



ASTI

101st Annual Convention 2023

Convention Handbook & Reports

**SERVING TEACHERS
PROMOTING EDUCATION**

BOOKS 1 & 2

CONVENTION 2023

101ST ASTI ANNUAL CONVENTION



Miriam Duggan, President, ASTI



Kieran Christie, General Secretary, ASTI



Pictured at the October 2022 CEC meeting: Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary), Áine Hyland (Emeritus Professor of Education, University College Cork), and Miriam Duggan (ASTI President)

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CONVENTION PROGRAMME

TUESDAY, 11TH APRIL 2023

12:00 noon OFFICIAL OPENING

If the business of Annual Convention is progressing quicker than expected Convention may, at the discretion of the Presiding Officer, move to the following business on the Convention programme.

12:00 noon to
2.00 p.m.

PRIVATE SESSION

Election Arrangements:

The arrangements for the election of President, Vice-President and Honorary Treasurer are set out in the document "Election Arrangements" which has been circulated to all delegates and CEC members.

Nomination papers for the election of Trustees will be available between 2.45pm and 5.30pm.

- (i) Credentials
- (ii) Adoption of Standing Orders Book 1 - 14
- (iii) Appointment of Timekeepers
- (iv) Formal Appointment of Tellers Book 1 - 21
- (v) Minutes of Annual Convention 2022
- (vi) Adoption of Steering Committee Reports Book 1 - 18
- (vii) Declaration of Results of Regional Elections to Standing Committee

ASTI PRESIDENT

HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

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- Motion 51– Student Wellbeing Book 1 - 45
- Motion 52 – Junior Cycle Book 1 - 45
- Motion 48 – Leaving Certificate Assessment Book 1 - 45
- Motion 28 – Inspections Book 1 - 45
- Motion 26 – Inspections Book 1 - 45
- Motion 24 – Supervision and Substitution Book 1 - 45
- Motion 62 – Global Solidarity Book 1 - 46
- Motion 12 – Posts of Responsibility Book 1 - 46

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URGENT MOTION 1: LEAVING CERTIFICATE	Book 1 - 46
URGENT MOTION 2: LEAVING CERTIFICATE ORAL AND PRACTICAL EXAMINATIONS	Book 1 - 46

2:00p.m. to
4:00p.m.

Public Session

2.00p.m.

DECLARATION OF ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Senior Cycle

Book 2 - 81

MOTION 43 – COMPOSITE MOTION - ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

That the ASTI demand, that for all future Leaving Certificate syllabi (specifications), the Department of Education, the NCCA and SEC publish the full range of syllabus documentation concurrently and not less than 12 months prior to implementation of the syllabus.

The syllabus documentation to include: a detailed syllabus which embeds depth of treatment and comprehensive teacher guidelines into the syllabus, sample examination papers and sample marking schemes. **(Clare, Dublin North West)**

Amendment

Amend by adding the words “rationale and research-based evidence that underpin the changes to/or introduction of syllabi” after the words “sample marking schemes”.

The amended motion will then read as follows:

That the ASTI demand, that for all future Leaving Certificate syllabi (specifications), the Department of Education, the NCCA and SEC publish the full range of syllabus documentation concurrently and not less than 12 months prior to implementation of the syllabus.

The syllabus documentation to include: a detailed syllabus which embeds depth of treatment and comprehensive teacher guidelines into the syllabus, sample examination papers, sample marking schemes, rationale and research-based evidence that underpin the changes to/for introduction of syllabi. **(Stillorgan)**

Motion 53 - ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

That a committee be formed to develop a set of positive proposals for Senior Cycle reform that the ASTI can promote as an alternative to the Minister’s proposals. **(Dublin North East)**

Motion 56 - ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

That the ASTI vehemently oppose the proposal to hold English and Irish Leaving Certificate paper 1 at the end of 5th year. **(Dublin South 1)**

Motion 57 - ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

That the ASTI refuse to cooperate with the proposal to move Paper 1 in English and Gaeilge to 5th Year. **(Dublin North East)**

Motion 58 - ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

That the ASTI oppose any attempt for students to sit a Leaving Certificate exam in 5th year. **(Fermoy)**

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Industrial Relations

Book 2 - 14

Budget 2023

Book 2 - 8

Redeployment

Book 2 - 11

Conciliation and Arbitration

Book 2 - 12

**Motion 47 – ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS -
COMPOSITE MOTION**

That the ASTI demand that the State Examinations Commission not schedule the oral and practical examinations during the Easter holidays. **(Carrick on Shannon, Dublin North East, Dublin North West, Mullingar, Tipperary)**

Motion 55 - ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

That the ASTI demand that the Easter and Midterm breaks and weekends are not used for the sitting of State Examinations. **(Dublin South 1)**

4:00 p.m. Adjournment

**4:25 p.m. to
6:00 p.m.**

PUBLIC SESSION

PRESIDENT’S ADDRESS

MINISTER’S ADDRESS

GUEST SPEAKER’S ADDRESS

PRESENTATION OF MEDAL TO IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT 2020-2021

PRESENTATION OF MEDAL TO IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT 2022-2023

6:00 p.m. Adjournment

WEDNESDAY, 12TH APRIL 2023

Ballot papers will be available between **9:00 a.m. and 12 noon** for the election of the Trustees, Education Committee, Equality Committee and Non-Permanent Teachers' Advisory Committee.
Ballot papers must be placed in the ballot boxes between 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Nomination papers will be available between **2:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.** for the election of Steering Committee, Rules Committee, Investment Committee, Pensions Sub-Committee, Safety, Health and Welfare Committee, Business of CEC Sub-Committee, and other sub-committees as relevant.

Completed nomination papers must be submitted by 6:00pm.

**9:30 a.m. to
1:00pm**

Public Session

If the business of Annual Convention is progressing quicker than expected Convention may, at the discretion of the Presiding Officer, move to the following business on the Convention programme.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Survey 2022	Book 2 - 25
Rationalisation	Book 2 - 1
Occupational Health Service	Book 2 - 3
Employee Assistance Service	Book 2 - 3
Safety, Health & Welfare Committee	Book 2 - 5
ICTU Health and Safety	Book 2 - 4

MOTION 28 - CONDITIONS OF WORK

That in view of the deterioration of the sick leave entitlements of teachers as a result of the economic crash of 2008 the ASTI now seek significant improvements in teachers' sick leave entitlements. **(Dublin South 1)**

MOTION 33 - CONDITIONS OF WORK

That the ASTI enter into negotiations with the Department of Education regarding the current requirement of Croke Park hours, to seek a reduction to reflect concessions made in other sectors of the public service. **(Tipperary)**

MOTION 27 - CONDITIONS OF WORK

That the ASTI demand an alleviation in additional hours (Haddington Road Agreement) as given to other public servants outlined in the report of the Independent Hours Body established under the Building Momentum Agreement 2021-2022.
(Dublin North West)

11:00 a.m.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

COMMUNITY AND COMPREHENSIVE

Advisory Committee Report	Book 2 - 95
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POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Relations with Parents	Book 2 - 5
NCSE Departmental Council	Book 2 - 5
Retirement Seminars	Book 2 - 8
Pensions Sub-Committee	Book 2 - 7

Motion 12 - SUPERANNUATION

That the ASTI negotiate with the relevant Government departments that changes be made to pension arrangements for teachers paying Class A PRSI who wish to work in retirement prior to reaching State Pension age, in order to bring them in line with the pension rights of retired teachers in the Class D PRSI scheme working before reaching State Pension age. **(Tuam)**

MOTION 5 - POSTS OF RESPONSIBILITY- COMPOSITE MOTION

That the ASTI seek additional allocation of teaching hours to provide for a reduction in teaching time on a pro-rata basis, to allow AP1 and AP2 post holders to perform their duties. **(Clare, Fermoy, Mullingar)**

MOTION 6 - POSTS OF RESPONSIBILITY

That the ASTI conduct a full and comprehensive review of the workload attached to AP1 and AP2 posts and insist that a time allowance for all post holders be mandatory in all schools. **(Dublin South 1)**

MOTION 9 - POSTS OF RESPONSIBILITY

That the ASTI demand that, in addition to their post allowance, Assistant Principals be given a time allowance of 4 hours per week for AP1 and 2 hours a week for AP2, to enable them to fulfil their duties.

(Wexford Tony Boland)

RSTA Speaker

1:00 p.m.

Adjournment for Lunch

2:00 p.m. to
6:00 p.m.

Public Session

EDUCATION

Education Committee Report
Junior Cycle

Book 2 - 68

Book 2 - 83

MOTION 36 - CLASS SIZE

That the ASTI enter into negotiations with the Department of Education to reduce class size to 24 in all subjects across the board (with the current limit of 20 for Home Economics to remain in place). **(Tullamore)**

MOTION 39 - EDUCATION - COMPOSITE MOTION

That the ASTI demand an increase in the services provided by the National Educational Psychological Service to all secondary schools to ensure sufficient SEN provision so that schools can provide inclusive education for all students. **(Dublin North West, Dungarvan)**

Motion 44 - ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

That the ASTI seek that there be no more than 1 CBA in each subject at Junior Cycle and that the completion of these CBAs be spread across second and third year and that the Assessment Task in relation to the CBAs be removed. **(Dublin South 1)**

Motion 50 - ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

That the ASTI engage with the Department of Education with the aim of abolishing all CBAs in Junior Cycle. **(Cork South Paddy Mulcahy)**

National Council for Curriculum & Assessment
Education Consultative Structures
SCoTENS
International Education Studies

Book 2 - 89

Book 2 - 92

Book 2 - 88

Book 2 - 81

Anti-Bullying in Schools	Book 2 - 93
Special Educational Needs	Book 2 - 80
Educational Disadvantage	Book 2 - 88
Education for Sustainable Development	Book 2 - 93
Examinations	Book 2 - 6
Teacher Education	Book 2 - 81

Motion 74 - ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION

This Convention demands that all ASTI-endorsed teacher representatives are facilitated to attend ASTI-endorsed meetings [including Teaching Council meetings]. If ASTI-endorsed teacher representatives are impeded from attending, this Convention authorises the ASTI to take action where deemed appropriate, so that teachers are facilitated to attend. **(Galway)**

6:00 p.m. Time of closure for nominations

6:00 p.m. Adjournment

THURSDAY, 13TH APRIL 2023

Ballot papers will be available between **9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.** for the election of Steering Committee, Rules Committee, Investment Committee, Pensions Sub-Committee, Business of CEC Sub-Committee, Safety Health and Welfare Committee, and other sub-committees as relevant.

Ballot papers for these elections must be placed in the ballot boxes between 9:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.

Nomination papers will be available between **1:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.** for election of Honorary National Organiser, Benevolent Fund, Awards Committee, Regional Organisers and CEC Appeals Sub-Committee.

Completed nomination papers must be submitted by 4:00 p.m.

**9:30 a.m. to
12 noon**

Public Session

If the business of Annual Convention is progressing quicker than expected Convention may, at the discretion of the Presiding Officer, move to the following business on the Convention programme.

NON-PERMANENT TEACHERS

Non-Permanent Teachers' Advisory Committee Book 2 - 43

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

School Inspection/Evaluation Book 2 - 6

EQUALITY

Equality Committee Report Book 2 - 97

MOTION 18 - CONDITIONS OF WORK

That the ASTI demand that special leave be granted to those who experience a miscarriage or who are partners of those who experience a miscarriage; equivalent to that given for compassionate leave as is in the case of a parent, child or spouse bereavement **(Bray)**

MOTION 30 - CONDITIONS OF WORK

That the ASTI seek to have the wording in Circular 0042/2014, Appendix 1 Agreed arrangements for the creation of the substitution roster PRELIMINARY WORK BY PRINCIPAL (Part 1 a, b, & c) amended from the current wording:

Calculation of the number of substitution slots to be filled: The Principal calculates the total number of substitution slots to be filled, based on the weekly class period commitment of the teachers who have not opted out of S&S duties, as set out in Circular 0006/2014:

- a. Each teacher working up to and including 12 hours class contact per week = 3 class periods
- b. Each teacher working more than 12 and up to and including 17 hours class contact per week = 4 class periods
- c. Each teacher working more than 17 hours class contact per week = 5 class periods

To the following:

- a. Each teacher working up to and including 12 hours class contact per week = 120 minutes
- b. Each teacher working more than 12 and up to and including 17 hours class contact per week = 160 minutes
- c. Each teacher working more than 17 hours class contact per week = 200 minutes **(Galway)**

MOTION 20- CONDITIONS OF WORK

That the ASTI enter into negotiations with the Department of Education to ensure that ASTI members be allowed to opt out of supervision and substitution at any stage after 10 years of service. **(Carbery)**

Amendment

Amend by deletion of the number '10' after the word 'after' and replacement with the number '15' so that the motion reads:

That the ASTI enter into negotiations with the Department of Education to ensure that ASTI members be allowed to opt out of supervision and substitution after 15 years of service. **(Desmond)**

MOTION 29 – CONDITIONS OF WORK - COMPOSITE MOTION

That the ASTI negotiate with the Department of Education for teachers to be able to opt-in and opt-out annually from the Supervision and Substitution scheme. **(Donegal, Galway, New Ross) (Already Policy)**

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Irish Congress of Trade Unions	Book 2 - 44
– ICTU Disability Committee	Book 2 - 47
Education International/ETUCE	Book 2 - 48
Teaching Council	Book 2 - 64
British and Irish Group of Teacher Unions	Book 2 - 65
RSTA	Book 2 - 66
Amnesty International	Book 2 - 66
Affiliations	Book 2 - 66
Political Lobbying	Book 2 - 66
Post of Responsibility	Book 2 - 1
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ASTI Global Solidarity	Book 2 - 47

ASTI SUBMISSIONS

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School Sector Climate Action Mandate - ASTI Submission - December 2022	Book 2 - 36
Consultation on national framework for guidance ASTI Submission - February 2023	Book 2 - 38
Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Learning Strategy Consultation- ASTI submission - January 2023	Book 2 - 40

12 noon **Adjournment for Lunch**

**1: 00 p.m. to
2:00 p.m.** **Public Session**

MOTION 52 – ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

That the ASTI insist that the supervision and correction of all terminal State Examinations continue to be the remit of the State Examinations Commission and that appointment for such work remain on a voluntary and contractual basis. **(Desmond)**

MOTION 49 - ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

That the ASTI engage with the SEC to ensure that marks are allocated in advance for all individual questions in all subject papers for the Junior Cycle Final Examinations, and subject teachers be informed accordingly. **(Cork South Paddy Mulcahy)**

2:00 p.m. to
4:00 p.m.

Private Session

INTERNAL UNION MATTERS

Finance	Book 2 - 101
Members' Benefit Schemes	Book 2 -102
Salary Protection Scheme	Book 2 - 102
Four Teachers' Unions	Book 2 - 102
Legal Aid Grants	Book 2 - 103
Principals and Deputy Principals	Book 2 - 104
Honorary National Organiser	Book 2 - 105

RULES MOTION

Amend Rule 11 by deletion of "Higher Diploma in Education lay students, final year lay students in colleges who" and substitute with "Professional Masters of Education students in colleges and others who"

Rule 11 to read as follows: Professional Masters of Education students in colleges and others who, when qualified, would be entitled to register as secondary teachers are eligible for student membership of the ASTI. Student members shall be eligible for ASTI membership rights and privileges subject to the following provisions: a student member shall not be entitled to act as an officer of a branch, as a representative on the Central Executive Council or as a member of Standing Committee.

RULES MOTION

Motion for new Rule: The new rule to read:

- a) A special committee, to be responsible to Standing Committee, shall be elected and known as the Safety Health & Welfare.
- b) The Committee shall consist of the President, President-elect, where applicable and Vice-President for the time being and nine members duly elected at Annual Convention every second year.
- c) The Safety Health & Welfare Committee shall advise Standing Committee on such Safety Health & Welfare matters:
 - (i) as are remitted to it by Standing Committee, or
 - (ii) on such other Safety Health & Welfare issues as the Committee itself wishes to investigate.
- d) The Committee shall remain in office for two years, shall meet not less than three and not more than seven times a year and members shall be eligible for re-election.
- e) In the event of a vacancy arising for an elected member during the period of office of the Committee the vacancy shall be filled by election at the next CEC meeting or Annual Convention, whichever is the earlier.
- f) The Committee shall meet within one month from the conclusion of Convention each year. At this meeting the Committee shall elect one of its members as Chairperson. The Chairperson shall hold office for one year and shall be eligible for re-election but shall not hold office for more than four years consecutively.
- g) The Committee shall submit an annual report to Convention which will be published in the Convention Handbook, after that report has been submitted to and approved by Standing Committee.

- h) All activities of the Committee involving expenditure shall be subject to the approval of Standing Committee.

If passed, this motion would require as a consequence changes to rule 108 as follows:

Amend Rule 108 as follows:

- (i) By inclusion of the words “Safety Health & Welfare Committee” after the words “Education Committee”.

Rule 108 shall then read as follows: With the exception of the President and Vice-President, no member may serve on more than one of the following committees namely, Standing Committee, Education Committee, Safety Health & Welfare Committee and Equality Committee during a concurrent term of office.

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Publicity and Information	Book 2 - 106
Publications	Book 2 - 107
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Substitution Service	Book 2 - 112
Conferences, Seminars and Meetings	Book 2 - 108
Membership	Book 2 - 108
Awards to Members	Book 2 - 110
Training Report	Book 2 - 113
ASTI Staff	Book 2 - 110
Casework	Book 2 - 112
Rules Committee	Book 2 - 112

4:00 p.m. Time of closure for nominations

4:00 p.m. CLOSURE

STANDING ORDERS

1. PRESIDING OFFICER

- 1.1 The Presiding Officer will normally be the President.
- 1.2 In the absence of the President, the Presiding Officer will be the Vice-President.
- 1.3 In the absence of the President and Vice-President, the Presiding Officer will be the Immediate Past-President or a member of Convention or CEC elected by Convention or CEC.
- 1.4 The Presiding Officer shall chair Convention or CEC in accordance with the provisions of the ASTI Rules and Constitution and of these Standing Orders.
- 1.5 In the event of a dispute about a matter of order or procedure, the Presiding Officer shall determine the matter. The Presiding Officer may consult the Officers prior to making such a ruling.
- 1.6 In the event of a tied vote, the Presiding Officer may exercise a second or casting vote.
- 1.7 If the Presiding Officer rises to speak, all other delegates or members shall be seated immediately.
- 1.8 Failure to observe a ruling of the Presiding Officer may result in expulsion from the meeting.

2. TIMEKEEPING

- 2.1 Convention or CEC, as appropriate, shall appoint from among its members a timekeeper.
- 2.2 The duty of the timekeeper will be to indicate when each speaker has exhausted the time allotted to them in accordance with the provisions of the Standing Orders or ruling of the Presiding Officer.
- 2.3 A visible signal shall be given by the timekeeper to each speaker when the speaker has exhausted the time allotted to them at which point the speaker must stop speaking and withdraw from the speaker's platform.

3. VOTING:

- 3.1 Every resolution shall be made by a show of credential cards at Convention or a show of hands at CEC meetings.
- 3.2 The Presiding Officer shall determine whether or not the resolution is accepted unless:
 - (i) the Presiding Officer rules that a division is needed, or
 - (ii) the determination of the Presiding Officer is challenged by not less than twenty members who shall express their desire that a division is taken by standing in their places.
- 3.3 Tellers shall be appointed by each Convention or CEC meeting to assist the Presiding Officer, on request, in determining the outcome of a division.

4. SUBMISSION OF MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

- 4.1 Motions and amendments for Annual Convention must be submitted in accordance with the provisions of the Rules.
- 4.2 Motions for Special Conventions must, in accordance with the Rules, be submitted in the notice of the Special Convention. Amendments to motions at Special Conventions must be submitted in writing prior to the opening of the debate. The amendment must state the name of the proposer and seconder who must be delegates to the Special Convention and present at the proceedings.
- 4.3 Motions and amendments may be submitted by Standing Committee or by members of CEC prior to or at a CEC meeting. Motions or amendments must be submitted in writing and must state the name of the proposer and seconder, who must be members of CEC and present at the appropriate meeting.

5. PROPOSING A MOTION OR AN AMENDMENT

- 5.1 Each motion and amendment must be proposed and seconded by persons entitled to do so whether at Convention or CEC.
- 5.2 Motions or amendments at Convention must be proposed and seconded by representatives of the branch(s) or committee which submitted the motion or amendment. At CEC they must be proposed and seconded by the persons who submitted them.
- 5.3 The proposer of a motion shall be allowed not more than five minutes to speak to the motion.
- 5.4 The seconder of a motion shall be allowed not more than three minutes to speak to the motion.
- 5.5 The proposer and seconder of an amendment shall be allowed not more than three minutes each to speak to the amendment.
- 5.6 Each other speaker to a motion or amendment shall be allowed to speak for not more than three minutes.
- 5.7 A speaker to a motion or an amendment shall be allowed to speak only once to the motion or amendment with the exception of the proposer of a motion who may be allowed the right of reply to matters raised in the debate. In such circumstances, the proposer may be allowed to speak for a further three minutes.
- 5.8 The Presiding Officer shall ensure that speakers to an amendment confine their speeches to matters specifically dealt with in the amendment.

- 5.9 A speaker to an amendment may also be allowed to speak to the substantive motion.
- 5.10 At the discretion of the Presiding Officer, the times specified above may be reduced.
- 5.11 In exceptional circumstances, the Presiding Officer may allow the proposer of a motion additional time to a maximum of three minutes.
- 5.12 Any amendments to a motion must be moved and disposed of after the motion has been proposed and seconded. No other speakers to the motion may be heard until the meeting has disposed of the amendments.
- 5.13 Each amendment must be moved and disposed of before the next amendment is taken.
- 5.14 After a motion or amendment has been proposed and seconded, the Presiding Officer shall, as far as possible, call alternately for speakers against and for the motion or amendment.
- 5.15 Where no speaker offers to oppose the motion or amendment, it shall be put immediately unless the Presiding Officer rules that the interests of the Association warrant an extension of the debate.
- 5.16 When the proposer of a motion indicates that an amendment is acceptable, the Presiding Officer will invite the proposer and seconder of the amendment to put the amendment formally before the meeting, i.e. without a speech. If there is no objection to the amendment, the amendment will be voted upon immediately. If there is an objection, the proposer and seconder of the amendment will be invited to speak first and a debate conducted on the amendment in the normal manner.

6. PROCEDURAL MOTIONS

- 6.1 Procedural motions to bring the business under discussion to a close or to move to the next business may be proposed during the course of a debate by any member who has not already spoken in the debate.
- 6.2 The following procedural motions may be proposed:
- (i) "That the motion/question be now put"
 If such a motion is accepted the proposer of the motion before the meeting shall be entitled to exercise a right of reply as provided under Standing Order 5.7.
- (ii) "That the meeting proceed to next business" or
- (iii) "That the motion/question be referred to....." Such a motion must specify to whom the matter is to be referred.
- 6.3 The acceptance of such procedural motions shall be at the discretion of the Presiding Officer.
- 6.4 If any one of the above procedural motions is accepted, the proposer shall be entitled to speak on the motion for not more than two minutes after which the procedural motion shall be put to the meeting.

7. POINTS OF ORDER / INFORMATION / EXPLANATION

- 7.1 A "Point of Order" must deal with the conduct or procedure of the debate and may be put to the Presiding Officer at any time with a request to make the point.
- 7.2 The person wishing to put the "Point of Order" must indicate his/her wish to speak immediately after the alleged breach has occurred.
- 7.3 The person must obtain the permission of the Presiding Officer to speak and in order to receive that permission must prove one or more of the following:
- (a) that the speaker is travelling outside the scope of the matter under debate;
- (b) that the speaker is using unacceptable language;
- (c) that the speaker is transgressing a rule of the ASTI;
- (d) that the speaker is infringing the standing orders;
- (e) that the speaker is acting unlawfully or is proposing a course of action which is unlawful.
- 7.4 With the permission of the Presiding Officer, a person may interrupt the proceedings with a "Point of Information" or a "Point of Explanation".
- 7.5 The "Point of Information" or "Point of Explanation" should be submitted to the Presiding Officer with a request to be allowed to make the point.
- 7.6 A "Point of Information" is a request for further information regarding the procedure or the subject under discussion. It must be brief and put in the form of a question and should indicate to whom it is addressed.
- 7.7 A "Point of Explanation" is a statement to correct or clarify what is being said by the speaker. It must be a brief explanatory statement and must not be developed into a speech.
- 7.8 The role of the Presiding Officer is to determine if a point of information/point of order is legitimate. At the request of the proposer, the Presiding Officer shall explain to the meeting why a point of order/information is out of order.
- 7.9 The Presiding Officer may allow a person to interrupt a speaker to make a "Point of Explanation".
- 7.10 The Presiding Officer may allow a "Point of Information" to be made after the speaker has finished.
- 7.11 If a speaker is interrupted by a "Point of Order", "Point of Information" or "Point of Explanation", the Presiding Officer may allow the speaker additional time to compensate for the time taken by the interruption.

8. QUORUM

- 8.1 A quorum shall consist of one-third of the duly accredited members of Convention or CEC.
- 8.2 The Presiding Officer may initiate proceedings at the scheduled time or shortly thereafter without a quorum being present. However, no decision shall be taken without a quorum being present.

9. ANNUAL CONVENTION TIMETABLE

- 9.1 Annual Convention shall begin at 12 noon. on the first day and at 9.30 a.m. on each succeeding day.
- 9.2 Annual Convention shall adjourn at 6.30 p.m. on the first day, 6.00 p.m. on the second day and 4.00 pm on the third day.
- 9.3 Annual Convention shall adjourn for lunch from 1.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. on the second day and 12 noon to 1.00 pm on the third day.
- 9.4 The timetable for Annual Convention may be changed by Convention on the recommendation of Steering Committee or by a procedural motion to that effect duly proposed and seconded. Such a procedural motion must be proposed at least thirty minutes before the proposed change would have effect.

10. REPORTS

- 10.1 A person introducing a report shall be allowed not more than ten minutes' speaking time for that purpose except with the express permission of the Presiding Officer or of the meeting.
- 10.2 A report shall be placed formally before the meeting through the use of one of the following procedural motions:
- (i) that the report be adopted;
 - (ii) that the report be adopted and its recommendations implemented.
- 10.3 Such procedural motions must be proposed and seconded either formally (i.e. without speeches) or with speakers directing attention to key elements or recommendations in the Report.
- 10.4 One of the following procedural motions may then be proposed and seconded:
- (i) "That the report be rejected".
 - (ii) "That the report (or a section thereof) be referred back to?"

In the case of the latter proposition the motion must be submitted in writing to the Presiding Officer and must specify to whom the report is being referred and to whom it is to be brought when completed.

- 10.5 Motions proposed under this Standing Order shall be subject to the ordinary Rules of Procedure regarding motions except

- (i) speakers shall be permitted to ask questions about matters contained in the report, and
- (ii) the person introducing the report rather than the person proposing the motion may reply to the debate and to any questions which are raised.

11. MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

- 11.1 Matters which are not on the agenda for the meeting may be raised by submitting them in writing to the Presiding Officer prior to the opening of proceedings of any session, on any particular day.
- 11.2 Standing Committee shall be entitled to submit motions on urgent matters to Steering Committee either prior to or during Convention. Steering Committee shall decide whether or not to recommend that such motions be considered by Convention.
- 11.3 The Presiding Officer shall set aside a specific time for dealing with such new business.
- 11.4 Such new business shall only be dealt with with the consent of the meeting.

12. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

- 12.1 A motion to suspend Standing Orders shall be submitted in writing to the Presiding Officer by a proposer and a seconder both of whom are members of Convention or CEC.
- 12.2 The motion must specify the Standing Order or Orders to be suspended, and the period of such suspension.
- 12.3 The motion must state the reasons of importance and urgency justifying such suspension and, if such suspension is for the purpose of considering a matter not on the agenda, the reason for not submitting such matter in accordance with the rules or with Standing Order No. 11.
- 12.4 A motion to suspend Standing Orders shall not be considered by the meeting except with the permission of the Presiding Officer.

A motion to suspend Standing Orders shall not be adopted save with the consent of not less than two-thirds of the members of Convention or CEC, who are present and voting.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

1. RULES OF DEBATE

- (i) Proposers and Seconders of motions are entitled under Standing Orders to five minutes and three minutes speaking time respectively. A voluntary curtailment in the use of this time would allow more time for debate. Greater co-operation between proposers and seconders could also reduce the amount of time required for presenting motions.
- (ii) At the President's discretion, and after a number of speakers have spoken for and against, the time limit on speakers should revert to two minutes and after a further number of speakers to one minute.
- (iii) Speakers for a motion and against a motion should sit at opposite sides of the hall, with speakers for to the right of the hall and speakers against, to the left of the hall.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM HANDBOOK SECTIONS

At the discretion of the President subsections of the Convention Handbook may be proposed, seconded and dealt with collectively. At the beginning of a session where this procedure is being applied, members of Convention may raise any aspect of the particular section or subsections with which they wish Convention to deal.

3. REPORTS TO CONVENTION

The following guidelines apply to the introduction, presentation and proposing of committee reports at Convention:

- (i) The person or persons introducing / presenting the report should highlight only the issues which the committee believes to be of special significance or require debate.
- (ii) If there is more than one person introducing / presenting the report, they should ensure that there is no duplication between their contributions.
- (iii) The person or persons introducing / presenting reports should use the minimum amount of time necessary to do so but, in any event, should not exceed a combined total of ten minutes.
- (iv) After the introduction / presentation of a committee report, the motion "that the report be adopted" should be placed before Convention formally, i.e. without a further proposing / introductory speech. The debate on the report should then take place in the usual way.
- (v) Amendments to a report may be proposed in the usual form of procedural motions "to refer back" a section or sections.
- (vi) Where such reports contain recommendations, they should be highlighted and / or summarised at the end of the report.

STEERING COMMITTEE

GUIDELINES FOR MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS FOR ANNUAL CONVENTION

Members are advised to read the following guidelines carefully as they will be applied by Steering Committee when it meets to rule motions 'in' or 'out of order' for the Convention Preliminary Agenda.

Steering Committee recommends that motions for Annual Convention being proposed at Branch Meetings should be put in writing either at the relevant Branch Meeting or prior to the Branch Meeting.

(a) MOTIONS:

To ensure that motions are not ruled "out of order"

- (i) all motions **must arrive** in ASTI Head Office by November 30 in accordance with Rule 73;
- (ii) all motions must ask Convention to declare an opinion or call for a course of action, or both;
- (iii) all motions must be properly worded and factually correct;
- (iv) all motions must conform to the objects of the ASTI as set out in the ASTI Rules and Constitution
- (v) all motions must be capable of implementation.

(b) AMENDMENTS AND ADDENDA:

To ensure that amendments and addenda are not ruled "out of order":

- (i) they **must be received** in ASTI Head Office by January 31 in accordance with Rule 73 (d):
- (ii) they must conform with the objects of the ASTI as set out in the ASTI Rules and Constitution
- (iii) they must be capable of implementation
- (iv) they must be properly worded and factually correct
- (v) they must not change the whole sense of a motion and must in some way involve the same question that is raised in the motion
- (vi) they must not be a direct negative of the motion.

Please Note:

Steering Committee has decided that branches may not amend the motions which they have submitted.

(c) CHANGES OF RULE:

- (i) Motions, amendments and addenda involving a change of rule should specify clearly what is to be deleted and what is to be substituted.
 e.g. *The correct formula would read:*
 Rule 59: delete"....."
 or
 Rule 59: delete"....." and substitute "....."
- (ii) All motions proposing a change of rule, which, if passed, will require as a consequence, material change(s) in other rule(s), should identify those rules in which such material change(s) will be required and specify the changes required.
- (iii) Motions, amendments and addenda, other than those specifically changing a rule or rules, must not conflict with existing rule(s).

(d) ADVICE REGARDING DRAFTING MOTIONS:

- (i) Each motion should be clear and concise.
- (ii) A motion should not contain an argument.
- (iii) Each motion should deal with one topic only.

(e) matters affecting the terms and conditions of staff, except as provided for in the Rules, are not appropriate for Convention motions. These should continue to be dealt with by Standing Committee and/or CEC as appropriate.

(f) ADDITIONAL EXPLANATORY GUIDELINES FOR MOTIONS:

- (i) the meaning of a motion must be clear to an independent reader.
- (ii) a motion must not be open to more than one interpretation.
- (iii) where a motion sets out a particular time scale for implementation, this time scale must be reasonably achievable in the opinion of Steering Committee, e.g. *a motion to be passed in April calling for a salary increase to be negotiated and paid by May would probably be ruled 'out of order'.*
- (iv) a motion must not contain errors of fact, e.g. *a motion proposing the reduction of the 'thirty five' point salary scale would be ruled 'out of order' on the basis that there is not a 'thirty five' point salary scale.*
- (v) a motion must be in conformity with the Objects of the ASTI as set out in Rule 4 of the Rules and Constitution of the ASTI. Seventeen specific objects of the Association are listed in Rule 4.
- (vi) motions proposing change of rule must be very carefully worded; they must identify clearly the specific changes being proposed; the amended rule must not be in conflict

with any other ASTI rule. Proposers should read all rules associated with or affected by the rule change that is being proposed.

- (vii) a motion may not be in conflict with any existing rule of the ASTI, e.g. *Rule 5 prohibits discussion of political or sectarian topics so a motion requiring such a discussion would be ruled 'out of order'.*

STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1

The first meeting of Steering Committee took place on 5th December, 2022.

In attendance were: Geraldine O'Brien, (Vice President) Máire G. Ní Chiarba, Susie Hall, Niall Duddy, Noel Buckley, Jimmy Staunton, Kieran Christie (General Secretary) Diarmaid de Paor (Deputy General Secretary)

Apologies: Miriam Duggan (President)

1. Steering Committee Guidelines and Criteria:

The Committee adopted the guidelines for motions and amendments for annual Convention.

Steering Committee noted that for motions to be in order they must:

- (a) Be clear and concise
- (b) Not contain argument
- (c) Deal with one topic only
- (d) Conform with the objects of the ASTI
- (e) Ask Convention to declare an opinion or call for a course of action, or both.
- (f) Be factually correct
- (g) Be capable of implementation
- (h) Not conflict with an existing rule or rules. (Except those specifically changing a rule or rules).

In the case of proposed rule changes, motions should specify what is to be deleted and what is to be substituted. All motions proposing a change of rule, which, if passed, will require as a consequence, material change(s) in other rule(s), should identify those rules in which such material change(s) will be required and specify the changes required.

2. Dates of ASTI Annual Convention 2023.

The dates on which Annual Convention 2023 is to be held were noted.

3. Motions:

Steering Committee examined the motions submitted by branches. Except for rule change motions which require precise wording, every effort was made to include motions on the preliminary agenda. A number of motions were deemed to be 'out of order' and it was agreed to write to the branches involved to provide explanation.

Motions that were already policy were to be accompanied with a statement to that effect on the preliminary agenda.

It was decided to composite motions submitted that were of similar intent.

4. Branch Letter:

The Committee approved the draft letter to be sent to branches regarding prioritisation of motions.

5. AOB

It was decided to return to an item regarding late registration of delegates for Annual Convention 2023 at the next Steering Committee.

STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 2

The second meeting of Steering Committee took place on Friday 3rd February, 2023.

In attendance were:

Miriam Duggan (President), Geraldine O'Brien (Vice President), Susie Hall, Máire G. Ní Chiarba, Niall Duddy, Jimmy Staunton, Noel Buckley Kieran Christie (General Secretary) Diarmaid de Paor (Deputy General Secretary) Gemma Tuffy (Executive Officer: Media and Communications)

1. Steering Committee Report No. 1:

Steering Committee report No. 1 was adopted.

2. Correspondence:

Late submissions by two ASTI branches of prioritised motions for Annual Convention were noted.

Correspondence from a member of Standing Committee regarding how an aspect of the format of Annual Convention 2023 and interruptions of the Ministerial address could be handled was considered and noted.

Correspondence from the Community and Comprehensive Committee regarding the positioning of their report on the Agenda of Annual Convention 2023 was considered and noted.

Correspondence and a separate request for facilities to be provided to hold two fringe events at Annual Convention were considered and noted. It was decided that both events should be accommodated.

3. Amendments to Motions:

Amendments to three motions that had been submitted were examined. Steering Committee decided to approve the amendments submitted in respect of motions 43 and 20 for placement with the original motion on the agenda of Annual Convention 2023.

A submitted amendment to motion 16 did not require consideration as it had not been sufficiently prioritised to be placed on the Annual Convention programme.

4. Urgent Motion:

Two urgent motions submitted by Standing Committee relating to proposed changes to the ASTI Rules and Constitution were considered. It was decided to include the two urgent motions on the programme for Annual Convention.

5. Prioritised Motions:

Submissions from branches of prioritised motions were noted and the most popular motions were chosen for inclusion on the final Convention Agenda.

6. Convention Programme:

The programme for Convention was approved. Motions were placed in the appropriate positions on the agenda.

It was decided that if a session or the business of Annual Convention is progressing quicker than expected, Convention may, at the discretion of the Presiding Officer, move to the following business on the agenda.

7. Registration Arrangements:

Arrangements for dealing with late notification of delegates/CEC members and/or changes of delegates/CEC members were discussed. New administrative arrangements were agreed to deal with the overlap period whereby changes are permitted at the same time as general registration has commenced.

8. Election Arrangements:

Two nominations, received after the deadline, from branches for a candidate for President of the ASTI were noted.

Two nominations, received after the deadline, from branches for two separate candidates for Vice President of the ASTI were noted.

One nomination, received after the deadline, from a branch for a candidate for Honorary Treasurer of the ASTI was noted.

A discussion took place regarding physical arrangements for registration of delegates/CEC members at Annual Convention.

A motion to require closure of the doors of the room in which registration is taking place at the time at which collection of ballots is no longer permissible, to enable all present in the room to register and receive ballot papers, was defeated by four votes to three.

A motion to mandate the deferral of discussion of the proposal to require closure of the doors of the room in which registration is taking place at the time at which

collection of ballots is no longer permissible, to enable all present in the room to register and receive ballot papers, until the December 2023 meeting of Steering Committee, was adopted by four votes to three.

9. Unauthorised Display Stands:

Steering Committee decided that unauthorised display stands are not permitted within the precincts of the Convention centre. This includes the areas made available for stands and displays outside Annual Convention Hall.

10. Steering Committee decided that, in accordance with long standing practice, the distribution of any election or other literature within the Annual Convention Hall is not permitted. The only material that may be distributed is that mandated in accordance with the business of the Convention and distributed at the discretion of the Presiding Officer by the tellers.

11. General:

- It was agreed to invite a speaker from the RSTA to address Convention on Wednesday 12th April, just prior to the adjournment for lunch.
- It was agreed that there would be a presentation of medals to the Immediate Past President and the Past President who served in that capacity for the year 2019 – 2020 on Tuesday 11th April prior to the adjournment of Annual Convention at 6.00 p.m.
- Delegates who wish to submit points of order etc. must take their place on seating provided for this purpose. Under no circumstances should they approach the platform.
- Speakers should be requested to avoid repetition as it wastes valuable Convention time.
- Speakers are required to respect the 'red light'. It should be noted that those who continue to speak once the red light goes on are taking time from other speakers.
- It was agreed that the next Steering Committee meeting would be held at 6.00 p.m. on Monday 10th April, 2023 in the Clayton Hotel Silver Springs, Cork. Clayton Whites Hotel, Wexford.

TELLERS

1. NOMINATION OF TELLERS

- (i) Each year branches are asked to nominate one of their chosen Convention delegates or one of their CEC members to act as a Teller at Annual Convention.
- (ii) The names and addresses of the nominated Tellers shall be forwarded by the Branch Honorary Secretary to the General Secretary so as to reach the General Secretary not later than January 31st.
- (iii) A member who intends contesting an election at Annual Convention shall not be nominated as a Teller.

2. DUTIES OF TELLERS

- (i) The tellers shall be divided into teams and assigned duties.
- (ii) On their duty day the responsibilities of the tellers are as follows:
 - (a) Security of ballot boxes in the Convention hall. This responsibility commences fifteen minutes prior to the opening of Convention business each day.
 - (b) Counting of votes taken by show of hands / cards. Each teller will be assigned to count a section of the attendance, with one teller acting as co-ordinator.
 - (c) Distribution of necessary documentation to Convention delegates as requested by the Presiding Officer.
- (iii) The counting of ballot boxes shall be carried out by the tellers at times other than when they are on duty in the Convention Hall.
- (iv) Counting of ballot boxes shall be carried out in a specified place and at a specified time. Every effort will be made to make ballot results available to Convention as quickly as possible.

3. ELECTION OBSERVERS

In the cases of elections which require nomination of candidates prior to Convention (i.e. President, Vice-President etc.), duly nominated candidates will be offered a facility to nominate an observer to attend the relevant ballot count. Arrangements will be made to inform such duly nominated observers of the place and time of counting of ballots.

4. TELLERS (STEWARDS) 2023

Branch	Name
Athlone	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Bray	Conall Ó Dufaigh
Carbery	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Carlow	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Carrick-on-Shannon	<i>No nomination submitted</i>

Cavan	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Clare	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Cork North	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Cork South Paddy Mulcahy	Pat Morris
Desmond	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Donegal	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Drogheda Sean Higgins	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Dublin North 1	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Dublin North East	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Dublin North West	Keith Rooney
Dublin North Central	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Dublin South Central	Sarah Cullen
Dublin South 1	Maura McCaul
Dublin South 2	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Dublin South County	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Dublin South West	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Dungarvan	Jonathan O'Donovan
Dun Laoghaire	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
East Cork	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
East Galway	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
East Mayo	Stacey Walsh-McDermott
Enniscorthy	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Fermoy	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Fingal	Ed Byrne
Galway	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Iar Thuaisceart Thír Chonail	Tony McGennis
Kerry	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Kildare	Adrian Guinan
Kilkenny	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Laois	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Longford	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Limerick North	Eimear Holly
Limerick South	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Monaghan	Enda Tourish
Mullingar	Gavan Kierans
Navan	Liam McHugh
Nenagh	Bill Lonergan
New Ross	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Roscrea	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Sligo	Christopher Davey
Stillorgan	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Tipperary	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Tuam	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Tullamore	Richard Egan
Waterford	Barry Musgrave
West Limerick	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
West Mayo	John McDonnell
West Waterford	Ann Bennett
Wexford Tony Boland	<i>No nomination submitted</i>
Wicklow	<i>No nomination submitted</i>

ELECTION PROCEDURES

I. ELECTION AND NOMINATION

(a) PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENT AND HONORARY TREASURER

- (i) A nomination form for the offices of President, Vice-President and Honorary Treasurer and a list of eligible candidates are to be sent to each branch secretary by January 6th.
- (ii) Each branch may nominate one candidate for each office.
- (iii) For President and Vice-President elections, candidates must be from among members of the incoming CEC or from the Trustees. For Honorary Treasurer elections, candidates shall be elected from among the members of the incoming CEC.
- (iv) In the event of a Trustee being elected President, Vice-President or Honorary Treasurer, he/she must resign his/her Trusteeship.
- (v) For President and Vice-President elections, candidates must have been members of the Association for the six years immediately prior to the election or have been a representative on the CEC for the three years immediately preceding the election.
- (vi) Nominees defeated for Presidency automatically become candidates for the Vice-Presidency but shall have the right to withdraw.
- (vii) Nominations duly completed on the appropriate forms must be sent to reach the General Secretary on or before 31st January and no later nominations will be accepted.
- (viii) Nominated candidates may withdraw by notifying the General Secretary on or before February 18th.
- (ix) The list of nominees shall be published in the Convention Handbook.

(b) TRUSTEES

- (i) Nomination forms for election of Trustees will be made available on the first day of Annual Convention.
- (ii) Trustees shall be members of the Association elected from among those who have been members for not less than ten years.
- (iii) Nominations for the positions of Trustee shall be by two members of Convention.
- (iv) The appropriate nomination form, duly completed must be submitted to the General Secretary prior to the end of the last session on the opening day of Annual Convention and no late nominations will be accepted.
- (v) Candidates for election will be as listed on the ballot papers.
- (vi) Members of CEC who are elected as Trustees shall resign.

(c) EDUCATION COMMITTEE AND EQUALITY COMMITTEE

- (i) Nomination forms for election to the Education Committee and Equality Committee will be sent to each Branch Secretary by January 6th.
- (ii) No member may serve on more than one of the following committees namely, Standing Committee, Education Committee and Equality Committee during a concurrent term of office.
- (iii) Each candidate must be nominated by a branch.
- (iv) The appropriate nomination forms duly completed must be sent to reach the General Secretary before January 31st.
- (v) In order to facilitate balloting at Annual Convention and as members may be elected to only one of the following Committees, Standing Committee, Equality Committee, Education Committee, candidates who are seeking election to more than one of the relevant Committees are asked to submit to the General Secretary a written statement of the order of their committee preference. This written statement of preference should be placed in a sealed envelope with the candidate's name on the outside of the envelope which should also be marked "Choice of Committee" and forwarded to the General Secretary along with the candidate's nomination form. The envelope will only be opened by the General Secretary at Convention in the event of the candidate being elected to more than one committee.
- (vi) Nominated candidates may withdraw on or before February 18th.
- (vii) The list of nominees will be published in the Convention Handbook.

2. BALLOTING PROCEDURES

For election of President, Vice-President, Trustees, Honorary Treasurer, Education Committee and Equality Committee.

(a) PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT AND HONORARY TREASURER

- (i) The election of President, Vice-President and Honorary Treasurer shall take place on the afternoon of the first day of Annual Convention.
- (ii) Ballot papers for the election of President, Vice-President and Honorary Treasurer shall be made available between 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. on the first day of Annual Convention.
- (iii) Completed ballot papers for the election of President must be placed in the appropriate ballot boxes by a time to be specified on the first day of Convention. The counting of ballots shall then take place.
- (iv) In the event of no single candidate securing a majority over all others, a further ballot or ballots shall be held.

- (v) The result of the Presidential ballot shall be announced to Convention when the count is complete.
- (vi) Ballot papers for the election of the Vice-President and Honorary Treasurer must be placed in the appropriate ballot boxes by a time to be specified on the first day of Annual Convention. The counting of ballots shall then take place.
- (vii) In the event of no single candidate securing a majority over all others, a further ballot or ballots shall be held.
- (viii) The result of the Vice-Presidential and Honorary Treasurer election shall be announced to Convention when the count is complete.

(b) TRUSTEES

- (ix) Ballot papers for the election of Trustees shall be made available between 9.00 a.m. and 10.30 on the second day of Annual Convention.
- (x) Ballot papers for the elections of Trustees must be placed in the appropriate ballot boxes by 10.45 am on the second day of Annual Convention. The count shall then take place.
- (xi) The three candidates for Trusteeship achieving the highest number of votes shall be deemed elected and the result of the election shall then be announced.

(c) EDUCATION COMMITTEE AND EQUALITY COMMITTEE

- (xiv) Ballot papers for the election of Education Committee and Equality Committee must be placed in the appropriate ballot boxes by a time to be specified on the morning of the second day of Annual Convention. The count shall then take place.
- (xv) The candidates to be elected to the Education Committee and Equality Committee shall be the nine and nine candidates respectively who receive the highest number of votes.
- (xvi) The results of the elections to Education Committee and Equality Committee shall be examined by the Chairpersons of each of the teams to ensure that a member has not been elected to more than one of the committees.
- (xvii) In the event of a candidate being elected to more than one of the relevant committees, the General Secretary shall then be asked to open the “choice of committee” envelope of the candidate involved, if such is available. The candidate shall then be assigned to a committee based on the candidate’s expressed preference.
- (xviii) The next candidate/s in order of votes received shall then be assigned to the vacant seat/s on the relevant committee/s. The results shall then be handed to the President and be declared to Convention.
- (xix) In the event of a candidate being elected to more than one of the relevant committees and where such candidate has not submitted a “choice of committee” envelope and where such candidate is present at Convention, the candidate should be so advised by one of the chairpersons of the relevant group of tellers. The candidate must indicate immediately to a meeting of the three chairpersons of the tellers of a decision to opt for membership of one of the relevant committees.
- (xx) The next candidate/s in order of votes received shall then be assigned to the vacant seat/s on the relevant committee/s. The results shall then be handed to the President and be declared to Convention.

- (xxi) In the event of a candidate being elected to more than one of the relevant committees, and where such candidate has not submitted a “choice of committee” envelope, and where such candidate is not present at Convention, the candidate shall be contacted by the General Secretary as soon as possible after Convention and requested to indicate a decision to opt for membership of one of the relevant committees.
- (xxii) The next candidate/s in order of votes received should then be assigned to the vacant seat/s on the relevant committee/s.
- (xxiii) In the above circumstances, the interim result shall be declared to Convention and the final result shall be published in ASTIR.

3. ELECTION CODE FOR CANDIDATES

(a) SCOPE

This election code applies to all elections to the following offices, committees and sub-committees of the ASTI:

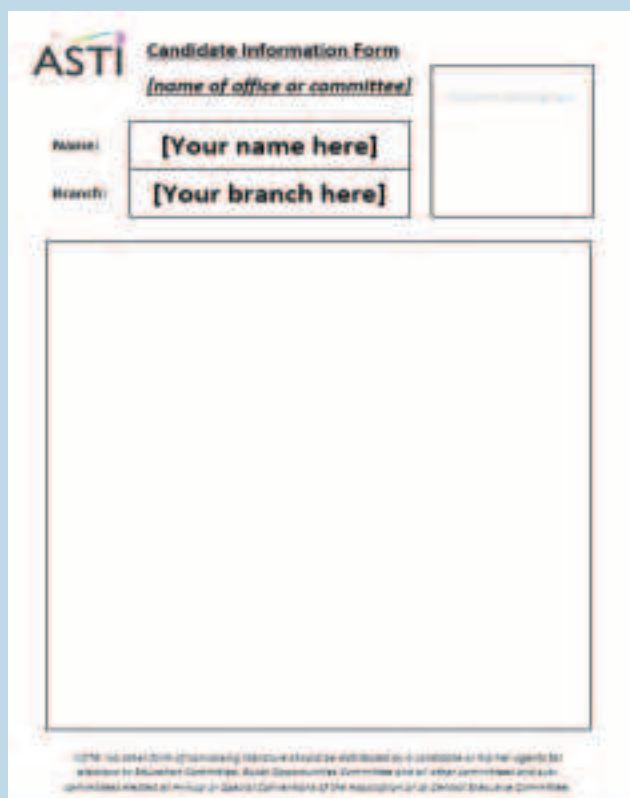
- (i) President, Vice President and Honorary Treasurer elected at Annual Convention and Honorary National Organiser elected by the Central Executive Committee (CEC).
- (ii) Education Committee, Equality Committee and all other committees and sub-committees elected at Annual or Special Conventions of the Association or at CEC.

(b) REGULATIONS

Candidates for election to committees and offices within the ASTI should adhere to the following regulations:-

- (i) There shall be no use of the funds of the Association or the funds of any branch of the Association for the purposes of assisting any individual or individuals in an election campaign other than as provided in (iii) below.
- (ii) The structures and facilities of the union may not be used for the purposes of the collection of funds to finance the election campaign of any member.
- (iii) Branch mailing facilities shall only be used for the purposes of advising other branch secretaries of the candidate nominated by a branch.
- (iv) Candidates offering themselves for election may use the official ASTI “Candidate Information Form” for the purposes of promoting their candidature.
- (v) Blank copies of the “Candidate Information Form” shall be available from the General Secretary on request.
- (vi) Completion, copying and distribution of the above form shall be the responsibility of the candidate. Candidates must also take responsibility for the accuracy of statements on the form and for any legal liability accruing.
- (vii) No other form of canvassing literature should be distributed by a candidate or his/her agents.
- (viii) There shall be no distribution of the “Candidate Information Form” or any other election literature within the Convention Auditorium.
- (ix) There shall be no posting of election literature within the Convention precincts.

(c) CANDIDATE INFORMATION FORM



The image shows a 'Candidate Information Form' from ASTI. At the top left is the ASTI logo. The title is 'Candidate Information Form' followed by '(name of office or committee)' in a smaller font. Below this, there are two input fields: 'Name: [Your name here]' and 'Branch: [Your branch here]'. To the right of these fields is a larger empty rectangular box. At the bottom of the form, there is a small line of text: '© 1978-2018 ASTI. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the prior written permission of ASTI. Printed in Dublin by the Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland.'

4. ORGANISATION OF ELECTIONS AND CONDUCT OF COUNT

(a) DELEGATES/ ELECTORATE

- (i) Names of Delegates and CEC should be notified on time to ASTI Head Office in the normal way.
- (ii) In exceptional circumstances, late notification of delegates/CEC and/or changes of delegates/CEC must be submitted in writing and signed by a branch officer from the nominating branch; this to be handed to a member of the Head Office Staff in the Convention Centre no later than 11am on the first day of Convention.
- (iii) These deadlines will be notified by Head Office to each branch and Branch Officers will bring them to the attention of delegates and CEC members.
- (iv) The deadlines will be implemented rigidly.

(b) REGISTER

- (i) It was agreed that the ASTI should retain the practice of having a register of attendees at Conventions.
- (ii) The register will be divided on a regional basis at different tables for ease of signing.
- (iii) When distribution of ballot papers for each election has been completed, the register is handed to the Presiding Officer (President).
- (iv) At close of voting the register and ballot boxes will be moved by the tellers to the counting venue.

- (v) A 'late register' is then opened.
- (vi) The electorate in each election shall consist of those who have registered prior to the end of distribution of ballot papers for that election.
- (vii) The organisation of the safeguarding of the register shall be the responsibility of the General Secretary.

(c) IDENTIFICATION

Staff and tellers must adhere rigidly to the requirement that members produce ID or their ASTI membership card in order to receive ballot papers.

(d) BALLOT PAPERS: PRESIDENTIAL /VICE PRESIDENTIAL / HONORARY TREASURER ELECTIONS

- (i) Each member at Convention should be handed two ballot papers for the Presidential and/or Vice-Presidential and/or Honorary Treasurer elections - one for the first ballot and one for the second ballot (to be used if necessary on that day).
- (ii) Each ballot paper will be numbered in sequence and printed on paper with a watermark.
- (iii) Ballot papers will be placed in envelopes for delegates.
- (iv) At the Registration Desk each delegate must check that his/her envelope contains the ballot papers; any error must be immediately notified to the Head Office staff; it is only in such circumstances that replacement ballot papers may be issued.
- (v) Where a member mislays his/her ballot paper no replacement ballot paper will be handed out. This will be rigidly implemented.
- (vi) If a third ballot is required then ballot papers will be prepared on site and distributed by the tellers on production of credential cards to those who have registered.
- (vii) Head Office staff will retain a certificate from the printers which will state the number of ballot papers printed. This certificate will be given to the relevant team of tellers.
- (viii) Head Office staff will also provide, to the relevant team of tellers
 - (a) a total of the unused ballot papers contained in the uncollected delegate envelopes and
 - (b) a total of the surplus unused ballot papers.

(e) BALLOT BOXES

- (i) Ballot boxes will consist of six transparent plastic boxes.
- (ii) No other boxes (e.g. quiz boxes etc) will be allowed in the Convention Hall.

CONDUCT OF COUNT

(f) TELLERS

- (i) No teller who is a candidate may be involved in the conduct of an election.

(g) PROCEDURE FOR TELLERS

- (i) When each group of tellers first meet they will appoint one of their number to act as a ‘Chairperson’ and one to act as a ‘Recorder of Decisions’.
- (ii) Tellers must always work in teams of no less than two.
- (iii) All ballot boxes will be opened together.
- (iv) Ballot papers will be stacked face down.
- (v) The number of names on the register and the ‘late register’ where appropriate, will be counted by two tellers acting together.
- (vi) The number of ballot papers will be counted by the remaining tellers acting in teams of two.
- (vii) If the number of ballots cast equals the number of names on the register(s) then counting may proceed.
- (viii) If the number of ballots cast is fewer than the number of names on the register(s) then counting may proceed.
- (ix) If there are more ballot papers than there are names on the register then the following applies:
 - (a) If there are more than 5 ‘extra’ ballot papers then the entire ballot must be reheld ab initio.
 - (b) If there are 5 or fewer ‘extra’ ballot papers the counting of ballots may proceed. However if the difference in votes cast between a candidate to be eliminated and the next best candidate is less than or equal to the number of ‘extra’ ballot papers then the entire ballot must be reheld ab initio following the distribution by tellers of an entirely new set of ballot papers in the hall.
- (x) Once counted, the bundles of ballot papers are swapped around and counted again by a different set of tellers.
- (xi) If the tellers are satisfied with the bundle counts then the chairperson and a teller total the ballots cast.
- (xii) This total is then crosschecked by two other tellers.
 - (a) If the gap between any 2 candidates is greater than 5 votes then the count stands.
 - (b) If the gap between any 2 candidates is 5 or less then the bundles are recounted.
 - (c) If at the end of the second count the result is the same then the count stands.
 - (d) If at the end of this second count the same candidate is successful then the result stands.
 - (e) If at the end of this second count the result is different then a third count is necessary.
- (xiii) When a count has concluded and a provisional result has been agreed by the Tellers, a candidate or a candidate’s nominated observer may request a further count. A further count must then be held.
- (xiv) A candidate or a candidate’s observer may request a further recount and this must also be held.
- (xv) A candidate or a candidate’s observer may request a further recount and this must also be held.
- (xvi) There shall be no further recounts unless that is deemed necessary by the tellers.

(h) COMMUNICATION

- (i) There shall be no communication of count information from the count centre once a count has commenced until the count has concluded.
- (ii) It shall be the responsibility of the nominated observers to advise the candidates of the result.
- (iii) After each ballot the tellers shall furnish a completed teller report to the Presiding Officer. This report shall include the results and any observations which the tellers may wish to make.

(i) FINAL DETERMINATION

In the event of a major problem arising regarding a count and if the tellers are unable to arrive at a particular decision then the matter shall be referred to the ASTI Officers for determination.

5. TABLE OF ELECTIONS

	NO. OF VACANCIES	NOMINATION DATE	NOMINATED BY	ELECTION HELD
President	1	31 Jan	Branch	Annually at Convention
Vice-President	1	31 Jan	Branch	Annually at Convention
Treasurer	1	31 Jan	Branch	Annually at Convention
Trustees	3	1st day of Convention	Convention Member	2023, 2025, 2027 etc at Convention
Standing Committee	18	7 Jan	Branch or 50 members	Biennially in Regions
Honorary National Organiser	1	31 Jan	CEC Member	Annually at May CEC
Education Committee	9	6 Feb	Branch	2023, 2025, 2027 etc at Convention
Equality Committee	9	6 Jan	Branch	2023, 2025, 2027 etc at Convention
Steering Committee	5	2nd day of Convention	Convention Member	Annually at Convention
Sickness Benefit Committee	7	2nd day of Convention	Convention Member	2024, 2027, etc Appendix A Rules
Investment Committee	4	2nd day of Convention	Convention Member	Annually at Convention
Benevolent Fund	3	Last day of Convention	Convention Member	Annually at May CEC
Standing Committee Regional Election Committee	5	2nd day of Convention	Convention Member	2024, 2029, 2034 etc at Convention
Rules Committee	5	2nd day of Convention	Convention Member	Annually at Convention
Pensions Sub-Committee	5	2nd day of Convention	Convention Member	Biennially 2023, 2025, 2027, etc
Safety, Health & Welfare Sub Committee	6	2nd day of Convention	Convention Member	Biennially 2023, 2025, 2027, etc.
Non-Permanent Teachers’ Advisory Committee	6	31 Jan	Branch	Biennially 2023, 2025, 2027, etc

ELECTIONS 2023

1. ELECTION OF PRESIDENT 2023-2024

Candidate	Nominating Branches
Geraldine O'Brien	Athlone, Bray, Carbery, Clare, Cork North, Cork South Paddy Mulcahy, Desmond, Drogheda Sean Higgins, Dun Laoghaire, Dublin North East, Dublin North West, Dublin South Central, Dublin South 1, Dublin South 2, Dungarvan, East Cork, East Mayo, Enniscorthy, Fermoy, Fingal, Galway, Iar Thuaisceart Thir Chonaill, Kerry, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Limerick North, Limerick South, Mullingar, Navan, Nenagh, Roscrea, Sligo, Stillorgan, Tipperary, Tuam, Wexford Tony Boland, Waterford, Wicklow.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENT 2023-2024

Candidate	Nominating Branches
Ray St. John	Athlone, Bray, Clare, Drogheda Sean Higgins, Dublin North West, East Mayo, Enniscorthy, Fermoy, Kilkenny, Limerick North, Limerick South, Mullingar, Navan, Nenagh, Roscrea, Stillorgan, Tipperary, Tullamore, Waterford, Wicklow.
Donal Cremin	Carbery, Cork North, Cork South Paddy Mulcahy, Dublin North East, Dublin South 1, Dublin South 2, Dungarvan, East Galway, Fingal, Kerry, Kildare, Tuam.

3. ELECTION OF HONORARY TREASURER 2023-2024

Candidate	Nominating Branches
Pádraig Murphy	Athlone, Carbery, Clare, Cork South Paddy Mulcahy, Dublin North East, Dublin South Central, Dublin South 2, Dungarvan, East Mayo, Fingal, Galway, Iar Thuaisceart Thir Chonaill, Kildare, Laois, Limerick South, Mullingar, Tuam, Tullamore, Wexford Tony Boland.

4. ELECTION OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE 2023-2024

Candidates	
Eamonn Cashin	Sinead Moore
Susan Doherty	Conor Murphy
Richard Egan	Edel Myles
Gerard Hanlon	Pauline Nagle
Barry Hazel	Siobhan O'Donovan
Ciarán Kavanagh	Geraldine O'Loughlin
Niall Mahon	Jennifer Walsh

5. ELECTION OF EQUALITY COMMITTEE 2023-2024

Candidates	
John Byrne	Roisin MacCárthaigh
Marina Carlin	Tony McKernan
Eamonn Daly	Noelle Moran
Maura Greaney	Orla O'Callaghan
Eimear Holly	Orla O'Sullivan
Claire Kileen	John Sims
Bill Lonergan	Philip Synnott
Mary Lyndon	Tara Whelan

6. NON-PERMANENT TEACHERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2023-2025

Candidates
Helena Cunniffe
Lorraine Finn
Ruth Heneghan
Robert McDonnell
Michael McGrath
Aoife O'Hara
Kevin Wall
Labhras White

OFFICERS / STANDING COMMITTEE / CEC

1. OFFICERS 2022/2023

President:	Miriam Duggan
Vice-President:	Geraldine O'Brien
Immediate Past President:	Eamon Dennehy
Honorary Treasurer:	Padraig Murphy
General Secretary:	Kieran Christie

2. STANDING COMMITTEE 2022/2023:

Standing Committee consists of the President, Vice-President, Immediate Past-President, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary National Organiser and 18 Regional Representatives. The General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary attend all meetings of Standing Committee.

Update the following

Since Convention 2022, up to time of going to press, 8 ordinary meetings and 1 special meeting have been held. The numbers in brackets after the name indicate attendance at meetings:

Region 1

(Donegal, Iar Thuaisceart Thir Chonail, Sligo): Patrick Curley (7)

Region 2

(West Mayo, East Mayo, Carrick-on-Shannon): Róisín Doyle (8)

Region 3

(Galway, Tuam, East Galway): Richie Bell (8)

Region 4

(Clare, Limerick South, Limerick North, Nenagh): John Conneely (3)
Nov 2022

Region 5

(Desmond, Kerry, West Limerick): Donal Cremin (7)

Region 6

(Cork South, Carbery): Anne Loughnane (9)

Region 7

(Fermoy, Cork North, East Cork, West Waterford, Dungarvan): Pat Knightly (9)

Region 8

(Wexford, New Ross, Enniscorthy, Waterford): Paul O'Reilly (6)

Region 9

(Tipperary, Kilkenny, Roscrea): Donal Coughlan (9)

Region 10

(Laois, Kildare, Carlow): Eamon Ryan (9)

Region 11

(Longford, Tullamore, Navan, Athlone, Mullingar): David Wynne (9)

Region 12

(Dundalk, Monaghan, Cavan, Drogheda): Ray Nolan (9)

Region 13

(Dublin South 2, Dublin South County): Chris Hind (9)

Region 14

(Stillorgan, Wicklow, Dun Laoghaire, Bray): Ray St. John (8)

Region 15

(Dublin South West, Dublin North West): Adrienne Healy (8)

Region 16

(Dublin North 1, Dublin North Central): Maria Markey-Greene (7)

Region 17

(Dublin North East, Fingal): Seamus Keane (8)

Region 18

(Dublin South Central, Dublin South 1): Sinead Corkery (9)

3. CEC 2022/2023

Since Convention 2022, two ordinary meetings and three special meetings of the Central Executive Council were held.

At the meeting of 21st May, 2022, all members were present except: **Carbery:** Eamon Scully, **Carlow:** Vanessa Byrne, **Desmond:** Christine Fitzgerald. **Dublin South 2:** David Murphy & Sandra Fay. **East Galway:** Aodán Mac Cárthaigh **Enniscorthy:** Eóin ÓhAodha. **Fermoy:** Richard Terry. **Galway:** Paul Glynn, Richie Bell, SC Region 3. **Laois:** Kevin Dunphy. **Nenagh:** Granú Dwyer, Jacinta Kelly, Sinead Kent. **Stillorgan:** Helen O'Reilly. **Tullamore:** Catherine Dolan, Richard Egan, Patricia Griffin **West Limerick:** Matthew O'Connor. **Wexford Tony Boland:** Joseph Cummins.

At the special meeting of 27th June, 2022, all members were present except:

Bray: Conall O'Dufaigh, Yvonne Rossiter. **Carbery:** Eamon Scully, Gloria Helen. **Carlow:** Vanessa Byrne, Christopher Davey. **Carrick-on-Shannon:** Seamus Mallon, Seamus Mullen, Jackie Wallace. **Cavan:** Caroline Quinn. **Desmond:** Amelia Fitzgerald. **Donegal:** Jacinta Edwards, Anna Johnston. **Drogheda Sean Higgins:** Sean Maher. **Dublin North 1:** Stephen Campion, Derek Hobbs. **Dublin North Central:** Natalie Doyle Bradley. **Dublin South 1:** Chris Halligan, Maura Mc Caul, Eddie Noonan. **Dublin South 2:** Chris Hind, David Murphy, Sandra Fay. **Dublin South Central:** James Breslin. **Dublin South County:** Trevor Murray, Sean O'Neill. **Dublin South West:** Stephen Burns, Edward O'Byrne, John Woods. **Dundalk:** Thomas Campbell, Helen McKeown. **Dun Laoghaire:** Paul Kelly. **East Cork:** Marina Cusack. **East Mayo:** Stacey Walsh-McDermott. **East Galway:** Greg Mannion. **East Mayo:** Stacey Walsh McDermott. **Enniscorthy:** David Flynn, Siobhan Mc Cormack. **Fermoy:** Richard Terry. **Fingal:** Seamus Keane. **Galway:** Sarah Withero, Richard Bell (SC Region 3). **Iar Thuaisceart Thir Chonail:** Tony McGennis, Helen Moran. **Kerry:** Michelle Costello, Lily Cronin, Breda Lyons, Siobhan Slattery, Jeremiah O'Brien, Donal

Cremin (SC Region), Gavin Daly. **Kildare:** Karl Whelan. **Kilkenny:** Ethel Dooley, Robert Chaney, Emma Raggett. **Laois:** Eamon Dennehy, Joan Colbert, Colm O'Toole. **Limerick North:** Eimear Holly. **Limerick South:** Anna Maria Trimble. **Longford:** James Gacquin. **Monaghan:** Andrew Mayne, Enda Tourish. **Mullingar:** Robert Masterson. **Navan:** Ciaran Dunne. **Nenagh:** Granu Dwyer, Sinead Kent. **Roscrea:** Joan Brophy. **Stillorgan:** Helen O'Reilly. **Tipperary:** Siobhan Peters. **Tullamore:** Catherine Dolan. **Waterford:** Paul O'Reilly. **West Mayo:** Orla O'Callaghan. **Wexford Tony Boland:** Brigid Power. **Wicklow:** Jamie Fernandez, Declan Mc Inerney, Brian Reid.

At the special meeting of 3rd September, 2022, all members were present except:

Bray: Yvonne Rossiter. **Carbery:** Dermot Brennan. **Carlow:** Vanessa Byrne, Christopher Davey. **Carrick on Shannon:** Jackie Wallace. **Cork North:** Simon Kelliher, Lorraine Mellerick. **Dublin North East:** Therese Glennon. **Dungarvan:** Pat Knightly. **Dublin North West:** Mary Ohle. **Dublin South West:** Stephen Burns, John Woods. **Enniscorthy:** Eóin ÓhAodha, Siobhan McCormack. **Fermoy:** Bernadette Fennessy. **Iar Thuaisceart Thir Chonaill:** Patrick Doohan. **Kerry:** Kay Bunce. **Limerick North:** Veronica Lavin. **Longford:** Padraic McWeeney. **Mullingar:** Laura O'Toole, Robert Masterson. **Navan:** Mary Mullaghy. **New Ross:** Shane Curran, Jackie McKeivitt. **Roscrea:** Rachael Corboy. **Sligo:** Eimir Murphy. **Stillorgan:** Ciara Kinsella. **Tipperary:** Gerada Barry. **Tullamore:** Richard Egan. **West Waterford:** Ann Bennett. **Wexford Tony Boland:** Joe Cummins

At the special meeting of 15th October, 2022, all members were present except:

Bray: Yvonne Rossiter. **Carbery:** Gloria Helen. **Carrick on Shannon:** Seamus Mallon. **Clare:** Jacinta Mc Garry. **Cork North:** Lorraine Mellerick. **Cork South Paddy Mulcahy:** Anne Piggott. **Desmond:** Seamus Meskill. **Donegal:** Michael Doherty. **Dublin South I:** Eddie Noonan, Chris Halligan. **Dublin South 2:** David Murphy. **Dublin South West:** Stephen Burns. **Dundalk:** Helen McKeown. **East Galway:** Greg Mannion. **Galway:** Paul Glynn. **Kerry:** Kay Bunce. **Longford:** Padraic Mc Weeney. **Mullingar:** Robert Masterson. **Navan:** Mary Mullaghy. **Stillorgan:** Ciara Kinsella. **Tipperary:** Gerada Barry. **Tullamore:** Catherine Dolan, Patricia Griffin. **West Limerick:** Matthew O'Connor. **Wexford Tony Boland:** Joseph Cummins.

At the meeting of 21st January, 2023 all members were present except:

Athlone: Ciara Henriques. **Carrick-on-Shannon:** Jackie Wallace. **Clare:** Jacinta McGarry. **Desmond:** Amelia Fitzgerald & Christine Fitzgerald. **Dublin North West:** Ian Mc Colgan. **Dublin South I:** Maura McCaul. **East Galway:** Greg Mannion. **Enniscorthy:** Siobhan Mc Cormack. **Fermoy:** Bernadette Fennessy. **Galway:** Maura Greaney. **Longford:** Padraic McWeeney. **Nenagh:** Granu Dwyer. **New Ross:** Shane Curran. **Roscrea:** Rachael Corboy. **Stillorgan:** Ciara Kinsella. **Tullamore:** Richard Egan. **West Limerick:** Matthew O'Connor & Joan Collins. **West Mayo:** Orla O'Callaghan. **Wexford Tony Boland:** Joe Cummins

REPRESENTATION AND COMMITTEES

ASTI COMMITTEES

Investment Committee

Patrick Collins, Nora Donovan, Tony McGennis, Peter Quinn, President, Vice President, Immediate Past-President and Honorary Treasurer.

Rules Committee

Richard Bell, Philip Irwin, Mary Lyndon, Michael McGrath, Padraic McWeeney, President, Vice-President, Immediate Past-President and General Secretary.

Steering Committee

Noel Buckley, Niall Duddy, Susie Hall, Máire G Ní Chiarba, Jimmy Staunton, President, Vice-President, General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary.

Business of CEC Sub-Committee

John Byrne, John Conneely and Richard Egan.

CEC Appeals Sub-Committee

Ed Byrne, Niall Duddy, Maura McCaul and Liam O'Mahony.

DEPARTMENTAL AND OTHER EDUCATION COMMITTEES

NCCA Council

Ed Byrne and Deirdre MacDonald.

Employee Assistance Scheme Steering Group

Executive Officer: Organisation and Development

Comhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta

Lorraine Finn

Teacher Fee Refund Scheme Monitoring Committee

Deputy General Secretary

Qualifications Allowance Appeals Committee

Deputy General Secretary

Incremental Credit Appeals Committee

Deputy General Secretary

OTHER COMMITTEES / REPRESENTATION

Amnesty International

Assistant General Secretary

ASTI Advisor to the Director of Redeployment

Deputy General Secretary

Belong To Education Advisory Group

Deputy General Secretary

Children's Rights Alliance

Assistant General Secretary

Educational Studies Association of Ireland

Assistant General Secretary

General Synod (Church of Ireland) Board of Education

Susie Hall and Kieran Sparling.

ICTU Disability Committee

Geraldine O'Brien and Deputy General Secretary.

ICTU Education and Training Committee

General Secretary and Assistant General Secretary.

ICTU Executive Council

General Secretary

ICTU Global Solidarity Committee

Ann Piggot and Assistant General Secretary.

ICTU Retired Workers' Committee

Denis O'Boyle and Ger O'Donoghue

ICTU Women's Committee

Adrienne Healy and Assistant General Secretary.

ICTU Youth Committee

Christopher Davey and Executive Officer/ Organisation and Development: Desmond O'Toole

Irish Forum for Global Education

Assistant General Secretary

Irish National Women's Council

Lorraine Finn and Sheila Flynn

Irish Labour History Society

Assistant General Secretary

National Adult Literacy Association

Assistant General Secretary

NCSE Departmental Council

Deputy General Secretary

Post of Responsibility Appeal Boards

Ed Byrne, Neil Curran, Miriam Duggan and Noelle Moran.

Teaching Council

John Holian and Noelle Moran

TENI Education Advisory Group

Deputy General Secretary

PRELIMINARY MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

SECTION I

SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES, POSTS OF RESPONSIBILITY, SUPERANNUATION, EXAMINERS AND SUPERINTENDENTS, REDEPLOYMENT

SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES

1. That the ASTI demand that monies due to ASTI members as a result of the increment freeze in 2016/2017 be repaid with immediate effect.
(Wexford Tony Boland) (Already Policy)

POSTS OF RESPONSIBILITY

2. That the ASTI renegotiate Circular Letter 0003/2018 with the Department of Education regarding posts of responsibility so that interview boards exclude personnel employed in the school or college named in the advertisement. (Carbery)

Composite Motion

3. That the ASTI demand an immediate review of the current appointment system to posts of responsibility in schools as per circular 0003/2018 in the interests of retention of teachers. (Dublin North West, Tuam)
4. That the A.S.T.I. form a committee to conduct research into the awarding of Posts of Responsibility with a view to ensuring/reaffirming there is no discrimination or inequality in the process. (Donegal)

Composite Motion

5. That the ASTI seek additional allocation of teaching hours to provide for a reduction in teaching time on a pro-rata basis, to allow API and AP2 post holders to perform their duties. (Clare, Fermoy, Mullingar)
6. That the ASTI conduct a full and comprehensive review of the workload attached to API and AP2 posts and insist that a time allowance for all post holders be mandatory in all schools. (Dublin South I)
7. That the ASTI insist that the Department of Education, in conjunction with the teachers unions and management bodies, conduct a comprehensive review into the interview, selection and appeals process for Assistant Principal posts. (Dublin South Central) (Already Policy)

Composite Motion

8. That the ASTI begin negotiations with the Department of Education to demand that a significant portion of the overall marks for the selection of candidates for API and AP2 positions be allocated for teaching experience and seniority. (Carbery, Donegal) (Already Policy)

9. That the ASTI demand that, in addition to their post allowance, Assistant Principals be given a time allowance of 4 hours per week for API and 2 hours a week for AP2, to enable them to fulfil their duties. (Wexford Tony Boland)

SUPERANNUATION

10. That the ASTI negotiate with the Department of Education, that each teacher be provided with a statement of their pensionable service on an annual basis. (Carbery)
11. That the ASTI commission advice into the different options available to members for providing the best possible pension. This would consider associated costs and benefits for specific pension schemes (AVCs, PRSAs and Notional Service etc). (Clare)
12. That the ASTI negotiate with the relevant Government departments that changes be made to pension arrangements for teachers paying Class A PRSI who wish to work in retirement prior to reaching State Pension age, in order to bring them in line with the pension rights of retired teachers in the Class D PRSI scheme working before reaching State Pension age. (Tuam)
13. This Convention calls on the ASTI Pension Committee to make recommendations to review the current Pension arrangements for post 2011 Teachers. This review will be presented to Convention in 2024. (Dublin South County)
14. This convention demands that in view of the increased cost of living that the 1.5% spouse and child salary deduction be made optional for all serving teachers. (Dublin South County)
15. That ASTI demand from the Department of Education that teachers who work beyond 40 years of pensionable service and continue to have pension contributions deducted from their salary be given appropriate pension benefits for the additional years worked, or have the additional contributions returned. (Waterford)

EXAMINERS AND SUPERINTENDENTS

16. In an effort to explore a solution to the shortage of examiners for the State Examinations the ASTI seek that all remuneration for State Examinations Commission work be taxed at the standard rate. (Desmond)

REDEPLOYMENT

17. That the ASTI demand that the Department of Education establish a nationwide voluntary redeployment scheme for post-primary teachers. (Dublin North East) (Already Policy)

SECTION II
**CONTRACTS OF INDEFINITE DURATION,
 PART-TIME AND FIXED TERM TEACHERS,
 CLASS SIZE, CONDITIONS OF WORKERS**
CONDITIONS OF WORK

- 18 That the ASTI demand that special leave be granted to those who experience a miscarriage or who are partners of those who experience a miscarriage; equivalent to that given for compassionate leave as is in the case of a parent, child or spouse bereavement **(Bray)**
- 19 That the ASTI demand that the Department of Education provide paid substitution cover for staff members who avail of marriage leave during school term. **(Bray)**
- 20 That the ASTI enter into negotiations with the Department of Education to ensure that ASTI members be allowed to opt out of supervision and substitution at any stage after 10 years of service. **(Carbery)**
- 21 This Convention demands that the Department of Education make the Supervision and Substitution Scheme voluntary for Teachers. **(Dublin South County) (Already Policy)**
- 22 That the ASTI engage in relevant negotiations to end the Croke Park hours. **(Cork South Paddy Mulcahy) (Already Policy)**
- 23 That the ASTI demand that immediate whole time permanent jobs are available to teachers who take up employment in schools. **(Cork South Paddy Mulcahy) (Already Policy)**
- 24 That the ASTI negotiate with the Department of Education with the aim of introducing menopause leave which will allow teachers to request suitable workplace adjustments such as flexibility, time off to attend medical appointments and work task adjustments when teachers are experiencing symptoms. **(Drogheda Sean Higgins)**
- 25 That the ASTI negotiate with the Department of Education with the aim of establishing an independent and mandatory audit of teachers' psycho-social hazards and stresses in each school. **(Drogheda Sean Higgins)**
- 26 That the ASTI demand, in the interests of health and safety, that all teachers be given access to the flu vaccine free of charge. **(Dublin North West)**
- 27 That the ASTI demand an alleviation in additional hours (Haddington Road Agreement) as given to other public servants outlined in the report of the Independent Hours Body established under the Building Momentum Agreement 2021-2022. **(Dublin North West)**
- 28 That in view of the deterioration of the sick leave entitlements of teachers as a result of the economic crash of 2008 the ASTI now seek significant improvements in teachers' sick leave entitlements. **(Dublin South I)**

Composite Motion

- 29 That the ASTI negotiate with the Department of Education for teachers to be able to opt-in and opt-out annually from the Supervision and Substitution scheme. **(Donegal, Galway, New Ross) (Already Policy)**
- 30 That the ASTI seek to have the wording in Circular 0042/2014,
 Appendix 1 - Agreed arrangements for the creation of the substitution roster PRELIMINARY WORK BY PRINCIPAL (Part 1 a, b, & c) amended from the current wording:
 Calculation of the number of substitution slots to be filled:
 The Principal calculates the total number of substitution slots to be filled, based on the weekly class period commitment of the teachers who have not opted out of S&S duties, as set out in Circular 0006/2014:
 a. Each teacher working up to and including 12 hours class contact per week = 3 class periods
 b. Each teacher working more than 12 and up to and including 17 hours class contact per week = 4 class periods
 c. Each teacher working more than 17 hours class contact per week = 5 class periods
 To the following:
 a. Each teacher working up to and including 12 hours class contact per week = 120 minutes
 b. Each teacher working more than 12 and up to and including 17 hours class contact per week = 160 minutes
 c. Each teacher working more than 17 hours class contact per week = 200 minutes **(Galway)**
31. That the ASTI seek to have a reduction in the number of class periods a teacher must be available for substitution where the school has increased the length of the class period above 40 minutes. **(Mullingar)**
32. That the ASTI demand of the Department of Education, in the interest of wellbeing and fairness, that all members are granted partial personal days if and when requested. It should not be at the school's discretion. **(New Ross)**
33. That the ASTI enter into negotiations with the Department of Education regarding the current requirement of Croke Park hours, to seek a reduction to reflect concessions made in other sectors of the public service. **(Tipperary)**
34. The ASTI calls on Department of Education to consider/facilitate the allocation of job-sharing on the basis of two teachers sharing a full/fixed weekly timetable (as happens in Primary Schools) and with class groups sharing two teachers per subject (e.g., English/Irish/Maths). **(Tullamore)**
35. That the ASTI insist that classroom visits by members of a school's management team to observe and/or inspect teaching and learning, do not take place in the absence of an agreed national procedure governing such visits. **(Waterford)**
- CLASS SIZE**
36. The ASTI enters into negotiations with the Department of Education to reduce class size to 24 in all subjects across the board (with the current limit of 20 for Home Economics to remain in place). **(Tullamore)**

SECTION III

**EDUCATION, SCHOOL RESOURCES,
TEACHING COUNCIL, CONTINUOUS
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
ASSESSMENT, CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS**

EDUCATION

37. That the ASTI demand, in the light of the covid-19 pandemic being recognised as an adverse childhood experience (trauma), that the ex-quota status be reinstated for all guidance counsellors, in all second level schools, as a matter of urgency. **(Clare) (Already Policy)**
38. The ASTI urge the Department of Education to immediately provide properly resourced psychological services, specifically designated to schools, so that students can access appropriate and timely clinical and therapeutic interventions and supports. **(Mullingar)**
- Composite Motion**
39. That the ASTI demand an increase in the services provided by the National Educational Psychological Service to all secondary schools to ensure sufficient SEN provision so that schools can provide inclusive education for all students. **(Dublin North West, Dunganvaran)**
40. That the ASTI, in view of the ever-increasing diverse population, engage in discussions with the Department of Education with a view to appointing a Diversity and Inclusion Officer in all schools, similar to those engaged in some Government Departments. **(Stillorgan)**
41. That, in the light of the severe shortage of qualified teachers in schools nationwide, the ASTI engage immediately with the Department of Education with a view to carrying out a complete review of the recruitment process for teachers, to include training, inclusivity and remuneration. **(Stillorgan)**

ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

42. In the interest of student and teacher welfare and given that such an option has been trialled as a result of the Covid19 pandemic, that the ASTI negotiate with the Department of Education, the option to complete only one CBA per state-examined subject and to discontinue the Assessment Task of the Junior Cycle. **(Carbery)**
- Composite Motion**
43. That the ASTI demand, that for all future Leaving Certificate syllabi (specifications), the Department of Education, the NCCA and SEC publish the full range of syllabus documentation concurrently and not less than 12 months prior to implementation of the syllabus. The syllabus documentation to include; a detailed syllabus which embeds depth of treatment and comprehensive teacher guidelines into the syllabus, sample examination papers and sample marking schemes. **(Clare, Dublin North West)**

44. That the ASTI seek that there be no more than 1 CBA in each subject at Junior Cycle and that the completion of these CBAs be spread across second and third year and that the Assessment Task in relation to the CBAs be removed. **(Dublin South I)**
45. In the interest of equity of assessment for students, that the ASTI insist that the assessment and grading of present and future state-examined subjects in Senior Cycle remain the sole remit of the State Examinations Commission. **(Carbery) (Already Policy)**
46. That, in the light of the announcement on 29th March 2022 by Minister for Education Norma Foley on a vision for the reform of Senior Cycle education in Ireland, the ASTI will remain steadfast in keeping with its current policies on teachers assessing their own students for state certification. **(Clare) (Already Policy)**

Composite Motion

47. That the ASTI demand that the State Examinations Commission not schedule the oral and practical examinations during the Easter holidays. **(Carrick on Shannon, Dublin North East, Dublin North West, Mullingar, Tipperary)**
48. The ASTI seek the State Examinations Commission to issue the breakdown of marks written on the examination paper for students completing their Junior Cycle Examination. **(Mullingar)**
49. That the ASTI engage with the SEC to ensure that marks are allocated in advance for all individual questions in all subject papers for the Junior Cycle Final Examinations, and subject teachers be informed accordingly. **(Cork South Paddy Mulcahy)**
50. That the ASTI engage with the Department of Education with the aim of abolishing all CBAs in Junior Cycle. **(Cork South Paddy Mulcahy)**
51. That the ASTI insist that the Department of Education reinstate Higher and Ordinary Level papers, as well as Foundation Level papers where appropriate, in place of the Common Level paper in all relevant Junior Cycle subjects, so that all students may achieve at an appropriate level. **(Desmond) (Already Policy)**

52. That the ASTI insist that the supervision and correction of all terminal State Examinations continue to be the remit of the State Examinations Commission and that appointment for such work remain on a voluntary and contractual basis. **(Desmond)**
53. That a committee be formed to develop a set of positive proposals for Senior Cycle reform that the ASTI can promote as an alternative to the Minister's proposals. **(Dublin North East)**
54. That the ASTI insist that teachers of Music and other practical subjects be remunerated for the preparation and facilitation of the practical exam, similar to other subjects such as Home Economics. **(Dublin South I)**
55. That the ASTI demand that the Easter and Midterm breaks and weekends are not used for the sitting of State Examinations. **(Dublin South I)**

56. That the ASTI vehemently oppose the proposal to hold English and Irish Leaving Certificate paper I at the end of Fifth year. **(Dublin South I)**
57. That the ASTI refuse to cooperate with the proposal to move Paper I in English and Gaeilge to Fifth Year. **(Dublin North East)**
58. The ASTI opposes any attempt for students to sit a Leaving Certificate exam in 5th year. **(Fermoy)**
59. That, in support of student wellbeing and in valuing students' work, the ASTI seek a reduction of CBAs from two to one in all Junior Cycle subjects and that one CBA is externally assessed and is awarded a maximum 10%, in lieu of the Assessment Task, which goes towards the final JC subject result. **(Stillorgan)**
60. That the ASTI establish a committee to review the operation and effectiveness of SLAR meetings and ASTI's current policy in relation to SLARs and report to Annual Convention 2024. **(Tipperary)**
61. (a) That the ASTI commission independent research into:
 (1) comparing the depth of treatment of Accounting, Business and Economics in the new common level Junior Cycle Business Studies specification and that of those subjects in the previous higher and ordinary Junior Certificate Business Studies and compare their effect on students' prior knowledge after completion of these courses ahead of embarking on studying current Leaving Certificate syllabi/subject specification(s) in those subject areas.
 (2) comparing the depth of treatment of Physics, Biology and Chemistry in the new common level Junior Cycle Science specification and that of those subjects in the previous higher and ordinary Junior Certificate Science syllabi and compare students' prior knowledge in both cases ahead of embarking on studying current Leaving Certificate syllabi/subject specification(s) in those subject areas.
 (b) Pending the completion of this research and its results, that the ASTI consider an appropriate response, if any, ahead of any further new subject specifications being developed for these subjects. **(Tuam)**
62. That the CEC, at its next meeting after Convention 2023, elect a committee to advise how the established practice of the State Examinations Commission employing experienced teachers to mark the oral, practical, and written components of the Certificate Examinations can be guaranteed, and that this committee report back to the January CEC, 2024. **(Waterford)**
63. That the ASTI oppose the examination of any element of state examinations during school breaks, other than the summer break. **(Wexford Tony Boland)**
64. That the ASTI object to Classroom Based Assessments in SPHE and CSPE due to the negative impact this has on student wellbeing. **(Wicklow)**

SECTION IV

RULES AND CONSTITUTION, ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION, MISCELLANEOUS

RULES AND CONSTITUTION

65. Rule 8 – Full Membership
 That Rule 8 be amended by deleting the word “lay” from the three locations in which it currently appears. The rule to read as follows:-
 Full membership of the Association shall be open to:
 (a) all serving teachers who hold the qualifications necessary for registration as secondary teachers in the Republic of Ireland,
 (b) all serving teachers who hold a primary university degree or other qualifications acceptable to the Registration Council, other than those who teach in the schools which comply with the Rules for Secondary Schools as defined in the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Acts 1878 to 1924, and
 (c) all those entitled under the Rules of the Association to become “associate members” or “members on leave”, who elect to apply for full membership.
 Notwithstanding anything contained in parts (a), (b) and (c) above, principal teachers who have or may assert the sole power to appoint or dismiss members of a school's teaching staff shall not be eligible for membership of the Association. **(Dungarvan)**
66. RULE 9 – ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP
 That Rule 9 be amended by deletion of the word “lay”. The rule to read as follows:-
 The following are eligible for Associate Membership of the ASTI:
 (i) All part-time teachers qualified as in (a) or (b) of Rule 8 and who are teaching in Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and Community Colleges, and,
 (ii) such category or categories of teachers as defined by Standing Committee from time to time. **(Dungarvan)**
67. RULE 11 – STUDENT MEMBERSHIP
 That Rule 11 be amended by deleting the word “lay” from the two locations in which it currently appears. The rule to read as follows:-
 Higher Diploma in Education students, final year students in colleges who, when qualified, would be entitled to register as secondary teachers are eligible for student membership of the ASTI. Student members shall be eligible for ASTI membership rights and privileges subject to the following provisions:
 a student member shall not be entitled to act as an officer of a branch, as a representative on the Central Executive Council or as a member of Standing Committee. **(Dungarvan)**

ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION

68. That the ASTI introduce an app which can be downloaded by all members in order to access union information, news and surveys. **(Drogheda Sean Higgins)**

69. That the ASTI establish a sub-committee to examine the feasibility of employing in-house legal counsel on a full-time basis. **(Drogheda Sean Higgins)**

70. That the ASTI commit to exploring the formation of one Second Level Teachers union in a timely fashion, in the interest of the advancement of the teaching profession. **(Dublin North West) (Already Policy)**

Composite Motion

71. That this Convention elect an ASTI Rejuvenation Committee to review engagement of ASTI members in union activity at school and Branch level. This Committee will report back to CEC in January 2024. **(Dublin South County, Wexford Tony Boland)**

72. That the ASTI negotiate with the Department of Finance and the Revenue Commissioners, a tax relief for teachers to allow them to recoup, annually, some or all of the costs of upgrading and investing in technology, teaching supplies and equipment purchased for teaching purposes. **(Dublin South Central)**

73. This Convention demands that all ASTI members on the Teaching Council be facilitated to attend all meetings. If ASTI members are impeded from attending, this Convention authorises the ASTI to take all appropriate action until teachers are facilitated to attend. **(Dublin South County)**

74. This Convention demands that all ASTI-endorsed teacher representatives are facilitated to attend ASTI-endorsed meetings [including Teaching Council meetings]. If ASTI-endorsed teacher representatives are impeded from attending, this Convention authorises the ASTI to take action where deemed appropriate, so that teachers are facilitated to attend. **(Galway)**

75. That the ASTI reinstate the hybrid format for CEC meetings and Annual Convention to increase accessibility for members to attend. **(Stillorgan)**

76. That ASTI note with pride the contribution ASTI members make to education research and reform; that ASTI encourage members to engage with university and third level projects, bring to the research the teacher experience, and articulate the application and aspirations of union policy when pertinent. **(Waterford)**

77. That the ASTI conduct a survey of its members to establish the stressors in their workplaces. **(Wexford Tony Boland)**

PRIORITISATION OF MOTIONS 2023

Each branch was invited to prioritise motions on the Preliminary Agenda by choosing eight motions and setting them out in order of preference, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. The following table lists the prioritisation of motions as submitted by the branches::

BRANCH	PRIORITY IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE							
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
Athlone	16	56	47	52	20	43		
Bray	53	12	74	43	30	6	5	22
Carbery	12	53	74	36	34	3	5	13
Carlow	58	50	47	33	18	34	6	52
Carrick-on-Shannon								
Cavan								
Clare	33	36	18	56	3	20	59	41
Cork North	43	74	35	49	12	58	71	18
Cork South Paddy Mulcahy	12	58	55	46	34	44	36	29
Desmond	33	63	43	8	28	50	61	20
Donegal	4	47	58	33	12	18	70	25
Drogheda Sean Higgins	43	27	74	13	33	28	44	47
Dublin North I								
Dublin North Central								
Dublin North East	18	9	30	12	52	43	38	75
Dublin North West	41	74	2	38	46	18	12	29
Dublin South I	74	58	18	53	63	20	36	10
Dublin South 2	55	50	12	58	39	25	9	30
Dublin South Central	9	43	30	74	36	44	47	56
Dublin South County								
Dublin South West	12	15	18	74	30	4	23	5
Dun Laoghaire	57	22	44	29	45	12	6	70
Dundalk								
Dungarvan	57	50	74	49	43	18	36	2
East Cork	5	39	10	42	52	55	43	26
East Galway	12	30	29	74	32	27	43	50
East Mayo	74	30	12	22	27	31	33	47
Enniscorthy	25	77	18	10	53	23	71	74
Fermoy	33	52	44	41	47	49	56	34
Fingal	53	58	59	28	36	3	5	10
Galway	28	36	9	42	52	58	73	11
Iar Thuaisceart Thir Chonaill	53	39	55	12	43	4	50	64

Kerry

Kildare	18	56	55	44	1	7	27	77
Kilkenny	44	23	53	58	25	1	9	61
Laois	33	20	18	58	55	43	44	64
Limerick North	43	22	44	18	61	31	33	55
Limerick South	43	55	58	37	12	44	74	53
Longford								
Monaghan	57	27	50	31	49	36	8	28
Mullingar								
Navan	43	13	49	57	74	52	9	55
Nenagh								
New Ross	58	51	18	36	20	59	6	61
Roscrea	47	58	50	16	48	20	61	18
Sligo	53	42	12	74	52	30	47	68
Stillorgan	5	42	58	47	43	18	71	61
Tipperary	44	13	56	43	36	61	16	63
Tuam	44	18	32	73	29	16	39	71
Tullamore	9	43	55	10	41	58	20	50
Waterford	28	48	27	63	50	6	31	5
West Limerick								
West Mayo	43	58	55	18	10	25	39	3
West Waterford	57	63	44	6	36	20	35	31
Wexford Tony Boland	56	55	6	36	33	49	31	12
Wicklow	74	18	43	58	30	36	11	5

Steering Committee decided to award points to motions in the following manner:

- (i) Branch's most popular motion 6 points
- Branch's second most popular motion 5 points
- Branch's third most popular motion 4 points
- Branch's fourth most popular motion 4 points
- Branch's fifth most popular motion 3 points
- Branch's sixth most popular motion 3 points
- Branch's seventh most popular motion 2 points
- Branch's eighth most popular motion 2 points

- (ii) Where motions from a number of branches have been composited, then the following will apply:

Three points will be given for each branch involved in the composite, e.g. if motions from five branches are composited into one composite motion, then points are awarded as follows: 5 x 3 = 15.

After points were awarded, the motions were listed as follows in order of popularity:

Points Awarded	No. of Motion	Topic
90	43	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
74	58	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
73	18	CONDITIONS OF WORK
67	74	ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION
5	12	SUPERANNUATION
52	33	CONDITIONS OF WORK
51	44	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
49	47	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
46	55	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
42	53	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
36	36	CLASS SIZE
35	50	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
33	5	POST OF RESPONSIBILITY
32	30	CONDITIONS OF WORK
28	56	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
28	57	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
27	9	POST OF RESPONSIBILITY
27	20	CONDITIONS OF WORK
26	52	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
24	28	CONDITIONS OF WORK
24	29	CONDITIONS OF WORK
23	39	EDUCATION
22	27	CONDITIONS OF WORK
21	49	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
20	6	POST OF RESPONSIBILITY
19	10	SUPERANNUATION
19	63	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
18	42	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
17	3	POST OF RESPONSIBILITY
17	25	CONDITIONS OF WORK
16	13	SUPERANNUATION
16	22	CONDITIONS OF WORK
16	31	CONDITIONS OF WORK
16	61	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
15	16	EXAMINERS AND SUPERINTENDENTS
15	41	EDUCATION
14	71	ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION
12	4	POST OF RESPONSIBILITY
12	8	POST OF RESPONSIBILITY

Points Awarded	No. of Motion	Topic
11	34	CONDITIONS OF WORK
10	23	CONDITIONS OF WORK
9	59	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
8	48	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
7	32	CONDITIONS OF WORK
7	46	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
7	77	ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION
6	1	SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES
6	2	POST OF RESPONSIBILITY
6	35	CONDITIONS OF WORK
6	38	EDUCATION
6	73	ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION
5	15	SUPERANNUATION
5	51	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
4	11	SUPERANNUATION
4	37	EDUCATION
4	64	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
4	70	ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION
3	7	POST OF RESPONSIBILITY
3	45	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
2	26	CONDITIONS OF WORK
2	68	ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION
2	75	ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION
0	14	SUPERANNUATION
0	17	REDEPLOYMENT
0	19	CONDITIONS OF WORK
0	21	CONDITIONS OF WORK
0	24	CONDITIONS OF WORK
0	40	EDUCATION
0	54	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
0	60	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
0	62	ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
0	65	RULES AND CONSTITUTION
0	66	RULES AND CONSTITUTION
0	67	RULES AND CONSTITUTION
0	69	ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION
0	72	ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION
0	76	ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION

CONVENTION 2022 RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED BY ANNUAL CONVENTION 2022:

Motion 5 – Cost of Living

That the ASTI, in the negotiations on the successor to Building Momentum, demand cost of living increases in line with inflation.

(Fingal)

The ASTI sought such an increase at meetings of the ICTU Public Services Committee. An extension to Building Momentum which provided some increases, albeit lower than inflation, was accepted by a ballot of ASTI members in October 2022. The ASTI will continue to demand cost of living increases in future negotiations.

Motion 42 – Teacher Qualifications

In light of the current shortage of teachers at second-level, that the ASTI campaign, as a matter of urgency, to have a one-year course made available to graduates, to provide them with a qualification to teach in second-level schools. **(Clare)**

The ASTI has raised this matter with the Department of Education and with the Teaching Council.

Motion 33 – Health and Safety

That, in light of the continuing assault of teachers, physically, verbally and online, the ASTI demand that the Department of Education review its policies to ensure the protection of teachers under Health and Safety legislation. **(Dublin North West)**

The ASTI continues to raise this issue with the Department of Education.

Motion 25 – Sick Leave

That, as a matter of urgency, the ASTI seek a written assurance from the Department of Education that school management does not require teachers on sick leave to submit work for their classes.

(Drogheda Sean Higgins)

The ASTI has raised this matter with the Department of Education.

Motion 41- PME students

That the ASTI negotiate with the DES so that second year PME students be paid for all teaching hours worked through the academic year. **(Carbery)**

The ASTI has raised this matter with the Department of Education and with the Teaching Council.

Motion 14 - Pensions

That as a matter of urgency, the ASTI commission a comprehensive report, assessing the current contributions made under the different pension schemes, with a view to promoting equity for our members. **(Dublin North I)**

This matter has been referred to the ASTI Pensions Sub-Committee.

Motion 47 – Leaving Certificate

That the ASTI refuse to engage in any discussion on Leaving Cert Reform until a full, open and transparent study of the Junior Cycle has been conducted and its findings made public. **(Desmond)**

This motion was superseded at a Special Convention held in June 2022 by the passing of the following motion:

“That ASTI engage in discussions on Leaving Certificate/Senior Cycle Reform. This policy supersedes the previous adopted position regarding engagement in such discussions and does not impact on any other ASTI policy.”

Motion 51- Student Wellbeing

That the ASTI seek that there be no more than one CBA per subject in junior cycle in the interest of student wellbeing.

(Dublin North West)

The ASTI has raised this issue with the Department of Education and with the NCCA.

Motion 52 – Junior Cycle

That the ASTI pursue a review of the minimum hours per subject at Junior Cycle with the intention of increasing class contact hours to implement the specifications to satisfactory levels.

(Dungarvan)

This matter has been raised with the Department of Education.

Motion 48 – Leaving Certificate Assessment

That the ASTI insist that the assessment and grading of the leaving certificate remain the sole remit of the State Examinations Commission. **(Desmond)**

This continues to be ASTI policy and has been raised with the Minister for Education, the Department of Education and the State Examinations Commission.

Motion 28 – Inspections

That the ASTI insist that teachers should maintain autonomy over the way they teach and be free to determine for themselves the best pedagogical methods for their classes. As such, teachers' methodologies should not be used as a criterion in whole-school and/or subject inspections and should not be referenced in any subsequent written report or publication.

(Dublin North East)

This matter has been raised with the Inspectorate.

Motion 26 - Inspections

That ASTI negotiate with the Department of Education to ensure that no WSE Inspection or Subject Inspection takes place during the period between the 1st of May and the end of the academic year. **(Drogheda Sean Higgins)**

This matter has been raised with the Inspectorate.

Motion 24 – Supervision and Substitution

That the ASTI negotiate with the Department of Education to allow pregnant teachers opt out of Supervision and Substitution duties for the duration of their pregnancy.

(Drogheda Sean Higgins)

This matter has been raised with the Department of Education

Motion 62 – Global Solidarity

That the ASTI establish a Global Solidarity Committee.
 Aims of this committee:

- To raise awareness amongst ASTI members of the challenges faced by teachers and their representative associations across the globe.
- To promote the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4: 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.'
- To promote the principle of equality in all aspects of education and the teaching profession globally.
- To promote the right to education.
- To promote the rights of workers, especially teachers, and their unions where they are being victimised and/or denied human rights or trade union rights.
- To enable ASTI to express solidarity on humanitarian issues, in the context of global challenges such as world poverty, growing inequality, human rights abuses, denial of trade union rights and climate crisis. **(Tuam)**

This Committee has been established

Motion 12 – Posts of Responsibility

That the ASTI begin negotiations with the Department of Education to revisit the criteria for selection of candidates for API and AP¹ positions, specifically that some recognition be given for teaching experience/years of service.

(Tullamore – amended by Tipperary)

This matter has been raised with the Department of Education and with the management bodies. Standing Committee has established a sub-committee on issues related to Posts of Responsibility.

Motion 18 – Supervision and Substitution

That the ASTI insist that Supervision and Substitution be uncoupled so that teachers can opt in or out of supervision and/or substitution on an annual basis from September 2023.

(Dublin South Central)

This matter has been raised with the Department of Education

Motion 45 – Continuous Professional Development

That the ASTI resist any attempt by the Department of Education to introduce a policy of out-of-hours CPD. **(Dublin North East)**

This remains ASTI policy.

Motion 44 - Vetting

That the ASTI do all in its power to have the changes to the vetting and re-vetting process for teachers reversed, so that only court convictions would be taken into account, as was previously the case. **(Dublin North East)**

This matter has been raised with the Teaching Council.

Motion 20 - Leave

That the ASTI enter into discussions with the Department of Education to ensure that any teacher who takes leave for part of a day, only has that part of the day recorded as leave, and that any leave less than two hours be not counted. **(Athlone)**

This matter is progressing in discussions with the Department of Education.

URGENT MOTION 1: LEAVING CERTIFICATE

That ASTI reaffirm its policy that members do not assess their students' work for State Certification purposes. Moreover, ASTI commits to a comprehensive consultation process with members on all aspects of the announcement on 29th March, 2022, by the Minister for Education, regarding redevelopment of the Senior Cycle. **(Standing Committee)**

This matter has been raised with the Department of Education, the State Examinations Commission and with parent and student groups.

URGENT MOTION 2: LEAVING CERTIFICATE ORAL AND PRACTICAL EXAMINATIONS

That the ASTI condemn the decision to extend the holding of both oral and practical examinations during the Easter break and at weekends which was agreed as a temporary crisis measure as a result of the Covid19 Pandemic. **(Standing Committee)**

This matter has been raised with the Department of Education, the State Examinations Commission and with parent and student groups.

MOTIONS REFERRED TO STANDING COMMITTEE:**Motion 1- Pay**

That the ASTI ballot members with a view to undertaking industrial action, up to and including strike action, starting in September 2022 until the following demands are met:

1. The elimination of the post-2011 pay scale and the establishment of one common pay scale for all teachers;
2. A pay rise for all teachers to counter the increasing costs of living within our country;
3. Full repayment of monies lost to teachers for lost and delayed increments imposed by FEMPI;
4. The end of unpaid work currently done under Croke Park and Haddington Road Agreements.

(Carlow)

The ASTI continues to pursue those elements of this motion which have not been dealt with under the Extension to Building Momentum.

NOTES

NOTES

BOOK 2

Convention Reports

NOTES

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

POSTS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Department of Education circular which governs posts of responsibility is “Leadership and Management in Post-Primary Schools” (Circular 0003/2018). This Circular was issued in January 2018. Negotiations on amendments to this circular have been going on for some time and continue at the time of writing.

Following a motion passed by CEC in May 2021, Standing Committee appointed a sub-committee to prepare a report for CEC. Members of this sub-committee are President, Vice-President, Donal Cremin, Patrick Curley, Adrienne Healy, Seamus Keane and David Wynne. The Deputy General Secretary provides professional support. The Committee has held meetings with the Equality Committee and with the ASTI nominees to Posts of Responsibility Appeal Boards.

The Standing Committee Sub-Committee on Posts of Responsibility is undertaking a body of work which is intended to assist in the development of an ASTI model of how a posts of responsibility system should work in second-level schools.

The Sub-Committee was closely involved in the aspects of the ASTI/Red C survey on teachers’ conditions which was carried out in Autumn 2022. The results of this survey, which was designed and intended for internal use are being used to assist the ASTI in its policy development and in its negotiation with relevant education partners.

Appeals: An appeal system for Assistant Principals continues to operate. The procedures for appealing are outlined in the Circular referenced above. An appeal system for Principal and Deputy Principals has been agreed between the ASTI, the TUI, the ACCS, ETBI and JMB and the Department of Education. This procedure is governed by Circular Letter 0062/2021.

RATIONALISATION

ASTI ENGAGEMENT WITH RATIONALISATION

Meetings are held as required with the Department of Education, Planning and Building Unit regarding interests of members employed in schools facing amalgamation or closures. Similarly meetings are held with Education Training Boards concerning the assimilation of schools into their ETBs. Other management bodies and trustee representatives are also met. Schools facing amalgamation or closure are visited by ASTI personnel.

Rationalisation issues which arise include assimilation rights, agreement on school type, position of part-time and temporary staff, contracts, redeployment rights, transfer rights, retirement, post of responsibility allocation, staff allocation, principalships, deputy principalships, planning and facilities. Advice is given to members in relation to these and other related issues. Schools enlist the assistance of the ASTI to advance their claims for funding for extensions, refurbishments and completion of buildings in cases of amalgamations.

POST PRIMARY MAJOR SCHOOL PROJECTS

Details are set out below of the Post Primary Major School Projects that (a) were substantially completed in 2022 and (b) are under construction.

Post Primary School Projects substantially completed in 2022

County	Roll No	School	Project
Dublin	68306H	Edmund Rice College	New School Building
Dublin	68308L	Malahide Portmarnock ETSS	New School Building
Kildare	76194S	Naas Community College	New School Building

In addition to the above, circa 120 Additional Schools Accommodation (ASA) projects were completed across the primary and post-primary sectors in 2022.

Post-Primary School projects under construction

County	Roll No	School	Project
Clare	91518F	Ennistymon Community School	New School Building
Clare	70830N	Ennis Community College	Extension
Cork	62090D	Scoil Mhuire gan Smál, Blarney	New School Building
Cork	62330U	Patrician Academy, Mallow	Extension
Cork	76333G	Carrigtwohill Post Primary School	New School Building
Dublin	60263V	St Josephs College, Lucan	Extension & Refurbishment
Dublin	68241F	Stepaside ETSS	New School Building
Dublin	68346T	Belmayne ETSS	New School Building
Dublin	91344V	Rosmini Community School	New School Building
Kerry	70560K	Gaelcholáiste Chiarraí, Trá Lí	New School Building
Kildare	61702D	St Pauls' Secondary School, Monasterevin	New School Building
Limerick	68309N	Limerick ETSS	New School Building
Limerick	76101I	Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh	New School Building
Limerick	76476F	Mungret Community College	New School Building
Limerick	81014R	Crescent College Comprehensive	Extension & Refurbishment
Louth	71750U	Bush Post Primary School, Riverstown, Dundalk	Extension & Refurbishment
Mayo	64520M	St. Marys Secondary School, Ballina	New School Building
Meath	76173K	Colaiste na Mí, Navan	Extension
Waterford	91509E	Blackwater Community School, Lismore	Extension & Refurbishment
Waterford	64940L	Waterpark College	Extension & Refurbishment
Westmeath	63221U	Meán Scoil an Chlochair, Kilbeggan	New School Building
Wicklow	61830M	St. David's Holy Faith Co-Educational School, Greystones	Extension & Refurbishment

In addition to the above, circa 190 Additional Schools Accommodation (ASA) projects were under construction across the primary and post-primary sectors in 2021.

SUMMARY OF NEW POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS WHICH OPENED IN 2020 and 2021

Details of new post-primary schools WHICH opened in 2020 and 2021 outlined below.

Area	Size*	Year of Opening	Patron
Maynooth- Gaelcholáiste Mhaigh Nuad	500	2020	Kildare & Wicklow ETB
Blanchardstown West_D15 & BlanchardstownVge_D15 (Regional Solution)- Ériu Community College	Announced for 800 but now 1,000	2020	Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB)
Goatstown_Stillorgan DLR - Goatstown Educate Together Secondary School	Announced for 800 but now 1,000	2020	Educate Together
Enfield (Kilcock school planning area)- Enfield Community College	Announced for 500 but now 1,000	2020	Louth and Meath Education and Training (LMETB)
Citywest/Saggart (Tallaght & Newcastle_Rathcoole school planning areas) (Regional Solution)- Colásite Pobail Fóla	1,000	2020	Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB)
Dublin6_Clonskeagh & Dublin_6W (Regional Solution) - Harolds Cross ETSS	1,000	2020	Educate Together
Ballincollig- Le Cheile Secondary School Ballincollig	Announced for 600 but now 1,000	2021	Le Chéile Schools Trust
Boosterstown_Blackrock & Dunlaoghaire (Regional Solution)- Boosterstown Blackrock ETSS	1,000	2021	Educate Together
Kilcoole & Greystones (Regional Solution)- Greystones Community College	Announced for 800 but now 1,000	2020	Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB)
Dunshaughlin- Colaiste Rioga	Announced for 600 but now 1,000	2021	Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB)
Gorey- Gorey ETSS	500	2021	Educate Together

SCHOOL CLOSURES

There were no school closures in 2022.

(The ASTI wishes to acknowledge, with thanks, the co-operation of the Planning and Building Unit, Department of Education, in the supply of this information)

OPERATION OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (OHS)

ASTI continues to monitor the operation of the Teachers' Occupational Health Service (OHS) and Occupational Health Illnesses Categories. We have maintained contact with officials from the Department of Education (DOE). Year on year the largest group of applications for retirement on medical grounds is on the basis of psychiatric disorder & stress and 2022 was no different. Musculoskeletal disorders and cancer-related conditions remain the second and third most common causes.

During 2022 a new tendering process was instigated and the outlined view of the ASTI was for the professional standard of those implementing the scheme or schemes must at the very least be maintained.

We noting that 40% of absences are as a result of mental health / stress and many of these relate to the organisation of the workplace. We called for any provider to have adequate staff specialised in the field of occupational psychology and psychiatry.

In respect to mental health/stress we sought that the provider must have the expertise necessary to evaluate the illness and have the authority to make recommendations with the imprimatur of the patient/client. At a minimum the OHS provider should have the remit to enquire whether the workplace has conducted a psychosocial risk audit and have met their statutory obligations under the Safety Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005 in respect of psychosocial risk management.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and international Labour Organization (ILO) report on mental health specifies that psychosocial risk identification and management is the key strategy to intervene and protect mental health in the workplace - yet few schools follow this practice.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE (EAS)

The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) continues to provide a confidential and free-of-charge advisory and counselling service to teachers and their family members, including children over 16 years of age. The EAS is operated by Spectrum Life.

Recent years have seen an increasing amount of mental health & stress absences in the workplace and the EAS has seen a significant rise in contacts for mental health issues such as anxiety. The EAS identified a clear link between public health announcements and contacts to their service.

NCSE DEPARTMENTAL COUNCIL

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) was established to assist in the processing of industrial relations issues involving employees of the NCSE. This body is the equivalent of the Teachers' Conciliation Council for these workers. The first meeting of the NCSE Departmental Council took place on November 19th 2019. Represented on the Council are NCSE Management and the following unions: Association of Higher Civil and Public Servants (AHCPS); ASTI; FORSA; INTO and TUI. The ASTI is represented on the council by the Deputy General Secretary. The Council is currently discussing the proposals by the NCSE to change the nature of the employment of Visiting Teachers by the NCSE.

ICTU HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Safety, Health and Welfare Committee is a 10 person committee that deals with safety, health and welfare issues for teachers in their place of employment (i.e. school buildings) and we are guided by relevant legislation. The most important piece of guiding legislation is the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

The ASTI is represented on this committee by Deirdre MacDonald – former ASTI President and chair of the ASTI Safety Health & Welfare Committee and Conor McDonald – Industrial Relations Official. During 2022 term Deirdre MacDonald was returned as the ICTU Health & Safety Committee's nominee to the board of the Health & Safety Authority (HSA).

The Health and Safety Committee of Congress is made up of representatives from its affiliates and meets on a regular basis to discuss and identify ways in which unions can work together to promote healthy and safe workplaces. As part of its work Congress leads the Trade Union response to public consultations on issues that affect healthy and safe workplaces.

It is clear, in retrospect, that the contribution of good air quality to the control of viral transmission was not properly appreciated in the early stages of the pandemic. It is Congress's view that this

resulted in an undue delay in issuing appropriate guidance on masking and ventilation, especially important in our high-density workplaces.

As early as June 2020, the World Health Organisation contributed to guidance on ventilation and air-conditioning systems in the context of COVID-19. In relation to engineering controls, the WHO recognised that well-maintained heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems had the potential to play a significant role in reducing airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and slowing the spread of viruses. The ECDC recommended that ventilation be considered as part of the bundle of non-pharmaceutical interventions used to reduce transmission risk in closed spaces. This guidance was flagged at an early stage to NPHET by experts such as Asst Prof Orla Hegarty School of Architecture, UCD and Asst Prof Kim Roberts School of Genetics and Microbiology, TCD, and public health consultant doctors. Recommendations through official channels from the Expert Group on Ventilation, chaired by Prof John Wenger of UCC do not seem to have been acted upon with any alacrity, and there was a considerable time lag before a position was adopted in public policy and public health advice.

Notwithstanding this relatively slow response, it is now widely accepted that Indoor Air Quality is an important component of workplace health. Air pollution has been linked to serious health conditions such as cancer, asthma and cardiovascular diseases. We know that indoor air, and the pollutants present, are the result of a complex set of factors. The air quality changes from building to building, place to place, over time, and in response to the activities taking place indoors. Biological contamination, VOCs, Radon, other pollutants and outdoor air quality can all be factors in affecting Indoor Air Quality (IAQ). There is now considerable evidence that poor air quality has, in addition to being the cause of various illnesses, a significant effect on worker productivity and also adversely affects educational outcomes in children. Some workers can be particularly susceptible to poor IAQ. For these reasons the committee has advocated for the risk assessment approach to be adopted. The committee has engaged with the public consultation on the creating of a Code of Practice (COP) which outlines the legal responsibilities of employers under various parts of our wider occupational health & safety legislation.

We are seeking a Code which is clear on the fact that compliance in one area cannot be at the expense of non-compliance in another. It would not be acceptable, for example, for adequate ventilation to be achieved through open doors and windows if this resulted in a breach of recommended minimum working temperatures.

Part of a wider holistic approach needs to include also how a Code of Practice will have implications for other parts of our regulatory framework, including those that fall outside the area of Occupational Safety and Health. There will be clear implications, for example, for building regulations to ensure updated provision of adequate levels of ventilation. This is relevant not only to new builds but also to renovations and upgrades to existing building fabric, especially in the context of current schemes aimed at increasing energy efficiency and higher levels of insulation in existing building stock. For new builds in the public arena, such as schools, it is essential that cognisance is taken of IAQ for the working environment and that this be incorporated as an essential element at the planning and design phases of any new builds. It is also clear that there needs to be more stringent regulation and oversight of building regulations, which are often not properly observed as evidenced by some recent scandals.

The ICTU Health & Safety Committee welcomed the use of such monitors in our schools as they can be a useful tool in achieving

healthy IAQ levels. While high levels of CO₂ can indeed have serious ill effects, its measurement is useful generally as an indicator of good ventilation in any space.

We know there is variation in what different countries deem acceptable. For example, in the UK, the government has agreed to a set of standards for acceptable CO₂ levels in indoor spaces with 800 ppm or below indicating that an indoor space is likely to be well ventilated and has acceptable indoor air quality. OSHA in the US has set a permissible exposure limit of 5000 ppm of CO₂ as a time-weighted average over 8 hours. And, according to ASHRAE, the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (which is in fact a global organisation now, with a chapter in Ireland), levels of indoor carbon dioxide should be below 700 ppm.

Belgium, before the pandemic, established (by law, not guidance) a limit value for CO₂ of 900 ppm (or a ventilation flow rate of 40m³/h per person present). Originally, the Belgian legislation allowed for a higher level of 1200 in exceptional circumstances. However, with the arrival of the pandemic, and based on expert opinion, only the 900 ppm of CO₂ is used now as a maximum to prevent or limit infection by air. This limit wasn't only used in workplaces during the pandemic, also in public buildings, hospitality etc.

There should always be engagement with employees through consultation in the conducting of the risk assessment, and specifically that Safety Representatives be involved where they have been selected in a workplace.

RELATIONS WITH PARENTS

The ASTI continues to maintain cordial relations with parents' groups. Formal meetings have been held with the National Parents Council (post primary) and with the Parents' Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools. At these meetings issues of mutual concern to parents and teachers are discussed. The Deputy General Secretary has attended the conferences of parents' organisations and has contributed to their proceedings.

SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE COMMITTEE

The Safety, Health and Welfare Committee is a 10 person committee that deals with safety health and welfare issues for teachers in their place of employment (i.e. school buildings) and we are guided by relevant legislation.

The Committee members are:

Deirdre Mac Donald	– Chairperson
Michael McGrath	
Lorraine Finn	
Eóin Ó hAodha	– Vice Chairperson
Mary Lyndon	
Siobhan O'Donovan	
Miriam Duggan	– President
Geraldine O'Brien	– Vice President
Kieran Christie	– General Secretary

Executive Officer/ Industrial Relations: Conor McDonald provides professional support to the committee.

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 states that 'hazards' in the workplace must be 'identified and controlled'. This means that employers must be proactive in managing dangers to employees or hazards in their place of work. The Act prescribes the role of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) as follows:

'the National Authority for Occupational Safety and Health shall continue in being and shall from the commencement of this Act be known as the Health and Safety Authority'

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 - Pt.5 S.32 (a)

The HSA in collaboration with the Department of Education and Skills (DES), the State Claims Agency and the School Development Planning Initiative have issued specific guidelines for Post-Primary Schools called Guidelines on Managing Safety, Health and Welfare in Post-Primary Schools.

These guidelines state that a school should use the following 3-step process when assessing risk

- Identify the hazard
- Assess the risk in proportion to the hazard
- Identify and implement the appropriate control measures to eliminate the hazard or reduce the risk

Guidelines on Managing Safety, Health and Welfare in Post-Primary Schools – P.14

Meanwhile, hazards are identified under the following 5 categories:

- physical hazards, e.g. manual handling, slips, trips, and falls, electricity, fire
- health hazards, e.g. noise, harmful dusts, unsuitable lighting levels, vibration
- chemical hazards, e.g. glues, solvents, dyes, cleaning agents
- biological hazards, e.g. viruses, bacteria
- human-factor hazards, e.g. work related stress, bullying, violence

Guidelines on Managing Safety, Health and Welfare in Post-Primary Schools – P.43

When health and safety is mentioned often the first things that come to mind are 'manual handling, slips, trips' and 'falls' as listed under 'physical hazards' above. However, a 2021 Primary Illness Overview by Medmark, the occupational healthcare provider for the DOE and hence all post primary teachers in Ireland lists 'Mental Health / Stress' as representing 40% of all reported illness while 'Musculoskeletal' represented only 18% of illness. The remaining 42% were classified under 'General'.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) describes 'work-related stress' as being the result of 'psychosocial hazards' in the workplace. It is further defined as emerging "...when the knowledge and abilities to cope of an individual worker or of a group are not matched with the demands of the job and expectations of the organizational culture of an enterprise." The ILO state that "...50-60% of all lost working days [in Europe] are attributed to work-related stress and the number of people suffering from stress-related conditions caused or made worse by work is likely to increase. This represents a huge cost in terms of both human distress and impaired economic performance".

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The ASTI’s online guide to Safety, Health and Welfare for second-level teachers in Ireland states “It is important to remember that psychosocial hazards (such as stress) are workplace hazards. Stress has been identified as the top workplace health issue in Ireland.”

Experiences from the Covid-19 Pandemic:

The Covid-19 pandemic brought teacher’s safety, health and welfare to a new level. The Safety Health and Welfare Committee assisted the union in making significant representations with regard to the pandemic to the DOE and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU). First of all we had to grapple with the enormity of the pandemic and try to consider the challenge that it posed to our members. We also had to try and make sense of the options available to best protect our members and to support them in their determination to carry out their teaching so that they could support their students. While we did teach remotely for a period, it’s limitations in terms of communication and hence education became very apparent.

Upon returning to the classroom exceptional efforts were made to manage the quality of air but this was at the expense of a comfortable classroom temperature. In order to contend with the coldness and draughts, staff and students had to wear supplementary clothing and schools were beginning to resemble tuberculous sanatoria from a century ago! Open windows also brought about other issues in relation to noise such as street noise in urban schools and noise from other classes and school activities. Also, constant monitoring and physically adjusting windows that were sometimes old and stiff provided unwelcome disruption to teaching and the flow of a class.

EXAMINATIONS

The second-level teachers’ unions continue to hold meetings with the State Examinations Commission. Among the topics discussed in the last 12 months were the following:

- Holding of Oral and Practical Examinations at Easter
 - Both Unions strongly opposed this move and expressed dismay that commitments given when they agreed to this measure during Covid that this would be for one year only were broken by the Minister. ASTI welcomed the decision to bring the Music Practical Examinations back into school time.
- Payment Rates
- Payment Timelines
 - This was a particular issue in 2022 as payments for a significant number of examiners were late. The SEC apologised and stated that would do everything they could to prevent a recurrence.

- Recruitment of contract staff
 - SEC stated that they have been struggling to get numbers and that while 2022 may have had particular circumstances that this is a global and systemic issue. They stated that they need significant increase in numbers in both oral and written examiners.
 - The unions suggested various measures that might improve matters, such as greater remuneration, smaller numbers of scripts for correction, advance payments.
 - The State Examinations has established a Contract Supply Stakeholder Working Group which began meeting in February. The ASTI is represented on this group by the Deputy General Secretary with the General Secretary acting as an alternate.
- Online Marking
- Travel and Subsistence and the availability of affordable hotel accommodation.
- JC Irish T2 paper phraseology
 - The unions asked that questions be understandable.
 - The SEC stated that it is aware of the problem and is addressing it.
- Having marks allocated to questions on JC exam papers
 - The unions argued that students (and teachers) expected this and that the lack of allocated marks was causing confusion and stress. The SEC stated that they would look at the issue.
- LCA
 - The SEC explained that not posting LCA results to schools was an administrative error and not a policy decision
- Delays at collection centres
- July examination sittings
- Leaving Certificate appeals timelines
- Sample Paper for Leaving Certificate Art

Other issues relating to State Examinations are dealt with in the sections in this Handbook: Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle.

EVALUATION AND INSPECTION

The ASTI took part in stakeholder discussions in 2022 in advance of the publication by the Inspectorate of an updated Guide to Inspection in Post-Primary Schools, August 2022. It states that the aim of inspection is to improve the quality of learning for children and young people through the provision of high quality evaluation, analysis and advice. Currently,

- Incidental inspection
- Subject inspection
- Whole-School evaluation – management, leadership and learning
- Whole School evaluation
- Programme evaluation
- Evaluation of provision for students with additional and special educational needs

- Evaluation of action planning for improvement in DEIS schools
- Evaluation of schools attached to special care units and children's detention centres
- Child protection and safeguarding inspection
- Supporting the safe provision of schooling
- Evaluation of remote teaching and learning
- Follow-through inspection

PENSIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

The Pensions Sub-committee is elected biennially at Annual Convention. The Sub-committee was last elected at Convention 2021 following a one year term extension to the previous Sub-committee, along with other ASTI committees, during the initial phase of the COVID pandemic. However, three elected members subsequently stood down from the Sub-committee and, at a meeting of the Central Executive Committee held on 21st May 2022, these vacancies were filled by way of co-option of remaining candidates with the highest number of votes in the most recent election. The current elected members of the Sub-committee are: Pauline Nagle (Chairperson), Noelle Moran, Ger O'Donoghue, Patrick Collins and Tony McGennis. Desmond O'Toole (Organisation and Development official) provides professional support for the work of the Sub-committee. The ASTI President, Vice President and General Secretary are *ex officio* members of the Sub-committee. The Sub-committee has formally met five times since Convention 2022 on the following dates: 30th May 2022, 4th October 2022, 25th November 2022, 2nd February and 28th February 2023. All meetings took place in a blended manner with some members attending in person and others on-line. The following key issues were addressed by the Sub-committee in the last year:

Pay and Pension Parity:

Pay and pension parity secures the principle that any salary increases paid to serving teachers are applied pro-rata to the pensions of retired teachers. This continuing obligation was specifically acknowledged in the *Public Services Stability Agreement 2018-20 (PSSA)*, and then by its successor agreement to the end of 2022, which itself was then extended to the end of 2023. All subsequent agreed increases in the pay of serving teachers have been followed by increases paid to retired teachers during the period of this report. The ASTI remains strongly committed to the preservation of pay and pension parity and the Pensions Sub-committee has continued to support efforts to ensure that this principle is respected in the successor to the current national agreement which expires at the end of 2023.

Trident Report

ASTI Convention 2022 adopted a resolution for the commissioning of a further report from the consultancy firm, Trident Consulting, into the relative values and terms of the different superannuation arrangements and schemes that currently apply to serving teachers. The Sub-committee is currently evaluating a draft project scope proposal submitted by Trident Consulting with a view to agreeing a formal scoping document prior to Convention 2023.

Gender Issues in Superannuation:

Following a symposium hosted by government departments in January 2018 entitled "Rising to the Challenge: Addressing Ireland's

Gender Pay Gap", the Pensions Sub-committee examined the role that gender inequality plays in determining the pension entitlements of teachers. The Pensions Sub-committee remains very conscious of the existence of gender-specific implications for pensions in professions which have a very large proportion of women employed within them. Following discussions with representatives of the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI) on this issue in February 2020, the Pensions Sub-committee considered how the union might commission research that would provide evidence of the specific role that gender inequality plays in determining teachers' pensions. In this regard, the Pensions Sub-committee has since been working with the ASTI Equality Committee to look more broadly at the role that gender inequality plays in determining both teachers' pensions and pay. A draft discussion document setting out five high level research questions was considered by both committees in January and February 2023 and its recommendations were adopted. The discussion document proposes that a joint research project be commissioned with the National Women's Council of Ireland with the purpose of collecting and analysing the experiences of women post-primary teachers of their occupational pension schemes and pay, including with respect to income inequality in retirement, and making recommendations for reform. This document is currently being re-drafted as a formal proposal for a research project that it is anticipated will be commissioned in the coming months.

Speakers:

Ethel Buckley: The Pensions Sub-committee was very fortunate to welcome Ethel Buckley, Deputy General Secretary of SIPTU, to speak with members in February 2023 about developments in the public debate on the State Contributory Pension. As a senior official with SIPTU, Ethel Buckley led the STOP67 campaign that dissuaded the government from proceeding with its then plans to increase the age at which workers could qualify for the State Contributory Pension to 67. Following that campaign, Ethel Buckley was nominated to the Pension Commission established by the government and has played a key role in ensuring that the development of public pensions policy protects the interests of working people who depend on the State Contributory Pension in retirement.

Dr Tom McDonnell: The Pensions Sub-committee was also delighted to welcome Dr McDonnell, Director of the Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI), to address the Sub-committee in April 2022. Dr McDonnell spoke and answered questions about pensions at the macro/fiscal level, long-term projections of overall pension costs and numbers, the government's fiscal position and outlook, taxation of pensions, and matters related to the education sector.

Other Matters:

Winding Down Scheme: The Sub-committee has been pressing for the introduction of a Winding Down Scheme for teachers approaching retirement which would gradually reduce working hours in the period leading up to retirement while maintaining the value of pension benefits. A claim was tabled by the ASTI at the Teachers Conciliation Council (TCC) in 2019, but has since been rejected by the Department of Education.

ICTU Retired Workers Committee: A former Chairperson of the Pensions Sub-committee, Denis O'Boyle and current member Ger O'Donoghue, continue to serve on the ICTU Retired Workers Committee and provide regular reports to the Pensions Sub-committee on its work.

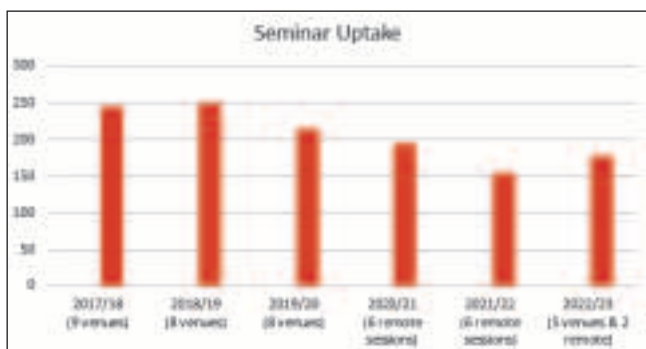
Retirement Lead Times: Significant dissatisfaction has been expressed by ASTI members for some time at the lengthy lead-times being reported by the Department of Education for the provision of information related to teachers' occupational pensions

in order to assist these members in planning their retirement. The ASTI's dissatisfaction with the current response times of the Department of Education's Pay and Pensions Units has been tabled by the General Secretary at the Teachers Conciliation Council (TCC).

Communications: The ASTI continues to be very active communicating with members about pension and retirement issues. The successful annual programme of retirement seminars took place both on-line and in-person this year and a presentation on the work of the Pensions Sub-committee given by the chairperson and other members was included at the second evening of the retirement seminars run by Cornmarket. Feedback received from members who attended these seminars continues to be very positive. The pensions and retirement section of the ASTI website continues to provide detailed and accessible information on teachers' pension schemes.

RETIREMENT SEMINARS

The ASTI continues to provide direct assistance and advice to members enquiring about retirement, including retirement on medical grounds. This support is provided by two Head Office officials and an extensive pensions and retirement section on the ASTI website. Furthermore, the ASTI held a series of seven in-person and on-line retirement information evenings from November 2022 to January 2023, as well as two additional sessions delivered by Cornmarket. The information evenings attracted registrations from 178 ASTI members. These seminars ensure that members considering retirement have access to the information they need to make an informed decision on retirement.



Part 1 of the seminar was presented by Desmond O'Toole, ASTI Organisation, Development & Industrial Relations Officer, and covered topics such as retirement options, overview of pension scheme, how to retire, calculating your pension, and enhancing your benefits. Each of the six sessions lasted three hours and the official remained available for a further period afterwards for follow-up questions and private consultation. A representative from the Retired Secondary Teachers Association also spoke for some 10 minutes at the beginning of each seminar.

Part 2 involved two sessions presented by Cornmarket representatives and covered topics such as AVCs and financial planning, preparing mentally for retirement, overall wellbeing and life after work. As part of these sessions, a representative of the ASTI Pensions Sub-committee provided an overview of the sub-committee's role and work programme. Each of these sessions were of approximately one hour duration.

BUDGET 2023

Prior to the announcement of budget 2023, ASTI set out its priorities as below in letters to the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. Unfortunately, the governments announcement was a disappointment in several respects.

The OECD report *Education at a Glance 2021* shows that Ireland remains in last place out of 36 OECD countries for investment in second-level education as a percentage of GDP.

ASTI Budget 2023 Priorities

The pandemic has highlighted how crucial a quality education service is for young people. The most recent OECD report *Education at a Glance 2021* finds Ireland, once again, in last place out of 36 countries for investment in second-level education as a percentage of GDP. It is therefore essential that the Government commits to a significant increase in investment in second-level education in Budget 2023.

ASTI priorities:

1. **Address cost of living increases**
The sharp increase in inflation since 2021 has impacted on individuals, families and organisations, including schools. Workers and families struggle to meet essential costs. Schools have been hit by rising operational costs.
2. **Significant increase in investment in second-level education as a percentage of GDP**
In 2018, Ireland invested 1.1% of gross domestic product (GDP) in second-level education compared to the OECD and EU averages of 1.9%, according to *Education at a Glance 2021*.
3. **Equal pay for post-2010 entrants to teaching**
The Government must commit to equal pay for post-2010 entrants to teaching if it is serious about recruiting and retaining second-level teachers at this time. A significant number of teachers have been subjected to pay discrimination for up to a decade. Ireland has experienced a serious shortage of second-level teachers in recent years.
4. **Smaller class sizes**
Research carried out by the ASTI in 2020¹ found that the majority of Junior Cycle classes are above the EU and OECD class size averages. This means many students are not getting the attention they deserve. Differentiated teaching, which is the foundation of inclusive education, is problematic in overcrowded classes. Large class sizes also impede the use of diverse teaching methodologies which are very much required for the Framework for Junior Cycle.
5. **School building infrastructure**
The pandemic has put the spotlight on school buildings. It is now glaringly obvious that Irish second-level schools operate on a shoestring budget, with most schools having to fundraise to meet day-to-day running costs. An ASTI survey of school principals in 2021² found that in addition to smaller classes to

1 <https://www.asti.ie/document-library/class-size-and-the-physical-environment-in-our-schools-the/>
2 <https://www.asti.ie/document-library/survey-of-members-on-reopening-of-schools-jan-2021/>

reduce classroom overcrowding, principals believe their schools need:

- Improved ventilation systems
- Improved heating systems
- Adequate work-space for teachers
- Upgraded toilet/sanitary facilities
- Adequate canteen facilities for students
- More/ larger communal spaces

6. Restoration of guidance counselling to pre-recession levels

Guidance counselling services in schools are over-stretched. The pandemic has highlighted the need to ensure student wellbeing is supported in a variety of ways including adequate access to one-to-one counselling services within the school community. We must also make provisions for more guidance counsellors to support students to make informed decisions and choices about their future learning and working lives in a rapidly changing global labour market.

7. Digital Technology

Students' unequal access to broadband and appropriate digital devices was repeatedly highlighted during the pandemic. Each school should have a dedicated leadership post to oversee the implementation of the school's digital learning strategy.

BUDGET ANNOUNCEMENT ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27TH, 2022 KEY EXCERPTS FROM ANNOUNCEMENT

Overall expenditure of €9.6 billion was committed to education funding in Budget 2023.

This is an increase of €443 million in core funding, as well as €145 million in non-core expenditure.

Budget 2023 Key Education Measures

- As part of the Cost-of-Living measures to be enacted €90m is being provided in one-off additional funding to support increased running costs for primary and post-primary schools in the free education scheme in dealing with challenges they face in light of rising energy costs. This will be paid at a rate of 40% of schools' basic and enhanced rates of capitation.
- For 2023, the special education budget will be increased to a total spend of over €2.6 billion. Additional SNA and support resources will be provided.
- €8 million to address the impacts of Covid-19 and increase retention rates of students in schools, especially those from groups at risk of educational disadvantage. This will include a 5% increase in the funding for the School Completion Programme.
- An additional €20 million will be provided to maintain in 2023 the enhanced Summer Programme. This will bring the total provision for the Summer Programme in 2023 to €40 million.
- The Department is due to publish the review of the Action Plan on Bullying and the updated Action Plan on Bullying in November; €1 million will be provided to undertake actions to prevent and tackle bullying in schools.
- Additional funding of €2 million will be provided in 2023, to progress work on the Senior Cycle reform programme. Additional funding of €11 million will be provided to maintain for 2023 the enhanced rate

of payment to examiners in the State examinations as a result of Covid-19 measures.

Additional funding of €3 million in 2023 will be provided for social inclusion measures, including enhancing the capacity of the education welfare services in Tusla that are now under the remit of the Minister for Education.

Special Education Measures

Additional provision in Budget 2023 for measures supporting children with special educational needs includes:

- €12 million for additional teachers supporting students with special educational needs
- 686 new teacher posts, as follows:
 - 206 of the new posts will provide additional support for children attending mainstream classes including new and expanding schools.
 - 480 posts will facilitate the opening of a further 370 new special classes providing over 2,200 new places in 2023 and 250 new special school places
- 1,194 SNA posts covering primary and post-primary, as follows:
 - 735 to support students in new special classes
 - 124 to support students in new special school places
 - 335 to support students in mainstream classes

As a result, the number of special classes will increase to 2,900 in schools throughout the country.

Further investment in special education will include:

- additional funding for the National Council for Special Education to enable it to provide additional support to students with special educational needs and their families. An additional 121 frontline and administrative posts to support families will be recruited. This commitment will rise to a €13 million investment in a full year.
- a further 40 new posts will be provided, for a new scheme to support Deaf and Hard of Hearing students for whom Irish Sign Language is their first language.
- the National Educational Psychological Service will receive funding for an additional 54 psychologists to provide services to special schools and special classes.
- an additional investment of €2 million will be made in the assistive technology in education scheme, to meet the needs of students availing of this scheme.

Capital Programme

Under Project Ireland 2040, the school sector will receive a total of approximately €4.4 billion capital investment over the period 2021-2025.

Capital planning and budgeting is undertaken on a multi-annual basis. The allocation of €860 million for 2023 will facilitate a continued roll-out of school building projects.

Cost of Living Measures

Once-off funding of €100 million is also being provided for 2022 as part of the cost-of-living measures to be enacted this year to ensure financial supports are available for:

- l schools to meet the increased running costs for primary and post-primary schools in the free education system to deal with challenges

they face in light of rising energy costs. This will be paid at a rate of approximately 40 per cent in their standard and enhanced rates of capitation funding.

- I existing school transport providers to address the ongoing increased fuel costs.

As can be noted from the foregoing, the Budget announcement for 2023 was underwhelming. ASTI issued the following public statement in response.

DISAPPOINTING BUDGET FAILS SECOND-LEVEL EDUCATION

Today's Budget announcement will do little to address the chronic underfunding of second-level schools and large class sizes, according to ASTI President Miriam Duggan.

"Ireland is ranked in last place out of 36 OECD countries for investment in second-level education as a percentage of GDP*. Despite this underfunding, Budget 2023 fails to address core funding for schools and does nothing to reduce our large class sizes," said Ms Duggan.

School funding

The ASTI President said the union acknowledges the announcement today of additional one-off funding for energy costs and school transport. However, she said school operational costs are wide ranging and a significant increase in the school capitation grant is what is required to bring investment in line with the OECD country average.

"The funding gap experienced by second-level schools is not new and arose long before current inflationary increases. It is due to prolonged underfunding and it is the reason why so many second-level schools are forced to fundraise to try to meet day to day operational costs."

Class size

Ms Duggan said that under-investment in second-level education has continued despite record numbers of second-level students: "Schools continue to welcome more students every year, including students from Ukraine and other challenging situations. Teachers are addressing increasingly complex societal issues which are impacting on young people on a daily basis. Classes with 26 to 30 adolescents are the norm at Junior Cycle. Schools are buckling under the strain of increased demands and expectations".

Withdrawal of teachers

Today's announcement that there will be no reduction in class sizes compounds the recent withdrawal of additional teachers allocated to second-level schools during the pandemic. "These teachers were withdrawn despite the overwhelming evidence of learning gaps and mental health challenges which emerged during the pandemic and school closure periods. The 296 second-level teachers mentioned in today's Budget relate to demographic changes only and will do nothing to augment supports for schools or reduce class sizes for students," said Ms Duggan.

School buildings

An ASTI survey in 2021 found that many school buildings require serious upgrading. "Covid has demonstrated how essential it is to have school buildings that are fit for purpose. It is shocking that so many schools are in need of ventilation systems, improved heating systems, and upgraded toilet facilities," said Ms Duggan.

What ASTI is looking for:

- (ASTI Priorities are set out in the document ASTI Budget 2023 Priorities)
- A significant increase in the student capitation grant to address cuts made during austerity and help schools cope with rising costs.
- We need increased investment in school buildings to ensure upgraded ventilation and heating systems, adequate canteen facilities for students, adequate work space for teachers, and more.
- Guidance counselling services must be restored to pre-austerity levels.
- The Government must commit to addressing entry to teaching if it is serious about recruiting and retaining teachers. All remaining salary issues must be addressed. The cost of teacher education must be addressed.

General points:

- Tax cuts will make it more difficult to reverse the underfunding of education.
- Annual inflation was 9.1% in July – which represents a 38 year high.
- The pandemic exposed the lack of a sustainable model of childcare in Ireland. This has a disproportionate impact on professions which are predominately female.
- Many young teachers are experiencing housing issues. This is exacerbating Ireland's teacher shortage crisis.
- (Irish Congress of Trade Unions has put forward taxation reform proposals including an increase in employer and self-employed PRSI on those earning in excess of €100,000 and significantly greater tax contributions from inherited wealth.*)

General education points:

- The OECD publication *Education at a Glance 2021* ranks Ireland in last place out of 36 countries in terms of expenditure on second-level education as a percentage of GDP.
- Second-level student enrolments have risen by just under 40,000 over the past 5 years and are still increasing.
- Unequal pay, a housing crisis and the cost of living are driving young teachers away from teaching and/ or out of Ireland.

Class sizes:

ASTI Junior Cycle Class Research – March 2020

- 54% of history classes have 26-30 students; a further 1% have 31 students or more
- 47% of English classes have 26-30 students; a further 2% have 31 students or more
- 38% of maths classes have 26-30 students; a further 3% have 31 students or more
- 62% of CSPE classes have 26-30 students
- 56% of Spanish classes have 26-30 students

The National Economic Dialogue 2022

The National Economic Dialogue 2022 took place on 20th June 2022. This stakeholder engagement event was hosted jointly by the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. Both Ministers attended the forum. The Taoiseach also addressed the forum. The theme for this year's forum was *Building Economic Resilience to deal with International Challenges*.

The dialogue provides a deliberative forum for stakeholders to participate in an open and inclusive exchange on the competing economic and social priorities facing the Government. It is the principal institutional forum for wider public consultation and discussion on the Budget. The General Secretary of ASTI, Kieran Christie, attended on behalf of ASTI.

Representatives of community, voluntary and environmental groups as well as business, unions, research institutes and the academic community were invited to attend.

The opening session dealt with the theme: Building Economic Resilience to deal with International Challenges. It was chaired by Professor Alan Barrett, Addressed by An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin T.D., Minister for Finance and Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Michael McGrath T.D.

A series of breakout sessions on specific themes then took place.

BREAKOUT 1: BUILDING A ROBUST ECONOMY TO WITHSTAND GLOBAL SHOCKS CHAIR: Minister for Finance, Paschal Donohoe T.D. **RAPPOORTEUR:** Mr Seamus Coffey

BREAKOUT 2: SUSTAINABLE SPENDING THROUGH A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL WELLBEING FRAMEWORK CHAIR: Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Michael McGrath, T.D. **RAPPOORTEUR:** Professor Orla Doyle

BREAKOUT 3: STRENGTHENING IRELAND'S ENTERPRISE POLICY FOR THE FUTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FORTHCOMING ENTERPRISE POLICY WHITE PAPER CHAIR: Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Leo Varadkar, T.D. **RAPPOORTEUR:** Dr Conor

BREAKOUT 4: FROM CARBON BUDGETS TO EFFECTIVE CLIMATE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION CHAIR: Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications and Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan T.D. **RAPPOORTEUR:** Professor Eleanor Denny

BREAKOUT 5: CONFRONTING THE CHALLENGES OF VIABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY IN AN ERA OF RISING COSTS AND PRICES CHAIR: Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien T.D. **RAPPOORTEUR:** Professor Michelle Norris

BREAKOUT 6: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE AGRI-FOOD SECTOR CHAIR: Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D. **RAPPOORTEUR:** Professor Thia Hennessy

BREAKOUT 7: ADAPTING TO CHANGING LABOUR MARKET CONDITIONS CHAIR: Minister for Social Protection and Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys, T.D. **RAPPOORTEUR:** Professor Philip O'Connell

A plenary session took place in the afternoon.

The ASTI General Secretary took the opportunity to inform the forum and the Ministers of ASTI priorities for Budget 2022 as set out above.

REDEPLOYMENT

There are two redeployment schemes currently in operation in second-level schools. In addition, a voluntary redeployment scheme is currently under discussion.

The scheme that affects the largest number of schools and teachers is redeployment scheme for teachers surplus to requirements other than in situations of school closure.

Redeployment scheme for teachers surplus to requirements other than in situations of school closure.

A scheme allowing for the redeployment of teachers into schools with teaching vacancies (other than in situations of school closure) was included in the Croke Park Agreement, which was accepted by ASTI members in January 2011.

Nominating teachers for redeployment

If a school or VEC has one or more teachers employed in excess of their allocation, they must notify the Director of the Redeployment Scheme of the teachers identified for redeployment. If a school or VEC believes that its surplus position is short-term or transient, it may present its evidence of this opinion to the Director, who may defer a decision in relation to redeployment.

Only permanent/CID teachers can be redeployed.

In the first instance the school or VEC will ascertain if any member of staff wishes to be considered for redeployment voluntarily. Those teachers who volunteer for redeployment will be offered vacancies first and can choose to refuse a redeployment vacancy.

At the same time, teachers will be identified for compulsory redeployment based on seniority and the school's curricular needs.

Any teacher nominated for redeployment should be provided with a statement by the school setting out the basis for its decision. This statement should include a list of all permanent/CED teachers in the school together with their teaching subjects. It should also include a statement of the curricular reasons, based on the curriculum audit, why the school believes "it is not possible to cope without" the services of any teacher below them on the Seniority List for Redeployment.

A teacher nominated for redeployment can appeal to the Director of the Redeployment Scheme if they feel the correct process and procedures were not complied with in their identification for redeployment.

Identifying vacancies

Each year schools and VECs must notify the Director of the Redeployment Scheme of any vacancies, permanent or temporary, that exist in their school. The Director will then try to assign redeployed teachers to these vacancies.

Assigning teachers to vacancies

A teacher identified for redeployment may be assigned to a school within a maximum radius of 50km from his/her existing school or, where they request, from their place of residence.

The Director of the Redeployment Scheme will seek to match a teacher to a vacancy that matches their qualifications and experience and will take into account the curricular needs of the school, the teacher's preference where more than one post exists, travelling time for the teacher and any other factor deemed relevant by the Director.

If the Director is unable to redeploy a teacher because there is no suitable vacancy available, the teacher will not be redeployed in that year.

Teachers will transfer their reckonable teaching service for promotion purposes in the previous school to the receiving school, except in the case of teachers being redeployed from one voluntary secondary school to another voluntary secondary school.

Any post-holder who is redeployed will retain their post of responsibility allowance and will be required to carry out in-school management duties in the receiving school.

Redeployment in the case of school closures

The second redeployment scheme in operation in second-level schools deals with redeployment in the case of school closures. It was negotiated between the ASTI/TUI and the Department of Education and Science in 2007. The scheme covers all qualified permanent and CID teachers in recognised second-level schools who are surplus to requirements due to school closures.

Redeployment in 2023

There were 52 teachers redeployed in 2021: 8 “Ward” CID holders (4 of whom were voluntary); 4 voluntary redeployments as a result of school amalgamation; 15 arising from surplus in schools (of which 10 were voluntary); and 19 under the pilot voluntary redeployment scheme.

The breakdown of redeployments between sectors is as follows:

From / To	Secondary	C&C	ETB	Total
Secondary	23	7	5	35
C & C	7	2	2	11
ETB	3	3	0	6
Total	33	12	7	52

The breakdown of redeployments under the pilot voluntary scheme is as follows:

	Applications processed			No Offer	Total applications
	Accepted	Refused	Total		
To Dublin	4	5	9	3	12
Cork	9	4	13	66	79
Clare	2	3	5	22	27
Mayo	4	4	8	22	30
Total	19	16	35	113	148

Voluntary redeployment

The pilot voluntary redeployment scheme established in 2013 is to continue in 2023. The pilot voluntary redeployment scheme 2023 is confined to teachers in Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath who wish to be redeployed in September 2023. The scheme allows Permanent/CID teachers who are employed in schools in these counties to express an interest in being redeployed to another post-primary school. **In addition, any teacher outside of Dublin who wishes to be redeployed to Dublin can apply.**

If you apply for voluntary redeployment and a vacancy exists, you may be offered a redeployment to that vacancy. However, you will only be redeployed if a suitable teacher can be redeployed to your school to replace you.

Your school must indicate its willingness to release you and so accept a replacement teacher on redeployment. Principals should declare on the form the preferred subject options that the school requires as a replacement for you, if you are redeployed. These subjects do not have to be your subjects; this gives the school an opportunity to address a curriculum mismatch within the school.

The ASTI continues to press for the introduction of a purely voluntary redeployment scheme.

In Autumn of 2022 RED C conducted a survey on teachers’ terms and conditions which included a section on redeployment.

CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION

Teachers Conciliation Council:

The purpose of the ‘Scheme of Conciliation and Arbitration for Teachers’ is to provide a means acceptable to (i) the Ministers for Education and Finance, (ii) the Managerial Authorities of national and second level schools and, (iii) the Teacher Unions; for dealing with claims and proposals relating to the salaries and other emoluments and the conditions of service of teachers and other specified grades, and to secure the fullest co-operation between the parties in maintaining and improving the quality of the education service.

Meetings of the Teachers’ Conciliation and Arbitration Council (T.C.C) were held on six occasions over the past year.

Some of the issues discussed included the following:

Claim for establishment of an occupational injury scheme for teachers.

The Department of Education and the unions continue to engage on this matter.

It has been agreed that the Staff side would progress this claim and submit the Agreed Report to the Secretary of the Public Service Agreement Group (PSAG).

That teachers acquire the right to opt in or out of the Supervision and Substitution scheme on an annual basis.

ASTI has vigorously pursued this claim in accordance with ASTI policy. The Department is resisting the claim on the basis that it is a cost increasing claim.

Principal and Deputy Principal Appointment Appeals:

After several years of discussion and negotiation Circular Letter 0062/2021 sets out the Appeal System for the appointment of permanent Principals and Deputy Principals in recognised Post Primary schools.

Guidance on a particular question has been requested from the Data Protection Commissioner and a favourable response has been received. The staff side has requested an update of the Circular

accordingly. The Official side advised that they were currently considering the position as set out in the comprehensive response from the DPC.

Payroll Issues:

A number of payroll issues were raised at meetings of TCC throughout the year.

Section 28 of the Education Act: Education (Student and Parent Charter) Bill 2019

The legislation to commence procedures under section 28 of the Education Act has made some progress through the Oireachtas. A student and parent charter is proposed. It was announced in July 2021 that the Government intends to amend the title of the Bill to the *Education (School Community Charter) Bill*. This is something the ASTI has campaigned for to reflect the fact that schools are communities, including teachers and other staff. The teachers' unions have repeatedly raised other concerns. ASTI had been informed that the legislation that will be enacted will be an enabling framework. Development of the framework will be done in consultation with stakeholders. ASTI re-iterated that it would not countenance variable school procedures which must be national or sectoral. Several amendments to the bill have been proposed by ASTI.

Bereavement leave:

The Department of Education has published *Circular Letter 78/2022 Bereavement Leave Scheme for Registered Teachers employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools*.

This came in response to demands from the ASTI that teachers should have access to bereavement leave on a similar basis to workers in other sectors of the public and civil service.

Key features are as follows:

- Bereavement leave is increased to 20 working days from 5 consecutive days in the event of the death of a teacher's child or spouse.
- A teacher may avail of a maximum of 5 working days in the event of the death of an immediate relative.
- Up to 20 days of bereavement leave may be availed following the death of someone with whom the teacher was in a "relationship of domestic dependency" – this refers to someone who lived with, and was cared for, by the teacher.
- Periods of bereavement leave exclude weekends and public holidays.
- There is flexibility to allow bereavement leave to be deferred in exceptional circumstances.
- Ten days of bereavement leave are available for the father, or the partner of the mother, following stillbirth or prenatal death after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Partial Absences:

ASTI continually raised the matter of how partial absences are recorded. This matter was also comprehended by the provisions of the "Outcome of Department of Education and Skills and ASTI Discussions – 29 November 2016" document. It has still not been possible to reach agreement on this to allow for the issue of a Circular Letter.

However, the Official side advised that an updated draft Circular was in preparation.

Administrative requirements re Child Protection Complaints to BOM

ASTI raised several issues related to the administrative requirements associated with dealing with Child Protection complaints to schools. A formal response is awaited at time of going to print.

Violence at Work Definition and Terms of Circular 0061/2017

ASTI has submitted that the below text from the ILO Convention 2019 should be inserted/reflected in Circular 0061/2017

The Convention recognizes that violence and harassment in the world of work "can constitute a human rights violation or abuse...is a threat to equal opportunities, is unacceptable and incompatible with decent work." It defines "violence and harassment" as behaviours, practices or threats "that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm." It reminds member States that they have a responsibility to promote a "general environment of zero tolerance".

The Department of Education and Skills are still considering the proposal but have indicated an unwillingness to do so. Engagement is on-going.

Availability of adoptive/ parental leave item

ASTI raised this item with regard to provision for Surrogate Parents.

The Official side expressed their concern and regard for parents in these circumstances. However, these considerations come under the remit of a decision by Government and no unilateral decision can be made until legislation on the wider issues comes into force.

Part-time (hourly) rates payable to post-2010 entrants

A claim for a revision of, and increase in, part-time (hourly) rates payable to post-2010 entrants to teaching (as set out in Appendix 2 to Circular 0066/2020 and elsewhere), and for the determining formula for such rates to reflect the updated pay arrangements for such entrants including the skipping of incremental points on the post-2010 entrant pay scale has been submitted.

At time of going to print this item was being discussed under Sectoral Bargaining and will remain on the agenda pending the outcome of this process.

Claim for Supports required (including adequate CPD, time for administration and testing) to support the Special Education Needs (SEN) Model.

The Official side has advised that there would be consultation with stakeholders prior to the next re-profiling and these issues will be included in the review.

Claim for adjustment of salaries of teachers appointed as principals and deputy principals who had opted out of, but now undertake in their promoted posts, S&S duties.

Agreed Report 2-2022 was signed between the Official side and the Staff side on 18th October 2022 in which the Department of Education conceded the claim. They also advised that a draft Circular and application form was in preparation

Implementation of the Gender Pay Gap Act (2021) in schools

The Official side advised that this remains an issue under consideration in the Department. It was confirmed that with regard to the ETB sector, each ETB will be reporting as a whole as an employer which will include the schools in that sector. With regard to other sectors, Statistics and Payroll have been looking at this and there are currently no schools with over 250 staff so there are no reporting requirements for this year. The Department will be looking to put in place a process going forward but also outlined that the reporting requirements are not solely related to statistics and remains to be worked out

The Staff side considered that the Department was the employer in this respect for the purposes of this Act.

HRA hours (S&S) from 43 to 37 hours

The Staff side outlined that we did not agree with the position regarding how the six hours were dealt with by the Independent Hours Review Body. In relation to S&S, we did not agree that it was an allowance, it is part of each point of the scale. This was a cut amount and had not been restored to the pre-FEMPI rates. It should not be considered to be cost-increasing as it is a FEMPI restoration.

The Official side outlined that there was a difficulty in going against what Government had decided under the Independent Hours Body process. The Official side re-iterated that this was a Building Momentum issue as the body was set up under Building Momentum

CEC Meeting:

At a meeting of the Central Executive Council held on the 3rd September 2022, it was decided to set in train the arrangements for a school-based ballot of members. The purpose of the ballot was to ascertain whether or not members accepted the proposals from the Workplace Relations Commission regarding the review and extension of the Building Momentum Agreement.

The wording of the motion passed by the CEC was as follows:

“That ASTI ballot its members on the WRC pay proposals without recommendation.”

The ballot was held in late September/early October, 2022.

Summary and Key aspects of the proposals from the Workplace Relations Commission (August 2022) regarding the review and extension of the Building Momentum Agreement.

The proposal was to make the following pay adjustments to the existing arrangements within Building Momentum and extend its duration until the end of 2023:

- 3% with effect from 2nd February 2022
- 2% with effect from 1st March 2023
- 1.5% or €750 a year (whichever is the greater) with effect from 1st October 2023. The €750 a year floor means those on lower incomes will receive a larger percentage increase than higher paid staff (see below).

The increases would apply to pensionable allowances.

The WRC-proposed increases would be paid in addition those paid and scheduled under the original Building Momentum agreement. These are:

- 1% or €500 (whichever is the greater) from 1st October 2021
- The equivalent of 1% increase through sectoral bargaining from 1st February 2022. (See below)
- 1% or €500 (whichever is the greater) from 1st October 2022. The €500 floor means those on lower incomes received a larger percentage increase than higher paid staff.

In percentage terms, the proposed adjustments are worth an additional 6.5% between February 2022 and December 2023, on top of existing Building Momentum pay increases.

The floor payment of €750 (in October 2023) means a higher percentage increase for workers who earn below €50,000.

If the proposals were accepted, the first additional increase of 3% would be backdated to 2nd February 2022. This would appear in pay packets as a ‘lump sum’ back-payment after the agreement was ratified.

While there were no additional non-pay elements in these proposals, the Government came to the negotiations promising that economy-wide cost-of-living supports would accompany any pay improvements. These were expected to come through the 2023 Budget announcement (scheduled for 27th September 2022) and the Labour-Employer Economic Forum (LEEF), which is Ireland’s main national forum for social dialogue between unions, employers and Government.

The ‘sectoral bargaining fund’ established under the original Building Momentum agreement was not affected by the WRC proposals. ASTI and TUI opted to use part of this 1% fund to settle a claim for the payment of the Professional Master of Education

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Review and extension of the Building Momentum Agreement.

In 2022, with rampant price inflation, it became abundantly clear that the Building Momentum Agreement 2021/2022 was proving inadequate at protecting public servants standard of living.

The ASTI and other unions comprehended by the ICTU Public Services Committee decided to embark on a coordinated campaign with a view to uniting public sector unions in seeking a pay increase to address the cost-of-living crisis.

The objective was to secure an acceptable review of the pay terms set out in the Building Momentum public service agreement. The ICTU Public Services Committee triggered a review clause in the agreement in early March 2022, with a view to gaining significant improvements in pay. The Government did not respond until May, when it accepted that the Building Momentum pay terms should be improved. It also said it wanted to discuss pay for 2023 to have certainty over the next year’s public service pay bill. Talks got underway in the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) but ended without agreement on 17th June. On 15th July, the ICTU Public Services Committee agreed to ask affiliates to participate in a coordinated campaign, including industrial action ballots. ASTI set about organising a ballot of members. However, the WRC then invited the parties to re-engage and union negotiators agreed to this.

On 30th August 2022, the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) published proposals for a public service pay package aimed at resolving differences between public service unions and the Government.

(PME)/Higher Diploma in Education Allowance (H.Dip in Ed) for post 2010 entrant teachers in the post primary sector. The Circular Letter to implement this measure was issued in Autumn 2022. Consideration relating to the usage of the balance of funds remained on-going. (See below)

There were no additional productivity measures in the WRC-proposed package. It reaffirmed the measures in the original Building Momentum agreement.

The package would extend the duration of Building Momentum by one year, so that it would expire on 31st December 2023. Unions would expect to be in negotiations on a successor agreement around the middle of 2023.

The principle that there should be pension parity between serving and retired teachers has long been defended by ASTI. This is the concept that any increases in the pay of serving teachers are also applied to our retired members. ASTI pressed hard to ensure that this will be maintained for the duration of the agreement.

Under public service agreements, increases in public service pay scales are generally reflected in public service pensions that are linked to pay scales. Confirmation was received that, if accepted, the increases would apply to the WRC-proposed measures in the usual way.

The review mechanism that was used to secure the adjustments in the proposals from the Workplace Relations Commission (August 2022) regarding the review and extension of the Building Momentum Agreement remains in place and could be triggered again if inflation spiked further.

Ballot Outcome:

On October 6th, the result of the ballot of members was declared:

ASTI members voted to accept the proposals from the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) regarding the review and extension of the Building Momentum Agreement by 83% to 17%.

The turnout for the ASTI ballot was 45%.

The proposals provided for the following pay adjustments to Building Momentum and increases its duration until the end of 2023:

- 3% with effect from February 2nd 2022
- 2% with effect from March 1st 2023
- 1.5% of €750 a (whichever is greater) from October 1st 2023

The ASTI participated in the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' aggregate vote process for public sector unions on October 7th and the extension of the Agreement was ratified.

Sectoral Bargaining:

As previously stated, the 'sectoral bargaining fund' established under the original Building Momentum agreement was not affected by the WRC proposals.

In the first instance, it worthwhile to review the clause in Building Momentum that gave rise to the fund.

Chapter 2:

Sectoral bargaining:

"A Sectoral Bargaining Fund will be established to be allocated within sectors under this Agreement. The purpose of the sectoral Fund process is to deal with outstanding adjudications, commitments, recommendations, awards and claims within the terms of the Fund and

within the Exchequer funding limit in place. All public servants covered by the Agreement will be encompassed by this process.

To balance the need to protect the Exchequer and to address pressure points as identified by trade unions a quantum of cost to be expressed as 1% of basic pay will be allocated to this Fund. Grade or sector-based pay claims and outstanding adjudications and awards will have to be resolved within this process.

In agreement with sectoral management, each sectoral bargaining unit or union will have the option of using some or all of the sectoral fund to address claims appropriate to the process or, in the alternative, to elect for the funds involved to be used as a sectoral pay round.

Where a sectoral bargaining unit opts to use the Fund to deliver a sectoral pay round, all the union/s encompassed by that sectoral bargaining unit agree that in so doing, they may not pursue any grade or pay or pay related claims relating to that sector for the duration of this agreement.

Implementation Process:

A series of steps will be followed to identify appropriate sectoral bargaining units (by end February 2021) how the bargaining fund will be used (March 2021) and finalised proposals (June 2021)"

The ASTI and TUI have been regarded as one sectoral bargaining unit. A fund equivalent to 1% of basic pay has been allocated to a fund. A sectoral bargaining unit such second-level teachers could elect for the funds involved to be used as a sectoral pay round whereby each member would receive a 1% pay rise or, in the alternative, to elect for the funds involved to be used as a sectoral pay round.

The equivalent of a 1% increase in annualised basic salaries became payable on 1st February 2022 as a Sectoral Bargaining Fund in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Agreement.

Initial discussions on the allocation of the Sectoral Bargaining Fund took place throughout 2021 and into 2022.

In the event, ASTI and TUI opted to use part of this 1% fund to settle a claim for the payment of the Professional Master of Education (PME)/Higher Diploma in Education Allowance (H.Dip in Ed) for post 2010 entrant teachers in the post primary sector. The Circular Letter 0059/2022 to implement this measure was issued in Autumn 2022 and can be accessed at:

<https://www.asti.ie/document-library/circular-00592022-payment-of-pmehdip-allowance/>

It refers to the implementation of Sectoral Bargaining with effect from 1 February 2022 for post primary teachers – Payment of PME/HDip Allowance.

Key aspects:

The change implemented, under this circular, is the restoration of the Professional Master of Education (PME)/Higher Diploma in Education Allowance (H. Dip in Ed) with effect from 1st February 2022.

The revised new entrant salary scale was increased to include the value of the PME/Honours H.Dip in Education Allowance (€1,314) on each point of the scale

The increase was applied directly by the payroll operators and did not require an application process in most instances.

The payroll adjustments necessitated by this Circular were retrospective effect to 1 February 2022 (or date of appointment, if later).

There are a number of new entrant post primary teachers who entered teaching between 1 January 2011 and 31 January 2012 who are already in receipt of the existing Professional Master of Education (PME)/Higher Diploma in Education Allowance (H. Dip in Ed in addition to salary. As there can be no duplication in the payment of this allowance, and as this allowance is now incorporated into the pay scale with effect from 1 February 2022, the increased pay scale will be applied and the allowance discontinued for these teachers from 1 February 2022.

There are also a small number of teachers who entered employment after the discontinuation of the PME/H.Dip in Ed allowance on 1 February 2012 but who were appointed to the existing pre-2011 pay scale. It is the intention that these teachers will be allowed to apply for the existing allowance and this process will be agreed and finalised with unions as soon as possible. A separate circular will issue in due course.

On 5th September, 2022 a joint ASTI/TUI statement was issued regarding the reinstatement of the value of Postgraduate Masters in Education (PME) allowance as follows:

ASTI and TUI welcome reinstatement of value of Postgraduate Masters in Education (PME) allowance

The Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) and the Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland (ASTI) have welcomed the overdue publication of the circular letter confirming payment of the value of the Professional Masters in Education (PME) allowance (formerly HDip Allowance) - value currently €1,314 annually - to those teachers appointed since February 2012.

The two unions had publicly demanded urgent resolution of this issue, criticising the unacceptable delay in payment of this allowance to teachers who are already struggling with the cost-of-living crisis.

Teachers who will benefit should note that the payment will be backdated to 1st February 2022 (or date of appointment as a teacher if later).

In a hugely damaging cutback to the profession, the value of this and other allowances was withdrawn by Government for those appointed on or after 1st February 2012. Since then, both unions have vigorously campaigned for its reinstatement. This regressive development proved to be the genesis of a teacher recruitment and retention problem that is now at crisis levels in second-level schools.

Second-level teachers who are members of the TUI and ASTI sacrificed a general 1% pay increase payable on 1st February 2022 under Building Momentum so that the equivalent funding would allow reinstatement of the value of the PME allowance for those teachers appointed since February 2012.

TUI President Liz Farrell said: "We had vigorously demanded the urgent payment of the value of this allowance, which had been agreed several months ago. Given the cost-of-living crisis, focus must now turn to providing teachers with secure jobs of full hours in order make teaching a viable and sustainable career."

ASTI President Miriam Duggan said: "It brings equal pay a step closer for this cohort of teachers who have suffered this injustice for almost a decade. It is regrettable that teachers have had to resolve this issue by taking money out of their own pockets."

Remainder of Sectoral Bargaining fund:

The use of the Sectoral Bargaining fund to provide for the reinstatement of value of Postgraduate Masters in Education (PME) allowance accounted for approximately 2/3 of the funds available.

Discussions had also been on-going regarding the use of the remainder of the fund. For instance, on 11th March, 2021, ASTI wrote to the Department of Education to request information and costings regarding a number of possible usages of the Sectoral Bargaining Fund. *Some of the areas we sought to explore in that context were as follows:*

The cost of restoration of PME allowances to post-2010 entrants to teaching.

The cost of an increase in part-time hourly rates payable to post-2010 entrants to teaching by reflecting the updated pay arrangements for such teachers as including the skipping of incremental points on the post-2010 entrant pay scale.

The cost of restoration of the starting point for new entrants from the first to the third point of the salary scale.

The cost of restoration of incremental dates for ASTI members who had their points on the scale frozen and consequently adjusted during the ASTI/DES dispute of 2016/2017.

The cost of potential restoration of Posts of Responsibility to the second-level system which were lost during the programme of austerity implemented across the last decade or more.

After a series of meetings and written engagements with the Department of Education it was clear that it was not possible to use the fund in a manner that would be to the satisfaction of ASTI. Eventually, in July 2022, ASTI and TUI submitted appeals to the Public Service Agreement Group.

The below sets out key extracts from of the ASTI appeal which includes relevant correspondence over an extended period of time and which led to the final determination.

ASTI Appeal to Public Service Agreement Group

As the group will be aware, Chapter 2 of Building Momentum provided that a Sectoral Bargaining Fund be established to be allocated within sectors under the Agreement.

A quantum of cost to be expressed as 1% of basic pay was to be allocated to this Fund.

In agreement with sectoral management, each sectoral bargaining unit or union have the option of using some or all of the sectoral fund to address claims appropriate to the process or, in the alternative, to elect for the funds involved to be used as a sectoral pay round.

ASTI and TUI have been incorporated into the Education Secondary Sectoral Bargaining Unit for these purposes.

In April 2022, the ASTI and TUI informed the Department of Education of the following:

"The ASTI and TUI, who jointly operate in SBU 2, are both in agreement to use part of the money available in the Sectoral Bargaining Fund to restore the pedagogical qualification allowance which was abolished for payment to new entrants to teaching under the terms of relevant Circular Letters. The allowance will be payable to teachers who have a H.Dip.Ed, PME or any equivalent qualification. The payment of the H.Dip Allowance as paid to pre-2012 recipients should be the basis of the agreed restoration. This should be restored to all Teachers eligible to be in receipt of the allowance and back dated to the 1st of February 2022."

Work is continuing of the appropriate Circular Letter to enact the terms of the forgoing.

It is expected that this will result in the expenditure of approximately 2/3rd of the available fund.

With regard to the balance available no joint decision by the ASTI/TUI has been made.

The position remains reserved as to whether to elect for the balance (approximately 1/3rd of the Fund) of the fund involved to be used as a sectoral pay round for all second-level teachers or to use it in furtherance of other claim(s).

Claims:

On 11th March, 2021, ASTI wrote to the Department of Education to request information and costings regarding a number of possible usages of the Sectoral Bargaining Fund in the following terms:

“Regarding sectoral bargaining, we have been separately advised that a sectoral bargaining unit pertaining to second-level teachers has been discussed and we have no difficulties with such an approach. We would ask that you would confirm to us the total fund available for our Sectoral Bargaining Unit.

Moreover, the ASTI retains an open mind in respect of intentions relating to the usage of the fund, whether as a means to settle claims or as an additional 1% general round increase. In that regard, we would seek to engage with you and secure costings from you on a variety of scenarios that would inform decision making in that respect.

Some of the areas we would wish to explore in that context would be as follows:

The cost of restoration of PME allowances to post-2010 entrants to teaching.

The cost of an increase in part-time hourly rates payable to post-2010 entrants to teaching by reflecting the updated pay arrangements for such teachers as including the skipping of incremental points on the post-2010 entrant pay scale.

The cost of restoration of the starting point for new entrants from the first to the third point of the salary scale.

The cost of restoration of incremental dates for ASTI members who had their points on the scale frozen and consequently adjusted during the ASTI/DES dispute of 2016/2017.

The cost of potential restoration of Posts of Responsibility to the second-level system which were lost during the programme of austerity implemented across the last decade or more.

On 18th February, 2022 we received the below response to the foregoing and in the context of on-going discussions:

Sectoral Bargaining Unit Claims in the Post Primary Sector (Education Bargaining Unit 2)

The Sectoral Bargaining Fund for the post-primary sector (SBU 2) €21,812,435.

The post-primary sector is represented by ASTI & TUI. The Post primary SBUs consist of six claims as listed, the details of which are set out below. The spreadsheet named 2021_12_10_Draft Sectoral Bargaining Unit 2 Post Primary Costings.xlsx provides the costings for each claim.

The total costings to date for the items costed is approximately **€36,275,889** as follows.

1. Restoration of PME Allowances to post-2010 entrants to post primary teaching - €15,552,581.
2. Increase in Part-Time Hourly Rates - €2,303,829
3. Commencing on 3rd point of scale - €5,117,488
4. Restoration of Posts of Responsibility - €8,351,254
5. Restoration of Increment Freezes - €4,912,737
6. Secure Unit Allowance (Disturbed Adult Allowance) / Environmental Allowances - €38,000

As the total amount exceeds the total value of the fund, decisions are required by the union side on the final list of claims to agree on.

Other possible claims:

Recently some further ideas for claims have been raised such as the island Allowance or Gaeltacht allowance. The position on these claims is that the restoration of these allowances cannot be agreed to as they are cross-sectoral and therefore precluded under Building Momentum (Section 2.3.3).

Summary of Claims and Position of Official Side

1. PME Allowances: The cost of restoration of PME allowances to post-2010 entrants to post primary teaching - €15,552,581.

Teachers Conciliation Claim (Claim 46/18 “Claim for the payment of H.Dip/PME Allowance to Teachers). This seeks to restore a qualification allowance which was removed from new-entrants as part of the DPER Review of Allowances in 2012.

The current costings of €15.5m are based on teacher numbers as at November 2021 and an allowance rate of €1,314 at 1st October 2021. These costings also include an estimated cost in respect of ETB teachers (at 45% based on overall expenditure) and substitution costs of 5.46% of the main payroll as provided by the Teacher Payroll. **Tab named 1. HDip-PME.**

Management Position: There is no difficulty with progressing this issue under sectoral bargaining on condition that it will be re-instated as an allowance and will **ONLY** apply to post-primary teachers covered by this sectoral bargaining unit.

The claim will need to be implemented through an application process and so will take a period of time before allowances are actually allocated.

2. Part-Time Hourly Casual Rates - €2,303,829

This claim refers to an increase in part-time hourly rates payable to post-2010 entrants to teaching and would reflect revised arrangements which have been applied to the [full-time] new entrant teachers' salary scales (e.g., skipping of increments).

The Pre-2011 Post Primary rate is currently based on the 7th point of the CBS + Hons Deg & H.Dip giving an hourly rate of €53.08 effective from 1st October 2021. This compares to 5th point CBS + HDip for 2011 new entrant scale of €47.55 a difference of €5.53 per hour in 2021.

This claim would mean increasing the calculation point of the part-time rates from the 5th to the 8th or 9th point to reduce the difference and would result in an increase of between 10 and 13%. The calculation is based on the current expenditure from the payroll for new entrant teachers who are currently paid the part-time rates multiplied by the % increase represented by a 3 or 4 point increase in the calculation of part-time rates. **Tab named 2. PT Casual Rates Post Prim.**

Management Position: There is no difficulty with progressing this issue under sectoral bargaining.

3. Starting on 3rd point of scale - €5,117,488

This refers to new entrant teachers who, in the past, started above the first point of the scale i.e., point 2 for primary teachers and point 3 for post primary teachers. This claim seeks to commence future new-entrant post-primary teachers on point 3 of the scale going forward and such teachers no longer receiving increment skips. The understanding is that existing teachers on point 1 or 2 of the scale would continue as normal with incremental skips applied.

The costing, based on the current numbers at point 1 of the scale, is €5,117,488. **Tab named 3. Point 3 on Scale.**

Management Position: The progression of this claim cannot be agreed to as starting pay for grades across the public service is at the minimum of the relevant salary scale in line with government pay policy. Therefore, this is a cross sectoral issue which is precluded under Building Momentum (Section 2.3.3).

4. Restoration of Post of Responsibility (POR) - ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS POSTS - €8,351,254

This refers to the restoration of Posts of Responsibility (API & API I) to the second-level sector which were lost across the last decade. In the context of this claim, additional PORs would be for schools with greater number of pupils e.g., 500-600, 600-700 etc. **Tab named 4. Restoration of POR Posts.**

Management Position: PoRs are assigned following recruitment processes, usually during the summer. Therefore, they may not be assigned until the autumn and it would not be possible to backdate an allowance that is paid for carrying out certain duties where they were not actually carried out.

The final number of posts to be restored is not yet clear. There is no difficulty in principle to this claim, but our view is that the use and management of PoRs is in need of review. Therefore, if the unions wish to progress this claim, we can agree on condition that a review will be carried out on the use of PoR's in the context of efficiency and effectiveness.

5. Restoration of Increment Freezes - €4,912,737

Restoration of increment freezes which arose for ASTI Members. The calculation is an ongoing calculation since 2017 which looks at what these teachers would be on less what they are currently on. **Tab named 5. Rest of Increment Freezes.**

Management Position: The progression of this claim cannot be agreed to as the increment freezes were correctly applied to ASTI members under Section 7(1) of the FEMPI Act 2015.

6. Secure Unit Allowance - Disturbed Adult Allowance / Environmental Allowances - €38,000

On the post-primary side this allowance is paid to staff in Secure Care Units/Secure Care settings including prison settings. There are currently two staff working in these settings who do not receive the allowance, where teachers in other similar setting get the allowance. The rate for this allowance is €2,334. The Post Primary total for this allowance is €5,109.

With regard to the Environmental Allowance, this relates to a number of staff in Portlaoise Prison who were awarded the allowance following an Adjudication finding in April 2019. The cost of the claim was in the region of €45,000 based on the allowance rate of €1,349 and approximately 31 staff. However, the actual number of staff is now 20.72 and the allowance rate is €1,434 when the 5% restoration of October 2020 and the 1% increase of October 2021 is factored in. The total for this allowance is €32,520. **Tab named 6. Secure Unit Allow.**

Management Position: There is no difficulty in progressing this claim under sectoral bargaining.

NOTE: In April 2022, ASTI was notified that the quantum of our SBU fund was being revised upwards as follows:

"In terms of the amended SBU fund, I can confirm that an additional €1,358,450 has been added to the original amount to give a revised total of €23,170,885."

Appeal to Department of Education:

Arising from this position, ASTI in consultation with our TUI colleagues submitted an appeal regarding a number of these items to the Department of Education on 14th March, 2022:

"I write regarding your email of 18th February and the management position paper you attached regarding the claims we sought to be costed under the Sectoral Bargaining process.

We are particularly disappointed that a number of claims submitted cannot be agreed by management.

We wish to appeal these decisions.

Restoration of Increment freezes to ASTI members.

In particular, we wish to refer in detail to the below extract from the document.

7. Restoration of Increment Freezes - €4,912,737

Restoration of increment freezes which arose for ASTI Members.

Management Position: The progression of this claim cannot be agreed to as the increment freezes were correctly applied to ASTI members under Section 7(1) of the FEMPI Act 2015.

This does not constitute a reason that is compatible with the terms and requirements of Chapter 2 of Building Momentum.

We would further point out that with regard to our claim for the restoration of PME allowances to post-2010 entrants, management states that "there is no difficulty with progressing this issue under sectoral bargaining"- even though that vista was visited upon the teaching profession under the framework of FEMPI legislation too.

ASTI has previously been advised by management that "Any claims pursued via the sectoral bargaining process must be compliant with the provisions set out in chapter 2 of Building Momentum"

I quote the relevant portion of the chapter, which deals with the operation of the fund below.

2.3 Fund operation

2.3.1 It will not be possible to increase the quantum allocated to the Sectoral Bargaining Fund through proposals for productivity savings/measures.

2.3.2 The parties agree that this process cannot give rise to unintended cost increasing outcomes which would serve to increase Exchequer costs beyond the allocated quantum.

2.3.3 Issues of a cross-sectoral nature aimed at standardising certain terms and conditions across grades and sectors of the public service will be excluded from such sectoral negotiations, including the following:
 Overtime rates. · Weekly hours of attendance. · Annual and sick leave entitlements. · Pension arrangements.

2.3.4 In cases where identified issues are not capable of being fully addressed within the Sectoral Bargaining Fund:

- The parties will agree which elements or portions are to be implemented within the agreed Fund.
- Where issues are not fully or only partially addressed, these outstanding elements will fall to be addressed in a future Sectoral Bargaining Fund as part of the next Agreement.

It shall be noted that the aforementioned claim does not contravene any of the provisions of Chapter 2 of Building Momentum.

(b) Island, Gaeltacht allowances etc.

The position paper supplied on 18th February states that Island allowances, Gaeltacht allowances (and presumably the Secretary of Board of Management allowance which is not mentioned but for which we requested costings) cannot be agreed as they are cross sectoral and therefore precluded. No evidence is adduced in support of this position. ASTI does not accept this to be a viable reason and appeals the position in that regard.

(c) Starting on 3rd point of scale.

The management position set out here can be demonstrably challenged in a number of instances. On that basis, ASTI does not accept that this claim is a cross sectoral issue which is precluded under Building Momentum.”

Department of Education responses to ASTI Appeal:**The Department of Education have provided two separate responses regarding matters related to the foregoing:**

On 13th May, 2022 they wrote as follows:

Further to our discussions I am coming back to all of you on one further matter – the question around certain Gaeltacht/Island allowances.

Following further consideration and discussion centrally the view is that the position on this claim is as set out previously. That is to say that the official side are not in favour of settling such claims because they are cross sectoral allowances. The Gaeltacht allowances/living on an island/island inducement/teaching through Irish allowances are part of a group of allowances which the government decided to abolish for new beneficiaries in 2012. These allowances were payable in various sectors of the public service including the education sector, the health sector, the Garda Síochána and the Defence sector and therefore are cross sectoral for the purposes of sectoral bargaining.

I trust this clarifies the position on those claims.

On 17th May 2022 the Department of Education provided a separate response as follows:

Dear Kieran,

I am writing to you in response to your correspondence in relation to your views that some of the sectoral bargaining fund for post primary teachers should be used for progressing the claim for restoration of the increment freezes under FEMPI legislation and the claim that new entrant post primary teachers would start at the third point of the salary scale. The matters have been considered again as requested.

The claim on starting on point three has also been examined in detail from a costings point of view by both this Department and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The response on these matters is set out below.

Restoration of Increment Freezes under FEMPI

The position on this claim remains as previously set out. The progression of this claim cannot be agreed to as the increment freezes were correctly applied to ASTI members under Section 7(1) of the FEMPI Act 2015. You set out that the PME allowance, which is now being restored, was also removed under the “framework of FEMPI” and therefore is a reason to allow this claim. However, this is not accurate as the allowances were removed following a review of allowances by the Government across the public sector and was not implemented under FEMPI legislation.

Teachers starting on Point 3 of the Scale

Cross Sectoral Issues

Previously the Department indicated that: “Progression of the claim cannot be agreed to as starting pay grades across the public service is

at a minimum of the relevant salary scale in line with government policy. This is a cross sectoral issue which is therefore prohibited under Building Momentum Section 2.3.3.”

The view of the Department is that the new entrant solution, incorporating the skipping of points 4 and 8 on new entrant salary scales generally, has been in place for new entrant grades across the public service since 2018. The effect of the skipping of points 4 and 8 is that teachers on the post-2011 pay scale reach point 11 of the pay scale in a far shorter time period than teachers on the pre-2011 salary scales. To change the arrangement for one group of new entrants (post primary teachers), would, in our view, have repercussive effects beyond the education sector.

In addition, Building Momentum specifically provides the following at 2.3:

“Issues of a cross-sectoral nature aimed at standardising certain terms and conditions across grades and sectors of the public service will be excluded from such sectoral negotiations...”

In this context, the Public Service Agreement Group (PSAG) has further determined that new entrant pay is one of the issues precluded from sectoral bargaining under paragraph 2.3 of Building Momentum.

Building Momentum also provides at paragraph 4.3 that, in final conclusion to the arrangements put in place in September 2018 as part of the Public Service Stability Agreement, 2018-2020, the following measures [i.e., the skip at point 12] will be implemented to resolve in full the remaining salary scale issues pertaining to new entrant teachers [Emphasis added].

This arrangement applies to new entrant teachers only and does not apply to other new entrants to the public service. It is the view of the official side that all parties comprehended by the agreement are bound by it in its entirety. Therefore, the Department continues to stand over its principled view that this is a cross sectoral claim and is therefore precluded under Building Momentum.

Cost of Claim

On foot of the appeal, it was necessary to examine this issue, as well as the costs associated with it, in further detail. As you know, this Department initially estimated the cost of this measure (for future new entrant post-primary teachers to start at point 3) at €4.4 million (€5.1 million inclusive of substitute costs and employer PRSI). A further examination and consideration of the issue involved a review of the numbers of teachers involved (which has increased to over 1,700 per annum based on the actual number of recent teacher new entrants) and the medium to long term costs arising. In the previous estimate, the year 1 costs only were taken into consideration. However, as this claim has significant additional costs arising each year over a six-year period, until new entrants reach a point equal to where they would have been under the current progression scenario, these additional costs must be taken into account in order to ensure that teachers are treated in an equitable manner to other public service groups in the context of sectoral bargaining (a fixed envelope comprising 1% of basic pay) under Building Momentum. The revised costing, which is in the region of €25m, is many multiples of the original estimate.

Other Concerns

In addition to the position set out above there would also be concerns of other unintended consequences of the claim being processed. For example, given that new entrants under this proposal would be better off financially than their counterparts who entered teaching between 2012 and 2021, it is likely that a subsequent claim would be made from this cohort, which could lead to further significant costs. In addition, processing the claim would also create a third teacher scale with

consequent costs and workload for developing new payroll systems to deal with this new cohort with significant additional administration work.

I trust the above sets out clearly the position of the Departments on this claim.

Grounds of appeal to Public Service Agreement Group (PSAG)

ASTI does not accept the positions set out by the Department of Education regarding the matters in dispute

The Department of Education failed to address the arguments ASTI presented in our appeal to them of 14th March and which we reproduce below for convenience:

Restoration of Increment freezes to ASTI members.

In particular, we wish to refer in detail to the below extract from the document.

8. Restoration of Increment Freezes - €4,912,737

Restoration of increment freezes which arose for ASTI Members.

Management Position: The progression of this claim cannot be agreed to as the increment freezes were correctly applied to ASTI members under Section 7(1) of the FEMPI Act 2015.

This does not constitute a reason that is compatible with the terms and requirements of Chapter 2 of Building Momentum.

We would further point out that with regard to our claim for the restoration of PME allowances to post-2010 entrants, management states that “there is no difficulty with progressing this issue under sectoral bargaining”- even though that vista was visited upon the teaching profession under the framework of FEMPI legislation too.

ASTI has previously been advised by management that “Any claims pursued via the sectoral bargaining process must be compliant with the provisions set out in chapter 2 of Building Momentum”

I quote the relevant portion of the chapter, which deals with the operation of the fund below.

2.3 Fund operation

2.3.1 It will not be possible to increase the quantum allocated to the Sectoral Bargaining Fund through proposals for productivity savings/measures.

2.3.2 The parties agree that this process cannot give rise to unintended cost increasing outcomes which would serve to increase Exchequer costs beyond the allocated quantum.

2.3.3 Issues of a cross-sectoral nature aimed at standardising certain terms and conditions across grades and sectors of the public service will be excluded from such sectoral negotiations, including the following:

- Overtime rates.
- Weekly hours of attendance.
- Annual and sick leave entitlements.
- Pension arrangements.

2.3.4 In cases where identified issues are not capable of being fully addressed within the Sectoral Bargaining Fund:

- The parties will agree which elements or portions are to be implemented within the agreed Fund.
- Where issues are not fully or only partially addressed, these outstanding elements will fall to be addressed in a future Sectoral Bargaining Fund as part of the next Agreement.

It shall be noted that the aforementioned claim does not contravene any of the provisions of Chapter 2 of Building Momentum.

Island, Gaeltacht allowances etc.

The position paper supplied on 18th February states that Island allowances, Gaeltacht allowances (and presumably the Secretary of Board of Management allowance which is not mentioned but for which we requested costings) cannot be agreed as they are cross sectoral and therefore precluded. No evidence is adduced in support of this position. ASTI does not accept this to be a viable reason and appeals the position in that regard.

Starting on 3rd point of scale.

The management position set out can be demonstrably challenged in a number of instances. On that basis, ASTI does not accept that this claim is a cross sectoral issue which is precluded under Building Momentum.”

ASTI acknowledges that the TUI have provided a substantial submission regarding this matter and we stand in support of that position.

In making this appeal to the PSOG we are happy to clarify any aspect of our appeal and would wish to engage directly with them on all the issues raised.

We ask that this appeal be looked upon favourably.

Best regards,
 Kieran Christie
 General Secretary

Outcome of Appeal to Public Service Agreement Group (PSAG):

In November 2022, ASTI was made aware that our appeal in respect of the claim relating to the restoration of increment freezes under FEMPI was successful.

Arising from this position, a senior official from the Department of Education wrote to ASTI and set out the following:

7 November 2022

Dear Kieran,

I am writing to you in relation to the outstanding sectoral bargaining issues for post-primary teachers as discussed at the recent Public Service Agreement Group on 19th October 2022.

As regards the claim relating to the restoration of increment freezes under FEMPI, which was referred to at item 1 in my letter, management is open to exploring this issue on condition that the Teachers Union of Ireland are agreeable to conceding their part of the Sectoral Bargaining Fund for post-primary teachers in order to meet the costs associated. Should the TUI be agreeable to such a concession, the approach proposed to settling this claim must be agreed and fully costed and it must be confirmed that it can be addressed from within the TUI/ASTI sectoral bargaining fund balance remaining.

I hope that this provides the basis for progress to be made in finalising sectoral bargaining for post-primary teachers.

Discussions with Teachers Union of Ireland: TUI

It was clear from the above that consultation with the Teachers Union of Ireland would be necessary. On foot of this and previous discussion, ASTI received the following letter from TUI on 23rd November.

Teachers' Union of Ireland An tAon Mhúinteoirí Éireann

73 O'Connell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6, D06 Y0W8
Tel: (01) 4922888
E-mail: info@astireland.ie
Website: <http://www.asti.ie>



25th November 2022

Mr Eileen Chubb
General Secretary
Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland
Thomas MacDonagh House
Westmore Street
Dublin 8
D08 Y0W6

Dear Eileen,

You have requested written confirmation of the offer TUI made to ASTI at our meeting regarding the use of the Sectional Bargaining fund in SIBU 2 (post-primary teachers) in ASTI Head Office on 17th of May 2022. The meeting was attended by the (then) TUI President, Martin Maguire, Vice President, David Wilson and myself, in addition to yourself as General Secretary. The ASTI was represented at the meeting by Laura Crowley, (then) President and Thérèse de Paor, Deputy General Secretary.

At the meeting, the TUI clearly set out its position for two of the fund, the first of which was payment of the PBR allowance to all post SIBU 2 contracts and also to the small number of teachers on the pre SIBU 2 contracts with the PBR/PBR allowance. The TUI also proposed using the money remaining (after payment of the PBR allowance) to seek the current system of skipping points 9, 8 and 12 for all future contracts as post primary teaching and, instead, to have them start on the third point of scale (as used to be the case), in recognition of the period of unpaid training in teaching they undergo. The payment of an outstanding award covered by the TUI at arbitration under the Teachers' Conditions Council scheme had not yet paid is also an aim of the TUI in SIBU 2. The money amount is very small as is the number of teachers involved.

At the meeting, the ASTI outlined its wish to see a proportion of the funds to reduce the incremental date of ASTI members but raised a concern that this might not be achievable, even if the appeal against DPER's refusal to order this merge proved successful, as the TUI would most likely not agree to use national funds generated by the aggregate number of members of the two unions to the use of ASTI members only. In response, speaking on behalf of the TUI and supported by my colleagues, I already said in their presence at the meeting that we would be prepared to consider the ASTI proposal as an option.

Conrad

President: Ian Greig, General Secretary: Richard Wilson, Deputy General Secretary: James Moran
Assistant General Secretary: Susan O'Brien, David Kelly, Adrienne O'Leary, Justine O'Leary, Andrew O'Connell, David O'Sullivan, John O'Sullivan, John O'Sullivan

Teachers' Union of Ireland An tAontas Múinteoirí Éireann

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Website: <http://www.tu.ie>



Comrad(a)

The ASTI represented me initially seemed surprised by the offer. The obvious question was then asked as to what the TUI would want in return. The TUI response - subsequently based on TUI Congress members' agreed offer many years -- was that the most advantageous of the two unions to form a strategic, larger union better able to protect members and improve the terms and conditions of all our members. This, as we pointed out at the meeting, was a serious offer from TUI. TUI would be willing to see members' money to equities pay for our challenge for the benefit of us all.

At the meeting it was agreed that the appeal would probably not be upheld and therefore that the TUI offer would not be an option. Obviously, it is now an option given the PSC appeal result.

On Friday, 30th May 2012, at a meeting of the TUI National Executive, I reported on the meeting of the 17th May outlining what had been discussed and proposed as a possibility. The issue presented at the meeting informed the Executive that they were fully supportive of the offer. The TUI National Executive unanimously supported the proposal and pledged that it would give full support to ballot all TUI members on any agreed full teacher unionisation proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Callinan
General Secretary

An tAire Leasúcháin
Departments of Education

it



Air tAire Leasúcháin
General Secretary
Teachers Union of Ireland
1st Floor, Victoria House
78 Canal Road
Dublin 8

7 November 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you in relation to the outstanding essential bargaining issues for post-primary teachers on the scope of the recent Public Service Agreement (PSA) on 10th October 2022.

I can confirm that the issues in relation to new entrant teachers starting on point 3 of the salary scale, which was referred to of item 2 in my letter of 17th May 2022 to the TUI, has been fully addressed. It now settled policy and cannot be reopened under essential bargaining. While there is a reference to a PSCS determination contained in that letter, the position is that the issue of new entrant pay being concluded falls specifically under paragraph 2.3 of Budget Memorandum as referred to in my letter.

As regards the claim relating to the restoration of Government Income under PSEAF, which was referred to of item 1 in my letter, management is open to negotiating this issue on condition that the TUI are agreeable to carrying their part of the Essential Bargaining Fund for post-primary teachers to assist to meet the costs associated. Would the TUI be agreeable to such a condition, the approach proposed to settling this claim must be agreed and fully worked and it must be confirmed that it can be achieved from within the TUI/ASTI essential bargaining fund income accounting.

I hope that this provides the basis for progress to be made in finalising essential bargaining for post-primary teachers.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Hogan
Principal Officer,
Essential Staff Relations

Standing Committee considered the contents of the TUI letter and the proposal contained therein at their meeting of 24th and 25th November, 2022.

The following is an outline of the position adopted.

It was felt that in common with TUI, ASTI has adopted motions over many years that have advocated for a process of discussion leading to unity, for all the reasons set out in the letter from TUI to ASTI of 23rd November.

In that context, ASTI would engage on this matter to seek to achieve agreement on the foregoing objective.

Such engagement would take place as a matter of urgency and should enjoy the good faith of ASTI and TUI. However, it would be incumbent on both parties to agree that there are no preconditions.

Separately:

ASTI and TUI have two groups within its membership with issues that could be resolved by utilisation of the current sectoral bargaining fund.

There are two categories of teachers affected.

TUI:

Staff not in receipt of the Secure Unit Allowance in Secure Care Units/Secure Care Settings including prison settings.

Staff not in receipt of Environmental Allowance following adjudication finding in April 2019.

ASTI:

Staff for whom their increments were frozen in the context of industrial action taken in 2016/2017

Notwithstanding that the numbers involved for both Unions are unequal and the cost of resolution for ASTI members is greater, the teachers involved are equally valued by their respective Unions and the issues to be resolved are equally critical. Neither Union would like to leave any of the forgoing groups of teachers behind at a time when an opportunity to deal with these matters is available.

Accordingly, ASTI and TUI would agree to utilise a portion of the remaining Sectoral Bargaining funds to resolve these issues.

It would be agreed to write to the Department of Education immediately to set out the following:

ASTI and TUI agree to the utilisation of Sectoral Bargaining fund to address the following claims:

TUI Claims:

Staff not in receipt of the Secure Unit Allowance in Secure Care Units/Secure Care Settings including prison settings.

Staff not in receipt of Environmental Allowance following adjudication finding in April 2019.

ASTI Claim:

Staff for whom their increments were frozen in the context of industrial action taken in 2016/2017

ASTI and TUI would also request that the balance remaining in the fund be paid to second-level teachers as a sectoral pay round in accordance with Paragraph 2.1.3 of the Building Momentum Agreement which provides as follows:

2.1.3 In agreement with sectoral management, each Sectoral Bargaining Unit or union/ representative association will have the option of using some or all of the Sectoral Bargaining Fund to address claims appropriate to the process (as per 2.3.3 below) or, in the alternative, to elect for the funds involved to be used as a sectoral pay round.

The above position was brought to the attention of TUI representatives at a meeting between ASTI and TUI, held on 6th December 2022.

TUI agreed to take the proposal away and consult with their Executive. Further discussion would take place in the New Year. ASTI insisted that any meeting regarding Sectoral Bargaining would be entirely separate to a meeting on potential teacher unity.

Teacher recruitment and retention Crisis.

The teacher recruitment and retention crisis continues unabated. To put it in context, a Teacher Supply Steering Group was set up in March 2018. Teachers Unions were excluded. An Action Plan was later published with almost two dozen separate measures included. There has hardly been a dent made in solving the problem. A minimalist approach has been adopted. Those who have decided to take a career break, job share or retire are central to the plan. Students would fill the gaps too. Amazingly, in December 2022, the Minister for Education floated a proposal to axe career breaks for teachers. It demonstrated a lack of joined-up thinking by the Minister for Education and her Department. The reality is that such proposals would likely exacerbate teacher shortages by forcing some teachers to resign. They would do nothing to resolve the teacher shortage crisis and will impact on already low teacher morale.

The ASTI has called for a number of actions to address teacher shortages including:

- Reducing the length and cost of the two-year Professional Masters in Education.
- Offering permanent, secure teaching jobs to teachers.
- A pay review for teachers.
- Addressing obstacles for teachers teaching abroad to return home.
- Restoring promotional structures in schools, so as to ensure teaching is perceived as a sustainable and rewarding career.

ASTI has been warning of a teacher shortage crisis for many years. We have presented evidence and research on the problem and on how it can be best addressed. It is essential that the Minister and the Department of Education involve the key stakeholders who are most familiar with the complexities of the current crisis so that students' education is protected.

The insistence on persisting with a lower salary scale for new entrants, the paltry number of promotional posts and the continued casualisation of the profession cannot continue. Downgrading of the teaching profession has been Government policy for over a decade.

In a trend that is bound to be repeated, parents in a small number of schools have resorted to calling public meetings and demanding solutions from their politicians. A motion on teacher shortages was debated in the Oireachtas in December 2022.

ASTI published its own research last April in the form of a REDC poll of Principals. 84% of Principals reported that there have been situations where no teacher applied for an advertised teaching post.

Undersupply in some areas, particularly acute in Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow looks set to worsen.

Recognition that supply is impacted by broader challenges (demographics, inflation and housing supply) will have to take place and appropriate action taken.

Growing the number of graduates is necessary, through increasing output from PME and B.Ed.

The importance of maintaining the attractiveness of entering the

profession is at stake. The Minister for Education must take radical action to encourage teachers to come back to Ireland and to ensure teachers currently living in Ireland stay. This would include offering such teachers immediate permanent posts and a rebuilding of the promotion structure within schools that was dismantled some years ago. The system is at a tipping point with many schools unable to offer the full range of subjects or employing unqualified personnel to teach in our classrooms.

Housing crisis threatens education system

The ASTI has been vocal on the Housing Crisis as it impacts on members and the communities they serve. Prior to the Raise the Roof rally on Saturday 26th November, 2022, we issued a joint statement with our colleagues in other Education Unions. It stated as follows:

The Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland (ASTI), Fórsa, the Irish National Teachers' Organisation, the Irish Federation of University Teachers, SIPTU (Education) and the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) represent about 110,000 members working in schools, colleges, and education centres across the country.

Ahead of the national Raise the Roof rally on Saturday, 26th November, the six unions have issued a joint statement accusing the government of a failed housing policy that now risks the effective delivery of education services.

"For too long we have witnessed first-hand the deterioration in housing provision, most acutely in our major urban areas. This year we have seen schools and colleges struggle to recruit and retain critical staff, citing severe difficulties in relation to the availability and affordability of accommodation. The effective delivery of education is now fundamentally at risk if we don't take steps to tackle the chronic housing challenges we are facing.

Homelessness is becoming a far too familiar feature of the Irish education landscape. Schools and colleges have become places of sanctuary for pupils who find themselves in such circumstances, but we need to acknowledge how disruptive and challenging this is for vulnerable pupils and their families. Our members report that they often feel helpless, powerless, and ill-equipped to effectively respond to, and support pupils who are experiencing homelessness.

We are calling on our members to support the Raise the Roof Rally on Saturday, 26th November. Together, we must call time on this failed housing policy and ensure government parties fully understand the scale of the crisis and the impact on the delivery of essential public services."

– ASTI, Fórsa, INTO, IFUT, SIPTU (Education) and TUI

Ukraine

One of the features of the last year has been the extent that schools have had to deal with the abhorrent and tragic challenges that the war in Ukraine puts before us.

The crisis and its impact on the Education system continues to evolve. ASTI members will not be found wanting in extending a hearty welcome and settling Ukrainian students into our schools.

Standing Committee approved payment of a €10000 donation to the Red Cross, to provide humanitarian support for victims of the Ukraine conflict. Members in many schools held a coffee morning or other events to raise funds.

It is also clear that the war in Ukraine presents substantial challenges for the Irish school system. ASTI, as a participant in a stakeholder group that has been convened to plan for such scenario

have sought to ensure that the impacts on an already heavily oversubscribed and underfunded system are addressed. We called for provision to overcome the language barriers, the need for education welfare services, critical incidents trauma and wider supports and many other resources that are necessary.

Regional education support teams have been put in place to seek to match up services and streamline provision. The management of the situation will continue to be an enormous strain in the period of time to come.

During 2022, ASTI hosted an Information Webinar on welcoming Ukrainian students to schools to support our members in responding to the Ukrainian refugee crisis and the arrival of thousands of traumatised and vulnerable children in our schools. The webinar provided an overview of the impact of the war in Ukraine on children – 7.5 million of whom, or 50% of all under 18-year-olds, are displaced; information on the education system in Ukraine; guidance and supports for schools; advice from a Cork school with large number of refugee students.

ASTI has also published an FAQ section on our website to assist members in accessing information and resources. It can be accessed as below:

<https://www.asti.ie/your-employment/faqs/faqs-on-welcoming-ukrainian-students/>

ASTI SURVEY FOR CONVENTION 2022 – SUPPORTING TEACHERS, SUPPORTING SCHOOLS

The research objectives were twofold: to inform ASTI's demands for safe re-opening of schools and promoting teachers' welfare and to identify factors impacting on teacher supply and retention.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

Teacher recruitment is facing a crisis

There is a crisis in teacher recruitment at two levels: the immediate availability of certain subject teachers to schools and the declining attractiveness of teaching as a more profession. Almost all principals – 93% - reported that their school had experienced difficulties in recruiting staff since August 2021: 67% had a lot of difficulties, 26% had a little.

These difficulties are manifested in the fact that since August 2021, 84% of principals reported that there has been situations where no teacher applied for an advertised teaching post.

Over half of all principals – 55% - reported that their school currently has unfilled vacancies due to recruitment difficulties. The top three subjects with recruitment difficulties are Irish, maths and home economics.

Principals identify a number of factors they believe are impacting on teacher supply. Chief among these is the inadequate number of teachers graduating in certain subjects, the high cost of the two-year masters degree teaching qualification (PME) and the decline in the attractiveness of teaching as a profession.

In the current school year, 9 out of 10 principals stated that situations had arisen in their school where no substitute teacher cover was available to cover for absent teachers. In these circumstances, the most common response was for the principal or deputy principal to 'stand in' (92%), employing either a student teacher (81%) or an unqualified teacher (61%).

Teacher wellbeing, workload and work satisfaction

More teachers rated their wellbeing as poor (34%) compared to good (28%). Only 3 in 10 teachers rate their wellbeing as good or very good. For over a third of teachers, their wellbeing was rated as fair (37%).

More teachers identified workload and work intensity as having a negative impact on teacher wellbeing in their school than the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 7 out of 10 teachers identified workload (74%) and work intensity (73%) as the main factors negatively impacting on wellbeing. Heavy workload is underscored by fact that most teachers – 89% - have full-time teaching hours.

Teacher wellbeing was also affected by external events including the pandemic (55%) and negative media narratives about teachers (62%) as impacting on wellbeing.

Over half of teachers (58%) stated that their Board of Management did not put in place specific measures to support teacher wellbeing.

Among teachers, the right to disconnect from school e-communications after the school day was the main priority to improve wellbeing (60%), followed by more professional time, i.e., non-class-contact, during the school day (55%) and smaller classes (51%).

Principals too were concerned about teacher wellbeing. While most felt that teacher wellbeing was reasonably good in the circumstances (81%), many were also worried that individual members of staff were manifesting low levels of wellbeing (64%). The majority of Principals concurred that workload was negatively impacting on teachers' wellbeing (67%).

Work satisfaction levels among teachers is low – just over half (51%) indicating satisfaction compared to last year's rating (63%).

Maintaining a safe working environment post-pandemic

The key recommendation from for a safe working environment is smaller classes to reduce over-crowding (77%). Adequate work space for teachers – as distinct from staffroom – is also important (71%) followed by a strong cleaning regime in the school (67%). Improvement to the air conditioning/ventilation systems is also important (58%). Just over half of teachers (51%) stated that their schools had installed HEPA-quality air filters to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

ASTI SUBMISSIONS

OIREACHTAS COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FURTHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE

SUPPORTING UKRAINIAN STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS

ASTI Submission, MAY, 2022

Introduction

The arrival of over 30,000 Ukrainian refugees in Ireland, of whom 6,000 are children or young people, in the space of weeks has required a massive humanitarian response from the state. This response is, moreover, evolving as refugees continue to arrive and planning for accommodation, employment, social protection, education, health has to quickly translate into services and supports on the ground. The humanitarian disaster facing Ukrainian children is of unprecedented proportions. UNICEF has stated that nearly two-thirds of all children in Ukraine have been displaced from their homes. Clearly, the international humanitarian response will require to be immediate, sustained and have particular focus on supporting this generation of children and youth.

The ASTI, in common with the other education stakeholders, has engaged with the Department of Education on a weekly basis to ensure a rapid education response to Ukrainian families. Building on the COVID-19 response process, the stakeholders are working to share information, deliver on school places, create supportive environments and, crucially, serve as a feedback-loop to policy makers on what is happening on the ground. In this submission, the ASTI wishes to draw to highlight areas of provision and policy which require attention.

1. System response

The response of the Department of Education to the arrival in Ireland of over 6,000 students is acknowledged to be expeditious, holistic and humane. Building on the experience of planning and partnership developed during the pandemic, measures were put in place to ensure immediate access to education for Ukrainian children and young people. The network of Regional Education and Language Teams (REALT) established in the 16 Education and Training Boards is already proving to be highly effective. The generous and resilient response of school communities is noteworthy. Schools have opened their doors and their hearts to Ukrainian families and have gone about the business of settling in these students with professionalism and empathy. This response was informed by previous experience of integrating other refugee students, students from direct provision, and unaccompanied minors. It is also noteworthy that the issues which teachers and school leaders have raised in relation to education provision for Ukrainian students are not new. Language support, special needs, teacher training, counselling and pastoral care have all been

identified as under-funded by teachers and school leaders. The sudden arrival of thousands of Ukrainian students in schools over the last months is placing additional pressures on these services.

2. School capacity

To date, the issue of school capacity has not emerged in the public discourse on schooling for Ukrainian students. However, the ASTI is aware of emerging concerns in relation to schools which have waiting lists for admission and potential conflicts with their humanitarian duty to provide access to education for refugee students. Principals have stated that many schools already have waiting lists and that if they do not follow their school admissions policy, as required under the School Admissions Act 2018, they could be open to appeals and potential legal action. Such a scenario has untold potential to feed into negative narratives about migration and refugees and must be avoided. The Department of Education must put in place an appropriate response to avert this situation as a matter of urgency.

3. Language supports

Language skills are foundational to all learning. Migrant and refugee children are typically bi-lingual and policy rightly avoids a 'deficit model' approach. Instead, supports for supporting language acquisition focus on building on students' existing knowledge and skill level. That is why having teachers appointed to as English-as-Additional-Language (EAL) posts is so important in schools. One of the most damaging decisions during austerity was the decision in 2009 which reduced EAL allocation to a maximum of two per school - with alleviation for schools with large numbers of migrant and refugee students.

Teaching English-as-an-additional language is a highly professional practice. EAL teachers identify pupils requiring additional language support, assess pupils' proficiency in English using the assessment materials, devise appropriate language programmes based on the curriculum, in particular core subjects of English and maths, deliver the programmes and record and monitor pupils' progress. Classes are in small mixed-ability groups or on a one-to-one basis. Moreover, language support is not necessarily time-bound as students can still require language support as they move progress from year to year and have to engage with the concomitant increase in curriculum challenge. The ASTI believes that it is time to review the current allocation model for EAL teachers to ensure stability for schools into the future and the current fast-track application process for EAL teachers must continue into the next school year.

Another fundamental weakness in the current model is the lack of a dedicated training programme to enable classroom teachers acquire EAL skills and qualifications. In fact, there is no formal qualification for EAL teaching at present. Teachers are provided with a suite of assessment and teaching resources and the Professional Development Service for Teachers (www.pdst.ie) provides guidance for guidance. However, there is no accredited training programme for EAL teaching. This gap in provision needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

4. Psychological support

A key message from the experts is that of not pathologising refugee students. All of the young people arriving in our schools have

experienced significant disruption to their lives. They are facing many changes and challenges and are having to adjust to a new country, a new language, unfamiliar living arrangements. However, the very fact of arriving safely in Ireland demonstrates individual and collective resilience. All of these young people need time to settle and adapt to their new environment. The young people arriving in our schools already have a range of skills and strategies to help them cope with challenging situations so many will adjust well to their new school setting. Many will show remarkable resilience now that they are in a safer place, but for some recovery will take longer.

The National Educational Psychological Service has provided comprehensive advice to schools on how to respond to this spectrum of need. Schools are already familiar with the core principles of this advice as it informed the Service's support to schools during the pandemic. Clearly, our schools have many strengths to deliver the psychological supports required by Ukrainian students. From the ASTI's perspective, the key issue is the adequacy of current pastoral care structures in schools and of the Guidance Counselling service. The union has long called for a full restoration of middle-management posts in schools to ensure that there is sufficient leadership capacity to provide these programmes. It has also called for the allocation ratio for Guidance Counsellors to be reviewed as a matter of urgency. There are simply not enough posts in our schools to meet the developmental and career guidance needs of students.

5. Curriculum

An acknowledged strength of the second-level curriculum is wide range of subjects offered to students. This diversity will enable Ukrainian students to study subjects which are of interest to them. It should also be noted that the Ukrainian government continues to provide a distance learning platform - National Online School – which is being used by Ukrainian students. Flexibility is the key in terms of schools best meeting Ukrainian students' needs. It is also of note students can currently sit a Leaving Certificate examination in language not taught in the school, for example, Japanese, Russian, Chinese, Lithuanian, Polish and Portuguese. This examination is based on the syllabus developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. The ASTI strongly recommends that the NCCA fast-track work on developing a similar syllabus for Ukrainian students to be in place for the state examination in 2023.

The Guidance Counselling service in schools will also be important in terms of providing information and guidance to Ukrainian students on requirements and options for post-school education and training. The ASTI must point out that there is already unsustainable pressure on this service in schools. While the number of guidance posts lost in Budget 2021 have slowly been restored, this simple restoration measure does not take into account the new emphasis accorded to guidance in the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme. Neither does it take into account the emphasis on expanding apprenticeships and the wider FET sector for school leavers.

*<https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/latest/news/online-ed-resources-ua.htm>

6. Digital and other practical supports

One of the most practical supports the education system can provide to Ukrainian students is digital devices and free access to broadband. Having appropriate devices supports language acquisition and access to the curriculum. The provision of emergency financial support to schools to purchase digital devices during the pandemic must be continued to those schools which have Ukrainian refugees. Free access to broadband will also be

critical. Schools have already identified the need to be able to provide other practical supports such as uniforms, school bags, books, etc. Currently, there is huge good will and communal effort in providing the latter. However, local charity will not be sufficient into the future. The Department of Education must ensure that existing schemes such as the Back-to-School grant and the school book grant scheme are sufficiently funded and made available to Ukrainian families.

Many schools have already identified the provision of hot school meals as a practical support for refugee children, many of whom are living in temporary accommodation with poor facilities for cooking. Currently, the School Meals Programme is targeted at DEIS schools. However, there is no automatic entitlement to funding and all applications are considered in light of the available budget for the scheme. Funding will be provided only to existing projects that have shown ongoing viability and applications must be made on an annual basis. In other words, the scheme is extremely limited. It is high time that a national policy for school meals was developed. Ireland is a shameful outlier in terms of this basic service in schools. Indeed, in this as in other areas, the sudden influx of thousands of refugee children and young people into our schools has once again exposed the deficiencies in investment.

7. Teacher registration and professional learning

The Teaching Council has developed a tailored registration process to support the registration of teachers who have qualified in Ukraine and who have been granted Temporary Protection under the EU Temporary Protection Directive. The qualifications of qualified Ukrainian applicants eligible to apply under this process will be assessed following initial registration. This assessment process is to ensure that qualifications are of a comparable standard to those achieved by graduates of accredited programmes in Ireland. Where significant differences arise, conditions are applied to the teacher's registration. The vetting and police clearance processes have also been adjusted to ensure that standards are maintained while taking account of the unique situation in Ukraine. These measures are welcomed by the ASTI which has long insisted that the Council must reduce delays around registration process, in particular for foreign nationals, in order to address problems in teacher supply.

As noted above, Irish schools have developed expertise in opening their doors and providing quality education for migrant and refugee children. This response is characteristic of the teaching profession which has a deep ethical commitment to inclusion and care for all students. However, teachers must be supported in their work through access to good quality CPD. In the current situation, CPD on responding to trauma and on EAL-teaching is really essential and should be put in place.

8. Concluding remarks

To date, the humanitarian response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis has been a whole-of-society effort. This is something of which we are all rightly proud of. However, as we know from the pandemic, we must be mindful that such collective responses can, over time, become weakened and undermined by misleading and deliberately manipulative political narratives. Trade unions across Europe are extremely concerned about the rise of anti-immigrant, xenophobic and reactionary political forces who will use social crises to undermine the legitimacy of democratic governments and egalitarian political policies. We cannot be complacent in Ireland about wider political developments within the European Union. Getting it right in education policy is therefore important. Continued dialogue with the teaching profession is essential.

OIREACHTAS COMMITTEE ON AUTISM

ASTI Submission, 5th JULY, 2022

Introduction

The ASTI appreciates this opportunity to submit its views on the issues which need to be addressed to meet the needs of students with special educational needs, including ASD students, in second-level schools. Engaging with, and listening to the voice and experience of the professional educators, is a vital dimension of good educational policy-making. The ASTI considers that we are at an important juncture in terms of a step-change in the Irish state's delivery of its commitments following its ratification in 2018 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD). The progressive Resolutions adopted by Dáil Eireann in April 2019 and 2021 demonstrate the widespread public demand for progress on meeting the needs of persons with autism, a demand which extends to all persons with disabilities. The commitment to implementation of the Autism Innovation Strategy, launched earlier this year, underlines this positive turn in government policy.

Note: This submission does not attempt to address the many complex issues in education policy in relation to inclusion. Rather, it addresses the relevant key issues in the Committee's request for submissions.

Access to education

Access to education is fundamental to realising the right to education. Currently, according to the Office of Children's Ombudsman (OCO), there are 270 autistic children do not have a school place for the next school year in September. A further 15,500 children travel outside of their locality each day to attend specialist provision, another 1,455 students are in receipt of Home Tuition as a result of the lack of specialised placements.¹ This is a recurrent problem in the system. The OCO's Report notes that the DE has stated that its planning is hampered, in part, by parental choice regarding their child's education setting. The OCO has observed that where a child has a diagnosis and recommendation for a specialist placement and a parent wishes to exercise that option, the system lags in its response, and for many children who live in provision 'black spots', most notably Dublin and Cork, the system fails in its response. Clearly, without proactive capacity building at a local level, utilising the real-time data such as that deployed in the new identification model for DEIS schools, this situation is set to deteriorate further with future pressure on school provision expected to be concentrated in and around Metropolitan Areas at both primary and post-primary level.²

Secondly, the ASTI is concerned about the emerging narrative that schools are reluctant to enrol SEN students, including ASD students. Some of the commentary – media and political – around the decision of the Cabinet to approve the Education (Provision in Respect of Children with Special Educational Needs) Bill 2022 last week, which aims to compel schools to open special classes within six to eight weeks (the existing process can take up to 18 months) has been misplaced. Schools are highly regulated institutions, at both legislative and policy levels, and decisions in relation to admission must comply with both. Capacity is also essential: if a school does not have, for example, a dedicated sensory room for ASD students and is already over-crowded, the Board of Management may consider that it simply does not have the capacity

to meet specific needs. The solution to such a situation lies with the DE which should respond with additional financing within very short time frames: the rapid allocation of additional resources to schools during the pandemic and, more recently, the sudden arrival of almost 7,000 Ukrainian students proves that the DE can respond efficiently and effectively when necessary.

Thirdly, the ASTI believes that such a narrative deflects attention from the wider contextual issues of social infrastructure failing to keep up with a developer-led market-based model of housing provision. The consequent lack of sufficient number of school places is familiar to members of the Oireachtas, many of whom routinely raise this issue in the Dáil. The current housing crisis is impacting on all aspects of our society, not least the education system which is facing a prolonged teacher supply problem, driven in part by the unaffordability of accommodation – rented or privately owned – in most urban areas.

Recommendation: Access to a school place is fundamental to any ambition for inclusive education. The former is dependant on investment in school buildings and facilities: it is unfair to attribute sole responsibility on schools for infrastructural and human resource decisions made at central level.

Access to assessment and intervention

Delays in access to assessment and intervention continue to undermine the right to an inclusive education of ESD students. Currently, there are approximately 4,000 children awaiting a diagnostic assessment to get a school place. From the ASTI's perspective, these delays are primarily attributable to a failure by the state to adequately invest in public services as well as to inadequate workforce planning to anticipate current and future need.^[1] Across many sectors, workload, burnout, high levels of staff turnover are having a hugely detrimental impact on service delivery. It is of note that a common thread of the analysis provided in the OCO Report is that of failure to plan resulting in a mismatch between need and actual provision. This has resulted in waiting times for both assessments and services as 'now intolerable'.^[2] As noted in the Dáil debate on 29th April, 2021, the HSE confirmed an average 19-month waiting time for an assessment – in direct contravention of the legal requirements under the Disability Act 2005 which stipulates that such assessments be commenced within three months and completed within six months. Shockingly, less than 10% of assessments are carried out within the statutory time-frame.^[3] Many families have to resort to paying for private assessments which can cost several hundred euro: moreover, as also noted in the Dáil debate of April 2021, due to Ireland's two-tier health service, families from more disadvantaged backgrounds, or without the financial resources, cannot access timely intervention, which is leading to increased levels of stress and difficulties for families of children with autism. Immediate steps must be taken to extend access to assessment services via the National Educational Psychological Service and the Scheme for Commissioning Psychological Assessments. It is of note that that latter was introduced as an 'interim' measure in 2007, underlining the need for a review of the overall psychological service for schools. Given that the prevalence of SEN in the student population is estimated at 25%, the latter is imperative to ensure timely and effective assessment and intervention responses.

Recommendation: Immediate steps must be taken to extend access to assessment services via the National Educational Psychological Service and the Scheme for Commissioning Psychological Assessments. A review of overall psychological service should be undertaken, given sustained growth in population and a SEN prevalence rate of 25%.

Inclusive education for all

Notwithstanding the current focus on school places and waiting lists for assessments, there are many strengths in our education system which need to be stated. Only 2% of SEN students are educated in separate facilities. The Framework for Junior Cycle, introduced in 2015, has ensured that differentiated and appropriate curriculum is available for SEN students. The Inspectorate has a dedicated evaluation of provision for special educational needs in schools which focuses on learning outcomes, resource deployment and structures and systems in place to meet the goal of inclusive education.

This evaluation model was introduced following major changes to the allocation process of additional Special Education Teachers (SET) – formerly called resource/learning support teachers – to schools. This model removed the obligation for an assessment of need in order to receive additional teaching supports. (Prior to 2017, students with less complex needs such as dyslexia, could not get additional support without an assessment: students with complex needs, such as ASD, continue to have provision based on assessment.) It also marked a move away from the practice of withdrawing students from mainstream classes to one where the SET teacher co-teaches with the subject teacher in the classroom. Ideally, this should have brought about a culture change in school. However, as noted in the Chief Inspector's Report 2016-2020, this has not occurred to the degree envisaged.³ Specifically, the latter identified the need for an induction programme for SET teachers as well as support for teacher collaboration and usage of assessment data in developing plans for SEN students. This is not an unexpected finding as no national training programme accompanied the introduction of the new allocation model in 2017 despite the demand for same from teachers and school principals. Another debilitating feature of the introduction of the new model was the lack of a dedicated allocation of teaching time for SEN co-ordination activities.

Both of these 'omissions' in implementation policy continue to negatively impact on overall SEN provision as highlighted in Red C research commissioned by ASTI in 2019.⁴ Several findings confirm the need to focus on providing resources for coordination and teacher upskilling:

- ❖ Only 16% of Assistant Principals had a SEN coordination role
- ❖ Only 5% of mainstream teachers have a SEN qualification
- ❖ 40% of SET teachers do not have a SEN qualification
- ❖ 68% respondents stated that smaller classes were essential to meet SEN needs

The ASTI has consistently communicated to the DE that a dedicated post requires to be established in all schools to ensure that the many complex and time-consuming tasks, not least liaison with parents, external services, subject teachers and pastoral care leaders, are effectively discharged.

Recommendation: A national CPD programme must be provided and all school should have a dedicated post for SEN coordination.

Concluding observations

The ASTI is committed to inclusive education and believes that it is the model most consonant with the needs of children and young people and wider social inclusion goals. The UN CRPD requires Ireland to move towards an inclusive education system which will require continued investment in schools, in the teaching profession,

in assessment and intervention, and in school leadership. Education policy should regard inclusion as a process rather than a fixed outcome. Concepts of rights and duty bearers will continue to evolve in democratic society and education policy must be proactive in ensuring effective 'fits' between desired outcomes and implementation strategies on the ground. From the ASTI's perspective, the most important resource in the school system is the teaching profession. Supporting the profession requires sustainable workloads, good working conditions – including equal pay for equal work, resourced in-school management structures, and supports for CPD.

Notes

- 1 <https://www.oco.ie/news/plan-for-places-oco-report-highlights-need-for-adequate-forward-planning-to-ensure-children-with-sen-receive-equal-access-to-education/>
- 2 <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/220043/d6b98002-a904-427f-b48a-0fa0af756ea7.pdf#page=null>
- 3 <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/611873-chief-inspector-reports/>
- 4 <https://www.asti.ie/document-library/achieving-inclusive-schools-the-teachers-perspective-april-2019/>

ASTI VIEWS ON SECTION 37A, EDUCATION (ADMISSION TO SCHOOLS) ACT, 2018

ASTI Submission, AUGUST 23rd, 2022

Introduction

The Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 was an important development in terms of ensuring the right to education as it requires that a school's admission policy contain a statement that the school shall not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on specified grounds as set out in the equality legislation. Further, it provides that in certain circumstances, the patron or Minister may issue a direction to a board of management in relation to the admission of students to a school. From the outset, the ASTI has welcomed this legislation as it addressed acknowledged lacunae in existing legislation in relation to schools' admission policies. The ratification by the State of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2018 is also an important development as it will seek accountability from the state in terms of its obligations under the Convention.

Barriers to inclusive education

Unfortunately, as requested in the letter of invitation, the ASTI is unable to comment on the operation of Section 37A to date as notices to schools under this Act only commenced to issue in June 2021 to primary schools. However, as a trade union representing teachers, including school principals, the ASTI is fully apprised of the capacity issues impeding progress towards full inclusion in our schools, especially for students with special educational needs. Since the introduction of the EPSEN Act in 2004, the ASTI has made numerous submissions to the Department of Education on

the need for adequate investment in education. The 2021 OECD Education at a Glance report once again confirmed that Ireland is at the bottom of global rankings in terms of investment in education with 1.1% of GDP in second-level education compared to OECD and EU averages of 1.9%. Failure to invest in education means larger class sizes, overcrowded accommodation, inadequate provision of clinical services, including speech, language and occupational therapists, and psychological mental health services for children and young people. The teaching profession is under-supported, teachers have unsustainable workloads and in-school management structures are over-stretched. These deficits in our second level education system have a direct impact on the capacity of schools to provide inclusive education.

In its recent submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Autism, the ASTI highlighted these concerns.¹ In this submission, the ASTI also expressed its concern about an emerging narrative which suggests that schools are reluctant to enrol SEN students. Schools are highly regulated institutions, at both legislative and policy levels, and decisions in relation to admission must comply with both. Capacity is also essential: if a school does not have, for example, a dedicated sensory room for ASD students and is already over-crowded, the Board of Management may consider that it simply does not have the capacity to meet specific needs. Even when a Board may consider that it has capacity, delays in completing building works, in sanctioning the appointment of additional teachers and SNAs, and in accessing clinical and other supports may impact on admission decisions.

Earlier in June, the Office of Children's Ombudsman (OCO), stated that 270 autistic children did not have a school place for the new school year in September. A further 15,500 children must travel outside of their locality to attend school while another 1,455 students are in receipt of Home Tuition as a result of the lack of specialised placements.² The OCO's Report notes that the DE has stated that its planning is hampered, in part, by parental choice regarding their child's education setting. The OCO has observed that where a child has a diagnosis and recommendation for a specialist placement and a parent wishes to exercise that option, the system lags in its response, and for many children who live in provision 'black spots', most notably Dublin and Cork, the system fails in its response. Clearly, without proactive capacity building at a local level, utilising the real-time data such as that deployed in the new identification model for DEIS schools, this situation is set to deteriorate further with future pressure on school provision expected to be concentrated in and around Metropolitan Areas at both primary and post-primary level.³ Since then, the Education (Provision in respect of Children with Special Educational Needs) Act 2022 has been enacted which requires schools to cooperate with the NCSE and the Department in terms of providing special classes. However, this new piece of legislation in itself will not address the underlying capacity issues.

Access to assessment and intervention

Delays in access to assessment and intervention continue to have an enormous impact on access to education. Currently, approximately 4,000 children are awaiting a diagnostic assessment to get a school place. From the ASTI's perspective, these delays are primarily attributable to a failure by the state to adequately invest in public services as well as to inadequate workforce planning to anticipate current and future need. Across many sectors, workload, burnout, high levels of staff turnover are having hugely detrimental impact on service delivery. It is of note that a common thread of the analysis provided in the OCO Report is that of failure to plan, resulting in a mismatch between need and actual provision. This has resulted in waiting times for both

assessments and services as 'now intolerable'. As noted in the Dáil debate on 29th April, 2021, currently the average waiting time for an assessment is 19 months –whereas under the Disability Act 2005, such assessments should be commenced within 3 months and completed within 6 months. Shockingly, less than 10% of assessments are carried out within the statutory time-frame. The non-availability of timely assessment data undermines schools' capacity to plan for the admission of students and ensure that all necessary supports are in place upon admission.

Ensuring an inclusive education for all

Notwithstanding the current problems, there are many strengths in our education system which need to be stated. Only 2% of SEN students are educated in separate facilities. The Framework for Junior Cycle provides a differentiated curriculum for SEN students. The revised allocation process for schools introduced in 2017 removed the obligation for an assessment of need in order to receive additional teaching supports. The attendant Departmental Guideline emphasised the need to move away from the practice of withdrawing students from mainstream classes to ensure that all students experienced an inclusive education. However, as noted in the Chief Inspector's Report 2016-2020, this has not occurred to the degree envisaged.⁴ Specifically, the latter identified the need for an induction programme for SET teachers as well as support for teacher collaboration and usage of assessment data in developing plans for SEN students. This is not an unexpected finding as no national training programme accompanied the introduction of the new model in 2017 despite the demand for same from all the education stakeholders. Another debilitating feature of the introduction of the new model was the lack of a dedicated allocation of teaching time for SEN co-ordination activities.

ASTI commissioned research in 2019 highlighted capacity problems in schools in terms of inclusive education:⁵

- ❖ Only 16% of Assistant Principals had a SEN coordination role
- ❖ Only 5% of mainstream teachers have a SEN qualification
- ❖ 40% of SET teachers do not have a SEN qualification

Class size was also highlighted as negatively impacting on inclusive practices: 68% of teachers stated that smaller classes were essential to meet SEN students' needs. The ASTI has repeatedly communicated to the Department that a dedicated SEN post requires to be established in every school to meet the requirements of the Departmental guidelines. Once again, the ASTI is calling on the Department to develop a national training programme for teachers on inclusive education.

Concluding observations

The ASTI is committed to inclusive education and believes that it is the model most consonant with the needs of children and young people and wider societal goals. Non-discriminatory school admission policies are already in place. What is not in place is adequate planning for school places and investment in our schools. Moreover, resort to Section 37A should be a measure of last resort. Its deployment – in the absence of concrete measures to address well-founded concerns of schools such as adequate accommodation, sufficient SET and SNA personnel, access to clinical services – has already been negatively received by the education stakeholders. What is now needed is an Action Plan from the Department of Education which addresses the acknowledged barriers to inclusive education and sets out the

roadmap for meeting its obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Notes

- 1 <https://www.asti.ie/news-campaigns/latest-news/asti-submission-to-special-oireachtas-committee-on-autism/>
- 2 <https://www.oco.ie/news/plan-for-places-oco-report-highlights-need-for-adequate-forward-planning-to-ensure-children-with-sen-receive-equal-access-to-education/>
- 3 <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/220043/d6b98002-a904-427f-b48a-0fa0af756ea7.pdf#page=null>
- 4 <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/611873-chief-inspector-reports/>
- 5 <https://www.asti.ie/document-library/achieving-inclusive-schools-the-teachers-perspective-april-2019/>

ASTI RESPONSE TO TG4 PROPOSAL ON CÚLA4

ASTI Submission, 5th September 2022

Introduction

The proposal by TG4 to establish a dedicated Irish language children's channel on Saorview is welcomed by the ASTI. Children engage with the media from early childhood, in particular with TV. Currently, there are 21 children's TV channels available in Ireland, almost all of which are commercial UK or US channels. This should be a matter of concern given that, by definition, the ethos and content of these channels do not relate to Irish society and the socio-cultural context experienced by Irish children. Media experiences are fundamental to shaping children's understanding of self as well as their understanding, attitudes and engagement with the wider social world. Indeed, this role is not unlike that of the mission of the school. Unlike the latter, however, commercial media content is not regulated by wider social values and practices, constitutional precepts or public accountability. Public service broadcasting has a clearly articulated social purpose and is accountable to the wider society. That is why the proposal from TG4 represents an important moment in the Irish broadcasting context.

Rationale

The rationale for the establishment of Cúla4 is well set out in TG4's proposal. It is premised on the explicit social purpose of public service broadcasting. Children should be able to engage with media in safe space and with trusted content. The latter is particularly significant in an age of ever-increasing social changes and an increasingly diverse society. Moreover, content should be relatable to children's lives by reflecting the wider Irish society from a local and national perspective. Children need to be able to 'see' themselves in the media and thereby gain understanding of their own community and the wider society.

The ASTI firmly supports the case for an Irish-language channel set out in the proposal. The availability of such a channel is essential to the wider public project of protecting and supporting the Irish language as a spoken community language. From an early age, children and young people should have access to a TV channel that allows them to engage with the Irish language and develop competence and skills in the Irish language.

It is also the case that certain types of children's programmes such as live action drama, sport and educational programmes are not sufficiently attractive for commercial broadcasters to produce. Public service broadcasting can fill this gap.

The shift to remote schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic has radically demonstrated the potential for public service broadcasting to meet society's needs. The high level of usage by teachers and pupils at primary level of current Cúla4 educational content during the pandemic clearly indicates that there is a demand for more educational programming.

Citizenship and democracy

The risks posed by unregulated social media platforms to democracy and human rights are increasingly acknowledged. Online content constructed by algorithms are increasingly the source for young people's information about what is happening in the world. Such content is frequently untruthful and harmful. Children and young people need access to news which is impartial, age-appropriate and from trusted sources. Public service broadcasting has a particular responsibility in this regard.

ASTI SUBMISSION TO OIREACHTAS COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FURTHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE ON MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS

1. Introduction

The ASTI welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's examination of issues in relation to mental health supports in schools and tertiary institutions. This examination is timely not only in the context of the redevelopment of the senior cycle curriculum but also in light of the growing concern around third-level students' wellbeing. This concern is well placed: education is fundamental to our country's social and economic development. Failure to flourish while at school or college is never an individual problem: it is the problem of the family, the school community and the wider society. Given the complexity of mental health and wellbeing issues, this submission will focus exclusively on second-level schools, their response to students with mental health problems and what interventions are required to better support schools in their work.

This submission uses the definition of mental health difficulties contained in the Government's policy paper, 'Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone' (2020). The term includes the full range of difficulties, from psychological distress experienced by many to severe mental disorders that affect a smaller population.¹

2. Prevalence of youth mental health difficulties

There is increasing concern about the mental health of young people in Ireland. Reports of psychological distress, substance abuse

and suicide among young people are regularly the subject of public concern and serve to promote awareness and help-seeking behaviour. The prevalence of youth mental health problems is highly concerning. In 2013, research by the Royal College of Surgeons demonstrated that by the age of 13 years, 1 in 3 young people in Ireland are likely to have experienced some type of mental health difficulty. By the age of 24 years, that rate had increased to over 1 in 2. Of particular concern is the fact that the suicide rate for young people aged 15-19 years is the fourth highest in the EU.² The World Health Organisation has stated that 20% of adolescents may experience a mental health problem in any given year. 50% of mental health problems are established by age 14 and 75% by age 24.

More recently, research has found that 42% of adults in Ireland met diagnostic requirements for at least one mental health disorder, with younger people more likely to have a disorder. In fact, people aged 18 to 24 were eight times more likely than older people to have a mental health disorder. Worryingly, the research found that people *experiencing a mental health disorder were five times more likely than those without a disorder to have attempted suicide.*³

*The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth mental health must be a factor large in future policy considerations. There is a strong body of evidence in Ireland which indicates that children and adolescents experienced adverse mental health effects, including feelings of social isolation, depression, anxiety, and increases in maladaptive behaviour. Families with children with autism spectrum disorders reported increased mental health difficulties during this period mostly due to changes to routine.*⁴

ESRI research further highlighted the impact of socio-economic inequalities on families and young people during the pandemic with negative effects on wellbeing and mental health more prevalent among those from poorer backgrounds.⁵ It concluded that the growing levels of anxiety, stress and depression documented among the adult population are likely to be mirrored, if not amplified, among children and young people. The scale of difficulties is likely to be such that addressing them through existing child and adolescent mental health services may not be feasible, especially given high pre-COVID-19 levels of unmet demand for community mental health services. It is crucial therefore to develop flexible and innovative approaches to promoting socioemotional wellbeing through schools and youth services.

3. Youth mental health and schools

The role that schools play in supporting the wellbeing of children is a major global policy concern. The OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI)'s 21st Century Children project focuses on the nature of modern childhood. On a number of measures, children's lives have clearly improved: better health care, child protection, and support for their physical and mental well-being. At the same time, there are signs of new stresses. Children in the 21st century are reporting more anxiety, including from increased pressures in increasingly 'consumerist' cultures while the omnipresent nature of the digital world means that risks like cyberbullying, sexual harassment, abuse and grooming, are very real threats to their wellbeing and mental health.⁶

Irish second-level schools have a justified reputation for their focus on providing a holistic education aimed at meeting the developmental needs of young people. This approach is embedded in the Department of Education's *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice*, first published in 2018. It provides a definition of wellbeing, and an overarching structure for the range of supports already available in schools.⁷ Its core aims are to:

- ❖ build core social and emotional skills and competencies

- ❖ enable students to experience supportive relationships within the school setting
- ❖ ensure that students are integrated into the school environment and culture that feels both physically and psychologically safe, in which they feel a sense of belonging and connectedness, that their voice is heard, and they feel supported

These aims are achieved through existing school structures such as pastoral care, the Guidance Counsellor service, peer-led mentoring project, etc, are all part of the 'safety-net' that schools provide for vulnerable young people. Provision for students with special educational needs, students at risk of early school leaving and at risk of neglect or other abuse form part of this eco-system of support, as do anti-bullying and positive student behaviour policies.

The curriculum is also important and the ASTI welcomes the development of a follow-on programme for SPHE at senior cycle. Subjects continue to be developed with a focus on key skills, including Managing Myself, Staying Well, Communicating, Being Creative, Working with Others, and Managing Information and Thinking.

Counselling is a key part of the role of the Guidance Counsellor, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process, at moments of personal crisis but also at key transition points. The Guidance Counsellor also identifies and supports the referral of students to external counselling agencies and professionals, as required. Students attend the service for many reasons including family concerns, such as marital break-up or parental pressure; peer issues such as bullying and relationship problems; academic areas such as concerns about exams; issues to do with the self, such as suicidal ideation, aggression, self-harm, pregnancy, concerns about sexuality, abuse, depression, anxiety and eating disorders. A major challenge for the service is that when they decide that the student requires further expert support such as CAMHS, they are not confident that access to this service will be timely.

However, for some students, these supports are not adequate. Last year, Dr Paul Downes, Director of DCU's Educational Disadvantage Centre, presented compelling evidence to this Committee's on the need for specialist emotional counselling and therapeutic supports in and around schools. He has been influential in highlighting the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) on children's development and the need for appropriate responses. The Committee's report fully supported this proposal and recommended that such supports be provided through a reconstituted and expanded National Educational Psychological and Counselling Service (NEPCS).⁸ The announcement in this year's Budget of a pilot process in primary schools is welcome but the question must be asked, what about older children and adolescents? Teachers - individually and collectively - are influential in mental health promotion but they are not mental health workers. Early intervention is the key to successful outcomes. The 'whole-of-person' approach underpinning 'Sharing the Vision' is best realised in the school context where young people are in familiar and safe environments with their peers and caring professionals. From what we already know about the epidemiology of mental ill-health, it is clear that adolescence is the stage when mental health issues begin to manifest and demand attention.

The current mental health supports for children and adolescents, CAMHS, remains under severe pressure as is evidenced in long waiting lists and variability of service provision across regions. The Committee's recommendation for a reconstituted NEPCS would reduce this pressure. The gap between what schools can provide

and what CAMHS can offer is too wide – and the wait too long. The Minister for Education must take on board the set of recommendations in ‘Sharing the Vision’ on education and early intervention and ensure the roll-out of a reconstituted NEPCS to all schools within a clear time frame.

4. What do schools need to respond to students with mental health difficulties?

It is clear from the above that the schools have a central role to play in supporting young people with mental health difficulties. However, schools are not a mental health service for young people: such a service can only be provided by qualified and experienced professionals working with families, with schools and specialist services, such as residential care. At the same time, a number of measures can and must be taken to strengthen the capacity of schools to support young people with mental health difficulties. They include:

Extending the Guidance Counselling service in schools by decreasing the appointment ratio

The appointment ratio for Guidance Counsellors needs to be reduced in order to ensure that schools have enough trained Guidance Counsellor teachers. Unlike in other systems, the Guidance Counselling service is holistic and integrationist, placing the student firmly at the centre of the four areas of social/personal counselling, vocational guidance counselling and educational guidance counselling. The junior cycle Wellbeing programme has added significantly to the workload of Guidance Counsellors. In a nutshell, schools need more Guidance Counsellors. The need to expand capacity in the service was also a core recommendation of the 2021 Indecon Report on career guidance.⁹

Extend the pilot project for emotional counsellors and therapeutic supports to second-level schools

There is a growing body of evidence at EU level that exposure to adverse early childhood experiences is directly and inter-generationally associated with poor mental and physical health outcomes, with attendant social and economic costs to society.¹⁰ Nationally, the 2019 report authored by Dr Downes on the educational experiences of a sample of homeless men in Dublin aged 18-38 Years provides stark evidence of gaps that can and must be remediated.¹¹ ‘Flashpoints’ included the transition from primary to second level; negative engagement with schools’ norms and policies leading to frequent suspension and expulsion; not succeeding in learning; lack of supports, especially counselling and therapeutic supports; failure to make successful transitions after school. Above all, the report resonates with a call for help while in school in terms of behaviour, anger management, feeling alienated from teachers and their peers, family problems.

Strengthen school leadership by creating more leadership roles

High quality leadership is crucial in establishing a shared purpose and vision for a school and to the achievement of high-quality educational outcomes for students. The primary purpose of school leadership and management is to create and sustain an environment that underpins high quality in student care, learning and teaching.¹² School leadership is increasingly demanding as schools are to deliver on complex social policy goals such as inclusion, diversity and equity as well as responding to multiple societal concerns such as bullying, youth mental health, sustainable development, etc. The key to strong and effective school leadership is having sufficient numbers of leadership posts in schools. Thirteen years after a moratorium on appointments to leadership posts under austerity, the number of such posts still has not met pre-austerity levels, despite the sustained increase in school population.

Professional learning and development for teachers

In 2017, a new model of allocation of resources to schools to support students with special educational needs was introduced. It removed the need for a diagnostic assessment of need in order to secure resources while retaining access to professional assessment for lower incidence/higher need students. Schools now assumed greater responsibility for identifying high incidence needs, putting in place appropriate learning plans, ensuring regular monitoring and reporting on students’ progress. Unfortunately, this new model was not accompanied by any national training initiative for classroom teachers.

This example of recent failure to support policy innovation with investment in teachers’ professional learning continues to have negative consequences, not least a teaching profession that feels bypassed while yet held responsible for inclusion of all needs in the mainstream classroom. This failure is symptomatic of a model of policy innovation which has become all too familiar in recent years – a period which is also marked by growing problems in teacher supply and retention. There needs to be a comprehensive examination of professional learning needs of teachers and appropriate programmes put in place to meet current and future demands on the school community.

Teacher wellbeing central must also be acknowledged

As noted in the Guidelines for Wellbeing in the Junior Cycle, part of the task of putting wellbeing on the school map involves creating opportunities for teachers to consider their own sense of wellbeing. The Teaching Council recognises ‘the importance of care of self so as to be able to care for others and, in that context, teachers’ well-being is vital if they are to effectively lead learning, and support and facilitate students in this endeavour’.¹³ In a sense, student wellbeing in starts with the staff. They are in the front line of the work and it is hard for them to be genuinely motivated to promote emotional and social wellbeing of others if they feel uncared for and burnt out themselves. Teachers’ consistently report low morale and poor wellbeing in ASTI research. A large part of this malaise is attributed to workload and the increasing intensification of teachers working lives. It is also attributable to a feeling of not being valued and a lack of public or political appreciation of their work and the work of schools. A health workplace framework for schools is a long over policy intervention for a resilient school workforce.

5. Conclusion

Schools are uniquely placed to support young people with mental health difficulties. The implementation plan for Sharing the Vision strategy contains several important recommendations on how schools can be best supported to deliver on their potential. They include ongoing professional development/national CPD for all teachers; expanding dedicated services such as TUSLA’s education welfare service, the National Psychological Service; continued targeting of DEIS schools. The Plan also acknowledges the need for clearer protocols in terms of communications between schools, school support services and mental health services. Its wider recommendations on healthy workplace interventions have a particular resonance for the teaching workforce. All of the above require engagement with the teaching profession and investment in the human resources provided to and within schools.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically made society aware of the centrality of schools to the wellbeing of young people. Policy-makers must reflect on how government can better support the vital work of schools in educating, supporting and socialising our

young people in the post-pandemic period. Schools are seriously under-invested in given the multiplicity of roles that they clearly discharge. Schools cannot effectively address complex societal problems such as bullying if there are not enough teachers, not enough dedicated leadership posts, not enough specialist teachers such as Guidance Counsellors, no training programmes for teachers. Many of the recommendations which the ASTI makes in this section of our submission are relevant to other areas of school life.

Notes

- 1 <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2e46f-sharing-the-vision-a-mental-health-policy-for-everyone/>
- 2 https://repository.rcsi.com/articles/report/The_Mental_Health_of_Young_People_in_Ireland_A_report_of_the_Psychiatric_Epidemiology_Research_across_the_Lifespan_PERL_Group/10796129
- 3 <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/news-events/over-40-irish-adults-have-mental-health-disorder-and-one-ten-have-attempted-suicide-mu-ni-and>
- 4 <https://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/16626/1/KatrionaOSullivanQualitative2020.pdf>
- 5 https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/SUSTAT94_3.pdf
- 6 https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/b7f33425-en/1/1/3/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/b7f33425-en&csp_=8178ddc35728ca609f27f5e6dd559e7c&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book
- 7 <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/851a8e-wellbeing-in-education/>
- 8 <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/press-centre/press-releases/20210823-education-committee-launches-report-on-school-bullying-and-the-impact-on-mental-health/>
- 9 <https://assets.gov.ie/24951/dffde726604b451aa6cc50239a375299.pdf>
- 10 [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(21\)00232-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(21)00232-2/fulltext)
- 11 https://pmvtrust.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Final-DCU_Summary_Report_online.pdf
- 12 <https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/293039e549914b1ca7dc87ed5f25ef9b/>
- 13 https://ncca.ie/media/2487/wellbeingguidelines_forjunior_cycle.pdf

EXEMPTIONS FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH, 2022

ASTI SUBMISSION TO COMHCHOISTE NA GAELIGE, NA GAELTACHTA AGUS PHOBAL LABHARTHA NA GAELIGE

ASTI Submission, 4th October 2022

Introduction

The ASTI appreciates this opportunity to engage with An Comhchoiste na Gaeilge, na Gaeltachta agus Phobal Labhartha na Gaeilge and commends it for organising this meeting. Strengthening the position of the language within our education system is a key focus of the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language, 2010 -2030 and it is important that An Chomhchoiste continues to monitor

changes to the procedures for exemptions for the study of Irish in schools.

The ASTI submitted a full statement of its views on exemptions to the study of Irish in response to the Department of Education's consultation paper in January 2019.¹ It endorsed the paper's articulation of the linguistic, social and cultural importance of the Irish language and its potential to contribute to the goal of an inclusive society characterised by growing cultural diversity. The decision to exempt a student from the study of Irish has significant implications for students, schools and the wider community. The ASTI position is that students should be given every reasonable opportunity to participate in the learning of Irish for as long as possible. Exemptions from the study of Irish should only be granted in circumstances which meet clearly understood thresholds of need.

Context

The decision on whether or not to grant an exemption from the study of Irish is devolved to the school on the basis that the school is best placed to understand the needs of individual students and how those needs can best be addressed in accordance with wider policy on responding to special educational needs in an inclusive school environment.

Revised Department of Education circulars on exemptions from the study of Irish were issued in August 2022 to primary and second-level schools. The revisions were informed by a review of the implementation of the 2019 circulars which, in turn, replaced circulars in place since the mid-1990s.² The initial review of the 2019 circulars highlighted the need for further changes to ensure equity in the granting of recommendations. In particular, an important feature of the 2019 circulars was a move away from a diagnostic categorial assessment model to a needs-based model in line with other changes to special educational needs policy and practice in schools. This changed approach was important as there was strong anecdotal evidence that access to private assessments were used to gain exemptions for students who were not adjudged by the school to have needed same. This was a particular concern at second level as evidenced in the fact that students who had been granted exemptions from the study of Irish continued to study additional languages to Leaving Certificate level. This raises concerns about equity, transparency and the integrity of the school's curriculum. Teachers of Irish have expressed concern that the unchecked growth in the number of exemptions is undermining the status of their subject among students, creating further negative attitudes towards the language and its relevance to students' lives.

This submission will set out some specific observations on Circular 55/2022 (second-level) followed by a statement of ASTI's wider concerns relating to the process of granting exemptions.

Circular 55/2022

This Circular sets out specific grounds for exemptions for the study of Irish at second-level. It includes grounds set out in previous circulars, namely:

- A student of at least 12-years of age whose education was received outside the state for at least three consecutive years) where they did study Irish.
- Children who experience persistent and significant literacy difficulties which are an obstacle to their learning across the curriculum
- Children who are or who have been enrolled in a special class/ special school

It adds two new grounds, namely:

- Children who experience a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a significant barrier to the student's participation and engagement in their learning and school life
- Children who have a recommendation and have been deemed eligible for a place in a recognised (sanctioned and resourced by NCSE) special school and/or in a special class in a mainstream school

Circular 55/2022 also amends the appeals process to a refusal to grant an exemption. Previously, an appeal was based purely on the process the school undertook in order to reach its decision. Under new Circular, the Irish Exemptions Appeals Committee (IEAC) will review the case in its entirety (as presented to the school) and make a decision as to whether or not the child meets the criteria. If the Committee decides the student fulfils the criteria of the circumstances under which the application is made and an exemption should be granted, it will instruct the school to give effect to their decision.

Finally, Circular 55/2022 requires schools to update the Post-Primary Online Database on a monthly basis with information on exemptions granted to allow for ongoing statistical analysis and accountability in decision-making.

ASTI observations on Circular 55/2022

The ASTI supports the two new grounds introduced for exemptions. In Ireland, less than 1% of students with Special Educational Needs are educated in special schools. Consequently, schools have very diverse student populations, for whom a complex infrastructure of supports, planning, monitoring are maintained by the school. The prevalence rate of special educational needs in the system is typically 21% of the overall population. Clearly, a 'one-size' curriculum cannot meet the needs of all students as is evidenced in the introduction of Level 1 and 2 Learning Programmes in the Framework for Junior Cycle and the work that is currently ongoing for a progression programme at senior cycle.

A strong feature of the Circular is the requirement that decision-making by the school is based on documentary evidence (Student Support Plan) which substantiates the persistent difficulties of a student with learning the Irish language despite having had access to a differentiated approach to language and literacy learning in all subjects/across the curriculum and over time and having had specific interventions put into place.

The ASTI also supports the revised Appeals Process as it provides for a full examination of the school's rationale for the decisions to refuse to grant an exemption based on the documentary evidence used by the school – as distinct from the process itself. As such, the revised process should provide an objective external oversight to a process that can be challenging for schools.

The requirement that schools update the Post-Primary Online Database on a monthly basis with information on exemptions granted to allow for ongoing statistical analysis and accountability in decision-making is highly important. Currently, there isn't a centralised database where such evidence is gathered and lack of access to information on a newly enrolled second-level student can impair the overall process of responding to special educational needs.

ASTI's wider concerns in relation to process of exemptions from Irish

In its submission to the 2019 Departmental consultation process, the ASTI highlighted several outstanding challenges in terms of school's processing of applications for exemptions from the study of Irish. These concerns derive from wider school issues in relation

to supports for special educational needs. While the Department introduced a new model for the allocation of additional teachers to schools in 2017, it did not provide an accompanying training programme for either subject teachers or teachers allocated to Special Education Teacher roles. Teachers were expected to engage in diagnostic practices and prepare individual Student Support Plans without training. This decision by the Department elicited a strong negative reaction from teachers and the ASTI is on record in terms of demanding a national CPD programme and the allocation of an ex-quota coordinator to each school to lead the SEN team. Planning for special educational needs comprises two key dimensions, namely, planning at whole-school level and planning for individual students. Both processes require high levels of professional expertise, dedicated time (including time to engage with external agencies and professionals as well as parents) and, crucially, access to ongoing professional development.

Red C research commissioned by ASTI in 2019 found that, overall, only 20% of teachers have a qualification in special educational need while just 5% of SET teachers had a relevant qualification.³ Heavy workload and lack of access to relevant are the main reasons for low engagement in CPD. Teachers in the survey strongly identified class size as a key barrier to the delivery of inclusive education.

The ASTI is again calling on the Department of Education to address these ongoing issues which have huge potential impact on the school's processing of applications for exemptions from the study of Irish.

Conclusion

The ASTI believes that the Irish language is central to the purposes of education as set out in the Education Act 1998 and in the curriculum. Languages are for everyone and the principle of inclusivity must underpin policy for the Irish language. Exemptions should be exceptional and only granted in specific circumstances. The curriculum must reflect this principle and seek to provide access for all to Irish language learning.

Notes

- 1 <https://www.asti.ie/document-library/asti-submission-on-exemptions-from-irish-january-2019/>
- 2 <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/233821/087a8697-b452-45c0-a2d4-e39ba32fdf7f.pdf#page=null>
- 3 <https://www.asti.ie/document-library/achieving-inclusive-schools-the-teachers-perspective-april-2019/>

SCHOOL SECTOR CLIMATE ACTION MANDATE

ASTI Submission, December 2022

Opening observations

The ASTI appreciates the opportunity to submit its views on the School Sector Climate Action Mandate. This Mandate represents the commencement of what will, and must be, a transformative roadmap for schools. While we also appreciate that this Mandate is part of the wider Public Sector Climate Action Mandate, itself based on the legally binding 2021 Climate Action Plan commitments on reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 51% in 2030, the ASTI is of the view that meaningful prior consultation should have taken place.

Consultation is very important for a number of reasons: it deepens knowledge; builds consensus; identifies potential barriers and unintended consequences; it creates a community-wide synergy around goals. While the actions in this first Mandate are not radical and, in many instances are already happening in schools, it is not helpful if a perception is created wherein this Mandate is yet another initiative adding to the system-wide fatigue with innovation overload. It is also erroneous to assume that school patron bodies and Boards of Management are fully apprised of the extent of the change which must occur over the next seven years up to 2030. There is a need for a wider communications strategy by the Department at the level of school patrons because what must happen at school level has profound implications for every level of educational leadership, starting at the top, and for every aspect of school buildings and 'stock', ownership of which not in the hands of the state.

Boards of Management and school Principals, in particular, are required to immediately focus on the requirements for policy development, procurement reviews, school transport issues, etc, as laid out in Section 3 – Schools Ways of Working. In essence, all of this means more work for school principals. Their workload and role are already unsustainable and it is concerning that the Department considers that extra-capacity is not required in terms of the school leadership team. The world is facing a climate crisis and this first Mandate will require rapid, deep, systemic change driven by collective action in schools across several domains – carbon emissions, renewable energies, sustainable school buildings, school transport – not to mention curriculum and the cultural changes required in the second national strategy on sustainable development (ESD to 2030).¹ The commitment by the Department of Education to allocate additional school leadership posts to schools would send out the clearest signal that schools will be supported to deliver on their Mandate actions and in meeting the actions within the 5 Priority Areas. It is worth listing the latter to comprehend the multi-dimensional nature of the response expected, indeed, required from schools. They are: advancing policy, transforming learning environments, building capacities of educators, empowering and mobilising young people, accelerating local level actions. The ASTI is not optimistic that the necessary progress will be made on either the Mandate or the Strategy in the absence of adequate leadership capacity in schools.

Section 2: Our Schools

Asking schools to include an energy/sustainable Champion in the current post system is inadequate because this system is already over-burdened. Moreover, not all schools are enabled to provide dedicated time for the discharge of post duties. Additional posts need to be created to drive this Mandate and ESD to 2030. Moreover, it is facile to suggest that energy/environmental tasks are synonymous with transformative goals and new normative cultures specified in the latter. At the very least, some distinction needs to be made around what school communities can achieve and what infrastructural/physical stock changes need to be put in place.

Recognising young people as key contributors to sustainable futures is critical. ESD to 2030 contains important actions in this regard. The ASTI also recommends that the Department closely examine the outcome of the UNESCO series of climate change education events at the recent United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 27), including the launch of global survey report on youth demands for climate change education and the Greening Education Partnership.²

CPD for teachers is critical. However, a more ambitious approach to developing teachers' professional capital is required given the existential nature of the climate crisis. Supporting teacher

professionalism has many dimensions and is not confined to teacher CPD. Hargreaves and Fullan's concept of teachers' professional capital is relevant in this regard, comprehending as it does human, social and decisional dimensions.³ Supporting teacher professionalism requires an approach that aims to develop and integrate these three dimensions.⁴ Practically speaking, teachers need opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills; to collaborate with colleagues to actualise their knowledge and skills; space and time to reflect on their practice. Curriculum change cannot take place without dedicated professional time for teachers to 'grow' each form of capital.

Section 3: Schools Way of Working

As noted above, the fundamental issue for the ASTI as regards the necessary actions in this section is who will actually do this work? For example, engaging in Green Schools requires detailed application forms and the latter take time. Projects such as Green Schools are really valuable in schools and underpin many curriculum goals as well as providing space for students to work together, connect with nature, develop relationships with the wider community, etc. These important outcomes are only realised when the project is led by passionate and knowledgeable teachers. Unfortunately, annual commissioned research by the ASTI points to workload having a hugely negative impact on teachers' morale, wellbeing and motivation to engage in these wider educational activities.⁵ For the ASTI, the solutions are evident: reduced class size; provision of adequate professional time; the right to disconnect; and adequate number of posts in schools.

Section 4: School buildings

The actions in this section are necessary but the ASTI must again underline the fact that actually getting this work done typically falls on the school principal during holiday time. This situation cannot continue: the Department must consult with principals' and their representative organisations on how best to delegate this essentially technical/construction work to suitably qualified personnel.

Section 5: School transport

The ASTI notes the statements in this section. In future iterations, there needs to be better alignment between sustainable school transport and wider school policies such as SPHE goals, for example, importance of physical exercise, sport and community engagement.

Concluding observations

The publication of the first School Sector Climate Action Mandate is an important milestone in meeting Ireland's binding commitments on reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 51% in seven years' time. There is no time to waste in terms of addressing the climate crisis. The ASTI's main concern with this first Mandate is the lack of consideration of capacity of schools to discharge the multiple actions.

Notes

- <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/8c8bb-esd-to-2030-second-national-strategy-on-education-for-sustainable-development/>
- <https://www.unesco.org/en/education/sustainable-development/cop27>
- A Hargreaves and M Fullan (2012) *Professional Capital: transforming teaching in every school* (Ontario)
- <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/ezines-archive/ezines-2017/5d77d38d-f8b1-4f77-bac2-117ee166e39e.htm>
- <https://www.asti.ie/news-campaigns/latest-news/survey-finds-increased-work-demands-impacting-teachers-job-satis/>

CONSULTATION ON NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR GUIDANCE

ASTI Submission, February 16th 2023

Introduction

The holding of a consultation on a national Framework for Guidance is timely. Much has changed in society and the economy since the passage of the Education Act 1998. Accelerating global economic and technological changes, characterised as the fourth industrial revolution, are driving exponential changes in education, the labour market and the nature of work itself.¹ The COVID-19 pandemic has confirmed how such changes are already in our economy and society. Added to this economic/technological transition is the climate transition, encapsulated in the Paris Accords of 2016, a legally binding international treaty which aims to limit global warming below 2, preferably 1.5 degree, Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels. Demographic trends are also significant: ageing populations and increased migration require new approaches to guidance. In this rapidly evolving national and global context, lifelong guidance assumes a heightened importance for all citizens, not just those in formal learning.

Guidance in second-level education

The guidance counselling service in second-level schools has many strengths. Introduced in 1966, the service is practised in a holistic and integrative way, and encompasses the four areas of social/personal counselling, vocational guidance counselling and educational guidance counselling. As such, the service is a very distinctive feature of our second level system which aims at the holistic development of students. The decision to require schools to provide the service from within quota was deeply damaging the service in every school. The slow pace of restoration of posts has compounded this damage. It is of note that the last programme evaluation of the service was conducted in 2009.² The introduction of the junior cycle Wellbeing programme has placed additional demands on an already under-staffed service. The COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of schools continues to impact on student wellbeing across all ages and backgrounds, manifested in heightened levels of anxiety and depression in young people. ESRI research has underlined that the need for ongoing support for more disadvantaged young people to overcome pandemic-related disruption to their learning and to counter potentially longer-reaching setbacks to their emotional wellbeing.³ The guidance counselling service is the primary response in schools to meeting these needs. It is also critical in terms of addressing educational disadvantage – as emphasised in the consultation paper's reference to its role in compensating for, and addressing, poor social capital.⁴ In the section below, the ASTI highlights what it considers the key issues facing the guidance counselling service at present. These issues are familiar to policy makers but must be reiterated by the practitioners who are providing the service in schools.

Definition: In the second level context, the guidance service is known as the guidance counselling and is provided by qualified teachers who are registered counsellors. This not a tautological point. The guidance and counselling model in second-level schools is an integrated model comprising seven guidance activities: counselling; assessment; information; advice; educational development programmes; personal and social development programmes; and referral.⁵ Counselling is considered a transversal

activity in that, at its most fundamental, it enables students to make choices. The 2019 Indecon Report on Career Guidance underlined the integrated nature of the service in schools. This acknowledgement of the relational nature of guidance is important as it raises issues of resource allocation to schools.

Allocation: From the ASTI's perspective the issue of resource allocation is the key issue for guidance at second-level. While the Department of Education maintains that all 600 Guidance Counselling posts lost to schools during austerity, there is inadequate data on the deployment of guidance counselling hours across the 700+ schools. The Institute of Guidance Counsellors reported in 2020 guidance counsellors were spending 10.6 hours weekly teaching classes while 10.6% of full-time guidance counsellors were not practising at all. Further, 22.4% of schools reported using unqualified internal staff to deliver guidance counselling and 26.4% of schools reported using external providers for counselling.⁶ Clearly, there is a need for a comprehensive survey by the Department of Education to establish how guidance counselling resources are being deployed across and within schools.

Workload and role-overload: The workload of guidance counsellor is increasingly problematic in that additional requirements on the role are not supported by additional allocations to schools. The introduction of the junior cycle Wellbeing Programme in schools is a case in point. As one of the four pillars of the Programme, guidance provision across the three years of the junior cycle must be provided on a whole-class and individual basis.⁷ However, this Programme did not result in the delivery of additional guidance resources to schools. Similarly, the introduction of a new model of SEN resource allocation to schools in 2017, which placed responsibility on schools for the development of the profile of need in the school, also did not result in any additional guidance counsellors to schools.

While related to workload, role overload has become the norm for guidance counsellors. Every policy development in schools – wellbeing, promoting mental health, student support teams, inclusion of students with special and additional needs/the continuum of support, school self-evaluation, etc – contain additional responsibilities for guidance counsellors. It is of note that the recent Chief Inspector's Report confirms that the role of the guidance counsellor has become more complex, with increased pressure on guidance counsellors to provide a comprehensive and holistic service.⁸ (p.170)

Supporting student wellbeing and responding to complex needs: Guidance counsellors are the first point of contact in schools for students experiencing emotional and psychological problems. The role of the guidance counsellor is to listen and determine if the student should be referred to the local CAMHS service. Guidance counsellors are not qualified or mandated to provide ongoing individual therapeutic supports for students with complex emotional needs. However, the deficiencies in local CAMHS services mean that such supports are not always there for the young person.⁹ The ASTI fully supports the recommendation in the 2021 Oireachtas report that all schools immediately be provided with emotional counselling and therapeutic services to supplement their guidance counselling service.¹⁰

Recruitment of guidance counsellors: Difficulties in the recruitment of guidance counsellors to schools, as noted in the recent Chief Inspector's Report, are driven by a number of factors. The teacher supply crisis is a primary factor, in turn exacerbated by the diminishing attractiveness of teaching as a profession. The other factor is the high cost of qualifying as guidance counsellor, most of which falls on to the individual teacher. A related aspect is

the fact that schools are frequently unwilling to release teachers to engage in the placement hours (typically 130 hours) if they already have a guidance counsellor in situ. This is an unacceptable situation both for the teacher wishing to obtain additional qualifications and the wider system needs for an adequate supply of guidance counsellors. Another factor is the high level of burnout among guidance counsellors as manifested in the 10% or more identifying as same in IGC research. Workload, role overload, emotional demands of the role are impacting as never before on the service in schools.

2019 Indecon Review of Career Guidance

The Indecon Review of career guidance was an important policy exercise. An initial concern of the ASTI was that its focus on career guidance would overlook the integrative nature of the guidance counselling service in schools. Fortunately, this fear was not realised and the report demonstrates a strong understanding of the complex nature of the work of guidance counsellors. It also demonstrates an awareness of the role-overload on the practitioners and the challenge to keep abreast with a constantly changing external environment. Access to labour market intelligence is rightly identified as problematic for guidance counsellors. It recommends that specialist guidance practitioners be allocated to groups of schools on a regional basis so serve as a source of detailed sectoral information on labour market development and on employment, and work experience and apprenticeship programmes. There is much merit in this recommendation. The primary concern of the ASTI is that irrespective of the host organisation for such as service, all schools must have equal access to it.

The recommendations on work experience and enterprise engagement are problematic. Work experience placements and enrichment activities are important dimensions to students' learning. However, schools struggle with both activities because of workload and lack of professional time. It must also be stated that the additional hours (51 in total) imposed on teachers during austerity have undermined the culture of voluntarism in many schools. Many teachers are making decisions not to engage in work outside the classroom in response to excessive workload and the need to maintain a work-life balance. Devolving this work on to local employers is neither a practical nor an acceptable solution. It is not practical because employer interests are not necessarily uniform across the country or indeed consonant with the wider social project of schools. It is not acceptable because both activities are embedded in the curriculum and teachers are the professionals in this regard. What is needed to support effective engagement with both activities is reduced time tables for teachers, more posts of responsibilities, adequate professional time to support ongoing curriculum change.

ASTI observations on draft vision for lifelong learning

The ASTI broadly endorses the draft vision for lifelong guidance, namely, a unified guidance system which will allow young people and adults to have access to high quality and appropriate lifelong guidance. The five strategic objectives underpinning this vision incorporate important social and economic goals, including equity of access, citizenship, sustainability, and lifelong learning. The 2021 multi-agency report, 'Investing in Career Guidance', underlined the social dimension of guidance systems in terms of enabling individuals to make decisions over their life-span in relation to education, employment and training, thereby contribution to social inclusion, fairer societies and greener economies.¹¹ However, insufficient attention is paid to the societal changes, frequently described as disruption, in response to the fourth industrial

revolution.¹² Guidance policy must underpin the wider social contract and accord priority to those who are economically and socially marginalised.¹³ Marginalisation is a constantly evolving process as new forms of work such as platform work and the gig economy – incidentally where migrants and young people are over-represented. National guidance systems need to be designed to meet the dynamic nature of these forms of work while promoting social inclusion.¹⁴

The key principle of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, leaving no one behind, should be explicitly stated in the final vision statement. Indeed, it is a matter of concern to the ASTI that the draft vision does not contain any reference to SDG 4 which provides the globally agreed roadmap for education up to 2030, namely, 'to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. SDG 4.4 – 'to substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship' – should be highlighted in the final statement.

It is also of concern to the ASTI that the draft vision does not contain any reference to gender. Differences in experiences in education, training and work result in segregated labour markets, income inequalities and other forms of exclusion for women. Lifelong guidance for all must be part of the societal response to these enduring inequalities. A 'gender-blind' approach is not acceptable and is not consonant with wider policy objectives for gender equality.¹⁵

Finally, another omission from the draft paper is a reference to the diversity of population and the workforce. There were 347,233 non-Irish nationals in the labour force in April 2016 with a participation rate of 73.9 per cent.¹⁶ Currently, 13.8% of the population is foreign-born: this figure doubles in some of the inner urban areas.¹⁷ Again, a diversity or migration-blind guidance framework will be flawed and will not meet the wider social goals inherent in the vision statement or the strategic objectives. There is a clear need for a revisit of the draft paper in terms of policy coherence with other government policy objectives and frameworks.

Concluding observations

The guidance counselling service is multi-dimensional in second-level schools. It responds to the needs of individual students across multiple domains while at the same designated as a whole-school activity. This dual function is not in itself problematic. Schools are complex organisations and roles are constantly evolving in response to curriculum and policy changes. What is problematic is the inadequate numbers of guidance counsellors in schools to discharge these roles. This results in students' developmental and educational needs being unmet. It also results in unsustainable workload and a declining attractiveness in the post of guidance counsellor.

The vision articulated in the discussion paper is, on the whole, strong but it has a number of gaps as identified above. Lack of attention to the sociological dimension of lifelong learning, training and work in term of gender and ethnic/migration status and in terms of dynamics of exclusion, precariousness and marginalisation will not provide for effective and equitable policy into the future.

Notes

- 1 [https://www.oecd.org/cfe/regionaldevelopment/Audretsch\(2018\)DevelopingStrategiesForIndustrialTransition.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/cfe/regionaldevelopment/Audretsch(2018)DevelopingStrategiesForIndustrialTransition.pdf)
- 2 <https://assets.gov.ie/25338/e1873c3dd1b3465d9c3bc553bb12ab5e.pdf>
- 3 <https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/RB202217.pdf>

- 4 <https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/RS36.pdf>
- 5 <https://euroguidance.ie/sites/default/files/DAY1-WSG-Approach-%28NCGE%29.pdf>
- 6 <https://igc.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/IGC-Pre-Budget-Submission-2023-.pdf>
- 7 https://ncca.ie/media/5062/updated-guidelines-2021_en.pdf
- 8 <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/611873-chief-inspector-reports/>
- 9 <https://www.mhcirl.ie/news/mental-health-commission-publishes-interim-report-child-and-adolescent-mental-health-1>
- 10 https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/33/joint_committee_on_education_further_and_higher_education_research_innovation_and_science/reports/2021/2021-01-14_report-on-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-primary-and-secondary-education_en.pdf
- 11 https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-09/investing_in_career_guidance.pdf
- 12 https://www.etui.org/sites/default/files/Foresight-Brief_04_EN_WEB.pdf
- 13 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_800036.pdf
- 14 <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/industrial-relations-dictionary/platform-work>
- 15 <https://www.citizensassembly.ie/en/previous-assemblies/2020-2021-citizens-assembly-on-gender-equality/>
- 16 <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp11eoi/cp11eoi/lfnmfl/>
- 17 <https://emn.ie/population-and-migration-estimates-2022-show-population-growth-driven-by-large-increase-in-migration/>

LITERACY, NUMERACY AND DIGITAL LEARNING STRATEGY CONSULTATION

ASTI Submission, January 2023

Introduction

The ASTI welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the public consultation on the follow-on Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy. Teacher unions are uniquely placed to provide insights and information on how national education policy translates in the school context. The discourse around education policy, including curriculum change, has changed substantially since 2011. At system level, there is a greater acknowledgement of the multiple factors – enablers and challengers – impacting on policy implementation at the level of the school.¹ The 2020 OECD report on the Senior Cycle review process also highlights the importance of inclusive stakeholder engagement and conducive context for change.²

This submission is developed in response to questions in the online questionnaire. However, the latter cannot capture the many contextual changes which have occurred since the introduction of the original Strategy in 2011. Accordingly, this submission provides a short commentary on the implementation of the Strategy and outlines significant contextual changes which require to be acknowledged in advance of the development of a new strategy.

Commentary on implementation of the 2011 National Strategy

Notwithstanding that the National Strategy was introduced at the height of unprecedented government austerity policies which slashed investment in education, cut teachers' salaries and increased their working hours, the 2017 Interim Review demonstrated considerable progress in each of the six pillars, notably improving literacy standards across primary and second-level schools. PISA 2015 ranked Irish 15-year-olds as third out of 35 countries in terms of reading proficiency. Other international studies such as PIRLS and TIMS confirmed progress evidenced in PISA. The introduction of the Framework for Junior Cycle in 2015 included 6 key skills with literacy and numeracy considered as foundational skills for all students. The School Self-Evaluation model (SSE), introduced in 2012, had an explicit focus on supporting the National Strategy.

The areas identified for additional focus are supported by teachers, namely, improving numeracy standards; improving literacy in and through the Irish language; enhancing digital literacy skills; and continued gaps between students in DEIS and non-DEIS schools.

However, since the Interim Report in 2017, the global COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant school closures over two years must now be factored into the next national strategy. The evidence to date strongly indicates that school closures had a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged students and students with special educational needs.³ Students in Irish medium schools, learning in immersive environments, have also been disproportionately impacted by school closures. For the vast majority of these students, the school environment for most pupils is the sole space for language acquisition and linguistic development.

The COVID-19 Learning and Support Scheme (CLASS) put in place to help schools mitigate the adverse impacts of school closure on students' learning and wellbeing provided much needed support to schools. CLASS provided funding to schools to employ additional part-time teachers to provide additional learning support. **It is regrettable that many supports put in place in the context of the pandemic have been withdrawn.** This measure has also been undermined by the other systemic development impacting on both primary and second-level education, namely, a materialisation of a long-developing teacher supply crisis.

Crisis in teacher supply

The current crisis in teacher supply commenced well before the pandemic. Globally, there is strong consensus on the causal dynamic between the declining attractiveness of teaching as a profession and teacher supply problems.⁴ At European level, there is a sustained campaign to reverse the decline in the attractiveness of teaching as a profession which is supported by the ASTI.⁵ The clear message from this campaign is that the ambitious goals set out in the pathway to the European Education Area for 2025 will not be achieved.⁶

In the Irish context, ASTI research has consistently demonstrated that workload, compounded by innovation overload and the intensification of working life, is the major source of dissatisfaction among teachers about their working lives.⁷ The introduction of unequal pay austerity measures in 2010 has proved deeply corrosive to the attractiveness of teaching as a career. Another negative factor is the cost of the 2-year PME which is negatively impacting on diversity in the profession.

The national housing crisis is central in any discussion on teacher supply. Teachers, in common with every grade of worker across the economy, cannot get accommodation – rental or home

ownership. This national crisis is no longer confined to younger workers but is affecting workers, including teachers, across all age groups. Younger teachers are emigrating to acquire savings to enable them to return and purchase a family home. There is a very real concern, given the aggressive recruitment campaigns for teachers in Australia and the Middle East, that many of these teachers will not return to Ireland for some time – if at all.

While the ASTI is a stakeholder in the Departmental Teacher Supply Working Group, it is concerned that the Department of Education is not taking into consideration the systemic barriers to policy implementation currently impacting on the work of schools, namely, the supply crisis, low teacher morale, the decline in the attractiveness of teaching as a profession, excessive workload and low teacher morale.

Pillar 2: Building the capacity of school leadership

From the ASTI's perspective, there are two inter-related problems concerning school leadership in second-level schools. In the first instance, there are insufficient promotional posts in schools. The ASTI does support the claim that a full restoration of posts has been enacted following the moratorium imposed in 2009 austerity measures. Recent internal research commissioned by the ASTI found that in a total survey population of 2,206, only 29% agreed that there was an adequate number of posts in their school. Moreover,

- Only 28% had reduced timetable to discharge their duties
- Of those who had reduced timetable, 77% stated that the time was insufficient
- Among all post holders, while the average time spent on post duties was 3.2 hours, 40% spent 4 hours or more on duties
- 46% of all teachers without a post had an unpaid post in their school, including Class Tutor and curriculum Coordinator.

The inadequacy of current post numbers in schools is, secondly, directly related to well established phenomenon of role overload for school principals with resultant high stress levels and poor wellbeing, contributing to problems in recruitment and appointment of school leaders.⁸ The ASTI is calling for a review of the allocation of promotional post numbers to schools to provide for the model of distributive leadership that is advocated by the Department of Education and to ensure sustainable working conditions for all post holders in our schools.

Pillar 3: Improving the curriculum and learning experience

Notwithstanding its introduction in 2015, the Framework for Junior Cycle continues to be of concern to teachers for a number of reasons. There remains widespread concern with specification model of the subject curriculum: the knowledge content is insufficiently presented and results in teachers continuing to have difficulties in terms of learning outcomes and skills development. There is also widespread concern at the impact on students of having 2 CBAs in each subject area (plus 1 CBA in short courses). Several surveys conducted by the ASTI confirm teachers stating that students are reporting stress and workload concerns from being over-assessed. Teachers also report that CBAs are taking up a disproportionate amount of time in the classroom and are detracting from other learning experiences.⁹ Indeed, the interim review of the implementation of the Framework confirms teachers' experiences in both regards.¹⁰

The ASTI must also put on record its concern that the specification model for subject curriculums at senior cycle does not repeat the flawed model at junior cycle. As outlined in Hyland's authoritative report, depth of treatment is absolutely fundamental to subject curriculum and school-leaving examinations such as the Leaving Certificate.¹¹ There are other problematic aspects to the decisions outlined by the Minister for Education for senior cycle redevelopment in March 2022, not least the requirement that Paper 1 in the core subjects of English and Gaeilge be taken at the end of Fifth Year. This proposed change has been roundly criticised by ASTI and other teacher bodies. There is no educational argument to support this proposal. Not having an evidence-based rationale for curriculum change is not conducive to improving teaching and learning outcomes.

There are positive dimensions to the redevelopment plan but the ASTI must caution that the conducive circumstances must be in place prior to and during the introduction of revised subject and programme curriculums. The 2020 OECD Report was particularly emphatic on the importance of conducive conditions to secure buy-in and trust among teachers. In addition to the conditions identified in the 2020 OECD Report, including governance, policy coherence, stakeholder engagement, and teacher professional learning, teachers' working conditions also matter. As stated above, teachers' workload is increasingly unsustainable and the minimalist amount of professional/non-class contact time provided for the Framework for Junior Cycle is a source of deep dissatisfaction among teachers. Curriculum change at senior cycle must be supported by adequate professional time.

Pillar 4: Helping students with additional learning needs to achieve their potential

Since the introduction of the National Strategy in 2011, the model of teacher resource allocation for students with special educational needs changed significantly in 2017. The ASTI welcomed this development as it removed the necessity of an assessment of students' need to obtain additional resources. It also prioritised the practice of inclusion in the mainstream classroom. Detailed guidelines were issued.¹² However, this new model was not accompanied by any national training programme for teachers nor dedicated time allocation for SEN coordinators within schools. The ASTI has had several meetings with the Department of Education on both issues but have not made progress on these matters. ASTI research in 2019 documented lack of training for classroom differentiation and lack of clarity around the process of identify, planning for, and evaluating individualised curriculum and classroom interventions.¹³ Such is the extent of concern that the ASTI has issued advice to its members that only those teachers who have received training in SEN should engage in the above identifying, planning and evaluation process. It is a matter of deep concern to the ASTI that no progress has been made on a national training programme or on dedicated time allocation for SEN coordinators.

Pillar 5: Improving assessment and evaluation to support better learning in literacy and numeracy

Assessment and evaluation in schools are aimed at school improvement and accountability. In addition to School Self-Evaluation, there are currently eleven inspection/evaluation models deployed in second-level schools. From the point of view of teachers, a key concern is the amount of paperwork which these models require. At a more fundamental level, teachers have long expressed frustration that recommendations in the ensuing reports do not ensure that schools get additional supports or resources to improve on aspects of practice referenced by the Inspectorate. A

good example of this gap is manifested in the commentary in the Chief Inspector's Report 2016-2020 in relation to inclusion and SEN inspections. For second-level, the Report stated that teachers' collaborative practices should be further developed to support the needs of learners with SEN and that, overall, there is scope for the improvement for provision for students with SEN.¹⁴ As noted in the ASTI's report on accountability and regulation in education, there is a danger of viewing schools as measurable entities with 'outputs' instead of understanding schools as complex dynamic communities sustained by high quality caring relationships and trust in the teaching profession.¹⁵

Concluding observations

This submission has not focused on recommending content or directions for the next national strategy. Instead, it seeks to communicate to the Department and the Minister the need to address the systemic issues which are currently negatively impacting on the work of schools and on teaching and learning in the classroom. The inter-related nature of these problems is deeply concerning. Workload and diminishing teacher well-being are negatively impacting on the attractiveness of teaching as a profession. In turn, this is contributing to problems in recruitment, retention and supply. All impact on teaching and learning in the classroom. Wider social deficits such as the housing crisis and the costs of childcare are also having an impact on the teaching profession as is the perceived lack of value attributed to the work of teachers and of schools. Education policy must, as a matter of priority, address these systemic barriers to progress.

Notes

- 1 <http://www.anc.edu.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Key-competences-for-all-1.pdf>
- 2 <https://www.oecd.org/ireland/education-in-ireland-636bc6c1-en.htm>
- 3 <https://www.esri.ie/pubs/SUSTAT92.pdf>
- 4 <https://teachertaskforce.org/>
- 5 https://www.csee-etuice.org/en/resources/policy-papers/4912-raising-the-status-and-improving-the-attractiveness-of-the-teaching-profession-2022?_cldee=P5yTACRjXxVWnNszmGNIEreGS46MNTdfajRTdv-HBGEM&recipientid=account-7a819b0ff39bdb11a8460003ffb721cc-67201c13afbf4cb1801cc99fa6a703ea&esid=556061ed-89a0-ed11-aad0-6045bd8952f1
- 6 <https://education.ec.europa.eu/>
- 7 <https://www.asti.ie/news-campaigns/latest-news/survey-finds-increased-work-demands-impacting-teachers-job-satis/>
- 8 <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/education/two-in-three-second-level-principals-burnt-out-due-to-stress-with-40pc-needing-medication-survey-finds-41800401.html>
- 9 <https://www.asti.ie/news-campaigns/latest-news/asti-survey-teachers-experience-of-the-implementation-of-the/>
- 10 https://researchrepository.ul.ie/articles/report/Exploring_the_introduction_of_the_Framework_for_Junior_Cycle_A_longitudinal_study_Introductory_report_Initial_perspectives_on_implementation_outcomes_and_impact_/19819909
- 11 <https://www.ista.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/ISTA-Hyland-Report-low-res-update-1.pdf>
- 12 <https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Guidelines-for-Post-Primary-Schools-Supporting-Students-with-Special-Educational-Needs-in-Mainstream-Schools-1.pdf>
- 13 <https://www.asti.ie/document-library/achieving-inclusive-schools-the-teachers-perspective-aPril-2019/>
- 14 <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/611873-chief-inspector-reports/>
- 15 <https://www.asti.ie/document-library/accountability-and-regulation-in-education-a-better-way/>

NON-PERMANENT TEACHERS

NON-PERMANENT TEACHERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Non-Permanent Teachers Advisory Committee meets approximately 4 times a year. The Committee represents teachers who are working in fixed-term teaching positions and part-time (casual and non-casual) teaching positions. The main focus of the Advisory Committee's work is the proper and fair implementation of the Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act and the Protection of Employees (Fixed Term Work) Act. The other function of the Committee is to advise Standing Committee on matters of concern to non-permanent and part-time teachers.

The Committee members are as follows:

Lorraine Finn - Chairperson
Michael McGrath
Órlagh Nic Eoin
Cian O'Grady
Michelle Ryan
Kevin Wall
Miriam Duggan - President
Geraldine O'Brien - Vice-President
Kieran Christie - General Secretary

Executive Officer/Industrial Relations: Bernard Moynihan provides professional support to the committee.

The main issues which are dealt with by the Committee are:

- Increasing casualisation of Teaching profession.
- Predicted Grades.
- Teacher allocation.
- Cyber Bullying.
- Implementation of the Ward Agreement.
- Building momentum Pay Deal.
- Successful cases taken by the ASTI.
- Communication strategy of the ASTI with Non-Permanent members.
- New Entrants to teaching.
- The Pupil:Teacher ratio.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

IRISH CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions is the largest civil society organisation on the island of Ireland, representing and campaigning on behalf of some 800,000 working people. There are currently 44 unions affiliated to Congress comprising Unions from Northern Ireland and the Republic.

Congress Mission

Congress will strive to achieve economic development, social cohesion and justice by upholding the values of solidarity, fairness and equality.

The primary instrument for the achievement of this mission will be the organisation of workers in unions. Congress will also construct and advocate for a platform of policies capable of delivering our vision of a just society. We will engage with Government, employers, civil society organisations, voluntary groups and international bodies to promote its attainment. We will support unions in their efforts to secure a fairer distribution of the wealth their members create.

Arising from this there are four key objectives:

1. To build capacity in recruitment, organisation and advocacy;
2. To improve Congress capacity to regulate relations between affiliated unions;
3. To achieve the financial viability of Congress;
4. To create a broad base of support or empathy with a concept of the common good which will help us to translate our vision of a just society into reality.

Working Together

Congress seeks to shape and influence government policy in key areas, such as taxation, employment legislation, education and social policy. In general terms, the role of Congress is to:

- Represent and advance the economic and social interests of working people;
- Negotiate national agreements with government and employers, when mandated to do so by constituent and member unions;
- Promote the principles of trade unionism through campaigns and policy development.
- Provide information, advice and training to unions and their members;
- Assist with the resolution of disputes between unions and employers;
- Regulate relations between unions and ruling on inter-union disputes.

Congress also pursues these objectives at both the EU and the global level. Congress is the sole Irish affiliate of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the representative body for trade unions at European level and is also affiliated to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL:

The ICTU Executive Council meets on a monthly basis. Kieran Christie, General Secretary, currently represents ASTI on the Council. Amongst the issues dealt with at these meetings are the following.

- Economic Analysis of the Irish Economy including Northern Ireland
- Trade Union Organisation
- Industrial Disputes
- Climate Action – A Just Transition
- Public Sector and Private Sector Employment Policy
- International Matters
- Social Justice Issues
- Trade Union (Workers') College
- Collective Bargaining /Legislative Changes
- Pensions
- Pre-Budget Submissions.

Throughout 2022 Congress was actively campaigning with regard to a variety of issues.

A range of campaign initiatives and activities are undertaken by the Congress Sector Groups.

Campaigning for workers' rights and influencing global issues, such as climate change, are integral components of what Congress does.

Decent work must be at the centre of government actions to bring back economic growth and build a new global economy that puts people first following the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Throughout 2022 Congress was actively campaigning with regard to a variety of issues.

A Just Transition:

With climate change now a key issue at home and abroad, the Energy Sector Group of Congress has campaigned to ensure that the practice and principles of Just Transition are embedded in the official policy response.

The idea of Just Transition arose from the global trade union movement and seeks to ensure that we “...secure the future and livelihoods of workers and their communities in the transition to a zero-carbon economy. It is based on social dialogue between workers and their unions, employers, government and communities.

“A plan for Just Transition provides and guarantees better and decent jobs, social protection, more training opportunities and greater job security for all workers affected by global warming and climate change policies.”

The ILO has also published essential guidelines on implementation of a Just Transition.

They can be accessed here:

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed_emp/—emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_432859.pdf

The Energy Group has published a report on Just Transition in Bord na Móna and will shortly publish a briefing setting out the key measures needed to deliver a genuine Just Transition across the economy and society.

The Energy Sector Group is also a founding member of the Just Transition Alliance.

In November 2021, ICTU published a document entitled Delivering a genuine Just Transition.

It can be accessed here: <https://ictu.ie/publications/key-measures-needed-deliver-just-transition>

HOUSING: RAISE THE ROOF CAMPAIGN:

Raise the Roof is comprised of trade unions, housing and homeless agencies, women's groups, political parties, representatives of older people, children's advocacy groups, community organisations, student unions, Traveller groups, housing academics and experts.

The trade union-led campaign network comprises a wide range of civil society bodies and political parties working for a radical change of housing policy to ensure the delivery of secure affordable homes for all.

Raise the Roof has called for a number of key measures, including:

- Dramatically increase investment in housing in line with the ESRI call to double funding, with the State and local authorities embarking on an ambitious five year programme to build up to 100,000 homes over that timespan, with agreed numbers of public, affordable and cost rental units delivered annually;
- Underpin the State-led housing programme with an explicit mandate and remit to deliver public and affordable homes with 'affordability' clearly defined and tied to income levels;
- Guarantee in law that all public land will be retained in public ownership and used exclusively for public/ affordable homes, along with robust measures to tackle land hoarding and speculation;
- Develop a Secure Tenancy Model in the rental sector by introducing tenancies of Indefinite Duration, a ban on 'no fault' evictions and a rent freeze until a new system of national rent regulation is established, with affordable rents linked to income levels
- Hold a referendum to establish a Right to Housing to ensure the State meets its obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights and the European Social Charter.

Raise the Roof Rally:

Raise the Roof holds regular protest events including a Raise the Roof rally on November 26th, 2022.

Many thousands of people, media reports estimate the numbers at between 15 and 20 thousand, gathered in Dublin to support the rally which called for a radical and dramatic change to official housing policy.

Raise the Roof called for:

- A State-led housing programme with a mandate to deliver affordable homes for all.
- A new State body with responsibility for housing delivery.

- Emergency measures to reduce homelessness and shorten the time spent in emergency accommodation.
- An end to 'no fault' evictions, a freeze on rents, and long-term security for renters.
- A legal Right to Housing.

(View the full Raise the Roof manifesto here:

<https://ictu.ie/publications/new-deal-housing>

YOUTH CONNECT:

Youth Connect is the educational, engagement and student support program of the ICTU developed in collaboration with the teaching unions and the Irish Second-level Students' Union. The program focusses on raising awareness of the realities of the workplace and their rights within it, while seeking to empower and engage students within their school and the local community, in particular with their school student council.

THE NEVIN ECONOMIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE:

The Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI) is an all-Ireland research organisation funded by all trade unions affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

It aims, through information gathering, analysis, policy recommendations and educational activities to inform and assist others in the achievement of a just, sustainable and equitable society on the island of Ireland.

The Institute is organised as a charitable company with a remit as approved by the founding trade unions and incorporated into its articles of association to:

- advance knowledge and understanding of economics and the social sciences, with particular reference to the economic and social conditions in or affecting the island of Ireland;
- undertake, to the benefit of the public, research and analysis on the impact of economic policy development and its effects towards the attainment of a more equitable and just society;
- publish and promote research findings in order to advance awareness and comprehension of economic theory;
- undertake activities to ensure a broad dissemination of the research and analysis; and
- provide education, training and capacity building programmes to increase understanding of economic and social science policy among the general public.

The Institute is accountable to the Chair of the Institute's Governing Council concerning organisational and financial affairs. The Council is composed of representatives of all trade unions affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. The Co-directors and staff of the Institute develop the research work programme of the Institute. This is in consultation with the Chair and the Governing Council.

Work published in the name of the Institute is the sole responsibility of the Co-directors of the Institute. A group of external reviewers assesses the research quality and policy and user-interest relevance of NERI research output. These include:

1. A major and comprehensive series of reports on economic development on the island of Ireland and in the EU including analysis of policy directions for the future.
2. A series of reports dealing with analysis of wages, jobs and living standards

3. A series of reports dealing with analysis of employment and the future of work.
4. A series of reports on key areas of the welfare state and the 'social wage': housing, education, childcare and eldercare, pensions, health and transport o Related to this will be a complementary series of reports on fiscal policy and areas of taxation.
5. Periodic reports and analysis of policies on climate change mitigation and the just transition.
6. A collection of outputs contributing to the Shared Island agenda and to a greater understanding of the All-island Economy.

Work Programme for 2023:

Short-term Outputs

- I. Working Papers
 - i. Building a Resilient and Inclusive Economy: A Long-term Economic Policy Framework for the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland
 - ii. The Adjusted Gender Pay Gap in the Republic of Ireland: An econometric analysis of the determinants of the gender pay gap in the Republic of Ireland.
 - iii. Over-qualification in the labour market: Examining outcomes for over-qualified workers.
 - iv. Carbon Lock-in and Institutions: Outlining a political economic approach to emissions reductions inertia
 - v. Carbon lock-in in the Republic of Ireland: Examining structural forces preventing decarbonisation transition.
 - vi. Poverty on the Island of Ireland (joint with ESRI): An examination of the trends in poverty in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
 - vii. Job Quality in the Republic of Ireland (joint with UCD): Establishing a framework for reporting job quality in the Republic of Ireland using the Working in Ireland Survey 2.

Report Series

- Economic Report I: Economic outlook in the Republic of Ireland: Focus on inflation, employment and wages [NERI/2022/GC04].
- Economic Report II: Updated economic outlook and fiscal Policy in the Republic of Ireland: Focus on Fiscal and monetary policy
- Economic Report III: Updated economic outlook and fiscal Policy in the Republic of Ireland: Focus on Long-term inclusive growth and resilience
- Labour Market Observer NI: Analysing trends in the Northern Ireland labour market.
- Labour Market Observer ROI: Analysing trends in the Republic of Ireland labour market: Focus on in-work poverty
- Labour market mapping: Establishing a framework for examining sectoral and regional trends in Irish employment.
- Over-qualification: A cross country comparison of overqualification in Europe.
- Essential Workers (joint with UCD): Analysing the labour market experience of essential workers in the Republic of Ireland during the pandemic using the Working in Ireland Survey.

- Gender and the Pandemic (joint with UCD): Analysing the labour market experience of female workers in the Republic of Ireland during the pandemic using the Working in Ireland Survey x. Sectoral Mapping
- Setting out the regional and occupational structure of a sector (TBD) of the Irish economy.
- Setting out the regional and occupational structure of a sector (TBD) of the Irish economy.
- NERI Long-Read Series (selected):
 - 'Housing in the Republic of Ireland: Still in need of a game-changer'
 - 'Fighting fit; building economic resilience on the island of Ireland'
 - 'Intergenerational Inequality in the Republic of Ireland'
 - 'The future of tax and welfare in the Republic of Ireland'
- Collaboration with ICTU (selected):
 - i. ICTU Budget Submission
 - ii. Pay Bargaining Guidance
 - iii. Just transition
 - iv. Housing
 - v. All island economy
 - vi. Sectoral analysis

Additional Contributions (selected):

Development of an updated 'no going back' document Paper on intergenerational equity and relevant policy levers in the Republic of Ireland [NERI/2022/GC04]
 NERI education and training work

- Ongoing media contributions (print, TV, radio, social)
- Internship programme with UCD
- Internship programme with Ulster University
- Briefings for Congress committees and affiliates
- Professional training for Congress and affiliates including collaborative work with the ICTU social policy team
- Organisation of Annual Donal Nevin Lecture, NERI Labour Market Conference, monthly NERI seminars and policy roundtables - Contributions at events, conferences, and other occasions - Contributions of articles, blogs and related materials to economic research, NGO, trade union platforms
- NERI staff are also on a variety of advisory groups and forums E. Continuing professional development of NERI staff
- Review of researcher skills needs and development (including statistical methods, media, writing, presentations)
- Collaboration with Maynooth University on PhD programmes for two members of NERI staff - Review of administrative skills needs and development (e.g. media communication, event organisation, office management)

The Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI) continues to be a strong progressive voice in the country's economic debate. Access to extensive material produced by the Nevin Economic Research Institute is available at <https://www.neriinstitute.net/>

ICTU DISABILITY COMMITTEE

The 17 member Disability Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions is charged with promoting the interests of persons with disabilities, both within the workplace and in wider society.

The ASTI is represented on the Committee by Geraldine O'Brien and by the Deputy General Secretary.

The ICTU Disability Committee engaged with the authors of two 2021 reports on the employment of people with disabilities:

ESRI Study

Commissioned by the National Disability Authority, this study examines the skills and educational qualifications and employment prospects of people with disabilities compared to those without, and how the situation has changed over time.

The study found that among EU-28 countries Ireland had the fourth lowest employment rate among people with disabilities of working age in 2018 (36 per cent). In addition, employment rates among this group did not benefit from the economic recovery that took place after the Great Recession to the same extent as other workers.

Among EU-28 countries Ireland had the fourth lowest employment rate among people with disabilities of working age.

In 2016, only a third of the working age people with disabilities indicated that their main economic status was employment. This compares with two-thirds of those without disabilities.

There was considerable variation in the percentages in employment by disability type. In particular, only 15 per cent of individuals with an "intellectual disability were employed in 2016, compared to 46 per cent of people that reported having 'deafness or a serious hearing impairment' and 34 per cent for those with 'blindness or a serious vision impairment'.

OECD Report: Disability, Work and Inclusion in Ireland

Disability, work and inclusion in Ireland: Engaging and supporting employers says that the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath make action more important than ever. There is a large risk that the labour market situation for persons with disabilities will deteriorate further, as happened following the global financial crisis.

In Ireland, only one out of three persons with disabilities has a job, one of the lowest shares in Europe and the OECD area. Persons with disabilities are half as often in a job as those without disabilities.

Only one out of three persons with disabilities has a job, one of the lowest shares in Europe.

At the same time, more than one out of ten Irish adults receive a disability payment, including many young people. This is one of the highest shares in OECD countries. Data indicate that many of them would like and be able to work if the right support measures were in place.

Both reports have a number of useful recommendations that we will seek to have implemented. We are active participants on the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities implementation group. Our agenda here includes the pursuit of the Government commitment to double the target for employment of people with disabilities in the public service to 6%.

ASTI GLOBAL SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

Committee membership: Noelle Moran, Chairperson; Sinéad Moore; Andrew Phelan; Ann Piggott; Veronica Lavin.

AGS/ERO, Moira Leydon, provides the professional support for the work of the Committee.

1. Terms of Reference

The Committee prepared terms of reference for the Committee which were subsequently approved by Standing Committee.

Committee name: The Committee is called the ASTI Global Solidarity Committee.

Membership: Members of the Committee are elected biennially at Annual Convention. The Committee is comprised of 5 elected members, the President and the Vice President.

Term of Office: The term of office of the Committee is two years. Members shall be eligible for re-election. In the event of a vacancy arising, this will be filled by an election at the next CEC meeting or Annual Convention, whichever is nearer.

Number of meetings per year: The Committee shall meet at least three times per year and not more than 5. The Committee will meet within one month from the conclusion of Annual Convention and shall elect one of its members as Chairperson.*

Aims of the Committee: The aims of the Committee are set out in Motion 62 adopted at Annual Convention 2022, namely:

- To raise awareness amongst ASTI members of the challenges faced by teachers and their representative associations across the globe.
- To promote the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4: 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.'
- To promote the principle of equality in all aspects of education and the teaching profession globally.
- To promote the right to education.
- To promote the rights of workers, especially teachers, and their unions where they are being victimised and/or denied human rights or trade union rights.
- To enable ASTI to express solidarity on humanitarian issues, in the context of global challenges such as world poverty, growing inequality, human rights abuses, denial of trade union rights and climate crisis.

Reporting: A report after each meeting of the Committee will be provided to Standing Committee. The Committee will provide a report to Convention in the annual Convention Handbook.

**During the first term of office of the Committee, namely Convention 2022 to 2024, the proposer of the motion at Convention 2022 which established the Committee, shall serve as Chairperson.*

2. Plan of work

Given the newly-established nature of the Committee, much of the work to date has been on familiarising members on issues contained in the Convention motion. It was agreed that the plan would seek to support relevant areas of ICTU's Global Solidarity Committee, given that the ASTI has two representatives on same – Ann Piggott and AGS/ERO, Moira Leydon. The ICTU Committee currently has the three campaigning strands - Palestine, Justice for Colombia/protecting the right to organise and free trade unions, and the elimination of child labour.

3. Promoting global solidarity work in the ASTI

The Committee discussed ways of raising awareness among the ASTI membership of global solidarity issues, including the challenges faced by teachers and their unions. Suggestions included:

- Hosting Global Solidarity fringe event as ASTI annual convention
- Creation of post of Global Solidarity Officer in branches
- Creation of dedicated ASTI award for Global Solidarity
- Dedicated page in ASTIR for international news on education plus global solidarity issues

4. Protecting the right to education in Palestine

As an introduction to the wider context facing Palestinian students, teachers and trade unionists, the Global Solidarity Committee received a presentation from the ICTU Representative on the Anti-Apartheid Coalition for Palestine. This Coalition was formed following the publication in February 2022 of the Amnesty International report – 'Israel's Apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel System of Domination and Crime against Humanity'. The Coalition includes ICTU and other NGOs, including faith-based agencies. The Coalition has two aims:

1. Have the Irish Government, and others, recognise what is happening as Apartheid under international law.
2. Bring an end to this crime and ensure human rights for all.

The Committee will continue its examination of the wider educational and human rights context for Palestinian students, teachers and trade unions.

5. Sustainable Development Goals

As an introduction to the wider Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda, the Global Solidarity Committee received a presentation on Coalition 2030 from its National Coordinator, Ms Meaghan Carmody. Coalition 2030 is an alliance of 70 civil society organisations from the international development, environmental, anti-poverty and trade union sectors working together to ensure Ireland keeps its promise to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) both in Ireland, and abroad.

In September 2015, the 193 UN member states unanimously adopted the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, a global commitment to navigate humanity towards greater wellbeing and to forge a new relationship between sustainability and development. This global agenda unfolded in a novel institutional setting with a high level of participation. Its decade-long elaboration process involved several stakeholders: non-governmental organisations, private-sector entities and local authorities in various frameworks. In sum, more than a million people shared their views on the new global development agenda.

The resulting charter set interconnected and indivisible goals, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), each with a series of 169 specific targets to be attained by 2030.

The goals balance the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, providing a holistic vision for the wellbeing of people and the planet, and placing equality and resilience at the core. They provide the only universally agreed and universally applicable framework for global evidence-based policy-making in this crucial decade - the Decade of Action.

GOAL 1: No Poverty

GOAL 2: Zero Hunger

GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being

GOAL 4: Quality Education

GOAL 5: Gender Equality

GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality

GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

GOAL 13: Climate Action

GOAL 14: Life Below Water

GOAL 15: Life on Land

GOAL 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions

GOAL 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal

6. Solidarity interests of Committee members

Members of the Committee present an update at each meeting on the solidarity activities they are currently engaged in.

EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL /ETUCE

Established in 1977, the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) is the teachers' social partner at European level and a defender of teachers' interests to the European Commission. ASTI is an affiliate.

In November 2010 a new European Structure was adopted by the Extraordinary Conference / General Assembly, at which ETUCE became an integrated part of Education International, EI. ETUCE is now the EI Regional Structure in Europe.

Following the new structure, ETUCE represents 132 teachers' unions in 50 countries. In total numbers, ETUCE represents 11 million members all over Europe.

ETUCE is composed of national trade unions of teachers and other staff in general education - early childhood education, primary education, secondary education, vocational education and training as well as higher education and research. ETUCE is also a European Trade Union Federation of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).

The aims of the ETUCE are:

- To promote and implement the aims of Education International (EI) in the European Region
- To advise the EI Executive Board on policies and activities to be undertaken by EI in the European Region, including the development of responses to proposals and policies which emanate from other international bodies such as OECD or UNESCO
- To develop and maintain positive relationships with organizations in Europe which have similar aims and objectives, including ETUC and PERC/ITUC
- To determine and promote policies in relation to the Council of Europe, and any such other European inter-governmental body, which addresses issues of concern to education unions
- To promote the development of strong independent and democratic education unions throughout the European Region
- To determine and promote policies in relation to European Union (EU) and EFTA matters
- To represent member organizations in EU consultative structures and at EU meetings
- To respond to proposals, policies and decisions of the EU affecting the members of education unions in Europe
- To develop and implement projects and programs designed to further the interests of education unions in the European Region and, especially, in the EU/EFTA countries
- To be the social partner for education workers in the EU Social Dialogue process
- To be the trade union federation representing the education unions in the ETUC structures

On the 4th, 5th and 6th of July, 2022, an ETUCE Special Conference took place in Liege, Belgium. Eamon Dennehy, President and Kieran Christie, General Secretary represented ASTI at the event. They were joined by representatives of Education Trade Unions from across Europe, representing more than 11 million teachers and other education personnel.

The theme of the conference was “*Trade union engagement and activity in Europe: Mobilising for quality public education, for the benefit of students, and an improved status of teachers and all education personnel*”

The ETUCE Special Conference is convened two years after each ordinary Conference to consider and decide on matters related to ETUCE policies on education and employment. Constitutional and financial matters are not dealt with on this occasion. The Special Conference is a decision-making body composed of the ETUCE Committee and a maximum of two representatives from each member organisation. It is entitled to adopt policy and resolutions.

The Special Conference provides an opportunity for representatives of all ETUCE affiliates to meet and strengthen the bonds of solidarity between teachers and other education employees.

Larry Flanagan, ETUCE President and chair of the Conference, opened the Conference. Welcome addresses were given by Minister Ben Weyts, Flemish-speaking region and Minister Lydia Klinkenberg, German-speaking region.

Opening keynote speeches were provided by Stefaan Hermans, Director of Policy Strategy and Evaluation, Directorate-General

for Education, Youth, Sport, and Culture (DG EAC), European Commission and David Edwards, General Secretary, Education International.

A panel discussion on *Boosting social dialogue for quality education: how can education trade unions make a difference?* was chaired by Ms. Susan Flocken, European Director of ETUCE and included speakers: Stefaan Hermans, Director of Policy Strategy and Evaluation, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission and Evelyne Léonard, Professor, Human resource management and Industrial relations, UC Louvain.

A presentation of the Policy Paper *Raising the Status and Improving the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession* took place.

A keynote speech was delivered on *Digitalisation and education* by Dr. Kristin Vanlommel, Professor, Research Group Learning and Innovation, University of Applied Sciences, Utrecht, The Netherlands.

A keynote speech on *Citizenship & Inclusion* was delivered by Dr Catherine Lowry-O’Neill, Lecturer in Education, School of Education and Lifelong Learning, South East Technological University, Waterford.

There was a panel discussion on *Addressing the social change in and through education with environmental sustainability*.

The ETUCE Special Conference adopted three key resolutions, one outlining 10 key action points to raise the status and improve the attractiveness of the teaching profession. Based on these action points the ETUCE Committee has tasked the ETUCE Secretariat to launch a two-year campaign (2023-2024) across the European region. The campaign covers all education professionals working in all education sectors and addresses policy-makers, education authorities, employers in education, teachers and other education personnel at national, regional and local level. The campaign also seeks to further alliances with other relevant actors in education such as parents and students.

The **10 key action points** are:

1. Ensure professional autonomy and academic freedom
2. Commit to collaborative and collegial leadership in educational establishments and systems
3. Deliver decent salaries – including addressing any pay inequalities
4. Ensure sustainable working conditions and promote teacher well-being
5. Control excessive workload and working hours
6. Create quality entry pathways and retention practices
7. Ensure entitlement to quality and inclusive initial education and continuous professional development
8. Address equality and diversity challenges in teaching workforces
9. Promote and commit to social dialogue
10. Empower the teaching profession

Another key resolution adopted was, in keeping with the theme of the conference, was regarding trade union engagement and activity in Europe: *Mobilising for quality public education, for the benefit of students, and an improved status of teachers and all education personnel*.

A further motion was a Peace resolution on Ukraine.

The full text of these resolutions is published below.

A major **teacher shortage** now faces Europe, threatening the sustainable development of education systems.¹ Teacher shortages² are apparent in most education systems. Given the aging profile of those in post, retention is as critical as recruitment. Varying by countries, such shortages might express themselves in general terms or specifically in geographical areas, in certain subjects (particularly STEM), or according to the particular needs of students, including students with special needs, students in multilingual and multicultural settings and students from socioeconomically deprived backgrounds.³

Building on the [Resolution on Empowering Education Trade Unions: The Key to Promoting Quality Education \(December 2016\)](#), which recognises the role of education trade unions in providing support to teachers with their employment and professional matters, the ETUCE Resolution on [Campaigning to enhance the Teaching Profession for Solidarity, Democracy, Equality and Sustainability \(2020\)](#), and the [Resolution "For an Education-led Recovery"](#) (2021) underlines ETUCE's commitment to "support teachers, academics and other education personnel in rising above the challenges of post-pandemic societies, protect their rights, working conditions, health, safety and well-being, and ensure the overall status and attractiveness of the teaching profession".

This ETUCE Policy Paper sets out in 10 clear demands, the visions of ETUCE on improving the status and attractiveness of the teaching profession in all education sectors, including the research sector. It calls upon ETUCE member organisations to propagate and campaign for these demands in their own jurisdictions and for governments at all levels to commit to delivering these objectives as part of a comprehensive effort to raise the status and attractiveness of the teaching profession.

Important notes

1. The policy paper focuses on the **education staff in every education sector, including early childhood education, VET and higher education and research.**
2. Where the word **school** is used, it covers all **education institutions** including ECE institutions, general education schools, VET institutions, and tertiary level institutions.
3. Throughout the policy paper we use the expression "school leader" in a broad sense. **School leader** means head or principal of the learning institution, but also other individuals with leadership roles such as deputy principals, departmental/subject heads, senior teachers and other individuals entrusted with leadership responsibilities in every education sector.⁴



Policy Paper
Raising the Status and Improving the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession

Adopted by the ETUCE Special Conference, the Regional Special Conference of Education International, on 5-6 July 2022

Background

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) believes that education is a public good and that well-funded, well-staffed education systems are critical to the future prosperity of European nations. The fight must continue, therefore, for the enhancement of structural and sustainable **public investment** in education systems, and to support the **rights, professional integrity, autonomy, and academic freedom of all teachers and academics**, so that they can deliver **quality, equitable and inclusive education**.

Raising the status and improving the attractiveness of the teaching profession are priorities for ETUCE. Given the recent experience of the pandemic, the critical role which education plays in respect of **social recovery**, and the centrality of teachers to the delivery of **education recovery** and the promotion of well-being amongst children and young people, raising the status and the attractiveness of the teaching profession should be a priority, also, for politicians at every level of governance and for education social partners across Europe.

During the COVID-19 crisis, ETUCE member organisations stood up for the rights, health and safety and working conditions of education sector employees across Europe. We must now campaign to further build support for **enhancing the status of education and research staff** and ensuring that teaching is valued highly as a profession and rewarded appropriately. Central to this is ensuring that meaningful social dialogue and collective bargaining mechanisms are in place to develop education policies and employment protection agreements that are effective and meet the needs of practitioners.

The **COVID-19 pandemic** created additional pressures on education staff who worked on the frontline of the crisis including: a deterioration of working conditions; heavily increased workloads; pedagogical challenges due to online and blended learning; job losses; fixed-term contracting; and the casualisation of staff. Such negative experiences have had an overall detrimental impact on the mental health and well-being of staff and have undermined the status of teachers.

10 Key action points to raise the status and improve the attractiveness of the teaching profession

The numbering of key action points does not indicate the level of importance

- 1 Ensure professional autonomy and academic freedom
- 2 Commit to collaborative and collegial leadership in educational establishments and systems
- 3 Deliver decent salaries – including addressing any pay inequalities
- 4 Ensure sustainable working conditions and promote teacher well being
- 5 Control excessive workload and working hours
- 6 Create quality entry pathways and retention practices
- 7 Ensure entitlement to quality and inclusive initial education and continuous professional development
- 8 Address equality and diversity challenges in teaching workforces
- 9 Promote and commit to social dialogue
- 10 Empower the teaching profession

1. Ensure professional autonomy and academic freedom

Teachers are the greatest resource of any education system. Teachers, therefore, should be trusted and provided with the professional autonomy and academic freedom to decide the most appropriate approach to meet local conditions and individual needs of children and students within any curriculum framework in order to ensure quality and inclusive education.⁵

Every school and university should develop an appreciative performance policy for their teachers and researchers and install a stimulating feedback culture. Evaluation and teacher assessment can be part of a participative personnel policy but they should never be an obstacle to professional autonomy and academic freedom in teaching and research. Teachers and researchers cannot be restricted in their work in order to conform with labour market needs. Assessment of teachers and academic staff should not be punitive or gender biased. There is a need to resist the increasing pressure from the labour market and trends such as increasing managerialism which considers schools and universities as private enterprises. These attempts hinder the professional autonomy of the teachers, the academic freedom of academics and researchers, and the institutional autonomy of universities.

It is important to ensure sustainable, and effective public funding of education and research “as part of the principle of public responsibility⁶” and to resist proposals which seek to privatise, market, and commercialise the education sector. Especially since these proposals have a direct effect on the professional autonomy of teachers as they risk pushing the teacher-student relationship into one of service providers and customers

Academic freedom and institutional autonomy are the central pillars of higher education and research sectors; they run in parallel to the need for decent salaries, fair working conditions, efficiency, quality and inclusiveness of education.

2. Commit to collaborative and collegial leadership in educational establishments and systems

ETUCE believes⁷ in distributed leadership, shared or collaborative leadership, involving teachers and the whole pedagogical community. Through such collaborative leadership, school principals can work with the whole pedagogical community to develop a shared vision for the school, to set its goals and to work systematically towards their fulfilment. In any education system, teachers should be considered the leaders of their profession.

Teachers and union representatives should have an active role in democratic and collaborative leadership⁸ in order to establish conditions for a positive school environment with a democratic culture of peace, tolerance, equity, inclusiveness and cooperation and for effective teaching and learning in their institutions by providing the necessary resources, support, and motivation for the school leaders, teachers and students. Involving teachers and union representatives in the development and reform of educational policies and programmes is crucial for improving working conditions.

Improvements in salaries should be in the context of addressing the gender pay gap within the education sector and between teachers in different education sectors and between the teachers and school leaders.¹⁵ The gender discrepancies in the teaching profession are predominantly due to salary expectations for women and men as teachers relative to their salary prospects in other fields.¹⁶

Further work needs to be done to examine other pay gaps deriving from other inequality characteristics to effectively fight against discrimination. It is also important to analyse differences of salaries between public and private education institutions and also geographical inequalities.

While initial teacher salaries should be increased, there is still a need for progressive promotion paths and salary scales to be such that they act as an aid in teacher retention.¹⁷ A clear and structured salary pathway needs to be ensured for all teachers in order to support their retention and to increase motivation and provide certainty for the future.

4. Ensure sustainable working conditions and promote teachers' positive well being

There are significant links between stress levels and working conditions, which includes the working environment and perceptions of self-efficacy amongst staff.

Well-being - which relates to different aspects of the teaching profession: job security and contractual situation, workload, work environments, working conditions, sense of safety, peer and institutional support, relational aspects with learners, parents, colleagues, school leaders, and others involved with the school, and appreciation from the wider community¹⁸ - has been worsened by the COVID-19 crisis¹⁹.

The pandemic had a negative impact on teachers' and researchers' working conditions and health and safety. Constant switches between open and closed education institutions were disruptive for the teaching and learning process. Hybrid and online teaching and learning have caused significant work-related stress on teachers, negatively impacting their well-being.²⁰ Teachers' inability to disconnect digitally from their jobs creates an imbalance in their professional and private lives, thus making teaching unsustainable and resulting in poor retention rates. Efforts must be made to tackle these psychosocial hazards, especially considering that these negative trends have been worsened by the COVID-19 crisis.

Psychosocial hazards, such as work-related stress, increasingly affect teachers' health and well-being.²¹ According to research²², the causes of work-related stress of teachers include "schools and schools systems becoming more and more bureaucratic; expectations on teachers to manage difficult student behaviour; greater service delivery demands with fewer resources; a lack of planning time; increased emphasis on accountability measures; and the exclusion of teachers from policy-making procedures." High levels of stress are associated with lower self-efficacy for teaching, lower job satisfaction and lower commitment. High levels

School leaders are also crucial figures in the development of fundamental values in schools; however, they often do not feel that their work is held in high regard by society, as just over one third of principals agree that their profession is valued.⁹ School leaders should not only be administrators but pedagogical leaders who mediate collaboration among teachers as well as between teachers and students. They have a critical role in ensuring equality, freedom of speech, and human rights.

The practice of social dialogue and collegial governance is crucial to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of leadership. Considering the important and demanding roles performed by school leaders, the completion of a programme or course specialising in institutional administration or principal training is a requirement in many countries before taking up their positions.⁴⁰

3. Delivering decent salaries – including addressing any pay inequalities

Decent salaries need to be ensured for all teachers and researchers (no less than the equivalent salary level of other professionals who have tertiary level qualifications) through collective bargaining and by collective agreements and/or by influencing national legislation on the salaries of civil servants.¹¹ Salaries should take into consideration the rising cost of living in Europe especially following the COVID-crisis.

High and attractive starting salary levels need to be ensured for all teachers; improving salary and career progression would increase the recruitment and retention of young teachers.¹²

Salaries should be linked to qualifications obtained. The principle of equal pay for equal work and work of equal value needs to apply. All teachers should have the highest level of qualifications and be paid appropriately. According to the [ETUCE policy paper: Teacher Education in Europe](#), "raising the level of qualifications of teachers is arguably one of the most important means to raise the status and attractiveness of the teaching profession [...] It is the ETUCE's firm belief that in the light of the complexity of the job of teaching today, all teachers should, as a minimum, be educated to Master's level. In the context of recruiting qualified candidates into teacher education it is however also important to recognise that teacher education is important in its own right."

The status of early childhood teachers, and the value placed on their education, should be at an equal level with other teachers, with equal rights and entitlements. The fact that teachers in the VET sector are being treated in an inferior manner than other teaching professionals, (they are more likely to have fixed-term contracts and lower salaries than teachers in other education sectors)¹³ is one of the reasons why recruitment of VET teachers is difficult.¹⁴ In some countries the primary school teachers are paid less than their counterparts in other sectors.

of stress can lead to burnout, a multidimensional construct composed of three characteristics: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment.²³ In addition, teaching has an impact not only on mental but also on the physical well-being of teachers. Policy makers and employers need to take effective actions to reduce these impacts.

Improved work design, organisation and management, and the social context of work can target negative psychological, physical and social outcomes such as; work-related stress; burnout or depression, inclusive, sustainable, and decent workplaces, including by enhancing occupational health and safety, and work-life balance need to be provided to all education staff. National policies and national legislation on occupational health and safety and particularly on stress at work must guarantee a good working environment and well-being for teachers, trainers, researchers and other education personnel.²⁴ Improving the health literacy of education staff is important, to raise awareness on the importance of health and safety measures, as well as for risk assessment in education.²⁵

5. Control excessive workload and working hours

While many countries acknowledged the invaluable contribution of teachers as daily front-line workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, formal recognition has not been accompanied by concrete support and improved working conditions.

Rapid adaptation to emergency teaching settings during the pandemic resulted in significant changes in the teaching and working conditions of teachers and researchers. Research shows²⁶ that in the sudden increases in emergency remote teaching, fewer than half of teachers felt well prepared to use ICT in their teaching, and most countries provided some sort of training on digital competences only after the pandemic had started. Not having the appropriate skills for teaching in an online environment increased the workload and stress of teachers. Special attention for teachers with care responsibilities needs to be considered in relation to their home/family responsibilities.

Many countries made non-teaching tasks mandatory in the pandemic outside normal teaching times, for example in-person consultations with parents or creating and sharing one's own teaching materials.²⁷ At the same time most countries did not increase teacher salaries²⁸ despite the increased workload of education personnel during the pandemic, and only a few countries recruited new temporary education personnel (many of whom did not meet the minimum requirement of teaching qualifications) to reduce teachers' workloads.²⁹

Excessive workload is a universal challenge for teachers which demands immediate redress. Apart from teaching hours, these are caused by other assignments such as preparing lessons, administrative tasks, in-service training, and staff meetings.³⁰ Online and blended teaching also increase the workload of the teachers in multiple ways. Instead of referring only to 'teaching hours', the term 'working hours' should be used, as this will assist in the reduction of workloads and the amount of unpaid overtime for teachers. This is particularly important for teachers in precarious employment.³¹ The evolution of 'mobile teaching',

where teachers are contracted lesson-by-lesson and teach selected classes in multiple schools in almost all sectors, impacts teachers and puts their ability to provide quality education at risk.³² This has been worsened with digitisation, as often teachers work remotely instead of travelling, and thus receive less pay.

To increase the attractiveness of teaching, permanent contracts must replace fixed term ones to address the issue of unpredictable and often unregulated working hours.

6. Create quality entry pathways and retention practices

The attractiveness of the teaching profession could be improved amongst second level students by providing good career guidance to young people, which could enhance their motivation to apply to train as a teacher. There is also a need to consider how to support socio-economically disadvantaged students to ensure their access to, and completion of, initial teacher education. Finally, particularly in the post-COVID period, there is a need for improved career prospects, as these improve the attractiveness of teaching and also support job retention.

Raising the quality of induction training and mentorship by effective updates in response to teachers' professional needs, and providing permanent contracts to early-stage teachers are issues which need to be addressed in order to reduce the early dropout rate of novice teachers at the start of study and of their professional careers.³³

High quality induction and mentorship programs provided for trainee teachers while learning and working in schools play a key role, not only to help them to complete their teacher qualification or acquire a teaching licence (depending on the country), but to integrate them into the profession. Induction and mentorship programs need to include: updated quality pedagogy and didactics; teacher training materials, alternative learning methods, updates of the curricular design, and deployment of highly trained mentors.³⁴

Employee rights are critical to recruitment. Job security, decent salaries and working conditions, decent health and holiday coverage, fair pension schemes and social benefits will further enhance the attractiveness of the profession.

Retention is a prominent challenge, also; it is closely linked to the fact that career progression for teachers in different education sectors is very slow or stagnant. In several countries this makes the profession unattractive and leads to difficulties in retaining high quality staff.³⁵ It is important, therefore, to diversify teacher career structures and to widen career advancement opportunities in order to attract and retain well-performing teachers in the profession.³⁶

Career development needs to be seen as being broader than leading to management roles. It should allow for promotion in different areas and professional specialisation within the education sector. Teachers positively welcome having more opportunities for career progression while still being able to continue their classroom work.³⁷ Accessing attractive

career pathways and opportunities for further professional development are essential for all teachers and researchers. Overall time spent on maternity, paternity, parental, and care leave should never affect career progression in a negative way.

7. Ensure entitlement to quality and inclusive initial education and continuous professional development

Teachers must be supported in the professional development needed to cope with new demands, including digital and green skills³⁸, social skills, democratic citizenship and other transversal skills³⁹.

For all decisions regarding professional development, initial or continuous, teachers and their trade unions are essential; they must therefore be part of any process of determining the necessary requirements for qualification to enter the profession or for upskilling.

Initial education and continuous professional development need to be updated to help teachers to be fully prepared for classroom work regarding the green and digital transition of education and to teach key competences.⁴⁰ For education systems, continuing professional learning is critical to complement teachers' initial preparation, to continue improving the quality of teaching and learning, and to retain staff over time.⁴¹

Effective and sustainable investment in initial education and CPD of teachers concerning pedagogy, workshops, and resourcing of education institutes, should ensure that quality education and training is provided to match the demands of the future. Initial and continuous professional development needs to be based on detailed high-quality research on teaching subjects and pedagogical methods, which should also deal with equality issues and gender roles. Initial and continuous professional development needs to be available in different flexible forms (online, part-time, etc) which allow teachers to attend while meeting care responsibilities. However, in some countries, governments have taken steps to privatise teacher training or to hand over the research on teachers' professional development to private institutions.⁴²

While acknowledging that each country, with the effective involvement of the education trade unions, should determine the mandatory or voluntary nature of CPD, ETUCE believes that high quality and inclusive⁴³ CPD should be available for all teachers, free of charge and within their working hours.⁴⁴ This must be facilitated by guaranteeing a replacement during working hours and administrative support to organise the training⁴⁵. Teachers participate in more types of CPD when there is a certain amount of time allocated to CPD annually in their working hours.⁴⁶

Minimum academic qualifications, set at Master level by most European countries⁴⁷, are needed to ensure high quality staff. The recognition of teaching qualifications obtained in other countries should be simplified⁴⁸.

The requirement to move towards minimum qualification levels for teachers have been ignored in an increasing number of cases⁴⁹. There have also been attempts to shorten the length of initial teacher education programmes⁵⁰ due to teacher shortages which derive from ageing of the workforce, unattractive working conditions, and salaries, and the COVID crisis. There are increasing attempts to de-regulate the teaching profession and schools are opening more access to non-qualified teachers or professionals from other sectors. Included in this are VET teachers and VET trainers within schools, who are increasingly being replaced by unqualified professionals. VET trainers should also be expected to acquire the minimum requirements of pedagogical training⁵¹.

It is essential to fight against attempts to de-regulate minimum requirements of teaching qualifications because these can undermine the quality of education, the status of teachers, and collective agreements. Ensuring such minimum requirements for teaching would also promote increases in teacher salaries, which should be determined based on qualifications obtained.

8. Address equality and diversity challenges in teaching workforces

It is crucial that all education personnel are treated according to principles of equal opportunities, enhanced diversity and supported inclusion, in their everyday work. A recruitment policy must be put into effect which seeks to attract a teaching body that reflects the full spectrum of society in terms of diversity, including gender, sexual orientation, abilities and special educational needs, economic status, ethnic origin, language, religion, and migratory and citizenship status.⁵² Particular emphasis should be given to recruiting teachers with migrant backgrounds and teachers with different mother tongues. Preventing and combating discrimination and the intersectional interweaving of different grounds of discrimination are major challenges. It is important to create in educational institutions a climate not only of tolerance but of recognition of the benefits of diversity.

Considerable attention should be given to recruitment strategies that are aimed at recruiting equal numbers of men and women into the profession. The extent of the gender imbalance varies within the education sector depending upon subject and level of education. Early childhood education, primary and secondary education are dominated by a significant gender imbalance with a predominant female workforce, whereas VET and higher education and research are predominantly male orientated.⁵³

9. Promote and commit to social dialogue, collective bargaining and agreements

Social dialogue, collective bargaining and agreements and collegial governance are essential in order to ensure sustainable quality employment, decent working conditions, promising career prospects and rewarding incentives such as fair pay⁵⁴ for the staff.⁵⁵

Key elements of social dialogue need to be strengthened such as: joint work and projects with employers and government, information sharing, communication, consultation, collective bargaining, and collective agreements.⁵⁶ Without effective social dialogue raising the attractiveness of the teaching profession cannot be realised.

Social dialogue should be expanded to include non-traditional but essential issues for education personnel.⁵⁷ According to ETUCE research, the range of issues addressed within social dialogue has gradually expanded in many countries. Collective agreements increasingly cover matters such as health and safety, training, grievance and arbitration procedures, discrimination in employment and affirmative action measures for women or minority groups, and may include the professional responsibilities of faculty members.⁵⁸

Teacher trade unions should have an active role in ensuring the rights of their members in order to improve their working conditions and support them professionally⁵⁹. Pay will always be an absolutely fundamental issue in the wages-for-work transaction, but the nature of the work in that exchange relationship, and the factors that shape it, are equally important.⁶⁰ In ETUCE Resolution⁶¹ ETUCE Member Organisations committed to “Continue to engage in actions aimed at improving social dialogue and collective bargaining at European, national, regional and local level to ensure an increase of public funding for education and teachers’ salaries, equal access to and provision of quality education for all learners, and with a view to increasing the status of teachers and improving the image of the teaching profession in society”, and to “Provide various means of professional support to education personnel and be a centre for teachers’ professional development”.

It is also essential to understand the different experiences of social dialogue at national, regional and local levels. A few ETUCE member organisations reported that social dialogue is “good” across all levels, compared to the majority which find it unsatisfactory, and who say that it has deteriorated badly.⁶² It is not clear to what extent the deterioration of social dialogue may be attributed to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic⁶³, but social dialogue remained strong and got even stronger in few countries during the pandemic⁶⁴.

To achieve these goals, trade union action must be able to take place without hindrance or fear of legal reprisals or sanctions in the workplace. Trade union freedom is at the foundation of the achievement of social and civil rights. Guaranteeing trade unionists the right to collective action, the right to mobilise, the right to denounce and resist must be a priority objective. Specific and comprehensive protection for whistle-blowers and staff representatives is an essential prerequisite for achieving quality social dialogue in line with European Directive 2019/1937, which should be strengthened and extended in this way.

10. Empower the teaching profession

Empowering the teaching profession means providing the necessary resources in terms of staffing and budgets to allow schools to flourish and to play their role in broader communities to tackle the inequities, so clearly exposed by the COVID-19 crisis in too many societies. The critical role of teachers in supporting learners and school communities was highlighted by the

response to the pandemic. Teachers need the trust of parents, pupils, and the broader society. This trust should be replicated by policy makers who need to move away from directive, top-down, approaches to education and to turn instead to trusting and empowering teachers and school staff to nurture, educate and support students and to deliver the common good which is education.⁶⁵

Professional autonomy and teacher agency are the hallmarks of an empowered education system. They are the cornerstones of the provision of quality education. Trust in the profession is a third, critical, hallmark. Understanding and respecting the mission and professionalism of teachers is a crucial aspect of attracting people to the profession. Teachers are the experts in teaching and allowing them to put into practice their pedagogies will enhance learning and teaching immensely.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹36% of teachers in primary and secondary schools are aged 50 and over; 9% of teachers in the European Union are over 60. Ageing teachers are a growing problem in 16 out of the 36 countries surveyed by Eurydice. At the same time that teachers are getting older, 11 countries report that there are too few students enrolling for initial teacher education. Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Norway report that student drop-out from initial teacher education is their main challenge in terms of teacher supply and demand. In: [Eurydice report "Teaching Careers in Europe: Access, Progression and Support", 2018.](#)

² 24.6% of principals reported a shortage of qualified teachers; 37.8% reported a shortage of teachers with the competence in teaching students with special needs; 16.4% reported a shortage of vocational teachers; 23.5% reported a shortage of teachers with competence in teaching students in multicultural or multilingual settings; and 24.2% reported a shortage of teachers with competence in teaching students from socio-economically disadvantaged homes. These shortages of resources reportedly hindered the school's capacity to provide quality instruction 'quite a bit' or 'a lot'. In: [European Commission "Education and Training Monitor 2019"](#).

³ On average in the EU, 34% of teachers work in schools with at least 10% of special-need students; 19% of teachers in the EU work in a school where more than 30% of students come from socio-economically disadvantaged homes; 24% of teachers work in schools with at least 10% non-native-speaking pupils and 32% of teachers work in schools with at least 1% of refugee students. In: ["Council conclusions on European teachers and trainers for the future" \(2020/C.193/04\), Art. 13 b\).](#)

⁴ During the policy paper we use the expression "school leader" in a broad sense. "ETUCE takes a broad view of school leadership, encompassing, not only the head or principal of the learning institution, but also other individuals with leadership roles such as deputy principals, departmental/subject heads, senior teachers and other individuals entrusted with leadership responsibilities. ETUCE believes in distributed leadership, shared or collaborative leadership involving teachers and the whole pedagogical community. Through such collaborative leadership, school principals can work with the whole pedagogical community to develop a shared vision for the school, to set the school goals and to work systematically towards their fulfilment." In: [ETUCE Policy Paper on School Leadership, 2012](#)

⁵ On average across OECD countries and economies only 42% of principals report that their teachers have a significant responsibility over a large share of tasks related to school policies, curriculum and instruction. In: [OECD TALIS 2018 Results \(Volume II\): "Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals"](#).

⁶ [ETUCE Article "Trade unions' demand to education ministers about the future of the Bologna Process", 2020.](#)

⁷ [ETUCE Policy Paper on School Leadership \(2012\)](#)

⁸ [EPPN Project Policy recommendations: "New roles and competences for teachers and school leaders in the digital age", 2021](#)

⁹ On average across OECD countries, 37% of principals agree or strongly agree that the teaching profession is valued in society. In: [OECD TALIS 2018: "Insights and Interpretations"](#).

¹⁰ Only 54% of school leaders have completed a programme or course in school administration or principal training before taking up their position as principal. In: [OECD TALIS 2018 Results \(Volume I\): "Teachers and School Leaders as Life-long Learners"](#).

¹¹ For example, in Germany, the actual salaries of upper secondary teachers are the same as those of similarly educated workers. In: [OECD report "Education at a Glance 2020: OECD Indicators"](#).

¹² Young teachers are more disadvantaged in terms of salaries, as they earn on average 66% less than senior colleagues with the same level of qualification. In: [OECD report "Education at a Glance 2020: OECD Indicators"](#). In Germany, Finland, Sweden, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia and Norway, the starting salary increases with the education level. In: [Eurydice report "Teachers' and School Heads' Salaries and Allowances in Europe 2018-19"](#).

¹³ [OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training: "Teachers and Leaders in Vocational Education and Training", 2021.](#)

¹⁴ [OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training: "Teachers and Leaders in Vocational Education and Training", 2021.](#)

¹⁵ Although women make up a majority of the teaching profession, they are relatively under-represented in leadership positions. On average across OECD countries, 68% of lower secondary teachers are women, but only 45% of principals. This is particularly striking given that principals tend to be recruited from among the ranks of teachers – suggesting that female teachers are less likely to be promoted as principals than their male counterparts. In: [OECD Education Indicators in Focus: "Gender imbalances in the teaching profession", 2017](#)

¹⁶ Gender differences are more significant when it comes to teachers' salaries relative to other tertiary-educated workers. On average across OECD countries, male primary school teachers (aged 25-64) earn 71% of the wages of other tertiary-educated men. This number increases to 76% in lower secondary education and 81% in upper secondary education. Female teachers earn a significantly higher relative wage. Women in primary education earn over 90% of the salaries of other tertiary-educated female workers, and even slightly more than them at the lower and upper secondary levels. These sharp differences in relative salaries for men and women are likely to have made the teaching profession more appealing to women, especially at the lower levels of education. In: [OECD Education Indicators in Focus: "Gender imbalances in the teaching profession", 2017.](#)

¹⁷ It is uncommon for appraisal processes to be tied to career progression in the form of pay increases or a bonus, with an average of only 41% of teachers reporting that this happens in their school. In: [OECD TALIS 2018 Results \(Volume II\): "Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals"](#).

¹⁸ According to OIELE's research, teachers in private schools in Greece highlighted the lack of investment in new educational strategies/innovations, the growing amount of bureaucracy that is affecting the quality of teaching, democratic governance in schools, transparency in the selection of school officials, isolation of teachers that take part in union activities, illegal practices from school boards/owners when it comes to not paying overtime (including open school days, bazaars, and forced work during weekends). Teachers expressed frustration at e-learning during the pandemic, because many working rights were violated, mainly the right to digitally disconnect after the legal working hour frame. In OIELE research: [Survey on working climate and professional satisfaction in private education in the time of the pandemic](#) (in Greek only).

¹⁹ World Health Organisation (WHO): ["Schooling during COVID-19", 2021](#)

²⁰ Teachers can find themselves in a state of physical and emotional exhaustion, stress and burnout, and their mental and physical health can be affected. In: [Eurydice Report "Teachers in Europe Careers, Development and Well-being", 2021.](#)

²¹ OECD: [Teachers' Well-Being: A Framework for Data Collection and Analysis, 2020](#)

²² OECD: [Teachers' Well-Being: A Framework for Data Collection and Analysis, 2020](#)

²³ Well-functioning, inclusive and supportive education systems are important and key to supporting the well-being, including the mental health, of pupils and teachers. In: [European Commission "Education and Training Monitor 2021"](#).

²⁴ World Health Organisation (WHO): ["Schooling during COVID-19", 2021](#)

²⁵ OECD: ["The State of Global Education. 18 Months into the pandemic", 2021.](#)

²⁶ All OECD countries made non-teaching tasks somehow mandatory, in one way or the other. Worryingly, during the pandemic, this was also encouraged outside the normal teaching time. Czech Republic, for instance, expected teachers to have individual e-mail, phone and in-person consultations with parents as well as conducting survey feedback, while Portugal established collaborative networks between teachers, local governments, and mail services to distribute learning materials. In: [OECD "The State of Global Education. 18 Months into the pandemic", 2021.](#)

²⁷ Around 85% of OECD countries did not increase teacher salaries (exceptions were Lithuania, Slovenia and Latvia) despite the increased workload of education personnel during the pandemic. In: [OECD "The State of Global Education. 18 Months into the pandemic", 2021.](#)

²⁸ About 40% of OECD countries recruited new temporary education personnel while additional staff did not always meet the regular qualifications expected from teachers. This is, for instance, the case of Luxembourg where temporary non-certified teachers were recruited without respecting the usual inception period foreseen for substitute teachers. In: [OECD "The State of Global Education. 18 Months into the pandemic", 2021.](#)

²⁹ 22% of teachers experience a lot of stress at work if they spend five hours during a calendar week on administrative tasks, 20% of teachers experience a lot of stress at work if they spend seven hours during a

calendar week on marking and correcting student work, and 20% of teachers experience “a lot” of stress at work if they spend eleven hours during a calendar week on planning or lesson preparation. In: [OECD TALIS 2018 Results \(Volume I\): “Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners”](#). At EU level, lower secondary teachers list administrative work as their main source of stress. Moreover, the data reveals that 3 of the top 4 sources of stress are not directly linked with the core tasks of teaching: administrative work, responsibility for students’ achievements, and requirements from authorities. In: [Eurydice Report “Teachers in Europe Careers, Development and Well-being”](#), 2021.

³² 48% of teachers under 30 report that their employment contract is temporary. The survey found that teachers working under contracts of less than one year also report feeling less confident in their ability to teach in roughly one third of the countries surveyed. In: [OECD TALIS 2018 Results \(Volume I\): “Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners”](#).

³³ Working in multiple schools increases the demands on teachers, potentially reducing time available for collaboration with other teachers and other valuable activities. In: [OECD Review of School Resources “Working and Learning Together: Rethinking Human Resource Policies for Schools”](#), 2019.

³⁴ [European Commission, Staff Working Document SEC \(2010\) 538 “Developing coherent and system-wide induction programmes for beginning teachers: a handbook for policymakers”](#).

³⁵ Only 38% of teachers participated in either formal or informal induction activities in their first employment. Nevertheless, teachers who took part in some kind of induction activity tend to feel more confident in their teaching abilities and more satisfied with their job. While school principals generally consider mentoring to be important for teachers’ work and students’ performance, only 22% of novice teachers have an assigned mentor. In: [OECD TALIS 2018 Results \(Volume I\): “Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners”](#).

³⁶ 24 European education systems have a career structure system organised in different levels and 18 organised in one single level. In: [Eurydice Report “Teachers in Europe Careers, Development and Well-being”](#), 2021.

³⁷ In: [UNESCO Report “Teacher career reforms: learning from experience”](#), 2019.

³⁸ In: [UNESCO Report “Teacher career reforms: learning from experience”](#), 2019.

³⁹ [EU Council conclusions on countering the COVID-19 crisis in education and training 2020/C 212 I/03](#) highlighted the need for additional, targeted training and member states were invited to support further development of teachers’ and trainers’ digital skills and competences, in order to facilitate teaching and assessment in digital learning environments.

⁴⁰ Transversal skills are: Critical and innovative thinking, inter-personal skills (e.g. presentation and communication skills, organizational skills, teamwork, etc.), intra-personal skills (e.g. self-discipline, enthusiasm, perseverance, self-motivation, etc.), Global citizenship (e.g. tolerance, openness, respect for diversity, intercultural understanding, etc.), Media and information literacy such as the ability to locate and access information, as well as to analyse and evaluate media content. In: [UNESCO Education Policy Brief \(Vol.2\): Skills for holistic human development](#), 2014

⁴¹ [EU Council Recommendations of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning \(2018\)](#) sets out eight key competences: 1) Literacy competence; 2) Multilingual competence; 3) Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering; 4) Digital competence; 5) Personal, social and learning to learn competence; 6) Civic competence; 7) Entrepreneurship competence; 8) Cultural awareness and expression competence.

⁴² [OECD: Policies to Support Teachers’ Continuing Professional Learning](#), 2020

⁴³ In some countries the government made steps to privatise teacher training or give the research on teachers’ professional development to private institutions (e.g. Scotland, Norway). In: [ETUCE Report on the second Training Workshop of the ETUCE Project Education Trade Unions for the Teaching Profession](#), 2018

⁴⁴ Inclusion is not sufficiently addressed in the initial and continuous professional development of teachers (e.g. France, Belgium). In: [ETUCE Report on the second Training Workshop of the ETUCE Project Education Trade Unions for the Teaching Profession](#), 2018

⁴⁵ In 16 education systems CDP is required for career progression (Spain, France, Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Montenegro, North-Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Lithuania). CDP is mandatory for all teachers in lower secondary education in 18 education systems (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Latvia Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Austria, Portugal Romania, Slovenia, Finland, Scotland, Albania,

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) where there is a minimum number of hours, days or credits that teachers must complete within a specific period of time. In 9 education systems, CDP is considered an entitlement (Belgium-Fr, Czech Republic, Croatia, Italy, Lithuania, Sweden, Iceland, Netherlands) with a set amount of time specified in top-level regulations or collective agreements. In one third of European education systems (28), it is not mandatory for schools to develop a CDP Plan, however CDP planning at school level contributes to teacher participation in more varied professional development activities. In: [Eurydice Report “Teachers in Europe Careers, Development and Well-being”](#), 2021.

⁴⁶ CDP often takes place outside of teachers’ working hours and in locations far away from teachers’ working place (and transportation to these places is not paid) (e.g. Germany, the UK). In some countries, working time of the teacher who participates in CDP is distributed among other teachers which creates conflicts between colleagues (e.g. Belgium (French-speaking)). In other countries, teacher do not have access to CDP because their employers do not find substitutes for them (e.g. Finland). In: [ETUCE Report on the second Training Workshop of the ETUCE Project Education Trade Unions for the Teaching Profession](#), 2018

⁴⁷ Data reveals that, on average, teachers participated in more varied CDP activities in those countries that allocate a certain amount of time for CDP. Teachers in the countries where a CDP was mandatory or an entitlement participated, on average, in more different types of CDP activities than teachers for whom CDP is voluntary or defined as a professional duty, but no specific time is set. In: [Eurydice Report “Teachers in Europe Careers, Development and Well-being”](#), 2021.

⁴⁸ The education level of general lower secondary teachers per country: Master’s level of qualification (ISCED 7) is required in 15 countries: Slovakia, Portugal, Croatia, Finland, Czechia, Italy, Estonia, Slovakia, France, Sweden, Austria, Hungary, Norway, Ireland, Malta. Bachelor’s level (ISCED 6) is required in 11 countries: Belgium (French and Flemish Communities), Bulgaria, Denmark, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Turkey. In: [Eurydice Report “Teachers in Europe Careers, Development and Well-being”](#), 2021.

⁴⁹ According to GEW’s research, in Germany, from 2016 to 2018, at least 12,000 people were given advice who wanted to have their foreign qualifications recognized for the teaching profession. During the same period, 7,365 initial applications for recognition were registered. An annual average of 11 % were found to be “fully equivalent” to a qualification acquired in Germany, 17 % received a clear refusal but the majority, 68% were advised to begin a compensation programme. To date, only about 500 teachers with foreign degrees have been granted full recognition for the teaching profession each year - either directly or through a successfully completed compensation programme. That is only 20 % of those who apply for recognition. In: [Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft Research Study](#), 2021.

⁵⁰ There is an increase in the number of unqualified teachers employed in schools, as well as teacher teaching subjects for which they do not have relevant qualifications (e.g. France, Germany, the UK). In: [ETUCE Report on the second Training Workshop of the ETUCE Project Education Trade Unions for the Teaching Profession](#), 2018

⁵¹ Eg. in France and Italy (information from ETUCE Member Organisations received in the ETUCE Equality Committee meeting on 8 February, 2022)

⁵² [OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training: “Teachers and Leaders in Vocational Education and Training”](#), 2021.

⁵³ 31% of teachers work in schools with at least 10% of students with special needs, 30% in schools with at least 1% of refugee students, 21% in schools with at least 10% of students whose first language is different from the language(s) of instruction or from a dialect of this (these) language(s), 20% in schools with at least 30% of socio-economically disadvantaged students, and 17% in schools with at least 10% of students with a migrant background. In: [OECD TALIS 2018 Results \(Volume II\): “Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals”](#).

⁵⁴ Women make up as much as 97% of the teachers in pre-primary and 82% in primary education on average across the OECD. The share goes down to 63% at the secondary level and 43% at the tertiary level. In: [OECD Education Indicators in Focus: “Gender imbalances in the teaching profession”](#), 2017. At primary level, female teachers are a majority in Denmark, England (United Kingdom), France, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and Turkey. The proportion of women among primary teachers is at least 15% higher than in lower secondary education in England (United Kingdom) and Sweden, and at least 20% higher in France. In upper secondary teachers the proportion of female teachers is at least 4% lower in Croatia, Denmark, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, and Turkey. In: [OECD TALIS 2018 Results \(Volume II\): “Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals”](#).

⁵⁴ In 8 education systems, there were pay rises for teachers as the result of collective bargaining. The increase was between 2 % and 6 % in Sweden (depending on the education level and number of years in service), between 4 % and 5 % in Malta, between 3 % and 6 % in Iceland (more than 7 % for pre-primary teachers), and 5 % in North Macedonia. In the Netherlands, Finland, Slovenia and Norway, the increase was around 2%. In: [Eurydice report "Teachers' and School Heads' Salaries and Allowances in Europe 2018-19"](#).

⁵⁵ "For the purpose of this Convention the term collective bargaining extends to all negotiations which take place between an employer, a group of employers or one or more employers' organisations, on the one hand, and one or more workers' organisations, on the other, for: (a) determining working conditions and terms of employment; and/or (b) regulating relations between employers and workers; and/or (c) regulating relations between employers or their organisations and a workers' organisation or workers' organisations." In: [ILO Convention No. 154, Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981](#), art. 2.

⁵⁶ [ETUCE Report "YOUR TURN! Teachers for Trade Union Renewal", 2020](#).

⁵⁷ "The experience of the national curriculum reform in Norway reaffirms the importance of strong social dialogue, but also highlights the importance of extending this across the full range of issues that confront teachers in their working lives. Policy making on curriculum and pedagogical issues relate not only to the quality of education provided, but also to the quality of working lives of teachers and other education personnel and therefore need to be developed in a framework based on social dialogue". In: [ETUCE Report "YOUR TURN! Teachers for Trade Union Renewal", 2020](#).

⁵⁸ Terms and conditions of employment, including working time and wages, are the principal matters covered by most collective agreements. However, in Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway, criteria for assessing academic staff performance are included in collective agreements. In: [ILO "Employment terms and conditions in tertiary education", 2018](#).

⁵⁹ [ETUCE Resolution: "Empowering Education Trade Unions: The Key to Promoting Quality Education \(2016\)"](#)

⁶⁰ In: [ETUCE Report "YOUR TURN! Teachers for Trade Union Renewal", 2020](#).

⁶¹ [ETUCE Resolution: "Empowering Education Trade Unions: The Key to Promoting Quality Education \(2016\)"](#)

⁶² ETUCE survey of 62 education trade unions across the European region highlighted the range of experiences of social dialogue across the education sector. "4 of 8 Northern European respondents indicated social dialogue was 'good' across all four elements, whereas Southern European education trade unions indicate very high levels of dissatisfaction (13 out of 16 Southern European respondents described both consultation and negotiation as 'unsatisfactory')". The condition of social dialogue in Spain, France, Italy, Portugal and Greece can be summarized with the following remark: "In this country social dialogue has deteriorated badly. Unions are not taken into account and are neither negotiated with nor consulted. Everything is imposed without dialogue. Throughout these pandemic months, we have not been called to sectoral meetings or, if we have, it has been to notify us of decisions already taken without trade union involvement". Results from Central Europe and Eastern European trade unions are more mixed with majority responses indicating social dialogue was broadly satisfactory (50% of 20 Eastern European respondents and fractionally less than half of unions in Central Europe). In: [ETUCE Report "YOUR TURN! Teachers for Trade Union Renewal", 2020](#).

⁶³ It is not clear to what extent the deterioration may be attributed to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. When asked specifically about coronavirus issues between 18% and 29% of respondents reported social dialogue was 'good' although these numbers were exceeded by those indicating dissatisfaction. In this regard 42% and 47% reported dissatisfaction in relation to information sharing and consultation respectively with these figures increasing to 57% and 58% for collaborative working arrangements and collective bargaining. In: [ETUCE Report "YOUR TURN! Teachers for Trade Union Renewal", 2020](#).

⁶⁴ Eg. in Ireland and Norway. In: [ETUCE Report "YOUR TURN! Teachers for Trade Union Renewal", 2020](#).

⁶⁵ On average across OECD countries, only 14% of teachers felt that policy makers in their country/region value their view, and only 24% of teachers believe that they can influence education policy. In: [OECD TALIS 2018 Results \(Volume II\) - Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals](#).



3. Education trade unions in the European region have been, and continue, working tirelessly on protecting the working conditions and equal opportunities of education personnel, fighting for their rights and social justice, providing the necessary professional and psychological support to their affiliates and enhancing the attractiveness and status of the teaching profession.
4. In many countries the Covid-19 crisis has catalysed the trend on narrowing down education to what only translates into a few easily measurable indicators or into education meant only as direct preparation for the labour market. These trends contribute to the challenges the profession faces as they lead us away from a more holistic view of education, preparing children and young people not only for a working life, but first and foremost for a life as free, independent and responsible citizens able to cope with the society and environment they live in. These narrow views continue undermining the quality of education and the attractiveness of the teaching profession.

Recognises that:

1. The teaching profession is experiencing significant attrition and retention challenges in many European countries, resulting in a less diverse and less attractive profession. The challenges have been further compounded in the last two years by the Covid-19 pandemic which has had detrimental impacts on the status of the teaching profession. These include a major teacher shortage, deterioration of working conditions and increased workload, including challenges linked to digital and blended learning, precarious employment, increasing class size, and casualisation of staff; increased teacher burn-out, mental health and wellbeing challenges, higher work-related stress, a diminution of the status of the profession, and lack of relevant professional development and support.
2. Societal concerns and problems such as poverty, racism and family-matters enter the classroom with the students and complicate the work of the teachers. These have a profound negative impact on the outcomes of education especially when schools do not receive enough support to deal with the challenges they create.
3. Increasing trends towards unilateral decision-making by governments, neglect of social dialogue, and violation of social partners' autonomy and of their rights to bargain collectively are explicit obstacles experienced by some European education trade unions for many years. And now, education trade unions face even more reluctance, or a lack of political willingness, from education authorities and governments to conduct social dialogue while using the COVID-19 crisis as an excuse.
4. The highly valuable contribution of teachers, academics and other education personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic was not met at all with formal recognition, such as increased salaries, concrete support or improved working conditions. Instead, some governments, in an attempt to address the teacher shortage, used the crisis as an excuse to recruit temporary education personnel without the regular qualifications that are usually required from teachers.
5. Privatisation and commercialisation are creeping into education, leading to casualisation of the profession and precarious working conditions that strongly affect the quality of public



Resolution

Trade union engagement and activity in Europe: Mobilising for quality public education, for the benefit of students, and an enhancement of the status of teachers, academics and all education personnel

Adopted by the ETUCE Special Conference, the Regional Special Conference of Education International, on 5-6 July 2022

Further to and consistent with the Resolutions adopted by the 8th EICongress in Bangkok in 2019, the Resolutions adopted by the ETUCE Conference in 2020 and the ETUCE Extraordinary Conference in 2021, this ETUCE Special Conference

Recognises and acknowledges the monumental efforts and ongoing professional dedication of teachers, academics and other education personnel during the period of the pandemic in continuing to seek to deliver quality and inclusive education despite the very real challenges faced.

Acknowledges that:

1. Publicly funded quality and inclusive education is a fundamental prerequisite for societal and economic recovery, for the enhancement of the well-being of children and young people, for building solidarity and empathy, and for delivering a better future for Europe. It is ever more essential in times of crises, regardless of whether such have their origins in financial, health, environmental or political concerns. Quality and inclusive education prepares committed, critical-thinking and active citizens, provides a sense of belonging and equal opportunities in life, and ensures that no one is left behind in these turbulent times.
2. Quality and inclusive education is grounded in a highly valued, attractive and diverse teaching profession which plays a crucial role in education-led recovery, as highlighted in the ETUCE Resolution For an Education-led Recovery. Indeed, the value and importance of the teaching profession to society and the recognition of the important work of teachers, academics and other education personnel became evident in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic and continues as societies prepare for the future in the context of digital transformation and the climate emergency.



3. Education trade unions work towards effective social recovery for a better future for education personnel, young people, society and the planet, and demand strong investment priorities in education and training, including in the framework of the recovery and resilience funds and policies, based on a democratic balance between the technocratic view of the goals and their sustainable accountability, starting from the support to the teaching profession as a pre-requisite for high quality and inclusive education.

4. Ensuring healthy and safe education environments and the well-being of teachers, academics, and education personnel – taking into account the long-term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, climate emergency and increasing digitalisation - is of paramount importance to preserve quality working and learning environments and enhance the status of the teaching profession.

5. An increasingly digitized, inter-connected and sustainability-oriented society and education system require from teachers, academics and other education personnel a complex set of skills and fundamentally different learning and pedagogical approaches. Among others, these include: interdisciplinary learning, a whole-school approach, a hands-on approach to practicing green and digital skills and competences, as well as the ability to assess and address the risks and opportunities associated with digital technologies and artificial intelligence systems for educational pedagogies. Therefore, education trade unions focus strongly on ensuring the provision of effective professional support to education personnel in order to ensure their preparedness for the profession with quality and inclusive initial education and continuous professional development, while respecting and enhancing national entry requirements and regulations to become a teacher.

6. The use of digital technology for educational purposes must be responsible and respectful of the applicable rules, in particular concerning intellectual property. These must take into account the right to disconnect (essential for the well-being of staff members), which already exists in some legal frameworks and agreements, and cannot be part of a conception of the digital tool as a control tool for students and staff members in education. In this regard, digital tools and resources should be used in a critical manner.

7. Equality, inclusion and respect for human rights in the education system are key factors for attracting a more diverse population to the teaching profession, improving its status and perception in society, and ensuring that teachers and other education personnel feel appreciated and supported. Initial and continuous professional development of teachers, academics and other education personnel, that is free of charge and takes place during working hours, on inclusive education plays a critical role in this.

8. Education trade unions should also address equality and inclusion in the context of trade union renewal with a view to accommodating the needs of education personnel from various backgrounds and to being the representative voice of all teachers, academics and other education personnel in the European region.



education, thereby risking pushing families towards private tuition or additional educational services and deepening the existing socio-economic and other gaps among students. An unattractive teaching profession and lack of support for teachers and other education personnel also make it impossible to attend to the particular needs of students, including students with special needs, students in multilingual and multicultural settings and students from socioeconomically deprived backgrounds and rural areas.

6. The COVID-19 crisis has also accelerated the use of digital technologies and artificial intelligence systems in education which gives rise to a series of challenges for the working conditions of teachers, academics and other education personnel, and risks jeopardising the academic freedom, academic agency and ultimately, the role of education workers. This also contributed to the emergence of new pedagogical practices which re-confirm the irreplaceable value of in-presence teaching and social interaction in education and exposing the unpreparedness of education systems for the use of digital technologies.

7. Besides, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated already existing health and safety risks for teachers, academics and other education personnel (e.g., work-related stress, psychosocial hazards, cyberbullying and cyber harassment, inability to disconnect, etc.) and exposed the unsustainable and destructive way by which neo-liberal policies promote the survival of the fittest: It also highlighted the significant impact that environmental challenges and mitigation measures has on the European labour market and on workers' lives.

8. Furthermore, following Russia's attack on Ukraine, European education systems and education trade unions are facing further challenges trying to accommodate millions of refugees, mostly women and children, and also trying to scale up education for democratic citizenship with a view to ensuring that tolerance, solidarity and critical-thinking skills are employed in education and in society. when addressing the topic of this war.

Believes that:

1. The solution to the current multi-dimensional crisis that Europe finds itself in, requires a profound change in the social, political and economic organisation of our countries and societies, founded on principles of peace and solidarity. Quality and inclusive education based on an attractive, diverse and valued teaching profession is one of the keys to this transformation.

2. The dual role of education trade unions, and their legitimate right to be consulted in good time on all matters relevant to those working in the sector is a cornerstone and the only solution to address acute socio-economic issues in society. The respect for, and safeguarding of fundamental trade union rights and freedoms are essential pillars of a modern and democratic society, while effective social dialogue and the reinforcement of collective bargaining are essential prerequisites to guarantee adequate salaries, pensions and good working conditions that match the increased demands for quality learning and for a valued, attractive and diverse teaching profession.

Asserts the commitment of ETUCE Member Organisations to:

1. Mobilise for an attractive, diverse and valued teaching profession based on the respect for professional autonomy, professional ethics and academic freedom, by implementing the ETUCE Policy Paper on Raising the Status and Improving the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession and by facilitating exchanges (including cross-border) of experiences and good practices among affiliates and other education trade unions;
2. Strengthen the voice of education personnel in Europe and ensuring that the fundamental role of the teaching profession in society is respected, acknowledged and promoted through meaningful social dialogue, collective bargaining, and involvement in policy-making;
3. Continue to press governments and education authorities to increase investment and to design public education budgets in a manner that provides sufficient, predictable and sustainable resources even after the lifetime of the recovery plans and in a holistic, rather than fragmented and project-based manner;
4. Continue to make government and public opinion aware that education must be a human right and public good, supported by society as a whole and with long-term investment across political mandates.
5. Continue to press governments to ensure sustainable, equitable and long term public funding of research in order to enhance quality teaching in higher education, research-based knowledge relevant to the teaching profession, as well as research to meet societal and economic challenges
6. Campaign for better mechanisms of recruitment and retention in the teaching profession based on attractive salaries, working conditions, work-life balance, and career pathways for teachers, academics and other education personnel;
7. Protect and uphold national requirements of education personnel entering the teaching profession while lobbying for the provision of quality and inclusive initial training and continuous professional development to meet the professional needs of all teachers, academics and other education personnel, including digital and green skills and competences, as well as skills and competences for implementing inclusive education;
8. Address equality and inclusion in the teaching profession in a holistic manner and mainstream it into all education trade unions' fields of work while looking at issues through different lenses (e.g. urban/rural, public/private, geographic differences) as underpinned by the key priorities set out in the ETUCE Action Plan for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion;
9. Promote a stronger focus on democratic citizenship education in European education systems with the view to ensuring that all education personnel are equipped to promote critical thinking, democratic values, human rights and civic engagement, and that students and education personnel enjoy safe and open learning and working environments based on tolerance and mutual respect;

10. Lobby for improving the protection of the occupational health and safety, work-life balance and well-being of education workers - including through national and European legal frameworks - with particular attention to addressing psychosocial risks in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis;
11. Advocate for further public accountability and effective legal frameworks to address the deregulated activities of for-profit actors (e.g., EdTech companies) in the education sector with the aim of preserving the public value of high-quality education for all;
12. Continue lobbying for the active involvement of education trade unions in each step of the formulation of policies having an impact on education pedagogies and the status of the teaching profession and engage more in conversations with politicians;
13. Engage in the design, assessment and implementation of national and European climate and education strategies, including the European competence framework on sustainability;
14. Lobby education authorities to provide effective support and up-to-date high-quality materials, guidelines and tools for teachers and other education personnel for the green transition of education and education institutions;
15. Focus on trade union renewal by increasing engagement with young members and further addressing the needs of those who have not been involved in trade unions, often at the margins of the labour market, with the view to connecting with young people and developing a stronger presence in different, but inextricably linked contexts, such as the workplace and in the communities that young people are part of.
16. Further develop their skills and capacities to better communicate and advocate for the needs of young members including leadership training amongst the younger generation of education professionals.
17. Continue building awareness of the challenges and barriers that young teaching professionals face in accessing the labour market and creating opportunities for addressing these challenges/barriers via engagement in education trade unions.



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persons, nationals of certain countries fleeing political persecutions, and other groups are refused entry.

5. It should not be underestimated that all children in Europe are impacted by the news on the war especially as they experience its direct consequences on Ukrainian children who are suffering from the war and who they meet in their classrooms
6. There have been phenomenal efforts on the part of our member organisations, including our Ukrainian members, in supporting refugees and the children of refugees to cope with the trauma of war. These efforts should be made on a strategic long-term basis.
7. The atrocities and barbaric actions perpetrated by Russian soldiers against Ukrainian people, show a total absence of respect for human rights and the dignity of every individual, and reflect the lack of democratic principles in the Russian leadership.
8. The situation of education in the territories temporarily occupied by Russia is difficult. Local sources report that citizens and children are prohibited to leave the occupied territories and access Ukrainian education institutions. There are also reports about forced removal of Ukrainian children to Russia and confiscation of Ukrainian history and literature books from libraries.

ETUCE member organisations continue to stand in solidarity with the education personnel, students, education trade unions and people of Ukraine and call for:

1. Immediate cessation of military operations, withdrawal of all Russian troops from Ukraine, a peaceful resolution of the conflict built on dialogue, respect for the Ukrainian territorial integrity, respect for human rights and tolerance.
2. Condemnation of Russia's invasion of the sovereign and independent territory of Ukraine by international community. ETUCE is clear in its condemnation of any support for the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
3. Preservation of the values of education and peace, recognising the central role of education trade unions in the promotion of peace and democracy.
4. Provision of humanitarian and all other kinds of support to Ukraine and its population to restore the socio-economic structure, including the education system, and the implementation of all necessary measures to protect and assist those fleeing their country due to the war, considering the specific risks for elderly, women and children (including unaccompanied minors) refugees;
5. The support for teachers, academics and all educational personnel who speak out for peace and against the war against Ukraine in their countries and are therefore subject to repression.
6. The welcoming of all refugees and people fleeing from Ukraine and other countries regardless of nationality, race, ethnicity, religion or any other background, ensuring that all migrant



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Resolution

Peace Resolution on Ukraine

Adopted by the ETUCE Special Conference, the Regional Special Conference of Education International, on 5-6 July 2022

Further to and consistent with the Resolutions adopted by the [8th EUCongress](#) in Bangkok in 2019, the [Resolutions](#) adopted by the ETUCE Conference in 2020 and the ETUCE Extraordinary Conference in 2021, this ETUCE Special Conference

Notes with concern:

1. A full-scale military invasion by the Russian Federation on the sovereign state of Ukraine, that started on the 24 February 2022, has led to one of the biggest humanitarian crises in Europe since World War I, costing thousands of lives, wounding thousands, and displacing millions of people. The unjustified war has broken millions of families apart, traumatised people of all ages, disrupted the education of young people and children, and the lifelong learning pathways of Ukrainian citizens and others, and destroyed homes and futures.
2. The war has had catastrophic consequences for the whole of Ukraine's economy, including for the education sector, with educational institutions and facilities destroyed, social services disrupted, and social welfare stretched to breaking point. Even if a peaceful resolution is reached, it will take years to reconstruct the economy, the basic infrastructures, and also the education system.
3. Following Russia's attack on Ukraine, Europe faces an enormous wave of refugees. As war escalates, it is likely that millions more will be forced to flee Ukraine and seek refuge across borders, joining what is already a record 31 million refugees and asylum seekers worldwide. Most of the displaced persons leaving Ukraine and seeking refuge elsewhere, are crossing into EU and other neighbouring countries such as Poland, Romania, Moldova, Slovakia and Hungary. Some are finding their way further into the EU, continuing their journey to other countries. The arrival of millions of refugees, mostly women and children, many unaccompanied, represents a great challenge for education systems and societies across the European region, which are already struggling with the impact of the pandemic and its economic consequences.
4. There are reported cases of discrimination and racism towards some refugees crossing borders to certain EU countries where for example, refugees of colour (often students), LGBTI

children and young people are included in quality inclusive education and provided with all necessary supports in response to their needs, e.g. linguistic, psychological, cultural etc.;

7. Ensuring the access of refugees and migrants as well as their families to the labour market and social support systems in the host countries, including the accreditation and recognition of the qualifications of refugee teachers, academics, researchers, and other education personnel, as well as the provision of fast-track programmes and necessary continuous professional development with a view to qualifying them to work in the education systems of their host countries as quickly as possible;
8. Provision of significant investments in education to support and equip teachers and other education personnel as they work to address the diverse needs of migrant students and to promote inclusion, diversity and intercultural dialogue in educational institutions across Europe;
9. Ensuring that education in all European countries further contributes to the peacebuilding processes and prevention of different types of conflicts through the implementation of peace education and democratic citizenship education, building on principles of inclusiveness, tolerance, intercultural dialogue, human rights, equity, and non-discrimination, as well as developing critical thinking and social responsibility;
10. Ensuring that peace education and democratic citizenship education is implemented in every European education system from an early age and that teachers and other education personnel are properly prepared and supported with knowledge and skills in order to be able to transmit values of peace, mutual respect, understanding and tolerance.
11. Strong collaboration, cooperation and social dialogue between education trade unions, governments at all levels, education personnel and families as a precondition for establishing peace in the minds of people and society as a whole;
12. A reaffirmation of the fundamental values of ETUCE and its member organisation in the face of conflict situations in our belief in the dignity of individuals, the right to live in peace, the continued need to campaign for human rights and in particular the right of children to an education and to hope in the future.

TEACHING COUNCIL

Réamhrá

I mí Aibreáin 2022, tháinig Comhairle Mhúinteoireachta nua ar an bhfód ar feadh thréimhse ceithre bliana. Is mór an onóir dúinn araon gur ainmnigh Coiste Seasta an ASTI sinn mar bhaill den Chomhairle.

We are both acutely aware that the Teaching Council is a statutory body that has an immense impact on the teaching profession and we are very conscious of our responsibilities as members of the Council.

New members are briefed on their roles and responsibilities and the need to protect the public interest. There are strict rules around the use of electronic devices for Teaching Council business and the requirement for absolute confidentiality and data protection is highlighted.

When the 37-member Council first met on 25th April, INTO member, Michelle Keane, was appointed as Chairperson and TUI member, Ann Mulcahy, became Deputy-Chairperson. These positions rotate.

It's been a steep learning curve for both of us, in terms of understanding the work of the Council, how the different Council committees and panels operate and the wide range of influence and control that the Council can exert over our lives as registered teachers.

The full 37-member Council meets every four to six weeks, but each of the seven committees and three panels meets much more often, usually once a month, at a minimum. The detailed work of the Council is conducted by these committees and panels, and reports on their work are presented at Council meetings.

New Director Appointed

Dr Lynn Ramsey has been appointed as Director of the Teaching Council. She will take up her role on 1st February 2023.

Teacher Registration

116,208 teachers are currently on the Teaching Council register and 54 staff members are employed. The following is the breakdown between the different sectors. It is important to note that teachers may be registered in more than one sector.

Route 1	Primary	53,771
Route 2	Post-Primary	48,636
Route 3	Further Education	17,372
Route 4	Other	1,465
Route 5	Student Teachers	1,226

At present, 5,500 teachers on average apply for registration every year. We have been informed that registration will be completed within 10 weeks for applicants who have supplied all the documents requested.

Vetting

The vetting and re-vetting processes are continuing. Teachers are given 5-6 months advance notice of re-vetting.

Route 5 - Student Teacher Registration

In December 2021, an amendment to the Registration Regulations was signed into law, which enables student teachers who have successfully completed the first two years of an accredited undergraduate Initial Teacher Education programme in primary and post-primary to apply for registration with the Teaching Council. This is now commonly referred to as Route 5.

1,247 student teachers are currently registered under Route 5. A further 1,059 applications for registration have been received and are currently in process.

Conditional Registration

Teachers who have not fulfilled all the requirements for registration may be registered with conditions.

Teachers granted conditional registration are given three years to address any shortfalls, after which they can apply for an extension if for some reason they have been unable to fulfil their conditions during this period. Automatic emails/SMS are issued from the database at 6, 4, and 3 months in advance of conditions expiring. A 28-day notification is issued by tracked post to teachers who have not engaged.

Tailored Registration Process for qualified Ukrainian Teachers

In April 2022, the Council opened its tailored application and vetting process for qualified Ukrainian teachers who hold temporary protection status. To date, 168 applications for registration have been received and 91 teachers have been registered - 85 post-primary, 6 primary. Where documentation is complete, registration is expected to take two weeks.

Information posters have been published in Ukrainian, Russian and English for people who have arrived in Ireland from Ukraine.

Teacher Supply

New Curricular Subjects

Four new curricular subjects – Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish and Portuguese – became effective for Teaching Council registration from 1st January 2023.

Registration Amendment

To assist with teacher supply challenges, the Teaching Council introduced an amendment to the registration regulations and will now accept applications for registration from primary and post-primary teachers who have qualified outside of Ireland, but have not completed the required period of induction in the country in which they qualified. This will allow teachers who have qualified outside of Ireland to apply for registration and complete their induction here in Ireland, subject to meeting the eligibility and qualification requirements. It will operate on a time-bound basis from 22nd February 2023 to 1st February 2024.

Droichead

For the year 2022 / 2023, 1,737 NQTs from the Primary Sector and 1,524 from the Post-primary Sector took part in the Droichead process.

Fitness to Teach

Complaints

There are currently 25 live complaints at various points of investigation before Council. Most cases do not move beyond the

Investigating Committee, as it is decided that the teacher does not have a case to answer.

Investigation

The Investigating Committee has 11 members, seven of whom are teachers. The Deputy Chairperson of the Council chairs the Investigating Committee, in accordance with the Teaching Council Act.

Disciplinary/Inquiry

The calendar of inquiries is available to view on the Teaching Council website under *Fitness to Teach*.

Findings and Decisions are available to view on the website under the same tab.

Points of interest

- Anyone can bring a complaint against a registered teacher
- The Investigating Committee can refuse complaints if local procedures have not been exhausted, except where there are good and sufficient reasons to proceed
- Information Booklets for Employers have issued to each school in the country setting out the complaint and enquiry process
- Student teachers registered under Route 5 are subject to Part 5 of the Teaching Council Act
- To date, four section 47 applications have been granted by the High Court for the interim suspension of a teacher.

Féilte 2022

The annual FÉILTE event, where the Teaching Council showcases different elements of education, took place in the Helix in DCU on 1st October 2022. It was a hybrid event, with the main speakers live streamed. Declan Coyle from the Green Platform delivered the keynote address.

Career Events 2022

The Council regularly attends career events throughout the country to promote teaching as a profession. In 2022, representatives of the Teaching Council attended 34 events, including career fairs, open days, job expos and presentations, including three in Belfast.

Data Breach

In December 2021, the Data Protection Commissioner (DPC) imposed an administrative fine of €60,000 on the Teaching Council after the personal data of 9,735 teachers was leaked in a phishing scam. The Council did not appeal the DPC's decision and, in November 2022, the fine was confirmed by the Dublin Circuit Court. All those affected by the data breach were informed.

This relates to an historic event, going back a number of years and the IT system has subsequently been updated to a more secure standard. The security system on Council laptops is now very strict and it is intended that no further breaches will take place.

Teacher Release

The continuing absence from the Council of a democratically elected person and a highly-respected member of the ASTI, Niall Duddy, due to the refusal of the Board of Management of his school to release him to attend meetings of the Council is a very serious matter. The ASTI has made numerous efforts to resolve this impasse, and eventually Standing Committee brought the matter into the public domain when it held a protest outside the school. The Teaching Council has also endeavoured to resolve the matter.

The Teaching Council is a statutory body and Niall is a duly elected member of the Council. His electorate consists of approximately 8,500 registered teachers across 13 counties in the Midlands/North West region. It is vitally important that every voice is present at meetings of Council committees and panels, especially when serious decisions that can have a massive impact on a teacher's life are being taken and voted on. It is an appalling situation and cannot be allowed to continue.

Efforts are continuing to get Niall released for Council meetings, but this is a bigger issue than any individual and could potentially affect other members of Council. Further legal advice is being sought on possible pathways to resolve this issue.

It goes without saying that we all stand shoulder to shoulder in solidarity with Niall.

Mar Chríoch

Táimid an-bhuíoch de gach éinne a thacaíonn go láidir linn san obair ar an gComhairle, go háirithe an fhoireann in ardoifig an ASTI agus díbhse, na baill a chuireann bhur muinín ionainn chun ár ndualgaisí a chomhlíonadh ar an gComhairle Mhúinteoireachta.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh, a Chomhdháil.

Eamon Dennehy & Anne Loughnane

Ainmnithe ag an ASTI mar bhaill den Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta 2022-2026

Éanáir 2023

BRITISH AND IRISH GROUP OF TEACHER UNIONS

The Presidents and General Secretaries of the teacher unions associated with BIGTU met on three occasions during 2022

Unions who participate in the BIGTU meetings are ASTI, TUI, INTO, IFUT, Ulster Teachers' Union, Scottish Secondary Teachers' Union, University and College Union (UK), Educational Institute of Scotland, National Education Union (UK) and NASUWT (UK).

The BIGTU group of unions seeks to exchange information on developments in their respective jurisdictions. A regular review of the conditions of service of teachers in each of the jurisdictions is undertaken.

A co-ordinated approach for meetings of Education International and ETUCE is also sought.

The ETUCE mid-term conference took place in Liege from 5-7 July 2022. The programme focused primarily on education recovery post-pandemic. The conference is further reported upon elsewhere in this Annual Convention Handbook and Reports.

A significant BIGTU seminar on second-level examinations and qualifications took place on 3rd October, 2022. ASTI was represented by President, Miriam Duggan, General Secretary; Kieran Christie and Assistant General secretary – Education/Research, Moira Leyden

Key Points that emerged in common with colleagues from the other jurisdictions from an Irish perspective were as follows:

a) Barriers to change

- Historical and traditional background of systems
- Fear of change, political courage,
- Failure to listen to teachers
- Teachers do not want to assess their own students
- Lack of clear purpose of education and qualifications
- The place of teacher professional judgement
- Lack of time and 'toxic' bureaucracy for teachers
- Lack of professional development
- Parent and pupil expectations and outcomes
- Transition to further and higher education
- High stakes qualifications and teacher accountability

b) Post-Primary Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications

- National policy context – human capital critical
- EU 2030 – supporting job creation, economic growth and social fairness
- Partnership model of policymaking
- School prime social function, extensive engagement – lots of social actors, the teacher voice is marginalised
- One curriculum and Qualification body – no league tables

c) Issues raised in common with colleagues from the other jurisdictions from an Irish perspective were as follows:

- Reluctance to assess own students
- Grade inflation and teacher judgement
- Teacher accountability with continuous assessment
- Parental views relate to their own children at that time
- Teacher workload – moderation and verification processes
- Support for teacher judgement
- Role of Inspectorate and creating pressure
- Outcomes for students

RSTA

ASTI has an excellent relationship with the Retired Secondary Teachers Association and supports their endeavours.

A meeting is scheduled annually between the Officers of ASTI and the Officers of RSTA. This enables discussion of matters of mutual interest. We met on 17th November 2022.

The topics discussed included how ASTI might support RSTA communications with retired members, a Christmas Coffee Morning, the continued support of ASTI for the concept of pension parity, ASTI Retirement seminars.

One area on which ASTI has worked closely in recent years with the RSTA has been ensuring that pension parity is maintained for the duration of the current pay agreement, Building Momentum. It was noted that ASTI secured its continuance for the duration of the extension of the agreement in 2023.

At time of going to print, arrangements are being put in place to organise a Coffee Morning in ASTI Head Office in Spring 2023.

The RSTA is affiliated to the Alliance of Retired Public Servants. The Alliance represents retired public servants in pension negotiations with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

ASTI provides an annual financial subvention to the RSTA.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

The ASTI is a member of Amnesty International and responded to various campaigns and issues as they arose during the year. The major focus of the ASTI's contribution is on teachers and education personnel whose human rights have been abused or denied by Governments. The ASTI sent letters of complaint to Heads of State in a number of countries on behalf of teachers, who had been harassed, detained, tortured and murdered by security forces.

AFFILIATIONS

The ASTI was affiliated to the following:

- a) Irish Congress of Trade Unions
- b) Coalition 2030
- c) The People's College
- d) Education International and ETUCE (EU region of EI)
- e) Standing Committee on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS)
- f) AONTAS – National Adult Education Association
- g) Educational Studies Association of Ireland
- h) National Women's Council of Ireland
- i) Irish Labour History Society
- j) National Adult Literacy Association
- k) Amnesty International
- l) National Irish Safety Organisation
- m) The Children's Rights Alliance

POLITICAL LOBBYING

The ASTI is a registered lobbyist and lobbies on behalf of members on issues of concern to teachers.

The union engaged in lobbying activities in relation to a number of issues in 2022, including:

- Investment in teaching and education
- Junior Cycle review
- Pay of post-2010 entrants to teaching
- Teachers' working conditions
- Senior Cycle change

- Cost of PME
- Resources for schools with Ukrainian students
- Teachers' pay
- Covid-19 and second-level schools
- Education (Student and Parent Charter) Bill 2019
- Students with Special Education Needs
- Restoration of guidance counselling services
- Class size
- Sustainable Development goals
- Cost of living
- Health Management Initiative for teachers
- Assault leave
- Support for Teaching Council Representatives

All lobbying activity co-ordinated or undertaken by ASTI Head Office is reported to the Standards in Public Office Commission in accordance with the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 (except where an activity is exempted under the Act). The ASTI's submissions to the Standards in Public Office Commission can be viewed at www.lobbying.ie.

MEETING WITH MINISTER

An ASTI delegation met with the Minister for Education, Norma Foley T.D. on Thursday 6th April, 2022.

ASTI representatives took the opportunity to raise the following topics.

- I. Sectoral Bargaining issues – Pay and Conditions
 There was discussion of the supply of data necessary to enable decision making in a timely manner.

2. Investment in Second-level education.
 ASTI took the opportunity to emphasise the fact that Investment in Education is the lowest as a percentage of GDP in the OECD.
3. Covid-19 issues.
 On-going issues were discussed.
4. Ukraine students' provision.
 ASTI asked that all necessary resources be provided to accommodate Ukrainian Students in our schools.
5. Junior Cycle/Senior cycle concerns.
 ASTI raised a number of concerns regarding the implementation of the Junior Cycle Framework and the review of Senior Cycle. In particular, the issue of scheduling of Subject Learning Assessment and Review meetings was discussed at length and ASTI's insistence that such meetings must be held in accordance with the Appendix to the Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation (July 2015) and Circular Letter 0015/2017.
6. Special Education
 ASTI raised the concerns of members relating to the area of Special Educational Provision. We complained the lack of training, time and resources to implement the model and indeed the practicality of doing so.
7. Integrated Workplace Health Management Project.
 ASTI emphasised the need to support this project.
8. Parent and Student Charter
 ASTI raised concerns about the forthcoming Parent and Student Charter. In the interests of fairness and effectiveness, the proposed legislation should ensure that an appropriate balance is struck between sustaining teachers' professionalism and enabling more effective communication, engagement and decision-making by all members of the school community. The Parent and Student Charter should be a balanced universal document to support the development of inclusive, participatory and accountable communities in schools. We stated that a normative culture is central to the concept of education as a public good. The Charter should give effect to structures which realise these principles for all members of the school community and must reflect the work, worth and professionalism of the teaching profession.

EDUCATION

REPORT OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Members of Committee: Edel Farrell (Chairperson), Richard Egan, Ciaran Kavanagh, Niall Mahon, Deirdre Mac Donald, Geraldine McLoughlin, Pauline Nagle, Siobhán O'Donovan, Sarah Withero,

AGS/ERO, Moira Leydon, provided the professional support for the work of the Education Committee.

CURRICULUM REVIEW

Primary school curriculum

The Education Committee received a presentation on the draft Primary Curriculum Framework from INTO Senior Official for Education and Research, Ms Aoife Mullen. The Framework will replace the 1999 primary curriculum. The draft Framework contains a vision statement, principles, key competencies, curriculum areas and subjects. Particular attention was paid to curriculum for 5th and 6th classes in terms of transition to second-level education.

Junior Cycle

The Education Committee reviewed reports from ASTI Subject Representatives on a number of documents relating to junior cycle curriculum including:

- Background Paper and proposed specification for Short Course SPHE
- Report on consultation on draft Short Course for History (Level 2)
- Review of early enactment of L1 and L2 specifications for Gaeilge

SENIOR CYCLE

Senior cycle curriculum review

At each meeting the Education Committee discussed the redevelopment of the senior cycle as set out by the Minister for Education earlier in March. It examined several presentations made to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science on aspects of in the senior cycle curriculum.

The Education Committee reviewed reports from ASTI Subject Representatives and a number of documents relating to junior cycle curriculum including:

- Background Paper and Brief for Development of Drama, Theatre and Film Studies

- Background Paper and Brief for Development Climate Action and Sustainable Development
- Transition Year Programme Development Group
- SEN/Level 1 and Level 2 Development Group

Other curriculum areas

The Education Committee reviewed reports from ASTI Subject Representatives and a number of documents relating to junior cycle curriculum including:

- Children in Detention and Care Curriculum Framework
- Traveller Culture and History Research Report

Educational disadvantage

The Education Committee examined in detail the report, Responding to Educational Disadvantage in Ireland: A Review of Literature, 1965–2020. Key findings:

Educational disadvantage manifests in fewer opportunities for engagement in education, lower levels of participation in formal education, and poorer educational outcomes. While complex factors underpin educational deprivation, international research is in broad agreement that economic deficiency and social isolation contribute to underachievement at school which, in turn, perpetuates the cycle of poverty. Notwithstanding the growth in retention and participation rates in education over the past 55 years, the report stated that the continuance of poverty demonstrates both the multidimensional aspect of socioeconomic disadvantage and the requirement for greater interdepartmental and community collaboration in its amelioration. The report also draws attention to shortcomings in the official digital and information technology strategy for schools shown up by COVID-19 – a time of sudden school and college closures, resulting in virtual classrooms becoming a forum for learning. A wide variation in response, throughout primary, post-primary and third-level education suggests that, after 25 years of investment in digital technology, the embedding of information and assistive technology necessary for delivering lessons on line has not occurred.

Access to higher education

Noting that ASTI CEC had adopted a policy supporting open access to higher education, the Education Committee continue its work of developing a policy paper on wider questions of access to higher education. It received a presentation on equity in access to higher education from the Ms Caitriona Ryan, Head of Access Policy. It will finalise its draft policy paper for submission to Standing Committee in May.


NATIONAL ACCESS PLAN:

A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education 2022-2028

Caitríona Ryan, Head of Access Policy

18 October 2022

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**NATIONAL
ACCESS PLAN**
A STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN
FOR EQUITY OF ACCESS,
PARTICIPATION AND
SUCCESS IN HIGHER
EDUCATION 2022-2028

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[OVERVIEW]

Consultative and Collaborative Approach

Ambition and Priority Groups

Strategic Student-Centred Goals

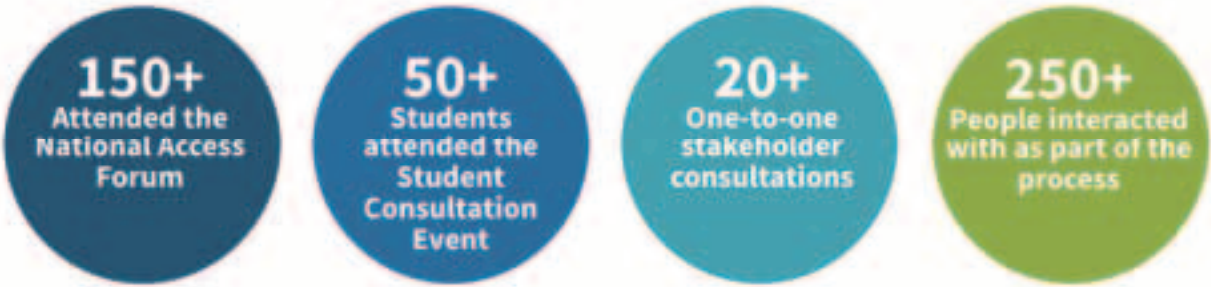
National Targets and Indicators for Evaluation

Implementation

[Consultative and Collaborative Approach]

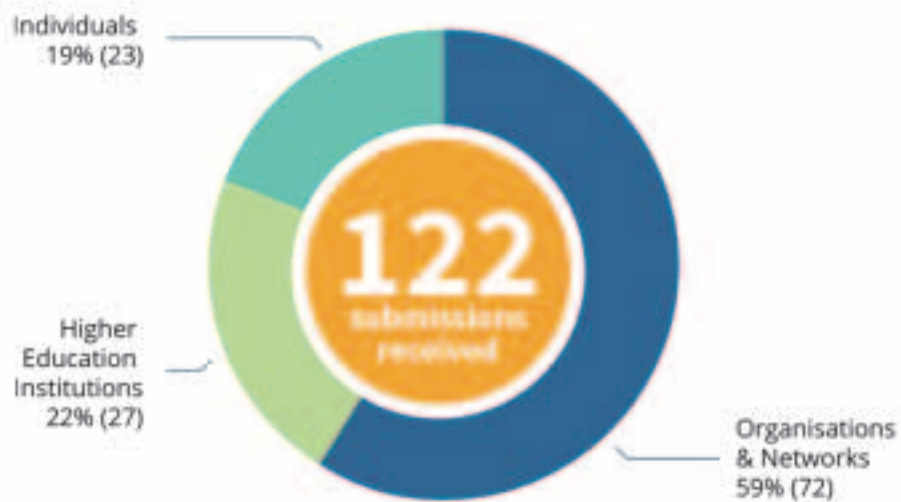


[CONSULTATION PROCESS – STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS]



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[BREAKDOWN OF SUBMISSIONS]



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[KEY THEMES EMERGING]

Financial Support for Students 	Priority Groups 	Financial Support for HEIs 	Pathways 	Part-time and Flexible Learning 	A Whole of Institution Approach
Policy Coherence 	Mainstreaming and UDL 	Pathways from HE to Employment 	Local and Community Partnerships 	Data 	Post COVID-19

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[Ambition and Priority Groups]

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[AMBITION]

The ambition for our Higher Education system is:

“that the higher education student body entering, participating and completing higher education, at all levels reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland’s population.

That our higher education institutions are inclusive environments which support and foster student success and outcomes, equity and diversity and are responsive to the needs of students and wider communities.”

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[PRIORITY GROUPS]



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RECOGNITION OF INTERSECTIONALITY AND IMPACT OF LIFE EXPERIENCES



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[Strategic Student-Centred Goals]

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[STUDENT-CENTRED GOALS]



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[National Targets and Indicators for Evaluation]

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NATIONAL TARGETS FOR 2022 - 2028

New entrants from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas	
Current transition rate between school and higher education	Target transition rate between school and higher education
42%	54%

New mature entrants from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas	
Current % of mature new entrants from disadvantaged areas (as a % of all disadvantaged new entrants)	Target % of mature new entrants from disadvantaged areas (as a % of all disadvantaged new entrants)
11%	20%

New entrants with a disability	
Current % of students with a disability (as a % of all new entrants)	Target % of students with a disability (as a % of all new entrants)
12.4%	16%

New entrants from the Traveller community	
Current number of Traveller new entrants	Target number of Traveller new entrants
33	150
Current % of Traveller new entrants (as a % of all new entrants)	Target % of Traveller new entrants (as a % of all new entrants)
0.07%	0.32%

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KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Nine performance indicators will be monitored in parallel with targets to assess progress and trends over the period of this Strategic Action Plan.

Part-time/flexible learners	Further education award holders	Postgraduate study among selected priority groups
Student diversity across selected fields of study	Students supported by FSD	Entry to higher education from students attending DEIS schools
Lone parents	Completion and progression	Graduate outcomes

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[Implementation]

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[IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION]

Implementation Structures

- Policy implementation led by DFHERIS
- System Performance Framework and Strategic Dialogue process
- Implementation Steering Group
- Annual work plan
- Annual Access Forum

Mid-Term Progress Review

Resourcing Implementation of the Strategic Action Plan

[Current Implementation Initiatives]

- **PATH Investment:**



- **Changes to SUSI Student Grant Scheme**
- **Additional SAF Funding**
- **Pathways from Further Education**
- **Further Data Developments**
- **Laptop Scheme**

Consultation on Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance

The Education Committee contributed to the preparation of the ASTI's submission to the national consultation on a Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance. This consultation followed the publication of the 2019 Indecon Report on Career Guidance. In addition to highlighting both strengths and weaknesses in the current guidance system across second level, third level and further education and training, the report recommended a new strategic framework for lifelong guidance for all young people and adults. It emphasised that guidance must provide a combination of information, advice and counselling services that can enable learners and potential learners to make better choices about their learning pathways and career and life aspirations. The role of guidance in compensating and addressing poor social capital in understanding a complex system is perhaps the most important public role for the service.

See section in this handbook: Submissions.

Consultation on Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy

The Education Committee contributed to the preparation of the ASTI's submission to the national consultation on the second National Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy. This strategy is being developed between Department of Education and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The Consultation Paper stated that the Government of Ireland has an ambition that every child and young person in Ireland should have the necessary literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills to fully participate in society. These skills are crucial to a person's ability to develop fully as an individual, to live a satisfying and rewarding life and to participate fully in our society. Ireland has

become increasingly multilingual and multicultural, which is evidenced by the recognition of Irish Sign Language (ISL) as a native and independent language in 2017 and the diversity of languages used in homes, while digital technology has become even more widespread.

See section in this handbook: Submissions

Special Educational Needs

The Education Committee has decided to prepare an overview of the implementation of the model of teacher resource allocation for SEN students commenced in September 2017. Almost immediately thereafter, concerns around key issues emerged for teachers. They include lack of training for both classroom teachers and SET teachers; lack of time for coordination of SEN Team; lack of clarity as to responsibility for, and process of, preparation of Student Support File; recent legislative developments, including the Assessment of Needs process initiated following a legal judgement in October 2021; processing of RACE applications and exemptions from the study of Irish. The overview will consist of:

- Examination of post-2017 Departmental guidance and documents on SEN, including NCSE, NEPS and HSE
- Examination of recent reports/articles on inclusion policy for SEN
- Examination of policies of key stakeholder groups
- Examination of training available to second-level teachers, including barriers to uptake, relevance, etc
- Submission of report to Standing Committee in June 2022

Education Committee will provide a report to Standing Committee later in the year.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Review of EPSEN Act 2004

The Minister for Education and the Minister of State with responsibility for Special Education and Inclusion initiated a review of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004. The Working Group overseeing the conduct of this review is chaired by Emeritus Professor, Sheelagh Drudy. The ASTI is represented on the Working Group by Assistant General Secretary, Moira Leydon.

The review was initiated to 'provide assurance that there is an adequate legislative basis for the educational provision, both current and planned, for children with special educational needs in order to protect the interests of the children concerned and their families and those of the state; to reflect best practice; to take into account of policy and legislative developments.'

The scope of the review is to:

- Focus on the status of EPSEN Act in respect of sections that have and have not been commenced
- Take account of existing of policy advice, legislation / legal judgments, existing research
- To progress toward meeting the obligations on the state following its ratification in 2018 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability (UNCPRD)

The public consultation commenced in November 2022. The purpose of the consultation is to ensure that the legislation is up-to-date, fully operational, and reflective of the lived experiences of students and families. The ASTI prepared a submission to this review.

Assessment of Needs Process

All children/young people born on or after 1st June 2002 are eligible to apply for an Assessment of Need (AON) under the Disability Act (2005). However, this right was not being met and resulted in litigation which led to a legal judgement in 2021. Following this judgement, the NCSE is now legally obliged to assist the Assessment Officer if requested, and is required to nominate a person with the appropriate expertise to carry out an assessment of education needs. If the HSE Assessment Officer forms the opinion that there may be a need for an education service to be provided to an applicant under Section 8 (3) of the Disability Act (2005), she/he will request the NCSE to nominate a person with the appropriate expertise to assist in carrying out the assessment of education needs.

The education stakeholders continue to engage with the Department of Education in relation to the AON process. In response to their collective concerns, the Department of Education and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) issued the following statement to the stakeholders in October 2022:

Following on from a court ruling in October 2021 there is now a legal obligation on the education system to provide an assessment of education needs as part of the HSE's Assessment of Need Process.

The Department and NCSE have worked intensively to ensure the process put in place adheres to legal obligations arising from the HSE's AON process and is one that is rooted in existing good practice in schools. The NCSE is obliged under the Disability Act (2005) to nominate a person with appropriate expertise to carry out the assessment of education needs. Where the child is enrolled in a school EPSEN (2004) names the principal as the person the NCSE should contact.

Identification of education needs is central to the way schools provide for the inclusion and participation of all students and provide an education which is appropriate to a student's abilities and needs.

In that regard, it is important to note that schools routinely identify students' needs. This aligns with the obligations on schools arising from the Education Act 1998. They use a range of assessment practices as part of the *Continuum of Support* process. This is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables schools to gather and analyse data about individual pupil's education needs, as well as for planning and review of the progress of individual pupils. The Continuum of Support framework enables the school to identify, address and review progress in meeting the academic, social and emotional needs of the pupil, as well as physical, sensory, language and communication needs.

Schools have been provided with a range of resources to ensure that the education needs of all students, including those with a disability or other special education needs, are identified and supported. The Department issued Guidelines for Primary and Post Primary schools as to how they should identify and provide for the special education and learning needs of students (2017).

Information derived from the schools' assessments in education are recorded in a 'Student Support File'. In line with best educational practice, the Student Support file details a student's education needs as identified by the school. The information contained in the Student Support File is used in completing the educational component of the AON form which is returned to the HSE via the NCSE.

The Department and the NCSE are conscious of the workload on schools and on school leaders and, in that regard, an extensive consultation process on the educational component of the AON was undertaken prior to its introduction. This process involved schools, advocacy groups, management bodies and unions. The Department and NCSE worked with a small number of schools on a draft of the documents required as part of the HSE's AON process. The schools provided valuable feedback on the form and guidance documents which was used to inform the documents which have been issued to schools.

The Department and NCSE have put in place a suite of supports to assist schools in completing the educational component of the HSE's AON process. These include a detailed guidance document, a dedicated support-line, email support and a video.

In addition, the HSE have stated they anticipate an average of 6,000 AON applications annually. It is expected this will be over approximately 4,000 schools. Based on these numbers, the Department and NCSE are satisfied this process is achievable for schools and will not be onerous. The Department and NCSE will continue to provide support to schools as needed.

TEACHER EDUCATION

Oide – Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

The Department of Education issued a letter to schools and education stakeholders in January 2023 to advise of the consolidation of existing teacher and curriculum support services. Currently, there are four individual teacher education support service for primary, post-primary and special schools; Centre for School Leadership (CSL); Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT); National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT); Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST).

In September 2023, a new integrated support service named Oide will be established. The vision for Oide is to ‘support the professional learning of teachers and school leaders in Ireland through the development of high quality, innovative and responsive professional learning that enables them to meet the educational needs of all learners in a changing world’. The National Council for Special Education will continue to provide dedicated support for schools and teachers.

The Department of Education has convened a number of meetings with the education stakeholders on this new service. ASTI is represented by Assistant General Secretary/Education and Research, Moira Leydon.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION STUDIES

OECD Education at Glance 2022

Education at a Glance (EAG) is the annual statistical of the OECD on the state of education around the world. It provides information on the structures, finances/resources; impact of learning across countries; teachers and education staff; and the organisation of schools. The 2022 EAG Report focused on tertiary education, looking at increased enrolments and associated benefits for societies and individuals. A specific chapter was dedicated to the COVID-19 crisis and the shift in education systems from crisis management to recovery.

ASTI Press Release – October 2022:

OECD education report: Ireland in last place for investment in second-level education

The OECD report Education at a Glance 2022 once again ranks Ireland in last place out of 36 countries for investment in second-level education as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP).

In 2019, the year analysed in the OECD report, Ireland invested 1% of GDP in second-level education compared to the OECD and EU averages of 1.9%.

Expenditure per second-level student was \$10,383 compared to an OECD average of \$11,400 and an EU average of \$11,673.

In 2019, total expenditure on primary, second-level and post second-level non-tertiary education in Ireland was 2.3% of GDP, lower than the OECD average of 3.4% and EU average of 3.2%.

Ireland’s young people at risk

“At a time of record high numbers of young people attending second-level education in Ireland, schools are in urgent need of a significant increase in funding,” said ASTI President Miriam Duggan. “If we are serious about preparing all of our young people for life and work in modern society we must catch up with our OECD and EU counterparts. Smaller classes, improved buildings and IT resources, and more guidance counsellors are key areas crying out for urgent investment.”

High returns on investment in education

The OECD report emphasises the high returns of Government investment in education for individuals and countries. Workers who have upper second-level education earn significantly more than those with below upper second-level education only. The report also highlights the role of education in wellbeing, social tolerance and global mindfulness – all critical in today’s world.

Pandemic lesson

“The report states that the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated that education attainment is one of the best protections against economic risks. Investment in education is essential for preventing the education system from future shocks, not least the current economic uncertainty,” said Ms Duggan.

SENIOR CYCLE

Leaving Certificate Redevelopment

On 29th March, the Minister for Education announced her plans for redevelopment of the Senior Cycle.

The standout measure is to change the final assessment procedure to significantly reduce reliance on final examinations and introduce teacher-based assessment components. The ASTI believes that Senior Cycle change must protect the integrity of the examinations and any changes must be built upon fairness for students and trust in the system.

It is longstanding ASTI policy that state examinations for certification purposes are entirely externally assessed and this must be retained in all aspects of the development of the Leaving Certificate. Furthermore, it is essential that the mistakes made in the introduction of the Framework for Junior Cycle in recent years, which side-lined the voice of teachers, must not be repeated.

The ASTI acknowledges the retention of the existing broad subject range and the addition of two new subjects. The continuation of the successful Transition Year programme is welcome. Changes announced to Leaving Cert pathways will offer improved opportunities for students with special education needs.

However, it is clear that a vigorous campaign will be necessary to secure crucial changes to the plan over the coming period. The ASTI will be proactive in ensuring that the voice of teachers is heard and has organised a number of events and plans a number of initiatives in response to the Minister’s plan.

Annual Convention 2022 adopted the following motion:

URGENT MOTION I: LEAVING CERTIFICATE

That ASTI reaffirm its policy that members do not assess their students’ work for State Certification purposes. Moreover, ASTI commits to a

comprehensive consultation process with members on all aspects of the announcement on 29th March, 2022, by the Minister for Education, regarding redevelopment of the Senior Cycle.

The ASTI Standing Committee drew up plans for a comprehensive engagement and consultation process with members. over the coming period of time which may include the following.

- (a) Dedicated branch meetings if possible – single item agenda September 2022
- (b) Survey of ASTI members
- (b) Seminar/ Education Conference
- (a) Special Convention

A petition signed by as many ASTI members as possible would also be considered in due course.

ASTI has met with the TUI with a view to developing a common approach to the plan.

ASTI is also pursuing contacts with subject associations with a view to developing common cause and approach to the Minister's proposals as appropriate.

In addition, the Central Executive Council of the ASTI adopted the following motion at its meeting in May 2022.

- A) *As the first priority in dealing with the Minister's proposals on changes to Senior Cycle, that the ASTI hold a Special CEC meeting in September/October that would seek to:*
1. *promote a deeper understanding among CEC members of the Minister's proposals and why we need to resist some of them;*
 2. *develop a set of positive proposals for the ASTI's alternative vision for the Senior Cycle.*
- B) *That CEC elect a subcommittee to plan this Special CEC.*

The work of this subcommittee prepared the agenda for a the Special CEC held on 15th October 2022.

The meeting of the ASTI Central Executive Council was addressed by Irish educationalist and Emeritus Professor of Education at UCC, Áine Hyland who provided a summary of second-level curriculum change in Ireland and also highlighted key research pertinent to Senior Cycle change. The ASTI's report of Professor Hyland's address can be accessed at www.asti.ie

The following motions were adopted.

Motion

At its meeting on October 15th 2022, the ASTI Central Executive Council passed a number of motions in response to the Minister for Education's announcement on Senior Cycle redevelopment.

Motion

That the ASTI demands substantial consultation on the selection criteria for and operation of Network Schools and clarification on the exact nature of the role of students as co-constructors of the curriculum and assessment arrangements.

Motion

ASTI affirms that Transition Year must remain a standalone programme.

That the ASTI demands that the Easter and mid-term breaks and weekends are not used for the sitting of any part of the state examinations.

Motion

That the ASTI demands the provision of a programme of initial teacher education and meaningful CPD prior to the introduction of new subjects and revised Syllabi and specifications on the Curriculum. Further, the ASTI demands that the full range of

syllabus documentation (including sample examination papers, sample marking schemes and, if applicable, teacher's notes) should be officially published at the same time as the new syllabus.

Motion

ASTI emphatically rejects the proposal to hold paper 1 in English and Irish at the end of 5th Year.

Moreover, at time of going to print, it is intended to debate the following motions at the January 2023 meeting of CEC to further enhance the policy platform of ASTI in response to the Minister's announcement.

Motion

That ASTI will strongly advise and support all members in Network Schools to familiarise themselves with and adhere to union policy on state examinations. The ASTI rejects the Ministers for Education's proposals on teacher assessment; the assessment and grading of the Leaving Certificate must remain the remit of the State Examinations Commission as is currently practiced.

Motion

That ASTI rejects the proposal that the balance between written and other assessment components be standardised across all subjects. This balance should be developed through consultation, including with subject development groups.

Motion

ASTI demands that the teacher union voice be central to all discussions on Senior Cycle change.

Motion

That, the ASTI demands that any implementation plan for senior cycle curriculum change address the need to reduce teacher workload, provide adequate professional time, reduce class size, invest in school facilities and protect the working conditions of teachers.

Motion

That the ASTI insist on in-person CPD for LC change during normal school tuition time, on Monday, Tuesday or Thursday in light of the fact that many schools operate a half day Wednesday & Friday.

Joint ASTI/TUI Seminar

On Saturday 26th November, the ASTI and TUI jointly hosted a seminar for activists and subject representatives in Athlone, entitled 'Equity and Excellence for All'. The purpose of the seminar was to identify area of common cause and indeed difference in the context of the Minister's proposals.

An overview of Minister's plan and future work of NCCA was provided by both Union's Education Officers and the discussion the feedback was rich and intensive.

A further aim was to develop common understandings and common approaches to the suite of actions proposed in the Minister's announcement of 29th March.

It is felt that it is critically important that both unions can maximise their political response to elements in her announcement. Both unions representatives on NCCA will be on the 'front-line' of this response as they will work on the Subject Development Groups, charged with revising/developing subjects including assessment components.

Minister Foley's plan for Senior Cycle Redevelopment, announced on March 29th 2022, is set out below.

The redeveloped Senior Cycle will include the development of new subjects and revised curricula for all existing subjects. These will

include a significant emphasis on additional assessment components outside of the traditional final written exams.

The Minister has stated that the plan has been informed by the Senior Cycle Review Advisory Report prepared by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

Key excerpts from Minister Foley's announcement:

- Introduction of new curricula for subjects across Senior Cycle, updating subject content
- The introduction of new subjects, providing greater choice for students to better reflect their range of interests and support the development of a wider range of talents and skills. Two new subjects – Drama, Film and Theatre Studies; and Climate Action and Sustainable Development, will be ready for students in network schools starting fifth year in 2024.
- Changing the final assessment procedure to significantly reduce reliance on final examinations and introduce teacher-based assessment components.
- As Leaving Certificate subjects are revised they will have assessment components additional to the conventional written examination worth 40% of the total marks; with the written examination worth 60% of the final score.
- The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and SEC will jointly research and define, in consultation with education partners, how an SEC-externally moderated, school-based form of assessment would operate.
- The initial tranche of new and revised subjects will be available in September 2024, when students entering fifth year in network schools will study updated subject curricula, with updated assessment models in the optional subjects of Chemistry, Physics, Biology and Business.
- Leaving Certificate Established students entering Senior Cycle in September 2023 will sit Paper 1 in English and Irish at the end of fifth year.
- It is intended that into the future Oral examinations and the Music practical performance will take place during the first week of the Easter break of 6th year as is the case this year.
- Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) students will have improved access to Mathematics and Modern Foreign Languages from September 2022, broadening the options for LCA.
- A new qualification will be introduced at level one and two on the National Qualification framework to provide an appropriate level of assessment to some students with special educational needs, building on the equivalent programme at Junior Cycle level.
- A revised Transition Year programme will be established, and greater access to Transition Year for all students will be encouraged.

A Senior Cycle Programme Delivery Board will be established which will have responsibility for overseeing the achievement of actions forming part of this suite of reforms.

A detailed implementation plan will be developed through ongoing collaboration and co-creation and consultation with education partners, including teachers, students, school leaders and parents.

Minister Foley has requested the NCCA to invite a selection of schools, representative of the different types and sizes of schools, to become "network schools".

Network schools will be given the opportunity to participate at an early stage in revised curriculum and assessment arrangements. These schools will receive support through a variety of forms to enable their participation.

Leaving Certificate Examinations 2023:

Following strong representations by the ASTI, the Music Practical Performance Tests will be returned to within school term for Leaving Certificate 2023. It was clear that the move to hold them in 2022 during the Easter break simply didn't work on either educational or logistic grounds and reversion to the practice that prevailed previously is a sound decision.

However, it is regrettable that the ASTI demand that the Oral Examinations also be returned to within school term has not been met. They are set to be held over the Easter Holiday period for at least one more year. This is neither a sound educational or logistical decision. Students will again be enormously and intensively stretched to perform across a range of subjects over a tight timeframe.

ASTI has been assured by the State Examinations Commission that holding the Oral examinations at Easter in 2023 does not indicate the timing of these tests in perpetuity. The SEC have stated that the holding of these examinations at Easter in 2023 is to allow for a comprehensive evaluation of the arrangements outside of the context of Covid.

SENIOR CYCLE CURRICULUM

Report on work of Sub-Committee established by May CEC on senior cycle

Sub-Committee membership: Mark Walshe, John Conneely; James Howley; Seamus Keane; Philip Synott; Eamon Dennehy, President; Miriam Duggan, President Elect; Geraldine O'Brien, Vice President. ASTI General Secretary, Kieran Christie, and Assistant General Secretary/Education and Research, Moira Leydon provided professional support for the work of the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee's work included:

- Extensive analysis and discussion on wide range of literature on curriculum change, critiques of models of curriculum design including Framework curriculums, assessment and examinations in upper secondary education, teacher agency.
- Analysis of Minister's redevelopment of senior cycle statement of 29th March 2022
- Identify gaps in ASTI policy in relation to the 15 actions contained in Minister's statement
- Preparation and review of motions for Special CEC on senior cycle

JUNIOR CYCLE

Junior Cycle Framework Implementation Committee:

The Junior Cycle Framework Implementation Committee should meet quarterly to discuss relevant matters related to Implementation. In 2022, no meetings were scheduled. ASTI protested regarding this failure and at time of going to print, a commitment to resume such meetings has been received.

The President, Vice President, General Secretary and Assistant General Secretary: Education/Research represent ASTI at these meetings.

ASTI raises several matters of concern with the Department of Education and Skills at these meetings.

These include the following:

- Marking of Junior Cycle 2022
- The provisions of relevant Circular Letters.
- Continuous Professional Development.
- Workload
- Professional Time.
- Recording of Classroom Based Assessments and Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement
- Subject reviews
- Scheduling of JCT symposiums on Saturdays
- Management Resource Hours – quantum of hours available - the usefulness of hours not divisible by 40 minutes.
- Longitudinal Study
- Provision in Special Schools
- Supports in smaller schools where there are very few post holders
- Time available for subjects.
- Role of Junior Cycle Co-ordinator
- Lack of external oral examinations
- Time window for conducting Classroom Based Assessments
- Issues related to sample papers issued by SEC.
- Reporting Templates
- Wellbeing
- Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings. (See below)

Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings:

The matter of scheduling of Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings in schools remains a big issue for ASTI. Some schools continue to attempt to organise such meetings entirely outside normal school tuition hours.

The Appendix to the Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation (July 2015) and Circular Letters issued since then state:

“The 40 minute professional time period provided within timetable is available to teachers on the basis that they will use this time flexibly including bundling time periods and carrying forward time to facilitate professional collaboration. Teachers may also use the time periods for individual planning, feedback or reporting activities relating to Junior Cycle. In particular, time periods will need to be bundled to facilitate Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings. Since professional collaboration meetings can only be held when the relevant subject teachers can be present, a limited number of meetings may need to draw on teachers’ bundled time to run beyond normal school tuition hours for some of the duration of the meeting”

In addition, a further clarification relating to SLAR meetings was provided by the Department of Education and Skills to ASTI in December 2015. It stated as follows:

“The Department confirms that any attempt to impose the organisation of SLAR meetings entirely outside school hours would contravene the agreement. The intention is that SLAR meetings will be scheduled to commence within the timetable, involving the inclusion of a normal timetabled period. However, given the required duration, flexibility to run beyond the normal school day for some of the duration of the meeting is required. This flexibility is essential to the feasibility of organising SLAR meetings.”

In May 2018 the ASTI Central Executive Council passed the following motion.

“That CEC adopt the view that the current arrangement for SLAR meetings, where a portion of all these meetings takes place outside of school time, contravenes section 9.7 of the appendix to Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation on Junior Cycle reform.

Therefore, CEC adopt the view that section 9.7 means that all SLAR meetings must be scheduled to start and end within normal school tuition hours, and only a limited number may run over, and issue a directive to members to comply.”

In November 2019, ASTI conducted a ballot of members on the scheduling of Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings. ASTI members voted by 93% to 7% in favour of authorising Standing Committee to issue the following directive to members.

ASTI Directive

In the context of section 9.7 of the Appendix to Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation on Junior Cycle Reform, ASTI members are hereby directed to only attend Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings on the basis that they must be scheduled to start and end within normal school tuition hours, and only a limited number may run beyond school tuition hours for some of the duration of the meeting.

Notes:

All members are required to adhere to this directive. Where a member of ASTI becomes aware that another member is in breach of the above Directive, he/she should report this in writing to the ASTI General Secretary so that the matter may be formally investigated by the union.

Breaches of the directive may result in union disciplinary sanction.

The purpose of this ASTI Directive is to ensure that all Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings are held in accordance with the provisions of section 9.7 of the Appendix to Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation on Junior Cycle Reform.

Unfortunately, the Department of Education and Skills have continued to maintain that SLAR meetings should be held in accordance with the three options set out in the Circular 76/2020 which provides as follows:

Schools should use one of the following options to organise SLAR meetings, while noting the scope, in the context of Covid-19, to explore digital technologies for the holding of these meetings:

Option A –

Schools may choose to maintain or implement a timetable having four long days and one shorter day. - This timetable will facilitate SLAR and other meetings relating to Junior Cycle to be held in the period following the conclusion of tuition on the shorter day, or at another time that does not impinge on student tuition time. - Schools will be required to maintain the currently defined levels of student tuition time, i.e. 28 hours per week. - Schools must not incur any additional costs through Substitution. - Substitution and Supervision must not be used in facilitating SLAR meetings. - A SLAR meeting will be a single meeting of approximately 2 hours duration.

Option B –

An agreement is reached at school level between teachers and management that SLAR meetings will be held at a time suitable to the teachers in the subject groups without impinging on tuition time. - Should circumstances allow, a meeting, or portion thereof, may take place within normal school tuition hours. - Schools will be required to maintain the currently defined levels of student tuition time, i.e. 28 hours per week. - Schools must not incur any additional costs through Substitution. - Substitution and Supervision must not be used in facilitating SLAR

meetings. - A SLAR meeting will be a single meeting of approximately 2 hours duration.

Option C –

The SLAR process will constitute 40 minutes of preparation time from within a teacher's professional time, and a collaborative portion of a minimum of 80 minutes' duration, the latter to be held as a single meeting. - Once students have completed their CBA, their subject class teacher will carry out a provisional assessment of the students' learning as developed and evidenced by the CBA process, based on the Features of Quality. These provisional assessments may be modified in light of the discussions that take place at the SLAR meeting. - In preparation for the collaborative portion of the SLAR process, each teacher will identify one sample of students' work for each descriptor, where feasible, for discussion at the meeting. Each teacher will submit his/her samples to the Facilitator, together with a brief note on each sample of students' work showing their reasons for their provisional assessment of the students' work. This will support all relevant teachers in reviewing the samples of students' work in the preparatory phase. - The Facilitator will assemble and make available the appropriate examples of student work and attached notes supplied by the subject teachers some days prior to the commencement of the collaborative portion of the SLAR process. - Teachers will use 40 minutes of their professional time to access this material, examine the samples and attached notes, and familiarise themselves with their content. - The balance of the SLAR process (a meeting of a minimum 80 minutes' duration) will be held at a time suitable to the teachers in the subject group, without impinging on student tuition time and without the use of any substitution. - Schools will be required to maintain the currently defined levels of student contact time, i.e. 28 hours per week. - Schools must not incur any additional costs through Substitution. - Supervision and Substitution must not be used in facilitating SLAR meetings.

ASTI members are required to adhere to the ASTI directive.

In June 2022, the Department of Education issued the following letter to schools:

Letter to School Principal's June 2022

Dear Principal,

This note is intended to provide a reminder on arrangements and tasks required for uploading and completion of Junior Cycle Profiles of Achievement (JCPA). You are asked to bring its contents to the attention of your teaching staff involved in Junior Cycle provision.

Holding of SLAR meetings

As you know, as part of the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) the reporting process at Junior Cycle culminates in the award of the JCPA to students. The JCPA was awarded for the first time to students who completed their Junior Cycle in 2017 and reports on student achievement across a broad range of areas of learning in Junior Cycle. The JCPA, alongside other reporting arrangements in Junior Cycle, offers students/teachers/parents/guardians a clear, broad picture of a child's learning journey over the three years of Junior Cycle.

A key aspect of reporting in the JCPA is reporting on Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) in subjects and short courses. CBAs are best described as the occasions when the teacher assesses the students using the specific tasks set out in the subject or short course specification. Teachers' judgement on students' work in relation to CBAs is provisionally recorded, at which point the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) process is initiated.

SLAR meetings play a key role in developing a collegial professional culture and building up expertise about the judgements that teachers make about student achievement. At these meetings, teachers share and

discuss representative samples of students' work and build a common understanding about the quality of their students' learning. The SLAR meeting should take place no more than a month after completion of the CBA and should last in total approximately two hours.

Following the SLAR meeting each individual teacher re-considers the judgement they had made of their student's work, based on the outcomes of the meeting, and where necessary makes the appropriate adjustments to the level of achievement awarded to the work. The descriptors awarded are used in reporting progress and achievement to parents and students as part of the school's reporting procedures and through the JCPA via uploading to the Post Primary Online Database (PPOD). Only those descriptors which have been subject to the SLAR process may be uploaded to PPOD. It is highly desirable to upload descriptors to PPOD in the same school year as CBAs take place in order that PPOD contains accurate and complete data and uploading must take place prior to the issuing of the JCPA to students in the school year following third year in order that a students' JCPA accurately reflects their achievement and learning throughout their time at Junior Cycle.

The scheduling of CBAs and associated SLAR meetings is a matter for the management of the school, in liaison with subject departments. In order to ensure effective SLAR meetings, it is recommended that the timing of the completion of CBAs and SLAR meetings remain as close together as the situation in specific school contexts allows.

Because of the importance of these two complementary functions – building a common understanding of standards and teachers' professional development – a portion of the professional time (non-class contact time) provided within the teacher's contract is devoted to SLAR meetings.

Given the particular circumstances that arise from COVID-19 in the current school year, there are flexibilities built into the CBA and SLAR process this year to allow schools to overcome any scheduling difficulties which may arise. The use of digital platforms as a method of transacting SLAR meetings has also been introduced for this academic year in order to overcome any difficulties schools may encounter in holding in person SLAR meetings, particularly in relation to the impact of COVID-19. It is acknowledged that certain aspects of the SLAR process cannot be transacted online such as meetings involving the physical examination of artefacts.

Schools must use one of the three options outlined in Circular Letter 59/2021 to organise SLAR meetings, while noting the scope, in the context of Covid-19, to explore digital technologies for the holding of these meetings. Further details on SLAR meetings can be found in Circular Letter 59/2021 and Circular Letter 17/2020.

In facilitating SLAR meetings, schools: must ensure that the currently defined levels of student contact time (28 hours per week) are maintained; must not incur additional costs though substitution and; must not use supervision and substitution.

Uploading finalised CBA assessments

Subsequent to the holding of a SLAR meeting, teachers should consider the provisional assessment of their students' work and where necessary make adjustments to their provisional assessments. These finalised CBA assessments should then be uploaded to PPOD either directly or via the school's content management system. CBA assessments must not be uploaded prior to the completion of the SLAR process. To the greatest extent possible, it is highly preferable that these assessments are uploaded during the school year in which they take place.

Monitoring

The uploading of finalised CBA assessments to PPOD are to be actively monitored by the Department of Education. Should it become apparent that there are issues for particular schools in completing this task the

Department will, from the beginning of the next school year, make contact with those schools to ensure that this task across all subject areas and for all students is completed.

1 Circular 29/2021 - Arrangements for the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to the school year 2021/22. 2 Circular 17/2020 - Guidance on the Junior Cycle Subject Learning and Assessment Review Process

Allocation of professional and management resource hours

The Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 recognises that teachers need professional time to engage in a range of professional collaborative activities, a proportion of which will involve collaboration with teaching colleagues, to support teaching, learning, assessment and reporting. This time will facilitate teachers engaging, as necessary, with a range of professional and collaborative activities, namely:

1. Whole-school professional activities to support the Junior Cycle
2. Individual teacher and subject department professional activities, including activities related to formative assessment, feedback, reporting and inputs being compiled for the JCPA
3. Attendance at Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings
4. Preparation for, and overseeing the outcomes of Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings
5. Administration of the Assessment Tasks in classrooms. This will not be required for academic year 2021/22.

The provision of individual professional time for teachers reflects the commitment under the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 to provide such support to allow teachers engage in professional collaborative activities to support teaching, learning and assessment.

In addition to the 22 hours of professional time allocated within the timetable for each fulltime teacher from 2017/18 onwards, a further two hours will be allocated by school management to a teacher on a rotational basis for the preparation and co-ordination of each SLAR meeting for an individual subject or short course, including providing confirmation to school management that the meeting has taken place and descriptors awarded and reported. The two-hour allocation may be facilitated through the provision of additional paid substitution hours to the school – not within the Supervision and Substitution scheme.

In recognition of the fact that the introduction of the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 has implications for school leaders, extra hours were allocated to schools (via substitution) with effect from 2016 on an interim basis pending the restoration of leadership posts in schools, to help with the facilitation of this additional work.

The allocation for the academic year 2021/22 is set out as follows:

Enrolment Weekly Management Resource Hours

700+ 2 hours

600-699 2 hours 40 mins

400-599 2 hours

Existing pro-rata arrangements for partial implementation will apply.

Schools receive these additional resources on the basis that their Junior Cycle students have access to teaching, learning and assessment practices, including the holding of SLAR meetings, in line with the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 and the associated specifications designed by the NCCA and approved by the Minister, including all assessment arrangements set out in Junior Cycle circulars.

While these management resource hours were due to lapse at the end of the 2021/22 school year, the Department has decided, on an interim basis, to continue to allocate these hours under the same allocation model for the school year 2022/23. However, where through the monitoring mechanism deployed by the Department in the 2022/23 school year,

the uploading of all CBA assessments to PPOD has not taken place without due cause, these hours will be withdrawn at the end of 2022.

CAP Unit 01 June 2022

In December 2022, Information Note TC 0011/2022 was issued to schools. It stated as follows:

Information Note TC 0011/2022

To: Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and Teaching Staff of Post-Primary Schools, Special Schools and Chief Executives of ETBs

Information Note

Updates on the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to the school year 2022/23. To be read in conjunction with Circular 0059/2021.

Purpose of this note

This information note, to be read in conjunction with Circular 0059/2021, Arrangements for the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to the school year 2021/22, supersedes aspects of that circular and sets out updates in Junior Cycle implementation for school year 2022/23.

Boards of Management, Principal teachers of all post-primary schools, special schools, and the Chief Executives (CE) of all Education and Training Boards (ETBs) are asked to ensure that this note is brought to the immediate attention of all teachers. In addition, Boards of Management are also requested to ensure that parents/guardians and students are advised of the relevant elements of this note.

Curriculum Updates

- Schools are required to provide a programme of 400 hours of Wellbeing for students starting first-year September 2022. The [NCCA Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines \(2021\)](#) aim to support schools in planning and developing a coherent Wellbeing programme that builds on the understandings, practices and curricula for Wellbeing already existing in schools.
- In planning their Wellbeing programme, schools are reminded that from September 2022 onwards, the use of the Junior Certificate syllabuses for SPHE and CSPE should be discontinued. Further information on this can be found in section 2.4 of [Circular 0059/2021](#).
- In addition to programmes of study in PE, SPHE and CSPE schools may also choose to include other areas in their provision for Wellbeing, with examples set out in the [NCCA Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines](#). Further information is available in Section 2.6 of [Circular 0059/2021](#).
- The NCCA has finalised a 135-hour programme for Physical Education (PE), which will be implemented in schools in September 2023. Further information on this can be found in section 2.4 of [Circular 0059/2021](#).
- It is not appropriate to use resources or materials produced or funded by the alcohol industry for education and awareness on alcohol in schools, or for teachers to attend, in their professional capacity, associated training which may be offered by organisations funded by the alcohol industry. Correspondence on this matter issued to Principals on 9 December 2022.

Assessment Updates

- Adjustments were made to assessment arrangements for the 2022/2023 academic year and published in September 2022 in the document [Assessment Arrangements for Junior Cycle and](#)

Leaving Certificate Examinations 2023

- Adjustments were made to the Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) arrangements and published in Revised arrangements for the completion of Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs) for students in third year and second year in 2022/2023
- Students in 3rd year in the school year 2022/23 will not be required to complete Assessment Tasks (ATs) in the relevant subjects.

Management Resource Hours

- In recognition of the fact that the introduction of the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 has implications for school leaders, extra hours were allocated to schools (via substitution) with effect from 2016 on an interim basis pending the restoration of leadership posts in schools, to help with the facilitation of this additional work.
- Schools receive these additional resources on the basis that their Junior Cycle students have access to teaching, learning and assessment practices, including the holding of Subject, Learning And Review (SLAR) meetings, in line with the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 and the associated specifications designed by the NCCA and approved by the Minister, including all assessment arrangements set out in Junior Cycle circulars.
- While these management resource hours were due to lapse at the end of the 2021/22 school year, the Department decided, on an interim basis, to continue to allocate these hours under the same allocation model for the school year 2022/23.
- However, as laid out in the letter reminding Principals of the arrangements and tasks required for uploading and completion of Junior Cycle Profiles of Achievement (JCPAs), sent to schools on 1 June 2022, the uploading of finalised CBA assessments to PPOD for inclusion in students' JCPAs is being actively monitored by the Department of Education.
- The Department has established a dedicated email account CBAUPLOADS@education.gov.ie, to allow school Principals to advise the Department of particular issues in their school in relation to the finalisation of CBA assessments for uploading to PPOD.
- Further information on Management Resource Hours can be found in section 4.5 of [Circular 0059/2021](#).

Reporting Updates

- Wellbeing programmes will be reported on in their own separate area of the JCPA for the first time in the 2022 JCPA, applying to students who completed 3rd year in the 2021/2022 school year.
- Reporting on student achievement in CSPE, SPHE and PE short courses will be facilitated by the use of the descriptors which have already been developed and reflect the appropriate language of learning.
- Due to technical constraints, it is not possible to reflect subject descriptors for the old Junior Certificate syllabi in the Wellbeing section of the 2022 JCPA. As a result, schools which provided the Junior Certificate syllabi in CSPE, SPHE and/or PE to students will have to reflect their students' achievements in these areas of learning via the free text box entitled 'Other Areas of Wellbeing'. Suggested text has been developed and provided to schools for this purpose. Students who studied the Junior Cycle short courses are not affected by this issue.
- Further details concerning wellbeing reporting, including the suggested text referred to above, are available in the letter sent to school Principals outlining arrangements for reporting on wellbeing areas of learning in the JCPA for 2022 on 25 May 2022.

- The JCPA production process will open as soon as is feasible in the New Year. Further information in relation to the production process will issue at that time along with this year's JCPA Handbook.

Ongoing Review of Junior Cycle Implementation

- The NCCA is undertaking early enactment reviews on the implementation of Junior Cycle specifications in a number of subject areas.
- The University of Limerick has been commissioned by the NCCA to conduct a research study - Exploring the implementation and impact of the Framework for Junior Cycle in post-primary schools.
- A first report from this longitudinal study was published in October 2022.
- It is expected that this research, which began in late 2020, will continue until 2024.
- Both reviews aim to capture the views of students, teachers and stakeholders to provide insights and learnings that can inform the ongoing implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle.

Issued by: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit

Date Issued: 20 December 2022

Exploring the implementation and impact of the Junior Cycle Framework (JCF) in post-primary schools - A study being conducted by a team of researchers from University of Limerick together with international advisors with expertise in curriculum research.

This four year study aims to explore the implementation and impact of the Junior Cycle Framework (JCF) in post-primary schools in Ireland. As a longitudinal study, the experiences of schools will be explored over a period of four years, in order to capture the complexity, challenges and successes in enacting the JCF.

An Introductory report (Initial perspectives on implementation, outcomes, and impact) was published on 27th October, 2022. It can be accessed here:

https://researchrepository.ul.ie/articles/report/Exploring_the_introduction_of_the_Framework_for_Junior_Cycle_A_longitudinal_study_Introductory_report_Initial_perspectives_on_implementation_outcomes_and_impact_/19819909

ASTI declared no confidence in Junior Cycle research project

During 2022, ASTI engaged in correspondence with the University of Limerick, the NCCA and the Minister for Education, setting out concerns it has regarding a perceived conflict of interest.

In October 2022, Standing Committee reviewed a range of correspondence between the ASTI and relevant parties over several months in which the ASTI expressed its disquiet about a perceived conflict of interest concerning the independence of the Junior Cycle National Project: Exploring the implementation and impact of the Junior Cycle Framework in post-primary schools, commissioned by the NCCA and being conducted under the auspices of the University of Limerick.

The ASTI's concerns centre on the role of the one of the research team member's previous co-option by the NCCA as one of its two representatives on a Junior Cycle Subject Development Group.

The ASTI holds this individual in the highest regard. His integrity and professionalism are unquestionable. Ordinarily he would be an ideal person to conduct the research in question. However, the ASTI perceives a conflict of interest arising from his prior role.

The research group member was involved in drafting a Junior Cycle subject specification and, as such, played an important role in the design of a significant component of the Junior Cycle Framework. In the ASTI's view, circumstances exist where it could be perceived that there is a conflict of interest arising from him assisting University of Limerick with its independent research on behalf of the NCCA.

The ASTI wishes to ensure that the University of Limerick study will be recognised as an entirely independent undertaking, without any perception of conflict of interest.

Accordingly, a motion of no confidence in the research project was adopted.

The ASTI will be advising its members not to co-operate with the project any further.

ASTI members must have absolute trust and confidence in all aspects of research that impinges on the work they do and particularly research that seeks to convey the views of teachers to the NCCA.

SCoTENS

SCoTENS – Standing Conference of Teacher Educators, North and South is a network of 38 colleges of education, university education departments, teaching councils, curriculum councils, education trade unions and education centres on the island of Ireland with a responsibility for and interest in teacher education. SCOTENS was established in 2003 to create a space for teacher educators – North and South – to come together and discuss issues of common interest, and explore ways of co-operating. The four teacher unions share representation on a rotational basis on the Steering Committee for SCoTENS. ASTI is currently the union representative and is represented by Assistant General Secretary, Moira Leydon.

The SCoTENS annual conference is a key fixture in the education calendar on the island of Ireland. The annual SCoTENS conference provides a forum where teacher educators across the island of Ireland can engage in open, critical and constructive analysis of current issues in education with a view to promoting a collaborative response to these issues. The 2022 annual SCOTENS conference theme was “Reflecting, Reconnecting and Re-Engaging with the Core Purpose(s) of Education”. ASTI is represented at the Conference by the Deputy General Secretary, Diarmaid de Paor and Assistant General Secretary, Moira Leydon.

The SCoTENS Seed Funding Programme promotes and funds a range of research-based initiatives with a view to establishing sustainable North-South partnerships and projects.

The North/South Student Teacher Exchange project, brings student teachers from Dublin to do a key part of their assessed teaching practice in Belfast schools, and Belfast student teachers to do the same in Dublin. Its membership is open to all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that offer programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE).

EDUCATION DISADVANTAGE

DEIS

DEIS – Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools - is the Department's main policy initiative aimed at tackling educational disadvantage in primary and post primary schools. DEIS Plan 2017 sets 5 key goals:

- implementation of a more robust and responsive assessment framework for the identification of schools and effective resource allocation;
- improve learning experiences and outcomes for pupils in DEIS Schools;
- improve the capacity of schools leaders and teachers to engage, plan and deploy resources to their best advantage;
- support and foster best practice through inter-agency collaboration;
- support the work of schools by providing research, information, evaluation and feedback.

2. Representation at the Advisory Group

The Plan included an Advisory Group to engage the stakeholders in an annual consultation process. In June 2022, 27 attendees attended the meeting of the Advisory Group including DES Officials, officials from other Government Departments, the Educational Research Centre, Teacher Unions and School Management Bodies. Assistant General Secretary, Moira Leydon, represents the ASTI on the Advisory Group. The focus of the discussions included:

Q1. What areas of DEIS do you consider future evaluation work should focus on and why?

- Urban vs Rural context e.g. teaching principals; teacher retention
- HSCL and SCP
- Inter-Departmental and inter-agency approaches; funding streams
- Parental empowerment and impact of DEIS
- CPD (how well its being engaged with and perceived barriers)
- Transitions and tracking between pre-school and school enrolment databases e.g. DEIS Primary to Non DEIS post-primary and visa versa
- Impact of homelessness

Q2. What is working well and what needs to be improved upon in the way the Department allocates resources to address educational disadvantage in primary and post-primary schools?

- Working well:
- Maintain and improving the teacher ratio – key to success
- HSCL scheme
- School meals
- DEIS schools role in creating a community approach “hub” e.g. welfare, housing co-locations with schools
- NEPS

Needs to be improved upon

- DEIS schools multi-disciplinary teams such as guidance counsellors should be well resourced.

- Inclusion supports
- Networking between DEIS schools especially after the newest expansion
- Alignment of services
- Increased counselling support
- School buildings to be made available during the school breaks e.g. Summer

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Council is a representative structure. The membership is determined by the Minister for Education. The 26-member council comprises of nominees of the partners in education, industry and trade union interests, parents and student organisations and one nominee each of the Minister for Education and the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. The current Council was appointed by the Minister to take up positions on the Council from March 1st 2022 and is scheduled to run until 28 February 2026. The Council was expanded to the current 26 members when the Minister co-opted a member of the Irish Second Level Students Union on to the Council early in 2022.

The NCCA is the statutory advisory body to the Minister of Education. Its remit is to advise the Minister on curriculum and assessment from early childhood to the end of second level.

The focus of this of this report from the Council is the main developments at Second Level over the past year with continued emphasis on the role out of Junior Cycle and the review of Senior Cycle. The first meeting of this Council took place in the April 2022. The ASTI representatives on Council are: Deirdre Mac Donald and Ed Byrne.

It is worth noting that at the December meeting of the Council the report on the new primary school curriculum was agreed and has now been sent to the Minister for Education. The primary school curriculum has a direct knock-on effect on the post primary curriculum.

It is interesting to note that several of the issues of concern around education for post primary school teachers are shared with their primary school teaching colleagues; curriculum overload, workload for teachers, equity, lack of resources, increased bureaucracy, increased role expectations.

In response to the ASTI expressing dissatisfaction about the appointment of chairpersons to development groups, Council was informed that for new development groups, names of suitable candidates may be submitted to the NCCA executive, to take up these positions. Therefore, it is important that the ASTI be proactive in forwarding names of people we consider suitable to fill these roles as they arise.

Discussions have taken place around the role of the NCCA, it is considered very important that it is an independent body, its role is to give independent advice to the Minister. It is vital that the organisation does not allow itself to become the fall guy when

ministers decide not to take the advice of the Council. This emphasises the importance of rigor, evidence, consultation in its work and building trust with the education partners. The organisation must be transparent and inclusive in all its processes. These views were expressed by the ASTI nominees and supported by other Council members.

A request was made that Council members and relevant organisations be notified when consultations went live, as this would facilitate communication and increase involvement in the consultation process.

Meetings

The meetings returned to face to face early in 2022 with some members wishing initially to remain in the virtual space. The return to corporeal meetings is welcome, allowing for more robust exchanges and debate. The union voice at these meetings, while exercised, seldom gains support and, on occasions, when a vote is forced the outcome is the nominees of the second level teacher unions against the rest. There were seven meetings of council in 2022 the meetings took place on April 7th, May 12th and 13th, June 16th, September 22nd, November 8th and 9th and December 8th. The new Chair of the Council is the former Secretary General of the Department of Education Séan Ó Foghlú. Mr Ó Foghlú will chair his first council meeting on February 9th, 2023.

The Members of Council

Séan Ó Foghlú	Chairperson
Teresa Hagan	Minister of Education nominee
Sheila Garrity	Minister of Children and Youth Affairs nominee
Michael Redmond	JMB/ Deputy Chairperson
Patricia Gordon	JMB
Marian Ni Chéileachair	INTO
Joe McKeown	INTO/Deputy Chairperson
Carmel Browne	INTO
Anne McHugh	ETBi
Rory D'Arcy	CPSMA
Finn Ó Murchú	NABMSE
Joyce Purdue	CIBE
Deirdre Ni Mhurchú	IFUT
Claire McGee	IBEC
Brian Tubbert	ICTU
Caitlin Faye-Maniti	ISSU
Denis Ring	ACCS
Clare Downey	NPC-Primary
Martin O Shea	NPC-Post Primary
Edel Ni Chorraín	Foras na Gaeilge
Elaine Sheridan	SEC
Orlaith O'Connor	DoE
Deirdre Mac Donald	ASTI
Ed Byrne	ASTI
David Duffy	TUI
Liz Farrell	TUI

JUNIOR CYCLE

The investigation into the junior cycle reforms by the team from the University of Limerick (UL) is ongoing despite major concerns expressed by the ASTI. The ASTI have written to the NCCA expressing their concerns about some members of the UL team having earlier worked on some subject development groups as representatives for NCCA. This the union believes is a clear case

of a conflict of interest. The NCCA Council and the Minister are unconcerned and do not believe a conflict of interest has occurred. The union has instructed members in schools to no longer engage with the process. The UL team has produced an interim report which teachers should read but with the knowledge that a conflict of interest may have occurred. This June 2022 saw many of the new reformed courses examined for the first time with the welcome return of the SEC Junior Cert Exams. Members concerns were expressed at council, areas such as the late release of the results, lack of exam samples released in a timely fashion, the continued lack of depth of treatment in the Framework, the absence of higher and ordinary levels in all but three subjects, the very small numbers attaining a distinction grade and the span of particular grade divisions. The NCCA seem to be taking the let's wait and see what the UL investigation tells us. The mantra is everything must be evidence based.

There was a Junior Cycle Gaelige early enactment report, this was a well written report by Colm Mac Gearailt and Pádraig Ó Dubhair, the report highlighted many of the frustrations that teachers in the classroom are experiencing. Areas highlighted included lack of an externally evaluated oral, the absence of a foundation level, an over emphasis on literature and the fact that both CBAs were in third year. The report did include some next steps which all the second level teacher union nominees on council felt did not go far enough considering the strength of the findings, however they did not receive any support when suggesting more action particularly around the provision of an oral component. The report on next steps was sent back to the Junior Cycle Board of Studies but support for immediate action was not forthcoming; however the Board did agree to review when more evidence was collated.

The new Junior cycle Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) course is almost complete and should be ready for publication before this report is printed. A great deal of time and effort has gone into the report which has become the focus of some religious groups. The over emphasis on a rather small part of the overall report by these groups has made its completion difficult however those working on and presenting the report are to be commended.

There has also been work on Learning 1 and Learning 2 programmes. This does allow for more of the students with Special Educational Needs access to a fuller curriculum, an example of the is the new History short course designed for L1 and L2 learners.

The Junior Cycle UL report even without our support is likely to have a major influence on the evolution of the Departments thinking and that of the Ministers with regards to the future of the Junior Cycle. Though the Minister has form when it comes to solo runs.

SENIOR CYCLE

On March 29th, prior to the new Council meeting, the Minister for Education, Norma Foley, announced her plan for redevelopment of Senior Cycle education, which has been titled Equity and Excellence for All. These proposals differ from the NCCA Senior Cycle Review Advisory Report in several significant ways. Most importantly:

- introduction of new curricula (syllabi) for subjects across Senior Cycle
- introduction of two new subjects, Drama, Film and Theatre and Climate Action and Sustainable Development – in network schools for the school year 2024/25

- revised Leaving Certificate subjects to have an additional assessment component worth 40% of the total mark, the written examination worth 60%
- English and Irish Paper 1 to be sat at the end of fifth year from 2024
- oral examinations and music practical examinations to take place first week of the Easter break in 6th year from Easter 2023.

From September 2023 fifth year students may access the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) without subject-specific criteria. This revision is welcomed by those involved in post primary education in schools and at Council.

The ASTI at Council continues, as it did at the previous Council, to advise, advocate and argue in line with ASTI education and assessment policy. This will continue as the redevelopment of the Senior Cycle progresses. The importance of knowledge and rigor in all curricular matters are sought and the issue of conducive conditions for the implementation of new syllabi/specifications are raised. The latter includes the fact that post primary education comes in last place in the OECD review of investment in education as a percentage of GDP – 36th out of 36 countries (OECD, Education at a Glance). The issue of a sustainable workforce in the teaching profession is a real issue in education. Evidence of the difficulties in recruitment and retention of teaching staff, are presented by the ASTI amongst potential problems which will impact negatively on all aspects of curriculum delivery.

Grave concerns exist around the issue of sitting Paper 1 in English and Irish at the end of fifth year; amongst these are the lack of time for students to develop sufficient language skills by the end of fifth year; lack of maturation time at this critical stage of life – educationally and personally, the timeframe (introduction for fifth years Sept 2023) and the possible negative impact on Transition Year; lack of clarification and specification for the proposed Paper 1, lack of consultation around this whole proposal and relevant CPD means the timeframe is completely unrealistic, apart at all from the educational arguments against its implementation.

Similarly, there are serious issues around the holding of oral examinations over the Easter holidays as proposed by the Minister and being planned for by the SEC. From an educational perspective this is a very unwelcome proposal. Oral examinations outside of term time means that teachers are not available to support students with the subject element but equally important the psychological support element. This adds to the fact that the student will now not have a significant break in the run up to the final written exams. This undoubtedly militates against the wellbeing of students and indeed teachers, which the Minister has repeatedly said is of great importance and which she wants to see prioritised. This approach to assessment, where it takes place outside of term time, certainly does not fit with the Minister's assertions around wellbeing. At NCCA, the ASTI continually advocates for conducive conditions for students and staff in the implementation and assessment of Leaving Certificate subjects; an approach which supports rather than shatters the wellbeing of all concerned.

Current areas of the Senior Cycle curriculum being researched and developed/redeveloped are dealt with below.

Transition Year - TY

The ASTI welcomes the proposal by the Minister that all students have access to Transition Year.

The proposed Transition Year Audit had 86 schools express interest in contributing to the process, 14 were selected through an anonymous procedure to participate. The school-based component

of the research seeks to get an insight into what is happening in TY including:

- programme components
- planning and evaluation
- student personal development and social awareness
- vocational skills and learning
- teaching, learning, assessment and reporting.

Solas and the NCCA have established a working group to look at the possibility of schools and FET providers to co-construct modules for TY.

Consultation for the background paper opened on Nov 10th. The discussion around TY Programme Statement included: interrogation of the importance of achieving a balance between prescription and autonomy is fundamental to devising a Programme Statement; an opportunity for all students to access TY; equality of individual school programmes; the difference in resources available to different types of school and its implications for programme development and delivery. Equity must be a guiding principle for any recommendations by Council.

The development group continues its work and will be informed by the results of the consultation.

Social Personal Health Education – SPHE

A development group has been formed. It is currently working on the development of a draft syllabus / specification which follows on from the excellent work of the JC SPHE (which includes RSE) development group, whose new syllabus / specification has been published. A background consultation process has been undertaken and closed December 6th 2022. For effective implementation of this area of the curriculum, the ASTI at Council has continually advocated for conducive conditions for the delivery of the new syllabus / specification; the necessity for teachers to volunteer to take this subject, quality and ongoing CPD for teacher involved in this area of the curriculum and reduction in class size for delivery of this subject. Group facilitation is the manner of delivery and international best practice for facilitation is maximum group size of 16 participants, optimal group size 12 participants; thus class / group size is a key consideration.

It is worth noting that much of the general discourse around SPHE focuses on RSE, which is one small but important part of SPHE. Council's view is that SPHE, including RSE, should be available to all students. The development group will continue its work and be informed by the results of the consultation.

Leaving Certificate Business

Consultation on this subject took place in September and October 2022. Consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of the present syllabus were explored. The relevance of the subject to real life/world, accessibility to all students were perceived as very significant positives for this area of the curriculum. However, there were differences of opinion with regards to: the volume of content; unit-based approach; the focus on and volume of theory; lack of time to develop key skills associated with this subject such as critical thinking, analytical skills and problem solving. The importance of cross curricular links were acknowledged, but concerns were expressed that any redevelopment must not result in too much overlap. There was a consensus around students learning about business relevant to, their own lives, the local area, national and international developments.

It was unanimously agreed that advances in technology needed to be reflected in the new syllabus/ specification. It was considered vital that students be analytical when learning about technology and digitalisation, as it can have positive and negative impact for

individuals and the world of business. Ethics and sustainability were also deemed import and relevant, thus they must be given significant consideration in the redeveloped course of study.

The majority of participants welcomed the proposal, a small number did not, for a second component in assessment of the subject, bringing it in line with other subject areas. The percentage of the total marks assigned to this component would be twenty percent in line with other subjects presently and this was by and large considered adequate; however this is not in line with the Minister's proposals. The development group will continue its work and be informed by the results of the consultation.

Leaving Certificate Drama, Theatre and Film Studies

A development group has been established and is currently working on a draft syllabus / specification. There are various aspects of this work, they include identification of overlap and differentiation, where these curricular areas are currently included in curricular provision across sectors and the international experience of these areas of education.

The ASTI has expressed its concern around a number of issues in this curricular area, including equality of access to this subject, equality of resourcing across post primary schools, fear that the subject will just be about performance, lack of proper resourcing to support the broadness of the proposed subject. Council has a function in drawing attention to the possibility of inequities and how these may be resolved. This subject has great potential but for it to be realised, it requires these issues to be addressed in a serious manner. The development group will continue its work and be informed by the results of the consultation.

Climate Change and Sustainability

Consultation on this curricular area took place in September and October 2022. There were differences of opinion around the necessity for a stand alone subject in this area; some believed that it was an unnecessary development due to the existing cross curricular approach to these issues and the danger of too much overlap with existing subjects. Geography teachers were particularly concerned around elements of this subject. Others held the view that it offered an opportunity "to join the dots" between the various areas of the existing curriculum, and for Ireland to be a leader in this area of the curriculum. Another area of concern was the issue of qualifications necessary to teach this subject and, of course, the real need for a high quality comprehensive programme of professional development and the provision of adequate and appropriate resources to support the teaching and learning of the subject. The development group will continue its work and be informed by the results of the consultation.

L1 and L2 draft specification for Leaving Certificate Irish

The process of developing differentiated syllabi / specifications for L1 (Irish speaking schools) and L2 (English speaking schools) began in 2018 and the consultation on the developed draft launched in February 2021. It follows the implementation of a differentiated curriculum at primary and JC and seeks to provide continuity into the LC specifications. The review of the *Review on the Implementation of L1 and L2 at Junior Cycle* has not yet been published, and the Minister's proposals for LC announced on March 29th, have paused work on and added to the difficulties with respect to developing L1 and L2 LC Irish specifications. Planning for enhanced CPD, support and resourcing in line with the feedback from our members on what they consider appropriate and necessary is being advocated for; it is hoped these will be acted on when the report and specifications are published and the Minister responds to the NCCA's recommendations.

Level 1 / Level 2 Learning Programmes

The Minister requested that the NCCA work to provide continuity at certificate level for students studying Junior Cycle L1 and L2 programmes. The NCCA is developing a background paper for these follow-on programmes including a review of provision in both mainstream and special schools of L1/L2LPs at JC and follow up provision for students at SC. These programme developments are viewed by Council as very important to the issue of equity in the provision of education.

One theme that has clearly emerged from the research/consultation is that a shared vision and purpose in relation to LC Irish has not been achieved. The model of curriculum provision needs to be considered in further detail and from an educational perspective and in the context of the future of the Irish language. It is vital that whenever the changes to the curriculum come, they take real account of the experience of teachers' and their needs in both Irish and English medium schools.

Leaving Certificate Applied - LCA

Work is being undertaken to revise the LCA Programme Statement, this includes further considerations around students having the opportunity to take mathematics at LCE level in line with the Minister's announcement on March 29th.

ASTI SUBJECT REPRESENTATIVES 2022/2023

SUBJECT	REPRESENTATIVES
ACCOUNTING	Noelle Moran Eamon Scully
AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE	Peter Keaney Ciarán Dunne
APPLIED MATHEMATICS	Tony McGennis Patrick Conroy
APPLIED TECHNOLOGY/ TECHNOLOGY	Adrian Guinan Vacant
BIOLOGY	Margaret McGagh Maura Cullinan
BUSINESS/BUSINESS STUDIES	Joan O'Brien Imelda Mulhall
CHEMISTRY	Jacinta McKenna Mary Mullaghy
CLIMATE ACTION & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	Dermot Brennan Ciara McGarry

SUBJECT	REPRESENTATIVES
CLASSICS/CLASSICAL STUDIES	Two Vacancies
COMPUTER SCIENCE	Geraldine O'Brien Mark Walshe
DRAMA	Conor Murphy Maeve Hackett
ECONOMICS	Anne Taylor Meave Murphy
ENGINEERING/ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY	Eamon Dennehy Donal Cremin
ENGLISH	Kate Barry Siobhan O'Donovan
FRENCH	Daniel Howard Barry Hennessy
GAEILGE	Anne Loughnane Aodán Mac Cárthaigh
GEOGRAPHY	Margaret Fitzpatrick Edmund Hussey
GERMAN	Clodagh Mackle Pamela Conway
GAPHICS/DESIGN & COMMUNICATION GRAPHICS	Liam Quinn Paul Glynn
GUIDANCE & COUNSELLING	Joan Colbert Michael Gleeson
HISTORY	Gerard Hanlon Philip Irwin
HOME ECONOMICS	Maura McCaul Joan Carr
ITALIAN	Two Vacancies
LEAVING CERTIFICATE APPLIED	John Sheedy Michael Doherty
LEAVING CERTIFICATE VOCATIONAL	Kevin Dunphy Imelda Mulhall
MATHEMATICS	Niall Duddy Pauline Nagle
MUSIC	Mary McFadden Áine Balfe
PHYSICS	John Conneely Kevin Dunphy

SUBJECT	REPRESENTATIVES
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	Andrew Levis Fergal Lyons
POLITICS & SOCIETY	Patrick O'Driscoll Donal McCarthy
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	Roisin Dignan Philip Synnott
SCIENCE	Shane Curran Michael McGrath
SPANISH	Daniel Howard David McArdle
SPECIAL EDUCATION	Pat Knightly Natalie Doyle Bradley
SCHOOL CHAPLAIN	Simon Kelliher Karol Torpey
VISUAL ART/ART	Veronica Lavin Helene Cunniffe
TRANSITION YEAR	Pauline Nagle Margo McGann
WELLBING/CIVIL, SOCIAL, POLITICAL EDUCATION	Aisling Brogan Vacant
WELLBING/SOCIAL, PERSONAL & HEALTH EDUCATION	Karen Ryan Louis Callaghan
WOOD TECHNOLOGY/ CONSTRUCTION STUDIES	Peter Masterson Gary Doherty

genders, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. ESD is a lifelong learning process and an integral part of quality education that enhances cognitive, social and emotional and behavioural dimensions of learning. It is holistic and transformational and encompasses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment itself.

The Strategy is underpinned by the following Principles:

- Promote lifelong learning and engage all sectors of the education system, including the nonformal and informal education sectors.
- Balance social, environmental and economic considerations.
- Be an agent for positive change in reorienting societies towards sustainable development.
- Emphasise social justice and equity, climate justice, antiracism and interculturalism. •
- Focus on values and promote active democratic citizenship and inclusion as a means of empowering the individual and the community.
- Be locally relevant while also linking the local to the national and global.
- Be interdisciplinary and recognise interdependence and interconnectivities across other sectors.
- Promote and use a variety of pedagogical techniques that support active and participatory learning, critical thinking and the development of key dispositions and skills

The Strategy contains 5 Priority Action Areas up to 2030:

1. Advancing Policy
2. Transforming Learning Environments
3. Building Capacities of Educators
4. Empowering and Mobilising Young People
5. Accelerating Local Level actions

The Second Strategy is accompanied by an Implementation Plan up to 2026 and contains a set of actions for each of the Five Priority Areas. Priority Area 3 – Building the Capacity of Educators – includes the actions to integrate ESD into all stages of teacher education; curriculum design and school policy. The latter is of particular significance in terms of other policy goals of inclusion and diversity.

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ESD to 2030: Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development was launched in June 2022. It builds on the First Strategy and spans the life-long learning spectrum from early childhood to higher education. The Strategy is co-shared across the Department of Education, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Skills and the Department for or Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Education for Sustainable Development is defined by UNESCO as follows:

Education for Sustainable Development ESD empowers learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to take informed decisions and make responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society empowering people of all

ANTI-BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying, the second national action, was launched in December 2022. It was developed following a consultation process with children and young people, parents, school staff, education partners and the wider education community. In addition, the Plan has drawn on a number of wider policy frameworks, in particular the Department's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2019, UNESCO's Whole Education Approach and the UN Sustainable Development for Education, as well as national and international research, including that on student voice. It also reflects the obligations placed on the Irish state following its ratification in 1992 of the UN Convention

on the Rights of the Child. The state is obliged to promote, protect and fulfil the rights of children. Bullying is a children's rights issue, and interferes with the following rights of the child:

- The right to freedom of expression (Article 13)
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)
- The right to freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 15)
- The right to be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect (Article 19)
- The right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24)
- The right to education (Article 28)
- The right to enjoy their own culture, religion or language (Article 30)

The four principles underpinning the Plan are:

- ❖ **Prevention:** Through the generation of empathy and the provision of training which provides a foundation for knowledge, respect, equality and inclusion
- ❖ **Support:** Tangible and targeted supports based on a continuum of needs which provide a framework for school communities to work together
- ❖ **Oversight:** Visible leadership creates positive environments for children and young people and all members of our school community
- ❖ **Community:** Building inclusive school communities that are connected to society, and that support and nurture positive relationships and partnerships

Key actions in the Plan include:

- Development of a national database to enable the publication of an annual national report on bullying in schools
- Ensuring that student teachers and all school staff have the knowledge and skills to effectively prevent and address bullying
- Development of a recognition process, such as a Cineáltas flag, for schools who engage in measures to prevent and address bullying
- Piloting a programme of counselling supports for primary schools
- Developing guidance for the establishment of a Student Support Team model in larger primary schools
- Establishing a dedicated unit in the Department of Education to promote the voice of children and young people and to ensure that they have meaningful input into the development of Department policy
- The progression of the Charter Bill and the development of Charter Guidelines that will strengthen the voice and participation of children and young people and their parents in the development and implementation of school policies

The development of these actions will be overseen by a stakeholder Steering Committee. Assistant General Secretary, Moira Leydon, represents the ASTI on the Steering Committee.

COMMUNITY AND COMPREHENSIVE

COMMUNITY AND COMPREHENSIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT TO CONVENTION 2023

COMMITTEE MEMBERS FROM DECEMBER 2021

Sinead Keegan	Area 1
Vacant	Area 2
Ian McColgan	Area 3
Peter Masterson	Area 4
Annemarie O'Mahony	Area 5
Dermot Brennan	Area 6
Geraldine O'Brien	Area 7
Jackie Wallace	Area 8
Padraig Curley	Area 9
Liam McHugh	Area 10

Miriam Duggan (President), Geraldine O'Brien (Vice President) and Michael McGrath (Honorary National Organiser) also attend meetings of this Committee and Breda Lynch, Executive Officer: IR provides professional support to the Committee.

The Advisory Committee has met on four occasions since last Convention.

For information, the role of the area representative is as follows:

- 1 Advise School Stewards and members in individual schools how to deal with problems;
- 2 Prior to all meetings, the Advisory Committee gather reports from schools with particular reference to implementation of ASTI policies, unresolved issues, grievances and matters which in the view of the Area Representatives require consideration by the Committee;
- 3 Make reports on the basis of 2. above to all meetings of the Committee;
- 4 Visit all schools in their area once a year, if possible;
- 5 Maintain regular contact with the school stewards in the schools in their area.

COMMITTEE ELECTION PROCESS

The term of this committee is two years. The election process includes writing to all schools within the Community and Comprehensive sector, asking for nominations to be submitted for election in the ten committee areas and when there is more than one nominee for an area, ballot papers are issued to schools within each area in order for committee members to be elected. This process took place in December 2021. Nominations were not received for all regions and further nominations were sought at the January CEC meeting. All regions are now represented except for Region 2.

COMMUNITY AND COMPREHENSIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE: A LINK BETWEEN ASTI HEAD OFFICE AND THE MEMBERSHIP

The Committee notes that members working in the Community and Comprehensive sector are required to deal with extra layers of management, including the Chief Executive Officer and the ETBI. The Committee Area Representatives have regular contact with members in their areas and they then report back to this Committee. Committee members keep teachers in their areas updated on all developments, especially those affecting teachers working in the Community and Comprehensive sector. It should be noted that in the Community and Comprehensive sector that there is continued competition with the TUI for trade union membership and that this Committee is a method of monitoring ASTI membership numbers versus TUI numbers.

ONGOING WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

In predominately dual-union Community and Comprehensive Schools and Colleges, School Stewards are asking for increased support from Head Office as some members in these Schools and Colleges are experiencing extreme difficulty in finding a teacher willing to act as School Steward particularly as a result of the additional layers of school management.

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment in Community and Comprehensive Schools and Colleges is very challenging. Concern was raised at our meetings regarding the fact that many teachers are refusing to join either union. This is concerning for the teachers involved as they have no protection in the event of a spurious complaint against the teacher/s by a student or parent/guardian of a student. In such cases the union can provide advice and support, both at school level and with the Teaching Council if necessary. There are many other benefits available to members.

TEACHING COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Members in the Community and comprehensive sector are anxious that there should be an ASTI member in every constituency of the next Teaching Council Elections. Candidates will need the full backing of the Union.

POSTS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The lack of an adequate number of Posts of Responsibility combined with concerns re the fairness of the appointment/appeal process continues to be a cause of great stress in schools in the Community & Comprehensive Sector.

COMMUNITY AND COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

Tables 6 to 9 set out the growth in ASTI membership in the Community and Comprehensive Sector. Overall membership in this sector has grown from 2,305 in 1997 to 3,277 in 2022. Membership growth in this sector has improved at an increasing rate to 2020, but has seen a marginal reduction during 2021 and 2022.

Table 6: Total Membership in Community and Comprehensive Schools and Colleges (2018 to 2022)

	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	Dec 2020	Dec 2021	Dec 2022
Total membership	3,095	3,182	3,363	3,294	3,277
Full members ¹	2,294	2,289	2,285	2,208	2,223
Job Sharers	115	104	103	93	94
CID non-full	115	121	137	142	138
Associate pro-rata	493	563	699	739	463
Associate non-pro rata	43	49	86	79	53
Members on leave	21	29	31	20	19
Student members	14	27	22	13	50

¹ Includes CIDs 18hrs+

Table 8: Membership in Comprehensive Schools (2018 to 2022)

	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	Dec 2020	Dec 2021	Dec 2022
Total membership	324	321	326	320	314
Full members ¹	260	255	250	242	244
Job Sharers	8	7	7	5	5
CID non-full	13	12	15	14	14
Associate pro-rata	40	36	47	53	46
Associate non-pro rata	0	1	3	4	2
Members on leave	3	4	1	1	0
Student members	0	6	3	1	3

¹ Includes CIDs 18hrs+

Table 7: Membership in Community Schools (2018 to 2022)

	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	Dec 2020	Dec 2021	Dec 2022
Total membership	2,125	2,172	2,310	2,263	2,251
Full members ¹	1,643	1,631	1,627	1,571	1,578
Job Sharers	90	79	78	73	74
CID non-full	84	88	96	101	101
Associate pro-rata	252	306	412	441	405
Associate non-pro rata	34	34	60	55	46
Members on leave	13	19	22	14	14
Student members	9	15	15	8	33

¹ Includes CIDs 18hrs+

Table 9: Membership in Community Colleges (2018 to 2022)

	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	Dec 2020	Dec 2021	Dec 2022
Total membership	646	689	727	711	712
Full members ¹	391	403	408	395	403
Job Sharers	17	18	18	15	15
CID non-full	18	21	26	27	23
Associate pro-rata	201	221	240	245	240
Associate non-pro rata	9	14	23	20	12
Members on leave	5	6	8	5	5
Student members	5	6	4	4	14

¹ Includes CIDs 18hrs+

EQUALITY

REPORT OF THE EQUALITY COMMITTEE TO CONVENTION 2023

The Equality Committee advises Standing Committee on such equality matters as are remitted to it by Standing Committee and on such other equality issues as the Committee itself wishes to investigate.

The Committee shall consist of the President, President-Elect, where applicable and Vice-President for the time being and nine members duly elected at Annual Convention every second year.

The members of the Committee are:

Philip Synnott Chairperson
 John Byrne
 Maura Greaney
 Gloria Helen
 Mary Lyndon
 Noelle Moran
 Tony McKernan
 Orla O'Callaghan
 John Sims

The Deputy General Secretary provides professional support to the Committee.

The Committee has met on 6 occasions since Convention 2022.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Equality Committee has made recommendations at several Conventions and Convention has consistently adopted the reports

containing these recommendations. Outstanding recommendations which the current Equality Committee is progressing are

- The adoption of an equality-proofing policy which would examine structures, rules, policies, procedures and outcomes of negotiations to ensure that they disadvantage no group within the ASTI.
- Training courses in leadership roles within the union.
- Consultation with branches about quotas and thresholds for CEC and Standing Committee.

In line with the above recommendations, the Committee organised a very successful Training Day for Branch Equality Officers. This event took place in Athlone on Saturday 8th October 2022 and was facilitated by Derek McDonnell of Big Picture Consultancy.

2. PROMOTION OF EQUAL TREATMENT

2.1 Promotion of Equal Treatment on Gender Ground

2.1.1 within the ASTI

2.1.2 within the teaching profession

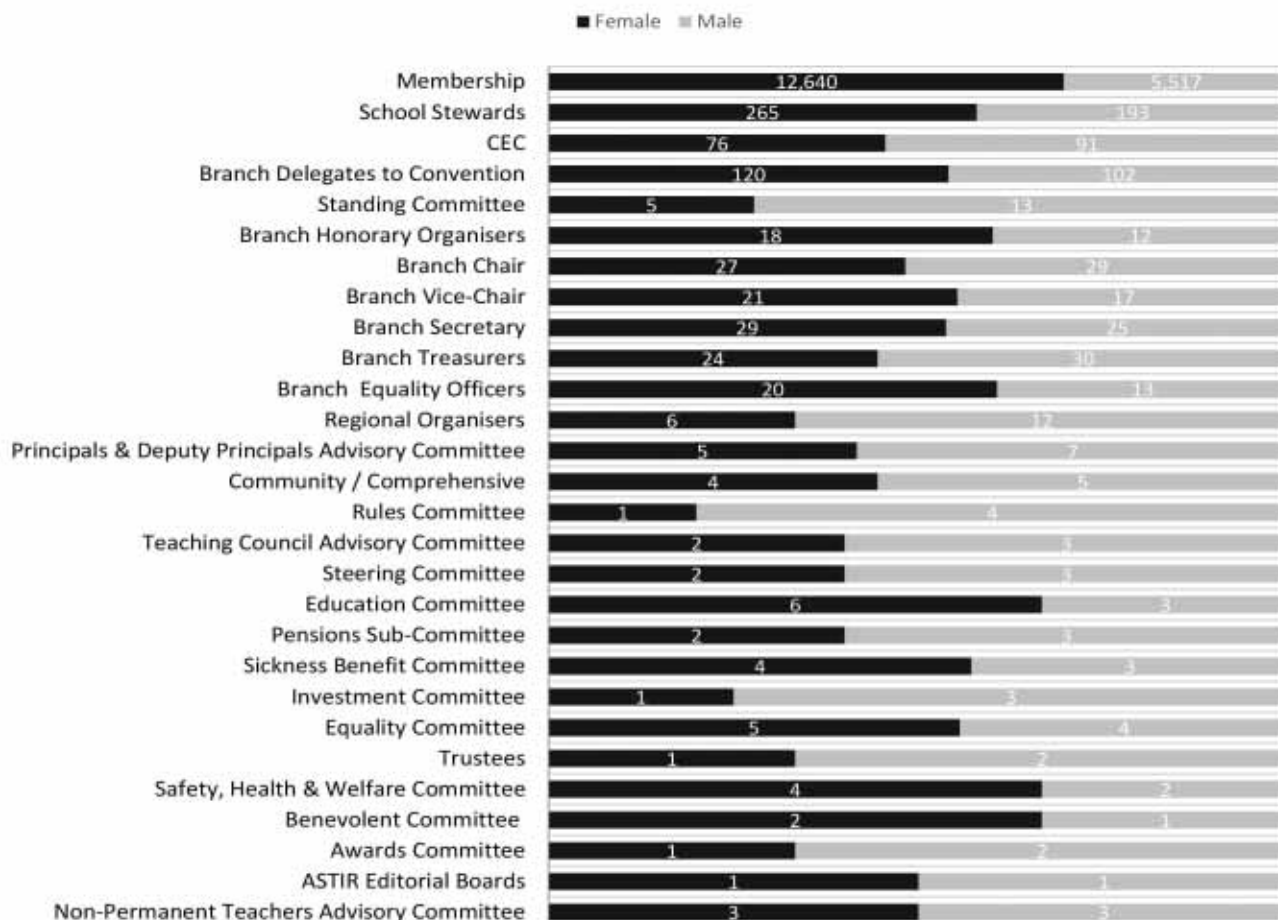
2.1.3 within the workplace.

2.1.1 Within the ASTI.

The committee continues to gender profile the occupancy of offices, committees and engagement of members within the union.

It should be noted that nearly 70% of the members are female. We are aware that there may be ASTI members who do not identify as either male or female and we are examining an inclusive approach towards this issue.

GENDER PROFILE WITHIN ASTI



* Ex Officio members of committees have been omitted from this list.

The Gender occupancy of committees and offices reveals a consistent pattern of under- representation of females in key positions of influence within the union:

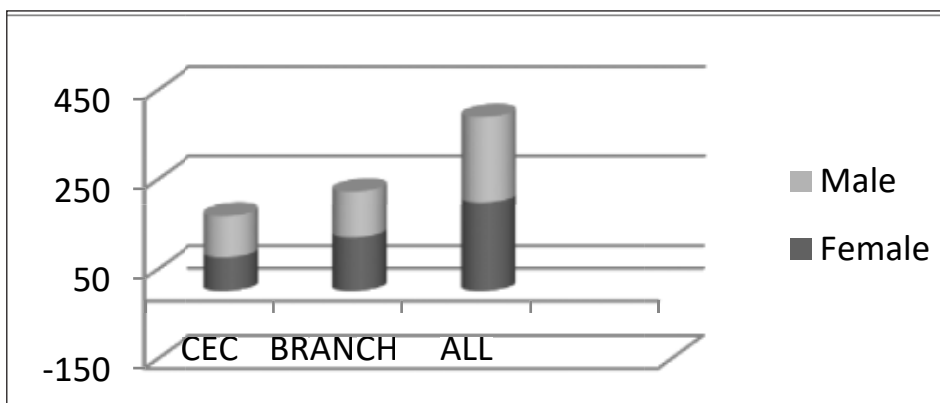
- Standing Committee
- Branch Chairs
- Branch Treasurers

This under-representation is also reflected in the gender breakdown of delegates attending ASTI Convention. While there are 18 more female Branch Delegates to Convention 2023 than male, this is offset by the 15 more male CEC members. While this leaves us with a situation of near parity in the delegates, these figures must be read in the context where 70% of ASTI members are women.

Gender Profiles of Delegates to ASTI Convention 2023

	Female	Male
CEC	76	91
Branch Delegates	120	102
All Delegates	196	193

CONVENTION 2023



These observations are not new. The measures adopted by the ASTI to seek a more balanced representation between males and females have not closed the gap.

2.1.2 Within the teaching profession.

- a) Efforts to reverse the withdrawal by the DoE of compensatory leave for teachers whose maternity leave overlaps with holiday periods.

The claims were lodged under the Maternity Protection of Employment Act, 1998-2004, where it was argued that the failure to distinguish between a statutory entitlement to maternity leave and an entitlement to holiday leave infringes members' statutory rights.

Similarly, the same complaint has been lodged under the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2004, arguing again, that the withdrawal of such leave facilities indirectly discriminates against female teachers – as only women could benefit from this leave provision.

In December 2018, the INTO lost several similar claims (under the Employment Equality Acts) which it had lodged on behalf of its members. On 18th April, 2019, the WRC issued its decision on the ASTI Employment Equality cases. It ruled against the ASTI. On advice, neither union decided to appeal. However, the INTO won an appeal at the Labour Court on their claim under Maternity Protection Act. The Department of Education appealed this matter to the High Court. The High Court ruled against the INTO but it referred the matter back to the WRC.

The ASTI claims are still active and we continue to pursue them.

- b) Actions to try and overturn the imposition of pay cuts to job-sharing teachers on less than €65,000.

The ASTI lodged claims under the Employment Equality Acts, 1998-2004 and under the Protection of Employees (part-time work), Act 2001, challenging the imposition of higher-pay cuts under the FEMPI legislation to job-sharing teachers. On legal advice, these claims were withdrawn. However, the ASTI has lodged a challenge in the High Court to the imposition of these as breach of contract. This claim has been lodged and we are awaiting developments.

2.1.3 Within the workplace.

- a) Gender Pay Gap.

At the time of writing the Committee is working with the Pensions Sub-Committee to commission research on the gender and pension pay gap for teachers.

- b) Menopause.

The Committee continues to monitor developments in relation to how women undergoing the menopause are treated in schools and to seek to look for necessary provisions in relation to working arrangements and conditions for these women.

2.2. Promotion of Equal Treatment on Sexual Orientation Ground.

The Committee is aware that transgender issues might be more properly treated under the gender ground, however, as there is a considerable overlap between organisations and activities relating to all LGBTQI+ issues, they will all be dealt with in this section.

2.2.1 LGBTQI+ Group

After many attempts, we have finally succeeded in re-establishing a fledgling group of ASTI LGBTQI+ members. This group has met this year and at the time of writing are working on getting themselves established. The Group proposed the holding an event at Convention 2023 to welcome new members and to begin a discussion within the ASTI on the issues facing our LGBTQI+ colleagues. We are holding a meeting on the Wednesday of Convention in White's Hotel and all are welcome to attend. **Any member interested in joining the ASTI LGBTQI+ Group should email lgbtqi@asti.ie**

2.2.2 Poster for Schools

The Committee has worked on the development of a poster for all schools on the issues facing our LGBTQI+ colleagues and on how to support these members. Many thanks to the INTO LGBTQI+ for their support and their permission to use their poster as the basis for ours.

2.2.3 Pride

The ASTI has been attending Dublin's Pride Parade for many years, however numbers have been very small. In 2022, the three teacher unions (ASTI, INTO and TUI) marched together and it was agreed that we should continue this practice in future Pride Parades. The teachers received an enthusiastic

reception from other marchers and the public who were watching. This year's Dublin Pride Parade will take place on Saturday 24th June.

2.3. *Promotion of Equal Treatment on Disability Ground.*

The Committee continues to support measures to address the issues of stress and mental health in schools which are being developed by the Safety Health and Welfare Committee. The ASTI is represented on the Disability Committee of the ICTU by Geraldine O'Brien, Vice-President and by Diarmaid de Paor, Deputy General Secretary.

2.4 *Promotion of Equality on Membership of the Traveller Community Ground:*

ASTI contributes to the workings of the Yellow Flag Programme – an award for schools which promotes opportunities for students from a traveller background.

ASTI continues to meet with Pavee Point to discuss how best to address issues facing traveller students in the Irish education system. We are seeking to arrange talks with management bodies, parent groups and other unions in relation to this issue.

2.4 *Promotion of Equal Treatment on Age Ground.*

2.4.1 Pensions

The Committee continues to emphasise the importance of maintaining parity between pensions and salaries. Representatives of the Committee met with representatives from the Pensions Sub-Committee in February to discuss areas of mutual interest and concern. At the time of writing the Committee is working with the Pensions Sub-Committee to commission research on the gender and pension pay gap for teachers.

2.4.2 Posts of Responsibility

The Standing Committee Sub-committee on Posts of Responsibility has met with the Committee as part of their work in surveying members on Posts of Responsibility, including exploring possible discrimination on the grounds of age or gender. See section in this handbook: Posts of Responsibility.

3. **COLLABORATING WITH THE WORK OF NGOS AND STATE BODIES IN PROMOTING EQUALITY.**

3.1 *National Women's Council of Ireland.*

The ASTI is represented on the NWCI by Lorainne Finn and Sheila Flynn.

3.2 *ICTU.*

The ASTI is represented on the Women's Committee of the ICTU by Adrienne Healy and by the Assistant General Secretary. It is represented on the ICTU Disability Committee by Geraldine O'Brien and by the Deputy General Secretary.

3.3 *ETUCE.*

The ASTI is represented on the Standing Committee for Equality of the European Trade Union Committee for Education by the Deputy General Secretary.

4 **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

The General Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary have represented the ASTI at the annual launch of White Ribbon Ireland (the national movement of the world's largest male-led campaign to end men's violence against women) for the past few years. The Committee continues to work with the campaign which acknowledges the importance of schools in promoting a culture which does not tolerate any violence against women.

The ASTI continues to seek amendments to the Assault Leave Circular 0061/2017. Teachers are only entitled to claim assault leave when they have suffered physically from the assault. Psychological effects are not eligible. While this omission affects all teachers it can have a particularly devastating effect on women teachers who have been sexually assaulted in schools.

5. **EQUALITY ISSUES FOR STUDENTS**

The Committee also devoted time to the discussion of equality issues as they affect schools and students. Among the issues discussed were:

- Issues facing LGBTQI+ students
- Inequalities which have been highlighted during remote learning
- Hidden Disabilities
- Grind Schools

The Committee is committed to maintaining the beneficial effects of education in mitigating inequality.

The Deputy General Secretary attended the launch of Belong To's School Climate Survey on 15th November and took part in a panel discussion at the event. He represents the ASTI on the Belong To Education Advisory Group.

6. **REFUGEES/ASYLUM SEEKERS/ IMMIGRANT TEACHERS**

The Committee has agreed that the issue of refugees and asylum teachers, and particularly students and teachers, should be a priority in its work.

The ASTI has been working (along with our sister unions the INTO and TUI) with the Migrant Teacher Bridging Programme. We address the teachers on this programme and explain to them the role of trade unions in supporting them and the importance of trade union membership.

7. **SCHOOLS' ADMISSION POLICIES**

The Committee continues to monitor the admission policies of schools to ensure that they are compliant with equality legislation.

8. **EQUALITY CONFERENCE**

The Committee has begun to discuss the idea of holding an Equality Conference at a time to be decided.

INTERNAL UNION MATTERS

FINANCE

END OF YEAR BRANCH BALANCES

In recent years, the Registrar of Friendly Societies, who grants the ASTI and other recognised trade unions their legal status and, thus, their protection under the industrial relations legislation, has sought increasingly detailed information about funds which unions allocate to branches. Each union is required to make a return to the Registrar for each financial year giving details of its finances. Failure to comply with this requirement could mean the withdrawal of legal recognition. The Registrar has insisted that unions provide a statement of their branches' bank balance at the end of the calendar year with each annual return. The end of year branch balances received from 9 branches in Head Office at time of going to print had a total of €75,935 in their various accounts at 31st December, 2022.

BRANCH AUDITS

Rule 49 states:

“All branch bank accounts shall be opened in the name of the branch and all monies lodged shall be in the name of the branch. Each branch shall, not later than November 1st hold an audit of the accounts of the branch, and a duly authenticated copy of the Balance Sheet shall be sent to the General Secretary, and shall be available for examination by members of the branch, within a month from the date of the audit. Such an audit shall be carried out by the Auditor to be appointed at a meeting of the branch. No Branch Officer shall be eligible to act as Auditor of the branch accounts.”

It is a requirement under the Rules and Constitution that the branch audit be completed and forwarded to the General Secretary. At time of going to print, audits for 33 branches were submitted to the General Secretary in respect of the financial year ended 30th September, 2022.

BRANCH CENTRAL FUND

In accordance with Rule 154 Convention 1994 established a special Central Fund to be known as the Branch Central Fund. In the report adopted by CEC in January 1994 it was agreed that branches should not as a rule retain more than €2,539.48 at any one time in a branch current or deposit account. This limit was increased to €5,000 at Convention 2015. Any surpluses should be forwarded to the Branch Central Fund. Convention 2019 agreed that 0.72% per annum from each member's subscription should be allocated to the Branch Central Fund. Branches wishing to undertake a project which would promote the aims and objectives of the ASTI but where their funds are insufficient to finance such a project can apply to the Branch Central Fund for a grant.

The income to the fund in 2022 was €57,091 made up from a €37,219 allocation from members' subscriptions and €2,463 negative deposit interest. Surplus from Branches was €22,335. The balance in the Branch Central Fund on 31st December, 2022 was €655,256.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

At Convention 2021 Michael Barry (Cork North), Gerry Breslin (Sligo) and Bernadine O'Sullivan (Dublin North-West) were elected for a two-year term. Bernadine O'Sullivan resigned from her position of Trustee in 2022 and she was replaced by Máire G. Ní Chiarba (Cork North) following an election at a special CEC meeting on Monday June 27, 2022, at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Athlone. We would like to take the opportunity to thank Bernadine for her work and commitment throughout her term of office as Trustee. The next election for the position of Trustee will take place at Annual Convention 2023.

The ASTI Trustees were invited to meet with the Honorary Treasurer, Pádraig Murphy and the Investment Committee on October 13th, 2022. The Trustees were invited to join the meeting to be briefed by the Honorary Treasurer on all ASTI Investments and on the deliberations of the Investment Committee. The report by the Honorary Treasurer was based on the accounts up to September 30th, 2022. It included a summary of all investments held: Education Credit Union, Goodbody Portfolio, AIB Ordinary Deposit A/C Balances, AIB Fixed Term Deposit A/C Balances, Prize Bonds, Irish Life Multi Asset Portfolio and An Post – Ireland State Savings. The decision of the Investment Committee was that no action needed to be taken at the time. The situation regarding negative interest rates was still evident until recently. From June 2019 to 1/09/22 The ASTI incurred negative interest of approximately €67,000 euros across all its deposit accounts.

As per Rule 71 we met with the ASTI auditors HLB Sheehan Quinn with respect to the audit of the Association's accounts for the year ending 31 December 2022. Our auditors are responsible for performing an audit of ASTI Financial Statements and forming and expressing an opinion about whether the financial statements are materially correct, fairly presented and overseeing the financial reporting process.

We met Mark Butler of HLB Sheehan Quinn on the 30th of November in advance of the audit for the year ended 31/12/22. The auditors will meet the ASTI Trustees in February 2023 to consider the accounts for the full year. The Trustees Report to Annual Convention will contain details of the Annual Audit.

As Trustees we are presented with quarterly financial statements and the most up to date accounts we have for the convention handbook are for September 30th, 2022. On examination of the accounts for the nine months ending September 30th, 2022, the following is our review of the more important matters.

- a) In the summary of the Balance sheets, it shows a fall in value of fixed assets of €87,984. Current assets have increased by €272,726, whilst current liabilities decreased by €233,087. This gives us an increase in net current assets of €505,807 and an increase in total net assets of €417,823. There is also a very healthy ratio of Current assets to Current liabilities. This puts the A.S.T.I in a healthy financial position.

- b) The figures of the General Fund show a surplus of income over expenditure for the 9 months to September 30th of €165,493, with an estimated figure for the full year of €195,075. This is a sharp decline in the surplus for 2021, which was €1,003,577. This of course reflects the return to normality following the effects of Covid in 2021. One clear example is the increase in expenditure on Committees, Conventions and Deputations from €171,728 for the full year of 2021 to €504,558 for the 9 months to the end of September 2022.
- c) The figure for membership subscriptions for the 9 months is €3,845,658, with an estimate of €5,411,812 for the full year. This would be an increase of approximately €400,000 for the year, representing a steady increase in membership.
- d) Legal fees for the 9 months are €352,323 and are expected to be approximately €500,000 for the full year; a drop of €50,000 from 2021. Fitness to Teach legal fees for the 9 months to hand are €59,252, which is approximately €9,000 greater than the whole of 2021. Legal fees are a necessary part of any trade union, we must look after our members interests. However, the question we would ask is there a more efficient and effective way of providing this service. We suggest that it would be in our interest to investigate the viability and effectiveness of having an in-house legal team/individual.
- e) There have been no other significant changes in any of other funds this year, all of which are in a health position.
- f) Finally, the net assets of the ASTI as of 30/09/2022 are €12,054,415, an increase of €360,000 from December 21, 2021.

To conclude we would like to thank the General Secretary Kieran Christie, President Miriam Duggan and our Honorary Treasurer Padraig Murphy for their continued support. A special thanks to Elaine McLoughlin and all in accounts.

Trustees: Michael Barry, Gerry Breslin and Maire G. Ní Chiarba

MEMBERS' BENEFIT SCHEMES

BENEVOLENT FUND

The five administrators of the Fund are Sinéad Corkery, Adrian Guinan and Geraldine O'Brien, elected by CEC, and the President and Honorary Treasurer, both ex-officio.

The administrators met three times during the year to consider claims and sanctioned seven. Six were for exceptional circumstances and one for deceased member. The total amount of monies sanctioned for payment was €48,000.

SICKNESS BENEFIT FUND

The Sickness Benefit Committee met four times during the year. Claims for benefit totalled 275. In eight cases no award was made as the conditions set out in the Rules were not met.

For the year 2022, of the claims for which awards were made, 11 were for illness, 66 for dental treatment, 196 for optical treatment and two for otological treatment. The total amount paid out in claims for 2022 was €48,844 compared with €50,940 in 2021.

The elected Committee members are:

David Briscoe, Róisín Doyle, Mary Lyndon, Margaret McGagh, Tony McKernan, Geraldine O'Brien and Gerard O'Donoghue.

SALARY PROTECTION SCHEME

The Salary Protection Scheme for ASTI members has been in operation since the 14th February 1977. It was last reviewed on 1st June 2018 and the terms and conditions will again be reviewed on 1st June 2024. The Scheme provides members with an income in the event that they are unable to work as a result of injury or illness.

During 2022 a total of 84 Disability claims were notified. (4 of these cases did not proceed to claim as they returned to work before exhausting sick pay at full rate). 56 of these claims were admitted by the end of 2022. 21 claims are currently being assessed. One claim was not paid as it was declined as a result of non-disclosure. A further 30 claims, notified in 2021, were admitted in 2022, bringing to 1,440 the total number of members admitted as claimants under the Disability element of the Scheme. Currently 106 members are in receipt of benefit amounting to €2,800,000 per annum. Since its introduction, a total in excess of €134,000,000 has been paid under the Disability element of the Scheme.

The total paid out under the Death Benefit element of the Scheme in 2022 was €281,854 in respect of 2 member's claims. A total of 4 member's death claims were notified in 2022 and there are 7 death claims awaiting settlement at the end of 2022 with total benefit due of approximately €931,043. Since this element was introduced in 1981, a total of 324 claims have been admitted with payments to the families of deceased members amounting to approximately €29,680,000.

A Specified Illness benefit was introduced at the 1st June 2014 Scheme review. In 2022 21 claims were settled with a total benefit of €391,755 paid. One claim is awaiting settlement and three claims notified in 2022 were declined. Since the introduction of this benefit in June 2014 a total of 151 claims have been paid with a total benefit paid of approximately €2,525,755

FOUR TEACHER UNIONS

The Presidents, General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries of the four teacher unions ASTI, INTO, TUI and IFUT hold regular meetings to discuss matters of common interest. There have been six formal meetings in the past year. These meetings are intended to provide opportunities to share information and ensure that where possible there is a joint position on issues that affect teachers. In particular, they are very useful to ensure that the staff side are well prepared for Teacher Conciliation Council meetings.

Issues discussed included the following:

- Pay inequality
- Climate Change
- Public sector pay/pension talks
- Redeployment issues

- Pension issues
- Special Educational Needs provision
- Integrated Workplace Health Management Initiative
- HSA Work Positive Process for Schools
- Teaching Council/Registration issues
- Teacher disciplinary issues
- Supervision and Substitution
- Partial Absences
- EI/BIGTU/ETUCE
- Third level funding
- Second level funding
- Junior Cycle Implementation issues
- Posts of Responsibility
- Fixed Term Teachers and CIDs
- Teacher Secondment
- Sick Leave
- Assault Leave
- Adoptive Leave (Surrogacy)
- Occupational Injury
- International union issues
- ICTU business
- Probation management
- Equality issues
- Payroll issues
- International issues
- Global Schoolroom

LEGAL AID GRANTS

LEGAL AID APPLICATIONS

In 2022, there were 13 applications for legal aid of which 12 were approved. In 2020, there were 10 applications for legal aid of which 10 were approved.

The applications related inter alia to the following issues:

- Allegations/complaints against members
- Bullying/harassment issues
- Dismissals or threatened dismissals
- Disciplinary Issues
- Equality issues
- Teaching Council Issues

GUIDELINES FOR GRANTS FOR LEGAL AID

The following are the guidelines for applications for grants for legal aid:

ASTI Rule 159(c) provides that “grants on account of legal expenses incurred by members arising out of or in connection with their professional duties” may be paid from the General Fund in accordance with the provisions of Rules 179 to 182.

These Rules provide that, before a member takes any steps (other than entering a notice of appeal), a member must submit the request for a grant in writing to the General Secretary. Standing Committee (or CEC) may refuse a grant or allow portion of a grant or state the maximum sum which will be made available. Each application for a grant for legal aid will be assessed on its own merits and in its own circumstances. The increasing number of applications for grants for legal aid, however, requires that there must be some measure of standardised response which also takes into account the broader interests of the Association. Guidelines are issued to members to help to ensure that there is

consistency of approach and clarity with regard to the degree of support which may be available to individual members.

The following general principles apply:

1. Insofar as possible, the advice and assistance will be provided through the ASTI solicitors.
2. In principle, Standing Committee will follow the advice of the ASTI legal advisors in deciding whether or not to support an action or to continue to support an action.
3. A grant will not normally be approved by Standing Committee where the issue could be addressed through the agreed industrial relations procedures and the provisions of the procedures have not been exhausted.
4. An initial grant for legal aid will cover the cost of a consultation with the solicitors and any consequent correspondence. The member concerned will be accompanied and assisted by an ASTI representative. The initial grant may also cover the cost of a Barrister’s advice, if required.
5. A further application for a grant will be required for legal representation in a court or other quasi legal forum.
6. Such legal aid grant is provided to cover the legal costs of the member who made the application only.
7. A further application will be required if a grant is required to cover the legal costs of a third party.
8. In the case of legal proceedings, a specific cash limit will be set on the grant to be paid. This limit may not cover the member’s full costs in the proceedings but will not exceed, except in exceptional circumstances, the member’s costs in the proceedings, based on estimates provided by the legal advisors. The limit may only be exceeded by obtaining further specific approval.
9. The ASTI will not pay a grant to cover the costs of any damages awarded against a member.
10. The ASTI may only pay the legal costs involved in an agreed settlement of a case.
11. That, as a matter of principle, a grant for legal aid to a maximum of €5,000 will be made to members on receipt of a request submitted in accordance with the Rules, who is accused of behaviour which may lead to a criminal investigation in order to pay legal costs which arise in relation to the protection of their continued employment.
12. Except in cases of emergency, requests for legal grants should be forwarded to the General Secretary at least 5 days prior to the meeting of Standing Committee for which it is relevant.

PRINCIPALS AND DEPUTY PRINCIPALS ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

One Principal and one Deputy Principal is elected in each of nine regions, based on Standing Committee Regions, to the ASTI Principals and Deputy Principals Committee. It is recommended that there should be gender balance and that the Principal and Deputy Principal should not be from the same school. The term of office is two years.

The Current Committee members are listed below.

SC Region	Principal / Deputy	Name
1 and 2	Principal	Vacant
	Deputy Principal	Jimmy Staunton
3 and 4	Principal	Mary Kelly
	Deputy Principal	Vacant
5	Principal	John O'Donovan
	Deputy Principal	Liam Hassett
6 and 7	Principal	Aaron Wolfe
	Deputy Principal	Peter Hyde
8 and 9	Principal	Shane Hallinan
	Deputy Principal	Vacant
10 and 11	Principal	Vacant
	Deputy Principal	Kathleen Burke
12, 16 & 17	Principal	Vacant
	Deputy Principal	Jean Marie Ward
13 and 14	Principal	Vacant
	Deputy Principal	Robert Browne
15 and 18	Principal	Sarah Green
	Deputy Principal	Patricia MacManus

John O'Donovan is Chairperson of the Committee. The President and the Vice-President are also members of the Committee. The Deputy General Secretary provides the professional support to the Committee.

Meetings were held on throughout the year at which many issues were discussed.

COVID -19:

At the beginning of the year, the Covid pandemic and its repercussions for teachers and school leaders took up much of the Committee's time. The Committee continued to raise issues of concern for ASTI members who are in school leadership positions. These concerns were all been forwarded to the Department of Education and Skills through the General Secretary and the President.

STATE EXAMINATIONS:

Changes to the State Examinations were discussed many times. While there was no consensus on the impact of the moving of Oral Examinations to the Easter Holidays, there was unanimous dismay expressed at the suggestion of Papers I in English and Gaeilge being moved into 5th Year. The Committee felt that this decision, if implemented, would increase stress on students and they already saw it having a negative impact on Transition Year. Concern was also expressed in relation to the difficulty in recruiting examiners.

BUILDING MOMENTUM:

The Committee was kept fully briefed on developments relating to the Building Momentum agreement and its extension.

The Committee welcomed the decision to use a portion of the sectoral bargaining 1% to restore the PME Allowance to post 2011 entrants.

They expressed disappointment that the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform would not allow restoration of the Allowance for Principals Serving as Secretary to a Board of Management to be extended to more recently appointed Principals.

OTHER REMUNERATION ISSUES:

The Committee continued to seek for other issues to be addressed, including

- A Step-Down Scheme for Principals and Deputy Principals
- An examination of the basis for the allowances paid to Principals and Deputy Principals. These allowances are based on the number of teachers employed in a school. However, in recent years up to one third of employees may be in grades other than teaching grades, in particular as SNAs.
- They welcomed the ASTI's success in getting agreement from the Department of Education that new Principals and Deputy Principals who had opted out of the Supervision and Substitution Scheme could opt back in, in circumstances where they are now required to undertake supervision and substitution duties. A Circular on this matter is still awaited.

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS:

Discussions on changes in the provision of Special Education Needs to schools and the increasing demands being put on schools, teachers and school leaders was an issue that took up a lot of the Committee's time this year. They expressed, in very strong terms, their concern about burn-out among teachers as a result of the ever-increasing demands being put on them by these and other developments imposed by the Department of Education.

ASSAULTS ON TEACHERS:

The Committee addressed the following motion, which was passed at Annual Convention 2022: *"That, in light of the continuing assault of teachers, physically, verbally and online, the ASTI demand that the Department of Education review its policies to ensure the protection of teachers under Health and Safety legislation."* Members of the Committee recounted incidents in their own schools and were very supportive of the motion.

WORKLOAD:

The workload for Principals and Deputy Principals has always been, and continues to be, an issue for the Committee. Incremental increases in the demand on schools has led to a now intolerable situation which is leading to serious concern about health, safety and welfare of school leaders.

OTHER ISSUES:

Among other issues raised by the Committee were.

- LGBTQI+ Issues, including the need for more support and guidance to provided to school leaders.

- Ukrainian and other refugee students.
- Redeployment (including voluntary redeployment)
- SLARs
- Senior Cycle Reform
- Principal Deputy Principal Appeals
- Grade Inflation
- Parent Teacher Meetings

REPRESENTATION OF PRINCIPALS AND DEPUTY PRINCIPALS:

During the year, the ASTI represented a number of Principals and Deputies in relation to difficulties they were having with Boards of Management and/or Trustees.

STANDING COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

General Election 2023

The terms of office for regionally elected representatives for Standing Committee regions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15 and 17 expire at the conclusion of Annual Convention 2023. The General Secretary duly notified all branch secretaries in these regions and valid nominations for representatives to serve until Annual Convention 2025 had been received by the due date (7th January 2023) as follows:

Region 1	Pat Curley
Region 3	Richie Bell
Region 5	Donal Cremin and Siobhan O'Donovan
Region 7	Pat Knightly
Region 9	Donal Coughlan
Region 11	David Wynne
Region 13	David Murphy
Region 15	Adrienne Healy
Region 17	Seamus Keane

At the time of going to print, an election is scheduled in Regions 5. The formal announcement of elections to Standing Committee will be made at Annual Convention.

BY-ELECTIONS

Region 4

Arising from Geraldine O'Brien's election to Vice President, a vacancy arose for a representative for Region 4. A by election was held, John Conneely was formally deemed elected.

THE REPORT OF HONORARY NATIONAL ORGANISER

Fellow delegates,

I write this report for Convention 2023 in a positive frame of mind as eventually in my 3rd year as HNO I have been in a position to fulfil the promises I made when elected. During the previous 2 years COVID19 regulations severely restricted my ambitious plans to visit as many secondary schools and 3rd level teacher training colleges as possible. During this school year I have undertaken numerous visits to post primary schools and many teacher training colleges. In this regard I have enlisted the support of my Standing Committee colleagues and also the Regional Organisers in the 18 regions, having sought and received approval of CEC for paid substitution for up to 2 days per year for these activists to visit up to 4 schools in the year. I want to acknowledge the support I have received to date, conscious of the fact that together we have a lot more to do. I am delighted that in each and every school that was visited I have received a very warm welcome from both management and staff. I have focused my attention on 2 categories of schools: (a) Those that do not have an elected school steward and (b) Those that have considerable numbers of non-unionised teachers.

I have come to realise that many of the new entrant teachers seem dis-interested in joining the ASTI or for that matter any Trade Union. If the ASTI is to remain the strong voice for teachers in Post Primary schools, I am asking all delegates here at Convention 2023, when you return to your schools after Easter, that you will collectively strive to persuade these young colleagues to join you in the ASTI. I want you all to prioritise delivery of the message that they may one day need the very valuable support and protection afforded through ASTI membership. I firmly believe that those who join as students will remain ASTI members.

Regarding my visits to numerous teacher training colleges, some via ZOOM meetings, the attendance and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. I want to express my thanks to Desmond O Toole, Executive Officer, Development and Organisation, for accompanying me on these information seminars. Desmond explains in great detail the various types of contracts that new entrants may be presented with as they take up their first teaching position. For the majority of these students this has been their very first introduction to the ASTI and the many benefits of Trade Union membership.

As I stated in my HNO report to Convention 2022, far too many of our members do not have a full hours contract. On a positive note there has been a slight reduction in this category of members from 26% to 23.9% this year but all of us must continue to be a strong voice for this vulnerable cohort of ASTI members in our schools. It is often all too convenient for management to keep several teachers on a low hours contract, thus having readily available substitutes on staff.

Overall membership figures remain more or less static at 18,273 which indicates that the high numbers of teachers that have retired since last year have been replaced by new members. However, there is evidence that there is a considerable cohort of non-unionised teachers in an ever increasing number of second level schools. This is a matter of great concern to me and will be my primary focus going forward as your Honorary National

Organiser for the remainder of this school year and into the future.

“Ní neart go cur le chéile.”

Is mise le meas,

Michael McGrath, Honorary National Organiser.

PUBLICITY AND INFORMATION

During the 2022 period the ASTI Communications Office was involved in the following activities:

- Writing and issuing news releases and statements to the media.
- Briefing the media / responding to media queries.
- Organising media interviews for radio, television, newspapers, and online media.
- Promoting ASTI activities and policies.
- Developing campaigns on key issues such as teacher shortages and the Senior Cycle.
- Participating in research for publicity purposes.
- Monitoring media coverage of ASTI.
- Maintaining a network of regional ASTI spokespersons.
- Briefing media spokespersons.
- Writing, editing and producing ASTI publications including ASTIR and Nuacht.
- Designing publications/liasing with designers.
- Monitoring Dáil debates and political developments.
- Co-ordinating political lobbying.
- Developing the new ASTI website.
- Updating and maintaining ASTI website on a daily basis.
- Continued development of ASTI social media presence.
- Organising photo opportunities at ASTI events throughout the year.
- Producing online videos.
- Producing ASTI merchandise.

List of Press Statements 2022

Health and Safety must be the priority for the reopening of schools – 3rd January, 2022.

ASTI expresses dismay at lack of progress on school safety – 3rd January, 2022.

ASTI committed to externally-assessed Leaving Cert 2022 in line with expectations – 10th January, 2022.

School charter Bill could harm student wellbeing, widen inequalities - 19th January, 2022.

ASTI comment following meeting of education stakeholders – 20th January, 2022.

Further adjustments to Leaving Cert exams should be considered – 25th January, 2022.

‘New Leaving Cert adjustments will level playing field for students’ – ASTI President – 1st February, 2022.

ASTI comment on easing of restrictions – 22nd February, 2022.

Chief Inspector’s report confirms high standard of teaching & learning despite inadequate funding – 23rd March, 2022.

Senior cycle change must protect integrity of exam system – 29th March, 2022.

500 teachers to debate future of education, teaching at ASTI conference in Cork – 4th April, 2022.

Survey indicates half of second-level schools have unfilled vacancies – 14th April, 2022.

ASTI President calls on Minister to address teacher recruitment crisis – 19th April, 2022.

ASTI General Secretary address to Annual Convention – 20th April, 2022.

Joint Statement from The British and Irish Group of Teacher Unions – Work overload affecting wellbeing in education systems – 9th May, 2022.

Celbridge teacher wins ASTI award for service to union – May 2022 – Ger Curtin (Dublin North West Branch).

Cork teacher wins ASTI award for service to union – 27th May, 2022 – Pat Hurley (East Cork Branch).

Wexford teacher wins ASTI award for service to union - 27th May, 2022 – Deirdre Mac Donald (Wexford Tony Boland Branch).

Dublin teacher wins ASTI award for outstanding contribution – 27th May, 2022 – Angela O’Connor (Dublin North I Branch).

Local Teacher receives ASTI Bursary – 30th May, 2022 – Helen Lowe (Limerick North Branch).

Bandon teacher wins ASTI award for outstanding contribution – 31st May, 2022 – Trevor Collins (Carbery Branch).

Dublin teacher wins ASTI award for outstanding contribution – 31st May, 2022 – Julie Ann Somers (Dublin North West Branch).

Local Teacher receives ASTI Bursary – May 2022 – Noelle Moran (Tuam Branch).

Local Teacher receives ASTI PJ Kennedy Award – 31st May, 2022 x 14 statements.

Local Teacher receives ASTI Thomas MacDonagh Medal - 31st May, 2022 x 3 statements.

Tuam teacher wins ASTI award for outstanding contribution - 1st June, 2022 – Elaine Feeney (Tuam Branch).

Local Teacher receives ASTI Thomas MacDonagh Medal – 1st June, x 10 statements.

Local Teacher receives ASTI PJ Kennedy Award – 1st June, 2022.

Cavan teacher receives posthumous ASTI award – 1st June, 2022 – Jane Craig-Elliott (Cavan Branch).

Cork teacher wins ASTI award for outstanding contribution – 1st June, 2022 - Edel Farrell (Cork South Paddy Mulcahy Branch).

‘You have weathered the storm. Now it’s time for a simple, balanced routine’ – ASTI President’s message to exam students – 8th June, 2022.

ASTI welcomes public consultation on the draft curriculum for Social Personal Health Education – 18th July, 2022.

‘Teachers are central to effective, trusted curriculum development’ – new ASTI President – 29th July, 2022.

ASTI begins preparations for public sector pay ballot – 10th August, 2022.

ASTI President congratulates Leaving Cert students - ‘You have had to cope with uncertainty and disruption’ – ASTI President – 2nd September, 2022.

ASTI and TUI welcome reinstatement of value of Postgraduate Masters in Education (PME) allowance – 5th September, 2022.

Donegal teacher wins ASTI award for outstanding contribution – 19th September, 2022.

Disappointing Budget fails second-level education – 27th September, 2022.

OECD education report: Ireland in last place for investment in second-level education – 3rd October, 2022.

ASTI members vote to accept Review of Building Momentum proposal – 6th October, 2022.

ASTI begins consultation process on Minister's Senior Cycle announcement – 15th October, 2022.

Thousands of teachers denied representation on Teaching Council – Press Notice / Photocall – 21st October, 2022.

ASTI protest outside Presentation College Athenry 'entirely lawful' – 21st October, 2022.

ASTI declares no confidence in Junior Cycle research project – 26th October, 2022.

Joint ASTI/ TUI statement: Union intervention halts rollout of Assessment of Needs process – 27th October, 2022.

Joint ASTI, TUI, INTO & IFUT, ActionAid press release - IMF austerity policies in the Global South undermining Ireland's aid budget – 8th November, 2022.

Education unions – Joint trade union statement - Housing crisis threatens education system – 22nd November, 2022.

ASTI President congratulates students receiving their first State Exams certificate – 23rd November, 2022.

ASTI demands radical action on teacher supply – 30th November, 2022.

PUBLICATIONS

ASTIR

ASTIR - Pink and Blue Power saves lives – January, 2022.

ASTIR - 100th ASTI Annual Convention – March, 2022.

ASTIR - Annual Convention 2022 – May, 2022.

ASTIR - Join the ASTI – September, 2022.

ASTIR - Teachers Denied Representation on Teaching Council – November, 2022.

ASTIR - Massive Shortages of Teachers - January, 2023.

Nuacht

Nuacht No 1 - March, 2022 - Convention Special.

Nuacht No 2 - August, 2022 - Ballot Special.

Nuacht No 3 - September, 2022 - Ballot Special - Review and extension of the Building Momentum Agreement.

Nuacht No 4 - November, 2022 - Leaving Certificate Redevelopment - Your voice matters.

Additional Publications

ASTI Convention 2022 Preliminary Agenda.

ASTI Convention Handbook 1, 2 and 3, 2022.

ASTI Awards Brochure 2022.

ASTI Advantages Cornmarket Rewards Flyer – 2022.

ASTI Diary 2023.

ASTI Information Leaflets – Contracts – 2022.

ASTI Information Leaflets – You and the ASTI – 2022.

ASTI Information Leaflets – Pensions Information – 2022.

ASTI Noticeboard signs – 2022.

ASTI/RedC Survey – Support teachers, supporting schools - April, 2022.

ASTI Planner 2022/2023.

ASTI Recruitment - Membership Application form.

ASTI Recruitment - Change of Membership form.

ASTI Poster: Why should you join the ASTI.

ASTI Flyers: Why should you join the ASTI.

The Leading Democratic Assembly - Celebrating the ASTI's 100th Annual Convention John Cunningham.

New Teachers' Guide Treoir do Mhúinteoirí Nua.

Recruitment Advice for School Stewards.

Leas Muinteoirí: Cearta agus Freagrachtaí (Teacher Welfare Leaflet in Irish).

ASTI Diary 2022.

ASTI Faisnéis Chonartha Maidir Le: Múinteoirí Neamhbhuana, lena n-áirítear – January, 2022.

ASTI - ASTI agus tusa – January, 2022.

ASTI - Faisnéis maidir le Pinsinn – January, 2022.

ASTI ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS

The ASTI website mirrors all areas of the ASTI's work including campaigns, industrial relations and legal issues, information and advice for teachers, education policy, and teachers' rights and entitlements, publications including Nuacht and ASTIR, and latest news.

In 2022 the ASTI launched MyUnion, a new online facility on the ASTI website which allows ASTI members to access and change information relating to their membership without having to contact head office. Members can change their address/ contact details/ work details and view contact information for their main elected representatives. Members have the opportunity to choose whether they wish to receive a hard copy or digital copy of a range of ASTI publications including Astir and Nuacht. ASTI activists including school stewards and branch secretaries have access to additional online facilities to support them in their roles. MyUnion will be further developed so as to encourage improved engagement between the ASTI and its members.

Facebook and Twitter

The ASTI's presence on social media continued to grow over the course of the past year. In January 2022, the ASTI Facebook page has 8,528 page likes and a following of approximately 9,000 subscribers.

In January 2022, the ASTI Twitter page increased to over 13,300 followers.

Social media tools are increasingly used by the ASTI to support activities and campaigns. In addition, teachers use Facebook and Twitter to receive news updates, access information on the ASTI website via links, and address questions to the ASTI and fellow ASTI members. ASTI members can also debate decisions taken and join in ongoing campaigns.

CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND MEETINGS

SINCE ANNUAL CONVENTION 2022 THE ASTI HAS HELD THE FOLLOWING ON-LINE AND IN-PERSON CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND MEETINGS:

CEC

Two meetings were held in Dublin on Saturday 21st May 2022 and on Saturday 21st January 2023.

SPECIAL CEC

Three meetings were held in Athlone on Monday 27th June 2022, Saturday 3rd September 2022 and on Saturday 15th October 2022.

JOINT ASTI/TUI SUBJECT REPRESENTATIVE MEETING:

Joint ASTI/TUI subject representatives meeting was held on 26th November 2022.

COMMITTEES / SUB COMMITTEES:

The following committees and sub-committees held a number of meetings as received by rule or demands of business in hand. Reports on these committees are contained in the appropriated sections of this handbook.

- Standing Committee / Special Standing Committee
- Steering Committee
- Education Committee
- Equality Committee
- Principals' & Deputy Principals' Advisory Committee
- Safety, Health & Welfare Committee
- ASTIR Editorial Board Sub-Committee
- ASTI Awards Committee
- Community & Comprehensive Advisory Committee
- Non-Permanent Teachers' Advisory Committee
- Investment Committee
- Rules Committee
- Sickness Benefit Committee
- Benevolent Committee
- Business of CEC Sub-Committee
- Pension Sub-Committee
- Teacher Council Advisory Committee

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATIVES TRAINING COURSES

Three training courses were held as follows:

- Wednesday 26th October 2022 in Cork
- Wednesday 9th November 2022 in Head Office
- Wednesday 30th November 2022 (on-line course)

SCHOOL STEWARDS TRAINING COURSES

Five training courses were held as follows:

- Wednesday 5th October in Dublin
- Wednesday 12th October in Cork

- Wednesday 19th October (on-line course)
- Wednesday 9th November in Dublin
- Wednesday 23rd November (on-line course)

RETIREMENT SEMINARS

Six Retirement Seminars were held by the ASTI as follows:

- Tuesday 8th & Tuesday 15th November in Dublin
- Tuesday 21st November in Sligo
- Wednesday 22nd November in Galway
- Monday 9th & Monday 16th January 2023 in Dublin
- Tuesday 10th & Tuesday 31st January 2023 on-line course
- Monday 23rd & Monday 30th January 2023 in Cork
- Tuesday 24th January 2023 on-line course

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Leadership training were held as follows:

- Saturday 12th November 2022 in Head Office
- Saturday 26th November 2022 in Head Office

HEALTH & SAFETY TRAINING

One training were held as follows:

- Monday 21st November 2022 on-line course

MEMBERSHIP

Overall membership has shown a marginal decline in the post-COVID period and return to work in schools. There has been a small reduction in membership of 166 (-129) to 18,157 (18,323) in 2022 (2021) from the point reached last year. This represents a reduction of 0.9% (-0.7%) over the 2021 (2020) figure.

This membership reduction is concentrated within the following categories of members: Full members -77 (-0.7%), Job-sharers -22 (-4.3%), Associate pro rata (non-permanent fixed term teachers) -130 (-4.2%), and Associate non-pro rata (substitute teachers) -80 (-26%). Almost all of the remaining categories have shown increases in the number of members, especially student teachers +71 (54%).

A further increase in emeritus members has added to the trend identified in previous reports of retired members forming a growing proportion of union membership. Emeritus members now represent 11.2% of the union's total membership in 2022 (2021 10.7%; 2020 10.2%; 2019 10.1%; 2018 9.5%; 2017 9.3%).

The figure for student membership has continued to grow at a faster rate over the last three years but also reflects the decisions of university and college education departments to schedule union recruitment into the second semester, i.e. after the ASTI's membership reporting date.

Membership Returns

The total membership of the ASTI in December 2022 was 18,157, comprising 12,640 women members and 5,517 men. A detailed presentation of membership figures is contained in the following tables:

Table 1: Total membership by category at December 2022 (2018 to 2022)

	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	Dec 2020	Dec 2021	Dec 2022
Total membership	16,849	17,411	18,452	18,323	18,157
Full members ¹	11,421	11,381	11,697	11,386	11,309
Job Sharers	595	572	553	508	486
CID non-full	636	643	689	694	691
Associate pro-rata	2,104	2,412	2,947	3,130	3,000
Associate non-pro rata	198	288	339	304	224
Members on leave	157	184	167	141	143
Student members	61	95	109	132	203
Emeritus members	1,606	1,764	1,880	1,959	2,030
Honorary life members	70	72	71	69	71

Table 2: Annual change in total membership on previous year (2013 to 2022)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Increase	531	466		792	
Decrease			227		1,932
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Increase	409	562	1,041		
Decrease				129	166

Table 3: Annual change in full membership on previous year, including full CIDs (2013 to 2022)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Increase		144	391		
Decrease	192			20	1,295
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Increase			316		
Decrease	49	40		311	77

Table 4: Total members other than full members (2013 to 2022)

Category Total	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
	5,091	5,413	4,795	5,607	4,970
Category Total	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	5,428	6,030	6,755	6,937	6,848

Table 5: Total Associate Pro rata Contract & Non-Pro rata Contract Members (2013 to 2022)

Category Total	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
	2,479	2,696	1,840	2,523	1,939
Category Total	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	2,302	2,700	3,286	3,434	3,367

Community and Comprehensive Schools

Tables 6 to 9 set out the growth in ASTI membership in the Community and Comprehensive Sector. Overall membership in this sector has grown from 2,305 in 1997 to 3,277 in 2022. Membership growth in this sector has improved at an increasing rate to 2020, but has seen a marginal reduction during 2021 and 2022.

Table 6: Total Membership in Community and Comprehensive Schools and Colleges (2018 to 2022)

	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	Dec 2020	Dec 2021	Dec 2022
Total membership	3,095	3,182	3,363	3,294	3,277
Full members ¹	2,294	2,289	2,285	2,208	2,223
Job Sharers	115	104	103	93	94
CID non-full	115	121	137	142	138
Associate pro-rata	493	563	699	739	463
Associate non-pro rata	43	49	86	79	53
Members on leave	21	29	31	20	19
Student members	14	27	22	13	50

Table 7: Membership in Community Schools (2018 to 2022)

	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	Dec 2020	Dec 2021	Dec 2022
Total membership	2,125	2,172	2,310	2,263	2,251
Full members ¹	1,643	1,631	1,627	1,571	1,578
Job Sharers	90	79	78	73	74
CID non-full	84	88	96	101	101
Associate pro-rata	252	306	412	441	405
Associate non-pro rata	34	34	60	55	46
Members on leave	13	19	22	14	14
Student members	9	15	15	8	33

Table 8: Membership in Comprehensive Schools (2018 to 2022)

	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	Dec 2020	Dec 2021	Dec 2022
Total membership	324	321	326	320	314
Full members ¹	260	255	250	242	244
Job Sharers	8	7	7	5	5
CID non-full	13	12	15	14	14
Associate pro-rata	40	36	47	53	46
Associate non-pro rata	0	1	3	4	2
Members on leave	3	4	1	1	0
Student members	0	6	3	1	3

Table 9: Membership in Community Colleges (2018 to 2022)

	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	Dec 2020	Dec 2021	Dec 2022
Total membership	646	689	727	711	712
Full members ¹	391	403	408	395	403
Job Sharers	17	18	18	15	15
CID non-full	18	21	26	27	23
Associate pro-rata	201	221	240	245	240
Associate non-pro rata	9	14	23	20	12
Members on leave	5	6	8	5	5
Student members	5	6	4	4	14

Branch Membership

Branch	2021	2022	Branch	2021	2022
Athlone	232	229	Fermoy	130	125
Bray	222	215	Fingal	422	427
Carberry	350	345	Galway	778	765
Carlow	344	335	Iar Thuaisceart TC	71	70
Carrick-on-Shann	132	141	Kerry	616	632
Cavan	214	214	Kildare	687	670
Clare	407	418	Kilkenny	367	361
Cork North	555	538	Laois	296	317
Cork South	772	766	Limerick North	359	375
Desmond	245	237	Limerick South	398	395
Donegal	353	374	Longford	180	176
Drogheda Sean Higgins	301	293	Monaghan	258	252
Dublin North I	484	452	Mullingar	220	223
Dublin North Ctrl	292	286	Navan	423	430
Dublin North East	489	501	Nenagh	126	127
Dublin North West	838	831	New Ross	195	192
Dublin South I	534	501	Roscrea	92	91
Dublin South 2	602	604	Sligo	281	300
Dublin South Ctrl	316	301	Stillorgan	394	381
Dublin South Cnty	197	186	Tipperary	460	456
Dublin South West	415	388	Tuam	147	163
Dún Laoghaire	148	141	Tullamore	205	200
Dundalk	252	254	Waterford	449	452
Dungarvan	175	183	West Limerick	103	106
East Cork	272	255	West Mayo	495	493
East Galway	173	165	West Waterford	58	61
East Mayo	104	95	Wexford Tony Boland	240	239
Enniscorthy	244	241	Wicklow	211	189

ASTI AWARDS TO MEMBERS

Membership of the ASTI Awards Committee are as follows: Pat Derry, Adrian Guinan, Crena Shevlin, President, Vice-President and General Secretary. Jacqueline Kearns, Executive Officer provides technical advice to the committee.

The committee meet on Thursday 12th January 2023 to consider applications for the following awards:

- Honorary Life Membership
- Thomas MacDonagh Medal
- PJ Kennedy Award

in the context of a strict application of the Procedure for ASTI Awards and the information supplied by the branches the committee made the following recommendations.

Honorary Life Membership

The committee considered the branch nominations for Honorary Life Membership and recommended to CEC at their meeting on Saturday 21st January 2023 that CEC propose to Convention 2023 that the following nominee:

Mary Dowling-Maher

be conferred with Honorary Life membership in accordance with Rule 13 of the ASTI Rules and Constitution.

CEC adopted the proposal at its meeting on the 21st January 2023**Thomas MacDonagh Medal**

Two outgoing Standing Committee members would be conferred with a medal.

PJ Kennedy Award

The committee recommended that the PJ Kennedy Award be awarded to nine members.

Anonymising Branch Nominations:

The Committee agreed branch nominations will be anonymised in future by ASTI Head Office before being presented to the Committee for consideration to ensure fairness and transparency.

ASTI STAFF**STAFF CHANGES****The following staff changes were made****Clerical Officer:**

Alison Mannion resigned her position as Clerical Officer and was replaced by Rebecca Lyster.

Executive Officer:

Maire Collins resigned her position as Executive Officer/ Industrial Relations and was replaced by Brian Burke.

Ann Marie Ryan resigned her position as Executive Officer/ Industrial Relations and was replaced by Breda Lynch.

ASTI STAFF GRADES AND SALARIES

Apart from the General Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary ASTI staff members' salaries are linked to the appropriate Civil Service grades. The levels of remuneration are comparable with those paid in the other teachers' unions and in other unions of similar size.

The General Secretary's salary was fixed by CEC in April 2005 at 2.1846 of the maximum of the secondary teacher's salary scale plus pass primary degree allowance plus pass H Dip in Education allowance. The Deputy General Secretary's salary scale was fixed in January 2006 at a maximum of 1.73493 of the maximum of the secondary teacher's scale plus primary pass degree allowance plus pass H. Dip in Education allowance.

The General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary are provided with the use of ASTI motorcars. The ASTI pays all costs in relation to these cars, excluding personal mileage. These provisions are subject to "Benefit in Kind" taxation. Other officials are paid Civil Service mileage rates or the actual fares when travelling on ASTI business. Details of these expenses are published annually in the Financial Report to Convention.

The method of reimbursement of staff members' costs incurred in the conduct of their duties is a system linked to Civil Service subsistence allowances. Claims in respect of such costs are circulated to Standing Committee at each ordinary meeting and checked by scrutineers before being reimbursed.

Head office is open from 9.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. each day with a luncheon period closure of one hour from 1.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. The office is open for 242 normal working days in each year. Much of the work of officials and, in particular, of the industrial relations officials, is confidential to the members directly involved. It is, therefore, unlikely to be reported or referred to at branch or other meetings. Much of this work takes place outside normal office hours.

An outline of the duties undertaken by officials is set out below. The duties are assigned by the General Secretary and vary from time to time in accordance with the priorities established by Convention, CEC and Standing Committee.

Outline of Duties:

The duties of officials set out below may vary depending on circumstances.

General Secretary **Kieran Christie**
 The General Secretary represents and promotes the interests of the union and its members in relation to salary and conditions of employment and the wellbeing of the education service at a national and international level. He is entrusted with managing the daily business of the Association, including the organization of Head Office and the execution of Association policy.

Deputy General Secretary **Diarmaid de Paor**
 The Deputy General Secretary supports the General Secretary in his national role. He deputizes for the General Secretary and has specific responsibility in the area of communication and education policy, relations with parents, aspects of C&A and issues arising for Principals and Deputy Principals. He presents the Board of Management training for ASTI. He also services the ASTI Equality Committee and the Principals and Deputy Principals Committee.

Assistant General Secretary/Education Research **Moira Leydon**
 The Assistant General Secretary acts as Education and Research Officer and monitors progress in the education area. She services

the ASTI Education Committee in furthering the education aims of the Association. She is responsible for coordinating a number of ASTI training programmes and coordinator of the ASTI network of subject representatives.

Executive Officer: Administration **Jacqueline Kearns**
 The Executive Officer has responsibility for the general administration of ASTI head office and the organization and co-ordination of conferences and seminars. She is responsible for staff training, recruitment of administrative staff and monitoring the work of administrative staff. She also has specific responsibility for the Awards Sub-Committee.

Executive Officer: Media & Communications **Gemma Tuffy**
 The Executive Officer has responsibility to develop and maintain a positive public profile for the ASTI and its members. She is involved in media liaison, public relations, political campaigning, policy development, coordination of ASTI media representative network, publications and communications, and assisting members in dealing with the media. She acts as coordinator for media training for ASTI. She also has specific responsibility for the ASTIR Editorial Board.

Executive Officer: Industrial Relations **Bernard Moynihan**
 The Executive Officer has responsibility for industrial relations. He is involved in assisting and representing teachers on industrial relations matters and promoting the welfare of members on an individual and school basis. He is a member of the school stewards training team. He also has specific responsibility for the Non-Permanent Teachers' Advisory Committee.

Executive Officer: Development & Organisation **Desmond O'Toole**
 The EO/Development & Organisation is involved in assisting and representing teachers on industrial relations matters and promoting the welfare of members on an individual or school basis. He is assigned duties in relation to recruitment, retirement, elections, social welfare, Occupational Health Service, Employee Assurances Scheme. He is a member of the school stewards training and retirement training teams. He also has specific responsibility for the Rules Committee and Pensions Sub-Committee.

Executive Officer: Industrial Relations **Conor McDonald**
 The Executive Officer has responsibility for industrial relations. He is involved in assisting and representing teachers on industrial relations matters and promoting the welfare of members on an individual or school basis. He is a member of the school stewards training team. He also has specific responsibility for the Safety, Health and Welfare Sub-Committee.

Executive Officer: Industrial Relations **Breda Lynch**
 The Executive Officer has responsibility for industrial relations. She is involved in assisting and representing teachers on industrial relations matters and promoting the welfare of members on an individual or school basis. She is a member of the school stewards training team. She also has specific responsibility for the Community and Comprehensive Advisory Committee.

Executive Officer: Industrial Relations **Brian Burke**
 The Executive Officer has responsibility for industrial relations. He is involved in assisting and representing teachers on industrial relations matters and promoting the welfare of members on an individual and school basis. He is a member of the school stewards training team. He also may have specific responsibility for sub-committee work as it arises.

CASEWORK

Assistance regarding a wide range of issues in support of members and complaints relating to members made to the Teaching Council, is among the core work of ASTI Head Office Officials. This work includes making representations to school authorities, schools management bodies, the Department of Education and other stakeholders in the Irish education system. Such representation can often be on behalf of individual members, groups of members or the ASTI membership as a whole, depending on the forum. ASTI officials also deal with queries from branch representatives from the branches and liaise with regional representatives as appropriate. ASTI has also taken cases to the Workplace Relations Commission and the Labour Court under a number of legislative provisions. On occasion it has been necessary to pursue matters through the legal system up to and including the superior courts.

Matters on which representations were made this year include:

- Maternity leave
- Sick Leave
- Breastfeeding breaks
- Job-sharing
- Career break scheme
- Incremental credit
- Harassment of teachers
- School discipline
- School amalgamations
- Complaints against teachers
- Redeployment
- GDPR issues
- Dismissal
- Internal school difficulties
- Leave of absence
- School closures
- Pension entitlements
- Part-time and fixed-term teachers' conditions
- Timetable issues
- Supervision and substitution
- Junior Cycle
- Posts of Responsibility
- Special needs provision issues
- Salary matters
- Teaching Council issues

- Examinations / State Examinations Commission
- Difficulties with revenue and social welfare authorities
- Complaints about appointment procedures
- Queries about Department Circulars
- Retirement
- Qualification allowances
- Bullying and Victimisation

RULES COMMITTEE

The Rules Committee is elected annually at Annual Convention. The Committee was last elected at the Convention 2022. The current members of the Committee are: the President, Vice-President, Immediate Past President and General Secretary (ex-officio), Padraic McWeeney, Philip Irwin, Mary Lyndon, Richard Bell and Michael McGrath. Desmond O'Toole (Organisation and Development official) provides professional support for the work of the Committee.

The Committee has met once since Convention 2022 on 21st February 2023. Meetings ordinarily take place in ASTI Head Office. The Committee was convened to discuss matters regarding to Rule 5 of the ASTI Rules and Constitution.

ASTI SUBSTITUTION SERVICE

The ASTI Substitute Placement Scheme has been in operation since 1994 and there are currently 250+ teachers registered with the scheme. There is an average of 15 calls per week to the Substitute Scheme and approximately 10 of those are from schools looking for a substitute teacher. Regulations: When registering, a teacher must complete a registration form containing the relevant details and including a commitment to abide by the rules of the scheme. The rules require a teacher to keep the register updated as to the teacher's current availability for employment. All members of the scheme are advised to keep their details up to date. Operation of the Scheme: The service is provided by calling 01- 6040170 or by e-mailing . Schools making enquiries will be advised of the names and details of teachers who are on the register and available to undertake substitute work within their area. Online registration is available on the ASTI Website. It is not necessary for an applicant to be a member of the ASTI. How the Scheme works: When applicants have submitted their details they are stored on our Substitute Placement database and made available to school principals. According to employers' criteria, the ASTI releases a list of teacher's details subject to what is required. The ASTI is not a recruitment agency and only releases Substitute Placement teachers' details to Secondary Schools and upholds the Data Protection Act.

TRAINING ANALYSIS 2022

School Steward Training

DATE	VENUE	Attendees
5 th October	Dublin	8
12 th October	Cork	7
19 th October	Online	15
9 th November	Stillorgan	10
23 rd November	Online	19

Board of Management Training

DATE	VENUE	Attendees
26 th October	Cork	10
9 th November	Head Office	20
30 th November	Online	32

Retirement Seminars

DATE	VENUE	Attendees
8 th November	Dublin Airport	22
21 st November	Sligo	8
22 nd November	Galway	12
9 th January	Stillorgan	17
10 th January	Online	42
23 rd January	Cork	16
24 th January	Online (the second online date was released due to demand)	61

School Leadership Training

DATE	VENUE	Attendees
12 th November	Head Office	13
26 th November	Head Office	8

Health & Safety Training

DATE	VENUE	Attendees
21 st November	Online	33

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ASTI

101ú Comhdháil
Bhliantúil 2023



Comhdháil
Lámhleabhar
& Tuairiscí

LEABHAR 1 & 2

AG FREASTAL AR MHÚINTEOIRÍ
AG COTHÚ AN OIDEACHAIS