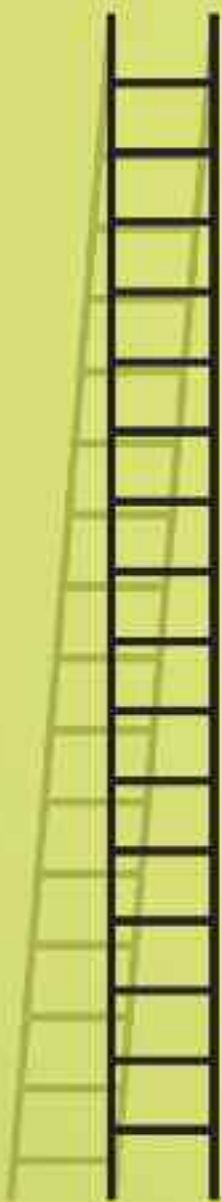


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Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland

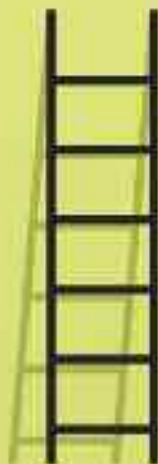
Campaign for equal pay continues



Pre - 2011



2011



2012

Equal pay

Union activism

Pensions

Global Passport Award

DEADLINE:
28 FEB 2018

**Recognising and rewarding schools for their
quality development education work**

GLOBAL PASSPORT AWARD

The Global Passport Award is a Development Education (DE) quality mark, which offers schools a framework to integrate DE into their teaching and learning.

It is a self-assessed and externally-audited accreditation for DE that is open to all post-primary schools in the Republic of Ireland.

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for emerging
engagement with
Development
Education



Diplomatic Passport
for established
engagement with
Development
Education



Special Passport
for exceptional
engagement with
Development
Education

What is involved?

You review and rate your school's level of DE activity across 7 categories (Passport 'stamps') providing examples for what your school is doing in each. The total score achieved across all 7 stamps will determine which of the three Passport types is awarded.

What are the benefits?

The Global Passport provides:

- A pathway for students to explore and take action on local to global issues
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What supports are offered?

WWGS provide a range of free supports:

- Workshops and support visits
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What is Development Education?

Also known as Global Citizenship Education, Development Education (DE) enables students to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to become global citizens who take action to transform the world we live in for the better.

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HOW DO I APPLY?

For more information please contact:

Tel: 01 663 2076

Email: global_passport@worldwiseschools.ie

Web: <http://www.worldwiseschools.ie/register-your-interest/>

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AUSTERITY STILL PREVAILS IN OUR SCHOOLS

Second-level schools have little to look forward to next year in terms of the restoration of key education cutbacks. Despite the fact that it is now more than four years since the Government announced that the recession was over and economic growth had returned, Budget 2018 fails to deliver for our young people. Austerity continues to prevail in second-level schools.

Before the recession, the ASTI commissioned research on class size at Junior Cycle level. Teachers of English, maths and history were asked to log the number of students in their classes for one week. The research found unacceptably large class sizes at second level. For example, 61% of third year students were in classes of 25 or more for English; 14% were in classes of 30 or more. That was in 2007. Since then, the allocation ratio has been increased from 18:1 to 19:1. This means even larger class sizes for many students.

As well as cuts to classroom teachers, certain specialist teaching posts were cut during the recession including guidance counselling. While some of the ex-quota guidance provision has been restored, the cut has not been fully reversed. The same is true of posts of responsibility, despite commitments of restoration.

This issue of *ASTIR* contains a report on the findings of the annual OECD study *Education at a Glance 2017*. The study confirms once again that investment in education pays dividends in every area of young people's lives – their employment chances, their health, their participation in communities, and much more. It also pays dividends across all areas of national life including social cohesion, crime levels and, of course, the economy. The OECD report states that Ireland needs to invest more in its education services (see page 12).

One of the consequences of the education cuts has been the curtailment of student mental health/pastoral care services in schools. Earlier this month I attended the launch of Comhairle Na nÓg research on young people's experiences of second-level education. Just under half of the students surveyed said they were satisfied with the level of access to guidance counselling in their schools. The ongoing 'Growing Up in Ireland' study recently reported that 94% of 17-18 year olds believe they could talk to their teachers if they had a problem. These pieces of research reinforce the importance of young people having supportive adults in their lives – adults that they can access when they need to. New initiatives and programmes have no hope of working if there are not enough teachers in schools and if the teachers who are there are over stretched and frequently tied up with administrative duties.

Equal pay

Equal pay is the number one issue for the ASTI at this time (see page 8). Speaking to post-2010 teachers all over the country in the past number of months, I am extremely concerned about the impact of unequal pay and job insecurity on their drive and enthusiasm. These talented and committed teachers are struggling with the way entry into the teaching profession is treating them. These teachers are in daily contact with the next generation of teachers and their morale is vital for the future of teaching and education.



RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROBLEMS WORSEN

The ASTI – along with the INTO, the TUI and the other public sector unions – is currently participating in a process to examine recruitment and retention problems in the public sector under the Public Service Stability Agreement 2018-2020. Since 2011 new public sector employees have been placed on inferior pay scales. In addition to a pay cut, all new entrants to the public sector start on the first point of their salary scale. This has had a disproportionately negative impact on teachers who, prior to 2011, were appointed to the third point of the teachers' pay scale in recognition of their pre-service education. On top of all this, in February 2012 qualification allowances were abolished for teachers, further disadvantaging those entering the profession from 2012 onwards. While some progress has been made in closing the significant pay gap between pre- and post-2010 teachers, it is nowhere near enough. Teachers who are five and six years into their career have already lost thousands of euro. A recent OECD report, *Education at a Glance 2017*, found that starting salaries for teachers in Ireland are lower than the OECD average, and Ireland is an expensive country to live in. In a RED C survey published in April of this year, 83% of recently-qualified teachers said their level of pay was a cause of job dissatisfaction.

In the same survey, 55% of new teachers said being able to help young people was the main reason why they entered the profession. More than 60% have qualifications in addition to their teaching qualifications. Two-thirds are in precarious employment – working in temporary and/or part-time positions. The lack of job security and a decent standard of living means that young teachers are now voting with their feet and either leaving the profession or the country. Young people are turning away from teaching as a career, as evidenced recently in the drop in the number of CAO applicants for teacher education courses.

There is growing evidence of retention and recruitment problems at second level. Schools are finding it more and more difficult to recruit teachers in areas such as technology and science subjects, home economics, maths and languages, as increasing numbers of graduates in these fields find stable and better-remunerated work in other professions. Despite the fact that the ASTI has been warning of these consequences for many years, the Department of Education and Skills is only now reacting, as demonstrated by the recent plea to homemakers to re-enter the workforce as teachers.

The number of students entering second-level schools is increasing. In addition to navigating an increasingly complex society, these students will later enter a significantly more competitive global labour market. It is essential that we attract high-calibre people into teaching. We also need to ensure that our committed and talented teachers stay teaching. The solution is clear and was recently affirmed by the OECD in *Education at a Glance 2017*, which stated that countries wishing to increase the supply of teachers “might consider offering attractive starting wages and career prospects”. Let's hope the Government listens before it is too late.



Irish Aid meeting on education



From left: Anne Payne (formerly of Blackrock College, now seconded as Development Education Officer to Irish Aid), Garret Campbell (CEO, Global Schoolroom), and Moira Leydon (ASTI Assistant General Secretary) at the Irish Aid briefing meeting in September on mobilising finance to achieve its Sustainable Development Goal 4: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

ASTI at ICTU Summer School



From left: Moira Leydon (ASTI Assistant General Secretary), Miriam Duggan (ASTI Standing Committee), and Ann Piggott (ASTI Standing Committee) at the annual Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Global Solidarity Summer School in August. The theme of the 2017 Summer School was 'Building Solidarity in Challenging Times'.

Stamp marks 50 years of free secondary education

Fifty years ago in 1967, then Minister for Education, Donogh O'Malley, announced plans for free second-level education throughout Ireland. Now, a commemorative stamp from An Post marks that significant milestone in Irish life.

The stamp, by leading designer Ger Garland with photography by Alan Betson, features Lauren Dench and Michael Duke (pictured below), two students at Gorey Community School in Wexford, the largest second-level school in the country. A first day cover, designed to accompany the stamp, includes a portrait of O'Malley, who served as Minister for Education from 1966 until his death in 1968.

It is widely accepted that the introduction of free second-level education changed the face of modern Ireland. Reports of the time indicate that about a third of all children dropped out of education after finishing primary school. At 15 years of age, fewer than 50% were still in full-time education. By age 16, only 36% were still at school.

The commemorative stamp and first day cover are available from main post offices, the stamp counters at Dublin's GPO, or online at www.irishstamps.ie.



Did you know ?

Did you know that if you joined the Secondary Teachers' Superannuation Scheme prior to 2013 you can use an online tool to calculate your future pension benefits or compare the value of your pension if you leave in different years?

The Pensions Modeller is available on the Department of Education and Skills (DES) website at: <http://penmod.education.ie/despen/>.



Your ASTI vote: have we got your correct contact details?

The ASTI regularly ballots its members on key issues. Ballots may be conducted via the school structure or by posting individual ballot papers to members' home addresses. It is therefore vital that ASTI Head Office has your up-to-date contact details, including:

- your school address
 - your home address
 - your mobile number
 - your email address
- to ensure you have your vote.

If you have changed your school or home address recently, please email your most up-to-date information and contact details to membership@asti.ie. Please note that the best time to do this is well before a ballot. For administrative reasons, ballot material is prepared in advance of any ballot voting period. Once ballot papers are issued they cannot be rescinded. Being a member of the ASTI means that you get to participate in important decisions that affect your career, teaching as a profession, and the education service.



Learn about Uachtarán na hÉireann

A new interactive website provides young people with an easier way to learn about the role of the President of Ireland, the history of the office and its functions. Among the features on the site are a virtual tour of the public rooms of Áras an Uachtaráin, and videos providing information on the history of the Áras and the constitutional role of the President. There is also a quiz to provide students with a challenge to check their knowledge. The website is available in English at: www.president.ie/en/childrens-section, or in Irish at: <http://www.president.ie/ga/childrens-section>.

Apply now for ASTI scholarship

The ASTI Centenary Scholarship is an annual award of €4,000, which aims to assist ASTI members in undertaking further third-level studies. The Scholarship is awarded each spring to the applicant whose education plans best match the following criteria:

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

Any ASTI member who is currently in service or on paid study leave can apply for the Scholarship. Those studying on both a full- and part-time basis are eligible to apply.

For more information or to download an application form visit: www.asti.ie/asti-membership/services-and-benefits/services/asti-scholarship-award/.



From left: Ed Byrne (then ASTI President), Patrick Glover (2017 ASTI Centenary Scholarship recipient), and Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary).

Teaching Council news: retrospective vetting update

At present, 90% of the 100,000 teachers on the Register of Teachers have been vetted. On September 11, the Teaching Council issued notices to the remaining 16,500 registered teachers who are now required to be vetted.

If you are one of these teachers, you are asked to comply with both stages of the vetting application process in the 28-day timeframe specified in order for you to be eligible to renew your registration on your renewal date.

Due to the high volume of applications being received and processed at present, the turnaround time for applications once received has increased from one week to approximately four weeks. You can log in to the National Vetting Bureau website and use your vetting application number to check the status of your application.

If you have been previously vetted through the Council, you are exempt from the retrospective vetting requirement. You can check your vetting

status by logging onto the 'My Registration' section of the Teaching Council website – www.teachingcouncil.ie. If your vetting status is "approved", then you are exempt from the retrospective vetting process. You can take a screenshot of the vetting status screen to present to your employer.

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) Circular 0016/2017 sets out the statutory requirements for the retrospective vetting of teaching staff. The statutory vetting requirements for teachers changing schools/jobs continue to apply, as set out in DES Circular 31/2016.

More information is available at the FAQ section of the Teaching Council website, which has retrospective vetting FAQs for teachers and schools/principals. The FAQ section of the DES website also provides information regarding the retrospective vetting process.

School steward training

The ASTI organised school steward training in venues around Ireland in September and October. Over 130 school stewards attended the training sessions, which included updates on national issues facing ASTI members

as well as information on the role of ASTI school stewards and how school stewards can help members in their schools.



World Teachers' Day celebrations at ASTI school steward training in Sligo. From left: Noreen Friel (Pobalscoil Chlioch), Emir Murphy (Summerhill College), Luke Saunders (Jesus and Mary Secondary School), Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary), Freda Carr (St Attracta's College), and Ger Curtin (ASTI President). (Photographer: Frances Muldoon.)

Pink and Blue Power update



In January 2017, the ASTI teamed up with Cornmarket and Irish Life to launch the Pink and Blue Power breast and prostate health assessment service for the 5,000 members of the ASTI Salary Protection Scheme.

All assessments and referrals have now been completed and six ASTI members were diagnosed with cancer through the service: five with prostate cancer and one with breast cancer. Thankfully, their outlook is good, due to early detection and swift intervention provided by the programme.

Members were cared for by staff in the Bon Secours Private Hospital and Beaumont Private Clinic in Dublin, and treatment plans put in place.

The numbers:

- 1,165 assessments took place
- 308 customers were referred for further tests
- 259 customers had scans (mammogram/ultrasound/MRI)
- 26 customers had a biopsy
- 99% said the service was excellent, good or very good.

Increasing awareness

As well as providing the service, an important part of the programme was to increase awareness and education around risk factors, family history and symptoms. Female members were also given resources on how to self-check. Members were surveyed after their assessment and 89% of women said they are now more confident about self-checking and 84% of males said they knew more about prostate health and symptoms to be aware of. For more information on breast or prostate cancer visit:

www.breastcancerireland.com or www.cancer.ie

Pink Power	Total
Invites sent	3,720
GP assessments	823
Referral consultations	247
Mammograms and ultrasounds	244
Biopsies	17
Surgeries performed	10
Positive breast cancer diagnosis	1

(Source: Beaumont Private Clinic, August 2017)

Blue Power	Total
Invites sent	1,578
GP assessments	342
Referral consultations	61
Imaging (MRI/CT scan)	15
Biopsies	9
Positive prostate cancer diagnosis	5

(Source: Bon Secours Private Hospital Dublin, October 17)

EQUAL PAY CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

New entrants' pay is currently under discussion under the Public Service Stability Agreement.



The ASTI is participating in new entrant pay talks along with the other public sector unions. The talks are taking place under clause 4.1.3. of the Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA). This provides for “an examination of the remaining salary scale issues in respect of post-January 2011 recruits at entry grades covered by parties to this Agreement within 12 months of the commencement of this Agreement”.

The fact that the PSSA does not contain a commitment to resolving the issue of unequal pay for teachers during its lifetime is a key reason why the three teacher unions rejected the Agreement. While the first meeting on new entrant pay under the PSSA took place in October, it remains to be seen if this process will lead to an acceptable outcome for the ASTI and the other teacher unions.

Recruitment and retention issues

A separate process under the PSSA will examine recruitment and retention issues in areas of the public sector. The ASTI will make a submission to this process in the coming weeks, along with other public sector unions.

Difficulties with recruitment and retention of teachers in Irish second-level schools were flagged well over a decade ago by the ASTI, and also by the OECD in its 2005 report ‘Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers’. In the Irish context, one of the most significant problems is the casualisation of entry into teaching. The ASTI has consistently warned that the corrosion of teacher morale was adding to the pull-factor of emigration after graduation. The introduction of differential salary scales in 2011 has greatly exacerbated this.

Retention and recruitment problems are now reaching crisis levels. Schools are increasingly reporting difficulties appointing teachers in certain subject areas such as technology, science, home economics, and languages. Extreme difficulties are being experienced in securing qualified substitute teachers across many subject areas.

In addition to job insecurity and inferior pay arrangements, our post-2010 teachers are impacted by factors such as the high cost of rental accommodation and housing in urban areas, high childcare costs, and poor public transport infrastructure.

Timeline of equal pay campaign – read about the campaign at www.asti.ie

- 2011**
 - New teachers’ pay cut by 10%
 - New teachers appointed to the first point of the pay scale instead of the third point
- 2012**
 - Qualification allowances for new entrants abolished
- 2013**
 - Partial restoration of 2011 and 2012 entrants’ pay
 - Significant pay gap remains – up to 21% between pre-2010 new teachers and those on the 2012 scale
- 2015**
 - The ASTI rejects the Lansdowne Road Agreement
- 2016**
 - Further partial restoration for post 2011-entrants only under the Lansdowne Road Agreement, but significant pay gap remains
 - ASTI members vote to take strike action over post-2010 teachers’ pay
 - ASTI members take two days of strike action over post-2010 teachers’ pay
- 2017**
 - Pay talks include commitment to examine new entrant pay, but no commitment on delivery of equal pay
 - PSSA rejected by the ASTI, INTO and TUI
 - Teacher unions – including the ASTI – attend talks on new entrants’ pay
 - ASTI Central Executive Council continues suspension of industrial action pending outcome of new entrant pay talks

**Seminar at Yad Vashem,
International School, Jerusalem**

Continuous Professional Development
for teachers and educators

08-16 July 2018



© Yad Vashem, Jerusalem

An eight-day programme for teachers at Yad Vashem International School for Holocaust Studies. This course is specifically tailored for Irish teachers, providing an in-depth exposure to the many facets of the Holocaust, working at the exceptional Holocaust Museum and Archives Centre, participating in a trail of resources, experiential and personal testimonies.

Fee: €1,500/teacher

This programme can be taken independently or as part of the Certificate in Holocaust Education awarded by Trinity College.



For further information contact our teacher education programme co-ordinator

Holocaust Education Trust Ireland, 31 Fitzwilliam, Lower Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.
Tel: + 353 1 8970025 Email: info@holocaust.ie www.holocaust.ie

 Holocaust Education Trust Ireland
Learning from the Past, Inspiring the Future

Berlin Study Visit

18-21 April 2017



© Yad Vashem, Jerusalem

A visit to the city of Berlin in the country where National Socialism originated. It includes an overview of Jewish Berlin and its history and a bus visit to a historic Holocaust site. Working with Holocaust scholars and educators, the programme allows participants to grasp the gravity of the Holocaust and its resonance within the city.

Visit includes:

- Tour of Jewish Museum, Topography of Terror Exhibition, Walking Tour with a focus on Jewish historical sites and commemoration of Nazi victims; Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe; House of the Wannsee Conference; Birkenwald Deportation Site; Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp; The Anne Frank Centre; Otto Weill House and the Silent Heroes Archive

Cost: €1,000 (includes of travel, hotel, luggage, meals and entrance fees)

For further information contact our teacher education programme co-ordinator

Holocaust Education Trust Ireland, 31 Fitzwilliam, Lower Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.
Tel: + 353 1 8970025 Email: info@holocaust.ie www.holocaust.ie

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OF
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BY
LITERATURE
THROUGH

CBS KILKENNY, OCT 2017

Students completing second level:



EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2017

Ireland: 1.6% of GDP

Ireland 32nd out of 34 countries in second-level education investment

SCHOOLS DOING WELL, BUT INVESTMENT NEEDED

Underinvestment in schools and lagging teachers' salaries are a threat to Ireland's quality education system. GEMMA TUFFY reports.

The OECD report *Education at a Glance 2017* shows that Ireland's second-level education service is performing well, despite the fact that investment in education is below the OECD average.

Ireland's school completion rate is the third highest in the world. In Ireland, 91% of students complete second-level education, compared to the OECD average of 68%. The proportion of the population in Ireland with tertiary education is six percentage points higher than the OECD average.

The benefits of education are emphasised by the OECD. Adults who have completed second-level education are more likely to be in employment, achieve better pay, and are at a lower risk for experiencing depression than those with less education. Those who transfer to third level do even better. This is particularly the case for Ireland, where tertiary-educated people enjoy a somewhat greater earnings advantage than the OECD average. For example, in Ireland those with a bachelor's degree or equivalent earn 70% more than those with second-level education only. Employment rates in Ireland are much lower than the OECD average for those without tertiary education. Related data, showing the percentage of young people who are NEETs (not in education, employment or training) is disconcerting: 18.2% of young people in Ireland are NEETs, compared to the OECD average of 15.3%.

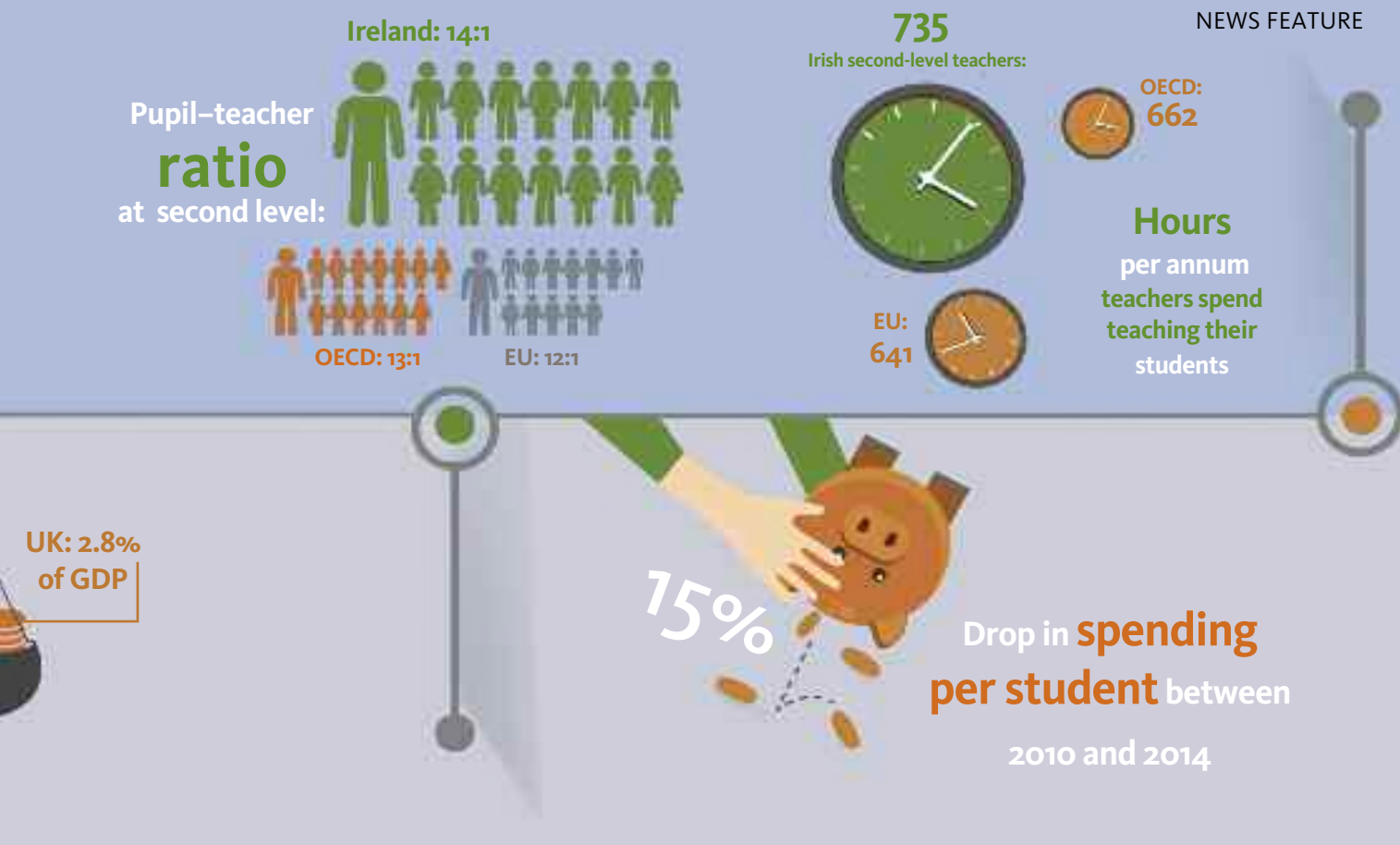
Fact: The OECD average expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP is 5.2%, compared to 4.8% for Ireland.

Ireland needs to invest more

The report states that spending on education in Ireland needs to increase. Ireland invests a lower percentage of GDP in second-level education than its international counterparts; the report ranks Ireland 32nd out of 34 countries. In 2014, expenditure on second-level education as a percentage of GDP was 1.6% in Ireland, compared to the OECD average of 2.1%. Across all education levels – preschool, primary, secondary and further education/third level – the average expenditure as a percentage of GDP was 5.2%, compared to 4.8% in Ireland.

Between 2010 and 2014, Ireland's expenditure per student fell by 15% from primary to post second-level (non-tertiary level). According to the OECD, this reduced investment in education occurred at a time when student numbers increased significantly.

“In Ireland, at least 90% of children are enrolled in school from the age of five to the age of 18 and the enrolment rate reaches 97% for 15 to 19 year olds, well above the OECD average and the highest among countries with data available.”



Teachers' salaries

Across the OECD, teachers' salaries are low compared to other similarly educated full-time workers, states *Education at a Glance 2017*. The report finds that upper second-level teachers earn approximately 94% of the average graduate salary. There is no equivalent figure for Ireland for the gap between the earnings of second-level teachers and other graduate-entry professions. However, the most recent Irish data for this indicator (published in *Education at a Glance 2014*) found teachers in Ireland earning approximately 81% of the country's average graduate salary. New teachers' salaries in Ireland are below the OECD and EU averages. The report warns that lagging salaries are a key obstacle for attracting young people into teaching.

Teaching time

Once again, *Education at a Glance 2017* provides the evidence that Irish second-level teachers spend more time teaching than many of their OECD counterparts. In Ireland, second-level teachers spend 735 hours per annum teaching their students, compared to the OECD average of 662 hours and the EU average of 641 hours. Students benefit from above average tuition time in Ireland – 918 hours per annum compared to the OECD average of 913 and EU average of 892.

Good news for science

In Ireland, a higher percentage of students study science, maths, and information and communications technologies at tertiary level than in other countries – 18% of new entrants in Ireland, compared to the OECD average of 11%. As in a number of countries, business, administration and law are the most popular fields of study,

Fact: Ireland is one of a handful of countries to score highly on both quality and equity in the OECD 2015 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA ranks the performance of 15 year olds across a range of academic and other domains.

“More than an end in itself, education is a means to deliver our vision of tomorrow.”

with 24% of graduates at tertiary level, similar to the OECD average.

Pupil-teacher ratio

Ireland's pupil-teacher ratio at second-level (14:1) is higher than the OECD average (13:1) and the EU average (12:1).



Gemma Tuffy

Gemma is the ASTI's Media and Communications Officer.

Education at a Glance

Education at a Glance is the authoritative source for information on the state of education around the world. This annual OECD report provides key information on: the impact of learning across countries; the financial and human resources invested in education; access, participation and progression in education; and, the learning environment and organisation of schools. Read the report at www.oecd.org.



RESEARCH AND POLICY UPDATE

A major study of Irish children has positive things to say about the transition to secondary school, while Government policy aims to support Gaeltacht schools. MOIRA LEYDON reports.

Off to a good start? Primary school experiences and the transition to second-level education

The latest report from 'Growing up in Ireland' – the national longitudinal study of young people – focuses on the transition to second-level education. Started in 2006, it has already provided valuable data on the quality of our children's lives, and their experiences of home, school and community, including the difficulties



they face arising from differing social, ethnic and family backgrounds.

The most recent 'Growing up in Ireland' report documents the experiences of children as they settle into second-level school. The report is highly affirmative of second-level schools. The vast majority of children are happy at school and feel that they have settled in well. Given that their transition from primary school took place in the middle of the recession, the report is a timely validation of teachers' professionalism and schools' commitment to children's wellbeing.

Key findings from the report are:

- Most young people settle well into the new school but around one-fifth are anxious about making new friends and miss their primary school friends.
- Young people become less confident about their own academic abilities as they move into second-level education and face new academic demands.
- Girls experience greater transition difficulties than boys. Transition difficulties are greater among those from more disadvantaged backgrounds and among young people with special educational needs.
- Social relationships play a protective role over this period of change. Young people have fewer transition difficulties if they have more friends and if they have better communication with their parents.
- The quality of interaction with teachers plays a crucial role in the entire transition process. Children feel most secure in the transition to second level when they have positive relationships with their teachers.
- Primary school experiences set the tone for later experiences; young people who were already negative about school, their teachers and school subjects at the age of nine are more likely to be negative about their experiences within second-level education. Those with low reading test scores at nine are more negative about school at the age of 13. Having low maths test scores and more negative attitudes to maths at the age of nine are found to be particularly important in shaping later engagement with the subject.

Supporting Gaeltacht schools ... enriching our linguistic heritage

The Department of Education and Skills Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022 was launched in 2016. It aims to strengthen the use of Irish in Gaeltacht communities by supporting Gaeltacht schools. The decline in the use of Irish as a community language is well documented – as are the challenges faced by Gaeltacht schools. Schools and other educational settings, especially early childhood centres, are central to passing on the language to future generations, and enriching the linguistic and cultural heritage.

Research by the Department and academic experts underlined the high-quality Irish-medium education in many Gaeltacht schools. However, in some schools in the Gaeltacht, Irish-medium education is either not available or only partially available. The new policy will encourage as many schools as possible to provide education fully through Irish, so that Irish-medium schooling will be the preferred option for parents in the Gaeltacht.

Measures to support this objective include:

- enhanced school recognition scheme
- support for whole-school planning
- support for schools to integrate with the Gaeltacht Language Planning Area process
- professional development for teachers
- benefiting from linkages with other Gaeltacht services and supports.

Gaeltacht schools have up to January 31, 2018, to apply for recognition under the scheme. The Department has established a dedicated unit to support the implementation of the five-year strategy.

Go n'eirí linn!!



Moira Leydon

Moira is ASTI Assistant General Secretary: Education and Research.

THE CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

ASTI media interviews have focused on members' commitment to the restoration of equal pay.

"We have all three teacher unions on the same page, and on the same issue: that of the post-2010 entrants to the teaching profession. Now many of those are five or six years now on a different salary scale to their colleagues and this number keeps growing year on year. This is causing all sorts of difficulties in schools, with problems recruiting teachers, and it's leading to some subjects being left without qualified teachers."

Ger Curtin, ASTI President, *Six One News*, RTÉ 1, October 23, 2017

"Just because people vote no doesn't mean that we're going to be out on the streets. As you know, we have suspended our industrial action from last year's dispute and that's where we are at the moment. So the notion that ASTI members are going to be out of their classrooms in the short to medium term: that doesn't arise at this stage."

Ger Curtin, ASTI President, *Six One News*, RTÉ 1, September 9, 2017

"But obviously, you know, when it comes to investment, we're ranked 32 out of 34 in the OECD countries. So we're third in performance, in completion rates, but 32 out of 34 in investment. In Ireland we invest 1.6% of GDP in second-level education whereas the OECD average is 2.1%. I know you can bamboozle people with figures and people want to know, what does that really mean? Teachers are doing more in Ireland with less and I think that's an important message ... During the crisis, many countries saw that education was the key to the future and they invested further in education, whereas in Ireland, we dropped our investment in education by 15%. So it is important that we invest in our future. It's not just about economics and jobs. It's about society as a whole. Education is the key to so many good things in our society."

Breda Lynch, ASTI Vice President, *Northside Today*, Near FM, September 21, 2017

"Our members have rejected the Public Service Stability Agreement by a tight margin of 51.5% to 48.5%. First of all what I would say is the tight margin has to be seen against the backdrop that our members have taken very severe punishment over a number of years now in relation to the use of FEMPI legislation and so on, so it's great credit to them that they still stand four square behind their colleagues who are on lesser pay and that the campaign continues ... We are going to continue to fight this very just campaign. Some of the members that I'm talking to on the ground have been putting up with this inequality now for five or six years and, you know, losing €5,000-€6,000. It's substantial losses per annum; over a career it multiplies to an enormous amount of money, so it has to be brought to an end sooner rather than later."

Kieran Christie, ASTI General Secretary, *Drivetime*, RTÉ Radio One, October 23, 2017.

"An fáth is mó taobh thiar den toradh ná an frustrachas le brath i measc na mball mar gheall ar an bpá míchothrom."

Moira Leydon, Árd Rúnaí Cúnta, ag labhairt le TG4 faoi thoradh na ballóide, *Deireadh Fómhair* 23, 2017

"The minister described it as the biggest education budget ever. There will be more teaching posts and more special needs posts and more special needs assistants, which is a good thing, but he has totally sidestepped the big issue of teachers' pay. There was no mention of equal pay or wages, which is what is on the minds of most teachers. New entrants are being paid frighteningly low salaries and this needs to be addressed."

Darren Murphy, ASTI member, *Irish Daily Mail*, October 11, 2017



Keith Howley on picket duty.

Gloria Helen receiving an ASTI award. Sinéad Moore speaking at ASTI Convention.

WHY WE GOT INVOLVED IN THE ASTI

Members are not just the foundation of a union, they are the union. *ASTIR* spoke to five teachers about why they got involved in trade unionism and what drives them on.



James Howley, St Nathy’s College, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon – School steward, East Mayo Branch Secretary and CEC member

I got involved with the ASTI from the first day I began teaching in 1984 by attending school and branch meetings. I simply wanted to keep myself informed with what was going on in the union and in education generally. I had already been advised by a college lecturer to be sure to join a union on entering teaching for the protection it offered in terms of possible litigation/accidents issues with any children in my care. The ASTI idea of “stronger together/weaker alone” also motivated me to join. Being part of the ASTI gave me lots of opportunities to advance my own

career and interests in education. For example, when I was elected to be the ASTI/National Council for Curriculum and Assessment convener for technical drawing/technical graphics in the 80s, I got a chance to shape the syllabus that is now in place at junior and senior cycle. I have tried to attend as many ASTI conventions as possible and actively take part in the discussions and debates taking place. I am continuing my interests in general education matters by being an active member of the ASTI Education Committee, school steward, branch secretary, regional organiser and CEC member. I have the greatest respect for the active ASTI members who have gone before me, and those who are working alongside me today. Their great work, commitment, and dedication to education matters, alongside their work to improve the pay and conditions of all teachers, is truly inspirational.



Sinéad Moore, St Joseph’s Secondary School, Rush, Co. Dublin – School steward, Fingal Branch Equality Rep and ASTI Equal Opportunities Committee member

There was a school steward in my school that I really admired named Robin Gallagher. He was the first person who helped me to see the importance of a union. I was just a young teacher trying to teach my classes but it was he who got me thinking about the importance of working together to keep education to a high standard. We need to stand in solidarity to ensure that terms and conditions are workable, and that the quality of education and assessment is maintained. We’ve a great tradition of being an excellent education provider in Ireland.

A lot of the decisions the Government is making are cost-cutting priorities. School-based assessment is not a good idea, as we’ve seen in Britain and America. One thing that’s motivated me in recent times is the recession and the fact that public servants are paying for the sins of others. I chose this profession not because of money but because I believe in the teaching profession, but then I and all my colleagues were asked to pay for the mistakes and the gambling of bankers, and I was just so angry about that. It just makes me very angry that the Government can treat public servants like that. I feel that the education system is very underfunded. I would have been very aspirational about education and what it can do in terms of transforming society but then working in it, I see that the young people of Ireland aren’t getting what they need.



Members at ASTI protest in October 2016.



Robert Chaney, CBS Thurles, Co. Tipperary – School steward, Kilkenny Branch Rep and CEC member

I have always believed in participating for the greater good. As a boy, I remember helping my mum deliver UK Social Democratic Party leaflets, and social democracy in the broadest sense is still the banner that I would identify with: curbing inequality; combatting oppression of underprivileged groups and those living in poverty; and, supporting universally accessible public services. It was almost a given that I should believe in doing the right thing, supporting others, and striving to improve whatever situation I was involved in. As a teacher in England, I had been well represented, and unions were

successfully making improvements in terms and conditions with New Labour. I moved to Ireland and started teaching in a school here, and saw that a branch meeting was happening. I thought it would be the best way to find out about the system over here. The branch was very welcoming under the chair of Martin O'Neill, and I just kept turning up to more meetings. And now I've ended up as the chairperson. Being more engaged with your union can only benefit you. You learn more about the issues and more about your rights. If you don't engage, you become ignorant of the issues that affect you. When more members become active in a union, it becomes more representative. By teachers in schools expressing their opinions to branch representatives, these ideas can be passed on to the leaders of the union. The union is then more diverse in opinion and the structures of the union are healthier.



Gloria Helen, Mount Saint Michael, Rosscarbery, Co. Cork – Carbery Branch, CEC Representative

If you are engaged in a union, you're well versed in your rights and you know how to effectively and safely exercise them. There was never any question about me joining the ASTI. I was teaching in an ASTI school and I grew up knowing the importance of trade union membership. You can never take for granted what unions have achieved over time. While trade union membership is important to improve pay and conditions, it is also important to defend fiercely what we have achieved in the past. It reminds me that you always have to be very aware of what's

going on in the union, in industrial relations, and to be engaged with what's happening and take part in it where necessary. I think the union leadership should have to be directed by members and that's why members need to be actively involved, so they can get their opinions out there so the union as a whole can know what direction to take. While there are things like social media and other ways to get involved, I think the union branch is the core of where it all starts, of where decisions are made, and that feeds up along. I'm lucky to have a range of role models. We've had great school stewards in my school over the years. I'm very impressed by past and current presidents of our union. I'm very lucky to be in the ASTI where there have been a lot of very fine trade unionists over the years.



Keith Howley, Pobalscoil Neasáin, Baldoyle, Dublin – School steward, Dublin North-East Branch

My father would be my main trade union role model. He was shop steward within his own profession and taught me the importance of being a member of an active union. I was extremely fortunate to join a very strong unionised staff in my school. I am always grateful for the information and encouragement provided to me from these senior members. No question was ever too small for them to answer. I have always admired the active members in our school. I understand

that their values are at the core of their decision-making process. They allowed me to look at my own values and strive for better. In anything you're involved in, you need to be informed and to be as informed as possible, you need to be engaged. It's in everyone's best interests that you inform yourself. We need newly qualified teachers (NQTs) speaking out about their situation and we also need more experienced teachers' opinions, as they have knowledge of past events and of what is the best way to go forward. There are a lot of NQTs that feel very vulnerable at the moment, as it is very hard to get a permanent contract now. Their situation has been at the forefront of the ASTI's industrial action. It's hard to get them to understand that they're not vulnerable, that the principals understand that there's a lack of pay parity and nobody's going to hold it against them for talking about their working conditions.

LESSONS IN HEROISM

The Heroic Imagination Project empowers people to become an “everyday hero” by teaching them how to take effective action in challenging situations, writes ELLEN BARRETT.



Students from CBS Middleton in Cork illustrated prizewinning poems by Italian children. The illustration above is by Dylan Garnett.



Illustration by Ben Daly of CBS Middleton.

As a volunteer at the Zimbardo-Luczo (ZL) Fund's annual week-long programme of events in Sicily, Italy, I have seen first hand the positive impact of the Heroic Imagination Project (HIP) and the ZL Fund on its targeted community.

The HIP and the separate ZL Fund were both founded by Dr Philip Zimbardo, a social psychologist best known for conducting the Stanford Prison Experiment (1971). Dr Zimbardo is a professor emeritus of psychology at Stanford University and has authored various introductory psychology books, textbooks for college students, and other notable works, including *The Lucifer Effect*, *The Time Paradox* and *The Time Cure*.

The Heroic Imagination Project

The HIP is a non-profit organisation that uses the best of social psychology research to teach people how to take effective action in challenging situations. In *The Lucifer Effect*, Zimbardo highlights that heroism “serves as an extraordinary guide and it provides an exemplary role model for pro-social behaviour” (2009, p.488).

The HIP programme comprises a set of modules, each designed to help equip the learner with various tools to deal with difficult social situations, and has many partner organisations around the world.

I first met Dr Zimbardo at a conference in the USA and the following summer I visited him in California, which led to my volunteering with the ZL Fund in Sicily, Italy.

Dr Zimbardo co-founded the ZL Fund with Steve Luczo. The Fund is based in Zimbardo's ancestral town of Cammarata, Sicily, and in that of the Luczo family in Corleone, Sicily. The Fund has a particular emphasis on the importance of education for self-efficacy, job opportunities and community.

“Per Esempio”, an organisation based in Palermo, is one of the many successful organisations that teach the HIP educational programmes. “Per Esempio” (in English “For Example”) is an organisation aptly named. It leads by example. It

educates and supports some of the most vulnerable children in Europe; unaccompanied children who have fled war-torn countries.

Atzori and Crowe (2017) highlight a recent UNICEF report, ‘Child Alert: A Deadly Journey for Children’ that makes clear the terrible dangers refugee and migrant children face. They suffer persecution, abuse and sexual violence. Some 92% of children on the move into Italy are between 14 and 17 years old and travel alone. They also write how UNICEF has praised the Italian Parliament for passing a historic law to improve protection for the thousands of foreign unaccompanied children who have arrived in Italy.

As a volunteer, I have seen the positive impact of these organisations. With the support of the ZL Fund, an old building was renovated that is used for year-round educational programmes for young people, their families and, most crucially, many disabled children and elderly people who have limited educational opportunities.

Celebration

For the past 14 years, Dr Zimbardo has travelled from the United States to Sicily each June for events that celebrate and recognise the efforts and sacrifices of teachers, parents, care workers, organisers and young people.

This week-long celebration of the ZL Fund's activities is at the very heart of the community and includes the presentation of scholarships to be used for local college education, along with a prize-giving ceremony.

A popular poetry competition among the schools in Cammarata is one of the highlights of the week. The arts, both visual and written, are an integral part of the week's programme. Art in all forms is a powerful way of giving a voice to young people.

This summer, there was a collaboration with my school, CBS Middleton in Co. Cork, the first collaboration with an Irish school. Artwork by nine of my art students illustrated the nine prizewinning poems from the year before.

An exhibition of the Italian poems, along with the corresponding artwork from Ireland, took place during the festivities. I believe that the arts in all forms develop our powers of observation and expand our understanding of the world around us on a deeper level. The arts also foster imagination and can be powerful in promoting ideas such as kindness, responsibility and empathy.

Society has an enormous price to pay if important qualities such as these, along with resilience and heroic action in the face of challenging situations, are not taught to our youth. Sue Palmer echoes this sentiment when she writes that: "As more children become distractible, impulsive and lacking in empathy, anti-social behaviour will increase" (2006, p.17). Palmer outlines three key principles children must grasp in order to have healthy, positive human relationships and live in harmony with themselves and others. Firstly, children must learn to keep their attention even if the activity does not appeal to them. The second principle is 'deferred gratification', learning to accept that rewards take time to achieve and are not always immediate even after very hard work. Finally, learning to balance one's own needs against the needs of others is essential for human relationships – the core of which is the ability to empathise with other people's point of view, in other words to develop perspective-taking empathy.

Oliner (2004) points out that empathy is a powerful energy behind acts of kindness and states that this is teachable. Feshbach and Feshbach (2011) share the same opinion, and believe that social competencies can be both taught and learned. The HIP is successful in teaching this generation of vulnerable teens the importance of positive personal and social growth. In order to raise caring and

moral children they must be taught responsibility, the difference between right and wrong, and to feel empathy for others as well as other basic moral values. For more information on the HIP see: www.HeroicImagination.org.

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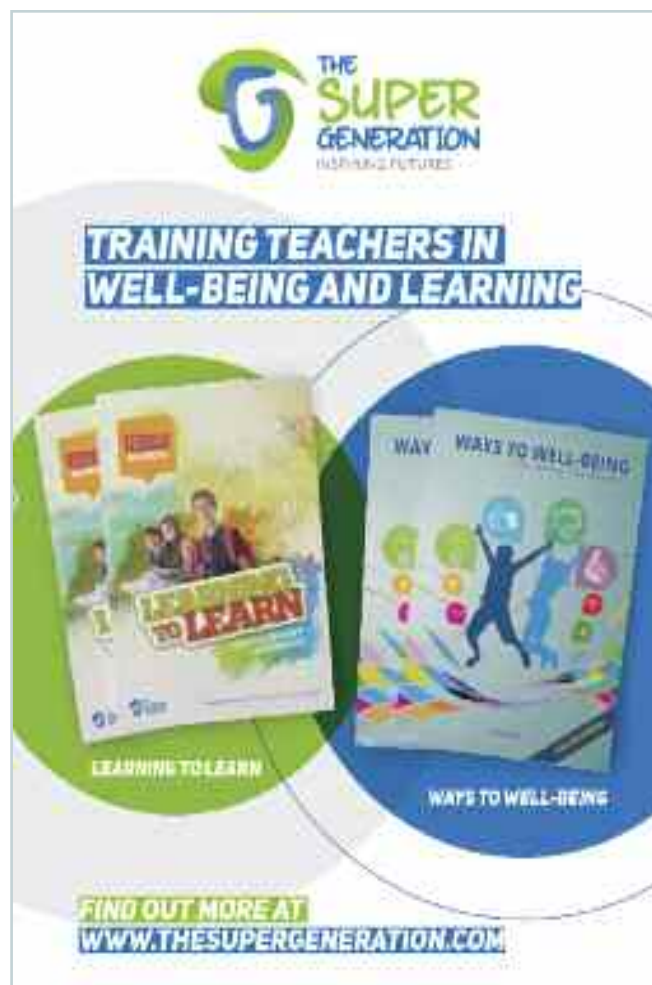


Ellen Barrett

Ellen Barrett is an art teacher in CBS Midleton, Co. Cork. She has an interest in the Heroic Imagination Project (HIP) and is a volunteer with the Zimbardo-Luczo (ZL) Fund in Sicily, Italy.



Illustration by Gary O'Brien of CBS Midleton.





PENSIONS FOR POST-2013 ENTRANTS

Pensions are significantly different for teachers who started their careers in 2013 or after, writes DESMOND O'TOOLE.

“It’s time to think about your pension!” This is a tag line that often accompanies advertisements from finance companies looking to sell pension products. You’ll find such adverts alongside ones for car loans and other shiny things. But there is a grain of truth in this tag line: it really is time to think about your pension.

Your pension is part of your pay as a teacher. It is an essential part of the total financial package that you earn for the work you do. It is, however, a complex part of your benefits package. This article seeks to unravel some of the mysteries of the new pension scheme for teachers.

There are two employment-related pension schemes for teachers: the Secondary Teachers Superannuation Scheme and the Single Public Service Pension Scheme. The first of these is open to teachers who began their careers prior to 2013. This Scheme provides a pension and lump sum on retirement, which is based on a teacher’s length of service and their final salary on the date they retire. Variants of the Scheme allow for teachers to retire early at different ages with and without penalties.

Since January 1, 2013, however, teachers who enter the profession are enrolled in the Single Public Service Pension Scheme, which applies across the public service. In addition, teachers who return to Department of Education and Skills (DES)-paid teaching posts after January 1, 2013, following a break in employment of more than 26 weeks, also become members of this new Scheme. This does not apply to teachers on an approved leave of absence, e.g., a career break. There are significantly different terms in this Scheme, which have a real effect on the value of the pension benefits that a teacher will receive on retirement. The calculation of pension benefits under the pre-2013 Scheme is based on a teacher’s final salary, typically the point at which it is at its highest. By contrast, under the new Scheme, pensions are based on a teacher’s average salary over their career, which, given the length of the teaching pay scale, will inevitably mean a significant reduction in the comparative value of pension benefits.

Under the new Scheme, pensions are based on a teacher’s average salary over their career, which, given the length of the teaching pay scale, will inevitably mean a significant reduction in the comparative value of pension benefits.

Pension benefits

The new Scheme provides a pension and lump sum on retirement based on a teacher’s career-average salary. Over their career, a teacher will build up two separate sums of money for their pension and lump sum for each year they work based on their pensionable remuneration for that year. These are called referable amounts. These referable amounts are adjusted each subsequent year in accordance with increases in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The annual referable amount for a pension also takes into account the value of the State Pension (Contributory), which a member may be entitled to on retirement, and is adjusted to reflect that value. When a teacher comes to retire, these referable amounts are added together to produce values for a teacher’s pension and lump sum. Members of the new Scheme receive a personal annual benefit statement throughout their career showing the pension and lump sum amounts that are being accrued for them and uprated in line with the CPI each year. The value of a teacher’s pension in retirement is also uprated each year in line with increases in the rate of inflation (CPI).

Pension and retirement age

The minimum age at which members of the new Scheme can retire from teaching is set initially at 66 years. This will rise in step with the qualifying age for the State Pension (Contributory) to 67 in 2021 and 68 in 2028. This change increases the minimum age at which teachers may retire compared with the pre-2013 pension scheme. Teachers will be entitled to retire early from 55 years of age on a cost-neutral basis, but the pension benefits they will have accrued to that date will be actuarially reduced to reflect this early retirement. The amount of actuarial reduction applied to the pension of a teacher at the point they opt for early retirement is reduced the closer to 66 that they retire. A compulsory age for the retirement of teachers has been reintroduced and is set at 70.

Other features of the new Scheme

As with the pre-2013 pension scheme, teachers have a range of additional benefits. These include: a lump sum death-in-service benefit of twice their annual salary paid to a deceased teacher's estate, a pension for a surviving spouse/civil partner and qualifying children in the event of the member's death, and early retirement on medical grounds, with enhanced pension benefits in the event that a teacher is assessed as permanently unfit to continue teaching. It is also possible for a teacher to enhance their pension benefits in a number of ways. A teacher may opt to make additional pension contributions on a once-off or regular basis to increase the value of the pension and lump sum they will receive on retirement. This is especially useful, as such additional contributions form part of a teacher's occupational pension scheme and thus attract the annual uprating applied to referable amounts accrued throughout a teacher's service, including attracting the CPI-uprating of a teacher's pension throughout retirement. The new Scheme can also accept the transfer of pension values from other funded pension schemes. Information on such facilities is available on request from the DES.

In addition, should a teacher cease employment before retirement age, they may opt for a preserved pension that is payable from 66 years of age, providing they have worked for at least two years prior to resigning from teaching. The value of such preserved benefits continues to be uprated in line with inflation until they are drawn down in retirement.

Conclusion

The Single Public Service Pension Scheme remains a defined-benefits scheme, but the basis on which those benefits are calculated has changed. **This has the effect of reducing the overall value of the pension benefits that teachers joining the profession since 2013 may expect.** In addition, the age at which a retiring teacher may access these benefits, without penalty, has increased. Such teachers are now expected to work for longer for reduced pension benefits. Even if you are at the beginning of your career, you should look at how you can enhance the value of your retirement benefits. You can do this either within the new Scheme or by making additional voluntary contributions to a private scheme. Should you need advice about your occupational pension scheme, you can call ASTI Head Office where our specialist will be happy to talk with you.



Desmond O'Toole

Desmond is Executive Officer: Organisation and Development with the ASTI.

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PUTTING WELL-BEING AT THE HEART OF SCHOOLS

Teacher stress is recognised as a serious health and safety concern, but what can be done to combat it? ASTIR talks to occupational psychologist Richard Wynne.

Teachers don't need to be told that stress is a serious issue, and both local and international bodies are also realising that it needs to be tackled. The Work Research Centre (WRC) specialises in research and consultancy on key social issues. Dr Richard Wynne of the WRC is an occupational psychologist who specialises in the area of work and health. He has long worked in the area of teacher stress, and says that there are a number of factors involved, from how work is organised, to the nature of the work itself: "Schools are not as effective as they could be. Teachers feel they have no voice in how schools are run, while principals are under huge stress".

The impact of the moratorium on posts, and of the removal of protected guidance counselling hours, is well known, and is a key example of how policies and structures at system level can contribute to stress. Another is the culture of temporary and part-time contracts that massively impacts on younger teachers. The day-to-day stresses of the job come from the challenges of larger, and more diverse, class groups, increasingly demanding parents, and the need to keep up with professional development: "These will all potentially add to stress, but particularly if teachers are not trained".

So what can be done? For Richard, it's not rocket science: "If you want to reduce stress and improve the well-being of teachers, you have to put resources in".

Integrated Workplace Health Management

Richard is involved, along with Deirdre MacDonald, chairperson of the ASTI Safety, Health and Welfare Committee, in engaging with the stakeholders in education – unions, management bodies, the Department of Education and Skills (DES), etc., – to develop a system for workplace well-being. The Integrated Workplace Health Management (IWHM)

initiative has three pillars: "The first is around standard health and safety issues that every school should be addressing, everything from slips, trips and falls, to stress in the workplace".

The second pillar is around health promotion, and strategies to maintain and improve physical and mental health. The third deals with the issues around returning to work after a period of physical, or mental, ill health: "If someone is off work for illness reasons, we need to get them back in the most constructive and effective way possible. Most absenteeism is due to longer-term, particularly mental health, issues. The DES has the Occupational Medical Service but there is very limited intervention about how you might alter the workplace to facilitate return to work, for example deciding that this person could be assigned a reduced number of classes for a period".

Of course, the path to implementation of any initiative can be painfully and frustratingly slow, and IWHM is no different. The Committee, chaired by Deirdre MacDonald, continues to work with stakeholders to push for progress, and there has been some movement: "I've met with representatives from Healthy Ireland [a Government-led national framework for action to improve health and well-being] and they are very interested. We've also recently been talking to the Teaching Council, which is looking quite favourably towards part funding the project".

The Health and Safety Authority has also been very supportive, but the DES has so far been "neutral" on the issue: "Support has not been forthcoming in any meaningful way, which I think is holding us back".

Co-funders are needed for broader support, and the IWHM is seeking to fund a pilot: "We propose to do a pilot project at a scale big enough to show benefits. I think it will generate huge interest and huge benefits. These approaches work elsewhere and should work here".



Leadership style vital

There's no doubt that school leadership structures have a role – both positive and negative – in the 'stress culture' of a school. Richard says that proactive leadership is essential, but support structures are needed: "Leadership development is important. Principals or assistant principals receive next to no training for the role. Training in leadership skills would be a huge leap forward. We did some work with principals while working on the IWHM – they are under extraordinary pressure and not appropriately trained or supported, and this feeds down to increase the stress on the rank and file teacher".

For Richard, participatory leadership is the way forward: "We need to give people a say in decisions that will affect them and that they can help implement. Staff meetings are often there to announce things rather than to invite input in decision-making and implementation. Why isn't there a health and safety subcommittee in each school? Why isn't there one for staff training? Part of what we're proposing in the IWHM is to set up a small team in the school to manage this process. Posts of responsibility and protected time to do what needs to be done beyond teaching duties have to be restored for schools to work".



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The closing date for applications is
Friday, February 9th, 2018

www.asti.ie
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**ASTI**
A century of service

REGIONAL ORGANISERS

Regional organisers operate throughout the country to help ensure that the ASTI is growing and working effectively.



Back row (from left): regional organisers Richard Bell (region 3), Patrick Curley (region 1), Eddie O'Byrne (region 15), Pdraig Murphy (region 10), Philip Irwin (region 18 and Standing Committee Region 18), Fergal Canton (region 9), Margaret Fitzpatrick (region 7), Kathlyn Hennelly (region 17), Donal Cremin (region 5), Anne Loughnane (region 6), Pat Deery (region 12), Eveline Holderick (region 16), and James Howley (region 2), Ann Piggott (Standing Committee region 6), and regional organisers Joe Rolston (region 8), and Richard Egan (region 11). Front row (from left): Breda Lynch (ASTI Vice-President), Ger Curtin (ASTI President), Mary Ohle (Honorary National Organiser), and Desmond O'Toole (Executive Officer: Organisation and Development).

ASTI regional organisers have an important role to play in encouraging discourse and engagement at grassroots level in the union by supporting school stewards and branch officers in their work. They aim to ensure that the ASTI is strong in each of its regions, that new members are being recruited, and that existing members are active and involved in the work of their union.

Each of the 18 ASTI regions has a regional organiser who is elected by the Central Executive Council (CEC) in May every year from members nominated by branches. In the same way that each region has a representative on Standing Committee to look after its interests and express its views, each region also has a regional organiser to ensure that membership is growing and active in the region, and that school stewards and branches are supported in their work.

It takes work and strategy in order to ensure that all of the necessary activities such as branch meetings, school meetings and member recruitment happen.

The Honorary National Organiser, Mary Ohle, works with the regional organisers. Their presence means that she has a network of people across the country that she can utilise for work within the regions and also for feedback on what is happening in each region.

The regional organisers meet in head office twice a year. At these meetings they look at issues such as changes in membership numbers and how they believe the ASTI can best recruit and retain members. These meetings also provide an opportunity for regional organisers to examine what events within the union,

such as industrial action, mean for the union's strength in the workplace and how school stewards can be supported at these times.

On a day-to-day basis, the main activities of the regional organisers include making contact with school stewards and ensuring that branches are talking to and engaging with school stewards, and that school visits are being arranged. This work is not always easy, as some of the ASTI regions are very geographically large and regional organisers are taking on this role in addition to their teaching work.

Organisation is the most important strength of a union, and it does not happen spontaneously. It takes work and strategy in order to ensure that all of the necessary activities such as branch meetings, school meetings and member recruitment happen. In cases where these activities are not happening, they need to be encouraged. The regional organisers are a network of skilled, experienced trade unionists working across the country who, with the support of the Honorary National Organiser and head office, are able to do this.

For more information on the work of the regional organisers visit www.asti.ie.



ASTI President Ger Curtin attends a regional organisers' meeting.

ASTI regional organisers:

Region 1	Patrick Curley	Donegal, Iar Thuasceart Thír Chonnaill, Sligo
Region 2	James Howley	West Mayo, East Mayo, Carrick-on-Shannon
Region 3	Richard Bell	Galway, Tuam, East Galway
Region 4	Granu Dwyer	Clare, Limerick South, Limerick North, Nenagh
Region 5	Donal Cremin	Desmond, Kerry, West Limerick
Region 6	Anne Loughnane	Cork South Paddy Mulcahy, Carbery
Region 7	Margaret Fitzpatrick	Cork North, Dungarvan, East Cork, Fermoy, West Waterford
Region 8	Joe Rolston	Wexford Tony Boland, New Ross, Enniscorthy, Waterford
Region 9	Fergal Canton	Tipperary, Kilkenny, Roscrea
Region 10	Padraig Murphy	Laois, Kildare, Carlow
Region 11	Richard Egan	Longford, Tullamore, Navan, Athlone, Mullingar
Region 12	Pat Deery	Dundalk, Monaghan, Cavan, Drogheda Sean Higgins
Region 13	Vacant	Dublin South 2, Dublin South County
Region 14	Ciara Kinsella	Stillorgan, Wicklow, Dún Laoghaire, Bray
Region 15	Eddie O'Byrne	Dublin South West, Dublin North West
Region 16	Eveline Holderick	Dublin North 1, Dublin North Central
Region 17	Kathlyn Hennelly	Dublin North East, Fingal
Region 18	Philip Irwin	Dublin South Central, Dublin South 1



Kathlyn Hennelly
Regional Organiser
– Region 17

How did you first become involved in the ASTI?

I first became really involved in the ASTI in 1984 when I became school steward. I had attended branch meetings before that but from then on I became involved at branch level. I attended Convention and then became branch secretary in 1986. From then on I think I held most of the branch offices and also served on CEC. I have only missed one branch meeting since 1984!

What do you find rewarding about being a regional organiser?

I have a network of people outside of branch level and am in contact with school stewards from outside the branch. While there are common ideals and problems at school level, within branches there can be a diversity of issues.

What is the most challenging aspect of being a regional organiser?

Most challenging would be trying to contact school stewards, particularly when there has been a changeover and details haven't been passed on to head office. Sometimes you feel that people are so busy that you are eroding their free time but the camaraderie with others is essential to a strong union.

Are you up for a challenge?

Are you reliable, good with people and patient?
Le Chéile is looking for men and women to mentor young people or parents who are at risk of offending or involved with the probation services.

We recruit in Cork, Dublin, Kildare, Laois, Limerick, Meath, Offaly, South Tipperary, and Waterford.

Youth Mentors: meet with a young person (age 12-23) to offer friendship, guidance, support and to encourage positive choices.

Parent Mentors: meet with a parent to listen to them and to support them with parenting challenges, practical issues and general confidence levels.

We welcome people from all walks of life – no experience required – full training and support provided – all out of pocket expenses covered

For more information or an application pack please contact: maxine@lecheile.ie
087 201 6901 www.lecheile.ie
Applications accepted throughout the year. Your time and support could really make a difference.

le chéile
Mentoring & Youth Advice Support Service

ALL ABOUT JUNIOR CYCLE

Many members have contacted the ASTI with questions about the Junior Cycle.

What professional time is available to me as a Junior Cycle teacher?

There are a number of categories of professional time available to schools and teachers:

Time for whole-school activities

Time for whole-school professional activities to support the Junior Cycle is available to all schools and must take place within the 167 days. This time does not form part of an individual teacher's professional time (see below). In the 2017/18 and 2018/19 school years, whole-school professional activities time amounts to two days as follows:

- Day 1: for whole-school planning and school self-evaluation
- Day 2: to facilitate CPD activities, including subject-specific CPD, being delivered on the Junior Cycle for teachers, using the school cluster model.

Individual teacher professional time

Professional time for individual teachers of Junior Cycle students is available in the form of 22 hours per school year. It is based on 40 minutes per week, which means that full-time teachers can be timetabled for a maximum of 21 hours and 20 minutes per week. It includes time to attend Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings. Teachers can also use the time to carry out work associated with teaching requirements under the Framework for Junior Cycle, such as professional collaboration on feedback and reporting activities. Part-time teachers receive individual teacher professional time on a pro-rata basis.

Teachers' autonomy with regard to the 22 hours' professional time should be respected. The Department of Education and Skills (DES) has stated the following:

- Within the provision of 22 hours' professional time for the full-time teacher, there is a requirement to allocate two hours for Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings each year for every Junior Cycle subject.
- All periods of professional time provided to support the implementation of the Junior Cycle must be used for this purpose under the overall direction of the school's management.
- In this context, school management should ensure that decisions made at whole-school level regarding priorities for the use of this professional time do not erode the professional autonomy of teachers but rather respect this professional autonomy.

Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings

This time must be taken as part of the 22 hours' individual teacher professional time (see individual teacher professional time). A Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting takes place after the second year and third year classroom-based assessment. This means that a teacher of two subjects to second and third year students will attend four meetings of approximately two hours, amounting to eight hours of professional time per school year. Since professional collaboration meetings can only be held when the relevant subject teachers can be present, a limited number of meetings may need to draw on teachers' bundled time to run beyond normal school tuition hours for some of the duration of the meeting.

Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings co-ordinator time

An additional two hours will be allocated to one teacher of each subject (on a rotational basis) to facilitate preparation for and co-ordination of each Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting. These additional two hours will be facilitated by the provision of additional paid substitution hours to the school.

Assessment Task administration time

The Assessment Task will be administered to students during class time. The whole-school administration of Assessment Tasks will be resourced through an allocation of additional hours to the school's management.

Arrangements for whole-school time, individual professional time, and administrative/co-ordination time are set out in Circulars 15/2017 and 29/2017, which are available at www.asti.ie.

Should my 22 hours of individual professional time appear in my class-contact timetable?

No. However, your class-contact timetable must reflect the reduction in maximum class contact time from 22 hours to 21 hours and 20 minutes per week.

In our school, teachers' timetables were finalised in May (before the suspension by the ASTI of industrial action over the Framework for Junior Cycle). Therefore, my colleagues and I have all been timetabled for a full 22 hours, rather than the 21 hours and 20 minutes allowed for Junior Cycle Framework teachers. What should be done?

Where the timetable was completed prior to the suspension by the ASTI of industrial action over the Framework for Junior Cycle, schools must make arrangements to ensure that teachers teaching the Framework for Junior Cycle receive the appropriate reduction in class teaching time over the course of the school year 2017/2018.



Should Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings be scheduled into the school calendar?

Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings can be scheduled into the school calendar, as they will involve all of the teachers of a Junior Cycle subject in the school.

Should Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings take place inside school time?

Yes. Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings must take place within school time. Since such meetings can only take place when the relevant subject teachers are present, a limited number of meetings may need to draw on teachers' bundled time to run beyond the normal school tuition hours for some duration of the meetings. A Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting should not exceed two hours.

I teach SPHE, which is now part of the Wellbeing Programme. Am I entitled to the 22 hours' professional time?

Yes, all teachers involved in all subject areas of the Junior Cycle are entitled to the 22 hours' professional time from the beginning of the 2017 school year.

Do classroom-based assessments replace in-house exams at second and third year?

Yes. The classroom-based assessments are intended to replace the in-house exams at the end of second year and at Christmas in third year. Obviously, given the phased rollout of subjects, some subjects will continue to have in-house exams until the new subject specification is introduced.

Is the ASTI directive on Junior Certificate optional oral exams still in force for the 2017/18 school year?

Subsequent to the Special ASTI Convention held on June 10, ASTI industrial action was suspended. Therefore, the ASTI directive relating to Junior Certificate optional oral exams is currently suspended. It should be noted that Junior Certificate oral exams remain optional.

The rationale for the ASTI directive issued in August 2016 (and suspended in June 2017) is as follows:

Oral examinations require a structure that ensures quality control and standards: one that commands public credibility in its objectivity. In this regard, school-level 'ad-hoc' arrangements for oral examinations for the Junior Certificate are unacceptable. It is the ASTI view that oral exams for State certification require an independent, standardised, externally assessed arrangement. Oral examinations should be organised and conducted by the State Examinations Commission.

Got a question? A comprehensive list of questions and answers can be found at www.asti.ie. If your question is not there, email it to info@asti.ie for a reply.

Martha Goggin

Martha Goggin taught at St Joseph's Secondary School, Stanhope St, Dublin 7, for more than 30 years. She was a talented and dedicated teacher who was highly regarded by her students and colleagues. Martha was also a committed member of the ASTI throughout her teaching life. As a member of the Dublin South Central Branch, she served as secretary, treasurer, vice chairperson, branch organiser and CEC representative. She also represented the branch at many annual conventions.

She was a passionate and committed trade unionist. As an active member of the Part-time and Temporary Teachers' Committee, she fought tirelessly for justice for that section of the teaching profession. She advocated equal opportunity, pay and status for all grades of teachers, and the current pay discrimination between young teachers and their older colleagues would cause her major concern.

Justice and fairness were always at the heart of Martha's view of life. She took a personal interest in one of her asylum-seeking students who had difficulty seeking refugee status in Ireland. With one of her Stanhope Street colleagues she set up a trust to raise money to pay for the legal fees required to get justice for this girl. This process took many years and lots of heartache, but Martha was always there to support the girl through the trauma of the legal battle. She was finally rewarded the year before she died when Irish citizenship was granted to the young woman. Martha was proudly present at the naturalisation ceremony, which gave her great pleasure. When she retired she was awarded the Thomas MacDonagh Medal for service rendered to the ASTI. This was a huge source of pride to her. The medal was included by her family at her funeral mass as one of the special mementoes of her life.

In her private life, Martha was a dedicated supporter of Kilkenny hurling. A native of Kilkenny, she was immensely proud of her county's many victories over the years and rarely missed a chance to attend their games at Croke Park, Nowlan Park, and other venues throughout the country.

Although it is two years since we lost Martha, her friends are still reeling from the shock of her sudden and untimely death. She was a loyal, supportive friend and great company. She was a person of great integrity and a straight talker who had no time for two-faced nonsense. She was very proud of her three boys: David, Kieran and Aidan. Just a week before she died, she attended David's wedding in Donegal and that occasion was one of the major highlights of her life. She had a wonderful time.

Martha was one of a kind and has left a valued imprint on all of us who knew and loved her. We extend sincere sympathy to her heartbroken husband Ray, her sister Mary and her 'lads' as she always referred to them.

Gan dabht, is féidir linn a rá nach mbeidh a leithéid arís inár measc.



Philip Irwin (then ASTI president), Martha Goggin RIP, and Pat King (then ASTI General Secretary) at the ceremony where Martha was awarded the Thomas MacDonagh Medal in 2015.

RSTA IN RECRUITMENT MODE

Progress is being made on pensions but the RSTA needs to keep the pressure on.

The RSTA continues to stress the need for recruitment to progress its three main goals, namely: full pension restoration; pension parity; and, the right of representation in conjunction with the Alliance of Retired Public Servants and the Retired Workers' Committee of the ICTU.

The Public Service Pay Commission did not address the position of public service pensions but the Alliance succeeded in engaging in parallel talks with the then Minister for Public Expenditure, Paschal Donohue and his officials, after the Commission had reported. The case of retirees post 2012 has been addressed and pensions up to €34,132 will be realigned. The Secretary of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform has indicated that there are plans to introduce

legislation to exit FEMPI in Autumn 2017. A measured response will be issued expressing disappointment that accelerated full restoration had not taken place but welcoming the proposed legislation and hoping that it is part of a process for full restoration.

Progress is always slow in these matters and consistent pressure is required. The future environment for retired people in both the public and private sectors looks very uncertain. The RSTA needs every retired secondary teacher to join and let us use the strength of our numbers to advance our cause. Ní neart go cur le chéile.

See the website – www.rsta.ie – for general information and branch news.

RSTA 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.
E: rstatreasurer@gmail.com M: 085-118 1330.

Standing order set-up form

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS using black or blue pen.

To The Manager

(Name of Member's Bank)

Bank Branch and Full Address

I hereby authorise and request you to DEBIT my account:

Name/s on Member's Account IBAN

and to CREDIT the account of:

RETIRED SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (RSTA): IBAN: IE55 AIBK 93236112729080

with the amount of €24 (Twenty Four Euro)

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

Reference to identify member's payment on RSTA bank statement:

Member's Name RSTA Branch

Signature Date

Please return completed form to RSTA National Treasurer

Young Environmentalist Awards

Registration is now open for the Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA) 2018! Entry is open to all young people aged 10-18 across Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The YEA is the biggest and longest-running eco-action programme that recognises and rewards young people who raise awareness of local and global environmental issues, and promote practical actions to improve the environment for all. Register a group online for a free information pack with everything you need to know to get started and run a successful eco-action project.

More information is available at: www.ecounesco.ie/what-is-the-young-environmentalist-award/item/8.

Free online teacher community

The OECD is inviting teachers to join its Teacher Community on the digital classroom platform, Edmodo.

This free online tool aims to encourage global dialogue across all levels of education, regardless of location or context. It promises to allow you to:

- access exclusive, short, easy-to-use content on global teaching best practice on a weekly basis
- engage directly with OECD experts and get data on teaching and learning methods
- build a network and connect with other teachers outside your school, county and country to share ideas and tips
- access relevant educational resources and tools.

Create your account here:
https://oecd_eduskills.edmodo.com.

Towards the Era of Lifelong Learning

John Coolahan, who has been referred to as “the man who knows more than anyone about Irish education” and is the author of *The ASTI and Post-Primary Education in Ireland, 1909-1984*, has written a new book entitled *Towards the Era of Lifelong Learning – A History of Irish Education 1800-2016*. This study by the Prof. Emeritus of Education at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth (NUIM) covers all aspects of the formal education system and will interest readers such as teachers, education students, educational leaders, policy-makers and researchers.

Part I of the book focuses on the period from 1800-1960 and the four foundational pillars – primary, secondary, vocational/technical and university education – while Part II covers the period between 1960 and 1980, when a major reform in educational provision took place. The final part of the book encompasses 1980 to 2016 and the cultural shift into the era of lifelong learning. The book has been published by the Institute of Public Administration and is available to buy from its website: www.ipa.ie.

Volunteer with a youth charity

Le Chéile is a mentoring and family support charity working with young people involved in, or at risk of, offending. It is now looking for volunteers for its mentoring service. Mentors are a trusted and friendly support for a young person or parent, meeting once a week to do activities and work on goals together. As a mentor, you can make a real difference in a person's life – mentoring helps reduce a young person's offending behaviour and supports both young people and their parents to make choices that are more positive in their lives.

Le Chéile respects and supports its volunteers. It offers full training, support and supervision, and covers out-of-pocket expenses.

To find out more contact Maxine Kelly at maxine@lecheile.ie / 087-201 6801, or visit Le Chéile's website at: www.lecheile.ie

Book on Irish border

Patrick Mulroe, an ASTI member who teaches in Our Lady's Secondary School, Castleblaney, Co. Monaghan, has released a book entitled *Bombs, Bullets and the Border – Policing Ireland's Frontier: Irish Security Policy, 1969-1978*. Living and working in the border area has left Mulroe, originally from Emyvale, Co. Monaghan, with an extensive knowledge of all aspects of border life. The book was launched at Monaghan County Museum earlier this year and draws heavily on previously unseen State archives from Dublin and London.

Based in part on his thesis, which he completed for his PhD in Politics from the University of Ulster, the book examines Irish Government security policy and the role played by the Gardaí and the Irish Army along the border during some of the worst years of the Troubles. With the upheaval of Brexit, the issue of Irish border security is back in the public consciousness, so the book is essential reading in understanding what a secure border entails, and how it affects the lives of those living within its environs.

Bombs, Bullets and the Border is available to buy from www.irishacademicpress.ie.



Teacher and author of *Bombs, Bullets and the Border* Patrick Mulroe (centre), with Eddie Kelly (Principal, Our Lady's Secondary School), Finbarr Brohan (Deputy Principal), and student representatives.

Classifieds

Northern Lights Tour – Norway 2018

February 12 mid-term seven days. Includes two nights in Oslo, one night wild camping, husky dog safari and much more.
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www.extremeireland.ie Contact: stephen@extremeireland.ie

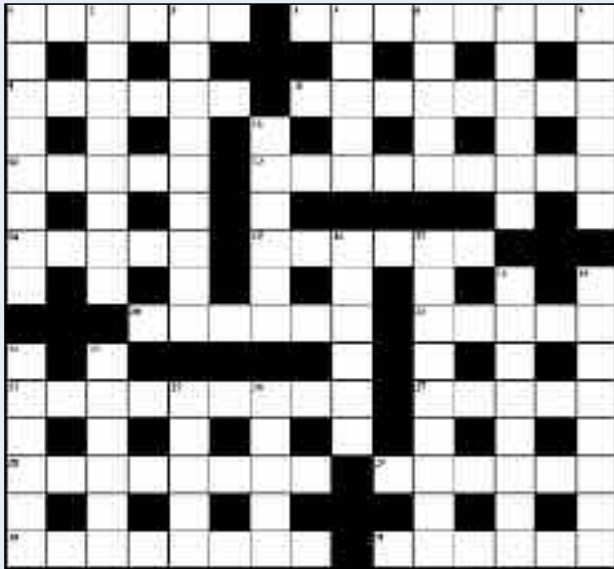


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ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 1705

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. 1705, Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, December 8, 2017

CLUES ACROSS:

- 1 Collect a type of vehicle (4,2)
- 4 A Junior Cert grade D could also have this descriptor (8)
- 9 The referee getting sick might look for a substitute (6)
- 10 Beethoven's Sixth Symphony also known as this (8)
- 12 and 14 across: Current ASTI Vice-President (5,5)
- 13 Informally Marla and Ivana's ex! (3,6)
- 14 See 12 across
- 15 Turn into bone (6)
- 20 Dad led the way to being muddled (6)
- 21 Prefix meaning "star" (5)
- 24 Supreme leader of North Korea (3,4,2)
- 27 Provide the gear in a fit of pique (5)
- 28 Leaving Cert subject introduced into a small number of schools in September 2016, and Society (8)
- 29 Lancashire stew (3,3)
- 30 Ex-rioter could be outside (8)
- 31 Could he/she streak on thin ice? (6)

CLUES DOWN:

- 1 Graph of quadratic function... you drew many of them in your school days! (8)
- 2 A fine face could be a stimulant (8)
- 3 Handle Sue to get freed from restraint (9)
- 5 Teach a seadog to pursue with intent (5)
- 6 Opening bars (5)
- 7 "One impulse from a wood May teach you more of man" (Wordsworth) (6)
- 8 Fool or deceive the Spanish guy! (6)
- 11 Meander along (6)
- 16 Four-door cars (6)
- 17 The Digital Learning has been developed by PDST and is available to all schools (9)
- 18 "..... City", historical novel by James Plunkett (8)
- 19 " Science", new Leaving Cert subject to be introduced into some schools in September 2018 (8)
- 22 Macedonian capital (6)
- 23 Good luck charm (6)
- 25 A torte for this playful aquatic mammal (5)
- 26 Small chirpy lizard (5)

Solution to ASTIR Crossword No. 1704

Across

- 1. Retrospective
- 10. Open air
- 11. Chagrin
- 12. Mean
- 13. Taser
- 15. Cede
- 17. Did
- 19. Nutmeg
- 21. Macron
- 22. Perplex
- 23. Career
- 25. Tip-off
- 27. Arc
- 29. Thou
- 30. Issue
- 31. Star
- 34. Optimal
- 35. Trivial
- 36. Prime Minister

Down

- 2. Elegant
- 3. Real
- 4. Spread
- 5. Etched
- 6. Teal
- 7. Vermeer
- 8. Communication
- 9. Once and for all
- 14. Simperts
- 16. Tepee
- 18. Maxim
- 20. Ger
- 21. Met
- 24. Rooster
- 26. Outside
- 27. Asylum
- 28. Curtin
- 32. Imam
- 33. AIDS

Did you miss?

- Equal pay campaign continues 8
- Pensions for post-2013 entrants 20

Congratulations

Congratulations to the winner of
Crossword No.1704:
Donal McCarthy, Ashton School,
Blackrock Road, Cork. Cork South
(Paddy Mulcahy) Branch

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