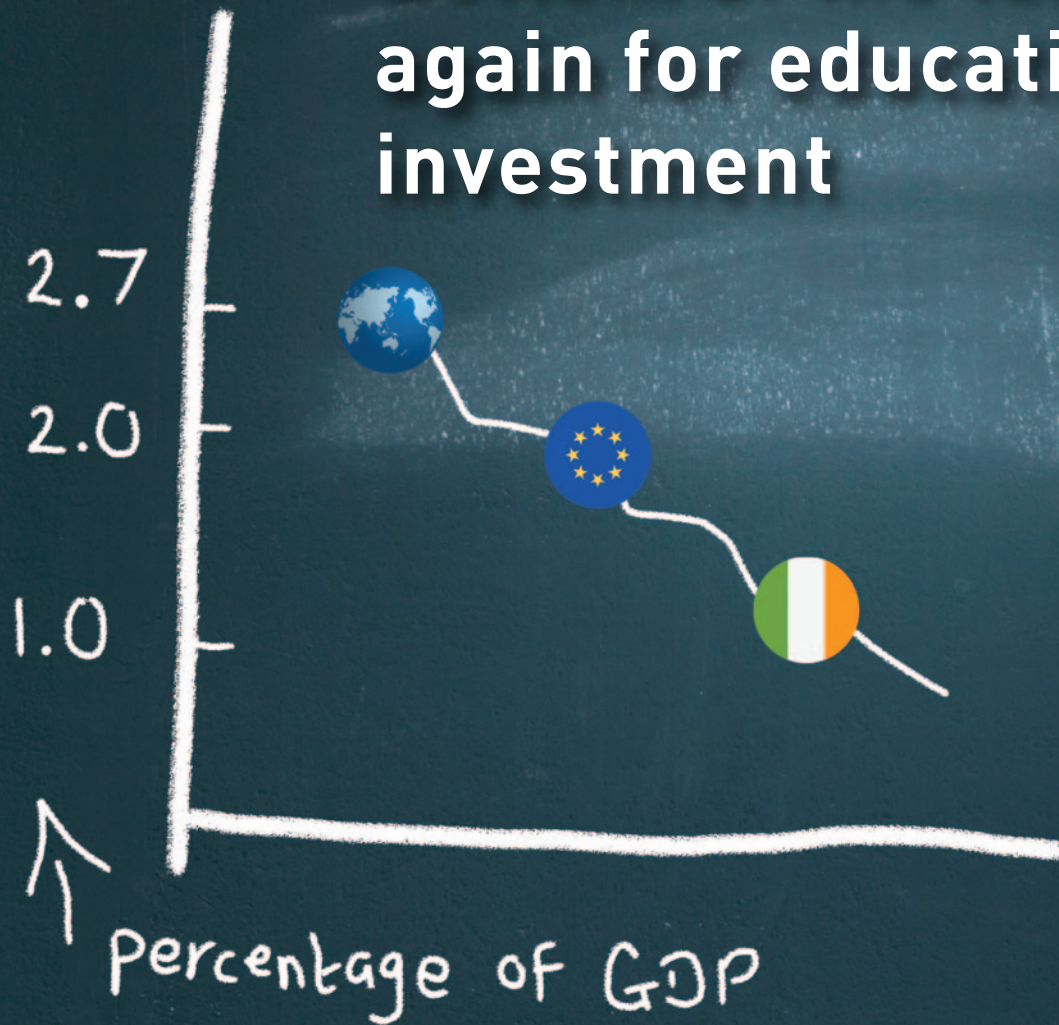


ASTIR

ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY TEACHERS, IRELAND

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Bottom of the league again for education investment



- | Technology in education
- | Senior Cycle redevelopment – update
- | Redeployment

ASTI



POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES AT MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE

EDUCATION POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

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- M Ed in Leadership of Wellbeing in Education
- M Ed in Educational Leadership & Management
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- MA in Music Education
- MA in Education & the Arts (META)
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- Graduate Diploma/M Ed in Adult & Further Education
- Graduate Diploma/M Ed in Information & Communication Technologies in Primary Education
- Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma/MA in Autism Studies
- Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma/M Ed in Digital Leadership in Education
- Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma/M Ed in Middle Leadership & Mentoring
- An Teastas Iarchéime i dTeagasc Ábharbhunaithe (TTA) san Iarbhunscolaíocht Lán-Ghaeilge & Ghaeltachta
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- Structured PhD in Applied Linguistics
- Structured PhD in Contemporary Irish Studies
- MA in Climate, Justice & Sustainability
- MA/M Sc in Environment, Society & Culture
- MA in Modern English Literature
- MA in Applied Linguistics
- MA in History
- MA in Local History (with UL)
- MA in Media Studies
- Certificate/MA in Christian Leadership in Education

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

Business Studies; 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

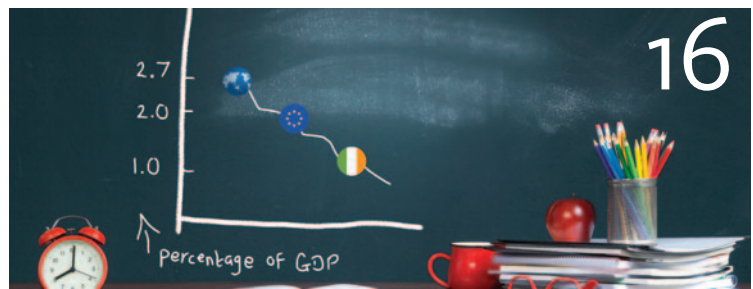


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Members can email astirfeedback@asti.ie or text 087 934 9956.

Collective voice on Senior Cycle

Last month ASTI and TUI subject representatives, along with other key union activists, met for the second time this year as part of ongoing collaboration regarding our response to the Minister for Education's plans for Senior Cycle. In addition to this, the General Secretaries and Presidents of the two unions have worked together on an ongoing basis, particularly in relation to the Minister's plan that English and Irish Paper 1 be moved to the end of fifth year, and also her plan for teacher-based assessment for second components in new Leaving Cert subject specifications (see page 14 for Senior Cycle redevelopment update).

In my view, it is vital that the two unions continue to work together to protect Senior Cycle education and the integrity of our State exams system. During very difficult discussions throughout the summer of 2023, and indeed prior to that, ASTI and TUI representatives emphasised to the Department of Education that assessment of students for State certification purposes must be based on fairness and impartiality for students and trust in the system. The ASTI and TUI were united in this common cause – united in this vision for the future of second-level education.

I am convinced that this united front played no small part in the Minister's announcement on September 20 this year not to proceed with her plan for teacher-based assessment for new subject specification second components.

Collective action and collaboration

Teacher unions are the collective voice for teachers in the classroom. Meaningful and continual collaboration between the Department of Education and the teacher unions recognises the importance of the professional voice of the teacher in curriculum change.

As teachers, we know and accept that curricula must continuously evolve and adapt to meet the educational needs of students. Many of us have implemented multiple syllabi and curricular revisions and even transformations during our teaching careers. Despite this, there is a narrative out there that little has changed and, for example, that all Leaving Cert subjects are terminally assessed by written exam only at the end of sixth year. This is not true. Some 29 of the 43 subjects have second components, which are carried out over year 1 and year 2 of the Leaving Cert. I teach Home Economics. There is a substantial journal component – worth 20% of the students' overall grade – which is submitted to the State Exams Commission in the autumn of year 2. This helps to spread the exam load for students and the exam process retains its integrity.

In any redevelopment of the Senior Cycle and Leaving Cert, we must ensure that what is working well is not replaced with educationally unsound 'reform'. In particular we must insist on appropriate depth of treatment for new subject specifications. While the ASTI and TUI have achieved much in terms of protecting the Senior Cycle, there is much work to be done.



Geraldine O'Brien

ASTI President

Teacher unity discussions

Discussions with the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) around the prospect of unification with the ASTI have been taking place over the past year. Both unions have engaged constructively and in good faith but there remains a considerable amount of work to be done. The aim is to create a new union that at its heart is member focused, and which acknowledges and respects the traditions of each union, while creating a new union to face the challenges of the current industrial relations landscape. The merging of two large trade unions is not a simple process and while a definitive deadline for these discussions is impossible to predict, it is hoped to have an outcome that can be presented to the executive structures and the membership of the TUI and ASTI within the 2023/24 academic year.

The unification of the TUI and the ASTI would be a seismic moment in education. There is potential for one coherent teacher voice on all topics across the entire breadth of the education sector. We would no longer be able to be splintered and pitted against each other, and we would have a larger voice as a member of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' Public Services Committee.

Any outcome that emerges from these discussions will require comprehensive and substantial membership consultation within both unions, and will ultimately be adjudicated upon in ballots of members. Members will decide.

Social media and electronic communications

It is with trepidation that I broach the following subject as it only applies to a small number of our members. Unfortunately, here in the ASTI we have noticed an increase in the number of teachers who have experienced difficulties in their schools arising from their use of social media/electronic communication in communications within and outside the course of their teaching profession. This is not to be confused with the fact that many teachers use social media and electronic communication to enhance their classroom practice, introducing new tools to their students and delivering the curriculum in innovative and engaging ways. In that instance, best practice should always be followed.

Furthermore, it must also be acknowledged that teachers have a right to privacy and freedom of expression, two matters that are beyond compromise. What I am referencing here are posts that, in retrospect, prove to be foolhardy at best and have in some cases led to Fitness to Teach complaints to the Teaching Council. Problems have arisen whereby teachers have befriended students on Facebook or other social networking platforms. It is always advisable to consider whether your expressed view is reasonable and appropriate before posting online. Discussion about students, parents, colleagues, or your employer in less than complimentary terms is inadvisable to say the least. It is imperative that teachers should keep their personal and professional use of social media separate. Indeed, a clear and comprehensive social media policy should be in place in all schools. It should also deal with how the school manages inappropriate behaviour of students towards teachers.



Kieran Christie

ASTI General Secretary

Protest over Galway school decision



From left: John Conneely (ASTI Standing Committee regional representative), Sean O'Neill (elected member of the Teaching Council), Niall Duddy (elected member of the Teaching Council), Eamon Dennehy (ASTI Teaching Council nominee), Anne Loughmane (ASTI Teaching Council nominee), and Richard Bell (ASTI Standing Committee regional representative).

The ASTI recently held a short protest to highlight a Galway school's decision not to release a teacher member of the Teaching Council to attend Council meetings. The protest took place outside the Teaching

Council's annual FÉILTE festival. Niall Duddy, a teacher at Presentation College Athenry, was elected by teachers to represent 8,000 second-level teachers across 13 counties on the Teaching Council. However, the Board

of Management at Presentation College is refusing his requests to attend Teaching Council meetings.

Meanwhile, other elected teacher representatives on the Teaching Council are attending meetings as part of their role in representing teachers across Ireland.

Commenting on the situation, Kieran Christie, ASTI General Secretary, said: "Despite the fact that Mr Duddy was duly elected by teachers and subsequently appointed to the Teaching Council position by the Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD, the Board of Management at Presentation College Athenry is refusing a reasonable request by Mr Duddy to represent thousands of second-level teachers across Galway and other counties. The Teaching Council performs vital work in the national interest including the registration of teachers, professional standards in teaching, and investigations into complaints against teachers. It is unthinkable that a Board of Management in one school in Ireland would choose to stymie thousands of teachers' democratic right to be represented on the Teaching Council".

The Teaching Council annual FÉILTE festival took place in Portlaoise on Saturday, October 7.

Teacher longlisted for Booker



Elaine Feeney, 2020 ASTI Outstanding Individual Achievement Award recipient, was recently longlisted for the 2023 Booker Prize for her second novel, *How To Build a Boat*.

The novel tells the story of how one boy on a unique mission transforms the lives of his teachers, and brings together a community.

As well as her novels *As You Were* and *How to Build A Boat*, Elaine has published three collections of poetry: *Where's Katie?*; *The Radio was Gospel*; and, *Rise*.

Elaine teaches creative writing and poetry at NUIG, and is the Creative Director of the Tuam Oral History Project at NUI Galway, which works with survivors of the Tuam Mother and Baby Home.

Unpaid leave for medical care purposes

Unpaid leave for medical care purposes is a new statutory leave entitlement. This is in addition to existing statutory entitlements to carer's leave and *force majeure* leave, and the non-statutory entitlement to illness in family leave.

A teacher can apply for unpaid leave for medical care purposes to provide personal care or support for a serious medical reason to their:

- child (including adopted child, stepchild and child being cared for on the basis of 'in loco parentis'),
- spouse or civil partner,
- cohabitant,
- parent or grandparent,
- brother or sister, or
- housemate (person who resides in the same house as the teacher, other than those listed above).

Unpaid leave for medical care purposes consists of one or more school days, but must not exceed



a maximum of five school days in a consecutive 12 months.

For more information on unpaid leave for medical care purposes, see Circular 0050/2023 or www.asti.ie

World Teachers' Day 2023



ASTI President Geraldine O'Brien joined attendees at an ASTI school steward training event held on World Teachers' Day to celebrate with a slice of cake.



School steward Mary Ohle and Niall Keenan preparing cakes to celebrate World Teachers' Day in Holy Family School for the Deaf, Navan Road, Dublin.



Teachers from St Jarlath's College, Tuam, Co. Galway (from left): Morgan Ó Concubhair, Claire Corbett, Noelle Moran, Bríd Burke, and Michael Houlihan.



Teachers from Seamount College, Kinvara, Co. Galway (from left): Ruth Cullen, Mary Reynolds, Aisling Leonard, Fiona Ryan, Maura Greaney, Ailbhe O'Donnell, Jessica Mullins, Margaret Keville, Eileen Fitzgerald, Lisa Vega, Sinead O'Reilly, Christina Kennedy, Keara Cormican, Maeve Tierney, Léan Breathnach, and Séamus Ó Conghaile.



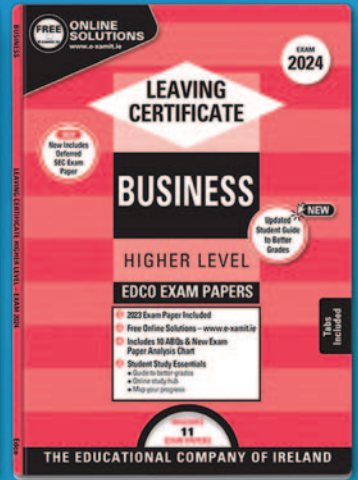
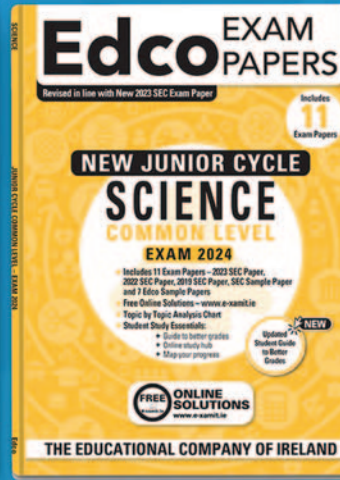
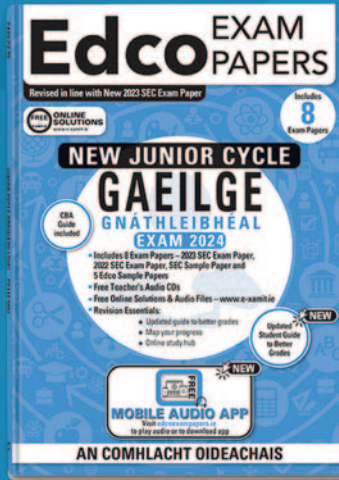
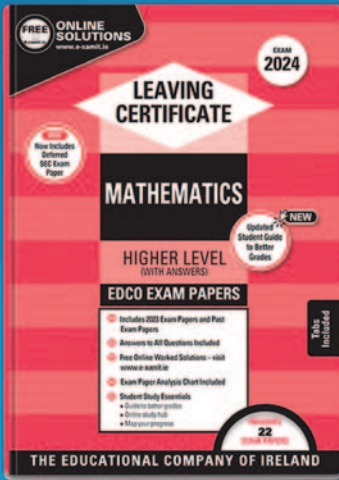
Seán Barrett, teacher in St Mary's Diocesan School, Drogheda, celebrating World Teachers' Day.

As in previous years, ASTI school staff were invited to organise staffroom cakes to celebrate during the week of World Teachers' Day in October and recoup the cost by submitting

receipts directly to their branch treasurer. This offered ASTI staff an opportunity to welcome new members to the union.

Information on World Teachers' Day events organised by UNESCO is available at <https://www.unesco.org/en/days/teachers>

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Dublin North West Branch retirement event



Pictured at a recent Dublin North West retirement event were:

Front row (from left): Detta Brennan, Máire Collins, John Kane, Geraldine O'Brien (ASTI President), Marie Claire Bardel, Katrina Connolly, and Bernadine O'Sullivan.

Second row (from left): Oliver Burns, Rosaleen Kane, Susan Kennedy, Margaret Doddy, Mary Ohle, and Paddy O'Shea.

Third row (from left): Jerome Devitt, Andrew Deacon, Pádraig Murphy (ASTI Honorary Treasurer), Máire Woods, Paula Bigley, and Éamon Ó'Ceallaigh.

Fourth row (from left): Diarmaid de Paor (ASTI Deputy General Secretary), Niall Mahon, and Adrienne Healy.

Fifth row (from left): Brian Burke (ASTI Industrial Relations Official), Philip Synnott, and Ian McColgan.

ASTI and TUI meet on Senior Cycle change

A meeting of ASTI and TUI subject representatives took place in October to progress a common approach to the Minister for Education’s March 2022 announcement on the redevelopment of the Senior Cycle. At the meeting, it was acknowledged that the joint ASTI/TUI approach had played an important role in the Minister’s revision of her original announcement in relation to teacher-based assessment and in relation to Leaving Cert English and Irish Paper 1. It was agreed that a strong, unified campaign will be key to ensuring that the integrity and credibility of the Leaving Cert is maintained.

The following concerns were among those highlighted at the meeting:


- teachers’ voice must be central to any discussions regarding Senior Cycle change,
- the mistakes made in relation to Junior Cycle change must not be repeated,
- workload must be addressed,
- new syllabi/subject specifications must imbed depth of treatment, and
- appropriate syllabi/subject specification content/resources must be available.



From left: David Duffy (TUI Education Officer), Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary), David Waters (TUI President), Geraldine O'Brien (ASTI President), Michael Gillespie (TUI General Secretary), and Moira Leydon (ASTI Education Officer). (Photograph: Caleb Purcell.)



ASTI and TUI subject representatives met recently to progress a common approach to Senior Cycle redevelopment.



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- Music in Education
- Psychology of Education
- Science Education
- Teaching and Learning (Higher Education)
- The Psychology of Living with Life Events: Grief-informed Education in the classroom*

*Subject to Approval.
Please note that not all specialisms run in every academic year and are subject to minimum student numbers.

Admissions


The closing date for applications for the academic year 2024/25 is **30th June, 2024 (31st May for Drama in Education and Music in Education)**. Applications for all specialisms 2024/25 must be made online at: www.tcd.ie/courses/postgraduate/faculty/subjects.php

Applicants to the 1-year full-time M.Ed. must submit a 'Description of Area of Research Interest' as part of the application process. For further details, and an outline of the format required, please contact MASTERED@tcd.ie

Fees and Further Information

We are reducing the (M.Ed.) fees to support teachers returning to education. For further information please visit <https://www.tcd.ie/education/courses/postgraduate/masters-in-education/>. For all other enquiries please contact the Admin Team at MASTERED@tcd.ie

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Teaching Council elections

The Teaching Council election of seven post-primary registered teachers to the Council, for a four-year term commencing April 2024, will take place in February 2024. These elections are held pursuant to the Teaching Council Acts 2001 to 2015, and the Teaching Council (Election of Members) Regulations 2023, which are available on the Teaching Council website.

Electoral roll

The electoral roll consists of all teachers on the Register of Teachers on September 30, 2023. As a registered post-primary teacher, you can be elected to one of the following three categories:

- Voluntary school sector
- Education and Training Board sector
- Community and comprehensive school sector

Nominations

All registered teachers can be nominated for election. If you are interested in being a candidate for election to the Council, you will need a nomination paper signed by 15 electors within your category and constituency. Nomination forms are available on the Council website and you can submit your completed form in January 2024.

The work of the Teaching Council

Being a member of the Teaching Council gives you an opportunity to support the Council's work. If you are elected you will be invited to sit on some of the Council committees, such as the Investigating Committee, Disciplinary Committee, Registration Committee, and Education Committee.

More information on the work of the Council and the election process is available from www.teachingcouncil.ie.

ASTI-endorsed candidates

The ASTI endorses candidates running in the second-level Teaching Council election constituencies. ASTI-endorsed candidates are ASTI members who have applied for and received endorsement using criteria set down by ASTI Standing Committee. ASTI-endorsed candidates have committed to promoting the interests of ASTI members if elected.

Information in relation to the ASTI endorsement process will be available on the ASTI website shortly.

Induction for teachers who qualified outside of Ireland

The Teaching Council will accept applications for registration from post-primary teachers who have qualified outside of Ireland but have not completed the required period of induction in

the country in which they qualified. If you are aware of anyone who has qualified or is about to qualify as a teacher outside of Ireland, we encourage you to bring this important update to

their attention. Applications are being accepted until February 1, 2024. Information on eligibility requirements and how to apply for registration can be found at www.teachingcouncil.ie.

ASTI student bursary



Oliver Forsyth.



Jessica Rose.



Johnny Lambe.



Cathal Redmond Brett.



Doireann Heffernan.

The ASTI has awarded five bursaries to the value of €1,000 each to assist students who have a parent who is an ASTI member or an ASTI staff member, in undertaking an undergraduate course in third-level education. The winners of the 2023 bursaries are:

- Oliver Forsyth, Bachelor of Arts in Social Care, TU Dublin,
- Jessica Rose, Bachelor of Science in Food Marketing & Entrepreneurship, University College Cork,
- Johnny Lambe, Bachelor of Business and

- Accounting, ATU Donegal,
 - Cathal Redmond Brett, Bachelor of Commerce, University College Cork, and
 - Doireann Heffernan, Bachelor of Science in Physical Education, University of Limerick.
- The successful applicants were picked by lot at a live draw on October 2.

For more information on the ASTI Annual Student Bursary, see www.asti.ie/memberbenefits/awardsgrants/



ASTI President Geraldine O'Brien, with ASTI General Secretary Kieran Christie (right) and Seán Murray (auditor, HLB Ireland) at the live draw to choose the ASTI bursary winners on October 2.

Branch officers – view your branch members online

MyUnion – the members’ area of the ASTI website – includes features to assist branch officers in their role.

As Branch Chair or Branch Secretary, you can see an up-to-date list of ASTI members in your branch. This list will include members in the schools in your

branch, as well as branch members who are retired, on secondment, etc.

To see this list, log in to MyUnion and go to the Branch Schools page. Branch Secretaries are also able to ratify new members through their MyUnion account. To ratify a new

member application, log in to MyUnion and go to the Pending Applications page.

Scan the QR code to watch a video guide to MyUnion for Branch officers.



ASTI Awards



Pictured at the recent ASTI Awards ceremony were (from left): James Breslin, Geraldine O'Brien (then ASTI President-Elect), PJ Kennedy Award recipients Dan Maloney and Rosemary Flynn, Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary), and Breda Lynch (ASTI Executive Officer: Industrial Relations).

Nominations by branches for the following ASTI Awards must be received in ASTI Head Office by Friday, December 8, 2023:

- the PJ Kennedy Award,
- the Thomas MacDonagh Medal, and
- Honorary Life Membership

PJ Kennedy Award

This award reflects the contribution of the recipient to the ASTI. Eligible nominees are retired members who have given valuable service to the branch and/or branch members. Such a nominee might be a diligent school steward or a branch officer whose years of commitment and sterling service warrant such recognition.

Thomas MacDonagh Medal

This award reflects the distinguished service and contribution of the recipient to the ASTI. Eligible nominees are current or retiring members who, in the view of the ASTI Awards Committee, have given distinguished service to the ASTI and who merit this honour. Such service should include:

- outstanding service in a representative capacity on an outside body or within the structures of the ASTI, and
- action or a position taken by a member, which generates significant benefits for other ASTI members.

Service at national level, while it may lead to the award of the Thomas MacDonagh medal, is not a prerequisite.

Honorary Life Membership

This award is the highest honour that may be bestowed on a member. Honorary Life Membership is conferred only in recognition of outstanding service to the Association and entitles the Honorary Life Member to all rights and privileges of full membership, including the right to hold office.

Nomination forms have been sent to all branch secretaries.

Carlow Branch retirement event



The Carlow Branch of the ASTI recently held an event for retiring staff. Pictured with ASTI President Geraldine O'Brien are staff from St Leo's College (from left): Anne Rennick, Shelia Coady, Clare Ryan, Geraldine O'Brien (ASTI President), Jim O'Keeffe, Marie Nolan, Liz Kennedy, Ruth McHugh, Nuala Kennedy, Anne Buckeridge, Mary Foley, and Patricia Morrissey.

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EDUCATION DESERVES ADEQUATE FUNDING

Underinvestment in education, teacher shortages, and Leaving Cert change were all on the agenda for the ASTI in recent media appearances.

“The underinvestment for years in second-level education is now paying the dividends of us being bottom of the league once again. This is not a once-off, but a recurrence. We are bottom of the class every time. How poor is that for a country that’s considered a first-world country in the 21st century? We pride ourselves on education, education retainment, the knowledge economy, the skills economy, and yet, this is all done on a shoestring budget. The Government needs to invest and invest seriously in Ireland’s education, and in particular in second-level education, and indeed in primary level as well.”

Geraldine O’Brien, ASTI President, speaking on the OECD Education at Glance 2023 report

The Michael Reade Show, LFM, September 13, 2023

“Our strong opposition to teachers assessing their own students for certificate examination purposes is well known, and was well known long before ChatGPT came along. We certainly did lobby the Minister at our meetings, and her officials, that ChatGPT was essentially a game changer in all of this, irrespective of perspectives.”

Kieran Christie, ASTI General Secretary

The Tonight Show, Virgin Media, September 21, 2023

“I take the Minister’s statement this morning at face value. There is a myth out there that all exams are terminally assessed by written exam at the end of year two. That’s not true. Twenty-nine of the 43 subjects have second components. Those second components are done over year 1 and year 2 of Leaving Cert. Take the example of Home Economics. There is a journal component, a second component in that subject, and it is submitted to the SEC in the autumn of year 2 of Leaving Cert. That’s dividing the load for students – it’s spreading the load. It’s not a good idea, in Ireland, in a small country, to have teachers assessing their own students – to have teachers living next door to students, or to parents of the students the teacher is assessing. We saw what happened with the calculated grades. The grades were inflated and the universities subsequently were calling for much more rigid assessment and grading of the exams.”

Geraldine O’Brien, ASTI President

Pat Kenny Show, Newstalk, September 20, 2023

“I don’t know if it was because the Department of Expenditure and the Department of Education were forced to justify everything. The problem with that is this: after school today, for instance, I have Croke Park hours. After that, I have CPD that has to get done. You account for your hours. Teachers were always doing this, but now it has to be counted and signed

off. What that has done has brought about an end to volunteerism. Everyone is ticking boxes.”

Richie Bell, Standing Committee Representative

The Irish Times, October 7, 2023

“When they announce new teachers, what they’re announcing is vacancies. Go on education.ie any day and you’ll see how many posts there are and how few people there are to apply for them. It’s a bit bold to say they’re bringing in 700 teachers, unless they’re flying them in on a plane. I have some students in my sixth year class who have to walk 20 minutes down the road in order to access technology classes.”

Conall Ó Dufaigh, ASTI member

Irish Daily Mail, October 11, 2023

“I noticed that there was quite a significant increase in the training allowance for guards, and nurses get a training allowance, but there still isn’t an allowance given to the PME for secondary school teachers. They changed it from a one-year course to a two-year course. On the second year, you do a placement in the classroom, and you’re not paid for that. In other countries, there is an allowance – in Scotland, they give you 80% of your salary. It’s an expensive year, and you’re doing full-time work without getting any pay, so it’s very difficult for you to take on another job at the same time.”

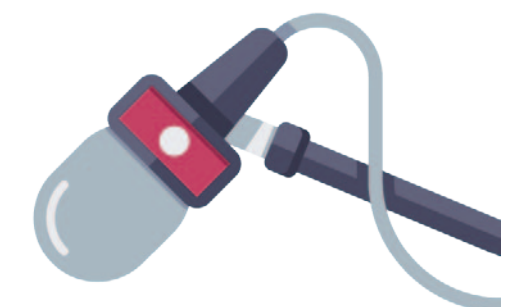
Maria Markey-Greene, Standing Committee Representative

breakingnews.ie, October 10, 2023

“It’s unfortunate that the political will doesn’t appear to be there because there are classrooms right across the country today where there are no teachers or where there are people standing there who are not qualified to teach at all. And that’s unfortunate.”

Kieran Christie, ASTI General Secretary

FM104 News, October 12, 2023



SENIOR CYCLE REDEVELOPMENT – UPDATE

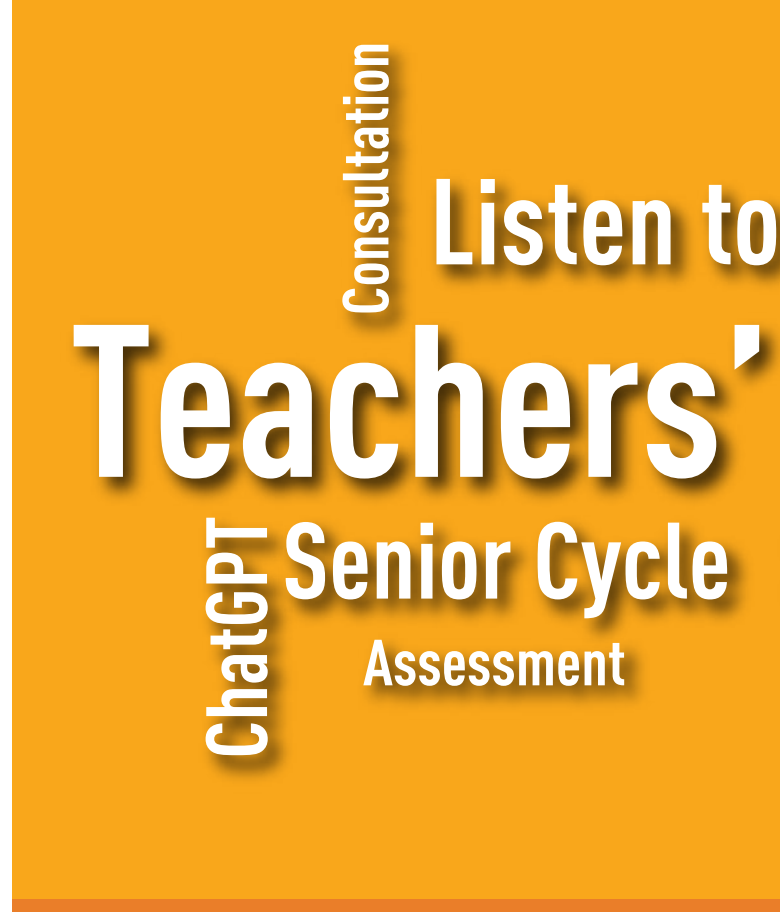
The Minister for Education recently announced revisions to her proposals for the Leaving Cert.

In September 2023, Minister for Education Norma Foley TD announced a key revision to her proposals for Senior Cycle redevelopment when she confirmed that teacher-based assessment for new additional components will not go ahead. Instead, these new additional components will be externally assessed by the State Exams Commission (SEC).

When the Minister made her original announcement on Senior Cycle redevelopment in March 2022, a standout measure was a proposal to change the final Leaving Cert assessment procedure to include additional and teacher-based assessment components. Following the Minister's March 2022 statement, the ASTI insisted that external assessment must be retained in order to protect the integrity of State exams and the nature of the teacher–student relationship in second-level schools. The ASTI highlighted the fact that the Minister's teacher-based assessment plan did not form part of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Senior Cycle Review Report to the Minister. Consequently, when the Minister announced in September 2023 that new additional components will now be externally assessed by the SEC, especially in the context of the advent of new artificial intelligence tools, the ASTI described this revision as both sensible and inevitable.

Revised announcement

In her September 2023 announcement, the Minister stated: "I am particularly conscious of the more recent accelerated evolution and growth in generative AI, and I understand there is a need to explore the opportunities afforded by these developments in an educational context, as well as the challenges they might represent. "With that in mind I have asked the SEC that further research would be commissioned on the potential role and impact of generative artificial intelligence in teacher-based assessment in particular. "While this work is ongoing, I have decided to progress additional and practical components that will be externally assessed by the SEC". The Minister's September announcement also included the bringing forward of the implementation date for seven revised Leaving



Certificate subject specifications. The seven subjects are: Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Business, Arabic, Ancient Greek and Latin. Thereafter, revised subject specifications will be introduced on an annual basis.

September 2025 will also see the introduction of two new subjects – Drama, Film and Theatre Studies, and Climate Action and Sustainable Development.

ASTI campaign

Timeline

In March 2022 the Minister for Education announced her proposals for Senior Cycle redevelopment. The ASTI began an internal process of consultation, including:

- consultation with members via the ASTI branch network,
- in October 2022, the ASTI Central Executive Council was addressed by Áine Hyland, Irish educationalist and Emeritus Professor of Education, UCC,
- a number of collaborative activities with the TUI have been organised, including meetings of the ASTI and TUI subject representatives,
- the ASTI and TUI undertook a joint campaign of opposition to the Minister's proposal to move Leaving Cert Paper 1 in English and Irish to the end of fifth year for those entering fifth year in September 2023,
- the ASTI hosted an education conference on curriculum change in March 2023,
- the ASTI adopted a range of policy positions in relation to the Minister's plans as announced in March 2022 (see panel),
- in February 2023, following a campaign of opposition by the ASTI/TUI regarding the Minister's plan to move Leaving Cert Paper 1 in English and Irish to the end of fifth year from 2024, the Minister announced the deferral of this proposal, and
- in September 2023, the Minister revised her proposal regarding teacher-based assessment.

ASTI Campaign

teachers Curriculum Policy Collaboration Subject specification Union Minister Redevelopment Protecting education Protecting members Leaving Cert Depth of treatment voice

Senior Cycle redevelopment – ASTI policy

The ASTI has a longstanding policy that teachers do not assess their students for the purpose of State exam certification and that all State exams be externally assessed. In addition, the ASTI has adopted the following policies since the Minister for Education announced her plans for Senior Cycle redevelopment in March 2022:

Policy adopted by ASTI Central Executive Council

- That the ASTI demands substantial consultation on the selection criteria for and operation of Network Schools and clarification on the exact nature of the role of students as co-constructors of the curriculum and assessment arrangements.
- ASTI affirms that Transition Year must remain a standalone programme.
- 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.
- That the ASTI demands the provision of a programme of initial teacher education and meaningful CPD prior to the introduction of new subjects and revised syllabi/specification on the curriculum. Further, the ASTI demands that the full range of syllabus documentation (including sample examination papers, sample marking schemes and, if applicable, teacher's notes) should be officially published at the same time as the new syllabus.
- ASTI emphatically rejects the proposal to hold paper 1 in English and Irish at the end of fifth Year.
- That ASTI will strongly advise and support all members in Network Schools to familiarise themselves with and adhere to union policy on State examinations. The ASTI rejects the Minister for Education's proposals on teacher assessment; the assessment and grading of the Leaving Certificate must remain the remit of the State Examinations Commission as is currently practiced.
- That ASTI reject the proposal that the balance between written and other assessment components be standardised across all subjects. This balance should be developed through consultation, including with subject development groups.
- ASTI demands that the teacher union voice be central to all discussions

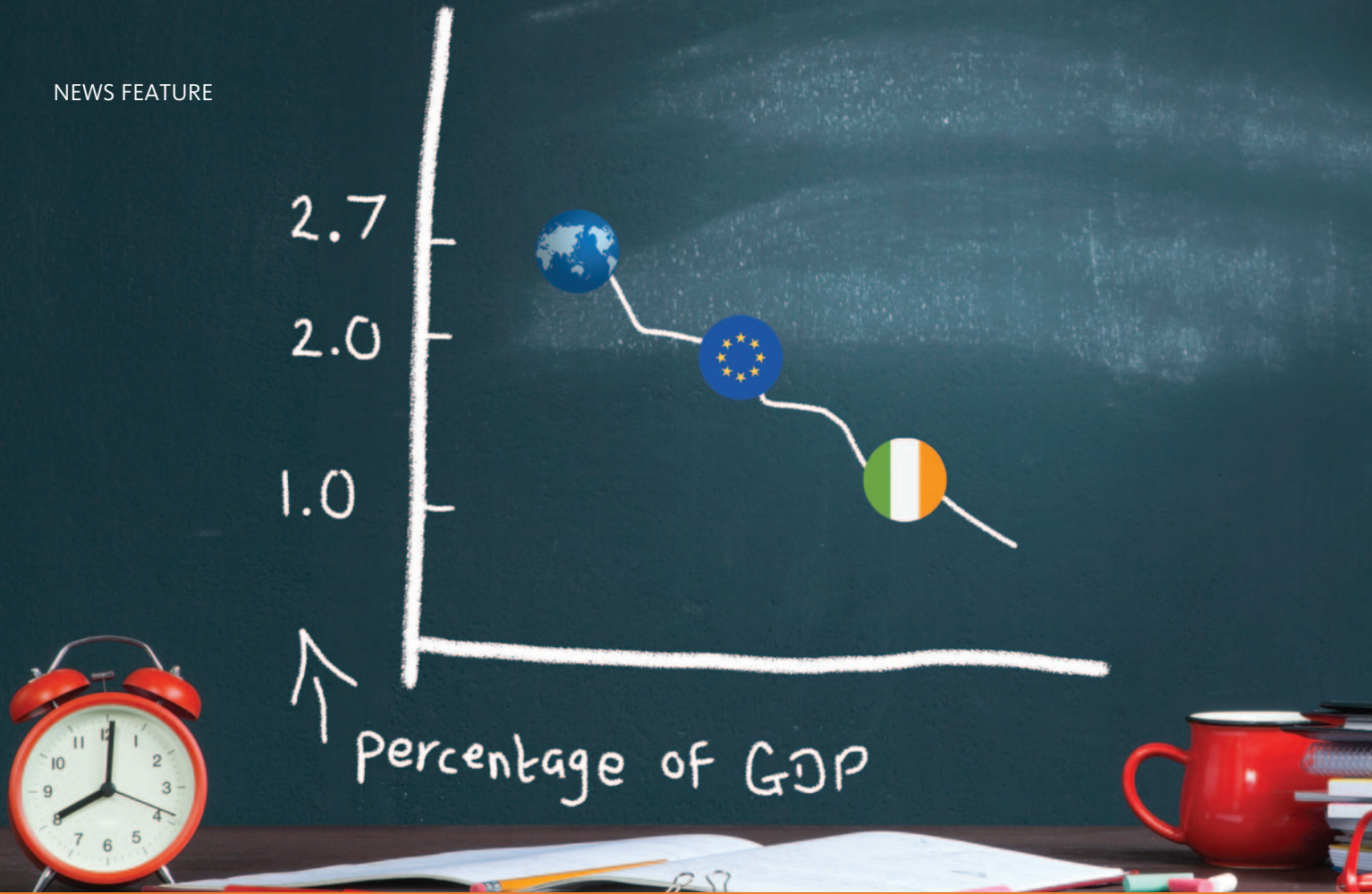
on Senior Cycle change.

- That the ASTI demand that any implementation plan for Senior Cycle curriculum change address the need to reduce teacher workload, provide adequate professional time, reduce class size, invest in school facilities, and protect the working conditions of teachers.

Policy adopted by ASTI Convention 2023

- That the ASTI demand, that for all future Leaving Certificate syllabi (specifications), the Department of Education, the NCCA and SEC publish the full range of syllabus documentation concurrently and not less than 12 months prior to implementation of the syllabus. The syllabus documentation to include: a detailed syllabus which embeds depth of treatment and comprehensive teacher guidelines into the syllabus, sample examination papers, sample marking schemes, rationale and research-based evidence that underpin the changes to/for introduction of syllabi.
- That a committee be formed to develop a set of positive proposals for Senior Cycle reform that the ASTI can promote as an alternative to the Minister's proposals.
- That the ASTI vehemently oppose the proposal to hold English and Irish Leaving Certificate Paper 1 at the end of fifth year.
- That the ASTI refuse to co-operate with the proposal to move Paper 1 in English and Gaeilge to fifth year.
- That the ASTI oppose any attempt for students to sit a Leaving Certificate exam in fifth year.
- That the ASTI demand that the State Examinations Commission not schedule the oral and practical examinations during the Easter holidays.
- That the ASTI demand that the Easter and mid-term breaks and weekends are not used for the sitting of State Examinations.
- That the ASTI insist that the supervision and correction of all terminal State examinations continue to be the remit of the State Examinations Commission and that appointment for such work remain on a voluntary and contractual basis.

Keep up with the ASTI's Senior Cycle campaign at www.asti.ie



BOTTOM OF THE LEAGUE AGAIN

Once again Ireland comes last in the OECD's Education at a Glance report for investment in second-level education, despite the proven benefits that such investment brings.

Ireland maintains its ignominious position as last out of 36 countries in the OECD for investment in education as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), as outlined in the organisation's latest Education at a Glance report. Despite holding this position for many years, the Government has not acted to get Ireland off the bottom of this list. The report is based on data from 2020.

In 2020, Ireland invested 1% of GDP in second-level education compared to the OECD average of 2% and EU average of 1.9%. The next lowest to Ireland is Canada, which spends 1.3%. Our nearest neighbours in the UK spend 2.4% and other nearby countries maintain levels much higher than Ireland's, such as France at 2.6%, Norway at 2.5%, and the Netherlands at 2.4%.

Expenditure per second-level student was \$11,379 in Ireland compared to an OECD average of \$11,942 and EU average of \$11,696. In comparable EU countries, the investment per second-level student was \$17,478 in Austria, \$16,576 in Belgium and \$11,358 in Portugal.

In 2020, total expenditure on primary to tertiary education in Ireland was 3.2% of GDP, much lower than the OECD average of 5.1% and EU average of 4.5%. Germany spends 4.6% of GDP on primary to tertiary education, while Italy spends 4.2%, and Spain 5%.

Investment in young people pays off

The OECD highlights that education is an investment rather than simply a cost to the State. The report emphasises the high returns of Government investment in education for individuals and societies: "Education is an asset not only because of its intrinsic value, but also because it provides individuals with skills and acts as a signal of such skills. As a result, investments in education yield high returns later in life".

Unfortunately, the Government did not take the opportunity to rectify the problems in our education system in Budget 2024. The ASTI had called on the Government to address the issues of large class sizes, insufficient staffing, inadequate classrooms and buildings, and school guidance/counselling services, among others, and to close the investment gap between Ireland and other OECD countries. ASTI President Geraldine O'Brien said: "Modern curricula require that significant practical, collaborative, and experiential work takes place in the classroom. This is not sustainable in overcrowded classes. Teachers are simply not able to give every student the attention they require". Geraldine also said: "People who complete second-level education and beyond do better, not only in terms of job opportunities and earnings, but on a range of indicators including digital literacy and civic engagement. This benefits all of society".



School completion

Ireland has a higher level of students in secondary education than many other countries in the OECD, with 94% of 15-19 year olds enrolled in education, compared to the OECD average of 84%. In Ireland, second-level student instruction time, i.e., the amount of time students spend being taught by their classroom teachers, is also higher than OECD and EU averages at 918 hours per year (the OECD average is 916, and the EU average is 876). The rate of 18-24 year olds not in employment, education or training (NEET) is lower in Ireland than in other countries, with a rate of 9.5% for males and 9.1% for females, while the OECD average is 14% for males and 15.5% for females.

Teacher shortages and conditions

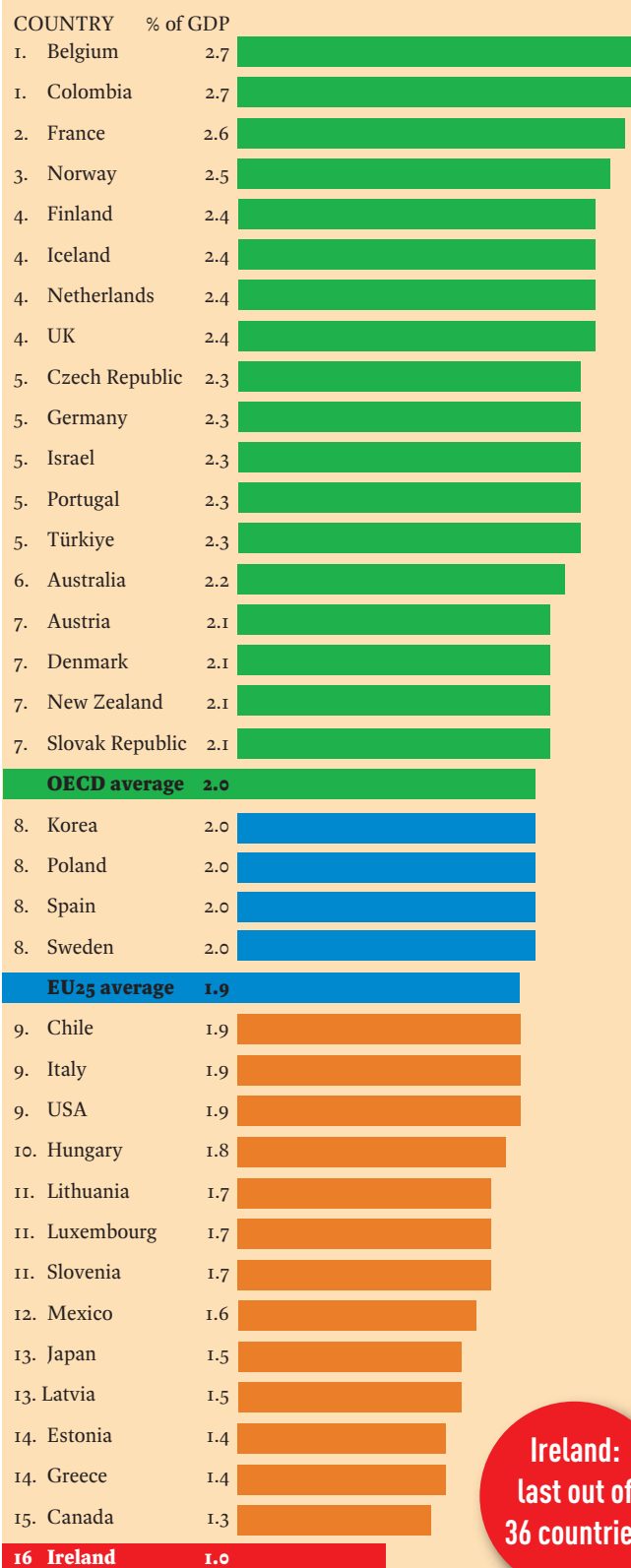
Ireland is also below both the EU and OECD country averages for new teachers' pay. For second-level teachers with language skills, there are more generous salaries on offer in other EU countries. Salaries start at \$77,905 in Germany, \$49,646 in Austria and \$49,905 in Spain.

The report states that competitive salaries are crucial to retaining teachers and attracting more individuals to the profession. In this regard, the ASTI notes that well-established destinations for Irish teacher graduates offer significantly higher starting salaries. In 2020, Ireland offered \$36,281 as the starting point on the scale for new teachers, while other English-speaking territories paid their teachers more. Canada gave teachers \$5,876 more than Ireland per annum (16% higher), while in Australia there was \$11,709 (32%) more on offer. Ireland lags behind both countries at the top end of the pay scale too, with Australia giving experienced teachers \$4,763 more per year and Canada paying \$1,894 more. Disparities like these make a big difference over the course of a career and may look attractive to Irish teachers.

Good teachers are sought worldwide, and Irish teachers are among the world's best. If Ireland wants to keep them in the country, then it is time the Government started investing adequately in the education system so that it is a fulfilling and rewarding place for teachers to work and students to learn.

OECD, EDUCATION AT A GLANCE

Total expenditure on second-level education
as a percentage of GDP 2020.



**Ireland:
last out of
36 countries**

ASSESSING TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

A new UNESCO report, launched recently in Dublin, examines the potential, and challenges, of technology in education.



The 2023 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report *Technology in Education: A tool on whose terms?* states that some education technology can improve some types of learning in some contexts. It can greatly increase access to resources and can fill quality gaps, increase practice time, personalise instruction, and help to engage learners. However, it can also be detrimental if used excessively. The report also highlights the importance of focusing on learning outcomes rather than digital inputs, and emphasises that technology does not need to be advanced to be effective. In China, delivering recorded high-quality lessons to 100 million rural students improved education outcomes by 32%.

The GEM Report was launched in Ireland in September at an event organised by the Irish Forum for Global Education.

The GEM report examines education challenges for which appropriate use of technology can offer solutions, while recognising that many solutions proposed may also be detrimental.

The report also explores system-wide conditions (access to technology, governance, regulation, and teacher preparation) that need to be met for any technology in education to reach its full potential.

Evidence

The report found that good, impartial evidence on education technology is rare, in part because education technology is evolving faster than we can evaluate it. Much of the evidence we do have is generated by those selling the technology.

Equity

Although technology offers an education lifeline for millions, such as

The report found that good, impartial evidence on education technology is rare, in part because education technology is evolving faster than we can evaluate it. Much of the evidence we do have is generated by those selling the technology.

those with disabilities or in very rural areas, it excludes many more. Context is important when considering education technology. For example, online learning reached over one billion students during the Covid-19 pandemic, but it failed to reach 32% of students worldwide, including 72% of the poorest students.

Long-term costs

The report found that technology is often bought to fill a gap, without thought for long-term costs to budgets, children's well-being, or the planet. Money is not always well spent on education technology. Around two-thirds of education software licences were unused in the United States.

Children's data are being exposed, yet only 16% of countries explicitly guarantee data privacy in education by law. One analysis found that 89%



Pictured at the launch of the 2023 GEM Report were (from left): Aidan Clifford (Chairperson, Irish Forum for Global Education), Monica Kassouf (Concern), Frank McManus (Irish Aid), Moira Leydon (ASTI), Manos Antoninis (Director, GEM Report UNESCO), and John O'Brien (Retired Teachers Association of Ireland).

of 163 education technology products recommended during the pandemic could survey children.

Decision-making compass for policy makers

The 2023 GEM Report provides a four-point compass for policymakers to use when deciding how to ensure that technology is used on their terms in education.

1. Is this use of education technology appropriate for the national and local contexts? Education technology should strengthen education systems and align with learning objectives.
2. Is this use of education technology equitable? Although technology use can enable access to the curriculum for some students and accelerate some learning outcomes, digitalisation of education poses a risk of benefiting already privileged learners and further marginalising others, thus increasing learning inequality.
3. Is this use of education technology scalable? There is an overwhelming array of technological products and platforms in education, and decisions are often made about them without sufficient evidence of their benefits or their costs.
4. Does this use of technology support sustainable education futures? Digital technology should not be seen as a short-term project. It should be leveraged to yield benefits on a sustainable basis and not be led by narrow economic concerns and vested interests.

To read the full report, see <https://gem-report-2023.unesco.org/>
For more about the Irish Forum for Global Education see <https://globaleducation.ie/>



Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
Trinity College Dublin

Ollscoil Átha Cliath | The University of Dublin

RECRUITMENT

An M.Oid. San Oideachas Lán-Ghaeilge agus Gaeltachta

Más maith leat cur le do shaineolas ar an oideachas trí mheán na Gaeilge, cuir iarratas isteach ar an M.Oid. san Oideachas Lán-Ghaeilge agus Gaeltachta

Tugann an cúrsa seo an deis do rannpháirtithe ardchaighdeán feabhais a bhaint amach ina gcleachtais oideachais agus ina n-inniúlacht teanga. Tá an cúrsa M.Oid. nua seo i gColáiste na Tríonóide á mhaoiniú ag An Roinn Oideachais, rud a fhágann nach mbíonn ach €650 in aghaidh na bliana le n-íoc ag rannpháirtithe an chúrsa.

Struchtúr

Cúrsa solúbtha páirt-aimseartha é an M.Oid. agus dearadh an sceideal le dul in oiriúint do mhúinteoirí atá ag obair go lán-aimseartha. Beidh idir léachtaí ar líne (40%) agus ar an láthair (60%) i gceist, sna tráthnóintí, ar an Satharn agus le linn laethanta saoire scoile.

Na Modúil

Bliain 1

- An tumoideachas agus an dátheangachas
- An dea-chleachtas i suíomhanna Gaeltachta agus lán-Ghaeilge
- An teagasc agus an fhoghlaim i suíomhanna scoile lán-Ghaeilge agus Gaeltachta
- An cleachtas pleanála agus measúnaithe
- An cheannasaíocht agus an bhainistíocht
- Múinteoirí lán-Ghaeilge agus Gaeltachta mar thaighdeoirí

Bliain 2

- Inniúlacht teanga sa Ghaeilge
- An tráchtas

Riachtanais iontrála faoi leith

Ní mór cáilíocht mar mhúinteoir bunscóile nó iarbhunscóile a bheith ag iarrrthóirí agus inniúlacht sa Ghaeilge ag leibhéal B1 ar a laghad ar an bhFráma Tagartha Comónta Eorpach do Theangacha.

Tuilleadh Eolais

Chun níos mó eolais a fháil ar an gcúrsa nó chun iarratas a chur isteach, téigh chuig: <https://www.tcd.ie/education/courses/postgraduate/m-oid-san-oideachas-lan-ghaeilge-agus-gaeltachta/>

REDEPLOYMENT

The Department of Education operates a number of teacher redeployment schemes.

The expansion of the redeployment schemes run by the Department of Education has long been an aim for the ASTI. However, there is great resistance to any suggestion that redeployment should be significantly expanded. This resistance comes chiefly from the management bodies, who believe that any redeployment removes their rights, as employers, to decide who to employ and who not to employ.

In the meantime, there are three redeployment schemes currently in operation and run by the Department of Education:

- redeployment scheme for teachers surplus to requirements (other than in situations of school closure),
- redeployment in the case of school closure, and,
- voluntary redeployment.

The redeployment scheme for teachers surplus to requirements (other than in the case of school closure)

The redeployment scheme for teachers surplus to requirements (other than in cases of school closure) came about as part of the Croke Park Agreement in 2010 and was accepted by ASTI members in January 2011. Under this scheme, a school or an ETB that is in surplus (i.e., has more teachers than its allocation allows) must notify the Department of this fact. After the Department has confirmed that the school is, indeed, in surplus, they will inform the school of how many teachers are to be redeployed. In the first instance the school must seek volunteers. However, any teacher volunteering for redeployment must be given sanction to apply by the Board of Management. Meanwhile, the school must identify teacher(s) for compulsory redeployment as volunteers have the right to decline an offer. In order to identify teachers for compulsory redeployment, the school is required to take certain steps:

- the school must have a seniority list in place and, following a curricular audit, must work its way up this seniority list asking the question: 'Can the school function without the teacher in question?' – for example, if the bottom teacher on the list is the school's only teacher of art and the school intends to continue timetabling art, the school cannot nominate this teacher for redeployment,
- the school works its way up the seniority list until it has identified the requisite number of teachers for redeployment,
- all permanent teachers (including holders of CIDs) are eligible for redeployment other than principals and deputy principals – this includes part-time teachers and teachers on approved leave from the school, and
- when the school has identified the required number of teachers to be redeployed, the teacher(s) must be so informed, and also informed of their right to appeal this decision to the Directors of Redeployment.

A teacher who is redeployed brings with them any post of responsibility that they may hold. This post then becomes part of the allocation of posts in their new school. The teacher must be redeployed within 50 kilometres of either their school or a home address supplied by them, and which address is used is at the discretion of the teacher.



A redeployed teacher carries their seniority with them on redeployment, with the exception of a teacher being redeployed from a voluntary secondary school to another voluntary secondary school.

Under certain, very limited, conditions, a teacher may apply to have their redeployment reviewed within one year of the redeployment taking place. If a teacher is successful in this review, they will be redeployed to another school.

Redeployment in the case of school closures

The scheme for redeployment in the case of a school closure differs from the above scheme in only one particular (a teacher cannot be redeployed into a part-time position); it is exactly the same as the previous scheme in every other respect.

Voluntary redeployment

In addition to the two schemes outlined above, a pilot voluntary scheme has been operating since 2013. Under this scheme, the Allocations Section of the Department of Education identifies a number of counties each year and teachers in these counties may put their names forward for consideration for redeployment, even if their school is not in surplus. Once again, the Board of Management must approve these applications. However, unlike under the compulsory schemes, these teachers will be replaced and it is up to the school to identify the subject(s) that they wish the new teacher to have.

While there were significant numbers of teachers redeployed in the early years of the scheme, the numbers of compulsory redeployments have dropped significantly in recent times. For the past few years, the number of teachers compulsorily redeployed (other than in the case of school closure) has been in single digits for the whole country.

The ASTI, in conjunction with our sister union the TUI, continues to pursue the objective of attaining a permanent voluntary redeployment scheme for the whole country.



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 9th, 2024

www.asti.ie

www.twitter.com/astionion

www.facebook.com/astiteachers



ASTI CELEBRATES OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS

Three more teachers were recently honoured by the ASTI for their contribution to education and their support for their students.



Jerome Devitt (centre) received the ASTI Outstanding Teacher Achievement Award from Geraldine O'Brien (then ASTI President Elect), and Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary).

Anita Stackpoole (centre) received the ASTI Outstanding Teacher Achievement Award from Geraldine O'Brien (then ASTI President Elect), and Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary).

The ASTI Achievement Awards acknowledge the outstanding contribution of second-level teachers to their students, schools, communities, and to society. The winners are exceptional people who have often made a big impact as role models and as advocates for their students.

Jerome Devitt and Anita Stackpoole both received Outstanding Teacher Achievement Awards at the ASTI awards ceremony in May. Other ASTI award winners were profiled in the September edition of *ASTIR*, and more will be profiled in the next issue.

Jerome Devitt

Jerome Devitt, a teacher of Politics and Society, History and English at The King's Hospital School in Palmerstown, Dublin, was recognised for his work developing a wide range of resources for Leaving Cert Politics and Society. A relatively new subject in second-level schools, Jerome wanted to ensure that students and teachers all over the country had access to comprehensive, quality materials at no cost.

A key resource for students is Jerome's *The Pol-Soc Podcast*, which has had tens of thousands of downloads. Jerome has interviewed many thought-provoking voices for the podcast including political hacks, historians, civil society activists and influential decision-makers such as the Children's Ombudsman. Most importantly, students' voices appear in every podcast. The podcast not only offers support and inspiration to students of Politics and Society, it serves as a guide to citizenship, and to human relations, for all of us – students, teachers and anyone concerned with current affairs, democracy and equality – reminding us that we don't exist apart from society, but are part of society.

In addition to his podcast, other resources include the website polso podcast.com, a YouTube channel, a blog, quizzes, writing tips, exam strategy suggestions, and information for teachers. Jerome has also published

two textbooks to assist students and teachers with aspects of the Politics and Society syllabus.

His colleagues report that Jerome is hugely generous with his time when contacted by teachers of Politics and Society for advice.

Jerome was presented with his award by the ASTI General Secretary and the then ASTI President Elect at a special reception in the Gresham Hotel.

Anita Stackpoole

Anita Stackpoole, an Art and SPHE teacher at Carrigaline Community School, was recognised for her commitment to supporting LGBTQI+ students and her work in promoting a healthy and positive environment for the entire school community.

In 2016 Anita helped a group of students to establish a Sexuality and Gender Acceptance Group in the school. This allowed LGBTQI+ students to meet up in a safe space and voice their issues and concerns. This led to the school's annual participation in *BelongTo StandUp Awareness Week*, which is spearheaded by Anita.

As an Art teacher, Anita also manages another initiative, *Artist in Residence*, which involves working with a local artist to engage students in the creation of a lasting art installation within the school building. Anita has added colour and diversity to the school environment, and has allowed generations of students to learn new and interesting art-based skillsets while expressing their own unique insights and talents.

In nominating Anita for the Outstanding Teacher Achievement Award, a colleague said: "Anita represents both positivity and acceptance on all levels within the building. She is a teacher and a mentor and for her, teaching is truly a vocation".

Anita was presented with her award by the ASTI General Secretary and the



Florian White (centre) received the ASTI Outstanding Teacher Achievement Award from Geraldine O'Brien (then ASTI President Elect), and Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary).

then ASTI President Elect at a special reception in the Gresham Hotel.

ASTI Centenary Scholarship

The ASTI Centenary Scholarship scheme assists ASTI members in undertaking further studies relating to teaching, education or trade unionism.

Sligo teacher Florian White received a 2023 ASTI Bursary. Florian, a Maths teacher at Sligo Grammar School, is undertaking an MA in Contemporary Innovations in Education at St Angela's College. The aim of the course is to enhance professional knowledge and understanding of the latest advances and innovations in education.

Florian is driven by recent changes to the Irish educational landscape and his own desire to be adaptable, innovative, reflective and consistently analytical as a teacher. He is particularly interested in the impact of curricular change on education, increased focus on innovation in assessment, the use of contemporary pedagogies, the significance of teacher and learner well-being, and the application of new technologies.

Outstanding contributions

The ASTI Achievement Awards recognise the outstanding contribution teachers make to schools, students and society. Branches can nominate members for an ASTI Achievement Award using the forms published on the ASTI website each November. 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 made to schools and education by groups of teachers, and
- the Outstanding Individual Achievement Award recognises the outstanding achievements of individual teachers outside of their professional life.

For more information on ASTI Achievement Awards, see <https://www.asti.ie/member-benefits/awardsgrants/>

Empowering tomorrow's leaders: European Commission launches 'ImagineEU' competition for secondary schools

The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) is a democratic tool designed to encourage active citizenship and engagement within the EU. It empowers European citizens to actively shape EU policies and participate in its democratic processes. Now, it's the students' turn to engage through the 'ImagineEU' competition.

At the core of this innovative educational journey lies the recently launched ECI Toolkit for schools: "EU Democracy in Action – Have Your Say with the European Citizens' Initiative". An interactive resource directed at teachers and designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills that will allow them to become active and engaged EU citizens, the toolkit is available for download in all official EU languages (including Gaeilge) on the ECI website.

How to enter

Students are encouraged to form small groups, where they can brainstorm European-level changes that could enhance the quality of life for all EU citizens. With their vision in mind, they embark on the creative process of producing a short persuasive video to rally support for their cause.

Videos (not exceeding three minutes) should be developed and produced by a group of up to seven students from the same school, working under the supervision of one or two teachers. Once submitted, eligible videos will be uploaded to the competition's webpage, where viewers will be encouraged to vote for their favourites.

After the public vote is completed, the top videos will be judged by the competition jury, and the winning three entries will be announced by February 20, 2024.

The competition is open to all secondary school students within the EU who are in their final two years of education. The top three teams, along with their teachers, will travel to Brussels, where they will meet representatives of the European institutions dealing with the ECI and learn more about the role of the different EU institutions and EU history.

The closing date for entries is December 13, 2023. Full competition rules and application details are available on https://citizens-initiative.europa.eu/schools/video-competition_en.

Learn more about the ECI at https://citizens-initiative.europa.eu/_en.



Empower Europe's next changemakers



ImagineEU competition



THE ASTI PENSIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

The ASTI Pensions Sub-Committee has a vital role in raising issues around teachers' pensions.



A recent ASTI Pensions Sub-Committee meeting. Seated (from left): Breda Lynch (ASTI Industrial Relations Officer), Donal Cremin (ASTI Vice President), Pauline Nagle, Ger O'Donoghue, and Daniel Howard. On screen (from left): Desmond O'Toole and Padraic McWeeney.

The ASTI Pensions Sub-Committee is responsible for advising Standing Committee about matters relating to teachers' pensions. The Sub-Committee is elected biennially at ASTI Convention and its current members are:

- Daniel Howard,
- Padraic McWeeney,
- Noelle Moran,
- Pauline Nagle,
- Ger O'Donoghue,
- Geraldine O'Brien (ASTI President), and
- Donal Cremin (ASTI Vice President).

Breda Lynch, Industrial Relations Officer, provides professional support to the committee. The current committee was elected at Convention 2023 and includes ASTI members at a variety of points in their careers. The committee meets four to five times a year.

Pay and pension parity

The Pensions Sub-Committee continues to support efforts to ensure that the principle of pay and pension parity is respected in national pay agreements. Pay and pension parity means that any salary increases paid to serving teachers are applied *pro rata* to the pensions of retired teachers.

Motions from Convention

Motions relating to pensions are often passed at ASTI Convention and, where appropriate, such motions may be referred to the Pensions Sub-Committee. For example, ASTI Convention 2022 adopted a resolution for the commissioning of a report into the relative values and terms of the different superannuation arrangements and schemes that currently apply to serving teachers. The Sub-Committee has liaised with an external consulting firm in the drafting of the scoping document for this report.

Gender issues/National Women's Council of Ireland

The Pensions Sub-Committee remains very conscious of the existence of gender-specific implications for pensions in professions that have a very large proportion

of women employed within them, such as teaching.

Following previous discussions with representatives of the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC) on this issue, the Pensions Sub-Committee considered how the union might commission research that would provide evidence of the specific role that gender inequality plays in determining teachers' pensions.

The Pensions Sub-Committee has since been working with the ASTI Equality Committee to look more broadly at the role that gender inequality plays in determining both teachers' pensions and their pay.

Working with the wider trade union movement

The Pensions Sub-Committee engages with other trade unions on issues regarding pensions. Ger O'Donoghue, current member of the Sub-Committee, also serves on the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Retired Workers Committee, and provides regular reports to the Pensions Sub-Committee on its work.

The Pensions Sub-Committee also recently welcomed Ethel Buckley, Deputy General Secretary of SIPTU, to speak with members about developments in the public debate on the State Contributory Pension. As a senior official with SIPTU, Ethel led the STOP67 campaign, which persuaded the Government not to proceed with its then plans to increase the age at which workers could qualify for the State Contributory Pension to 67.

Communications

The Sub-Committee supports the ASTI's broader communications with members about pensions and retirement. For example, the Pensions Sub-Committee contributes a presentation on its work to the popular annual programme of nationwide retirement seminars organised by the ASTI. It is also worth noting that the ASTI maintains a pensions and retirement section on its website, which provides detailed and accessible information on teachers' pension schemes. Articles relating to pensions and retirement also appear regularly in *ASTIR*.

For more information on pensions and retirement see <https://www.asti.ie/your-employment/terms-and-conditions/pension-and-retirement/>

MEET YOUR STANDING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES



**John Conneely, Standing Committee Region 4:
Clare, Limerick South, Limerick North, Nenagh**

I got involved in the ASTI because...

Ten years ago I was asked by our outgoing school steward to take on the role. At that time our school had a significant number of teachers who were on CIDs of fewer than 18 hours. I looked for advice from Head Office, and our Standing Committee representative, Peter Quinn, and our Industrial Relations Officer, Desmond O'Toole, did Trojan work. We managed to achieve full CIDs for our members.

The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are...

I believe we need to make teaching a sustainable and attractive profession. In

order to achieve this we need:

- pay increases in line with inflation,
- clear and detailed Leaving Certificate specifications and an educationally sound and balanced Senior Cycle, and
- a review of the posts of responsibility circular and an increase in the number of posts.

Something people may not know about me is...

You may not know that I am involved with the NASA Ames Space Settlement Design contest. In 2022 our school team was the winner out of 3,000 plus entries. We got to present our project at the International Space Development Conference in Washington DC.



**David Murphy, Standing Committee Region 13:
Dublin South 2, Dublin South County**

I got involved in the ASTI because...

I come from a household where my father has been, and is still, very heavily involved in SIPTU, so I strongly believe in trade unionism and joined the ASTI when I started teaching.

As a non-permanent teacher, I felt protected and knew my ASTI colleagues were there to offer me support, advice, and encouragement. Since 2009, I have been very active in the Dublin South 2 Branch and have held many officer positions. It is a relatively small branch with a tremendous spirit. Meetings, which are held every month, provide invaluable support and information for members. I have personally benefited from the wise advice of many branch stalwarts, especially our outgoing Standing Committee Representative Chris Hind.

The ASTI's biggest priorities right now are...

The ASTI has many challenges now with Senior Cycle change being high on the

list. The recent decision by the Minister not to proceed with teacher assessment is the right decision and must be made permanent policy. The high standards of the Irish education system should not be jeopardised by introducing Senior Cycle change without teacher and student voices being heard.

Cost of living for teachers is also a huge issue and we as a union need to achieve an acceptable pay rise for teachers to match current inflation. Teachers are struggling to get by and hopefully this can be achieved in the next wage deal for members. Schools have become highly intensive places and teachers' workloads are affecting extra-curriculars in schools and teacher well-being. We as a union need to ensure that teacher well-being is protected.

Something people may not know about me is...

I am a qualified referee with Dublin GAA, Dublin Camogie and Dublin LGFA. I worked as a Spanish and Irish teacher for 10 years before becoming a guidance counsellor. I am a Man United and Dublin supporter, and like to attend concerts, especially Coldplay and Damien Dempsey. I also do crossfit and travel in my spare time; my favourite place I visited was Cuba!



**Siobhan O'Donovan, Standing Committee Region 5:
Desmond, Kerry, West Limerick**

I got involved in the ASTI because...

My father was a teacher of Maths and Physics in The De La Salle Secondary School in Skibbereen for over 40 years.

As soon as I got my first job he advised me to join the ASTI. I have taught in The Patrician Academy in Mallow for 27 years now and the ASTI has been and continues to be very strong in my school. I believe in trade unionism and have found the collegiality and security offered by being an active member of the union at school, branch and committee level very affirming over the years.

The ASTI's biggest priorities now are...

The ongoing issue of equal pay for equal work is of course a core campaign of the ASTI and one that must remain top of the agenda until the inequality that exists in our staff rooms in terms of pay is brought to a conclusion.

Another issue of great concern is the increasing workload on teachers. Initiative overload involving often pointless work is contributing to many of our colleagues leaving the profession. Finally, and perhaps most urgent, is Senior Cycle change. The traditional Leaving Certificate treats every student equally, it has integrity, and is respected the world over. It is vital that teachers and teacher unions are central to discussions on proposed changes to the Senior Cycle and Leaving Cert. As teachers present in the classroom every day, we know what will and what won't work in our schools and our communities. Members must be ready to stand firm against any unsound changes.

What you may not know about me...

Apart from my husband Ray and my two kids, Thomas (20) and Rachel (17), the loves of my life are my two beautiful dogs, Caesar and Sansa. Caesar is a cross between an Alaskan Malamute and a Collie, so he is a big dog, while Sansa is a Poochon, a cross between a Poodle and a Bichon. If I am not at home there is a good chance you will find me "up the road" with my dogs.

ASTI ANNUAL CONVENTION 2024

ASTI Annual Convention is an opportunity for members to have their say and vote on union policy.



Every Easter, approximately 500 ASTI members attend Annual Convention to discuss and vote on the Association's policies for the year ahead. This year, Annual Convention will take place in the Clayton Whites Hotel, Wexford, from April 2-4, 2024.

Where can I get information about Convention?

The ASTI website – www.asti.ie – is where you will find all of the information you need about Convention 2024. Go to the Events section of the website, where you will find the Convention 2024 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 and Standing Committee also attend Convention as delegates.

If you wish to attend Convention 2024 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 on 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 2024 is being held in the Clayton Whites Hotel, Wexford. Accommodation for delegates to Convention 2024 will be available at the Clayton Whites Hotel. Delegates book their own accommodation. Please be advised that Clayton Whites Hotel's Convention accommodation is

limited and is allocated on a first come, first served basis.

There are several other accommodation options in Wexford, and details of other hotels and guesthouses in the surrounding area are available on 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 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 such as X (formerly known as 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.

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY ASTI MEMBERSHIP IF I STOP TEACHING OR GO PART-TIME?

Department-paid teachers who teach full time may wonder what categories of membership are available to them if their circumstances change.

What happens to my ASTI membership if I...?

Take unpaid leave?

If you are on paid leave your ASTI membership will continue to be deducted from your salary as normal. However, teachers who were in receipt of incremental salary and who are on approved, unpaid leave of absence under the terms approved by the Department of Education are eligible for 'member on leave' membership of the ASTI.

As a 'member on leave', you will have the same rights and privileges as a full member of the ASTI except that you cannot act as a Branch Officer, as a representative on the Central Executive Council or as a member of Standing Committee, and you will not be eligible to benefit from ASTI Sickness Benefit while on leave. However, entitlement to benefit from this fund recommences without penalty on resumption of full membership. Apply using the Change of Membership form, which can be downloaded at the link below.

Teach part-time?

Department-paid members on less than full teachers' hours pay 0.76% of their pro-rata salary. Therefore, if you go from teaching full-time to part-time, your membership fee may be adjusted to reflect the change in your salary. You will have all of the same rights and privileges as a full member.

Retire?

If you retire from teaching, you can become an Emeritus member of the ASTI. Emeritus members have the same rights and privileges as an ASTI member, except: the right to act as a Branch Officer, as a member of Standing Committee or as a representative on the Central Executive Council, to vote on any ballot on industrial action, to be a candidate in any election for Trusteeship of the Association, or to benefit under the Sickness Benefit or Benevolent Fund Schemes. Contact Head Office to apply for Emeritus membership.

How do I change my ASTI membership category?

To inform the ASTI of your change of membership category, you can download a Change of Membership form from <https://www.asti.ie/join/> and return it to ASTI Head Office.



To ask any questions or to discuss your specific situation, contact ASTI Head Office on 01-6040160, or via email at info@asti.ie

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In return, we are looking for the opportunity for European teachers to occasionally visit your school.

Contact Europass on ireland@europassnetwork.eu or Patrick O'Hare at 0874155822 to find out more.

Join us – we are recruiting!



My dear friends,

By now you have all settled back into the routine of school life, and we in the RSTA wish you a very happy and fulfilling year. You are all aware of the fantastic work the ASTI does for you and for all its members. But do you ever think what will happen when you are no longer teaching? Who will look out for your interests then? Well, that is where the RSTA comes in. We work to protect and defend the pensions of retired secondary teachers. We work closely with the Retired Workers' Committee of Congress, and the

RSTA was a founder member of the Alliance of Retired Public Servants, formed during the dark days of FEMPI to defend public service pensions. This has become a formidable group of some 150,000 members. There is strength in numbers but we always need more. If you are retiring at the end of this year or you know of any recently retired colleagues, please spread the word. Join the RSTA and help us defend your pension.



Susie Hall (RSTA President).

Susie Hall
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.

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___

A chance to sing

The People's College Choir is looking for male voices to join. The Choir is a mixed-voice choir of 45 members from Dublin and neighbouring counties, and includes trade union and community activists. This year marks the Choir's 30th anniversary, and it's looking for new members to share in the joy of singing together in harmony. As there is a waiting list for female voices to join the choir, they are currently only recruiting male voices.

The choir was founded in 1993 by the then President of the People's College, Dr Sheila Conroy, the first ever female member of the ITGWU Executive. The College itself was established in 1948 to promote worker and cultural education, and the choir is part of that wider programme.

The Choir sings an extensive range of songs in a non-competitive atmosphere; some old, some new, some folk, traditional Irish airs and modern popular songs, as well as songs of social progress – some of which have been performed at trade union events and even in Áras an Uachtaráin. Rehearsals take place each Tuesday evening in Club na Múinteoirí (the 'Teachers' Club', Parnell Square), from 8.30pm until 10.00pm. The choral year runs from September until May of the following year.

Contact the musical director, Paul Walsh, at peoplescollegechoir@gmail.com.

Rewrite/Calor Ireland Climate Education Programme

Rewrite has partnered with Calor Ireland to sponsor the rollout of the Rewrite Climate Education Programme in schools.

At Drimnagh Castle Secondary School in Dublin, 40 Transition Year students enrolled in the Rewrite 11-week programme.

Topics covered include the carbon cycle, climate change, climate action and energy, while also examining the impact of climate change on industries such as fashion, forestry, food, waste, and more.

Fergal Kelleher, a teacher at the school, said the programme perfectly complemented the climate and environmental modules and projects that the students were engaged in, providing a better understanding of and grounding in the issues involved.

Rewrite, which is the education arm of global decarbonisation firm CoolPlanet, launched in April 2021, and has already made a significant impact in climate education, with nearly 160 post-primary schools and more than 13,000 students enrolled.

The programme delves into the fundamentals of climate science while exploring various aspects of climate change affecting our daily lives. It combines engaging video content, animations, and quizzes to create an interactive and enjoyable learning experience.

The Rewrite programme is primarily designed for Transition Year students, but its adaptability and impact have led to its integration into Science and Geography modules, as well as Junior Cycle CSPE.

For more information, visit <https://www.rewrite.ie/>

LGBTQI+ inclusive staffroom poster

Posters have been sent to all schools with ASTI members to provide advice to members on how to make their staffroom a safe and friendly place for colleagues who may be gay, bisexual or transgender.

It also aims to provide support for those LGBTQI+ teachers, and to let them know that their union will support them.

The ASTI has recently established an LGBTQI+ group for ASTI members, which meets regularly and any LGBTQI+ member is welcome to join. The group can be contacted at lgbtqi@asti.ie or by ringing the ASTI on 01-604 0160. These contact details are on the poster.

The poster is two-sided, with one side in English and the other as Gaeilge. Two copies have been sent to each school, giving you the opportunity to display it in both languages. We are asking schools to display the poster as soon as you receive it.



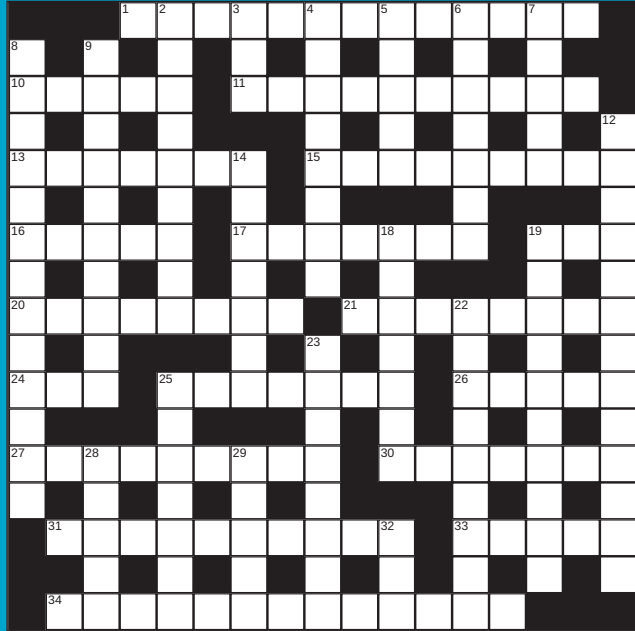


Sponsored by Cornmarket

ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 2305

The winner will receive €250 in One4All vouchers.

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



Name

School

Address

ASTI Branch

Entries to: ASTIR Crossword No. 2305,
Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, December 8, 2023.

ACROSS

1. Foul recipe from South East Asia, or so we hear (7,6)
10. Normandy city on the Seine (5)
11. Apiculture (10)
13. Frosty's headgear in 17 across country. (7)
15. Could be college, district or register (9)
16. Wear away with zero decrease (5)
17. Funny phrases helped Hillary to the top (7)
19. Top man in company (1.1.1)
20. ... Jane, American sharpshooter (8)
21. Hogwash, balderdash, baloney (8)
24. External listening device (3)
25. Space for sleeping device? (7)
26. Learn about Kidney (5)
27. Do this to remove program (9)
30. Develops a secret.(7)
31. Person without ability to move lower half of body (10)
33. Micheal O'Neill, all by himself (5)
34. Sounds like Northern European crosses this to win (9,4)

DOWN

2. Carmen had moisturising lotion (9)
3. Part of Calambac turned up for a ride home (3)
4. First name of miser Scrooge (8)
5. Three, strangely, in that place (5)
6. An impelling movement or force (7)
7. ... Blackman, Bond girl Pussy Galore (7)
8. Sounds like angry East European lodged this to account (7,6)
9. US currency lodged in foreign bank (10)
12. Eastern European cleaning machine, we hear (13)
14. Theory put forward where Post Office located (7)
18. Oddly compile diatribe (7)
19. Blimey! Zero land for royal ceremony (10)
22. Hard shiny substance made by heating clay (9)
23. Vandal, yob, troublemaker (8)
25. Aromatic long-grain rice (7)
28. Nationality of Saddam Hussein (5)
29. Deity on Bhopal/Lahore border (5)
32. Lowest point of ridge between two peaks (3)

Solutions to ASTIR Crossword No. 2304

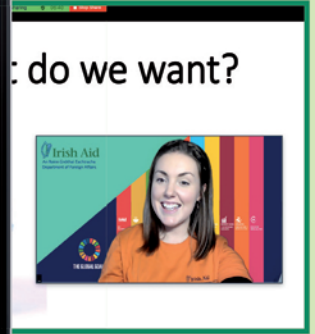
ACROSS	DOWN
1. Redemption Day	2. Easter egg
10. Reels	3. Ebb
11. Balustrade	4. Polymath
13. Eminent	5. Ibsen
15. Manhandle	6. Normans
16. Hedge	7. Added
17. Isthmus	8. Greenhouse gas
19. Eel	9. Bewildered
20. Uprights	12. Yellowbellies
21. Chat show	14. Thistle
24. Eid	18. Mahjong
25. Oregano	19. Exhausting
26. Route	22. Tarantula
27. Autograph	23. Cashmere
30. Genital	25. Organic
31. Rainforest	28. Trail
33. Ulnae	29. Alone
34. Black-eyed Peas	32. Top

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the winner of Crossword No. 2304: **Andreana Barry**, Our Lady's College, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth. Drogheda Sean Higgins Branch.

Did you miss?

- ASTI Awards 22
- Meet your Standing Committee Reps 25



Both Virtual and In-Person Available



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