

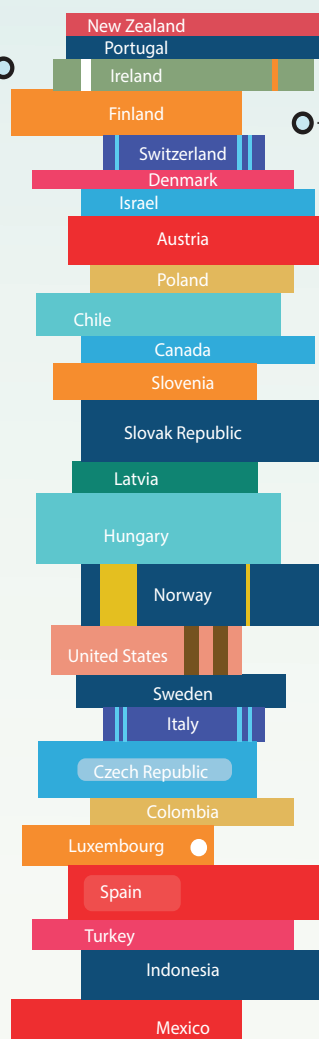
ASTIR

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland

COMPLETION OF SECOND LEVEL

98%
IRISH
completion

85%
OECD
average



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High standards in
Irish schools

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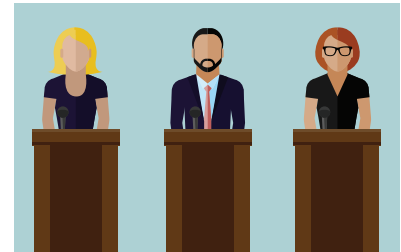
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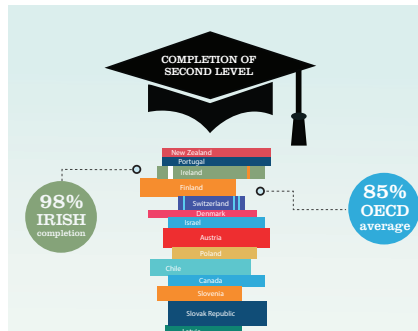
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Letters, comments and articles are welcome

All submissions will be considered by the ASTIR Editorial Board. Email astir@astir.ie.

Members' concerns on Junior Cycle identified

Gúim gach rath ar obair bhaill uile an ASTI agus sinn ag féachaint ar aghaidh ar an mbliain atá romhainn. Táimid go léir ag obair ar mhaithe le caighdeán an oideachais sa tír, ar mhaithe leis na scoláirí atá faoin ár gcuram agus ar mhaithe len ár gcomhmuhteoirí.

Since the last edition of *ASTIR* the ASTI has consulted widely with members to try to establish the unresolved issues regarding Junior Cycle reform. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who engaged with us. During the consultation period it became more evident that there is a major lack of trust between our members and the Department of Education and Skills. If it were not for such distrust it might be possible for us to progress towards a resolution of the current dispute.

The ASTI negotiators met twice in November with Officials from the Department. At the first meeting we highlighted the main issues as identified by members – these included the lack of trust, timetabling, the educational value of the Classroom Based Assessments and the Assessment Task, the timing and value of the Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meetings, common level examinations in all subjects apart from Gaelige, English and Maths and the absence of externally assessed oral examinations in Gaelige and Modern Languages. We emphasised that the publication of the NCCA Junior Cycle Specification and Guidelines for the Classroom Based Assessment was a matter of great concern as it was not in many areas in keeping with the Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation.

At the second meeting the Officials addressed the issues raised at the initial meeting. Subsequently I, as President, received a written reply, which you will find on the ASTI website.

Among the decisions taken by Standing Committee, having been fully briefed by the ASTI negotiators, were: that the ASTI directive on Junior Cycle remain in place; that teachers of English be reminded that the new Junior Cycle Specification must be taught but that it is imperative that the Directive be adhered to in full; and that an Education Conference be organised by the ASTI to highlight our issues and to further our campaign. Threats from Government regarding the non-adherence to the Lansdowne Road Agreement continue. As party to the Haddington Road Agreement we will continue to deliver on our commitments until it expires. The ASTI Directive on Posts of Responsibility took effect on November 23, 2015. On behalf of members, I congratulate and welcome our newly appointed General Secretary, Kieran Christie and convey congratulations and best wishes to Pat King on his retirement.

Aris tá tréimhse dhúshlánach romhainn amach. An dualgas atá orm mar Uachtarán is ea éisteacht le guthanna na mball. Is féidir libh a bheith cinnte gurb é sin atá á dhéanamh agam. Athbhliain faoi mhaise dhaoibh go léir agus go n-eirí linn le chéile!



Máire G. Ní Chiarba
ASTI President

Work to support teachers continues

As I write this, my first General Secretary's update, I cannot but reflect on the enormity of my predecessor's contribution to the ASTI. Pat King served this union with distinction, culminating in his role as General Secretary from 2010 to 2015. I would like to take this opportunity to wish him every happiness and success as he embarks on a new phase of his life.

On the industrial relations front the big items facing us in the months ahead are Junior Cycle reform and our rejection of the Lansdowne Road Agreement. Junior Cycle reform has occupied an enormous amount of ASTI members' time and commitment over the past number of years. In that context, I think it is accepted that with the series of iterations of proposals emanating from the NCCA in the first instance, and the successive ministerial initiatives that followed, major improvements were achieved by our strong campaign in conjunction with our TUI colleagues. For instance, we have established beyond doubt that we will never assess the work of our own students for certification. Furthermore, our campaign has also ensured that State certification at Junior Cycle will continue into the future. These gains were derived from the passion that ASTI members have for ensuring that students receive a high quality education. Standards must never be compromised; the integrity of the system remains paramount. In a ballot of members in September 2015, the ASTI rejected the terms of resolution offered in the negotiated document *Junior Cycle Reform – Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation* (including the appendix – *Professional Time to Support Implementation*). The mandate to continue industrial action remains in place. Notwithstanding this, as developments unfold, one would hope that ultimate resolution is reached via dialogue, rather than having to resort to more traditional forms of trade unionism. Regarding the Lansdowne Road Agreement, it is unclear what position the Government may adopt with the ASTI and other unions who have rejected its terms upon expiry of the Haddington Road Agreement. The passage of new FEMPI legislation during November 2015 is a matter of some concern in the context of its provisions regarding the award of increments and the restoration of payment relating to supervision and substitution. Standing Committee has stated that it will not be bound by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions Public Services Committee decision to accept the Agreement. There is no doubt that the ASTI will have to take decisive action if there is any worsening of members' terms and conditions of employment.

I want to assure members that my tenure as General Secretary will be characterised by a number of initiatives, some of which are expanded upon elsewhere in this edition of *ASTIR*. But uppermost in my mind at all times will be the need to work for improved terms and conditions of employment for teachers, and resourcing the system, so as to ensure the delivery of a world-class second-level education service for our students.



Kieran Christie
ASTI General Secretary

Teaching Council updates

Elections to the Teaching Council

An election for teacher members of the Teaching Council will open on February 22 and close at noon on March 9.

You are strongly encouraged to vote. This is an important opportunity to help lead the development of national policy as it relates to teaching and learning, and regulation of the teaching profession. The elected members that you vote for will be in a position to make a significant contribution to this.

Candidate nominations can be submitted between January 8 and 29, and further information on the nominations process can be found on www.teachingcouncil.ie.

ASTI nominees

ASTI Standing Committee is due to endorse a number of candidates in January. Information will be circulated to members in advance of the election.

Registration conditions – deadline extended to January 31

There is a number of teachers registered with the Teaching Council with conditions that were due to expire on December 31, 2015. This expiry date has been extended to January 31, 2016.

Teachers are required to notify the Council in writing if they have addressed their conditions of registration. If a teacher has encountered extenuating circumstances that have prevented the completion of a condition, they may be eligible for an extension. Further information in relation to extensions can be found on teachingcouncil.ie. If in doubt, please make contact with the Council to discuss your situation. If teachers employed in State-funded positions do not fulfil their conditions by January 31, 2016, and if they have not engaged with the Council in the interim, their registrations will lapse. This means that the payment of their salaries will be stopped by the relevant paymaster (DES or ETB).

It is of vital importance that any teacher with an outstanding condition makes contact with the Council immediately. Teachers who wish to submit documentation including evidence that the condition has been met, or extension requests with relevant evidence, are asked to do so without delay. The lapsing of the registration of a teacher has serious implications for all involved and is not something that the Council wishes to see happening.

The Teaching Council can be contacted by emailing conditions@teachingcouncil.ie or calling 01-651 7900.

RSTA Dublin Branch Christmas function



Mary Kenny (RSTA Dublin Branch Chairperson), Máire G. Ní Chiarba (ASTI President), Carmel Heneghan (RSTA President), Susie Hall (RSTA Secretary) and Catherine McHugh (RSTA Dublin Branch Treasurer).

Do we have your up-to-date contact details?

If you have changed postal address, email address or telephone number recently, please let ASTI Head Office know. If you have not received any communications from the ASTI in the past six months, please contact our membership department at 01-604 0162, or email membership@asti.ie to ensure that your contact details are up to date.

Grace period extended to April 2019

The grace period, whereby teachers can retire with pension and retirement lump sum based on their salary as of June 30, 2013, has been further extended to April 2019. Although ASTI members have voted to reject the Lansdowne Road Agreement, the ASTI understands that the grace period provision will continue to apply to ASTI members until April 2019.

ASTI prizes awarded to education graduates in NUIM and DCU



From left: Professor Bernard Mahon (Vice President for Research, Maynooth University), Niamh Rooney (Typetec Prize for Highest Grade in BScEd), Sinéad Phillips (ASTI Prize for Highest Grade in Teaching Placement), Gemma Buick (Prize for BScEd Chemistry) and Majella Dempsey (Course Co-ordinator, BS cEd). Missing from picture: Rachel Doyle (ASTI Prize for Highest Grade in Education).



Avril Gallagher and Aoife Bugler, 2015 winners of the ASTI Student Awards for Science Education and Physical Education.

This issue in numbers...

735

NUMBER OF HOURS
teachers in second-level schools in Ireland spend teaching per annum according to *Education at a Glance 2015*

(P. 10)

669

AVERAGE NUMBER OF
hours spent teaching per annum across the OECD according to *Education at a Glance 2015*

(P. 10)

Recent ASTI retirement functions

Retirement functions were recently held in Galway and Wicklow.



Pictured at a Galway branch retirement function on November 27 are retiring teachers from Jesus and Mary Secondary School, Galway (from left): Mary Scannel, Margaret O'Dwyer, Marian Cahill, Eileen Scanlon, Josephe Hession, Triona Hanley and Yvonne Daly.



Pictured at the recent Wicklow Branch retirement function are: Back row (from left): Bosco Guinan, Pat King, Brendan O'Regan (CBS, Arklow) and Declan McInerney. Front row (from left): Monica Haughton (Colaiste Chill Mhantain, Wicklow Town), Mary White (Dominican College Wicklow) and Una Breslin (Dominican College Wicklow).

Bill to protect LGBT teachers passed

The Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013, which prohibits religious-run schools from discriminating against LGBT teachers on the grounds of their sexuality, has been passed by Dáil Éireann.

The ASTI has welcomed the passing of the legislation, which amends Section 37(1) of the Equality Act. Commenting on the passing of the Amendment, Diarmaid de Paor, Deputy General Secretary and Equality Officer of the ASTI, said: "Section 37 represents an affront not only to teachers, but to all workers, and indeed all citizens. It promotes secrecy and fear rather than a culture of openness and inclusivity, which is vital for the health of school communities. When enacted, this amendment will mean that schools will no longer have the right to discriminate against LGBT teachers on the grounds of maintaining their religious ethos".

The ASTI has been campaigning against Section 37 for a number of years. Campaign activities have included lobbying Oireachtas members and highlighting the issue in the media.

New AMCSS/JMB General Secretary appointed



The Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools/Joint Managerial Body (AMCSS/JMB) has announced the appointment of John Curtis as the organisation's new General Secretary.

John has been Principal of St Kieran's College in Kilkenny since 2005. He has served as a member of the Council of the AMCSS/JMB since 2012. John took up the position of AMCSS/JMB General Secretary on January 1, 2016, on the retirement of the incumbent, Ferdia Kelly.

1,800

NUMBER OF NEW CIDS
awarded in September 2015

(P. 8)

193

NUMBER OF SECOND-LEVEL
schools included in the DEIS
scheme
(P. 20)

Digital Strategy in Schools

Minister for Education and Skills Jan O'Sullivan TD recently launched the five-year Digital Strategy in Schools, accompanied by a €210m investment in digital technology in schools, the largest ever such investment.

Among the key points of the Digital Strategy are:

- dedicated multi-annual funding to schools to invest in technology
- a plan to build on the successful roll-out of high-speed broadband to every second-level school by investing in high-speed wifi networks in every school
- integration of digital skills in the curriculum and in assessment
- development of opportunities for students to take an in-depth ICT course at Leaving Cert, as well as embedding digital skills within other subjects
- promotion of the use of e-portfolios at primary and post-primary level
- provision of enhanced digital content to schools, including working with cultural institutions, sporting bodies and others to expand this range of resources
- embedding ICT skills as part of initial teacher education and ongoing training for teachers
- working with stakeholders to promote safe and responsible use of the internet and social media, including providing new resources to schools to better prevent cyber-bullying.

Commenting on the new Digital Strategy for Schools, the ASTI's Assistant General Secretary, Moira Leydon, said that there is no doubt that the allocation of €210m to fund the five-year strategy is the biggest investment in ICT to date. Such investment is absolutely necessary given the ambitious scope of the Strategy: "To realise the potential of digital



technologies to enhance teaching, learning and assessment so that Ireland's young people become engaged thinkers, active learners, knowledge constructors and global citizens to participate fully in society and the economy".

There is no doubt as to the accelerating pace of integration of ICT into all areas of teaching and learning in our schools. This is a welcome and necessary development. At the same time, certain things stay constant: teachers need ongoing CPD to enable them to effectively use ICT in their teaching and they need time in their working day to plan and collaborate with colleagues on how ICT can support and enhance students' learning and schools need properly funded IT support. The ASTI will be focusing in particular on the resource of time over the period of the Strategy.

1,800 new CIDs

Contracts of indefinite duration (CIDs) were awarded to 1,800 teachers in September 2015 compared to 1,000 in September 2014.

The significant increase in the number of CIDs awarded during the current school year is due to the introduction of new CID arrangements for teachers in September 2015. The new arrangements mean that teachers in temporary positions become eligible for CIDs after two years in a school, provided they meet the criteria for a CID. This compares to four years under legislation.

Teachers covering for those on career breaks and secondments also qualify for CIDs after two years under the new arrangements.

It is expected that a large number of CIDs will also be awarded in September 2016 and again in the coming years.

While not all of these CIDs are full time, CID teachers with additional temporary hours will get these hours on a permanent basis after just one year (previously the requirement was three years). This means that the level of casualisation in the second-level teaching profession will reduce dramatically over the next few years.

The new arrangements follow a lengthy campaign by the teacher unions to have the issue of casualisation in second-level teaching addressed. The ASTI was to the forefront of this campaign, having pursued the issue for more than a decade.

Colombian teacher assassinated

The Education International (EI) Executive Board has strongly condemned the assassination of Marcelis Mendes, President of the Coveñas regional subdivision of the Colombian Teachers Federation (FECODE) on November 15, 2015.

Mendes was not only a young female teacher leader, but was also an active member of civil society. She persistently stood up against all forms of violence against her people in Coveñas, much of which was perpetrated by right-wing paramilitary forces trying to wrest control of the region. She was especially vocal in bringing these acts of violence to light during the last election campaign. Tragically, it was presumably this engagement for a peaceful and just society that put her on a blacklist.

She was not alone. Since the beginning of 2015, 16 members of FECODE have been murdered. And in the last 20 years, 1,068 teachers, members of FECODE, have been assassinated.

Education International campaigns for the rights of teachers around the world.

The ASTI is an affiliate of Education International, a federation of education associations and trade unions.

For more information, see <http://www.ei-ie.org/>.

Lansdowne Road Agreement

In October, ASTI members rejected the Lansdowne Road Agreement (LRA) proposals by 74% to 26%. Among the reasons for rejection were:

- teachers have taken significant cuts in pay in recent years
- working conditions have deteriorated through a combination of reduced resources and additional demands on teachers' time
- at a time of reduced resources and increased demands, the Department has introduced a significant number of new initiatives, programmes and guidelines in schools; for example, the document 'Wellbeing in Post Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide' was introduced following the axing of ex-quota guidance provision and in the context of a moratorium on posts of responsibility
- young teachers have been disproportionately affected due to the introduction of new pay scales and new pension arrangements
- young teachers are also impacted by the hours culture, which has blighted the second-level teaching profession for a number of years – teachers need sustainable careers.

In October, Standing Committee passed a motion stating that it would not be bound by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions Public Services

Committee's decision to accept the Lansdowne Road Agreement. Standing Committee stated that the ASTI is currently party to the Haddington Road Agreement and will continue to deliver on its commitments, and demands that the Government do the same. The ASTI also expressed the view that the threats contained in the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) Act are vindictive and inappropriate, particularly given the Government's recent statements that Ireland's economy is recovering.

For more information see the ASTI LRA page at www.asti.ie.



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Applications are invited for DCU's Doctorate in Education (EdD) - a research degree for experienced professionals from education and related fields who wish to extend their professional knowledge and skills. This programme is offered by the DCU Institute of Education, an internationally significant development that will be located on DCU St Patrick's Campus from 2016, following the joining together of the Church of Ireland College of Education, Mater Dei Institute of Education and St Patrick's College, Drumcondra with DCU.

Commencing in July 2016, the part-time Doctorate will involve two years of coursework (on campus and online) and two years of dissertation writing.

Participants on the programme will have an opportunity to specialise in the following strands*:

- Educational Leadership and Evaluation
- Arts, Creativity and Imagination in Education
- Ethical Education and Schooling
- Teacher Education
- Religious Education
- Assessment, Learning and Teaching
- Special and Inclusive Education

Further Information

For full details on course content and course requirements, visit: www.dcu.ie/institute_of_education/edd.shtml

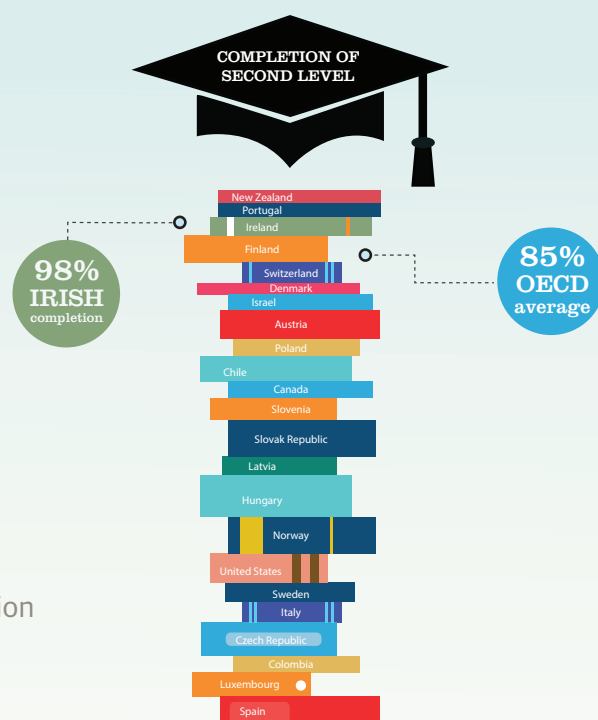
How To Apply

Applicants are required to complete an Expression of Interest Form and research proposal by Friday, February 26th, 2016. Full details available at: www.dcu.ie/institute_of_education/edd.shtml

*Please note, strands offered are subject to change

OECD confirms high standards in Irish schools

GEMMA TUFFY reports on the key findings of the OECD publication *Education at a Glance 2015*.



The OECD publication *Education at a Glance 2015* shows that Ireland is one of the best performing countries in the world when it comes to the number of students completing second level.

With a 98% completion rate (compared to the OECD average of 85%), Ireland is ranked third out of 18 countries. Some 52% of Irish school leavers progress to third level, compared to the OECD average of 35%.

A key message in the report is that the relationship between education and employment is strong right across the world. The higher the level of education, the lower the likelihood of unemployment. The report states that a nation's graduation rate from tertiary education "illustrates the country's capacity to provide future workers with advanced and specialised knowledge and skills".

The link between education and unemployment is more pronounced in Ireland than in other countries. The unemployment rate for those who have not completed second-level education is 18.7%, compared to the OECD average of 12.8%. The unemployment rate for those who have not completed third level is 11.9% compared to the OECD average of 7.7%.

The work of teachers and schools

Education at a Glance 2015 demonstrates that second-level teachers in Ireland are teaching longer hours and carrying out more non-teaching tasks than teachers in other countries. In Ireland teachers spend 735 hours each year in the classroom teaching their students compared to the OECD average of 669 hours. Students benefit by receiving more tuition time than their OECD counterparts. While the average number of hours' tuition time for second-level students across the OECD is 915 hours' tuition, students in Ireland receive 935.

The report also shows that second-level teachers in Ireland are required to carry out a more extensive range of non-teaching tasks than teachers in many OECD countries. This does not include participation in extra-curricular activities such as sport, drama, debating and breakfast club.

The truth about teachers' salaries

Headlines such as 'Teachers here are the best paid in the world' (*Irish Independent*) may have dominated the media coverage of *Education at a Glance 2015*, but the facts tell a different story. The starting salary of teachers in Ireland is ranked 13th out of 34 OECD countries. The ranking

Higher levels of education = better health, more participation in society and greater social cohesion.

is based on full-time salaries, and does not take into account the fact that in Ireland approximately 50% of second-level teachers under the age of 30 are on temporary and/or part-time contracts, and often earn only a fraction of a full-time salary. After 10 years of teaching, the salary for teaching in Ireland is ranked 10th out of 34 OECD countries. After 15 years, the salary is ranked eighth out of 34 countries. When teachers' maximum salaries were compared, Ireland was ranked 10th out of 34 countries.

Perhaps more telling is the fact that across the OECD teachers qualified to teach at upper second level (all second-level teachers in Ireland are qualified to teach at upper second level) earn approximately 91% of the OECD average salary for a graduate. While the equivalent figure for Ireland is not available in *Education at a Glance 2015*, last year's report found that in Ireland, second-level teachers earned approximately 81% of the average graduate salary for Ireland. The report also notes that Ireland is one of nine OECD countries where teachers' salaries were significantly affected by the economic crisis: "In Ireland, teachers' salaries were reduced as of 1 January 2010 as part of a public service-wide reduction in pay. In addition, teachers who entered the profession after 1 January 2011 are paid according to a new salary scale that is 10 per cent lower than the salary scale that applied to those previously recruited".

Download the full report at: <http://www.oecd.org/edu/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm>.

Why should governments invest in education?

Higher levels of education = better chances of employment and higher earnings for individuals. The benefits for countries include greater tax revenues and social contributions from a larger proportion of well-educated adults. The social benefits include better health, increased participation in voluntary/community activities, and greater interpersonal trust/social cohesion.

Addressing inequalities for teachers and students

The ASTI's recent contributions to the media have focused on addressing the lack of resources in our schools.

"With reference to the article by Katherine Donnelly with the dramatic headline 'Teachers here are among the best paid in the world' (*Irish Independent*, November 25), I notice no reference is made to the culture of casualisation in the profession in this country. This disgraceful situation results in many highly qualified teachers finding themselves almost begging for teaching hours in second-level schools. It is shameful. These teachers should be welcomed into the system with open arms but instead of that, they are in many cases given minimum hours on a casual basis."

Máire G Ní Chiarba, ASTI President, Letter to the Editor, *Irish Independent*, November 27

"The challenge for schools is that the way they are operating is that every member of staff is deployed and when students do not take subjects, the school has to make a provision for that child to be supervised outside of the class ... it's not an ideal situation, but what school managers will point out is that we simply do not have the facilities to provide one-on-one supervision for students who are exempted. In many ways it is not an ideological challenge, it is a practical, logistical challenge that most school managers are worried about ... schools are trying to manage large numbers of students, trying to accommodate huge varieties of needs with very little resources and sometimes they have to take pragmatic decisions."

Moirá Leydon, Assistant General Secretary, Newstalk Breakfast, November 24

Pat King, General Secretary of the Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland, said schools and teachers continued to prioritise the delivery of a quality education to students despite cutbacks in recent years.

***Irish Times*, November 24, speaking about the *Education at a Glance* report**

"Some children go through their entire secondary school years in prefabs, which can be cold, damp, they have to go out in the cold, out in the rain to switch between classes – that is not acceptable."

Pat King, TV3 News at 5.30, November 17

"Our members are angry and frustrated with the cutbacks that have occurred within education, the extra workload that has been put onto teachers, the cutbacks to career guidance teachers, to the posts of responsibility and the additional 33 hours workload. They just feel that they've been downgraded from where they were before the recession started. With the general election coming up, we're going to put

pressure on the politicians to improve the Lansdowne Road Agreement. Some of our grievances do not apply to some of the other public service unions."

Peter Quinn, *Clare Champion*, December 4

"These so-called 'league tables' are misleading because they present a very narrow aspect of the work of second-level schools. They tell us very little about school performance ... By focusing on one aspect of education alone, league tables promote 'teaching to the test'. There is no evidence that league tables lead to school improvement and the ASTI believes that they have the potential to exacerbate social inequalities." **ASTI spokesperson, *Evening Echo*, December 5**



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 **schoolsVET@leargas.ie**




Junior Cycle campaign update

The ASTI is continuing its campaign for appropriate and well-resourced Junior Cycle reform.

In a ballot of ASTI members in September 2015, members voted to reject the document entitled '*Junior Cycle Reform – Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation (including the appendix)*' by 55% to 45%.

Members also voted to continue industrial action up to and including strike action by 70% to 30%.

In a parallel ballot, members of the TUI voted to accept the *Junior Cycle Reform* proposals.

Industrial action

On September 25, 2015, ASTI Standing Committee re-issued the Junior Cycle Framework Directive to members. This Directive prohibits ASTI members from engaging with aspects of the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle, including attendance at CPD for the Framework and participation in any aspect of Classroom Based Assessment.

Consultation with members

In November 2015 the ASTI undertook a consultation with members on the *Junior Cycle Reform* proposals in order to identify the reasons why members rejected them. Following this consultation, ASTI representatives met with the Department of Education and Skills and relayed the concerns of ASTI members. These included: increased workload/pressure on teachers, the

impact of the proposals on teaching time, the feasibility of timetabling Junior Cycle meetings (i.e., Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings), common level only for most subjects, the lack of examination conditions for the Assessment Tasks, and the absence of State-certified oral exams in Irish and modern European languages.

The Department gave some clarifications to the ASTI and stated that: "Implementation of the new Junior Cycle Framework is now underway. The May agreement [*Junior Cycle Reform – Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation*] committed all parties to the establishment of an Implementation Committee ... It is considered that this committee can provide a very valuable ongoing forum for addressing issues of interpretation or contention that arise as implementation continues. The Department is willing to convene this committee at the earliest possible date and in that context would invite ASTI and TUI to identify any priority agenda items".

On December 11, Standing Committee considered the Department's response and decided that as members have rejected the *Junior Cycle Reform* proposals, the union will not participate in the implementation committee.

The ASTI Directive remains in place. For more information visit the ASTI website Junior Cycle Campaign page at www.asti.ie.

DIRECTIVE TO MEMBERS

At its meeting on 25 September, 2015, ASTI Standing Committee decided to direct ASTI members in all schools, including Junior Cycle Network Schools, to continue their withdrawal of co-operation with the introduction or implementation of the Junior Cycle Framework proposals as follows:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Not to attend CPD organised in connection with the Junior Cycle Framework Proposals.</p> <p>2 Not to attend meetings associated with the Junior Cycle Framework Proposals.</p> <p>3 Not to attend any planning or participate in any planning activities organised in connection with the Junior Cycle Framework Proposals.</p> | <p>4 Not to engage in any aspect of school based assessment for the purpose of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).</p> <p>5 Not to engage in any development of or delivery of Junior Cycle Framework Short Courses.</p> <p>6 Not to engage in any event or function related to points 1 to 5 above.</p> |
|---|---|

India in the autumn

ASTI President MÁIRE G. NÍ CHIARBA recently visited India on behalf of the Association.



ASTI President Máire G. Ní Chiarba with students in the Good Shepherd Secondary School, Shillong.

In the autumn I was invited as President to represent the ASTI at the Coral Jubilee Celebration of the Teachers' Association in North East India, the KJDSTA. I was also invited to address the Annual Conference of the Association, which was attended by about 1,000 members. My presence there as ASTI President was considered very significant as it showed solidarity with and support for the KJDSTA, its members and officers. All of the employees of the Association work on a voluntary basis and international solidarity is a great source of strength to them. The INTO and the TUI were also invited to attend the Coral Jubilee and were represented by Emma Dineen (INTO President) and Annette Dolan (Deputy General Secretary, TUI). We were accompanied by Dr Garret Campbell, CEO Global Schoolroom, who arranged several school visits during our stay. Meeting teachers who had gone through the Global Schoolroom project and students who displayed such an eagerness to learn and an appreciation of education was most fulfilling and a wonderful experience.

A fine contribution

The contribution being made by Global Schoolroom to teacher education in North East India is highly respected. Many ASTI members have volunteered to work with Global Schoolroom and continue to do so. The work involves spending a month in India during the summer and tutoring teachers to assist them in developing their teaching skills. On the eve of the KJDSTA Annual Conference I had the opportunity to meet with the Officers of the Union and to discuss with them many of their issues, such as working conditions, lack of resources and pupil-teacher ratios. In spite of the distance between us culturally and in many other ways we actually had a lot in common.



ASTI President Máire G. Ní Chiarba with KJDSTA Joint Vice Presidents RS Marbaniang (left) and Nisar Ahmed.

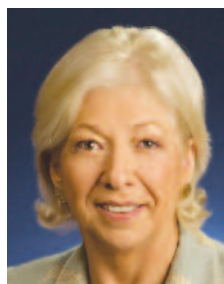
The Annual Conference was interesting but there was no debate! I was lucky I had been invited to address the Conference, as it would have been extremely difficult to sit through proceedings without giving my opinion on at least one issue!

I have to say that while I found the experience rewarding in terms of what I learned from visiting schools and from speaking with teachers and students, I also found the experience emotionally difficult – to see the circumstances under which the students are learning and the teachers are working. It was also very challenging to witness the poverty and the totally unacceptable circumstances under which people live.

I must admit that I greatly admire ASTI members who have volunteered and continue to volunteer with Global Schoolroom to further teacher and student education in North East India.

It was an honour for me as ASTI President to represent such dedicated members who give so freely of their time in very difficult circumstances in the interest of education.

For more information, go to www.globalschoolroom.net.



Máire G. Ní Chiarba
ASTI President



The politics of education

With a General Election now certain for spring 2016, *ASTIR* contacted the main political parties to ask for their comments and policy positions on vital issues for ASTI members. Below are the questions we asked and the responses we received.*

Why should teachers vote for your party?



PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT ALLIANCE
A Voice for People, Community and Environment

**Kieran Allen – People
Before Profit Alliance**
The People Before Profit

Alliance has consistently opposed cuts to teachers' (as well as other public servants') pay and conditions since the onset of the economic crisis. Richard Boyd Barrett TD has spoken out in the Dáil on numerous occasions on education and workers' rights, and has tabled amendments to legislation of direct concern to teachers, including: the FEMPI Bill 2015 (21/10/2015), the Teaching Council (Amendment) Bill 2015 (17/6/2015) and the FEMPI Bill 2013 (May 2013) – where he strongly condemned the attack on trade union rights contained in the Bill. A motion proposed by People Before Profit Councillor Karl Gill in support of the ASTI's Junior Cycle campaign was passed at a Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Council meeting in February/March 2015.



**Charlie McConalogue TD, Fianna
Fáil spokesperson on education**

This Government has not been a responsible custodian of our education system. It has progressed policies that have not taken on board the knowledge and guidance of those who understand the system the most – teachers – and consequently, often have not had the best interests of students at their core. Even more unforgivingly, this Government has implemented a series of shortsighted cuts, such as those to SNA and resource teaching supports, guidance counselling provision and programmes combating educational disadvantage, which have targeted the most vulnerable.

I believe that we need a government with fresh ideas, which understands the importance of education for securing our children's and our country's future. As a party we have a proud record in education

and, if elected to government, our plan is to prioritise systematic education investments to secure the future of Irish education.



**Jonathan O'Brien TD, Sinn Féin
spokesperson on education**

Sinn Féin believes that education is a basic and fundamental human right. Education should be free, universally available as of right and assist everyone without exception to develop her or his full potential. Instead of guaranteeing everyone equal access to the highest standard of education, previous and current Government policy has entrenched educational inequalities and a two-tier system, with the teaching profession being increasingly undermined.

We want to end inequality and we want to work towards an education system that allows Ireland to reach its full potential – that ensures every child full access to learning at all levels and ensures literacy and life-long learning for everyone.



**Jan O'Sullivan TD, Minister for Education
and Skills**

The Labour Party is committed to public investment and we want to see additional resources invested in education – from pre-school to third level. We also believe that investment needs to go hand in hand with reform. Teachers are central to our vision of a modern, progressive education system.

We value the work teachers achieve day in day out in our classrooms, and we believe that changes and improvements to our education system are best done in consultation with the teaching profession. In the past five years, despite the pressure on public finances, Labour has continued to invest in education. Our school building programme

Over to you – what to ask your local candidates when they call

1. Why is FEMPI still in existence given that there is no longer a financial emergency?
2. Will you work to restore the common basic pay scale for all teachers?
3. Will you work to lift the moratorium on posts of responsibility?
4. What will you do about the abolition of the ex-quota guidance provision for schools?

has made a real impact across the country. We have published and ringfenced funding for our Digital Strategy for Schools. We've worked with teachers and parents to tackle bullying. We have achieved a lot. But this is only a start.

As our economy recovers Labour is determined to see additional investment in education and teachers.



Ruth Coppinger TD, Anti-Austerity Alliance

The Anti-Austerity Alliance (AAA) stands for the complete reversal of the austerity measures implemented over the last number of years.

Teachers have been hit particularly hard with cuts to pay, pensions, and terms and conditions. Teachers have also felt the strain of an education

system that's been starved of much-needed investment. With incomes under pressure, the Government implemented measures such as property tax, water charges and the USC. We stand for an abolition of these austerity measures. It's a political choice to cut vital public services such as education over implementing tax breaks for big business and the super wealthy.

We stand for equality for all teachers. The AAA published the Employment Equality (Amendment) Bill 2015, which would end Section 37 and extend full employment equality law to all teachers. While there have been welcome changes to Section 37, unfortunately the Government decided to retain religious discrimination in Section 37. We have also recently published an Equal Participation in Schools Bill 2015, which would end religious discrimination against students.

If elected to Government, how would your party support new/young teachers affected by casualisation and low pay?

Kieran Allen – People Before Profit Alliance

We would reverse the cuts to new entrants' pay and pensions, and bring forward legislation to force education employers to offer the standard 22-hour contract to all teachers (save where a teacher requests a lower number of hours). Permanency would be the norm for all teachers following induction and probation.

Charlie McConologue TD, Fianna Fáil spokesperson on education

New entrants to the teaching profession do not receive the same allowances as longer serving teachers, which cannot be justified and is corrosive of morale within schools. In further pay agreements, we believe there should be a focus on equalising pay for new entrants and we are committed to restoring full equality of treatment for teachers.

On casualisation, we welcome the implementation of Ward Report recommendations on redeployment eligibility for teachers covering for a secondment or career break, which will mean that teachers in temporary positions become eligible for a contract of indefinite duration (CID) after two years of teaching. We will ensure full implementation of the Report's recommendations for further reduction in workforce casualisation.

Jonathan O'Brien TD, Sinn Féin spokesperson on education

Sinn Féin condemned the 14% cut in pay and the loss of allowances for newly qualified teachers when they were introduced by this Government and we believe that it has badly damaged the morale that is essential within a classroom setting, given that new teachers are earning over €11,000 less than their colleagues recruited in 2011. This is compounded by many teachers who are working on part-time contracts. Our view is that we

should work towards reintroducing the qualification allowance and putting all newly qualified teachers on the same rate of pay as their counterparts so that they are getting equal pay for equal work.

Jan O'Sullivan TD, Minister for Education and Skills

In Government Labour moved to tackle the issue of casualisation by appointing an expert group chaired by Peter Ward.

Minister O'Sullivan accepted the recommendations of the expert group and those recommendations are being implemented from September 2015. These changes will allow fixed-term teachers to acquire permanent positions more easily and quickly, and enable part-time teachers to gain additional hours. Labour is confident that these measures will reduce the high level of casualisation that affects second-level teaching in particular. We are also open to discussing any further measures with teacher representatives.

Labour also acknowledges the significant sacrifices that public servants, including teachers, have made in recent years. We are committed to seeing improvements in public sector pay and that process has already begun.

Ruth Coppinger TD, Anti-Austerity Alliance

There should be a complete reversal of the decision to lower the pay and conditions of newly qualified teachers. Teachers are best able to teach when they have secure employment and are able to have permanent contracts. Our TDs would be happy to support, assist and encourage new and young teachers campaigning against the low pay and precarious work that exists in teaching.

The moratorium on appointments to posts of responsibility in schools is having a significant negative impact on teacher/principal workload, student pastoral care services, and the ability of schools to fulfil administrative and legislative requirements. Will your party lift the moratorium and allow these posts to be filled?

Kieran Allen – People Before Profit Alliance

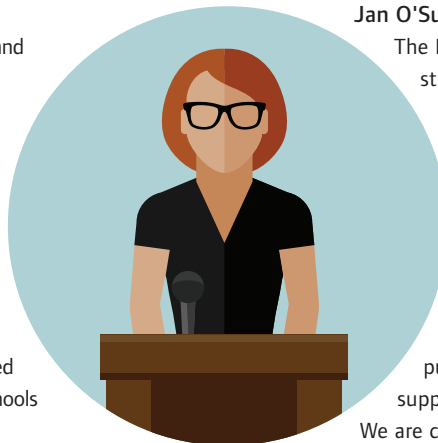
Yes, our party would lift the moratorium immediately and restore the posts of responsibility system that existed prior to the moratorium in 2009.

Charlie McConalogue TD, Fianna Fáil spokesperson on education

The current situation with regard to leadership in schools is unsustainable. It is essential that the moratorium on posts of responsibility within schools is lifted and we are committed to doing so as budgets allow and as schools' needs dictate. There is also a need for restoration of middle management posts within schools and lower thresholds for administrative principalships.

Jonathan O'Brien TD, Sinn Féin spokesperson on education

We recognise that schools already disadvantaged by the consistent education budget cuts were doubly affected by the imposition of the moratorium on appointments to posts of responsibility, which has had serious consequences, particularly in terms of school management. As a result of these cuts, subjects are being dropped from the list of options available to senior cycle students, and combining higher and ordinary level students in the one class has become an increasingly common occurrence. All too often we are told that investment in our education system is a key requirement to our economic recovery but this rhetoric is not being matched by investment in our schools, where cuts for short-term gain are threatening the delivery of the school curriculum. Sinn Féin is committed to working towards lifting the moratorium on posts of responsibility in schools.



Jan O'Sullivan TD, Minister for Education and Skills

The Labour Party believes that we need management structures in our schools that are fit for purpose, and focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning. In government, we created a new Centre for School Leadership designed to provide mentoring, training and support to new and established school leaders. The last Budget saw a significant improvement to the deputy principal support available in larger schools, as the first step of putting a fit-for-purpose level of management support in place.

We are committed to continuing to improve the staffing of second-level schools, including continuing to build greater leadership capacity and supports.

Ruth Coppinger TD, Anti-Austerity Alliance

Yes. This moratorium should be ended. The decision to implement this moratorium has resulted in teachers and principals having an extra burden of work and less time to concentrate on teaching. The posts of responsibility and positions such as guidance counsellors are vital for the education of our young people and the effective running of our schools. The Government would like to have a run down skeleton service as the new norm for our public services, including our schools. We fight for an education system that's not sacrificed to maintain bondholders, bank debt and incredibly low taxation on the super wealthy in our society.

Give us your vision for Ireland's second-level education system in a Tweet!

Kieran Allen – People Before Profit Alliance

A modern, inclusive, secular, ICT-enabled, public-only education system completely free from any charges for parents/guardians.

Charlie McConalogue TD, Fianna Fáil spokesperson on education

Restoring guidance provision, expanding DEIS, equalising funding, strengthening and expanding language skills and introducing computer science.

Jonathan O'Brien TD, Sinn Féin spokesperson on education

Sinn Féin believes education is a basic and fundamental human right that should be free and universally available to everyone as a right.

Jan O'Sullivan TD, Minister for Education and Skills

Top quality schools that encourage the talents and passions of all students, led by an enthusiastic and valued teaching profession.

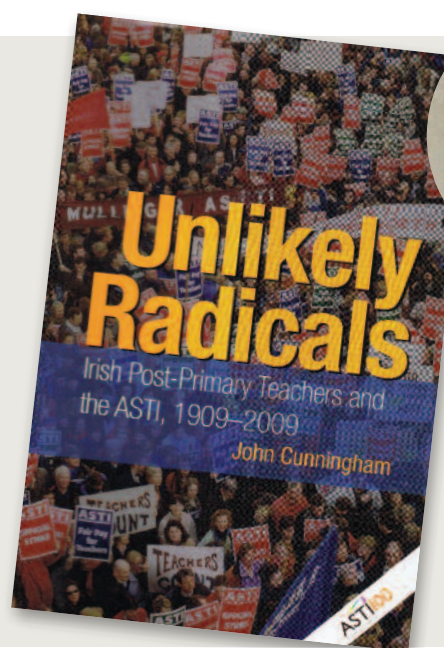
Ruth Coppinger TD, Anti-Austerity Alliance

Our schools should be well funded, high quality, equal and open to all with staff who are highly qualified, valued and well paid for their excellent work.

*We contacted Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, Labour, Sinn Féin, the People before Profit Alliance, the Anti-Austerity Alliance, Renua and the Social Democrats. Fine Gael declined to contribute, and at the time of going to press we had not received responses from Renua or the Social Democrats. It has not been possible to include individual TDs/independents. Further election features will be published at www.asti.ie.

The ASTI and 1916

An extract from *Unlikely Radicals: Irish Post-Primary Teachers and the ASTI, 1909–2009* by historian John Cunningham describes the crucial roles of the founding members of the ASTI in the foundation of the State.



Thomas MacDonagh, teacher and founder member of the ASTI, signatory to the 1916 Proclamation – executed 1916 (courtesy of the National Library of Ireland).

The ASTI has a close link to the 1916 Rising in Thomas MacDonagh, who was a founding member of the Association in 1909 while teaching in St Colman's College, Fermoy. In 1916 he was a commandant in the Easter Rising and one of the seven signatories of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic. He was later executed in Kilmainham Gaol for his

part in the Rising.

The extract below from *Unlikely Radicals: Irish Post-Primary Teachers and the ASTI, 1909–2009* by historian John Cunningham describes the political activities of Thomas MacDonagh and other founding ASTI members:

“ Establishing the ASTI

The period during which the ASTI was founded and fortified was one of considerable upheaval in Irish society: during its first half decade in existence, Labour, feminist and cultural nationalist movements became firmly established, while tens of thousands mobilised into rival volunteer militias to oppose and defend home rule; during its second half decade, tens of thousands joined the rush to the trenches of the First World War, while others took advantage of Britain's distraction to try to establish an independent Irish republic; during its third half decade, there was a great post-war revolutionary ferment and the two Irish states were established.

These events formed part of the context for early ASTI activity, and, as one might expect of educated men and women concerned about social justice, members also participated in other movements of the era, some losing their lives as a result. Thomas MacDonagh, later executed for his part in the 1916 Rising, was one such. A poet and a Gaelic League activist, he began his teaching career at St Kieran's College, Kilkenny, in 1901, where he succeeded another 'short-term' assistant master, Francis (Sheehy) Skeffington. In 1903, he took a position at St Colman's College, Fermoy, where he remained until he joined Pádraic Pearse in establishing Scoil Éanna in

1908. MacDonagh maintained contact with his former colleagues – fellow Gaelic Leaguer, P. J. Kennedy [the first ASTI President], in particular – so he was an early link between the Munster and Dublin elements of the new Association. Another founder and Gaelic Leaguer with a varied teaching career was Éamon de Valera, who was elected chairman of the ASTI's Leinster Provincial Council in 1910. Having taught at Blackrock, its sister Rockwell College, and Belvedere, he was appointed a lecturer in mathematics at Carysfort in 1906. Evidently underpaid in that position, he took part-time teaching work at a number of other institutions – Dominican College, Eccles Street; Loreto College, Stephen's Green; Holy Cross College, Clonliffe; the Catholic University – as well as acting as an examiner for the Intermediate Board and for the new National University. De Valera joined Thomas MacDonagh at the barricades in 1916 but survived to become Taoiseach and President of Ireland.

Loss of employment was a consequence of radical engagement for others, including the Cork feminist and republican activist Mary MacSwiney, who was unsuccessfully represented by the ASTI in 1916, following her dismissal from St Angela's Convent School by Ursuline nuns embarrassed at her political profile.

”

Unlikely Radicals: Irish Post-Primary Teachers and the ASTI, 1909–2009 by John Cunningham is available from Cork University Press.

To commemorate the Easter Rising in its Centenary year, the January meeting of the ASTI Central Executive Council (CEC) will take place in the Mansion House, Dublin, where the rules of the ASTI were first drawn up and the Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland was formally established. Other events will be announced shortly.

Meet the new General Secretary

ASTIR catches up with the new General Secretary, Kieran Christie.



New ASTI General Secretary Kieran Christie.

Leaving behind a 28-year career as a teacher to become ASTI General Secretary was a big decision for Kieran Christie, who thoroughly enjoyed the daily interactions and challenges of school life.

"A school becomes your community and in many ways moving on reminds you that teaching is so much more than a job," says the Sligo teacher, who adds that the decision was prompted by his other great passion in life – trade unionism.

"I've been an active trade unionist throughout my career. I have served as ASTI school steward, branch chair, Central Executive Council member, Standing Committee representative and Honorary National Organiser. I believe deeply in the power of solidarity and collective action."

Contrarian viewpoint

Kieran is confident about the ASTI's future: "The ASTI enjoys the benefit of a loyal and resolute membership where trust and confidence are the mainstay. I believe that we have often provided a strong and contrarian viewpoint within the wider trade union movement and I see no reason why this can't continue. A trade union is going nowhere unless it is willing to act decisively. I think that forging a reputation that the ASTI is trustworthy

Kieran taught for 28 years before taking up the post of ASTI General Secretary.

while resolute and forthright is in our members' best interests.

However, I also believe that a concerted effort towards teacher union unity has become an imperative like never before. Our recent campaign in partnership with the TUI illustrated what a force to be reckoned with we could become".

Reclaiming lost ground

In terms of his own plans for the union, Kieran wants to build on the ASTI's strengths while ensuring that the union's efforts focus on members' core issues: "Protecting and enhancing the terms and conditions of employment of teachers must always be front and centre of all that the ASTI seeks to achieve. In that respect, the recession of recent years has chipped away at some of the hard-won gains that were achieved over several decades. The priority now, as the economy improves, must be to reclaim lost ground". "Reform and modernisation of the union, like in all aspects of life, will be an ongoing process," says Kieran, who adds that "regular enhancement of ASTI services and sustained high standards in the management of members' casework will be a key objective as my tenure as General Secretary develops. There has been a long tradition of excellence in the

services and support provided to ASTI members from Head Office and I am determined that this will continue under my stewardship."

Media and communications are an important aspect of the union's activities for Kieran. "Our messaging must always be clear and delivered by trained and articulate spokespeople. The ASTI must also stay focused as a campaigning union. Campaigns underpinned with thorough and meticulous planning and research are now vital tools in changing and influencing agendas. We must also constantly review how we communicate with members, so as to reflect changes in the way teachers get their news and keep themselves informed."

One area of disappointment for Kieran is unequal gender representation in the ASTI: "Despite the fact that the membership is mainly female, Standing Committee has a substantial majority of male representatives. I believe this can and should be tackled".

How I escape from it all....

"A brisk walk on the sandy beaches of Rosses Point or Strandhill on a warm summer's evening is as close to a heavenly experience as I can imagine. I am also a wood turner of modest ability. Gaelic games and soccer are my major sporting interests and I consume countless hours absorbing news and current affairs. I have a soft spot for crime fiction and political or sporting biographies."

CV



Kieran is from north Sligo and attended a small vocational school in the village of Grange. He later attended Thomond College of Education (later subsumed into the University of Limerick) and became a teacher of design and communication graphics, materials technology (wood) and construction. He taught in St Attracta's Community School, Tubercurry, from 2002 to 2015, having previously taught at Banada Secondary School, which was amalgamated with the Marist Convent to form St Attracta's. As well as being a trade union activist throughout his teaching career, Kieran was elected (by teachers) to the Teaching Council in 2010.



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Cost: €695 (inclusive of travel, (hand luggage), hotel and entrance fees)

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Delivering equality in schools – is DEIS working?

New research from the ESRI sheds light on whether the DEIS scheme to address disadvantage in schools is effective. MOIRA LEYDON explains.



DEIS – Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools – is the strategy for combating educational disadvantage in primary and second-level schools. It is a targeted intervention based on the socio-economic profile of students in schools. The rationale for targeting is the existence of a “multiplier effect”, whereby students attending schools with high numbers of socially disadvantaged students have poorer educational outcomes in terms of achievement levels in State examinations and other assessments, attendance, retention, and progression to higher education. So, is DEIS working? Are outcomes getting better since the introduction of DEIS in 2006? A recent study, *Learning from the Evaluation of DEIS*, by the ESRI, provides the answer: DEIS is working, but inequalities persist.

Findings

Some findings from the ESRI report:

- there are 193 second-level schools (approximately 26% of second-level schools) in DEIS
- significant improvements were seen in literacy and numeracy at primary level, with greater increases in literacy
- significant narrowing of the gap in average Junior Certificate grades, as well as in English, was seen between students in DEIS and non-DEIS schools; however, there was no evident improvement among students in DEIS schools in Junior Certificate maths
- the gap in retention rates between DEIS and non-DEIS schools has narrowed from 22% in 1995 to 10.5% in 2008. At present, senior cycle completion is 92.5% in non-DEIS schools compared to 82% in DEIS schools
- attendance is improving but non-attendance is 12.5% higher in DEIS schools: 27% of students in DEIS schools were absent for 20 or more days in 2010/11
- progression to third level for DEIS students is roughly half of that for non-DEIS students: 24% compared to 49%
- in 2015, 93% of DEIS schools provided JCSP, 63% provided LCA, and 67% provided TY.

The ESRI report concludes that on indicators such as attendance, retention and Junior Certificate performance, there is evidence that DEIS is making a difference. However, the ESRI points out that lack of data, particularly on the achievement of disadvantaged students in non-DEIS schools, renders it difficult to make conclusive comparative judgements. The report also concurs with previous findings from Inspectorate reports concerning the need for more effective planning processes in schools: planning across DEIS schools is found to be variable across these areas – attendance, retention, progression, examination attainment, literacy, numeracy, partnerships with parents and others.

Challenging school environments

The ESRI report provides an important analysis of the complex interplay of factors leading to some schools having significant numbers of disadvantaged students. Around half of second-level students do not attend their nearest school: this is particularly the case in the greater Dublin area and in other large cities. DEIS schools have a much higher prevalence of students with learning/intellectual disabilities. Similarly, 49% of DEIS schools report that more than one-quarter of their students have emotional/behavioural difficulties compared to 4% in non-DEIS schools. They are also more likely to have young people from immigrant backgrounds and the Traveller community. The report also found that DEIS schools have more challenging disciplinary climates.

Policy recommendations

Mixed ability classes

The ESRI report examines school practices that impact on student achievement, in particular that of streaming. While it notes that mixed-ability teaching is increasingly widespread, 40% of DEIS schools use ability grouping compared to 13% of non-DEIS schools. There is consistent evidence that such grouping is associated with lower achievement in State examinations and early school leaving. There is no evidence that students in higher ability classes perform better either. The ESRI longitudinal study of 900 students found that 60% of

students allocated to lower ability classes did not complete senior cycle compared to 19% in higher stream and 7% in mixed-ability classes. It also documented much poorer student:teacher relationships in lower stream classes.

Financing DEIS schools

Given the concentration and complexity of needs in DEIS schools, the report questions whether the current levels of funding are adequate to meet such needs. It also notes that cutbacks in education have disproportionately affected students in DEIS schools. Such schools cannot rely on 'voluntary contributions' from parents and hence have less overall funding. Secondly, cuts to services for Traveller students and to the English as a second language service have a greater impact in DEIS schools, where such students are concentrated. Thirdly, cuts to the Guidance Service have particularly affected DEIS students who do not have access to the 'social capital' and employment knowledge of other students, and therefore have greater reliance on guidance counsellors about post-school options.

Need to supplement targeting approach

The ESRI confirms what many second-level teachers and principals have been saying for years. Namely, that the cut-off point for designation as a DEIS school is too sharp, resulting in schools with relatively high levels of disadvantage 'failing' to meet DEIS eligibility. Moreover, significant

numbers of disadvantaged students attend non-DEIS schools, while the social mix of schools – DEIS and non-DEIS – will have changed in the decade since DEIS commenced. The ESRI concludes that there is a case for "tapering of funding to schools rather than a sharp withdrawal below a specified cut-off point".

Social mix of school matters

The social mix of a school is largely determined by parental choice, school admission policies and the social mix of the local area. There is not necessarily a neat mapping between a school and a local area, and the funding model must reflect this in terms of continuing to support DEIS schools and providing additional funding to non-DEIS schools.



Moira Leydon

Moira is Assistant General Secretary, Education and Research, with the ASTI.

For more information, see the ESRI website – www.esri.ie.



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A committed advocate for teachers

ASTIR pays tribute to Pat King, who retired as ASTI General Secretary at the end of 2015.



Pat King and Minister for Education and Skills Jan O'Sullivan TD at the launch of Education Matters 2015-2016.



Pat King with Jack O'Connor at an ICTU demonstration in 2010.



Pat King speaking to teachers on the picket line during a Junior Cycle strike day in January 2015.



ASTI President Máire G. Ní Chiarba makes a presentation to Pat King on behalf of Central Executive Council to mark his retirement.

Pat King was appointed General Secretary of the ASTI in 2010 having worked at ASTI Head Office as a Senior Industrial Relations Official and as Assistant General Secretary. Previous to this, Pat worked as a second-level teacher at Presentation School Terenure in Dublin. A long-time ASTI activist, Pat served in a number of representative roles in the ASTI, including Branch Chair and Honorary National Organiser. His work as an Industrial Relations Official included recruiting new teachers to the ASTI, co-ordinating and providing ASTI training events for activists, and supporting the ASTI branch structure.

He also looked after the ASTI's retirement and pension advice services for a number of years and co-ordinated the union's health and safety initiatives.

Activist

Pat organised a number of mass demonstrations during his tenure, including mobilising 12,000 ASTI members to protest outside the Dáil in December 2000 as part of the ASTI's pay dispute.

He worked on a number of key industrial relations cases over the years, including a landmark case in 2002 in which a school was found directly



Pat King speaking to members at an ASTI demonstration outside Dáil Éireann in December 2000.

liable – not just vicariously liable – for the sexual harassment of two teachers by students after the school failed to take adequate steps to prevent the harassment from occurring or reducing the extent of it. Pat was elected to the executive of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in 2011 and again in 2013.

As an activist and later as an official, Pat was deeply concerned about



Dublin South 2 retirement presentation to Maire McDonagh. Back row (from left): Cathal O'Gara, Pat Cahill, Geraldine Kenny, Ray Kennedy, Margaret Le Lu and Pat King. Front row (from left): Maire McDonagh and Margaret Walsh.

new teachers – particularly those affected by casualisation in the profession. His efforts on behalf of the ASTI played a key role in the achievement of CIDs for teachers after two years in a school (compared to four years under legislation).

We thank Pat for his work over the years and wish him well in his retirement.



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Have your say at Convention 2016

Everything you need to know if you're attending ASTI Annual Convention 2016.

Each Easter, approximately 500 ASTI members, teachers from all over the country, gather to determine the ASTI's policy priorities for the coming year. This year they are meeting in the Clayton Silver Springs Hotel, Cork, from Tuesday to Thursday, March 29 to 31, 2016.

Where can I get information about Convention?

The ASTI has a Convention 2016 page on its website. Visit www.asti.ie and go to Events.

Interested in attending Convention?

If you wish to attend Convention 2016 you should go along to your branch meeting. If you are unsure about when your branch meetings take place, ask your school steward for your branch's meeting schedule.

To attend Annual Convention you must be a delegate or an observer.

Please note that only delegates are allowed to speak and vote on Convention motions.

Branches usually select their Convention delegates at their January meetings. Each branch gets to send a number of delegates to Convention, and this number depends on the number of members in the branch. Branches must submit the names of their delegates to ASTI Head Office not later than January 31. In addition to branch delegates, members of the incoming Central Executive Council and Standing Committee attend Convention as delegates.

Costs

The cost of travel and an overnight subsistence allowance is paid to all delegates attending Convention. There is a registration fee of €30, which is paid direct to Head Office by delegates' branches.

Where to stay

Convention 2016 is being held in the Clayton Silver Springs Hotel, Cork. Convention hotel accommodation is limited and is allocated on a first come, first served basis. You can book accommodation in the Convention hotel by contacting them directly by phone on 021-452 9300 or by email at resmanager.silversprings@claytonhotels.com. Please quote 'ASTI Convention 2016' when booking to avail of the special rate. For details of the special rate and details of other hotels and guesthouses located in the surrounding area, see the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.

Can I bring my children?

The ASTI organises child-minding facilities during Convention sessions for children of delegates aged between two and 12 years. Places must be reserved well in advance of Convention, not later than February 13, 2016. If you are attending, please book your children's place(s) as early as possible. For more information, visit www.asti.ie.

Convention Dinner

The Convention Dinner will take place on Tuesday March 29 in the Clayton Silver Springs Hotel in the Conference Centre. Tickets are available to purchase at a cost of €48, but if your branch reserves a table for 10 before March 11, it will cost only €380, a saving of €100. If your branch wishes to join with another branch to make up a table of 10, the branch should book under one branch's name by emailing info@asti.ie reference 'Annual Convention Dinner'. Payment for reserved tables of 10 must reach the ASTI Accounts Department on or before March 18, 2016.

A limited number of tickets may also be on sale on Tuesday March 29 in the Convention Centre lobby from 2.30pm-3.30pm at the standard cost of €48 per ticket. Book early to avoid disappointment.

Teachers in the spotlight

Key debates take place on teaching, education and the ASTI's role as a trade union during Convention. The ASTI Annual Convention attracts significant media attention and provides opportunities to highlight some of the key issues for second-level teachers, for example, young teachers' terms and conditions. Coverage focuses on key speeches made during Convention, including the President's address on Tuesday evening, and on key debates throughout the conference.

Topics for debate

Topics for debate are dictated by motions, which are submitted and selected at ASTI branch meetings. In other words, ASTI members get to decide what is debated at Annual Convention. Motions are presented to Convention and delegates speak to these motions. Branches normally decide on the topics they would like to see discussed at Annual Convention at their November branch meetings. A Convention Steering Committee, which consists of classroom teachers elected by Annual Convention each year, prepares a list of motions received from branches. The list is circulated to all branches before January 7. Branches are asked to prioritise motions for inclusion on the Convention agenda not later than January 31. They can also propose amendments to any of the motions circulated. Motions and amendments are considered again by Steering Committee in early February and a final agenda is drawn up.

Connect at Convention

The ASTI encourages the use of social media during open debates. Social media platforms Twitter and Facebook allow the ASTI and delegates attending Convention to spread the news to their colleagues who cannot attend.

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Setting the agenda

Steering Committee has a crucial role to play in the planning and organisation of ASTI Annual Convention.



ASTI Steering Committee. Back row (from left): Deirdre MacDonald, Noelle Moran, Diarmaid de Paor (Deputy General Secretary) and Miriam Duggan. Front row (from left): Susie Hall, Ed Byrne (Vice President), Máire G. Ní Chiarba (President), Pat King (then General Secretary) and Mary Lyndon. Not pictured: Philip Irwin (Immediate Past President).

What is Steering Committee?

The ASTI Steering Committee looks after the motions and agenda for ASTI Annual Convention. Steering Committee has an important role in ensuring that there is a clear and logical agenda set out and adhered to for each ASTI Annual Convention. Members are elected to Steering Committee each year at ASTI Annual Convention.

The current members of the ASTI Steering Committee are:

- ASTI President
- ASTI Vice President
- ASTI Immediate Past President
- ASTI General Secretary
- ASTI Deputy General Secretary
- Miriam Duggan
- Susie Hall
- Mary Lyndon
- Deirdre MacDonald
- Noelle Moran

How does Steering Committee select motions for Convention?

Branches submit their draft motions for the following year's Annual Convention to ASTI Head Office by November 30. The first meeting of the Steering Committee is held in early December.

Steering Committee could receive as many as 300 motions for consideration each year, and they must determine whether or not each motion submitted is 'out of order'. The guidelines that determine if a motion is 'out of order' are available in the Convention Handbook given to delegates each year. In brief, the guidelines state that in order that motions are not ruled 'out of order':

- they must arrive in ASTI Head Office before the deadline
- they must ask Convention to declare an opinion or call for a course of action or both
- they must be properly worded and factually correct
- they must conform to the objects of the ASTI and must be capable of implementation as set out in the ASTI Rules and Constitution.

All motions sent in by branches that meet these criteria are sent back to

branches as a Preliminary Agenda and branches are asked to choose their eight favourite motions and to list any amendments they wish to make to the motions.

Steering Committee then meets again in early February to consider which motions were most popular with members in branches and the amendments suggested by branches. They rank the popularity of motions based on a points system and discard any amendments that are out of order, or that significantly change the meaning of a motion. They then choose between 15 and 20 of the most popular motions for discussion at Convention that year. If an issue has recently become relevant they may choose a lower-ranking motion relating to that issue for inclusion in the agenda. Steering Committee then draws up the final agenda for Convention, and the motions are placed into the relevant areas of the agenda, e.g., a motion on an equality issue would be taken after the report from the Equal Opportunities Committee.

What happens if two branches have the same idea for a motion?

If several branches send in motions that are very similar, for example if five different branches propose a motion asking for a new system of balloting members, Steering Committee will combine these into one composite motion and the composite motion will be listed in the Preliminary Agenda.

What happens if there is an urgent issue that needs to be discussed at Convention?

If something very important happens in the time between the submission of motions and Convention, or even during Convention, Standing Committee may submit an Urgent Motion on the issue for consideration for inclusion in the agenda by Steering Committee. This motion must be approved by Steering Committee before it can be included in the Convention agenda.

What does the Steering Committee do during Convention?

Steering Committee meets a few times during Convention, to ensure that the agenda is being followed and to rearrange the agenda if necessary; for example, if there was not time to take a motion on Tuesday it may be moved to Wednesday's session.

Posts of responsibility directive

The ASTI has issued a directive regarding posts of responsibility. The directive on posts of responsibility supports the ASTI in its demand for the reinstatement of all post of responsibility options.



Q. Why does the ASTI have a directive prohibiting members from engaging in voluntary post of responsibility work?

A. In 2009 the then Government implemented a moratorium on posts of responsibility in second-level schools. The moratorium means that where teachers with posts of responsibility retire or change jobs, these posts remain unfilled (except in the case of some Assistant Principal posts where a limited alleviation of the moratorium applies). The moratorium has led to the collapse of the posts structure in second-level schools. Posts such as year heads, exam co-ordinators and school library co-ordinator remain unfilled. The ASTI has been campaigning to have the moratorium lifted since 2009. In the context of increased workload for teachers and principals, and a decline in job satisfaction (according to research by Millward Brown), it is essential that teachers are not put under pressure to undertake post of responsibility work on a voluntary basis. The directive prevents this from happening and acts to strengthen the ASTI's campaign to have all posts of responsibility restored.

Q. What is the 'Schedule of Posts' referred to in the directive?

A. The 'Schedule of Posts' is the school's schedule of posts as defined on November 23, 2015, and as approved by the school's Board of Management (Manager) in accordance with the relevant Department circular letters. School authorities are required to engage in transparent consultation with all staff where it is proposed to amend the schedule.

For more information, see the posts of responsibility FAQs in the campaigns section of the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.

Q. If a particular duty or range of duties was previously on the schedule (e.g., library) but was removed at the most recent review of posts (in accordance with the consultative procedures set out in the relevant circular letters), can I perform such duties on a voluntary basis?

A. Yes. As the duties are not listed on the current Schedule of Posts they are not comprehended by the terms of the directive.

Q. I currently have a special duties post and I am in receipt of the appropriate pensionable allowance. I have been asked to carry out the duties of an assistant principal. Does the directive prohibit this?

A. Yes. The allowance for an assistant principal's post is greater than a special duties post, reflective of a larger workload.

Q. I do not have a post of responsibility. I have been performing some duties listed on the Schedule of Posts on a voluntary basis. Can I continue to perform such duties?

A. No. This is a breach of the directive.

Q. Can I perform such duties on a voluntary basis if I have been awarded some time off on my timetable to do so?

A. No. If the duties are listed on the Schedule of Posts and are not being performed by a teacher who has been appointed in accordance with the normal appointment procedure and is being paid the appropriate post of responsibility pensionable allowance, then it is a breach of the directive.

RSTA in action

The RSTA is pursuing full pension restoration.

The timescale for pension restoration is too long and the first tranche is too small. All avenues are being explored to try and get amendments to the FEMPI legislation.

The campaign to retain pension parity is ongoing to protect the value of pensions in the future. The right to representation is a burning issue and in this regard the RSTA President has written to Ministers Bruton, Howlin and Nash, and sent a copy of the letter to Patricia King, General Secretary of the ICTU, seeking clarification on the right

of representation of retired public servants.

The unions are precluded from representing retirees due to the Industrial Relations Act 1990.

The RSTA is very active, considering its relative size, within the Retired Public Servants Alliance.

The campaign goes on but numerical strength is vital; consequently, we appeal to all retired secondary teachers to join the RSTA. The cost is minimal and the cause is very worthwhile.

RSTA Membership Application/Renewal

| | | | |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| First Name: | <input type="text"/> | Surname: | <input type="text"/> |
| Address: | <input type="text"/> | | |
| Home Phone: | <input type="text"/> | Mobile: | <input type="text"/> |
| Email: | <input type="text"/> | RSTA Branch: | <input type="text"/> |

Annual Subscription €24. Payment options:

1. Standing Order: Please complete the set-up form below and send to the RSTA National Treasurer.
2. Cheque: Please make the cheque payable to "RSTA" and send with this form to the RSTA National Treasurer.
3. Online Bank Payment: To make a transfer or set up a Standing Order online please refer to the Standing Order Form below for details of the RSTA Bank Account.

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO:

RSTA National Treasurer: Mrs Muriel McNicholas, Cordarragh, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo.

E: murielmcnicholas@gmail.com. M: 085-118 1330.

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS using black or blue pen.

To The Manager: Date:

(Name of Member's Bank)

Bank Branch and Full Address:

I hereby authorise and request you to DEBIT my account.

Bank Account No: National Sort Code (NSC):

Account Name: with the amount of €24. Amount in words: Twenty Four Euro

Frequency: **Annually** Until Further Notice Start Date for payment:

And to CREDIT the account held in the name of: **Retired Secondary Teachers' Association AIB Bank, Sutton Branch**

NSC: 93-23-61 Account Number: 12729-080 IBAN: IE55 AIBK 9323 6112 7290 80 BIC: AIBKIE2D

Member's Name & RSTA Branch:

(To identify the member's payment on the RSTA bank statement)

Member's Signature: Date:

(You can cancel this Standing Order instruction at any time by writing to your Bank. The amount of the payment authorised above may not be altered except by your instruction to your Bank.)

Call for research participants

Irish Post-Primary Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment is a study by ASTI member Marie Darmody under the supervision of Dr Zita Lysaght and Dr Michael O'Leary. The research is being conducted in partial fulfilment of the Doctorate in Education at St Patrick's College, Drumcondra. The purpose of this research is to elicit baseline data about Irish post-primary teachers' conceptions of assessment. Teachers' conceptions provide a lens for the translation of policy into practice. Therefore, when considering assessment reform, one needs to know what teachers believe about the nature and purpose of assessment.

Involvement in this research study will require you to complete an anonymous survey regarding your beliefs about assessment. You will be asked to respond to 27 statements and to indicate your level of agreement with each one on a scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Completion of the survey takes around 10 minutes. Involvement in a study such as this presents a unique opportunity to reflect upon your own beliefs and assumptions about assessment. It is hoped that this study will contribute to national understanding of assessment at post-primary level.

If you are interested in taking part in this research, please contact Marie Darmody at marie.darmody3@mail.dcu.ie.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation with this research.

All-Ireland maths challenge returns with €20,000 prize fund

Registration is now open for LearnStorm Ireland, the all-Ireland maths challenge with a prize fund of €20,000 for students and schools. Originally called MATHletes, the challenge was started in 2014 by technology entrepreneur Sean O'Sullivan and Khan Academy, with the goal of increasing students' competence and confidence in maths. To date, over 500 teachers throughout Ireland have participated, helping over 13,000 primary and secondary students complete four million extra minutes of learning maths skills.

MATHletes is returning in 2016 with a new name: LearnStorm Ireland. Starting in January, students can earn recognition for themselves and their schools by mastering maths skills on Khan Academy. At the same time, they'll build confidence to help them learn anything. LearnStorm is free, fun and accessible from anywhere. All students need to participate is an internet connection, so they can work on maths exercises in the classroom, at a library or at home in their own time, as well as during mid-term break and at weekends!

LearnStorm Ireland has €20,000 in great prizes up for grabs and students from each county will compete for their class, their school, their county and province, and for Ireland, to earn rewards for their hard work. As in previous years, students can earn invites to provincial and All-Ireland finals events, which are scheduled to take place after Easter.

LearnStorm Ireland is open to all students from fourth class to fifth year. LearnStorm Ireland officially kicks off on January 29, but signups are now open. Visit learnstorm.ie to learn more and sign up today!

School defibrillators must be regularly serviced

URGENT!

The Health Product Regulatory Authority (HPRA) is calling on organisations with an automated external defibrillator (AED) on their premises to ensure that the recommended safety and maintenance updates for the device are undertaken. The HPRA has identified approximately 940 defibrillators in Ireland where updates are needed immediately to ensure that devices will work as necessary in a lifesaving situation. The five models affected by this are:

| AED name | Manufacturer |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Lifepak CR Plus | Physio Control Inc. |
| Lifepak 1000 | Physio Control Inc. |
| AED Plus | Zoll |
| Samaritan PAD, 300, 300P | HeartSine |
| Samaritan 500P | HeartSine |



If your school is in possession of one of the above models, please review the maintenance history and contact the manufacturer or distributor to ensure that all necessary updates have been applied. If you are in any doubt as to the status of the AED, contact the manufacturer or supplier immediately.

In addition, the HPRA reminds owners of all AED devices that weather (temperatures/humidity) can affect a defibrillator's performance and all AEDs should be stored correctly and regularly checked during the winter months.

For more information or to download the HPRA advice leaflet on AEDs visit www.hpra.ie.

Bord Gáis Energy Student Theatre Awards

Bord Gáis Energy is calling on schools to submit their entries for the 2016 Bord Gáis Energy Student Theatre Awards before the closing date of 5.00pm, Friday January 29.

The Awards are open to all secondary school students. There are 12 categories, ranging from group categories such as best overall school musical, best overall school play and best set design, to individual categories such as best short scene script, best dramatic critique and best performances in a leading role (male and female).

Shortlisted schools will be invited to a special awards ceremony at the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre on May 5, 2016, and will also be in with a chance to perform on stage. Winning schools will share a prize fund, and receive a commemorative trophy and plaque for their school.

All class entrants will be automatically entered into a competition to win a class trip to *Annie* at the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre and individual entrants could win the chance to go to *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*.

To enter the awards, log on to bgesta.ie, where you can download an entry form to go with your written or video submission.


**WIN
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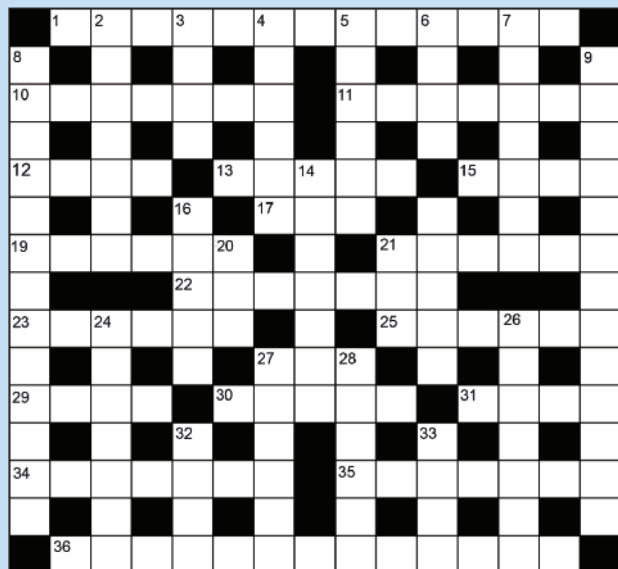
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ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 1601

The winner will receive €200

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. 1601, Think Media,
The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, February 12, 2016

CLUES ACROSS:

- 1 Useless, perhaps expensive item (5,8)
- 10 Claims there are beers around the limb (7)
- 11 Pressure mark on the pint rim (7)
- 12 Cocksure mugs! (4)
- 13 You might hear Julian Lloyd Webber play this instrument (5)
- 15 Joint ailment (4)
- 17 "Oh, you must wear your with a difference" (3) (Shakespeare: *Hamlet*)
- 19 The bosses could worry persistently! (6)
- 21 Spotted, a piece played in a mask (6)
- 22 Not on regular menu but particularly favoured (7)
- 23 Amount left after deductions (3,3)
- 25 Featherbrain (6)
- 27 The Boss in short (3)
- 29 I run into a destroyed building (4)
- 30 Shocked sounds from dying asps (5)
- 31 A die is cast by the assistant (4)
- 34 Lothario, gallant, Don Juan for example (7)
- 35 Harder on the ears (7)
- 36 94th ASTI Convention will be held in this hotel (6,7)

CLUES DOWN:

- 2 These kind of robberies cause delays (7)
- 3 Basic formatting tool used in html markup language (4)
- 4 Time for 36 across (6)
- 5 Be idle and safe to consume (6)
- 6 What remained in Pandora's box (4)
- 7 Kenya's capital (7)
- 8 Reached from Croke Park via Haddington Road! (9,4)
- 9 The very latest (5,2,3,3)
- 14 Midday meals (7)
- 16 Yes, say it with a literary composition (5)
- 18 Idols are well built (5)
- 20 Bond, for example (3)
- 21 down & 27 down: International Rugby Board Player of the Year 2015 (3,6)
- 24 Libyan city (7)
- 26 Fish cooked with gin! (7)
- 27 SEE 21 DOWN
- 28 Bare one's soul (4,2)
- 32 Ukrainian capital (4)
- 33 21 & 27 down is one (4)

Solution to ASTIR Crossword No. 1505**Across**

1. Broadband
9. Tiepin
10. Christie
11. Kieran
12. Ordeal
14. Try a
15. Sneer
16. On edge
18. Pat King
21. Bouncer
24. Teaset
26. Octet
30. Urdu
31. Ironed
32. Exhale
33. Charisma
34. Is nigh
35. Aldershot

Down

2. Rehire
3. Abides
4. Battle
5. No entry
6. Titian
7. Sporadic
8. On in years
11. Kyoto
13. Anti
17. Apathetic
19. Teaching
20. Nitre
22. User
23. Council
25. Eulogy
27. Tirade
28. Topics
29. Seem to

DID YOU MISS?

The political parties speak: who should you support?
Meet the new General Secretary

14
18

Congratulations

Congratulations to the winner of
Crossword No. 1505:
Conor Pentony, St Louis
Carrickmacross, Carrickmacross,
Co. Monaghan. Monaghan
Branch member.



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