

# astir

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland



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damaging education

Minister Mary Hanafin  
speaks to ASTIR

Changing the  
curriculum

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# astir

## Editorial Board

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## Editorial Board

Front row, from left:  
John White, General Secretary;  
Michael Freeley, President;  
Patricia Wroe, Vice President;  
Gemma Tuffy, Media and  
Communications Officer.  
Standing: Sheila Parsons,  
Immediate Past President;  
Joe Moran, Standing  
Committee; Paddy Mulcahy,  
Standing Committee. (Missing  
from photograph is Ray St  
John, Honorary Treasurer.)



# Many issues on our agenda



As President of the ASTI I welcome the launch of the new ASTIR magazine. I hope that members find the magazine informative and engaging and I encourage all members to consider contributing to future editions.

Teaching has changed beyond recognition over the past number of years. Significant legislative change, the mainstreaming of students with special needs, the arrival of many international students, and continuous curricular change are just some of the factors behind this transformation. The ASTI is fully committed to the provision of a quality education for all students, but we are very concerned about the lack of resources in schools to help provide this inclusive education. In this edition of ASTIR, we ask the Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin, what plans she has to ensure teachers are empowered to provide the best education for students with special needs. Regrettably, I am not reassured by her response.

The obsession of some newspapers and individuals with so-called league tables linking schools to third level colleges is doing Irish education a disservice. As our General Secretary, John White, writes on pages 14 and 15, these tables distort the facts. They fail to recognise, for example, the disadvantaged status of some schools and schools' achievements in spheres such as extra curricular activities and special needs education. For some schools and teachers the biggest challenge is getting students to remain in school. On the anniversary of Michael Davitt's death, a man with a passion for justice and a belief in equality and the dignity of each human person, I appeal to all with a real interest in education to cease endorsing this elitism.

Non-permanent teachers have been discriminated against over many years. I am glad that we have achieved some improvements with the implementation of Contracts of Indefinite Duration. These give more of our members greater security of tenure. We are also working hard on behalf of members to ensure that arrears of incremental credit will be paid in the near future.

This year we will have an opportunity to strengthen our representation at national level by ensuring that we support the ASTI-endorsed Seanad candidates Bernadine O'Sullivan (NUI Panel) and David Martin

(University of Dublin, TCD Panel). In addition to voting for them, please encourage friends and family to do likewise.

I am very concerned about the decision of the Mercy Sisters to announce the closure of a vibrant second level school at Kinvara, Co. Galway. Teachers, parents and students were not consulted about the closure. I believe the decision of the Trustees to dissolve the Board of Management is in breach of the Education Act, 1998. I urge the Mercy Sisters to revoke their decision and work with the whole school community to provide second-level education for the students of the area – boys and girls – and to safeguard the employment of teachers.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to wish all ASTI staff and members a healthy, prosperous and peaceful 2007.

Rath Dé ar bhur gcuid oibre.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Freeley". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michael Freeley



Michael Freeley,  
ASTI President



# Meetings for non-permanent teachers

The ASTI is holding a series of meetings for non-permanent teachers and school stewards over the coming weeks. The meetings will cover issues such as:

- contracts of indefinite duration;
- rates of pay for casual and non-casual teachers;
- payment of arrears due from 2001;
- clarification of issues arising for non-permanent teachers;
- entitlements of holders of fixed-term contracts; and,
- complaints procedures.

DATE/ TIME	VENUE	BRANCHES
Monday, Jan 29th 7.30p.m.	Silversprings Hotel, Cork	Desmond, Cork South, Carbery, Fermoy, Cork North, East Cork
Monday, Jan 29th 7.30p.m.	Stillorgan Park Hotel, Dublin	Dublin South 2, Dublin South County, Stillorgan, Wicklow, Dun Laoire, Bray, Dublin South Central, Dublin South 1, Dublin South West
Tuesday, Jan 30th 7.30p.m.	Corrib Great Southern, Galway	Galway, Tuam, East Galway
Tuesday, Jan 30th 7.30p.m.	Racket Hall Hotel, Roscrea	Laois, Kildare, Roscrea
Monday, Feb 5th 7.30p.m.	South Court Hotel, Limerick	Limerick North, Limerick South, West Limerick, Clare, Tipperary, Nenagh
Tuesday, Feb 6th 7.30p.m.	Breaffy House Hotel, Castlebar	East Mayo, West Mayo
Tuesday, Feb 6th 7.30p.m.	Glass House Hotel, Sligo	Sligo, Donegal, Iar Thuaisceart
Tuesday, Feb 6th 7.30p.m.	Great Southern Airport Hotel, Dublin	Dublin North West, Dublin North 1, Dublin North East
Tuesday, Feb 13th 7.30p.m.	Brehon Hotel, Killarney	Kerry
Tuesday, Feb 13th 7.30p.m.	Mullingar Park Hotel	Longford, Tullamore, Navan, Athlone, Mullingar, Dundalk, Monaghan, Cavan, Carrick on Shannon
Tuesday, Feb 13th 7.30p.m.	Newpark Hotel, Kilkenny	Wexford, New Ross, Enniscorthy, Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow, West Waterford, Dungarvan
Tuesday, Feb 13th 7.30p.m.	Clarion Hotel, Dublin Airport	Fingal, Drogheda, Dublin North Central

## Gaisce, the President's Award



At the recent presentation of President's Awards were (from left): Pat Shallow, Royal & Prior School, Raphoe; Fidelma Lipsett, Sligo Grammar School; Dr. Martin McAleese; President McAleese, Patron of Gaisce, the President's Award; Kathy Ann Gibson, Royal & Prior, Raphoe; Elaine Gallagher, Loreto Secondary School, Letterkenny; John White, General Secretary, ASTI; and John Hurley, Council Member of Gaisce.

## Teacher exchange

Teacher seeking to move to Midlands area from the East with all of the business subjects. Please contact: [movecounty@hotmail.com](mailto:movecounty@hotmail.com) for more details.

## ASTIR March/April Edition

The deadline for items for the March/April edition of ASTIR is February 6. Please send items to [astir@asti.ie](mailto:astir@asti.ie) or ASTI, Thomas MacDonagh House, Winetavern Street, Dublin 8.

## ASTI getting bigger

The ASTI – Ireland's largest second level teachers' union – has seen its membership grow by 10% in the last 10 years. Total membership now stands at over 17,000.

## Making the most of your voice

Your voice can be a powerful teaching tool in the classroom and a vital instrument for your teaching career. But it can also suffer if you do not take care of it. The ASTI and the VHI are running voice coaching workshops this February to help members use their voice in a healthy and effective way. The dates for the workshops will be publicised in Nuacht in January and February.

## At the ASTI Education Conference



Denis O'Boyle, West Mayo (left) and Michael Freeley, ASTI President.



Paula Bigley (left) and Mary Ohle both from Dublin North West Branch.



Joe Moran, Standing Committee Region 9 and Bernadine O'Sullivan, Dublin North West Branch.

## Adoptive leave

Leave-in-lieu for paid adoptive leave is to be extended from 22 days to 27 days. The change is designed to deal with the anomaly whereby holidays lost due to maternity leave may be recovered after the maternity leave is over up to a maximum of 30 days, while holidays lost due to adoptive leave can currently only be recovered up to a maximum of 22 days. The change, which was sought at the Teachers' Conciliation Council, reflects the fact that there is only a difference of two weeks between paid maternity leave and paid adoptive leave.

## Teachers' Code of Professional Conduct

Teachers are invited to participate in the formulation of a Code of Professional Conduct for the profession, which is being drawn up by the Teaching Council.

A Draft Code of Professional Conduct was published in November 2006 and it is important that teachers participate in a discussion on the code by attending one of the six regional meetings organised by the Teaching Council in the coming weeks (see schedule of meetings below).

Teachers can also forward comments on the Draft Code to the Teaching Council. Comment forms are available at [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie).

According to the Teaching Council the code is being developed with three key objectives in mind: to promote quality teaching and learning; to encourage and support teachers in their professional role; and to promote the teaching profession.

The Draft Code states that teachers "are committed to a holistic vision of education which includes the aesthetic, cognitive, intellectual, critical, emotional, imaginative, creative, moral, social, political, spiritual, physical and healthy development of their students. . . . Teachers recognise that differences in students' backgrounds can shape experience and impact on learning. They value diversity."

The Draft Code covers teachers' responsibilities and practice in a range of areas including the safety and welfare of their students, the handling of confidential information arising in the course of their work, and the provision of an inclusive education to students.

The full text of the Draft Code is available at [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie).

### Meetings on the Draft Code of Professional Conduct

*(Teachers wishing to book a place should contact the relevant education centre)*

Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday Jan 24	7pm – 9pm	Navan Education Centre
Wednesday Jan 31	7pm – 9pm	Kilkenny Education Centre
Thursday Feb 1	7pm – 9pm	Cork – Contact Education Centre
Tuesday, Feb 6	7pm – 9pm	Limerick Education Centre
Wednesday Feb 7	7pm – 9pm	Galway Education Centre
Tuesday Feb 13	7pm – 9pm	Dublin West Education Centre
Thursday Feb 15	7pm – 9pm	Sligo Education Centre

## Stillorgan Branch



At a Branch function held on December 14, 2006 were from left: Sally Maguire, Chairperson, Stillorgan Branch; Mary Hanafin, Minister for Education and Science; and, John White, ASTI General Secretary.

## Students join global campaign

At least 80 million children in the world do not go to school and many more drop out before they complete primary school. Global Action Week 2007, which takes place from April 23 to 29, aims to highlight the need for governments to put education for all the world's children on their agendas. In Ireland, the Irish Coalition for the Global Campaign for Education – of which the ASTI is a member – is asking schools to participate in the campaign by joining in the Big Chain Reaction project. This involves students or classes compiling an information file on access to and barriers to education for children globally. This file is to be handed over to a politician during Global Action Week. The project is ideal for CSPE and Transition Year students. For more information log onto [www.campaignforeducation.ie](http://www.campaignforeducation.ie) or [www.campaignforeducation.org](http://www.campaignforeducation.org).

## Technology support service

A new support service to assist second-level teachers in the implementation of the four new technology subjects has been established.

### The four new subjects are:

- Technology (a new Leaving Certificate subject);
- Design and Communications Graphics (which replaces Technical Drawing);
- Architectural Technology (which replaces Construction Studies); and
- Engineering Technology (which replaces Engineering).

The support service includes professional development training and a dedicated website ([www.t4.ie](http://www.t4.ie)). Funding is also being provided to schools offering the subjects to assist them in the upgrading of facilities and equipment.

Two of the new subjects – Technology and Design and Communications – will be taught in schools from September 2007 and will be examined for the first time in 2009.

The first intensive sessions of training for approximately 2,000 technology teachers are currently taking place.

## East Galway Branch function



Back row, from left: Mary Molloy; Mary Uniacke; Margaret Flannery; Joe Molloy; Phil Lally; John Walshe; Anette Lynagh; Tony McNamara; Tim Byrnes; TJ Beatty; John Carroll; Daithi Frawley; Kay Dooley; Colm Moorehead; and Ulick Burke. Front row: Noreen Coakley, Emer Nolan, Ann Ryan (for PB Ryan R.I.P.), Verna Ryan, Patricia Wroe, Vice President ASTI; John White, General Secretary ASTI; Louis Blehein; Deirdre Gunter; and, Pierce Joyce.



Frank Fahy, Treasurer, East Galway Branch making a presentation to Ray St John, Honorary Treasurer, at a retirement function in Ballinasloe.



Pat O'Looney, Vice-Chairman, East Galway Branch, making a presentation to Pat King, Assistant General Secretary (left) at the function in Ballinasloe.



## Teachers lead brilliant performance

*Pictured at The Helix after the performance were: (front row, from left) Maebh Coogan; Katherine Kearns; Máire Ni Lighil; Marian Mullen, DSSC Co-ordinator; Minister Mary Hanafin; Mary McFadden; Anna Heffernan, Schools' Orchestra Director; Kathryn Fitzgerald; Anne Cullen, piano accompanist, DSSC. Back row: Brenda Shields; Patricia Feighery, Treasurer DSSC; Jaqueline Dooley, Traditional Group Arranger; Sean Creamer, Director, DSSC; Dervilla Sloan; Carol-Ann Duffy; Kim Fallen; and Máiréad Ni Oistin.*

The Dublin Secondary School Girls' Choir performed in The Helix, Dublin last December to a crowd which included the Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin.

This year's event marked the retirement of choir director and conductor Sean Creamer. Sean, a retired primary school inspector from Mullingar, has made a remarkable contribution to the fostering of choral singing in primary and second-level schools for many years. He has collaborated with second-level music teachers on the Dublin Secondary School Girls' Choir for 21 years. Since then, over 10,000 students have participated including 200 students from 15 schools who took part in December's performance. Sean is also director of the National Children's Choir. The schools (and teachers) involved in this year's brilliant performance were: Coláiste Mhuire (Máiread Ni Oistin);



Photo: Dave Cullen

Coláiste Bhríde Clondalkin (Anne Cullen);  
 Coláiste Íosagáin, Stigh Lurgan (Meadhbh Uí Chiagáin);  
 Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan (Mary McFadden, Kim Fallen);  
 Loreto Abbey, Dalkey (Kathryn Fitzgerald);  
 Loreto College, Swords (Katherine Kearns);  
 Our Lady's Grove, Goatstown (Dervilla Sloan, Jacqueline Dooley);  
 Presentation College, Terenure (Maebh Coogan);  
 St Dominic's College, Cabra (Patricia Feighery);  
 St Dominic's High School, Sutton (Anna Heffernan, Antoinette Murray);  
 St Mark's Community School (Sr Cecily O'Flynn);  
 St Paul's Secondary School, Greenhills (Carol-Ann Duffy, Brenda Shields);  
 Scoil Chaitríona, Br Mobhí (Máire Ni Lighil); and,  
 Sancta Maria College, Ballyroan (Sarah King, Géaróid McCartney).

## If you are on maternity leave – tax news

Maternity benefit paid to you by the Department of Social and Family Affairs is not regarded as income for the purposes of Income Tax. However, the Department of Education and Science deducts Income Tax from your salary while you are in receipt of Maternity Benefit. In order to claim your tax rebate from the Revenue Commissioners, you should request an MB21 form from the DFSA Maternity Benefit Section when you have completed your maternity leave. This form will state the

amount of Maternity Benefit which the DFSA has paid in respect of your maternity leave. You should send the form MB21 along with your P60 for the relevant tax year to your local tax office in order to claim a rebate. You can also obtain a refund of relevant PRSI contributions by completing a form PRSI REF 1. This form is available on the DFSA website ([www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)). Your form PRSI REF 1 must be stamped at Section 4 by the Department of Education and Science before being sent to the DFSA.

## Limerick South Branch function



John White, General Secretary, making a presentation to Aine Ni Uallachain at a recent Limerick South Branch function.

## €229 million for school buildings

A total of €229 million is to be spent on second-level school building and modernisation projects in 2007, according to the Department of Education and Science. The money will go towards recently announced building projects including the first bundle of post primary schools under the Public Private Partnership programme in counties Laois and Offaly. Building sites for new schools will also be purchased and some funds will be diverted to the Summer Works Scheme. Commenting on the news ASTI General Secretary John White said: "We welcome any announcement for additional funding for second level schools". However, Mr White added that out of 30 OECD countries, Ireland comes second last when it comes to funding per second level student per GDP per capita. "The Government must put in place a comprehensive investment plan which seeks to rectify this and ensures that all of our young people get the educational opportunities they deserve," he said.



## OBITUARY

### Patricia Murphy, Our Lady's School, Terenure

Patricia Murphy joined the staff of Our Lady's School, Terenure, in 1972. She was a teacher of Irish and French but she is most famed for her musical prowess. Alongside her Music classes, she organised the music for all the school ceremonies and for our hugely successful school musicals.

Always generous with her time, Patricia spent hours counselling students as a Form Tutor, in the days before any other support systems were available. As her career progressed, she became a House Mistress and later an exceptional Year Head.

But these are simply the facts. True and impressive as they may be, they convey little of her abilities and influence. For Patricia was more than talented, more than professional, she was what is now a rare entity – a genuine educationalist, an accepted oracle. One phrase echoes no longer in our staffroom, "ask Patricia", she will know. And she did know. She knew how to communicate with teenagers. She applied standards of discipline that were at once just and

unwavering, and they understood them. She was also honest and compassionate and they were drawn to that.

She knew about us too, our rights and responsibilities as professionals. She was a union activist, a convention delegate, and spent many years as school steward in Our Lady's School. And when she was not our representative in name, she was in spirit. At varying intervals during her illness, she would send word that Circular X needed our attention and if Patricia felt something was important – then it was.

Ultimately, it was her affinity for people that created in her a wealth of wisdom and understanding. With these fine threads, she spun her identity, a beloved wife and mother and a dear friend, a trusted advisor and a superb teacher. And she was proud and certain of the person that she became.

We extend sympathies to her husband Gerry and sons, Cathal, David, Eoin and Brian. *LM*

## TY Coordinators, European Studies teachers: have you ordered your free Europa Diaries?

The deadline for ordering online is 26 January!

The Europa Diary: It's Your Choice and its accompanying Teacher's Guide are provided free of charge by the European Commission in all Member States.

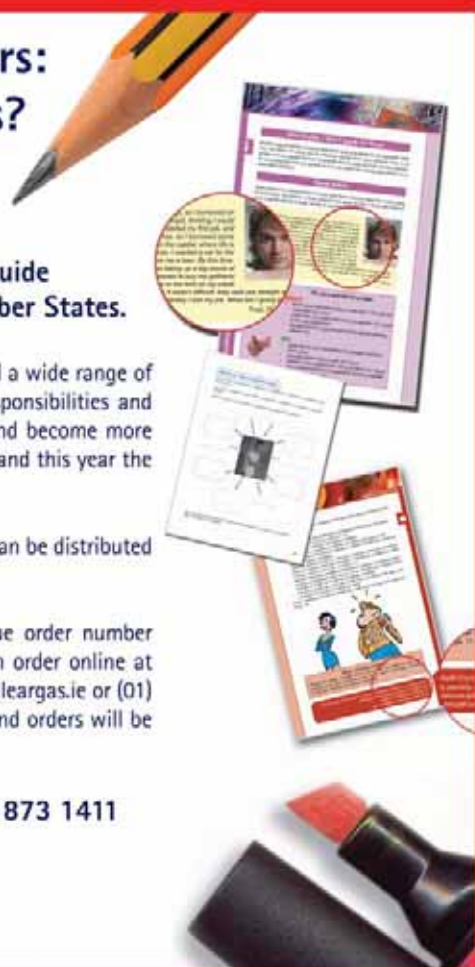
The Europa Diary is a unique and interactive resource, that helps young people understand a wide range of consumer rights and environmental issues including managing their finances, public responsibilities and personal awareness. It aims to help students make independent and informed choices and become more resourceful European citizens. All content is reviewed for relevance to students in Ireland and this year the content is in both Irish and English.

Schools will receive the diaries before the end of the 2006-2007 school year so that they can be distributed to students in September 2007.

Last term all post-primary schools received news about the Europa Diary and a unique order number that allows teachers to order free diaries for all the TY students in their school. You can order online at [www.generation-europe.org](http://www.generation-europe.org). If you don't have an order number, contact Léargas at [diary@leargas.ie](mailto:diary@leargas.ie) or (01) 873 1411. You may also order from Léargas, by fax or post. Stocks are limited, however, and orders will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis.

You can find more information here: [www.leargas.ie/diary](http://www.leargas.ie/diary) or call (01) 873 1411

 **léargas**



# Has the Minister delivered?

A teacher sits in the most important political post for education in Ireland – Minister for Education and Science. **GEMMA TUFFY** interviewed the Minister for ASTIR.



Mary Hanafin, Minister for Education and Science.

Minister for Education and Science Mary Hanafin is passionate and compelling when she talks about teaching. But when asked about practicalities such as investment in education, it is her political communication skills that come into play.

On educational and curriculum issues she displays uncompromising conviction: "I absolutely reject incorporating Transition Year into the Senior Cycle". "I'm absolutely convinced of the importance of keeping Irish as a compulsory subject". "[College entry] league tables discourage schools from recognising the broader skills and talents of students and from investing time in individual students".

The Minister is keen to proclaim her appreciation of teachers' work but says second level teachers need to be more positive about themselves: "At the ASTI conference I said something about people valuing the role of the second level teacher and there was a moan from one end of the hall. Teachers are doing a good job, but if they are not confident and positive about what they do, society won't be positive about them either." But will the Minister demonstrate her appreciation of teachers by significantly improving funding and resources for second level schools and teachers? An OECD league table on investment per second level student shows Ireland coming 21st out of 30 countries. The Minister responds by

reciting some well-rehearsed figures: an increase of €18 in the capitation grant this year; a further €5 for support services; another €25 for voluntary secondary schools; €40 million for technology subjects alone; €825 million annual spend on special education; and an additional €742 million across all levels of education this year – "that's real investment you know". When asked specifically, can we expect Ireland to perform better the next time this league table is published? the Minister jokes: "I don't believe in league tables". Finally she equivocates: "I would certainly be committed, obviously, to increasing expenditure on our schools".

*What did you enjoy about teaching and what did you find difficult?*  
"I loved the classroom. I loved the interaction with students. I loved the variety of every day; the fact that you could be doing something with first years one minute and doing something completely different with Leaving Certs the next. I particularly liked the extra curricular activities. My school – Sion Hill – were good at those. We did everything from the Gael Linn debates to musicals, to fashion shows. There is some very incriminating evidence of me out there in fashion shows which someday someone could use against me! But that was all part of the fun. I was Transition Year Co-ordinator at the time I was elected and had been for the previous four or

five years and I loved that. I thought it gave great scope and great flexibility for me as a teacher, an opportunity to use other skills. I hated homework and I hated corrections. I taught Irish and History and quite often had honours History and honours Irish, so there were lots of corrections."

*"I loved the classroom. I loved the interaction with students. I loved the variety of every day...I hated homework and I hated corrections. I taught Irish and History and quite often had honours History and honours Irish, so there were lots of corrections."*

*Are teachers and schools under too much pressure to solve all of society's ills?*

"There is a general view in society that schools can solve all problems. Whether it's teen pregnancies, drugs, alcohol, road safety, whatever the problem is, schools are expected to solve it. Schools do have a role because we have a huge influence on young people and we have a huge influence on their lives and the values they have. That's why the broad curriculum is something that I think is hugely important. Subjects like SPHE, initiatives like tutor systems mean that we are not just focussing all the time on the academic. But society must recognise that while schools can certainly play a role, they cannot tackle social issues in isolation."

*Class size is a huge issue among ASTI members. What do you say to teachers who are teaching classes with 28 or 30 14 year olds?*

"I can say that there is a teacher for every 13 students in a second level school."

*But there isn't really, because that's counting guidance counsellors, principals. . . .*

"No there is, no there is. Don't think that the guidance counsellor doesn't play a hugely important role in dealing with issues in a school. Of course the principal is included because the principal is a key person in the school. And because of the range of subjects that are offered, you might have 10 people doing Physics or you might have 15 doing Chemistry, or you might decide to put all of the honours students in one class and pass into another and then one class is smaller than the other. It's not possible to be prescriptive. It's a school management issue. The schools are given an allocation and the schools decide what they want to offer. I remember a



*Mary Hanafin, Minister for Education and Science and Gemma Tuffy, Media & Communications Officer, ASTI.*

student saying to me, 'I've 25 in my English, but two in Spanish'. So it can balance out. But there is one teacher for every 13 students."

*So you have no plans to bring down large classes?*

"But you see we don't allocate according to individual subjects. At the moment there is one teacher to 13. Over the next few years priorities will have to be in the special needs area. So obviously there will be resources here. But I think one to 13 is a fair ratio at the moment."

*What specific resources are being put in place to help second level schools implement the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act, and in particular Individual Education Plans?*

"I think that schools with children with special needs can see exactly what resources are going in. I don't think teachers need fear too much from the EPSEN Act, because what it's basically talking about regarding Individual Education Plans is good practice – which is what an awful lot of teachers are doing anyway. So, for most students what you're doing is directing them towards their Junior Cert or Leaving Cert – that's the end game. For a child with special needs, you're directing them towards their own personal outcomes. Most teachers dealing with children with special needs are already doing this."





Mary Hanafin taught Irish and History at Dominican College, Sion Hill, Dublin until she was elected as a TD for Dun Laoghaire in 1997. She was re-elected in 2002. Her previous Government portfolios include Government Chief Whip, Minister of State with Responsibility for the

Minister Hanafin attended a recent Stillorgan Branch Retirement Function. The Minister, a former member of the Stillorgan Branch, is pictured with: front row, from left - John Noonan, Oatlands College, Stillorgan; Bernard O'Reilly, St. Benildus College, Stillorgan; Marie Golden, St. Raphaela's Secondary School, Stillorgan; and Tony O'Keefe, St. Benildus College, Stillorgan. Back row, from left: John White, ASTI General Secretary; Kevin Gavin, St. Benildus College, Stillorgan; Pat Colgan, St. Benildus College, Stillorgan; Joe McDonagh, St. Benildus College, Stillorgan; and Niall Harkin, Willow Park School, Blackrock.

Information Society and Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children. She was appointed Minister for Education and Science on September 29, 2004. A former ASTI member, Mary Hanafin served as a school steward in Sion Hill.

Resources for special needs education have increased and will continue to expand over the next couple of years because it's only now that we are starting to see the children coming through from primary schools into second level."

*Is there any plan to appoint a special needs co-ordinator post in schools?*

"Well schools should use the posts they already have to do that. I also think there is a crucial need for schools to look at the posts that people are given and the responsibilities that they are given in order to support middle management in the school. There is nothing to stop them re-organising the posts they have within the school if they feel it's necessary."

*"I don't think teachers need fear too much from the EPSEN Act, because what it's basically talking about regarding Individual Education Plans is good practice – which is what an awful lot of teachers are doing anyway."*

*Are schools which are designated disadvantaged, but not included in the DEIS programme going to lose supports?*

"We wrote to all the schools and said that they could maintain what they had for the year and they will continue to receive support in line with their level of disadvantage and that's what we are working out at the moment. No school has been told by anybody in the Department that they are losing anything.

"What was [previously] being said in relation to disadvantage schemes is that they were far too scattered and people weren't able to get the benefit from them. . . . There are schools that were disadvantaged that are not anymore and there are schools that never were disadvantaged that are right now. We absolutely have to target the right schools. But I do recognise that there are schools which might not have the same level of disadvantage and they will continue to get supports."

*Do you have any plans to appoint laboratory technicians to assist science teachers in their work?*

"No, certainly not at the moment. Any teachers teaching a practical subject could say we want a technician and it's just not feasible at the moment." *But Junior Cycle Science teachers say their workload has changed and expanded since the introduction of the new science curriculum.* Yes, but it's still Junior Cert science, they are still teaching 22 hours, so it's not as if they are being expected do a huge amount more outside of that. But we will continue to invest in the new science labs and equipment. There has been a lot of investment, last year and this year in the summer works, and quite rightly. I think it makes a difference if you have the facilities to be able to back up what you are doing."

*After your period in education, do you think teachers will say that you supported them in their work?*

"I hope they will because I think it's really important for a profession to feel they are being supported by the Minister of the day. I hope they will see that I supported them, not just vocally, but in recognising the issues that were important to them; issues like student behaviour and funding which, particularly this year, has been increased substantially. And equally I hope they will recognise that when we are talking about introducing change, that it's in the interest of schools and the teaching profession."



Gemma Tuffy,  
Media and Communications Officer.

Gemma Tuffy met the Minister for Education and Science in November 2006.

# Contracts won

The ASTI has recently won Contracts of Indefinite Duration for privately-paid teachers. **PAT KING**, Assistant General Secretary, who was involved, outlines the case which took place recently.

In an important recent landmark decision for schools, a Rights Commissioner ordered that two teachers who were privately paid by their school should be awarded Contracts of Indefinite Duration (CIDs). The two teachers, and a third teacher who was also privately paid by the school, were also awarded €2,000 due to the school's failure to provide them with written objective grounds for not offering them permanent contracts.

## School and Department pay issues

The three teachers at the school in the west of Ireland who took this case have been praised by the ASTI General Secretary, John White, for helping to set an important precedent for their colleagues in other schools. They had each been continuously employed in the school for the past seven years. Part of each of their teaching hours were funded by the Department of Education throughout that period. The remainder of their teaching hours had been directly funded by their school. In other words, they had two paymasters.

In spring this year, along with hundreds of other fixed-term teachers nationwide, they were awarded CIDs for their Department-paid hours, thus attaining permanent status in the school. However this permanency did not extend to their school-paid hours. They approached their school authorities requesting that the CID should also be applied to their school-paid hours. The school believed that the requirement to award CIDs did not extend to school-paid teaching and the request was refused.

Following ASTI advice, the three teachers appealed the school's decision both to the Internal Adjudication Process for Schools and to the Rights Commissioner Service of the Labour Relations Commission. As expected, the Internal Adjudicator advised the teachers that as they were privately paid and not paid by the Department for the hours concerned, he could not process their claim for a school-paid CID. It therefore emerged that their decision to also lodge a claim with the Rights Commissioner Service, within the required six-month period, was of great importance.

*"The Hearing lasted for several hours and was conducted by all sides in a respectful and fair fashion."*

## The Hearing

The Rights Commissioner Hearing took place in Days Hotel, Galway on September 13. The school management was represented by IBEC and the JMB. The teachers were represented by myself, Pat King. The school side argued that the teachers' hours were dependent on concessions from the Department, that there would be no long-term need for the school-paid hours and that subject needs at the school were changing. In response the ASTI argued that the

demands of the Protection of Employees (Fixed Term) Act, 2003 applied equally to school-paid or Department-paid hours. Two of the three teachers had been continuously paid by the school for up to six years. (It emerged that the third teacher did not have the requisite unbroken school-paid service and could not, therefore, qualify for a school-paid CID). The ASTI also pointed out that none of the teachers had received written objective justification for the refusal to offer permanency rather than another fixed-term contract. The Hearing lasted for several hours and was conducted by all sides in a respectful and fair fashion.

*"Arising from this breach of the Act, each of the three teachers was also awarded compensation of €2,000 to be paid by the school."*

## The judgement

On October 17 the Rights Commissioner issued her determination to all sides. She stated that each teacher had two separate and distinct contracts. (They had been awarded CIDs for the Department-paid contract). She concluded that there was no written objective reason for the failure by the school to provide a CID for the school-paid hours of the two teachers who had given continuous service. The teachers were therefore "entitled to draw the inference that they were in fact on Contracts of Indefinite Duration" both for their school-paid and their Department-paid hours.

In a further interesting determination the Rights Commissioner concluded that the school had also breached Section 8 of the Act in that it had failed to provide the teachers concerned with written statements of contract. Arising from this breach of the Act, each of the three teachers was also awarded compensation of €2,000 to be paid by the school.



Pat King,  
Assistant General Secretary,  
Industrial Relations.

# League tables damaging education



*Are we cherishing all our children equally?*

School league tables based on entrance rates to certain third level institutions are damaging to the education service, writes **JOHN WHITE**. We must never cease to reiterate that those who promote such tables are doing a great disservice to education.

It is said that the collapse of the Soviet Union was inevitable because of the invention of the fax machine. In other words, information is the lifeblood of a democratic society and, in that context, there will be a demand for the fullest information about schools. However, it is essential for the well-being of education in our country that highly inappropriate inferences are not drawn from league tables which show the number of pupils who enter universities from schools. I believe it is the responsibility of newspapers which publish such tables to make it clear what can and cannot be validly concluded from such tables. As educators we must never cease to reiterate that those who promote such league tables are doing a great disservice to education.

### Damaging to education

Firstly (and fundamentally), it is improper and damaging to the education service to conclude that because a high number of pupils from a grind school goes to a particular university, this means that pupils of the same academic ability and from the same socio-economic background increase their chances of attending university if they attend such a grind school. There is not a scintilla of evidence to support such a claim but this is the distinct impression created by stories on front pages which announce that

such and such a grind school tops the table. For anyone to draw the conclusion that grind schools offer a superior service is spurious, unwarranted and damaging to the education service. All of the research evidence is that highly motivated pupils from affluent socio-economic backgrounds have a distinct advantage regardless of the school they attend. The best schools are those which are attended by the full ability range from all sectors of society.

*“For anyone to draw the conclusion that grind schools offer a superior service is spurious, unwarranted and damaging to the education service.”*

Secondly, it is axiomatic that any valid comparison must compare like with like. Such tables do not state whether a pupil is a repeat pupil, as many will be in grind schools, nor do they state whether a pupil has done the Transition Year, which research shows increases by 46 points the average number of CAO points achieved by pupils. Even more significantly, it is the policy of this State that pupils with special needs or disabilities should be integrated into mainstream education. League tables of university entrants which praise those coming at the top of such tables are clearly stating that pupils with special needs are less important and schools which cater for them are not somehow “as good” as schools which do not cater for them. Is this the kind of society we want to create?

Thirdly, league tables giving raw lists of numbers attending university do not take account of the numbers sitting the Leaving Certificate in any particular institution. Thus, a school with 150 pupils sitting the Leaving





Certificate is likely to have more entrants than a school with 30 pupils doing the examination. Furthermore, every study of third level entrance clearly tells us that location is a significant factor for students when it comes to deciding which third level institution they would like to attend. If the university is situated in south County Dublin, as UCD is, what possible significance can be attached to the fact that large schools situated on the southside send many pupils to UCD?

*“League tables of university entrants which praise those coming at the top of such tables are clearly stating that pupils with special needs are less important and schools which cater for them are not somehow “as good” as schools which do not cater for them. Is this the kind of society we want to create?”*

#### Information must be 'unpacked'

What I am illustrating is that all information is not innocent; it must be 'unpacked' and, therefore, the publication of such tables, paradoxically, without such unpacking, misleads and distorts. In recent years the OECD has been undertaking research on the performance of second-level students in 40 countries worldwide. Since embarking on this research the OECD has stated on a number of occasions that parents in Ireland can rely on "high and consistent standards across all types of second-level schools".

Such an endorsement of our second level schools system can never be reflected in something as crude as a college-entry table. Jan Fige, the European Commissioner for Education, recently stated that "inequities in education and training have huge hidden costs "...if we ignore the social dimension of education and training, we risk incurring huge corrective costs later on"... "equity and quality are not mutually exclusive objectives". Thus for newspapers to state that the ASTI's opposition to league tables is out of narrow self-interest flies in the face of the facts. However precarious it may be in the current environment, we have always placed the dignity of each pupil at the heart of the education system. Valuing only the so-called top schools as presented by league tables will have long-term consequences for our society and, indeed, for our economy, as the European Commissioner for Education has stated. Such tables should come with an education health warning: "league tables damage the education of our pupils".



*John White,  
ASTI General Secretary.*

# The Teaching Council

SUSIE HALL reflects on the role of the Teaching Council and the impact it will have on the teaching profession.



*The teaching profession now has its own professional council, similar to the medical, legal and veterinary professions, amongst others.*

The ASTI first called for the establishment of a Teaching Council in 1973. The General Teaching Council of Scotland, the first professional council for teaching in the UK, had been established in 1965. In November 1997 the then Minister for Education, Micheál Martin set up a Steering Committee on the Establishment of a Teaching Council, which published its report in June 1998. After what must surely count as the longest gestation period in

education in this country, the Teaching Council was finally launched by the Minister for Education, Mary Hanafin, in March 2005 at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham. One year later, on March 28, 2006, in the Mansion House, Dublin, she announced the establishment of the Teaching Council as a Statutory Body. This was an event of enormous significance for the teaching profession and was welcomed as such by all the partners in

## Broad remit

So what will the remit of the Teaching Council be? The Teaching Council will exercise the following functions:

- establish and maintain a register of all teachers and any teacher who wishes to practise will have to be registered;
- decide and set down the qualifications, standards of education, training and fitness to teach, which satisfy the conditions for registration;
- advise the Minister for Education and Science on the minimum standards of educational attainment required for entry to initial teacher education programmes;
- in consultation with the institutions concerned, accredit and keep under regular review, for satisfying registration requirements, all programmes of teacher education;
- set down procedures and criteria for the probation and full recognition of new entrants to the teaching profession;
- advise and make recommendations on the induction of newly qualified teachers into the profession;
- draw up codes of professional practice and conduct for teachers. (Draft codes have already been drawn up and are accessible on [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie));
- investigate and where appropriate apply sanctions in relation to serious professional misconduct or fitness to practice of any member. (It is important here to point out that it will not take over any of the responsibilities of the employer and will only be involved after all the local procedures have been exhausted);
- set down a framework for the in-career professional development of teachers and establish a mechanism, including accreditation, for its implementation;
- promote teaching as a profession through the organisation of lectures and conferences, and the publication of newsletters, research reports and articles on educational issues;
- undertake or commission research on educational issues, relevant to the work of the Council and, as it deems appropriate, publish such research;
- present the views of the teaching profession on educational issues and establish procedures for communicating with members, the public and organisations involved in education;
- advise the Minister for Education and Science on teacher supply and demand; and
- enhance the public image and status of the profession and promote teaching as a career.



education. The Teaching Council is an autonomous, statutory, self-regulating body. At long last teachers have a direct involvement in the regulation, planning and direction of the most significant areas of their own professional lives. The fact that, of the 37 seats on the Council, 22 are reserved for practising teachers (and some of the other members are also practising teachers) ensures that in all its deliberations the Council is aware of the realities on the ground, as they directly affect teachers.

*“This was an event of enormous significance for the teaching profession and was welcomed as such by all the partners in education.”*

The ASTI has seven members on the Council, two of whom were nominated and five of whom were elected. It is represented on all three Statutory and all three Standing Committees of the Council. There is a Teaching Council Advisory Committee, composed of all ASTI members on the Council, which meets to discuss policy and strategy and also advises the ASTI on issues relating to the Teaching Council. Joint meetings of all teacher union members of the Council are held three times a year. The ASTI Standing Committee receives reports on the Teaching Council.

#### **Champions of the profession**

For years I have been conscious of the clear need for a voice of truth to counterbalance the often disproportionately negative portrayals of the teaching profession in the media. We need to celebrate publicly all that is positive and wonderful about what we do as teachers. Irish teachers have had, and continue to have, a major influence on our society. We

have been hugely significant in creating the well educated and confident workforce which has generated the unprecedented economic progress we currently enjoy.

As Deputy Chairperson of the Teaching Council, I am totally committed to the Council's role in championing the profession. The Teaching Council Act, 2001 places great trust and confidence in the teaching profession, and in the Teaching Council to advocate the teaching profession, and the Council will not be found wanting in fulfilling that role. We will actively promote teaching as a profession so that its positive contribution to society can be widely and publicly recognised, and teaching can be accorded a place of honour in the public consciousness. In doing so, we will be seeking to maintain the high calibre of entrants into the profession and to promote teaching as an attractive career option, particularly for men.

These are exciting times for the teaching profession and I feel very privileged to have been elected to represent teachers on the first Teaching Council.



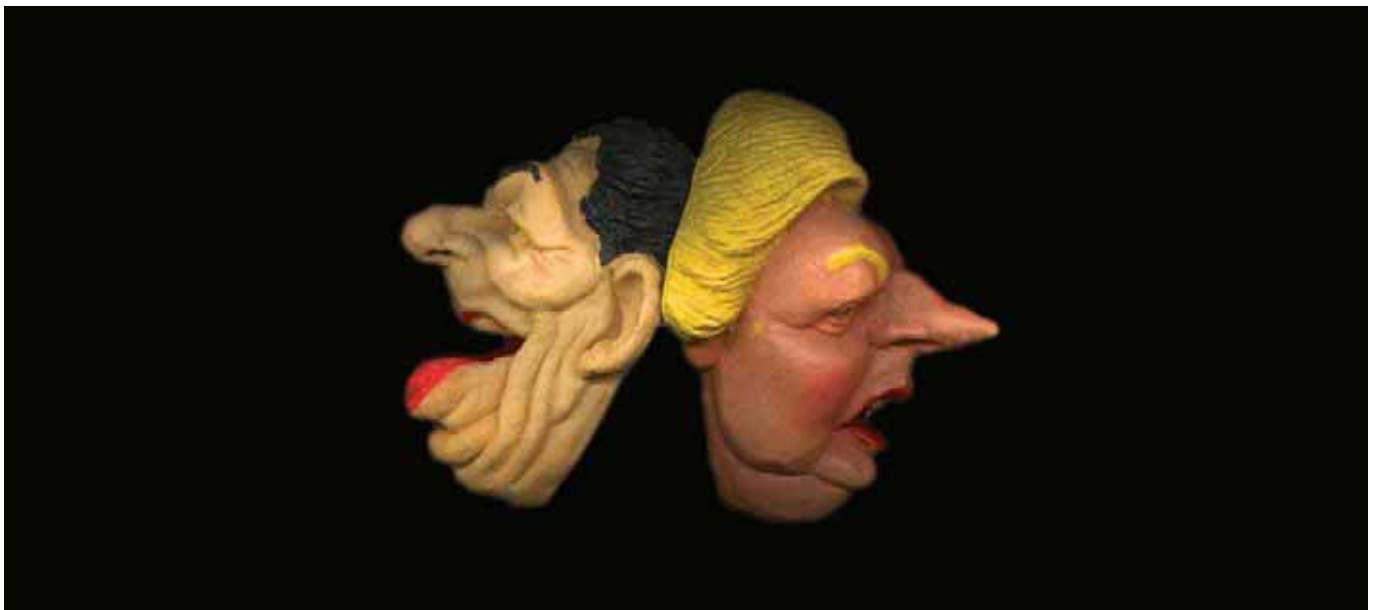
*Susie Hall,  
former President.*

Susie Hall is Deputy Chairperson of the Teaching Council and a former President of ASTI. She teaches at Malahide Community School.



# Managerialism in teaching: more for less

JIM O'BRIEN reveals the real agenda underlying the new managerialism approach to education.



*Spitting Image: Jim O'Brien is spitting fire over the real agenda underpinning new managerialism which was championed by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher.*

So you are a classroom teacher and your workload has increased dramatically with new syllabi, mandatory experiments, project and course work, increasing levels of indiscipline, etc. Maybe you are a holder of a post of responsibility who has all the above, plus your expanding post work. Or perhaps you are the Deputy Principal or Principal who is snowed under a blizzard of policy statements, circulars, vetting procedures, supervision and substitution returns, discipline procedures, etc. You wonder what has happened to the job you once had. Well wonder no more because you, my friend, have been hit by new managerialism.

## 'More for less'

If like me you never heard of old managerialism – not to mention the new version – then read on. Old managerialism, or scientific management, began in the coalfields of Pennsylvania in the early 1900s. An American engineer called Frederick Winslow Taylor introduced a management system to the mines by examining the miners' work methods, changing them to what he called 'best practices' and introducing machinery where possible to improve efficiency and productivity. In order to make the changes, Taylor advised employers that they required 'disciplined' workforces who would comply with the new work practices and, to that end, he called for the abolition of trade unions. All fine and well, you may say but what has that got to do with my teaching work?

Let us fast forward to the 1980s. The world is in recession, inflation is spiralling out of control and oil prices have quadrupled over eight years. Neo-liberal or new-right governments have come to power in the UK and the USA. Right leaning economists and management consultants advised the Thatcher and Reagan governments to cut public service spending by reforming it and making it more efficient and more productive. They called the reforms new managerialism but it was commonly known in Britain as 'more for less'. This immediately brought government and unions into conflict and, in true Taylolean style, the Thatcher government set about weakening and defeating the trade unions.

In British education new managerialism steamrolled over unions, schools and teachers alike. Teachers were now set productivity targets. Performance indicators were put in place. Everything that moved in a school had to be documented and measured and a paper trail created. An external inspection system was put in place to monitor teachers' work. School heads were given sweeping powers of hiring and firing and holding annual appraisals of teachers' work. Results were published to create league tables of schools.

New managerialism became the *bête noire* of the teaching profession. It drove tens of thousands of teachers out of the profession through early retirement, stress and burn out. Even today, 20 years later, the UK Centre for Education and Employment Research reports that 18% of new teachers

leave the profession within three years. Many new graduates are given more casualised contracts, at half the cost to the school budget, a real example of more for less.

*"...Irish teachers and students are doing quite brilliantly and regularly outscoring their OECD counterparts on literacy and other skills tests."*

#### The Irish position

So how much of this new system has been implemented in Ireland? Well, if managerialism were to be measured on a scale of one to 10 then England is at the high end, probably at point seven or eight. Ireland would be at about point three and rising. All the fundamentals of new managerialism are in place here. We have strategic planning initiatives, target setting, mission statements, internal reviews, paper trails and record keeping and an external inspection system to monitor teachers' work. We have the policies and language of industry in our schools thanks to recent national wage agreements and Benchmarking. So what else could happen the job you once had? League tables could be published. What harm you say. In England head teachers described the publication of league tables as "damaging to education and particularly to disadvantaged schools". With an educational health warning such as that, they could hardly be good for you. In Ireland newspapers are already creating half-baked tables from entries to colleges. League tables pit school against school, and teacher against teacher, and are heavily loaded in favour of fee-paying schools and grind schools. It's a pretty uneven competition especially since fee-paying schools and grind schools do not prioritise the provision of an inclusive and holistic education for all students including those with special needs, disadvantaged students or immigrant students. The upshot of all this is that parents who have the opportunity and the money are being encouraged to move their children to fee-paying and grind schools.

*"Young teachers have the most to lose from the new system so they should consider getting involved in their local ASTI branch."*

#### Real motives

One may wonder why the Irish education system is being changed in this way. Are we falling behind other EU countries? Are Irish teachers lazy compared to their OECD counterparts? The answer is no, none of these. In fact, considering investment in education here, Irish teachers and students are doing quite brilliantly and regularly outscoring their OECD counterparts on literacy and other skills tests. So why change a winning formula? Well the answer to that lies buried within the ulterior motives of new managerialism. On the face of it new managerialism promises efficiency, productivity and accountability but its real aims are to create a quasi-market in education in which schools are compared by league tables and the better-off parents vote with their feet and abandon public sector education. The more parents you can persuade to do this, the more you can cut spending in public sector education and a two-tier education system is created. In the last five years, spending in education has fallen from 4.7% of our GDP to 4.3% of GDP. Grind schools are thriving while public sector schools struggle to cope. It is hardly what Donagh O' Malley envisaged in 1968 when he introduced free education for all.

What else could happen? Well that depends on the kind of governments we elect in the next 10 or 15 years. In England it has taken 20 years to implement the aspects of new managerialism that are currently in place. Is there anything Irish teachers should be doing to combat the growth of managerialism? For what it is worth, my own opinion is that all three teacher unions should amalgamate as soon as possible. The policy issues that divide us pale into insignificance beside rampant managerialism. Individually, teachers should educate themselves about new managerialism. Google "managerialism" or "new managerialism". Read *The Privatisation of State Education* by C. Green (2005). Forewarned is forearmed and it helps to know your enemy. Young teachers have the most to lose from the new system so they should consider getting involved in their local ASTI branch. For them, leaving the battle to their more senior and possibly close to retiring colleagues is no longer an option.



*Jim O'Brien,  
Standing Committee member.*

*Jim O'Brien teaches Geography,  
English and History at St. Ciaran's  
Community School, Kells, Co Meath.  
He is the Standing Committee  
representative for the Longford,  
Tullamore, Navan, Athlone and  
Mullingar ASTI branches.*

# The classroom of the future



The teacher's voice on education is vital for meaningful national policy formation. **MOIRA LEYDON** explains how the ASTI Education Committee provides that voice and outlines the Committee's policy on information and communications technology.

The provision of laptops to second level teachers along with appropriate training and ongoing support is paramount to the mainstreaming of information and communications technology (ICT) in schools, according to the ASTI Education Committee.

The Education Committee has prepared a policy paper on ICT in education as part of a Department of Education and Science review of spending on ICT. At present, the average ICT expenditure per student in Ireland is €40 per annum, compared to €110 in the UK. In its submission to the Department, the Education Committee presented the following findings from an ICT census carried out in 2005 by the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE):

- the ratio of computers to students is one to seven, with significant differences in ratios between school sectors. The voluntary secondary sector, in which the majority of second level students are educated, has a lower ratio of computers to students than the other two sectors;
- one-fifth of computers are more than six years old;
- only four per cent of computers are in classrooms; 58 per cent are located in dedicated computer rooms;
- eighty-nine per cent of schools stated that accessing technical support and maintenance is a "high priority" while only 24 per cent of schools have a service contract with an IT contractor; and
- schools spend an annual average of €11,583 of their own funds on ICT. (full text of the census is available on [www.ncte.ie](http://www.ncte.ie)).

The Education Committee also highlighted Ireland's poor international rating when it comes to investing in ICT for education. With the exception of the allocation of €20 million in 2003 to complete in-school networking, there has been no additional funding for ICT in schools. This situation is unacceptable given the emphasis in Government announcements on creating the knowledge economy. The ASTI Education Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Science develop a programme for ICT funding in schools in the form of a grant per student of €130 per annum. This funding would aim to:

- improve the ratio of computers to students to the EU average of one to five;
- ensure the availability of computers in all classrooms;
- replace all computers over four years old;
- extend the bandwidth available to schools;
- provide funding for technical support and ICT maintenance needs in schools; and
- provide funding for software packages and licenses in schools.

The Education Committee's policy document is critical of the Department of Education and Science for failing to develop a policy for ICT in schools. The first and last policy statement in this area was contained in the 1999 Departmental Plan "IT2000". Since then, the emphasis has been on building up the ICT infrastructure in schools with





**Education Committee.** Back row: Eileen Scanlon, Galway; Tommy Francis, Iar Thuaisceart; Christina Henehan, West Mayo; and Noel Buckley, Tipperary. Front row: Catriona McGrath, Cork South; Jimmy Staunton, Sligo; Maire Ni Chiarba, Cork North; Moira Leydon, Assistant General Secretary, Education and Research; and Pat Deery, Monaghan.

no thought given to enabling teachers to integrate the new technologies into their teaching. Some teachers remain sceptical towards the use of ICT in the classroom because they feel students need training in traditional literacy and numeracy skills. If schools are not providing this training, the students may not receive it. The Education Committee believes ICT can be used to improve students' skills. However, the most efficient, effective and expeditious way of

enabling teachers to integrate ICT is to provide all teachers with laptops and appropriate training. Teachers must be allowed space and time to reflect on and make decisions about their own ICT development on an ongoing basis.

The full text of the Education Committee's ICT policy paper is available on the ASTI website [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie) in the Policy and Campaigns section.

## Busy agenda

The ASTI Education Committee is currently working on a number of other important issues for teachers. This work includes:

- monitoring the ongoing work of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), in particular developments in relation to Gaeilge and mathematics syllabi;
- developing proposals for sabbatical and paid education leave for teachers which would give teachers professional development opportunities similar to those of many other OECD countries; and
- examining a research paper analysing the UK system for the examination of coursework which looks at, amongst other things, guidelines for teachers on validating students' work and the problem of plagiarism.

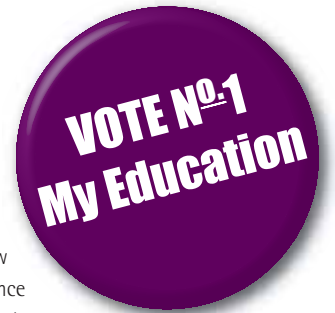
*The ASTI Education Committee is composed of nine elected members. The collective expertise and experience of these teachers enables the ASTI to present policy positions which reflect the reality of classroom life and the way schools operate.*



*Moira Leydon,  
Assistant General Secretary,  
Education and Research.*

# Your union needs you

The ASTI plans to make education a central issue in the next election. **DIARMAID de PAOR** outlines the plan for a campaign on investment in education, class size and special needs resources.



As you all know, 2007 is an election year - the time when politicians and their supporters will be looking for your votes. To capitalise on this situation, the ASTI is mounting a major campaign on the related issues of investment in education, class size and special educational needs. We are focussing on investment in education because Ireland is ranked 29th out of 30 OECD countries when it comes to annual expenditure per second level student relative to GDP. We are focussing on investment in education because it has been shown time and time again that a well-educated population is one of the pillars that support economic success and well-being. We are focussing on investment in education because our young people deserve the best equipped, best-resourced and best-funded schools that we can provide for them. And Ireland in 2007 should be able to provide the best in the world. We already have dedicated and highly professional teachers, so now let us support them to give our children the best education system we can.

*"We are focussing on investment in education because Ireland is ranked 29th out of 30 OECD countries when it comes to annual expenditure per second level student relative to GDP."*

We are focussing on class size because this is the root of so many of the difficulties that face teachers in the classroom. We all know that a disruptive teenager in a class of 20 is much more easily dealt with than in a class of 30. We all know that, in order to give the necessary attention to

a pupil with special educational needs, we need the space and time that only a reduced class size can provide. We all know that the quality of the educational experience of a student in a small class is much better than that of a student in a large class.

We are focussing on the issue of special educational needs because these students deserve the best. We welcome the mainstreaming of students with special educational needs but this cannot take place in any meaningful way unless the necessary resources are in place. It would be a grave disservice to these children to place them in schools without the proper supports - extra teachers, training for teachers, and smaller classes - to enable them to thrive.

### Professional research

To support our campaign we have commissioned research by Drury Research. This research will be in two parts. The first part will be a quantitative survey of class sizes and composition at Junior Certificate level. Size is important for the reasons outlined above. Composition is important because, however difficult it is to teach a class of 30 adolescents, if you add into the mix four students with special educational needs and another four who do not have a full grasp of the English language it becomes more difficult still.

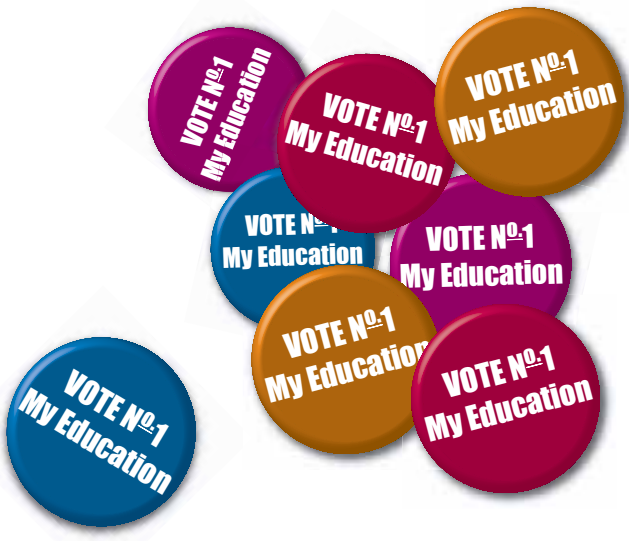
The second part will be more qualitative in nature and will ask all Maths and English teachers at Junior Certificate level about the effect of class size on the quality of education they are able to provide. We need this information in order to be able to illustrate the effect that class size has on the education of our young people.

### Building alliances

As part of our campaign, we intend to contact other groups who have an interest in the education of our young people. We have already agreed to work with the National Parents Council post primary (NPCpp) which represents parents throughout the country. We hope to get others on board such as special needs groups, those interested in the development of science in Ireland, other trade unions and all those who are concerned with the welfare and the development of children.

### Events

We intend to launch our campaign in the spring. We are planning to launch nationally but also to have a number of local events in order to make use of local media outlets and to put pressure on politicians at a local level. We will be looking for your support and help in organising these events.



*"Our aim is to make education a major issue in Election 2007."*

**Professional material**

When our research has been completed and the results analysed, we plan to produce high quality material for circulation to every teacher in the country. This material will help you when you are confronted by a canvasser on the doorstep, when you are talking to your friends about issues in the election and if and when you take it upon yourself to bring these issues directly to your local candidate. Our aim is to make education a major issue in Election 2007.

**What can you do?**

- In the first instance please co-operate with the survey. If you are asked to complete a questionnaire, please do so as promptly as possible. It should not take you too long and the information we gather will be very useful in our fight to improve the resourcing of our schools;
- when the election gets under way, make it your business to make education the central issue. Ask canvassers about their candidate's position on the issues. Write to the politicians in your area asking them to outline their views on investment in education, on class size, on the resources for students with special educational needs; and
- talk to your friends, especially those who are parents or grandparents and ask them what kind of education they want their children to have. Together we can make a difference.



*Diarmaid de Paor,  
ASTI Deputy General Secretary.*



# Irish Aid

Department of Foreign Affairs  
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha

**CALL FOR TENDERS**  
for the Production of

**Development Education Teachers' Booklets**

for Senior Cycle Specific Subjects based on the  
Joint Irish Aid/NCCA 'A Study of the Opportunities for  
Development Education at Senior Cycle' Report

Irish Aid is the Irish government's programme of assistance to developing countries, which is administered by the Department of Foreign Affairs. Irish Aid provides support for development education which is seen as having a crucial role in enlarging the Irish public's understanding of development issues and the underlying causes of poverty and underdevelopment in the world.

Irish Aid invites tenders from interested parties for the development and production of development education teachers' booklets for the following subjects at senior cycle.

- ▶ English
- ▶ Biology
- ▶ Art
- ▶ Modern languages
- ▶ Geography

The production of these five resources, targeted at second level teachers, trainee teachers, teacher educators and development education practitioners, should be visually attractive, include sample lesson plans based on active learning and learner-centred approaches appropriate to the age group and contain a comprehensive resource list.

It is proposed that the development of the five booklets be based on the relevant subject sections within the Joint Irish Aid/NCCA *A Study of the Opportunities for Development Education at Senior Cycle* report.

Copies of *A Study of the Opportunities for Development Education at Senior Cycle* report are available from the Irish Aid website [www.irishaid.gov.ie](http://www.irishaid.gov.ie) Hard copies are also available on request.

The Terms of Reference for this tender are available from [sean.creaney@dfa.ie](mailto:sean.creaney@dfa.ie)

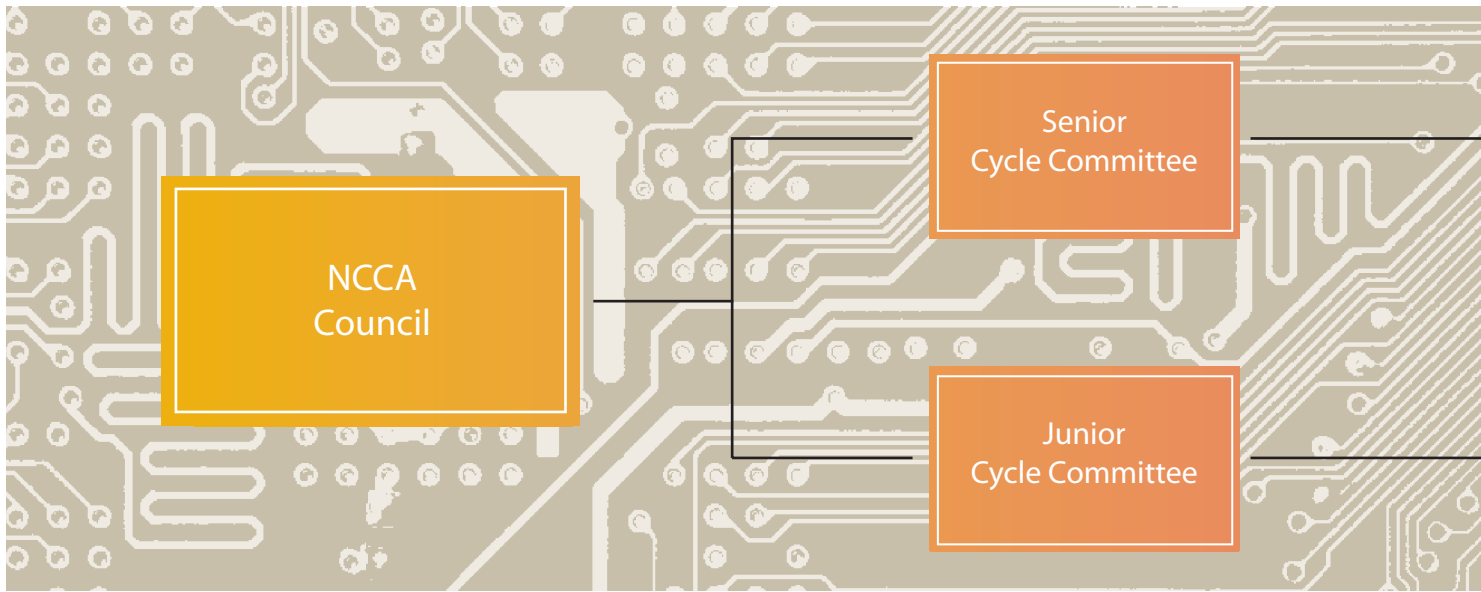
**Tenders for the production of individual or a number of subject specific booklets will be considered.**

The deadline for receipt of tenders is  
**5 pm Friday, 23 February 2007.**



# Changing the curriculum

SHEILA PARSONS explains the structure and work of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.



In March 2006, a new National Council for Curriculum and Assessment was appointed by the Minister for Education and Science for the term of office, 2006–2009. Dr. Tom Collins, NUI, Maynooth was appointed Chair. The Council advises the Minister on curriculum and assessment. Sheila Parsons and Michael Freeley are the ASTI nominees.

## Overview

NCCA's work is done through committee structures. The educational partners and other associated bodies nominate representatives to NCCA committees. Education Officers are appointed and their research directs the work of the committees.

There are Subject Course Committees for all Junior and Leaving Certificate subjects. Boards of Studies are in operation for areas of the curriculum for example Science, Languages, Humanities and others. Course Committees' deliberations are referred to these boards which have fewer teacher members than Course Committees and less input from classroom teachers. Two new committees, a Short Course Committee and a Transition Unit Committee, were formed recently to develop units of curriculum of 90 hours and 45 hours teaching duration, respectively. A full subject is envisaged as an 180 hour unit. The framework for the introduction of Short Courses into a school's curriculum, which would inevitably provoke structural changes, remains undefined.

*A Junior Cycle and a Senior Cycle Committee operate at the level subordinate to the Council.*

*Council is the governing body of the NCCA.*

The Schools' Network is a pilot scheme for development, research and the evaluation of initiatives at local level. These schools are clustered in Dublin, Kildare and Kerry. A representative geographical spread, when put in place, will allow more schools engage in such work. There is an executive staff

employed by the NCCA. Education officers have a defined function in producing draft documents on areas where change or development is being considered. Occasionally, research is commissioned. Any change to an effective, well-established system requires much deliberation, therefore comprehensive consultation at committee level followed by wider consultation with the public is a central working mode of the NCCA. Social, cultural, economic and political imperatives influence and/or determine outcomes.

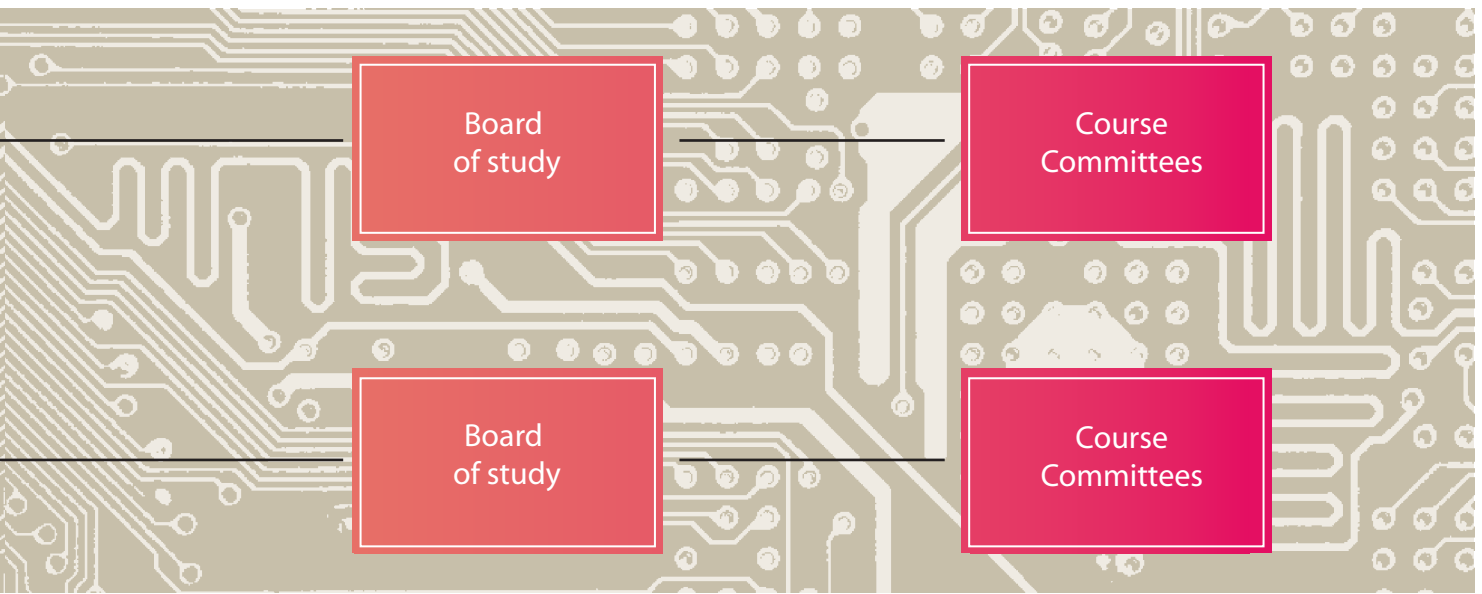
*"... teachers have implemented a gargantuan task of modernisation, having received neither financial reward at salary level nor resources at school level."*

## Current areas of development in the curriculum

Developing a framework for the renewal of Mathematics and Gaelge is the NCCA's predominant concern at present. The NCCA is very actively engaged in consultations aimed at developing revised syllabi in both subjects. Efforts to develop pedagogical approaches affirmative of students' potential are ongoing. Teachers from schools within The Schools' Network are to pilot possible methodologies.

A draft document of a senior level syllabus in Social and Political Education has been prepared by the Education Officer and a consultative process, initially within the NCCA, is at its initial stages.

Of current interest to teachers is the development of a Short Course in Enterprise. Proposals for the renewal of the Classical Subjects are under consideration. Work to develop and produce standardised report cards at



Primary Level is at an advanced stage. Later, models of report cards for Post-Primary level will be developed. The NCCA is in the process also of conceptualising the curriculum as delivering five key skills/competencies for effective learning and teaching.

#### Inadequate resources

Since the introduction of the Junior Certificate in 1989, it occurs to me that most Leaving Certificate subjects have been revised and teachers have implemented a gargantuan task of modernisation, having received neither financial reward at salary level nor resources at school level. All teachers are painfully aware that until adequate resources are delivered to each school, unacceptable and unjust inequities are visited on our young people. Political will to achieve equal investment in each and every student, irrespective of location, is required. Only then will all the children reap the benefits of change.

*“Political will to achieve equal investment in each and every student, irrespective of location, is required.”*

Irish society and culture continues to change significantly each passing year. Official decisions with regard to the delivery of education have put pressure on our under-resourced schools. Guidelines for Intercultural Education were produced by the NCCA some years ago but resources for the implementation of initiatives in this area are awaited.

#### Investment

Investment-vision to introduce a class size of 20 in the post-primary

sector is required from our political leaders. That would allow pupils experience the child-centred methodologies envisaged by the NCCA. Teachers on all committees of the NCCA express the realities of learning and teaching experienced daily in our schools. Their expertise, insights, practical experience at delivery level and their commitment to promoting students' holistic welfare inspire their contributions to all NCCA working groups. Teachers are central to informing the NCCA process. All teachers have ready access to their representatives on these committees. Get engaged in the evolving educational debate so that your professional voice moulds the development of Ireland's education system.

Bi Linn

Sheila Parsons: 01-8491965 and 087 7669515

Michael Freeley, President: 01-6040160 or [president@asti.ie](mailto:president@asti.ie)

*For more information details for all ASTI NCCA representatives, please contact ASTI Library/Information: 01-6040170.*



Sheila Parsons,  
Immediate Past President.

Sheila Parsons is an ASTI representative on the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

## The long wait

**MARY CROWLEY** spent 20 years as a non-permanent teacher. She tells of her experience and explains how the ASTI has worked to improve the lot of non-permanent teachers.



On February 9, 2006, I received a Contract of Indefinite Duration. This was the culmination of 20 years of non-permanent employment and it meant essentially that for the first time in my working life, I knew in February that I had a job to return to September. I have worked in the same school for 20 consecutive years but my conditions of employment today bear no resemblance to when I started 20 years ago.

*“When I was pregnant I remember being afraid to tell anyone at work because I was afraid my condition might affect my employment prospects.”*

I began my teaching career as a part-time teacher with four and a half hours per week! I was paid by the school which was, in turn, reimbursed by the Department of Education for my services. However, as there were plenty of substitute hours available, I seldom if ever ended up with just my own hours. In fact, I can remember one year teaching 28 hours a week from September to December. The money was good as I was paid by the hour, though exactly how good I was never quite so sure as I was paid by cheque with no pay slip! Other adverse working conditions in those days included not being paid for attending parent-teacher meetings or staff meetings, no holiday pay, no entitlement to sick leave and no pay if the school was granted a half-day by a well-meaning bishop! In other words, the only remuneration which a part-time teacher received was for actual class-contact which varied frequently depending on what was going on in the school calendar.

Entitlements such as job-sharing and career breaks simply were not an option for non-permanent teachers. I remember feeling a sense of relief and gratitude when entitlements to maternity leave and parental leave were regularised in line with permanent teachers. When I was pregnant with my first child I remember being afraid to tell anyone at work (until I had no option) because I was fearful that my condition would affect my employment prospects. This is not a reflection on school management, rather, it is a reflection on the very real insecurity and vulnerability experienced by non-permanent teachers. Indeed, on that point, I would highly recommend continuous professional development for non-permanent teachers as a means of maintaining and enhancing one's self esteem.

### Critical advice

There have been many times during the last 20 years when I seriously considered resigning, or, more appropriately, not making myself available for work. On each occasion I



was strongly advised by the ASTI not to do so: "Instead of being Mary Crowley with 13 years service, you would be Mary Crowley with zero years service". This advice has turned out to be crucial in enabling me to maintain my seniority on the staff which I became entitled to in 2006 after 16 years of service. It also highlights one particular concern of non-permanent teachers which is that if a teacher's service has been spread between a number of different schools, there is no way of building up an entitlement to seniority irrespective of how long a person has been employed.

#### Legislative changes

In November 2001 I was elected to serve as a regional representative on the ASTI Non-Permanent Teachers' Advisory Committee. The role of this committee is to discuss and highlight issues of concern to non-permanent teachers. For me, membership of this committee (which it is currently my privilege to chair) has been both informative and rewarding. Access to, and dissemination of, information regarding rights and entitlements of non-permanent teachers is vital to enable people to make informed decisions regarding their options for employment. This has become very relevant in recent years with the passing of two important pieces of legislation.

*"...a part-time or temporary teacher cannot now be treated less favourably than a comparable full-time colleague in terms of pay, pensions, promotional posts and general conditions of employment."*

The Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act, 2001 was passed into law in December 2001. Under the terms of this Act, a part-time or temporary teacher cannot now be treated less favourably than a comparable full-time colleague in terms of pay, pensions, promotional posts and general conditions of employment. The ASTI has driven the implementation of this Act by taking, and winning a number of significant test cases. In July 2003, the Protection of Employees (Fixed Term Work) Act, 2003 was passed into law. Following intensive negotiations between the ASTI, the Department of Education and Science and the management bodies, a Transitional Agreement was published in October 2005. This agreement set out the terms for the introduction of Contracts of Indefinite Duration (CIDs) which have benefited hundreds of non-permanent teachers. However, it needs to be said that while many have been positively affected by these new measures, others have, ironically, been adversely affected. The pupil-teacher ratio has been far



*Carbery Branch organised a special meeting for part-time teachers. At the meeting were (from left): Maureen Dineen, Orla Minihaue and Gloria Helen, all from Mount St Michael Secondary School, Rosscarbery, Co. Cork.*

too high for far too long and it remains a stated objective of the ASTI to do all within its power to achieve a reduction.

#### Defending rights

The process of change is long and slow and can at times be very frustrating. However, a quite significant amount of progress has been achieved in recent years on foot of new legislation. The problems facing non-permanent teachers are unlikely to be solved in the short term. There will always be a need for substitute teachers to cover for others on approved leave of absence. It is very important that this Association continues to support and defend the rights of non-permanent teachers particularly those who are long-term in the system.



*Mary Crowley,  
Chairperson, Non-Permanent Teachers'  
Advisory Committee.*

*Mary Crowley teaches at St Mary's  
Secondary School, Macroom, Co. Cork.*

# Making our case



David Martin is the ASTI endorsed candidate for the University of Dublin (TCD) Panel. David teaches in Mount Temple Comprehensive in Dublin.



Bernadine O'Sullivan is the ASTI endorsed candidate for the NUI Seanad Eireann University Panel. Bernadine teaches in St Mary's School for the Deaf, Cabra, Dublin.

**BERNADINE O'SULLIVAN** explains why she is going to stand as a candidate for election to the Senate this summer – and why it is important for the teaching profession.

Some of you have asked me why I am interested in getting elected to the Seanad. This is my reply:

- Seanad Eireann is one of the two houses of the Oireachtas;
  - issues can be raised in the Seanad House of the Oireachtas by someone who is independent of the political parties;
  - a Senator can directly address and question a Minister;
  - a Senator can have a crucial input into the drafting of legislation; and
  - education issues can be raised at the highest political level.
- non-permanent staff: monies due to non-permanent staff must be paid immediately;
  - collegial atmosphere: managerialism and bureaucracy must not be allowed to erode this;
  - early retirement: the three strands must continue;
  - pensions: pension arrangements for new entrants to the profession since April 1, 2005 must be reversed;
  - pay: young teachers should be able to buy a home and not be priced out of the housing market;
  - affordable childcare; and
  - a fair and more equitable society.

**Your issues:**

All of the issues which teachers around the country raise with me could be greatly alleviated by a significant increase in funding for education.

- class size: a reduction in class size would reduce workload and help teachers deal with negative student behaviour;

*If you want your voice heard in the Senate please ensure you are registered to vote. NUI graduates can download a voter registration form by logging on to [www.nui.ie](http://www.nui.ie). I can be contacted at [bernadineosullivan@ireland.com](mailto:bernadineosullivan@ireland.com) or 087/9856322.*

## The European Schools



**Are you interested in a job in Europe?  
Would you like to teach in a European School?**

The European Schools are a system of nursery, primary and secondary schools which serve the needs of children whose parents are officials of the EU Commission, European Parliament and other official European Institutions.

The schools are located in Brussels (three schools), Luxembourg (two schools), Bergen (the Netherlands), Alicante (Spain), Culham (United Kingdom), Frankfurt, Karlsruhe and Munich (Germany), Mol (Belgium) and Varese (Italy).

Further details may be found on the website of the European Schools, [www.eurisc.org](http://www.eurisc.org)

Each year the Department of Education & Science arranges for the secondment of teachers from Ireland to fill positions in the European Schools. Advertisements for positions commencing 1 September 2007 will appear in the national press and on the website of the Department of Education and Science in late February/early March 2007.

If you would like to receive information on vacancies at that time, please e-mail your details to [elleen\\_mcguire@education.gov.ie](mailto:elleen_mcguire@education.gov.ie) or write to **Eileen McGuire, International Section, Department of Education and Science, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1.**




# That was then

A look back at the world of teaching in Ireland of 1976.



Equal pay for teachers regardless of marital status, a possible merger with the TUI, and the establishment of a Teaching Council were some of the issues for the ASTI in 1976.

While the Irish Government was finally moving to end pay discrimination based on gender, the ASTI was furious that unmarried men and unmarried women continued to earn less than their married counterparts.

This form of discrimination was affecting married and unmarried teachers as the following article from the September 1976 edition of ASTIR demonstrates: "An ASTI member has brought to the attention of Standing Committee two advertisements from newspapers seeking applications for incremental posts. In each case the advertisements were inserted by convent secondary schools and had requested "single" teachers. Standing Committee has agreed to write to the Conference of Convent Secondary Schools protesting that any kind of discrimination should be used in advertising appointments to teaching posts in convent schools."

## Union merger

Following a motion passed at ASTI Annual Convention in 1973, a joint ASTI/TUI committee continued to explore a possible merger between the two unions. The committee recommended that the unions table a motion to their 1977 annual conferences that "Conference accepts in principle the desirability of an amalgamation between the ASTI and the TUI on a basis to be agreed between the two organisations and endorsed by the membership."

In the April issue of ASTIR, the union issued a warning that "secondary teachers might use revolutionary tactics to secure the right to principalships in religious-run schools".

On the pay front the ASTI accepted the terms of the 1976 National Wage Agreement which was subsequently accepted by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. The Agreement allowed for a £3 to £5 salary increase over five months.

Michael Ward (Dublin) was elected Honorary Treasurer of the ASTI and would serve in the role for the next 26 years. MacCartan McCormack (Monaghan) was elected President.

## Grind schools

The ASTI drew up a policy on grinds institutions for the first time which stated that such institutions:

- exploit the fear of failure in examinations;
- may undermine the work of the regular class teacher;
- set up non-educational goals for pupils, and by doing so may make the educational task of the regular school impossible to achieve; and, frequently, create a false need.

And, after counting the number of members affiliated to union branches around the country (the old fashioned way), the ASTI announced that it had 6,500 members. Thank goodness for computers!



## Teachers get new Employee Assistance Scheme

Few people would doubt that teaching can be a demanding and stressful occupation. Coping with the pressure of an ever changing curriculum, disruptive pupils, staffroom conflicts, and anxiety over school inspections are just some of the issues which many teachers face on a regular basis. Trying to balance these demands together with home life pressures can sometimes mean that life becomes a bit of a juggling act.

**A**t the beginning of this school year ASTI General Secretary John White stated, "Second level teaching is a high-intensity activity and stress is the number one occupational hazard for teachers. High public expectations, the continuous implementation of new education legislation, the burden of increasing administrative work, and the strain of meeting the challenges of disruptive behaviour by a minority of students can take their toll on even the most experienced and committed teachers."

Data from the ASTI's Salary Protection scheme shows that the health of a significant number of teachers at risk due to stress. Between 2000 and 2005, 45% of claims under the salary protection scheme were a direct result of anxiety or depression.

So, what is being done to help teachers?

Following discussions between the Department of Education and Science, the teachers Unions, and School Management Groups on the development of an Occupational Health Strategy for teachers, it was accepted by all that the aim of the strategy would be to promote the health and wellbeing of teachers at work with a focus primarily on prevention rather than cure.

The first stage of implementation of this strategy is in the area of Employee Assistance. The Minister of Education and Science sought proposals on the open market for the provision of the service to teachers from suitable providers. Following a successful tendering process, Vhi Corporate Solutions has been contracted to administer the service which is FREE and confidential and is now available to all ASTI members.



The purpose of the EAS is to provide teachers and their immediate family members with easy access to confidential counselling and to assist in coping with the effect of personal and work-related issues. Vhi Corporate Solutions Staff, who provide the EAS, follow strict ethics and codes of practice and are bound by the Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) standards and protocols. This means that any contact with you remains confidential and that no information about you is available to anyone without your written consent.

### What kind of services are provided?

- ▶ Face to Face counselling – up to six counselling sessions,
- ▶ Telephone Counselling – single sessions or short term structured counselling,
- ▶ Counselling is provided on issues such as health, relationships, addictions, bereavement, stress, conflict, critical incident and trauma.
- ▶ Service is available to teachers, their partners/spouses and their parents.

### Accessing the service

Couldn't be simpler. EAS from Vhi Corporate Solutions is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year through:

Freephone **1800 411 057** or

Email **eas@vhics.ie**

For additional information on the EAS just click on to the Department of Education and Science website, **www.education.ie**



# Retired Secondary Teachers' Association (RSTA)

**MARIE DOYLE** has the news of RSTA activities around the country.

There is a change of venue for the **Galway Branch** meetings. The next meeting will be held in the Clybaun Hotel, Knocknacarra on February 13, 2007.

The secretary of the **Kilkenny Branch** invites members in Kilkenny and surrounding areas to get in touch with her for details of future meetings. The

Officers of the branch are planning this year's events including day trips to Dublin and other places of interest. Contact Kay Sheehy on 056 7722271. Aven Kilduff of the **Wicklow Branch** is happy to report that the postponed Birdwatch Event will now take place on Thursday February 1. Meet at Kilcoole Station car park at 10.30 am.

## Picture board

An RSTA Christmas Social was held in ASTI Head Office on December 5, 2006. ASTI's camera was present. All captions read from left to right.



*Maeve Colbert, Dublin and  
Maureen Lynch, Dublin.*



*Diarmaid de Paor, ASTI Deputy  
General Secretary with Marie  
Doyle, Secretary of the RSTA.*

*Bridie Gallagher, former  
Deputy Principal of St.  
Dominic's, Cabra, with  
Verity Swan, former  
Deputy Principal of Santa  
Sabina, Sutton.*



*Renee O'Dwyer, Joan  
O'Halloran and Mary  
Murphy, all formerly of  
Our Lady of Mercy  
Secondary School,  
Drimnagh.*



*Peter Quinn, Stillorgan; Sean  
Breathnach, Tullamore; and Pat  
Williams, Terenure.*



*Frank Scott with Louis O'Flaherty, Chairperson of the RSTA. Both  
are past pupils of St. Vincent's, Glasnevin.*

# Pensions and retirement

The ASTI'S INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS TEAM answers a frequently asked question on retirement and pensions.



*I am not yet 65, but would like to retire early, what are my options?*

Teachers may retire at any age, however pension benefit under the Department of Education and Science Superannuation Scheme is only payable to members of the Scheme under certain conditions and age restrictions.

## Optional retirement at age 60

A teacher who is not a "new entrant", i.e. commenced teaching on or after April 1, 2005, may opt to retire on pension at 60 or anytime thereafter. Such a teacher receives a pension based on the number of years of Superannuation Scheme membership. For example, a teacher aged 60 on a salary of €60,000 who was a member of the Scheme for 38 years would get a pension of 38 eightieths of salary, i.e. €28,500 and a lump sum of €85,500 which under current legislation is tax-free. The minimum retirement age on "full" pension for teachers who came into the system on or after April 1, 2005 is 65.

## Optional retirement at age 55 or over

A teacher who has reached the age of 55 and has 35 years pensionable service may apply to retire on pension. A teacher with a pre-service training period of three years is credited with one year for the purpose of calculating the required 35 years and a teacher with four years or more of pre-service training is credited with two years for the purpose of calculating the required 35 years. For example, a teacher aged 55 with a three year degree and a one year H. Dip in Education can retire with a pension of 33 eightieths of salary having completed 33 years of actual pensionable service. (A lump sum of 99 eightieths salary would also be paid on retirement in the case of this teacher.)

## Cost neutral retirement

In April 2005 a retirement option was introduced for teachers wishing to retire at age 50 (if in service before April 1, 2005) or at age 55 (if entering service from or after April 1, 2005). Thirty-five years pensionable service is not necessary. This option is defined as "cost neutral" and a penalty/adjustment is applied to the pension and lump sum, which is based on the age of the retiring teacher. For more information see Department of Education and Science Circular PEN 07/05 ([www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie) - click on Publications - click on Circulars).

## Disability Retirement

Teachers who retire on the grounds of serious ill health may be eligible for a Disability Pension. Normally extra years of credit are added to such a teacher's total number of pensionable years.

## Early Retirement Strands I, II and III

Teachers may apply for voluntary early retirement on a number of grounds including:

- if the school verifies that the retirement of the teacher would provide an opportunity to enhance the education service of the school by facilitating such change as the introduction of new skills and curriculum review;
- the teacher is consistently experiencing professional difficulties; and
- the teacher is in a post which is surplus to requirements.

Certain conditions apply to Early Retirement Strands. Teachers may apply for more than one strand. The closing date for Strands I and II is normally December/ January. The closing date for Strand III is normally January/ February.

*For more information on your retirement options see the ASTI Member's Handbook on the ASTI website [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).*

# ASTI Credit Union Limited

## - Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting took place on December 11, 2006. The Chairman of the Board of Directors, TONY BURKE, reported on another very successful year for the Credit Union.

### Highlights included:

The announcement of the introduction of ATM cards on a pilot basis in 2007. This will enable members to access their Credit Union account via ATMs throughout the country.

The development of an interactive website, which will be launched in 2007, allowing members access to their accounts via the internet.

### Loans up to €10,000 for new members at 7.99%

This is aimed at facilitating young members, new to the profession, who need a helping hand in starting out. We would ask all of our members to make new teachers aware of the Credit Union and the benefits it provides.

### CAR Loans – 6.99% typical APR

Buy that new car for as little as €9.09 per fortnight per €1,000.

### Secured Loans – 5.99% typical APR

This loan caters for those of our members who have through regular savings built up their shares, members who would like to keep their savings in place but clear their after Christmas credit card expenses may be find this loan very attractive.

### Once Loans – 5.99% typical APR

Borrow up to €5,000 & repay over 12 months. A very special rate for holidays / insurance premiums etc.

### Regular Loans – 7.99% typical APR

Available to all of our members & still at a very competitive rate

### Dividend – 2%

A dividend of 2% was approved by the members.

Vice-President of ASTI, Patricia Wroe, congratulated the Credit Union on its move to new premises, at Wellington House, 25 Wellington Quay, Dublin 2 and the excellent service that it provides to its members.

### There were two car draws at the AGM.

Congratulations to Elizabeth MacAduo, our first car draw winner in Donegal and Helen O'Reilly from Swords, in Dublin, both of whom won an Opel Astra 1.4 litre Life.

Congratulations also to Thomas McCluskey in St. Fintan's, Sutton, and Kevin Mallen in Eureka Secondary School, Kells both of whom won surprise Christmas Hampers.

### Plus

- All loans come with free loan protection insurance.
- There are no transaction charges.
- Immediate approval for loans (subject to terms & conditions).
- Deductions made directly from salary.
- Next day electronic funds transfer.
- Bill payments.
- Cash Draws.
- Car Draws.

*If you are not a member,  
you don't know what you are missing  
call now 1850 44 31 31  
"NI NEART GO CUR LE CHEILE"*

### ASTI Credit Union

Wellington House  
25 Wellington Quay  
Dublin 2  
asticu@eircom.net  
Tel: 01 675 0670  
Lo-call 1850 44 31 31  
Fax: 01 675 0680



# ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 0701

€1,000 prize for the first fully correct answer drawn from the entries.

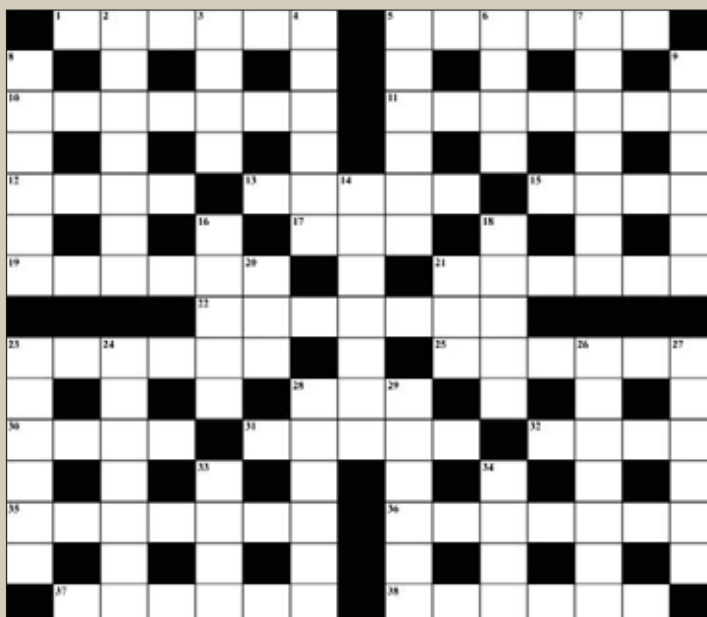


**CLUES ACROSS:**

- 1 Sr. came with a sudden sharp cry (6)
- 5 Yell on because you are on your own (6)
- 10 Five aboard for bluster & swagger (7)
- 11 1st name of ASTI President (7)
- 12 Are you of an age to have had a dose of Horace? (4)
- 13 The devil too has dwelt (5)
- 15 Padraic O'Conaire wrote a book about a small black one (4)
- 17 Four years successive service may lead to one! (1.1.1.)
- 19 You could be left without social graces (6)
- 21 29 down is one (6)
- 22 Again, the American lizards link up with us (7)
- 23 "..... ergo sum" said Descartes to prove he existed! (6)
- 25 Look for in the arches (6)
- 28 An Homeric expression of frustration at something stupid! (3)
- 30 The colour of the fleet (4)
- 31 SSIA learner could be a plant (5)
- 32 Management Association for Vocational Schools (1.1.1.1.)
- 35 Have T and paella on your kneecap (7)
- 36 Una in lace has many blank spaces (7)
- 37 & 38 They represent a "new brutalist philosophy" said the General Secretary at the ASTI Education Conference (6,6)

**CLUES DOWN:**

- 2 French cat and water both found in this building (7)
- 3 Originally made in Holland and often covered with a red wax (4)
- 4 A coy imp lacks foresight (6)
- 5 A Muslim pedagogue walked lamely (6)
- 6 Zinc can lead to curriculum body (1.1.1.1.)
- 7 This union could be singularly dangerous (7)
- 8 Bologna without an end could be rectangular (6)
- 9 Ms Lola in the ski race (6)
- 14 Termagants (7)
- 16 Our General Secretary's favourite colour? (5)
- 18 Has NEPS enough staff to help schools implement this Act? (5)
- 20 Shane goes over the top with self importance (3)
- 21 New counselling service for teachers (1.1.1.)
- 23 A pecan could be an appetiser (6)
- 24 A French dance at Ascot? (7)
- 26 They'll allow tax relief at source on your ASTI sub from January! (7)
- 27 "All I know is a door into the dark", he wrote (6)
- 28 Enlarge in detail (6)
- 29 "Good night, sweet prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest." Who was the prince? (6)
- 33 Do you have a personal one online? (4)
- 34 Blackleg cabs? (4)



## The winner will receive €1,000

If you wish to keep your copy of ASTIR intact you may send a photocopy of the crossword. One entry only per member.

Name

School

Address

ASTI Branch

Entries to: **Astir Crossword No. 0701, Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1,**  
 To arrive by: **Friday, February 23, 2007.**

# CONVENTION 2007

## WELCOME TO SLIGO

The Sligo Branch is very happy to host the 85th Annual Convention of ASTI on Tuesday April 10, Wednesday April 11 and Thursday April 12, 2007.

### VENUE

Convention will be held in the Radisson SAS Hotel, Ballinacra, Sligo.

### ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation will be provided at the Radisson SAS Hotel, Sligo. It will be allocated on a "first come, first served" basis at €65.00 per night, bed and breakfast per person sharing. There is a €43.00 single room supplement charge. Please note that there are a limited number of single rooms available.

A family room is €130.00 (up to two children, under 17 years, will be included at no extra charge - sharing with parents). A non-refundable booking fee of €80.00 per delegate is required. Delegates are asked to book in pairs or at least to indicate the person with whom they have agreed to share.

Further information relating to Hotels, Guest Houses and Bed & Breakfast in the area can be found on our website [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie)



### PLAY CENTRE

Facilities will be available off-site each day during Convention hours in a purpose-built, professionally-run crèche. Parents are expected to collect children at the appointed time. Booking forms are available on request from Maura Finan at Dun Clíodhna, Strandhill Road, Sligo. Places must be reserved in advance by returning completed booking forms by Friday March 9, 2007.

### ADMINISTRATION FEE

There is a registration fee of €25 per person for all delegates, CEC members and Standing Committee members. This fee is payable by Branches. Branch Treasurers should forward this fee, as soon as possible to: Convention Treasurer, Edmund Kenneally at Knocknahur North, Co. Sligo.

### BANQUET DINNER

Tickets for the Gala Banquet will be available from the Local Organising Committee in the Radisson SAS Hotel on Tuesday April 10 from 1.00pm - 3.30 pm. Book early in order to avoid disappointment.

Lunches are available on a cash basis in the Radisson SAS Hotel, Sligo each day.

## BOOKING FORM FOR CONVENTION 2007

Please tick whichever room you require

Double/Twin €130.00

Single €108.00

Family Room €130.00   
(As outlined above)

Please reserve one room for:

Name/s

Address

Home Telephone No.

Branch

PLEASE SEND COMPLETED BOOKING FORM WITH DEPOSIT TO ASTI ANNUAL CONVENTION, RADISSON SAS HOTEL, SLIGO AND MAKE CHEQUE PAYABLE TO THE RADISSON SAS HOTEL OR CREDIT CARD DETAILS.

Credit Card Details:

Name of Holder:

Credit Card No.:

Expiry Date:



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