

Teachers unite to oppose cutbacks

The four teacher unions have declared their total opposition to cuts in the pay of their members.

In a statement to the media the general secretaries and presidents of ASTI, IFUT, INTO and TUI said such cuts are **totally unacceptable and will be resisted**:

"We want to send a crystal clear message to An Taoiseach and his Ministers that we will not accept the scape-goating of our members to pay for a financial crisis which we did not cause."

"We are dismayed that, all of a sudden, the Government seems to have come to the belief that cutting the pay of teachers and other public servants is an easy and readily available option."

"As our economic crisis deepened there was much talk about the need for a national debate about what kind of society we should be building and how it should be paid for. It is almost beyond belief therefore that, without any justification or analysis whatsoever, An Taoiseach should simultaneously refuse to reform our tax system and indicate that he intends to cut public sector pay and social welfare payments."

"Our national crisis can only be resolved by a national consensus and a shared sense of purpose. **Teachers and lecturers have already suffered a severe drop in living standards.** If more pain is necessary, it must be spread fairly and evenly over those who can most afford it. Singling out public servants for special treatment is nothing more than an ill-thought out recipe for social division." ♦

Strategy to fight education cuts

The four teacher unions are working together on a campaign of sustained opposition against further cuts. See page 3

'Education should be exempt from the cuts' - ICTU

In its pre-budget submission to the Government, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions says that education should be exempt from public expenditure cuts.

The ICTU submission recommends that the Government:

- ◆ Does not cut education
 - ◆ Does not cut social welfare rates
 - ◆ Be judicious on cuts in capital expenditure
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ASTI survey on effects of cuts

There still is a better, fairer way

The four teacher unions, the other public sector unions and the private sector unions are supporting the Irish Congress of Trade Unions campaign "There Still is a Better, Fairer Way".

The campaign will include a range of activities between now and the Budget in December, including a mass protest on the afternoon of Friday, November 6th.

According to Congress General Secretary David Begg: "It will be the largest campaign of advocacy that we have ever run and organised. It will be a campaign of sustained opposition, that will be multifaceted and comprise many different elements."

For updates visit the ASTI website www.asti.ie.

Junior Cert optional oral examinations

ASTI policy with regard to the optional Junior Certificate Oral Examinations is as follows:

ASTI members do not award a mark to their own students for the purposes of the State Examinations. This is to ensure that the objectivity and public acceptability of the Examinations is maintained.

ASTI members therefore should not participate in awarding marks in the optional oral Irish examination in the Junior Certificate Examination 2010. The Leaving Certificate oral Irish examination will continue to be conducted by external examiners.

Schools have responded to the education cutbacks by amalgamating subjects across two/ three levels (higher, ordinary and foundation), dropping subjects and dropping or curtailing programmes, according to a survey undertaken by the ASTI in September and October.

As part of the ASTI's campaign against the education cutbacks, Standing Committee regional representatives organised information and consultation meetings all over the country.

A questionnaire circulated at regional meetings was used to identify key trends in schools' responses to the education cuts:

- ◆ Worrying trend of amalgamating subjects across two/ three levels (higher, ordinary and foundation)
- ◆ Systematic drop in subject choice. Subjects such as physics, chemistry and history are being dropped.
- ◆ Some schools have dropped programmes. Many others have restricted the range of options available within programmes
- ◆ Widespread reduction in important Posts of Responsibility

A full report on the survey is available at www.asti.ie (Education Cuts Campaign)

No go-it-alone strategy

At its recent meeting, Standing Committee members reported that the majority of members who attended regional meetings are in favour of a joint campaign by the teacher unions against the cuts and do not wish the ASTI to pursue a go-it-alone strategy. ◆

Parents, teachers, management action

The Post Primary Education Forum, comprising ASTI, TUI, the National Parents' Council Post Primary and the management bodies, made a submission to the key negotiators in the talks on the review of the Programme for Government.

"Young people have only once chance at education, the country may have only one chance at recovery," argues the submission. Read the full text at www.asti.ie. ◆

Irish teachers are value for money

The OECD report *Education at a Glance 2009* has found that Irish second-level teachers deliver value for money. The report uses the indicator "salary cost per student as a percentage of GDP per capita" to rank 28 countries for value for money. Only five of the 28 countries have a lower salary cost per student for second-level teachers as a percentage of GDP per capita.

In terms of funding of education, Ireland performs very badly. At second-level, only one EU country - the Slovak Republic - invested a lower proportion of its GDP per capita on second-level students than Ireland. A full report will appear in the next issue of ASTIR. ◆

Strategy to fight education cuts

In line with CEC, Convention and Standing Committee decisions, the ASTI is participating in co-ordinated action with the other teacher unions against cuts to services and members' pay.

The four teacher unions - ASTI, IFUT, INTO and TUI - are working together on a campaign of sustained opposition against further cuts.

Teacher unions take action

Recent co-ordinated actions taken with the teacher unions have included:

- ◆ The implementation of a series of directives to members in response to Budget cutbacks and the moratorium on posts in co-operation with the TUI. These directives include action in relation to parent-teacher meetings, whole school and subject evaluations, staff meetings and posts of responsibility. The INTO has also issued directives.
- ◆ The four unions have jointly communicated their opposition to the education cuts to the Department of Education and Science.
- ◆ The four unions have issued joint statements declaring total opposition to cuts (see page 1).

Future action

Future actions will include:

- ◆ Joint industrial action up to and including strike action, if necessary
- ◆ Joint meetings of the executives of the four unions
- ◆ Joint newsletter
- ◆ Intensive lobby of politicians on the damaging effects of the education cuts
- ◆ Support for ICTU billboard/ publicity campaign "There Still is a Better, Fairer Way"
- ◆ Support for the ICTU National Day of Action on November 6th in Dublin and regional venues

Ballot on industrial action

Ballots on industrial action will be joint ballots by the four unions, with the same wording appearing on all teachers' and lecturers' ballot papers.

The four teacher unions are meeting on an ongoing basis to develop their strategy against the cuts. ◆

Public sector versus private sector

One of the most regressive aspects of the current crisis is the attempt by those with a neo-liberal agenda to divide public and private sector workers. Working together in solidarity is the only way we can protect public services, protect the vulnerable and protect the pay of all workers.



A message from ASTI President, Joe Moran

At this very difficult time of education cutbacks when schools and teachers are being placed under enormous pressure and the ASTI has been required to issue directives to protect the conditions of our members, a great workload and responsibility has been placed on the shoulders of our school stewards. The school steward is the official voice of the union in the school. They are required to communicate on behalf of their colleagues with the management authorities of the schools. It is not an easy task.

All ASTI members should appreciate and support their school stewards for this vital work. The school steward's workload should be shared. Members could offer to keep minutes at union meetings, or to distribute Nuacht and other literature on behalf of the steward. When stewards are required to meet formally with school authorities on matters such as the directives they should be accompanied by one or two ASTI colleagues.

Thinking of Retiring in 2010?

The ASTI is providing retirement information evenings for members. If you intend to retire at the end of (or during) **this school year**, you should attend your local information evening which will be held in the following venues from **4.30pm-7pm**.

This is a two evening programme and members must attend on **both** evenings.

Content: Retirement options, pension calculations, retirement procedures, taxation/budgeting, investment and social welfare matters, pension enhancement etc.

Have all your questions answered

VENUE	DATE/ TIME OF SEMINARS
ASTI HEAD OFFICE Winetavern Street, Dublin	Day 1 – Wednesday, 4th November Day 2 – Wednesday, 11th November You must attend both days
CENTRAL HOTEL Donegal Town, Co. Donegal	Day 1 – Thursday 5th November Day 2 – Thursday, 12th November You must attend both days
BREAFFY HOUSE HOTEL Castlebar, Co. Mayo	Day 1 – Monday, 9th November Day 2 – Monday, 16th November You must attend both days
NUREMORE HOTEL Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan	Day 1 – Tuesday, 10th November Day 2 – Tuesday, 17th November You must attend both days
DAYS HOTEL Kilkenny City (near the Waterford Roundabout)	Day 1 – Wednesday, 18th November Day 2 – Wednesday, 25th November You must attend both days
THE CARLTON HOTEL Galway City <i>Formerly Days Hotel</i> (on the Dublin Road)	Day 1 – Thursday, 19th November Day 2 – Thursday, 26th November You must attend both days
THE MALTON HOTEL Killarney, Co. Kerry	Day 1 – Monday, 23rd November Day 2 – Monday, 30th November You must attend both days
SILVERSPRINGS MORAN HOTEL Cork City (on the Dublin Road)	Day 1 – Tuesday, 24th November Day 2 – Tuesday, 1st December You must attend both days
HUDSON BAY HOTEL Athlone (on the Roscommon Road)	Day 1 – Wednesday, 2nd December Day 2 – Wednesday, 9th December You must attend both days

Tea/Coffee and sandwiches will be available at 7pm each evening

For further information please contact Eileen O'Rourke on **01-6040170** or asti.library@asti.ie

ASTI RETIREMENT SEMINARS


ASTI100
A century of service