

Volume 38: Number 2: March 2020  
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**ASTI**  
A century of service

# ASTIR

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland



## GROW YOUR PENSION

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for equal work

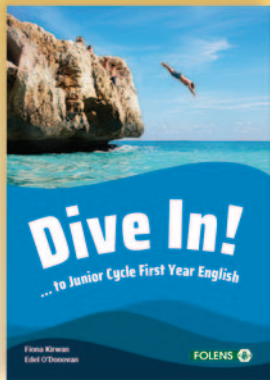
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ASTI  
Convention 2020

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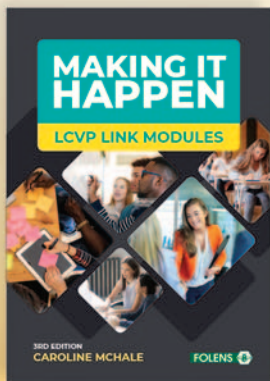


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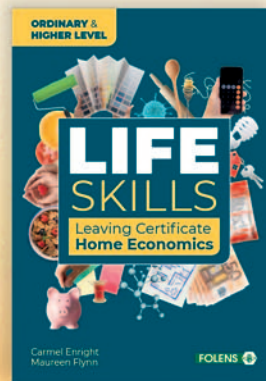
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PE



BUSINESS



HOME EC



SPANISH

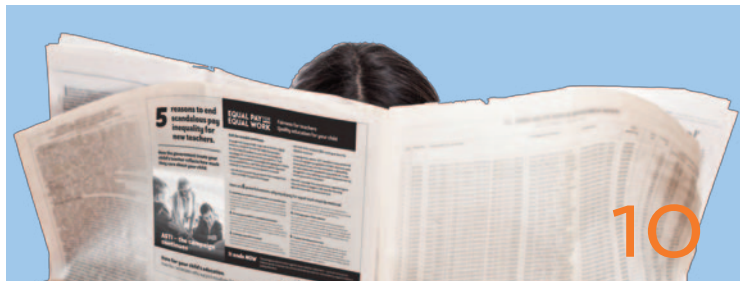
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## WORKLOAD: EVER INCREASING AND MULTI-DIMENSIONAL

As we approach the Easter break and the cumulative effect of the toil of the school year is being experienced by teachers all over the country, it is pertinent that we reflect on teacher workload in the Irish education system. Irish teachers spend more hours teaching their students than the OECD and EU averages. These class contact hours represent only a fraction of our working lives. Preparation, corrections/assessment, staff meetings, sub-committees to deal with the ever-expanding demand for policy development and implementation, pastoral care commitments and extra-curricular activities make enormous demands on teachers' time. The 22 hours' professional time allowed under the Junior Cycle Framework, while welcome, is totally inadequate to cover the time associated with implementing the new Junior Cycle. The Croke Park hours add further to demands on our time. Time well spent is one thing; unfortunately, so much of the time demands on us are of questionable value.

Teachers don't mind spending time on what they deem a worthwhile investment of their precious time. Evidence of this is the high position Ireland has achieved in the recent OECD PISA report. This achievement was made while Ireland was placed 35 out of 35 countries in spending on second-level education as a proportion of GDP (OECD, *Education at a Glance*). We, the teachers of Ireland, are making up for the huge deficit in resourcing of second-level education. Workload is becoming a critical matter for practising teachers and when coupled with the savage cuts to our sick leave entitlements, make sustainability a very real issue. Alongside pay, working conditions are impacting significantly on recruitment and retention of teachers.

Well-being is a term we hear a lot about nowadays, especially in education. Teachers' health and well-being counts too. The incessant increase in workload, the lack of control over how and when the work is done, is completely at variance with worker well-being and workplace health promotion. We have rights and our employers and paymasters have responsibilities, including around the provision of a healthy and safe working environment. The Department of Education proclaims to be concerned about teacher well-being. Actions speak louder than words. It is not good enough to speak of stakeholder engagement, collaboration and partnership, and then exclude teacher representation from working groups. Whatever the forum, where the issues around teachers' working lives are being discussed and decisions are being made, teachers must be included as equal partners. They must not speak about us without us.

As we go to print difficult times are upon us. We will take our advice from the public health experts with respect to the developing Covid-19 situation. Stay safe – **teachers' health is education's wealth.**



Deirdre Mac Donald

ASTI President

## NEW PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT

The Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA) concludes at the end of 2020. Irrespective of the outcome of the recent general election and the subsequent efforts to form a government, negotiations to put a successor agreement in place will have to take place in the coming months. Conversations between the then Government and the Public Services Committee of the ICTU took place during 2019 on an outline for the negotiations, but with the general election being called and the resulting uncertain outcome, there has been no progress in recent months. It had appeared that there might be sectoral negotiations in the lead-up to an overall round of pay talks, but that now looks increasingly uncertain. These would have had the potential to address outstanding issues that are specific to each sector, including teaching, and provide for a more comprehensive overall agreement. With time constraints becoming tighter as government formation becomes a prolonged process, this may not happen.

Meanwhile, the ASTI has remained to the forefront and fully committed in the campaign for equal pay for post-2010 entrants to teaching. A recent advertisement that was placed by the ASTI in the national press in February is reproduced elsewhere in this issue of *ASTIR*. Demonstrations have continued and a lobbying campaign during the general election accorded this issue top priority. Annual Convention 2020 will also provide a platform to keep this injustice in the public eye, and continue to highlight and assist in our efforts to convince the political establishment to bring an end to it, once and for all.

At time of going to press, we are balloting our members. This is to give effect to the following motion, which was adopted at the January meeting of the Central Executive Council of ASTI:

*That the ASTI ballot for industrial action up to and including strike action, for equal pay, to be taken in conjunction with one or both of the other teacher unions.*

A strong and refreshed mandate to continue our campaign is vital.

### Representing all teachers

The ASTI will enter the pay talks, in whatever guise they emerge, with pay inequality remaining as its top priority, and will be seeking full resolution of the issue. It is also clear that general pay rates for all members have become a key priority to be addressed in the context of developments in the wider economy. Teachers deserve a meaningful pay rise.

There is also a need to restore the additional time commitments that were imposed on teachers during the recession. Workload has spiralled during the last decade. We must also stand firm on any and all attacks on the principle that there should be pension parity between serving and retired teachers. It's a policy that has long been defended by the ASTI. The concept that any increases in the pay of serving teachers are also applied to our retired members is one that is imperative to protect all teachers' interests, whether in service or retired.



Kieran Christie

ASTI General Secretary

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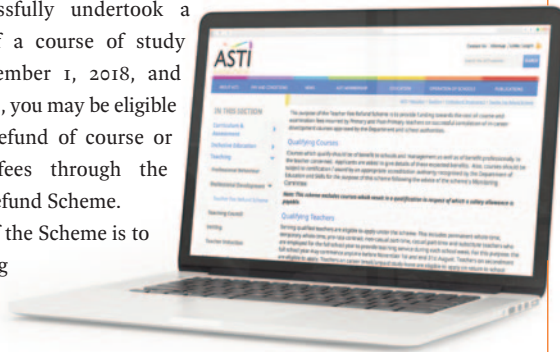
The Educational Company of Ireland

## Teacher Fee Refund Scheme 2019

If you successfully undertook a course/part of a course of study between September 1, 2018, and August 31, 2019, you may be eligible for a partial refund of course or examination fees through the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme.

The purpose of the Scheme is to provide funding towards the cost of

course participation and examination fees on successful completion of professional development courses. The funding is available for courses that are directly relevant and of benefit to schools, and that are subject to certification/award by an appropriate accreditation authority, recognised by the Department of Education and Skills.



The closing date for applications is March 31, 2020. For more information and the application form see Circular 0003/2020 Teacher Fee Refund Scheme 2019.

## Have we got your up-to-date contact details?



The ASTI regularly engages its members on key issues. It is therefore vital that ASTI Head Office has your up-to-date contact details, including:

- your school address;
  - your home address;
  - your mobile number; and,
  - your email address,
- to ensure that you have your vote.

If you have changed your school or home address recently, please email your most up-to-date information and contact details to [membership@asti.ie](mailto:membership@asti.ie). Being a member of the ASTI means that you get to participate in important decisions that affect your career, teaching as a profession, and the education service.

## Teaching Council news

### Re-vetting to be undertaken every three years

It is expected that the Minister for Justice and Equality will announce, in the coming months, the requirement that all persons working with children or vulnerable adults will be required to undergo re-vetting every three years. In preparation for this, the Teaching Council has commenced the re-vetting of registered teachers on a rolling three-year basis. Re-vetting will be linked to the teacher's renewal of registration. Teachers who are issued a re-vetting letter must complete the two-stage vetting application process in order to be able to renew their registration.

### ASTI members awarded Teaching Council bursaries

ASTI members were among the recipients of 24 bursaries recently awarded by the Teaching Council to teachers and others engaged in a range of education-related research projects as part of the first public service-wide Innovation Week. The bursaries, totalling more than €86,000, are being awarded under the John Coolahan Research Support Framework. The Framework is designed to support teachers' ongoing professional growth through their engagement in and with research, and the sharing of learning from that process. The research activities supported under the Framework cover a range of topics, from professional learning, to well-being, to student teachers' attitudes to teaching in a Gaelcholáiste. The following five ASTI members were recipients of the recently awarded bursaries:

- Jack Neylon and Pauline Della Chiesa: 'Team Teaching as a Medium of Situated Mentoring for Student Teachers on School Placement'
- Iseult O'Rourke: 'Delving into the Shadows of the Grinds Culture in Ireland – A Focus on Mathematics'
- Aideen O'Connor: 'Tús Maith? Exploring Student and Early Career Teachers' Attitudes to, and Experiences of, Teaching in a Post-Primary Irish Medium Immersion (IMI) Setting/Gaelcholáiste', and
- Katie Chapple: 'I Want to Break Free – Breaking Down the Barriers to Professional Learning in the 21st Century Second Level Irish School'.

## Wicklow Branch retirement function



ASTI Wicklow Branch held a retirement function in the Parkview Hotel, Newtownmountkennedy in March. Pictured are (from left): Joan Aylmer, Mary Kilgallen, Diarmaid de Paor, ASTI Deputy General Secretary, Mary O' Sullivan, Mary Ohle, ASTI Honorary National Organiser, Gerry Moloney, Ann Piggott, ASTI Vice President, Padraig Murphy, ASTI Treasurer, Maria O'Carroll, Willie Dunne, Jim O' Donnell, Eileen Dunbar, and Denise Buckley.



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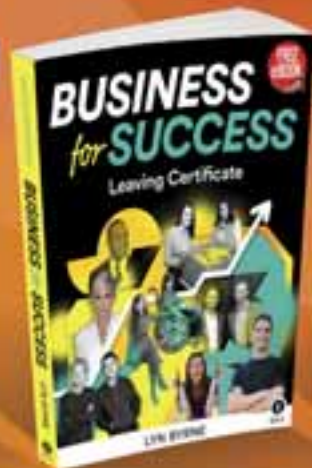
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## EU monitors education issues



EU data on education published by the European Commission once again confirms that students in Ireland have access to high-quality education despite underfunding. Dropout from school and/or training is low in Ireland (5%) – less than half the EU average (10.6%). Tertiary educational attainment is higher among young people here: 56.3% compared to the EU average of 40.7%.

Students in Ireland who are not native born do better than students not native born in other countries. In Ireland, these students are less likely to drop

out of education and more likely to achieve a tertiary qualification. The report also finds that women are over-represented in the teaching profession in Ireland. Some 80% of primary and second-level teachers are female, compared to the OECD average of 77%. Concern over lower pay scales for teachers who entered the profession after 2010 is also noted. The report states that: “Unions argue that teacher recruitment difficulties result, at least partly, from this practice”. The report shows that Ireland invested 3.3% of GDP in education in 2017 compared to the EU average of 4.6%.

### Key indicators

	Ireland 2018	EU average 2018
<b>Education and training 2020 benchmarks</b>		
Early leavers from education (age 18-24)	5.0%	10.6%
Tertiary educational attainment (age 30-34)	56.3%	40.7%
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP	3.3% <sup>17</sup>	4.6% <sup>17</sup>
Early leavers from education and training (age 18-24)	Native born 5.4% Foreign born 3.4% <sup>u</sup>	9.5% 20.2%
Tertiary educational attainment (age 30-34)	Native born 54.4% Foreign born 59.7%	41.3% 37.8%

Sources: Eurostat; OECD (PISA); Learning mobility figured are calculated by the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre from UOE data. Notes: u = low reliability; 17 = 2017.

The full report by country (including Ireland) is available here: [https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/document-library/education-and-training-monitor-country-analysis-volume-2-2019\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/document-library/education-and-training-monitor-country-analysis-volume-2-2019_en).

## ASTI President appointed to HSA Board



ASTI President Deirdre Mac Donald has been appointed to the Board of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), by the then Minister for Trade, Employment and Business, Pat Breen. The Board will serve a three-year term. Deirdre has an MA in Health Promotion from the University of Wales, specialising in mental health. A former chair of the ASTI Safety, Health and Welfare Committee, Deirdre has had a long time interest and involvement in workplace health and safety, with a particular interest in mental health and stress in the workplace. Her experience in this area includes being a co-ordinator/facilitator with the Irish part of the European ‘Creating a Healthy Teaching Environment – Teacher Stress Prevention Project’ 2000. She is

currently chair of the Integrated Workplace Health Management Initiative (IWHMI) – a union, management and HSA working group on teacher health and well-being. Deirdre is a member of the ICTU Health and Safety Committee, their strategy group, and co-chairs the ICTU H&S sub-committee on mental health. She has spoken and advocated for the importance of healthy workplaces at Irish and European seminars. The HSA has overall responsibility for the administration and enforcement of health and safety at work in Ireland. The organisation monitors compliance with legislation at the workplace and is the national centre for information and advice to employers, employees and the self-employed on all aspects of workplace health and safety. The HSA also promotes education, training and research in the field of health and safety. Deirdre is one of three trade union nominees to the Board, which is comprised of a chairperson and 11 nominees – three nominated by employer representative organisations, three by trade unions, one from the Minister’s department, and four appointed through the Public Appointments Commission.



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# ASTI CAMPAIGNS: SLARS AND EQUAL PAY

The ASTI continues to campaign on issues around equal pay, and teacher terms and conditions.

**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.**

**ASTI – the campaign continues**

**Vote for your child's education.**  
Vote for candidates who support equal pay for your child's teachers.

**EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK** Fairness for teachers  
Quality education for 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
- 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 (FEMPI) 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 debacle began in 2011, but the shocking discrimination that remains must end.

**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 essential 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 side by side, 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 passionate 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 cut-price labour, it causes even more problems. Your local school now finds it is almost impossible to recruit new teachers into a career with discriminatory pay, poor prospects and no chance of catching up with their peers. There are no applicants for many of the key positions. Many students have no qualified teachers in key subjects.

**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.

**ASTI** asti.ie  
A century of service #equalpayforequalwork

As this *ASTIR* goes to print, the ASTI is conducting a ballot of members on industrial action over unequal pay. Despite a statement by the Minister for Education and Skills in April 2019 that there was “unfinished business” in relation to new teacher pay, unequal pay continues. Teachers who have entered the profession since 2010 are on a different pay scale from their colleagues, even though they have the same duties and responsibilities. This has led to a teacher recruitment and retention crisis.

The ASTI continues to campaign for equal pay. Recently, this has included:

- placing an advertisement in the national newspapers in the run-up to the 2020 General Election
- a countrywide lobby of election candidates, and
- a protest outside the Department of Education and Skills in February 2020.

In 2016, the ASTI became the first union to strike over the issue of new entrant pay. While the ASTI's action secured some improvements for post-2010 entrants to teaching, a sizeable gap remains. Because of the lack of progress in closing this gap, ASTI Central Executive Council decided in January of this year to hold a ballot on industrial action. Depending on the outcome of the ASTI ballot, further industrial action may be taken in conjunction with one or both of the other teacher unions.

## Teachers' working conditions

As part of the ASTI's ongoing work to highlight teachers' working conditions, the union commissioned Red C to undertake a survey on class size at Junior Cycle level in January. The survey aims to provide evidence to back up the growing concerns of members that many Junior Cycle classes are too large, and the impact of this on the use of new methodologies, group work and other activities, which are emphasised in the *Framework for Junior Cycle*. The findings of the survey will be published in April.

## SLAR meetings – the impasse continues

The saga regarding the scheduling of Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings in schools remains to be resolved.

The Department of Education and Skills recently issued Circular Letter 0017/2020, in which it sets out four options from which schools could choose to decide how such meetings will be scheduled in the school. It was an ill-advised approach that will serve to do no more than undermine trust and goodwill among teachers.

ASTI Standing Committee concluded that none of the options contained in the circular letter are acceptable as a means to resolve the ongoing difficulty



Pictured at the ASTI protest for equal pay in February 2020 were (from left): Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary), Helen O'Reilly (CEC member and post-2012 entrant to teaching), and Deirdre Mac Donald (ASTI President).

in scheduling SLAR meetings. Members were advised to vote against all of the options set out in the circular letter when the matter was to be considered at staff meetings.

The ASTI has written to the Minister for Education and Skills, together with the Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform, to record our disappointment with the issuance of Circular 0017/2020. We have asked both Ministers to state their position on all the aspects we have raised in objection to its terms.

The approach adopted by the Department of Education and Skills represents another example of the perpetuation of the gross underfunding of Irish second-level education. As members will know, the latest OECD report Education at a Glance 2019 shows Ireland in last place out of 35 countries in terms of the proportion of GDP invested in second-level education.

The ASTI Directive on the scheduling of SLAR meetings remains in force, irrespective of what decision is made within a school, whether by staff or Board of Management in the absence of a staff consensus, regarding the options set out in Circular 0017/2020. The Directive requires that ASTI members only attend SLAR meetings on the basis that they must be scheduled to start and end within normal school tuition hours, and only a limited number may run beyond school tuition hours for some of the duration of the meeting.

ASTI members voted for the Directive by 93% to 7%. In upholding this Directive, ASTI members are standing up for students, the teaching profession and education in Ireland.

Keep up with ASTI campaigns at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie) and on social media.



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# LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

FÉILTE 2019 was a tremendous success, says Teaching Council Chairperson and ASTI member NOELLE MORAN.



*Pictured at FÉILTE 2019 were (from left): Noelle Moran (Teaching Council Chairperson and former ASTI Standing Committee representative), Ann Piggott (ASTI Vice President), Niall Duddy (elected member of the Teaching Council and ASTI member), Moira Leydon (ASTI Assistant General Secretary) and, Deirdre Mac Donald (ASTI President).*

FÉILTE 2019 was hosted by NUI Galway in the City of the Tribes in late September. FÉILTE, the Teaching Council's annual Festival of Education in Learning and Teaching Excellence, is an acknowledgement and celebration of the excellent work that teachers do in their schools and classrooms every day, and provides a platform where teachers can meet each other, network, and collaborate, sharing their work and ideas. This event also offers the public a glimpse into just some of the outstanding work teachers engage in, and the Teaching Council is very grateful to all teachers involved for their willingness to share with others.

## Education 360

The theme for FÉILTE 2019 was 'Education 360: Learning from Others'. As is the case every year at FÉILTE, valuable work being undertaken by teachers in our schools was showcased at almost 40 stands, organised thematically and addressing important educational issues.

Once again, the festival was held over two days, with an opening event on Friday evening and the main event on Saturday. A riverside barbecue took place on Friday at the college bar, attended by world-renowned educationalist Prof. Andy Hargreaves and Minister for Education and Skills

**FÉILTE, the Teaching Council's annual Festival of Education in Learning and Teaching Excellence, is an acknowledgement and celebration of the excellent work that teachers do in their schools and classrooms every day.**

Joe McHugh TD. Stories from schools were shared and educational issues discussed. All of this was followed by an enjoyable fringe event of music, poetry and the arts.

Interesting keynotes on Saturday were delivered by Prof. Hargreaves and Dr Finn Ó Murchú of Mary Immaculate College, Thurles, and there were two panel discussions on the themes of 'Inclusive Education' and 'Leaders in the Community'.

A variety of workshops on a number of themes were very well attended throughout Saturday. Many FÉILTE 'meetups' took place. 'ResearchMeet' was an opportunity for teachers to engage on research findings and the research experience (some of those presenting were recipients of John Coolahan Research Support Framework bursaries from the Teaching Council). 'StudentMeet' encompassed a panel of principals and newly qualified teachers offering advice to student teachers, and new this year was 'LeadershipMeet', where principals and deputy principals shared learnings from their schools.

2019 was also the inaugural year of 'BreakfastMeet' at FÉILTE. On arrival, those attending were greeted with a free healthy breakfast, and had opportunities to attend food demos, along with music and mindfulness events.

## Enjoying Galway

The organisers were very conscious that FÉILTE occurred at the weekend, and as Galway is renowned for culture and the arts there was plenty of entertainment organised. There was a myriad of music to be experienced at various points in the day with performances from local drummers Drumadore, songwriter and NUIG graduate Katie O'Connor, who is a student of the new BA Music degree at NUI Galway, local branches of Comhaltas, and some sean nós dancing performances by local teacher Roisín Ní Mhainín and her very talented young daughters.

FÉILTE in Galway was a huge success and even an evacuation for a short period due to a fire alarm did not dampen spirits! FÉILTE is a very enjoyable professional learning event and tickets are free of charge – attendance counts towards Croke Park hours completed on an individual basis at your principal's discretion.

Thanks to all our members who supported FÉILTE 2019. We hope to see many of you in The Helix, Dublin, for FÉILTE 2020 next October!

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# SPEAKING UP FOR TEACHERS

The ASTI continues to argue that unequal pay and conditions for teachers is contributing to the recruitment and retention crisis in schools.

“It is unthinkable that in 2020 some teachers have inferior pay arrangements even though they are doing the same work as their colleagues in the next classroom. In taking industrial action in 2016, ASTI members lost pay and were further penalised under FEMPI (financial emergency) legislation, and are still suffering the consequences. However, their action put unequal pay firmly on the agenda. In addition, the ASTI’s actions led to some gains for lower-paid teachers, but full pay equality remains to be achieved and we intend to achieve it.”

**Deirdre Mac Donald, ASTI President, *The Irish Times*, January 25, 2020**

“The key issue is resourcing. If you look at the OECD Education at a Glance results, we are 35th out of 35 on spending in education, yet if you look at the PISA results, we are at the top of the results in the various subjects. Resourcing is a key issue. We have some of the biggest classes and the longest working hours in terms of teaching in the OECD. It is about resources; we would love to have the resources at our fingertips that Finland has.”

**Deirdre Mac Donald, ASTI President, *The Pat Kenny Show, Newstalk*, February 13, 2020**

“Mr Christie said so-called new entrant teachers recruited on 10% lower pay from 2011 had suffered losses ‘running to tens of thousands of Euro’. He acknowledged that some measures that have been taken to address the two-tier pay system across the public sector had reduced the gap between teachers recruited before and after 2011. However, he noted that staff recruited this year continue to be at a 10% pay disadvantage, with further losses due to the failure to reinstate the HDip allowance. Mr Christie said: ‘The new government coming into being must prioritise this or they will have more days like today when industrial action is taking place.’”

**Kieran Christie, ASTI General Secretary, *rte.ie*, February 4, 2020**

“My partner and I are paying €1,700 rent a month for a one-bedroom apartment. That’s 40% of our combined household income. It’s a nice apartment, but it’s still a one-bedroom apartment. We’re not getting a three-bedroom house for that amount. I’m 33 now. When I was 23 I certainly didn’t think I’d still be in the same situation. I love my job, I really do, I dance into work every day, but I don’t know if it is sustainable in the long run. My principal would tell you she had at least three jobs that she had filled in May or June last year and she had to re-advertise them in August because people had moved home to Mayo or to Sligo or Clare. They had jobs there and they were paying a third of [the rent] they were paying here in Dublin.”

**Órlagh Nic Eoin, ASTI member, *Prime Time, RTÉ*, January 22, 2020**

“We had no objection to it [teacher-sharing scheme] and if it helped some schools and some teachers, well and good, but when the scheme was announced we didn’t think it would make a big difference. We think it is kind of missing the point about teacher shortages, which is pay and conditions. The point about teacher shortages is that we still have unequal pay for teachers since the recession when we had savage cuts to new entrant teachers’ pay. We’ve had some restoration but there is still a very significant gap between a teacher who started pre 2011 and one who started a few years later in terms of what their salary could be.”

**Diarmaid de Paor, ASTI Deputy General Secretary, discussing the teacher sharing scheme on KFM radio, January 6, 2020**

“There was an allocation of 22 hours’ professional time per year to implement the new Junior Cycle, which was a totally inadequate amount of time and we knew it would be. We fought hard and 22 hours was the best that we could do. What we want now is that the agreement as we signed it is implemented. I noted as I was coming in this morning, you had a discussion about an article on mental health and your last speaker spoke on well-being. Well we are looking after the well-being and the health of our members. We signed an agreement and we signed it in good faith and that’s all we are seeking. We sought clarification from the DES at the time and this is what we received from the DES – SLAR meetings held entirely outside of school time would contravene the agreement.”

**Deirdre Mac Donald, ASTI President, *The Pat Kenny Show, Newstalk*, February 28, 2020**



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# THE POWER OF SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

A Cork City school’s campaign to prevent the deportation of three students and their family went viral in January.



At the start of 2020, the nation was caught up in the story of a school in Cork and its campaign on behalf of three students living in direct provision with their family. Zubair, Umair and Mutjuba Khan are students at Coláiste Éamann Rís, and faced deportation along with their parents Mubeen and Hina Mubeen, older brother Hamza and sister Shazadi.

Having lived in Ireland since 2017 (see panel), the family was given five days’ notice of deportation in January. This prompted the school to launch a massive campaign to keep the family in Ireland. Acting Principal of Coláiste Éamann Rís, Aaron Wolfe, takes up the story: “We were given very little time. They got the letter on the 11th of January, and on the 12th, Ms Farrell started the campaign to keep them”.

Edel Farrell, an English and history teacher at the school, was already familiar with the family, having helped the boys’ older brother Hamza, a past pupil at the school, to apply for a third-level place under the Sanctuary Scholarship scheme, which was set up to help young asylum seekers access third-level education. “It’s a very difficult application process,” Edel explains. “We rowed in behind him, and he’s now studying computer science at UCC”.

Zubair, who is in fifth year, is another success story. A talented cricketer, he has been awarded a scholarship with the Cricket Ireland Academy. For Aaron, these achievements get to the heart of why this campaign was so important:

“This guy is going to become a cricket player for Ireland. These kids will really add something to Irish society. They’re an addition to our school, and an addition to the country”.

### Going viral

The school decided to use its strong and active social media presence to raise awareness, issuing a press release on Facebook and Twitter, which garnered a huge response. Local and national media picked up the story, with newspapers, and radio and television stations retweeting, and contacting the school for comment. Aaron says: “We only had five days, so we went round all the radio stations. We were on everything: Newstalk, *Morning Ireland*, the local RedFM and 96FM. Myself and Edel became PR gurus! Hamza went on air and told his story and it really captured people’s imagination”.

They also had political support from both Government and opposition representatives, and support from the trade union movement, including the ASTI and ICTU. Aaron and Edel express their gratitude to ASTI General Secretary Kieran Christie and President Deirdre Mac Donald for their support (see panel): “They submitted a humanitarian appeal on our behalf to the Minister at very short notice”.

The campaign, which also included a petition, went beyond Coláiste

### ASTI support

ASTI President Deirdre Mac Donald wrote to the Minister for Justice, Charlie Flanagan TD, in support of the campaign to allow the Khan family to remain in Ireland. In the letter, she stated: “The ASTI joins UCC, ERST and Coláiste Éamann Rís Cork City in asking that you and your department reconsider the deporting of Hamza, Zubair, Umair and Mutjuba Khan and their sister Shazadi. These five students have shown themselves to be dedicated students, who have committed themselves to their education in order to become independent contributors to our country as it moves to become a more inclusive society. We believe

this is the moral and humanitarian approach that should be taken to their request to remain in Ireland”.

The letter goes on: “We believe that these students should be given the opportunity to complete their education in Ireland. They are committed to and contribute significantly to the places of education they attend. They have integrated with the other students and have been a positive influence in these institutions. If they are allowed to remain in Ireland, they will undoubtedly go on to be in a position to sustain an independent existence and indeed be in a position to contribute in many positive ways to Irish society”.





Pictured at Coláiste Éamann Rís with first-year students who were involved in the campaign: Back row (from left): Kevin Wall (ASTI Standing Committee and teacher at Coláiste Éamann Rís), Brian Kenny (Acting Deputy Principal), Zubair Khan, Umair Khan, Mutjuba Khan, Hamza Khan, Aaron Wolfe (Acting Principal), and Edel Farrell (English and history teacher).

Éamann Rís to other schools that are part of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. The Trust itself has been very active on the issue of direct provision, as Aaron explains: “The Edmund Rice Schools Trust launched a position paper called ‘Futures on Hold’, so it’s the policy of the Trust that its 96 schools campaign to end direct provision in Ireland. Direct provision is 20 years old this year, and it shouldn’t have carried on that long. It’s the belief of the Trust that direct provision needs to become something a lot more caring and a lot more short term. The whole meaning of ‘Futures on hold’ is you are putting these children into direct provision for years and they can’t do anything”.

One example of this is the boys’ older sister Shazadi, who was 18 when the family came to Ireland, and spent the first year in the direct provision centre unable to work or study. Coláiste Éamann Rís became involved in helping her too: “Our home school liaison officer Carmel O’Callaghan got involved, and Shazadi is now studying hospitality and tourism, which is brilliant”.

He says the school is very grateful to the Edmund Rice Schools Trust for all of its support during the campaign: “We’d really like to thank them. We organised a demonstration in Cork City, and through the Trust, we were going to have a simultaneous demonstration in Dublin”.

The demonstrations were called off at the last minute, however, when Tánaiste and local TD Simon Coveney contacted the school personally to say that the Minister for Justice had decided to review the Khan’s application for asylum. Needless to say, the whole school community at Coláiste Éamann Rís was delighted. A video of fellow students applauding the boys as they returned to school went viral, illustrating how invested the whole school community had become in the campaign.

“It was amazing,” says Aaron. “The video captures the atmosphere of our school. It is a very caring school. Young people have a great sense of social injustice, and they could see this was socially unjust. It just shows the power of young people, and the power of the 96 schools.”

He also emphasises that none of this could happen without teachers who are willing to go the extra mile for their students: “We’re more than just teachers: we’re counsellors, we’re mentors, and in this case Edel was their advocate. It shows that schools are so much more than teaching and learning. It relies on volunteerism from staff that will step forward and take on a mountain of extra work. That’s what makes the Irish education system really brilliant”.

## Seeking asylum

Originally from Pakistan, Mubeen and Hina Mubeen Khan fled persecution to Saudi Arabia, where their children were born. However, when the Saudi Government introduced a punitive system of taxes targeting immigrants, which placed them under threat of deportation back to Pakistan if they failed to pay, they fled again. Arriving first in the UK, they came to Ireland in 2017. Since then, the family has been living in a direct provision centre in Cork, where they awaited a decision on their application for asylum. Because the Khans came to Ireland from England, under the Dublin Agreement they were facing deportation back to the UK, and thence to Pakistan.

For now, the family’s case is under review, but Aaron and Edel are hopeful that they will be granted residency in Ireland.

## Courage and unity

Having been successful in their own campaign, Aaron and Edel have some advice for schools that find themselves in a similar situation. Says Edel: “Don’t be embarrassed or ashamed or hide it. We were successful in our publicity. A lot of schools might be reluctant to actually want that, but look where it got us. We’re all about inclusion, we’re all about multiculturalism, interculturalism. It’s important that we share our values with all of our students and with all of our schools”.

For Aaron, it’s about having the courage to go on air, and to deal with the responses on social media and elsewhere, including the negative: “Some people did contact our school, some tweeted quite nasty things to us. But schools just have to be brave and face that criticism”.

They feel the school has learned valuable lessons from the experience. Says Aaron: “Good will is a massive thing as we know in schools. We couldn’t have done it if staff members like Ms Farrell didn’t volunteer, and do it themselves. So [it’s important for principals] to understand the good will”.

Edel sees it as proof of the importance of the school community: “You’re faced with crises and critical incidents, and to us this was a crisis. For our school to get behind one family, and the support that we had from students, staff, parents, and our community – it was so good to see that unity”.

Says Aaron: “It’s like a union – we’re all in this together, there to support each other”.



# GROW YOUR PENSION

**Teachers need to know what pension scheme they are in and how they can make the most of it, says Desmond O’Toole, ASTI Organisation and Development Officer.**

Knowing about your pension scheme is important at every stage in a teacher’s career, because decisions you make while working can have a significant effect on the value of your pension benefits when you come to retire. Your pension is an essential part of the total financial package that you earn for the work you do as a teacher. It is, however, a complex part of your benefits package. There are essentially three occupational pension schemes for teachers: the two pre-2013 schemes for secondary, community, comprehensive and Education and Training Board (ETB) teachers; and, the Single Public Service Pension (SPSP) Scheme for teachers who first entered the profession after January 1, 2013, or who left the earlier schemes and re-entered teaching after this date.

The first two schemes are open to teachers who began their teaching career prior to 2013, and with the exception of differences in retirement ages, provide largely the same benefits. These schemes provide a pension and lump sum on retirement, which is based on a teacher’s length of service and their final salary on the date they retire. Under these schemes the absolute maximum pension that a retiring teacher can expect is up to half of their final salary, with one-and-a-half times salary in their gross lump sum. Most members of these schemes, however, retire early with a pension that is less than half of salary. The value of pension benefits is also affected by the rate of PRSI that you pay.

Since January 1, 2013, teachers who first entered the profession after that date are enrolled in the new pension scheme, which applies across the public service, the SPSP Scheme. In addition, teachers who return to a Department/ETB-paid teaching post after January 1, 2013, having previously left teaching for more than 26 weeks, also become members of this new Scheme (this does not apply to teachers on an approved leave of absence, e.g., a career break).

There are significantly different terms in this Scheme, which have a real effect on the value of the pension benefits that a teacher can expect to receive on retirement. The calculation of pension benefits under the pre-2013 pension schemes is based on a teacher’s final salary, typically the point at which a teacher’s salary is at its highest. By contrast, under the new Scheme, pensions are based on a teacher’s average salary over their career, which, given the length of the teaching pay scale, will inevitably mean a reduction in the comparative value of pension benefits.

Whether you are a member of one of the pre-2013 schemes or of the SPSP Scheme, however, you have the facility to top up your pension benefits. Under the pre-2013 schemes this top-up service is known as notional service. A similar scheme operates in the SPSP Scheme.

**Pension benefits matter when it comes to planning your retirement. Whether you are a member of one of the pre-2013 schemes or the SPSP, you should think about the level of income you will need in retirement.**

build their retirement pension and the other to their retirement lump sum. Every year the value of accrued referable amounts held in the Scheme is updated by the rate of inflation. Over the course of a teacher's career these amounts build up and fund the defined pension benefits that the Scheme delivers on retirement.

Members of the SPSP Scheme, who have been contributing to the Scheme for at least two years and have at least nine years left to retirement, can also purchase additional referable amounts on an annual cycle to enhance the value of their retirement benefits. A teacher applies to the Scheme administrators (DES or ETB) for a quote and, if accepted, the payments commence and continue for one full year. At the end of that year the additional referable amounts are banked in the Scheme. A teacher can repeat this cycle for up to 20 separate years in total. The value of these additional referable amounts rank on a par with standard referable amounts when it comes to calculating retirement benefits, including the Spouses' and Children's Scheme, and their value is updated by the rate of inflation each year.

#### Private options

Teachers can also take out private pension arrangements such as Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) or Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSAs), such as the ASTI-endorsed scheme offered by Cornmarket (cornmarket.ie). These are private arrangements, however, outside the teachers' pension schemes, and as such depend on the performance of pension fund managers to secure an additional gratuity and/or pension in retirement. They do not deliver the same value of retirement benefits as public service pension schemes, but are much more flexible when it comes to making or varying regular contributions or lump sum payments to the Scheme.

#### Summary

Pension benefits matter when it comes to planning your retirement. Whether you are a member of one of the pre-2013 schemes or the SPSP, you should think about the level of income you will need in retirement. The State Contributory Pension is only a backstop for those who are entitled to it. Teachers will typically depend on their occupational pension scheme to provide the bulk of their income security in retirement. It is definitely worth examining how you might enhance that security within your pension scheme, or by making additional private arrangements. The ASTI Pensions sub-committee ensures that ASTI Standing Committee is advised of all matters relating to teachers' pensions and is constantly working to protect and improve teachers' pension arrangements. The pension specialists at ASTI Head Office are there to talk members through these schemes. Why not give us a call?

#### Pre-2013 pension schemes

In order to enhance pension benefits in the pre-2013 schemes, members may top up their pensionable service by purchasing additional notional service within the Scheme. This is a very effective way of building top-up service, especially if you have at least 10 years to retirement. Notional service can be used to top up gaps in service when a teacher was not paid and did not generate pensionable service, for example career breaks, any unpaid leave, or the half years during periods of job sharing. A teacher should apply to the Pensions Section of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) (pensions@education.gov.ie) or the human resources team in their ETB for a quote for notional service. The DES or ETB will provide a quote for purchasing this service outright in one payment, or by the more usual route of making regular deductions from pay. The DES or ETB will offer the option of a notional service contract maturing on either a teacher's 60th or 65th birthday. If a teacher is happy to take up the offer of purchasing notional service, then the contract will commence at their next birthday. Purchasing notional service attracts tax relief at a teacher's marginal rate and the regular deductions are taken from gross salary. The Scheme delivers additional pensionable service – a key basis on which pension benefits are calculated – and notional service years are treated the same as 'earned' years for benefits, including benefits under the Spouses' and Children's Scheme. However, the Scheme is quite rigid in that a teacher is expected to maintain payments until the agreed maturity date if not buying service in one payment. Retiring before that date or terminating the contract early attracts significant actuarial penalties.

#### Single Public Service Pension Scheme

Members of the SPSP Scheme do not generate the pensionable service that members of the pre-2013 schemes accumulate. Instead, these teachers make two separate contributions to the SPSP Scheme every time they receive their salary. These regular payments are called referable amounts, with one going to

# CONVENTION 2020

Make sure you keep up with the debate at Convention 2020 by following online.



Each Easter approximately 450 ASTI members from all over the country gather at ASTI Annual Convention to determine the ASTI's policy priorities for the coming year.

## An ASTI member discusses the importance of attending Convention...



“Last year I wasn't in a position to attend Convention unfortunately because I had to work at my second job during the Easter holidays. That is a decision that many young teachers in my position have to take in relation to their holidays. This year I'm hoping to attend Convention, because Convention is where ASTI policy is formulated; it's an opportunity to discuss important issues with colleagues and learn from their expertise and experience in a collegial atmosphere, surrounded by fellow teachers.”

**Órlagh Nic Eoin, Dublin North East Branch**

This year's Annual Convention takes place from April 14 to 16 in Clayton Whites Hotel, Wexford. Delegates will debate motions that decide the union's policy for the coming year, and will listen to key speeches from ASTI President Deirdre Mac Donald and guest speaker Dr Ciaran O'Boyle, who is Director of the Royal College Surgeons in Ireland Centre for Positive Psychology and Health. The first day of Convention will include debate on an urgent motion calling on the ASTI to intensify its campaign to secure full restoration of the pre-2011 pay scale for all teachers. Other important issues that will be discussed at Convention 2020 include cycle change, psychosocial hazards for teachers, the unfair application of FEMPI to ASTI members and class size. The full list of all motions that will be debated at Convention is available in the Convention section of the ASTI website and in Nuacht 4 – Convention Special.

### How to follow what's happening at Convention 2020

#### **Watch key speeches live and read them back**

Key speeches from the ASTI President and guest speaker Dr Ciaran O'Boyle will be streamed live on the ASTI website from 4.25pm on Tuesday, April 23. The text of the speeches will also be available on the website after they have been given.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

We will be posting on our [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) platforms live from the Convention hall.



[www.facebook.com/astiteachers/](http://www.facebook.com/astiteachers/)



Twitter account [@astiunion](#)  
Twitter hashtag [#ASTI20](#)

You can also keep up to date by visiting [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

## An ASTI member discusses why he thinks it is important to attend Convention...



“Having attended Convention over the last couple of years, one of the things that I was most surprised by was how welcoming people can be and how involved you can become as a member of the ASTI, especially since I’m on the post-2011 pay scale. Personally, I started attending local branch meetings and I’m now the Chairman of our local branch in Galway. I’ve gone to Convention three or four times and I’ve learned a lot from attending. I do think more lesser-paid teachers and younger teachers should make an effort to attend Convention. When you consider that some of us have been members for 10 years, it would be great to see more lesser-paid members at Convention. The decisions that are taken there are the decisions that will affect us the longest. It would be great if more of the stories of lesser-paid teachers were heard at Convention – having to take second jobs, that our salaries aren’t enough to live on, the low hours contracts that we’re on.”

Cian O’Grady, Galway Branch

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# LEAVE OPTIONS FOR PARENTS

**There are a number of leave options available to teachers who are, or are about to become parents.**

If you or your partner are expecting a baby or you have recently become parents, you may be interested in what types of leave are available to you. There are a number of types of leave available to teachers who have recently become parents, including parent's leave, which has been available since November 1, 2019. The table below outlines some of the leave options that are particularly relevant to new parents. However, there are other leave options available to care for family, for example *force majeure* leave or carer's leave. If you need additional leave and the options below do not suit your circumstances, or you have already availed of them, consult Circular Letter 0054/2019, which gives a good overview of different types of leave available to teachers.



If you have questions about leave, call ASTI Head Office on 01-604 0160 for professional advice.

Leave type	Who is entitled to it?	Maximum length of leave	Is it paid?	Relevant Circular for more information
Maternity leave	All pregnant teachers, who give birth to a living child, or who reach their 24th week of pregnancy.	26 weeks' paid and up to 16 weeks' additional unpaid maternity leave	Yes	Circular Letter 0054/2019
Adoptive leave	Teachers who are adopting mothers or sole male adopter. The adopting father who is not a sole male adopter may be entitled to adoptive leave in certain circumstances.	24 paid weeks and up to 16 unpaid weeks	Yes	Circular Letter 0054/2019
Paternity leave	New parents of children under six months of age (but not the mother of the child).	Two weeks	Yes	Circular Letter 0054/2019
Parental leave	Parents of children up to the age of 13, or 16 in the case of a child with a disability and/or long-term illness.	22 weeks (increasing to 26 weeks from September 1, 2020)	No, it is unpaid	Circular Letter 0054/2019
Parent's leave	Parents of children under one year of age (or in the first year of adoption).	Two weeks	Yes*	A circular has not yet been issued at time of going to print. For more information, see <a href="http://www.citizensinformation.ie">www.citizensinformation.ie</a> or call ASTI Head Office.

\*The Department of Education and Skills (DES) does not currently top up the €245 of benefit payable weekly to teachers to their full pay for these two weeks of parent's leave, as is the case with other statutory paid leave, e.g., maternity leave. The ASTI is pursuing this matter.

# MEET YOUR STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS



## PETER KEANEY

Standing Committee Region 11 – Longford, Tullamore, Navan, Athlone, Mullingar  
Teaches at Wilson's Hospital School, Mullingar

### I got involved in the ASTI because ...

I had been involved in student politics in the student union prior to entering teaching so when I began teaching I joined the ASTI. Joining the ASTI gave me a sense of collegiality and, of course, the ASTI is a safety net. You hope you will never need their help, but it's good to know they're there to protect your rights. Also, as a member of the ASTI you're there to protect the most vulnerable in the union and to stand up for their rights. The ASTI has proven to be a driver in education and from that respect that's why it's a very important organisation and it was very important for me to be involved with it.

### The ASTI's biggest priorities right now ...

are preventing further erosion of workers' rights and working to win back what has already been lost. This is particularly true for new entrants – not just pay inequality but also the length of time and expense required of new entrants to enter the teaching profession. New entrants are also facing an inferior pension scheme and a higher retirement age, and that's not good for them or for education. Another priority for the ASTI should be striving for a better relationship with our education partners, including other trade unions. We have a stronger voice together and we should not be seen to be easily divided. For the sake of all workers we need to work together. I also think broader social needs should be a priority for the ASTI. Schools are more than just a learning institution – they're a social campus for a lot of the community's needs, and we need to widen our focus in that regard. These social needs impact on us as teachers every day; what happens outside comes into the school and vice versa.

### Something people may not know about me is ...

I've always been involved in sport, mainly GAA and soccer. I'm also very involved in the community and working to organise the building of pitches and community centres in Multyfarnham, where I'm from. I believe that if you give back, you get back.



## KEVIN WALL

Standing Committee Region 6  
Cork South, Carbery  
Coláiste Éamann Rís, Cork City

### I got involved in the ASTI because ...

I am a maths and history teacher at Coláiste Éamann Rís (formerly Deerpark CBS) in Cork City. I began my teaching career there in 2006, and the late Paddy Mulcahy was the school steward and Standing Committee representative at the time, so I was encouraged to join the ASTI immediately. Prior to being elected to Standing Committee, I held the positions of school steward, vice chairman and CEC representative in the Cork South Paddy Mulcahy branch.

### The ASTI's biggest priorities right now ...

The key issue for the ASTI is pay inequality. Two-tier pay scales create a divide in staffrooms and will exacerbate teacher shortages that

currently exist in many subject areas. Having paid thousands of Euro to complete a primary degree and postgraduate masters in education (PME), graduates find it difficult to secure full-time contracts due to casualisation in our profession. The inferior pay scales and a lack of job security are forcing them to choose teaching abroad. The next Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA) must restore the common scale in order to entice graduates to choose teaching as a career.

Senior Cycle reform is another key issue facing the teaching profession. The ASTI must insist that a full, robust review of the Junior Cycle takes place prior to design and implementation of any Senior Cycle programme. Teachers are the professionals in the classroom and they must be properly consulted as part of this process. There are aspects of the Junior Cycle that are not working and we must strive to learn from this experience as we enter into the process of Senior Cycle reform.

### Something people may not know about me is ...

My main interests revolve around sport, especially GAA and rugby. I played hurling and football with Glen Rovers and now coach the under-9s and under-10s in our club. I still play five-a-side football with a group of teachers on Thursday nights. I am a season ticket holder and avid fan of Munster Rugby. I haven't missed a European game home or away since 2009. I can solve the Rubik's cube in under a minute!

# MEET THE ASTI AWARDS COMMITTEE

The ASTI Awards Committee considers applications for a number of ASTI awards.



Above: Members of the ASTI Awards Committee (from left): Crena Shevlin, Pat Deery, Ann Piggott (ASTI Vice President), Deirdre Mac Donald (ASTI President), Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary), and Jacqueline Kearns (Executive Officer: Administration). Above right: Ger Curtin.

The Awards Committee is made up of the following members:

- Pat Deery
- Ger Curtin
- Crena Shevlin
- Deirdre Mac Donald – ASTI President
- Ann Piggott – ASTI Vice President
- Kieran Christie – ASTI General Secretary

Jacqueline Kearns, ASTI Executive Officer: Administration, provides support to the Committee.

The task of the Awards Committee is to consider applications for three of the awards available to ASTI members: the PJ Kennedy Award, the Thomas MacDonagh Medal, and Honorary Life Membership.

Proposed recipients of these awards are nominated by their branches each year. The nominations are then considered by the members of the Awards Committee, who use the information supplied by the branches to determine whether the nominees meet the criteria for the award. In order to ensure fairness and transparency, nominations are anonymised before being presented to the Committee for consideration.

### Awards criteria

The criteria for the three awards are as follows:

**The PJ Kennedy Award** is given to retired members who have provided valuable service to their branch and/or branch members. For example, a diligent school steward or a branch officer whose years of commitment and service warrant recognition may receive the PJ Kennedy Award.

**The Thomas MacDonagh Medal** is awarded to current or retired members who the Awards Committee determines have given distinguished service to the ASTI and who merit this honour. Distinguished service could take the

form of outstanding service in a representative capacity on an outside body, or within the structures of the ASTI, or taking an action or position that generates significant benefits for other ASTI members. While this distinguished service is often at national level, this is not necessary in order to receive the Thomas MacDonagh Medal.

**Honorary Life Membership** is the highest honour that may be bestowed upon a member by the ASTI. Honorary Life Membership is awarded to a member who has given singular and exceptional service to the ASTI and who merits the honour. Qualities of a recipient of Honorary Life Membership might include outstanding leadership qualities or vision, service as an inspirational role model for ASTI members, or taking actions that benefited the teaching profession and the ASTI. An Honorary Life Member of the ASTI is entitled to all rights and privileges of full membership, including the right to hold office.

If, on consideration of an application, the Awards Committee does not feel that the nominated person meets the criteria for the award they are nominated for, they may recommend that they receive a more suitable award; for example, a nominee for Honorary Life Membership may be recommended by the Committee to receive the Thomas MacDonagh Medal if they meet the criteria for this award.

The PJ Kennedy Award, Thomas MacDonagh Medal and Honorary Life Membership are conferred upon recipients at the ASTI Awards evening, which takes place each May to honour ASTI members who have provided service to the teaching profession and the union.

For more information about ASTI awards, see [www.asti.ie/news/events/asti-awards-2020/](http://www.asti.ie/news/events/asti-awards-2020/).





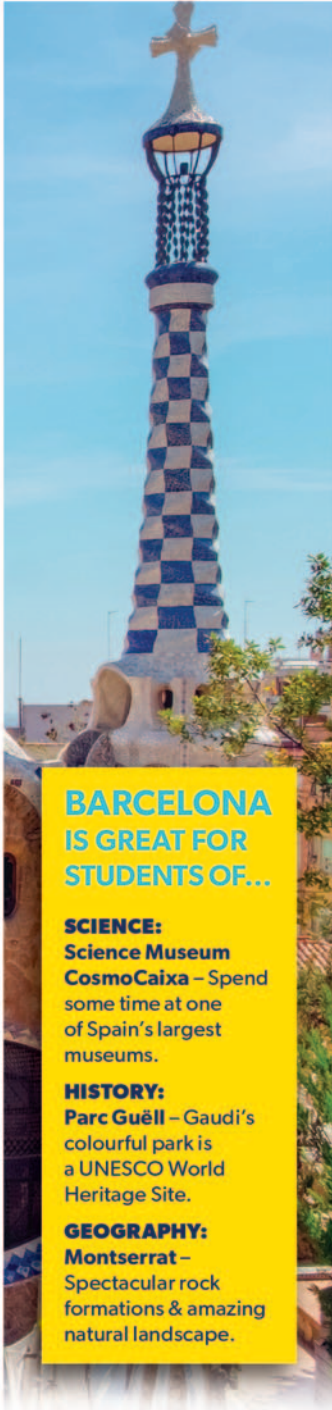
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**GEOGRAPHY:**  
**Montserrat** – Spectacular rock formations & amazing natural landscape.



### BERLIN IS GREAT FOR STUDENTS OF...

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**Topography of Terror** – Museum focusing on how the Nazis planned, organised & implemented the persecution & murder of millions of people throughout Europe.

**HISTORY:**  
**Potsdam** – Visit the UNESCO World Heritage City of Potsdam. With 17 palaces, you will not be short of places to visit here!

**HISTORY:**  
**The Story of Berlin** – Learn the history of the city from 1237 to present day in this unique museum.

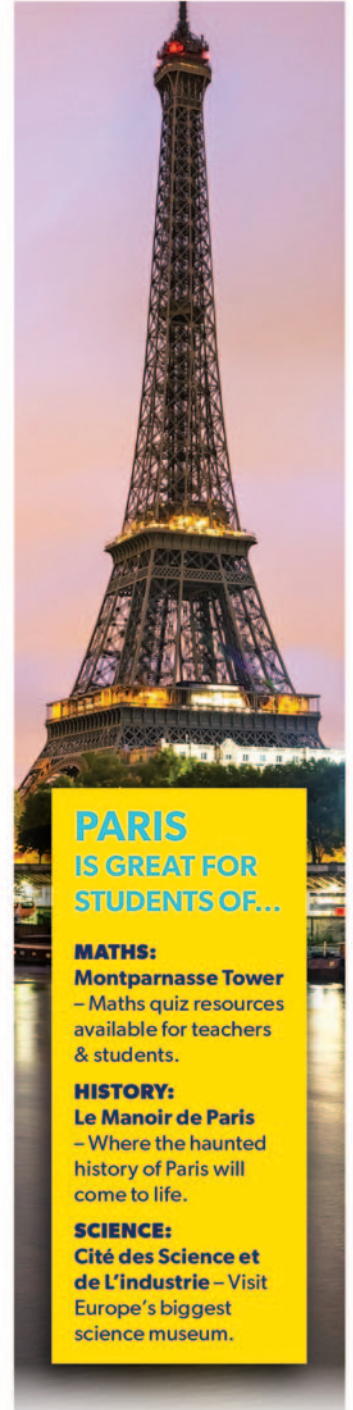


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# SPRINGTIME ACTIVITIES CONTINUE

RSTA members are enjoying travel plans, and the Association continues to campaign on important issues for retired teachers.

The longer days of late spring brighten the road ahead for us all. However, at school, the efforts of teachers are at a crucial stage as the public examinations are imminent. Some practical assessments have now been completed.

### Retirement seminars

For those contemplating their retirement options this year or in the near future, the ASTI organised retirement seminars at central venues throughout the country. These seminars enable members to make their decisions with the greatest amount of self-assurance. The RSTA was invited to speak at each event, and gratefully appreciated the welcome of the Desmond O'Toole from ASTI Head Office.

### Foreign trips

The Midland Branch is back from an early spring break in Cyprus. The places were filled with exceptional speed. Already there are tentative inquiries for a trip to North Africa at Halloween. South Africa is mooted by some branches for next year. Other interesting trips are being finalised throughout the branches, with Mayo heading for Belfast and to Italy in autumn.

### Coffee morning

The RSTA coffee morning hosted by the ASTI took place in February. Representatives of the invited branches attended. The ASTI President, officers and staff were in attendance. Speaking during the meeting, the President, Deirdre Mac Donald, addressed the RSTA guests and thanked them for their



*Pictured at the recent RSTA coffee morning in ASTI Head Office were (from left): Padraic O'Doherty (RSTA President), Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary), Deirdre Mac Donald (ASTI President), and Pádraig Murphy (ASTI Treasurer).*

years of service and their membership of the union. She then referred to the upcoming pay talks and reassured the RSTA of the determination of the ASTI negotiators to reaffirm the motion passed at the 2019 AGM to preserve the pay parity that currently exists with serving teachers. The RSTA responded by thanking the ASTI President for her supportive words.

The need for an ombudsman for older people and the recruitment of new members by branches will continue to feature at the RSTA National Conference in May.

## 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](http://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\_\_\_

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# FURSEY HENEGHAN RIP



Furse Heneghan was born fifth of seven children in Shrle on the Galway-Mayo border in April 1934. He was educated at the local national school and, due to being successful in the exam for a preparatory scholarship, attended Coláiste Einde in Galway and then St Patrick’s College in Dublin, where he qualified as a primary teacher. Furse was Principal of two national schools during his early career. He furthered his studies, completing a BA degree and a Higher Diploma in UCG. In 1968 he accepted a teaching position at Presentation College, Headford, Co. Galway where he taught English and Geography for many happy years until he retired in 1999 at age 65.

Furse married his soulmate Carmel in 1967 and they had wonderful years together in Shrle raising their family – their son John and daughters Aisling and Mary.

Furse was always a great believer in trade unionism. He was active within the INTO initially. On joining the staff of Presentation College he decided to join the ASTI, out of loyalty to his secondary school colleagues, although it was permissible for him to remain in the INTO at the time. Both Furse and Carmel were always very active trade unionists in their schools and in their local branch, attending many meetings, rallies, marches and Conventions over the years. Furse spent many years in the role of school steward and was elected Branch Chairperson and Branch Secretary at different times during his long involvement with the Tuam Branch. He regularly engaged with young teachers regarding the union, impressing on them both the importance of joining the ASTI and of signing up to the pension scheme.

Furse’s union involvement spanned many years. In his first year as an ASTI member he was a strong supporter of the February 1969 strike regarding pay, which lasted for three weeks, and although money was very scarce he believed in tolerating the hardship of that time in the hope of better for teachers going forward. In later years Furse continued to attend Annual Convention, in an observer capacity, due to his very keen interest in teaching and in the ASTI, and as he also enjoyed an annual catch-up with life-long friends. He thoroughly enjoyed encouraging, and often provoking, debate on a variety of topics, be that within the union, in the classroom or among his friends.

In his many healthy years of retirement Furse had more time to spend on the many activities he enjoyed. He was an avid reader and enjoyed gardening. Furse loved music having a varied and broad musical taste. He had high regard for all types of music even keeping up with teenage tastes, which endeared him to his pupils over a prolonged period of time teaching! He even set up a school band at one point. Furse really enjoyed being an active member of the RSTA, providing musical entertainment at their social functions on occasion! In later years he had the joy of spending time with his grandchildren, which he cherished greatly. All through his lifetime Furse had an avid interest in schooling and the doors education opened for people. He always encouraged his pupils of all ages to reach their full potential. He was renowned for wearing dazzling colourful ties solely for the entertainment of his students. Furse gladly did yard duty up until the day he retired and he claimed it was the best way to help students with problems as it provided opportunities to speak with students and advise them outside the formal structure of the classroom.

Furse embraced a true vocation to education all through his life, and this dedication and interest completed full circle as his vocation ended where it began; Furse was chairperson of the Board of Management of his old alma mater – Shrle National School – at the time of his passing.

Furse passed away peacefully at his home on August 29, 2019, at the changeover of two school years – his last school year just complete. Huge crowds made their way to Shrle to pay their respects and to bid Furse a final farewell. Past pupils have paid tribute to him from all over the world. Past pupil Willy McHugh, on learning of Furse’s passing, paid tribute to him in The Mayo News, saying: “Furse Heneghan wasn’t your normal run-of-the-mill teacher. Anything but. He smashed that mould to smithereens. He grabbed conventional schooling by the scruff of the neck, dragging it into modernity. He made learning interesting and fun. Every scholar privileged enough to have sat at his seat of learning will ever hold him in the highest regard”.

Furse touched many lives and will be very fondly remembered by his family in education as well as his loving family in Shrle and his many, many friends.

Ar dheis Dé go rabh a anam dílis.

***Furse’s friends at Tuam Branch ASTI.***

John Boner, Furse’s great friend, teaching colleague and fellow RSTA member, composed the poem below as Gaeilge as a warm tribute to Furse. Thank you to John for allowing us to print:

## Do mo chara Fursey

Fear a’ tí  
sa seomra foirne  
Croí na féile ann  
Comhairleoir don ghlún óg  
ag foghlaim ceirde.

Múinteoir den scoth  
Teagascóir go smior  
Meabhrach agus ardú meanma  
díuinn go léir.

Bláthanna ag fógairt  
Teacht an Earraigh.  
An carbhat le mórtas  
Meangadh diabhláochta  
Le scéalta agus seanchas.

Ní raibh a shárú  
sa seomra ranga  
Scoláirí a spreagadh  
ó bhliain go bliain.

Imithe uainn go fóill beag  
ach níl sé ina thost.  
Beidh cuimhne air  
I mballaí Choláiste na Toirbhirte  
go lá an luain.

Beidh sé linn go deo na ndeor.  
Slán a chara,  
Go gcastar ar a chéile muid  
I scoil éigin eile  
Amach anseo.

Le mór mheas  
John

## ICE CREAM IN A GOOD CAUSE!

Make time for ice cream with HB Fundays in aid of Down Syndrome Ireland. Hosting your own HB Fundays party is a fun way to raise much-needed funds to support young children with Down syndrome across Ireland.

Online registrations open on April 20, 2020. For more information, please email [alisonk@downsyndrome.ie](mailto:alisonk@downsyndrome.ie) or call 01-563 2457.

## CLEAN AIR COMPETITION IN SCHOOLS

The Asthma Society of Ireland has officially opened a call for entries for its #OwnOurAir Schools competition, which is supported by ESB's Energy for Generations Fund. The competition, which is open to all secondary schools in the country, aims to educate young people on the harmful effects poor air quality has on their health, while simultaneously encouraging students to take action against air pollution.

The closing date for the competition is March 30. Contact Anna at [advocacy@asthmasociety.ie](mailto:advocacy@asthmasociety.ie) for further information.

## JANUARY ASTIR: CLARIFICATION

An article in January 2020 ASTIR entitled 'The flawed template of syllabus (specification) design being introduced into the secondary school system in Ireland' contained the following statement:

"In the recently published Draft Background Paper and Brief for the Review of Leaving Certification Physics, Chemistry and Biology (NCCA, 2019) the following is stated:

"Given the concerns expressed by many stakeholders about the enactment of the specifications following the consultation on the draft specifications in 2014 (Hyland, 2014), it is clear that many stakeholders in Ireland do not easily see the potential of learning outcomes to support them to design and deliver appropriate programmes for the students in their contexts". (NCCA, 2019, p: 24)."

The ASTI is informed that the quotation referred to above appeared in a previous unpublished Draft Background Paper and Brief for the Review of Leaving Certification Physics, Chemistry and Biology (September, 2019). In the final published Draft Background Paper and Brief for the Review of Leaving Certification Physics, Chemistry and Biology (NCCA, 2019), the following revised statement appears: "Some stakeholders expressed concerns about the enactment of the specifications following the consultation on the draft specifications (NCCA, 2012; Hyland, 2014)". The ASTI is happy to clarify this matter.

#HelloMIC



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- M Ed in Leadership of Wellbeing in Education
- M Ed in Educational Leadership and Management
- M Oid san Oideachas Lán-Ghaeilge agus Gaeltachta
- MA in Education and the Arts (META)
- MA in Education and Well-being of the Older Person
- 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 / Diploma / M Ed in Professional Studies in Education
- Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma/M Ed in Middle Leadership and Mentoring in Primary and Post-Primary Settings
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- 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
- MA in German Language and Culture in Europe
- Graduate Certificate/MA in Christian Leadership in Education

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Drama and Theatre Studies; English Language & Literature; French Studies; Gaeilge; German Studies; Geography; History; Mathematics and Computer Studies; Media & Communication Studies; Music; Philosophy; Psychology; Theology and Religious Studies.



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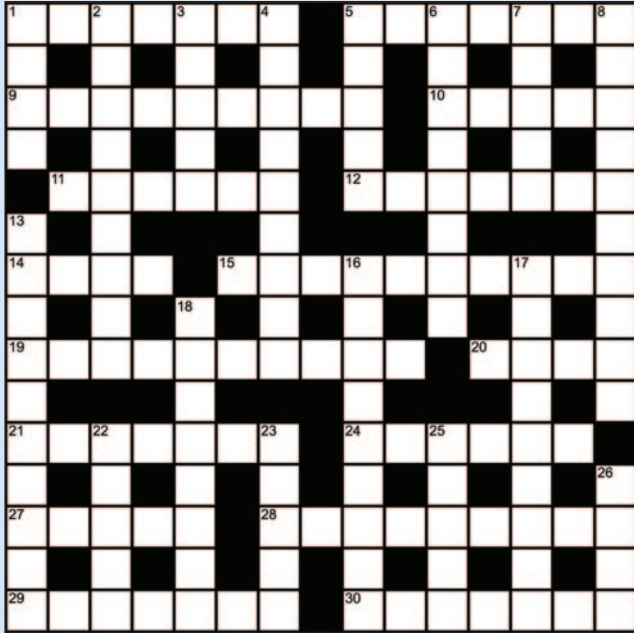


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ASTI Branch

Entries to: ASTIR Crossword No. 2002, Think Media,  
The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, April 17, 2020.

LEIDEANNA TRASNA

1. Talamh fhliuch, criathrach (7)
5. Drámadóir Francach ón seachtú céad déag (7)
9. Gníomh ónar ainmníodh ord mná rialta (9)
10. Bíonn cearc mar seo nuair a bhíonn ubh aici (2,3)
11. An chlann a mhair in Haworth, Yorkshire (6)
12. Eas ar an dteorainn idir SAM agus Ceanada (7)
14. Aerlíne in San Miguel, Alicante (2,2)
15. Aisling, cailín fíor-álainn (10)
19. Réalta na gCiaróg (5,5)
20. An t-ainmhí leis an mBr. Ó Caoimh! (4)
21. Reacaire nó seanchaí (7)
24. Seomraí móra le haghaidh damhsa srl (6)
27. Tost anseo agus daoine ag fanacht ann? (5)
28. Leisce nó drogall (9)
29. Canúint Bhéarla a labhraíodh in áiteanna in Albain (7)
30. Sonraí a chuirtear isteach i ríomhaire (7)

LEIDEANNA SÍOS

1. Leis seo a mhúchtar coinne ar cháca (4)
2. Ba ghá é seo chun Breatimeacht a chur i gcrích (9)
3. Cad tá á dhéanamh agat? Cad tá ..... agat? (2,3)
4. Duine a chuireann coir leighis tré bhlúiríní beaga de dhrua a thabhairt (9)
5. Iarsma tanaí chun ball coirp a bhogadh (5)
6. "Ar mhargadh na saoire im shuí cois balla, im scaoinse ar ..... sráide" (8)
7. Gael a spreagann faitíos (5)
8. Gael (10)
13. Institiúid dara léibhéal (10)
16. Duine atá ag tabhairt faoi MA no PhD srl (9)
17. Coimhscear 1916 (4,5)
18. Foirmeálta, státúil, maorga (8)
22. Geit ilghnéitheach a bhogann éan (5)
23. Abha náisiúnta na Pacastáine (5)
25. Lindsay, amhránaí Meiriceánach (5)
26. Tig leis bheith dubh, bán, nó cliste! (4)

Solution to ASTIR Crossword No. 2001

Across

1. Start to finish
10. Radar
11. Astonished
13. Noisier
15. Epaulette
16. Haiku
17. Scented
19. Elm
20. Innuendo
21. Capuchin
24. Sol
25. Cherish
26. Acute
27. Newcastle
30. Plinths
31. Designated
33. Ozone
34. Spit and polish

Down

2. Turpitude
3. RIA
4. Tattered
5. Fonda
6. Nestled
7. Scent
8. French kissing
9. Additional
12. German measles
14. Residue
18. Tea shop
19. Exhaustion
22. Unanimous
23. Side step
25. Chariot
28. Whelp
29. Tenon
32. DHL

Did you miss?

- Equal pay and SLARs 10
- The power of school communities 16

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the winner of Crossword No. 2001: Noel Foynes, St Joseph's Secondary School, Rochfortbridge, Co. Westmeath Mullingar Branch



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