

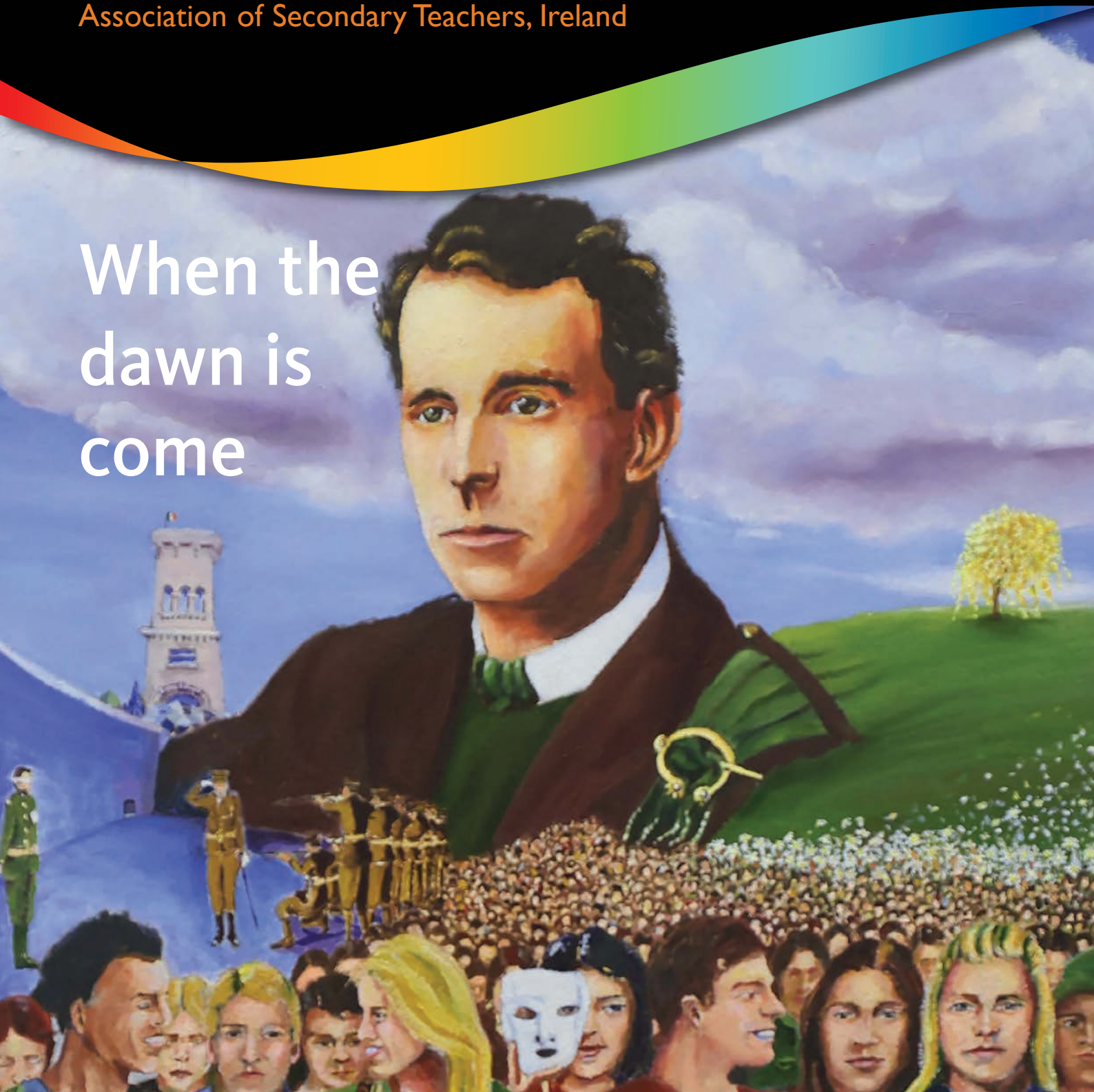
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ASTIR

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland

When the
dawn is
come



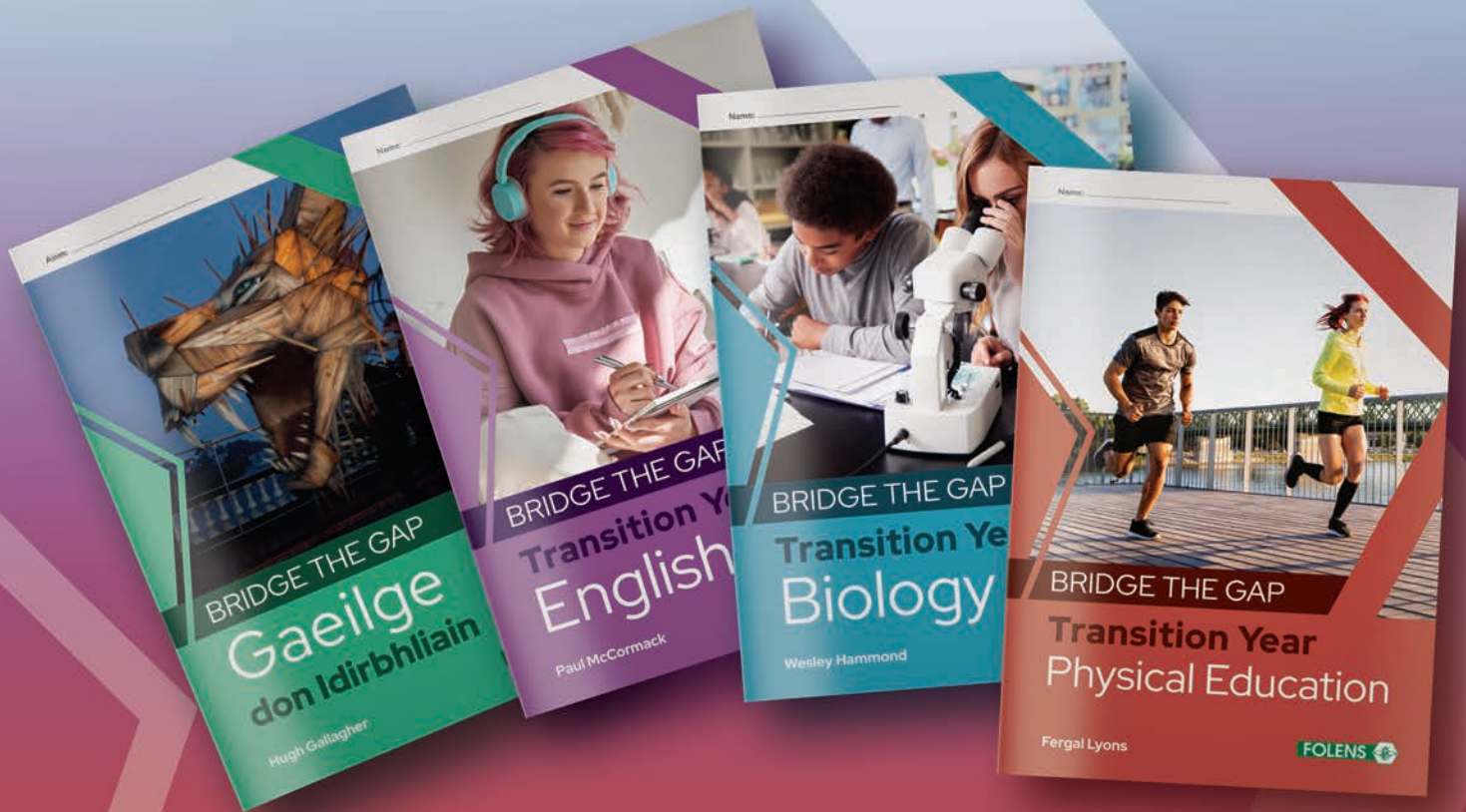
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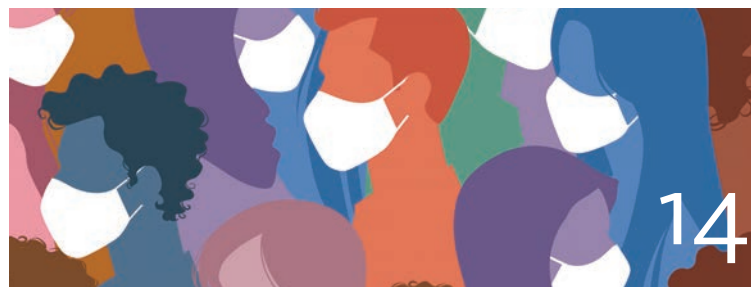


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Together we achieve more

At a time when there are more second-level students in our schools than ever before, Ireland is ranked last out of 36 countries for investment in second-level education as a proportion of GDP (OECD Education at a Glance 2021). Budget 2022 has failed to address this appalling deficit in any meaningful way. In 2020 and 2021 the ASTI sought and achieved additional monies and staffing to assist schools in implementing Covid-19 arrangements. While these temporary measures are welcome, they are a drop in the ocean in the context of decades of underfunding. We need a permanent reduction in the pupil-teacher ratio, a dignified entry to teaching, a realistic management posts structure, and significantly improved investment in school buildings.

Senior Cycle change

What happens in schools is very much determined by curriculum. This is why the ASTI reacts cautiously to calls for 'curricular reform'. Teachers need to be convinced of the rationale for change, feel that their views and experiences are listened to, know that adequate resources will be provided to support change, and – most importantly – that change will deliver better learning outcomes for students. In much of the debate around Senior Cycle change, the strengths of the current model (e.g., high level of public trust in the assessment process) are glossed over. Often missing entirely from the debate is the fact that the Leaving Certificate is the sole pathway for school leavers to higher education. I recently made these points to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education. The ASTI will continue to pursue your concerns in relation to any Senior Cycle proposals.

No going back for trade unions

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions' (ICTU) Biennial Delegate Conference took place in October. Patricia King, ICTU General Secretary, reflected on how the trade union movement and its members have played a central role in shielding the most vulnerable during the pandemic. It was the ICTU who put forward the proposals that resulted in the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP). Trade unions led the way on workplace safety. In education, the ASTI has been to the forefront in seeking to ensure that schools are safe workplaces. While unions have come into their own in the past 20 months, much work needs to be done if we are to achieve a fair and equal society. Despite our proud labour history, many workers still have no access to collective bargaining. The pandemic has magnified the necessity for unions. I was honoured to second a motion from the Kildare Trades Council for a national campaign to amend Article 40.6.1. (iii) of the Irish Constitution to guarantee the right of trade unions to represent and engage in collective bargaining so that every worker has the fundamental human right to be represented by a trade union.

Together we achieve more.



Eamon Dennehy

ASTI President

Stronger together

At the recent Biennial Delegate Conference of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the ASTI underlined the essential value of strong trade unions in the workplace in ensuring that workers' terms and conditions of employment are properly protected and enhanced. Our motion as set out below was overwhelmingly carried. "The important role that a strong, well-organised trade union movement can play in the lives of workers has always been apparent. This was never more evident than during the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to grow and develop the trade union movement and protect workers, Congress will create and organise a national campaign to encourage and motivate all workers to join a trade union by demonstrating:

- ▶ the benefits of trade union membership
- ▶ the rights of workers under relevant legislation
- ▶ the value of solidarity between workers
- ▶ the value and importance of solidarity and co-operation between trade unions
- ▶ the importance of the trade unions in fostering respect for all workers and the work they do, and
- ▶ the relevance of the trade union movement in the building of a just and equitable society."

If anything, the pandemic laid bare the vulnerability of workers who do not have a strong trade union presence in their workplaces. For our part, the ASTI has been to the forefront of all the discussions regarding the operation of schools throughout the pandemic. Since reopening this autumn, we have continued to work assiduously to ensure that every school is operating in line with all public health guidance. As this stubborn affliction continues, we must never let down our guard.

Education Budget 2022 – an opportunity missed

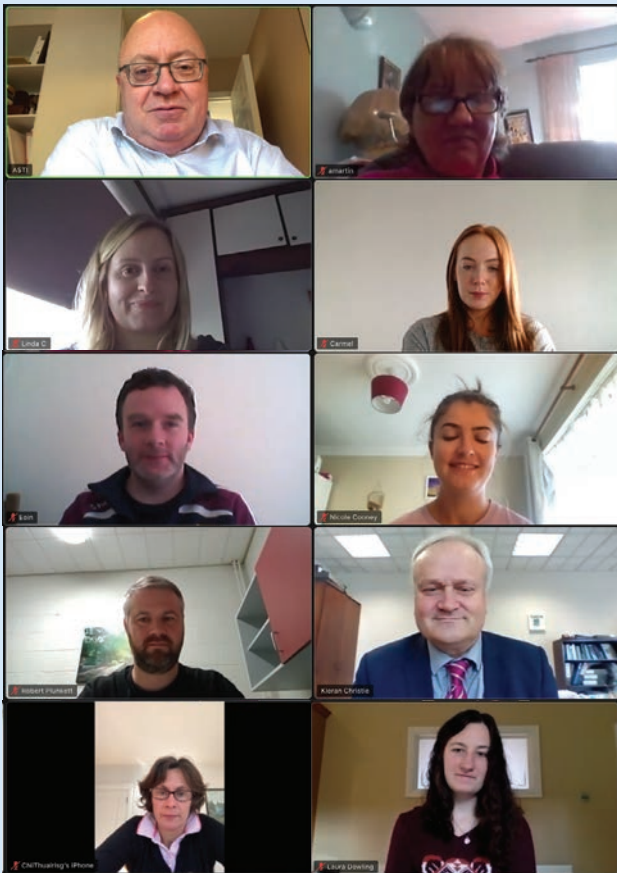
The recently published OECD report Education at a Glance 2021, reported in more detail elsewhere in this edition of *ASTIR*, once again ranks Ireland in last place out of 36 countries for investment in second-level education. While long-term thinking needs to be applied, Budget 2022 was a missed opportunity to begin the necessary redress and fails to tackle the underfunding of second-level schools in Ireland. The ASTI has insisted that the increased resources provided to schools regarding Covid-19 arrangements must only be considered to be a baseline for future funding of our schools. Investment in schools will be vital to support any hopes of realising a vision for Ireland as an inclusive society. Ireland's track record regarding education funding is exposed yet again on the international stage. Significantly more investment in infrastructure and student services is required. Smaller classes, improved buildings, technology investment, extra guidance counsellor appointments, and the restoration of middle management posts are the centrepieces of the list of needs. A depressing apprehension looms large that as soon as the pandemic is over, normal underinvestment as a matter of policy will resume. This cannot be allowed to happen.



Kieran Christie

ASTI General Secretary

ASTI school steward training



School stewards attended training on October 5. Issues covered included: the role of the school steward; school steward team; representing the collective views of the members; conducting school ballots; disciplinary and grievance procedures; and, update on national issues.

Artificial intelligence in education



Prof. Vincent Wade, Director of the ADAPT Centre for Digital Content Technology, was invited to address the ASTI Education Committee in October. His presentation, 'AI in Education: Beyond the hype', discussed how artificial intelligence is currently used in education settings, and how it may be used in the future. For more information on the work of the ADAPT centre, visit: www.adaptcentre.ie.

World Teachers' Day



On World Teachers' Day (October 5), ASTI President Eamon Dennehy thanked all teachers in Ireland for their extraordinary efforts during the pandemic.

"Your rapid transition to online teaching despite digital capacity issues, and your work in helping to minimise transmission in schools, has ensured that students could return to classrooms as soon as possible," he said.

He also paid tribute to those teachers worldwide who have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. "This year, we recognise the enormous toll that Covid-19 has taken on our profession beyond school closures and lost learning. We pay tribute to all those teachers and fellow trade unionists who lost their lives around the world in the past year and a half."

This year the World Teachers' Day theme was 'Always present: Paying tribute, taking action'.

Education International has launched a memorial website to share stories and profiles of teachers, union colleagues and school staff who have lost their lives: www.teachercovidmemorial.org.



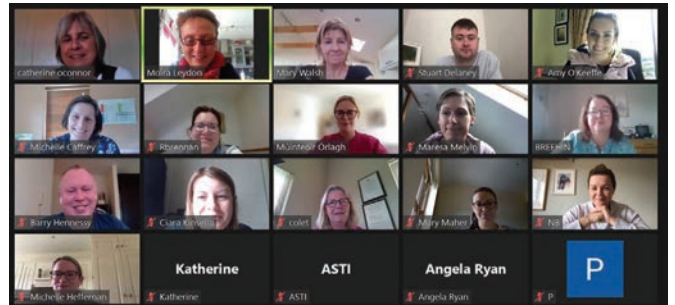
Teachers in St Mary's New Ross celebrating World Teachers' Day.

ASTI supports climate strike



ASTI Standing Committee members demonstrated their support for students participating in the global climate strike on September 24. From left: Ann Piggott (Immediate Past President), Kieran Christie (General Secretary), Eamon Dennehy (President), and Pádraig Murphy (Honorary Treasurer).

ASTI school leadership seminar



The ASTI recently provided an online training seminar for members thinking of applying for an Assistant Principal post in their school. The seminar focused on the four domains of leadership as set out in Circular 0003/2018, including advice on completion of the application form and preparation for the interview. Topics included:

- Framework for Leadership and Management in Schools (Circular 0003/2018):
 - Leading teaching and learning
 - Managing the organisation
 - Leading school development
 - Developing leadership capacity
- Looking at our School – A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools
- Preparation of CV, and
- Preparation for the interview.

For information on future ASTI training and seminars, visit: <https://www.asti.ie/member-benefits/events/>.

ASTI Leaving Cert submission

Teachers will engage with curricular change when they are convinced of its necessity and rationale, feel that their views and experiences are listened to, trust that adequate resources will be provided to support change, and believe the change will deliver better learning outcomes for students, ASTI President Eamon Dennehy told a Joint Oireachtas Committee recently.

The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science invited the ASTI to present its views as part of a series of roundtable discussions with the education partners on the Leaving Certificate and reform. The discussions referred specifically to: assessment options; key subject areas and digital learning; access; equality and well-being supports; and, the Irish language/Irish medium education.

The ASTI President told the meeting that the strengths of the current Leaving Cert model include a high level of public trust, provision of a valid and objective statement of students' academic achievement, and fairness, impartiality and transparency. "These strengths must be maintained," said Mr Dennehy.

"The pandemic has exposed that many of our second-level schools are overcrowded, and lack communal spaces for eating, relaxing and studying. Ventilation, heating, lighting and noise containment are frequently inadequate. Access to broadband and digital services, gaps in the provision of teacher professional learning, and the need for more school management posts have also been highlighted. These issues impact on all aspects of school life, and in particular subject choice, the range of programmes provided for students, and the provision of pastoral care services.



"The Department of Education's own demographic projections indicate that by 2024, there will be 39,000 more students in second-level schools than there were in 2019. Key steps towards meaningful change must be taken to ensure that schools are fit for purpose and the services they provide are adequately resourced."

Assessment

The ASTI President told the Committee that the fact that the Leaving Cert is the sole pathway for school leavers to higher education is deeply problematic. The ASTI recommends options such as the 'decoupling' of entry to higher education from the Leaving Cert exam, changes to the exam, or variations to the points system – as outlined by Prof. Áine Hyland in her report *Entry to Higher Education in Ireland in the 21st Century*.

The ASTI's submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science is available to read here: <http://www.asti.ie/about-asti/policy/submissions/>.

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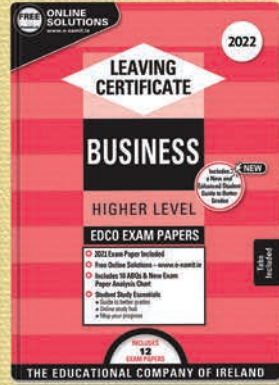
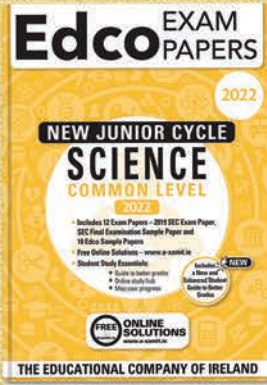
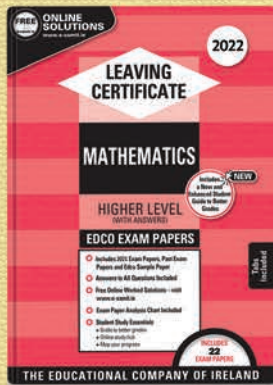
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ASTI Standing Committee – in-person meeting

The first in-person meeting of ASTI Standing Committee since the beginning of the pandemic took place in September, and discussed investment in education, Senior Cycle review, the public sector pay agreement, and Covid-19 and schools. The meeting was held in the Communications Workers' Union Conference Hall, to ensure social distancing.



New report addresses bullying and mental health in schools

The Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science has published its report on School Bullying and the Impact on Mental Health.

In the report, the Committee makes a total of 28 recommendations, including 10 key recommendations, which it believes could have a transformative impact on the whole school community. The ASTI has warned that key recommendations, such as increasing school middle management posts and teacher professional development, must be properly resourced.

The Joint Committee met with senior academics from the National Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre in Dublin City University (DCU) to discuss the impact of bullying during the pandemic. This was an important intervention as the DCU Centre is a global leader in anti-bullying research and policy. The Committee also sought and received written submissions from a wide range of stakeholders, including the ASTI and other education stakeholders, clinical psychologists, child and adolescent mental health experts, the Ombudsman for Children, organisations dealing with cyber safety for children and young people, and young people themselves. The Committee's key recommendations are:

- ▶ the Department of Education's Action Plan on Bullying and related Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary should be urgently audited and updated
- ▶ the Department of Education should establish a national system for the reporting of data on individual bullying cases
- ▶ anti-bullying measures should be included as a separate section in the Department of Education Inspectorate's Whole School Evaluations (WSE) reports
- ▶ emotional counselling and therapeutic supports should be provided on site, as needed, in all primary and post-primary schools

- ▶ an online safety commissioner should be appointed
- ▶ a mandatory online cyber bullying and internet safety training programme should be provided for all teaching staff
- ▶ separate mandatory modules on school bullying, well-being (including developing resilience and emotional intelligence), autism and neurodiversity, disability, racism and inclusivity should be provided in all initial teacher education (ITE) courses, and to all primary and secondary school teachers as part of their continuous professional development (CPD)
- ▶ middle management posts should be restored to previous levels and increased where there is an identified need
- ▶ the innovative FUSE Programme developed by DCU's Anti-Bullying Centre should be rolled out to all primary and secondary schools as a model of best practice, and
- ▶ the Barnardos Friendship Group and Roots of Empathy Programmes should be rolled out as a pilot and, pending evaluation, nationally.

Subsequent to the publication of this Report, the Minister for Education has announced her intention to review the 2013 anti-bullying procedures for schools. In its submission, the ASTI underlined that a key problem with these procedures was the failure of the Department to provide an in-service programme for teachers on restorative justice and other proactive interventions in schools. Thus, while the procedures contained measures to record incidents of identity-based bullying – which is a huge issue for children of Traveller, Roma and migrant backgrounds, children with an illness or disability, and LGBTQI+ young people – again no in-service training was provided to assist teachers in recognising and responding to the complex challenges. The need has not gone away: if anything, the changed societal and digital landscape makes investment in teacher professionalism more imperative than ever.



The Committee's report is available on the Oireachtas website: https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/33/joint_committee_on_education_further_and_higher_education_research_innovation_and_science/submissions/2021/2021-08-23_report-on-school-bullying-and-the-impact-on-mental-health_en.pdf.

ASTI medal winner



Eamon Dennehy, ASTI President, is pictured at the recent Mary Immaculate College conferring ceremonies with Edel Shanahan from Thurles, Co. Tipperary, who was this year's recipient of the ASTI Medal. This medal is presented by the ASTI to the graduate who excels in education and school placement on the BA in Education (Post Primary) programmes.

Climate education for all

The British and Irish Group of Trade Unions (BIGTU), of which the ASTI is a member, set out its demands for climate change education ahead of COP26. These demands are that:

- ▶ governments ensure quality climate change education for all
- ▶ every student transitions from formal education climate literate and equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to tackle climate change, adapt to uncertainties, and take part in building a more sustainable future
- ▶ quality climate change education is based on science, and addresses the ethical, cultural, political, social, and economic dimensions of climate change
- ▶ teachers are trained and supported to provide quality climate change education, and
- ▶ schools and learning environments are transformed to support quality climate change education.



The ASTI delegation to the ICTU Biennial Delegate Conference (from left): Noelle Moran, Miriam Duggan (Vice-President), Deirdre Mac Donald, Diarmaid de Paor (Deputy General Secretary), Eamon Dennehy (President), Kieran Christie (General Secretary), Ann Piggott (Immediate Past President), Mark Walshe, and Padraig Murphy (Honorary Treasurer).



ASTI delegate Deirdre Mac Donald proposed an ASTI motion on union membership at the ICTU Biennial Delegate Conference.

Improving work for all

ASTI representatives attended the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Biennial Delegate Conference in person and remotely in October. The conference took place in Belfast.

Recruitment campaign

The Conference adopted a motion proposed by the ASTI that the ICTU develop and implement a national campaign to encourage all workers to join a trade union. Such a campaign should demonstrate the benefits of trade union membership for individuals, the value and importance of solidarity between workers and unions, and the role of the trade union movement in building a just and equitable society.

Proposing the motion, ASTI delegate Deirdre Mac Donald said the pandemic has highlighted that there is strength in numbers and that collegiality and solidarity are vital for progressing workers' rights: "ICTU must use this rare opportunity to design and implement a multilingual, multimedia campaign to greatly increase trade union membership". "Trade unions have to work on being more visible. We owe so much to those who fought so hard and made significant sacrifices for workers' rights. We must not surrender their legacy," ASTI President Eamon Dennehy told the conference.

ASTI representatives also supported and spoke on a range of other conference issues including:

- ▶ the need for legislation to ensure that workers who join unions have a legal right to collective bargaining with their employer, and
- ▶ the obligations of employers to protect public servants from abuse and violence in the workplace.

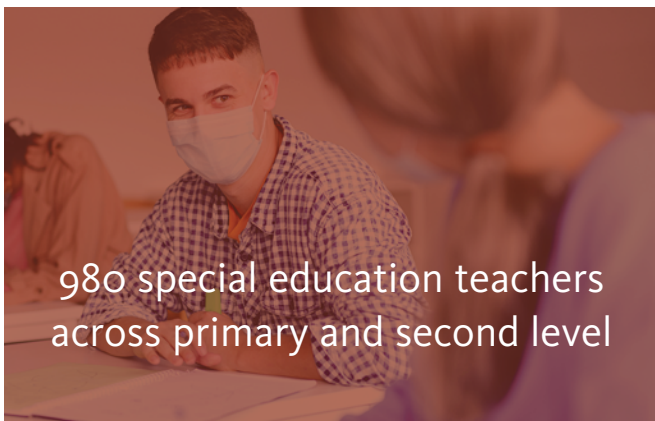
BUDGET FAILS TO ADDRESS KEY EDUCATION ISSUES



No change to pupil-teacher ratio at second level



No increase in middle management posts



980 special education teachers across primary and second level



Additional funding to address digital divide

This year's Budget has yet again failed to address serious issues in education funding.

Budget 2022 – announced in October – does not tackle the underfunding of second-level schools.

While additional special education teachers and SNAs are to be welcomed, these posts will not improve class size, school infrastructure, or services for most students.

An additional 980 special education primary and second-level teachers will be allocated to schools in the 2022/23 school year. At the time of this *ASTIR* going to print, there were no details regarding how many of the 980 teachers will be for second-level schools. The ASTI is also awaiting details of how 1,165 additional SNAs will be appointed across primary and second level. "Investment in the special needs education area is vital to supporting Ireland's vision for an inclusive society," said ASTI President Eamon Dennehy. "However, we are greatly disappointed that there has been no announcement to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio at second level. Modern

second-level curricula require that a significant amount of practical, scientific and experimental work takes place in classrooms every day. This is not sustainable in overcrowded classrooms."

The ASTI welcomed an increase in funding for voluntary secondary schools as part of a commitment to funding equalisation for these schools. The ASTI has been seeking this for many years.

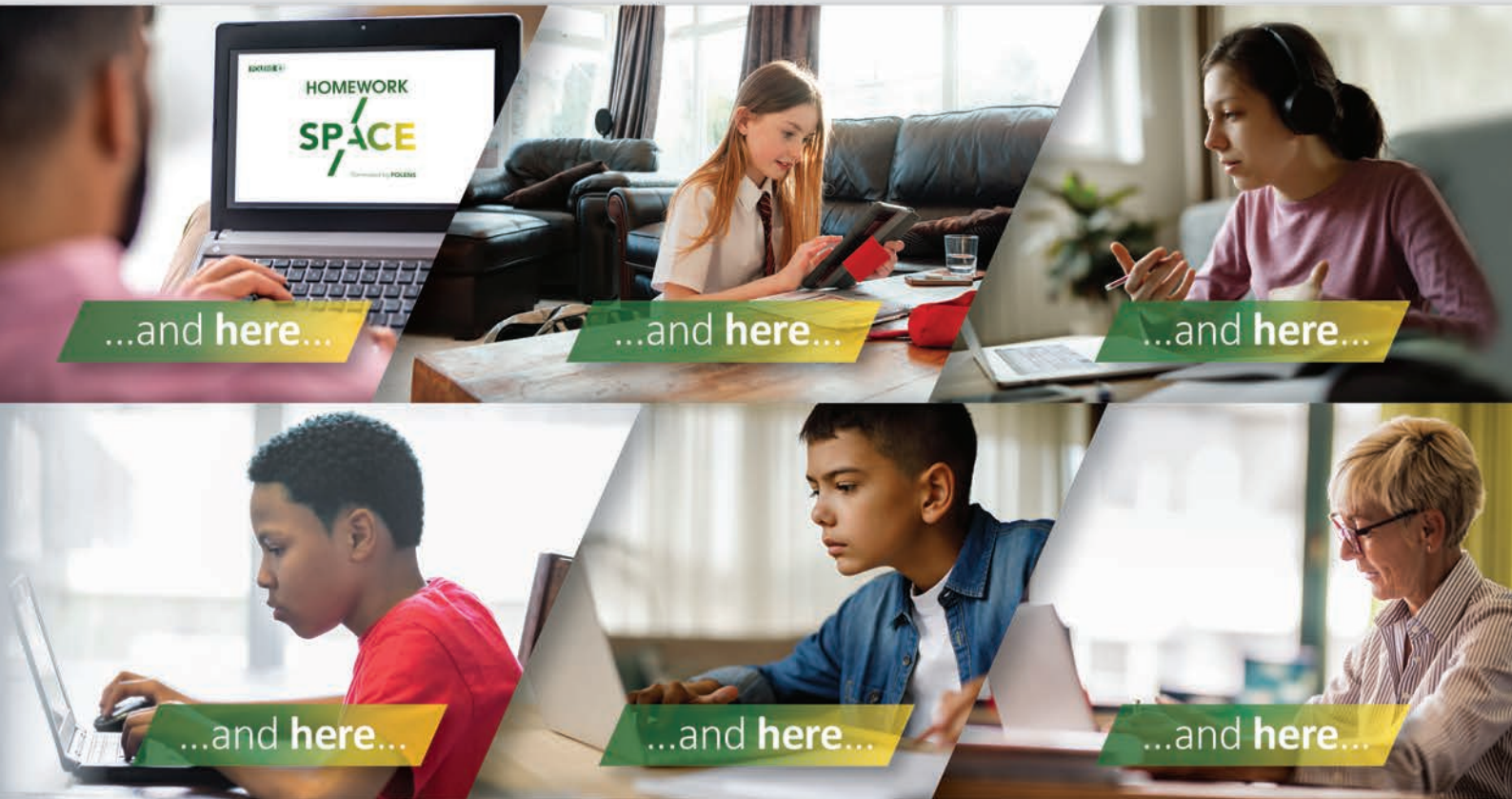
Additional funding to address the digital divide is also to be welcomed. The education of many children and young people was disproportionately impacted during school lockdown periods due to IT deficits.

Middle management

Middle management posts in schools were massively eroded during the recession years and the ASTI had hoped that Budget 2022 would go some way towards filling management support gaps in schools.

"The recently published OECD report *Education at a Glance 2021* ranks Ireland in last place out of 36 countries for investment in second-level education," said Eamon Dennehy. "Budget 2022 does very little to address this."

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GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO GET THE MESSAGE ON EDUCATION FUNDING

Ireland once again sits at the bottom of the table for investment in education, according to the OECD Education at a Glance 2021 report.

In its latest Education at a Glance report, the OECD states: “Education is an asset not only because of its intrinsic value, but also because it provides individuals with skills and also acts as a signal of such skills. As a result, investments in education yield high returns later in life”.

However, this is not a message the Government seems to be listening to. In 2018, Ireland invested 1.1% of gross domestic product (GDP) in second-level education compared to the OECD and EU averages of 1.9%, according to the report. This is far below our neighbours, with the UK spending 2.2%, France spending 2.5%, and Belgium 2.6%. Expenditure per second-level student here is \$10,634 compared to an OECD average of \$11,590, and an EU22 average of \$11,543. The term ‘EU22’ is used in the report for the group of countries that are both EU and OECD members.

Before the pandemic, total public expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education in Ireland reached 2.3% of GDP in 2018, which was lower than the OECD average of 3.2%.

Commenting on the report, ASTI President Eamon Dennehy, said that ongoing failure to invest in our schools will have long-term social and economic consequences both for individuals and our society: “If we take GDP as a measure of national wealth, it is unacceptable that a rich country like Ireland remains at the bottom of the global rankings. The pandemic has dramatically underlined how important schools are to children, families and communities. It has also demonstrated that large classes, insufficient staffing, and inadequate accommodation and ventilation are undermining the capacity of schools to provide a safe environment for quality education”.

The number of second-level students is growing, and by the Department of Education’s own calculations, there will be 39,000 additional students by 2024. New schools need to be built and this requires investment. There are also many second-level schools that are old and urgently need refurbishment.

Teachers’ working conditions

Teacher salaries across the OECD are 81-96% of the salaries of other graduates. Here in Ireland, teacher salaries are 90% of the level of other graduates. This is lower than in other countries such as Germany and Portugal, where teachers earn the same or more than other graduates.

While starting salaries for Irish teachers are above the EU22 and OECD averages at \$37,096, Irish teachers teach for more hours per year than the OECD average. Here, teachers teach for 704 hours per year compared to the OECD average of 685 hours per year. This is far more than the EU22 average, which is 629. Irish second-level teachers teach more hours than those in countries such as Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Spain.

But of course there is much more to teaching than standing in a classroom imparting knowledge to students. The report recognises this: “For teachers, the proportion of their statutory working time spent teaching provides information on the amount of time available for non-teaching activities, such as lesson preparation, marking students’ work, in-service training and staff meetings. A larger proportion of statutory working time spent teaching may indicate that a lower proportion of working time is devoted to tasks such as assessing students and preparing lessons, as stated in regulations”.

ASTI President Eamon Dennehy recently highlighted the lack of concern in Government for the workload of teachers. ASTI research in 2018 found that teachers worked an average of 41+ hours per week, 21 of which were

classroom teaching. The remaining hours were taken up with activities such as preparing for class, marking homework, lab preparation and curriculum planning with other teachers.

Impact of education

In Ireland, schools and teachers have done well at ensuring students complete upper secondary education. Just 6.5% of those aged 25-34 have not completed upper secondary. The EU22 average is 12.3% and the OECD average is 14.8%.

Education not only affects people's professional lives, it has a big impact on other aspects as well. Men who do not complete upper secondary level live on average six years less than those who complete tertiary. For women, the figure is three years. Obesity rates are also higher for those who do not complete upper secondary.

It's clear that education should not be looked at as something that only impacts on people when they are young; it also has a profound impact on their entire lives and the societies they live in. The report states: "Moreover, there is a growing interest in looking beyond the traditional outcomes of education – such as income, employment and GDP – towards non-economic aspects of well-being and societal progress – such as health, civic engagement, political interests, crime and happiness".

Figures from the report

Education at a Glance reveals some interesting statistics about Irish education:

- ▶ Ireland comes third in the enrolment rate among 15-19 year olds with 93.6% in education, compared to the OECD average of 83.5%
- ▶ women make up 70% of Ireland's secondary teachers, compared with the OECD average of 59.8%, and
- ▶ across almost all countries, women outnumber men in terms of students who go on from secondary education to achieve some kind of tertiary attainment. In Ireland, in this case the number of women aged 25-34 who have a tertiary attainment is 7.7 percentage points higher than men.

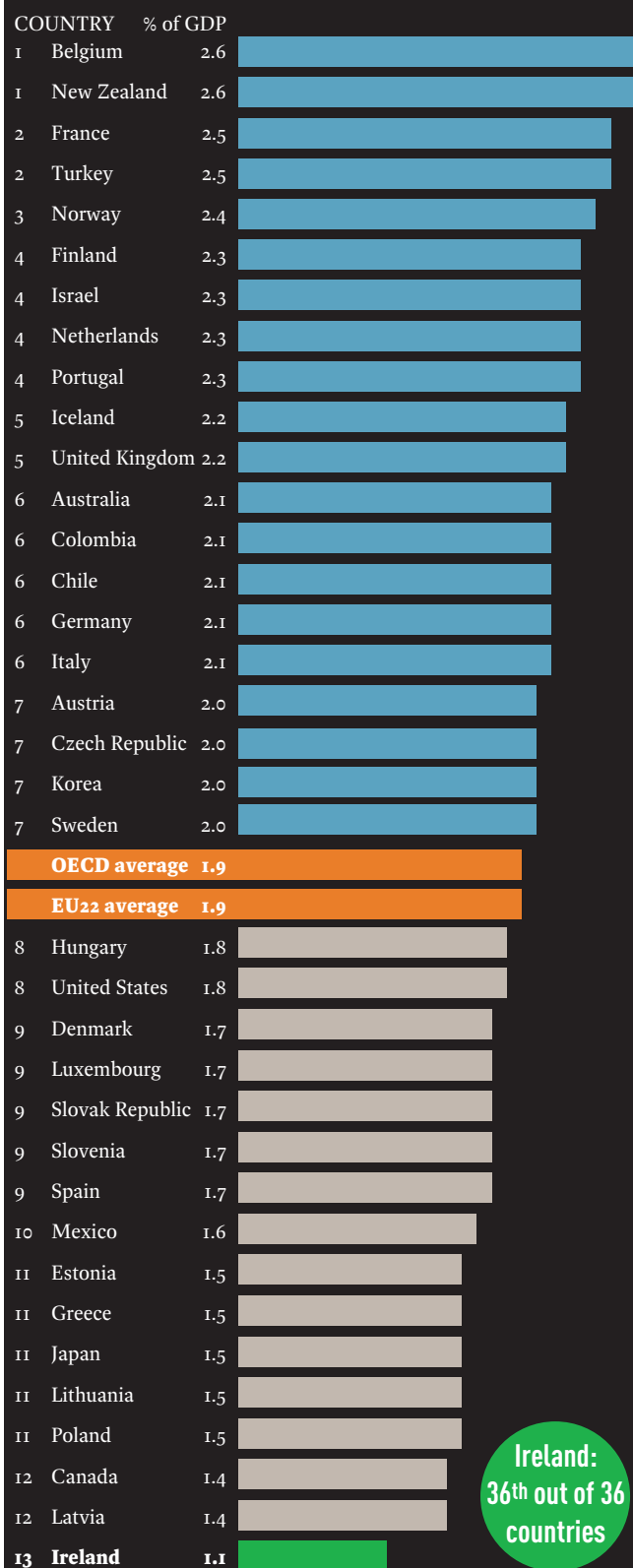
A positive equity outcome is also indicated in terms of the smaller than OECD average difference between native-born and foreign-born 15-29 year olds who are neither employed or in education or training (NEETs). In Ireland, the difference is two percentage points compared to the OECD average of five.

Having a good education has never been more important in OECD countries and underlines the need for investment. The report states: "The economies of OECD countries depend upon a supply of highly skilled workers. Expanded education opportunities have increased the pool of skilled people across countries, and those with higher qualifications are more likely to find employment. In contrast, while employment opportunities still exist for those with lower qualifications, their labour market prospects are relatively challenging. People with the lowest educational qualifications have lower earnings and are often working in routine jobs that are at greater risk of being automated, therefore increasing their likelihood of being unemployed".

View the full Education at a Glance 2021 report at:
www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/.

OECD, EDUCATION AT A GLANCE

Total expenditure on second-level education
as a percentage of GDP 2018



WHAT DO WE REALLY KNOW ABOUT ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOUR?

ASTI Assistant General Secretary, Education and Research, **MOIRA LEYDON**, outlines research into how and why adolescents behave the way they do.

Well-being is moving centre stage in terms of post-Covid social and political policy. Young people's well-being has been extensively documented and commented upon during the pandemic. However, as teachers are well aware, adolescent behaviour and well-being is changing all the time, which is why teaching is such emotionally demanding work and characterised by profession-wide high stress levels. Recent research by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) provides good information on aspects of adolescent behaviour and how schools both manage and influence behaviour. Its report, 'Risk and protective factors in adolescent behaviour: the role of family, school and neighbourhood characteristics in (mis)behaviour among young people' (May 2021) provides a huge amount of data, which will not only resonate with teachers but also provide clear messages to the Government on what supports schools need.

The report is based on the longitudinal study Growing Up in Ireland, which tracks several cohorts of children at nine, 13 and 17 years of age. The research purpose was to establish what patterns of (mis)behaviour are found among young people and to what extent these relate to differences in social class, parental education and household income. Significantly, it also looked at the extent to which adolescent behaviour reflects the social mix of the school, over and above the effects of family background. This granular focus is really important as it can help schools to adapt their policies and practices.

Four domains

The typology for behaviour had four domains:

- "Externalising behaviour" relates to conduct ('acting out') and

- concentration difficulties

- "Internalising behaviour" relates to negativity directed towards the self (i.e., mood or emotional difficulties, difficulties interacting with peers)
- "Prosocial behaviour" is an indicator of positive development, reflecting positive interaction with others, and
- "Antisocial behaviour" reflects behaviour in the wider community (such as graffiti or damaging property).

Data on behaviour was provided by the primary caregiver – usually the mother.

So, what did the study find? It might surprise some to read that there are generally low levels of behaviour difficulties among 17 year olds. Externalising behaviour declined between the ages of nine and 17 years, while prosocial behaviour was relatively stable over time. Internalising behaviour increased between 13 and 17 years for young women, but was stable for young men. Few young people experienced persistent behaviour difficulties over time and across the different domains of home, school and community, indicating the way in which behaviour was shaped by context and responded to different protective and risk factors within those contexts. Marked gender differences were found in the types of behaviour analysed. Males were more likely to display externalising, antisocial and school (mis)behaviour; females had higher levels of prosocial behaviour but were more likely to internalise difficulties.

Young people with special educational needs had greater behaviour difficulties. Internalising and externalising difficulties were found to be more

prevalent among young people from families with lower levels of education and who had experienced financial strain during the last recession. However, there were few consistent relationships between family advantage and school-based or antisocial behaviour. Poorer outcomes for all types of behaviour were found among those living in lone parent or separated families.

The difference a school makes

The school young people attended made a difference to certain types of behaviour, namely, school-based misbehaviour, truancy, internalising difficulties and prosocial behaviour, with significant variation found between schools, even taking account of the background of their students. Students in DEIS schools had higher levels of school-based misbehaviour, truancy, externalising, internalising, and antisocial behaviour. However, they also displayed more prosocial behaviour than those in non-DEIS schools.

However, even taking school type into account, the differences between individual schools in the levels of school misbehaviour and truancy remained significant. In other words, school policies and school climate play an important role.

The quality of relationships with teachers was significantly related to within- and out-of-school behaviour. Positive interaction (receiving praise or positive feedback) served as a protective factor, while those who were

frequently reprimanded by their teachers at 13 years of age had poorer behaviour outcomes four years later. Behaviour difficulties were also greater among those who had been assigned to either middle-/lower-stream or special classes at Junior Cycle (lower secondary) level. Disengagement from school was strongly related to behaviour, with the small group (3%) who “hated” school at 13 not only having higher levels of school misbehaviour and truancy, but also engaging in more antisocial, internalising and externalising behaviour outside school.

Schools emerge as an important influence on adolescent behaviour, as well as a potential arena for the provision of intervention and support. Critically, the research underlines the importance of formal interventions being underpinned by a positive school climate, and day-to-day interactions between teachers and students. This is not news to teachers! Relationships are at the heart of the classroom. However, as teachers know well and ASTI research validates, large class sizes and huge workload radically impair the capacity of teachers at an individual and collective level.

The report recommends the development of restorative justice practices in schools and the fostering of conflict-resolution skills among students. However, some groups of young people experience more serious behaviour and mental health difficulties than others. Previous research indicates high levels of unmet demand for adolescent mental health services, creating challenges for young people being able to access appropriate services in a timely way. Teachers can readily confirm this.







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WHEN THE DAWN IS COME

The ASTI recently commissioned a portrait of Thomas MacDonagh for its Head Office. This article by the late DR SHANE KENNA examines MacDonagh's life and his role in the Easter Rising.

Born in Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary, in 1878, Thomas MacDonagh is one of the most fascinating characters behind the Easter Rising. He was the child of a peculiar marriage of two national school teachers, his father a jovial drunkard with little interest in politics, and his mother a devoted convert to Catholicism who instilled in her children a devotion to just causes. As a child he enjoyed "running little manuscript magazines, playing paper and pencil games and reading improving books". He was described as a "small, sturdily built boy with curly brown hair and large grey eyes", with a mischievous humour and a love of ghost stories.

MacDonagh was educated by the Holy Ghost Fathers at Rockwell College, Co. Tipperary. Following the death of his father in 1894, he developed a decided inclination for the missionary priesthood and, applying to join the order, held: "I like its rules and customs and particularly the great object of all its members, and for which it has been founded. I first learnt of it from some of my friends, and now, having tried by every means in my power to find out to what life I have been called, I have concluded that I have a vocation for this congregation, and a decided taste for the missionary and the religious state. It has always been my wish to become a priest and now that wish is stronger than ever, and it is to become, not only a priest, but a missionary and religious".

At no point, as has previously been asserted in the history of the Easter

Rising, did MacDonagh become a priest or take any religious vows. He enrolled as what the Order termed a Surveillant. This was a means of preparation for young boys during adolescence to adulthood who showed potential to go further within the Church. If they chose to continue on to a religious life they were then recommended to begin a novitiate in Paris. As MacDonagh's studies progressed within the Junior Scholasticate, he began instruction of junior students, and seemed to relish the role of teacher, with a special interest in humanities, particularly English, Latin and classics. At Rockwell, however, MacDonagh drifted away from the church and battled a crisis of faith where he doubted the existence of a God and afterlife, and rejected church teachings in favour of a harrowing Catholic heterodoxy.

Unable to stay at Rockwell, he left for Kilkenny where he worked as a teacher of English and French at St. Kieran's College. It was here that he developed a lifelong love for the Irish language and experienced what he termed "a baptism in nationalism", when he attended a meeting of the Gaelic League, which he had intended to disrupt for "a lark". He was so moved by how the native speakers used the language that he recalled how it dawned upon him that he was "the greatest West Britisher in Ireland and suppressed the Irish language". Immersing himself in the language through the League's social and cultural activities, he attended summer language classes on Inishmaan, Co. Galway, and became a fluent Irish speaker and

Painting of a patriot

The ASTI commissioned member and artist Gerry Whelan to paint a portrait of Thomas MacDonagh for display at ASTI Head Office. Gerry explains how the various images in his painting relate to Thomas MacDonagh's life:

"The painting is set against an Irish landscape because of Thomas MacDonagh's love of nature. MacDonagh also loved the Irish language and culture, and wore a Tara brooch. In the painting MacDonagh's Tara brooch is attached to his lapel but also to a green landscape. There is a forsythia tree next to MacDonagh, which blooms yellow at Easter time.

"MacDonagh took charge of Jacob's Factory during the Easter Rising. In the painting the factory can be seen with a tricolour flag at the top. The flag was made in the factory and remnants of it still exist in the National Museum at Collins Barracks. There is also a scene depicting MacDonagh's execution on May 3, 1916, in the Stone-Breakers' Yard at Kilmainham Gaol. "The young people at the front of the painting represent the generations who have been influenced by MacDonagh. The subject books they carry are the subjects taught by MacDonagh. The book *Literature in Ireland* – MacDonagh's PhD – was published posthumously.

"The scene of MacDonagh's execution is depicted. He is saluting the firing squad, a representation of his respect for the soldiers, whom he told: "You



Artist and ASTI member Gerry Whelan (seated) is pictured with ASTI General Secretary Kieran Christie (left), and ASTI President Eamon Dennehy.

are doing your duty, I do not hold this against you".

A member of Dublin North Central Branch, Gerry Whelan has served as school steward, branch chair, regional organiser and a member of the ASTI Central Executive Council.

writer. His enthusiasm for the Irish language, and disagreement within the local Conradh, forced him to leave Kilkenny, however, and make his way to Fermoy. He settled at St Colman's College, which he described as "Gaelic to the spine". He was thrilled to find that the President of the College was progressive and that its teachers were "scholars and gentlemen".

Musical collaboration

At this time MacDonagh had also been working on a musical cantata in collaboration with the Italian composer Benedetto Palmieri. Palmieri and MacDonagh's cantata, *The Exodus*, was based on the escape of the Israelites from Egypt and was submitted to the Feis Ceol, an Irish music festival held at the Royal University, Dublin. *The Exodus* was first performed on May 19, 1904, and featured a baritone singer, accompanied by tenors, sopranos, and a boys' choir drawn from St Mary's College, Dublin. A resounding success, the cantata was so popular that MacDonagh and Palmieri won first prize at the festival and Doremi & Co., a London publisher, published it later that year.

Working with Pearse

Moving to Dublin, MacDonagh started working with Patrick Pearse, whom he had met on a visit to the Aran Islands. It was evident that MacDonagh held Pearse in high regard, describing him as "the greatest of Irish writers in imagination and power, if not in language". Pearse had been desirous of establishing a bilingual educational project and a school, Scoil Éanna, at Cullenswood House, Ranelagh (later Rathfarnham). MacDonagh was effectively his right-hand man and was employed as deputy headmaster. MacDonagh was responsible for internal organisation, administration and the day-to-day working of the school, and was the face of Scoil Éanna, regularly meeting high-profile visitors and lecturers. He was also committed to teaching English and French, and thoroughly enjoying the experience, thinking the students "splendid". He reported how he had "the little lads now talking French" on a regular basis. Relishing this role, MacDonagh used it to network within the bustling academic and literary scene, meeting many varied guests including Shane Leslie, George Moore, WB Yeats, Lady Gregory, Francis Ledwidge, A.E. (George Russell) and Padraic Colum, to name a few. Embracing the Dublin literary scene, however, he was frustrated at his inability to become a recognised poet; despite his best efforts throughout his life, his poetry was never a commercial or academic success.

The playwright

That same year the Abbey Theatre produced MacDonagh's first play, *When the Dawn is Come*, poignantly based upon the theme of a rebellion led by a council of seven. His protagonist was a rebel poet, Turlough, who, in a complicated narrative, attempts to trick the British Government into believing he is a spy.

Extensively criticised by the media, the opening night was regarded as a failure. This was no fault of MacDonagh's; pre-production had been blighted by several factors, including poor management on the Abbey Theatre's behalf and the fact that the main actor, Ambrose Power, had refused to learn his lines. Disappointed by failure, MacDonagh remained committed to theatre work and produced two further plays: *Metempsychosis*, in which he lampooned Yeats, whom he partly blamed for the failure of his first play, and *Pagans*, his only play to have strong, believable protagonists showing tangible human emotion. In this play, a married couple eventually part due to irreconcilable differences, followed by a throwaway remark where the main character announces to his former wife: "You will not know yourself

in the Ireland that we shall make".

Around the time of *When the Dawn is Come*, MacDonagh met Joseph Plunkett, a fellow poet, albeit more bohemian in character, who, desirous of entry to UCD, had advertised for an Irish tutor to improve his chances. Hiring MacDonagh, the two developed an instant friendship through a mutual love of poetry, history, language and art. Both poets offered constructive criticism on each other's work and Plunkett dedicated his first book of poetry, *The Circle and the Sword*, to MacDonagh in 1911. Teaching Plunkett the Irish language MacDonagh threw himself into linguistic studies and, following advice from Plunkett, he accepted a position lecturing in UCD in 1912, where he taught English literature. Here he had earlier completed an MA thesis on the works of the English writer Thomas Campion and strongly considered a PhD on the theme of language in Ireland, which he worked on until his death in 1916. This PhD was published posthumously under the title *Literature in Ireland*, where MacDonagh asserted that the English language, as spoken in Ireland, was a new form of Irish, and that a national literary culture could be written in English.

Marrying Muriel

In 1911 MacDonagh proposed to Muriel Gifford, who he had earlier met at St Enda's. Writing to Muriel he humorously described his proposal as a "testament of intentions" from a "bachelor of arts and artfulness, being in a state of perfect poverty and health (barring a slight cold)". The following year MacDonagh and Gifford wed on January 3 in a small informal ceremony. Celebrating his new wife, he joyfully wrote:

*Now no bitter songs I sing:
Summer flows for me now;
For the spirit of the Spring;
Breathes upon the living bough;
All poor leaves of why and how?
Fall before this wonder, dead:
Joy is given to me now,
In the love of her I wed.*

The new couple moved into an apartment in Dublin City Centre at 32 Baggot Street and by November of that year had their first son, Donagh. He would later be joined by Barbara, who was born in March 1915.

A new theatre

By 1914 MacDonagh and Plunkett had formed a partnership with Edward Martyn to establish a new theatre in Dublin. The three were eager to counter the influence of the Abbey Theatre, which they believed gave too much emphasis to peasant plays and a stereotypical view of rural Irish life. Their new venture, the Irish Theatre, was located at Hardwicke Street, with MacDonagh as its manager, and listed a troupe of actors including Frank Fay, Máire Ní Shuibhlaigh and Una O'Connor. According to Fay, MacDonagh had desired a company of young actors who would assist in staging avant-garde plays written by Irish and European playwrights. Such was MacDonagh's dream of an avant-garde theatre, the partnership became the first theatre in Ireland to perform Chekov's *Uncle Vanya* in June 1915, followed by August Strindberg's *Easter* and Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*. Serendipitously, the Ireland that the Irish Theatre was created in was changing politically, and the project was operating in a new political environment.

Political events

Inspired by political events in Ireland and abroad, notably the Ulster crisis and the first world war, MacDonagh was swept along by a prevailing current of militancy and found himself elected to the provisional committee of the Irish Volunteers. By March 1915 he was appointed commandant of the 2nd Battalion of the Dublin Brigade and regularly produced headquarters orders and notes for the training of volunteers. This was alongside a series of lectures and rallies, which he addressed on military themes. MacDonagh insisted upon a programme of regular training including drilling, scouting, ambushes and fieldwork, often involving two companies of Volunteers in manoeuvres with the object of war games, skirmishing and seizing strategic points. This, MacDonagh speculated, would familiarise the Volunteers with discipline and obedience to their senior officers, company formation, tracking advance guard and frontal assault strategies. In his training style MacDonagh also favoured the establishment of instruction centres and rifle ranges parallel to inter-company rifle competitions as a means of “stimulating healthy rivalry in what is after all the most important part of [Volunteer] training”. In April 1915 he was sworn into the Irish Republican Brotherhood and he recruited Eamonn de Valera into the conspiracy. Discussing this with Eamonn Ceannt, who was sceptical about de Valera, MacDonagh prophetically commented: “Don’t you worry about de Valera, he always lands on his feet”. The last man to be co-opted onto the military council, it is wrongly assumed that MacDonagh knew nothing of the Rising until a few

weeks beforehand. MacDonagh was aware of the plans for the Rising and the evidence indicates that he had been working on these plans with Joseph Plunkett prior to his co-option to the military council. Such was the demand of his Volunteers work that his work at UCD and the Irish Theatre was greatly hindered, and meeting his friend Edward Martyn for one final time, he explained to Martyn his belief that Ireland would change forever due to the Volunteers. Almost prophetically, Martyn warned him: “Remember, dear boy, you’ll be shot”.

The Rising


Martyn’s prediction was eerily correct and when the Easter Rising began MacDonagh found himself in charge of Jacob’s Factory. An impregnable fortress with two large towers, it is assumed that MacDonagh’s garrison saw little action. This is not entirely correct. While the garrison was isolated, they were regularly engaged in sorties, sniper fire with Dublin Castle, and provided relief to Michael Mallin in the Royal College of Surgeons and de Valera at Boland’s Mills. While the atmosphere in the Jacob’s garrison was tense, there were moments of levity too, with assembled volunteers organising céilís and reading circles. Here the rebels found a gramophone, but to their horror the only record they could find was *God Save the King*. As the Easter week wore on the Jacob’s garrison was wholeheartedly dejected and it was recalled that MacDonagh, dishevelled and worn looking, had become more of a figurehead within the garrison, with real authority passing to his second in command John MacBride. By Wednesday the garrison stood on top of the roof of Jacob’s and saw the city ablaze, watching in horror as the British used heavy artillery to pound the distant GPO. Throughout the course of the week MacDonagh wrote extensive propaganda to keep the rebels’ spirits up, and rumours of German landings and national uprisings spread through the garrison. Resultant from this, when MacDonagh eventually agreed to a surrender, the garrison collapsed into visible pandemonium amidst calls of “fight it out, fight it out”, while one rebel, Peadar Kearney, recalled that men were in tears and others had become prostrate with disbelief. Addressing his men for the last time, MacDonagh lamented: “We have to give in. Those of you in civilian clothes go home. Those of you in uniform stay on, you cannot leave”.

He died like a prince

Thomas MacDonagh was sentenced to be executed in the Stone-Breakers’ Yard at Kilmainham Gaol on May 3, 1916. Unable to see his wife Muriel, MacDonagh wrote to her hours before his execution: “I am ready to die, and I thank God that I am to die in so holy a cause. My country will reward my deed richly. I counted the cost of this, and I am ready to pay it”. In what would become the most iconic execution of the Easter Rising, he addressed the firing squad, and offering them a cigarette, he lamented: “I know this is a lousy job, but you’re doing your duty – I do not hold this against you”. Turning to the officer in charge of the firing squad, he offered him his silver cigarette case saying: “I won’t be needing this. Would you like to have it?” After his execution, the British commented: “They all died well, but MacDonagh, he died like a Prince”.

Dr Shane Kenna (1983-2017)

This article was written by the late Irish historian Dr Shane Kenna for ASTIR magazine in 2016. Dr Kenna authored a number of books including Thomas MacDonagh: 16 Lives (O’Brien Press). The Invincibles: The Phoenix Park Assassination and the Conspiracy that Shook an Empire (O’Brien Press) was published posthumously in 2019.



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AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR LGBTQI+ MEMBERS

DIARMAID DE PAOR, ASTI
Deputy General Secretary with
responsibility for the ASTI
Equality Committee, outlines
the union's wish to reconnect
with LGBTQI+ members.

We have a problem in the ASTI in our relationship with our LGBTQI+ members.

You, our colleagues in the LGBTQI+ community, are very important to us, as are your issues. We are continually seeking to have legislation changed and to ensure that schools are welcoming places regardless of a teacher's sexual orientation or gender identity.

However, we don't know who you, our LGBTQI+ members, are, and would like to hear what your issues are, directly from you.

We have over 18,000 members and it is therefore safe to assume that we have many hundreds of members (perhaps thousands) who are lesbian, bisexual, gay, or who do not identify with the gender assigned to them at birth (or with any gender). However, any attempt to reach out to these members is met with near total silence. This silence tells us that second-level teachers who do not conform to societal 'norms' in terms of sexuality or gender are still reluctant to come out in their school community – or even to their union.

Fear of negative consequences

We have tried to forge links with you over the years. We have asked for you to contact us confidentially by phone or to a designated email address, but there have been very few responses. We participate in the Dublin Pride Parade each year under ASTI banners but very few LGBTQI+ teachers join us. We conducted a survey to find out what we should be doing for our members who are LGBTQI+ and what issues you had in your schools and with your union. There was a very poor response. This leads to the obvious conclusion that we are not going about things in the right way, or that you are afraid that there might be negative consequences for you if you try to change things.

ASTI commitment to equality

It is not that the ASTI is ignoring your issues. In 2015 we successfully, along with other unions, secured an amendment to the discriminatory Section 37.1 of the Employment Equality Act. This section allows educational and medical institutions to provide "more favourable treatment on the grounds of religion" to their employees. The 2015 amendment considerably curtailed the circumstances in which this "more favourable treatment" can be applied and made it practically impossible for a person's sexual orientation or

gender identity to be used to discriminate. However, the section still remains, it is still discriminatory, and the ASTI continues to seek its total removal from the Act.

The ASTI used to regularly invite the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN), which has now ceased to operate, to hold workshops at Annual Convention. We have invited Transgender Equality Network Ireland to address our principals and deputy principals conference – a session that had a major positive impact and response – and we support the activities of many organisations promoting better treatment of LGBTQI+ people, both adults and children.

The Equality Committee of the ASTI regularly discusses issues relating to equality for our LGBTQI+ members and is anxious to build contacts with you so that we can listen to your concerns and how you would like them to be addressed.

LGBTQI+ teachers' group

We would love to establish a vibrant and active LGBTQI+ teachers' group within the ASTI. If such a group were established, we would be very diligent in maintaining confidentiality in relation to participants in its activities. Any expression of interest would be treated with the utmost confidentiality, both inside and outside the union. If anybody would be interested in joining such a group, please contact us. You can send an email to lgbtqi@asti.ie. If you would like to meet to discuss issues in confidence that can also be arranged. We know that we have many LGBTQI+ members out there. We know that many of you are worried about your position in your schools. We also know that many of you feel that your union is not representing you. We want to change that. We want to create an education system in Ireland where every teacher and student can feel happy and comfortable in who they are. No teacher, whatever their race, religious beliefs, gender, sexuality or disability should feel ashamed or afraid. We want to reassure you that it is not only LGBTQI+ students who concern us or who are worthy of our support and protection.

Let's turn a new page and renew the fight for equality. You are our members, and we want to represent you, so please make contact and we will help you

If you would like to contact the ASTI about any
of these issues, please email lgbtqi@asti.ie.

SUPPORTING TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS

ASTI media appearances focused on Covid-19 safety issues and continued underinvestment in education.

“We all knew that transmission within society was widespread prior to the schools reopening and we are being advised that we are sort of getting the back wash of that. I suppose the big concern from my point of view is that we have been assured that people who are in schools are operating in an environment where the Delta variant mitigation control is in place and that it won't be transmitted throughout the school. Well, it's very early days yet and as I say we will be meeting the public health officials and the Department tomorrow and we will be asking the questions in relation to the first number of days. What I would say is that we have been asking that there would be certainty around the contact tracing system: that it would be robust, that it would cope and that it would be agile.”

Kieran Christie, ASTI General Secretary,
The Pat Kenny Show, Newstalk, September 7

“Our aim is to back up the people who are working in the schools: the same kind of effort and provide the resources people are actually providing themselves in the schools. I'm talking about management and teachers and the students indeed, all really playing by the rules, and they have for the past 18 months, in a really gallant effort to try and keep our schools open, and we need the resources to match the human effort.”

Eamon Dennehy, ASTI President,
Drivetime, RTÉ Radio 1, September 7

“The Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland (ASTI) said investment in education is the “most important factor” that impacts on curriculum. “Teachers know that transformative curriculum change takes place in the classroom and that, ultimately, the teacher is the facilitator of this change ... Teachers need to be convinced of the rationale for change; feel that their views and experiences are listened to; trust that adequate resources will be provided to support change; and – most importantly – that change will deliver better learning outcomes for students.”

Irish Examiner, October 5

“If we take GDP as a measure of national wealth, it is unacceptable that a rich country like Ireland remains at the bottom of the [Education at a Glance 2021] global rankings. It has also demonstrated that large classes, insufficient staffing, and inadequate accommodation and ventilation are undermining the capacity of schools to provide a safe environment for quality education.”

Eamon Dennehy, ASTI President,
Irish Examiner, September 16

“For me the main issues are still outstanding issues for the ASTI in particular. For example, we still have teachers on unequal pay since 2011.”

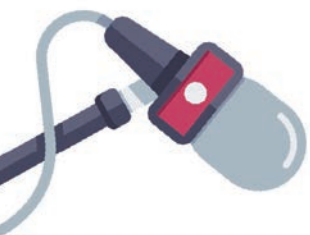
Mark Walshe, ASTI delegate at ICTU Conference,
discussing ICTU Biennial Delegate Convention 2021,
Six One News, RTÉ One, October 26

“We are greatly disappointed that there has been no announcement [in Budget 2022] to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio at second level. Modern curricula require that a significant amount of practical, scientific and experiential work occurs in classrooms every day. This is not sustainable.”

Eamon Dennehy, ASTI President,
Irish Daily Star, October 13

“We need significantly more investment in our schools if we are to build capacity both in terms of infrastructure and student services. Smaller classes, improved buildings and technology, more guidance counsellors and the restoration of middle management posts are the key areas requiring investment.”

Eamon Dennehy, ASTI President,
The Echo, October 13



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- M Ed in Leadership of Wellbeing in Education
- M Oid san Oideachas Lán-Ghaeilge agus Gaeltachta
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LIFELONG LEARNERS

The ASTI Scholarship is awarded each year to teachers undertaking postgraduate research that has the potential to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in second-level schools. Four past recipients spoke to *ASTIR* about their research.

Junior Cycle in the media



From left: Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary), Claire Redmond (ASTI Bursary recipient), and Máire G. Ní Chiarba (then ASTI President).

Claire Redmond – 2015 recipient

My research questions centred on examining the representation of Junior Cycle reform in the print media, journalists’ views on Junior Cycle reform, and the views of other stakeholders involved in the process.

A qualitative approach was used in the research. The first strand of research involved a content analysis of 126 newspaper articles. The second strand of the study involved collecting data from nine interviews with journalists, as well as the main protagonists emerging from the data analysis in the initial part of the study.

The findings illustrate a history of curricular reform in Ireland that was

difficult and slow. Prior attempts at Junior Cycle reform encountered difficulties and many of the previous reforms were only enacted in a piecemeal fashion. Over the course of a lengthy dispute on Junior Cycle reforms – at the root of which was teacher opposition to assessing their own students – the trajectory of events was documented in the print media by key journalists and contributors. This study aimed to capture how the newspaper media can frame areas of importance and create a preferred discourse of the events.

It was found that for the journalists, the key criterion in source selection was practicality. Accessibility and availability of sources, as well as the contributors’ ability to write on the topic, were the main areas considered in source selection.

The documentary analysis provided evidence as to the significant role of the industrial relations dispute and how teachers’ unions were

ASTI Scholarship

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

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

framed in the process. Representation of curriculum reform in the media was welcomed by the stakeholders interviewed. The relationship of the stakeholders with the media emerged as a finding. Their occasional and sporadic interaction with journalists was pointed out. The study found the print media representation of Junior Cycle reform to be a complex space, requiring further interpretation and meaningful analysis.

Teacher stress



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

Patrick Glover – 2017 recipient

In 2017 I was delighted and honoured to be awarded the ASTI Centenary Award for undertaking research that was deemed to have the potential to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in second-level schools.

As part of completing the MSc in Education and Training Management with Dublin City University (DCU), I conducted a mixed-methods research study examining ‘Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction’ among teachers. During the course of the study I found that occupational stress is a significant problem affecting many second-level teachers. Some of the main stressors included: workload, time management, lack of promotional opportunity and student indiscipline. I also found that the causes and manifestations of stress vary depending on stage of career.

Given that teaching is a vocation it was not surprising to learn that, despite the strains of the profession, most teachers found their jobs hugely rewarding, reporting very high levels of job satisfaction.

Upon reflection, the research helped me to develop a deeper understanding of the demands of teaching, but it also helped to start conversations around stress management and about how to mind oneself throughout what is a demanding career.

Given the year that has just passed it would be interesting to investigate the challenges brought about by Covid-19, and how they have impacted on the stress levels of teachers and school managements – although I think we might know the answer to this question already!

Induction for new teachers



From left: Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary), Stephen Dunne (ASTI Bursary recipient), and Breda Lynch (then ASTI President).

Stephen Dunne – 2019 recipient

I have just finished the third year of my professional doctorate (EdD) with the Institute of Education at DCU. The EdD is a four-year course. I am in the second half of the data-gathering phase. My working title is ‘Using a professional learning community model to investigate the development of professional identity among teachers completing Droichead Induction, with emphasis on promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in the classroom’.

Both the *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers*, and *Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework* place a strong emphasis on teachers developing a professional identity, and capacity to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in schools. Induction is also described as a period of socialisation to the profession. My research seeks to investigate how newly qualified teachers (NQTs) navigate the development of this agency and what supports they find, or find lacking, during the induction process.

Using a professional learning community model, participants met fortnightly over six weeks to collaborate and reflect on their experiences of promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in their classrooms during the interim. Participants also kept a reflective diary to record their experiences. Participants have discussed their interest to actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion in their classrooms, and have also examined the challenges they face as early career teachers in developing the skills.

It is hoped that the research will inform the future design of induction in Ireland, as well as shedding light on how we support teachers in general to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in schools.

Teacher shortages

Maeve Clancy – 2018 recipient

In 2018 I was awarded the ASTI Bursary in recognition of my studies in education policy. I studied for an MSc in Public Policy in DCU. I titled my thesis ‘The teacher supply crisis: examining the shortages of post-primary teachers in key subject areas in Ireland’.

The research was of keen interest to the ASTI as it has been to the

forefront on the issue of pay inequality for recently qualified teachers and has valiantly promoted the need for Government to address the issue of temporary contracts in the teaching sector over the last number of years. Improving teacher supply, especially in areas such as STEM and modern languages – where employment opportunities in industry and in the private sector are plentiful – is connected to improving the pay and conditions of new entrants. Teaching must be viewed as a valuable, well-regarded and viable career option for highly skilled and highly qualified graduates.

There are various interrelated factors that influence those who choose teaching as a career and determine whether or not they remain in the profession. These include the image and status of the profession, conditions of work, salary scales, pathways to promotion, and security of tenure. It is evident that the issue of teacher shortages in recent years has been multi-causal and therefore requires an effective multifaceted response.

The foundations of a successful education system lie in ensuring an appropriate supply of highly qualified teachers covering geographical areas, education sectors and, importantly, subject specialisms. The multiplicities of factors required to achieve this success are examined in my thesis, which concludes that it is imperative, going forward, that any education policy is cognisant and considerate of its potential impact on teacher supply.



From left: ASTI Bursary recipient Maeve Clancy with Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary).

Trócaire

GAME CHANGERS

Create a game. Change the world.

A competition for young people who want to change the world and believe games are a way to do this! You can create any of the following types of game:

BOARD GAME — CARD GAME — VIDEO GAME





Entries must be submitted by **8th April 2022** in one of the following categories:

Primary

Post Primary

Youth




Prizes: Every young person that enters the competition will receive certificates. Winners will receive an individual prize and trophies for their school/youth group. The overall winning game will be developed into a final design version for the winning school/group to use.

For further information please visit trocaire.org/education/gamechangers



An Roinn Gnóthaí, Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Children at school in Mozambique continue their education after cyclone Idai.

PHOTO: SAMAM SAIDI/SAVE THE CHILDREN

LOST GENERATION

MOIRA LEYDON, ASTI Assistant General Secretary: Education and Research, says that a crisis in global education is looming, with education in a quarter of countries close to collapse.

As schools across Europe are progressively reopening following the most serious disruption of their services for many decades, a drastically different scenario is unfolding in the global south. At the height of the pandemic the United Nations estimated that, for the first time in history, about 1.5 billion children were out of school. At least one-third of these children were unable to access remote learning.

The learning poor

Prior to the pandemic, the World Bank estimated that of the 720 million primary school-aged children, 382 million – more than half – are “learning poor”, below the minimum proficiency level in reading. This is on top of the 258 million children – equivalent to one-sixth of the global school-age population – who were already out of school due to poverty, discrimination and child labour. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has now pushed a quarter of the world’s countries into an “extreme” or “high” risk of educational collapse.

A recent report by Save the Children* ranked countries according to their vulnerability to educational catastrophe. The analysis calculated how vulnerable school systems were as a result of a range of factors including coronavirus vaccination coverage, the climate crisis, physical attacks on schools, and the proportion of school-age children with a home internet connection. It concluded that in at least 48 countries – mainly in sub-Saharan Africa – the education of hundreds of millions of children is now hanging by a thread. This is especially the case in eight countries deemed to be at “extreme risk”: Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Somalia, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Sudan, Mali and Libya. It found that a further 40 countries, including Yemen, Burkina Faso, India, the Philippines and Bangladesh, were all at “high risk”.

The report states that emergencies had already affected children’s learning, protection and well-being prior to the pandemic. The likelihood is that over the coming decades, countries will be at increased risk of hazards that – without investment in national education systems, preparedness and



Rima, 13, writes on the blackboard at her school in Bethlehem in the occupied Palestinian territory.

PHOTO: JONATHAN HYAMS/SAVE THE CHILDREN

anticipatory action – pose an even greater threat to children’s right to a safe, inclusive and quality education. As the pandemic has shown, building resilient education systems in all countries is critical, and even more so in crisis-prone and low-income countries. As part of an emergency response, education is life saving and life sustaining.

Recommendations for change

The Report concludes that it is simply not good enough to build “back” to how things were. We need to build “forward” and differently. To this end, it posits an eight-point strategy for those systems most at risk:

1. **Covid-19 recovery:** Ensure that children can return to school safely and get their learning back on track.
2. **Preparedness and anticipatory action:** Every country must have an integrated preparedness plan to secure children’s learning and well-being in future crises.
3. **Target out-of-school children:** Ensure that children facing discrimination, and who were out of school before the pandemic, can access safe learning opportunities.
4. **Keep learning safe:** Protect learning from violence and attacks, and from the impact of the climate emergency.
5. **Scale up and adapt financing:** Urgently fill the education financing gap and adjust financing modalities to enable anticipatory action.
6. **Get the data right:** Collect more and improved data, and continuously share data widely for agile decision-making on preparedness and anticipatory action, and policy making.
7. **Focus on equity and child protection:** Reach the children most affected by inequality and discrimination first, and include children in analysing, designing, implementing and evaluating programmes.
8. **Shift power:** Move decision-making power and resources into national and local civil society.

In response to the education crisis caused by the pandemic, UNESCO established a Global Education Coalition focused on three themes: gender, connectivity and teachers. It convened a high-level ministerial meeting in March this year to take stock of lessons learnt, the greatest risks facing education today, and strategies to leave no learner behind. The core message from the meeting was sombre and stark: the international community must prioritise education recovery to avoid a “generational catastrophe”.

*Save the Children 2021 – ‘Building Forward Better: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/19526/pdf/build-forward-better.pdf?_ga=2.167398905.676506388.1634124341-967177894.1634124341

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR PENSION SCHEME?

DESMOND O'TOOLE, ASTI Executive Officer: Development & Organisation, with responsibility for the ASTI Pensions sub-committee, says that teachers need to ensure that they are informed about their pension scheme.



Knowing about your pension scheme is important at every stage in your teaching career. Decisions you make during your career can have a significant impact on the value of your pension benefits when you come to retire. 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.

Which scheme?

The first step is to understand which pension scheme you are a member of, and what type of scheme that is. There are essentially three occupational pension schemes for post-primary teachers:

1. Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Teachers Superannuation Scheme.
2. Education and Training Board Teachers Superannuation Scheme.
3. Single Public Service Pension Scheme for teachers employed since January 2013.

All three pension schemes provide a pension in retirement until the natural death of the retired teacher, a lump sum payable on retirement (typically tax free), and survivors' benefits if a teacher dies either in service or once retired. The pension benefits of teachers in the first two schemes are based on the total pensionable service a teacher has accumulated in the scheme, their salary on the day they retire, and the rate of PRSI they have paid during their career. The pension benefits of teachers in the Single Public Service Pension Scheme are based on specific sums of money that are contributed to the Scheme from pay over the length of that teacher's career, cumulatively updated by the Consumer Price Index. All of these pension schemes are 'defined benefit' schemes, backed by the State, which allows for the confident calculation of future benefits as required.

Retirement arrangements also vary depending on when you joined your pension scheme. Depending on scheme membership, a teacher may retire from as early as 50 or 55 years of age with penalties, or from 55, 60 or 65 years of age without penalties. Teachers may also apply to retire early on medical grounds, and with enhanced pension benefits, if they are assessed to be permanently unfit to continue teaching.

How your union can help

The ASTI is able to assist teachers with almost all aspects of their occupational pension scheme, including pension enhancement, buying back early teaching service, how to retire, medical retirement, working in retirement, and how pension benefits are co-ordinated with the social insurance scheme (PRSI). ASTI officials can be contacted at ASTI Head Office for advice and assistance.

The ASTI also hosts an annual series of retirement seminars that provide a comprehensive briefing on the teachers' pension schemes and practical advice on preparing for retirement. Although these seminars are designed for teachers who are planning to retire in the next year, they are also invaluable for teachers in the later stages of their career who want to understand their occupational pension scheme. The schedule for the current series of retirement seminars commences in November 2021, and continues in January and February 2022. Further information and booking details can be found in the 'Events' section on the front page of the ASTI website.

For more detailed information on your pension scheme, visit www.asti.ie or call ASTI Head Office on 01-604 0160.



Take a bow



The ASTI Achievement Awards
recognise the outstanding contribution teachers make to
schools, students and society.

Nominate an outstanding teacher or teaching team for their achievements
in school or outside their professional life

The ASTI Achievement Awards recognise teachers in three categories:

The Outstanding Teacher Achievement Award
recognises the contribution of individual teachers to their schools and education

The Outstanding Teacher Team Achievement Award
recognises the contribution of a team/group of teachers to their school and education

The Outstanding Individual Achievement Award
recognises the outstanding achievement of individual teachers outside their professional life

Log on to the ASTI website to find out more or to nominate a colleague.

The closing date for applications is
Friday, February 4th, 2022

www.asti.ie
www.twitter.com/astionion
www.facebook.com/astiteachers

Covid-19 has by no means disappeared

As restrictions are relaxed, some RSTA branches have begun to meet in person again.

The short winter days and long dark evenings are taking their grip on the country. Schools are fully operational. There is confidence and determination everywhere that the normal school programme, including State examinations, will continue uninterrupted. While the pandemic situation has improved and public health restrictions have eased, continued vigilance and observance of public health advice remain crucial, as Covid-19 has by no means disappeared.

RSTA AGMs have taken place in branches where the number of members did not exceed the maximum allowed indoors. For larger branches this meant that AGMs could not proceed. As is usual, financial statements have been prepared, forwarded, and local branch funding allocations have been distributed.

RSTA members appreciated the easing of restrictions that allowed family and friends to visit, and also enjoyed staycations. Some were able to visit friends and family abroad, where travel and quarantine restrictions allowed. The September RSTA Newsletter paid tribute to two colleagues who died recently: Nora Hawkes founded a secondary school in Askeaton, Co.



Waterford RSTA members on their regular walk observing social distancing (from left): Martina Mannion, Mary Hackett, Anna Neville, and Ursula Doherty.

Limerick, and retired aged 74. She then continued to work for four more years as a volunteer teacher in Tanzania.

Kathleen Ryder was a teacher in Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo. In 1958 she was forced to resign because of the ban on married women working in schools. With the assistance and support of the ASTI, she returned to her position in 1960.

The Alliance of Retired Public Servants (ARPS) continued to meet, via Zoom, following the Industrial Relations Bill, which came before the Dáil during the summer. Carmel Heneghan is the RSTA representative on the Alliance. The ARPS intends to network with the other retired groups and supporters on this single issue to ensure that members will have an established mechanism to address their pension issues.

Bígí slán, sábháilte

RSTA membership application/renewal

Name:

Address:

Home phone:

Mobile:

Email:

RSTA branch:

Annual subscription: €24
Annual renewal date: September 1

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

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

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

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

Standing order set-up form

To: The Manager (Bank name and full address)

I hereby authorise and request you to DEBIT my account:

Account name/s:

IBAN

BIC

And to credit the account of:

RETIRED SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

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

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

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

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

Member name

Signature: Date: ___/___/20___

Go for Gold for Down Syndrome Ireland



Down Syndrome Ireland (DSI) is asking schools to host a fundraiser for DSI this year. Schools can set up a Go For Gold Sports Day or Go For Gold Hero Day, using the DSI branded materials provided to decorate the school, and award a 'medal' sticker to everyone involved.

Each fundraising group will receive a 50th Anniversary Certificate of Appreciation for their fundraising.

DSI has produced an information sheet for your classroom, to get everyone talking, and to raise awareness and improve their understanding of disability and the importance of inclusion.

Teachers can register to receive a pack (which includes balloons and stickers) and download a poster to advertise a Go For Gold day. Our suggested donation on the day is €2 with all donations gratefully received. Share any pictures you take on the day by tagging @downsyndromeireland on your social media pages and also using the hashtags #GoForGold4DSI and #ShareTheJourney.

For more information, or to register, go to: <https://downsyndrome.ie/event/go-for-gold/>.

Create a game with Trócaire

Trócaire is running a competition for school students called Game Changers. Trócaire says it is for students who want to change the world and believe games are a way to do this. Students are invited to create either a board, card or video game based on one or more of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Every student that enters will receive a certificate. Winners will receive an individual prize and trophy, and the overall winner will see their game developed into a final design version for the winning school/group to use.

Entries close on April 8, 2022. For further information and to register, please visit: www.trocaire.org/our-work/educate/game-changers/.

Thomas MacDonagh Museum



The Thomas MacDonagh Museum in Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary, is open for school tours. The museum charts the co-founder of the ASTI's life and work in detail, including his time as a teacher and revolutionary. To find out more about visiting the museum, please go to: www.macdonaghmuseum.ie/contact-us/.

Passing of Máire Mhac an tSaoi and Brendan Kennelly

The ASTI expresses its regret on the death of the influential Irish poets Máire Mhac an tSaoi and Brendan Kennelly, both of whom sadly passed away in October.

Máire Mhac an tSaoi

A scholar of Irish, member of Aosdána, writer and one of the most influential Irish poets of her time, Máire Mhac an tSaoi lived an extraordinary life.

She was born in 1922 and spent extended periods of her childhood in her uncle's house in Dún Chaoin, in Corca Dhuibhne, where she attended the local national school and became an expert in the local Gaeilge. She began writing in both English and Irish while studying in UCD, and went on to study at the King's Inns. This was followed by a distinguished diplomatic career with the Department of External Affairs.

In his statement on her death, President Michael D. Higgins said: "A woman of immense talent and one of our most gifted, creative writers, she made a profound and distinctive contribution to our society in terms of

literature, diplomacy and, above all, poetry. Her fearless, powerful and intriguing personality led her to defy established convention and expectations in a unique way".

Brendan Kennelly

Renowned poet, novelist and academic Brendan Kennelly was born in North Kerry in 1936 but spent most of his life in his adopted city of Dublin. Kennelly studied at the co-educational St Ita's College where he was greatly influenced by a teacher, Jane McKenna, who was a follower of the educational theories of Patrick Pearse. This influenced his own later work as Professor of Modern Literature in Trinity College Dublin.

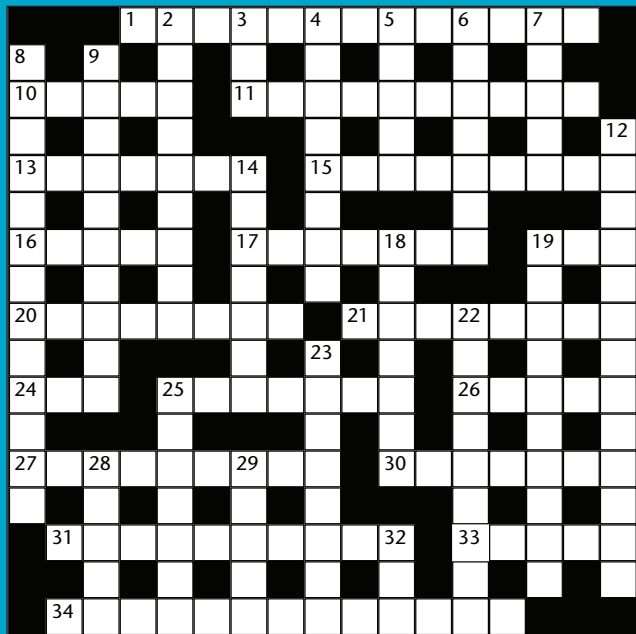
A prolific writer, his legacy includes over 30 volumes of poetry, two novels, three plays and several anthologies. He was well known for his love of recitation and could recall and recite extended poems by memory, both his own work and the work of others.

President Michael D. Higgins said: "As a poet, Brendan Kennelly had forged a special place in the affections of the Irish people. He brought so much resonance, insight, and the revelation of the joy of intimacy to the performance of his poems and to gatherings in so many parts of Ireland. He did so with a special charm, wit, energy and passion".

Win

€250





ACROSS

1. Make a lot of money quickly (3, 3, 7)
10. A division, in short, could be very proficient (5)
11. Male childminder might also grow plants (10)
13. Joy when cutting toenail (7)
15. Controversial culinary issue (3, 6)
16. Its capital is Port au Prince (5)
17. Toss this when truly enraged (7)
19. Computer transmission path (3)
20. Sad group in Co. Down mountains? (8)
21. Highly skilled musician (8)
24. Mathematically associated with 3 down (3)
25. Widely-spoken East African language (7)
26. Ray from Sheila's error (5)
27. Hot air, hogwash, claptrap (5, 4)
30. First human to journey to outer space (7)
31. Public part of theatre (10)
33. Plane crash in mountainous country (5)
34. Approval received from lying face down in cow pasture? (1, 3, 2, 3, 4)

DOWN

2. Sounds like how pupils learn, but that's just a hunch (9)
3. Yellowish-brown colour (3)
4. Cruder, but in a heartier way (5)
5. Keep an eye on later revision (5)
6. Listening device on door. (7)
7. WW2 Normandy beach (5)
8. Poke fun at Disney character (4, 3, 6)
9. Habits, actions, practices (10)
12. Short haircut for male relative could be all right! (4, 4, 5)
14. Most populous country in Africa (7)
18. Sounds like a revolution happening! (7)
19. Bart stoops to tie these (10)
22. Could Celine get on the box by being this? (9)
23. Lick this difficult situation (8)
25. Pigpen inventory might cut your hair! (7)
28. Hit the pillow! (5)
29. Decorate or make beautiful (5)
32. Disorderly or violent crowd (3)

Sponsored by  Cornmarket

ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 2105

The winner will receive €250 in One4All vouchers.

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

Name

School

Address

ASTI Branch

Entries to: ASTIR Crossword No. 2105,
Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Monday, December 6, 2021

Solutions to ASTIR Crossword No. 2104

ACROSS	DOWN
1. Dwelling place	2. Warp speed
10. Inner	3. LED
11. Duffle coat	4. Infamous
13. Knossos	5. Gulag
15. Mogadishu	6. Lucidly
16. Elite	7. Class
17. Squishy	8. Winklepickers
19. Pic	9. Unsociable
20. Imbedded	12. Muscle wasting
21. Cordelle	14. Systems
24. KBE	18. Stomach
25. Cassava	19. Palliative
26. Utica	22. Drug baron
27. Repudiate	23. Base pair
30. Habitat	25. Codicil
31. Psychopath	
33. Raven	
34. Soul searching	

Did you miss?

Education at a Glance 2021	12
ASTI Scholarship recipients	22

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the winner of
Crossword No. 2104:
Margaret Teegan, Mount Mercy
College, Model Farm Road,
Cork. Cork South Paddy
Mulcahy Branch



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

TRANSITION YEAR, CSPE, JUNIOR CYCLE & SENIOR CYCLE
POLITICS & SOCIETY

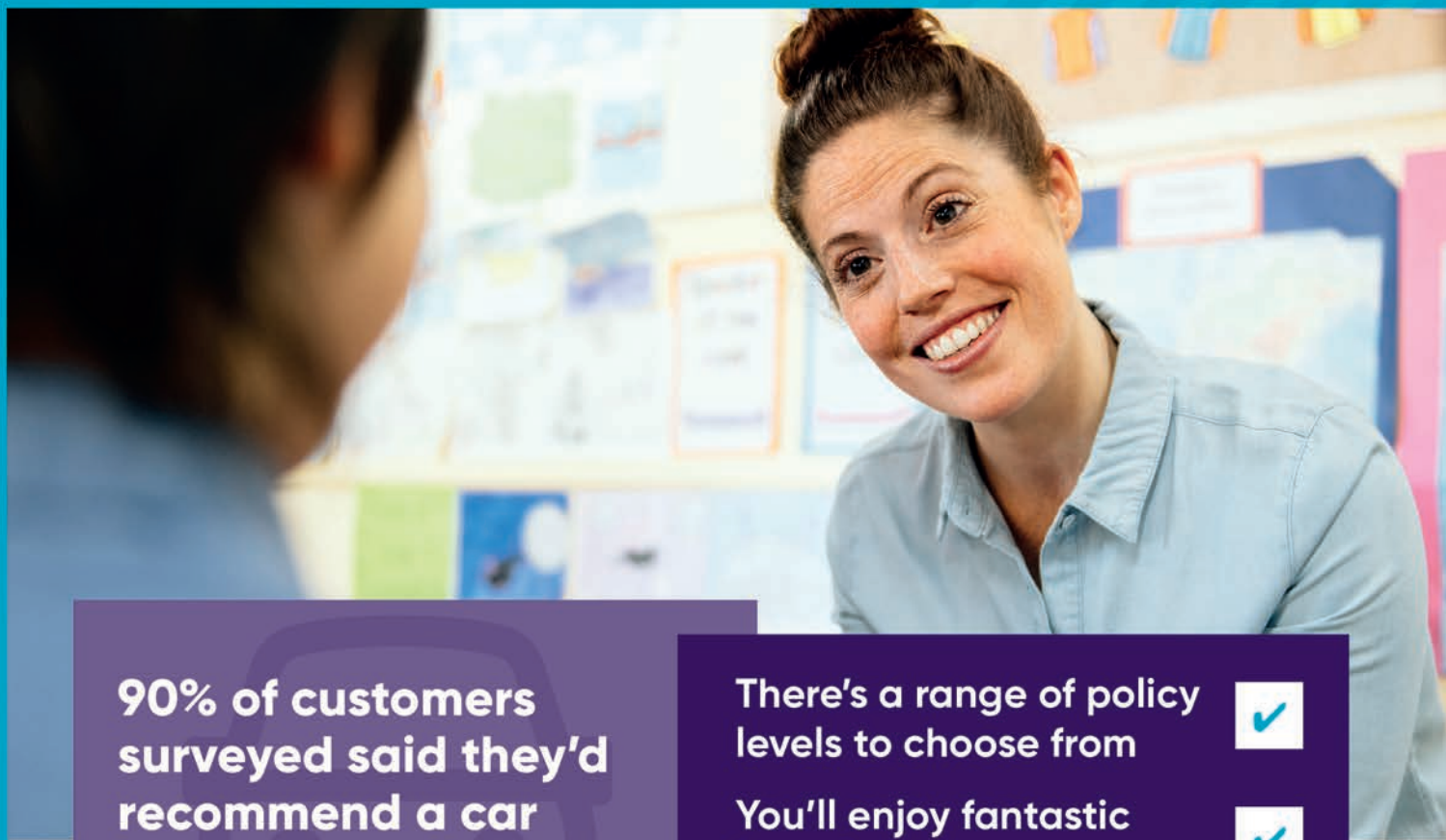
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