

Public Service Agreement 2010-2014 – Ballot of Members

Convention recommends rejection of proposals

The ASTI is to ballot its members on the Public Service Agreement with a recommendation to members to reject the agreement.

ASTI Annual Convention unanimously adopted the following resolution which was proposed by Standing Committee:

Convention expresses its total and vehement opposition to the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014 whilst recognising that decisions on final salary offers are a reserved function of Central Executive Council under the Rules of Constitution of the ASTI. Convention calls on CEC to recommend the rejection of the Agreement in a ballot of members.

Subsequently, Central Executive Council (CEC) adopted the following motion at its meeting on April 9th:

CEC expresses its total and vehement opposition to the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014. CEC directs that the Agreement be put to a ballot of members with a recommendation to reject.

CEC also appointed a committee to summarise the arguments against the proposed agreement during the debate at Annual Convention. This summary will be sent to members before the ballot. The document is currently being prepared by the committee and will be issued to all members.

A postal ballot of ASTI members will be conducted during May with a closing date of May 20th.

All branches have been requested to hold information meetings at which Standing Committee members can provide full information and answer questions. The President, Joe Moran; President Elect, Jack Keane; and the Vice President, Brendan Broderick will attend meetings as requested and if available.

The full texts of the Agreement and the section on Education are contained on pages 3 - 6.

ASTI postal ballot

Ballot papers will be posted directly to the home addresses of ASTI members according to the current membership database. It is very important that ASTI Head Office has the correct contact address for each member.

You can update your details by downloading the change of membership form on the ASTI website or by emailing updated details along with your membership number to membership@asti.ie.

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Inservice

Members are reminded that attendance at inservice outside of school hours is voluntary.

Options:

At the time of going to press, ASTI, TUI, IFUT, CPSU, INMO, UNITE and TEEU have recommended rejection of the proposals. INTO, PSEU, SIPTU and AHCPs have recommended acceptance. Decisions are pending from the Prison Officers' Association, the Irish Medical Organisation and IMPACT. It is unlikely that the results of all ballots will be available before the end of May.

The ASTI and other unions have made it clear that if members vote against the Agreement, the terms of the Agreement cannot be imposed by a majority vote at the Public Services Committee. It will be a matter for the unions to consider the next steps in the event of rejection. This could involve a continuation of the industrial action campaign or an attempt to remove the unacceptable elements of the Agreement by negotiation/clarification.

Context:

Ireland is currently facing its greatest economic crisis since independence. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions formulated a coherent response to the banking crisis, the fiscal deficit crisis and the global economic crisis. This plan involved a billion Euro job creation initiative, the preservation of wages to prevent a deflationary spiral and an extension of the period within which budgetary deficit would be addressed. In essence, this was shifting the burden of the crisis from working people to those who can pay - the rich and wealthy.

This social solidarity pact wasn't accepted by the political system - either government or opposition. In the Dáil on December 9th, industrial relations were removed from discussions with the trade unions and were decided on the floor of the Dáil. Pay cuts were imposed. Sick leave arrangements were changed. This is the worst possible situation for trade unions. It is right wing nirvana.

From January to March, public service trade unions engaged in work-to-rule type activities. In the wider public service, action in the Passport Office received most publicity. The next stage was escalation of the action and the teacher unions were committed to four half-day strikes as agreed at our CEC meeting in December. That is the context in which the talks took place.

Banking Crisis:

Members were justifiably angered by the billions which has been poured into the banks especially Anglo-Irish. However, this money does not count in the calculation of the public sector deficit, which the Irish government has agreed with the EU will be reduced to 3% of GDP by 2014. This will involve cuts of €3 billion in 2011, €3 billion in 2012 and €2 billion in 2013. All the mainstream political parties have agreed with this. The trade union movement has argued that the period for the reduction of the deficit should be extended to 2017 but this has not been supported by the political system. We are now faced with dealing with the consequences of these decisions.

What the proposed Agreement means for teachers:

Pay:

The Proposals state that there will be no pay cuts between 2010-2014. Increments are protected.

In the spring of each year, there will be a review of the legislation giving effect to the pay cuts and pension levy with a view to restoring pay scales and with priority given to those earning €35,000 or less taking account of sustainable savings generated by the implementation of the Agreement.

Pensions:

Pensions in 2010 and 2011 will be calculated on pre-pay cut salaries. This allows members to retire with dignity on a decent pension and it preserves the concept that the pre-pay cut salary is the salary for teachers.

Performance Management:

At a meeting with the Minister for Education and Skills and senior officials of the DES on 1st April, it was confirmed to the ASTI that performance management for teachers will be that outlined in Towards 2016, pages 124/125, published in June 2006 which requires schools to conduct an evaluation based on the DES document circulated to all schools in 2003, *Looking at our Schools - an Aid to Self Evaluation in Second-Level Schools*. Discussions took place in 2007 and 2008 between the teacher unions and the government on this matter but then went into abeyance.

Change Agenda:

There are four elements in the education change agenda:

(i) An additional hour per week. This is not an hour's extra teaching; it was, but we removed it in negotiations. The hour is to be devoted to school planning, continuous professional development, induction, other activities and S&S. It has been agreed under the aegis of LRC facilitation that S&S can only be required if the hour hasn't been used up by all other duties and responsibilities. Standing Committee, when it expressed vehement opposition to this, noted in exasperation that the great majority of our members are already doing far more than an hour a week acting as class tutors, on planning committees, discipline committees, pastoral care work, subject co-ordination, games, etc. Clear and precise guidelines in relation to this hour were sought but were not given at this stage.

(ii) Paragraph 2 requires those in the S&S Scheme to be available for three timetabled periods rather than the current two while still only having to substitute for one period. What this means is that it will be more likely to have to do the one substitution class period per week.

(iii) Paragraph 3 means the implementation of a redeployment scheme which has been provided for anyway whether this agreement existed or not. It will not come into effect until the school year 2011-2012.

(iv) Paragraph 4 provides for a comprehensive review and revision of the teaching contract. We have had endless and detailed discussions at sectoral level on all of these issues. We sought clarifications from the Department of Education and Skills as to what "review and revision" meant. We stated that we couldn't live with an open-ended review which could, for example, impinge on June, July and August. The DES has stated to us that this review of the contract will not involve fundamental change.

Resolutions adopted at Convention 2010

Motion 4 - Posts of Responsibility

That the ASTI seeks the reinstatement of all Posts of Responsibility in schools and the immediate lifting of the moratorium on the filling of posts.

Motion 44 - Special Needs

That the ASTI resists any further reduction in the provision of teachers and resources to students with special needs.

Motion 20 - Conditions of Employment

That the ASTI rejects any worsening of teachers' conditions of employment and strenuously resists any attempt (a) to abolish the Supervision and Substitution Scheme; (b) to require teachers to be present on the school premises for the duration of school opening hours, or (c) to lengthen the school day and/or the school year.

Standing Committee Motion on Public Service Pay Agreement 2010-2014

Convention expresses its total and vehement opposition to the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014 whilst recognising that decisions on final salary offers are a reserved function of CEC under the Rules and Constitution of the ASTI. Convention calls on CEC to recommend the rejection of the Agreement in a ballot of members

Your Future as a Teacher

The ASTI is holding a conference for new/ young teachers on Saturday, May 22nd in Dublin.

The conference will cover your rights and entitlements as a new/ young teacher, coping with challenging behaviour in the classroom, and teachers and technology in the 'smart' age. Members are invited to apply to attend this conference by phoning 01/6040170 or by emailing asti.library@asti.ie on or before Friday, May 14th.

Places will be allocated on a 'first come' basis.



Jack Keane, ASTI President Elect



Brendan Broderick, ASTI Vice President

Election results from Convention 2010

President Elect
Jack Keane

Vice-President
Brendan Broderick

Honorary Treasurer
Ray St John

Trustees
Ger Curtin
Tom Gilligan
Michael Kilbride

Steering Committee
Noel Buckley
Lily Cronin
Susie Hall
Christy Maginn
Maire Ni Chiarra

Rules Committee
Fergal Canton
Pat Deery
Paul McGrath
Sheila Parsons
Mark Walshe

Investment Committee
Dermot Brennan
Patrick Collins
Michael Freeley
Tony Waldron

Pensions Committee
Jane Craig-Elliott
Sean Fallon
Mike Moriarty
Denis O'Boyle
Bernadine O'Sullivan

Business of CEC Committee
Eilis Casey
Caitriona McGrath

A full report of Annual
Convention will appear in
May ASTIR

Motion 33 - Junior Certificate Examination Format

That the ASTI resists any attempt by the Minister for Education and Science to discontinue the present format of the Junior Certificate examination and its independent assessment.

Motion 47 - Junior Certificate Examination Reform

That the ASTI welcome the reform of the Junior Certificate Examination on the basis that the following essential educational aims are achieved in the review:

- (a) an agreed system of independent external assessment is maintained;
- (b) the "overload" in the current curriculum is addressed;
- (c) that adequate resources are made available for more active teaching and learning methodologies.

Motion 50 - Assessment

That the ASTI strongly oppose any efforts to introduce methods of assessment in Certificate examinations that will involve teachers assessing their own students.

Motion 30 - Pupil Teacher Ratio

That the ASTI negotiate with the DES a restoration of the pupil-teacher ratio to 18:1

Motion 31 - Revision of Syllabi

That, in the light of the recent unexpected changes to the Irish Junior Certificate Syllabus, this Convention demands that any future revision of syllabi must be preceded by proper and adequate consultation with the relevant teachers and that implementation of syllabi revisions does not take place before structures, resources and adequate inservice are in place

Motion 16 - Contract of Indefinite Duration

That the ASTI demands that all teaching hours are included for the calculation of a Contract of Indefinite Duration.

Motion 17 - Employment Vacancies

That, in the present economic situation, the ASTI would exhort school managements to employ newly qualified teachers where possible and that where part-time hours exist in a school, the ASTI demands that priority in employment be given to teachers on the live register or to teachers who do not have 22 hour contracts.

Motion 73 - Review of Union's Structures, Rules and Organisation

That the Officers of the Association investigate mechanisms, including the possibility of engaging an independent body, by which a complete review of the union's structures, rules and organisation can be carried out with the object of making the ASTI more effective, totally democratic and essentially member centred; proposals to be put to a Special Convention in September 2011.

Motion 68 - Rule 145 (a)

There shall be three Trustees of the Association. The Trustees shall be members of the Association elected by a simple majority vote by the Annual Convention from among those who have been members for not less than ten years. The Trustees may attend meetings of the CEC as observers. The Trustees may speak at CEC meetings on matters pertaining to their duties but shall not have the right to vote at CEC meetings.

Motion 72 - Rule 151

The Trustees or any one or more of them may be removed from office for conduct injurious to the Association at any time by a resolution of the CEC passed by two thirds of members present and voting.