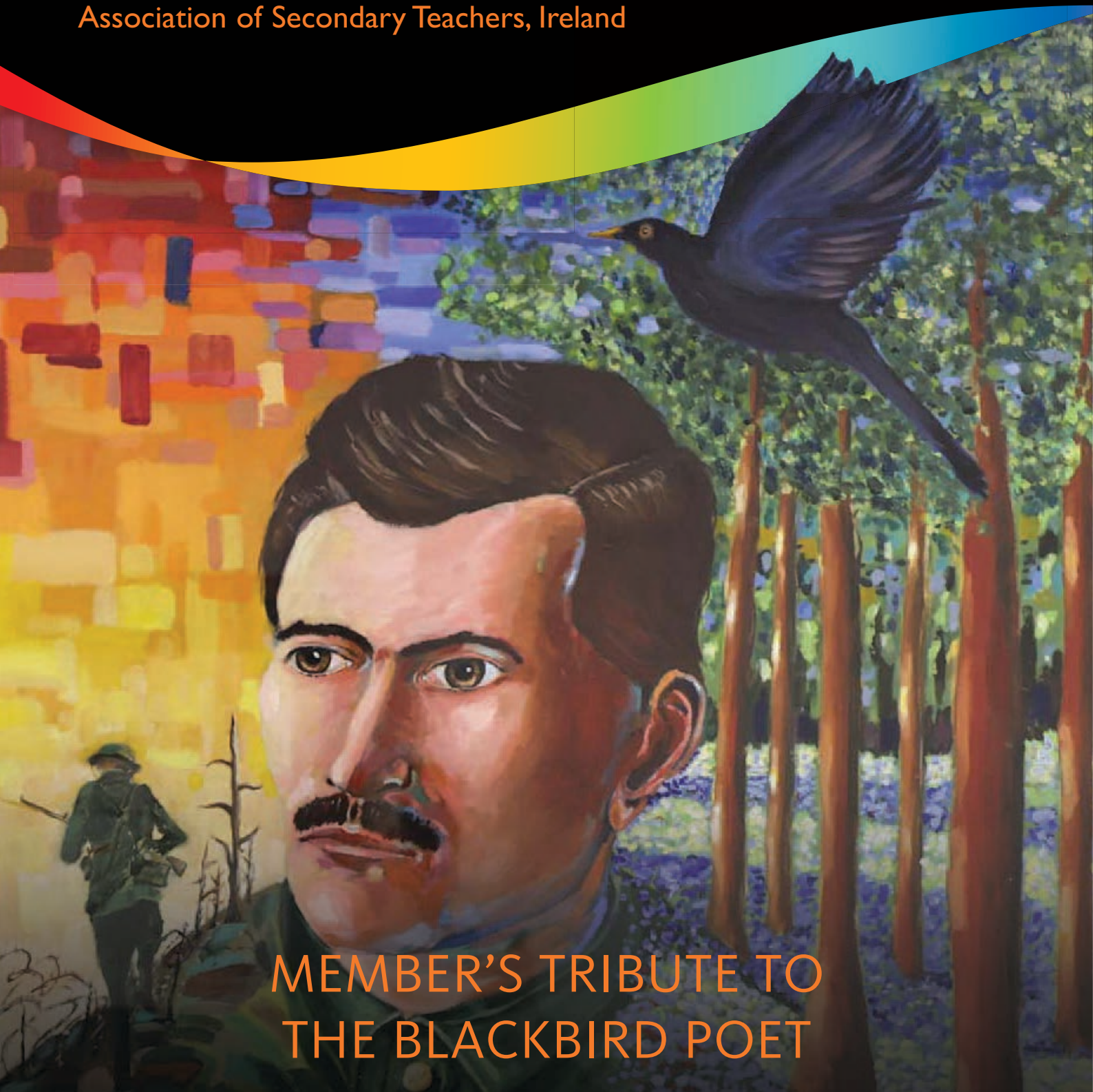


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**ASTI**
A century of service

ASTIR

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland



MEMBER'S TRIBUTE TO THE BLACKBIRD POET

Lead Worker
Representatives in schools

OECD report on
Senior Cycle review

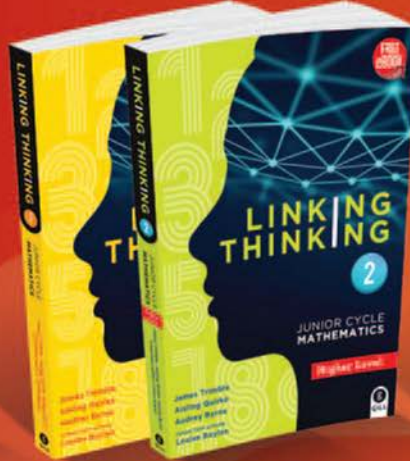
Promoting
teachers' health

GILL EDUCATION NEW TITLES COMING 2021

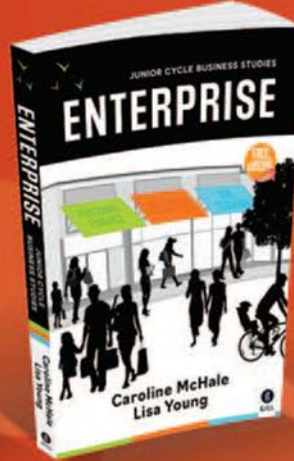
NEW FOR JUNIOR CYCLE



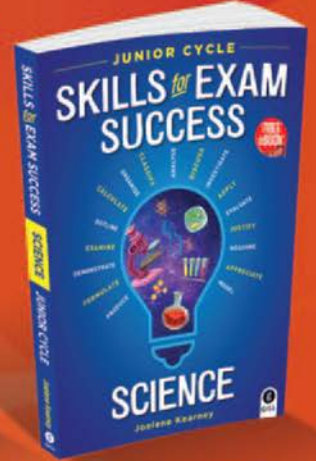
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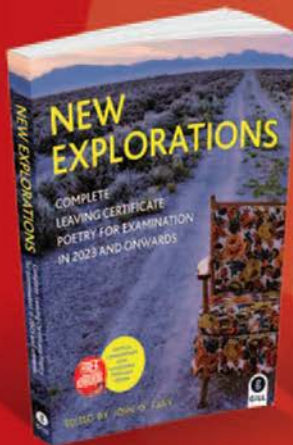


BUSINESS STUDIES



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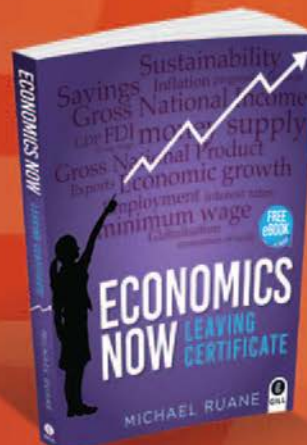
NEW FOR LEAVING CERTIFICATE



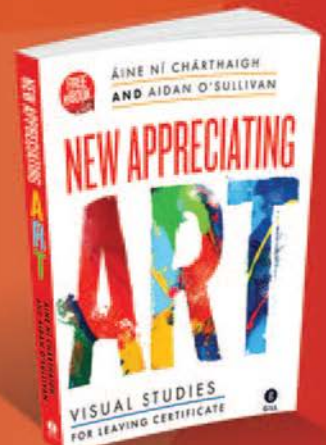
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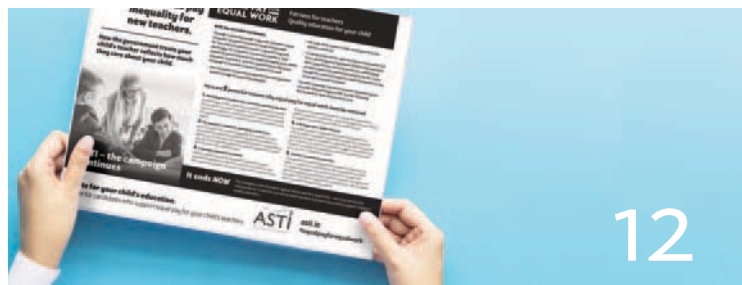
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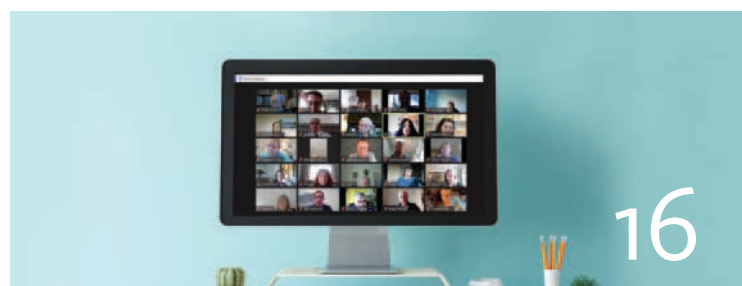
IRISH

CONTENTS

- 4 From the President's desk
Hope in bleak times
- 4 General Secretary's update
The effects of underfunding
- 5 News
- 10 News features
 - 10 *Tribute to the blackbird poet*
 - 12 *Highlighting 'new entrant' pay for 10 years*
 - 14 *Taking the lead*
 - 16 *Coming together online*
- 17 Feature
 - 17 *Supporting education around the world*
- 18 ASTI in the media
Protecting teachers and students
- 20 Features
 - 20 *Your voice makes a difference*
 - 22 *Protecting and promoting teachers' health: an imperative*
 - 24 *Education in Ireland: An OECD assessment of Senior Cycle review*
- 26 RSTA news
- 27 Convention 2021
ASTI online Annual Convention 2021
- 28 Obituaries
- 29 Noticeboard
- 30 Crossword



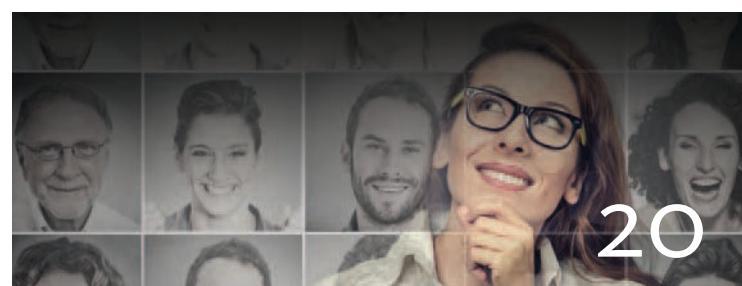
12



16



18



20



24

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HOPE IN BLEAK TIMES

"If we don't control the surge, we will have a major problem coping, there is no healthcare service that could cope with what Italy has just gone through. You need not to get this disease. You need to do that by keeping away from other people."

Dr Catherine Motherway, March 2020

As I write this on day four of 2021, the country is experiencing the most unimaginable and bleakest of circumstances. Numbers of Covid-19 cases have multiplied enormously; while yesterday's figure of 4,962 was extremely alarming, the news of 6,110 cases today is staggering. Further increases are predicted.

The fearful trepidation experienced by teachers in schools since August has never left or abated; anxiety and concern have now re-emerged with vigour. High community numbers will potentially be reflected in school cases. As a new variant surfaced before Christmas, the ASTI wrote to Minister Foley to question the implications of faster transmission rates of a mutated virus, where younger people may be more susceptible. There are major concerns that measures being implemented in schools may not adequately protect teachers, students and staff.

Exams

The ASTI is committed to ensuring that State exams will run in June. The process of calculated grades undertaken last summer was a once-off commitment. The 2021 class must have State exams that are independently set and corrected in a nationally standardised manner encompassing impartiality and fairness. Exam papers will need to be adjusted to compensate for the uncontrollable circumstances since the start of the pandemic. Any choices given and any changes made should proportionally reduce the workload for students.

We are also steadfast in our view that the Junior Cycle exam will take place. It was unfortunate that circumstances did not allow for the holding of exams in summer 2020, but we demand that both the Junior and Leaving Cert examinations 2021 will be run in a manner as close to normal as possible.

Jane Craig Elliot

I wish to express my deepest condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of the late Jane Craig Elliot. Her sad and unexpected recent passing has left the most heartfelt sorrow among many. As a Standing Committee representative, active branch member, devoted teacher and dedicated ASTI member, Jane was intelligent, gracious and a beautiful lady, who lit up life with colour and smiles. The sincere sympathies of the ASTI are extended to her family and many friends.

2021

The union will continue to do its best to protect you and your working conditions in 2021. Whatever lies ahead, everyone anticipates better times as we begin our journey through a new calendar year. Hope is slowly rising on the horizon.



Ann Piggott

ASTI President

THE EFFECTS OF UNDERFUNDING

The President comments elsewhere in this edition of ASTIR on the work being done to manage our way through these extraordinary times. The day will come when ASTI members will be able to look back on their contribution to the national response with pride. With the news of a vaccine rollout programme in the not-too-distant future, minds are beginning to turn to the thereafter. Repairing the damage when the pandemic is over will be an enormous task. Irish schools have long been the poor relations in terms of proper resourcing compared to their OECD counterparts. The high-level data in that respect is well known and I don't propose to rehearse it again here. It is often the case that, when you look deeper into published data, the full implications become clear. A case in point is data published within the PISA 2018 results, long pre-dating the pandemic, which would be startling except that we have had to put up with this for many years. Some 44.8% of Irish students were in schools hindered by a lack of teaching staff compared to the OECD average of 27.1%. Physical infrastructure or the lack thereof featured prominently too. Here the hindrance was in the order of 44.6% rather than the OECD average of 33.1%. The inadequacy of the physical infrastructure that was available ran significantly higher too (40.7% compared to an OECD average of 32.5%). It is undoubtedly a certainty that the manner in which schools have been stripped and reshaped during the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated these problems. For our part in the ASTI, we will continually highlight the entire range of severe challenges within the system and argue for significant additional investment. This is the only means by which transformative change can happen. We must have a school system that allows every student to realise their full potential.

Unions matter

2020 will be remembered for a long time for many reasons. In workplaces, the need for active trade unions will be one of them. The importance of unions in giving workers a collective voice in the workplace has been underscored in many ways. The Return to Work Safely Protocol, the election of Lead Worker Representatives, the insistence on investment and enhanced safety measures, and so on, have been driven by union pressure in the education sector. In the ASTI, as always, we continually advocate on our members' behalf on all matters associated with their terms and conditions. A significant increase in our membership during 2020 (6%) stands as testament to the value and quality of the work that we do, whether in Head Office or on the part of our many elected representatives and activists throughout the country. Members are asked to make sure to recruit every available teacher who may be recruited in your school. The ASTI is the Professional Union for Professional Teachers. We are stronger together.



Kieran Christie

ASTI General Secretary

ASTI GENERAL SECRETARY ADDRESSES OIREACHTAS COMMITTEE



ASTI General Secretary Kieran Christie with Paul Kehoe TD, Chair of the Oireachtas Committee.



ASTI General Secretary Kieran Christie addressed the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in November.

ASTI General Secretary Kieran Christie, along with other teacher union leaders, addressed the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in November.

In his opening statement, Kieran outlined the importance of ensuring the health and safety of students, teachers and other school personnel, and highlighted the ASTI's request for intensive daily monitoring of the progression of the Covid-19 virus in schools. He also outlined the importance of the inspection model piloted by the Department of Education in conjunction with the Health and Safety Authority, and called for it to be rolled out nationally without further delay.

The General Secretary also told the Joint Committee that the ASTI is

dismayed that teachers and students who are vulnerable to Covid-19 in terms of their health or personal circumstances have been required to attend schools, and no remote options or reasonable accommodations have been implemented to allow them to participate in their work or studies in a more appropriate setting.

Finally, he reminded the Committee that ASTI members recently voted to take industrial action unless the Government immediately addresses key Covid-19 issues in schools, including rapid testing and turnaround, appropriate resources for schools to ensure continuation of learning where there are school closures/self isolation, a redefinition of close contacts for school settings, and appropriate arrangements for teachers categorised as 'high risk'.

Irish students among top performers in maths and science

Second-year Irish students are among the top performers in Europe in mathematics and science. Moreover, student performance in these subjects is stable, with Irish students consistently performing at a high level, especially in mathematics. These findings were published in December 2020 in the 7th Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) report.

TIMSS looks at the performance of Irish fourth class primary students and second year second-level students in mathematics and science. Students are assessed across the four content areas for mathematics: number, algebra, geometry, and data and probability. Likewise, in science it assesses across biology, physics, chemistry, and Earth science.

In mathematics, the mean score for Irish students was 524 – significantly above the TIMSS centre-point of 500. Students in Ireland significantly outperformed students in 26 out of 39 countries. In science, the mean score was 523 – also significantly above the TIMSS centre-point of 500. Students in Ireland significantly outperformed students in 23 out of 39 countries.

A marked feature of Irish students' performance was the small gender differences compared to other countries. Similarly, lower-achieving students performed relatively higher compared to peers. However, the report found that higher-achieving students were underperforming compared to peers.

In her statement on the publication of the TIMSS Report, the Minister for Education and Skills, Norma Foley TD, said that concentrated efforts are required to improve the performance of our higher-performing students. High-quality continuing professional development for teachers, which incorporates a specific focus on extending higher-achieving students, dedicated resources, and on promoting skills in mathematics and science, including digital learning

skills, will be part of the Department's response to the report's findings. She added: "This high performance reflects the commitment and hard work of our school communities but also the significant efforts that have been put into the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, curricular review and redevelopment, the STEM Education Policy Statement and the Digital Strategy for Schools".

The ASTI has repeatedly expressed concern that across subject areas, not just in mathematics, Junior Cycle subject specifications need to be revisited to address the need to challenge higher-performing students. The Programme for Government commits to implementing a strategy to support gifted and talented students at both primary and post-primary levels.

What is TIMSS?

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) is an international study conducted every four years by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, a non-profit organisation based in The Hague. It assesses the mathematics and science skills of students at fourth class in primary school and in second year at post-primary level. TIMSS reports on students' mean scores relative to a TIMSS centre-point of 500, providing a solid measure of trends over time. TIMSS also collects contextual data on schools. At second level, it involved 39 countries and 288,000 students. The Education Research Centre administers the survey on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills.

Loss of a colleague



ASTI Standing Committee member Jane Craig Elliott sadly passed away in November. Jane taught in St Patrick's College, Cavan, and represented Region 12 – Cavan, Monaghan, Dundalk, Drogheda on ASTI Standing Committee. The ASTI extends its deepest condolences to her husband Simon, daughter Katie, son Jack and wider family. Jane will be sorely missed by all in the ASTI, her work colleagues and her wide circle of friends. May she rest in peace.

Second remote Lead Worker Representative seminar

Every workplace in the country is required to appoint at least one Lead Worker Representative (LWR). The LWR will work in collaboration with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and monitor adherence to those measures, and to be involved in communicating the health advice around Covid-19 in the workplace. For more information on the role of the LWR, see page 14.

The second remote LWR seminar is scheduled for Monday, February 1, at 7.30pm. To register, please contact eileen@asti.ie. We would be delighted to see previous and new attendees at this seminar.

ASTI SUPPORTS DEBENHAM'S WORKERS



Mandate Trade Union General Secretary Gerry Light with Debenhams workers protesting outside the Henry Street store.

The ASTI recently made a donation of €10,000 to the Debenhams workers to be paid through their union Mandate.

The ASTI has previously expressed its full support for the Debenhams workers, adding its voice to the campaign calling on the Government to introduce legislation to protect terms and conditions of employment in the event of receiverships and liquidations of businesses.

Other recent donations made by the ASTI include €1,000 to Focus Ireland, €1,000 to Our Lady's Hospice and €2,000 to the Simon Community.

Career break/job share – deadline and changes to scheme

The deadline for applications for career break and job share for the 2021/22 school year is February 1, 2021.

Job share

Job sharing is the sharing of a whole-time position on a 50:50 basis, or a reduction of hours to 50% of a whole-time teacher, i.e., 11 hours per week teaching. The minimum period for which a job-sharing arrangement may occur is one school year.

Career break

The main objective of the career break scheme is to facilitate applicants in the areas of:

- personal development
- voluntary service overseas
- accompany spouse/partner on diplomatic/military posting
- education
- public representation
- childcare/dependent care, and
- self-employment.

A career break shall be a period of not less than one school year and may be extended on an annual basis provided the total period of the career break does not exceed five years at any one time.

Application forms

Full information and application forms are available in Circular Letter 0054/2019 – Career Break Scheme – Chapter 7, and Job Sharing Scheme – Chapter 8.

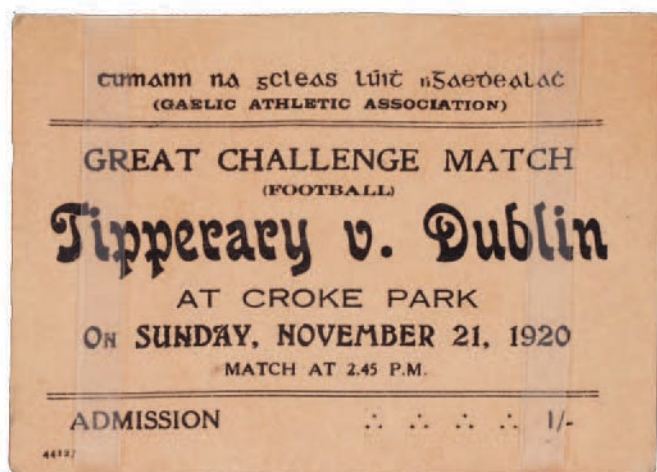
ASTI SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

The ASTI Scholarship Award is open to ASTI members who are undertaking or wish to undertake further third-level studies. The programme of study can be either full-time or part-time. Two successful applicants will receive €2,000 each to fund their studies. Applications will be determined by a selection committee comprised of ASTI officers. The criteria for selection are:

- relevance of proposed course to the professional lives of teachers and second-level education
- potential for study to inform the ongoing policy agenda and work of the ASTI, and
- potential for the research to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

The closing date for the ASTI Scholarship Award 2021 is April 30, 2021. The application form is available at www.asti.ie/member-benefits/awardsgrants/.

GAA MUSEUM LAUNCHES FREE HISTORY RESOURCES TO REMEMBER BLOODY SUNDAY



The GAA Museum at Croke Park has launched a free suite of interactive learning resources for secondary schools, to enhance students' knowledge and understanding of the events around Bloody Sunday 100 years on.

The history resources are available free of charge to all secondary schools. They include: an education pack; a series of online video and podcast lectures from leading Irish historians; and, an interactive virtual classroom session with a GAA Museum tour guide on the topic of Bloody Sunday.

The secondary school history resources are being launched as part of the GAA Museum's Bloody Sunday centenary programme commemorating the 100th anniversary of the tragic events that unfolded on November 21, 1920, and their impact on Irish history.

The education pack, which contains biographies of significant figures in the history of the GAA, can be posted to teachers in hard copy or sent digitally via email, and can be used to accompany existing curriculum textbooks. The online resources include a video and podcast lecture series with leading Irish historians speaking about the events of Bloody Sunday, the War of Independence and other key moments in Irish history and sport. These talks were recorded as part of the GAA Summer School and Lecture Series and will be of particular interest to teachers with Leaving Certificate history classes.

Presentation topics include: 'Atrocity and Atonement: The Civil War and the Rise of Kerry's Greatest Team' (video) with Dr Richard McElligott (DKIT); 'Setting the Scene: Overview of the War of Independence in Ireland, 1920' (podcast) with Prof. Diarmuid Ferriter (UCD); 'Killing and Bloody Sunday Morning' (video) with Dr Anne Dolan (Trinity College); and, 'Sport and Revolution: The Irish Case,' with Dr Will Murphy (DCU).

The GAA Museum has also created a virtual live classroom session with a GAA Museum tour guide. These sessions include an overview of the events of Bloody Sunday, a short film about the GAA Museum's new 'Remembering Bloody Sunday' exhibition and a Q&A session. The virtual classroom sessions will be conducted via Microsoft Teams, must be booked in advance, and are subject to availability. They will also require a good internet connection but can be tailored to teachers' class times.

For more information on the schools programme, visit crokepark.ie/bloodysundayforschools.

TEACHING COUNCIL RE-VETTING

The mainstream re-vetting of teachers on a three-year cycle recommenced in October 2020 when 8,000 of the approximately 40,000 teachers who have a renewal date in March 2021 were requested to apply for re-vetting. The majority of these teachers have now complied and will be able to renew their registration in March. Teachers who are requested to submit a re-vetting application are advised to do so in a timely manner so that they can renew their registration when it falls due. Re-vetting notifications are issued to the relevant teachers six months in advance of their renewal dates. Teachers who are currently registered or previously registered with the Council may submit the required documentation, including a scanned signed consent form, by email.

For more information see www.teachingcouncil.ie.

UPDATE YOUR EMAIL AND ACCESS WEB BENEFITS

The new ASTI website is being rolled out over the coming weeks and months. Members will be able to register for a MyUnion web account and access additional benefits such as a members' area, a sick leave calculator and direct contact to Head Office/elected representatives. To register for an account, your email address must match the one we have for you on our members' database. If you do not currently receive regular emails from ASTI Head Office, this may be because we do not have your email address, or because the one we have is no longer in use.

Update your email address in time for the launch of our MyUnion facility by emailing janem@asti.ie.

Ann Piggott at The Spirit of Mother Jones Festival

The Spirit of Mother Jones Festival was held virtually from November 27-30, commemorating the 90th anniversary of the death of Mother Jones. The festival celebrates the life of Mother Jones, also known as Mary Harris, a prominent union organiser and activist born in Cork in 1837. Labelled “the grandmother of all agitators” on the floor of the US Senate, Jones became involved with the United Mine Workers of America during her time in the United States. She gained prominence for her work in not only organising industrial workers, but also organising on behalf of the wives and children of striking workers. The Spirit of Mother Jones Festival seeks to honour the life and legacy of one of Cork’s most famous daughters, as well as emphasising the importance of trade unions in the 21st century.

As part of the annual Spirit of Mother Jones Festival, ASTI President Ann Piggott spoke at a webinar titled ‘The Dynamic Role of Labour Unions in the Wake of Covid-19 and the Safe-keeping of Frontline Workers’. Ann emphasised that the ASTI’s focus during this pandemic has been to ensure that schools can open in a safe and sustainable way. She mentioned that the

ASTI has been concerned over the past few months with regard to a number of issues: the definition of a close contact within classrooms; protections for high-risk teachers; social distancing within classrooms; and, class sizes. She also mentioned that there is particular concern regarding information on positive cases in schools being disseminated to teachers in an effective manner. She noted that rapid change has been demanded of the Irish education sector, but without meaningful consultation from teachers.

Ann remarked that it was clear that the onset of a pandemic has exposed the effects of Ireland’s low investment in all levels of education and that this issue must be rectified. She welcomed President Michael D. Higgins’ remarks on the role of frontline workers over the past number of months, in which he praised their efforts to ensure the safety and security of their fellow citizens. President Higgins stated that: “As we reflect on the dynamic role of trade unions in the wake of the pandemic and the safe-keeping of our frontline workers, let us all commit to continuing our appreciation by standing in solidarity with all those whose contribution is so vital during this difficult time”.

INMO General Secretary Phil Ní Sheaghda also spoke at the event.

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- Master of Education (M Ed)
- M Ed in Religious Education
- M Ed in Leadership of Wellbeing in Education
- M Oid san Oideachas Lán-Ghaeilge agus Gaeltachta
- MA in Education and the Arts (META)
- MA in STEM Education
- MA in Music Education
- Graduate Diploma / M Ed in Adult and Further Education
- Graduate Diploma / M Ed in Information and Communication Technologies in Primary Education
- Graduate Diploma / M Ed in Special Education Needs
- Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma/M Ed in Middle Leadership and Mentoring in Primary and Post-Primary Settings
- An Teastas Iarchéime i dTeagasc Ábharbhunaithe (TTA) san Iarbhunscolaíocht Lán-Ghaeilge agus Gaeltachta
- Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice
- Graduate Certificate / Graduate Diploma in Autism Studies

LIBERAL ARTS POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

- Structured PhD in Applied Linguistics
- Structured PhD in Contemporary Irish Studies
- MA in Applied Linguistics (online/on-campus/blended)
- MA sa Ghaeilge
- MA in History
- MA in Local History (with UL)
- MA in Media Studies
- MA in Modern English Literature
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Learning, Society & Religious Education; Language & Literacy Education; Arts Education & Physical Education; Reflective Pedagogy & Early Childhood Studies; Educational Psychology, Inclusive & Special Education; STEM Education.

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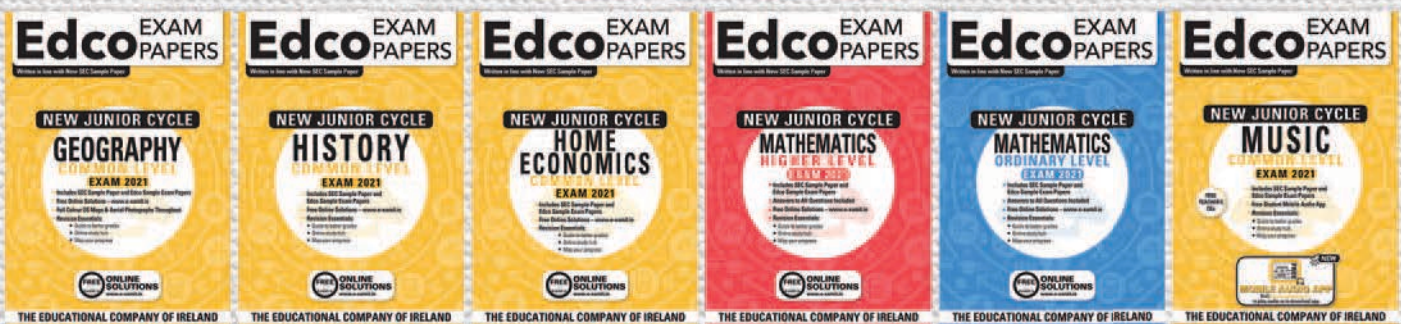
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TRIBUTE TO THE BLACKBIRD POET

ASTI member GERRY WHELAN writes about his painting of Irish poet Francis Ledwidge, which he has kindly donated to the ASTI.



Gerry Whelan (front), pictured with ASTI President Ann Piggott and ASTI General Secretary Kieran Christie at the presentation of his painting to the ASTI.

In 2016, I received a request from the curator of the Richmond Barracks museum to do a series of visual art works celebrating the history of the museum. Built in 1810, the museum and cultural centre has been home to the British army, Irish army, public housing and a Christian Brothers' primary school. It was the holding centre for 3,000 suspected rebels after the Easter Rising and the place of court martial for the signatories of the Proclamation (with the exception of James Connolly), who were sentenced to death.

Built in 1810, the museum and cultural centre has been home to the British army, Irish army, public housing and a Christian Brothers' primary school.

The Irish poet Francis Ledwidge did his basic training here prior to his military service in WW1 where he saw action at Suvla Bay, Serbia and finally Passchendaele. He was a close friend of Thomas MacDonagh and, on hearing the news of the rebellion, wrote the beautiful poem Lament for Thomas MacDonagh.

Being a proud member of the ASTI during my teaching career and standing in a former classroom in what is now part of the museum, I felt I should do a portrait of Francis Ledwidge among other works. In the portrait I tried to convey a sense of the man who was a poet, soldier and Irish nationalist. He was sometimes referred to as the blackbird poet, although that is a pale reflection on his complete understanding of nature and humanity. In the portrait I depict a blackbird taking flight in a bluebell wood next to the charred woods of the battleground.

The museum retained this and two other works from the exhibition but I requested that this work be given to the ASTI for Thomas MacDonagh House for permanent display and hope that the members and guests get some pleasure from it.

Lament for Thomas MacDonagh

by Francis Ledwidge

He shall not hear the bitter cry
In the wild sky, where he is lain,
Nor voices of the sweeter birds
Above the wailing of the rain.
Nor shall he know when loud March blows
Thro' slanting snows her fanfare shrill,
Blowing to flame the golden cup
Of many an upset daffodil.
But when the dark cow leaves the moor,
And pastures poor with greedy weeds,
Perhaps he'll hear her low at morn
Lifting her horn in pleasant meads.

A life in the ASTI

My involvement in the ASTI is very important to me. I spent 33 years in the union, including too many to count as school steward. I also held the position of Regional National Organiser and served on various committees. I was a member of CEC for approximately 12 years and was Chair of the Dublin North Central Branch.

"Amid bleak times, the painting's vivid colours will uplift any spirit. The background research undertaken to produce this work of art has created an ingenious composition by a gifted and intelligent artist. The contrasts are astounding: bright electric colours outshine dark shades, war is presented paired with peaceful nature, and soft strokes oppose firm shapes. Sincere appreciation to Gerry for this unique gift to the ASTI."

Ann Piggott
ASTI President

In 2019 Gerry received the ASTI PJ Kennedy award for his service to the union.

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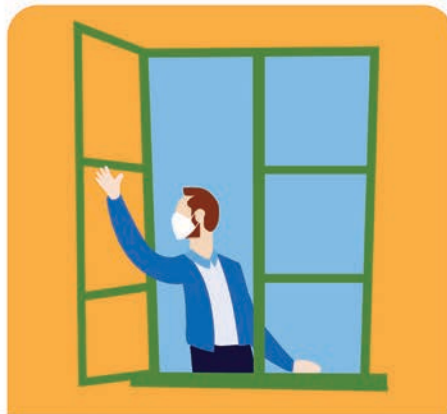
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HIGHLIGHTING 'NEW ENTRANT' PAY FOR 10 YEARS

The ASTI has been at the forefront of a campaign to challenge unequal pay for new entrants to teaching.

At the time of going to print, the ASTI Central Executive Council (CEC) is preparing to meet to consider proposals for a new public sector agreement, which would span the period from January 2021 to the end of December 2022.

The proposals are contained in the document *Building Momentum: A New Public Service Agreement 2021-2022* (which is available on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie). This proposed agreement includes provisions for new entrant teachers, i.e., teachers who entered the profession since January 1, 2011, and who are on the new entrant salary scale. At a special Zoom meeting in early January, CEC will consider the implications of these provisions for teachers and the teaching profession, along with all other provisions contained in the proposals.

How unequal pay happened

It is now 10 years since unequal pay was implemented for teachers. The cut to new teachers' pay followed the introduction of a public sector pension levy in 2009 and a pay cut in 2010, both of which were applied to all teachers. While all austerity cuts to education

and teachers were resisted by the ASTI, the union took particular exception to the singling out of new teachers for additional pay cuts. The ASTI argued that many of these teachers had precarious work contracts and were struggling to make ends meet. We believe the establishment of a two-tier pay structure was a key cause of the recruitment and retention crisis in second-level teaching.

The following cuts were applied to new teachers' salaries:

- a 10% cut was applied to new teachers' salaries in January 2011
- from January 2011, second-level teachers were appointed to the first point of the new teachers' salary scale instead of the third point (previously teachers were appointed to point 3 in recognition of their four- to six-year teacher qualification period)
- qualification allowances were reduced for teachers entering the profession from January 2011, and
- qualification allowances were abolished for teachers appointed on or after February 1, 2012.

ASTI ad highlighting unequal pay published in national newspapers in February 2020.

5 reasons to end scandalous pay inequality for new teachers.

How the government treats your child's teacher reflects how much they care about your child.

Still the scandal continues
Through continuing savage wage cuts and other unjust measures, the government has made it impossible for new-entrant teachers to earn a decent living and, alarmingly, for schools to recruit new teachers. That means the government is knowingly damaging your child's education and future. ASTI has spearheaded a dynamic campaign to have this reckless injustice reversed.

• We refused to accept any proposals that emerged that failed to bridge the pay inequality gap

Here are 5 powerful reasons why equal pay for equal work must be restored

- 1. Punishing new teachers was a senseless act from the start**
In 2011 and again in 2012, vicious pay cuts and the slashing of entitlement allowances for new-entrant teachers were imposed by Government. There was no negotiation with teacher unions. There was no thinking through of the catastrophic consequences that ASTI predicted would happen.
- 2. The pay gap is vindictive, damaging and divisive**
As we forecast in 2011, an alarming gap between the salary of new-entrant teachers and those who entered the profession earlier has opened up. Two teachers, with identical qualifications, working with the same pupils, can be earning vastly different amounts throughout their careers. This is divisive, unfair and destructive.
- 3. It damages education in Ireland**
Ireland's second level schools have performed impressively in international comparisons. We must ensure that this continues. But these destructive policies will see our schools' performance plummet.
- 4. It damages your child's chances**
Your child's teacher is a dedicated and committed professional who has chosen teaching as a pleasant vocation. But cutting and devaluing their pay and conditions undervalues the work they do with your child. It causes stress and a constant struggle to make ends meet. Teachers are leaving the job they love. An enormous brain drain has occurred. Your child deserves better.
- 5. Teacher recruitment is in crisis**
When government treats highly-trained professionals like cost-price labour, it causes even more problems. Your local school now finds it is almost impossible to recruit new teachers into a career with discrimination, pay, poor prospects and no chance of catching up with their peers. There are no applicants for many positions. Many students have no-qualified teachers in key subjects.

We took strike action in 2016, seeking to have the injustice resolved

• In taking strike action, ASTI members endured the full force of emergency legislation (FEMPE) imposed upon them (pay freezes, increment freezes, withholding of supervision and substitution payments etc.) even though the crisis had long since been declared over by senior government ministers

The ASTI campaign has secured some important gains since the debate began in 2011, but the shocking discrimination that remains must end.

Teachers are the standard bearers for schools. But every month – among those who entered since 2011 is an all-time low.

It ends NOW
The outrageous discrimination against newer teachers stops here – we must remove this massive barrier to teacher recruitment and retention and we must properly support children's quality education.

Equal pay for equal work
Fairness for teachers
Quality education for your child

ASTI
A century of service

asti.ie
#equalpayforequalwork



A joint union protest on the issue of unequal pay took place outside Leinster House in 2019.

ASTI new entrant pay campaign

The ASTI has been at the forefront of the campaign against unequal pay:

- we took strike action in 2016, seeking to have the injustice removed
- in taking strike action, ASTI members endured the full force of emergency legislation (FEMPI) imposed upon them (increment freezes, withholding of supervision and substitution payments, etc.) even through the economic crisis had long been declared over by senior Government ministers
- the ASTI has organised many successful protests against unequal pay, and
- the ASTI has taken out newspaper advertisements to highlight unequal pay in teaching.

Progress

There have been some important gains since the debacle began in 2011:

- the ASTI's efforts ensured public awareness of unequal pay in teaching
- in 2013, a reversal of the cut in the qualification allowances for those who entered teaching in the period January 1, 2011, to January 31, 2012, was achieved
- in the negotiations leading to the Haddington Road Agreement, the ASTI, along with colleague teacher unions, secured improved pay scales for both the post-January 1, 2011, and post-February 1, 2012, entrants – these pay sales came into effect from November 1, 2013

- in 2016, the incorporation of the Honours Primary Degree allowance into the pay scale of new entrant teachers was secured
- in 2018, the removal of the fourth and eighth points of the new entrant pay scale was secured
- increases in salaries were applied, including a €1,000 increase on annualised salaries up to €65,000, as well as general salary increases as part of public sector pay agreements
- in 2012, the gap between the starting salary of a new entrant and a colleague who was appointed in 2010 was over 20% – this has been substantially reduced
- in April 2019, the then Government committed to seeking to resolve the issue of new entrant pay, and
- following inaction on the above commitment during the 2019/2020 school year, in November 2020 ASTI members voted to take industrial action in conjunction with one or both of the other teacher unions.

Read about ASTI Central Executive Council's meeting regarding *Building Momentum: A New Public Service Agreement, 2021-2022* at www.asti.ie.

Keep up with the ASTI's campaigns at www.asti.ie

TAKING THE LEAD



ASTI industrial relations official CONOR McDONALD reports on the virtual Lead Worker Representative Seminar held remotely in November.

Lead Worker Representatives (LWRs) have been working tirelessly to ensure that schools operate for their students and staff as safely as possible. One of the central elements of good workplace health and safety is the representative and consultative function. There is a clear and well-accepted body of evidence that demonstrates a scientific link between safe, healthy workplaces and a representative function.

The creation of the LWR role is built on the extensive evidence that workplaces with safety representatives (as legally provided for under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005) statistically experience less injury and harm at work.

As the ASTI had a central role in creating the position, it therefore has a responsibility to support our members in the role. Therefore, a Lead Worker Representative Seminar was held in November.

Concerns raised

The seminar was opened by an address from ASTI President Ann Piggott and then ASTI General Secretary Kieran Christie gave an update on the national picture.

The seminar included a report on the valuable data compiled through a survey of participants, which fed into an open discussion on the experiences of LWRs around the country. The discussion was aided by the presence of Immediate Past President Deirdre MacDonald, the Chair of the ASTI Safety Health and Welfare Committee Michael McGrath, members of the Safety Health and Welfare Committee, and also members of ASTI Standing Committee.



An ASTI Lead Worker Representative Seminar was held remotely in November.

At the seminar, many LWRs raised concerns about lack of social distancing, poor ventilation and opportunities for training. This discussion covered topics such as the complaints procedure, leave, the ASTI website, FAQs, time, confidentiality, definitions, and issues of stress, anxiety and resilience. These issues were discussed in an open panel and the ASTI compiled a list of issues, which it raised with the Departments at our weekly pandemic forum.

LWR induction training is available on the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) website. There are also broad online training and information portals on the Health and Safety Authority's website, which is designed specifically for post-primary schools. While these may not be the final word in training, they are an excellent first port of call.

Lead Worker Representative

Every workplace in the country is required to appoint at least one Lead Worker Representative (LWR). In schools, a second LWR will be appointed where there are 40 or more staff (that is all staff, not only teaching staff). The LWR will work in collaboration with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and monitor adherence to those measures, and to be involved in communicating the health advice around Covid-19 in the workplace. The role of LWR is separate to that of the Safety Representative under the health and safety legislation. However, the Safety Representative may act as the LWR if selected to do so by the staff. Where these roles are separate, there should be collaboration.

The school staff are entitled to select staff members for the LWR position(s). The LWR(s) represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role and must be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts. In this regard, where a school has two LWRs, the roles should be spread between teaching and non-teaching staff where feasible.

The LWR does not have any legal responsibilities. They do not have any duties in relation to Covid-19 other than those that apply to employees generally. In other words, the LWR is not responsible for the control measures within an organisation, which remain the employer's responsibility.

Where the LWR is a teacher, the LWR will receive protected time of two hours per week from timetable to enable them to carry out their duties in that role. In the rare instances where the appointment of a teacher selected for the LWR role would cause curricular/timetabling difficulties that cannot be resolved, school management will examine internal and external possibilities to enable the teacher's appointment as LWR. Where the matter cannot be resolved, management will set out the reasons why this is the case. In this circumstance, an alternative individual must be appointed as LWR.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the Covid-19 Response Plan, control measures, or the adherence to such measures by staff, students or others, they should contact the LWR, who will engage with school management. It is important that concerns are raised in this way, through the LWR and not directly with the principal.

In summary, the role of the LWR is to:

- represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts
- work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to Covid-19
- keep up to date with the latest Covid-19 public health advice
- in conjunction with school management, promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette, along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice
- assist school management with the implementation of measures to suppress Covid-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice
- in conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of Covid-19
- conduct regular reviews of safety measures
- report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of issues and actions taken to rectify them
- consult with school management on the school's Covid-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing Covid-19 while in school, including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area
- following any incident, assess with school management any follow-up action that is required
- consult with colleagues on matters relating to Covid-19 in the workplace
- make representations to school management on behalf of colleagues on matters relating to Covid-19 in the workplace, and
- regularly communicate to staff the management's response to staff Covid-19 issues.

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COMING TOGETHER ONLINE

An ASTI seminar for subject and programme representatives held in December discussed the impact on schools of the transition from remote teaching back to the classroom.



In March, schools moved overnight to remote learning, and teachers had to adapt everything about how they worked, while dealing with issues around Wi-Fi, digital devices, and digital platforms. Schools reopened in September, but this did not signal the end of the challenges, and a recent ASTI seminar discussed that transition back to the classroom, the issues that remain, and the solutions needed. Edel Farrell, a teacher of English and History at Coláiste Éamann Ris in Cork, and Chairperson of the ASTI's Education Committee, says that preliminary research among ASTI members shows that schools are still dealing with huge change: "We can't collect copies or give written tests; everything has to be done digitally, and students have to return everything to us digitally".

Even in schools where teachers and students have access to ICT facilities and devices, and many do not, this is extremely challenging. Teachers are spending significant extra time preparing and developing classroom resources, while managing the fact that many students lack the skills (or the devices) to upload, scan or attach documents. Edel says that lack of support and training, for teachers and students, has been a huge problem: "Of those schools that did provide training, it came from a staff member as opposed to an outside agency. It's kind of like a Meitheal – we're all helping each other".

Ann Devitt, Director of Research at the School of Education and Academic Director of Learnovate in TCD, says that the lockdown in March, and the challenges that remain, highlight the need for all schools to have digital infrastructure as a baseline: "You can't blame anyone for not being ready in March as it was so sudden and completely unprecedented. But now we need to be sure that all schools have baseline infrastructure for staff and students".

Collaboration

The sense of a Meitheal that Edel mentions has been a positive in this difficult time, as teachers share ICT knowledge and classroom resources: "Although we're physically isolated, digitally we're coming together to help each other". The forced adaptation of the way teachers work has also led many to look at their teaching in new ways, both in terms of planning, and how it can be differentiated, for example for students with special educational needs.

The changes of the last months have been hugely demanding, as on top of the extra class preparation (not to mention sanitising classrooms and the other work that is necessary during a pandemic), teachers are finding that demands on their time can extend well beyond the working day, as Edel explains: "During lockdown we made ourselves available nearly 24/7 because we didn't know when students might have access to a device at home. What we've found since coming back is we're still getting those emails".

The ASTI has raised this issue with schools, and a motion on the right to disconnect was passed by Standing Committee in September.

Ann agrees that there have been positives in terms of how teachers have adapted their teaching and learning practices, but points to the huge difficulties remaining in the Covid classroom, especially in facilitating collaborative or group work: "Teachers are disappointed – in recent years there has been fantastic work done to bring in more collaborative ways of working in the classroom, and now because of social distancing teachers have had to go back to the old ways where it's more individual, and that's really hard for students. Students have identified loneliness – working on their own – as a problem during school closures and it is still difficult now in socially distanced classrooms".

Solutions

Edel welcomes the increased funding to schools, but says that money will only go so far: "We need training for teachers and students. The Department needs to step up – they have been giving money and grants but it's not enough – we need training and support". For Ann, continuing to try and find ways to facilitate collaboration is key: "Where we're in a challenging environment like we are now, how do you get people working together and do that well, because it's worth it". She says teachers and students have taken huge steps in terms of their digital skillset, but more support is needed. She agrees that it's not just about funding, and says that leadership and sense of community in schools is crucial: "It's not all about investment in infrastructure – we need a holistic approach. In our work on school closures, we found that in schools where there was real leadership, a whole-school approach, and a sense of community among staff, they did better".

SUPPORTING EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD

The ASTI's Development Aid Fund supports organisations in the developing world on behalf of members.

Under Rule 154 of the Rules and Constitution of the ASTI, the union operates a Development Aid Fund, which supports charities and NGOs operating in developing countries. When distributing monies from this fund, the ASTI prioritises those organisations that are supporting children, education and teachers.

A small sub-committee of Standing Committee considers applications for funding and makes recommendations to Finance Committee, which in turn recommends to Standing Committee for final decision. The Development Aid budget is in the region of €50,000 per annum. This figure varies from year to year, as it is based on a percentage of membership fees received by the union each year.

Aidlink

An example of funding provided in 2020 is a grant of €4,280 to Aidlink to help the Kajiado County Emergency School Feeding Programme in Kenya. This project's aims are to:

- keep children in school
- respond to increased malnutrition among children in Mashuru sub-County, Kajiado
- reduce the burden of household food insecurity in the immediate term
- address growing drop-out rates and ensure that all children stay in school, safe and learning, and
- protect children from the risks associated with being out of school, including early marriage and child abuse.

Targeted schools are identified as being girl friendly, and as having students, teachers and Boards of Management trained to support a child-friendly learning environment. The programme mobilises parents and the wider community to build support for education (especially for girls) and stop harmful cultural practices such as early marriage and female genital mutilation. The ASTI's contribution will provide safe food to children in two of the targeted schools.



In July 2020 the ASTI provided a grant of €4,280 to Aidlink for school feeding for three months in two primary schools in Kajiado, targeting approximately 500 pupils. The school feeding programme has been delayed due to Covid-19, as schools are closed until January 2021. It is critical that Aidlink has school feeding in place in January, as it is a key pull factor in attracting children who have been 'locked out' of school for over nine months to return to school. As ASTI members know, school is not only a place of learning, but a place of nutrition, health, protection and socialisation. The ASTI grant will now be used to provide school feeding for the first term of 2021, from January to March. Photo courtesy of Aidlink.

Global Schoolroom

Through the fund, the ASTI also supports (in conjunction with the other teacher unions) the work of Global Schoolroom on a multi-annual basis. This organisation gives experienced Irish teachers the opportunity to contribute to teacher education in India, Ghana, and elsewhere. Many ASTI members have participated and continue to participate in Global Schoolroom programmes.

Education International

The Development Aid sub-committee usually ringfences a sum of money in the fund to help to combat emergencies occurring during the year. In 2020 the fund granted €10,000 to Educational International (EI), the global federation of teacher unions. This money was given to the organisation's Covid-19 Response Solidarity Fund. This fund was established to allow EI to help member organisations with limited resources to respond to the crisis more effectively. Specifically, the Response Fund is helping these teacher trade unions to:

- continue to function
- communicate internally and externally
- work to ensure respect for human and trade union rights, which may be under renewed attack during this crisis
- defend unpaid or dismissed teachers
- advocate against for-profit private education initiatives (in the context of distance learning), and
- undertake activities that address increases in child labour and gender-based violence.

In the year just gone, other organisations that received funding included Goal, Trócaire, Irish Red Cross, Concern and many others. The letters of thanks and appreciation we receive can make all ASTI members proud of the contribution we are making towards making the world a safer and a more equal place for children, their families, and their teachers.

PROTECTING TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

The ASTI continues to raise awareness of issues around Covid-19 and schools.

“Well I certainly agree with what’s going to be proposed that people in nursing homes would obviously be top of the list for the vaccine and healthcare workers who are in contact with Covid all the time. After that, then it might be a good idea to consider teachers who are working in school in contact with many people. If a case breaks out in a school, the schools will close. So for a start if the adults in the school could be prioritised after everybody else is done in terms of importance. I know that the vaccines will not be available in Ireland until after Christmas anyway but for the future and in an effort to keep schools open it certainly would be a good idea if the adults going in there were vaccinated.”

Ann Piggott, ASTI President, Ocean FM, December 8, 2020

“Our union is very much in favour of having as normal a Leaving Cert. as possible. Things are very different now to where they were last March. Last March, students were at home and there was huge effort to run a Leaving Cert. but it didn’t seem possible at the time. Since then, we have had teachers and students back at school since August. Students are wearing their masks and students are doing a great job – they are being very careful. They are looking after themselves, they are behaving well, they are wearing their mask. Classrooms are arranged so that they can sit apart. So if that can be done now, I don’t think it’s any problem to have all Leaving Cert. [students] in schools to sit a Leaving Cert., provided they are appropriately distanced from one another.”

Ann Piggott, ASTI President, *The Last Word*, Today FM, November 30, 2020

“Some schools have policies whereby they imagine that calculated grades will be needed next year, so they are encouraging their teachers to have a whole database of results. This puts enormous pressure on both students and teachers. Students are worried with every piece of homework and every written exam and likewise teachers are under pressure. So we would like this over-assessment to stop. What we need to focus on now is teaching and getting the courses finished.”

Ann Piggott, ASTI President, *This Week Programme*, RTÉ Radio 1, December 13, 2020

“As colder weather sets in, keeping many classrooms warm and ensuring they are appropriately ventilated is proving to be a big problem in many schools. Teachers and students are there in their coats, in many instances. If a period of very cold weather comes in the coming weeks or months, many schools are likely to have to close for the duration.”

Kieran Christie, ASTI General Secretary, *The Irish Times*, November 19, 2020

“Well I suppose the main concerns that teachers have is the lack of testing for schools and the need for a more comprehensive testing programme for schools. Also accommodation for teachers in the very high-risk categories. Teachers in that category need some accommodation. Then the provision of IT resources for students and teachers in the event that there would be a closure and they would need to return to online teaching. I note that there was an announcement last week that there would be a considerable sum of money available and announced by the Minister but that is the third tranche of the sum of money that was allocated from the 2015 to 2020 Digital Strategy for Schools. That’s not additional funding, it’s not extra funding, it’s not over and above.”

Geraldine O’Brien, ASTI Standing Committee representative, *Morning Focus*, Clare FM, December 8, 2020



“We’ll be asking the Department how safe is it for everybody to go back into a school setting. We will be looking for the implications of the new variants and we will be wondering are the restrictions and measures in place in schools enough to keep everybody safe.”

Ann Piggott, ASTI President, *Six One News*, RTÉ 1, January 3, 2021

"Well firstly our members welcome the extension up to January 11, but with the huge number of increased cases last night our members are very worried. They are also very worried because of the new variants that we've heard about from the UK and South Africa. We heard the Taoiseach saying that we should stay home and stay away from other people; however, that is impossible in a school setting. The ASTI wrote to the Minister on December 23 in relation to the new variant, which was far more transmissible and young people may have been more exposed. Since then we've heard about the South African variant and seen the increased case numbers, so we've asked for a meeting. We are having a meeting tomorrow, along with other stakeholders. What we want is assurances on safety in schools at this point, on January 11 and following on from that."

Ann Piggott, ASTI President, RTÉ Radio 1, *This Week Programme*, January 3

"I sought assurances from the Minister directly that schools will be safe places to return to for teachers and students next week and she was far from convincing. She also turned up to the meeting without any medical expertise by her side to reassure us and that was very disappointing."

Kieran Christie, ASTI General Secretary, *News at 8*, Virgin Media News, January 4

"Well we are certainly committed to ensuring that State exams will go ahead and I don't think there should be any other decision but that. The State exams must run both for Leaving Cert and the Junior Cycle. The 2021 class must have State exams, which are independently set and corrected in a national, standardised manner. Last year we agreed on calculated grades but that was a once-off commitment. It wasn't the best process in the world. However, the content of exam papers may need to be adjusted to compensate for the circumstances that we find ourselves in, but we would be committed that we want the State exams to go ahead."

Ann Piggott, ASTI President, RTÉ Radio 1, *Today with Claire Byrne*, January 5

"The ASTI made up its mind a long time ago that we would follow public health advice. We appreciate how important the education system is and that it has to be absolute priority to keep it going, but in the current situation with this virus that is now out of control, every measure has to be taken to get it under control. We've always said we'll listen to the medical advice. When NPHE says it is appropriate and safe to re-open school buildings, we'll try to return as soon as possible."

Eamon Dennehy, ASTI Vice President, *The Michael Reade Show*, LFM, January 5, 2021



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YOUR VOICE MAKES A DIFFERENCE



A new series of articles highlights some of the ASTI's work since its foundation to bring about change.

Through the democratic structures of the ASTI, second-level teachers have been using their collective voice to effect change for more than 110 years.

1914 – professional salary for teachers

At the time of the ASTI's foundation in 1909, secondary teachers in Ireland had no right to a contract and their pay was totally at the discretion of their employer (religious order-owned schools). Pay was abysmal in many secondary schools – averaging at £48 a year for female teachers and £82 for men. Casual work was the norm and most teachers found themselves out of work at the end of the school year. Primary school teachers fared somewhat better; they were paid according to set salary scales (although these were also considered inadequate) and had a recognisable career structure.

The ASTI's main focus in the early 1910s was the professionalisation of second-level teaching by way of a registration process and the regularisation of teachers' pay. Success on the pay front came in 1914 with the introduction of the Teachers' Salaries Grant for secondary schools. To be eligible, secondary schools had to employ at least one lay teacher for every 40 students. Schools had to pay these teachers an annual salary (£120 per annum to a teacher in a boys' school and £80 to a teacher in a girls' school). The scheme meant that the State effectively took on the role of paymaster to secondary teachers for the first time. The scheme was met with resistance from Catholic religious leaders, which made it necessary for the ASTI to monitor its implementation to ensure that union members received the correct salary.*

At the time of the **ASTI's foundation in 1909**, secondary teachers in Ireland had **no right to a contract** and their pay was totally at the **discretion of their employer (religious order-owned schools)**.

2008 – mobilising the public

In October 2008, in the midst of Ireland's banking crisis and a Government decision to provide a bank guarantee, a number of significant education cuts were announced as part of Budget 2009. These cuts included:

- an increase in the pupil-teacher ratio
- cuts to supports for vulnerable children including the Traveller children capitation grant and the abolition of Junior Certificate Schools Programme, Leaving Cert Applied and Leaving Cert Vocational Programme grants, and
- cuts to specialist teachers including Home School Liaison and Language Support teachers.



60,000 people marched from Parnell Square to the Dáil to protest at cuts to education in 2008.



In 2008, the teacher unions came together to organise a mass public demonstration against austerity cuts.

In response to the cuts, the three teacher unions (ASTI, INTO and TUI), along with the university union IFUT, organised a mass public demonstration. On December 6, 2008, nearly 60,000 teachers, parents, pupils and school managers from all over the country met at Parnell Square in Dublin before marching to the Dáil.

The protest received extensive media coverage both in Ireland and abroad. Pressure on the Government in relation to its handling of the economic crisis, and in particular the imposition of austerity cuts, culminated in a general election in early 2011.

2020 — keeping safety under the spotlight

In 2020, a key issue for the ASTI was highlighting the need for Covid-19-secure schools for students and their teachers.

In July 2020, the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) issued interim advice on the re-opening of schools. It did not require the wearing of face coverings by either teachers or students.

In late July, the ASTI wrote to the Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD, to request that she seek a review by the HPSC of the interim recommendations, and in particular the advice regarding the wearing of face coverings within schools.

The ASTI made the point that the interim advice on the re-opening of schools was developed in June prior to significant changes to public policy regarding the wearing of masks on public transport and in other enclosed spaces.

Following the ASTI's representations, on August 7, 2020, the Minister announced the adoption of new recommendations for the wearing of face coverings in second-level schools.

The wearing of face coverings has played a key role in helping schools to stay open during the 2020/21 pandemic. The ASTI continues to pursue a number of other safety concerns including adequate testing and test turnaround, redefinition of close contacts, IT resources for students and teachers to facilitate continuity of learning, and reasonable accommodations for teachers in the high-risk category.

*Source: *Unlikely Radicals* by John Cunningham (Cork University Press).

PROTECTING AND PROMOTING TEACHERS' HEALTH: AN IMPERATIVE

**ASTI Immediate Past President
DEIRDRE MAC DONALD** says that teachers' health must be prioritised at school and policy level.



Has there ever been a time when the importance of health has been more acknowledged and discussed? Through whichever prism you view the issue of teachers' health – morality, economics, education or sustainability – the imperative that it is addressed in a systematic manner is abundantly clear. Occupational health is a real opportunity to back up the lofty words of policy on health and well-being with real and meaningful structures and resources. Physical and mental health are intimately linked; there is no health without mental health. What affects well-being in the workplace? How do we protect and promote it in schools? The idea that additional professional demands can incessantly be made on the teacher while maintaining individual and organisational health is a complete fantasy!

"Recognition for the demanding and extensive nature of teachers' work as holistic educators is necessary so that teachers can do this critical and transformative work without too high a cost to themselves", (pg 179, O'Brien, 2009).

Ireland versus the Nordic model

With the changes to sick leave entitlements for all teachers, and changes in retirement age and pension provision for newer entrants to teaching, it is more necessary than ever to give serious attention to teachers' health. It is a matter of system sustainability. In Finland there is an integrated occupational health model – Maintaining Workability. It is a statutory obligation across the public and private sectors. The Nordic countries – Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland – all scored in the top ten in the 2016 Global Workforce Happiness Index, and there is a lot that we can learn from them. This includes planned interventions to solve specific problems, a consensual approach to workplace issues, an emphasis on the psycho-social environment, strong trade union involvement, and a regulated

workplace. The business case for a progressive and integrated approach to occupational health can be summarised as: "... organisations managing their most important asset – people" (pg.29, Stevenson & Farmer, 2017).

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2017) proposes a rights-based approach to well-being, seeing it as something of intrinsic worth, not simply because it leads to better educational outcomes. Research shows that students learn more effectively if they are happy in their work. So too in workplaces, where there is very significant evidence to demonstrate that people work better when they are in a happy and healthy workplace.

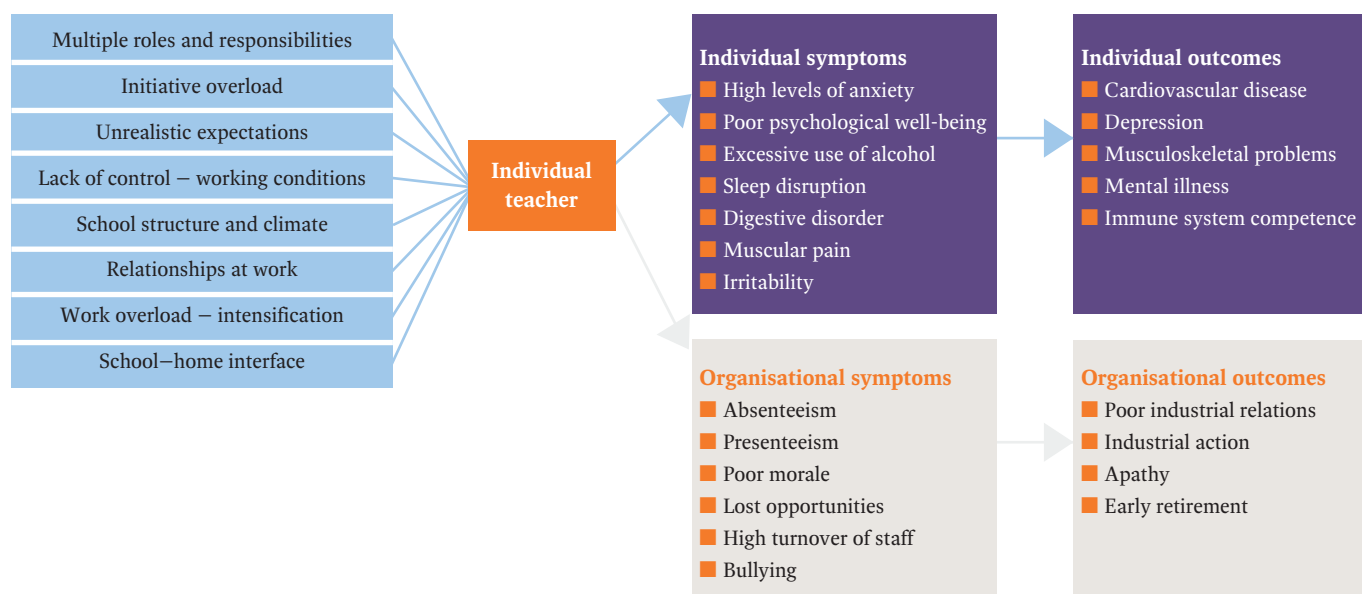
Prevention, promotion and return to work

Employers have legal responsibilities that they must meet under health and safety legislation while there are also some voluntary actions that can significantly influence and sustain workers' health and the recovery and employment of people who develop a serious health issue. These can be labelled under the banners of prevention, promotion and return to work.

Not all health problems are the same. Depending on factors such as severity, whether the person was working at the time of the onset of illness, and the policies and actions of the employer, the prospects for the individual of remaining in work and recovering from illness can be significantly affected. Organisations that have implemented a comprehensive health management programme for a number of years that focuses on prevention, early intervention and return to work following illness, have seen their investment in workplace health initiatives rewarded quantitatively and qualitatively (Wynne *et al.*, 2014).

At times prevention measures are insufficient, and secondary intervention may be necessary. The Employee Assistance Service provides such a service. It does not concern itself with the organisational aspect of health. It works at an individual level, such as coping strategies to deal with

Stress to strain to breakdown



stress, financial advice, etc. The potential for its contribution to occupational health would be greatly enhanced by incorporation into a cohesive framework. The rigidity of return to work parameters and the role of MedMark also needs to be considered in developing an integrated occupational health strategy.

Time for policy change

A Vision for Change identifies the population perspective model of health promotion because it can put in place programmes and interventions tailored to specific groups and settings (Government of Ireland, 2006). The school as a workplace is one such setting. This model of health promotion is important as it is seen internationally as a capacity-building measure in that it empowers individuals, groups and organisations to fulfil their potential.

Physical and mental health are intimately linked; there is no health without mental health. What affects well-being in the workplace? How do we protect and promote it in schools?

The Department of Education and Skills' Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (DES, July 2018) speaks of a collaborative approach to well-being. It advocates for "evidence informed approaches and support, appropriate to need, to enhance well-being for all" and has a vision where "Ireland will be recognised as a leader in well-being promotion".

A policy document does not fulfil the Department's role in teachers' health; nor is a mere statement of intent sufficient to fulfil managements' statutory and moral obligations. Human resources are "core" because they are essential to society and the market economy. The value teachers' work generates for society has never been more evident than during the Covid-19 pandemic. The importance of a sustainable education system is obvious to all. At present, where everything is evaluated in monetary terms, no cost-benefit analysis is even attempted, not to mention captures, what is really

done in schools. True collaboration and engagement with the partners in education is required to move towards a comprehensive, integrated model of occupational health.

European perspective

The European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in Education, at its seminar in Dublin in June 2017, focused on the concept of a 'Decent Workplace'. Input from the European Agency for Safety & Health at Work emphasised the importance of the empowerment of a workforce in relation to their working environment and how it is organised, and that this needs to be supported at national level. Similarly, the collaboration of the European Trade Unions Committee in Education and the European Federation of Employers in Education (2011) has recommended that teachers' well-being be prioritised as a progressive and effective way to promote health and education in schools. There has never been a time when the importance of health has been more acknowledged.

Protecting and promoting teachers' health is not an option, it is an imperative!

Further reading

Department of Education and Skills. Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice. Dublin, 2018.

Government of Ireland. A Vision for Change. Dublin, 2006.

European Trade Union Committee for Education and European Federation of Education Employers. European-Wide Survey on Teachers Work Related Stress – Assessment, Comparison and Evaluation of the Impact of Psychosocial Hazards on Teachers at their Workplace. Brussels, 2011.

O'Brien, M. Well-being and Post-Primary Schooling. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment; Dublin, 2008.

Wynne, R., *et al.* Promoting mental health in the workplace: guidance to implementing a comprehensive approach. European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 2014.



DEIRDRE MAC DONALD

Deirdre is ASTI Immediate Past President. She holds a BSc and HDipEd – UCD, an MA (Health Promotion) – University of Wales, and a HDip in Conflict and Dispute Resolution – TCD.

EDUCATION IN IRELAND: AN OECD ASSESSMENT OF SENIOR CYCLE REVIEW

An OECD report on Senior Cycle review in Ireland has made a number of recommendations.

Why is the OECD looking at the review of the Senior Cycle curriculum? The OECD was invited by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) to provide strategic advice as part of the NCCA's review of the Senior Cycle curriculum. The OECD Implementing Education Policies programme team looked at the outcomes of the NCCA review to date and provided recommendations on conducive conditions for implementing curriculum change at Senior Cycle.

What did the OECD find?

The OECD assessment stated that Ireland is one of the high-performing education systems across OECD countries, and is committed to high-quality education and to adapting to the challenges that the future presents. It identified current strengths in Senior Cycle education:

- Irish students are motivated by their studies and Ireland has among the highest levels of completion across OECD countries in upper secondary education, and high transition rates into tertiary education
- Senior Cycle enjoys high levels of trust among the public, and its final assessment – the Leaving Certificate Examination – is strongly rooted in the national culture
- the four programmes offered in Senior Cycle – Leaving Certificate Examination (LCE), Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and Transition Year (TY) – aim to cater to different needs and preferences
- content is regularly updated in response to perceived needs to learn about emerging topics, and
- the aims, purposes and learning methodologies proposed in the curricular documentation aspire to align with international best practices.

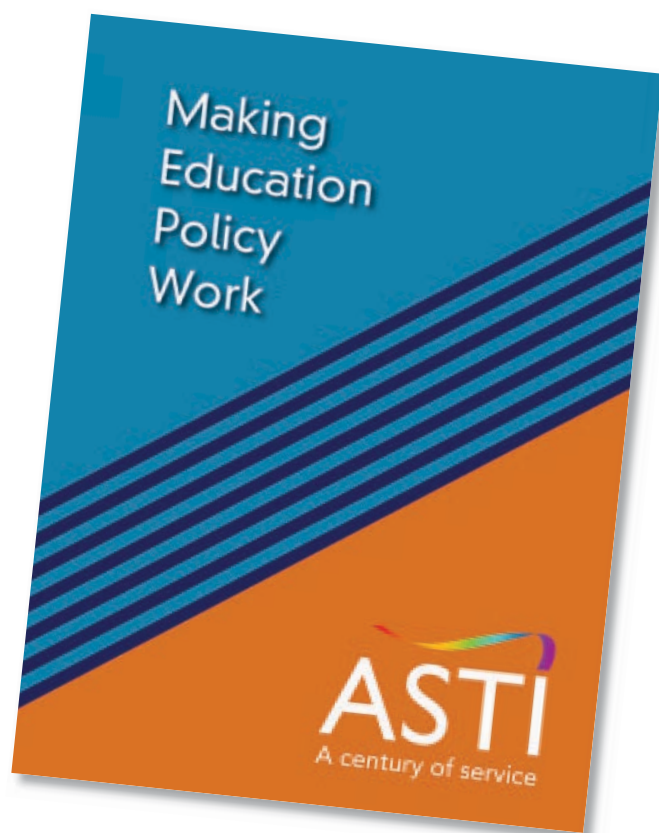
What are the areas of concern?

Notwithstanding the strong consensus on the strengths of the current Senior Cycle, key concerns from the consultative feedback include:

- the impact of the final assessment and the points system to access third-level education appear to drive this level of education, shaping decisions of many stakeholders – this impact is such that any changes made to Senior Cycle will have limited possibilities to succeed if the current final assessment approaches are not reviewed accordingly
- there is concern about not having a more rigorous and attractive vocational segment in Senior Cycle, which provides work-based experience to students and is delivered in close co-ordination with employers, and
- introducing wider subject choice could be more challenging in disadvantaged schools.

What opportunities and challenges did the OECD identify?

The OECD team emphasised that Ireland's model of partnership and stakeholder engagement was important to build consensus on proposed changes to what is acknowledged as a high-performing education system. There is ambivalence in the support that some stakeholders manifest for change, which jeopardises the chance to settle some of the issues acknowledged. Even when convinced of the need for change in Senior Cycle education, stakeholders tend to disagree on the nature and scope of the change, which makes finding common solutions considerably more challenging.



Contextual issues are also influential. There is consensus around the need to learn from Junior Cycle reform for a smooth change process. Collaboration among schools needs to be promoted to build supportive environments for change. Providing school leaders and teachers with better support and training is a concern. In other words, it needs to be better. Assessment approaches need to be adapted to any potential changes, as evidence shows strong impact on the whole Senior Cycle.

As equity has proven to be a key concern, it should be granted a more prominent place in the discussion. Finally, a high level of public scrutiny needs to be factored in, which in turn can raise new issues to be addressed.

So, what strategic advice did the OECD actually provide?

Given that the OECD was primarily concerned about policy implementation, it outlined what it considered to be key elements for an effective implementation approach. The latter must be thought out and agreed in advance rather than an 'add-on' to a revised curriculum. Good policy-making requires that the 'what' of curriculum change must be accompanied by the 'how' before any final decisions are made. In an acknowledgement of the fraught and contested change process at Junior Cycle, the authors identify stakeholder engagement in both the 'what' and the 'how' as critical.

As the OECD team was giving advice on the review process rather than the curriculum per se, it confined its recommendations to conducive conditions for effective policy implementation.

The key recommendations are:

Timing not right for Senior Cycle change

In 2019 the ASTI commissioned former school principal Dr Brian Fleming to critique the NCCA Senior Cycle Review process and examine the context for Senior Cycle curriculum change. Dr Fleming's research concluded that significant curriculum change is not suitable in the next few years due to the lack of capacity at school level, uncertainty about the outcomes of the Framework for Junior Cycle, the deterioration in teachers' working conditions, and other factors. Key recommendations contained in Dr Fleming's report were:

- there is a need to consider an appropriate timeframe for introducing change at Senior Cycle: "Schools are in need of a breather from the current pattern of ongoing innovation and additional workload", and
- there is a need for a rigorous independent evaluation of the Framework for Junior Cycle, including an examination of the impact of the Framework on the learning that is taking place in classrooms.

Making Education Policy Work can be accessed on the ASTI website at www.asti.ie/document-library/making-education-policy-work-by-dr-brian-fleming/.

The OECD assessment stated that Ireland is one of the high-performing education systems across OECD countries

- refining the vision for Senior Cycle and reviewing its structure accordingly
- reviewing complementary policies that need to be aligned in Senior Cycle – in particular, discussions should be aiming to clarify the options for adjustment of assessment methods, needs for continuing professional development for teachers, and guidance services
- defining a communication and engagement plan
- securing resources
- clarifying expectations concerning timing and pace, and
- ongoing data gathering and research.

Did the ASTI have any input into the OECD review?

Yes, the ASTI met with the OECD team when it visited Ireland. It had a prolonged and robust engagement in which the ASTI communicated its well-documented concerns around the need to respect and support the voice of the teacher profession in the review process. The bitter legacy of the contested implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle was strongly communicated, as was the depth of alienation perceived by the profession in the Junior Cycle review process. Teachers are not just one of the stakeholders in the review process. They are the most important stakeholder, as they are the professionals charged with delivering on the content and, more significantly, the promise of a new curriculum. Teacher voice must be accorded agency and status in the ongoing NCCA Senior Cycle review.

RENEWED CONFIDENCE IN THE MIDST OF UNCERTAINTY

The RSTA continues its work despite the restrictions.

The successful first term of the year 2020/21, with the extra regulatory restraints and health protections, heralded a renewed confidence in the midst of uncertainty. Now as the second half of the school year approaches, the awareness that 'times flies' is to the forefront of one's consciousness. By working together, in the common interest, the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic will be overcome. Despite the welcome news of an effective vaccine, personal responsibility will be constantly re-emphasised into the future.

Schools continue

Thanks is due to the teachers and support staff for their work in keeping the schools open. It is always reassuring for retired people to hear the sounds of jubilant youth going and coming from school and at break time. The determination to keep schools functioning has reassured the public that life continues even in the midst of a pandemic. Once again, the valuable contribution of teachers to society is recognised.

Social activities

RSTA social gatherings and foreign travel plans had to be cancelled during the past year. As restrictions ease, the committee is cautious in advising people of this vulnerable age group to participate in large social gatherings. The policy of the RSTA for 2021 will be determined by public health advice and local branch best practice.



The RSTA Midland Branch met outdoors in The Mall in Longford for coffee and cake in December. The main purpose of meeting was to finalise and sign off on end-of-year accounts, which would normally take place at the branch AGM, which could not take place this year due to Covid-19. Present were Rita O'Connor, Mary Kenny, Úna Byrne, Rosemary Kiernan, John Moloney, and Pádraic O'Doherty.

Administration

The administration work of the RSTA continues through e-contact. Carmel Heneghan, the RSTA representative on the Alliance of Retired Public Servants (ARPS) has kept in touch with the Government on the pay/parity aspects of our pensions and the outstanding anomalies that have arisen. Special attention is being paid to the amendment of the Industrial Relations and Pensions Bill 2009 coming before the Dáil.

Newsletter

Tomás MacCárthaigh and the editorial team produced an extra copy of the RSTA Newsletter for Christmas since members were unable to meet. It is encouraging to observe the amount of informal contact among members in the RSTA network. Local branches have kept in contact with members confined to their homes and those who are ill.

RSTA membership application/renewal

Name:

Address:

Home phone:

Mobile:

Email:

RSTA branch:

Annual subscription: €24
Annual renewal date: September 1

Payment options: Bank standing order (recommended by RSTA) or cheque (payable to RSTA)

Return to: Mrs Muriel McNicholas, Cordarragh, Kiltimagh, Claremorris, Co. Mayo.

Contact: murielmcnicholas@gmail.com or 085-118 1330

The personal information requested here is required to administer your membership of the RSTA. It is used by the RSTA in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). See the RSTA Data Protection and Privacy Policy on the RSTA website – www.rsta.ie.

Standing order set-up form

Please complete in **BLOCK CAPITALS** using black or blue pen.

To: The Manager (Bank name and full address)

I hereby authorise and request you to DEBIT my account:

Account name/s:

IBAN BIC

And to credit the account of:

RETIRED SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

IBAN: IE55 AIBK 9323 6112 7290 80 (BIC: AIBKIE2D)

with the amount of **€24** (twenty four euro)

Start Date: ____/____/20____ **Frequency:** Annually until further notice

Reference: (To identify member's subscription on RSTA bank statement):

Member name and RSTA branch

Signature: Date: ____/____/20____

ASTI ANNUAL CONVENTION 2021

The 2021 ASTI Annual Convention will be a virtual event.



ASTI remote Annual Convention 2020 broadcast.

Every Easter approximately 500 ASTI members attend Annual Convention to discuss and vote on the Association's policies for the year ahead. In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, this year Annual Convention will take place online on the Zoom platform.

Where can I get information about online Annual Convention 2021?

The ASTI website – www.asti.ie – is where you will find all of the information you need about Annual Convention 2021.

Delegates – online Annual Convention 2021

Delegates to Annual Convention are selected at branch meetings, usually in January. Each branch is entitled to send a number of delegates to Annual Convention depending on the number of members in their branch. Branches must submit the names of their chosen branch delegates to ASTI Head Office by post or email not later than January 31. In addition to branch delegates, members of the ASTI Central Executive Council and Standing Committee also attend Convention as delegates.

If you wish to attend the online 2021 Annual Convention you should attend your next branch meeting. Branches around the country are holding online branch meetings due to Covid-19 restrictions. If you are unsure about when or where your branch is meeting, ask your school steward for your branch's meeting schedule.

To attend Annual Convention, you must be either a delegate or an observer. Please note that only delegates are allowed to speak and vote on Convention motions.

Teachers in the spotlight

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

For more information about ASTI Convention see www.asti.ie.

SEÁN SLOWEY



Seán Slowey had a profound influence on teaching staff and students alike during his 28 years as teacher, Deputy Principal and Principal at Ballincollig Community School. He was a pioneer and leader in the field of education. Seán understood the concept of the mission statement, long before it became part of the lexicon of the Department. Seán's mission statement was: "The best for the best, is the best for all".

Seán was deeply committed to the needs of students in Ballincollig Community School. He believed passionately in the Transition Year concept, with its emphasis on alternative learning methodologies, self-directed learning, intellectual, social and personal development, and exposure to the world of work. Ballincollig Community School was one of the first schools in Cork to make TY compulsory for all students.

Seán was passionate about politics and trade unionism. At each general election, he organised a general election for students in the school. He hoped that they would understand the concept of proportional representation and develop a lifelong interest in politics. Seán was a ball of excitement from January to March each year, in anticipation of the ASTI Convention at Eastertime. He religiously read each and every motion, from every branch in the country, and had a considered opinion on each.

Seán was fair and supportive of staff and students alike. Teachers who worked with Seán attest to his supportive nature. You always knew that Seán would have your back. You also knew that if you disagreed with him, that he would have it forgotten in minutes.

Seán's dedication to the public-private partnership (PPP) project was legendary. We, the staff who worked in the original building, would find it impossible to describe to younger teachers the impact the new building had on our working lives. Seán allowed us to plan the building and each subject department had an influence on the final structure. By allowing us to collaborate in the project, we all had skin in the game, and we were as proud as he was of the finished product! We extend our sympathy to Seán's wife Geraldine, his son John, his daughter Rosemarie and his beloved grandchildren.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Anne Marie Daly

BLÁITHÍN NÍ DHUBHLAOICH



Our friend and colleague Bláithín Ní Dhubhlaoich joined us in Coláiste Mhuire as a teacher of English and learning support in 2001, serving as ASTI school steward from 2014. Committed to helping those with the greatest needs, her friendly face and warm sense of humour were a source of comfort for those students (and parents) who found the transition to post-primary challenging. As examination aide, she was also often the final teacher to wish the students well as they completed the Leaving Certificate and took their place in the wider world. Sadly, Bláithín was taken from us far too soon, just as we were about to start a new academic year. Much loved by her colleagues and the students she taught, both past and present, Bláithín will be greatly missed. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam.

Thosaigh ár gcomhghleacaí agus ár gcara Bláithín ag obair i gColáiste Mhuire sa bhliain 2001. Mhúin sí Béarla agus bhí sí i gceannas ar an Roinn Tacaíocht Foghlama. Bhí sí tiomanta do chuidiú leis na scoláirí go léir a bhí faoina cúram agus ach go háirithe leis na scoláirí a bhí ag streachailt. B'údar soláis iad do scoláirí agus do thuismitheoirí an meangadh gáire sin nach raibh riamh i bhfad ó haghaidh Bhláithín agus an acmhainn mhaith grinn a bhí inti. Mar Chúntóir Scrúduithe Stáit ba mhinic gurbh í Bláithín an múinteoir deireanach a d'fheicfeadh na scoláirí sula gcuirfidís tús leis an gcéad chuid eile dá n-aistear. Tagann an múinteoir sa dán cáiliúil An t-Oide le Séamas Ó hAodha chun cuimhne:

Aoibhinn ceird an oide

Mar gharnóir lá iúil

D'aistrigh sciamh na scoithe

Ó ghrianán go húir

Bhíomar go léir croíbhriste an drochscéala a fháil i mí Lúnasa gur sciobadh Bláithín uainn go tobann agus i bhfad ró-luath. Tá pobal Coláiste Mhuire, scoláirí, thuismitheoirí, foireann agus Bord Bainistíochta na scoile fíorbhuíoch de Bhláithín as an tseirbhís tiomnaithe a thug sí don scoil ar feadh beagnach fiche bliain mar mhúinteoir, mar bhall foirne agus mar bhall den Bhord Bainistíochta. Crothnóimid choíche í. Guímid beannacht dílis Dé ar a hanam uasal.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND – NEW ONLINE EVENTS, ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

In response to Covid-19 restrictions, the National Museum of Ireland has developed a range of virtual programmes to be used in the classroom for 2020/21. This new programme blends live online sessions with Museum educators, and a range of pre-recorded video and printable resources available from the Museum's website. Post-primary learning across a wide range of subjects can be enriched through exploration of the Museum's collections, from art and design to archaeology, 20th century Irish history, rural traditions, and the natural world. Here are some of the highlights.

Leaving Certificate Art History Presentation

Museum educators have developed a presentation containing high-resolution images of the artefacts on display at the Museum that are linked to the Leaving Certificate Art History curriculum. The presentation can be used by teachers as an in-class resource and the notes pages can be used by students as a revision tool.

Virtual Tour – Proclaiming a Republic: The 1916 Rising

This virtual tour features Museum curators, educators and guides, and brings viewers through the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition, which closed in 2020. Learn about key artefacts, personal stories and key curriculum-linked themes featured in the exhibition.

The Irish Coast Climate Change Virtual Visit

In this specially designed activity for Transition Year, students can explore the effects of climate change on Irish coastal ecosystems during a self-guided virtual walk-through of the Natural History Museum. Detailed teachers' notes are provided, with suggested follow-up classroom activities.

The National Museum of Ireland will be adding new resources and events as they become available so teachers should check the website regularly or follow the Museum on social media for updates.

Visit www.museum.ie for more.

NEW DIGITAL INNOVATORS CATEGORY FOR YOUNG SOCIAL INNOVATORS AWARDS 2021



Young Social Innovators has partnered with Virgin Media to launch the Digital Innovators Award – a new category in the Young Social Innovators Ireland Awards 2021. The award aims to promote digital well-being among young people and to recognise young people's positive application of digital technology for social good.

The new award is open to all current Young Social Innovators participants at Senior Cycle and the inaugural winner of the Digital Innovators Award will be announced on May 13, at the Young Social Innovators of the Year Ireland Awards 2021.

For more information see
www.youngsocialinnovators.ie.

STUDENT ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME 2020/21

Ireland's largest student business programme, the Local Enterprise Office's Student Enterprise Programme for 2020/21 helps young people to learn key skills on how to create a business idea, start a business and grow a business.

The students compete across three categories – Junior, Intermediate and Senior – and judging takes place virtually via electronic submissions. Each student enterprise is challenged with creating, setting up and running their own business, which must show sales of their service or product.

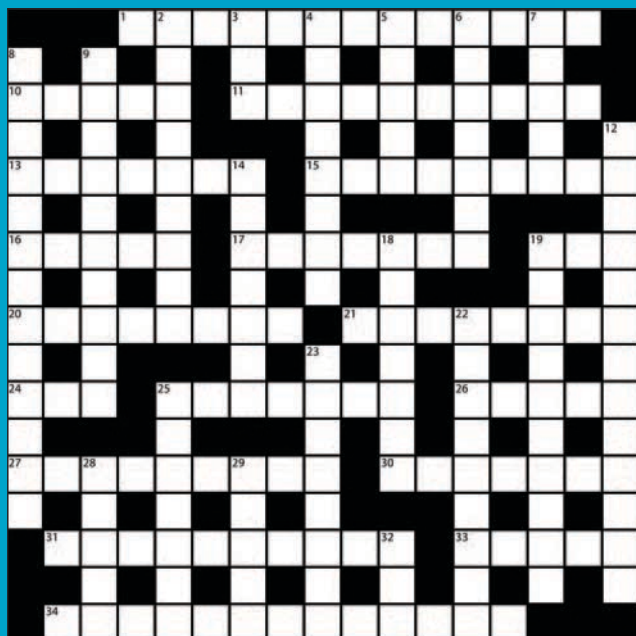
This year, the programme will also include two additional categories that students can enter. These are the "Most Creative Business Idea" video competition for the Senior category and the "My Entrepreneurial Journey" category for the Junior and Intermediate categories.

Earlier this year, the 2019/2020 Student Enterprise Programme National Final winners in the Senior category were Handy Hose Holders from CBS Thurles in Tipperary for their practical milking parlour hose solution, which has since been picked for national listing by Glanbia. The Intermediate category was won by Aim It Board from Loreto College in Dublin City, while Sofatop from Ballybay Community College in Monaghan took the Junior category award.

For more information visit www.studententerprise.ie, which will feature regular blogs and new online resources for students and teachers.



Win €250



ACROSS

1. How 17 across might be in love (4,4,5)
10. Titanic, for example (5)
11. Widely spoken Eastern European language (5-5)
13. Bucolic, halcyon, exquisite (7)
15. Intensely, unusually, immensely (9)
16. Lethal venom could split in two (5)
17. Nip out of portacabin for a tumbler (7)
19. Egg ... Yung (3)
20. Yawn (8)
21. Thin antelope drops into circus performer (8)
24. Kubrick's 1968 A.I. antagonist (3)
25. Could be asset, event or account (7)
26. Short reconnaissance trip (5)
27. 1975 musical directed by Robert Altman (9)
30. He composed The Barber of Seville (7)
31. A fruit for you, oh my darling! (10)
33. That place in the ether (5)
34. Whiplash can be so annoying (4, 2, 3, 4)

DOWN

2. Un-wise Leinster women provide number of students (9)
3. Early Microsoft computer procedure (1,1,1)
4. A bone or segment of the spinal column (8)
5. Shelter for fowl (5)
6. Sincere, serious, solemn (7)
7. Unsteady easel could provide security of tenure (5)
8. Prestidigitation! (7,2,4)
9. *Humanae Vitae*, for example (10)
12. 1982 single by rock band Survivor (3, 2, 3, 5)
14. Type of constitution, contract or license (7)
18. Lobster used to support heads (7)
19. One who has the right to use existing company brand name (10)
22. Bloodsucking, leechlike, living off another (9)
23. Four thieves lose out on flu symptom (8)
25. Troglodyte (7)
28. Dance on the outskirts of Salamanca and Tulsa (5)
29. Material in England (5)
32. Long period of time (3)

Did you miss?

Coming together online 16
Occupational health 22

Sponsored by



ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 2101

The winner will receive €250 in One4All vouchers.

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

Print-outs or photos of completed crosswords, or handwritten answers, can be posted to ASTIR Crossword No. 2101, Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1, or emailed to astir@asti.ie to arrive by Monday, February 15, 2021.

Solution to ASTIR Crossword No. 2005

Across

1. A laugh a minute
10. Eaten
11. Institutes
13. Overrun
15. Determine
16. Dodge
17. Cowgirl
19. Das
20. Pancreas
21. Tinsmith
24. Nae
25. Element
26. Coypu
27. Outnumber
30. Chapati
31. Custard pie
33. India
34. One Day at a Time

Down

2. Lunar year
3. Uzi
4. Hose down
5. Moist
6. Neutral
7. Trevi
8. Second opinion
9. Attendance
12. Neasa Hourigan
14. Nictate (7)
18. Idiotic
19. Dairymaids
22. Socialism
23. Decrepit
25. Erupted
28. Tauon
29. Berry
32. ENT

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the winner of Crossword No. 2005: Julia Blake, Letterkenny Road, Conroy, Co. Donegal. Donegal Branch.



IRISH AID CENTRE



VIRTUAL

SCHOOL WORKSHOPS & LEARNING RESOURCES

Ireland's Role In Fighting Global Poverty And Hunger

The Irish Aid Centre has gone virtual.

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Contact us to discuss a **free workshop** to suit your students. We look forward to welcoming your school to our virtual Irish Aid Centre soon.

TRANSITION YEAR, CSPE, JUNIOR CYCLE & SENIOR CYCLE

WWW.IRISHAID.IE

OVER 6,000 TEACHERS AND LEARNERS FROM 137 SCHOOLS VISITED THE IRISH AID CENTRE IN 2019, NOW WE'RE GOING ONLINE!

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On average ASTI members saved **€412*** on their health insurance



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Identify the savings which can be made

92% of customers surveyed think we're excellent and would recommend us to family & friends!**



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*Average saving based on 136 ASTI customers who reviewed their cover between November 2019 & November 2020. Source, Cornmarket November 2020.

**Source: Cornmarket Health Insurance Survey, November 2020, based on 136 survey responses in 2020.

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16325 ASTI Health WIN Ad 12-20

Be Healthy & Be Protected

ASTI members
**saved on average
€412** on their
Health Insurance*



Get **3 months FREE**
Salary Protection**

when you take a health
insurance policy out
through Cornmarket

See below for details

Cornmarket's Health Insurance Comparison Service

Cornmarket's Health Insurance Comparison Service

2020 has been a challenging year in a variety of ways and if there is one thing we've learnt, it's your health is your wealth. We don't know what 2021 has in store but as always, we're here to help our customers with the challenges ahead.

Having access to the right health insurance cover when we need it most is invaluable. We all have different needs when it comes to health insurance and with over 325 plans on the market it can be difficult to find the right plan for you. In many cases, you may be overpaying for your cover & that's where we can help.

ASTI members saved on average €412 when they reviewed their policy through Cornmarket in 2020!*

If you're new to health insurance, Cornmarket's Health Insurance experts will navigate the whole market for you, so there's no need to worry.

*Based on 136 ASTI members who switched their cover and saved between January & November 2020.
Source: Cornmarket, December 2020.

When finding the right plan, here's what Cornmarket take into account.

- ✓ Hospital preferences (location & room accommodation)
- ✓ Your budget – make a saving where possible
- ✓ Plan benefits (digital doctor, minor injury clinic etc.)
- ✓ Life stages
- ✓ Family planning (fertility & maternity)
- ✓ Medical conditions

To speak to a health
insurance expert today,
call (01) 408 6210



Customer Feedback

We recently surveyed our health insurance customers & here's what they had to say;

92%

would recommend
our service to
family & friends

97%

think our team are
extremely efficient

94%

think our teams
product knowledge
is very good

Source: 239 Cornmarket customers surveyed January to November 2020

**3 months FREE
Salary Protection****



What's more...

When you take out a health insurance policy through Cornmarket between 1st January 2021 and 30th April 2021, you can then get 3 months' FREE Salary Protection!** All you need to do is apply to join the ASTI Salary Protection Scheme for the first time before 30th April 2021 and fulfil the eligibility criteria. The ASTI Salary Protection Scheme is designed to provide a replacement income of up to 75% of your annual salary† if you can't work due to illness or injury, and your sick pay has reduced to half pay or ceased altogether. We want ASTI members to have peace of mind in the good times & the bad.

Sleep easy knowing you have the right health insurance benefits & financial security of Salary Protection.

Let's start 2021 on the right foot!

**Offer available to eligible members of the ASTI who firstly take out a health insurance policy through Cornmarket. You must fulfil the eligibility criteria of the Scheme and be applying to join the Scheme for the first time between 1st January 2021 and 30th April 2021. This offer is not available to existing or past members of any Salary/Income Protection Schemes administered by Cornmarket. Premiums will commence 3 months after the date you are accepted into the Scheme and cover commences. This cannot be claimed in conjunction with any other offer (e.g. Rewards/Free Period). Terms, conditions & exclusions apply.

†Up to 75% less any other income that you may be entitled to e.g. half pay, Ill Health Early Retirement Pension, Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration, State Illness or Invalidity Benefit. To qualify for Disability Benefit you must meet the Scheme's Definition of Disability and have exhausted the Scheme's 'Deferred Period'. Simply put, that's the amount of time that must pass before benefit can be paid.

Cornmarket's Health Insurance Comparison Service

What do we do?

**Go through
a review**

**Compare over
325 plans from
Irish Life Health,
VHI and Laya**

**Provide the
most up to
date offers and
benefits**

**Identify the
savings which
can be made**



**Call (01) 408 6210 or visit
cornmarket.ie/health-insurance/ASTI-health/**

The ASTI Salary Protection Scheme is underwritten by New Ireland. New Ireland Assurance Company plc is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. A member of Bank of Ireland Group. Laya Healthcare Limited, trading as Laya Healthcare and Laya Life, is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. Irish Life Health DAC is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. Vhi Healthcare DAC trading as Vhi Healthcare is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

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