

## Stand up for Equal Pay for Equal Work and Terms & Conditions



### Message from ASTI President Ann Piggott:

Dear Member,

Over the next few weeks you will be asked to vote on several issues simultaneously.

The outstanding ballot on equal pay for equal work from the previous school year was not completed. When schools were closed swiftly on March 12<sup>th</sup> last, it was in the middle of a ballot procedure. Schools were at various stages of the voting process, some school stewards had just commenced the vote, while others were at the final steps. This has meant a re-run of that ballot which, as you may remember, asks if you are willing to take industrial action in conjunction with at least one other teacher union for equal pay for equal work. This came with a recommendation for a **Yes** vote and is the subject of one of the ballot papers you will receive.

A remote CEC meeting was held on Saturday September 19<sup>th</sup> 2020 and some of the motions passed on the day also require a ballot of members.

As the other ballots come without recommendation, the democratic process will allow you to consider and express your views on the matters raised.

You are asked to vote on issuing directives to ASTI members relating to changes in work practices; firstly that you have a consensus of staff before any changes to work practices and secondly that such changes in work practices be time-neutral.

Another ballot paper will ask you to consider industrial action on nine measures, many related to the reopening of schools and health and safety issues. Each part shall be voted on separately.

The ballot papers will be posted to your home address lest there are circumstances where some or all schools may be inaccessible again.

Further information is contained in this edition of Nuacht.

Please vote and return your material to head office in the envelopes provided.

With kind regards,

Ann Piggott, President



Ballot papers will  
shortly arrive to  
members' home  
addresses.  
Please return  
completed ballot  
papers to arrive to  
ASTI Head Office  
not later than  
5.30 p.m. on Thursday,  
October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Ballot 1:  
Changes to work  
practices without  
staff consensus.

Ballot 2:  
Changes to  
work practices  
which are  
not time-neutral.

## Ballots on key issues

The ASTI Central Executive Council, at its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2020, decided to hold a postal ballot of members in respect of a number of key issues.

These include:

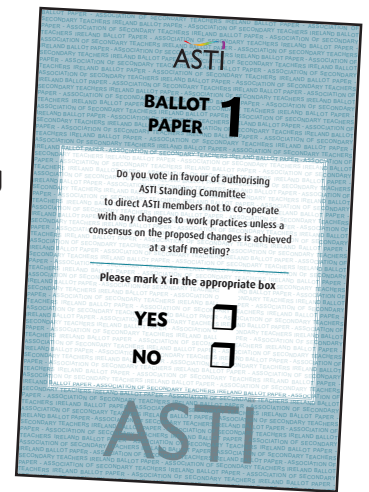
- unilateral changes to work practices in some schools without consultation;
- serious health and safety concerns around Covid-19; and
- equal pay for equal work, for which a ballot in March 2020 had to be postponed.

The questions on the ballot papers will be as follows:

### Ballot paper 1: Changes to work practices

Do you vote in favour of authorising ASTI Standing Committee to direct ASTI members not to co-operate with any changes to work practices unless a consensus on the proposed changes is achieved at a staff meeting?

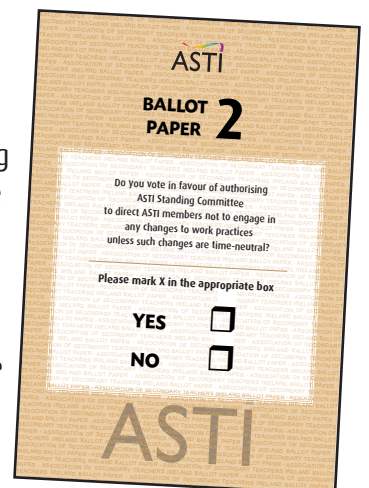
*A directive on this matter would be designed to ensure that ASTI members would only co-operate with changes to work practices in schools if the proposed changes achieved a consensus at a staff meeting.*



### Ballot paper 2: Changes to work practices

Do you vote in favour of authorising ASTI Standing Committee to direct ASTI members not to engage in any changes to work practices unless such changes are time-neutral?

*A directive on this matter would be designed to ensure that ASTI members would only co-operate with changes to work practices in schools if the proposed changes required no additional time commitment.*

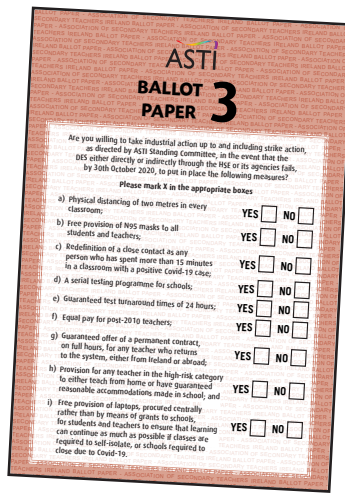


### Ballot paper 3: Covid-19 in schools – resources and practices

Are you willing to take industrial action up to and including strike action, as directed by Standing Committee, in the event that the DES either directly — or indirectly through the HSE or its agencies — fails, by 30th October 2020, to put in place the following measures?

- a) Physical distancing of two metres in every classroom;

- b) Free provision of N95 masks to all students and teachers;
- c) Redefinition of a close contact as any person who has spent more than 15 minutes in a classroom with a positive Covid-19 case;
- d) A serial testing programme for schools;
- e) Guaranteed test turnaround times of 24 hours;
- f) Equal pay for post-2010 teachers;
- g) Guaranteed offer of a permanent contract, on full hours, for any teacher who returns to the system, either from Ireland or abroad;
- h) Provision for any teacher in the high-risk category to either teach from home or have guaranteed reasonable accommodations made in school;
- i) Free provision of laptops, procured centrally rather than by means of grants to schools, for students and teachers to ensure that learning can continue as much as possible if classes are required to self-isolate, or schools required to close due to Covid-19.



Ballot 3:  
 Covid-19 in  
 schools – resources  
 and practices.

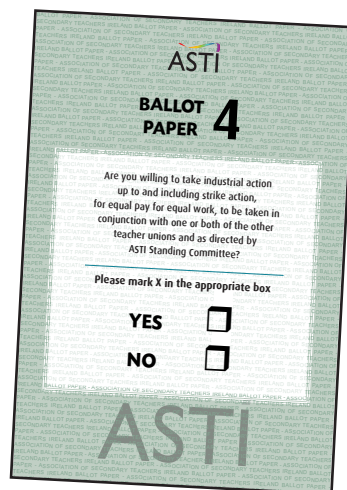
*This ballot seeks to provide a comprehensive framework for the ASTI to take industrial action, if necessary, on a range of current issues. Each item, (a) – (i) will be voted upon separately.*

## Ballot paper 4: Equal Pay for Equal Work

Standing Committee decided at its meeting of 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> September to revisit the matter of the ballot on unequal pay that was interrupted in March 2020 due to school closures and to hold a fresh ballot.

This ballot is also included and the question on that ballot paper will be as follows:

Are you willing to take industrial action up to and including strike action, for equal pay for equal work, to be taken in conjunction with one or both of the other teacher unions and as directed by ASTI Standing Committee?



Ballot 4:  
 Equal pay for  
 post-2010 entrants  
 to teaching.

*A special Nuacht was issued to members in February which set out in detail all the issues pertaining to this ballot. This Nuacht can be accessed here and on the October Ballots section of the ASTI website.*

<https://www.asti.ie/news/october-ballots-information/>

A school-based ballot on equal pay was not fully completed due to the closure of schools in early March.

**Have your  
voice heard –  
Ensure that  
you vote.**

For further  
information visit  
[www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie)

The special Nuacht issued to members in February 2020 set out in detail all the issues pertaining to this ballot. A key excerpt stated as follows:

*The scandal of pay inequality in the teaching profession continues. Teachers who entered the profession after 2010 are on a different pay scale to their colleagues, even though they have the same duties and responsibilities. Since January 2011, the Government has made it impossible for new entrant teachers to earn a decent living. This assault on teachers' terms and conditions must continue to be challenged by every means possible. Schools now find it is almost impossible to recruit new teachers into a career with discriminatory pay, poor prospects and no chance of catching up with their peers. There are no applicants for many positions. The future of the teaching profession is at stake. At its January meeting, the Central Executive Council of ASTI adopted the following motion: "That the ASTI ballot for industrial action up to and including strike action, for equal pay, to be taken in conjunction with one or both of the other teacher unions."*

A fresh ballot is now being conducted to enact the terms of the motion.

The full text of Nuacht No. 3, published in February 2020, can be accessed here.

<https://www.asti.ie/news/october-ballots-information/>



## Ballot arrangements

Ballot papers will be sent out to members' home addresses.

All ballot papers must be received in ASTI Head Office before 5.30 p.m. on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October. Please make sure to return your ballot papers promptly as post can take several days.

## Who has a vote?

All serving teachers may vote. Retired/honorary life/emergent members do not vote on industrial action.

## What may happen if the ASTI issues directives or implements other industrial actions if these ballots are passed?

### ASTI and the Public Service Stability Agreement

In 2017 the ASTI voted to reject the Public Service Stability Agreement. However, the agreement was accepted by the majority of trade unions and came into effect for public sector employees in January 2018. The ASTI is not currently repudiating the PSSA. ASTI members are therefore encompassed by the terms of the PSSA.

### Industrial action/directives

Adherence to the Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA) requires that a union does not engage in Industrial action or issue directives for the duration of the agreement. In the event that ASTI engages in Industrial action, it would be viewed by the Government as repudiation of the PSSA. If the ASTI repudiates the PSSA members may be subjected to a range of punitive actions under the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) legislation. (Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017)