**To:** Branch Officers (second-level)

Workplace Representatives

Executive Committee (for information)

9th September 2016

**Junior Cycle Implementation**

Dear Colleagues,

In September 2015, in a national ballot, TUI members accepted the proposals set out in the document - **Junior Cycle Reform: Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation (including the Appendix “Professional Time to support Implementation”)** - that had been negotiated by TUI and the ASTI with the Department of Education and Skills.

The agreement represents a very significant achievement, as it

* secures the continuation of the Junior Certificate as an externally assessed, state certified examination
* ensures that teachers will not be assessing their own students for state certification purposes
* introduces the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) - which is a school report and not a state certificate - to recognise a student’s broader areas of achievement
* involves Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs) in respect of which the school provides a report to parents
* agrees explicitly that implementation of the revised Junior Cycle will not impose additional workload and time demands on teachers and gives professional time, within weekly timetable, as an entitlement to every teacher - for the sole purpose of engaging in the processes associated with the revised Junior Cycle and
* establishes an Implementation Committee, comprising representatives of the unions and the Department of Education and Skills, to address in a prompt and effective manner any issues or difficulties that might arise. That Committee is already operating to good effect.

**Teachers of English**

Section 4.9 of the Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation (see above) recognises that teachers of English are the first cohort of teachers to engage directly with the revised Junior Cycle and that they will make a very particular contribution to the successful introduction of the new curriculum and assessment arrangements. In recognition of this, teachers and schools had the option of having their students complete the first Classroom Based Assessment either in spring of 2016 (in students’ second year) or early in autumn 2016 (at the beginning of third year).

Some teachers proceeded with the first CBA in May 2016 while others decided to defer it until September.

**Those who deferred the first Classroom Based Assessment (the Oral CBA) until September 2016 have from the 9th September to the 30th September to complete it, with the associated Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meeting to take place by 7th October.**

The second CBA for English is to be completed by Friday 2nd December 2016. Following completion of that CBA, a discrete Assessment Task (AT) must be undertaken by the students. While done in school, during class time, the completed Assessment Task is not marked by the class teacher but is sent to the State Examinations Commission for marking, in association with the state certified examination in English that will be conducted in June 2017. The AT and June examination, taken together, constitute the Junior Certificate final examination in English. The AT accounts for 10% and the June examination for 90% of the overall available marks. The State Examinations Commission has confirmed that in the event that an AT is not submitted to the SEC for marking, the student, if s/he sits the June examination, will be marked out of 90%, as opposed to 100%, of the marks.

**Professional Time in 2016/17 school year**

Teachers of English involved in the delivery of the revised Junior Cycle are entitled to 14 hours of professional time in the current (i.e. 2016/17) school year. These hours represent a reduction of 14 class contact hours. Teachers of Science and Business are entitled to 8 hours of professional time in the current year. Circular Letter 24/2016 sets out how this professional time is to be accommodated. Members should note that there are no circumstances in which the Supervision and Substitution scheme can be used to provide cover for professional time.

**Professional time in 2017/18 school year**

With effect from the 2017/18 school year, every full-time teacher involved in the delivery of the revised Junior Cycle – irrespective of whether or not her/his subject has, at that point, been rolled out under the reform - is entitled to 40 minutes of professional time per week of the school year. This comes to 22 hours annually for full-time teachers. Part-time teachers are entitled to professional time on a pro-rata basis, as set out in Appendix 3 of Circular Letter 24/2016.

It is important to note that this time is provided specifically as a professional support to teachers in respect of Junior Cycle implementation and must be used for this purpose.

The provision of the professional time will entail reducing class contact hours by 40 minutes per week. A full-time teacher’s maximum weekly class contact hours will, therefore, be 21 hours and 20 minutes. To facilitate this, class periods will have a minimum duration of 40 minutes with effect from the beginning of the 2017/18 school year and, where necessary, timetables will have to be restructured.

The TUI estimates that, apart from the direct benefit to a teacher of having professional time, the teaching hours that are released as a consequence will result in the creation of the equivalent of approximately 800 additional whole time posts. This will benefit existing part-time teachers, particularly now that the TUI has secured a mandatory sequence for filling such posts under Circular Letter 59/2016.

**Additional resources**

In addition, two paid hours are provided for the coordination of each SLAR meeting as well as a quantum of paid hours, on a weekly basis, to assist in managing the overall implementation of the revised Junior Cycle. Details are set out in CL24/2016.

We would ask you to bring this letter to the attention of all TUI members in your school/centre. If any difficulty arises or should clarification be needed, please contact your Branch, Area Representative and TUI Head Office ([tui@tui.ie](mailto:tui@tui.ie)).

We would also encourage members to refer to the negotiated document (on Junior Cycle Reform) for guidance on issues which may arise. In this regard, the opening section, on the agreed principles underlying the reform, is very instructive.

Yours sincerely,



Joanne Irwin John MacGabhann

President General Secretary