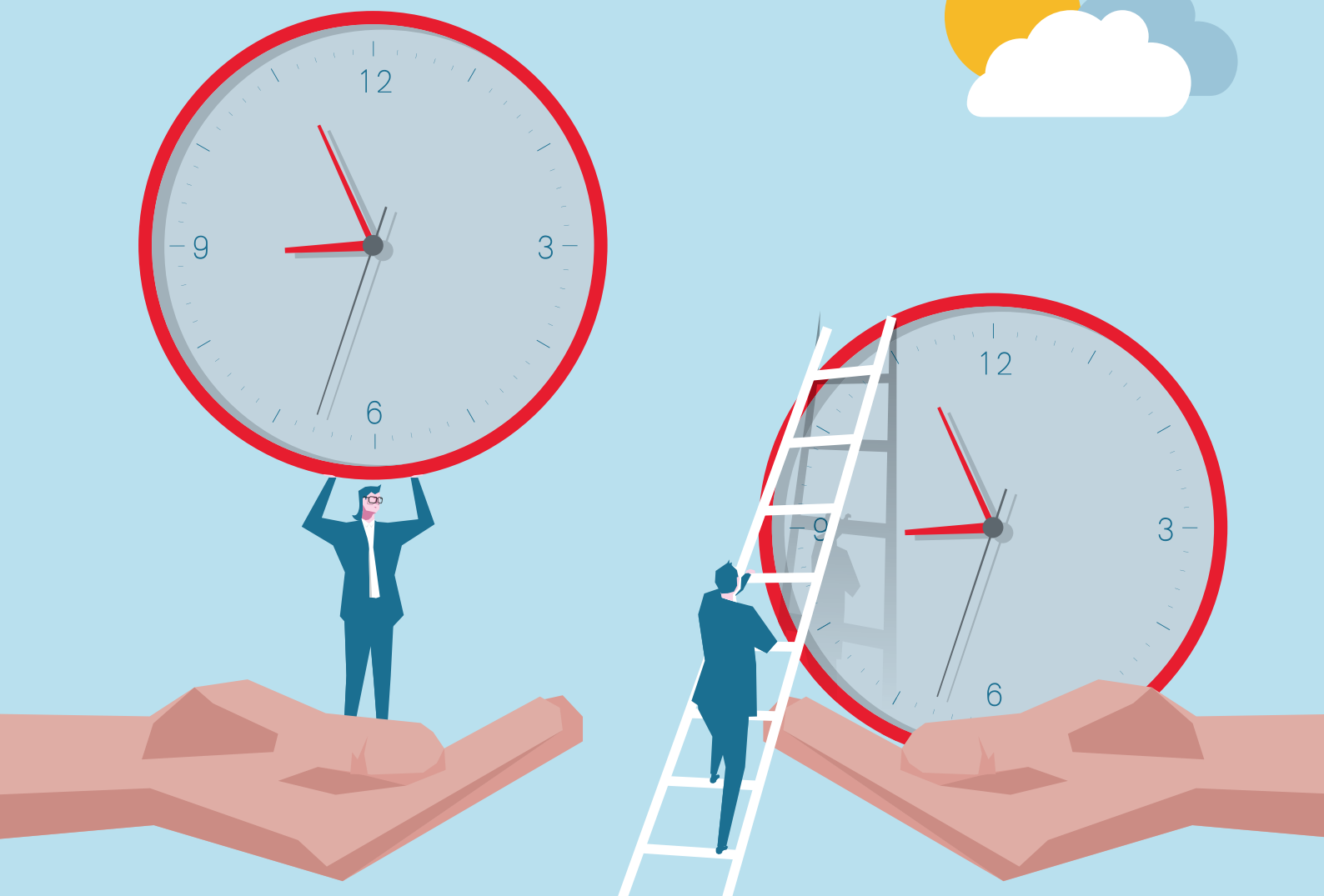


# ASTIR

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland

## Breakthrough on casualisation: The end of the hours culture?



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# Contents

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## ASTIR

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16



14



26



6



22



24

18

4	From the President's desk
	<i>Campaign on JC – we need to remain strong</i>
4	General Secretary's update
	<i>Significant headway on casualisation</i>
5	ASTI news
6	News
9	ASTI in the media
	<i>Protecting education</i>
10	News features
	<i>Permanency deal to benefit thousands 10</i>
	<i>Junior Cycle campaign continues 12</i>

14	Features
	<i>Is there light at the end of the tunnel? 14</i>
	<i>Making it all add up 16</i>
	<i>English work, Irish heart 18</i>
	<i>Taking a Global view 22</i>
	<i>Education makes a difference 24</i>
	<i>How are posts of responsibility appointed? 26</i>
	<i>Standing up for colleagues 28</i>
30	Book review
	<i>Seven Myths About Education</i>
31	FAQs
	<i>A question of leave</i>
32	Noticeboard
33	RSTA news
34	Crossword

Letters, comments and articles are welcome

All submissions will be considered by the ASTIR Editorial Board. Email [astir@astie.ie](mailto:astir@astie.ie).

## Campaign on JC – we need to remain strong

As this *ASTIR* goes to print talks are taking place between the ASTI, TUI and officials from the Department of Education and Skills on the Framework for Junior Cycle. The talks follow a resounding “Yes” to the extension of industrial action in opposition to the Framework. In a ballot of ASTI members in October, 84% voted in favour of extending industrial action, up to and including a day or more of strike action.

The talks also follow a year of intense campaigning to highlight the aspects of the Framework for Junior Cycle that are of most concern to teachers. These are: the abolition of an independent State-certified exam at the end of the Junior Cycle; and, the introduction of school-based assessment with teachers assessing and grading their own students.

Following the appointment of Jan O’Sullivan as Minister for Education and Skills in July, the ASTI met the Minister and outlined, in no uncertain terms, ASTI members’ key objections to the Framework. These objections were voiced again and again by ASTI members when I visited schools in the run up to the ballot. Given the result of the ballot, it must be clear to the Minister that these are the deeply and widely held views of the second-level teaching profession.

While the resounding “Yes” in the October ballot has no doubt strengthened the ASTI’s position as it participates in the current talks process, I expect these talks to be extremely difficult. It is clear that there are significant differences between the two sides and to date there has been no indication of any commitment to address teachers’ key concerns. This is despite the fact that many parents share these concerns, as evidenced in a Millward Brown poll published in the *Irish Independent* in May. Another Millward Brown survey, commissioned by the ASTI and published in April, found that 89% of second-level schools say that they have little to no capacity to implement the Framework. Throughout the year, teachers have remained united on the issue of the Framework for Junior Cycle. Your commitment to this issue, your involvement in our consultation, and in our petition to the Minister, your attendance at meetings and at the ASTI/TUI lunchtime protest, and your participation in ballots, have enabled us to further our campaign. We are asking that you maintain this solidarity over the coming weeks.

Education is a human endeavour driven by teachers. As teachers we care deeply about our students. We want them to succeed. We want the best educational experience possible for them. We see our role as advocates for our students. I believe that a solution exists, which meets the need for reform of the Junior Cycle, but which protects education standards, which is student centred, and which does not undermine the vital role of teachers.



**Philip Irwin**  
ASTI President

## Significant headway on casualisation

For many years the ASTI has been highlighting the plight of fixed-term/part-time teachers. Currently, 35% of second-level teachers are without job security and many of these teachers go from school to school, not knowing if they will have a job next week, next term or next year.

We have sought to give these teachers a voice. We have engaged with them about their own experiences. We have highlighted the impact of teacher casualisation as more and more young teachers emigrate, leave the profession or become increasingly demoralised. We have continuously and consistently argued for a system to help fixed-term/part-time teachers and substitute teachers to transfer from precarious to secure teaching contracts. The ASTI has taken these concerns to successive education ministers, to TDs and Senators, to the Department, the Teachers’ Conciliation Council, the Croke Park and Haddington Road negotiations, and the media. We have held conferences and seminars, and published articles.

In October, the ASTI and TUI made significant headway on the issue of casualisation. The qualification period for transferring from fixed-term employment to a contract of indefinite duration will be reduced to two years for teachers in September 2015. The waiting time for ‘top-up’ CID hours has also been reduced to one year. This compares to a four-year qualifying period for other professions. This new entitlement will extend to teachers covering career breaks and secondment, once certain conditions have been met. While this breakthrough will not eliminate the need for fixed-term and part-time contracts, it will offer second-level teachers a viable career entry path. It will improve the status of recently qualified teachers in schools and will ultimately benefit the profession as a whole.

### Junior Cycle talks

ASTI members have voted overwhelmingly (84%) to extend the union’s industrial action, to include strike action, over plans by the Minister for Education and Skills to implement the Framework for Junior Cycle. Talks between the teacher unions and the Department are taking place. This is a most difficult and challenging time for the ASTI. We appreciate your commitment and support as we continue to seek a resolution to this matter.

### Back to education cuts

As a result of the cut to the pupil–teacher ratio in 2009 and the abolition of the ex-quota guidance counsellor allocation in 2012, Ireland has the seventh worst pupil–teacher ratio at second level of 31 OECD countries. It is reported that Budget 2015 will deliver additional second-level teachers, but these teachers are being appointed to keep pace with increased enrolment. Now that the Government is talking about the end of austerity, the ASTI insists that the worst of the education cuts must be reversed.



**Pat King**  
ASTI General Secretary



## ASTI meets with Minister



Representatives from the ASTI met with the Minister for Education and Skills Jan O'Sullivan and officials from the Department of Education and Skills on September 9 to discuss the key issues affecting second-level teachers. Issues raised by the ASTI delegation included the high level of second-level teachers on part-time or fixed-term contracts, the ongoing effects of cutbacks on staffing and resources,

and the increasing workload demands on teachers.

The ASTI also brought up issues around the Haddington Road Agreement and FEMPI, including supervision and substitution. Senior Cycle curricular issues were also raised, as were the high number of initiatives introduced in schools during a time of cutbacks.

As a matter of priority, the ASTI requested that the moratorium on appointment to posts of responsibility at both special duties teacher and assistant principal levels be lifted with immediate effect. The ASTI also made it clear that in the event that any relevant party wishes to discuss alternatives to the current system of posts of responsibility in the first instance, there must be appropriate engagement through the customary industrial relations process.

The Minister responded that she shared the ASTI's concerns about the number of fixed-term and part-time teachers at second level and the effect of the moratorium on posts of responsibility. She also recognised how cutbacks have hurt teachers and schools, and that this has been an extremely difficult period for teachers. The Minister confirmed that FEMPI is emergency legislation and that the Minister for Public Expenditure, Brendan Howlin TD, recently stated that the legislation is to be 'rolled back'.

Separate meetings have taken place in relation to the Junior Cycle. See page 12 for further information.

## New ASTIR jargon decoder!

Confused by changing terminology? Lost in a fog of jargon? *ASTIR* has the answer with a handy regular jargon decoder. You'll never be stuck for the explanation of an acronym again!

You'll find it in this issue on page 17.

## Convention 2015

ASTI branches will soon be selecting delegates to attend ASTI Convention. Each year up to 500 ASTI members gather at Convention to discuss a wide range of topics relating to teaching and education, and to make important decisions about ASTI policy.

ASTI Convention takes place each year during the Easter break. This year Convention runs from Tuesday, April 7, to Thursday, April 9, 2015, and will take place in the Killarney Convention Centre.

Convention devotes three days to discussing the matters of concern to second-level teachers. Through debate and reports, delegates are brought up to date on the most recent developments in education and industrial relations. Special rates on accommodation are available for delegates at the Gleneagle hotel.

More information is available on [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

## Information leaflet on supervision and substitution

The ASTI has produced an information leaflet outlining the operation of the supervision and substitution scheme with effect from the 2014/2015 school year. Following a commitment given as part of the Haddington Road talks, the ASTI/TUI, management bodies and the Department have agreed to new procedures for the drafting of the supervision and substitution rosters. The leaflet outlines the details of the new arrangements, which include

early provision to teachers of their class timetables, an option for teachers to identify their preferences for the use of their 'non-teaching periods' for substitution in sequential order, and the publication of the completed roster for staff information. Job-sharing or part-time teachers will be able to 'block off' periods to which they cannot be assigned for substitution. Teachers will also be permitted to swap rostered periods.

The Supervision and Substitution leaflet is available in the Conditions of Work section at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).






**Professional Certificate/Diploma in Education (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 for the online Professional Certificate/Diploma in Education (Special/Inclusive Education)

**Commencing: January 2015**

**Deadline for Applications: 12th December 2014.**

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- ★ Option to take individual modules
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This programme was 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: [courseinfo@spd.dcu.ie](mailto:courseinfo@spd.dcu.ie) or log on to [www.spd.dcu.ie](http://www.spd.dcu.ie)**  
**Information also available from ICEP Europe on (01) 6510618**  
**Email: [info@icepe.eu](mailto:info@icepe.eu) or log on to [www.icepe.eu](http://www.icepe.eu)**

## Féilte 2014 celebrates teachers



Pictured at the recent Féilte 2014 were (from left): ASTI members Anna Finlay; Teresa Walsh; and, Miriam Cooney from Balla Secondary School, Co. Mayo, with the Balla Archaeological Remote Sensing Project



From left: Grainne Mulcahy and Geraldine Doran from Gorey Community School, Co. Wexford, and their exhibition, The Holocaust Memorial Exhibition.

## Information leaflet for new sick leave arrangements

An information leaflet for teachers on the new sick leave arrangements, which came into effect on September 1, 2014, is now available from the ASTI website. The changes to sick leave include the new arrangements for leave entitlements regarding certified sick leave. All teachers should familiarise themselves with these new arrangements. Teachers who wish to work out how much sick leave they have remaining should ask their school for their four-year record of sick leave, which shows how many days they have used in a rolling four-year period. The new ASTI sick leave information leaflet is available in the Leave section at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

## Retirement seminars

The ASTI is providing retirement information evenings for members. If you intend to retire at the end of (or during) the school year 2014/2015, you should attend an information evening, which will be held between 4.00pm and 7.00pm in venues around the country. For more information, visit [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

## Launch of ICTU Man Up campaign

The 2014 Man Up Campaign highlights the positive role that men can play in ending domestic violence by showing pride and leadership, challenging abuse and violence, and supporting women and children.

Congress General Secretary David Begg spoke at the launch and shared the results of research done by the Women's Committees of the Trade Union Centres in the UK and on the island of Ireland on the issue of violence against women and the workplace.

The key findings of the research showed the impact of domestic violence on women's careers. For example, the abusive partner may stop them from going to work or follow them to continue the abuse in the workplace.

The research also found that women rarely tell their union or their colleagues when they are experiencing domestic abuse, and that they often feel little is done about it if they do tell someone.

Guidelines for assisting women in the workplace who are experiencing domestic violence are available at

[http://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/ictu\\_vaw\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/ictu_vaw_guidelines.pdf).

## This issue in numbers...

30

### NUMBER OF YEARS THE ASTI

Credit Union has been providing financial services to members.

(P.15)

14

### NUMBER OF SPECIFIC

recommendations included in the Maths in Practice report.

(P.17)

## Head Space for students

A new guide to mental health and services for second-level students, *Head Space*, has been launched by the IMPACT trade union. The booklet was initially suggested by Mary Keating, who is a special needs assistant in Cabinteely Community School in Dublin.

*Head Space* aims to provide essential information on a wide range of mental health issues, including information on support services.

Mary Keating said: "Young people need to know where the services are, and that's what the booklet is all about".

Moira Leydon, ASTI Assistant General Secretary, praised the publication and said it was vital to be able to put a name on some of the issues and challenges facing young people: "When you can put a name on something you're feeling, that's the start of addressing any problems, and that really is a strength of this publication".

The booklet will be distributed in second-level schools through the Youth Connect initiative of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU). ICTU Assistant General Secretary Sally Anne Kinahan said she hoped that the booklet would continue to reduce any stigma around mental illness: "It's a great opportunity to break through any stigma and make sure that the information is available to young people".

For more information or to download the *Head Space* booklet, visit [www.impact.ie](http://www.impact.ie).



## Autism guides published



The website for people with autism, AsIAm.ie, has published a series of back to school survival guides for students with autism, their families and teachers.

The *School Handbook for Teachers* helps teachers to support their students with autism, in order to ensure that they can deal successfully with the isolation, anxiety and sometimes bullying that can accompany their time in school.

With the right approach, people with autism can thrive in school.

However, concentration, school structure, socialising and communicating are challenging aspects of education for those with autism. A new school year therefore brings change and upheaval, which many people with autism find difficult to cope with.

Former President of the ASTI Sally Maguire spoke of the challenge for teachers supporting people with autism with limited training in the area. "Most teachers in mainstream schools have received no training in the challenges of students with autism and therefore do not know how best to support them. This is particularly difficult in large classes, which may also include students of mixed academic abilities, students with other special educational needs and some for whom English is not their first language."

Adam Harris, Founder-CEO of AsIAm, and a young person with Asperger's syndrome, said: "We hope this schools programme will make everyone involved aware of the practical day-to-day challenges people with autism face in school. We want to start a discussion between parents, teachers and students on how we can build a more inclusive and supportive environment for those on the autism spectrum".

The handbooks for students, teachers and parents can be downloaded from AsIAm.ie – <http://www.asiam.ie/school-handbooks-2>.

## Education International Gaza

The ASTI recently made a donation of €5,000 to the General Union of Palestinian Teachers (GUPT), which is providing assistance to Gazan teachers and their families who were victims of the conflict in Gaza this summer. Approximately 30 teachers lost their lives due to the conflict. The ASTI finds it unacceptable that schools were hit in the warfare between Hamas and the Israeli Defence Forces. We advocate for schools as safe havens in all conflict zones of the world and strongly reject educational institutions being targeted or used for military purposes. We urge the education unions of Israel and Palestine to demand that their governments show respect for human life on either side of the border to ensure in particular the safety and protection of children.

**5-10%**

**PERCENTAGE OF TEACHING**  
graduates estimated to emigrate  
to the UK annually, according to  
HEA estimates.

(P.20)

**93%**

**SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOL**  
completion rate in Ireland as  
compared to an OECD average of  
84%, according to Education at a  
Glance 2014.

(P.25)



## Pumped Schools for heart health



Nick Sheridan, presenter of RTÉ news2day, Fiona Coghlan, PE teacher and Captain of the Ireland team, Women's Rugby World Cup 2014, and Paddy Barnes, Olympic medallist, with An Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD, at the launch of the Pumped Schools' Video Awards, supported by Bayer in partnership with the Irish Heart Foundation and the Federation of Irish Sport. The awards seek to encourage secondary school students up to 16 years of age to produce 90-second movies on a heart health theme. With a total prize fund of €10,000, the winner of each of three categories will scoop €3,000 for their school's sports department. More information on how to enter the awards can be found at [www.pumped.ie](http://www.pumped.ie).

## Schools encourage students to develop their tech talents

Students, parents and teachers in St Munchin's College can get the latest information on school life sent directly to their smartphones. Thanks to sixth year student David Wallace and Deputy Principal Brian O'Donoghue, the Limerick school now has its own app.

David first developed the app in Transition Year and recently upgraded it to enable push notifications so that parents and students can get the latest news as it's issued. Mr O'Donoghue is hoping that this will lead to cost savings for the College; instead of sending notes or text messages, staff will soon be able to simply update the 'latest news' section of the app and users will receive an instant notification to their smartphone. Technology is integrated into school life in St Munchin's, where Mr O'Donoghue is committed to preparing students for an increasingly digital world. As well as the app, St Munchin's College has a strong online presence, including active profiles on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The school also makes the most of online learning tools such as Edmodo and Moodle.

Rather than using a professional company to build the app, Mr O'Donoghue hired David to complete the project, as he puts great value on student involvement in the school community. Although he had recently created his first computer game, David had never developed an app before. However, after a few days' research he felt confident that he was up to the task and agreed to take on the job. He then collaborated with school staff to determine what they wanted from the app.

The result is a useful tool for students, parents and staff. Mr O'Donoghue said that most students have downloaded the app, which includes information on the school's latest news, timetables, school policies and extra-curricular activities.

The St Munchin's College app is available to download for both Apple and Android devices now.

## Donal Walsh Schools Marathon Challenge



Back row (from left): David Stanton TD; Derbhla Burke, Crystal Swing; Paddy Leahy, Tom Savage, and Willie McCann, Midleton Monday Night Club; Mary Burke, Crystal Swing; and, John O'Donnell and Shirley Garde, Midleton Monday Night Club; Front row (from left): Alexander O'Shea, Marathon Fireman World Record Holder; Derek Burke, Crystal Swing; and, Cork County Councillor Pat Buckley. Also present on the day but not pictured: Fionnbar Walsh.

The launch of the Donal Walsh #LiveLife Schools Marathon Challenge took place in St Colman's Community College, Midleton, in September. In February, a team of Transition Year students from St Colman's ran 165 laps of the school corridors to complete the full 26.2 miles. Now they're challenging every school in the country to hold a marathon to match or better their time of 3hrs 53mins. Marathons can be held inside or outside the school and a maximum of 42 students per team is allowed (each running 1km). Once your school has completed the marathon, you can nominate another school, and the winners will receive a trophy. It is suggested that each team member would contribute €2. The teacher can then send their money directly to the Donal Walsh #LiveLife Foundation. Entries are now open and will be accepted until May 10, 2015. For more information see the Donal Walsh Schools Marathon Facebook page – <https://m.facebook.com/profile.php?id=861670053854026>.

## Student teacher network

Did you know that student teachers can avail of ASTI membership completely free of charge? Student teachers



can now join the ASTI Student Teacher Network, which gives student teachers key services and benefits that come with being an ASTI member – and more.

The ASTI Student Teacher Network offers tailored services for student teachers, such as a dedicated Student Teacher Network section on the ASTI website – [www.asti.ie/asti-membership/student-teacher-network/](http://www.asti.ie/asti-membership/student-teacher-network/) – for news and events for student members, advice for teaching practice, job hunting and induction, and important career information.

Download a Student Teacher Network application form from [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie) or contact [membership@asti.ie](mailto:membership@asti.ie) for more information about student membership.



# Protecting education

The ASTI's media presence has served to emphasise the union's commitment to education and the status of teachers.



## Junior Cycle

"We now have a clear message for the Minister: teachers are not prepared to implement proposals which they believe are educationally unsound. It is vital that the Minister engages with the teacher unions in a way that ensures teachers' concerns are heard and addressed."  
**ASTI General Secretary Pat King, *Irish Times*, October 8**

"It's important to make the point, we don't have any principled objection to continuous assessment or different assessment points, although we would want to be involved in negotiations as to how that would work, but we have no principled objection to it provided that those other assessment points are externally assessed by the State Examinations Commission or an equivalent body."

**Diarmaid de Paor, Deputy General Secretary, Newstalk Lunchtime, October 16**

"Well we have a mandate to go on strike and obviously the most important thing is that the Minister and the teachers' unions will sit down to solve the stalemate which has emerged around the Junior Cert. I think it's a very clear signal of the sense of dissatisfaction and discontent and concern of teachers that they have voted for industrial action up to and including strike action."

**Moirá Leydon, ASTI Assistant General Secretary, The Right Hook, Newstalk, October 16**

"Education minister Jan O'Sullivan and the second-level teacher unions have agreed a talks process, under an independent chairperson, aimed at finding a resolution to the long-running row. Dr Pauric Travers, former President of St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, will chair the negotiations, which are expected to continue for a number of weeks. The breakthrough came at a meeting yesterday between the Minister, senior officials and representatives of Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI) and Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI). Both sides described the meeting as 'constructive'."  
***Irish Independent*, October 23**

"Ní theastaíonn ó 84% go mbeadh deireadh leis an Teastas Stáit agus go mbeimis ag déanamh measunú ar ár ndaltaí féin. Conas is féidir linn deimhin a dhéanamh de gurb ionann an tuairisc scoile ó scoil amháin agus an tuairisc scoile ó scoil eile?"

**Máire G. Ní Chiarba, ASTI Vice-President, Agallamh Beo ar 'Adhmhaidin', RTÉ**

## World Teacher's Day

"This is a simple reminder of the quality of what we already enjoy in large measure; a reminder of the dangers of taking it for granted and an exhortation to all of us to see a world-class education system as an entitlement, not an aspiration."

**Letter from Philip Irwin, ASTI President, Pat King, ASTI General Secretary, and other teacher union leaders**

## Budget 2015

"Maidir leis na postanna nua-fhógraíthe sa bhuiséad, níl said ach ag coiméad suas leis an bhfás sa daonra.

"Nuair a smaoiníonn tú ar an damáiste atá déanta i gcursaí oideachais le roinnt blianta anuas leis na ciorraithe ar fad, ní dóigh liom go bhfuil an buiséad dearfach."

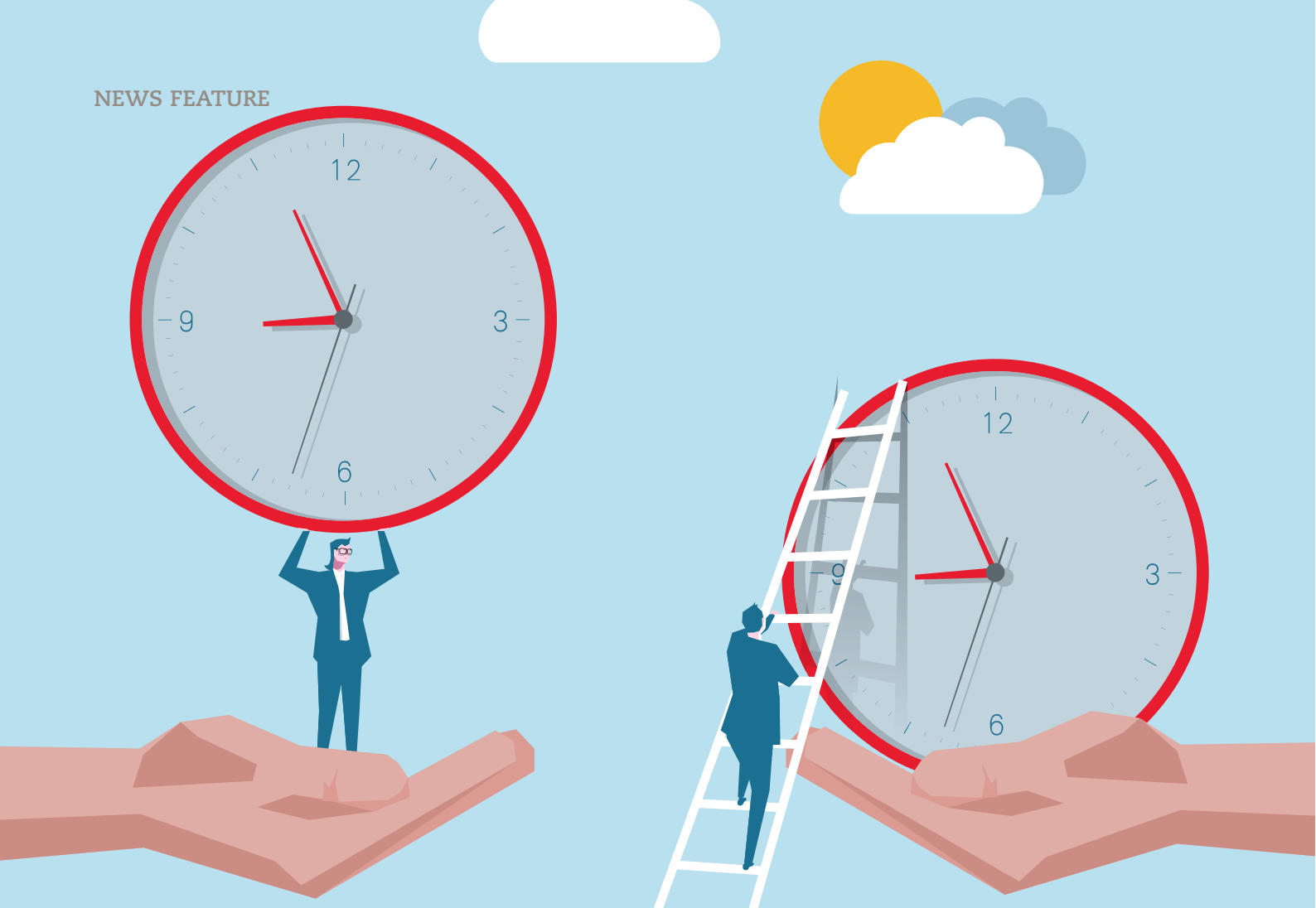
**Máire Ní Chiarba on TG4, ASTI Vice-President, agallamh ar TG4 ar chlár speisialta faoin mbuiséad**

"Previously announced cuts, such as the reduced funding to schools and the moratorium on posts of responsibility, will be implemented again next year and will make day-to-day life even more difficult for school communities."

**ASTI President Philip Irwin, *Irish Examiner*, October 15**

"I'm also being charged 5.5% [2013 cut on public sector workers] and this was brought in as an emergency legislation measure. According to the Minister, we're out of the era now so why am I still paying 5.5%? Why am I still paying 7.5% pension levy?"

**Rosabelle Crampton, job-sharing teacher and ASTI Member, on *Primetime*, RTÉ, October 14**



# Permanency deal to benefit thousands

From September 2015 temporary teachers will be eligible for CIDs after two years. ASTIR outlines the new permanency deal.

A major breakthrough has been secured by the second-level teacher unions – the ASTI and TUI – which will provide security to temporary/part-time teachers after just two years of teaching. Approximately 50% of second-level teachers under 35 – and one-third of all second-level teachers – are currently in temporary/part-time employment, applying for fragments of jobs with no guarantee of being retained from year to year.

Both unions have consistently and explicitly demanded that this crisis of casualisation be addressed and, as a result of these efforts, the qualification period for offer of a contract of indefinite duration (CID) was reduced from four years to three years for teachers in 2013. Effectively, a CID allows teachers to hold their hours on a permanent basis.

## 2014 permanency deal

Under the Haddington Road Agreement, an expert group was asked to

look at the situation with regard to casualisation in the second-level teaching sector, because the ASTI and TUI said that the situation was unacceptable. The new permanency deal – announced in September 2014 – means that (subject to certain conditions) from September 2015 teachers only have to complete two years of unbroken employment in a school to qualify for a CID.

## Key points

- from September 2015 second-level teachers will be able to qualify for a CID after just two years of teaching (subject to certain conditions);
- this is far better than the legal requirement of four years for fixed-term employees;
- teachers with a CID have the same job security as other permanent teachers; and,
- from September 2015, teachers employed on career break or

secondment cover will be able to qualify for permanency after two years (subject to certain conditions).

- If you have a part-time CID and you obtain additional hours, you will be eligible for an enhanced CID, which includes these hours, after one year (subject to certain conditions – see panel).

### Frequently asked questions

The ASTI recently ran a series of information meetings on the new permanency deal. Here are the replies to some of the most frequently asked questions by temporary/part-time teachers who attended those meetings. For more FAQs, visit the Temporary/Part-time Teachers' Section of the ASTI website – [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

#### What is a CID?

A CID gives a teacher the same rights as other permanent teachers. The only differences are that the salary is based on the number of hours of teaching (which can be less than full hours) and the awarding of a contract is normally the result of the teacher acquiring the requisite amount of teaching service (two years from 2015) in a sustainable teaching post. Some 88% of CID holders are on full hours. For many teachers, CIDs provide job and income security, and a viable career path. The ASTI has helped thousands of ASTI members to achieve CIDs in recent years. An independent adjudication process negotiated by the teacher unions allows teachers to appeal a school/Department decision not to give them a CID in a low-key and informal setting. ASTI industrial relations officials are here to assist members through the adjudication process. A significant number of CIDs have been awarded by the adjudicator to date.

#### I am a temporary teacher. What does this deal mean for me?

If you are currently in your first year of employment and your job is still viable in September 2015, the job will be re-advertised and a new recruitment process will be undertaken to fill the post for the second year. Effectively, for the teacher who has completed the first year, the interview for year two is technically the interview for a CID in year three (subject to the criteria for awarding of a CID).

If you are currently in your second year of employment and you have been given hours for the forthcoming school year and there are no objective grounds in your contract, then you are almost certainly entitled to a CID in September 2015.

If you are currently in your third year, you will have to wait until September 2015. In September 2015 you should receive your CID (subject to the criteria for awarding of a CID).

#### What are objective grounds?

Objective grounds, if they exist, will be stated in your contract. They are the reason why you are being employed on a temporary contract, rather than a permanent contract. The ongoing viability of the job may be used as an objective ground for not awarding a CID. However, this must also be stated in your contract. So, for example, if you are replacing someone who is on maternity leave, the school has an objective ground to give you a contract that covers the duration of the maternity leave. The objective ground is that the teacher on maternity leave will be returning to the position after the maternity leave ends. Objective grounds mean that there are no grounds for awarding a CID.

From September 2015, career break and secondment will no longer be objective grounds for not giving a CID. So if you have been covering for a teacher on career break for two years, you may be eligible for a CID (subject to the criteria for awarding of a CID). You may, however, be redeployed to another school (subject to criteria for redeployment), but you will retain your CID status.

#### When do I apply for a CID?

If you think you should be getting a CID next September, you should ask your principal in January or February 2015 about their plans for you for next year. If you think you are entitled to a CID in the 2015 school year and your principal says you are not, ring the ASTI as soon as possible for advice. There is a four-week window from the date of refusal of a CID to the cut-off date for lodging an appeal with the adjudicator. Don't hesitate to ring the ASTI and get the ball rolling.

#### If some of my hours this year are maternity leave hours, and some are resource hours, will my CID be for the number of resource hours only?

Your CID will be based on the total number of hours you have the year before you are awarded the CID. The source of those hours does not matter. If you have 11 hours' maternity leave this year, and 11 hours' resource teaching, and you are entitled to a CID in September 2015, that CID should be for 22 hours. If it is for any less, contact the ASTI immediately.

## Conditions for a CID

To be eligible for a CID, a teacher must satisfy the following conditions:

1. The teacher must be a qualified second-level teacher currently registered with the Teaching Council.
2. The teacher must have in excess of three years' continuous teaching service in the same school in a Department-paid position. **From September 2015, the teacher must have in excess of two years' continuous teaching service in the same school in a Department-paid position.**
3. There must be no objective ground/s in writing, which exclude the teacher from being awarded a CID.

#### Objective grounds

An objective ground is a valid and genuine reason why a teaching position is temporary rather than permanent. Objective grounds can include: maternity leave; long-term sick leave; career break;\* or, secondment\*. Where there is a valid and genuine reason for employing a teacher on a fixed-term/temporary contract, e.g., the teacher is covering for another teacher on maternity leave for a specified period, then there is an objective ground for not awarding a permanent contract or CID. Fixed-term contracts should include a statement as to what the objective ground/s is/are.

\*From September 2015, career breaks and secondments can no longer be used as objective grounds for not awarding a CID after more than two years.



# Junior Cycle campaign continues

The Junior Cycle has remained the big issue for the ASTI and its members throughout 2014. *ASTIR* takes a look at key actions and where we go from here.

## Junior Cycle timeline

**January 2014:** Representatives of the ASTI and TUI attend a working group meeting on Junior Cycle reform. The working group fails to address the key concerns of the teacher unions.

**January 2014:** ASTI Central Executive Council votes to ballot members on industrial action in opposition to the Framework for Junior Cycle.

**February 2014:** The ASTI and TUI announce details of their ballots on industrial action in opposition to the Framework for Junior Cycle.

**March 2014:** Up to 27,000 second-level teachers participate in a joint lunchtime protest to highlight their objections to the Framework for Junior Cycle.

**March 2014:** An information meeting for parents in Galway is addressed by ASTI and TUI representatives. The meeting is promoted through newspaper and radio advertising, press material, and an information flier sent to all primary and second-level school parents' associations.

**March 2014:** The ASTI and TUI issue a flier to primary school parents' associations nationwide explaining teachers' concerns about the Framework for Junior Cycle.

**March 2014:** The ASTI and TUI launch a website for parents explaining teachers' concerns about the Framework for Junior Cycle.

**March 2014:** Advertisements are placed in national newspapers explaining teachers' concerns about the Framework for Junior Cycle.

**March 2014:** In separate ballots, members of the ASTI and TUI vote by 88% to 12% in favour of industrial action in opposition to the Framework for Junior Cycle.

**March 2014:** The ASTI and TUI issue a common directive to their members on non co-operation with the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle.

"We expect these talks to be extremely difficult. To date we have not been given any commitment that our key concerns will be addressed." Read the ASTI President's message on page 4.

**April 2014:** The ASTI issues a survey conducted by Millward Brown on the capacity of schools to implement the Framework for Junior Cycle specification. Some 81% of schools say that they have little to no capacity to implement the Framework.

**April 2014:** The ASTI issues a survey on the Framework for Junior Cycle CPD provided to teachers of English ahead of the implementation of the English specification. A total of 47% of those surveyed say the training did not increase their confidence to teach the specification.

**April 2014:** ASTI Convention 2014 is used to highlight teachers' key concerns about the Framework for Junior Cycle.

**April 2014:** Addressing Convention 2014 the then Minister for Education and Skills Ruairí Quinn says: "We are almost unique in retaining a high-stakes terminal exam at the end of Junior Cycle. And we know it doesn't work. That, plainly speaking, is why I made the decision to introduce the JCSA [Junior Cycle Student Award]."

**May 2014:** The ASTI presents the signatures of almost 10,000 ASTI members to the then Minister for Education and Skills Ruairí Quinn. The petition calls on the Minister to put students at the centre of Junior Cycle reform and to abandon his proposal that teachers assess their own students at Junior Cycle level.

**May 2014:** The *Irish Independent* publishes a poll, which finds that the majority of parents back the ASTI's position that teachers should not assess their own students at Junior Cycle level.

**June 2014:** As over 60,000 students begin their Junior Cert written exams, the ASTI President issues a "good luck" message.

**July 2014:** Ruairí Quinn resigns as Minister for Education and Skills.

**July 2014:** Jan O'Sullivan is appointed as the new Minister for Education and Skills.

**September 2014:** The ASTI re-issues its directive to members on non co-operation with the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle.

**September 2014:** ASTI and TUI representatives meet with the newly appointed Minister for Education and Skills Jan O'Sullivan TD to communicate second-level teachers' objections to the Framework for Junior Cycle. Both sides agree to further meetings after the conclusion of the ASTI ballot.

**September 2014:** The ASTI president congratulates more than 60,000 students receiving their Junior Cert results: "This is an important milestone for students and their families."

**October 2014:** ASTI members vote overwhelmingly in favour of extending industrial action over Junior Cycle reform (84% to 16%).

**October 2014:** Delegations from the ASTI and TUI meet with the Minister for Education and Skills and representatives from the Minister's Department to discuss the industrial relations dispute over the Framework for Junior Cycle. It is agreed that both sides will enter a talks process chaired by Dr Pauric Travers, former president of St Patrick's College.

**November 2014:** A talks process between the ASTI/TUI and Department representatives gets underway.

### What happens now?

Up-to-date information will be posted on the ASTI website as soon as possible. Members are advised to check our website on a regular basis. If and when there are any major developments, ASTI Standing Committee will be convened.

### 2013 – key events

- Approximately 10,000 members participate in the ASTI's consultation on the Framework for Junior Cycle, the findings of which are published in the ASTI publication Teachers' Voice.
- A nationwide lobby of politicians is undertaken.
- A leaflet is distributed to ASTI school stewards containing information for parents' associations.
- Opinion articles by ASTI representatives are published in all the main national newspapers.
- ASTI Annual Convention 2013 is extended by one day in order to facilitate a full debate on the Framework for Junior Cycle and maximise publicity opportunities.

### 2012 – key events

- The Minister for Education and Skills launches the Framework for Junior Cycle. ASTI objects to the lack of consultation with teachers and others, and expresses shock at the unexpected announcement that the Junior Cert is to be abolished.
- The ASTI succeeds in having the proposal to impose an eight-subject limit for Junior Cycle exam students lifted.
- The ASTI holds a series of seminars for members warning them of radical proposals to reform the Junior Cert.
- The ASTI lobbies the education partners on teachers' concerns about Junior Cycle reform proposals.

### Junior Cycle in the spotlight

The ASTI has continued to highlight its concerns about the Framework for Junior Cycle over the past two years. The union has also worked closely with the TUI in order to maximise coverage at specific points during the campaign.

In recent weeks, the presidents of the ASTI and TUI wrote a joint letter in order to emphasise teacher solidarity on the Framework for Junior Cycle. The letter was published in national and regional newspapers as the two unions entered a talks process with the Department of Education and Skills.

Sir,

To resist unsound changes to the Junior Cycle being imposed by Government, ASTI and TUI members have voted overwhelmingly for industrial action, up to and including strike action if necessary.

In addition to the clear opposition of teachers themselves to school-based assessment, a national opinion poll last May showed that the majority of the public are opposed to teachers correcting their own students' work for certification purposes. Our main areas of opposition to Junior Cycle changes relate to the planned removal of national certification and external assessment, both of which provide status and credibility to the assessment process. Such credibility is linked with the high level of public trust in our education system. Indeed, a recent OECD survey placed Ireland first among countries measured for public confidence in their education system.

We are also opposed to the imposition of further pressure on the capacity of schools to provide a quality education service in the wake of several years of austerity cuts, none of which were reversed in this year's Budget.

Furthermore, it is clear that proposed changes to subject provision will have detrimental effects on the quality of education for students. Certain subjects, such as CSPE, history and geography, will be downgraded to optional status. Such detrimental change will hinder the development of students as informed and active citizens.

Sustainable and real educational reform requires teacher support and public confidence. We call on the Minister to engage with us on this basis.

Yours etc.

Philip Irwin, President, ASTI, Thomas McDonagh House, Winetavern St, Dublin 8

Gerry Quinn, President, TUI, 73 Orwell Rd, Rathgar, Dublin 6

Read more about our Junior Cycle campaign at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

# Is there light at the end of the tunnel?

SELINA GILLEECE has plenty of sound advice on managing your way out of debt.

"If you want to be financially secure, spend less than you earn!"

Sounds simple, certainly not rocket science! Unfortunately, however, the past five years of austerity, tax increases, levies and charges, etc., have made it virtually impossible for a large majority to live within their means. Escalating costs and reduced incomes have inflicted serious injury on the budgets of the average person. It would appear, however, that a glimmer of hope is flickering as Ireland emerges from recession. Unemployment levels are falling, GDP figures are improving and there is a general feeling that the worst is over.

So where to now as you review your decimated household budget, scratch your head and wonder: how am I ever going to get on top of all of this?

## **Tough medicine**

The most important advice that I can give is: firstly, make yourself aware of your current financial situation. It is tough medicine but it has to be done! Sit down and force yourself to draw up a list of all your monthly expenses: your mortgage costs, your credit card costs, your personal loan costs, your household costs, your monthly bills, etc. This may seem overwhelming but it is absolutely essential. Next draw up a list of your income: include salaries, social welfare payments and any additional income that you may have.

The most difficult part is balancing one side against the other, your income against your expenditure. The reality is that this exercise, although painful, will help you to identify areas of expenditure where you can cut back or make savings. Remember too that time will change your circumstances. If you, for example, have dependent children in college, then you will have additional costs now but in time these costs will diminish.

## **Register with PAYE-Anytime**

Key areas to look at include your tax liabilities. Make sure that you review the amount of tax that you have paid to determine if you are entitled to apply for a refund. Refunds are available for medical expenses, tuition fees, etc. There is a four-year limit for claiming tax refunds so if you are seeking a refund for 2010 you must submit a claim to Revenue by December 31, 2014. It is a good idea to register with PAYE-Anytime and use the new tools available to record expenditure for medical costs as they occur. This is a very easy and effective way of collating records and will save you a lot of trouble searching out receipts at the end of each year.

## **Review your mortgage**

Make sure that you are maximising any advantage that may be had in your mortgage repayment schedule. If you are making monthly repayments, talk to your bank about switching to fortnightly payments. This will save you money over time. Call your bank and see if this is something that will benefit you.

## **Review your insurance**

Every year the renewal notice comes and there is a tendency to just automatically renew. Talk to your insurers, get several quotes and, most importantly, negotiate! There are deals to be done that will benefit you!

## **Consider additional sources of income**

It may not suit everybody but if you have a spare room and you live close to a college, why not consider the income potential of renting it out to a student during the week?



### Talk to your creditors

If you are having problems with debt, please do not ignore the red letters. Take a deep breath, open them and if you are struggling to make payments that are due, lift the phone and make contact. Financial institutions will engage with you in a positive and professional way. Utility companies will also respond positively but you must engage with them.

### Seek advice

If you are really struggling and feel that you cannot manage the situation yourself then reach out and get help. The Money Advice & Budgeting Service (MABS) is available nationwide. This service is free. MABS will help you with professional advice and will, where necessary, contact your creditors and make representations on your behalf.

### Keep perspective

This may be easier said than done but remember we have all as a nation come through a very difficult time. Everyone has felt the impact of austerity, some more harshly than others. The reality is that you are not alone and help is available. Perspective is about acknowledging the problem and actively seeking solutions. Those solutions will not get rid of debt but they can and do give you time to work through the difficulties you may be experiencing.

### Join ASTI Credit Union

Please consider joining the ASTI Credit Union. Credit unions were first founded over 50 years ago by a teacher, Nora Herlihy, who desperately wanted to help the financially distressed through a spirit of co-operation and self-help. This ethos is as strong today as it was 50 years ago. ASTI Credit Union has been successfully providing a range of financial services to teachers for over 30 years, through good times and bad. ASTI Credit Union is strong, safe and secure, and most importantly we are here to help. Our services are designed specifically to respond to the needs of teachers. Members' savings are protected by the Government's Deposit Guarantee Fund (maximum €100,000 per member).

If you are not already a member you might be surprised at the excellent services that we offer. Please check our website for further details at [www.asticu.ie](http://www.asticu.ie) or call the office at 1850 44 3131.

### Selina Gilleece

Selina is Manager of ASTI Credit Union, and is a certified Financial Planning Professional and a qualified financial adviser.  
[www.asticu.ie](http://www.asticu.ie)

**The Search is on for Ireland's Next Young Novelist**

We're giving lucky secondary school students the chance to be published authors

Eason Creates is a new creative writing competition open to all 2nd level students in the Republic of Ireland, with entrants divided into two groups:

- Junior Cycle Competition**  
– Maximum 1,000 words
- Senior Cycle Competition**  
– Maximum 2,000 words

Submit your story today to be in with a chance to win some **great prizes** including **€1,500 worth of books** for the winning school with all shortlisted & winning stories **published as an eBook**.

Closing date for entries is **Friday 9th January 2015**

Details on how to enter can be found at [www.easons.com/easoncreates](http://www.easons.com/easoncreates)

Whatever you're into, get into **eason**

# Making it all add up

ROBERT CHANEY describes the work of the NCCA Maths in Practice Group to address issues arising from the introduction of Project Maths.



Over the last five years, the changes to the mathematics curriculum resulting from Project Maths have involved phased changes to syllabi and examinations, and have encouraged teachers to make changes to their methodologies.

Several issues arose during that process, in particular, teachers' understanding, interpretation and use of the syllabus documents; and, the only partial adoption of new activities to encourage problem solving and making connections over "traditional approaches".

## Maths in Practice Group

Following a request by ASTI and TUI representatives on the NCCA Council, the NCCA established a discussion group involving maths teachers from the ASTI, TUI and Irish Maths Teachers' Association, along with representatives from the NCCA, SEC, Project Maths Development Team (PMDT) and DES Inspectorate, which met over four days, primarily with the purpose of developing useful support material to aid teachers' engagement with the syllabus.

Discussions were wide-ranging, open and constructive, and the issues facing teachers in delivering maths education under the new curriculum were made clear to the various agencies. In particular, it was understood that teachers need additional support if the curriculum changes are to be a success.

The key issues raised included:

- time – the amount of content to cover, using the promoted problem-solving methodologies, was too much for the time available;
- examinations – various issues, including the use of terminology in exam questions that students are not familiar with and which is not used in the syllabus;
- clarity of the syllabus – issues about whether something was on the syllabus or not continue to challenge both teachers in the classroom and NCCA representatives dealing with queries. There has been a lack of awareness of NCCA information, including FAQs;
- format and structure of the syllabus – could the syllabus be presented in a more useable format, e.g., better numbering, better clustering of related learning objectives across from Ordinary Level (OL) to Higher Level (HL), and links connecting related learning outcomes (LOs)? Could the syllabus be provided in a format that could be easily copied and pasted for development of school schemes of work?;
- PMDT resources – could the ProjectMaths.ie resources be mapped to the LOs beyond just the Strands?;
- continuing professional development – what support could be provided, including further workshops, lesson study, and design-based research, to Masters level?; and,

- external issues – these include pressure on maths teachers from students and parents due to the high-stakes Leaving Cert (LC) exams and the CAO system.

### Developments

Some developments have already begun, including providing:

- a clearer reference document to all of the Project Maths website resources;
- additional explanation by the NCCA of the various Strands to give teachers a better overview of the concepts in the context of the whole syllabus;
- additional PMDT support for 2014-2015; and,
- an improved, laid out version of the LC syllabus, which will be available online or for download, to aid better planning.

In addition, following the June 2015 exams, a review is due to take place of the LC syllabus, following a Chief Examiner's report, when further changes may occur. Also, as part of the Junior Cycle (JC) implementation, the JC syllabus will be reviewed in 2016.

The full Maths in Practice report contains 14 specific recommendations, along with rationale. Much work is required by the various agencies to ensure that improvements are carried out, and teachers will need to respond to the extra support by reflecting upon and adapting their current practices, where appropriate.



The full Maths in Practice report is available to read from the NCCA website, by going to <http://bit.ly/NCCAmip>, or by QR-scanning:

## A-Z of terms

IMTA – Irish Maths Teachers' Association

LO – Learning outcome

NCCA – National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

PMDT – Project Maths Development Team

SEC – State Exams Commission

### Robert Chaney

Robert teaches in CBS Thurles and was an ASTI representative on the NCCA Maths in Practice Group.

**Doodle 4 Google**

For the seventh year running we're inviting Irish school children to create their own doodle by taking part in the Doodle 4 Google competition. This year's theme is 'My Perfect Day'.

The winning student will have their doodle appear on the Google Ireland homepage for 24 hours. They will also receive a Chromebook for themselves and one for their teacher, as well as a €5,000 college scholarship and a €10,000 technology grant for their school.

To be in with a chance to win these great prizes, enter your school today at [www.google.ie/doodle4google](http://www.google.ie/doodle4google)

The competition opens 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2014.



# English work, Irish heart

Disillusioned by a lack of opportunity in the Irish educational system, increasing numbers of Irish teaching graduates are heading for the UK. ANN-MARIE HARDIMAN spoke to four of them.



## Aidan Harwood – teaching history in Essex

From Palmerstown in West Dublin, Aidan graduated from Maynooth in 2006, and completed a PGDE in UCD in 2010. He travelled to Kent immediately after graduation and completed his NQT year there,

an experience he describes as "very tough". He returned to Ireland to work with Examcraft in Dublin, but missed teaching. "I missed developing relationships in a class over a year."

Aidan applied for a permanent position in Chelmsford in Essex and started work in September. He teaches both A-level and younger groups. "The A-level curriculum is

almost like first-year arts. I am currently teaching Russian history in quite some depth, and really enjoying it."

Aidan sees significant differences in the English system, particularly in paperwork and inspection. For example, several examination boards exist in the UK, and schools can change their board each year. As each board has different curriculum and exam specifications, teachers have to be familiar with them all.

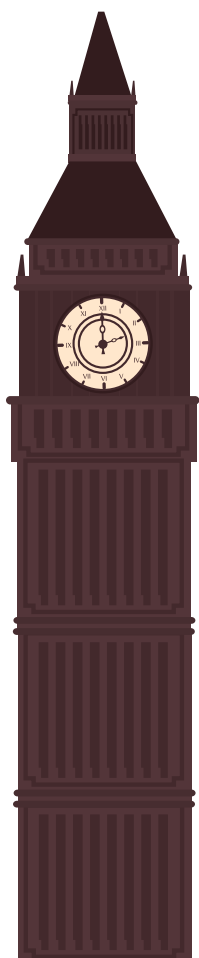
"There's a grey area between working and non-working hours, but if there's a new specification you have to know it."

Aidan describes the level of inspection here as akin to what he experienced during his PGDE training.

"We also have what is called 'book scrutiny', where all exercise book marking must be up to date on a certain date."

As he's only been in Essex for a couple of months, Aidan hasn't thought much about returning to Ireland, but acknowledges that the longer he stays, the harder it will be to come home.

"I'm 30 now, and I just want to be permanent somewhere, which is what I trained for."





## Jonathan Hughes – teaching English in London

A native of Ballingarry, Co. Tipperary, Jonathan completed his PGDE at Hibernia College in 2013, and didn't even apply for work in Ireland.

"I was hearing horror stories – so many people applying for so few jobs." Jonathan worked as a supply teacher in London, which eventually led to a position in Hanwell, near Ealing, where he is now completing his NQT year.

It's a large school and Jonathan teaches across all of the year groups, which is challenging but fulfilling.

"I like it. It's very busy, and there's a lot of paperwork, but when you get used to it it's not too bad."

Compared to his experience in a rural Irish school, Jonathan's current school has much greater social disadvantage than he's seen at home, as well as a much wider diversity in terms of culture and religion.

"It can be difficult to engage with pupils in the way you would at home, where they have a lot more in common and you might know everyone's families. But the Department here is very good and the kids are great."

He would love to return to Ireland, and would particularly like to teach close to where he grew up.

"I don't think I'd settle here or raise a family, but that makes it difficult to make long-term plans."

The types of contracts being offered in Ireland and the lack of security are the main reasons for staying away.

"You get security much quicker in the UK. They seem to want to hold on to good people here, but at home, it's not always a choice.

Principals have other considerations they have to take into account."



## Seán Joe Kearns – teaching engineering and product design in Reading

From Tuam in Co. Galway, Seán completed a Bachelor of Education at the University of Limerick, and in Ireland he would teach construction studies and design and communication graphics. Seán's UK career began last year in a school for children with behavioural and emotional difficulties. In September 2014 he got a full-time position in a new school in Reading. While there are obviously major differences from the system in Ireland, he is enjoying the opportunity to contribute to the design of a product design course for A-Level.

"It's very challenging but very good, and I'm getting a lot of support."

Like all of the teachers we spoke to, the lack of permanent positions in Ireland was Seán's main reason for moving.

"I need to complete my 300 Teaching Council hours and that's very difficult to do in Ireland."

He also cites inspections and paperwork as having a significant impact on work here.

"In England, most schools have 'learning walks', five-minute visits from the principal, deputy or head of department to sit in and see how you're doing. This happens once a week at the moment in my school."

Seán would like to return to Ireland but, in addition to the intense competition for positions, he mentions some elements of recruiting practice that he finds particularly difficult.

"Longer-term jobs that come up are advertised a week or so before they're due to start so there's no time for someone based in the UK to get home for interview."



## Why do Irish teachers emigrate?

While there are no definitive statistics on the numbers of Irish teachers working in the UK, HEA research suggests an annual average rate of 5-10% of graduates.

There is no doubt that the austerity measures of recent years have played a role in this. Research carried out over a three-year period by MillwardBrown Landsdowne for the ASTI on the impact of austerity found that schools have lost on average between one and three teaching posts since 2009.

However, as our interviewees demonstrate, the lack of permanent positions and job security for Irish graduate teachers also plays a major role in emigration levels. Figures produced by the Department of Education and Skills in 2013 show that approximately 35% of second-level teachers are employed either on a fixed-term basis or as part-time teachers or as both. Further, the 2012 OECD TALIS report found that 93% of Irish teachers with two years or less teaching experience had a fixed-term contract, compared with 22% of experienced teachers. The TALIS average was 59% and 12%, respectively. Significantly, the TALIS report noted that fixed-term contracts do not serve as a 'road' to a more permanent teaching post in Ireland. The introduction of the Fixed Term Work Act with resultant contracts of indefinite duration (CIDs) for teachers has helped; without the Act and the CID adjudication process for teachers, the number of fixed-term teachers would now be reaching epidemic proportions.

### What can we do?

The good news is that through teacher union campaigning, some measures are already in train:

- Teacher unions have achieved a new permanency deal (see page 10); and,
- progress has been made on new entrants' pay scales – see [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

Furthermore:

- the Teaching Council is initiating a consultation process on the issue of teacher supply;
- the Teaching Council must also work with the education partners to support a placement for newly qualified teachers so that they can complete their induction requirements.
- regulating supply of teachers will require more forward planning by the Department of Education and Skills in terms of spatial planning and demographic projections; and,
- we need more research on our teachers.

According to Moira Leydon of the ASTI: "Ireland should not be complacent when it comes to return migration ... We need to support our newly qualified teachers by enabling them to complete their induction period, and provide security of employment through measures such as a supply panel and through better planning at Departmental level in response to demographic and spatial developments".

Naturally, this is extremely demoralising.

"It's difficult to do a four-year degree and find yourself with little option but to leave – I know quite a few highly qualified people who've had to go away."



## Aedín O'Neill – teaching English in Essex

When Aedín O'Neill was in her final year at Mater Dei in 2011, she and her father drove around the South East and her native Kilkenny and handed in CVs to almost 40 schools.

When she got only one response, she knew

that staying in Ireland after graduation was not an option.

"I had worked really hard for four years. It was soul-destroying."

Aedín travelled to Essex to take up a full-time permanent position, and after four years, has just received a promotion. She teaches English, mainly to GCSE classes.

Like the other teachers we spoke to, Aedín speaks about the pressure of frequent inspections and curriculum change. As a core subject, English is subject to particularly rigid standards, but she feels that there is much to be gained from the process.

"Children are at the core of everything, and you can see the progress they make."

Being organised and accepting that the work has to be done is key to managing the workload.

"You learn things along the way to make it easier."

Staying at work until 6.00pm is normal, but working with a strong department is a great incentive.

"This department is unbelievable – I love it. Everyone works at the same rate and there is a real team atmosphere."

"Every day is challenging but really interesting. There's no sitting back and becoming complacent."

Aedín is about to buy a home in Essex, and while she misses family, she feels the situation at home would have to change significantly for her to return.

"I was a home bird and moving away can be scary but if you persevere it's a worthwhile experience – whether you do it for a year or forever."

As a result of negotiations following the Haddington Road Agreement, the ASTI has negotiated significant changes to the criteria for awarding of CIDs. For more information, see page 10.

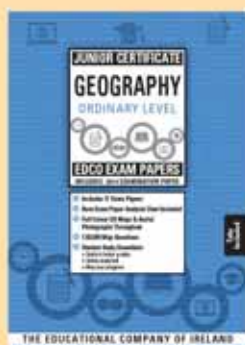
### Ann-Marie Hardiman

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# Taking a Global view

Since 2005, Global Schoolroom has been helping teachers in India to increase their skills. JENNY DUNNE reports.



The Global Schoolroom programme gives Irish teachers the chance to share their knowledge and experience with teachers in North East India, many of whom have little or no formal teacher training. The ASTI is committed to supporting Global Schoolroom and recently pledged to donate €5,000 a year to the organisation until 2017.

## Origins

Global Schoolroom was founded in 2005 by two ASTI members – Gwen Brennan and Garret Campbell – after they visited North East India to learn about the experiences of teachers in the region. They discovered that there was a knowledge and skills deficit in teacher education, and therefore a lack of confidence from the teachers in their own professionalism and skills. Gwen and Garret believed that there would be interest from Irish teachers in sharing their teaching expertise with their Indian colleagues. When they came home, with the help of Robert Power, then Deputy Managing Director of Cornmarket Group, they set up Global Schoolroom and sent their first group of Irish teachers to North East India in 2007. The programme now sends around 30 teachers to India for one month every summer, where they act as tutors to local teachers to help them improve.

## Personal and professional development

Before the tutors leave Ireland, they take part in several training sessions in UCD in order to ensure that they will be confident in facilitating seminars and workshops on teaching techniques and methodologies for the Indian teachers.

When the volunteers arrive in India they are based in one of 10 local ‘hubs’, which teachers from the region have travelled to in order to take part in the lectures, seminars and workshops. After two weeks, the tutors travel to the Indian teachers’ own schools to help them to put the skills they have learnt into action with their students.

For the volunteers, their time in India can provide a great enhancement to their personal and professional development. Matthew O’Connor, a member of the ASTI Standing Committee and a teacher in Colaiste Íde agus Iosef,

The deadline to apply to Global Schoolroom for July 2015 is December 5, 2014. For more information see [www.globalschoolroom.net](http://www.globalschoolroom.net).

Co. Limerick, visited India with Global Schoolroom in 2008. He said: “The people were really exceptionally welcoming and exceptionally kind. The original idea was that we were going to help with teacher training, but really we were learning a lot from them as well”.

Matthew said that the experience had informed his own teaching, as it showed him that you can adapt to any situation and still be an effective teacher: “They really make use of what they have there; they use the stones that are on the ground outside to teach maths, and for things like dissection in biology classes, they bring in local plants and use them”.

## Effective training

By focusing on training local teachers, Global Schoolroom is able to contribute a huge amount to education in the region without asking for a large time commitment from its volunteers. As most teachers know, a few highly skilled teachers can have a huge impact in a community. The schools that Global Schoolroom works with see large increases in exam pass rates, enrolment numbers and scholarship numbers.

In one school that Global Schoolroom works with, before starting the programme in 2002 all nine class 10 students failed their State exams. In 2007, the first year of a Global Schoolroom programme, 35% passed. In 2009, 91% of the 22 students sitting the class 10 exams passed, with three students getting a first division score. This increase in educational attainment gives these students opportunities they never would have had before.

For the Indian teachers, these sessions in July make up part of their credits for Global Schoolroom’s UCD-accredited three-year Diploma in Teacher Education. During the rest of the year they also complete assignments in Global Schoolroom workbooks for formal assessment. On completion of the diploma, there is an official graduation ceremony, which UCD staff travel to India to conduct.

Earning their diploma through Global Schoolroom gives the teachers a huge boost in skills and greater confidence in their work. “I got many ideas about teaching and learned different teaching methods,” says Bijou John, a

teacher from Mizoram. "I also got tips about how to motivate students. This course has given me great confidence." Graduates of the Diploma can apply to become tutors to other local teachers through Global Schoolroom, ensuring the sustainability of the project.

### Future plans

Over the next three years, Global Schoolroom aims to: roll out the accredited teacher training programme to an additional 450 teachers; pilot a monthly online tutorial with Indian teachers; work with the Teaching Council for continuous professional development recognition of Irish teachers' learning; and, add value to the professional role of Indian teachers through collaboration between Global Schoolroom, the ASTI, the INTO, the TUI and Khasi Jaintia Deficit School Teachers' Association (KJDSTA).

### ASTI Development Fund

The ASTI's support for Global Schoolroom is an example of how the union uses its development aid fund to promote teaching and education in developing countries. One per cent of the gross income from members' subscriptions goes to the ASTI Development Aid Fund, which responds to requests for money from organisations working in developing countries.

Volunteers with Global Schoolroom are required to raise €3,000 to cover their costs. Although this can seem like a lot of money it can be raised with the help of your family, friends, colleagues and students! The key to successful fundraising events is to advertise the event well in advance. Some examples of fundraising activities that can be done in your school include:

- Dress down friday
- Sponsored walk
- Raffle
- Penalty shoot out – teachers vs. students
- Match the baby photo to the teacher
- Guess the amount of sweets in the jar

### Jenny Dunne

Jenny is an Administrative Officer in the ASTI Communications Office.

Sharing Educational Experience Worldwide



## Global Schoolroom

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Places are limited to 30 volunteers and selection of candidates will be based on your application form and an interview. Successful applicants must be prepared to attend six weekend training days during the spring and must also agree to raise a minimum of €3,000 towards the cost of the trip.

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Volunteers will be entered into a draw for three Irish Life Bursaries each covering half of the €3,000 trip cost.



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All schools from which volunteers apply will be in with a chance to win €2,500 worth of sports kit kindly sponsored by



# Education makes a difference

*Education at a Glance 2014* provides compelling evidence for increased investment in education. GEMMA TUFFY reports.



Published once a year, the OECD report *Education at a Glance* receives significant media coverage across the world. The report is based on data collected by the OECD on education systems and their various components. This data is used by the OECD to form conclusions about governments' education policies based on comparisons between countries' inputs into education systems and the outcomes in terms of economic and social benefits.

Given the nature of the data, and its presentation in the form of newspaper-friendly 'league tables', key messages in the report are often sidelined in the ensuing public debate.

## Investment pays off

A key message of *Education at a Glance 2014* is that investment in education by governments pays off. In fact the report notes that on average, the public return on investment in education is double the value of the original investment. According to the report, this is because individuals who progress from second-level to third-level education and beyond are more likely to take up employment, earn higher incomes, pay more taxes and social insurance, and require fewer social transfers. Moreover, levels of education in society are strongly correlated with productivity in workplaces and overall levels of innovation in the economy. What's more, the report states that the public benefits of investment in education go well beyond the financial returns. A country's educational

In Ireland, second-level teachers spend 735 hours per annum teaching compared to the OECD average of 674 hours.

attainment is associated with higher levels of social outcomes including health, volunteering, interpersonal trust, political efficacy and social cohesion. The report concludes that: "education and skills hold the key to future wellbeing and will be critical to restoring long-term growth, tackling unemployment, promoting competitiveness and nurturing more inclusive and cohesive societies".

## Ireland – key findings

Ireland has one of the highest school completion rates in the world, according to *Education at a Glance 2014*.

The OECD average second-level graduation rate is 84% compared to 93% in Ireland. Ireland also has a high transfer rate to third level.

The report contains some analysis of the OECD PISA studies (PISA tracks the performance of 15-year-olds across the world and reports on academic and other outcomes every three years). Based on the most recently available PISA study, *Education at a Glance 2014* ranks Ireland 20th out of 64 countries when it comes to students' performance in mathematics. Significantly, the report finds that Ireland is one of 16 out of 63 countries that are performing well both in terms of academic outcomes and student equity. Other countries also doing well on these two indicators are Canada, Finland, Korea and Japan.

When it comes to inputs into education, the proportion of GDP spent on second-level education in Ireland decreased only very slightly between



2010 and 2011. However, it is a fact that the second-level school population increased during this period.

The report also demonstrates the impact of reduced staffing in Irish second-level schools. Ireland now has the seventh highest pupil-teacher ratio at second level out of 31 countries.

### Teaching and instruction time

Second-level teachers in Ireland spend more time in the classroom than most of their OECD counterparts. In Ireland, second-level teachers spend 735 hours per annum teaching compared to the OECD average of 674 hours. Students in Ireland also spend more time in the classroom than the OECD average.

### Teachers' salaries

Despite exaggerated headlines, the gross starting salary for second-level teachers in Ireland is 14th highest out of 35 countries and just above the OECD average. However, the data does not take into account the fact that in Ireland newly qualified second-level teachers spend a number of years working in part-time, temporary and substitute positions, typically earning a fraction of the starting salary.

After 10 years of teaching, second-level teachers are ranked 10th highest out of 35 countries in terms of gross salary. At the end of their teaching careers, second-level teachers in Ireland are ranked 9th highest out of 35 countries. However, the data does not take into account the fact that teachers in Ireland took a 7.5% pay cut in the form of the public service pension levy (unlike the public service pay cuts, the pension levy does not appear in gross salary figures). Pay cuts and pay freezes implemented as part of the Haddington Road Agreement are not included in the data. Across the OECD, teachers earn on average 92% of the average third-level graduate salary. However, in Ireland second-level teachers earn only 81% of the average third-level graduate salary for Ireland. This indicator, which compares teachers with other professionals in the same country, is perhaps the most relevant salary indicator published in *Education at a Glance 2014*.

### Read with caution

While *Education at a Glance 2014* serves as a guide to the impact of different governments' education policies, the report should be interpreted with care. Critics of OECD ranking tables point to their narrow, quantitative focus. In addition, much of the data is presented in formats that are detached from countries' unique historical, social and cultural contexts. The report itself acknowledges that OECD averages can hide significant differences between countries. There is therefore no evidence for 'cherry picking' education models and importing them to countries whose education systems operate in entirely different contexts. Policy learning rather than policy borrowing should be the approach when seeking to improve aspects of national education systems.

Read *Education at a Glance 2014* at

<http://www.oecd.org/edu/Education-at-a-Glance-2014.pdf>.

Gemma Tuffy

Gemma is Media and Communications Officer with the ASTI.



**Holocaust Education Trust Ireland**  
*Learning from the past - lessons for today*

## Berlin Study Visit

### 7-10 April 2015



Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe

A visit to the city of Berlin, where National Socialism originated. It includes an overview of Jewish Berlin and its history and also visits to authentic Holocaust sites. Working with Holocaust scholars and educators, the programme allows participants to grasp the enormity of the Holocaust and its resonances within the city.

**Visit includes:**

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

For information and details about all our teacher education programmes, contact:

**Holocaust Education Trust Ireland, Clifton House, Lower Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.**  
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**Course Duration:** One year (part time)

**Accreditation:** The Certificate in Holocaust Education is awarded by Trinity College Dublin, standardised by the EU and acknowledged internationally.

**Enrolment:** August or October.

1. **Teaching the Holocaust: (August)** Intensive three-day summer programme for teachers that addresses the complex subject of the Holocaust and how to teach it in the classroom.
2. **Learning from the Holocaust: (October)** Six-day programme that includes a four-day study visit to Krakow and Auschwitz-Birkenau. The programme is supported by two separate seminar days, one in preparation for the study visit and one on reflection afterwards.
3. **Irish Seminar at Yad Vashem International School, Jerusalem: (July)** Eight-day programme for teachers at Yad Vashem International School for Holocaust Studies.
4. **Assignments:** There are four assignments to be completed on this programme.

**Fee:** €1,995 for registered teachers which includes university registration, all tuition, travel and accommodation (p.p.s.) For other applicants who do not qualify for sponsorship, the fee is €2,995. This programme may qualify for the Refund of Fees Scheme.

Supported by the Teacher Education Section of the Department of Education and Skills (Ireland) and in appreciation of Claims Conference (USA) for supporting this educator training programme.






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# How are posts of responsibility appointed?

There has been some alleviation of the moratorium on posts of responsibility as a result of the Haddington Road Agreement. DIARMAID de PAOR reports.



Provision of middle management posts in schools has been severely curtailed since the introduction of the moratorium on recruitment and promotion across the public service in 2009.

Under the Haddington Road Agreement, the teacher unions negotiated a reinstatement of the limited alleviation on the moratorium, which had been introduced in 2011 and then subsequently withdrawn. Under this alleviation schools that fall below the assistant principal thresholds can fill assistant principal vacancies as they arise to the level of the thresholds set out in the table below.

Further information and copies of relevant documentation, including DES Circulars, may be found on the ASTI website [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

Pupil enrolment (30/9/10)	Number of assistant principal posts that can be filled under the alleviation arrangements
<100	
100-199	1
200-299	2
300-399	3
400-499	4
500-699	5
700-899	6
900-1099	7
>1100	8

## Programme co-ordinators

The alleviation arrangements include provision for filling a programme co-ordinator post at assistant principal level where a school has 100 or more pupils on such programmes and the school's overall number of assistant principal posts is at or below the thresholds set out in the table. Schools that meet both of these requirements may fill their programme co-ordinator vacancy at assistant principal level when it arises.

## Directors of adult education

Schools that meet the requirements for a director of adult education post (at deputy principal level) may fill their vacancy when it arises.

## Special duties posts

As a result of the moratorium, no special duties posts in schools are being filled.

## How are appointments made?

Revised promotional procedures for appointments to posts of responsibility in all sectors have been agreed (see DES Circular Letter 0042/2010). These procedures are being phased in for all second-level schools and this phasing in concludes at the end of the current school year (2014-15). From September 2015 onwards all available permanent posts will be filled under the new arrangements. For the period beginning in September 2013 and ending in 2015, half of the available posts are filled under the old arrangements appropriate to the sector and the other half under the new arrangements. The first of these appointments during this period is to be made under the old arrangements. This means that if a school is making an appointment in this school year, and if it is the school's first such appointment since the end of school year 2012-13, the appointment should be made under the old arrangements appropriate to the sector. The first, third, fifth, etc., appointments made in the period 2013-15 should be made under the old arrangements and the second, fourth sixth, etc., under the new arrangements. It should be noted that all interviews for posts are made according to the new criteria as set out in Circular 42/2010 but the marks are then adjusted in order to reflect the pre-existing values for seniority that applied in the different sectors.

## Appeals

A common appeal system has been established across all sectors in order to ensure that the correct procedures have been followed in making appointments. Appeals are heard by an independent Appeal Board consisting of a nominee of the relevant trade union, a nominee of the relevant management body and an agreed independent chairperson. The procedures for appeal (which contain strict timelines) are contained in an appendix to the circular. There are nine grounds for appeal (see Circular

42/2010), While the ASTI will advise members on how to appeal an appointment, we do not represent members at appeal or assist in the preparation of appeal documents.

### Temporary posts

The new arrangements apply to all temporary post appointments.

### Schedule of posts

The duties attached to the posts of assistant principal and special duties teacher, respectively, should have a level of responsibility and workload commensurate with the category and allowance to be paid. Each school's schedule of duties lists the post duties covered in that school. The teaching staff must be consulted when a schedule is being drawn up or if it is being revised.

### Reviews of post duties

A review of post duties may take place whenever a vacancy arises. Given the current moratorium, ASTI members should note that where a post of responsibility review takes place, the duties of a retired teacher may be reassigned; however, where this happens it means that other duties will be dropped by the school. ASTI members should not undertake post of responsibility duties for which they are not paid.

The review should be based on the following principles:

- open and transparent consultation with all teaching staff;
- real participation by teachers in this process;
- consensus among teachers;
- inclusive definition of posts so as to allow any competent, eligible member of staff to apply;
- duties that reflect the grade of the post; and,
- every effort made to ensure equity between post holders in the division of duties, i.e., no one post should be over burdensome when compared with others in the same category.

The ASTI continues to demand that the moratorium on posts is lifted, as the loss of posts of responsibility is seriously undermining the operation of schools. We raise this issue at every opportunity and are working closely with the other teacher unions, the management bodies and with parents to have it addressed.

### Diarmaid de Paor

Diarmaid is ASTI Deputy General Secretary.



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# Standing up for colleagues

The school steward has a central role to play in union organisation in schools. ANN-MARIE HARDIMAN and PAUL O'GRADY spoke to two school stewards about taking on this important role.



**Gearoidín O'Dwyer,**  
Newpark  
Comprehensive,  
Blackrock, Co. Dublin

Gearoidín teaches Irish, CSPE and social studies, and is a member of the newly re-

established Dun Laoghaire Branch.

A committed trade unionist, she assisted the previous school steward before being elected to the position herself last year.

"I took on the role because I was concerned about the direction education is going in. The cuts and Junior Cycle proposals are putting enormous pressure on teachers. I felt I had to get involved. It's hard to find the time, but I couldn't pass the buck to somebody else."

Newpark is a dual union school, and Gearoidín works closely with her TUI counterpart to make sure as many members of staff as possible join a union. "Obviously I'd prefer if they join the ASTI, but what's important is to make sure they join a union and get involved."

If there's an industrial relations issue, she represents the best interests of ASTI members. She also keeps colleagues informed, encourages them to vote in union elections, and makes sure they have all the relevant information. This can involve summarising documents from Head Office. "It's absolutely vital that the school steward makes information digestible. People are too busy to read a long document. I also try to organise regular meetings so members can voice their opinions."

Gearoidín was recently involved in organising a lunchtime protest about Junior Cycle reform at her school, which showed the two unions working together. "We had a great turnout and great media attention. It was a great success."

Gearoidín feels strongly that members should take a turn as a school steward. "Everyone should do it. You are helping colleagues to make their voices heard – the voice of the real classroom teacher – and it's very fulfilling."

She advises anyone who is interested to seek support from colleagues in dealing with the workload, and feels that the ASTI can help too by streamlining communications, with more use of texts and email in particular.



**John Conneely,**  
St Flannan's College,  
Ennis, Co. Clare.

John has been teaching physics, maths and science for 10 years at St Flannan's and is a member of the Clare branch. He is in the

second year of the role of school steward but joined the ASTI as soon as he started teaching many years ago (he has taught in Dublin, Mayo and Galway). "I was approached by the outgoing school steward and after giving it some consideration, I accepted. I see the main function as to ensure that the policies of the ASTI are in place in the school. I liaise with Desmond O'Toole [ASTI Official] in Head Office and link the union to the school."

John feels that changes in both the education system and in employment law have meant that it is a very challenging time to be a school steward. He cites the example of organising a meeting for part-time teachers with the school principal. "It's important that part-time teachers maximise the entitlements that they have with a view to gaining security of tenure – they need to optimise their hours for permanency."

He understands that the increased casualisation of teaching over recent years means that permanency is a huge worry for highly qualified and motivated young teachers. "It's difficult for them to get on with their lives, especially if they want to get a mortgage or start a family, if they do not have security of tenure." Working with these

teachers and helping them as far as is possible has created a good atmosphere in the school as the young teachers feel they have the support of their colleagues. "Showing that members are supporting each other is very important and provides a real sense of collegiality."

While he observes that some issues can be difficult, John is very keen that members understand the level of expertise that is available to them from Head Office. From that he sees people helping each other a great deal and feels that a school steward, while encountering challenges and difficulties, often gets to see the best of human nature when that help is offered and accepted.

The school steward is  
the official ASTI  
representative in the  
school – ASTI Rules and  
Constitution.

## Role of the school steward

The role of the school steward is outlined in the ASTI Rules and Constitution (Rule 55).

The school steward:

- is the face of the ASTI in the school
- recruits new members: the number one reason why people say they did not join a union? 'No one asked me'
- collects subscriptions from those members who are not in Check-off
- has a role in explaining the benefits of union membership
- is the contact point with the local ASTI branch, and represents members at branch meetings
- distributes union material such as *ASTIR* and *Nuacht*, and other notices from the union
- reports national and local information from the union to members in the school
- ensures that all members in the school adhere to ASTI policy
- is the point of contact with Head Office if something goes wrong
- is the conduit for consultation between the union and its members
- ensures that all agreements between the union and the management, both local and national, are observed within the school
- makes representations on behalf of members in the school

- calls meetings of union members within the school
- keeps a file of all union documents, containing:
  - (i) relevant cuttings from *ASTIR*, *Nuacht* and other documentation circulated by Head Office or branch
  - (ii) Head Office information leaflets
  - (iii) application forms
  - (iv) recruitment leaflets
  - (v) minute book
  - (vi) sickness benefit forms
- sees that seniority lists are established in the school
- ensures that the full quota of teachers is employed
- ensures that the terms of Department circulars on posts of responsibility are adhered to.

In order to support school stewards in their work, the ASTI runs school steward training sessions each year. The ASTI also encourages schools to form small committees to help the school steward with their responsibilities. If you are interested in becoming a school steward, serving on one of these committees is an ideal way to familiarise yourself with the role and responsibilities.



Participants at an ASTI training session for school stewards held in October 2014. From left: Bill Lonergan, CBS Nenagh; Sandra Moran, Loreto College; Laura Sweeney, Dominican College; and, Faustina Moran, Dominican College.

### Thank you

The ASTI wishes to thank this year's school stewards for all of their hard work and dedication. Your commitment to your colleagues and your union is greatly appreciated.

Full details of the role of the school steward as set out in the ASTI's rules are available on the ASTI website – [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie). All correspondence sent to school stewards is available on the ASTI website.






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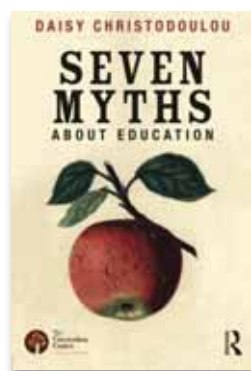
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# Seven Myths About Education by Daisy Christodoulou

Routledge 2014

ISBN-13: 978-0415746823

Paperback: 148 pages Price: £14.99 ([www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk))

This is a very seductive book, which, although based on the British education system, will resonate with some of Irish teachers' concerns about the Framework for Junior Cycle. But, reader beware! Myth-busting books by their nature are tendentious: sometimes, they end up creating a myth of their own.

Christodoulou's core thesis is the defence of the role of subject knowledge in education, which, she contends, is under attack from the English educational establishment. She asserts that progressivist educational ideas have resulted in the displacement of subject content from the curriculum, to be replaced by a focus on skills and active learning methodologies, with knowledge itself downgraded and the central role of the teacher undermined. In a nutshell, technological and other transformative social changes render "facts" secondary: what matters for twenty-first century knowledge economies is the development of conceptual understandings, soft skills and knowing how to learn.

Seven myths have been promulgated in support of this "hegemonic" shift in British education:

- **Myth 1** – Facts prevent understanding – is the foundation myth for modern education from which all the other myths flow. Because factual knowledge is seen to be in opposition to the development of skills or understandings,
- **Myth 2** – Teacher-led instruction is passive has become pervasive.
- **Myth 3** – The 21st century fundamentally changes everything – arises from the fact that '21st century learning skills' have become code for removing subject content from the curriculum on the flawed premise that society and the economy are changing so fast that knowledge is redundant. Moreover, there is no need to transmit knowledge when
- **Myth 4** – you can always just look it up. What takes place in the classroom should therefore prioritise skills development – problem solving, working co-operatively, critical thinking, etc., which are more suited to the globalised, digitalised world.
- **Myth 5** – We should teach transferable skills. Because skills are the priority learning outcome, teacher-led instruction should be reduced to allow students to engage in more collaborative, active learning activities.
- **Myth 6** – Projects and activities are the best way to learn. Because knowledge is time-bound and is intricately shaped by social structures such as class, knowledge itself is problematic and should be avoided. Because knowledge is problematic, the conclusion is that
- **Myth 7** – Teaching knowledge is indoctrination.

The primary evidence advanced by Christodoulou for the dominance of these myths in the British educational establishment is the inspection

reports from Ofsted and publications from the teacher unions. She states that Ofsted publications consistently promote one key message that is clearly influenced by an aversion to teacher-led instruction. This view is reinforced by an analysis of publications from two unions – ATL (Association of Teachers and Lecturers) and NAHT (National Association of Head Teachers) where she detects an overemphasis on the 21st century learning skills paradigm and insufficient focus on the content knowledge of subjects. Surprisingly, while she makes several references to the National Curriculum, she does not provide an analysis of its content but rather concludes that it has accepted "the idea that the transmission of knowledge hinders conceptual understanding". Christodoulou considers that an artificial dichotomy has been created between knowledge and skills in current teaching practice and official policy. Knowledge and skills are best understood as intertwined, and the creation of this artificial dichotomy is harmful to students because it results in some students, who do not come from homes with strong cultural capital, being particularly disadvantaged. Social science identifies a consistent correlation between vocabulary size and socio-economic status. Poorer students need to have access to a strongly knowledge-based curriculum to enable them to gain access both to a wider vocabulary and to the body of knowledge which enables them to navigate the complexities of modern life, and in particular to access the national culture. The current situation is consequently anti-egalitarian. The solution is, therefore, a stronger emphasis on knowledge transmission, more teacher-led instruction and less emphasis on skills and project work – and the reintroduction into the curriculum of key works and figures in the national culture.

As noted at the beginning, this is a seductive book. It interrogates several dominant paradigms in education; however, its iconoclastic tone does not compensate for what I consider a weak evidence base. The selective nature of the latter weakens the core arguments and ultimately, I find the book unconvincing. Moreover, it is simply not credible that every single teacher in Great Britain ignores subject content. Every teacher knows that you cannot teach skills in the absence of basic knowledge. As noted at the beginning, in the process of exposing myths, one can very often sustain the creation of other myths.

**Maira Leydon**

Maira is Assistant General Secretary, Education and Research.



# A question of leave

ASTIR looks at the difference between different types of leave.

## Is personal leave different from *force majeure* leave, bereavement leave and marriage leave?

Personal leave, *force majeure* leave, marriage leave and bereavement leave apply to different situations that may require teachers to be absent from their work. Personal leave can cover any situation that the school considers sufficient, while *force majeure* leave is used in the case of family illness, bereavement leave is used in the case of the death of a family member, and marriage leave is used in the case of teachers who marry during the school term.

### Personal leave

Personal leave is usually used for circumstances such as attending a wedding, funeral, graduation, etc. Personal leave must be granted in advance by the board of management. No substitution cover is provided for this leave. Personal leave must be taken for a minimum period of one day at a time, i.e., a half day of personal leave cannot be taken.

### Force majeure leave

*Force majeure* leave is used in situations where the immediate presence of the teacher is required to be with a sick family member. A family member is defined as a child or adoptive child, spouse or person with whom the employee is living as husband or wife, parent, grandparent, sibling or person to whom the person is *loco parentis*. *Force majeure* leave is limited to a maximum of three days in each period of 12 months or five days in 36 months. Substitute cover is provided for *force majeure* leave.

### Bereavement leave

Bereavement leave may be granted to a teacher in the case of the death of a family member. Five days' family leave is granted in the case of the death of a spouse, child or parent. Three days' leave is granted in the case of the death of a brother, sister, grandparent, aunt, uncle or parent-in-law. Substitute cover is provided for bereavement leave.

### Marriage leave

Marriage leave may be granted to a teacher if they marry during the school term. Marriage leave may be up to seven consecutive days' leave

from the date of the marriage. These seven days include Saturday and Sunday and must include the date of the marriage. There is no substitution cover for this leave.






**Develop and increase connection with Europe through Erasmus+, the European Commission's programme for learners and educators in schools, training, youth and sport.**

Erasmus+ offers funding for projects designed to improve education provision across Europe, including mobility for school staff (Key Action 1) and strategic partnerships for schools (Key Action 2).

Deadlines: 4 March 2015 (KA1) & 30 April 2015 (KA2).  
Information sessions will be held in winter 2014.  
Erasmus+ is managed in Ireland by Léargas.

**For more information, visit**  
[www.leargas.ie](http://www.leargas.ie)  
[www.twitter.com/leargas](https://twitter.com/leargas)

## No Hate Speech movement

The No Hate Speech movement launched in Ireland on September 24. The Council of Europe initiative aims to build awareness of and to challenge online hate speech. The campaign provides resources and ideas to empower young people to challenge racism, sexism, homophobia, islamophobia, disablism and all other forms of intolerance in a variety of ways.

Bookmark is the campaign's resource manual for teachers, which contains a number of activities for groups of 13-18 year olds designed to address hate speech through human rights education. Other ways schools can participate in the project include working in groups to develop counter narratives about groups who are frequently discriminated against, signing the no hate speech pledge or reporting hate speech online through the campaign's website or social media sites. The campaign will run until March 2015. For more information see [www.nohatespeech.ie](http://www.nohatespeech.ie).

## Education Research Conference

Limerick and Clare Education Centres invite expressions of interest from education researchers to present papers on current issues in education at the Limerick and Clare Education Centres' Second Education Research Conference 2015. The theme of the conference is 'Challenges and Opportunities in Education in 2015 & Going Forward'. Applications will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. The closing date for submission of the fully completed research paper for the conference journal is Friday February 13, 2015 and Powerpoint presentations to be used by presenters must be submitted not later than Friday February, 27, 2015.

The conference will be held in Limerick Education Centre, Government, Marshal House, Dooradoyle Road, Limerick on Saturday, March 7. Enquiries by email only to: Mr Pat Hanrahan, [pat@clareed.ie](mailto:pat@clareed.ie); Dr Joe O'Connell PhD, [joe@lec.ie](mailto:joe@lec.ie) or to the conference co-ordinator Dr Kevin Haugh PhD, [kevinmhaugh@gmail.com](mailto:kevinmhaugh@gmail.com).

## Habitat Ireland

Habitat Ireland offers a schools programme for teams of Transition Year and older students, working in some of the world's poorest communities. As well as building homes with local communities, volunteers experience the unique and vibrant culture of the country they visit. To find out more, including cost and training, please contact Habitat Ireland by emailing [mary@habitatireland.ie](mailto:mary@habitatireland.ie) or by calling 01-531 0034. Application forms are available at [www.habitatireland.ie](http://www.habitatireland.ie).

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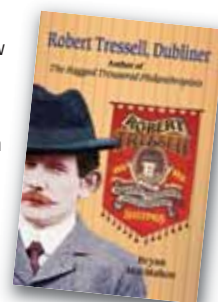
## Volunteers needed to take part in survey

Are you a qualified teacher who taught overseas for a minimum of two years? Are you currently teaching in Ireland for a minimum of one year? If so, I would very much appreciate if you would complete a short survey as part of my doctoral research project, which examines the experiences of repatriated Irish teachers.

Please email me at [M.NAGLE4@nuigalway.ie](mailto:M.NAGLE4@nuigalway.ie) by Friday November 28, 2014.

## Story of an author

ASTI member Bryan MacMahon has written a new book, *Robert Tressell, Dubliner: Author of The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* about Robert Tressell, author of the book which became known in Britain as the socialist bible. Tressell was born Robert Noonan in Dublin in 1870 and then moved to Britain where, under the pseudonym Robert Tressell, he wrote *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*.



Bryan MacMahon's book tells the story of Tressell's life and the discovery of his manuscript, which was first published by his daughter in an abridged version in 1914. MacMahon's book also includes significant new information about Tressell's Irish background and early years.

*Robert Tressell, Dubliner: Author of The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* is published on a non-profit basis by Kilmacud Stillorgan Local History Society and all profits go to Barnardos. To obtain a copy for €10 please contact Bryan MacMahon, Kilmacud Stillorgan LHS, 92 Stillorgan Wood, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

## Calling all newly retired teachers!

The RSTA needs your support now. Join us and our retired colleagues in the Alliance of Retired Public Servants in the campaign to have pension reductions reversed. Complete the RSTA application form today.

### And serving teachers!

Are you aware of colleagues who have retired or who are thinking of retiring? Retired teachers need the specialised support that the RSTA provides. It promotes the interests of retired secondary teachers through its membership of the Retired Workers' Committee of the ICTU and also the Alliance of Retired Public Servants, which has now been recognised by Minister Howlin as the official representative body for retired public servants.

The RSTA also offers members the facility to remain in contact with other retired secondary teachers for regular outings, trips and other social activities. It provides them with information and is committed to maintaining the fight for justice for retired public servants. So if you know of any colleagues who have recently retired or are thinking of retiring, we would be really grateful to receive their details. It would help us a lot but would also do your friends a favour.



## Membership Application/Renewal


First Name: _____	Surname: _____
Address: _____ _____	
Home Phone: _____	Mobile: _____
Email: _____	RSTA Branch: _____

### Annual Subscription €24. Payment options:

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

### PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO:

**RSTA National Treasurer:** Mrs Muriel McNicholas, Cordarragh, Kiltimagh, Co Mayo.  
 [murielmcnicholas@gmail.com](mailto:murielmcnicholas@gmail.com)     (085) 1181330.

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS using black or blue pen.			
To The Manager: _____ <small>(Name of Member's Bank):</small>		Date: ____ / ____ /20	
Bank Branch and Full Address: _____			
<i>I hereby authorise and request you to DEBIT my account.</i>			
Bank Account No:	<div style="display: flex; gap: 5px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div> </div>	National Sort Code (NSC):	<div style="display: flex; gap: 5px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div> </div>
Account Name: _____	with the amount of <b>€24.</b>	Amount in words: <b>Twenty Four Euro</b>	
Frequency: <b>Annually</b> Until Further Notice	Start Date for payment:	Date: ____ / ____ /20	
And to CREDIT the account held in the name of:			
<b>Retired Secondary Teachers' Association</b>	AIB Bank, Sutton Branch IBAN: IE55 AIBK 9323 6112 7290 80	NSC: 93-23-61	Account Number: 12729-080 BIC: AIBKIE2D
Member's Name & RSTA Branch: _____ <small>(To identify the member's payment on the RSTA bank statement)</small>			
 Member's Signature: _____		Date: ____ / ____ /20	
<b>(You can cancel this Standing Order instruction at any time by writing to your Bank. The amount of the payment authorised above may not be altered except by your instruction to your Bank.)</b>			




**WIN  
€200**

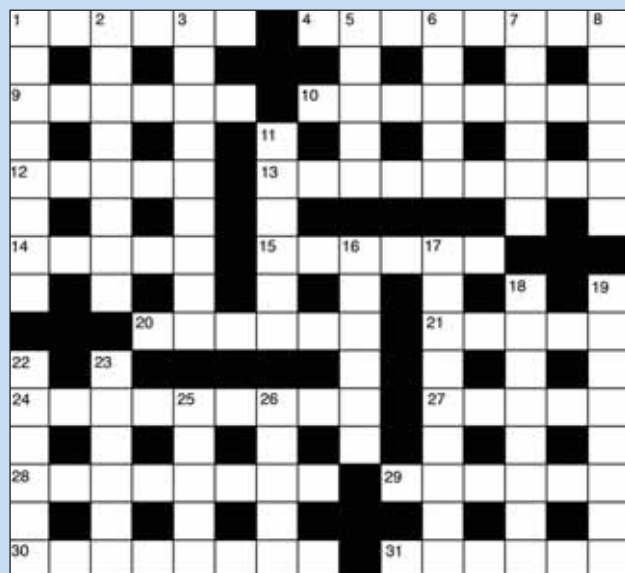
Sponsored by ASTI Credit Union



## ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 1405

**The winner will receive €200**

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



Name

School

Address

ASTI Branch

Entries to: ASTIR Crossword No. 1405, Think Media,  
The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, December 5, 2014

**CLUES ACROSS:**

- 1 See 24 across. (9, 8, 6)
- 4 See 24 across. (9, 8, 6)
- 9 Aggrieved at it being forwarded on (6)
- 10 Da is up for the choice of taking the child as his own (8)
- 12 Irish water! (5)
- 13 Something unorthodox with mix of each litre? (9)
- 14 Baby Doc ruled here (5)
- 15 Call amen to include a requiem (6)
- 20 Concealed sharpshooter, he could cut the queen (6)
- 21 All charged up (5)
- 24 Formerly the VECs (9, 8, 6)
- 27 Personnel, Payroll and Related Systems in short (5)
- 28 Journalist uses cutting implements (8)
- 29 SPHE ready for the globe (6)
- 30 Going all around the roster (8)
- 31 A rag 'tis all for nothing (6)

**CLUES DOWN:**

- 1 A cry of pain in the carriage (8)
- 2 He killed a couple of donkeys in the end (8)
- 3 Sounds like foppish animal, could be a wine maker (9)
- 5 A jockey could be an additional legal clause! (5)
- 6 Computer data, for example (5)
- 7 Though coy in the end, it was extreme stupidity (6)
- 8 "Do not go ..... into that good night" (Dylan Thomas) (6)
- 11 See 26 down. ASTI President (6,5)
- 16 You might find this breed of sheep in Rome (6)
- 17 Times – daily or weekly (9)
- 18 Tears get to be unsurpassable (8)
- 19 Greek Ulysses (8)
- 22 The remote thermostat could tie you up (6)
- 23 Regular news bulletin from ASTI (6)
- 25 It's a plus (5)
- 26 See 11 down. (6,5)

**Solution to ASTIR Crossword  
No. 1404**

Across	Down
1. A framework for	2. Frisson
10. Rainier	3. Arid
11. Cardiac	4. Earned
12. Nest	5. Orchid
13. Debit	6. Kirk
15. Iago	7. Origami
17. Dud	8. Trent Johnston
19. Junior	9. School steward
21. Jovial	14. Bucolic
22. Aerosol	16. Board
23. Harare	18. Solar
25. Savant	20. Ree
27. Bib	21. JOS
29. Sole	24. Relieve
30. Cycle	26. Acerbic
31. Meow	27. Bygone
34. Oregano	28. Blasts
35. Slobber	32. Talc
36. Teachers' Voice	33. Logo

**DID YOU MISS?**

New deal for non-permanent teachers  
Change of rules for posts of responsibility

page 10  
page 26

**Congratulations**

Congratulations to the winner  
of Crossword No. 1404:  
Tom McCarthy, Chanel College,  
Coolock, Dublin 5. Dublin  
North Branch member.

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\*Source: Cornmarket (July 2014)

\*\*Source: Zurich Life Claims Department (March 2014)

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Terms & Conditions: Offer available to new entrants from 01/06/2014. To avail of the half-price offer, you must be under the age of 40 and a NEW ENTRANT to the Scheme. You cannot have been a member of another Salary/Income Protection Scheme through Cornmarket in the past. The closing date for new entrants availing of this half-price offer is 31/12/2014.

