

## **Re: TUI Dispute Action.**

Dear School Steward,

The Teachers Union of Ireland has announced one day of strike action regarding the on-going pay inequality issue on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2020. ASTI members will not be on strike on that date. This is because the ASTI began its campaign for pay parity much earlier and with more vigour and focus than any other public sector union, several years ago. We are further advanced in achieving an end to this shocking stain that has afflicted the teaching profession.

### **ASTI's Track Record**

ASTI's track record in the campaign for pay parity is second to none. To date, the ASTI is the only public service union that has taken strike action in relation to unequal pay (in late 2016). While leading the way, ASTI members paid a huge price in terms of the penalties imposed under FEMPI legislation and continue to suffer due to lost and delayed increments. Other unions have a lot of catching up to do.

ASTI agitation has delivered some improvement to new entrants' pay, but full pay equality remains to be achieved.

The provisions in the Haddington Road Agreement, largely on foot of ASTI agitation were the first steps to rebalance the disparity.

Another measure that ASTI action delivered was the Honours Degree Allowance being returned as part of the salary scale of lesser paid teachers in 2016.

The new entrants' salary measure agreed in September 2018 was another advance, again largely as a result of ASTI action and agitation.

The ASTI is vigorously and strategically pursuing the restoration of the H. Dip/PME Allowance to those who entered teaching since 5th December 2011 at the Teachers Conciliation Council. A negative response to this claim was received late last year. ASTI, together with colleague teacher unions and in accordance with normal procedure, has moved the claim into the Arbitration process. We will continue to pursue the matter aggressively.

The ASTI is also currently engaging in a grassroots campaign on unequal pay and other issues in the run up to Election 2020 and we would ask that every member would place this issue front and centre in their discussions with politicians on their doorstep.

### **ASTI's strategy in the campaign for pay parity**

The Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA) concludes at the end of 2020. Negotiations to put a successor agreement in place are imminent. Conversations between the Government and the Public Services Committee of ICTU took place regarding the arrangements for those negotiations throughout 2019. There is some expectation that there will be sectoral negotiations in the lead up to the overall round of pay talks in the aftermath of the General Election. In the event that the

forthcoming negotiations fail to deliver a final resolution of the pay inequality issue, ASTI will undoubtedly take whatever action is necessary, including balloting our members on industrial action.

In April 2019 the following statement was issued by the parties to the Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA).

*“On the issue of new entrant salary scales, certain unions have indicated that they have outstanding issues of concern following the agreement brokered in September 2018. The management side understand that these outstanding matters will be given full consideration either by (i) any pay review mechanism agreed by the parties or (ii) in the context of the next round of pay talks. It is recognised that the positions of each of the parties concerned on these matters must be given due regard in endeavouring to reach a mutually agreed resolution.”*

The above statement, coupled with the outline discussions that have commenced with a view to putting in place a successor agreement to the Public Services Stability Agreement have formed the basis of ASTI strategy in recent months.

ASTI Convention 2019 adopted the following motion:

*“That the ASTI work with the Public Services Committee of ICTU to ensure that in the next pay negotiations the government commit to the principle of equal pay for equal work and a timetable for its realisation.”*

It is clear that pay equality must be fully achieved. ASTI will enter talks with pay inequality as its top priority and will be seeking full resolution of the issue. The ASTI is actively seeking, within ICTU, a review of the PSSA leading to the issue being fully addressed.

**What advice will ASTI provide for members during the TUI strike day on February 4<sup>th</sup>?**

ASTI members will be required to operate the normal trade union protocols for workplaces where there is more than one union during a strike situation and we have already contacted the relevant parties (TUI, Department of Education and Skills and Management Bodies) seeking clarifications and consultation. Arising from this, the ASTI will issue further detailed guidance to members in all our schools in due course but well in advance of the proposed TUI strike day of February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Some general information is set out in the accompanying leaflet.

Best regards,



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Kieran Christie  
General Secretary

20<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

***Please bring this letter and accompanying leaflet to the attention of ASTI members in your school.***