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ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY TEACHERS, IRELAND

ISSN 0790-6560 | VOLUME 42: NUMBER 4: SEPTEMBER 2024

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20449 GI AD Pre applied 07-24

CONTENTS

4	From the President's desk
4	General Secretary's update
5	News
6	News feature
6	<i>Senior Cycle update</i>
8	News
10	Interview
10	<i>Meet the new ASTI President</i>
12	New to teaching
12	<i>New to teaching</i>
14	<i>Advice for new teachers</i>
16	Features
16	<i>Representing ASTI branches</i>
18	<i>Information seminars for ASTI members</i>
20	<i>Celebrating teachers' outstanding contributions</i>
22	ASTI in the media
24	Profiles
24	<i>Meet your Standing Committee representatives</i>
26	<i>The ASTI Benevolent Committee</i>
28	RSTA news
29	Noticeboard
30	Crossword



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

Make teaching a sustainable career

As the new school year gets into flow, many second-level schools are still trying to fill teacher vacancies. At the same time, new and recently qualified teachers are finding that the jobs available to them are fixed-term or part-time, or both. Too many teachers find they cannot afford to rent accommodation where the teaching jobs are. Their options include looking for a teaching job near to where their parents live, so they can avoid rent, or leaving the country. Teachers living abroad, who want to return to Ireland, face the same dilemma.

The Government must act now by investing in teachers and education. In a situation where we know schools are having to employ unqualified teachers, move resources out of special needs education and drop subjects, radical urgent action is vital. We must give recently qualified teachers access to secure employment. Entry to teaching now takes four to six years. Teacher education in Ireland is robust and Ireland's teachers are sought throughout the world. Qualifying as a teacher is expensive and requires significant commitment and energy. Teachers on precarious contracts and low hours talk about difficulties getting car loans and mortgage approval. Let's be clear, access to permanent jobs is the best way to deal with teacher retention. When teachers can't get job security in Ireland, they get it elsewhere.

The Government must also address the length of the teachers' pay scale. It is the longest in the public service and does not help recruitment and retention. Other priority areas are the lack of promotional opportunities, too high workload, and poorly resourced schools. The most recent *OECD Education and a Glance* report (published in September 2023) ranked Ireland in last place in terms of percentage of GDP invested in education. Budget 2025 must rectify this.

Senior Cycle redevelopment

The redevelopment of the Senior Cycle must have the trust of teachers. It is both difficult and demoralising for teachers when their knowledge and experience of implementing curriculum is sidelined in favour of simple on-trend ideas. Curriculum policy is complex and requires complex solutions. This is all the more so in the era of rapidly evolving technology, including AI. It is regrettable to see shortcuts being taken in relation to revised specifications so far, including a 'one size fits all' approach to assessment components and a lack of openness towards members of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) subject development groups, who have been unable to access submissions made to the NCCA on revised subject specifications. The ASTI continues to represent the views of ASTI members at the highest levels.

Finally, I wish you well in the year ahead. It is an honour to serve as President of the ASTI, a union with a courageous history and a track record of defending the teaching profession. This is a challenging time for teaching and education. I will strive to stand up for you and represent your concerns as best I can.



NCCA subject development group process in need of reform

They do things differently in NCCA land! The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment recently undertook consultation processes with stakeholders and the wider public regarding the redevelopment of subjects at Senior Cycle. Developments relating to Leaving Certificate Biology, Chemistry and Physics have proved to be interesting, to say the least.

It would be reasonable to assume that when an individual or organisation (such as the ASTI) takes the time to compile and make a submission, that submission would be brought to the attention of the subject development groups for their consideration. Instead, a summary report on the consultation, prepared by NCCA officials, was drawn up. And the matter does not rest there. As this report was being drawn up, the subject development group meetings were being held in parallel. We are advised that feedback was shared by the NCCA through oral presentations and slides at those meetings. Akin to plucking a chicken as it cooks. When a request by subject development committee members to access the actual submissions was made, it was met with a blank refusal. Excuses were anchored in a mire of procedural difficulties and a lack of consents. As if any of the individuals or organisations that had made submissions would object to these being brought to the attention of the key decisionmakers. I would think that it would be assumed to be the point of making a submission in the first place. As one noted commentator on education observed, citizens' assemblies and Oireachtas committees publish the submissions they receive. Members of the subject development groups would be free to read them as they wish and transparency would be assured.

The ultimate kicker was that the NCCA's Consultation Report on these subjects was not shared with subject development groups until after all meetings were concluded. Amazingly, the analyses of the three processes were all lumped into one 14-page document. This is a breathtaking lack of appreciation of the necessity to prevent erosion of general support for and confidence in Senior Cycle redevelopment.

As it stands, the ASTI will dissociate itself from the proposed draft specifications for Leaving Certificate Biology, Chemistry and Physics. This dissociation will be applied to any other subjects treated in a similar manner.

Croke Park hours and S&S

Around this time of year, ASTI Head Office tends to receive an extra volume of queries regarding the operation of Croke Park hours and the Supervision and Substitution Scheme in schools. It is vital that both schemes operate in a manner that respects the terms of the relevant Circular Letters and that any attempts to impose additional burdens on teachers are strongly resisted. Vigilance regarding these matters is advised.

I wish you a happy and successful new school year in all your endeavours.



Bursary for children of ASTI members attending undergraduate courses



The ASTI will award 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. Applications are invited from children of ASTI members or ASTI staff members currently attending or commencing full-time undergraduate third-level courses. The successful applicants will be chosen by lot, which means that all entries have an equal chance of winning. The draw is open in respect of any student who:

- has a parent/guardian who is a member of the ASTI or a staff member of the ASTI, and
- is commencing or has already commenced a full-time undergraduate third-level course – proof of acceptance will be required.

How do I apply?

Entries for the bursary will open in September 2024. An application form can be downloaded from the ASTI website.

Closing date

Entries for the bursary will be open until September 30, 2024. It shall be the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the completed application will be received by the due time and date.

For more information on the ASTI bursary, and to download the application form, visit <https://www.asti.ie/member-benefits/awardsgrants>

Former ASTI President elected Chairperson of the Teaching Council



Former ASTI President Eamon Dennehy was recently elected as Chairperson of the Teaching Council for a four-year term. A

teacher of engineering at Heywood Community School, Ballinakill, Co. Laois, he currently serves as Secretary of the Laois Branch of the ASTI and on the ASTI Central Executive Council (CEC).

Eamon is joined on the Teaching Council by ASTI members Adrienne Healy, Anne Loughnane, Pat Knightly, and Adrian Guinan. The Teaching Council is the regulatory body of the teaching profession in Ireland, which promotes and regulates professional standards in teaching. The ASTI Teaching Council Advisory Committee keeps the ASTI informed of any developments at the Teaching Council that affect members.

ASTI Equality Conference

The ASTI will be holding an Equality Conference in Dublin on November 16.

The theme of the conference will be 'Equality and Inclusion in Our Schools' and speakers will discuss topics such as problems facing adolescent boys in an environment of growing toxic masculinity, how we can support traveller students in our schools, and issues that arise when dealing with neurodiverse students.

Further details will be communicated to branches and will be published on the ASTI website.

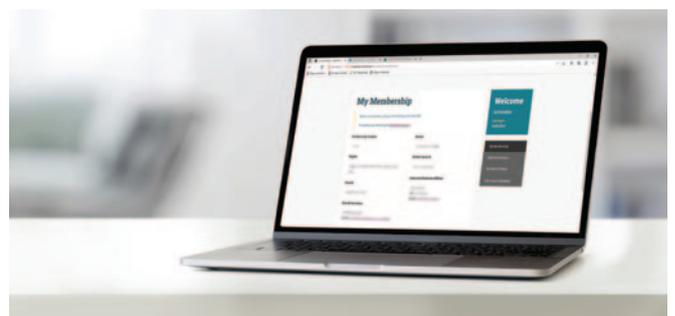


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Once you have created an account, you will have convenient access to information about your membership, and will be able to request digital and/or hard copies of all of our publications, such as *ASTIR* and *Nuacht*. Members can also update their personal details directly in the MyUnion area – for example, your home address and email address – to ensure that you receive the most up-to-date correspondence from the ASTI.

You can do this at: <https://www.asti.ie/my-union/>



SENIOR CYCLE UPDATE

New and revised Senior Cycle subject specifications commence from next year and by 2029 all subjects will be revised and implemented in schools.

Tranche 1 subjects

Tranche 1 starts at the beginning of the 2025/26 school year, and subjects are: **Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Arabic, Latin, Ancient Greek, Business, Climate Action and Sustainable Development** (Phase 1 schools), and **Drama, Film and Theatre Studies** (Phase 1 schools).

What's happened, what's next...

Revised subject specifications

A number of public consultations on revised draft specifications were undertaken in 2024. Following this, subject development groups worked to refine the specifications. These specifications have been accepted by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), and submitted to the Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD, for her consideration and approval.

The ASTI has made representations regarding the development process for Tranche 1 revised subject specifications, and in particular regarding the way the consultation findings fed into the NCCA subject development groups for **Biology, Chemistry** and **Physics** (see the General Secretary's Update on page 4 for more information). The ASTI has expressed serious concern about the failure to provide members of these subject development groups with access to consultation submissions. As subject development group members play a key role in decisions made about new/revised subject specifications, it is vital that they are provided with full information.

At the time of going to print, the ASTI has sought a meeting with the Minister for Education regarding this matter and has asked that the introduction of **Physics, Chemistry** and **Biology** be deferred for one year.

New subject specifications

Consultations on the draft specifications for **Drama, Film and Theatre Studies**, and **Climate Action and Sustainable Development**, were undertaken in 2024. Following this, subject development groups worked to refine the specifications. These specifications have been accepted by the NCCA and submitted to Minister Foley for her consideration and approval. These new subject specifications will be introduced on a phased basis from the 2025/26 school year.

Tranche 2 subjects

Tranche 2 starts at the beginning of the 2026/27 school year, and subjects are: **Accounting, Construction Studies, Engineering, English, Geography, LCVP Modules**, and **Physical Education**.

What's happened, what's next...

A background paper and brief were developed for each Tranche 2 subject and put out for consultation in 2024. These consultations are now closed. The subject development groups for these subjects are working to progress draft subject specifications. Consultations will take place on draft specifications in advance of their introduction in all schools in the 2026/27 school year.

Tranche 3 subjects

Tranche 3 starts at the beginning of the 2027/28 school year. The subjects included in Tranche 3 are: **Agricultural Science, Computer Science, Design and Communication Graphics, History, Home Economics, Mathematics, Music**, and **Physics and Chemistry**.

What's happened, what's next...

The NCCA convened subject development groups in early September for the Tranche 3 subject specifications. The ASTI was invited to provide two nominees to sit on each subject development group. These subject development groups will work to develop background papers, briefs, and draft subject specifications.

Assessment – a key issue for the ASTI

A key issue for the ASTI in the redevelopment of Senior Cycle subjects is the decision by the Minister for Education to stipulate that a minimum of 40% of all examination marks will be awarded for the additional assessment component. The ASTI strongly opposes this requirement.

Your participation is essential

Classroom teachers will implement new subject specifications in the coming years. Subject specification consultations are open to submissions from organisations and individuals/the general public. It is vital that ASTI members engage with subject consultations in order that the voice of the classroom teacher can be heard.

Keep up to date with developments at: www.asti.ie/education-and-curriculum/curriculum-and-assessment/

Transition Year

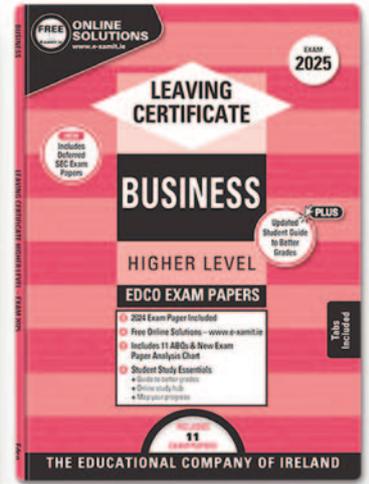
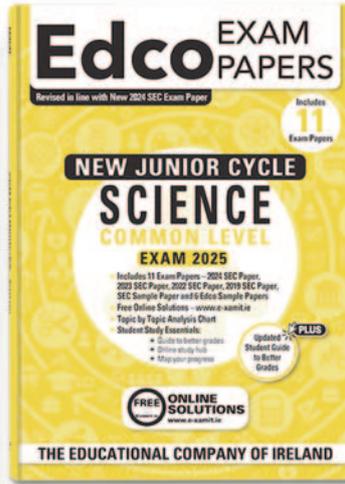
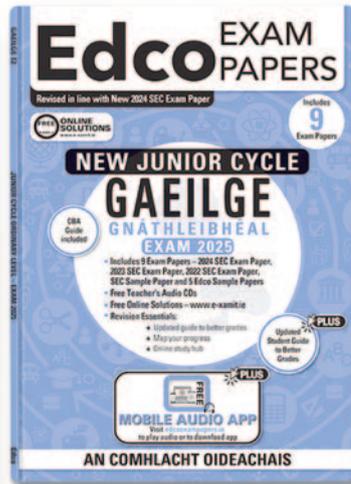
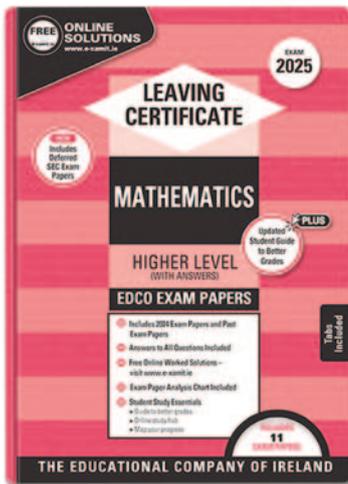
A new programme statement will be published shortly. Over the 2024/25 school year, all schools will have the opportunity to audit their current Transition Year offering and revise it where necessary in line with the programme statement. The Department's inspectorate will support and provide advice to schools in this regard during the 2024/25 school year, with inspectorate engagements being reflective of this.

SPHE

A new SPHE Senior Cycle curriculum has been accepted by the NCCA and submitted to the Minister for consideration and approval. Schools are not expected to implement this curriculum in the 2024/25 year, unless they have the capacity (resources, training, etc.).

For further updates on Senior Cycle redevelopment, including developments regarding additional components, Tranches 4 and 5, and other curricular developments, visit www.asti.ie/education-and-curriculum/curriculum-and-assessment/

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Kildare Branch retirement event



The Kildare Branch held a retirement event in the Killashee Hotel, Co. Kildare, in May. Front row (from left): Aingeal Seoighe, Geraldine O'Brien (ASTI Immediate Past President), Susie Hall (RSTA President), Mary Goold, Karen Lynch, and Paula Keegan. Back row (from left): Eamon Ryan (Kildare Branch Secretary), Mary Doyle, Margaret Costello, Pádraig Murphy (Kildare Branch Chairperson and ASTI Honorary Treasurer), and Adrian Guinan (Kildare Branch Treasurer).

Enniscorthy retirement event

The Enniscorthy Branch recently held a retirement celebration event in the Ashtown Park Hotel, Gorey, Co. Wexford. Front row (from left): Donal Cremin (ASTI President) and Diarmaid de Paor (ASTI Deputy General Secretary). Second row (from left): Carmel Wade, Rosemary Lenihan, and Freda Yague. Third row (from left): Michael Finn, Norah Harpur, Úna Bolger, Maria Warren, Mary Sinnot, Anne Kehoe, Phil Bolger, Brendan Daly, and Siobhan MacCormack. Back row (from left): Silvan Comer, Eoin Ó hAodha (Enniscorthy Branch Secretary and Treasurer), Lou-Anne Stafford, Gabriel Wade, Thomas Quilter, John O'Neill, Mary McIvor, Simone O'Neill, Donal O'Brien, Sean MacCormaic, and Daithí Flynn (Enniscorthy Branch Chairperson).



ASTI education conference 2024

The ASTI will host an education conference on Saturday, October 12, in the Radisson Blu Hotel, Athlone, Co. Westmeath. The conference will run from 9.30am-3.00pm.

The theme of the conference is 'Inclusive Education in our Schools: Challenges and Opportunities'. The conference will explore ways of making education more inclusive for students with special educational needs (SEN) and will discuss the ongoing policy developments in this area. The conference will include presentations from guest speakers as well as from several ASTI SEN teachers. Members interested in attending are advised to register early as places are limited.

For more information and to register for the event, please scan the QR code.



ASTI training schedule 2024

The ASTI will be holding a series of training sessions for members beginning in September, including:

- school steward training,
- school leadership training,
- health and safety representatives training, and
- board of management training.

The training sessions will take place in person and online. For more information on the different types of training available and to register, please scan the QR code.



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GPO Museum, General Post Office (GPO), O'Connell Street, Dublin 1
www.gpowitnesshistory.ie

MEET THE NEW ASTI PRESIDENT

New ASTI President Donal Cremin speaks about his background and his priorities for the coming year.



Where do you teach?

I teach in Scoil Phobail Sliabh Luachra, Rathmore, Co. Kerry, but formerly I taught in Phobail Scoil Neasáin, Baldoyle, Dublin, and in Scoil Mhuire gan Smál in Blarney, Co. Cork. I've been in Scoil Phobail Sliabh Luachra since 1998.

Where did you go to second-level school?

I went to second-level school in Rathmore, which was a co-operating system made up of St Mary's Secondary School and Rathmore Vocational School, and the longest-serving co-operative co-educational school in the country from 1972-1998 (26 years). There was a convent and a vocational school. The vocational school was in one village and the convent was in another village two miles away, and we used to travel between the two.

What would you say to teachers starting their career this September?

Number one I wish them well in their newfound career. Teaching is both rewarding and challenging. Enjoy every moment of every day and every day of every week. But above all, enjoy your free time so as to recuperate and unwind – after all, the teacher is at the centre of something good that happens in a school. It is vital to join a union and have a support network behind you. Being in a union also means you can have your say and stand up for what is right.

What are your priorities for your year as ASTI President?

A key priority is to make sure that the Senior Cycle that is being developed at the moment is fit for purpose. It's critically important that we develop an extremely robust, good-quality education system for future generations. Teachers' voices must be central.

Another priority is teacher retention and recruitment. I can't see why the Government can't just give the people coming out of teacher education access to full-time jobs. It would be the best thing for retention because if somebody got a full-time job, they would be automatically able to walk into the bank and apply for a mortgage or car loan.

Making teaching attractive is also a key objective. Workload and the need for a decent posts structure in schools are key to a fulfilled and valued teaching profession.

I can't see why the Government can't just give the people coming out of teacher education access to full-time jobs. It would be the best thing for retention.

What positions have you held in the ASTI?

I've been involved at school, branch and national level over the years, including:

- school steward,
- Kerry Branch executive,
- board of management,
- member of the Investment Committee,
- subject convenor for engineering,
- regional organiser,
- member of the Central Executive Committee (CEC),
- Standing Committee representative, and
- Vice President.

It's critically important that we develop an extremely robust, good-quality education system for future generations. Teachers' voices must be central.

What advice would you give to school stewards about asking new members to join the ASTI?

Research shows that a key reason why someone joins a union is because a colleague in their workplace approached them and asked them to join. I believe school stewards are critically important because they are the face of the ASTI in the school. My advice to school stewards is to prioritise face-to-face contact with new teachers. Introduce yourself to any new teacher in the school and tell them that you are the ASTI representative. More information on recruiting new ASTI members is available by scanning the QR code.



Workload and the need for a decent posts structure in schools are key to a fulfilled and valued teaching profession.

If have not yet attended an ASTI school steward training seminar, I advise you to do so. You will be briefed on current issues, including those affecting recently qualified teachers. For upcoming school steward training seminars, scan the QR code.



What is your proudest moment to date as an ASTI member?

Becoming President. I am deeply honoured and look forward to meeting and working with as many of you as possible. I am grateful to all the ASTI activists who came before me for their work and commitment, and to the current activists. Together we will lead the ASTI into the next school year. I hope I can serve members well.

What are your interests outside of teaching?

Family and friends are extremely important to me and my grandchildren have become centre stage. Being from Kerry, football must be included up there. Being a keen fisherman, rural life and being involved in the local community, especially the credit union movement, are important to me. Originally, I wanted to be a chef but I wasn't allowed to do Home Economics when I went to the convent as boys weren't allowed to do Home Economics at that particular time. Cooking was instilled in me when I was younger – my mother made us cook at 10, 11 years of age and I just love cooking. It is still a burning ambition to become a chef, and is on my bucket list to pursue once I have the ASTI presidency over.

Together we will lead the ASTI into the next school year.



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NEW TO TEACHING: WHY YOU'RE BETTER IN A TRADE UNION

For new entrants to teaching this year, joining a union has never been more important.

Welcome to the teaching profession!

As you begin your teaching career, the ASTI is here to support you.

For your first year of teaching ASTI membership is free. This means you make no payment whatsoever!

What the ASTI does

The ASTI is a registered trade union with over 18,800 members, which promotes the interests of second-level teachers, seeks to improve their salaries and conditions of employment, and regulates relations between members, their employers, and the Department of Education. As a member, you will have access to the ASTI's professional information and advice service. If you need representation or legal advice now or in the future, you can contact your designated industrial relations official.

What are the benefits of joining the ASTI?

Protection and support network

Joining the ASTI means that you are part of the biggest support network of second-level teachers in Ireland. As you navigate your career you have the collective experience and strength of 18,800 teacher colleagues behind you.

Professional information and advice

Members can contact ASTI Head Office, located on Winetavern Street in Dublin, for information and expert advice from industrial relations specialists with understanding and experience of the second-level education sector. These specialists can offer professional representation if necessary.

Representation and negotiation

The ASTI represents its members on a range of bodies and negotiates on their behalf at national, regional and school level.

Training and seminars

The ASTI holds regular training courses and seminars to support its members. Regular seminars on topics such as starting out in teaching, navigating social media, leadership, special education needs and retirement, assist members at all stages of their careers. Regular trade union training supports ASTI representatives, including school stewards, board of management representatives, health and safety representatives, and branch officers.



As a member, you will have access to the ASTI's professional information and advice service. If you need representation or legal advice now or in the future, you can contact your designated industrial relations official.

Financial benefits

You can access a range of exclusive financial benefits as an ASTI member:

- ASTI Rewards for new members – 12 months' free access to MyDoc, free financial health checks, and much more,*
- teachers' car insurance scheme,*
- discounted loans, home insurance, etc.*
- access to the ASTI Salary Protection Scheme,*
- you can apply for a range of grants for optical, dental or sickness benefit, and
- you can apply for the ASTI Bursary for further studies.

For more information, see: <https://www.asti.ie/member-benefits/financial-benefits/>

*The ASTI has no responsibility for these schemes or their administration. All enquiries about them should be made directly to Cornmarket.

Make sure your voice is heard

ASTI members decide on the policies of the union through its democratic structures, which begin at branch level. You can express your opinions by being active at branch level. Each ASTI member is a member of a branch operating in the area in which they work or live. Members are encouraged to attend branch meetings to discuss professional, educational and trade union issues.

teachers in second-level schools in Ireland. Through our equal pay for equal work campaign, the ASTI has vigorously sought to reinstate parity for lesser-paid teachers and has reduced the disparity considerably.

For more information on teachers' salary scales, scan the QR code here:



Employee Assistance Service

Teachers paid by the Department of Education have access to a free, confidential service, which provides telephone and direct one-to-one counselling on a nationwide basis. The service can also be used by teachers' spouses, civil partners, or dependents, where the family member can be described as a person over the age of 18 and residing at the family home. The telephone number is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, at 1800 411 057. Alternatively, you can WhatsApp or SMS 'Hi' to 087-369 0010. For more information on this service, go to the ASTI website at: www.asti.ie/your-employment/terms-and-conditions/employee-assistance-service-helpline-for-teachers/

Contacting the ASTI

The most immediate point of contact for ASTI members is your elected ASTI representative in your school: the school steward. Make sure to approach your school steward in the first instance if you want any advice or have any concerns. If you need to contact your industrial relations official in ASTI Head Office, you can call 01-604 0160/1800 418 400, or email info@asti.ie.

MyUnion

ASTI members have access to a section of the ASTI website called MyUnion. This area gives you convenient access to information about your ASTI membership, including contact details for your local and national elected representatives and Head Office staff. You can also edit your personal information and choose to receive key publications digitally.

How to join the ASTI online

To join the ASTI online, go to: www.asti.ie/join/

Department of Education-paid teachers, ETBI-paid teachers and school-paid teachers

Before you begin the 'join online' process, make sure you have the following to hand:

- payroll number,
- Teaching Council registration number,
- names of ASTI proposer and seconder (ideally your proposer and seconder will be from your local branch, e.g., school colleagues), and
- membership numbers of proposer and seconder (this is not essential, but having these numbers helps to process your application more quickly).

Student teachers – for PME students or students in a teacher training college/university

Before you begin your 'join online' process, make sure you have the following to hand:

- name of degree qualification,
- name of third-level institution and year of graduation, and
- teaching practice – school name (if known).

What contract are you being offered?

It is vital that new teachers are aware of the type of contract that is being offered. If you have any questions about your contract, or about a contract you are being offered, the ASTI can advise and support you.

Contracts

Before signing a contract, teachers are advised to carefully examine the contract and consult with their school steward and/or ASTI Head Office. The nature of the contract being offered should be made clear and in writing to the teacher, including the status of the contract (permanent/fixed-term), duration, subjects, number of hours, and reasons for a fixed term. Full-time teachers are contracted to teach up to 22 hours per week. There are many different types of teaching contracts and it is important that you understand what type of contract you have.

Non-permanent/part-time teacher

As a non-permanent or part-time teacher, you may be a casual part-time teacher, a non-casual part-time teacher, a regular part-time teacher, or a fixed-term whole-time teacher.

Contract of indefinite duration

A contract of indefinite duration (CID) gives a teacher the same job security as other permanent teachers. However, a CID holder's salary is based on the number of hours spent teaching (which can be less than full hours).

School-paid teachers

Some schools are in a position to employ teachers privately.

All queries regarding contracts should be referred to ASTI Head Office.

For more information about the types of contracts, scan the QR here:



Salary scales

Teachers are paid according to an incremental salary scale and may be entitled to extra allowances. Since 2010, two salary scales operate for

ADVICE FOR NEW TEACHERS

Teachers share their insights and advice.



Aisling Hughes, Monaghan Branch, Our Lady's Secondary School, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan

Make sure to ask questions if there is something you're unsure of. Remember that there is no such thing as a silly question. Get to know teachers in your subject departments, year heads, receptionists, and the caretakers. They will be happy to help in any way they can.

Be organised! Not an 'eight-page lesson plan for every class for the week' organised, but have a teacher journal to plan a day or two ahead and get photocopying done beforehand to avoid stress. I am convinced photocopiers can sense that you're in a rush and pick that time to jam! Pace yourself, especially in the first term of your first year teaching, which can be quite long. Do not feel that you have to put on all of the bells and whistles in every single lesson. Students value the fun activities more when they have completed a certain chapter or topic, rather than every class. Outside of school, it is also vital that you take time to prioritise yourself. Try to have a consistent morning and bedtime routine. Exercise and plan nutritious meals whenever you can. Most of all, enjoy the journey and be yourself!



Pdraig Curley, Loreto Community School, Co. Donegal, and ASTI Vice-President

Congratulations and best wishes for your new teaching career. You have worked hard to get to this point and now you should look to develop a bond with fellow teachers. The best way to do this is to join a teacher union. The ASTI is a union that solely represents second-level teachers with the aim to protect teachers' pay and conditions.

New teaching members will have their subscription fee waived for the first year, and student teachers can join for free at any stage of their BEd or PME. On our website – www.asti.ie – you can join online in minutes, and explore the many services the ASTI provides to its members.

Joining the ASTI means becoming part of a community. Your first contact in the school will be with the school steward and then all the other ASTI members in the school. Here you will get support and advice, and have your voice heard on all issues.

There are dedicated industrial relations experts in Head Office that are a phone call away to aid you. Protection is a vital role of the ASTI. This is particularly important in the event of a spurious or vexatious complaint by a parent/guardian to the Teaching Council under fitness to teach procedures. Solidarity is the key and teachers are stronger together as a union group with legal bargaining rights. I strongly advise joining the ASTI as early as possible in your teaching career and I wish you well on your career journey.



Dearbhla Cussen, Carlow Branch, St. Leo's College, Co. Carlow

Arise and go! Many congratulations for qualifying as a teacher. If you've not yet joined a union, do! You've probably been studying cumulatively for six years, so now it's time to enjoy a wage, if that's within the realms of your reality.

My reality, in 2003, when I qualified with a Higher Diploma in English and French, was to apply for a job in England. Over the Irish Sea I flew, like

many an Irish migratory bird before me, and plunged into the depths of Drama and Theatre Studies in the Isle of Sheppey, Kent. The 'pavements grey' of Kent and the Dorothy in me forced my hand, and I eventually returned home with a fear that the experience would negate my love of teaching. It didn't of course, and I have enjoyed teaching alongside the best colleagues and friends at St. Leo's College, Carlow, for 20 years.

Sometimes it's best to be honest with oneself, and pursue the job that makes sense, at that moment in time. If it's not the right fit, especially when you're in your 20s, it's okay to click your heels three times and walk away. If you're not in a rush to settle down, explore teaching opportunities near and far. Don't be afraid to travel, but equally, know that your hometown, your Innisfree or Kansas, may be the perfect place to establish yourself in your career.

You have worked hard to get to this point and now you should look to develop a bond with fellow teachers.



Keith Rooney, Dublin North West Branch, Coolmine Community School, Dublin 15

To new teachers starting out, I would say: 'Be patient!' I remember being so excited when I started, but also being nervous. There is so much to learn. I'll start my eighth year of teaching this September and I know I'm still learning, still getting better.

You can't expect everything to go perfectly or to be an instant success. You don't have to follow everything to the letter. Be open to listening to those

around you. There's potentially so much to learn from your teaching colleagues in an experienced staffroom. Balance their insight with your instincts. And remember, results take time. Whether you're introducing new activities or testing new classroom management techniques, it may take time to see their full impact.

Despite the challenges, teaching is a very rewarding career. Embrace every challenge, take every possible learning opportunity, and enjoy the job you've worked so hard for.



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- M Ed in Educational Leadership & Management
- M Ed in Education for Human Rights & Equality
- M Ed in Education for Sustainability & Global Citizenship
- Graduate Diploma/M Ed in Special Education
- 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
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REPRESENTING ASTI BRANCHES

BREEDA SLEVIN looks at the roles of branch treasurers and branch chairpersons in the ASTI, and speaks to some of those who undertake these vital positions in the union.

The primary unit of organisation in the ASTI is the branch. There are 56 ASTI branches in 18 regions across Ireland. Participation at branch level is the most effective way to be an active union member and to contribute to the business of the ASTI. Continuing our series of articles on branch roles, we look at the positions of branch treasurer and branch chairperson, and talk to members currently in these roles.

Branch Treasurer



Noelle Moran is ASTI Branch treasurer of Tuam Branch.

The role of treasurer is a key branch role with specific financial responsibilities. Noelle Moran (left) from the Tuam Branch outlines some of the duties involved: “Paying branch bills, e.g., hotel room hire, postage and stationery; reimbursing school stewards for expenses they incur; keeping records of monies received and payments made throughout the year; compiling branch accounts annually; and, organising paperwork for branch audits, which occur every few years”.



Eoin Ó hAodha is ASTI Branch treasurer of Enniscorthy Branch.

Eoin Ó hAodha (left) explains: “While this sounds like a lot of work, in reality many branches have no more than 20 transactions per year. Therefore, it is really only a matter of maintaining a simple annual debit/credit sheet”.

According to Noelle: “Sometimes as a small branch it can be challenging to stay within budget. Hotel rooms cost the same to rent for branch meetings irrespective of the size of the branch”. While financial oversight is the collective responsibility of all branch

officers, the treasurer’s role is important, explains Eoin: “It is your signature that decides if a sum of money is spent or not. If you have an issue with a transaction you will have to defend your viewpoint. Normally there is no difficulty. Where difficulty does arise is that most dealings with banks must take place face to face in a branch and this involves parking, queuing, going back and forth, etc., during busy school time. Online facilities are not available or are too expensive”.

While financial oversight is the collective responsibility of all branch officers, the treasurer’s role is especially important, explains Eoin.

Eoin suggests that “a group of unions and non-profit organisations could get together, identify common issues, and apply pressure for better service so that banks can live up to their ‘community’ rhetoric”. Other solutions suggested by Eoin include: “An alternative to using cheques for payments, or ensuring important deadlines don’t clash with busy periods in the school calendar”.

“It is very rewarding to review the annual report and see what has been achieved over 12 months.”

An enjoyable aspect of the role, according to Noelle, is organising social events such as school steward dinners and retirement functions: “It is lovely to be involved in thanking people for their service to the union locally in their schools. It is also a privilege to be involved in organising functions to celebrate and honour members’ long and loyal service to the ASTI”.

Eoin too emphasises the positive aspects of the role: “It is very rewarding to review the annual report and see what has been achieved over 12 months”.

However, Eoin is concerned about the serious lack of engagement at branch level, and says: “I fully acknowledge the fantastic work that already takes place and the people that carry out this work, but a review is necessary to address engagement and to communicate the collective aspect of a ‘union’”. Noelle gives this advice to members who are considering the role of treasurer: “The best way to learn the ropes is to ask the outgoing treasurer to go through the different aspects of the role with you, including advice on what paperwork should be retained to complete the branch annual accounts and branch audits, and also the process of compiling branch accounts”.

Eoin would recommend the role to any ASTI member, “especially someone who has, or wants to obtain, bookkeeping experience”. He says: “Although it requires some dedication, it is not too difficult. There are two key reporting events throughout the year. A summary of the year’s transactions must be presented to the branch at the Annual General Meeting, and a similar report needs to be sent to the ASTI’s accounts department at year end”.

He points out that “union staff and fellow members are very approachable and always available”, and adds: “The hands-on experience of being branch treasurer could prove very useful in other aspects of life”.

An enjoyable aspect of the role, according to Noelle, is organising social events such as school steward dinners and retirement functions: “It is lovely to be involved in thanking people for their service to the union locally in their schools”.

Branch Chairperson



Órlagh Nic Eoin is ASTI Branch Chairperson of Dublin North East Branch.



Robert Chaney is ASTI Branch Chairperson of Kilkenny Branch.

The chairperson ensures that branch meetings are conducted in a proper and efficient manner. The chairperson should be fair and impartial, giving equal opportunities to all members to express their views.

According to Órlagh Nic Eoin (left), chairperson of the Dublin North East Branch, a certain amount of planning is necessary to ensure that “attendees feel the branch meetings achieve something and are a worthwhile use of everyone’s time. This entails making contact with the branch secretary before the meetings to assess correspondence, communications, membership applications, etc., to create an agenda and to ensure a quorum”.

Robert Chaney (left), chairperson of the Kilkenny Branch, adds: “When chairing the meetings, it’s a matter of getting through the business at hand efficiently. This could include organising delegates to conferences, sorting out motions for Convention, or communicating information from Standing Committee. Another

task of the chair is to occasionally write a citation for a Benevolent Fund application”.

Both Órlagh and Robert mention how they are trying to boost meeting attendance.

“When chairing the meetings, it’s a matter of getting through the business at hand efficiently. This could include organising delegates to conferences, sorting out motions for Convention, or communicating information from Standing Committee.”

“While face-to-face contact is such a fundamental part of trade union participation, many branches use a hybrid approach to meetings post Covid, which can increase attendance levels,” says Órlagh. Other strategies include “inviting Head Office staff or external professionals to address the branch on issues such as pensions or contracts”.

This approach has also been employed by the Kilkenny Branch. “A few years ago we organised a very successful workshop on ‘learner and teacher well-being and resilience’ facilitated by educationalist Jackie Beere,” says Robert. “We are planning a similar event next year, with ‘AI in Education’ as the topic. It is important that, as before, the event is free and delivered locally.”

The ASTI produced a booklet entitled *Guidelines for the Operation of ASTI Branches* this year and Órlagh says: “This quickly became my bible for any queries regarding administration of the branch. It really is invaluable”.

However, Robert emphasises that “it is a real challenge trying to get members to turn up to meetings, in particular young and new members. Invariably they are the ones most affected by the issues that we discuss, in terms of lower wages, poorer pensions, etc.” He makes the point that “as information is now instantly accessible directly from the ASTI website and publications, this may affect members’ inducement to attend meetings to acquire information”.

Órlagh also believes that “the primary challenge as branch chair is encouraging more members to attend branch meetings and play an active part in discussions”. However, she adds that it’s important that attendance at meetings isn’t seen as the end goal: “As branch chair, it’s important to foster an atmosphere where every member feels they can contribute and that their contribution is valued. It’s also important to encourage new members, and those who don’t usually contribute, to speak and actively participate”.

Robert adds: “We don’t just want to represent people on matters of industrial relations. We also see ourselves as an education union wanting to be involved in education policy and help facilitate our members’ understanding of these issues”.

For Órlagh, the most fulfilling aspect of the role is the chance to pay back the union members who advised and supported her when she first joined the ASTI: “My longer-serving colleagues were, and remain, fonts of knowledge. It’s very satisfying now to have an opportunity to be that mentor to newer colleagues”.

Robert agrees: “I enjoy doing it. I get to know what’s going on and I’m able to have access in both directions, both to members in schools, but also to Head Office and the General Secretary and the other officials”.

Órlagh’s advice to anyone considering the role: “It’s worth remembering that nobody expects you to know everything. I definitely don’t know the answer to every question raised at branch meetings, but the answers are available, either within the room or outside the room, from your Standing Committee Representative or from Head Office”.

The ASTI produced a booklet entitled *Guidelines for the Operation of ASTI Branches* this year and Órlagh says: “This quickly became my bible for any queries regarding administration of the branch. It really is invaluable”.

Robert reiterates the importance of attendance: “If people aren’t coming to meetings, there’s no opportunity for them to take on the roles. The role of chairperson is a role that anyone can do, and it actually involves very little work, just making sure that all voices are heard”.

Finally, Órlagh advises members: “Go for it! Speak to the outgoing chair and get advice and strategies from other branches. Use social media to follow union and other elected officers – it’s a great way of keeping up to date on union issues and activities”.

For further information on getting involved in your local branch, visit: <https://www.asti.ie/about-asti/structure/branches/>



INFORMATION SEMINARS

2024

**TUESDAY 17TH
SEPTEMBER**

Contracts

- Types of contracts
- CIDs
- Your rights

**TUESDAY 24TH
SEPTEMBER**

Your First Year Teaching: Avoiding Common Problems

- Contracts
- Working hours
- Workload
- Navigating social media

**THURSDAY 3RD
OCTOBER**

Preparing for Annual Convention: Advice on Drafting Motions and Amendments

Among other matters, this seminar will focus on what to do to ensure successful drafting of motions and amendments for the Convention agenda, to help ensure they are in order.

**THURSDAY 10TH
OCTOBER**

Supervision & Substitution

This seminar will examine all aspects of the operation of the S&S scheme in schools.

**THURSDAY 17TH
OCTOBER**

Health & Safety

- Psychosocial hazards & risks in the workplace
- Key safety legislation
- Safety representative duties and responsibilities
- Role of the safety representative
- Safety statement & risk assessment

**THURSDAY 14TH
NOVEMBER**

Grievance Procedures

This seminar will explore the issues that can be dealt with effectively through the Grievance Procedure, the steps involved, and the support available to members through the process from the ASTI.

**THURSDAY 21ST
NOVEMBER**

Sick Leave

A guide to sick leave for second-level teachers including illness benefit requirements and Medmark referrals.

**TUESDAY 3RD
DECEMBER**

Posts of Responsibility

An overview of how the PoR structure operates in schools, including the appointment procedure, appeals and the circular governing posts. Also, an outline of the ASTI view on the posts structure and how it can be improved.

All seminars will run from 17.30-18.30 and will be held online

Seminars are open to all members - email training@asti.ie to register



www.asti.ie/events

2025

**TUESDAY 14TH
JANUARY**

**Securing
Additional Hours
and Eligibility for a
CID**

- Working hours are more important than contracts
- Pathways to a CID
- Circular letters 59/2016 and 49/2017

**THURSDAY 16TH
JANUARY**

**Fitness to Practice/
Dealing with
Complaints made to
the Teaching Council**

How the Teaching Council deals with such complaints and the advice and representation the ASTI provides to its members.

**TUESDAY 21ST
JANUARY**

**Disciplinary
Procedures**

This seminar will go through the steps of these procedures, and the support and advice available to members from the ASTI.

**TUESDAY 4TH
FEBRUARY**

**Career Break
Scheme/
Redeployment**

The operation of the Career Break Scheme including constrictions on the use of career breaks. The Redeployment Schemes; compulsory and voluntary. How they operate and what schools must do.

**TUESDAY 11TH
FEBRUARY**

**Job Sharing
Scheme**

- Overview of the scheme
- Eligibility
- Operation of the scheme
- Application procedures
- Employment while jobsharing
- Post of Responsibilities
- Pay, PRSI, Pension

**TUESDAY 4TH
MARCH**

**Leave
Entitlements**

- Maternity Leave
- Paid and Unpaid Leave,
- Parent's Leave
- Parental Leave
- Paternity Leave
- Adoptive Leave

**TUESDAY 11TH
MARCH**

**Croke
Park Hours**

This seminar will examine all aspects of the Croke Park hours including timetabling of the hours and the use of discretionary hours.

**THURSDAY 20TH
MARCH**

**Guidelines for the
Operation of ASTI
Branches**

A seminar targeted towards branch officers to explain their roles and responsibilities to facilitate the smooth and effective operation of ASTI branches. All members welcome.

CELEBRATING TEACHERS' OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS

Each year, the ASTI Awards celebrate the achievements and contributions of ASTI members around the country.



From left: Geraldine O'Brien (ASTI Immediate Past President), Maura Greaney (Honorary Life Membership recipient), and Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary).

From left: Geraldine O'Brien (ASTI Immediate Past President), Carol Kennedy Gardiner (ASTI Bursary recipient), and Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary).

Teachers from all over the country were honoured by the ASTI in May for their outstanding contributions both inside and outside the classroom. The annual ASTI Awards ceremony, held in Dublin, celebrated those who have provided invaluable service to the teaching profession and the ASTI.

Honorary Life Membership

Honorary Life Membership is awarded in recognition of a member who has given exceptional service to the ASTI, displayed outstanding leadership, and served as an inspirational role model. This year's recipient was Maura Greaney. Maura has been an ASTI activist since the early 1990s. She was instrumental in preventing the closure of her school, Seamount College, which is located in the community of Kinvara, Co. Galway. In the early 2000s when the Mercy Order announced that it would close the school, it was Maura who stepped up to prevent the closure. Maura was school steward at the time alongside her colleague Christina Kennedy, and became the staff representative on the Rescue Education at Seamount College community coalition. As part of the campaign, Maura organised for a petition to be distributed to ASTI schools and this action ensured the collection of more than 11,000 signatures in favour of retaining the school. The ASTI initiated court proceedings against both the trustees and the then Minister for Education and Science over the manner in which the school's Board of Management was disbanded. Maura agreed to be one of the named plaintiffs in the case. The case was settled and ultimately the school was retained. The settlement included payment of the €18,000 of ASTI legal costs.

Maura's efforts played a vital role in preventing the school's closure and her involvement with the union did not end there. Since then, she has remained a committed ASTI activist in the Galway Branch for more than three decades, serving as Branch Secretary and CEC representative. Maura was also elected to the ASTI Equality Committee in 2009 and continues to serve on this Committee. She was Chair of the Committee from 2015 to 2021.

Bursary Award

To mark the ASTI's centenary in 2009, the union inaugurated an annual scholarship scheme for ASTI members. The aim of the scheme is to assist members in undertaking further studies relating to teaching, education or trade unionism. There is no shortage of research on teaching and education, but the difference with teacher-led research is that it is embedded in the day-to-day realities of the classroom. This offers a richer evidence base for the purposes of developing sound education policy. This year's recipients of the ASTI Bursary Award were Carol Kennedy Gardiner and Lorraine Kelly.

Carol Kennedy Gardiner

Carol Kennedy Gardiner, a teacher at Coláiste Cholmille, Co. Donegal, who is currently on secondment with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) as an education officer for special educational needs, is a recipient of an ASTI Bursary Award. Carol is undertaking a PhD in Education at Dublin City University (DCU). Her research explores the

experiences of learners with developmental co-ordination disorder, which affects between 5% and 6% of learners in Irish schools. Her findings will offer educational stakeholders a valuable opportunity to advocate for inclusive education, empower marginalised voices, and improve the educational experience for all students.

Lorraine Kelly

Lorraine Kelly is a teacher at Gorey Community School, Co. Wexford, and is a recipient of an ASTI Bursary Award. Currently enrolled in the Graduate Diploma Course in Inclusive and Special Education at DCU, Lorraine plans to continue with her studies towards a Master’s in Special Educational Needs commencing in October 2024. This Master’s programme develops teachers’ research skills in the area of special and inclusive education, and in carrying out research relevant to children and young people with learning difficulties, additional support needs, or special educational needs. Her research will contribute to the improvement of school policies regarding team teaching and inclusive learning.

ASTI scholarships are determined by a Selection Committee whose criteria include relevance of the proposed course of study to the professional lives of teachers and second-level education, potential for the study to inform the ongoing policy agenda and work of the ASTI, and potential for the research to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.



From left: Geraldine O’Brien (ASTI Immediate Past President), Lorraine Kelly (ASTI Bursary recipient), and Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary).

For more information on the ASTI Awards, see <https://www.asti.ie/member-benefits/awardsgrants/>. Further awards, including the ASTI Achievement Award, Thomas MacDonagh Award and the PJ Kennedy Award, will be profiled in future issues of *ASTIR*.



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ASTI ADDRESSES RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CRISIS IN TEACHING

“The summer programme has been around for a number of years and it is a small but very important element of the offering of the system. It targets those children with complex special educational needs and indeed those who are at great risk of educational disadvantage and those who perhaps might, if left out of school for an extended time, fall away from the system. So, it does extraordinarily valuable work across the summer months in schools. And it is extraordinarily regrettable that the funding in relation to the capitation grants for students has been cut from €45 to €30 per student. It’s unconscionable.”

Kieran Christie, ASTI General Secretary,
Drivetime, RTÉ One, June 12, 2024

“[On the €2,000 incentive payment for new teachers] The stipulation with the €2,000 is that I would have to be working full-time and I would have to be working on a full-time contract. And there’s isn’t a full-time contract available for every single teacher. I’m fortunate enough that I have secured employment for next year. But some of my peers, some of my contemporaries who are in the PME with me are not as fortunate and therefore won’t be able to qualify for it”.

Dylan McKeever, ASTI member,
News at One, RTÉ Radio 1, June 27, 2024

“[On the advantage of multi-annual budgets] This year, schools were shocked when the Department of Education confirmed a cut in the capitation grant for the schools’ summer programme – a scheme for vulnerable students, including students with complex special needs and those experiencing educational disadvantage. Many schools only became aware of this reduction in funding when their 2024 programme was already planned. Multi-annual budgets for capitation grants should include annual increases to cover inflation. The Department of Education produces reliable projections for student members in the years ahead, so multi-annual budgets for school capitation grants are possible”.

Diarmaid de Paor, ASTI Deputy General Secretary,
The Sunday Times, June 28, 2024

“[On the teacher recruitment crisis] We’re dealing with a crisis that has been going on for a number of years now, which began to emerge prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, and which has worsened. Our big criticism is that the measures that have been implemented by the Minister have largely just toyed with this problem. They have been cosmetic and have lacked ambition. There were changes around the job-sharing provisions, student registration and the employment of retired teachers, but they haven’t made a dent in the problem because this year’s crisis is as bad as ever. We’ve continuously pressed the Department of Education for a variety of fundamental changes to the teaching system in the country and unfortunately it has fallen on deaf ears.”

Kieran Christie, ASTI General Secretary,
News at One, RTÉ Radio 1, August 14, 2024

“[On the recruitment crisis] The whole system needs to be looked at. It is a major crisis. We have a major crisis on our hands. It is not fair to the next generation that they have to wait so long for this to be solved. And it could be very easily solved by sitting down around the table and really discussing with the Department of Education the issues that need rectifying”.

Donal Cremin, ASTI President,
The Michael Reade Show, LMFm, August 15, 2024

“[On the teacher shortages] At the minute, there are unfilled vacancies in schools because schools are having serious difficulty filling them. As a parent or as a student I would be worried because this will directly affect subject choices in school. This will affect what kind of classes are available and whether there will be a dedicated higher-level class or whether it will be a mixed-level class”.

Padraig Curley, ASTI Vice President,
News, Ocean FM, August 15, 2024



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*Lourda Roseingrave,
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- Other matters relevant to higher, further and adult education.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- Teachers in management organisations, trade unions, and staff associations,
- Key stakeholders and decision-makers within the education setting, including school principals, assistant principals, inspectors and teachers at all levels,
- Solicitors, barristers, and trainees who advise or wish to advise on education law.

MEET YOUR STANDING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES



Maria Markey-Greene, Standing Committee Region 16: Dublin North & Miriam Duggan, Dublin North Central

I got involved in the ASTI because...

I experienced workplace inequity and inequality first hand. Teachers are not being recognised as professional practitioners despite being highly trained and skilled. Therefore, I took on the role of school steward and became more involved at branch level. I was nominated to CEC and Standing Committee because I campaigned to increase wages, create awareness of teachers' workplace issues, and kept those issues on the agenda. Enough was enough for me.

The ASTI's biggest priorities are...

The removal of Croke Park/Haddington Road hours, increases in basic



John Byrne, Standing Committee Region 6: Cork South Paddy Mulcahy, Carbery

I got involved in the ASTI because...

When our school steward retired, there was nobody to open correspondence. I volunteered, went to meetings, and got to know some really nice people. The issues being discussed had me hooked from the word go. My first Convention sealed the deal. Never in a million years did I think I would soon after become a branch officer, to say nothing of serving on numerous committees.

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

Pay, recruitment and retention, the failed Junior Cycle and now the new



Louis Callaghan, Standing Committee Region 12: Dundalk, Monaghan, Cavan, Drogheda

I got involved in the ASTI because...

When I qualified as a teacher in 1991, there were very few permanent or TWT (temporary whole-time) positions for young teachers. Many newly qualified teachers were compelled to go to Britain or other countries in order to find work and gain experience.

For over a century, the ASTI has strived to protect its members, and to improve their pay and working conditions. It has also remained faithful to its core principles including equality, inclusiveness, collegiality, and the welfare of both teachers and students.

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

- The existence of two different pay scales for teachers and the ongoing issue of equal pay for equal work,
- the need for clear and detailed Leaving Certificate specifications with an emphasis on depth of treatment in each subject,

salary rates of pay, and re-instating allowances, such as allowances for additional master's qualifications. This would encourage the labour market to view teaching as a viable career path with tangible career progression. The ASTI must seek the recognition of the need for specialist teachers within schools who are more specialised than additional educational needs (AEN) teachers. This would enable the provision of both specialist and mainstream education, and would shield mainstream classroom teachers from complaints of inadequate provision of specialised education by the State. Our professional autonomy needs to be recognised so that we are regarded as an important skilled voice, which is heard and respected by the Government and policymakers.

Something people may not know about me is...

I once submitted a song entry to Eurovision.

Leaving Cert – the list is endless. Standards in education and our professionalism must be maintained if the quality of Ireland's teaching and learning is to retain the respect it has always held. We are professionals and should be treated as such. Any changes to syllabi must contain decent depth of treatment, and teacher voice must be acknowledged and taken on board prior to any further changes taking place.

Something people may not know about me is...

I can't imagine my life without classical music and horses. I used to compete in eventing competitions (an equine triathlon), but now I just love to ride out on my horse, Elgar. However, I also spend a lot of weekend time as a steward and judge at professional eventing competitions at both national and international levels.

- the necessity to reduce the 40% component for project work in the new specifications,
- genuine, tangible and meaningful promotion of staff health and well-being in every school,
- the establishment of an independent and mandatory audit of staff psychosocial hazards and stresses in every school, and
- increased protection for teachers in relation to harassment and bullying online.

Something people may not know about me is...

My first teaching job was an EPT (eligible part-time) position in a boarding and day school. As well as teaching history, maths and English, I was required to live in the school from Sunday evening to Friday evening and carry out a wide range of boarding duties. I think that this would be practically unheard of nowadays.

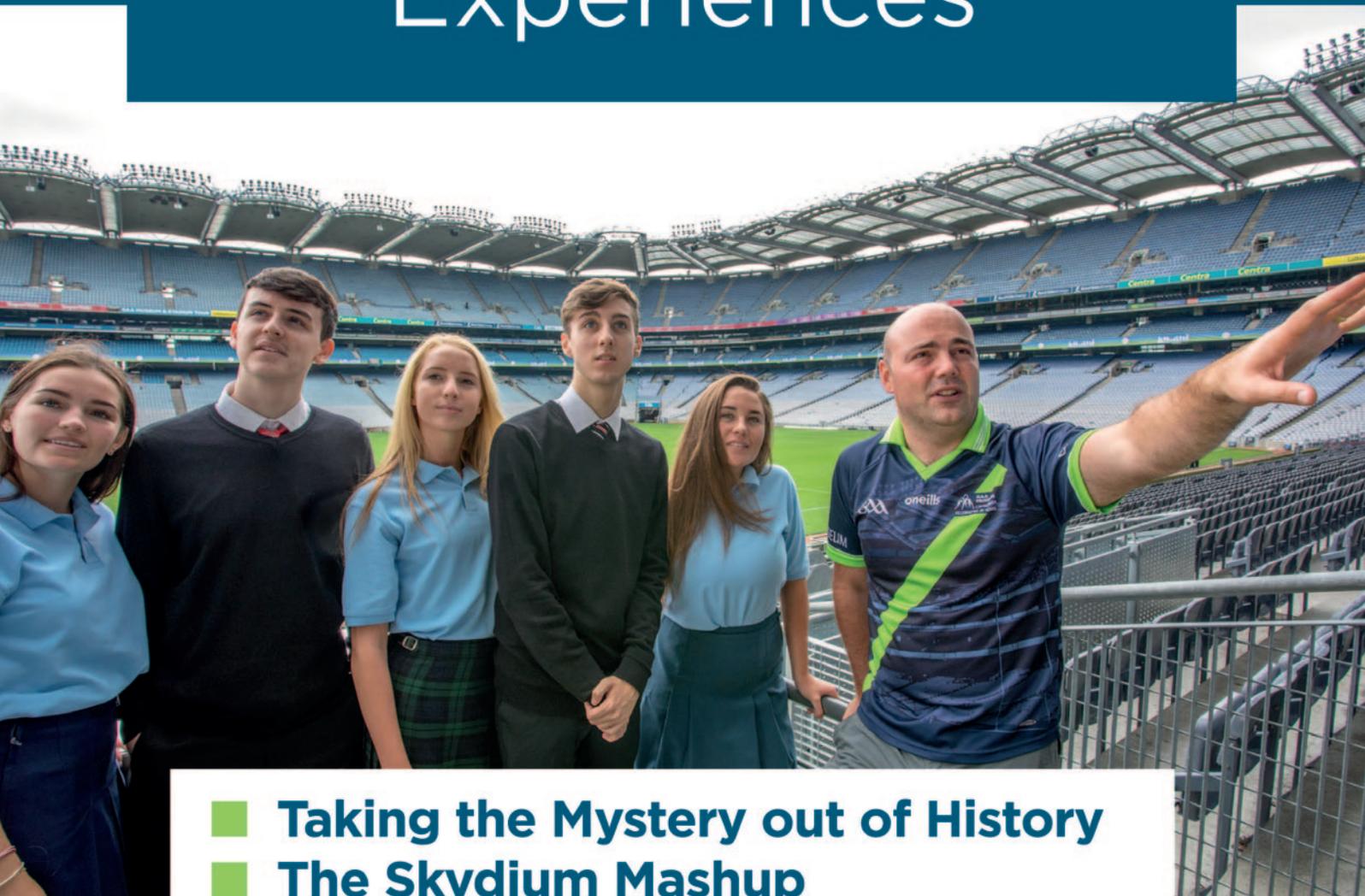
Scan the QR code for a list of all Standing Committee representatives.



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THE ASTI BENEVOLENT COMMITTEE

The ASTI Benevolent Committee has a vital role in overseeing and administering an internal scheme for its members called the ASTI Benevolent Fund.



The ASTI Benevolent Committee pictured with Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary – far right). From left: Pádraig Murphy (ASTI Honorary Treasurer), Keith Cassidy, Donal Cremin (ASTI President), Adrian Guinan, and Sinéad Corkery.

The ASTI Benevolent Committee is made up of five members, including the President and Honorary Treasurer, and three members who are elected annually at the May meeting of the Central Executive Committee. Its current members are:

- Keith Cassidy,
- Sinéad Corkery,
- Adrian Guinan,
- Donal Cremin (ASTI President), and
- Pádraig Murphy (ASTI Honorary Treasurer).

Role of the Committee

The ASTI Benevolent Committee was created to oversee and administer the allocation of funding from the ASTI Benevolent Fund to members who meet any of the criteria set out below:

- member who becomes totally incapacitated so that he/she is forced to retire from teaching,
- illness of member resulting in absence from work for 18 consecutive months,
- exceptional circumstances (determination at discretion of the fund administrators), and
- qualifying dependants of deceased members.

The Benevolent Fund is used to assist members experiencing incapacitation/ significant absence from work and also dependants of deceased members.

Members who meet any of the eligibility criteria set out above may be entitled to a once-off payment of up to €10,000. Each application is assessed individually. Application forms are available by contacting Elaine McLoughlin in the Accounts Department in Head Office on 01-604 0184.

Members must make a claim no later than four months after the event on which their claim is based. When a member has qualified successfully for the Benevolent Fund, they are unable to make another claim for five years. Members cannot make more than two successful claims to the Benevolent Fund.

There are no set amounts of times that this committee must meet in a single year – a committee meeting is only called when there are cases to discuss.



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New members are welcome

We in the RSTA are really grateful for all the support we receive from the ASTI. We are particularly delighted to note that the rights of Emeritus members were carried by the ASTI into the talks on amalgamation with the TUI. I hope you all had a very well-earned rest during the summer and wish you good health and energy for the coming school year. Many of you will have colleagues who have retired during the summer holidays. We would love to welcome them into the RSTA but do not know who they are. Unfortunately, due to the restrictions of GDPR, schools are not in a

position to give us such information, which is why I am appealing to you directly. If you are in contact with former colleagues, who are now retired, do urge them to join the RSTA. We fight to defend our pensions, above all parity, and we need new members to join our campaign. They will be most welcome. Thank you.

Susie Hall
RSTA President

Pictured at the RSTA Annual Conference 2024, which took place in Clayton White's Hotel, Co. Wexford, at the beginning of May are (from left): Carmel Heneghan (Chairperson, Mayo Branch, and former RSTA President), Rosemary Kiernan (Midlands Branch), Susie Hall (RSTA President), Margaret Larkin (Midlands Branch), and Mary Evans (Cork Branch).



Pictured at the RSTA Annual Conference 2024 are Susie Hall (RSTA President) and Michael McNulty (Chairperson, Retired Members Association of the TUI).

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

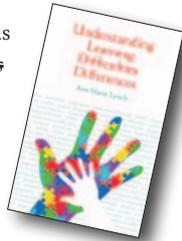
Reference: (To identify member's subscription on RSTA bank statement):

Member name

Signature: Date: ___/___/20___

Understanding Learning Difficulties Differences

Author and ASTI member Ann Marie Lynch has published a book, *Understanding Learning Difficulties Differences*, which aims to provide parents and teachers with an overview of common learning differences such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, intellectual difficulties, ADHD, dyspraxia, anxiety, autism, and speech and language difficulties.



In *Understanding Learning Difficulties Differences*, Ann Marie highlights and explains common traits and early indicators of a number of different learning differences, while also providing strategies of support in areas of reading, writing, organisation, study skills and social skills. Ann-Marie has both personal and professional experience of learning difficulties – she is dyslexic herself and has two children with dyslexia and dyspraxia, and she has worked as an additional educational needs co-ordinator in a busy post-primary school in Dublin for 20 years. She has also delivered special educational needs lectures in Dublin City University and Trinity College Dublin, and has participated in national and local advisory groups to advance the educational experiences of students with additional educational needs.

The book is available for purchase directly from the publisher at openpress.com, or both online and in store from Bridge Street Books and Alan Hanna's at bridgestreetbooks.ie and alanhannas.com

Arts Council Creative Schools



Post-primary and primary schools and Youthreach centres across Ireland are invited to sign up for the Arts Council's *Creative Schools* programme.

The support package offered to interested schools includes: support from an Arts Council Creative Associate who is assigned to each school to provide support and assistance for the duration of the programme, training for the school co-ordinator of the programme, a €4,000 grant for activities arising from the *Creative Schools* plan over two years, and networking and participation opportunities in national initiatives.

The initiative aims to draw attention to the importance of art in the curriculum and helps schools to fund related activities for students.

Schools and Youthreach centres across the country are invited to join the programme and take part in a two-year guided journey to develop a *Creative Schools* plan unique and suitable for their school, and to put it into action. Children and young people's involvement in planning, decision-making and reflection is central to this journey.

Teachers have access to case studies of previous schools that participated in the *Creative Schools* programme in the Schools Hub section of the Arts Council website – <https://www.artscouncil.ie/Arts-in-Ireland/Creative-Schools/Schools-Hub/>

Interested schools can apply for the programme by registering online for an account with the Arts Council and downloading an application form, which must be completed and uploaded onto their account using the following link: <https://onlineservices.artscouncil.ie/Secure/Login.aspx?lang=en-ie>

Relove Fashion competition 2024/2025

The annual Relove Fashion competition has returned for the 2024/2025 academic year. Relove Fashion is a sustainable fashion competition open to young people in participating local authorities across the Republic of Ireland. To find out whether your local authority is participating, please contact info@rediscoverycentre.ie.

The competition aims to teach students about fashion's environmental impact, while encouraging them to use sustainable design techniques. It also encourages applicants to take a deeper look at how their clothing is made, while challenging them to explore creative reuse options such as upcycling repairs, alterations and mending. Students interested in entering the competition must create a wearable outfit from second-hand, pre-loved or unwanted clothing and textiles, and must create a storyboard documenting the process of creating the outfit. Students must also undertake research into the fashion industry and detail this research as a part of their completed submission form. Online inspiration sessions will be held by The Rediscovery Centre. Applications should be submitted at relovefashion.ie by January 17, 2025. Shortlisted participants will be invited to the finals, which will be held in the Rediscovery Centre, Ireland's National Centre for the Circular Economy.

Discover what STEPS has to offer for Secondary Schools

September 2024

Visit the Engineers Ireland stand at the National Ploughing Championships September 17th -19th

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Take part in the STEPS Virtual Engineering Your Future experience in association with Springpod

November 2024

Transition Year students can apply for the in-person STEPS Engineering Your Future experiences

March 2025

Engineers Week 2025 will take place from March 1st - 7th 2025

Details on all STEPS activities at engineersireland.ie/schools

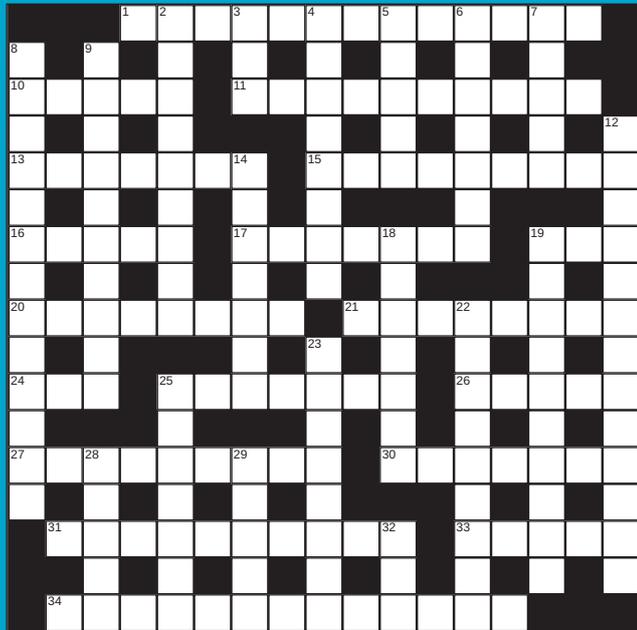


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ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 2404

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. 2404,
Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, September 27, 2024.

ACROSS

1. 1958 British war film starring John Mills (3, 4, 2, 4)
10. Shanghai tidies up Caribbean country (5)
11. Windy desert events (10)
13. Heroine from Verdi's opera *Il Trovatore* (7)
15. One who holds freehold of ground or property (9)
16. World's largest democracy by population (5)
17. See 7 down.
19. Describes a person who is not transgender (3)
20. Systematically arranged collections of dried plants (8)
21. Catholic Queen of Spain until 1504 (8)
24. Bounder, rake, scoundrel (3)
25. Mother, mosquito, ecstasy could become wealthy businessman (7)
26. Offaly town on the river Brosna (5)
27. Biological community of interacting organisms (9)
30. Its capital is Windhoek (7)
31. Low-growing annual plants with yellow or orange flowers (10)
33. Calls, hoops or arenas (5)
34. Dainty morsels for Trump court case (6, 7)

DOWN

2. Small, thin, spicy sausage (9)
3. Also known as Romaine (3)
4. In denial about old-style wire (8)
5. Nineteenth-century Norwegian playwright (5)
6. A mint with a hole? Sorry about that! (7)
7. and 17 across: Former ASTI President, now Chair of the Teaching Council (5, 7)
8. Sounds like a cold foul dish. That's hot! (6,7)
9. This commanded all over the place, we hear (10)
12. Well rested, like Donald Duck's girlfriend (5, 2, 1, 5)
14. Confusing, baffling, bewildering (7)
18. Nearest direction to morning sun (7)
19. Apprehend body odour could lead to part of human skeleton (10)
22. Describes a legislative body having two chambers (10)
23. Thanks, in short, to craving for state of Australia (8)
25. Summer month so-so in London (7)
28. Finished with tea, so we hear? That's plain and clear (5)
29. Woman's undergarment or soft toy (5)
32. ... generis: one of a kind (3)

Solutions to ASTIR Crossword No. 2403

ACROSS	DOWN
1. Tomato ketchup	2. Oestrogen
10. Epics	3. ABC
11. Contiguous	4. On notice
13. Retired	5. Elite
15. Tree stump	6. Cruiser
16. Icing	7. Uluru
17. Secular	8. Georgia Meloni
19. Owl	9. Histrionic
20. Monandry	12. Apple turnover
21. Nutrient	14. Desires
24. Luc	18. Lourdes
25. Desmond	19. Overturned
26. Gator	22. Rigoletto
27. Numerical	23. Roll call
30. Salerno	25. Dirtier
31. Brain drain	28. Mirth
33. Theme	29. Caddy
34. Cherry blossom	32. NHS

Did you miss?

- Meet the new ASTI President 10
- New to teaching 12

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the winner of Crossword No. 2403: Aislinn Barry, Loreto Fermoy, College Road, Fermoy, Co. Cork. Fermoy Branch member



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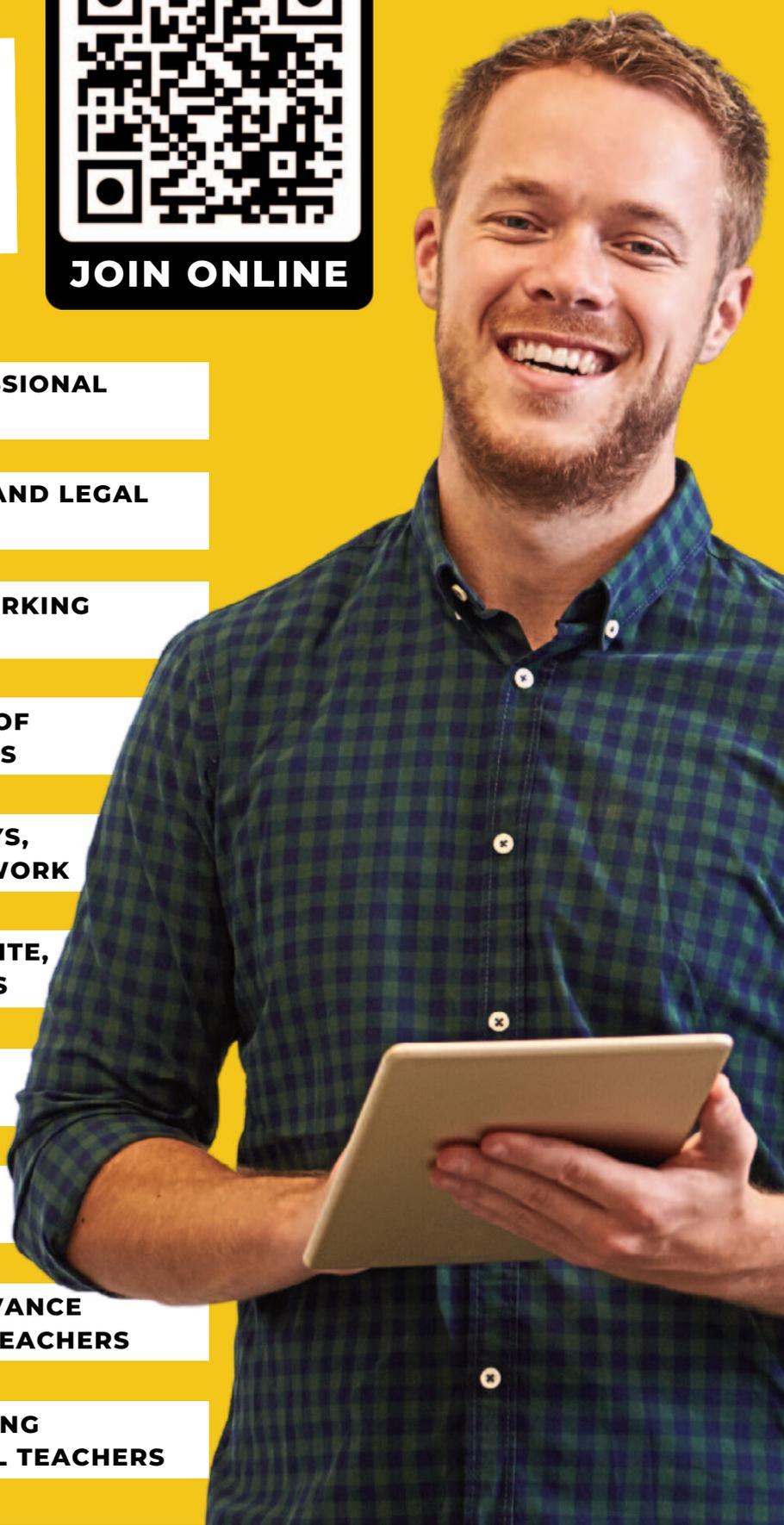
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