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- Ceisteanna atá dírithe ar an scrúdú i ngach cuid den leabhar
- Gluais leathan agus chuimsitheach agus Rannóg Gramadaí le cleachtaí
- Dlúthdhioscaí & Leabhrán Scrúdaithe saor in aisce do dhaltai
- Pacáiste saor in aisce do mhúinteoirí le Dlúthdhioscaí a bhfuil ath-thaifid orthu, Dlúthdhiosca Nua saor in aisce don Scrúdú Cainte agus cóip den scannán ainmnithe 'Cáca Milis'
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ASTI,
Thomas MacDonagh House,
Winetavern Street,
Dublin 8.
Tel: 01-604 0160
Fax: 01-897 2760
astir@astie.ie

www.asti.ie

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Choices in changing times

As we go to print, arrangements are being finalised for the ballot of members on the Public Sector Agreement 2010-2014. Your vote is your opportunity to decide the definitive ASTI position on the agreement. If you have not already done so, it is vital that you exercise your postal vote. Copies of the Agreement are available from your school steward or can be downloaded from the ASTI website – www.asti.ie. Important information about the Agreement was provided in the last edition of *Nuacht* and in a document drawn up by an elected sub-committee of CEC outlining the reasons for rejection, as discussed during Convention 2010 debate.

Difficult decisions

The additional hour and the teaching contract review in the education sectoral agreement were the main focus of the Convention debate. The contextual and strategic considerations of this ballot must also be considered. Is a better deal available in these difficult times and what is the best outcome to protect our pay and conditions? We must decide whether acceptance, as advocated by one teacher union executive, or rejection, as advocated by other teacher unions' executives, including the ASTI, is the optimal way to bolster our negotiating leverage and influence in protecting your working conditions in the months ahead. There are respected trade unionists on both sides of this debate but we must all remain committed to trade union solidarity at this time.

New and non-permanent teachers

The current contractual arrangements for new and non-permanent teachers are a major source of concern. Unlike primary teachers, our new teachers often receive contracts for less than full hours and, therefore, less than full pay. This casual hours culture makes professional teacher probation, induction and mentoring, as advocated by progressive educationalists, a mere theoretical exercise. We still attract top quality students into teaching and this casual hours culture is not an orderly or fair entry into our profession. On May 22, we invite our new and non-permanent teachers to our second seminar on 'Your Future as a Teacher'. We want to advance the issues of concern to these teachers and their attendance at the seminar and engagement in the ASTI is essential in this regard.

Convention debate

The hiring of retired teachers to do substitute teaching in schools has frequently been raised at branch meetings during this school year and a motion was adopted at Convention: "That, in the present economic situation, the ASTI would exhort school managements to employ newly qualified teachers where possible and that where part-time hours exist in a school, the ASTI demands that priority in employment be given to teachers on the live register or to teachers who do not have 22-hour contracts". As a trade union our priority must be a decent income for all

teachers so that ordinary living costs such as mortgage, childcare, etc., can be met.

Revitalising the union

A key motion passed at Convention was Motion 73 to review the union's structures, rules and organisation. Our rules, for example, must ensure that the representation of retired members at Convention is not disproportionate. It is an honour that the ASTI continues to attract committed and loyal activists who give so much time and energy to their union – for the betterment of their colleagues. However, we must ensure that our activists represent the full membership. Some 30% of ASTI members are under 35 years of age and more than 3,000 members are part-time or temporary teachers. We must encourage and facilitate these members to have a voice in the ASTI. They are the future of the union.

Difficult academic year

We held a very successful seminar for principals and deputy principals in March, where we heard the full effects of the moratorium on the non-filling of posts of responsibility in schools. It is essential that year heads, TY co-ordinators and other critical posts can be filled and we hope that the new Minister, Tánaiste Mary Coughlan, can address this issue as soon as possible. In this busy final term I want to thank each ASTI member for their hard work and loyalty during this difficult school year. I wish our esteemed General Secretary, John White, a fulfilled retirement when he surrenders the reins in late August. I wish the new General Secretary every success in the years ahead and my successor as President, Jack Keane, every success when he takes over in August.

Make your contribution

At this difficult time for education and for teachers, I would encourage all members of the ASTI to contribute to the development of ASTI policy. A strong and united ASTI was never more needed to protect and develop the teaching profession.



Joe Moran

ASTI President

Science in schools

The ASTI recently commissioned research into science teaching and learning at second level. The research: assessed the facilities for teaching science in schools; obtained feedback from teachers on barriers to the teaching and learning of science; and, looked at how cutbacks in education were affecting the provision of science subjects.



Budget cutbacks impacting on science infrastructure in schools

More than one in ten schools have dropped a science subject as a result of the Budget cutbacks and one in five are likely to drop a science subject next year.

The survey of 334 schools showed that science infrastructure in schools is strong, with over 90% of schools offering a Leaving Cert science option. However, higher and ordinary level science classes are amalgamated in over 70% of schools, while one in ten schools have amalgamated fifth and sixth year classes.

Science facilities a cause for concern

Almost one-third of teachers had concerns about the adequacy of science laboratories in their schools to accommodate student numbers. Four in ten teachers surveyed felt that the facilities in their science laboratories are inadequate.

While almost half of teachers surveyed regularly use ICT in their classroom teaching, 70% feel that there are not enough computer facilities in their laboratories. Those who rarely or never use ICT cite a lack of time due to workload and lack of computer facilities as the most common reason.

Irish schools produce well equipped science students; our students consistently score significantly above average in international comparisons of scientific knowledge and proficiency. Moira Leydon, ASTI Assistant General Secretary: Education and Research, says that the survey results emphasise the need to maintain and build on progress by properly resourcing science teaching and making sure it is undamaged by budget cutbacks: "The Government's stated focus on innovation and R&D to grow our economy is difficult to marry with the results of this research, which show science infrastructure in schools being eroded rather than developed. Second-level science education is the obvious cornerstone of any growth

Non-teaching tasks diminishing science teaching experience

Daily tasks such as preparing and returning materials for practical work take their toll on science teachers; almost 90% state that they spend too much time on preparation and clean up. The majority of teachers spend time daily on activities such as laying out materials, returning materials, and cleaning facilities and utensils.

Building preparation time into the teaching timetable would be very helpful to improving the teaching experience, according to 90% of teachers surveyed. Almost the same percentage – 88% – said the same of the availability of a laboratory technician.

Negative attitudes to science subjects a barrier to uptake

Four in ten teachers agree that students have a more negative attitude towards science than other subjects. The perceived difficulty of the subjects is seen to be the greatest barrier to the take up of physics and chemistry at Leaving Cert. Half of teachers surveyed felt that students saw the subjects as too theoretical and removed from everyday life, and four in 10 said students were unaware of the relevant career options available.

in the science industry. Allowing and encouraging students to develop scientific knowledge and skills they can carry through to third level and beyond is important, both to their holistic education and to the development of a 'knowledge society'.

Policy makers should be very concerned – as the ASTI is – about the overwhelming evidence that teaching time is being eroded in junior cycle science classes because of the amount of preparation and clean up teachers have to do for each class on a daily basis. It is unsustainable for the teachers and the government must revisit the issue of the provision of lab technicians.

ASTI in the media

A round-up of some media coverage of ASTI Convention 2010.



Irish Star – April 7

"Education cutbacks are damaging the teaching and learning of science in secondary schools, teachers have claimed. Startling research shows that 14% of schools dropped a science subject from the curriculum this school year as a direct result of education cutbacks. A further 20% of schools say it is likely that a science subject will be dropped before the next school year begins. ASTI General Secretary John White said physics is the subject that schools are most likely to drop as a result of the cutbacks. 'This is happening at a time when the Government, in its Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal, has stated that improving the mathematical and scientific literacy of second-level pupils is a key objective,' he blasted."

RTÉ News at One – April 7

ASTI President Joe Moran discusses Convention debate on the Public Sector Pay Agreement.

"The main focus of our debate has not been on the side of the pay freeze or the proposals about giving back money. People recognise the realities of that side of the equation. The economy is in difficulty, the public finances are in difficulty, they're really looking at the other side of the agenda ... the vehement opposition is to ... one or two of the clauses in the modernisation agenda for the education sector ... If you put [the proposed additional contracted hour] in the context of Irish teaching, where an awful lot of the work that's done in schools is done voluntarily ... if you say to people that irrespective of what you do outside of your contract time, you have to do another contractual hour, that sets off a whole train of distrust and apprehension in people ... If we go down that road it deprofessionalises teaching ... There is great goodwill towards students and parents and we don't want to interfere with that. We're just making the point, for the survival of the profession, give us a bit of trust, and give us a bit of support. We know the state the country is in and we're simply pointing out that there is a problem in this particular clause in the agreement."

Irish Star – April 8

"School discipline will decline and school administration will become impossible if the moratorium on appointments continues, the ASTI chief

has warned. John White said the freeze on appointments to posts of responsibility announced in March 2009 is having a 'devastating effect'."

Irish Examiner – April 9

"There were strong calls yesterday for new teachers to be given more hours, amid fears that those struggling for work could suffer mental health problems while retired teachers take substitute classes. The ASTI conference heard that retired teachers still taking substitute hours were 'an embarrassment' and were taking a living from younger teachers, many of whom are struggling to get work. Greta Harrison from West Mayo said teachers on the Live Register needed to be prioritised when it came to employing people in schools, while John Molloy (Galway East), a retired teacher, said other retired teachers 'are not welcome in the staffroom' at a time when younger teachers are struggling for work.

'The message should go out today – we had our day, we got it fairly good, the young teacher today hasn't got it as good,' he said, adding that non-permanent teachers needed 'every minute' available in schools so they can pay their bills, and that the policy of the union should be that those temporary/non-permanent people should get priority over retired teachers."

Irish Times – April 9

"A lively discussion about gender discrimination branched into a wider debate about gender imbalance in the ASTI itself, at the union's convention in Galway.

Leading on from a discussion about the lack of female head teachers in the country – just 20% of co-educational schools have a female principal – attention quickly turned to the union. Deirdre Healy, a Dublin delegate, said: 'There must be obstacles blocking women from operating in our union at a senior level,' citing the fact that out of 18 standing committee regions, just seven are represented by women.

Galway delegate Maura Greaney pointed to the male dominance at the conference top table. Sixty-eight per cent of ASTI membership was female, she said, 'but for the last three years the candidates for the ASTI presidency have been all male ... It is vitally important that women pursue key decision-making positions.'"



A group of PJ Kennedy Award recipients pictured with ASTI President Joe Moran (from left): John O'Sullivan; Niamh Walker; ASTI President Joe Moran; and, Austin Quirke. See page 19 for more pictures of ASTI award recipients.



The top table (from left): Maire Mulcahy, Assistant General Secretary; Pat King, Assistant General Secretary; Diarmaid de Paor, Deputy General Secretary; John White, General Secretary; and, Joe Moran, President.

Convention 2010 – the speeches

Guest speaker

Gearoid O Tuathaigh urges teachers to resist the language of performance in education and use their privileged position to restore "trust".

In his speech to ASTI Convention 2010, Professor Gearoid O Tuathaigh of NUI Galway returned to the themes of language and the discussion of education in the "public sphere", which he previously addressed as guest speaker at ASTI Convention 1995: "I want to focus in a particular way on the role and responsibility of the teacher in rehabilitating – indeed, rescuing – the meaning of 'trust' in a society in which that word no longer retains any shared meaning or value in large areas of our public life and for large numbers of our citizens".

Drawing comparisons between the situation in 1995 and the current scenario, Professor O Tuathaigh said: "In certain vital respects, of course, it is obvious that the situation is worse now than it was in 1995 ... Today, the economy is in crisis and there is evidence that the 'social contract', on which social order and cohesion in an open democratic society rests, has been shaken to its foundations. We have witnessed the collapse of any credible structures or institutions of moral authority, of any reliable, widely subscribed-to frame of ethics in the assessment of social value and behaviour. Fundamentally, Irish society is traumatised by a crisis of 'trust'".

Divide and conquer tactics

"One particularly ugly tendency is the relentless setting of private sector and public sector workers at each others throats in what, for some parties at least is, in my view, a deliberate tactic of 'divide and conquer' ... the relentless caricaturing of public service employment as being parasitic, not to say vampiric, on the 'real' wealth being generated by private enterprise in a world based on profit. This divisive note has become a striking feature of public commentary within key arteries of our mass

media, and it is not by any means an exclusively Irish phenomenon."

"There is a more fundamental issue at stake in our response to this 'oppositional' version of private and public sector interests. Do we or do we not have a shared understanding of what constitutes the desired basis for social order and cohesion – for the 'good' society? ... While there is a little of this in the recent public outpourings of rage, the more strident voices against security, decent salaries and working conditions in the public service more often belong to those who see in the current crisis an opportunity to decisively reconfigure the labour market in Ireland, private and public, aiming at the increased casualisation of labour on lower wage rates. For teachers and nurses, the offer is an insecure contract rather than a dedicated career, the objective, the creation of a new highly qualified spailpin class. The rhetoric driving this agenda is insidious, characterised as it is by the constant equation of security with stagnation, of rights and dignity with perks and privileges."

Rejecting the language of performance

"Up until the current crisis – and indeed even in the throes of that crisis – the language of 'performance' generated by the neo-liberal project has pervaded all aspects of our public discourse in Ireland, including our public discussion of education ... Even serious media outlets, with high-minded editorials on inequality, pander to the fascination with 'competition', with their league tables of feeder schools for the universities and ITs. It behoves you as teachers to register and to resist this imposition of such a 'competitive' model of performance, which takes such little account of the complex socio-economic and familial variables operating outside the school, but profoundly determining what can be achieved within it. In my book, at least, league tables based on 'results' in this narrow sense belong (as with all other 'scored games') in the sports section of the newspaper, not



Delegates listen to Convention debate.



Ray St John, Honorary Treasurer, and John White, General Secretary, pictured in the convention hall.

Pictures by Aengus McMahon.

on its education pages ... As I have said on previous occasions, I teach students or pupils; I am not the provider of an educational 'product' ... I am in no way hostile or even indifferent to the social value of business people and business acumen, or to the importance of the material base for any society wishing to live in dignity. My argument is with the privileging of one perspective, one explanatory language, in the public debate, on the full complexity of how we are meant or how we mean to live together."

Inspiring trust

"Trust' has been the most serious, most alarming casualty of our current crisis. Trust, it is said, is at the root of the public sector suspicions of, or hostility to, the terms of the proposed agreement currently being debated. There is no trust in the figures, no trust in the undertakings, no trust in the promises, no trust in the will to deliver. There is no trust that the words mean what they seem to mean. There is a presumption on each side of an intention to deceive (or to renege) by the other party ... What can we, as teachers, bring to the task of formulating, articulating, imagining a worthy vision for a new Ireland, in place of the ethical debris in which we now find ourselves? For the teacher doing his or her job honestly, the classroom is a site of extraordinary privilege and of intense pressure ... The teacher has a crucial role in restoring 'trust' in Irish society. When the classroom door closes and the teacher is alone with a class of teenagers, the possibility is present for a student to experience the magic of intellectual excitement ... with various subjects providing the excitement of prompting students to ask the 'why' questions.

"I am acutely aware of all [the] factors that operate daily in frustrating many teachers from finding and tending the moments of magic in class ... But this is what I understand as the non-negotiable, basic bond of trust that the teacher must seek to honour for each class and student that he or she teaches ... to be always open to the possibility of generating the vital spark of interest and intellectual engagement that makes its mark and may endure. To settle for less, however difficult may be the circumstances, would be to sell your subject short, to sell your students short, to sell yourselves short."

President's address

Despite pressures, teachers are committed to a broad and balanced education for students, ASTI President tells Convention.

Joe Moran, ASTI President, began his address to Convention by drawing comparisons between the present situation and that faced by the first ASTI Convention he attended in 1995: "The industrial relations climate at that time in a recovering economy was much more benign than it is today. The fallout from the building, banking and economic crisis of the last two years has created the most difficult and challenging environment for education and industrial relations".

Facing difficulties

The President went on to focus on some specific challenges facing teachers today. Discussing the moratorium on posts of responsibility, he said: "A school of 500, 600 or 700 pupils cannot function effectively without year heads, programme co-ordinators, exam secretaries etc. Ad hoc arrangements and overburdening contract hours is not a solution to this crisis. We welcome the Dáil statement by the outgoing Minister for Education and further assurances from the incoming Minister that the matter is under review. This situation must be resolved satisfactorily to preserve the quality of education in this country".

Entry into post-primary teaching is an issue of great concern to the President. In his speech, he made reference to the difficulties facing young teachers today and said: "The new teacher should not be a mere convenience to do residual hours in the system. The culture of hours is very damaging to our profession. The anxiety that uncertain tenure and variable hours create in individuals raises significant teacher welfare issues. It also has consequences for the school learning environment".

"The interpersonal interaction in education is absolutely vital. Students remember the teachers with whom they could communicate, often informally. The Ryan and Murphy reports remind us that the duty of care and respect for each student is our primary duty as teachers. Many of us were educated by and taught with good and decent teachers who were



Stillorgan delegate Crena Shevlin pictured at Convention with her husband Thomas and daughter Grace.



Wexford Tony Boland delegates listen to motion debate.

and are members of religious congregations. Their diligence and honourable service should not be tarnished by the guilt of others."

Considering the Public Sector Agreement

Moving on to discuss the Public Sector Agreement 2010-2014, the President noted: "This Convention takes place at a pressing and momentous juncture in our industrial relations strategy. The inevitable implosion of the property bubble and the fallout from the banking scandals have wreaked havoc in our economy, society and industrial relations. Unfortunately the inequitable and grossly unfair response of the Government to the crisis has aggravated the situation still further". Mr Moran discussed the terms of the agreement and acknowledged many reasons to oppose it. However, he said, the broader picture must be regarded: "A considered appraisal of the broader strategic and contextual dimensions of this agreement is absolutely necessary. The finances of this state are in a precarious imbalance due to the burden of the massive debt created by reckless banking policies. Fiscal stabilisation is vital for education funding and is this deal the best available in these uncertain times. We must also seriously consider the industrial action implications implicit in a rejection scenario. Whatever we decide this week it is essential that the full strategic and contextual considerations of both acceptance and rejection are fully comprehended by every ASTI member and we must remain resolute, confident and united at this crucial juncture".

Looking forward

"The Trade Union movement is absolutely essential to maintain a civil and caring society in Ireland at this time of national economic crisis," said Mr Moran. "The protection of professional conditions of employment requires the active engagement of the new generation of teachers in the ASTI. The landmark achievements of our representatives over the years were highlighted in our centenary year but they also remind us of the standards that must be maintained in the future. We need the most able, committed and professional representatives in all spheres of influence. The development

of policies to meet our new challenges is vital, but our core ASTI values such as collegiality, and core policies such as assessment, must never be compromised. As an activist since 1995 I have shared the achievements and disappointments of the intervening years. In the ASTI I have been fortunate to debate and campaign with many very able and sincere teachers."

[Go to the ASTI website – www.asti.ie – to read or watch the full speeches.](http://www.asti.ie)

General Secretary's report

Union members must act smart and rise above attacks on trade union solidarity, says ASTI General Secretary.

John White, General Secretary, began his address with a rational if downbeat view of the situation Irish society finds itself in: "We are living in extraordinary times. The most unsettling shock to the political system is that our belief in the inevitability of progress has been undermined ... Our parents believed that we would have a better life than they had and we believed that our children would have a better life than us. Since 2008 with the collapse of unregulated, raw neo-liberal capitalism, this generation is condemned to a standard of living and standards of public service inferior to those before us".

Continuing in a more optimistic tone he said: "This is a time of great difficulty for our 18,500 members but it is in time of difficulty we are truly tested. Fair weather friends are callow; it is when our backs are to the wall that we must be solid in our unity. We have enough external enemies without having internal rancour and distrust. Everybody here wants to advance the interests of teachers. We believe in education; we believe in solidarity with one another. That is trade unionism at its best".

Trade union solidarity

The climate in which trade unions are operating, the General Secretary said, "is a climate of unrestrained attempts by the right wing to diminish the power of unions to represent their members. As a union with 101 years' experience we have to address the situation. We wish we weren't in this



Sean O'Neill, Standing Committee, pictured with delegates from his Dublin South County branch (from left): Sean O'Neill; Katriona Mahon; Sinead McCarthy; and, John Rowe.



Guest speaker Gearoid O'Tuathaigh addresses Convention.

For more photos from ASTI Convention 2010 visit www.asti.ie/news/gallery.

situation but we have to deal with it ... What we in the ASTI must do above all is remain united and deal in a coherent manner with the reality we face". We are not without hope, Mr White assured: "Education is the one sector in the public service where those who retire or resign are replaced. Furthermore, there is the creation of an extra 200 jobs in 2010 for our newly qualified and temporary and part-time teachers. These achievements written into the Renewed Programme for Government were won by a most intense representation to the Government parties by the ASTI, including personal contact with the five Ministers involved ... even in the most difficult circumstances we must act smartly. We must neither throw our hands up in despair, nor hurl ourselves on the barbed wire of doomed actions".

Moratorium, pensions, part-time teachers

On the issue of the moratorium on posts, the General Secretary reported: "We have made a lengthy submission to the DES on this matter and at a meeting last Thursday with the Tánaiste, we outlined the disproportionate effect this moratorium was having on second-level schools. We were given to understand that they were aware of this matter and that discussions were advanced with the Department of Finance on the issue. Today, at this assembly of our teachers, I call on the new Minister to inform schools as a matter of the greatest urgency that this moratorium will be lifted and that the education of this generation of pupils is not irretrievably damaged". The General Secretary repeated the ASTI position that pensions for teachers and other public servants are deferred pay: "Ever since some coherence and rationality was introduced into the determination of pay 40 years ago, salary levels always had regard to the value of pensions. We pay for our pensions and indeed most second-level teachers have to purchase additional pension because of late entry into the profession. Reading the right wing economists, these facts are never allowed to interfere with their rhetoric". Mr White used the opportunity of his report to call on school managers to "implement as fairly as possible the spirit and indeed the letter of the circular that gives effect to the European directive that every attempt should be made when hours become available to schools to use them to

increase the hours of part-time teachers. In particular, every management must end the unjust situation of the CID of under 18 hours ... I want every delegate and school steward to see that four hours 40 minutes of permanent hours available to every school as agreed in the Renewed Programme for Government from September 1 – temporary since February 1 – is used to bring CID holders across the line of 18 hours when they will become entitled to full salary. I know this whole situation is of great concern to the President and this sense of solidarity with newly qualified teachers is in the best tradition of our history".

Curriculum and assessment – realistic change

Addressing the issue of curricular reform, Mr White said: "We as teachers are open to reforms that improve the education of the young people in our charge. And we have been very open and flexible over the past 15 years ... We are open to change but it must be change we believe in. It must be change that is realistic. People who propose grand reforms forget that we have 30 lively, vibrant and sometimes recalcitrant adolescents in our classrooms – some of whom don't want to be there – whatever the curriculum. The ASTI will consider carefully proposals for the reform of the Junior Cert. but I want to make this point loud and clear: 15-year-olds need the motivation, the structure, and the coherence of a national examination".

In conclusion, the General Secretary said: "This is my last address to an ASTI Convention and I am deeply proud to have served the ASTI as General Secretary and I want to thank everyone here at Convention and the members of our 56 branches for giving me the opportunity to serve teachers ... We are at our best as educators and as trade unionists when we act in a coherent, rational and unified manner. Let us not be provoked by those from the right and the extreme left who wish to weaken trade unionism into taking actions that can only lead to disunity and fear. Let us go forward in unity to meet and overcome our difficulties".

Go to the ASTI website – www.asti.ie – to read the full speech.

The motions

The freshly negotiated public service agreement dominated ASTI Convention 2010, with the issue permeating debate on almost every motion discussed. Conditions of employment, teacher and resource provision, and curriculum and assessment were also much debated issues on the agenda.

Public Service Agreement

Following the negotiation of the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014 only a week before Convention got underway, an emergency motion was brought by Standing Committee that: "Convention expresses its total and vehement opposition to the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014 whilst recognising that decisions on final salary offers are a reserved function of CEC under the Rules and Constitution of the ASTI. Convention calls on CEC to recommend the rejection of the Agreement in a ballot of members".

Proposing the motion, Jack Keane, ASTI President Elect, said: "Democracy demands that our 18,500 members should be allowed to ballot on this offer". He detailed some of the aspects of the agreement that Standing Committee found worrying, in particular its imprecise phrasing and the clause relating to "no currently unforeseen budgetary deterioration" on which the agreement rests. Regarding proposed changes to the teaching contract, he said: "The more you define what teachers will do, the less you will get from teachers. Defining and measuring everything will damage the voluntary ethos that's in our schools. I don't think that's realised ... Flexibility and goodwill disappear".

Sally Maguire, Standing Committee, called the extra hour of work called for under the agreement an insult to teachers: "The hour itself is irrelevant; it is the tone behind it ... There is not a teacher or a public servant who is not willing to put their back to the wheel and to help out and get this economy back running. But we want it to be fair. The Government has given itself a complete get out of jail card in this agreement ... There are a dozen things on our end of the agreement that we have to give indefinitely, exhaustively, absolutely ... [to] get nothing in return, no guarantees".

Greta Harrison, Standing Committee, called the clause to review and revise teaching contracts to identify and remove impediments to education: "an open-ended nightmare; it is a blank cheque to the devil and I will not sign it". Ann Piggott, Standing Committee, noted that under the agreement: "We will be bound to avoid strikes and other forms of industrial action ... and on this point alone, I would expect that every trade union would reject this document".

Eddie McCarthy, Fingal, warned: "This is a Government who couldn't transform the economy and, in fact, squandered the nation's wealth in good times, so they can hardly transform the public service in harder times. The ASTI and teachers have kept their side of every agreement made but it is the Government who has reneged on its word over and over again".

The motion was carried. A special meeting of CEC was held following Convention at which it was agreed to ballot members on acceptance of the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014.

Conditions of employment

Micheal Coyle, Dublin North East, proposed a motion "That the ASTI rejects any worsening of teachers' conditions of employment and strenuously rejects any attempt: (a) to abolish the supervision and substitution scheme; (b) to require teachers to be present on the school premises for the duration of school opening hours; or, (c) to lengthen the school day and/or the school year". The motion was written before the results of the public service negotiations at Croke Park, but Mr Coyle told Convention that those results bring the concerns addressed in the motion into focus: "Teachers give regularly of their own time, above and beyond the call of duty of which we are contracted ... it seems to me that the level of trust inherent in any teacher's daily work is being questioned [in the public service agreement] ... This transformation agenda has got to be seen for what it is, an attempt to railroad change at a time when the general population has been softened up, indeed brainwashed, into thinking that any changes brought about by it will in some way amend the perilous state of the economy".

Crena Shevlin, Stillorgan, seconded the motion saying: "We are already doing enough work on our own time for free ... quality not quantity is what we need in the Irish education system". Paddy Clancy, Waterford, spoke against the motion saying: "If the government doesn't pay, they don't get. I'm opposing this motion because what I want to see is not a rejecting of any worsening of conditions, I want to see a plan for 15% less work for 15% less pay".

The motion was carried.

Special needs

Liz Crummey, Stillorgan, proposed a motion: "That the ASTI resists any further reduction in the provision of teachers and resources to students with special needs". She spoke of a current situation where children are left without the supports they had at primary school when they move to second level, asking: "How cruel is that, to remove the scaffolding that these students depend on for their day-to-day existence, giving them an equal chance in our classrooms?" Bernard O'Reilly, Stillorgan, told Convention that the motion must be considered in the context of the ongoing revelations on banks: "The resources required to maintain and improve our help to those with special needs is an absolute pittance when compared with the tens of billions we and generations that follow will be forced to pay due to the lack of responsibility or social conscience shown by those who benefited from the Celtic Tiger. It's said a country can be judged by how it looks after the weaker members of society. I think far, far more attention should be given to those with special needs".

The motion was carried.

Junior cycle review and assessment

Two motions on the review of the junior cycle and its assessment were debated together on the second day of Convention. Pat Collins, Dungarvan, proposed a motion "That the ASTI resists any attempt by the Minister for Education and Science to discontinue the present format of the Junior Cert. and its independent assessment". He said: "The Government might save money in the short term but any hopes for the future of the country and the future recovery of the economy will be severely dented by falling education standards resulting from the dilution of the Junior Cert." Lily Cronin, Kerry, spoke to the motion, saying that now was not the time to revamp the Junior Cert. without the appropriate resources and class sizes: "Until we are offered resources up front, each and every teacher, each and every school, I say leave the Junior Cert. as it is".

Noel Buckley, Tipperary, proposed a motion "That the ASTI welcomes the reform of the Junior Certificate examination on the basis that the following essential educational aims are achieved in the review: (a) an agreed system of independent external assessment is maintained; (b) the 'overload' in the current curriculum is addressed; and, (c) adequate resources are made available for more active teaching and learning methodologies". He said: "We will engage in that [review] but we are laying down key parameters, around which we will engage". He said teachers were education professionals and key contributors to the NCCA, and warned: "If our voice is gone from that table we are leaving it up to the IBECs and the various other bodies that have seats at that table to shape the new Junior Cert." This was echoed by Joe Moran, ASTI President, who said: "We have a fairly simple choice in this, we can oppose it, or we can mould it". Aidan O'Leary, Tipperary, seconded the motion, saying the review was timely as the world has changed a lot in the 20 years since the Junior Cert. was introduced: "Teachers are flexible, intelligent, resilient, hard-working professionals, we love a new challenge, we love new curricula, but we also want to be able to teach them properly".

The motions were carried.

A motion "That the ASTI strongly opposes any efforts to introduce methods of assessment in certificate examinations that will involve teachers assessing their own students" was seconded by Deirdre McDonald, Wexford Tony Boland, who said: "If the teacher becomes the examiner, it will have a profound effect on the relationship between the student and the teacher ... It is fundamental to trust between the teacher and the student and the integrity of our role as their teacher, not their examiner. The other aspect that you need to take consideration of is the stress level on teachers that this additional aspect of their work would involve".

The motion was carried.

Pupil-teacher ratio

In proposing the motion "That the ASTI negotiates with the Department of Education and Science a restoration of the pupil-teacher ratio to 18:1", Peter Quinn, Clare, pointed out that in July 2007 the Government stated its commitment to reducing class sizes in Irish, English and maths. He asked: "What has happened since then? An increase in the pupil-teacher ratio. What an intelligent Government we have ... Increasing the pupil-teacher ratio disimproves the educational choices of students and narrows the subject choice schools have to offer ... more time is spent on discipline matters and control rather than giving individual attention to students ... Who would be the winners in all of this, if it were achieved? Students, teachers, parents, the economy. What a stupid government we have". Mary Carroll, Clare, in seconding the motion, called on the media to highlight what happens in classrooms: "The difficulties that we face, the poor resources that we have. We should try and get parents on our sides more. Sometimes we don't use the interest that they have – their number one priority – and make them realise the challenges their children face sitting in the middle of such heterogeneous groups".

The motion was carried.

Contracts of indefinite duration

A motion "That the ASTI demands that all teaching hours are included for the calculation of a contract of indefinite duration" was proposed by Sheila Herlihy, Carbery. She called for a record of accumulation of service and that boards of management would recognise transferability of service between the schools, which would be taken into consideration in awarding a CID: "What is actually happening at present, and many teachers may not be aware of this, is that contracts of indefinite duration are being awarded of paltry hours, sometimes of perhaps eight or nine hours, and that is supposed to constitute a permanent position ... There is no dignity in being a part-time person in a school, being perhaps invisible in a staff and not eligible for a long-term status in a school". Mick Evans, Cork South Paddy Mulcahy Branch, has recently taken up a position as principal and he told Convention: "I'm looking at teachers who are brilliant at what they do and have an awful lot to offer the teaching profession. I'm devastated for them because at the moment, at least where six or eight of them are concerned, I don't know what I can do with them next year because I don't have the information back from the Department yet and I'll still be scratching for hours for those people in the middle of the summer because I want to keep them on".

The motion was carried.

Resolutions adopted at Convention 2010

Motion 4 – Posts of responsibility:

That the ASTI seeks the reinstatement of all posts of responsibility in schools and the immediate lifting of the moratorium on the filling of posts.

Motion 44 – Special needs:

That the ASTI resists any further reduction in the provision of teachers and resources to students with special needs.

Motion 20 – Conditions of employment:

That the ASTI rejects any worsening of teachers' conditions of employment and strenuously resists any attempt: (a) to abolish the supervision and substitution scheme; (b) to require teachers to be present on the school premises for the duration of school opening hours; or, (c) to lengthen the school day and/or the school year.

Standing Committee motion on Public Service Pay Agreement 2010-2014:

Convention expresses its total and vehement opposition to the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014 whilst recognising that decisions on final salary offers are a reserved function of CEC under the Rules and Constitution of the ASTI. Convention calls on CEC to recommend the rejection of the Agreement in a ballot of members.

Motion 33 – Junior Certificate examination format:

That the ASTI resists any attempt by the Minister for Education and Science to discontinue the present format of the Junior Certificate examination and its independent assessment.

Motion 47 – Junior Certificate examination reform:

That the ASTI welcomes the reform of the Junior Certificate examination on the basis that the following essential educational aims are achieved in the review:

- (a) an agreed system of independent external assessment is maintained;
- (b) the 'overload' in the current curriculum is addressed; and,
- (c) adequate resources are made available for more active teaching and learning methodologies.

Motion 50 – Assessment:

That the ASTI strongly opposes any efforts to introduce methods of assessment in Certificate examinations that will involve teachers assessing their own students.

Motion 30 – Pupil-teacher ratio:

That the ASTI negotiates with the DES a restoration of the pupil-teacher ratio to 18:1.

Motion 31 – Revision of syllabi:

That, in the light of the recent unexpected changes to the Irish Junior Certificate syllabus, this Convention demands that any future revision of syllabi must be preceded by proper and adequate consultation with the relevant teachers and that implementation of syllabi revisions does not take place before structures, resources and adequate in-service are in place.

Motion 16 – Contract of indefinite duration:

That the ASTI demands that all teaching hours are included for the calculation of a contract of indefinite duration.

Motion 17 – Employment vacancies:

That, in the present economic situation, the ASTI would exhort school managements to employ newly qualified teachers where possible and that where part-time hours exist in a school, the ASTI demands that priority in employment be given to teachers on the live register or to teachers who do not have 22-hour contracts.

Motion 73 – Review of union's structures, rules and organisation:

That the Officers of the Association investigate mechanisms, including the possibility of engaging an independent body, by which a complete review of the union's structures, rules and organisation can be carried out with the object of making the ASTI more effective, totally democratic and essentially member-centred; proposals to be put to a Special Convention in September 2011.

Motion 68 – Rule 145 (a):

There shall be three Trustees of the Association. The Trustees shall be members of the Association elected by a simple majority vote by the Annual Convention from among those who have been members for not less than ten years. The Trustees may attend meetings of the CEC as observers. The Trustees may speak at CEC meetings on matters pertaining to their duties but shall not have the right to vote at CEC meetings.

Motion 72 – Rule 151:

The Trustees or any one or more of them may be removed from office for conduct injurious to the Association at any time by a resolution of the CEC passed by two-thirds of members present and voting.

Election results 2010



Jack Keane
President Elect



Brendan Broderick
Vice-President



Ray St John
Honorary Treasurer

President Elect

Jack Keane

Vice-President

Brendan Broderick

Honorary Treasurer

Ray St John

Trustees

Ger Curtin
Tom Gilligan
Michael Kilbride

Steering Committee

Noel Buckley
Lily Cronin
Susie Hall
Christy Maginn
Maire Ní Chiarba

Rules Committee

Fergal Canton
Pat Deery
Paul McGrath
Sheila Parsons
Mark Walshe

Investment Committee

Dermot Brennan
Patrick Collins
Michael Freeley
Tony Waldron

Pensions Committee

Jane Craig-Elliott
Sean Fallon
Mike Moriarty
Denis O'Boyle
Bernadine O'Sullivan

Business of CEC Committee

Eilis Casey
Caitriona McGrath



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If I could change one thing about second-level education in Ireland...

In this year's vox pop, ASTIR spoke to teachers at the recent ASTI Convention about what improvements they would like to see.



Jason Carrig
Limerick North

The professionalism of teachers should be promoted. Teachers have been demoralised and their professionalism undermined by the recent cutbacks in funding, resources and salaries. As teachers and public servants, we hear all the time that we're lucky to have a job. But the right to work is a fundamental human right. Teachers

shouldn't see it as a privilege. There are lots of positive things happening lately too, of course. It's my first time at Convention and it's very obvious to see that people are enthusiastic and they care about their students, schools and jobs. The recent Teaching Council survey showed that teachers and the teaching profession are held in high regard by the Irish people, and the complexity of the job is appreciated and understood. That's another area that is starting to creep in lately – the casualisation of the profession. There are people coming into teaching from other professions and it's almost presumed that there are no special skills required to be a teacher. We know that subject-related knowledge does not a teacher make and there are techniques and approaches that require our specialist training.



Robert Browne
Stillorgnan

Education in the years ahead needs to be more focused on creativity. What we need in the years ahead is a workforce that is creative and able to think on its feet.

Subjects like music, art and drama should be included in the curriculum and most other subject areas need reform because we need future graduates who have the

capability to make decisions and who are innovative. We are educating students for exams, whereas I think we need to educate young students

to be human beings by giving them a rounded education. I have a quote in my classroom by Alex Silk that reads: "Teach the young children to dream, there are no better riches than the imagination".

I also think that the public image of teachers has been tarnished and needs to be enhanced and improved. The media needs to see educators as individuals on the front line, developing young people's minds and the future generations of this country. I like to regard teaching as something that enriches my life and enhances the lives of children in my care. Finally, I would encourage young people to get actively involved in the union. We are debating issues that will affect teachers in the years ahead and they have an important voice. When it's all said and done they are going to be the ambassadors of change.



Maura Greaney
Galway

I would reduce the curriculum overload, particularly at Junior Cert. level, because I feel that there are too many subjects there and students might be losing out on the basic 'three Rs' – reading, writing and arithmetic. Students need the time to concentrate and do their subjects well, rather than having 12 and 13 subjects to

cover at Junior Cert. level. They end up being jacks of all trades and masters of none. It's just too much pressure on the students, trying to complete courses in every subject. It's very hard.

Mary Boissel and Jim O'Dea
Stillorgnan and Dublin South 1

Mary: I would love to bring back time for Latin because it is just the most terrific subject once the students get into it. We have got to the stage in Irish education where all the emphasis is on getting As and Bs, but what is wrong with taking a subject and learning it and becoming proficient in it? People say, for example, that students won't do physics because it's hard to get a top mark. Is the purpose of education to get a good mark or to get a job? It's not. It's to learn and to know how to lead your life in the best way

possible. I would love to bring back time for Latin. In America they've done studies that found that studying Latin increases vocabulary, accuracy, and lateral thinking, especially in children with learning difficulties.

Jim: Other language teachers tell me that if their students are doing Latin, it makes it so much easier for them to learn another language. They have the structure and the tenses and that can be transferred to other languages. Learning Latin is an education. We are in danger of taking the education out of school; the whole idea should be that students should be able to think for themselves.

To learn more about teaching and learning classics, see www.caiteachers.com.



Deirdre McDonald
Wexford Tony Boland

I would like to see a properly resourced health promotion project aimed at creating a healthy teaching environment implemented. Prevention is better than cure! International research shows that the two most stressful occupations are the classroom teacher and the front line social worker. In 2000-2001 a pilot project to create a

healthy teaching environment and prevent teacher stress was carried out. Schools that wholeheartedly committed themselves to the project experienced significant professional and organisational development. In 2007 an ASTI committee examined the area of stress prevention in teaching, outlined the pertinent issues and made recommendations to Convention. Two of the greatest stressors for teachers were indiscipline and poor student motivation. These remain serious problems for a significant number of teachers and the stress load is being added to by the Government's onslaught on teachers' pay, working conditions and pension entitlements. What does this say about how the Department treats their front line workers? As soon as there is upturn in the Government finances, it is imperative that a programme of health promotion is put in place. I hope that I am still around to see such an insightful initiative implemented. One might describe it as a truly 'smart' approach to education: teachers' health is education's wealth!



Bosco Guinan
Wicklow

At the moment, the Government is thinking short term; everything is valued in economic terms and they're not thinking long term about the value of education to society. Education is the way forward if the economy is to come out of this recession. In the '80s we educated our people, sent them out, and they came back in the '90s

to power the economy. We've had our wage cuts – and I'm not accepting any more of them – but everybody in the public service is affected by that. In terms of the education cutbacks, the Government has to think long term and realise that everything can't be measured in economic terms. Society has to be taken into consideration as well. You have to lift everyone in society with the economy.



Paddy O'Gorman
Tipperary

I would change the perception of teachers and the difficulty newly qualified teachers have in getting a job. Some people believe that teachers should accept everything the Government throws at us because we have a job, and this annoys me. Many teachers don't have jobs and many of those that do don't have full hours and don't get paid for

holidays. Teachers don't have a huge salary and as a young teacher, to have enough to pay the bills and rent is a big concern and trying to plan for the future is next to impossible. Young teachers have had their pay cut by up to 15% too, while on the lower end of the salary scale, and they have no hope of promotion because of the moratorium on posts. The Department of Education should make it easier for graduates to get jobs. The Government should bring in a system where, like in primary

education, if you have a contract for a year, you are on full hours. After four or five years' training, newly qualified teachers should not have to be happy with just a few hours' work. Why not bring in a system like in other European countries, where when you graduate you are given a job for a year, giving you vital experience and making going to college for four or five years seem worthwhile? This country will be improved by employing highly educated, energetic, newly qualified teachers.



Margo McGann
Dungarvan

I'd like to see more promotional opportunities for young teachers. Currently, you have to wait 33 years to get to the top of the pay scale. Many teachers never reach their long service increment, and with the current moratorium on filling of posts, the only possibility of promotion within teaching is to aspire to become deputy

principal or principal, which usually means moving to a different county or province. While 68% of ASTI membership is female, there is an under-representation of female principals in schools and I would like to see more key decision-making positions for women too.

Anne Marie Shanahan
Galway

I believe that there is too much of a gap between the primary and secondary levels. What I mean by that is that the basic fundamentals of reading, writing and maths are getting lost in an oasis of extra-curricular activities and subjects. I believe we need to go back to basics. Standards in maths, literacy skills and Irish need to be looked at. As a language teacher, I think that students need to learn the grammar of the English language first before they can learn any other language. This is certainly the case on the continent – I've had experience of teaching in France and Spain. It goes without saying that there should be much more funding for schools because it's fundamental that everyone gets the basics and a solid foundation to

build on. I think it's unacceptable that even at the height of the Celtic Tiger, pupils were put in under-heated buildings and rat-infested classrooms.



Dermot Brennan
Carbery

A lot of speakers at Convention have used the term 'yellow pack workforce' when talking about the new pay deal. But already one-quarter of teachers are working as yellow pack teachers – part-time teachers. Newly qualified and part-time teachers are expendable in the eyes of management and the Department. We have to work hard to

ensure that their chances of securing a contract of indefinite duration (CID) are maximised. Surely we can work to achieve a situation where continuous service irrespective of employer is calculated in order to gain a CID. Our superannuation is calculated this way, why not tenure? The Department is looking for redeployment across sectors, why not grant a CID across sectors?

Brian Burke
Navan

I'd really like to push the Government to introduce some form of earlier tenure or quicker route to permanency. I'm a school steward and there are about 10 or 11 teachers in my school, all young, and all non-permanent. Their lives are quite difficult, especially coming towards June, as principals are understandably slow in getting information out on whether they'll be kept on or not. Many aren't paid for holidays; there's a lot of maternity leave cover, fixed-term contracts, etc. The major problem with that is that it doesn't qualify you for a CID. I would be a huge advocate of looking at transference of time served in multiple schools for entitlement to a CID. There's a myth being peddled in the media that teaching is an immediately permanent, pensionable job. That's creating a wrong impression and a huge amount of anger among young teachers. The current moratorium prevents younger teachers taking on posts of responsibility.

ASTI Honorary Life Membership and PJ Kennedy Award recipients



PJ Leddy and Maura Finan receive PJ Kennedy Awards from ASTI President Joe Moran.



Former ASTI President Michael Corley is presented with Honorary Life Membership by ASTI President Joe Moran.



PJ Kennedy Award recipients (from left): Gerard Logue; John McGettigan; ASTI President Joe Moran; and, Jim King.



ASTI President Joe Moran presents former ASTI President Eamon O'hAllmhurain with Honorary Life Membership.



ASTI President Joe Moran presents Niamh Coll with the PJ Kennedy Award.



Carmel Heneghan, Tuam Branch, receives an Honorary Life Membership Award from ASTI President Joe Moran.

Under pressure

Schools are reducing subject options, cutting classes and combining levels and years as a result of budget cutbacks, according to recent research.



Research carried out by the ASTI in advance of its Convention in April showed that cuts made in the 2009 Budget and Supplementary Budget have had significant impacts on curriculum provision in schools. The case study research updates similar research undertaken at the same time last year and provides evidence of the direct impacts of the Budget measures on 20 schools and their ability to provide a broad education for all students.

Education damaged

Thirteen of the 20 schools surveyed lost one or more teachers as a result of the increase in pupil–teacher ratio introduced in the 2009 Budget. With restricted teacher numbers, the survey found that: 12 of the schools have combined higher and ordinary level classes; six have dropped subjects; 10 have reduced modules in Transition Year; and, seven have combined fifth and sixth year classes. Half of the schools reported overcrowding in Junior Certificate classes, while the same proportion reported that the increase in pupil–teacher ratio had directly affected the school's capacity to meet the needs of all students and had directly affected the school's capacity to provide a broad and balanced educational experience.

Reacting to the research, ASTI General Secretary John White said: "Everybody knows the country is under financial pressure. But shifting that pressure on to education is not the answer. Education provides for the future; it is the foundation for sustained wellbeing – for the individual as well as for society. The decisions the Government made last year have hindered education provision. That is undeniable. Merging year groups, amalgamating class levels, and overcrowding classes restricts learning potential. Denying students access to a range of subjects is unacceptable. What is happening is simply not fair to students who only get one chance at an education. In a few years these students will be called on to drive

our economy; but right now they are not being given the educational foundations to allow them to do that".

School development and planning hit

In March of last year a moratorium on appointments to posts of responsibility in schools was introduced. Since then, 19 of the 20 schools surveyed have lost such posts. The schools lost 53 posts between them, negatively affecting their school development and planning, and damaging their administrative capacity.

The moratorium has resulted in disaster in schools, as detailed by the response of one principal: "The moratorium on posts has created a crisis for the school. Who is to carry out the functions of the year head [or] Transition Year co-ordinator? The principal's function is now purely administrative – filling out forms, financial management, etc. – [there is] no time for educational leadership. The worst part is the service to students". Schools are doing their best to cope, with the help of dedicated staff, according to another response: "There is a lot of generosity among teachers and so much work goes unnoticed. In the present circumstances I look for creative ways of adapting to the cutbacks. We must be positive for our students and teachers".

Financial burdens

The increased cost of education to students and their families was a major theme referred to by school principals who completed the survey. As a result of Budget measures, boards of management have had to increase the amount paid by parents in 'voluntary contributions' in half of the schools, while 16 schools were forced to introduce charges for specific activities.

Principals' and deputy principals' seminar – a deeper engagement

DIARMAID DE PAOR, ASTI Deputy General Secretary, reports on a seminar that highlighted the benefits of increased interaction and communication between the ASTI and its members who are principals and deputy principals.

ASTI Convention 2008 established a sub-committee to examine the role of principals and deputy principals within the ASTI. This was a timely decision, as there was increasing concern that there was a growing disconnect between our members in these positions and the ASTI as a whole. Among the recommendations of that sub-committee was the following: "That the operation of the Principals and Deputy Principals Advisory Committee, its regional meetings and its relationship to the ASTI as a whole, should be reviewed with a view to improving communication and effectiveness."

Simultaneously and coincidentally, the Principals and Deputy Principals Advisory Committee was looking at how its regional meetings were operating and, in particular, at the very low attendance at some of these meetings. Meanwhile, ASTI President Joe Moran has repeatedly stated that he is a strong advocate of involving principals and deputy principals in the structures of the ASTI.

As a result of this confluence of pressures, Standing Committee decided, at the request of the Principals and Deputy Principals Advisory Committee, to replace the regional meetings due in September/October 2010 with a seminar to which all ASTI principals and deputy principals would be invited and to hold elections to the Committee at this seminar. The seminar on March 24 was attended by nearly 150 principals and deputy principals.

Deeper engagement

The seminar was opened by the President, Joe Moran, who stated that he hoped the day would be the first step in a deeper engagement. He expressed his understanding of the difficulties and stresses encountered by principals and deputies in these challenging times and he reminded them that any actions taken by the ASTI are in the long term interests of all teachers and of the quality of education in our schools.

ASTI General Secretary John White assured the assembled gathering that the ASTI was their union, that it was on their side and that it was there to help and assist in whatever way possible.

The first guest to address the meeting was Michelle Ní Longáin, partner in the Employment Law Department of Byrne Wallace Solicitors. Michelle's presentation was on 'Recent Legal Developments Affecting Schools' and it covered such areas as: admission policies; Section 29 appeals; dress codes and the Equal Status Acts; and, bullying and harassment and the Equal Status and Employment Equality Acts. She was followed by Sandra Masterson Power from the same firm who covered the 'Legal Relationship between Principals, Trustees/Patrons and Boards of Management'.

After lunch, ASTI Assistant General Secretaries Máire Mulcahy and Pat King outlined the role of industrial relations officials, and encouraged principals



Rob Halford, St Mary's Edenderry; Mary Ann Holton, Dominican College, Griffith Avenue; and, Ciaran McCormack, St Paul's College, Raheny at the seminar.

and deputy principals to foster good relations with them as they were there to attempt to solve problems wherever possible.

The Chairperson of the Advisory Committee, Brendan Forde, in a forthright address, outlined why principals and deputies should remain involved in their union and the importance of maintaining good relationships with school stewards. In a press statement issued in conjunction with the seminar he stated that principals and deputy principals will not continue to paper over the cracks in our education service caused by the moratorium on middle management posts in schools.

The final guest to address the seminar was Hubert Loftus, Principal Officer in the Department of Education and Skills with responsibility for Teacher Allocations and School Governance. In a presentation laced with dry humour he talked the audience through the allocations process in second-level schools and he remained for nearly an hour afterwards to answer individual queries.

Interspersed between the presentations was time for questions and discussion. Much of this was lively, to say the least, but it is fair to say that most people present felt that the robust exchange of views that took place was healthy and worthwhile.

The Advisory Committee has expressed its view that the seminar should be repeated and that the ASTI should consult with its principals and deputy principals as to the format and content of future events. This seminar is simply the beginning of a process of strengthening links between the ASTI and its members who are principals and deputy principals and we look forward to continued and increased involvement from these members.

Teachers for the future

The ASTI will launch a policy document – ‘Teachers for the Future’ – at a conference for new teachers this month. In advance of the launch, ASTIR looks at the difficulties facing teachers entering the profession today.



Over a quarter of second-level teachers working in Ireland today are in temporary employment, according to the recent OECD Teaching and Learning International Study. It is not surprising, then, that just one in ten teaching graduates finds full-time employment following graduation, and less than one-quarter of teachers under 30 have permanent jobs. These figures create obvious concern about the future of the profession and its ability to attract high calibre graduates. As Joe Moran, ASTI President, puts it: "We need to maintain Ireland's high standard of teacher graduates and make sure there is a steady supply of fresh minds to the teaching profession. We can't continue to have almost 90% of teachers graduating each year to unemployment or partial employment and expect to achieve either of those aims."

"There is a clear need to find workable alternatives for teacher graduates. How are students to gain experience or any real stability when they have to consider themselves lucky to find five teaching hours in one school and maybe two more in another school 30 miles away?" says the President. Mike Higgins, a teacher from Mayo, is a case in point. He is trying to get back into teaching in Ireland following a number of years teaching abroad: "I've been looking, but I haven't found anything yet. Now is not the ideal time but it seems there will be a lot of retirements in September, so it's a case of waiting out the summer to see what comes up, but even then I'll have to go wherever I find a job, if I can find one. It's not perfect but teaching is what I want to do so I'll stick at it."

Moving abroad

For a number of years now, many second-level teaching graduates like Mike have found that their only option for finding a full-time job or secure income

is to move to the UK or elsewhere. In contrast to the Irish situation, England, Scotland and Wales have a shortage of qualified teachers and falling numbers of teaching graduates. Scotland is even in a position to guarantee graduates from its teacher training programmes a paid teaching post with a Scottish local authority for a full school year after graduation. This provision is part of the formal induction process for newly qualified teachers.

The ASTI is calling for a sustainable policy for second-level teacher recruitment, retention and employment. A system such as the one Scotland offers would be an ideal solution for Irish graduates, says Joe Moran: "Obviously, especially given how the situation stands at the moment, that's not something that could happen overnight; we would need to phase any system in gradually and carefully. But creative alternatives to the current system and methods for their implementation must be examined."

The 'hours culture'

The current model of second-level teacher recruitment has become hours based, so instead of getting a teaching job, teaching graduates receive teaching 'hours'. This means, says Moira Leydon, ASTI Assistant General Secretary: Education and Research, that: "Instead of moving into a supportive professional community receptive to their needs and fears, new teachers find that they are almost unknown in the staff room. Instead of beginning a process of integration into the school life and culture, they have at best a peripheral relationship with the school". The 'hours culture' not only undermines initiatives aimed at maintaining teacher quality and professionalism but creates a problem for school

Table compiled from Higher Education Authority annual graduate destination statistics

Teaching graduate destinations									
First destinations	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Permanent teaching in Ireland	4.7	2.8	3.1	3.2	2	4	5	9	13
Non-permanent teaching in Ireland – all	73.3	72.7	71.7	71.3	67	67	73	71	52
Teaching abroad	5	4.6	8.1	6.9	7	5	6	4	4
Other work	7.6	8.8	4.9	7.3	10	11	6	7	3
Other	8.3	11.1	12	11.4	14	13	10	9	28*

*15% of 'other' are currently seeking employment; 7% are not available for employment; and, the remainder are in further study.

managements who cannot plan coherently in the absence of certainty regarding staffing levels: all classes must be allocated a teacher, teacher shortage is alleviated by giving 'hours' to new entrants and the situation fast becomes a vicious circle. Management copes by: assigning teachers to teach subject areas in which they may not be fully qualified; increasing the number of classes teachers are allocated; or, increasing class size and amalgamating year and class groups. Recent ASTI research provides conclusive evidence that these practices are now widespread in schools – to the detriment of pastoral care systems and exacerbated by the moratorium on appointments to posts of responsibility.

Planning ahead

The moratorium on posts of responsibility and its resultant effects on career progression is another area of concern for new teachers. The moratorium takes hope of career opportunities away from non-permanent teachers who even before its implementation may have found it difficult to progress. Teachers with hours rather than a secure job may find it difficult to integrate into the team culture of the permanent staff. They are not exposed to systematic opportunities to learn from experienced members of staff to build their careers and enrich their work experience.

Even aside from planning a career, it's difficult even to plan a life, says Patrick O'Gorman, who has been teaching in Tipperary for three years: "There are so many teachers trying to get into the system but find they simply can't. There are many more who only have part-time hours. I was lucky enough to get a job, but I have an RPT contract so I don't know at the end of the year if I'll have a job in September. I'm getting married next year and it's very hard to plan where you're going to live, whether you can get a mortgage, or anything like that".

Alternative entry

Many teachers entering the profession now come from backgrounds in other professional arenas, particularly in the context of the recent downturn. Moira Leydon says: "Teacher education institutions should work to develop programmes that enable people to move from different professions into teaching. However, it is extremely important that such programmes are well designed and are not perceived as 'fast-track' routes with less demanding academic entry and exit standards. Teaching is a highly skilled job and a complex task; it not only requires extensive knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy but also a broad range of skills, flexibility and commitment to young people".

The future is bright

It is predicted that the coming years will see a rise in the numbers entering the profession arising from demographic change and teacher retirements. So, says Moira Leydon: "The time to get our house in order is now. Innovation is increasingly regarded as central to Ireland's efforts to emerge from crisis. The concept of innovation must be extended to the crisis in second-level teacher policy. We must be innovative in our approach to solutions so that our schools and our teachers can provide the best quality education service to today's and tomorrow's young people".



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Quality relationships with teachers encourage students to stay in education



Around 9,000 young people leave school before taking the Leaving Certificate each year. ESRI research published in April attempts to establish the reasons why these students drop out of education. 'No Way Back? The Dynamics of Early School Leaving' combines surveys of second-level students and interviews with early school leavers and highlights many new findings relating to early school leaving.

Among the key findings are:

- early leaving rates differ markedly by social class background, with much higher levels among young people from working-class and unemployed households. Working-class young men are particularly likely to leave school early;
- the quality of relations between teachers and students emerges as a key factor in young people staying in education;
- early school leaving has its roots in early experiences of educational failure and struggle with schoolwork, often as far back as primary level;
- in some cases school disciplinary procedures, such as suspension or expulsion, can trigger early school leaving; and,
- early school leaving is generally the culmination of a longer-term gradual withdrawal from school, marked by non-attendance and truancy.

Commenting on the publication, ASTI President Joe Moran said that second-level teachers will not be surprised at the typical profile of early school leavers as described in the study: "The higher levels of drop out among young men who are socioeconomically disadvantaged and often from unemployed households is a matter of great concern to teachers". However, Mr Moran commented that more research was needed into why many young people with the same profile as early school leavers complete their second-level education. He said the experiences of these students could help to inform the education community.

"Anecdotal evidence from second-level teachers suggests that the hidden school curriculum – including sports, school musicals and other activities – plays a key role in enabling vulnerable students to build up positive school experiences. Teachers report that these kinds of experiences can impact positively on students' self esteem, social interaction and on their attitude to learning," said Mr Moran. Mr Moran said ASTI research undertaken this year shows clear evidence that the capacity of second-level schools to offer extra-curricular activities to students is diminishing due to the education cutbacks: "The education cutbacks have affected the entire school community. However, in the long term we will see that vulnerable and disadvantaged students are suffering disproportionately. This is because when you take more resources out of an already under-resourced education service, the result is deeper inequality".

New teaching posts

In September, 100 new permanent teaching posts allocated to second-level schools under the Renewed Programme for Government will come on stream. The posts will mainly be allocated to small stand-alone co-educational schools in order to facilitate greater subject choice.

The ASTI played a crucial part in ensuring that second-level education was included in the Renewed Programme for Government last October. In February, schools received an additional allocation of approximately 10 hours per week for the remainder of the school year. These hours were granted on a temporary basis. From September 1, each school will have four hours and 24 minutes in permanent hours.

The ASTI emphasises that schools should use the opportunity of these extra hours to end the unjust situation of CID holders on contracts of less than 18 hours. School stewards should be vigilant to ensure that CID holders are brought across the line of 18 hours and thus onto full salary.

Holocaust Memorial Day



ASTI General Secretary John White spoke at the National Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration.

ASTI General Secretary John White gave the following reading at the National Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration in January: "The Nazis persecuted hundreds of thousands of political dissidents and opponents, some for what they did, some for what they refused to do, and some for what they were. In the early 1920s, the Nazis began disrupting meetings of liberal democrats, socialists, communists and trade unionists. The torching of the Reichstag national parliament building in 1933 gave the Nazis a pretext for suppressing the Communist Party, and later the Social Democratic Party, with brutal violence. The Nazis abolished trade unions and co-operatives, confiscated their assets and prohibited strikes. Political dissidents and political opponents were among the first to be arrested. In 1933 the Nazis established the first concentration camp, Dachau, as a detention centre for political prisoners. Opponents of Hitler were murdered in the Night of Long Knives in 1934. Political prisoners were identified by a red triangle, which they had to wear on their concentration camp uniforms".

YOUR FUTURE AS A TEACHER

ASTI NEW TEACHER CONFERENCE



Want to learn more about your **entitlements**?

Have questions about **classroom management**?

Interested in **technology in education**?

Confused about **teacher registration**?

Come along to the ASTI conference for new teachers on May 22 and be enlightened!

The ASTI is hosting a conference for new teachers – Your Future as a Teacher – in the Gresham Hotel, Dublin, on May 22. The event will be addressed by new Minister for Education and Skills, Mary Coughlan, who will launch an ASTI policy document, 'Teachers for the Future: Entry Routes into and Securing Quality in Second-Level Education'. Jerome Morrissey of the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) will speak on 'Smart Schools, Smart Teachers', while a representative from the Teaching Council

will give a presentation on the requirements to be registered as a teacher. ASTI Deputy General Secretary Diarmaid de Paor will give an overview of teaching contracts and your entitlements.

This will be an interactive event, with the opportunity to have your questions answered by the speakers. Teachers can attend workshops on 'effective classroom management' and 'teaching mixed ability pupils', and you will have the chance to meet other new teachers from around the country.

Education for all



Moira Leydon, ASTI Assistant General Secretary, and Charmaine Kenny, Rose of Tralee, celebrate Global Action Week. Global Action Week promotes Millennium Development Goal Number 2 – universal primary education for all children by 2015.

New Minister for Education



Tánaiste Mary Coughlan was appointed Minister for Education and Skills in March as part of a cabinet reshuffle. First elected to the Dáil in 1987, the Minister previously served as Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Minister for Social and Family Affairs and Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. She was educated at the Ursuline Convent in

Sligo and University College Dublin, where she graduated with a degree in social science. She worked as a social worker before becoming involved in politics. The Department of Education and Science was renamed the Department of Education and Skills in March. The Department has taken on responsibility for skills and training policy, as well as the training activities of Fás.

Irish Aid award



Fifth-year students from Tarbert Comprehensive receive an Irish Aid award from Minister of State Peter Power.

John Hume at Stanhope Street Library opening



Pictured at the opening of a new library at St Joseph's Stanhope Street are (from left): Tommy Coyle, Principal, St Joseph's Stanhope Street; Joe Moran, ASTI President; John Hume; and, John White, ASTI President.

Tullamore Branch function



Pat Hurley, ASTI Past President, and Pat King, ASTI Assistant General Secretary, are pictured with former and current Tullamore Branch officers at a recent function held in Tullamore.

Drogheda retirement function



Pictured at a recent Drogheda Sean Higgins Branch function held in their honour are recently retired teachers: John Hanratty; Sean Conlon; John Garvey; Frank Cahill; Mary McHugh; Ned McHugh; ASTI President Joe Moran; Margaret McCartan; Paul Brennan; Jim Walsh; Noel Costello; and, Arthur Dunne.

Ulster Teachers' Union Conference



Pictured at the Ulster Teachers' Union Conference are (from left): Bernie Ruane, TUI Vice President; Diarmaid de Paor, ASTI Deputy General Secretary; Máire Ní Chuinneagáin, INTO President; Joe Moran, ASTI President; and, Annette Dolan, TUI Deputy General Secretary.

ASTIR welcomes letters and contributions from members. Please send your contributions to astir@asti.ie

Tuam Branch event



At a function held in honour of recently retired members of the Tuam Branch are: Standing (from left): Gerry Fahy, Branch Treasurer; John Ger Davin; Dave McDonagh; Nono Duggan; Martin McDonnell; Margaret Fahy; Carmel Lambert; Joe Moran, ASTI President; Sarah Withero, Standing Committee Representative; Pat King, ASTI Industrial Relations Official; Joe Lynch; Eileen Burke; Donal Halloran; Daithi Quinn; and, Noelle Moran, Chairperson, Tuam Branch. Seated (from left): Deirdre Tobin; Tommy Davin; Mary McDonagh; and, Lil Brien.

Easy to Use 1st Year and 2nd Year SPHE Resources

The North Western Health Board Lifeskills series has been revised, redeveloped and revamped. The series features comprehensive Teacher Lesson Plan Books and Student Workbooks for use in the classroom, as well as additional resources to support the delivery of SPHE.

Each Teachers Pack includes:

- An easy to use Teachers Lesson Plan Book which:
 - Cuts down on planning and preparation
 - Uses active methodologies as recommended for SPHE
 - Is based on the aims and outcomes of the 10 Junior Cycle SPHE Modules
- An accompanying Teachers Methodology Booklet and DVD containing classroom footage and additional resources such as lesson logs for record keeping, a certificate of participation for students, relevant web-links, and much more!

The Student Workbook:

- Is based on the activities in the Teachers Lesson Plan Book
- Is portfolio-based with perforated inserts for assembly in a binder if desired
- Includes a personal reflection section
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Both sets of materials are available to order now with immediate delivery of the 1st year resources and delivery in late May/early June of the 2nd year resources.

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Playing our part in the global community

ASTIR takes a look at two projects funded by the ASTI Development Aid Fund.



Students and teachers from Portmarnock and Sacred Heart schools.

The ASTI Development Aid Fund supports selected projects in the developing world, providing funding for charities working in developing countries and supporting schools and teachers undertaking charitable projects abroad.

Friends in Ireland

Recently, the ASTI Development Aid Fund supported 35 Portmarnock Community School students in travelling to South Africa to work with Irish charity Friends in Ireland. Led by teacher Niall Fitzgerald, this was the fifth successive year the school had embarked on such a trip, having established a twinning programme with Sacred Heart School in Flagstaff, on the eastern cape of South Africa.

Friends in Ireland works in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal provinces of South Africa to assist communities in caring for and supporting orphans and vulnerable children through community development structures. Working hand in hand with community-based organisations, the charity develops foster homes and facilities such as preschools, crèches and drop-in centres. On the recent trip, the Portmarnock group continued their construction programme, building a feeding centre and a reception unit for the village. Another of the projects on this year's programme was the renovation of a semi-derelict building into a day care centre for small children and a community meeting place. Fully wired, it is hoped that it will facilitate the viewing of the World Cup in June!

Portmarnock Community School is twinned with Sacred Heart in Flagstaff, South Africa. During this trip the group continued their scheme of works decorating and improving facilities for students and teachers there. One of

the highlights was the installation of the internet – quite a leap when you consider that when the group first visited the school, it had no electricity. The two schools even have their own social network site, largely due to Portmarnock past pupil Ciaran O'Kelly. Ciaran has put video lessons for teachers and students in the IT room so that they can continue lessons in music and maths in particular. Niall says: "This has gone down very well and allows teachers and students to review lessons after we depart and we can forward lessons on disc or online. These are our short-term goals. Long term, we hope to provide proper sanitation for the school. We have begun the process and hope to have it in place early next year. We will finance a borehole next month and put in the groundwork for the sanitation block. Next February we will construct a proper sanitation block for students and staff".

The South African Government recently outlawed corporal punishment, and while this is welcomed by the teachers in Sacred Heart, they were given no alternative or substitute. To support them in their efforts to make this move, teachers from Portmarnock facilitated two workshops on alternatives to corporal punishment and implementing rewards systems on their recent trip. They also provided the school with materials and equipment to last a year. In March of this year the principal and music teacher from the South African school visited Portmarnock Community School for two weeks. Their trip included meeting President Mary McAleese on St Patrick's Day. During that visit the two schools established a contract of agreement for long- and medium-term objectives for their twin relationship.

The programme is thriving and has had important benefits for both sides.



John Carroll and Pat O'Looney in front of the new polytechnic.



A mural painted by students in South Africa.



The visiting teachers from Sacred Heart School enjoy St Patrick's Day.



President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, pictured with the visiting teachers.

According to Niall: "Our partnership has grown into a strong relationship over recent years. For the students from Portmarnock, the experience provides an opportunity to discover their leadership, creativity and teamwork skills. For Sacred Heart, the relationship has meant an improvement in facilities, new relationships, and a sense of hope for the future".

Last August, a group of sixth-year students from Portmarnock who were part of the original student group travelled to South Africa on their own initiative to work building orphan housing. Undertaking such a trip as an alternative to 'booze cruise' summer holidays, says Niall, shows the very positive lasting impact projects like this can have on students. Staff and students at Portmarnock Community School would like to thank all who support their efforts. You can find out more about the project at www.pcs-southafrica.com.

Kenya

Last year, the ASTI Development Aid Fund supported two teachers, John Carroll and Pat O'Looney, on a tour of voluntary work at Mombasa in Kenya. Both formerly worked at Mercy College, Woodford, Galway, and having made a living from education, wanted to give something back. They joined 48 other volunteers on the Building of Hope Project in the parish of Migombani just outside Mombasa. Their group formed the fourth group of 50 whose task was to construct a new polytechnic school for local young people in the parish of Fr Martin Keane from Cranny in County Clare. Migombani – meaning the place of the bananas – is a new parish founded

by Fr Martin just three years ago. To date, the parish has a church, a primary school and a preschool for three- to six-year-olds. The task undertaken by John and Pat's group was to construct an 18,000 square feet polytechnic to provide training in trades for the young people in the area. For those who can get work in this area, the average wage is less than € per day. A childminder is paid the equivalent of just 30 cents per day and there is no welfare system.

The first group of volunteers left Ireland on January 15 and the final group returned on February 25. In just 27 working days the 200 volunteers constructed a school containing rooms for woodwork, metalwork, needlework, cooking and computers, along with ancillary offices and sanitation facilities. The building is finished to a very high standard throughout, thanks to the very generous benefactors in Ireland. On Sunday February 21, the school was officially blessed and opened by Bishop Willie Walsh of the Killaloe Diocese, who also worked on the project for two days after his arrival. In his oration he referred to the Irish volunteers as "the modern day missionaries" who, as he did 40 years ago, came to an unknown land to help the underprivileged. Local parish worker Lucy Mwaura summed up the appreciation of the people of Migombani: "We are so grateful that people with hearts full of love would do this for us".

John and Pat thank all who contributed to their fundraising and promise that their contribution is making a difference to the lives of the people of Migombani.

Can teachers contribute to economic recovery?

SHEELAGH DRUDY argues the importance of high quality teaching for Ireland's future.



Ireland has little choice but to invest all possible resources in its development as a knowledge economy. Given that Ireland cannot compete with low-cost economies in the manufacturing sector, that agriculture requires fewer people to produce increased-value output, and that construction has collapsed as an economic driver, education is vital to Ireland's economic recovery and to social cohesion.

Impact of recession

The economic turnaround has had immediate effects on education. The October 2008 Budget set out a programme of cuts in services. The December 2009 Budget introduced further cuts in education. In addition to cuts in education of €134 million, the Budget introduced cuts in social welfare, including Child Benefit, of €760 million. Given the level of unemployment in families and the proportion of children who were already 'at risk' of poverty (in 2008, 6.3% of all children under 17 were living in consistent poverty and 18% were at risk of poverty), these measures seem very likely to increase poverty levels among children. There is plenty of evidence from Ireland and other countries that children from

poor households are much more likely to do poorly in school and to have lower levels of achievement than others. An increase in child poverty will aggravate existing levels of educational inequality and will increase the risk of socially destabilising factors such as early school leaving, future unemployment, juvenile crime and early parenthood.

Building a knowledge economy?

Both the economic collapse and the education policy response to the Budget raise a number of fundamental questions. Although the development of the knowledge economy has been a key plank of public policy for some time, questions arise around whether or not the groundwork was sufficiently well laid during the period of high growth to continue this trajectory in any meaningful way.

Four indicators are useful to consider: Ireland's general position on knowledge competitiveness internationally; investment in the digital technology base; investment in education; and, general education performance. Using the World Knowledge Competitiveness Index, compiled by the Centre for International Competitiveness, we find that Ireland's

knowledge performance is roughly in the middle – approximately halfway between Latvia and Sweden. On investment in digital technology, Ireland's performance is not impressive in comparison with other European countries. Focusing on education, we find that the mean number of computers per student in schools in Ireland (0.11) is below the OECD average of 0.16 and well below the UK (0.23), the US (0.30), Finland (0.17), or Denmark (0.19). Despite an increase in investment in education during the boom '90s, Ireland continues to be below the OECD average on all of the investment indicators at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Given the dramatic increase in participation at third level (in 2008, 34% of those aged between 25 and 64, compared with 4% in 1970), it could be argued that the return on investment in education in Ireland is high, as these outcomes were produced with relatively modest public financial resources. All of this raises questions about Ireland's capacity to compete with the highest performing knowledge economies in Europe and elsewhere. With regard to general education performance, the Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) is a useful indicator of the relative performance of 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science. Irish 15-year-olds performed well on PISA literacy reading tests, ranked fifth out of 31 countries (just above average) on science (14th out of 32), and at the OECD average on mathematics (16th out of 32). Taking the example of another small European country, Finland, shows that their 15-year-olds were ranked second for literacy, and first for science and mathematics.

Role of education

It is thus quite clear that education has to be a key part of the solution to the economic difficulties now facing this country. Education cannot adequately contribute to a resurgence of the economy and to a stable and democratic society unless a number of important choices are made by Ireland as a society. One of these choices relates to the issue of equality and social cohesion. Quite apart from the indicators for a knowledge economy, during Ireland's boom years the gap between rich and poor continued and, despite some improvements in income redistribution, society is still relatively in-egalitarian. These indicators of inequality in the general population are closely interlinked with educational inequalities. Looking closely at performance among disadvantaged children, almost 50% of primary school children in this group have very low scores in reading, while almost two-thirds score poorly in mathematics. The international evidence suggests that education should be a central mechanism for Ireland's economic recovery. But, in spite of having the development of the knowledge economy and the building of social cohesion as central policy platforms for over a decade, Ireland invested only moderately in its knowledge infrastructure in comparison with other OECD countries. Ireland's position leaves it facing major educational, economic and social challenges.

Importance of teaching

A major policy choice facing policy makers, if education is to be a strong element in economic recovery, is the quality of teaching and teacher education. Teacher recruitment and teacher education are now internationally understood as having an extremely important role in the provision of high quality education, in the quality of pupil learning outcomes, and in social and economic development. The importance of teacher recruitment and education has also been recognised by the EU Commission since the early part of the 21st century. Through the Lisbon Agreement of 2000, the EU set out to make Europe the most competitive,

digital, knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010, and it also aimed to bring about greater social cohesion through economic reform.

The Lisbon Agreement made specific mention of teachers and aimed to use community programmes to foster and remove obstacles to their mobility, to bring about greater transparency in the recognition of qualifications, and to attract high quality teachers. The link between the economic and democratic projects of the EU and teaching was most clearly established at a European level by the work of the Education and Culture section of the European Commission in the development of Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications, and its statement on teacher quality in 2007. The Commission envisaged that teaching should be a high status, high reward, well-qualified profession in which every teacher should have the opportunity to continue studies to the highest (i.e., doctoral) level.

Teachers, it argued, should be lifelong learners, should be able to understand the factors that create social cohesion and exclusion in society, and should be aware of the ethical dimensions of the knowledge society. Furthermore, teacher education should be an object of research. All of the above policy statements would suggest a form of teacher education that is reflective, analytical and critical, and would be on a par with advanced studies in any of the professions. The analytical, research-based work of teacher educators would, the EU envisages, be conducted in partnership and collaboration with schools and other stakeholders. While there is an evident, genuine concern to attract and retain high quality people in the profession, much of the language of these documents, e.g., the OECD's 'Teachers Matter', is substantially that of neo-liberalism, performativity, performance indicators, standards, evaluation and appraisal and may, of course, be critiqued from a more holistic perspective.

Nonetheless, the evidence available from these and from a number of sources is that high quality teacher education from initial education, through systematic induction programmes and on to continuing professional development, is fundamental to a high quality profession and to pupil learning. Thus, if progress towards enhanced educational achievement and outcomes for a much more diverse pupil population is to be sustained, and if the overall participation and achievement of the population as a whole is to be further improved to the highest international standards, then substantial investment in initial and continuing teacher education is essential. The Teaching Council has a statutory role with significant powers to ensure the quality of teacher education at all stages on the continuum of teacher education, from initial teacher education through induction and continuing professional development. However, decisions on the resourcing of teacher education rest with the state.

If Irish society wishes to pursue its policy goal of becoming a knowledge economy, to become what the Government, in its policy document on the 'smart economy', calls "an innovation and commercialisation hub", then it must invest much more in knowledge infrastructure, in education generally, in research and innovation and, not least, in high quality initial and continuing teacher education. High quality teaching and teacher education will be an essential ingredient of the knowledge economy, as evidence from a number of countries shows that high quality teaching is central to improved educational outcomes.

Professor Sheelagh Drudy is the editor of Education in Ireland: Challenge and Change, published by Gill and Macmillan, 2009.

Junior cycle shake-up

CLAIRE REDMOND argues for a broad and practical view to ensure that the revised junior cycle is built on solid ground.



In reviewing the junior cycle programme, it is hoped to move students away from traditional rote learning practice. But let's not be too hasty. Learning material 'off by heart' is often a 'security blanket' for students, one they can fall back on when faced with the great unknown of the exam hall. The Junior Cert. student, parent and teacher need a certain amount of rote learning for a number of reasons.

The average Junior Cert student's level of maturity means that their ability to adapt material and to work on a skills-based subject is less developed than that of their Leaving Cert. counterpart. On this point, it might be advisable to consider a move away from the rote learning inherent in many Leaving Cert. subjects instead, and accept that a 'dry run' exam of sorts at Junior Cert. level is not a bad thing.

Exam overload

While educationalists certainly favour 'independent learning', they are also realists. They are keenly aware of the practicalities of the matter. The fact is that 14 subjects at examination time, in whatever form they come, remain 14 subjects. No matter how pleasingly disguised through 'project and portfolio assessment', the workload is huge. A reduction in the number of subjects undertaken during an examination period needs to be considered. Several schools offer a sampling of subjects in first year. Perhaps this type of initiative could be adapted and students offered certificates for modules completed. This is already practised in some second-level schools. Students take an exam in one subject and receive a written report from the school. Official national certificates would lend greater credibility to the time invested.

Junior cycle review – we want your views

A discussion paper on the junior cycle was published by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) earlier this year. This paper, 'Innovation and Identity: Ideas for a New Junior Cycle' was produced in line with the decision of the Minister for Education and Science in June 2009 that a review of the entire junior cycle curriculum be carried out.

All teachers are urged to read the paper and to submit their views to the ASTI to guide the ASTI's response.

You can read the paper and submit feedback on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie/education/curriculum-assessment/junior-cycle-review. You can also read feedback sent by other teachers on this page. Here are two examples of feedback from members.

Sean O'Leary

St. Caimin's Community School

I welcome the NCCA's paper on innovation and identity in the junior cycle. Embracing diversity in the classroom can be greatly facilitated by establishing learning communities that involve peer-tutoring and co-operative learning. An inclusive curriculum is linked to pedagogy and encompasses the total experiences of pupils in school. It is essentially about the quality of relationships between pupils, teachers, school personnel, learning opportunities/activities and the learning environment. Pedagogy is a reciprocal process rather than one way, and relies heavily on facilitating communication. Assessment and evidence of learning used to determine qualifications must reflect diversity.

The NCCA paper's emphasis on transition from primary school to post-primary school and its suggested pathway towards learning communities acknowledges the need to cater for diverse needs and abilities among students. Furthermore, the separation of the junior cycle qualification from an over-reliance on examinations towards multiple forms of evidence,

An exploration of structures already established in schools is needed. For example, students already take formal 'in-house' exams at various stages throughout the junior cycle. Allowing them to take some of the Junior Cert exams earlier in the year would lessen their headaches at one final point.

Call for back up

Accusations of 'declining standards' among students need to be looked at within a broader frame of reference. The interest level of the average 15-year-old is notoriously elusive. CSPE is one subject that encourages a practical and theoretical angle of study. Yet teachers are faced with the challenge of containing a broad, albeit student-friendly, curriculum within a single 40-minute period once a week. CSPE is one example of a subject with a practical project element – an element worth an astounding 60%, given its minority weighting in terms of classes allocated. Sixty percent for a project that has only 40 minutes dedicated to it once a week? How is that a balanced setup? In looking at declining standards, we need to take into account the full state of affairs.

It is worth bearing in mind that changes to the Leaving Cert Irish exam, with the implementation of an oral component worth 40%, have not as yet been matched by a sustained effort at training of teachers and recruiting of extra oral examiners. It should also be noted that demand for oral examiners in all languages at Leaving Cert currently outweighs supply, largely due to the inability of schools to release teachers for this work and the intensely pressurised workload involved. Perhaps a sustained effort at providing time for training, materials, and extra supervision hours could be added to the pot when the Department of Education is concocting its publicity-pleasing spells of change.

Reality versus fiction

In January 2009, the then Minister for Education, Batt O'Keeffe, made the following comments:

"I think we should have a national centre in a Gaeltacht area where we would provide in-service courses for teachers, where trainee teachers from the

teacher colleges could be immersed in Irish as part of their overall programme and I'm currently having discussions with UCC in relation to postgraduate courses ... The centre will also provide support and training for Irish dancing and music".

A beautiful, happy picture of an education system and teachers in harmony with the cultural landscape of the Gaeltacht; of Powerpoint presentations merged with jigs, reels and late night sing-songs as *Gaeilge*. The dreamy and romantic language sells an image of teachers somehow released from their duties by tormented principals who must work the miracle of the loaves and fishes in crafting a supervision and substitution timetable that is already bulging with demands. The factual matters of a lack of provision of training and time constraints are cloaked over for the sake of an aesthetically pleasing picture. And when this happens, it often results in the teachers being wrongly vilified in the media.

Let us remember that many teachers teach subjects in which they are not qualified at the request of the school. They embark on the necessary familiarisation and mastery of the course work without being provided with formal training. CSPE and SPHE are frequently cited examples of such subjects. We would do well to remember that the rollout of these innovative new subjects, albeit an admirable attempt at invigorating the examination, is not always sufficiently supported by the necessary framework to implement change.

Instead of seeking public approval, the Minister needs to consider a careful plan of implementation in conjunction with the teachers who will ultimately facilitate it. This will result in a more feasible and sustainable plan that will stand up to practice for all involved.

As is often the case at the front line of education, teachers implement change with limited resources. For the sake of the anxious and vulnerable teenagers who will be the ones most crucially affected by a lack of provision, the Minister for Education would do well to remember that the theory needs to be met with best practice.

Claire Redmond teaches English and French at Maryfield College, Dublin.

possibly augmented by national standardised tests, should contribute to the move towards greater inclusion in our post-primary schools. This emphasis on personalised learning will encourage all of our students to reach their potential, which can only result in improved learning outcomes and raised standards. Responding to the diverse needs of students is a key component of the Code of Professional Practice for Teachers. Such a response by teachers to students' needs must surely include assessment and evidence of learning. Assessment and qualifications must be linked to learning objectives, whatever they happen to be for each particular student. The only real question is: 'How as a profession can we make this work for our students?'

Jimmy Staunton

Sligo Grammar

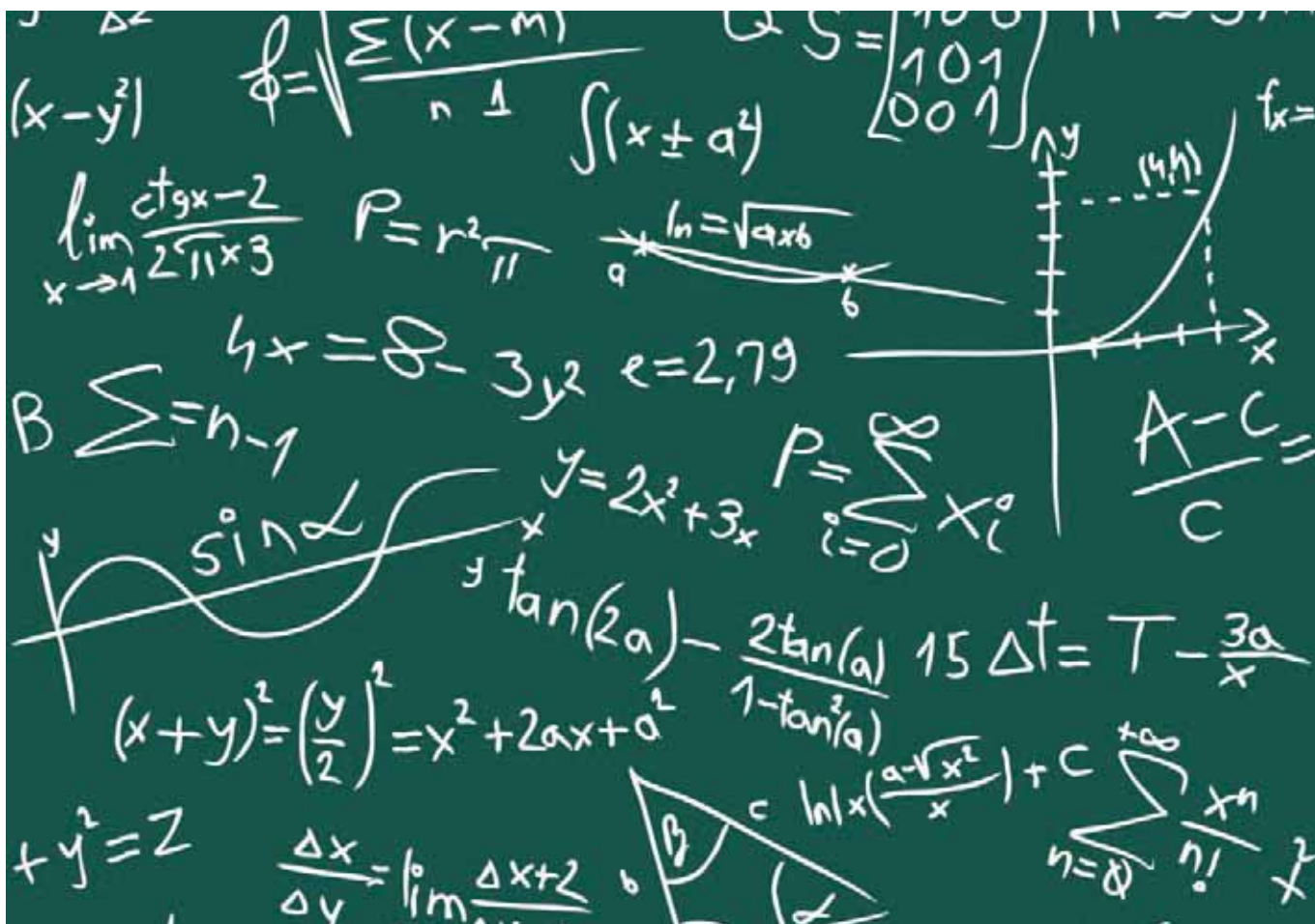
In my opinion a review is long overdue but now is probably the worst time to look for change. If I leave the IR issues to one side I would have to say I welcome the paper and am interested in the many ideas put forward in the various pathways. I would love to see the idea of four years to Junior

Cert and the best elements of TY brought into it. The first year of secondary school should be about settling in and students getting comfortable with their new environment. We are living in changing times and we must be open to new ideas. A properly resourced change would be welcomed and I believe the Government should prioritise educational funding, something they are failing to do at the moment. If there is a standard national exam in maths, English and Irish to Junior Cert., I will be quite happy. At present the system is all about the exam and not enough emphasis is placed on education.

I would also like to see Irish as an option after Junior Cert. I would like to see national templates prepared for schools on curriculum development. The idea that there would be a free-for-all in development of curriculum at local level is a bit scary. There need to be some national standards maintained so we do not end up with a bigger gap developing between people of different socio-economic backgrounds. The best thing about this paper is that it has people talking and questioning the present system, and that has to be good.

Project Maths

In September all schools will start to use the new approaches and the new syllabus for Junior and Leaving Certificate maths developed under 'Project Maths'.



Project Maths has been running on a pilot basis in 24 schools since September 2008. From September, the first two strands of Project Maths, which have been worked on in these 24 schools, will be introduced nationally for all incoming first-year and fifth-year students. These strands are 'Statistics and Probability' and 'Geometry and Trigonometry'. Project Maths involves the introduction of revised syllabuses for Junior and Leaving Certificate mathematics, making changes to what students learn, how they learn it and how they will be assessed.

Initiative aims

The aim is to enhance students' learning experience and attain greater levels of achievement for all. Much greater emphasis will be placed on student understanding of mathematical concepts, with increased use of contexts and applications that will enable students to relate mathematics to everyday experience.

The initiative will also focus on developing students' problem-solving skills. Assessment will reflect the different emphasis on understanding and skills in the teaching and learning of mathematics.

As the revised syllabus strands are introduced, there will be incremental changes to the examination papers.

Implementation group

A high level group to oversee the implementation of Project Maths was established by the Minister for Education earlier this year. The implementation committee is chaired by Frank Turpin of Intel, who represents IBEC on the NCCA. Only two educators sit on the committee: ASTI member Aoibheann Ni Shuilleabhain, who is a part-time facilitator with Project Maths, and Bill Lynch, who represents the NCCA on the committee. This group has recommended to the Minister that bonus points for honours maths be reintroduced.

Resources for teachers and students have been developed by the Project Maths development team and you can find these on www.projectmaths.ie. Official sample papers and pre-Leaving Certificate papers are now available on the same website.



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Department of Education and Professional Studies



We invite applications for the following suite of professional development programmes in education which will have an intake in September 2010.

STRUCTURED PhD (Education)

The main aim of the programme is to provide an opportunity for professionals in education and related disciplines to undertake a major research project leading to a significant development of educational policy or practice. In addition to a major dissertation, participants will complete a taught element which provides an advanced level of research training and an engagement with the state of the art of educational research. Candidates will normally have a minimum of three years of relevant experience. Final selection will involve attendance for interview.

GRADUATE DIPLOMA/MASTER OF EDUCATION (Education Leadership)

Applications are invited for this part-time programme. The main aim of the programme is to provide for the emerging professional development needs of primary and post-primary teachers, programme coordinators and senior management in schools, members of national curriculum support agencies and current and aspiring leaders across the education and training services. Applications are invited from recognised teachers, who should normally have a minimum of three years teaching experience. Final selection will involve attendance for interview.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE/DIPLOMA/ MASTER OF EDUCATION (Educational Mentoring)

Applications are invited for this part-time programme. This programme runs over a three year time-frame with on-campus attendance once a month supplemented with readings and on-line discussions. The first year of the study is devoted to the development of the reflective practitioner. In the second year students complete a school-based mentoring pilot research study. This may be brought to a deeper level in the third and final year of the Masters programme. The study focuses on using mentoring for staff development and the development of the whole school as a learning community.

GRADUATE DIPLOMA/MASTER OF EDUCATION (Health Education and Promotion)

Applications are invited for this part-time programme from professionals working in health and social care as well as those working primary, second and third level education. Professionals working in the areas of adult education, initial and further vocational education/training and those working at the interface between school and the community are also invited to apply.

For further details on all programmes, please consult the 'programmes' link on the UL Education and Professional Studies website or contact:

Postgraduate Admissions Office,
Graduate School,
University of Limerick,
Limerick, Ireland

Tel: +353-61-234377,
Fax: +353-61-233287,
Email: postgradadmissions@ul.ie,
Website: www.graduateschool.ul.ie

Frequently asked questions for fixed-term teachers

A number of fixed-term teachers will be out of work when the school year ends this month. ASTIR answers some of their frequently asked questions.



Will I be paid over the summer months?

This depends on the type of fixed-term contract you hold.

A teacher who is employed for the full school year to provide teaching for a specified number of hours during each week holds a pro-rata contract. This contract covers the period until August 31. If you hold this kind of contract, you will be paid each fortnight over the summer, as you would be during school term.

A teacher who is employed to work for more than 150 hours during the school year, but less than a full school year, is classified as a non-casual part-time teacher. If, for example, you are covering for a teacher on maternity leave, you will be paid an hourly rate based on your point on the salary scale and qualification allowances. You will not be paid over the summer. However, the rate of pay you received while working includes 56% holiday pay.

A teacher who is not employed on either of these contracts is classed as a casual part-time teacher. Any such part-time teacher is paid at a fixed hourly rate inclusive of holiday pay of 22%.

Can I claim social welfare for the summer months?

You can claim social welfare for periods when you are unemployed but your payments may be deferred or delayed because of the percentage of holiday pay you received while working. Even if the amount of holiday pay received means that your social welfare payment will be nil, it is advisable to claim benefit regardless in order to maintain your PRSI credits over the summer months.

What social welfare can I claim when unemployed?

If you are aged 18 or over and unemployed, you may be paid either Jobseekers Allowance or Jobseekers Benefit. Both payments are paid by the Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA).

Jobseekers Benefit

Jobseekers Benefit is a weekly payment to people who are out of work and covered by social insurance (PRSI). To qualify for this benefit, a person must

be unemployed for at least three days in six, must suffer a substantial loss of employment, and be available for work and looking for work. Unemployed persons who are classified as casual workers do not have to have suffered a substantial loss of employment.

Jobseekers Allowance

You may receive Jobseekers Allowance if you don't qualify for Jobseekers Benefit or if you have used up your entitlement to Jobseekers Benefit. Jobseekers Allowance is means tested and your means must be below a certain level to qualify. You may get a proportion of your Jobseekers Allowance if your days at work are reduced or if you can only get part-time or casual work.

See www.welfare.ie for more information.

Am I entitled to a job in the next school year?

As is the case with any fixed-term contract, when your period of employment expires your employer is not obliged to offer you further work. If the position you hold remains viable or there are other hours available in your subject, you may have an entitlement to the position. You should discuss the situation with your principal and if in doubt, contact ASTI Head Office.

I have had a number of fixed-term contracts: am I entitled to a CID?

You may be entitled to a contract of indefinite duration (CID) if: you have been employed in the same school on four successive fixed-term contracts; if you have not been covering for a teacher on an approved scheme of leave of absence in the fourth year and that was set out in writing; and, if the position remains viable. See Circular letter 0034/09 for the terms and conditions governing the granting of a CID.

If you believe you are entitled to a CID, confirm with your principal that they intend to offer you one for the next school year. If you are not offered a CID and feel you are entitled to one, contact your ASTI industrial relations representative for advice.

Drumcondra and its Environs by Louis O'Flaherty

Review by Rachel Tubridy



While browsing the shelves of new books in Cabra Library recently, I noticed a handsome volume, *Drumcondra and its Environs*, by Louis O'Flaherty. As I live in Glasnevin and recognised the author's name as that of a past president of the ASTI, I decided to add it to the pile I was borrowing. It is a fascinating book. It has completely changed the way I view a neighbourhood in which I have lived for 30 years and which I thought I knew well. I have discovered graveyards I never knew existed, a temple in the grounds of All Hallows, the oldest church in the locality, and numerous grand houses that are now incorporated into a variety of institutions, and was able to identify sites upon which historic buildings used to stand.

The category 'local history' can suggest folklore and tales of yore from an area. O'Flaherty's interest is different. His is the painstaking street-by-street history of the planning, architecture and building of a wider area than is suggested by the title. The role of the Catholic Church in determining the geography of an area noted for its myriad religious institutions is highlighted in minute detail. Living a stone's throw from Iona Road, I had never realised until reading this book that houses in the area were designed so as not to overlook the occupants of the monastery on St Alphonsus Road.

This carefully researched, well-written, very readable work is an excellent resource for any teacher of history or geography with an interest in promoting the study of local history. It will in particular appeal to teachers and students in the Dublin 9 area. In my opinion it should be acquired immediately by all schools in Dublin 9.

Trips abroad

Oberammergau 2010 includes Vienna, Salzburg and Munich –

September 14-21, departing from Cork Airport. Cost: €1,650. Single room supplement: €200. For further details contact Pat Browne, Tel: 021-429 4783, or Email: pat.browne@email.com.



Killarney Padre Pio Group pilgrimage to Cassino, San Giovanni Rotondo, Assisi and Rome –

from July 23 for eight nights, departing from Dublin Airport. Cost: €1,069pp including tax and charges. For further details contact Michael and Sheila Clifford, Tel: 045-861410/064-663 3712, or Email: michaelclifford@gmail.com.

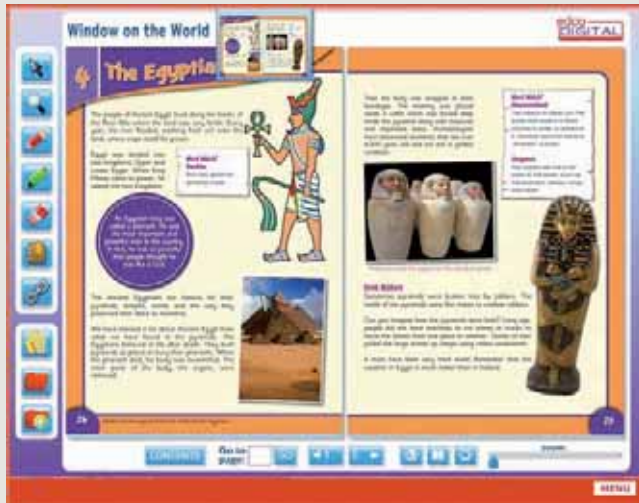
Gardening workshop for the Mayo Branch

Liam Sadler recently provided a very informative and enjoyable workshop on gardening for members of the Mayo Branch, and all those attending were supplied with lots of tips on gardening, as well as with plants and flowers to take home, which Liam generously provided.

RSTA contacts

Cork Branch	Geraldine Murphy	Lioniel, Ashboro	Shanakiel	Cork	021-439 6782
Dublin Branch	Maureen O'Connor	89 Castleknock Elms	Castleknock	Dublin 15	01-822 7597/086-877 5754
Galway Branch	Sheila Conneely	Kinvara West	Kinvara	Co. Galway	091-637206/087-256 3264
Kerry Branch	Ann Cox	The Bungalow, River Side	Tralee	Co. Kerry	066-712 5452
Kildare Branch	Phil Dunning	7 Jiggin's Town Park	Naas	Co. Kildare	086-123 6404
Kilkenny Branch	Kay Sheedy	Kin-Ross	Waterford Road	Kilkenny	056-772 2271/087-245 4380
Limerick Branch	Mary Bourke	10 Ashville	Ballysheedy	Co. Limerick	061-417247
Longford Branch	Martina Kelly	Clonturk		Longford	043-334 7981/086-882 0537
Mayo Branch	Carmel Heneghan	Iona	Shrule	Co. Galway	093-31273
North East Branch	Michael McMahon	Derryolam	Carrickmacross	Co. Monaghan	042-966 1097
Sligo Branch	Maire T Finan	Dun Clíodhna	Strandhill Road	Sligo	071-916 2185
Tipperary Branch	Elizabeth Hayes	Cluain Aogdha	Kilconnell, Fethard	Co. Tipperary	062-61633/086-170 6853
Wexford Branch	Mary Kavanagh	Gobinstown	New Ross	Co. Wexford	086-357 7887
Wicklow Branch	Aveen Kilduff	49 Herbert Park	Bray	Co. Wicklow	01-276 0616/087-664 1466

Online education resource



Recent winner of a Digital Media Award for Best in e-learning, EdcoDigital is an online teacher resource centre, which allows teachers to view Edco textbooks online, and also includes a range of blended learning items for teachers including powerpoints, weblinks, podcasts, digital posters and lesson plans. The website is free to register, and at present, teachers can view 11 second-level titles free of charge.

Survey on workplace bullying

Genevieve T. Murray is undertaking PhD research on teacher-on-teacher workplace bullying in the post-primary sector of the Irish education system. To gain a greater insight into the causes of bullying in the education sector, Genevieve needs school teachers/principals to tell her about their own experiences and invites them to contribute to this research if they are: teachers/principals experiencing bullying or for whom the bullying has stopped; teachers/principals who have had allegations of bullying made against them; or, teachers/principals who have not been subjected to workplace bullying.

Log on to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MKQ3X7D> to complete the survey.

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Barretstown appeal



Barretstown has a new mobile phone recycling campaign for 2010. The campaign runs until September 30 and offers three schools the chance to win a fantastic day out at Barretstown. Visit www.barretstown.org for more information.

Holocaust Education Trust of Ireland

The Holocaust Education Trust of Ireland (HETI) is running three teacher programmes this year:

Irish Seminar to Yad Vashem International School, Israel (July 2010);

Teaching the Holocaust summer course for teachers (August 2010); and,

Learning from the Holocaust study visit to Krakow (October 2010).

For further details contact the Trust office, Tel: 01-669 0593, or Email: info@hetireland.org. See www.hetireland.org for more.

Technology in education volunteers

Camara is recruiting long-term volunteers to work in Africa to strengthen their management team and to build the capabilities of local people. In particular, they are looking for learning officers who, based in Uganda over a two-year period, will assist to develop and put into practice a technology-enhanced learning programme. For more information, log on to www.camara.ie.

Book on child legislation

A new book on Irish child legislation has recently been published. *The Best Interests of the Child* by Eileen McPartland interprets child legislation and examines the implications of legislation for early childhood education and care.

For more information, see www.gillmacmillan.ie.



Book offer

Four Courts Press is offering ASTI members the chance to purchase *Sources for the History of Irish Education, 1780-1922* at a 20% discount. The book by Susan Parkes serves as an introductory guide for students and researchers in the history of Irish education. To avail of the offer contact Four Courts Press directly, Tel: 01-453 4668, or Email: info@fourcourtspress.ie, and quote 'ASTIR10' when placing your order.

Special needs conference



Myspecialneeds.ie is hosting a conference on October 7 in the D4 Hotel, Dublin. The conference will include the first showing of a documentary called *Including Samuel*. Shot over four years, it is a very personal, passionate portrayal that takes a close, sometimes painfully honest look at children with special needs and their families. The filmmaker will speak at the event. See www.myspecialneeds.ie for more information.

The Alternative Turner Prize

Why Violence? The campaign for violence reduction, is again organising a cartoon competition for second-level students.

Entrants are asked to create a cartoon conveying the idea that "Violent behaviour is always unacceptable". The winning entry will receive a prize of €500.

Each school or youth group is encouraged to run its own internal competition, from which the top three entries will be selected locally and then submitted by email for display on www.whyviolence.com in the national contest.

Final adjudication will be by *Irish Times* cartoonist Martyn Turner. The winning cartoon will be circulated to the media for publication, and may also be used in Why Violence? promotional material. The teacher or leader who organises the contest that produces the winning entry will receive a framed original Martyn Turner cartoon.

Entries in black and white, preferably pen, and not exceeding A4, should be emailed to competition@whyviolence.com. Students, teachers or leaders, and school or group names, should be stated on the covering email.

The closing date for submission of artworks is July 1, 2010.

Photography for art students

An online introduction to photography for 16- to 18-year-old students studying art and design or media studies has been developed in consultation with art teachers. The project aims to increase students' critical awareness of how photographic images are used in society and the variety of strategies that photographers use to produce work. The full project is available free online at www.source.ie.

New publication

Education in Ireland provides the results of research and analysis that will contribute to an understanding of the education system and its importance to Ireland's social and economic development. Chapters are written by staff of the UCD School of Education, all experts in the field they write about. For more information or to purchase, see www.gillmacmillan.ie.



Postgraduate Diploma in Spirituality and Leadership in Education

Please contact the course administrator for further information.

Marina Institute of Education,
Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9

Phone: 01 905 77617
Email: arwen.murphy@mia.ie

www.mia.ie

Miltown Institute,
Sandford Road, Miltown, Dublin 6

Phone: 01 277 6340
Email: ugnewell@miltown-institute.ie

www.miltown-institute.ie

Knowledge, values and skills to prepare effective leaders in Catholic Education

Miltown Institute and Marina Institute of Education are pleased to offer a postgraduate programme tailored to the needs of teachers, pastoral care staff, leaders and administrators involved in Catholic Education.

Accredited by the National University of Ireland, the programme is offered in modular format, over approximately eight Friday evening and Saturday sessions in the academic year, commencing Autumn 2010.

Modules include: Faith Leadership; Spirituality; The Catholic Church in Education; Team Leadership; Tutoring and Governance

Certificate/Diploma in Special/Inclusive Education

The Special Education Department of St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra and the Institute of Child Education and Psychology, Europe (ICEP Europe) invite applications to the online Certificate/Diploma in Special/Inclusive Education.

Commencing: September 2010
Closing date for applications - 16th August 2010
Late applications may be accepted

- ★ Open to all qualified teachers (primary and post-primary)
- ★ Ease of access regardless of location
- ★ Daily Support from tutors
- ★ Live Online Classroom Sessions
- ★ 24/7 access to materials for busy professionals

This programme is funded by the Special Education Support Service, Teacher Education Section, DES, under the National Development Plan

For further information & application forms contact Admissions Office, St. Patrick's College on (01) 8842025, email admissions.office@spd.dcu.ie or log onto www.spd.dcu.ie information also available from ICEP Europe at www.icepe.eu

Multicultural Young Peoples Awards

The Integration of African Children in Ireland Network (IACI) is calling for entries for its Multicultural Young People's Awards 2009/2010. The awards recognise the hard work of young people whose dedication and contribution is making strides in integration and cultural awareness initiatives. The deadline for entries is October 1, 2010. Full information including entry forms will be issued to schools in September or you can email iacyouth@gmail.com, or Tel: 086-402 3953 for more information.

Graphic organising in teaching and learning

A resource to advise teachers on working with graphic organisers in teaching and learning has been published by the Second Level Support Service. It is available for download at www.slss.ie.

Smart money

The Financial Regulator, in association with the Money Advice and Budgeting Service, has developed a resource for schools. 'Get smart with your money' helps students to handle money in an effective and responsible way and explores issues such as saving, planning and borrowing. To find out more about the free resource pack, Tel: 01-410 4000, or log on to www.financialregulator.ie.

Show racism the red card



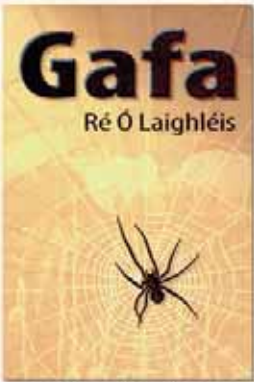
The Red Card Intercultural Summer Camp runs from July 5-10 in Donegal. The mission is to bring young people from different backgrounds together for a week of intercultural learning and fun activity. For more information, visit www.theredcard.ie/camp.

Integrate ICT into your teaching practice

A new website, the 'eTeach Community of Practice', is open to all teachers who would like to find out about different ways that they can use ICT in education, including some tried and tested methods and resources, and many new and innovative ideas and resources. You can join the eteach community of practice today at www.eteachnetwork.eu.

Don Ardteist Ardleibhéal 2010 - 2014

Gafa le Ré Ó Laighléis



ISBN: 0-9532777-5-5
Praghas €10.00

Scéal tranglamach croibhristeach an déagóra Eoin agus a thitim isteach in umar dorcha na handúile agus sa bhfodhomhan gránna dainséarach a ghabhann leis. Agus, chomh tábhachtach céanna le scéal Eoin féin, scéal na dtuismitheoirí: tá saol na máthar, Eithne, ina chior thuathail. Í ar a dicheall glacadh leis go bhfuil a haonmhac faoi ghreim go daingean ag heroin. Ach is measa fós di é nuair a bhuaitear an dara ropadh uirthi - midhilseacht a fir céile. Ní chuirtear fiacail san insint i gcás an scéil richumbachtaigh seo. É scríofa go firinneach fíriciúil lom, ach ardseil agus iogaireacht ann go deireadh.

"Tá ábhar an leabhair seo conspóideach nua-aoiseach agus thar a bheith feiliúnach don aoisghrúpa ... stíl sholéite inchreidte."
An Dr. Gearóid Denvir, Ollamh le Nua-Ghaeilge, NUIG

"Ó Laighléis deftly favours creating a dark side of urban life over sledge-hammering the reader with 'Just Say No' messages. The horrors of heroin addiction are revealed within the story itself and, thankfully, the author avoids any preachy commentary."
Educationmatters, Ireland on Sunday

"It is a riveting story based on every parent's nightmare."
Lorna Siggins, The Irish Times

"His raw and concise writing style peels the layers from a shadowy topic and makes it accessible for both teenagers and their parents."
Samantha Novick, Limerick Leader Weekender


"Ré Ó Laighléis speaks the language of those for whom this will strike a familiar chord. If it makes people stop and think - as it undoubtedly will - it will have achieved more than all the anti-drug promotional campaigns we could ever begin to create."
News Focus, The Mayo News

"Iarracht an-mhacánta é seo ar scríobh faoi cheann de mhórfhadhbanna shochai an lae inniu ... piosa scríbhmeoireachta an-fhiúntach."
Máire Nic Mhaoláin, Moltóir an Oireachtas

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Aithníonn MÓINÍN tacaíocht Fhoras na Gaeilge



A tribute to Sheila Meade RIP (1954-2010)

In the early hours of Saturday, February 20, 2010, Sheila Meade (nee Moloney) passed calmly and peacefully to her eternal reward after a brief illness borne with remarkable courage, dignity, serenity and strength of character. Her passing has left a deep void in the lives of her husband Garry, sons Fergus and Aidan, daughters Oonagh and Deirdre, her relatives, friends and colleagues in St Aloysius' College, Carrigtwohill. We will always remember Sheila as a wonderful mother whose devotion to her family was well recognised by all who knew her. In her own unassuming way, she was so pleased to see her family, for whom she worked so hard, achieve their full potential. Traditional virtues of hard work, honesty, and care for people, especially for those in difficulty or need, were core unshakeable values throughout Sheila's life. She had an extensive knowledge of many different facets of life and her advice was respected and invaluable to her many friends. Sheila had a keen interest in culture, current affairs, travel and photography, which she discussed with all. Academically, Sheila was always to the fore, beginning with exceptional success at second level in St Mary's Mallow, where she excelled at Leaving Cert. level. From there she proceeded to very high standards in English and history in University College Cork. She enjoyed reading and current affairs, which led her to work as librarian in St Aloysius' College, Carrigtwohill. Her love of learning and gentle words of encouragement were passed on to all the students over her 12 years in the College. Sheila was always delighted to provide staff with any library materials they needed. Her gentle smile, calm pleasant demeanour, uplifting positivity and her great efficiency were constantly evident. Sheila taught English and had a special interest in students who found learning difficult. The attention and concern that Sheila showed for her



students was second to none and she took great satisfaction in seeing them succeed in examinations. Sheila placed great importance on active student participation in their learning. Sheila will always be remembered as a very loyal and courteous colleague: nothing was a problem to her and there were many occasions when she helped a colleague in need. Her pleasant, dignified, sociable manner in the workplace was an example to all. Sheila's sudden passing was met with huge sadness and shock by her colleagues in St Aloysius, Carrigtwohill. Throughout the Monday following Sheila's passing student prayer services were held and a book of condolence was signed. On the night of her removal to St Mary's Church, Carrigtwohill, in a very sincere expression of sympathy, a guard of honour of all her work colleagues accompanied Sheila from the College gate to the church, where they were met by a Student Council guard of honour who stood in dignified silence as Sheila's remains were taken into the church. As a tribute to Sheila the College closed on the day of her funeral Mass. The church was packed to capacity to hear of the life of a great mother and teacher. The school choir sang beautifully at the ceremony. As a tribute to Sheila's deep Christian faith and her belief in the presence of the risen Christ a lighted candle was brought to the altar during the offertory of the Mass. It was noted the large number of past pupils and former colleagues in attendance, which was a testament to the high regard in which Sheila was held. A guard of honour of students accompanied Sheila to the cemetery. She will be sadly missed. Certainly the Irish seanfhocal is true when we think of our friend Sheila, *Ní bheidh a leithéid arís ann*. May she rest in eternal peace and happiness.

Solas na bhFlaitheas ar a hAnam Uasal. Leaba i measc na Naomh go raibh aici. Suaimneas síoraí ort go deo a Shíle. Cuimhneoidh ort i gcónaí.

Dónall Ó Murchú

Mary Gilmore

Our colleague Mary Gilmore, whose anniversary occurs at this time, was at the time of her death recently retired from the staff of Scoil Bhride, Tuam, where she was the most senior member of the staff and the deputy principal.

Born Mary Hogan in Co. Tipperary, she was the eldest of a large family whose father was a primary teacher and Mary herself might have followed in his footsteps had singing been one of her many talents! Instead, she attended UCG, as it was then, where she excelled academically, graduating with both a BComm and a BA in 1962. After her HDip in Education, she took up a teaching post in the Mercy, Tuam, where she remained until the end of her career.

She taught many subjects, not only in the business field but also English and, for a time, home economics. She was the staff representative on the first board of management in the school and a committed member of the ASTI. As a member of the board, she displayed an acute intelligence and breadth of knowledge of all aspects of Department policy. She was capable of absorbing vast amounts of technical detail with great ease, and was the person on the staff who was up to date with the latest

circulars emanating from the Department.

Eventually, she was appointed vice-principal, a position she held until her retirement in 2007. Outside of school, Mary was a keen fan of the theatre and it was as a member of the local Tuam Theatre Guild that she met local businessman Tom Gilmore, who she later married. Together they enjoyed travel, theatre, and dining out – Mary herself was an accomplished cook and a very generous hostess in their Moylough home. Above all, she was devoted to Tom and her family of a daughter and three sons and was enjoying the next phase of her life with them and her grandchildren.

Mary had suffered ill health in the last years of her career. She never let it interfere with her work and remained utterly dedicated to Scoil Bhride. Having a career that spanned four decades, she had seen many revolutionary changes in education but remained committed and conscientious to the end.

The pity is that she did not live long to enjoy the fruits of a retirement that she so richly deserved. The school community of St Brigid's remembers her especially at this time.

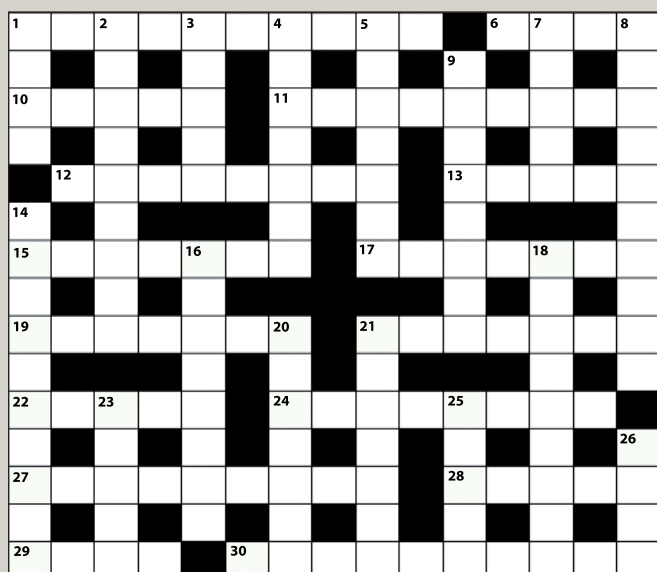


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School

Address

ASTI Branch

Entries to: **Astir Crossword No. 1003, Think Media,
The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.**

To arrive by: **Friday, June 25, 2010.**

CLUES ACROSS

- 1 This is neat in direct contrast (10)
- 6 He was known as the " ... of Avon" (4)
- 10 On her wading bird? (5)
- 11 Ways of escaping difficulties (9)
- 12 32 is this of 4 mathematically speaking! (8)
- 13 See 5 down
- 15 You could play this particularly in Hawaii (7)
- 17 A Greek mountain could be so lumpy (7)
- 19 A garment that covers the head and face of a Muslim woman (7)
- 21 Counts a number of large billed American birds (7)
- 22 Pat & Ed. could be proficient (5)
- 24 Slash a DP to become hasty or careless! (8)
- 27 Proportional (9)
- 28 Detest a prefab horror (5)
- 29 Tire out this ceremonial act (4)
- 30 Reviled, execrated (10)

CLUES DOWN

- 1 Some teachers get hurt (4)
- 2 They can inflict great pain (9)
- 3 Either way a belief or doctrine (5)
- 4 An oval shape (7)
- 5 down, 14 down, 13 across, 18 down: Tony's sham tribute - "Ciao, Ciao, Emperor! (1,4,2,4,6,3,2,6,3)
- 7 Try all other ways to distribute (5)
- 8 Deprive, divest, strip (10)
- 9 Conventional expression of gratitude (5,3)
- 14 See 5 down
- 16 I meet sin in deep-seated hatreds (8)
- 18 See 5 down
- 20 Small falcon (7)
- 21 Canters into dazed or stunned states (7)
- 23 "When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then and not till then, let my epitaph be written" he wrote (5)
- 25 "Because I could not stop for ... ,
He kindly stopped for me"
(Emily Dickinson) (5)
- 26 He is no 6 across! (4)

Solution to ASTIR crossword No. 1002

Across

1. ipod lover
9. Galway
10. Unlikely
11. Amulet
12. Scheme
14. Idea
15. Norma
16. School
18. Inroads
21. Aphasia
24. Radian
26. I hate
30. Ream
31. Thames
32. Wicked
33. Aviation
34. Vulcan
35. Liam Brady

Down

2. Panics
3. Driven
4. Opener
5. Elysian
6. Tarmac
7. Swallows
8. Ayatollah
11. Aesop
13. Mona
17. Microwave
19. Radicals
20. Dined
22. Hath
23. Timpani
25. Arenas
27. Atrium
28. Easter
29. Devoid

Congratulations to the winner of Crossword No. 1002:

Tracy Joy, Ursuline College, Finisklin, Sligo, Sligo Branch member.

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