

# ASTIR

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland

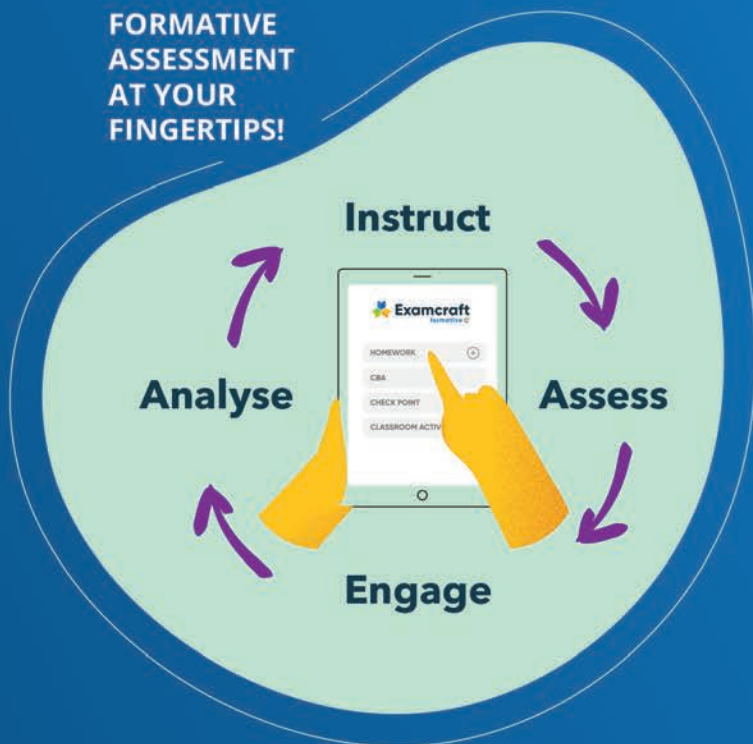


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# CONTENTS

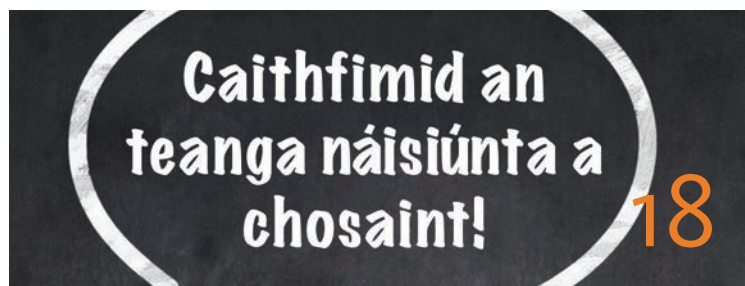
- 4 From the President's Desk  
*No excuse for underinvestment in education*
- 4 General Secretary's update  
*A Board of Management that fails to meet our expectations*
- 5 News
- 12 News features
  - 12 *Teachers' pay 2022/2023*
  - 13 *Senior Cycle – ensuring teachers are involved*
  - 14 *Serious increase in education funding needed*
  - 16 *Print or digital – your choice*
- 17 ASTI in the media  
*Addressing issues in education*
- 18 Features
  - 18 *Caithfimid an teanga náisiúnta a chosaint!*
  - 20 *Overdue recognition for outstanding teachers*
  - 22 *How it started – celebrating the ASTI's 100th Annual Convention*
- 25 Convention  
*ASTI Annual Convention 2023*
- 26 Profile  
*The ASTI Education Committee*
- 28 RSTA news
- 29 Noticeboard
- 30 Crossword



12



14



18



20



25

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Members can email [astirfeedback@asti.ie](mailto:astirfeedback@asti.ie) or text 087 934 9956.

## No excuse for underinvestment in education

Despite all the public discussion of education, we rarely hear about the achievements of our education system, a greater recognition of which would lead to a more balanced analysis. Nor does it escape me how demoralising that is for teachers who, despite working in straitened circumstances, do their best for their students every day, and who give up their free time to provide countless extracurricular activities in the interests of their students' well-being and development.

If we look at international comparators of success, Ireland's education system has much to recommend it. We are fourth in literacy in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) studies, and above average in maths and science. Obviously, there is always room for improvement, but these positions show that we are far from failing.

In ASTI Head Office, we recently had a visit from Flemish parliamentarians who came to Ireland to research how our education system is performing so well. A key statistic here is what happens for students after they leave school. From the most recent OECD report, Education at a Glance, the EU average for 18 to 24 year olds not in education, employment or training is 14.2%, while the OECD average is 16.1%. At 12.1%, Ireland's percentage is significantly better. So, Ireland's education system is doing well in various metrics, including the fact that at 92%, we have the second highest retention rate. These statistics are significant and point to an education system that is making strides in meeting the needs of its students.

And all of that achievement is against a background of poor investment. We all know that education has a positive economic impact on the individual and society and, although education should never be understood solely in those terms, the link between economic development and educational attainment is undeniable.

Despite this, Education at a Glance 2022 puts Ireland, once again, in last place for investment in education. The report states that, in 2019, the OECD average expenditure on education was 1.9% of GDP, compared to 1% in Ireland. Our teachers spend 700 hours per year in the classroom, leaving less time for our non-teaching duties. This is in marked contrast to the EU average of 651 class contact hours.

When viewed against the backdrop of such poor investment, Ireland's rankings in international metrics of success reveal the over-stretched and pressurised system within which we work. Yet the Minister's proposals for Senior Cycle make no reference to a very basic failure in our education system – the failure to invest properly.

It's interesting to note that the only time we come last in international tables is in investment – an area into which teachers have no input.

It's enough to make you wonder where 'reform' ought to start, isn't it?



## A Board of Management that fails to meet our expectations

This is my first time to write an opinion piece in *ASTIR* in which my gaze is fixed firmly on the actions of a single school authority. The Board of Management of Presentation College, Athenry, Co. Galway, has been refusing for some time to release ASTI member Niall Duddy from his teaching duties to attend meetings in respect of his role on the Teaching Council. Niall is an elected member from the voluntary secondary schools sector, representing in excess of 8,000 teachers across the sprawling Connacht, Munster and Ulster constituency.

The ASTI is concerned that this situation is having a debilitating effect on the Council's work and on Niall's capacity as an elected representative of teachers to discharge his role and responsibilities under statute on behalf of the profession. The Teaching Council performs roles in the national interest, the most obvious being the registration of teachers, one never more important than in a recruitment and retention crisis. It is unacceptable that the Board of Management of this school is behaving in a manner that could frustrate valuable work.

Numerous interventions by the ASTI and others seeking to resolve the situation were met with an intransigent response from the Board. Accordingly, the ASTI mounted a protest outside the school on October 21 (see cover and page 10).

This Board's disregard for and attack on an electoral mandate, which is provided for under legislation, chips away at a small but important feature of the structures that characterise a functioning democracy. These structures should be supported and protected. That the attack is being performed by a Board of Management of a learning institution is ugly and worrisome. Although elected to his position, Niall is technically appointed by the Minister for Education. The action of this Board of Management amounts to thumbing its nose at the Minister too.

Every stakeholder, big and small, has a duty to step up to the plate when called upon, to honour their obligations in full to the teaching profession and the wider education system. This Board of Management seems to display a chronic lack of broader perspective regarding this matter. Rather than instructing its solicitors to send a couple of letters to the ASTI in advance of the protest, the Board might have been more usefully engaged in reflection on the foregoing.

Designed to persuade the Board of Management of Presentation College in Athenry to abandon this ridiculous stance, the public campaign will continue.

### ASTI surveys

The ASTI regularly surveys members to ensure that we have a clear picture of their concerns. Surveys complement other aspects of our structures, ensuring that we have up-to-date information and enhancing our core work of campaigning for better working conditions for teachers. We have commissioned RedC to conduct a survey on a number of workplace issues in schools, including promotional posts, redeployment, and the supervision and substitution scheme. The widest and most representative participation rate possible would be greatly appreciated.



## Green Ribbon for mental health



ASTI Vice President Geraldine O'Brien at the launch of the 2022 See Change Green Ribbon campaign.

ASTI Vice President Geraldine O'Brien recently attended the launch of the 2022 See Change Green Ribbon campaign, which ran throughout September. The campaign aims to spread awareness about all mental health difficulties to help end mental health stigma and discrimination. 2022 marks 10 years of the Green Ribbon campaign, which includes events, social media campaigns, and supports for workplaces, organisations and the general public across Ireland in starting open and honest conversations about mental health.

The Green Ribbon theme for 2022 was shame. Across the month, See Change explored what shame is, how shame presents itself, and how shame impacts on people with mental health difficulties. The message of this year's Green Ribbon campaign was: there is no shame in having a mental health difficulty.

For more information, see <https://seechange.ie/green-ribbon/>

## New ASTI pensions leaflet

An updated version of the ASTI Pensions Information leaflet, dated 2022, is now available in the Pensions and Retirement section of the ASTI website. This supersedes the 2021 version of the same publication, which contained an error regarding the payment of a supplementary pension on page 5 (as previously reported in *ASTIR*).

The new corrected leaflet is available online at: <https://www.asti.ie/your-employment/terms-and-conditions/pension-and-retirement/>

## Pink and Blue Power



Pictured at the launch of the 2022 Pink and Blue Power programme were (from left): Miriam Duggan (ASTI President), Eamon Dennehy (ASTI Immediate Past President), and Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary).

Following the success of the last Pink and Blue Power programme, this potentially lifesaving initiative was rolled out for a second time in February 2022 to eligible members of the ASTI Salary Protection Scheme.\* The aim was to increase awareness of the signs and symptoms of breast and prostate cancer, and give members the opportunity to have a once-off clinical assessment.

Nearly 5,000 members were invited to take part in the initiative and 24% booked the GP appointment for education and a clinical breast or prostate assessment. GP appointments and referrals are currently ongoing at clinics nationwide and, to date, over 200 members have been referred for further tests.\*\*

There has been one breast cancer diagnosis in this year's programme so far. A member in her 40s shared this powerful message: "I am so grateful for this service. I received a very surprising diagnosis of ductal carcinoma *in situ* (DCIS). I had a lumpectomy, and all is clear now, thank God. I will be getting radiation in September. I had no symptoms at all and only for the mammogram it wouldn't have been spotted. So, thank you from myself and my family".

All medical appointments are due to finish by December 2022 and a final report will be issued thereafter.

Bookings for this programme have now closed and the first round of feedback surveys was sent in September to those who have completed the programme. Thank you to everyone who has booked an appointment to date.

For more information, visit:  
[www.Cornmarket.ie/pink-blue-power](http://www.Cornmarket.ie/pink-blue-power)

Important: while some participants are diagnosed with breast or prostate cancer through the programme, this is not a screening programme. The assessment provided only reflects a point in time. No test or exam will pick up every case of breast cancer or prostate cancer. Therefore, if you have signs and/or symptoms that are concerning for breast or prostate cancer, now or in the future, please consult your own GP without delay.

This programme is brought to members by Commarket on behalf of the Scheme underwriter and is not a regulated financial product. Commarket Group Financial Services Ltd is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland, and is a member of the Irish Life Group Ltd, which is part of the Great-West Lifeco Group of companies. The ASTI Salary Protection Scheme is underwritten by New Ireland. New Ireland Assurance Company plc is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland, and is a member of Bank of Ireland Group.

\*Female members who are aged between 30 and 49, and male members who are aged between 40 and 65 when invites are issued for each location.

\*\*Source: Full Health Medical Report, 2022.

## Supporting Merchants Quay Ireland



From left: Shauna Enright (Merchants Quay Ireland fundraising team), and Miriam Duggan (ASTI President) at a recent event hosted by Merchants Quay Ireland.

ASTI President Miriam Duggan recently attended an event for regular donors to Merchants Quay Ireland to learn more about the charity's work. Merchants Quay Ireland is a national voluntary organisation that helps people who are homeless and those caught in addiction. They provide

frontline services, practical supports, pathways towards recovery, and innovative responses to the issues of drug use and homelessness in Ireland. Miriam visited Merchants Quay's Riverbank building, which provides day services, including:

- hot showers,
- breakfast, lunch and evening meals,
- advice and information on what services are available and how best to access these,
- a healthcare service including a doctor, nurse, dentist, counsellor, and mental health team,
- a case management service, and
- a dedicated Young Person Support Worker for young people aged 18-25.

The ASTI General Fund has a budget of €30,000 per annum to make donations to national and local charities and organisations on behalf of members. Some 20 charities and organisations, including Merchants Quay Ireland, received donations from the ASTI in 2021.

For more information on the work of Merchants Quay Ireland, visit: [www.mqi.ie/](http://www.mqi.ie/)

## Celebrating teachers



ASTI President Miriam Duggan, General Secretary Kieran Christie, and Industrial Relations Officer Desmond O'Toole celebrating World Teachers' Day with members attending school steward training in Dublin on October 5.

ASTI members celebrated World Teachers' Day on October 5 – a UNESCO/International Labour Organisation (ILO) event, which recognises the importance of education and the work of teachers. In 2022, the celebrations of World Teachers' Day focused on the theme of 'The transformation of education begins with teachers', highlighting teachers' instrumental role in transforming education, and advocating for bold strategic actions by policymakers, teachers themselves and civil society.



Teachers in Seamount College, Kinvara, Co. Galway, celebrate World Teachers' Day (from left): Mary Leydon, Christina Kennedy, Amy Kerrigan, Vanessa Ballinger, Shirley Connolly, Laura Sheehan, Mary McLoughlin, and Maura Greaney.

ASTI staff representatives organised staffroom cakes to celebrate teachers and welcome new members to the ASTI. For those who have not yet done so, remember to submit receipts for staffroom cakes to your Branch Treasurer to recoup costs.

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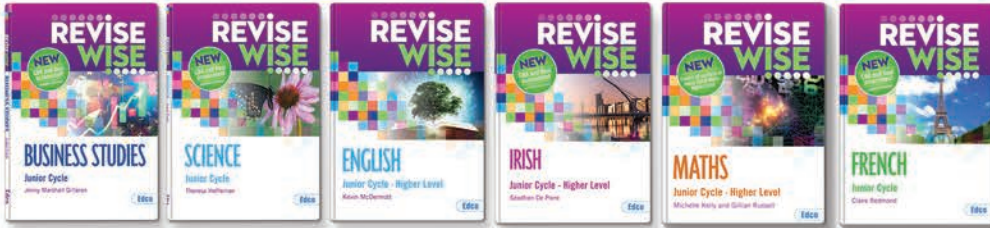
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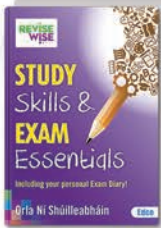
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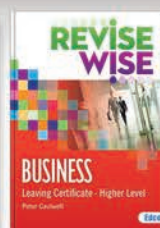
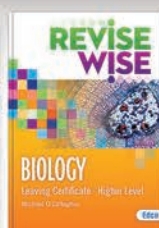
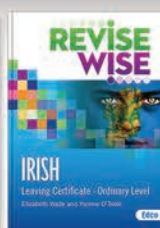
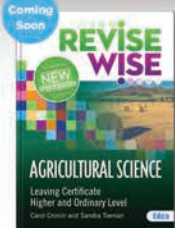
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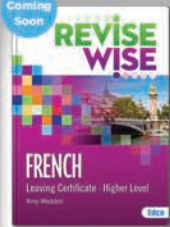
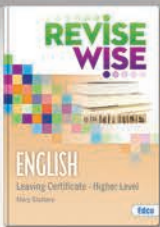
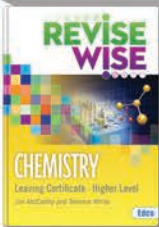
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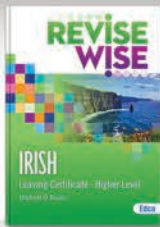
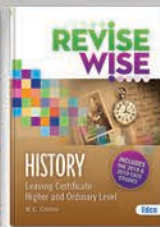
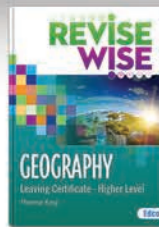
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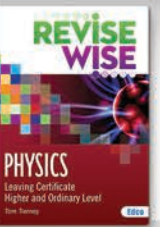
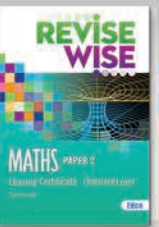
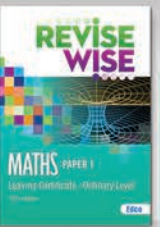
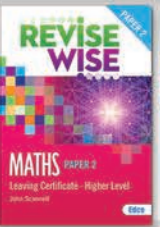
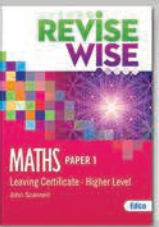
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## ResearchEd 2022

ASTI members attended ResearchED Dublin 2022 in September. The goal of ResearchED is to bridge the gap between research and practice in education. Researchers, teachers and policymakers come together for a day of information sharing and myth busting. Started by Tom Bennett in London in 2013, ResearchED has spread around the world to cities including Malmo, Haninge, Pretoria, Philadelphia, Rome, Dubai, Melbourne, Auckland, Amsterdam, New York, Toronto and Vancouver. ResearchED Dublin 2022, which took place in St Columba's College, featured a wide array of speakers on all aspects of teaching and learning, with keynote speakers Dr Barbara Oakley and Paul A. Kirschner presenting on 'Effective Teaching and Learning: Practical Insights from Neuroscience' and 'How Teaching Happens', respectively. The ASTI also provided financial support to ResearchED Dublin.

For more information on ResearchED, see <https://researched.org.uk/> or follow @researchEDDub on Twitter.



The ASTI delegation at ResearchED Dublin 2022. Back row (from left): John Conneely, Adrienne Healy, Anne Loughnane, and Niall Mahon. Front row (from left): Kevin Wall, Edel Farrell, Mark Walshe, and Seamus Keane.

## Irish Red Cross Ukraine Appeal



Frank Phelan (Irish Red Cross), and Miriam Duggan (ASTI President).

The ASTI donated €10,000 to the Irish Red Cross (IRC) Ukraine Appeal on behalf of members earlier this year. ASTI President Miriam Duggan met with Frank Phelan of the IRC to discuss the important work done by the IRC in Ireland and overseas. Mr Phelan said: "The Irish Red Cross would like to thank the ASTI and all its members for their ongoing support".

The IRC is part of the world's leading humanitarian movement, providing impartial services and support to vulnerable communities both in Ireland and abroad.

For further information about the work of the IRC, visit [www.redcross.ie](http://www.redcross.ie) or call 01-642 4600.

## ASTI activist elected to NUI Senate



Marina Carlin (ASTI activist and newly elected member of the NUI Senate) and Miriam Duggan (ASTI President).

ASTI activist Marina Carlin has been elected to the Governing Body of the National University of Ireland (NUI), the NUI Senate.

Marina is an autism special class teacher, Assistant Principal (policy development role) and Board of Management member in Scoil Mhuire, Buncrana, Co. Donegal. She is a member of the ASTI Central Executive Committee and is Donegal Branch Equality Officer.





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- M Ed in Educational Leadership and Management
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- MA in STEM Education
- MA in Music Education
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- Graduate Diploma/M Ed in Information and Communication Technologies in Primary Education
- Graduate Diploma/M Ed in Special Education Needs
- Graduate Diploma in Mentoring and Leadership in Schools
- Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma/M Ed in Middle Leadership and Mentoring in Primary and Post-Primary Settings
- An Teastas iarchéime i dTeagasc Ábharbhunaithe (TTA) san Iarbhunscolaíocht Lán-Ghaeilge agus Ghaeltachta
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## LIBERAL ARTS POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

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- Structured PhD in Contemporary Irish Studies
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- MA in History
- MA in Local History (with UL)
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- MA in Modern English Literature
- Certificate/MA in Christian Leadership in Education

## PhD & MA BY RESEARCH AND THESIS IN THE FOLLOWING LIBERAL ARTS DEPARTMENTS

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

# Thousands of teachers denied Teaching Council representation



ASTI representatives held a short protest outside Presentation College, Athenry, to highlight the school's refusal to allow a teacher to attend Teaching Council meetings. (Photograph: Melissa Mannion.)

The ASTI held a short protest outside Presentation College, Athenry, to highlight the school's refusal to allow an elected representative of the Teaching Council to attend Teaching Council meetings.

ASTI member Niall Duddy, who is Secretary of the Galway ASTI Branch and a member of the ASTI Central Executive Council, was elected to the Teaching Council by second-level teachers in voluntary second-level schools across counties Cavan, Donegal, Galway, Kildare, Leitrim, Longford, Louth, Mayo, Meath, Monaghan, Roscommon, Sligo and Westmeath.

Miriam Duggan, ASTI President, said: "When a school board of management refuses to allow a teacher to attend Teaching Council meetings, this has a debilitating impact on the work of the Teaching Council. It means the elected teacher cannot properly fulfil her or his role under statute. It denies thousands of teachers their right to be represented on the Teaching Council. The Teaching Council works in the interest of the public to promote the highest standards in teaching and education in Ireland".

Responding to a statement from the school's PR agency, that "it is extremely difficult to procure and retain a substitute teacher for one day a week", the ASTI said that a suitable substitute teacher had been identified, but the school declined to avail of their services.

The ASTI also said the peaceful protest outside the school was entirely lawful.



At the protest in Galway were (from left): Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary), Geraldine O'Brien (ASTI Vice President), Niall Duddy (Teaching Council representative), Pádraig Murphy (ASTI Honorary Treasurer), and Eamon Dennehy (ASTI Immediate Past President). (Photograph: Melissa Mannion.)

## Why trade unions must prioritise women workers



ASTI Assistant General Secretary Moira Leydon at the Scottish Council of Trade Unions' Women's Conference. (Photograph: Fraser Band.)

ASTI Assistant General Secretary Moira Leydon recently addressed the Scottish Council of Trade Unions' Women's Conference in Fife on behalf of the ICTU Women's Committee. Moira welcomed the recommendation of the High-Level Group on Collective Bargaining and Industrial Relations for the introduction of mandatory recognition of trade unions by employers. She also told the conference that trade unions in Europe must prioritise women workers, saying: "Why prioritise women? Because women work in heavily gendered labour markets, many in low-paid, low-status jobs. Because of the gender pay gap. Because of the glass ceiling. Because women have to make consequential choices between family life and earning an income, accruing social insurance and pension entitlements, and promotion and career progression. It is not surprising that Irish women now outnumber men in terms of trade union membership – representing 54% of organised workers. Recent research from UCD shows that more women than men want to join trade unions".

## Branch Equality Officer training

Training for ASTI Branch Equality Officers took place in Athlone on Saturday, October 8. Participants were welcomed by ASTI President Miriam Duggan, who stressed the important role that Branch Equality Officers perform. She was followed by Deputy General Secretary Diarmaid de Paor, who outlined the role of Equality Officers and of the Equality Committee. He stressed the central place that issues of equality and inclusion are now occupying in the work of the ASTI.

The bulk of the day was given over to Derek McDonnell of Big Picture Consulting, who led a thought-provoking and challenging session in which participants were led to examine their own attitudes to equality, equity and inclusion. He also provided guidance on how Equality Officers could facilitate discussions on inclusion within their own schools and branches. The session was closed by Chair of the Equality Committee, Philip Synott.



Derek McDonnell, Big Picture Consulting.

## Change to bereavement leave

The ASTI has welcomed the announcement by the Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD, that bereavement leave in relation to the death of a spouse/partner or child is to be extended for staff in the education sector. The ASTI has been seeking improved bereavement leave for teachers for some time. As well as raising this issue at Annual Conventions and in the media, the ASTI has been pursuing improved bereavement leave via the Teachers' Conciliation Council and other fora.

We await further details and engagement with the Department of Education on this matter.

Information on bereavement leave for teachers is available in the leave section of the ASTI website.

## ICTU Women's Conference 2022



ASTI representatives at the ICTU Women's Conference. Back row (from left): Geraldine O'Brien (ASTI Vice President), Maura Greaney, and Mary Lyndon. Front row (from left): Adrienne Healy and Noelle Moran.

The ICTU Women's Conference took place in Newcastle, Co. Down, in late September. The theme of the Conference was 'Women in Trade Unions – Shaping the Future of Work', and the ASTI was well represented by a nine-strong delegation.

A wide range of motions covering all facets of women and work, and women and society, were discussed. Topics ranged from the gender pay gap to violence against women. The ASTI motion concerned the reporting of the gender pay gap and read as follows: "This conference calls on Government Departments to take responsibility for supplying all information required under the Gender Pay Information Act 2021 in respect of those employees and organisations for which it has responsibility and for whom it is the paymaster". The motion was carried unanimously.

Guest speakers at the Conference included: Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Federation; and, Ivana Bacik TD, Chair of the Oireachtas Equality Committee. The Conference was also presented with a special report from Paul McFlynn and Lisa Wilson of the Nevin Economic Research Institute on 'The Future of Work'.

# TEACHERS' PAY 2022/2023

Second-level teachers will receive a series of pay increases after ASTI members accepted the Review of Building Momentum pay deal.



The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Public Services Committee has accepted the Review of Building Momentum pay deal proposed by the Workplace Relations Commission. The deal was accepted by all public sector unions on October 7, following a separate ballot by each of the unions.

ASTI members voted to accept the proposal by 83% to 17%. The turnout for the ASTI's ballot was 45%.

The Review of Building Momentum provides for pay increases amounting to 6.5% (teachers on lower incomes will benefit more – see below) in addition to the existing Building Momentum pay adjustments. The Review extends the original Building Momentum agreement until the end of 2023.

## Review of Building Momentum increases

The Review of Building Momentum consists of three pay increases:

- **3% with effect from February 2, 2022** – this increase will be implemented before Christmas 2022,
- **2% with effect from March 1, 2023,** and
- **1.5% or €750 per year (whichever is the greater) with effect from October 1, 2023.**

## Original Building Momentum increases

The original Building Momentum agreement also consists of three pay increases:

- **1% or €500 (whichever is the greater)** from October 1, 2021 (this increase has been implemented),
- **the equivalent value of a 1% pay increase through sectoral bargaining from February 1, 2022,** and

- **1% or €500 (whichever is the greater) from October 2022** – this is due to be implemented before Christmas 2022.

## ASTI achieves restoration of teachers' allowances

At sectoral bargaining discussions, the ASTI pursued and achieved the restoration of an equivalent value for the Professional Master of Education (PME)/Higher Diploma in Education (HDip) Allowance for second-level teachers who entered teaching from February 2012. The post-2011 salary scale for second-level teachers has now been increased to include the equivalent value of an Honours HDip Allowance (€1,314) on each point of the scale. The retrospective payment of this increase (to February 1, 2022) has also been paid. The incorporation of the PME/HDip Allowance for teachers into the post-2011 pay scale accounts for approximately two-thirds of the overall 1% sectoral bargaining amount available for second-level teachers under Building Momentum. The distribution of the remaining one-third is still under discussion.

You can view up-to-date salary scales for second-level teachers at:  
<https://www.asti.ie/your-employment/pay/salary-scales/>

# SENIOR CYCLE – ENSURING TEACHERS ARE INVOLVED

The ASTI aims to ensure that teachers are at the centre of changes to Senior Cycle.

The ASTI has begun a process of internal consultation on the Minister for Education's announcement in March of this year regarding changes to Senior Cycle education.

## ASTI executive considers Minister's proposals

In October the ASTI Central Executive Council (CEC) was addressed by Áine Hyland, Emeritus Professor of Education, University College Cork, who provided a summary of second-level curriculum change in Ireland and spoke about the need for robust syllabus development, including depth of treatment.

While curriculum reform has moved towards learning outcomes in recent years, Prof. Hyland warned that over-reliance on learning outcomes is problematic, stating that they should only be one element of a syllabus description. "Learning outcomes describe what must be attained in order that the learner can pass. But alone they are not a sufficient description of a syllabus, especially an externally assessed syllabus," she said.

Quoting Andreas Schleicher, Director of Education and Skills for the OECD, Prof. Hyland said that unless syllabi are rigorously written and accompanied by additional information such as depth of treatment, teacher guidelines, and assessment details and criteria, a syllabus "consisting only of themes and learning outcomes can result in a dumbed down and superficial curriculum, lacking in depth".

Addresses were also given by ASTI President Miriam Duggan and Assistant General Secretary Moira Leydon. Miriam Duggan said that any Senior Cycle change must protect the integrity of the exams, fairness for students and trust in the system. She reaffirmed the ASTI's longstanding policy that State examinations for certification purposes are entirely externally assessed.

## ASTI Senior Cycle policies

CEC debated and adopted a number of motions, which will contribute to the development of the ASTI's vision for Senior Cycle education. CEC will give further consideration to ASTI policy on Senior Cycle at its next meeting in January 2023.

## Motions adopted by CEC

- The ASTI affirms that Transition Year must remain a standalone programme.
- That the ASTI demands the provision of a programme of initial teacher education and meaningful CPD prior to the introduction of new subjects, revised syllabi and specifications on the curriculum. Further, the ASTI demands that the full range of syllabus documentation (including sample examination papers, sample marking schemes and, if applicable, teachers' notes) should be officially published at the same time as the new syllabus.
- The ASTI emphatically rejects the proposal to hold Paper 1 in English and Irish at the end of fifth year.
- That the ASTI demands that the Easter and mid-term breaks and weekends are not used for the sitting of any part of the State examinations.



From left: Moira Leydon (ASTI Assistant General Secretary), Prof. Áine Hyland (Emeritus Professor of Education, University College Cork), and Miriam Duggan (ASTI President).

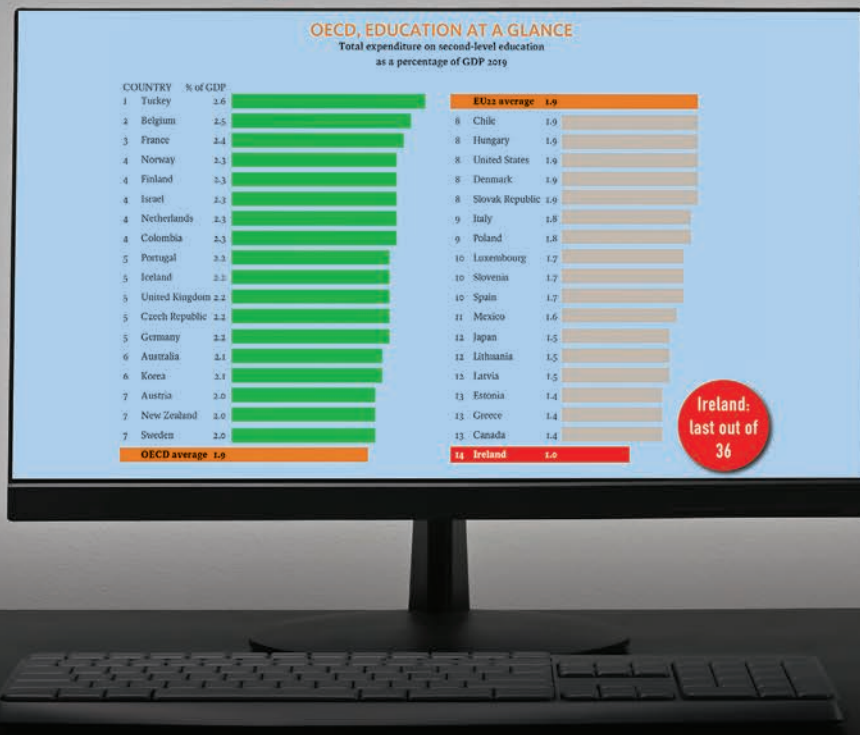
- That the ASTI demands substantial consultation on the selection criteria for and operation of network schools, and clarification on the exact nature and the role of students as co-constructors of the curriculum and assessment arrangements.

## What happens next?

- ASTI and TUI representatives on NCCA structures will meet in November to explore a common approach to Senior Cycle redevelopment,
- a special Senior Cycle *Nuacht* will be issued,
- ASTI branches have been asked to discuss Senior Cycle redevelopment as an agenda item at upcoming meetings,
- the ASTI will host an education conference in early 2023 with Senior Cycle curriculum as the theme,
- CEC will further consider Senior Cycle redevelopment at its January 2023 meeting, and
- the ASTI webpage on Senior Cycle will be updated regularly to reflect the ASTI's work, policies and activities.

On March 29, 2022, the Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD, announced her plans for redevelopment of Senior Cycle. Key measures include:

- changes to the final assessment procedure to significantly reduce reliance on final examinations,
- introduction of teacher-based assessment components,
- updated subject curricula (including updated assessment models) in Chemistry, Physics, Biology and Business in 2024 and eventually across all subjects,
- for students entering fifth year in 2023, English Paper 1 and Irish Paper 1 will be sat at the end of fifth year, and
- oral and musical practical exams to take place during the first week of the Easter break from Easter 2023.



# SERIOUS INCREASE IN EDUCATION FUNDING NEEDED

Once again, Ireland shamefully sits at the bottom of the OECD Education at a Glance report for investment in education, with the State investing just 1% of GDP in second-level education.

The latest OECD Education at a Glance 2022 report reveals that Ireland is again at the bottom of the OECD for investment in second-level education as a proportion of national wealth. The report states that Government funding of education is vital: “Education is one area in which all governments intervene to fund or direct the provision of services. As there is no guarantee that markets will provide equal access to educational opportunities, government funding of educational services is necessary to ensure that education is not beyond the reach of some members of society”.

## Last place

Ireland is in last place out of 36 countries for investment in second-level education as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP). In 2019, the year analysed in the OECD report, Ireland invested 1% of GDP in second-level education compared to the OECD and EU averages of 1.9%. Ireland’s spend actually dropped from 1.1% in last year’s report. The Irish Government’s spend in this area is also paltry when compared to other European countries. Finland spends 2.3% of GDP on second level. In France, the figure is 2.4%, and our nearest neighbour the UK spends 2.2%.

Expenditure per second-level student was \$10,383 in Ireland compared to an OECD average of \$11,400, and an EU average of \$11,673. Ireland’s spend is also lower than neighbouring countries like the UK (\$13,040), Belgium (\$15,006), and France (\$13,475). Ireland is 23rd out of 35 countries on total expenditure per whole-time equivalent student, and is below the EU and OECD averages.

In 2019, total expenditure on primary, second-level and post-second-level

non-tertiary education in Ireland was 2.3% of GDP, lower than the OECD average of 3.4% and the EU average of 3.2%. This compares unfavourably with other European countries, such as Sweden (3.9%), Denmark (3.6%), and the Netherlands (3.4%).

When it comes to proportion of national output spent on educational institutions, Ireland is last. This shows a lack of foresight on the Irish Government’s part, and the report states: “Countries invest in education to help foster economic growth, enhance productivity, contribute to personal and social development, and reduce social inequality, among other reasons”.

Commenting on the report, ASTI President Miriam Duggan said: “At a time of record high numbers of young people attending second-level education in Ireland, schools are in urgent need of a significant increase in funding. If we are serious about preparing all of our young people for life and work in modern society, we must catch up with our OECD and EU counterparts. Smaller classes, improved buildings and IT resources, and more guidance counsellors are key areas crying out for urgent investment”.

## Education is an investment

Nearly two-thirds of 18-24 year olds in Ireland were in part-time or full-time education – significantly higher than the OECD average of 54%, which shows the good work teachers do at second level to help students progress further and find fulfilling careers. Education also prepares students

for a better life. The report states that “higher levels of education usually translate into better employment opportunities and higher earnings”.

The OECD report emphasises the high returns of government investment in education for individuals and countries. Workers who have upper second-level education earn significantly more than those with below upper second-level education only. The report also highlights the role of education in well-being, social tolerance and global mindfulness – all critical in today’s world.

According to Miriam Duggan: “The report states that the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated that educational attainment is one of the best protections against economic risks. Investment in education is essential for preventing the education system from future shocks, not least the current economic uncertainty”.

Ireland does not spend enough on education as a whole, and the report marks the State as one of the countries that invest the least in education: “Expenditure on primary to tertiary educational institutions as a share of GDP varies from 6% or more in Australia, Chile, Israel, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States, to 3.5% or less in Ireland, Lithuania and Luxembourg”.

Irish teachers and schools have used what resources they have available to ensure that as many students finish secondary education as possible. The OECD average is that 14% of students leave school without completing secondary education. In Ireland this figure is just 5%.

Ireland also has a lower percentage of young people (12.1%) not in education, employment or training (NEET) than the OECD and EU averages of 16.1% and 14.2%, respectively.

### Teachers’ conditions

Irish secondary teachers spend more hours teaching per year than the EU and OECD averages. Irish secondary teachers’ net teaching time in hours per year is 700 hours, while the OECD average is 698 hours and the EU average is 651 hours. Some comparable countries to Ireland demand far less from their teachers, with Germany only requiring 626 hours per year, Italy 608 hours per year, and Austria just 607 hours per year.

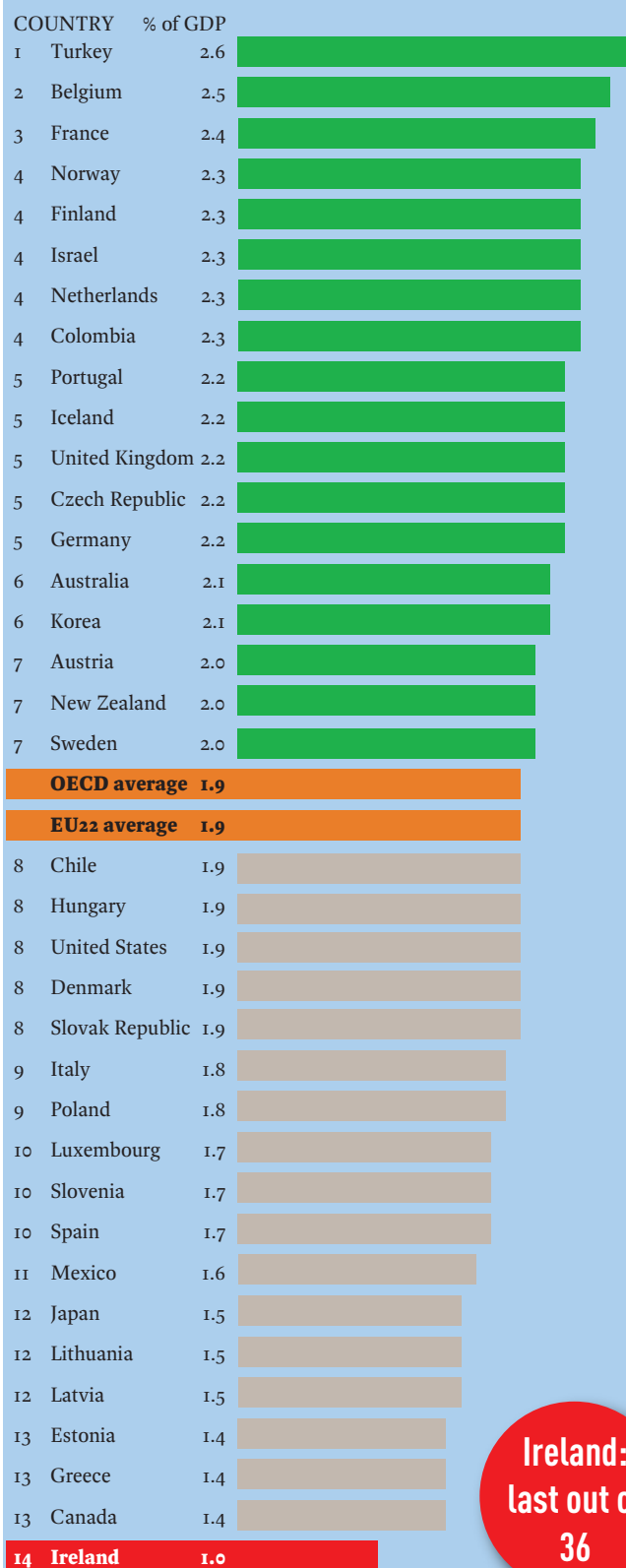
The report recognises that although teaching hours only partly determine the actual workloads of teachers and school heads, they do offer valuable insights into the demands placed on teachers and school heads in different countries. Teaching hours and the extent of non-teaching duties may also affect the attractiveness of the teaching profession, according to the report.

Education at a Glance goes on to state that more time spent teaching leaves less time for other important aspects of a teacher’s job. The proportion of teachers’ working time spent teaching provides information on the amount of time available for non-teaching activities, such as lesson preparation, correction, in-service training and staff meetings. A larger proportion of teaching time may indicate that a lower proportion of working time is devoted to tasks such as assessing students and preparing lessons. The report is clear that it could also indicate that teachers have to perform these tasks in their own time and hence work more hours than legally required.

The full report is available to view at:  
[www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/](http://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/).

## OECD, EDUCATION AT A GLANCE

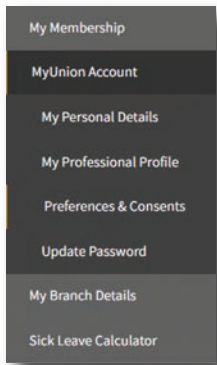
Total expenditure on second-level education  
as a percentage of GDP 2019



Ireland:  
last out of  
36

# PRINT OR DIGITAL – YOUR CHOICE

ASTI members can now choose how to receive the union’s publications via MyUnion.



From November 2022, ASTI members can choose to opt in or out of receiving printed publications by logging on to their MyUnion profile and going to the MyUnion Account > Preferences & Consents page.

On this page, members can opt to receive *ASTIR* and *Nuacht* as printed copies or digitally. They can also choose whether or not they wish to receive copies of the ASTI Diary and ASTI wall planner.

Log in to MyUnion at any time to check or update your preferences. Please note, it may take a number of weeks for your changes to be applied, as mailing lists are prepared in advance of postings.

### How it works

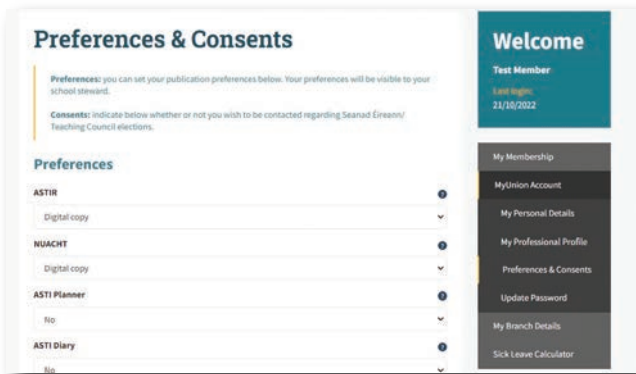
As members opt for digital versions of *ASTIR* and *Nuacht*, the number of printed copies sent to each school will correspond to the number of people in the school who have chosen to receive printed copies of these publications.

At the same time as printed copies of publications are arriving in schools, digital copies will be arriving by email to those who have opted to receive their publications in this way. Please don't take a printed copy of a publication in your school if you have opted to receive the publication digitally.

### How does the school steward know who is to receive a printed copy?

To access mailing preference information, school stewards simply have to log in to MyUnion, and go to the School Members page. This contains a full list of current members in the school, as well as a way of filtering out the members who do not wish to receive certain publications in hard copy (printed) any longer.

When a school steward receives a batch of ASTI publications to the school, they can use the filter on this page to select the publication they are in charge of distributing from the dropdown menu of the filter. This will bring up a list of members who have not opted out of receiving this printed publication. We ask school stewards to please distribute the publication accordingly, and let members know about this feature in order to reduce waste.





# ADDRESSING ISSUES IN EDUCATION

ASTI representatives speak out on the delay in issuing the Junior Cert results, the importance of Teaching Council representation, and chronic underinvestment in second-level schools.

“There are 3,500 more students doing the [Junior Cycle] exam this year than there were in 2019. And just to put it into perspective, that’s 28,000 more papers to correct. So those issues are there and they must be acknowledged, but there has been a reduction in the number of teachers correcting exams. I think pay has been an issue in the past although we do recognise that the rates of pay were improved this year. The ASTI has been warning for several years now about the recruitment and retention crisis in teaching. We have lost so many teachers who have moved abroad because of having precarious contracts or less than full-time hours. I know several younger teachers who had to go and get three months of work over the summer to be able to meet their responsibilities and therefore couldn’t do one month’s work for the State Exams Commission.”

**Miriam Duggan, ASTI President,**  
*News at 1, RTÉ Radio 1, October 18*

“When a school board of management refuses to allow a teacher to attend Teaching Council meetings, this has a debilitating impact on the work of the Teaching Council. It means the elected teacher cannot properly fulfil her or his role under statute. It denies thousands of teachers their right to be represented on the Teaching Council.”

**Miriam Duggan, ASTI President,**  
*Irish Examiner, October 21*

“I don’t see any logic in the Minister for Education not extending it [a pilot scheme of counselling support in primary schools] to post-primary... Certainly we will be going formally to the Minister for Education and talking about the model. What are our plans for second level? Schools are under-invested in. Teachers are not mental health workers, and we’re not putting in place other professionals in the school setting to address the holistic needs of young people.”

**Moira Leydon, ASTI Assistant General Secretary,**  
*Irish Examiner, October 25*

“I would imagine that the bulk of them [unregistered teachers working as substitutes] were student teachers. Many of them would be retired teachers perhaps who had allowed their registration to lapse. You can’t run a system on a wing and a prayer like that and the Minister for Education needs to take some very bold initiatives to address this deteriorating crisis.”

**Kieran Christie, ASTI General Secretary,**  
*98FM news, 98FM, October 27*

“At a time of record high numbers of young people attending second-level education, schools are in urgent need of a significant increase in funding. If we are serious about preparing all of our young people for life and work in modern society we must catch up with our OECD and EU counterparts. Smaller classes, improved buildings and IT resources, and more guidance counsellors are key areas crying out for urgent investment.”

**Miriam Duggan, ASTI President,**  
*Irish Independent, October 3*

“Most issues have been addressed. I was pleased about the free books at primary level because I do think that it is a big thing. The reduction in fees for third level is really important. We have an autism unit as well, so I welcome the SNAs. What I’d like to see the Government committing to addressing is how difficult it is to employ a teacher in Dublin. I was talking to a principal two weeks ago and they told me that they advertised a single job five times this year and on the fifth advertisement they had one application. I do think that is something that needs to be looked at long term.”

**ASTI member Órlagh Nic Eoin on Budget 2023,**  
*Irish Daily Mail, September 28*

“We don’t have a written policy, but certainly we would advise schools to use the pronoun that a child wishes to be used, and that’s generally what happens. There can be difficulties where the child says one thing and the parents say something else. We would generally encourage the parents to support the child.”

**ASTI Deputy General Secretary Diarmaid de Paor,**  
*Sunday Independent, September 11*

“Visiting Dublin in June to receive his Frontline Defenders Award, Obert Masaraure, President of the Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe, gave us a graphic description of how, in preparation for the presidential election in 2023, local Zanu PF “chiefs” are closing schools for day-long political rallies at which refreshments and entertainment must be provided by the pupils. When teachers objected to these closures, they were arrested. In Obert’s case, he was arrested, tortured, released, rearrested, and is now facing multiple criminal charges ... Almost 40 per cent of the Zimbabwean population is under 15 years of age. They must have access to education: the future of Zimbabwe depends on them. We call on the Zimbabwean authorities to stop arbitrary school closure, stop the repression of teachers and their union leaders, and give youth a chance.”

**Kieran Christie, ASTI General Secretary,**  
**joint letter with other Irish education unions, Irish Times,**  
*September 20*

# Caithfimid an teanga náisiúnta a chosaint!

Ar an 5ú Deireadh Fómhair, 2022, mar fhreagairt ar Imlitir 55/22 a eisíodh ar na Díolúintí maidir le staidéar na Gaeilge, thug Cumann na Meánmhúinteoirí Éire (CMÉ) aighneacht do Choiste an Oireachtas, Comhchoiste na Gaeilge, na Gaeltachta agus Phobal Labhartha na Gaeilge.



Thug Anne Loughnane, Cairbre, Ionadaí Gaeilge do CMÉ agus ball den Choiste Seasta do Réigiún a 6, an tuairisc seo don Chomhchoiste:

Ar dtús báire, thar cheann ár gceárdchumainn, Cumann na Meánmhúinteoirí Éire, ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil le baill an Chomhchoiste seo as an gcuireadh a thug sibh dúinn teacht anso agus ár dtuairimí a roinnt libh ar an ábhar seo, An Córas Díolúintí i Leith Staidéar na Gaeilge sa Mheánscolaíocht.

Sa Straitéis 20 Bliain don teanga, 2010 – 2030, tá sé mar chuspóir ag an Roinn Oideachais an teanga a neartú sa chóras oideachais. Is cúis áthais dúinn é go bhfuil an Comhchoiste seo ag coimeád súl ar obair na Roinne a bhaineann le múineadh na Gaeilge. Faoi mar a léirítear sa ráiteas a thugamar don Roinn i 2019, tacaímid go láidir le tábhacht na Gaeilge i gcomhthéacs sóisialta agus cultúrtha na tíre, go háirithe sa phobal éagsúil, ilchultúrtha atá ann anois.

Is cinneadh mór é díolúine ón nGaeilge a thabhairt do dhalta. Is é ár bpolasáí ná gur ceart gach deis a thabhairt do gach aon dalta an Ghaeilge a bhlaiseadh agus a fhoghlaim agus nach dtabharfaí díolúine ach i gcásanna eisceachtúla nuair atá gá soiléir intomhaiste ann. Luíonn an cinneadh anois leis an scoil faoi dhíolúine a thabhairt. Is ceart agus is cóir sin, mar is fearr a thuigeann foireann na scoile riachtanais an dalta agus conas is fearr tacú leis na riachtanais sin.

## Imlitir 55/22

Fáiltímid roimh Imlitir 55/22 a eisíodh i mí Lúnasa na bliana seo. Déanann an imlitir seo athbhreithniú ar an gcóras mar a bhí agus feicimid athruithe suntasacha inti ó thaobh cothromaíochta de, sa tslí ina mbronnfar díolúintí amach anseo.

Go dtí seo, ba mhinic a d'eagraigh tuistí, a raibh an t-airgead acu chuige, measúnú príobháideach dá bpáiste, chun díolúine a fháil. Ba mhinic leis

nár tháinig an tuairisc a fuair siad le tuairim na scoile. Minic go leor, lean an dalta céanna le foghlaim teangacha eile, cuir i gcás an Fhraincis nó an Ghearmáinis. D'eascair imní faoi ionracas agus cothromaíocht an chórais as a leithéid.

Tá méadú as cuimse le feiceáil ar líon na ndíolúintí ón nGaeilge le blianta beaga anuas. Cuireann sé sin laghmhisneach ar mhúinteoirí, íslíonn sé stádas na Gaeilge in aigne na ndaltaí agus cuireann sé amhras orthu faoi áit na teanga ina saol féin agus i saol na tíre.

Ag plé Imlitir 55/22, chun díolúine a fháil, bhí cuid mhór de na coinníollacha céanna inti ann cheana féin, cuir i gcás:

- (i) dalta dhá bhliain déag a chaith trí bliana as a chéile lasmuigh den stát,
- (ii) daltaí le deacrachtaí liteartha fadtéarmacha a chuireann bac ar a gcumas foghlama, agus
- (iii) daltaí i ranganna speisialta nó scoileanna speisialta.

Ta dhá bhonn breise san imlitir seo:

- (i) daltaí le drochriachtanais éagsúla a chuireann bac mór ar a saol ar scoil agus ar an gcaoi ina bhfoghlaimíonn siad, agus
- (ii) daltaí atá i dteideal áit a fháil i rang speisialta nó i scoil speisialta.

Rud eile fós, tá sé de cheart anois ag an gCoiste Achomhairc athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar na cáipéisí go léir a úsáideadh sa scoil chun cinneadh a dhéanamh ar dhíolúine a thabhairt nó gan í a thabhairt agus treoir dá réir a thabhairt don scoil faoin díolúine sin.

Ag tagairt d'Imlitir 55/22, tacaímid le spiorad agus cur chuige na himlitreach. De réir dealraimh, tá riachtanais speisialta ag 21% de dhaltaí inár scoileanna. I measc na ndaltaí sin, tá réimse leathan éagsúil de riachtanais le cothú. Ní mar an gcéanna nariachtanais agus ní mar an gcéanna na modhanna cothaithe.

Fáiltimid roimh an gcóras atá ann anois a chuireann an cinneadh i lámha na scoile, ach caithfear an cinneadh a bhunú ar fhianaise shoiléir a bhailigh an scoil ar an dalta le himeacht ama. Caithfear fianaise chonchréideach a thaispeáint, cuir i gcás, go bhfuil plean tacaíochta ar leith ag an dalta ar feadh tréimhse, go bhfuil curaclam foghlama idirhealaithe ag an dalta agus go bhbuil fianaise chonchréideach bailithe a thaispeánann nach bhfuil dul chun cinn á dhéanamh ag an dalta le himeacht ama.

Fáiltimid leis roimh an athrú a ligeann don Choiste Achomhairc maoirseacht sheachtrach a dhéanamh ar an bhfianaise iomlán a d'úsáid foireann na scoile chun cinneadh a dhéanamh ar an díolúine.

Molaimid an t-athrú a chuireann dualgas ar an scoil eolas a uaslódáil go míosúil ar an PPOD, an bunachar lárnach, chun a chur in iúl go bhfuil díolúine faighte ag dalta. Cuirfidh sé seo eolas ar fáil go réidh, cuir i gcás nuair a thagann dalta nua isteach sa scoil, ní hionann agus mar a bhí. Mar gheall ar and athrú seo, beidh an scoil in ann tacaíocht a chur ar fáil don dalta sin in am cuí.

### Na dúshláin

Tá na rudaí go léir a luadh cheana go breá i saol idéalach, ach ní mhairimid i saol idéalach. Is iomaí dúshlán atá sa chóras a chuireann isteach ar chumas múinteoirí agus foireann na scoile i gcoitinne an obair a bhaineann leis an bhfoghlaim an dhéanamh go héifeachtach. Is féidir

achomre a dhéanamh ar an fhadhb in aon fhocal amháin, sé sin acmhainní nó is fearr a rá, easnamh acmhainní.

Sa bhliain 2017, nuair a thug an Roinn an modh nua isteach chun múinteoirí breise a dháileadh sna scoileanna, is trua mór é nár chuir siad clár traenála ar fáil do mhúinteoirí ranga nó fiú do mhúinteoirí don oideachas speisialta ar a laghad. Ag an am sin, cuireadh dualgas ar mhúinteoirí pleananna tacaíochta ar leith a ullmhú do dhaltaí le riachtanais speisialta. Ní mó ná sásta a bhí múinteoirí i gCMÉ leis an ualach mór d'obair bhreise. Bhraith múinteoirí ag an am agus braitheann siad fós níos mó ná riamh go bhfuil an obair seo dodhéanta, anuas ar an obair bhreise a bhaineann leis na hathruithe éagsúla eile atá sa mhullach orthu le blianta beaga anuas, gan aon chomhairliúchán.

Chun a bheith soiléir faoi, éilimid dhá rud go práinneach:

- a. Clár Forbartha Proifisiúnta leanúnach ar bhonn náisiúnta don oideachas speisialta.
- b. Post mar Chomhordaitheoir don Oideachas Speisialta i ngach scoil, lasmuigh den chúta.

Chun na cuspóirí atá leagtha amach ag an Roinn a chur i gcrích, teastaíonn trí rud:

- 1. Eolas proifisiúnta.
- 2. Am ar Leith.
- 3. Forbairt Proifisiúnta rialta leanúnach.

Sa taighde a rinne RedC sa bhliain do CMÉ, fuarthas amach go bhfuil cáilíocht ag 20% de mhúinteoirí san oideachas speisialta.

Ag tagairt arís d'acmhainní, trua mór é, a bhraithtear go géar i seomraí ranga na tíre i mbliana is ea an chaoi inar baineadh dínn an lacáiste a tugadh i rith tréimhse Covid-19 maidir leis an gcoimheas múinteoirí is daltaí. Tuigeann gach éinne gur cabhair mhór í do dhalta, agus deis iontach foghlama, a bheith i rang le níos lú ná 20 dalta eile.

### Achoimre

Ba cheart gur rud eisceachtúil í an díolúine agus go mbeadh fáil ar an nGaeilge ag gach aon dalta ag a leibhéal cuí. Mar fhocal scoir, tá sé tábhachtach rud mór eile a chuireann leis an meon diúltach i leith na Gaeilge I measc daltaí a lua, agus tá sé pléite cheana againn níos luaithe sa bhliain leis an gComhchoiste seo, sé sin curaclam na Gaeilge, go háirithe an curaclam don tSraith Shóisearach. Tá an t-ualach mór litríochta agus an léirmheas liteartha éigeantach míoiriúnach ar fad.

Caithfear tús áite a thabhairt do labhairt na teanga sa churaclam i dtreo is go mbeidh cumarsáid nádúrtha mar bhunchloch de mhúineadh agus foghlaim na gaeilge sna scoileanna.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh as éisteacht linn. Fáiltimid roimh aon cheisteanna atá agaibh.

### Gluais

- Díolúine – exemption
- Imlitir – Circular
- Riachtanais – needs

# OVERDUE RECOGNITION FOR OUTSTANDING TEACHERS

Following a piece on the 2021-22 winners of the ASTI Awards in the last edition of *ASTIR*, here are the winners from the previous year, whose award ceremony was delayed due to Covid-19.



*From left: Eamon Dennehy (then ASTI President), Outstanding Individual Achievement Award recipient Julie-Ann Somers (Dublin North West Branch), and Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary).*

The ASTI awards ceremony took place in the Riu Plaza Gresham Hotel, Dublin, on Friday, May 27.

## **Outstanding Individual Achievement Award 2021**

The Outstanding Individual Achievement Award for 2021 was given to two well-deserving teachers for sporting exploits in ice swimming and soccer.

Julie-Ann Somers of Mount Sackville Secondary School in Dublin was one recipient of the Outstanding Individual Achievement Award for 2021. Her school colleagues decided to nominate her following her exploits representing Ireland at the World Ice Swimming Championships.

Julie-Ann braved a pool cut from a frozen lake to compete in the Championships, where she placed first in her age category for the 500m swim, and second in the 1,000m swim. Julie-Ann's nominators for the award said that if their students can see someone fulfilling their dream, they are more likely to believe that they can achieve their own goals.

The students in Julie-Ann's school often refer to her achievements and she is there to encourage them in their own sporting endeavours. During the school's sports day, she takes on the role of master of ceremonies, and her nominators for the award said that her enthusiasm is infectious.

Galway native Oliver Horgan is a teacher in St Eunan's College in Letterkenny, and has also been manager of League of Ireland soccer team Finn Harps since 2013. Despite having fewer resources than other teams in the league, Oliver has helped Harps to compete at the highest level and the club has remained in the Premier Division since 2019. In 2020, he was nominated for the Professional



*From left: Miriam Duggan (ASTI President), Outstanding Individual Achievement Award recipient Oliver Horgan, and Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary).*

Footballers' Association's Manager of the Year award.

Oliver is also involved with coaching the Republic of Ireland schoolboys and coaches his own school's soccer team. He uses his skills as a top-flight coach to help students in his school, and the team competes against other schools across Donegal.

## **Outstanding Teacher Achievement Award 2021**

Trevor Collins of Bandon Grammar School, Co. Cork, was the recipient of the Outstanding Teacher Achievement Award for the development of a website to help students nationwide, and for his work sourcing computers for local primary schools.

Freebiz.ie is a free website that covers Business and Economics for the Leaving Certificate and Business Studies at Junior Certificate. Students find it very useful, especially coming up to exam periods. Trevor built the website after students couldn't access resources they needed during the pandemic, while other companies were charging €99 per subject for such resources.

Trevor was also instrumental in the implementation of an IT system for his school, which made the transition to online teaching and learning smooth for teachers and students.

On top of all of that, Trevor identified that some companies have policies to replace computers after a certain period of time, regardless of the condition of the machines. He sourced around 300 PCs from different companies, helped to oversee their refurbishment, and then distributed them to primary schools in the West Cork area.



From left: Eamon Dennehy (then ASTI President), Outstanding Teacher Achievement Award recipient Trevor Collins (Carbery Branch), and Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary).



From left: Eamon Dennehy (then ASTI President), ASTI Bursary recipient Noelle Moran (Tuam Branch), and Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary).

#### ASTI Bursary 2020-2021

The ASTI Bursary awards two ASTI members €2,000 each towards the cost of studies in the following areas: relevance of the proposed course of study to the professional lives of teachers and second-level education; the potential for the study to inform the ongoing policy agenda and work of the ASTI; and the potential for research to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

Ryan Gallagher is a science teacher at St Aloysius College in Cork, and was one of the 2020-2021 recipients of the Bursary. His PhD in Education in UCC involved studying the potential for blended learning in secondary schools, with a focus on students attending DEIS schools, in order to encourage greater uptake of science subjects. As part of his research, Ryan created a website, which contains science video lessons, interactive presentations, notes and quizzes. The aim of the website is to bridge the knowledge gap between the new Junior Cycle science course and Leaving Certificate biology and chemistry. Noelle Moran of St Jarlath's College in Tuam, Co. Galway, was also a recipient of the ASTI Bursary for 2020-2021. Noelle undertook an Advanced Diploma in Law and Education at the Honorable Society of King's Inns. This course provides an overview of law and education. This improved Noelle's knowledge of the legislative responsibilities on schools and the legislation teachers are bound by in their workplace, which informed her work as a second-level teacher. As an ASTI activist, Noelle is hoping to share her learnings from her course, as relevant, with any of the union's committees.

#### Thomas MacDonagh Medal Posthumous Award

The Thomas MacDonagh Medal recognises outstanding service in a representative capacity within the ASTI or an outside body. It may also include an action or position taken by an ASTI member that has significant benefits for fellow members. Jane Craig Elliot received the Thomas MacDonagh Medal Posthumous Award. Jane passed away in November 2020 after a brief illness. She was an ASTI stalwart and was known by members the length and breadth of the country as a true champion of teachers. She held many ASTI roles over the years including branch chair, CEC representative and ASTI Subject Representative. She served on the ASTI Education Committee and the Pensions Committee. At the time of her passing, Jane was Standing Committee Representative for Region 12.



From left: Ann Piggott (ASTI President 2020-21), Mary Ohle (Thomas MacDonagh Medal recipient, Dublin North West Branch), and Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary).

#### Thomas MacDonagh Medal

The recipients of the Thomas MacDonagh Medal for 2020-2021 were Rosabelle Crampton (Stillorgan Branch), Deirdre Mac Donald (Wexford Tony Boland Branch), Mary Ohle (Dublin North West Branch), Siobhan Peters (Tipperary Branch), Andrew Phelan (Dublin North West Branch), Mark Walshe (Dublin North East Branch), and Kevin Wall (Cork South Paddy Mulcahy Branch).

#### PJ Kennedy Award

The PJ Kennedy Award is presented to ASTI members who have given valuable service to the union at branch level. The 2020-2021 recipients of the award were Liz Crummey (Stillorgan Branch), Norah Martyn (Dublin South 1 Branch), Monica McMahon (Athlone Branch), Jimmy O'Dea (Dublin South 1 Branch), and Colette Tinnelly Younger (New Ross Branch).

An article on the 2019-20 ASTI Award recipients will feature in the January issue of *ASTIR*.

# HOW IT STARTED



*Delegates at Annual Convention 1926, which was held in University College Cork. This was the first Annual Convention to be held outside Dublin, and the first at which invited speakers delivered addresses on education. Photo includes the then President T.P. Waller, and T.J. Burke, General Secretary (sixth and seventh from the left in the front row).*

**The need for a teacher registration system, low salaries, the absence of any pension, and inflation were some of the issues debated at ASTI AGMs in the early 1900s. The following is an extract from *The Leading Democratic Assembly: Celebrating the ASTI's 100th Annual Convention* by Dr John Cunningham.**

Though they were very different organisations, the ASTI and Jim Larkin's Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU) were founded in the same year, 1909, and both endeavoured during the following decade and a half to secure a footing in the emerging Ireland.<sup>1</sup> In the early years of the Association, there were lots of discussions and conflicts, but these did not occur at Convention. The first Convention did not in fact take place until 1923.

### Before Conventions

"The first general meeting was not held until July 1910. But it was a memorable one for all concerned, the crowd was so great, and the atmosphere so charged with enthusiasm and derring-do ... Paddy Breen of Listowel, Pro Enright of Tralee and I walked to the Mansion House and were shepherded to our places by a tall, slim, keen-eyed chap, who told us his name was de Valera, and he was teaching maths in Blackrock ... Every recommendation was adopted with acclaim. A code of rules was listened to impatiently and adopted forthwith. A CEC was appointed out of hand and a set of minimum demands OK-ed by a show of hands."

*Recollections of Killarney teacher Joseph O'Connor*<sup>2</sup>

Before Conventions there were annual general meetings (AGMs), the ASTI being small enough in its early years to accommodate all members in a

medium-sized hall. To facilitate as many as possible, these annual meetings were held in Dublin in early July, coinciding with summer courses for art and science teachers. The first such meeting, described above by Joseph O'Connor, was held in the Supper Room of the Mansion House – "kindly lent by the Lord Mayor". Among those playing a prominent part was Éamon de Valera, President of the Association's Leinster Council, who proposed one of the major resolutions: "That the meeting considers the lack of registration to be a most progressive grievance".<sup>3</sup> Without registration, anyone might appear in front of a class, and it was a sore point that untrained religious persons and others were engaged as post-primary teachers, while qualified men and women were precariously employed.

Hannah Sheehy Skeffington explained the situation she and other young graduates faced: "In return for a fixed sum, the teacher devotes her whole time to her pupils ... frequently she instructs the nuns, and having equipped them in certain subjects, she finds her place filled by one of her pupils. Sometimes her pupils enter the convent and supersede her".<sup>4</sup>

A registration system was eventually announced in 1912, but it was 1918 before it came into effect, with a transition period extending to 1925. Even then, the system was so porous that 47% of secondary teachers were unregistered in the mid 1930s.<sup>5</sup> Registration, therefore, remained a hot issue at ASTI gatherings.

The Mansion House remained the venue for the AGM during the years of war and revolution. In 1916, teachers were confronted by a city in ruins in the aftermath of the Easter Rising.<sup>6</sup> De Valera was not present, being in prison, though he escaped the fate of another ASTI founder, Thomas MacDonagh, executed in early May. Inevitably a topic of informal discussion, no public reference to the execution was found in reports of the proceedings. To have protested would have risked the suppression of the Association, and anyway the subject would have been controversial internally. There was however an oblique tribute to MacDonagh in the ASTI's periodical in a long and laudatory review of his book, *Literature in*



20,000 ASTI, INTO and TUI members attended the Teachers United rally in Croke Park on December 5, 1985.

Ireland, which, the reviewer reported, was “passing through the press as its author met his death at the hands of a file of soldiers in a Dublin barrack yard”.<sup>7</sup>

### The beginnings

If the ASTI had a small membership during its early years, this was mainly because the post-primary, or intermediate, sector itself was small (primary education had 16 times the enrolment). It was small also because in Catholic schools there was a preponderance of teaching sisters, brothers and priests, who were ineligible for membership.<sup>8</sup> Post-primary education had been shaped by the Intermediate Education Act of 1878, which provided public funding for schools based on pupils’ performance in the State’s intermediate examinations. (An alternative accountability mechanism, State inspection, was unacceptable to the Catholic hierarchy.) A highly competitive system evolved, focused on rote learning for examinations, which was denounced by Pádraig Pearse in 1912 as “a murder machine”.<sup>9</sup> It was a system which did not take account of the welfare of so-called ‘lay teachers’, as those not bound by religious vows were described. For Lord Mayor of Dublin, Lorcan Sherlock, welcoming teachers to the 1912 AGM of the Association, the low salaries and non-existent pensions were “a scandal” and, he continued: “The male teachers received on average £80 a year, and the ladies about £50”, comparing poorly with “Corporation porters who were paid in some instances 45s a week [£117 annualised]”.<sup>10</sup>

The four key demands of the early Association were for standardised salaries, job security, State registration, and service pensions, demands first formulated by the ASTI’s predecessor, the Association of Intermediate and University Teachers (AIUT). Dating from 1897, the AIUT drew attention to the major grievances of the day but it became unrepresentative, and was regarded as a ‘Dublin organisation’ by teachers outside the metropolis.<sup>11</sup> The dissatisfaction in the provinces prompted meetings in Cork in January 1907 and on St Patrick’s Day 1909, with the objective of establishing “an association like the INTO”. Ultimately, the AIUT would agree to co-operate with the Munster initiative and the new departure was consummated at a meeting in the Mansion House in Dublin on July 10, 1909, at which the ASTI was officially established.<sup>12</sup>



ASTI official protest as part of pay dispute – October 14, 2016.

Out of a wariness lest the Association revert to being ‘a Dublin organisation’ like its predecessor, provincial councils were established for Munster and Leinster in 1910. An Ulster Provincial Council followed in 1914. Men and women were recruited to the Association from the beginning, but due to concern that the specific concerns of women be addressed, a women’s section, known as the Women Teachers’ Association (WTA) was formed, with branches in Dublin (1911) and Belfast (1912). A notable feature of the WTA was the prominent position of Protestants, because there were relatively few ‘lay’ Catholic women regularly employed in the post-primary sector. Professional development was a central concern of the women’s branches, but it was not the only concern. With structures allowing for WTA representation, significant numbers of women were elected onto the Association’s executive, where they raised concerns about pay differentials between men and women teachers.<sup>13</sup>

### Fighting for fair pay

Developments in 1912 placed the ASTI in an uneasy alliance with the Liberal government in opposition to Catholic employers. Accepting the long-articulated necessity for improved salaries, Augustine Birrell, Chief Secretary for Ireland, announced the introduction of teachers’ salaries grants, which would raise the incomes of lay teachers. To avail of the scheme, schools would be obliged to employ a minimum number of lay teachers at a set salary, to concede contractual entitlements, and to comply with a mooted registration system. Initially denouncing the scheme as anti-clerical in favouring lay teachers over religious, the Catholic employers eventually yielded. It was 1915, however, before the first salary grants were paid, and there was resentment among teachers that the State salary was delayed by several years due to the obduracy of their employers.<sup>14</sup> As things turned out, the Birrell pay boost was swallowed by price inflation in the World War I years, and teachers were no better off in 1918 than they had been in 1914.

Indignation over the diminishing purchasing power of salaries at the 1918 AGM was tempered by a recognition that solid progress had been made. In his presidential address, G.A. Watson urged delegates to “congratulate



Delegates gather in Bray for ASTI Convention 1960.



Delegates voting at ASTI Convention 2017 in Killarney.

themselves on two distinct achievements” – the introduction of registration – and “a definite recognition of the teaching body as a profession” – the acceptance of the principle of State salaries for teachers.<sup>15</sup>

Dissatisfaction about pay towards the end of the war led to the establishment of a Vice-Regal Committee on the Conditions of Service and Remuneration of Teachers in Intermediate Schools, with ASTI representation, whose recommendations on State examinations, pay, pensions, and other matters were reflected in an Education Bill of 1919. If the ASTI was lukewarm about the legislation, Catholic employers were antagonistic towards its promise to increase State regulation. The Bill never became law, but its provisions would be influential in the post-independence period.<sup>16</sup>

In the wider society, trade unions were energised by wartime circumstances. Price increases obliged workers to demand wage increases, while reduced unemployment and State regulation enhanced labour’s bargaining position. Initially, manual workers moved into action, and their successes recommended the labour movement to cash-strapped white collar workers. Aloof from trade unionism up to then, the INTO affiliated in 1917/18 to the Irish Labour Party and Trades Union Congress (a single body at that point). The ASTI, which had forged close links with the INTO, followed suit in 1919 on a margin of just one vote. Labour/Congress was moving leftwards, and initiatives such as its stance against conscription created a perception that it was “a body which is frankly bolshevist and Sinn Féin”, in the words of an indignant Ulster teacher. There were defections from the INTO to the breakaway Ulster Teachers’ Union, but the outcome was worse for the ASTI, which had a higher proportion of Protestant members. The Ulster women’s branch defected in 1919, and there were resignations from the heavily Protestant Leinster women’s branch. With the loss of most female members, the WTA was wound up in 1920 and with it went provision for female representation on the ASTI’s leading bodies.<sup>17</sup>

Frustration over pay gave rise to action that would have been inconceivable a few years previously. The first ASTI strike took place in Cork on Monday, May 3, 1920, with the threat of a national strike one week later. Most employers conceded, but the Christian Brothers and a number of schools in Limerick did not. Announcing that schools would be picketed, T.J. Burke, the newly appointed General Secretary, advised that the ASTI was “taking steps to induce parents, and in particular trade unionists to withdraw their children from the schools until a settlement was reached”. By the end of May, concessions from employers brought the strike to an end, though some would claim revenge by dismissing the perceived ‘ringleaders’ of the strike.<sup>18</sup>

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17. *Ibid*, pp. 44-46
18. *Ibid*, pp. 47-53.

*The Leading Democratic Assembly: Celebrating the ASTI’s 100th Annual Convention* was produced to celebrate the ASTI’s 100th Annual Convention, and written by Dr John Cunningham, Irish labour historian and guest speaker at ASTI Convention 2022. This publication looks at the history of the ASTI with a particular focus on Convention. The commemorative publication was distributed to delegates at ASTI Convention 2022 and copies were also posted to schools. Additional copies are available from ASTI Head Office and/or can be downloaded from [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie). Dr John Cunningham is a lecturer in history at NUI Galway and has also written a history of the ASTI called *Unlikely Radicals: Irish Post-Primary Teachers and the ASTI*, available from Cork University Press.



# ASTI ANNUAL CONVENTION 2023

Next year's ASTI Annual Convention takes places in Wexford. Here is an overview of what you need to know about attending and following Convention.



Every Easter, approximately 500 ASTI members attend Annual Convention to discuss and vote on the Association's policies for the year ahead. In 2023, Annual Convention will take place in the Clayton Whites Hotel, Wexford, from April 11-13.

## Where can I get information about Convention?

The ASTI website – [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie) – is where you will find all the information you need about Convention 2023. Go to the events section of the website, where you will find the Convention 2023 page.

## Attending Convention

Delegates to Convention are selected at branch meetings, usually in January. Each branch is entitled to send a number of delegates to Convention, depending on the number of members in their branch. Branches must submit the names of their chosen branch delegates to ASTI Head Office not later than January 31.

In addition to branch delegates, members of the ASTI Central Executive Council (CEC) and Standing Committee also attend Convention as delegates. If you wish to attend Convention 2023 you should go along to your next branch meeting. If you are unsure about when or where your branch meets, ask your school steward for your branch's meeting schedule.

When attending Annual Convention, you must be either a delegate or an observer. Please note that only delegates are allowed to speak and vote on Convention motions.

## Costs involved

The cost of travel and an overnight allowance is paid to all delegates attending Convention. There is also a registration fee of €30, which is paid directly to Head Office by delegates' branches.

## Where to stay

Convention 2023 is being held in the Clayton Whites Hotel, Wexford. Accommodation for delegates to Convention 2023 will be available at the hotel. Delegates book their own accommodation. Please be advised that Convention Clayton Whites Hotel accommodation is limited and

allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

There are several other accommodation options in Wexford. Details of other hotels and guesthouses located in the surrounding area are available on the ASTI website at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

## Teachers in the spotlight

Key debates on education, teachers' terms and conditions, and the ASTI's role as a trade union take place during Convention. The ASTI Annual Convention attracts significant media attention and provides opportunities to highlight some of the key issues for second-level teachers, for example, conditions for recently qualified teachers. Coverage focuses on key speeches made during Convention, including the President's address on the Tuesday evening, and on key debates throughout the conference.

## Topics for debate

Topics for debate are dictated by motions, which are submitted and selected at ASTI branch meetings. In other words, ASTI members get to decide what is debated at Annual Convention. Motions are presented to Convention and delegates speak to these motions. Branches normally decide on the topics they would like to see discussed at Annual Convention at their November branch meetings.

A Convention Steering Committee, which consists of classroom teachers elected by Annual Convention each year, prepares a list of motions received from branches. The list is circulated to all branches before January 7. Branches are asked to prioritise motions for inclusion on the Convention agenda not later than January 31. They can also propose amendments to any of the motions circulated. Motions and amendments are considered again by Steering Committee in early February and a final agenda is drawn up.

## Connect at Convention

The ASTI encourages the use of social media during Convention. Social media platforms Twitter and Facebook allow the ASTI and delegates attending Convention to spread the news to their colleagues who cannot attend and to highlight important Convention issues to their followers.

# THE ASTI EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The ASTI Education Committee has a busy year ahead!



The ASTI Education Committee. Onscreen (clockwise from top left): Geraldine O’Loughlin, Siobhán O’Donovan, Geraldine O’Brien, and Niall Mahon. Seated (from left): Sarah Withero, Moria Leydon, and Pauline Nagle.

Aside from its customary role of keeping a watching brief on education and other State policies that impact on schools, teachers and the curriculum, the ASTI Education Committee has adopted an ambitious programme of work for the year ahead. Artificial intelligence (AI) and digitalisation of education is a key theme, as is access to higher education. The latter is of particular significance in the context of the redevelopment of the Senior Cycle. The Education Committee also prepares submissions in response to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and other public consultations.

Edel Farrell of Cork South Paddy Mulcahy Branch is the Chairperson of the Committee, which also includes Ciarán Kavanagh, Deirdre Mac Donald, Geraldine O’Loughlin, Niall Mahon, Pauline Nagle, Richard Egan, Sarah Withero and Siobhan O’Donovan.

## AI and digitisation in education

The Education Committee commenced a discussion on AI in education, in part arising from a need to consider the longer-term impact of the shift to remote teaching on schools, but also to obtain a wider understanding of AI and its potential impacts on teaching and learning, on schools, and on education more generally. The Committee examined a number of papers focused on the potential impacts of AI on education.

The Committee also noted the response of the European Trade Union Confederation for Education (ETUCE) to the proposal from the European Commission in August 2021 for a Council Recommendation on blended learning. This is proposed as part of the implementation of the EU Digital Education Action Plan and the European Education Area 2030, and is aimed at promoting blended learning as the norm in educational practice at school level. The ETUCE report was highly critical of the timing of this proposal and the lack of consultation with education trade unions. It also criticised the deterministic approach to technology and stated that insufficient acknowledgement had been

given to analysing the challenges related to blended learning and the limitations that its implementation entails. ETUCE has recommended that the following must be agreed in advance:

- I. A clear and commonly agreed definition of blended learning.
- II. Meaningful consultation and social dialogue with education unions.
- III. Protect the importance and centrality of face-to-face teaching and learning in education.
- IV. Respect the role of teachers and education personnel, ensure decent working conditions and respect the professional autonomy of teachers.
- V. Provide adequate initial and continuous professional development to teachers and education personnel.
- VI. Ensure that blended learning does not hinder equal access to quality education, including education institutions, for all students without any distinction.
- VII. Protect the health and safety of teachers and education personnel in blended teaching environments.
- VIII. Effectively address the challenges related to increasing trends of privatisation and influence of the EdTech sector in education.
- IX. Ensure adequate public investment at regional, national and European level for quality and inclusive education.
- X. Ensure the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The ASTI Education Committee constitutes a space to reflect on wider trends in society that impact on schools and teachers’ professional lives. At the same time, it is focused on the trade union dimension to such trends. Members of the Committee are elected biennially at Annual Convention. Elections will take place in 2023, so join us and add to the union’s sterling body of work on education and curriculum policy.



# 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 10th, 2023

[www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie)  
[www.twitter.com/astionion](https://www.twitter.com/astionion)  
[www.facebook.com/astiteachers](https://www.facebook.com/astiteachers)

# RSTA welcomes new members

## A message from new RSTA President Susie Hall.

Now that autumn is here and schools have settled in, the RSTA wishes all ASTI members a very happy and successful year. We appeal to all ASTI members who know of colleagues who have recently retired to encourage them to join the RSTA.

The RSTA works constantly for the welfare of retired second-level teachers and to defend pension parity. In conjunction with the Alliance of Retired Public Servants, of which the RSTA was a founding member, we continue to fight for representation at talks where the pay and pensions of teachers are being discussed with Government.

### Branch activities

In the meantime, our 18 branches are also forging ahead with a programme of social events, at which our members can meet and get involved in activities in their local area. We need to increase our numbers and you can help by encouraging your recently retired colleagues to join us.



*Padraic O'Doherty congratulates Susie Hall as she takes on the role of RSTA President.*

## RSTA membership application/renewal

Name:

Address:

Home phone:

Mobile:

Email:

RSTA branch:

**Annual subscription: €24**  
**Annual renewal date: September 1**

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

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

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

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

## Standing order set-up form

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\_\_\_

## Working to eliminate single-use plastic

Refill Ireland is asking second-level students to get involved in the campaign to reduce plastic waste by becoming 'Refill Ambassadors'.

Refill Ireland is a non-profit social enterprise that empowers communities to eliminate single-use plastic water bottles by offering positive, alternative solutions that reduce emissions, prevent waste and protect the environment. Refill Ireland does this by promoting 'hydration on the go', which is a forward-thinking sustainable option for communities to have access to free water refills throughout the day, wherever they are. To do this, they have established the Refill Ireland Tap Map app to locate free water refill points nationally.

Refill Ireland is growing a national Tap Map, which enables people to locate free drinking water locations. Businesses that join the map as a destination for free refills can make sustainable choices while benefiting from increased footfall. There are currently over 1,600 locations nationwide where individuals can refill for free.

Refill Ireland would like to communicate and collaborate with secondary school students who would like to be Refill Ambassadors. This may be an idea for a Transition Year project, but the opportunity is available to all students. Refill Ambassadors can get involved by asking local businesses to join the network and generate immediate impact as they empower their voices locally. As the national Refill Tap Map grows, it would be a great opportunity for young people who are interested in environmental action. The project is a simple, inclusive and effective way to prevent plastic bottle use and support community hydration.

For more information and resources for schools, go to [www.refill.ie](http://www.refill.ie).

## Her Heart Matters

The Irish Heart Foundation recently launched its Her Heart Matters campaign, which aims to raise awareness of the risk of heart disease and stroke in women, and of the fact that this risk increases as women enter menopause. One in four women die from heart disease and stroke, so we need to talk about women's heart health. The campaign is supported by the HSE and Healthy Ireland.

The campaign features lots of supportive content developed by women, for women, including:

- a self-care and well-being journal,
- a minding your heart health around menopause leaflet,
- videos from health experts and patients, and
- an explanatory video about oestrogen and your heart, a self-assessment lifestyle quiz, infographic and much more!

Check out [www.irishheart.ie](http://www.irishheart.ie) for more information and resources.

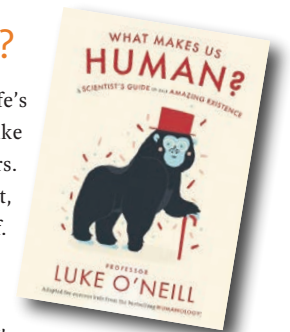
## What makes us human?

Curious kids will find all the answers to life's biggest questions and more in Prof. Luke O'Neill's exciting new book for young readers. Adapted from his bestselling 2018 debut, *Humanology*, *What Makes us Human?* is Prof. O'Neill's second book for children.

*What Makes Us Human?* is a brilliant educational journey through humankind, from the origin of life all the way to our eventual extinction as a species. Readers will learn about how we populated the planet, how we find a mate, how we age, why we like jokes and music, why we sleep, how we die – and how we can possibly escape death. Discussions of superhumans, robots and machines help us understand what the future may hold for us.

Prof. Luke O'Neill is a world-renowned immunologist and Professor of Biochemistry in the School of Biochemistry and Immunology at Trinity College Dublin. He is the author of four bestselling and award-winning books, including *The Great Irish Science Book* for children.

*What Makes Us Human?* by Prof. Luke O'Neill is published by Gill Books.



## Sexual consent play for secondary schools

A sexual consent education play is to be rolled out for secondary schools across Ireland as part of the University of Galway-based Active\* Consent for School Communities programme.

*How I Learned About Consent* uses drama to educate Senior Cycle students in ways to navigate positive and negative sexual scenarios they or their friends may encounter or experience.

The narrative of the play tackles topics ranging from sex education in schools, image-based sexual abuse, gender and sexual identities, to supporting a friend following a negative sexual experience. The play addresses these topics through age-appropriate humour and satire, drama and direct engagement with issues that young people may face concerning sexual harassment and assault.

*How I Learned About Consent* is the latest part of the Active\* Consent for School Communities programme for Senior Cycle pupils. The play was created using findings from the Active\* Consent for School Communities 2021 report, as well as ongoing work in the School Communities programme.

*How I Learned About Consent* links with the other components of the Active\* Consent for School Communities programme, which include a sexual consent workshop, the 'Sex on Our Screens' e-learning resource on sexual media, and support for teachers and parents.

*How I Learned About Consent* is supported by a funding award from The Community Foundation for Ireland's Youth Fund.

For contact information for Active\* Consent, see the official website at: [www.consenthub.ie/contact](http://www.consenthub.ie/contact)

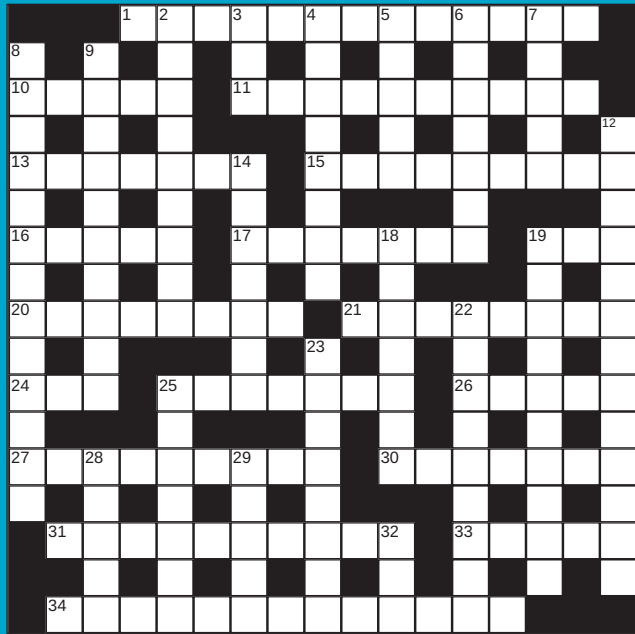


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Name

School

Address

ASTI Branch

Entries to: ASTIR Crossword No. 2205,  
Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, December 9, 2022

ACROSS

1. Reversal of position on cardiac operation (6,2,5)
10. Love the French! (5)
11. Caribbean island between Dominican Republic and Virgin Islands (6, 4)
13. This hurricane devastated New Orleans in 2005 (7)
15. Radon made in spiral galaxy (9)
16. Biblical mother-in-law of Ruth (5)
17. Demand return of miracle (7)
19. --- Pot, 1970s Cambodian dictator (3)
20. The ability to repay one's debts as they fall due (8)
21. Bogus court set up to give the impression of a fair legal process (8)
24. US Army term for the free time of a soldier (1.1.1.)
25. Waiting, waiting, waiting ... for 1 across (7)
26. Raptor seen in Clonea glen (5)
27. Accusing, impeaching, incriminating (9)
30. Italian composer from Rosscarbery and Inistioge (7)
31. Support whips to react negatively (10)
33. Plot of land belonging to an English parish church (5)
34. Thin immersion in the all together! (6,7)

DOWN

2. Substance toxic to plants (5)
3. Horse tipped to win race (3)
4. The quality of being graceful or stylish (8)
5. Rotten, putrid, acrid, rank (5)
6. Catchy tune that sticks in the mind (7)
7. This Stephen won the Tour de France in 1987 (5)
8. Think hard, Briana reckons, to solve a problem (4,4,5)
9. Could be data, game, or air traffic (10)
12. Unable to provide, disappointing (4,2,7)
14. Fruit resembling small peach (7)
18. Electrical device used when 3 into 2 won't go (7)
19. Small, lightweight recreational aircraft (10)
22. Hand-operated pump for delivering lubricant (6,3)
23. Chinese traditional practice of arranging space in relation to energy (4,4)
25. Porkers family could be a bag of wind! (7)
28. Trick, practical joke (5)
29. Laity surrounding Rome (5)
32. What's up? Could be a little drink! (3)

Solutions to ASTIR Crossword No. 2204

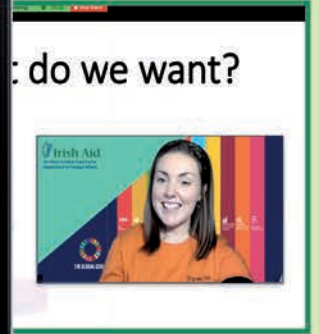
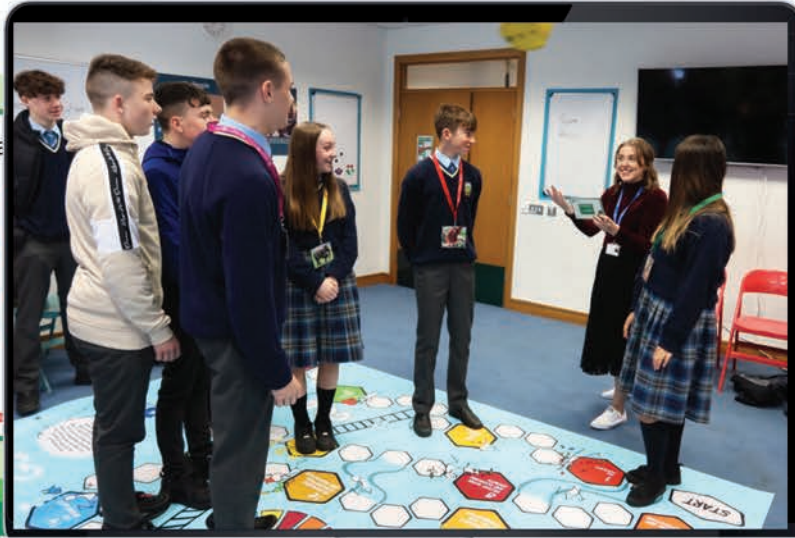
ACROSS	DOWN
1. Baptism of fire	2. Alabaster
10. Aorta	3. TLC
11. Chatterbox	4. Shambles
13. Replace	5. Octal
15. Ballistic	6. Fertile
16. Night	7. Roost
17. Treadle	8. Fair and square
19. Bar	9. Propaganda
20. Senorita	12. Scorched earth
21. Behemoth	14. Entitle
24. UDA	18. Dresden
25. Steroid	19. Boomerangs
26. Plead	22. Expertise
27. Rearrange	23. Lone wolf
30. Nirvana	25. Sardine
31. Meticulous	28. Arena
33. Ingot	29. Nouns
34. Water softener	32. Sue

Did you miss?

- Education at a Glance 14
- ASTI Awards 20

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the winner of  
Crossword No. 2204:  
Karl Foster, Colaiste Choilm, Dublin  
Road, Swords, Co. Dublin  
Fingal Branch



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