



TEACHERS' UNION OF IRELAND / AONTAS MÚINTEOIRÍ ÉIREANN

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NEW GALWAY CITY BRANCH OFFICERS WITH TUI AREA 11 EXECUTIVE MEMBER CATHERINE FAHY



CO. SLIGO BRANCH MAKE PRESENTATION TO RETIRING MEMBERS ANNE MANNION AND MICHAEL DEE



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TUI PRESIDENT, GERARD CRAUGHWELL

In the context of the current government's programme of austerity, there has to be concern about the capacity of the public education system, at every level, to accommodate the broad ranging agenda of reform that is being proposed. Even good ideas – and not all of the government's ideas are good – will not prosper in a resource starved environment. Appropriate timing is a vital ingredient for effective reform. Moreover the word 'reform' is itself problematic as it suggests that all is currently broken. It is not. Any wise view of our current education system would see immediately that there is much to be admired and conserved, that meets the needs and aspirations of learners and of Irish society in general. There is much that we as teachers and lecturers should be rightly proud of. We must ensure that language isn't debased by a cynical representation of cuts as reform.

Recently we have seen the roll-out of new mental health and suicide prevention guidelines for second level schools. On the day when these new guidelines were launched, the Minister of State at the Department of Health said: "What we want [schools] to do is take a whole-school approach". She went on to talk about the great work done by guidance counsellors in schools but ended by saying: "We are talking about everyone in the school, the caretakers, the ladies and men who come in to clean the school. It's a whole school approach". None among us would disagree with the idea of a whole-school approach to mental health and suicide prevention. But what is missing from the guidelines is the single point of referral in schools to a qualified

person when an 'at risk' child has been identified. There is only one such qualified person in our schools and that is the Guidance Counsellor. Again, we call on the Minister to re-establish the guidance counselling service in our schools on an ex-quota basis.

Central to the reform agenda at second level is the junior cycle. TUI calls on the Minister to consider the scale and pace of junior cycle reform. TUI representatives on the NCCA had worked along with other colleagues to modernise the junior cycle and it is a matter of great concern to the TUI that the blueprint, carefully developed by that group, was gazumped by the Minister's unilateral decision to abolish state certification. While acknowledging the need to keep curriculum relevant and updated, TUI questions the need for reform of the extent proposed. As State certification of student's achievements at age 15, the Junior Certificate has served our education system well. Having said that TUI welcomes modernisation providing it is aimed at meeting the needs of today's learners. Well-judged modernisation of the junior cycle has the potential to provide an opportunity for schools to shape a programme that will serve the wider needs of their learners. However, there is a need for much greater engagement with the practitioners in the schools, the real experts. The new junior cycle must be properly resourced, provide proper training to those delivering it and crucially it must be externally moderated. In addition, there must be a proper allocation of time for all additional work and, where appropriate, there must be payment for work done. Teachers, in general, and TUI members, in particular, who are engaged in the delivery of the junior cycle demand a high quality programme based on a centralised certification system.

With respect to third level we are about to see the biggest shake-up for years of the IoT and university sectors. The establishment of clusters, the likelihood of

mergers and the possibility of some IoT's seeking Technological University status will present serious challenges for TUI members. TUI members who lecture in the IoT sector have always welcomed change but the current proposals appear disjointed and seem to have little to do with improving quality. Not unlike changes at post-primary level, many decisions are being made without the active participation of the lecturing staff employed by IoTs. There is a real need for engagement at all levels, including with TUI, before there is any change. The HEA and the Department would be ill-advised to ignore this need.

Very soon now TUI members will have to deal with the outcome of the current round of PSA talks. The government wants to take more from us through further pay cuts and productivity measures. Many of our colleague teachers and lecturers are put to the pin of their collar to get by on very low incomes, the product of part-time, casualised work. Perhaps now is a good time for all of us to consider how some of our practices are damaging our own interests. Teachers and lecturers routinely give more than they are contracted to do. Yet, in the second level and FE/PLC sectors, posts of responsibilities have been lost. It is unlikely that we will get them back if we do the vacated duties free gratis. Similarly, at third level, lecturing beyond the weekly norm plus flex, reduces hours (and thereby pay) available to part-time colleagues. We have a duty to one another, as trade unionists, as professionals and as citizen educators with an abiding commitment to a high quality public education system, to protect the status of teaching and lecturing. That will be greatly assisted by adhering to good old-fashioned trade union values in the first instance – starting with collegiality and solidarity amongst TUI members, as TUI members.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerard P. Craughwell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Education International/OECD Conference: Framing Education for the Public Good

TUI was represented at a recent 2 day Education International OECD Conference in London by the President Gerard Craughwell and the Deputy General Secretary Annette Dolan, both of whom contributed to the discussions that teachers and lecturers are key to framing education for the public good.

Opening the Conference, EI President Susan Hopgood stated: "This year, the grave financial crisis which many countries in the world face has given the conference a sharper edge. It gives us the opportunity to do what the conference title says: 'Frame Education for the Public Good'."

Threats to Education

Frances O'Grady, General Secretary of the UK Trade Union Congress, stated that increasing privatisation and continuing austerity pose a huge threat to education. "At a time when education is increasingly being privatised and subjected to the profit motive, we must speak up for high-quality, publicly funded, publicly accountable education, that is accessible to all," she said. "With the forces of global economic competition and the interests of multinational corporations increasingly shaping the education our young people receive, we must also resist the creeping commercialisation of what is being taught in our schools, colleges and universities." Education is not just about economic competitiveness, important though that is. "Most fundamentally, it is about human enrichment, about the power of knowledge to transform lives and about the beauty of learning itself, so that every child, young person and adult has the chance to fulfil their true potential in life."

O'Grady also said that classrooms should be a place for learning, not a source of shareholder profit, and

teacher unions must resist government attempts to usher in a whole new era of schools run by firms simply wanting to make a quick buck for their shareholders. She added that, "of course we want well-funded schools, colleges and universities, and good education accessible to all, regardless of background, status or wealth. But we also want our educators to be well-treated, fairly rewarded and respected for the work they do."

Values of education

EI General Secretary, Fred Van Leeuwen stated: "The 'values of public education, are essentially the values that underpin democracy as well as our prosperity," he said. "They encompass the principles of equity and equal opportunities, of non-discrimination and social justice."

Van Leeuwen called on participants to get back to basics, get off the defensive and articulate again why public education has such an important role in each of our societies and why it cannot be outsourced to the private sector. "We must make it clear to our political leaders that privatisation and commercialisation of education are not the answer," Van Leeuwen said.

"Boosting education quality nationwide simply requires a massive investment in the entire teaching profession, in the initial training of teachers, in their professional development, and, yes, also in their pay and employment conditions," he explained. "There is no way around this reality and there are no shortcuts, such as performance pay based on student outcomes. Mind you, there is no evidence whatsoever that individual performance-related pay raises professional standards. What it does raise is anxiety and turmoil in teachers' staff rooms."



Seven threats

Highlighting de-professionalisation as one of the main challenges facing the education sector today, Van Leeuwen highlighted seven signs posing a serious threat to the future of the teaching profession and its capacity to ensure high quality teaching:

- The influx of unqualified teachers
- The casualisation of teaching
- The growing gap between teachers' pay and remuneration in other sectors
- The restriction of teachers' autonomy
- The rapid spread of standardised testing
- Mechanistic forms of high-stake teachers' evaluation
- Private sector management practices sneaking into educational institutions

Having a two-way dialogue with the OECD is vitally important, he stressed. The OECD's Education Directorate studies and surveys are anxiously followed by governments. "Whatever our views on the OECD's policies and research, we cannot deny the influence the OECD has on our education systems."

This is a pivotal time for the future of education, said Van Leeuwen. "We must not let education slip away as a top priority for governments. It is our job to keep pressing the core message that without properly resourced high-quality education for all, society itself will be fundamentally damaged."

New Equality Council



EQUALITY COUNCIL TRAINING SESSION WITH MARY QUIRKE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF AHEAD

The newly elected Equality Council, elected on the 13th December 2012 is as follows:

Chairperson:

Patrick Hogan, Limerick City Branch

Secretary:

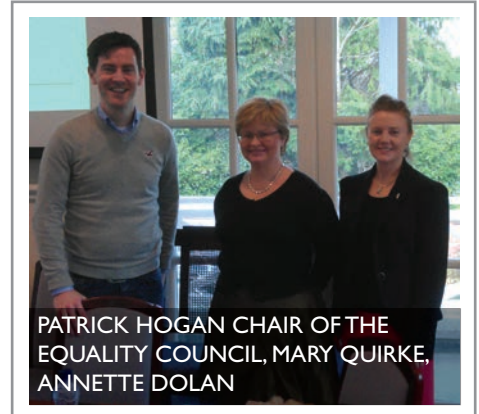
Rose O'Mahony Dublin C&C Branch

Standing Committee members:

Anne Meagher, Limerick Colleges

Lorraine Valley, Carlow IT

Geraldine Horgan, Co Meath Branch



PATRICK HOGAN CHAIR OF THE EQUALITY COUNCIL, MARY QUIRKE, ANNETTE DOLAN

Maura Fitzgibbon, Cork City branch

Michael Hughes, Co Dublin Branch

Stephen Lynch, Cork C&C Branch.

Equality Officer Training

Mary Quirke from AHEAD (The Association for Higher Education Access and Disability) facilitated an excellent training session for TUI Equality Officers on a range of disability issues including:

- Comparing the impact of different models of disability
- Exploring equality officer's own attitudes towards disability
- Reviewing the legislation
- Understanding the experience of people with disabilities
- Understanding universal design

Ms Quirke challenged the Equality Officers in relation to why teachers/lecturers should take notice of 'disabilities' and inclusive practices.

She stated:

- It is a fact that students and graduates with disabilities are creative, motivated, hard working and due to circumstance very used to 'thinking outside the box'.
- It is also a fact that while in school/college; students with disabilities meet the same requirements as other students and achieve comparable grades.

- Students that successfully progress from school and attain a place in third level do not do so by chance. All of these students have been through the second level system and have succeeded.
- Similarly the students with disabilities that graduate with honours degrees, masters and doctorates do so due to the same hard work and diligence as all students.

However, there can be times when the playing field needs to be 'levelled' with reasonable accommodation as deemed necessary. "Reasonable accommodation may be defined as providing adjustments so that a student is enabled to access a service. Accommodations can include voice activated software, print in large font, use of tape recorders, extra time in exams and screen reading software." The question is "how do you strike the right balance between making curriculums accessible and maintaining standards while working within the current legislative framework?"

There is no doubt that working with accommodations and ensuring that education is inclusive requires change.



The classroom/lecture hall is increasingly diverse as teachers/lecturers work with students with unique learning styles. Teachers and lecturers need to rethink the classroom and this 'rethink' will without doubt benefit all, she said.

AHEAD Conference 2013

AHEAD's annual conference 2013 entitled 'Is Universal Design in Education Any of My Business?' is a two day event taking place in the Croke Park Conference Centre on March 12-13 and will tackle the subject of universal design in education and on into the world of work. For further information please contact Dara at ahead@ahead.ie or at 01 7164396.

110,000 people take to the streets to protest at Ireland's bank debt burden

On Saturday, February 9th 2013, over 110,000 people took to the streets across the country to protest against the unsustainable €64 billion bank debt burden that Ireland is carrying and to demand that it be lifted. Rallies organised by ICTU, were held in Cork, Dublin, Galway, Limerick, Sligo and Waterford. Over 60,000 people took part in the Dublin protest, while at least 15,000 turned out in Cork, 13,000 in Waterford, 10,000 in Limerick, 7,000 in Sligo and 5,000 in Galway.

TUI was well represented at all marches and it was clear that branches made a significant effort to encourage and support members to join the rallies. General Secretary, John MacGabhann, had earlier called on members to attend the protests, saying it was "critical that members demonstrate their opposition and resistance to the failed austerity programme that has led to government cutbacks and demands".

Reflecting on the large TUI turnout the President and General Secretary thanked all those who had braved the cold - and in some regions rain - to make known their strong opposition to the continuing bank debt burden and the resulting austerity programme. The General Secretary said the huge turnout would send a message to the

Government and to Europe about the unfairness currently being imposed on Irish citizens. "Irish people, each individual citizen, man, woman, boy and girl in this society, has notionally paid €9000 towards resolving a debt that is not their debt, while those who were responsible for creating the difficulties that we are in seem to be escaping punishment. The large numbers attending the marches around the country were there because they want to see justice done," he said.

The General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, David Begg, told protestors at the rally in Dublin's Merrion Square that bank debt problem had not been solved by the recent deal regarding the promissory notes. "If you read some papers yesterday you would think we had achieved economic salvation and our problems were over. Nothing could be further from the truth. And we have over 100,000 thousand people on the streets of Ireland today who feel the same way.

"New deal, same problem: 1.8 million

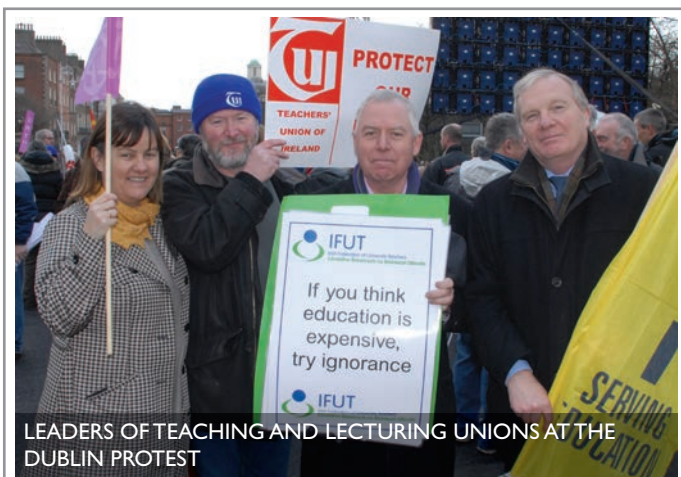
people cannot possibly pay a bank debt burden of €64 billion - especially a debt they played no part in running up. There is nothing fair about this deal. We saved the European banking system in 2008, an act of extraordinary solidarity with Europe - now we want some solidarity in return," Mr Begg said. He pointed out that Ireland had already paid some €41 billion for the banking crisis, more than Germany, the UK, Spain or Portugal. That is neither fair nor just" he said.

The rallies also heard personal testimonies from people affected by the crisis from all around the country.

ICTU has said it will continue the bank debt campaign until the link between private bank debt and national debt is clearly broken. Lift the burden - Jobs not debt!



LIFT THE BURDEN - JOBS NOT DEBT



LEADERS OF TEACHING AND LECTURING UNIONS AT THE DUBLIN PROTEST



DAVID BEGG, GENERAL SECRETARY OF ICTU ADDRESSES THE DUBLIN RALLY

TUI at protests across the country



Maternity leave – revised Circular

Following the announcement in Budget 2013 of changes to maternity and adoptive leave entitlements for teachers, the Department of Education and Skills (DES) has now issued Circular Letter 09/2013 on maternity leave.

The original Budget announcement meant the ending of leave in lieu during maternity and adoptive leave from May 1, 2013. Following on-going engagement between TUI and the other teacher unions with the Department, some progress has been made. *The new Circular does not fully abolish the entitlement to days leave in lieu, but cuts leave in lieu to the minimum in line with the requirements of the Organisation of Working Time Act. Please note any days in lieu accumulated up to April 30th 2013 will be granted under the previous Maternity Protection Entitlements for Registered Teachers Circular 0011/2011.*

TUI is of the view that the Circular does not address all of the concerns of our members. TUI will therefore be inviting members who have been adversely affected by the changes set out in the circular letter, to contact the union. The union will support claims under the appropriate legislation to be taken, where applicable.

The changes announced in respect of maternity leave are set out in paragraph 8 of the Circular. The changes mean:

- The leave year for teachers runs from the period 1 September to 31 August.
- Full time employees have a statutory entitlement to 20 days annual leave and 9 public holidays per year (pro rata for part-time teachers).

- A teacher will be entitled to leave in lieu for any public holidays that fall during her maternity leave. The statutory 20 days annual leave will be increased by the number of public holiday closures that occur during the maternity absence (i.e. if 3 public holidays fell during a teacher's maternity leave, her entitlement to annual leave in respect of that leave year would be 23 days).
 - A teacher's entitlement to 20 days annual leave (plus public holidays) is not affected by her absence on maternity leave. **However, leave in lieu must be taken on existing school closure days, either before and/or after her maternity leave, in the leave year in question (1 September to 31 August).** Therefore, if in a leave year, a teacher on maternity leave has reached the statutory minimum of 20 days annual leave, and any public holiday entitlements due, either before and/or after her maternity leave, then she has achieved her statutory entitlements and there is no leave in lieu accruing.
 - In a leave year, where the pattern of a teacher's maternity leave does not give her 20 days annual leave plus Public Holidays accrued in the existing leave year, teachers may either: (i) Take the extra days due immediately before the commencement of her maternity leave.
- (ii) Carry the days forward to the following year but they must be taken during school closures.

TUI advises that any small number of days in lieu that might accrue should be taken immediately prior to the commencement of maternity leave, otherwise they are effectively lost if carried forward to the next leave year.

Examples

(1) A teacher began her maternity leave in mid-January 2013 and her 26 weeks expire on 20th July 2013. Any days in lieu accumulated by the teacher up to April 30th 2013 are granted under the previous Maternity Protection Entitlements for Registered Teachers Circular 0011/2011. Therefore this teacher will receive 5 days in lieu for the February mid-term break and 10 days for the Easter holidays. These days in lieu are to be taken following the end of the school summer holiday period (i.e. starting September 1st 2013).

There are 3 bank holidays after May 1, 2013, over the course of the teacher's maternity leave. These will be covered by the new Circular so the teacher will take them during existing school closure in the remainder of the leave year (i.e. over the summer holidays following the expiry of her maternity leave on 20th July).

(2) A teacher begins her maternity leave in mid-October 2013 and her 26 weeks maternity leave expires on 22nd April 2014. The teacher has taken no annual leave days prior to her maternity leave. Over the course

of her maternity leave there are 5 bank holidays. The teacher will take these bank holidays and her 20 days statutory leave during existing school closure in the remainder of the leave year (i.e. over the summer closure period).

- (3) A teacher begins her maternity leave at the beginning of March 2014 and her 26 weeks maternity leave expires on 30th August. In the leave year prior to maternity leave, this teacher has had 4 days leave during the

October midterm break (excluding bank holidays), 7 days leave at Christmas (excluding bank holidays) and 5 days leave for the February midterm break, plus public holidays. Therefore she has used 16 days of her 20 days statutory leave and 4 public holidays. During the period of her maternity leave (March to August) there are 5 public holidays. Therefore the teacher has 4 annual leave days and 5 public holidays left to take, 9 days in total. When the

teacher returns to work on 30th August there are 2 school closure days left in the existing leave year. Therefore 2 of her 9 days must be taken on these school closure days. The remaining 7 days should be taken immediately prior to her maternity leave. (Alternatively she can carry the days forward to the following year but they must be taken during school closures.)

Circular 09/2013 is available on DES website and TUI website.

Changes to the Occupational Health Strategy for Teachers in Second Level Schools

From the February 1st 2013, any teacher who has four continuous weeks of sick leave or twelve cumulative weeks of sick leave in a 12 month rolling period must be referred by the teacher's employer to the Occupational Health Service (Medmark).

From January 1st 2014 any teacher on sick leave who has four weeks continuous or cumulative sick leave absence in a 12 month rolling period must be referred to the Occupational Health Service (Medmark). The details of the revisions to the scheme are set out in C/L 04/2013, which can be accessed on the TUI website www.tui.ie or on the Department website www.education.ie

Transition arrangements from the existing Sick leave scheme to the Revised Sick leave Scheme to be introduced in 2014

Members will also be aware that substantial changes will be made to the

sick leave scheme from 2014 arising from the Labour Court recommendations of July 2012. The existing scheme which allows for 12 months full pay over a rolling 4 year period and 24 months of unpaid leave will change to the following provisions:

Standard:

- 3 months full pay followed by 3 months half pay, unpaid leave or temporary rehabilitation pay thereafter for 18 months, depending on the illness.

Critical Illness:

- 6 months full pay followed by 6 months half pay, 12 months temporary rehabilitation pay or 12 months unpaid.

Please note that temporary rehabilitation pay is a payment based on pensionable service and is equivalent to the teacher's accrued pension benefit. Please also note that the rolling 4 year period also applies to the new scheme.

When the changes are introduced in 2014, the sick leave scheme provides for 12 months paid leave over a rolling four year period. It has not been clarified, however, when this rolling four year period will begin. TUI understands that some members may have already exhausted the 12 month paid leave period. The union is also aware that others may now be commencing an extended period of leave, arising from treatment and/or surgery for some serious illness which may result in them having exhausted the 12 month paid period by the operative date of the new scheme in 2014.

TUI advises that the transition arrangements for such teachers from the existing sick leave scheme to the new sick leave scheme in 2014, will form part of discussions which are due to commence shortly between the Department of Education and Skills and the Teacher Unions.

Apprenticeship Working Party calls for national review of apprenticeship system

With apprenticeship continuing to experience a significant reduction in student enrolment the employment led recruitment system is being questioned. The Apprenticeship Working Party has called for a national review of the apprenticeship system, to include an examination of alternatives to the employer led model. Members are concerned that the current policies and funding model will deplete capacity and structural resources within the Institute of Technology sector and that the quality and excellence created over decades will become obsolete. In order to guarantee the future supply of qualified trade's

people a new approach needs to be considered.

The TUI Executive has approved three recommendations made by the Apprenticeship Working Party:

- (1) The Department of Education and Skill should begin a national review of the apprenticeship system. This review should be supported by an inclusive and transparent consultation process.
- (2) A united trade union position on apprenticeship needs to be forged with colleagues in other union who have an interest in apprenticeship.

- (3) Members must engage proactively with their institutes to create new opportunities and programmes.

The Apprenticeship Working Party notes that apprenticeship should not be perceived as an industrial training model but rather as an alternative education model based on the principle of praxis, the application of technical knowledge and expert practice. Members of TUI seek to retain the best of the present apprenticeship model while constructing a pedagogy that will shape the apprenticeship model for the next decade.

Funding cuts continue for IoT sector

The Institute of Technology sector continues to suffer from the rolling annual cuts to core grant funding. Since 2008 the sector has witnessed a massive reduction in funding of over 12%, or in monetary terms €121,628,170. Due to the cuts, Institutes are now struggling to fund their core activities, such as teaching, engagement with industry and applied research. The high quality standard of programme provision may also be damaged by the relentless austerity measures.

To date, the sector has experienced an average annual reduction in funding of 3% but the projected cut for 2013-2014 is more than double this. According to figures released by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) the projected 2% cut

for 2013-2014 will have an additional once off 5% deduction applied, resulting in an accumulative cut of 7% from core grant funding.

However, the cuts go even deeper than the percentage cuts to core grant funding, as other top slicing measures are performed on the funding allocation before the core grant funding budget is identified. For example, €9 million was taken from the higher education funding allocation to deal with pension fund liabilities in the university sector and the €14.8 million additional revenue raised by the €250 increase in student fees will be deducted from the grant allocation. In addition, a further €15 million will be top sliced for sectoral and strategic development projects.

The extent of the dramatic cuts combined with the top slicing could result in some Institutes experiencing significant deficits, as much as 13% in some cases. This is unsustainable. The cuts have stripped back the fat and muscle exposing the bone, the next stage is marrow extraction which will result in a hollow higher education structure devoid of life and substance. This will put the future economic development of the country at risk. The economic and social progress that resulted from the Investment in Education strategy, which is now nearly 50 year old, could be undone in just five years of austerity. Recessions cannot be resolved by reductionist strategies. To combat recession there is a need for investment, innovation and a new social imagination.

President Gerard Craughwell visits Athlone IT



L-R RONAN FLYNN, DERMOT DUFFY, GERARD CRAUGHWELL, JIM MAGUIRE, JOHN O'CONNOR, KEVIN MCLOUGHLIN

Institutes of Technology must be protected in restructuring of third level

The Teacher's Union of Ireland (TUI) criticised last month's publication of a discussion document on possible changes to the third level sector, by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), as a kite flying exercise.

The document 'Completing the Landscape Process for Irish Higher Education' contains a number of proposals that will impact on the Institute of Technology sector. TUI believes the publication of the discussion document was an attempt by the HEA to influence the outcome of an on-going consultation process, with Higher Education Institutes and the Minister for Education and Skills, on the future of the third level sector.

The proposed changes contained in the document make it apparent that the Higher Education Authority (HEA) does not fully appreciate the role of Institutes of Technology (IOTs).

About 40% of third level students in Ireland attend an IOT. Institutes have widened access to third level and are an increasingly popular choice for students. Enrolments in IOTs increased by 48% between 2006 and 2010, compared to an increase of 14% in Universities over the same period.

The distinct educational offering of IOTs is characterised by their regional locations, the applied employment focused nature of their courses and the progression options available. Crucially, IOTs provide regional or local access to third level for students who do not have the financial resources or ability to relocate.

IOTs promote access to higher education for non-traditional or under-represented cohorts of students, including a significant proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, students completing apprenticeship courses and mature students.

The HEA itself suggests that "when choosing full-time study mature students in recent years have favoured the IOTs, possibly due to the range of courses offered and alignment with improving work prospects and proximity to home, keeping the IOTs ahead of the universities with regards to proportions of mature entrants". The HEA also acknowledges that during the economic downturn IOTs are "capitalising on recruiting those unemployed in a region".

TUI is concerned that the HEA proposals are driven by cost saving goals and not by educational or student need. Where there are valid educational reasons for change the IOT sector and TUI members in the sector will not be found wanting. However, the HEA must demonstrate that merging IOTs that are up to eighty miles apart will not damage access to regional higher education.

Students and communities, as well as Institutes themselves, need to know if existing courses will be lost to individual IOTs under these plans. Rationalisation of course provision must not result in students being denied the right to pursue a programme in their local region that was previously available. The close links that each Institute has forged with local industry and business, vital to the

employment prospects of students and graduates, must also be protected.

The HEA proposes Institutes of "more significant scale and critical mass in the best interests of students". However, a distinct advantage of IOTs is their smaller size, resulting in greater staff-student interaction.

Before proposing an ill-thought through overhaul of the sector, the HEA should address existing problems. These include increases in student numbers but decreasing staffing levels and a funding model that dis-incentivises IOTs from providing level 6 and 7 courses which are an extremely important option for students. In addition, the employment control framework imposed on the sector is preventing IOTs from developing new courses which could address potential areas of employment and equip students with necessary skills for the current jobs market.

Over the past forty years, the IOT sector has made a valuable contribution to national economic development. IOTs have empowered communities and regions and have created sustainable employment in local economies. However, there is now a real concern that the HEA proposals risk undermining this distinct mission. Before any change proposals are finalised it is imperative that there is meaningful engagement with TUI to ensure that this vital educational option is protected.

Extracts of this article were first published in the Irish Independent on 23rd January 2013.

Training for Governing Body Representatives

The Education and Training Committee of ICTU is developing an accredited training programme for worker/staff representatives on the boards of state and semi-state bodies. This programme will provide Worker Director and Governing Body Representatives with a range of knowledge, skills and competencies to assist in them in performing their role and function.

The training programme will provide a trade union perspective on a range of relevant legislation, guidelines and policy. The programme content will comprehend subjects such as Governance, Finances, Employment law, Communications, Strategic management, Occupational Health and Safety, Negotiations.

In order to assess the scope and demand for this type of training programme an online survey will be circulated to Worker Directors and Governing Body Representatives. TUI would encourage members to participate in this online survey. Any member seeking further information should contact TUI head office.

Public Service Talks

Talks on an extension to the Public Services Agreement began in January between public service unions and management. Last December, the TUI Executive decided, on a without prejudice basis, to accept the Government's invitation to talks. This was with a view to examining any proposals that might be put forward by the Government side and to putting our own priorities to Government.

On Friday, February 12th 2013, the TUI Executive Committee passed a motion on the talks that states: "As soon as concrete proposals from the current Croke Park Extension talks are put by the Government side, this Executive Committee will meet without delay to discuss these. Further, if at that stage, the Government side has not removed cuts in pay and jobs losses from the agenda, then this Executive Committee will consider the union's further participation in the talks."

Prior to the commencement of talks the Government set out its requirement for a further €1 billion of savings from the public sector pay and pensions bill between 2013 and 2015, on the basis that envisaged growth and tax revenues had not materialised and that, as a result, the deficit to be closed had increased by this amount.

In this initial phase of talks, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform set out the fiscal situation and outlined an indicative agenda under three strands – productivity, workplace reform, and pay/pension measures. The union side has also outlined its agenda for talks, including that any proposals must be fair and equitable. Of particular significance for TUI are the issues of casualisation and the elimination of the discriminatory, reduced pay scales imposed by Government on new entrants.

The unions have sought clarification from management on a number of matters to do with its indicative agenda. These include measures that could be applied centrally, across the entire public service, such as a reduction in numbers and a possible pay cut above a certain level. Unions have also asked the management side to provide figures on savings that could be generated under these and other measures. We are awaiting this detail and the unions have engaged external financial advisors to examine the management data when it is provided.

Following initial discussion of the overarching issues, some sectoral discussion has taken place. In the education sector, sub-sectoral talks at

primary and second level and at third level have been held and have been attended by TUI representatives. Unions have been informed that of the total targeted €1 billion of savings, a contribution of €350 million would be expected from education. In the education sector, management's indicative agenda was clarified as including reference to additional working time and adjustments to certain allowances, including supervision and substitution.

A series of discussions has been scheduled which commenced on Friday, February 15th 2013. TUI will keep members informed of developments as the talks continue and the Executive Committee will keep developments under close review.

The priorities of TUI are to preserve the pay and pensions of members, ensure protection against compulsory redundancies, tackle the casualisation of the teaching and lecturing professions and improve the pay scales of newly qualified teachers.

Single Public Service Pension Scheme

The Teacher Unions' campaign against the introduction of the new career average scheme, underpinned by the Trident Report, was successful in delaying the introduction of the new pension scheme by two years. However, on December 31st 2012, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform announced the commencement with effect from January 1st 2013, of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme ("Single Scheme"), as provided for in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and other Provisions) Act 2012.

The main elements of the scheme are:

- New entrants appointed on or after January 1 2013, are members of the Single Scheme.
- Existing employees who resign/retire and have a break in employment of 26 weeks or greater will be members of the single scheme on return to employment.
- Career average earnings are used to calculate benefits; a pension and lump sum amount accrue each year and are up-rated each year by

reference to Consumer Price Index (C.P.I.)

- Minimum pension age linked to the State Pension age; 66 years initially, rising to 67 in 2021 and 68 in 2028.
- Compulsory retirement age of 70 applies.
- Post retirement pension increases are linked to C.P.I.

The provisions in respect of teachers are set out in Circular Letter 07/2013. A similar Circular letter applying to lecturers is expected to issue shortly.



We look at things differently



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Visit from the American Federation of Teachers



AFT OFFICIALS AND JOHN MCGABHANN WITH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS FROM DEANSRATH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A delegation from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) came to Ireland at the beginning of February, as part of a study visit to see at first hand the Irish primary and post-primary education system. AFT represents 1.5 million members in the United States including early childhood educators, first and second level teachers and higher education faculty. The delegation visiting Ireland included AFT President Randi Weingarten and Vice Presidents, Dick Iannuzzi and Mary Cathryn Ricker.

As part of AFT's visit they attended a round table discussion at TUI Head Office with officials from TUI, ASTI and INTO. The purpose of the discussion was to share information and ideas on the industrial relations structures in the Irish education system, as well as the current cutbacks in education and how trade unions can respond. TUI General

Secretary, John MacGabhann, told the AFT delegation that Irish unions are currently in "uncharted territory" with regard to talks on an extension to the Public Service Agreement and the Government's aim of removing a further €1 billion from the public service pay and pensions bill.

AFT President Randi Weingarten explained that AFT had developed a number of key strategies to revitalise the union. This included encouraging teachers to tell their stories, linking with other stakeholders in the education community as a form of density and focusing on leadership development within the union. Ms Weingarten also emphasised AFT's focus on "ideas" and "being part of the solution". "We need to solve problems as opposed to win arguments", she said. This point was echoed by AFT Vice President, Mary Cathryn Ricker; "We never let them hear us say no. We say how about?" Ms Ricker

also pointed out the need for union members to "relearn activism". We need to see union membership like a health club membership, the more you put in the more you will get out, she stated.

Accompanied by John MacGabhann, the AFT delegation visited two Dublin second level schools; Deansrath Community College in Clondalkin and St. Colmcille's Community School in Knocklyon. They also visited St Ronan's National School in Deansrath. They spoke to pupils, teachers, members of schools management and parent representatives. The delegation was particularly interested in the level of engagement by the schools with the local communities they serve. AFT officials also remarked upon the extent to which students seemed genuinely motivated by the culture of the school and by the breadth of curriculum provision.



AFT DELEGATION WITH OFFICIALS FROM TUI, ASTI AND INTO



AFT PRESIDENT (LEFT) DISCUSSES THE IRISH EDUCATION SYSTEM WITH DEANSRATH COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT

The following articles have been submitted by the Teaching Council

Teaching Council Launches Video for Student Teachers

The Teaching Council has launched a new video telling student teachers all they need to know about registering with the Teaching Council.

It is important that future registrants are familiar with the registration process; know how to submit a complete application and how long the process takes. That is why the Teaching Council visits final year student teachers and gives a presentation detailing how to go about getting registered with the Teaching Council.

This video has been put together to make this important presentation accessible to all future registrants. It provides all the information needed to begin the registration process and can be watched on the registration pages of www.teachingcouncil.ie

Being aware of the registration process will be particularly important once Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act 2001 is introduced. Section 30 provides that only registered teachers employed in State funded teaching positions in recognised schools will be paid from State funds.

The Minister for Education and Skills has publicly indicated his intention to commence Section 30 of the Act before the end of this school year.

Registered teachers are encouraged to tell any final year teaching students they know about the video.

Annual Renewal Fee reduced to €65

The annual registration renewal fee has been reduced to €65, a reduction of €25. This reduction applies only to annual renewals falling due after 1 January 2013. Registered teachers should also be aware of some important changes which were made to the registration renewal process in 2012.

From now on a single Registration Renewal notice will be posted to teachers approximately four weeks in advance of their renewal date. If registration is not renewed by the expiry date, a Final Notice will be issued by registered post. If registration is not renewed within thirty days of the date on the Final Notice, the teacher's name will be automatically removed from the register.



St Patrick's College

Drumcondra, Dublin 9

A COLLEGE OF DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY

Doctorate in Education

Applications are invited for the Doctorate in Education (EdD) at St. Patrick's College, DCU. The Programme will commence in July 2013. Modules will be delivered on campus and online. Coursework will extend over two years on a part-time basis with a Dissertation being completed during the subsequent two years. The Programme has a Policy and Research focus and will enable candidates to pursue their interests in one of the following specialisations (contingent on student choices):

- Ethical Education and Schooling (in partnership with Educate Together)
- Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Curriculum
- Research and Evaluation (Co-ordinated by staff from the Educational Research Centre)
- Special and Inclusive Education
- Teacher Education (a fee bursary is available on a competitive basis)

Applicants should normally have an honours Masters degree or equivalent. Candidates will be interviewed prior to places on the programme being allocated.

Application forms and additional information may be accessed at www.spd.dcu.ie/pg or on request from: Admissions Office, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9 Telephone: 01-8842025/8842096; Email: courseinfo@spd.dcu.ie

Closing date for receipt of applications is Friday, 1 March, 2013

Coláiste Phádraig, Droim Conrach, Baile Átha Cliath 9
COLAISTE DE CHUID OLLSCOIL CHATHAIR BHAILE ÁTHA CLIATH



Registration with the Teaching Council – Important Changes

With effect from July 2012 just **one renewal notice** will issue from the Teaching Council **approximately 4 weeks** before your current registration expires. If you do not renew your registration before your registration expires a **Final Notice** will issue to you by registered post/courier service .

If you do not **renew registration within thirty days of the date on the Final Notice**, your name will be **automatically removed** from the Register in accordance with Section 34 of the Teaching Council Act. (Remember to advise the Council immediately should your current contact details change – this can be done on line).

From a **specific date in 2013** (yet to be specified) the Department of Education and Skills or VECs will be prohibited from paying a salary from state funds to a person employed as a teacher who is not registered. The Education (Amendment) Act 2012 requires the Teaching Council to share information it holds on registered teachers with the Department and the VECs.

Prompt renewal of your registration is advised as if you are removed from the register you will have to undergo the complete registration process, including Garda vetting.

Contradictory policy messages by government about student welfare and support

January brought the publication of two significant policy documents by the Department of Education and Skills and Department of Health, both of which seek to increase the level of support available for young people in our schools.

Well Being in Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention is a response to strong evidence of growing incidences of poor mental health and self-harm among young people and an increase in youth suicide. In Ireland the cost of poor mental health was estimated to be 2% of GNP (€3bn) in 2006. An investigation by Headstrong (National Centre for Youth Mental Health) found that every town and community has a small number of young people living on the edge and many young people are unable to cope with the problems they face (2009). International research shows that mental health promotion is most effective when it takes place early in life and school is a favourable location to start support programmes and initiatives. Therefore, guidelines to support practice in schools are welcome. Correctly, the good work already being done in schools (SPHE, Guidance, Pastoral Care, other initiatives) is highlighted. However, the guidelines seek to bring greater coherence to current practices and emphasise a stronger focus on a whole-school approach and co-ordinated links with out- of- school services (health, youth, community).

The second report *Action Plan on Bullying* is also a comprehensive document and lays the foundation for training for parents and boards of managements, the identification and provision of appropriate professional development for teachers, a public awareness campaign and a national anti-bullying website.

Bullying is a social phenomenon and a multi-faceted approach, involving local

communities, the family, social and health services and schools, is necessary. Explicit acknowledgement that schools already have anti-bullying measures in place and that they can only shoulder some of the responsibility for taking actions that prevent or counteract bullying is, therefore, welcome. However, as can be expected, school is seen as a place that has a strong influence on students' attitudes and behaviour. In this context, efforts to increase capacity in schools, families and society to avert or address bullying merit serious consideration. Immediate development of new anti-bullying procedures for schools is being given high priority and the Department has already invited the teacher unions to participate in a working group that will prepare draft new procedures for consultation.

Contradictory policy

The publication of these two policy documents can be taken as a demonstration of a laudable and welcome government commitment to the welfare of students and young people. Such effort would, however, be more impressive and instil greater confidence in teachers and principals if it did not lie alongside contradictory policy decisions; decisions that have seen schools lose teachers, guidance and counselling support and middle management posts on an on-going basis since 2008. Teachers and principals live with the consequences of poorly, thought out and disconnected policy decisions each day and it is difficult to imagine how the coherent approach advocated will emerge. They understand the negative impact the education cutbacks have had on the state of 'health' of their school. The critical point is that the reduction in teacher numbers and management posts and diminished access to the expertise of guidance counsellors restricts how schools can support young people in developing the personal attitudes, skills and competences to cope

with day-to-day adolescence life and prepare for adulthood.

A TUI study (2012), conducted by an independent company Behaviour and Attitudes gathered extensive data on the impact of the budget cuts on schools and students. In a sample of 88 schools close to a quarter (22%) reported that the level of pastoral care had been reduced by September 2012 and 19% reported reductions in guidance provision. Following the decision to withdraw provision for ex-quota posts many more schools reported expected reductions in these critical areas from September 2012 - 63% reporting expected reductions in guidance provision and 50% in pastoral care services. The allocation of a year head (from the reduced pool of senior posts) to each year group, seen by many as the key to strong pastoral care systems, is now a luxury in most schools. 70% of all respondents in the study (283) ranked the resulting negative impact on support and welfare services to students as high but management felt they had little choice.

A recent small, localised study across 12 schools on the east coast paints the reality that arises from the removal of ex-quota provision for guidance. Half of the schools involved had reduced discrete provision for guidance and counselling by 50% or over and one third had reduced it by over 60% (the highest reduction was 85%). Just one quarter of the schools surveyed had retained discrete provision for guidance at over 80% of the original allocation. At the time of the study one school indicated it no longer had a guidance counsellor. Feedback also flagged that some guidance provision was now general in nature and delivered by non-specialist teachers or guest speakers.

Additional data and commentary from personnel in these schools showed that within the discrete time allocated to

guidance work, many guidance counsellors are now expected to concentrate on delivering guidance to whole class groups. These trends have also been identified by a recent independent national study (LifeCare Psychological Services) in 240 second level schools which found that the amount of time guidance counsellors are spending on timetabled class room activity has increased by 19.8% which can include curriculum guidance, subject teaching, SPHE and other activities.

counsellors are not facilitated in attending their personal supervision sessions; an essential to ensure best practice. In addition, the guidance counsellor can no longer assign time to core planning or co-ordination activities that support other staff with less specialist expertise in working with students.

These trends clearly conflict with the whole-school strategy advocated by the guidelines. Both sets of guidelines

continuity of strong care and support systems in schools. If, as has been reported, they are restricted in the time available or in how they use their time they will not be able to deploy this expertise in a manner that will best suit the needs of the whole-school community and individual students.

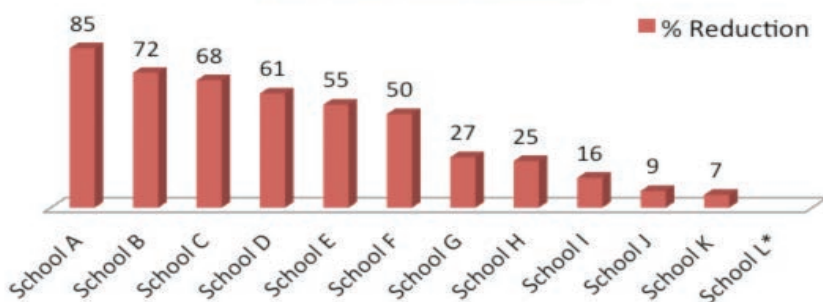
While the procedures and guidelines to address bullying are under review the guidelines for mental health promotion and suicide prevention are agreed and clearly articulate a continuum of support with three levels:

- 'Support for All' - universal support for all students.
- 'Support for Some' - targeted support for the mild or transient needs of some.
- 'Support for a Few' - intensive, individualised support for more complex and/or enduring needs.

It is difficult to see any compatibility between government guidelines that clearly expect more time and attention to be given to student welfare and the plight of schools in a resource stripped environment with many competing priorities. In such an environment it is not surprising that schools are expressing considerable concern that most students will not receive the general support they deserve, the short-term targeted support required by some will be inadequate and restricted and, most importantly, those that need intensive interventions will be short changed by the system as too little support will come too late. Failure in this regard will have negative consequences for the current generation of young people, which as identified in national and international reports will simply cost the state more in the long term.

Our thanks to Co Dublin VEC Branch for their assistance in preparing this article.

Guidance Provision across 12 Schools on the East Coast



* School L had no guidance counsellor at time of study

Both studies emphasised the provision of one-to-one support sessions as the biggest casualty of the removal of ex-quota guidance posts. The LifeCare Psychological Services study found a 51.4% reduction in the time available for one-to-one student counselling with guidance counsellors struggling to fit this in around timetabled and other commitments. The highly specialised expertise of the guidance counsellor and the 'necessary confidential space' are, therefore, no longer readily available to students who need individualised, high support to deal with personal issues and/or career advice. Individual sessions are by necessity restricted, often reserved for the extreme case that presents after a student has already endured significant personal distress or trauma. Notably, some guidance

recognise that someone has to have core responsibility and a small number of staff should have lead roles in order that effective responses are planned, co-ordinated and delivered. Critically, there is repeated reference to guidance, counselling, pastoral care services and care teams as core supports in identifying needs, planning, intervening, monitoring and review.

Diminished school capacity

Yet school capacity in all these areas has diminished, challenging even the most imaginative of schools in terms of how it will prioritise the implementation of any new guidelines and procedures. What seems to have escaped the policy makers is that guidance counsellors have additional professional expertise that is critical to the development and

PDA News



The PDA conference 2012 theme of **‘Change in Education- Meeting the Challenge’** was aptly chosen to reflect the current educational landscape which is being sculpted by the prevailing economic uncertainties, as well as the numerous reforms to teaching and learning in our schools. In recent years the Irish educational context has changed radically as a result of successive budgetary cutbacks. The PDA abhors the detrimental effect of recent budgetary cutbacks and pay cuts. PDA accepts, that in a world of constant change it is necessary to keep apace, to embrace necessary change and to adapt to new methodologies and approaches. Notwithstanding that, PDA also recognises that a prerequisite to any reform is the system’s capacity to manage change and at the moment the system is creaking at the seams. We ask now how a modern system of education for Ireland is going to be resourced?

There are approximately 1,000 teachers less in second level schools at present - that is equivalent to shutting down 30 schools of 550 pupils, or closing a 550 pupil school in every county in Ireland! Does the public realise the extent of the cuts and the inevitable reduction in the educational service to Irish families? PDA stress that in any new education landscape it is critical to:

- Ensure the quality of teaching and learning and student welfare
- Ensure the sustainability of current provision and quality in the system
- Ensure the welfare of Principals, Deputy Principals and school staff

How can this be done in a situation of: Reduced time for leadership; Revised PTR; Reduced Guidance Provision (effectively a cut in PTR); School-Budget



PDA PRESIDENT BRIAN Ó MAOILCHIARÁIN MAKING A PRESENTATION TO DR. DEIRDRE MATTHEWS FOLLOWING HER ADDRESS TO THE PDA CONFERENCE

Cuts (capitation, resource hours etc.); Reduction in VEC administration staff and the imminent establishment of local education and training boards (ETBs); Public Service Agreement - transfers and redeployment issues; DES Inspections - MLL, Programme Inspection etc. Couple these with the additional challenges of: Induction/Probation; Teaching Council Revisions and Career Entry Professional Programme; a Further 6% cut in capitation over next 4 years; Junior Certificate Reform; Literacy and Numeracy Strategy; Incidental Inspections, Legislative demands; SOLAS and the changes facing the Further Education sector and all of us in education can foresee the damage being visited upon the educational infrastructure of the nation.

Our clear message is that the recent dismantling of school middle management structures coupled with the revised PTR has left schools under-resourced to meet current demands and

consequently ill-equipped to satisfactorily implement new initiatives. Indeed schools have already been placed in the invidious position of choosing between guidance and subject provision. The rot however does not even stop there. Another critical issue looming for schools will be the proposed savings of a further 350 million euro next year from the national education budget. Where is that to come from?

Mar fhocal scoirr, undoubtedly, we are operating in times of unprecedented change. However, despite the enormity of the challenge facing us, PDA would know that we as teachers are resilient, innovative, we know how to improvise and manage, and most importantly of all we know we will not shy away from adversity!

BRIAN Ó MAOILCHIARÁIN
PRESIDENT OF P.D.A.

New Salary Scale Circular

Following the review of public service allowances in 2012, it was announced that a number of allowances were to be abolished for new beneficiaries not in receipt of the allowance prior to February 1, 2012. It was also announced that teachers whose first appointment was on or after February 1, 2012 would commence employment on the fourth point of the revised salary scale, at €30,702.

The Department of Education and Skills has now issued Circular 0008/2013 which sets down the new salary scale and pay rates for new teachers with effect from February 1, 2012.

Teachers first appointed on or after February 1, 2012 should note that they will not be paid qualification allowances but should commence employment on point 1 of the new scale (i.e. €30,702). This is equivalent to point 4 of the pay scale introduced from January 1, 2011. The new pay scale (which applies to appointees with effect from February 1, 2012) is a 22 point pay scale that exactly mimics points 4 to 25 of the older new entrant scale.

Teachers first appointed on or after February 1, 2012 should ensure they are placed on the correct point of the new scale and are receiving the correct salary. Teachers are also entitled to claim appropriate back pay. They should approach their employer and ask to be placed on the appropriate scale and for any back pay to be paid with retrospective effect to their first appointment. Teachers appointed after February 1, 2012 and whose first anniversary of appointment has passed should be placed on the second point of the new scale with appropriate back pay.

The Circular also sets out the following:

In situations where a teacher had an entitlement to a qualification allowance prior to December 5, 2011 and has failed to claim this allowance, this should be done within a period of 3 months from January 25, 2013 (i.e. the date Circular 0008/2013 was issued).

All teachers first appointed on or after February 1, 2012 to a post for which they are appropriately qualified and registered will start on the first point of the post-1 February 2012 salary scale. Incremental credit may continue to

apply for relevant recognised service (e.g. recognised teaching service in another EU Member State). Similarly, those who leave teaching will be able to reckon such previous relevant service on re-entry.

Any retired teacher who returns to teaching on or after February 1, 2012 will commence at the first point of the post-1 February 2012 salary scale. No incremental credit for service prior to February 1, 2012 will be payable.

Persons who are employed in a teaching position in an unqualified capacity and who become eligible for the qualified rate of pay on or after February 1, 2012 will be placed on the post-1 February 2012 pay scales from the date on which they were appropriately qualified and registered. No allowances will be payable regardless of qualified status in another sector. Incremental credit may be payable for qualified service in another sector i.e. primary/secondary, community and comprehensive/VEC.

TUI has raised the issue of Circular 0008/2013 with the Department of Education and Skills.

Circular 0008/2013 is available on the DES website and on the TUI website.

Please note, serving teachers (those in employment) on December 5, 2011, who were engaged in a course of further study on that date, leading to an additional qualification, will receive the relevant qualification allowance on completion of the course. These individuals should apply to the Department/VEC as appropriate within 3 months of the date of receipt of the award.

TUI PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

PRE-RETIREMENT TRAINING

DATE	LOCATION	VENUE
7th March 2013 9:20am – 4:15pm	Dublin	Gresham Hotel

Places are limited and will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis.
Please ensure you complete this form in full and return to the address below by February 26th 2013.
Alternatively please email your **full** details to Liz/Carol: reception@tui.ie

APPLICATION FORM

Name _____

School/College Name and Address _____

Contact Telephone _____

E-Mail Address _____

- **Have you previously attended a TUI pre-retirement seminar?**

If so please indicate where/when: _____

Please send completed form to:

Liz Daly/Carol Ryan, TUI, 73 Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6
Telephone: (01) 4922588 Fax: (01) 4922953
E-mail: reception@tui.ie

The Impact of the PTR Increase in FE/PLC

The recent increase in the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) for Further Education/Post Leaving Cert (FE/PLC) courses will have an impact beyond the direct FE sector. The simple fact of the matter is that in Ireland there is no recognised, separate Further Education sector in spite of TUI's continued demand for one. Many teachers employed in FE/PLC Centres are simply second level teachers assigned to FE/PLC and as such are fully transferable between second level schools and FE/PLC centres.

The increase in the PTR from 17:1 to 19:1 for FE/PLC announced in budget is aimed at removing 200 Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) teaching posts from the education system. This is a massive reduction in frontline staffing levels. There is a mistaken view that this translates just as two more students in a FE/PLC class. The truth of the matter is this PTR increase involving the loss of 200 WTE posts will translate into as many as 500 pro-rata fixed-term teachers losing all or a significant portion of their hours.

For many FE/PLC centres the choice will be stark; lose key personnel and current cutting-edge courses and/or courses currently under development or transfer teachers with traditional qualifications in areas such as business studies into second level schools.

Whether the transfer will be to another school within the existing VEC or the soon to be established ETB or within a set distance of the teacher's current school is under discussion at present. In any event, the effect of transfers will typically be the displacement of fixed term teachers. Therefore this issue needs to be seen as one that affects second level and FE/PLC.



ATTENDING THE LIMERICK CITY FE/PLC PTR MEETING WERE TUI PRESIDENT GERARD CRAUGHWELL, DON RYAN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, CARMEL RONAN BRANCH CHAIR, LIAM O'SULLIVAN BRANCH TREASURER AND PATRICK HOGAN EQUALITY OFFICER

What can we in the TUI do about this? At national level the President, Gerard Craughwell and and General Secretary, John MacGabhann have met with the Minister for Education and Skills Ruairí Quinn and outlined the damage this PTR increase will inflict on the FE/PLC centres and their ability to respond to their local community's needs for up-skilling, education and training.

A TUI deputation led by the President and General Secretary also met with the Fianna Fáil Parliamentary Party, the Sinn Féin Parliamentary Party and members of the Oireachtas subcommittee on Education and Social Protection, to brief them. A number of parliamentary questions have been put to the Minister for Education and Skills and there was a 5 hour debate on the issue in Dáil Éireann (under a Private Member's Motion).

The President has attended a number of meetings arranged by branches around the country to outline the impact of this increase on the FE/PLC centres in the area and on the VEC/ETB. In addition the President has had a number of opinion articles published in the national media (Irish Examiner and Irish Times) attacking the increased PTR.

TUI is asking members and local branches to get behind the political lobby campaign. Your involvement is critical to the success of the campaign.

The local TUI Branch should:

- Appoint a local lobby committee to co-ordinate and oversee the campaign.
- Organise a roster of teachers from each school centre to meet with TDs and Senators by calling to the local office.
- Contact and meet every national and local politician in the area. This would include formal letters to the Mayor, Chair of the Council, Corporation, Town Commission etc.
- Collate the feedback from members locally and report to TUI National office.

TUI is asking members to:

- Write a personal letter setting out the issues and their impact on you, your school and your colleagues. This should be posted.
- Use email to write to the leader of each political party setting out the same arguments you set out in the letter.
- Email the office of Minister Quinn and Junior Minister Cannon as well as Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Bruton, setting out the issues .
- Email the Education Spokesperson for each political party.
- Email every independent TD.
- Contact all local representatives (Councillors, Mayor etc.)
- Secure a commitment from local politicians to raise this issue at national level.
- Report the outcome of your lobby to your TUI branch.

The Junior Cycle Framework – current challenges

TUI representatives on the NCCA Council and Junior Cycle Board and the Department of Education and Skills Consultation Group are guided by TUI policy - implementation of a new framework will be contingent on adequate resources, supports and implementation arrangements. Consultation events during 2012 (regional meetings, visits to 8

branches, a joint TUI/ASTI meeting with the NCCA School Network and a national consultative conference) consistently affirmed this position. Concern has been expressed that the government impetus is driven primarily by a view that 'new ways of doing' will save money. Notwithstanding this concern, it is the case that public and political

endorsement of the framework has been strong and must not be underestimated as it makes it difficult to engender public support for union concerns. These concerns can be summarised under four areas that generate some questions and challenges for the union:

MEMBERS' CONCERNS	QUESTIONS AND CHALLENGES
<p>Teacher, School and System Capacity – There is concern about capacity to implement change effectively. Access to quality professional development, nationally designed syllabuses and good resources may build professional capacity to deliver. However, there are major operational and administrative obstacles to implementing and sustaining change. A series of questions arise about timetabling capacity, subject casualties, progression to senior cycle, multiple assessment events, co-ordination, and data storage/management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What additional time and resources are essential and how will they be accommodated within the timetable? • Could current resources be re-oriented to facilitate new demands and ways of working? • How can the union ensure that members' legitimate concerns are not misrepresented as obstructionist?
<p>Educational Standards and Public Confidence - Teachers are far from convinced that standards and public confidence in the education system will be maintained. Potential wide variation in short courses raises legitimate concerns. Justifiably, members are concerned about the absence of external moderation and state certification, believing this will nurture inconsistency. Possible pressure points include 'pressure from principals' (seeking high results to attract students), 'pressure from peers' (inadvertently inflating standards) and 'pressure from parents' (contesting grades). The validity and reliability of assessment outcomes and integrity of the process could be undermined. Ultimately, public confidence could be damaged and once damaged may prove hard to restore.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the absence of external moderation and state certification could standards be assured? • Who will take overall responsibility for standards and moderation at school level – who will be the final adjudicator? • Could different approaches to external moderation and validation of assessment outcomes be developed?
<p>Workload - Concerns about escalating workload and responsibilities feature prominently. No matter what changes to school organisation or work practices emerge, additional workload and responsibility are likely to flow from the framework. School based assessment and certification pose the biggest concerns in terms of generating new and additional work e.g. organisation, delivery, marking, recording, reporting, co-ordination and management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When will activity/work associated with the assessment and certification process take place (assessment events, marking, grading, moderation, reporting, and certification) and by whom will it be done? • Is there scope to replace some current work (e.g. Christmas tests, summer tests) with new assessments? • When will any additional workload and responsibility be realistically identified and quantified? Teachers need assurances promptly.

Information and assurances from the Department Consultation Group on operational issues are frustratingly slow. NCCA work is concentrating on exploratory activity in the network schools, developing specifications for English and short courses in PE, CSPE and SPHE and constructing a possible approach to assessment and school focussed moderation. Regular updates and consultation material are posted on the website at www.ncca.ie. We would ask members in each school staff to discuss these and make their views known to the local branch, area representative, TUI representatives on NCCA development groups (see www.tui.ie for contact details) and or the TUI

Education/Research Officer
(bjudge@tui.ie).

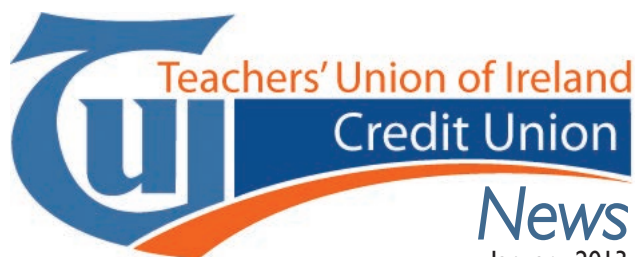
"The road to the future is always under construction... on the one hand its early days; on the other the clock is ticking" (Professor Ciaran Sugrue, TUI consultative conference, 2012).

The union need the input of members to ensure that its response to DES proposals is fully informed by the professional wisdom and experience of practicing teachers. There may be some proposals that we must resist and others that we could support. We must actively shape the process so that the best interests of teachers as professionals and trade union members are promoted. Critically, we

need compelling and professionally sustainable argument to sustain our views.

Forthcoming meetings

- Joint TUI/ASTI Meeting – NCCA Network Schools, Saturday, 23rd February, Athlone Education Centre 11am- 1pm.
- Regional meetings will be organised shortly – check notice board and TUI website.
- School and Branches should dedicate time for discussion on the junior cycle framework and provide feedback to head office.
- A members' survey is under design – your participation will be important and appreciated.



News
January 2013

New Car Loan Offer

The TUI Credit Union are now offering an extremely competitive Car Loan rate from 1st January 2013 to 31st March 2013. Our members are eligible to apply for a car loan at the rate of 6.5% APR. Terms and conditions apply.

Dividend 2012

The Teachers' Union of Ireland Credit Union was in a very healthy financial position at the end of 2012 and had a very good surplus. As a result TUI Credit Union was in a position to pay its members a dividend that surpassed what most other Credit Unions could pay their members.

The dividend rate of 1.75% was passed at the AGM on 7th December 2012 and has now been added to all members share accounts.

Introduce a Colleague or Family member

If you are a member of the TUI Credit Union and you introduce a colleague or family member to us and they become a member, we will enter both your names in a draw for an iPad. The draw will take place during the TUI Congress 2013.

Like Us on Facebook

The TUI Credit Union now have an active Facebook page, make sure to like us on facebook to keep up with all the latest news, views and hear about our upcoming offers and share your thoughts, opinions and pictures.



Follow Us on Twitter

The TUI Credit Union now also have an active Twitter feed. Follow us @TUICreditUnion for another way to stay in touch with all TUICU offers, loans, news and views.



Have the TUI Credit Union Rep visit your school

If you would like our rep, Declan Mahon to visit your school or college to make a presentation about the TUI Credit Union and the benefits of joining please contact him directly on 0860226067 or email declanmahon@tuicu.ie

RESULTS FOR CONFINED MEMBERS MONTHLY DRAW

October 2012

1st	Maura Fitzgibbon, Cork	€1500
2nd	Dermot Duffy, Dublin	€1000
3rd	Brendan Brennan, Kilkenny	€500

November 2012

1st	Emer Mary Wisely, Dublin	€1500
2nd	Geraldine Murphy, Dublin	€1000
3rd	Owen Wims, Kildare	€500

December 2013

1st	Brendan Kelly, Cork	€1500
2nd	Ann O'Reilly	€1000
3rd	Marion Foy, Mayo	€500

CAR ANON

Please contact the TUI Credit Union Office if you would like to enter the draw; phone 1850 741 600



TRINITY COLLEGE

The University of Dublin

School of Education

Master in Education

The School of Education Trinity College is delighted to announce that the Master in Education (M.Ed.) is now offered on a modular basis with three study modes available.

Option 1: Full time - 4 modules and 20,000 word dissertation completed in 1 year

Option 2: Part-time - 4 modules and 20,000 word dissertation completed over 2 years

Option 3: Part-time - 4 modules and 20,000 word dissertation completed over 3 years (2 modules completed in each of years one and two with the dissertation completed in year three)

Specialist Areas

The M.Ed. programme offers the following distinct specialisms. Please note, not all specialisms may run in a given academic year and are subject to minimum student numbers.

- Aggression Studies
- Co-operative Learning
- Drama in Education
- Educational Guidance and Counselling
- Foundation Studies
- Leadership and Management in Education
- Positive Behaviour Management
- Science Education
- Special Educational Needs
- Higher Education

Admissions

The closing date for applications for the academic year 2013/14 is 31st May 2013. Applications for all specialisms for 2013/14 can be made through the online system accessible at www.tcd.ie/courses/postgraduate/faculty/subjects.php?sub=AHS-ED

Applicants to the 1-year full-time M.Ed. must submit a research proposal as part of the application process. For further details, and an outline of the format required, please contact master.education@tcd.ie

Further Information

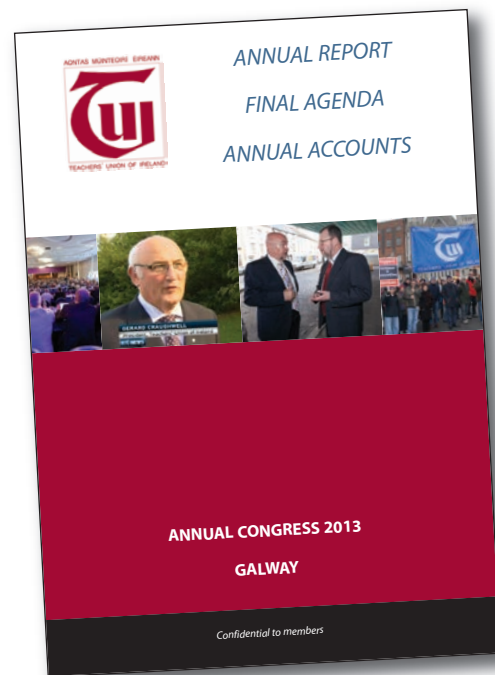
For further information please visit <http://www.tcd.ie/Education/courses/masters.php>

For all other enquiries please contact the course administrators on 01 896 3568/1290 or by email to master.education@tcd.ie



ANNUAL CONGRESS 2013 – GALWAY

TUI's Annual Congress 2013 takes place in the Clayton Hotel, Galway between Tuesday April 2nd and Thursday April 4th. A range of motions will be debated which will dictate the union's policies across a broad spectrum of issues at this crucial time for the education service and the teachers and lecturers employed within it. Updates will be posted on the TUI website and facebook page throughout the event.



ANNUAL CONGRESS TOURS

Thanks to the hard work and commitment of the TUI Galway City Branch there are a number of great tours to choose from at Annual Congress this year.

TOUR 1 Ashford Castle

Trip to medieval Ashford Castle on the shores of Lough Corrib.

Participants will travel by coach to Ashford Castle. The coach pick up will be from the Clayton Hotel at 1.30pm and will return for 5.15pm.

TOUR 2 Corrib Princess Cruise

The Corrib Princess river cruise sails from Woodquay in the heart of Galway city, along the famous Steamers Line, travelling one of the most spectacular waterways in Ireland. The journey will take passengers along the majestic River Corrib and onto the Corrib lake, passing castles and various sites of both historical interest and natural beauty.

Refreshments will be available to purchase on board.

Pick up is from the Clayton Hotel at 1.30pm and the trip will last for approximately 3 hours.

TOUR 3 Galway Walking Tour

A walking tour of Galway city with Failte Ireland approved guide, Joe Geoghane. The tour will last 80 minutes and covers the historical, cultural and social aspects of Galway city. Pick up will be from the Clayton Hotel at 1.30pm with arrival back at 5.15pm.

TOUR 4 Killary Outdoor Adventure Centre

For the more adventurous delegates make sure not to miss the RINGO RIDES on Ballyloughane Beach. (Some delegates might remember these from Wexford Harbour last year!)

You will need a swimsuit and some old shoes suitable to be worn in the water.

Groups of 5 people will be transported

from the Clayton Hotel from 2pm to 5pm. Trips to and from the beach including the rides will take approximately 1 hour.

For more details contact the Galway City Branch on galwayschoolbranch@gmail.com

GOLF OUTING

The Congress Golf outing 2013, sponsored by Cornmarket and organised by the TUI golf society, will be held in Athenry Golf Club host venue for the Irish Seniors Amateurs Open Championship 2012. Tee time: 13.40 – 15.10 Cost: €20.00

Refreshments will be provided for all golfers in the clubhouse prior to tee time.

The course is a 10-minute drive from the Congress hotel and directions will be provided when booking tee times.

Bookings will be taken at registration on Tuesday morning.



**AONTAS MUINTEOIRI EIREANN
TEACHERS' UNION OF IRELAND**

**2013 ANNUAL CONGRESS
TUESDAY, 2nd APRIL TO THURSDAY 4th APRIL 2013**

CRÈCHE BOOKING FORM

Please note the crèche will be in the Carlton Hotel

Name (Delegate): _____

School/College: _____

Branch: _____

No. of Children: _____

Name of Child _____ Age: _____

Name of Child _____ Age: _____

Name of Child _____ Age: _____

Please advise of any particular health condition(s), including allergies, illness or special needs your child(ren) may have.

Please indicate the dates on which you wish to book your child(ren) into the Crèche:

Tuesday 2 April (from _____ to _____)

Wednesday 3 April (from _____ to _____)

Thursday 4 April (from _____ to _____)

Crèche Opening Times

Tues 9.00- 9.00 Wed 9.00 - 1.00 Thurs 9.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please note the following:

⇒ Each child must be signed both in and out of the Crèche by a parent/guardian.

Children up to 12 years of age may avail of the Crèche

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BEFORE
Friday, 1st March 2013 (This deadline has been extended by one week)**

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO: Kate Moran - Email: katemoran1@gmail.com Mobile: 087 6490122

DON'T RENEW YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE UNTIL YOU REVIEW IT.

We are fast approaching the busiest time for health insurance and most consumers are unaware of some of the key changes to their cover, or more importantly, some of the special offers now available. Almost 850,000 members will be receiving their renewal notices in the first three months of 2013 and they may be in for a shock as most policies have increased substantially since their last renewal.

More importantly, all insurers now operate 'Annual Contracts' which means that you could find yourself locked into your existing contract for a further 12 months if you don't act now. You might think that you can simply exit your contract mid-term. However, some of the insurers may charge you financial penalties for breach of contract!

However, there is some potential good news that makes reviewing your cover worthwhile, e.g.

- GloHealth have now entered the market with some really attractive options. They allow you to personalise your cover to suit your requirements and all children under 3 years of age are free on some of their mainstream plans
- Aviva Health have discounted one of their mid-range plans for December, which means a saving of €100 for each adult and child (aged 5-17) either joining or renewing during this period
- Similarly, Laya Healthcare have discounted one of their mid-range plans to give a 50% discount for all children and students joining or renewing during this period.

If you are finding the cost of your health cover prohibitive, the good news is that all four health insurers have offerings from as little as €485 for basic adult cover (public hospitals) or €795 for mid-range adult cover (private hospitals). Don't cancel your cover without checking these out.

One of the key myths amongst consumers is that public hospital treatment is free, which is not the case. Unless you hold a medical card, going public will cost you a daily rate of €75 to a maximum of €750 per annum regardless of whether you're an adult or child. Consumers often think that they'll be able to bear the cost of 'routine' hospital treatment themselves should they fall ill. Given that private treatment in a public hospital will cost you approximately €1,000 per night, this will be beyond most people's means. A routine admission could easily cost €7,500 to €10,000 and this assumes no follow up treatment will be required.

Don't miss the deadline.

All TUI members can avail of Cornmarket's free comparison service which covers all four health insurers: VHI Healthcare, Laya Healthcare, Aviva Health and GloHealth.

Call Cornmarket now on **(01) 470 8097** to ensure you get the best deal possible.

FREE HEALTH INSURANCE COMPARISON SERVICE

We compare all four health insurance providers



GloHealth



Don't renew until we review

Call (01) 470 8097

Lines are open
Monday to Thursday: 9am - 7pm
& Friday: 9am - 5.30pm

New book on Statistics by IT Tralee lecturer

'Essential Statistics for Researchers' is a new book by TUI member, Tadhg O'Shea. Tadhg has been a lecturer in Economics and Statistics at the Institute of Technology in Tralee for the past 26 years. Prior to this, he lectured in the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology and in NUIG.

According to the author, the book was written "with a variety of clients in mind, namely students, tutors and those brave souls who are in the midst of, or about to embark on, a piece of research and is ideal for a structured course of study... the book was written to mimic the approach of a private tutor, who has the capacity to extract the essential knowledge from a discipline and deliver it to eager disciples with relative ease".

The book has been well received and has earned praise from a number of academics. Professor Christine Dancy, University of East London, said: "The author guides the reader through each statistical technique using amusing (but appropriate) examples. Coverage of Effect Sizes, SPSS instructions and Multiple Choice Questions combine to facilitate full comprehension of the topics." Professor Paddy Hillard of Queens University Belfast praised the book as "... clearly written, not too technical and beautifully illustrated". According to Dr. Seán Lacey of Cork Institute of Technology: "Enormous credit is due to the author for the effort in putting together this great educational tool, his desire and passion in truly



trying to help the researcher is evident in every single page. I will definitely recommend this book to my students."

The book costs €29.99 and the author has pledged proceeds book to go towards research at Temple Street Children's University Hospital and The Children's Medical Research Foundation at Our Lady's Hospital, Crumlin.

To order copies please contact Tadhg O'Shea on 086 6008128 or tadhg.oshea@staff.ittralee.ie



Cancer?

Concerned about cancer?
Diagnosed with cancer?
Caring for someone with cancer?

We are here to help, to listen, to answer your questions.

National Cancer Helpline
Freefone 1800 200 700
You can speak to a specialist cancer nurse

The Irish Cancer Society's Cancer Information Service includes:
Email service: helpline@irishcancer.ie
Interactive online help: www.cancer.ie
(cancer chat and cancer forum)



It's confidential and it's free

43-45 Northumberland Rd, Dublin 4 www.cancer.ie



THE IRISH HOSPICE FOUNDATION

CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO A CYCLE THAT MATTERS!

JOIN US ON A KINGSPAN IHF CYCLE CHALLENGE



ATLANTIC to MED
21st-27th July 2013

Proudly sponsored by




in aid of the Irish Hospice Foundation

To find out more or get an information pack please contact our fundraising team on: **1890 71 7000**
email: fundraising@hospicefoundation.ie
or log on to www.hospicefoundation.ie

New website

www.helpmykidlearn.ie

www.helpmykidlearn.ie

is a new website for parents of 0-12 year olds. The purpose of it is to provide fun activities that

parents can do with their children to improve their reading, writing and maths skills. The website can be used by anyone caring for children. The term 'parent' is used on the website to keep it easy, but it refers to all guardians, family members (grandparents, aunts and uncles) and childminders of children aged 0-12 years.



HelpMyKidLearn.ie

www.helpmykidlearn.ie was developed by the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) as part of the National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020. 40 stakeholders are involved including the Teachers' Union of Ireland, pre-school and primary school organisations, adult literacy services, libraries and community and voluntary groups.

Over 10,000 people have used www.helpmykidlearn.ie since it went live in September 2012. 20% of visitors to the website to date looked at it from their mobile 'smart' phone (iPhone or Android phone). The website will be reviewed and added to on an on-going basis. Parents can leave comments and rate the activities so that it can be continuously improved. NALA is asking all stakeholders to help get the word out to parents about the website.

So what's on the website?

www.helpmykidlearn.ie mixes the old with the new, from card games and hopscotch that help practice maths, to children's e-books that can be read out to your child and apps that you can download to help your child learn. Information is broken down into 5 age groups: 0-2 years, 3-4 years, 5-7 years, 8-9 years and 10-12 years. Activities are organised into 5 main areas of learning: Talk, Play, Read, Write and Count. The website includes audio and video content to support parents who have literacy and numeracy difficulties and links to other websites that provide more detailed information.

Spreading the word to parents

NALA is initially working with stakeholders and other government departments to get the word out to parents about the website. Please look at the website www.helpmykidlearn.ie and if you feel it is appropriate, recommend it to parents and other professionals who work with parents. NALA has posters, leaflets and flyers to promote the site. Contact mmurray@nala.ie if you would like us to send you promotional material. So log on and have a look around www.helpmykidlearn.ie

IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS

REQUIREMENT TO BE REGISTERED WITH THE TEACHING COUNCIL FROM 2012/13 SCHOOL YEAR

Under section 30 of the Teaching Council Act 2001, teachers employed in recognised schools must be registered with the Teaching Council in order to be paid from public monies by the Department of Education and Skills or a VEC.

It is the intention of the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn T.D., to commence section 30 during the 2012/2013 school year.

If you are working as a teacher in a recognised school, but are not currently registered with the Teaching Council, you should apply to the Council for registration immediately.

Further details including registration application forms and frequently asked questions are available on the homepage of the Teaching Council website: www.teachingcouncil.ie.

The Council may be contacted in relation to registration at:

primaryregistration@teachingcouncil.ie
for primary school teachers; and

postprimaryregistration@teachingcouncil.ie
for post-primary school teachers.



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OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

PIRLS and TIMSS 2011 – main findings for Ireland

By Aidan Clerkin, Educational Research Centre

December 2012 saw the publication of an initial report on two major international assessments that were carried out in 2011. **PIRLS** (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) and **TIMSS** (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) assess the reading, mathematics and science achievement of Fourth class pupils. Although Ireland has participated in post-primary studies such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) and ICCS (International Civic and Citizenship Study) in recent years, this marks the first time that Irish primary-level pupils took part in an international assessment since 1995, when we last participated in TIMSS. Sixty-seven countries took part in one or both studies. In Ireland, the surveys were administered in March and April 2011 in 151 randomly-selected schools, with more than 4,500 pupils taking part.

For reading, Irish pupils' score (of 552) was well above the PIRLS scale centrepoint (500). Only five countries (Hong Kong, the Russian Federation, Finland, Singapore and Northern Ireland) obtained mean scores that were statistically significantly higher than Ireland's, while the Irish score was significantly higher than 31 other countries – including Germany, Sweden, Australia and New Zealand. Girls outperformed boys in almost every country, including Ireland.

For maths, the Irish mean score (of 527) was significantly above the TIMSS maths centrepoint (500). Irish pupils scored higher than their peers in 33 countries. Thirteen countries (including Singapore, Northern Ireland, Finland and England) achieved higher mean scores. In Ireland,

and for the overall international average, boys and girls achieved similar mean scores.

Finally, for science, the Irish score (516) was significantly above the TIMSS science centrepoint (500). Singapore, Finland, the US, and England were among 17 countries that achieved a significantly higher score than Ireland, while Ireland's score was higher than that of 24 countries (including Spain, New Zealand and Norway). In Ireland, and for the overall study average, boys and girls performed at a similar level on the test.

Broadly speaking, the results above show that Irish Fourth class pupils were among the highest performers in the international reading assessment, and they also performed well in the maths assessment. A welcome finding is the significant improvement in maths performance among lower-achieving pupils in Ireland. In 2011, only 6% of pupils failed to reach at least the lowest mathematics "benchmark" (Low, Intermediate, High, Advanced), compared to 9% of pupils in TIMSS 1995. This improvement reflects similar positive findings from recent evaluations of the SSP/DEIS programme.

There is greater scope for improvement in science where (albeit with a score that is above the international average) the Irish performance could be described as "mid-table". Ireland's performance on the science assessment in 2011 was almost identical to its performance in 1995 – both in terms of the mean score achieved, and the proportions of pupils reaching each of the four performance benchmarks – despite the introduction of the primary school science curriculum in 1999.

A notable finding from the TIMSS assessment is the relative weakness of higher-order cognitive skills among Irish Fourth class pupils. Performance in both the mathematics and science tests was relatively poorer for items that assessed reasoning skills than for other cognitive processes, such as knowing facts or applying straightforward procedures. Of interest is that the Fourth class pupils that took part in TIMSS in 2011 (entering post-primary schooling later this year) will learn mathematics through the Project Maths syllabus, with its greater emphasis on promoting higher-order skills such as reasoning and problem-solving.

The full report (PIRLS and TIMSS 2011: Reading, mathematics and science outcomes for Ireland, by Eemer Eivers & Aidan Clerkin) can be downloaded from www.erc.ie/pirlstimss, along with sample items from the actual tests.

In Spring 2013, a second set of reports will be published. These will include a more in-depth look at contextual characteristics – including pupil engagement, attitudes and teaching practices of Fourth class teachers, home-school communication, pupils for whom English is an additional language, and analysis of test items.

View from Gaza

By Jim Roche, TUI DIT Branch

A recent trip to the besieged Gaza strip as part of an Irish working group, with academics and trade union members, examined the difficult conditions faced by people in the Palestinian territory and revealed a strange contradictory reality; the suffocating conditions under which the people live and yet their fierce steadfastness and resilience.

The frustration of our 12-hour trail by cramped mini-bus up the Suez Canal from Cairo, across the North Sinai Desert, complete with Egyptian Military escort for part of our journey, and several hours Soviet-style bureaucracy at the utterly dull Rafah crossing, evaporated as we finally saw the bright large-lettered welcoming sign WELCOME TO PALESTINE on the new terminal building in Gaza. Our journey to our hotel in North Gaza brought relief from the highly militarised North Sinai that we left across the border. Farmers tilled flat fields edged sparsely by date palms while horses and donkeys transported goods and people. Two male teenage Palestinians waved as they whizzed by us on their scooter. Around Khan Yunis, Gaza's second largest city, hordes of kids played football on ochre ground against a backdrop of unfinished buildings with barefaced blockwork and rusted reinforcement protruding.

Flat farmland gave way to an ordinary urbanism as 4-5 storey unfinished housing blocks, almost all with ground floor shops, frame streets in a classic grid pattern. A



lone policeman directed traffic – the only sign of officialdom we witnessed during our one-hour journey from Rafah. Then signs of destruction emerged as we turned corners; a damaged structure here, a completely flattened multi-storey block there. Tarred roads sometimes gave way to sandy stretches. We drove along the sea flanked by the third largest of the Gaza Strip's eight refugee camps; one of the most crowded and poorest, named Beach and known locally as Shati. It is home to more than 87,000 refugees, who all reside in an area of only 0.52 square kilometres. Shoddily erected fishermen's huts straddle the beach against the deceptively inviting, but seriously sewage polluted, Mediterranean Sea.

My first afternoon is spent lecturing at the Islamic University of Gaza to staff, students and members of the architectural and engineering profession, reviewing students' work with the Head of Department, and discussing possibilities for sustainable reconstruction in Gaza and possible future academic connections with DIT.

The group visited the highly respected Palestinian Centre for Human Rights whose solicitor director, and one time prisoner of both Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Raji Sourani has lectured in the past with Michael D. Higgins. The statistics that Raji and his colleagues impart to us are truly shocking: eight refugee camps in Gaza, the largest of which, Jabaliha, has a population of 100,000 people within an area of 3 sq. miles and is the densest place on earth; along the buffer zone with Israel, farmers are constantly harassed including having their lettuce crops shaved by special bulldozers; the municipal sewage system was destroyed by Israel in the 2008-2009 war and was not allowed to be repaired until the sewage in the sea began to reach the Israeli port of Ashdod after which Israel finally allowed a German company in to Gaza to carry out reconstruction; Gazans are not allowed to work, 90% are under the poverty line while 85% need aid from UNWRA; Israel essentially counts the calories that Gazans can survive on and many more.



Another day we visit the Health Department of UNWRA (which looks after the needs of the majority of Gaza's population, who are refugees), several hospitals and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS). The Health Department of UNWRA provides healthcare for 2/3rds of Gaza's population. More than half of children under three – and 40 per cent of pregnant women – suffer from anaemia. There are huge shortages of medicines (though recently improved) and specialist parts for vital medical equipment. Electrical cut outs are hugely risky during operations.

We visit the 730 bed Sheefa Hospital, which is the one always shown on newsreels during wars. Its director cardiologist, Dr. Nasser, who lost his own son during the 2008-2009 war, meets us without any fuss. The statistics he imparts of the fatalities during the 2008-2009 war are shocking: 250 people killed within the first 30 minutes, approximately 50% of the total killed were women and children, 13 members of one family killed within two minutes, many children were killed trying to attend school. Paramedics were also targeted and many staff died. The war caused awful pollution because of the use of depleted uranium and white phosphorous leading to an increase in congenital malformations and cancers. There is a big epidemic of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in Gaza with many men suffering. Though I have read all about this it's still so hard to take in when heard from someone working at the coalface. But he ends on a hopeful note saying, "We are fed up being victims and heroes. We just want to live in peace." Greetings of hope in the future are exchanged as we depart.

Perhaps the most informative and emotional meeting was with the Gaza Fishermen's Union at Gaza Seaport on the day before we left. Greeted by a recent monument to the nine activists killed on board the Mavi Marmara, we gather around Zakaria Bakr who outlines the plight of the fishermen under the siege. More horrible statistics: huge fall in catch since siege began; restrictions on distance they can fish out from shore (it was 3km but increased to 5km as part of recent ceasefire deal) and attacks on them by Israeli gun boats. These men are the poorest of the poor and are harassed, injured and killed trying to eek out a living from the sea in order to feed themselves and their families.

Our last afternoon is devoted to more uplifting stuff. Some of us visited the



Qattan Centre for the Child, where we saw a new play about Gaza by the inspiring Canadian based Palestinian Sarah Sabawi. A love story between an American based member of the Palestinian Diaspora who arrives on the 2008 Flotilla and a local woman, the play totally lifts our hearts, not least because of the performances by a mainly female cast.

A note on education in Gaza

Education is vitally important to Palestinians throughout the OPT. A 2007 UNESCO/Save the Children UK report titled "Fragmented foundations: education and chronic crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" showed that the people of Palestine are eager for education. The report found that among 15-24 year olds literacy is 98.2% and overall adult literacy is 91.1%.

The report goes on to note that during the 2008-2009 war the following happened which seriously impacted on education:

- 18 schools and kinder gardens were completely destroyed with hundreds more damaged.
- 6 university buildings were completely destroyed and 16 damaged.
- Almost 1400 Palestinians were killed including 352 children.
- According to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), 164 students and 12 teachers from its schools were killed during the Israeli military offensive. A further 454 students and 5 teachers were injured.
- A total of 86 children and 3 teachers who attend UNRWA schools were killed, and a further 402 students and

14 teachers were injured. Schoolchildren, thousands of whom lost family members and/or their homes, are still suffering from trauma and anxiety and are in need of psychosocial support and recreational play activities.

- In one case, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) attacked a UN run school with white phosphorus shells where 1600 civilians were sheltering, killing two brothers in a classroom and severely injuring their mother and cousin

The report concluded by noting that since this war ended hardly any destroyed schools have been re-built. It also noted that, each year, over 1000 Gazan students apply abroad to study yet no official body or channel handles their requests or ability to exit so most of them cannot go even if accepted.

Conclusion

Gaza is a Bantustan in an area half the size of County Carlow where 1.7 million people, half of them children, live in appalling conditions under a crippling siege where basic foodstuffs, vital medicines and building materials are prohibited or restricted from entering by the controlling authority, Israel.

Among all the sad terrible statistics we got from the Palestinians that we met we also felt a steely determination and steadfastness. Many told us "we are here, we are not going anywhere and we are prepared to die here" or as Raji Sourani noted "we are the stones of the valley". But despite this optimism it must be recognised that the people in Gaza are surviving on aid in a contrived state of locked down de-development.

How Education for Social Innovation Benefits Educators and Young People



Young Social Innovators

Believe in it. Act on it.

“If YSI’s aim is to reflect young people’s belief that the world should be a better place to live in, and it is possible to act on that belief, then Young Social Innovators has a great future in our schools. Based on my experience of YSI, young people can be the most idealistic and enthusiastic members of society and we must take care to harness that idealism for the betterment of Ireland.”

This comment from a teacher encapsulates the benefits of social innovation education. She got it!

Since 2001 Young Social Innovators has been promoting education for social innovation as a significant way to harness the energy and idealism of youth by engaging them in action based projects in their local communities. The projects are a pathway to discovering that each person can use their creativity to help improve the lives of others.

As a group, students decide what social issue they are going to tackle and how they will make a difference; they learn how to work as a member of a team; they discover and use their unique talents to bring about social change. Their self-awareness and confidence grows significantly as they engage with and advocate on issues that matter to them.

Teachers have the opportunity to engage with young people in a different way, as a facilitator, and to extend learning beyond the classroom and out into the community.

“As a teacher, YSI has been a useful channel for me to get involved in projects that I believe in...and involved with young people in a way that “probably” was closer to



STUDENTS AT YSI MUNSTER REGION SPEAK OUT FORUM IN 2011

“why I wanted to be a teacher, than actual teaching experience within the formal classroom and exam focused setting.” (YSI Guide)

Young Social Innovators offers professional development and a wonderful challenge to any teacher who wants to develop skills in the teaching of innovation and entrepreneurship (social or business). It will enable them to facilitate civic action and innovation with groups of young people and, in doing so, it will help deepen their practice and extend their experience beyond the traditional classroom setting.

The success of the Social Innovation Programme is its unique framework for learning and practicing social innovation - the 4 C's model of social innovation; Care, Co-operate, Communicate and Change - simple, but powerful! As a teacher, you learn how to facilitate these elements in an engaging and fun way. Participants are well supported with active learning methodologies, resources, tools and a fully dedicated Training and Education team at Young Social Innovators.

Social innovation projects by young people are addressing real local, national and even global issues and are having a real impact. Any topic can be explored in a creative and active way.

Young Social Innovators is activating citizenship and really engaging young people in Ireland. It is also allowing

educators to develop their learning and broaden their experience with their students.

Innovations have included: Mental health campaigns ; Road and sea safety initiatives; Environmental and community rejuvenation projects; Youth facilities created – youth cafés developed; Job creation initiatives; and many more.

Support Available to Schools and Teachers

Regional In-service training workshops delivered by practicing teachers
Certification for participating teachers who complete the programme
Online resource library available
Guiding Social Innovation Manual (2012) provided
Dedicated YSI Training and Education Team for ongoing help and support
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Email: educate@youngsocialinnovators.ie

Congratulations to Kinsale Community School

TUI President Gerard Craughwell wishes to congratulate Kinsale Community School, Cork, for its 3rd Win in 7 years at the BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition 2013.

On January 11 2013, third year students Ciara Judge, Emer Hickey and Sophie Healy-Thow, all aged 15, from Kinsale Community School, took home the top prize at the event for their project entitled, "A statistical investigation of the effects of Diazotroph bacteria on plant germination". The students were entered in the Biological & Ecological Sciences category, intermediate section.

Ciara, Emer and Sophie were presented with a cheque for €5,000, the opportunity to represent Ireland at the 25th European Union Young Scientist competition taking place in Prague in September and a Waterford crystal trophy.



CIARA, EMER AND SOPHIE RECEIVE THEIR PRIZE FROM THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Almost 1,200 students from 31 counties covering 550 projects from 216 schools nationwide competed for the coveted title 'Winner of the BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition 2013.'

Announcing the winners, Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn said: "I am greatly impressed by the standard and calibre of the entries to this year's BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition. The creativity and innovation these young people have shown bodes very well for the future of science and technology in this country, one of the key growth areas we know will help rebuild our economy. I want to commend all the students involved, in particular the winning entries, but also their parents and teachers who have helped them come so far."

Mary Kelly-Quinn, Head Judge – Groups, Biological & Ecological Sciences category said: "Over 70% of the Earth's atmosphere is made up of the gas nitrogen. Nitrogen is extremely important for plant growth and survival and is a key nutrient in plant agriculture. Only very few organisms can use nitrogen gas directly from the air. One is the bacteria Rhizobium which provides some plants with nitrogen. However not all plants can access nitrogen in the air using Rhizobium. The three girls had the brainwave of testing the use of Rhizobium bacteria to accelerate the rate of germination in important food crops which don't associate naturally with this bacterium. They demonstrated that adding Rhizobium in laboratory conditions reduced the time for the seeds of wheat and barley to germinate. The germination stage is one of the riskiest times in crop growth because of losses particularly from adverse weather. These results may have implications for our ability to address food security issues. These are the first exciting steps, field trials should follow."

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Seals, golden sunsets and hymns

By Billy Fitzpatrick

***‘Thrown on life’s surge we claim thy care.
Save us from peril and from woe
Mother of Christ, Star of the Sea,
Pray for the wanderer, pray for me’***



A little dramatic, you might think – given the balmy conditions – but that’s how Pearse College’s Kayak Club finished up its last training session at Howth. We were standing out under the stars on the middle pier on a Friday evening September 7th, guests of Eileen Murphy and long-standing TUI member Seán Pierce, founders of Shearwater Sea Kayaking. Our leader was languages teacher, Ruth Bracken, a keen kayaker with a quirky sense of humour.

After warm-up exercises, we left the harbour and headed for a blue-coloured buoy a few hundred metres offshore. From there we made for the island of Ireland’s Eye itself, Eileen encouraging us to go with the roll of the sea and not to worry. In fact, there appeared to be little movement in the water at all. We experienced just a gentle neap tide, no breeze and a strong, warm sun. The first visitors we found there were cormorants, dozens and dozens of them, perched on their rocky outcrops. Though shy enough to stay offshore, they didn’t seem unduly bothered by us in our multi-coloured craft, and took to the air only after we came right up under them. ‘They will shortly be heading for the ocean, no one knows quite where’, Seán said.

There was a burst of sunlight just before sunset, and everything (and everybody!) around us looked golden. ‘What a way to de-stress after a hard week’s work,’ a teacher behind me exclaimed. ‘This must be what it’s like going into Heaven,’ another said.

Eileen led us into a narrow creek, saying there were ‘folks’ in there expecting us. I didn’t notice anything until I found myself aground on a bed of seaweed. Turning around I saw what looked like a

disinterestedly at us from a ledge of rock overhead. I wondered for a second if there was a danger he might just roll over and flop on top of philosophy teacher, Anne, who was passing underneath him completely unaware. Around us seals were popping up to have a look every couple of minutes. They’re hunters – is there not a danger of their getting angry at our invading their space like this, I wondered. ‘No – no danger’, Eileen said.

On the far side of the island, we came across one of the biggest gannetries in the country. There must have been thousands of them perched up on the sea-stacks and high cliffs, everything white with their dung. Seán Pierce, a noted ornithologist, informed us that they, too, would be heading ocean wards within a matter of days.

A few hundred metres further round the head, we came across what must be one of the best sea-caves on the East Coast, south of the Antrim coastline. Possibly because it’s on the away side of the island, it remains largely unknown and doesn’t feature in any geography textbook. We paddled slowly inwards

as it grew increasingly dark. Believe it or not, people live in there, Seán said. Sure enough, we heard voices and what sounded like an argument, followed by crying, then terrible wailing. Our boats scraped off one another and the cave walls as we turned to escape. Had we stumbled upon an unlikely crime scene? Did anyone have a phone? But there was no need for undue alarm. There was a beach in at the inner recesses of the cave, where the seals hung out in order to date, have pups, etc. That, at least, was what we were told.

On the straight for home, I watched my former Pearse College colleagues bobbing along and chatting casually, as if they were doing this every day. They looked, for all the world, like they were heading home from work – which in a way they were!

And so it was that back on land, where she was acclaimed a ‘true star of the sea’, Ruth proudly threw back her head and, along with Eileen Murphy, burst into Hail, Queen of heaven, Star of the Sea, Pray for all wanderers, and Pray for me.



Schools Invited to Participate in Yellow Flag Diversity Programme

The Yellow Flag, a practical school based programme, which provides a framework to develop a school environment where every child is valued and included and unfair racist bullying and discrimination is challenged, is currently recruiting new schools to participate in its programme to start September 2013.

The programme which works through an 8 steps model allowing schools to apply those steps to the day to day running of the school is a practical scheme with an award incentive. On completion of the 8 steps and external assessment the school is awarded its Yellow Flag at a ceremony of celebration involving students, teachers and education stakeholders.

It is widely acknowledged that the Irish education landscape has significantly changed over the last number of years presenting schools with challenges as well as opportunities. Rather than putting unrealistic expectations on schools and teachers to deliver interculturalism without the necessary supports, the Yellow Flag focuses on practical intercultural achievements as well as providing the essential formal and informal framework to the schools themselves.

The 8 steps are:

1. Intercultural and Anti-Racism Training for Staff and Management
2. Going beyond the School's Walls: Engaging with the Community
3. Establishing a Diversity Committee
4. Conducting an Intercultural Review
5. Formulating an Action Plan for a Diverse School
6. Monitoring and Evaluation and Information Dissemination
7. Curriculum work
8. Production of a diversity code and anti racist policy for the school



PRINCIPAL ANDY BOLGER, TEACHER EILEEN ELLIS AND STUDENTS FROM ARKLOW COMMUNITY COLLEGE WITH JOHN JOE NEVIN

According to Paula Madden Coordinator of the Yellow Flag Programme: "Alongside providing a very practical programme for schools to promote inclusion and celebrate diversity, the Yellow Flag supports schools by providing a preventive initiative for identity based bullying. Identity based bullying was highlighted in the recently launched DES Action Plan on Bullying as 'a term that takes in to account the significant extent to which students may be more vulnerable to bullying because of prejudices, stereotyping and stigma against people with particular identities'. This takes in account and includes the experiences of students from a range of diverse nationalities and cultures, including Traveller and Roma children." On receiving their Yellow Flag in 2012 Andrew Bolger Principal of Arklow Community College, Wicklow said; "We were delighted to be invited onto the Yellow Flag Programme as for many years the school had been involved

in the area of celebrating diversity. Being part of the Programme from September 2011 allowed us to put a structure around work already being done and to enhance the opportunities to promote inter-culturalism in the school." Yellow Flag are currently inviting applications from primary and secondary schools for a September 2013 start. Application forms are available on the Yellow Flag website www.yellowflag.ie. The deadline for this round is 1st of May 2013.

For further information contact: Paula Madden Yellow Flag Coordinator on 087 241 0258 or email yellowflagprogramme@gmail.com



A GROUP OF STUDENTS AT YF AWARDS

TUI in the media

A small sample of issues recently addressed by the union in the national media

Our vital institutes of technology must be protected from looming overhaul - extract from opinion editorial by TUI Deputy General Secretary Annette Dolan in Irish Independent 23/1/13

... Over the past forty years, the IOT sector has made a valuable contribution to national economic development. IOTs have empowered communities and regions and have created sustainable employment in local economies. However, there is now a real concern that the HEA proposals risk undermining this distinct mission. Before any change proposals are finalised it is imperative that there is meaningful engagement to ensure that this vital educational option is protected.

Increasing ratios is anti-education and anti-jobs – extract from opinion editorial by TUI President Gerard Craughwell in Irish Times 22/1/13

... The increase in the pupil-teacher ratio is not just anti-education: it is anti-jobs. This cutting of frontline teaching resources, in tandem with the abolition of the cost-of-education allowance for learners and the imposition in the 2011 budget of a €200 registration fee, will send the FE/PLC sector spiralling backwards. It will impact most on some of the most marginalised learners in the education system. The Government must review this policy as a matter of urgency.

College merger plan - extract from letter to Irish Times by TUI President Gerard Craughwell 19/1/13

... Once again the HEA has published a document designed to influence, through the media, the outcome of the ongoing

consultation process, between the higher education institutes and the Minister for Education and Skills, on the future of the third-level sector... The Teachers' Union of Ireland is very concerned that the changes proposed in the HEA document would have a huge impact on our members in the Institute of Technology sector.

Unions warn college merger plan will hurt staff and students - Irish Independent 17/1/13

TUI Deputy General secretary Annette Dolan said the publication of the HEA document was "extremely badly timed", coming as it does at the start of negotiations between unions and public service management on an extension the Croke Park Agreement.

Institutes move ahead with TU status plan - Irish Examiner 17/1/13

The Teachers' Union of Ireland said the HEA document is a kite-flying exercise that attempts to influence ongoing consultations. "The significant changes proposed in terms of mergers would have a more negative impact on the institute of technology sector while the universities appear to escape largely unscathed," said TUI Deputy General Secretary Annette Dolan.

Southeast university still under review - Irish Times 17/1/13

The Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) described the report as a kite-flying exercise. "The proposals as set out undervalue and unfairly target the institute of technology sector," said TUI Deputy General Secretary Annette Dolan.

CAO points race - extract from letter to Irish Independent by TUI Education & Research Officer Bernie Judge 14/1/13

... It is a matter of public record that the Teachers' Union of Ireland supports a review of the selection system for entry to third-level education with particular reference to the CAO points system. In this regard, we welcome and endorse the key principles underpinning the review, as set out by Professor Aine Hyland.

Teacher's Pet – Irish Times 18/12/12

Is there an unexpected landmine in the education budget, namely the increase in the pupil-teacher ratio for post-Leaving Cert programmes? The TUI says the change will result in the loss of 200 whole-time equivalent posts.

An irresponsible attack on further education – extract from opinion editorial by TUI President Gerard Craughwell in Irish Examiner 14/12/12

... At a time when the educational attainment of the population is a national economic priority, it beggars belief that the Government has inflicted such an irresponsible cut on the FE/PLC sector by worsening the pupil-teacher ratio by two full points... This budget measure is counter-productive. It will lead to further educational inequality and societal division. Now is the time for all who seek quality and diversity in education and equity in society to make it clear that this is an intolerable cutback which the minister and Government simply must revisit.

Psychologists support Shannon's school friends and teachers - *Irish Examiner* 14/12/12

Teachers' Union of Ireland president Gerard Craughwell, said schools must be able to give the proper follow-up supports after traumatic events affecting students. But, he said, the restricted availability of guidance counsellors in some schools because of budget cutbacks is a big issue in the day-to-day running of schools.

Hidden costs could affect grant recipients - *Irish Examiner* 7/12/12

The Teachers' Union of Ireland said increased pupil-teacher ratios on post-Leaving Certificate courses, resulting in the loss of 200 teaching jobs, and reduced payments to some unemployed people on further education and training, fly in the face of Government commitments to labour market activation.

Minister should've been much harder on those who earn most - *Irish Daily Mail* 6/12/12 In response to the Budget, TUI executive member and second level teacher, Colm Kelly, criticised the increase in class size for PLC courses and also highlighted the cuts in allowances which have been introduced for new teachers.

Teachers to lose extra six weeks' maternity leave, saving €20 million - *Sunday Times* 2/12/12

John MacGabhann, general secretary of the Teachers Union of Ireland said 375 teachers earning over €100,000 are principals who have more than 35 years' working experience and in schools with at least 700 pupils. "Having said that, we do believe that those on higher salaries should pay more," MacGabhann said. "We



would encourage the government to make the tax system more progressive, to make sure that all highly paid individuals are paying enough through the taxation system."

€2 million tax-break boost for schools (the wealthy ones that is) - *Irish Daily Mail* 30/11/12

Annette Dolan of the TUI said better-off schools were benefitting from a tax break scheme introduced by Education Minister Ruairi Quinn when he was finance minister in the Nineties. "I find it incredible in the current climate that we are in, that every taxpayer in the country is paying to advantage the wealthier schools more," she said. "That's unfair and inequitable and that scheme needs to be scrapped."

TUI Deputy General Secretary Annette Dolan interviewed on *RTE News bulletins* criticises tax break scheme that unfairly advantages wealthier schools. 29/11/12

Post-primary salary can fall to €6,000, says TUI - *Irish Times* 16/11/12

A significant number of post-primary

teachers are now earning as little as €6,000 to €12,000 a year so drastic has the cut in their hours been, said senior Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI) officials... TUI general secretary John MacGabhann said incomes were being slashed as teachers all over the country experience a dramatic cut in the number of hours they get each week. He said getting a mortgage and paying rent was increasingly a struggle for teachers who, contrary to the image of having a comfortable well-paid job, were experiencing income poverty. The TUI boss said that 30 per cent of post-primary teachers and third-level lecturers represented by the union were part-time.

Knockout the Bullies - *The Irish Sun* 2/11/12

Teachers Union of Ireland spokeswoman Bernie Judge said cuts to resources have reduced teachers' ability to deal with bullying. She explained: "The removal of the provision of guidance counsellors is a huge problem here. The expertise we had in the area has been diverted back into the classroom. Many schools have lost very senior posts, some of whom would have given a good bit of time to pastoral care."

Margaret Evans R.I.P.

An Appreciation

It was with deep sadness and loss, that present and former members of staff at Mullingar Community College learned of the death of their former colleague, Margaret Evans.

Margaret grew up in Newmarket-on-Fergus in Co. Clare, the eldest of three children. She attended the local primary school, and went from there to Colaiste Muire Secondary School in Ennis.

Following a distinguished academic career, she graduated from University College Galway with a combination of B.A. and B. Comm. degrees. After graduation, she was appointed by Westmeath V.E.C. as a teacher of Irish and Commerce in Mullingar Vocational School, as it was at that time. Taking up duty in March 1965, she taught for almost 44 years, until her retirement on August 31st, 2008. During that period, she served under many V.E.C.

committees and administrators, school principals, and Department of Education officials, many of whom are long deceased.

What defined Margaret Evans as a teacher and educator was a thorough passion for her work. She immersed herself in education, as a stalwart who gave a long commitment to school and school work - a teacher who gave much, and expected much. Always passionate about the Irish language, her outstanding contribution to the teaching of Irish in Mullingar was born of an enthusiasm that had its roots in her early years in her native Clare. She held strong opinions about what she felt was important in life and always sought to foster an understanding of lasting values among the many generations of students she worked with. To her, the interests

and welfare of school and students were paramount. Her abiding interest in the lives of pupils, as they graduated, matured, found employment, and reared families, was repaid in kind by all those who remembered her in her retirement, in her illness, and in the large gathering that came to pay their last respects in Gilsenans' Funeral Home in Mullingar on the Friday after her death.

Margaret's Irish classes were always characterised by meticulous preparation of lessons, followed up by a painstaking attention to detail in class. A similar approach marked her teaching in Business Studies classes with Post-Leaving Cert students. During the educational expansion throughout the 1970s and '80s, as the Vocational School became a Community College, and expanded its horizons to include Intermediate, Junior and Leaving Certificates, Margaret Evans stood tall among the cohort of teachers who laid the educational foundations for the college as it is today. Her presence and influence in the College over almost 44 years became a significant cornerstone of its daily ethos, until her retirement in August 2008.

Margaret was a loyal and devoted member of the Teachers' Union of Ireland over many years and served with distinction and integrity as branch secretary for a number of years. A dedicated member, she always sought to progress the changes needed to promote the interests of school, student and teacher welfare. At branch meetings, her independence of mind and clear grasp of contentious and complex issues made her a formidable opponent in discussion and argument.

After almost 45 years service to the people of Mullingar, Margaret Evans retired in 2008, but became ill some years later. Typically, she fought a good and courageous fight, until she passed away in the Mater Private Hospital, on Tuesday, November 6th, 2012.

Ghéill sí don diabhail ailse agus d'éag sí. Stad rothaí móra an tsaoil uirthí agus shleamnaigh sí uainn is ón saol seo. Ar dheis Dé go raibh sí.

She was removed to Gilsenans' Funeral Home in Mullingar on Thursday November 8th, 2012. In his homily, Rev. Patrick Moore, who had served as chaplain to the College for a number of years, paid a warm and fitting tribute to her, as a former colleague. Her funeral service took place on Saturday, November 10th, at Glasnevin Crematorium.

She is survived by her brothers David and Michael, niece Lisa, nephews Peter, Paul, and Thomas, and sister-in-law Birthe.

To them, to her other relatives, to her neighbours, friends and colleagues, our sincere sympathies.

Go gcase "an tEarrach Thiar" uirthí arís agus í ina beatha siorraí.

RMA News

These are difficult times for all of us and we need to be on our guard. The Government have stated that they need to save an additional €1 billion from the Public Service pay and pensions bill. This you will know from the media is the topic of the current round two of the Croke Park Agreement. In the last round it was considered that pensions would not be involved and we know what happened! This time there is no doubt but that pensions are on the line.

What are we or what can we do about it? We have at this time no direct involvement in the negotiations, we have written to the Executive requesting them to protect our pensions and we have been assured that they will fight our cause. Through our involvement with the ICTU Retired Workers Committee we have made our case and with the support of others it strengthens our cause. We have through the Alliance of Retired Public Servants written to Shay Cody, Chairman of the Public Service Commission, who is chairing the workers side of the talks, expressing the need for representation for us. Shay has replied "This is a very difficult negotiation process but you can be assured of our wish to seek to protect the income of the great majority of public servants and pensioners in the process."

The Alliance has also written to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin TD, we are awaiting a reply to this. What can each one of us do as individuals, well it is very important to lobby our local TD's and Councillors. We can also write to our local paper and contact our local radio. If we are not prepared to act in our own interest how can we complain after words we know from the media in all its forms that there are plenty of people willing to attack our position and



misrepresent it.

Development of Local Branches continues to be a major part of our work and this is even more important now in this time of difficulty. Meetings of Branches already formed have taken place and social activities including Christmas lunches have been organised. Formation of new Branches continues to develop with many planned for this year. Since Christmas, meetings have taken place in Dublin and Cork and two are planned for February; one in Donegal and one in Kerry. One of the great benefits to accrue from this development is the quality of retired members getting involved, members who have had a lot of experience not only from their teaching career but also from management in that career and also from involvement in the TUI at Executive level.

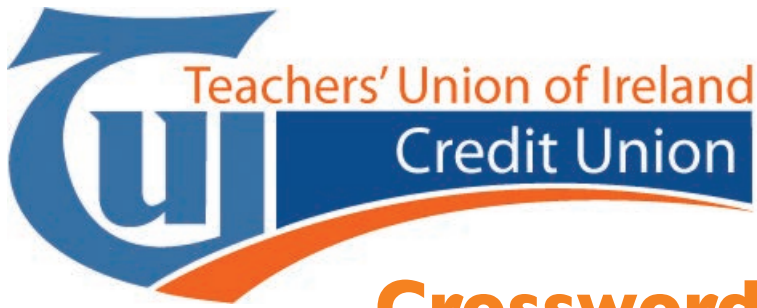
Issues with the PMG continue to worry members. The non supply of payslips is causing a lot of grief for some members, even though the information is available online. It is acknowledged that the trend for financial transactions is to go digital but is this fair for retired people who are not necessarily computer

literate and may not even possess a computer and because of the private nature of their pension may not want to go public as regards accessing the information. Another issue with the PMG is that it appears that they are working on a twelve year cycle. In other words after twelve years an extra payment will be made, this is called a correction. If there is a correction then there must be a mistake. Both of these matters will be discussed with the PMG.

There are no details as yet regarding the Spring Break however it will be in the second week of April. We are organising it for April because of the early date of Easter this year. Information will be sent to all our regular customers for the Spring Break as soon as we have confirmed the arrangements, it will also be on the TUI website for everybody.

There has been a lot of interest in the trip to Spain being organised by Paddy Byrne this is also on the TUI website.

Christy Conville
Secretary



Congratulations to
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 PRIMARY SCHOOL, DOONGEELA,
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Name _____

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Send entries to TUI
 Crossword February '13,
 TUI, 73 Orwell Rd, Rathgar,
 Dublin 6

Closing date for entries:
 Wednesday, 13th March 2013

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ACROSS

- 1 Greek goddess of love (9)
- 7 To inoculate (9)
- 12 Tragic heroine in Othello (9)
- 13 Norway lobster (11)
- 14 Provoking or deserving derision; ridiculous; (9)
- 15 Rose-breasted Cockatoo, native to Australia (5)
- 16 Relating to styles and fashions of the past (5)
- 17 Assists in times of distress (8)
- 19 Tolstoy novel (4,8)
- 22 Buy or obtain (7)
- 24 Not transparent or translucent (6)
- 26 2011 book by Bill Bryson, 'a short history of private life' (2,4)
- 28 Pain reliever (9)
- 29 An ordered formation of forwards in rugby (9)
- 31 Sign or give formal consent to (6)
- 33 Scattered or spread untidily (6)
- 34 Retroreflective safety device used in road marking (4-3)
- 37 A doctor specialising in diseases of the heart (12)
- 39 Actor who played 6 down in 1985 biopic (3,5)
- 42 Aston Villa's "Concrete Ron" (5)

- 43 Main character in The Hobbit, ----- Baggins (5)
- 44 Sluggish and apathetic (9)
- 45 A net of fine lines or fibers in the eyepiece of a sighting device (7)
- 47 Irish film nominated for best animated short Oscar (4,4,5)
- 49 American expatriate poet and critic, who became a major figure of the early modernist movement (4,5)
- 50 Collections of data. (9)

DOWN

- 1 Second largest in area of the autonomous communities in Spain. (9)
- 2 A branch of Orthodox Judaism (7)
- 3 To cook (something) until dry, burnt, or inedible (11)
- 4 A language created to be a universal second language for speakers of diverse backgrounds (3)
- 5 Pass or go by (6)
- 6 Classical Viennese composer (8,7,6)
- 7 Flavouring derived from orchids (7)
- 8 To keep a --- --- the ability to stay calm and think clearly in a difficult situation (4,4)
- 9 A person who revolts against civil authority or an established government (9)

- 10 A term that alludes to major movie stars or celebrities (1-4)
- 11 The notion that for every wrong done there should be a compensating measure of justice. (3,3,2,3)
- 18 Currency of Cambodia (5)
- 20 Archaeological period generally occurring after the Bronze Age (4,3)
- 21 Lynx rufus - American mammal of cat family Felidae (6)
- 23 A soldier or a unit who specializes in distributing supplies and provisions to troops (13)
- 25 Of, relating to, or resembling bears (6)
- 27 A customary practice for children on Halloween in many countries (5,2,5)
- 28 First name of Bond villain Goldfinger (5)
- 30 Sporting event (5)
- 32 Aconitum napellus - poisonous plant (6,3)
- 35 Structured physical activities (9)
- 36 A person regarded as slovenly, crude, or obnoxious (4)
- 38 A knight of the Round Table (7)
- 40 Intoxicated, drunk (sl) (7)
- 41 Nut used to make marzipan (6)
- 42 Vinho ----- - Portugese wine (5)
- 46 Rod Hull's puppet (3)
- 48 A male ferret (3)