



TEACHERS' UNION OF IRELAND / AONTAS MÚINTEOIRÍ ÉIREANN

news

VOL.31 / NO.3

NOVEMBER/
DECEMBER '08



FURY AT BUDGET ATTACK ON EDUCATION

The vicious and foolhardy budgetary decisions cut the legs from underneath an already creaking education system – a system that is seriously underfunded by international standards. The cutbacks will do untold damage across our education system from Primary to Second Level and to Third Level where funding has been slashed and registration fees increased hugely.

The Taoiseach, Minister for Education and their Cabinet colleagues are directly responsible for this and now they are trying hard to fool the public into believing that the cuts are modest.

Pupil/Teacher Ratio

The Government is saying that the worsening of the Pupil/Teacher ratio will only mean a couple of additional children in classes here and there. But this is not about class sizes. It is about the existence of classes. Every second level school of 360 pupils will lose a teacher. That means losing 33 classes of teaching each and every week. Irish children are the main victims of this decision.

In total 1.3 million classes of teaching will be wiped out. There's nothing modest or superficial about that. It is a near-mortal blow to our children's future.

Language Support

The loss of English Support teaching in schools will mean that thousands of newcomer children will be denied the most essential tool they need to survive and integrate in their new environment. Learning English is not a luxury for them – it is a basic necessity. This particular cutback is a hostile act that will be sorely regretted in the future. Irish society needs immigrant children to have this basic help as much as they need it as individuals. Our community and social cohesion depend on it. The abolition of funding for specialist programmes for weaker pupils at Junior and Leaving Certificate level and funding for schoolbooks are outrageous cutbacks. They illustrate the government's complete disregard for disadvantaged students and their families. Disadvantaged individuals,



TUI PRESIDENT, DON RYAN

families and communities are clearly not a priority for Fianna Fáil and the Green Party. The cuts at third level are consistent with those in other sectors of education in that they target parents who can least afford the additional costs of their children's education. Indeed, one could be forgiven for assuming the Minister when making the decision deliberately set out to target those who can least afford to pay.

Third Level

Both working parents in a family can each earn considerably less than the average industrial wage and still not have entitlement to a maintenance grant for their college-going children.

Such a family, with two children attending third level, will be burdened with an extra

€1,200 in registration fees alone, in addition to various tax hikes and the abolition of the Child Benefit for those over 18. It is no exaggeration to say that such a family could be confronted with the dilemma of which child they can afford to support in the next academic year. It is unfathomable that this could happen in Ireland in 2008.

It was particularly galling that the increased staffing schedule for Further Education was only revealed in a meeting with the Minister a month after the cutbacks. TUI expressed its fury that this short-sighted cutback, which will undermine and reduce the capacity of the sector, was not put in the public domain along with the other Budget announcements.

Even before the Budget cuts announcement, there was serious concern among TUI members in Institutes of Technology regarding the lack of funds for laboratory and workshop activities for undergraduate programmes and overcrowding in lecture rooms and workshops. We anticipate that the reduction in provision for higher education of €43m, coupled with the recent 3% pay budget cut, will intensify these problems.

Political Price

Some people believe that the Government cannot reverse the education cuts because it has backed itself into a corner. It is cornered because of its own ineptitude and shortsightedness. But there is bigger political damage ahead if this Government does not change its mind. The public will simply not forgive it if it does not withdraw the cuts in education. It will pay a heavy political price.

Now Minister O'Keefe is blaming teachers for his own decisions. But he is the one who has outraged the public. And his pathetic accusation that teachers are scaremongering is an act of pure desperation.

Education Partners

In order to challenge the cutbacks and their severe and damaging impact on education, the National Post Primary Education Forum (TUI, ASTI, IVEA, JMB, ACCS and The National Parents Council) has embarked on a national campaign. It is intended to establish the PPEF on a county-to-county basis as a means of mobilising everyone affected by the cutbacks, and to highlight the impacts locally. Local public meetings are to be arranged inviting parents, local representatives and the local media. A national co-ordinator for the campaign, Sean McCann, will liaise with county co-ordinating committees, providing information updates etc. A website will be available to provide information in relation to the campaign. TUI will also be organising its members with a view to offering maximum support to the national rally to take place in Dublin on 6th December.

Thanks to delegates who attended the Special Congress on Federated Teachers' and Lecturers' Union at the Burlington. Following a very constructive debate Congress decided to further the agenda of greater teacher union co-operation by agreeing in principle the concept of a teacher union federation among the four teacher unions.

Closer co-operation among teacher unions will give a force of over 55,000 teachers unified on issues of common concern such as the total opposition to the savage cuts in the education service.

Further Education

The Consultative Conference held in Portlaoise in October provided an opportunity for members to express their views on the draft proposals for the Further Education sector. A number of delegates expressed a strong view that the draft agreement falls well short of what TUI aspires

to and what was envisaged under the McIver Report. Notwithstanding, the general view expressed at the consultative conference indicates that in the current economic context it represents a reasonable offer but must only be taken as a starting point.

Over the past few months it has been a great pleasure to attend a number of branch functions honouring retired members. It is fitting that branches mark the retirement of colleagues and recognise the contribution they have made both to teaching and to the union.

I wish on behalf of TUI to pay tribute to all retired members and acknowledge the legacy you have left as teachers over long and distinguished careers. You have made a tremendous contribution to the lives of others, as teachers and mentors to many thousands of students and to your colleagues and comrades in the schools in which you worked.

RMA

TUI wishes that your association with the Union continues and you may wish to consider joining the Retired Members Association (RMA) allowing you to keep in touch with your colleagues and with developments that affect retired teachers. The RMA organise a very attractive package of social and other events and constantly advocate on behalf of its members. The executive of TUI liaises regularly with the RMA in order to represent retired members on issues that arise from time to time.

With Kind Regards,

Don Ryan, TUI President



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Produced by:
Newworld Associates,
9 Greenmount Avenue,
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Printed by:
Typecraft Ltd.

Budget 2008 – A Targeted Attack on Education

Those who watched Finance Minister Brian Lenihan's Budget speech first hand could be forgiven for thinking that education had escaped the worst cuts in the most anticipated speech by a public servant in recent memory.



EDUCATION CUTBACKS PROTEST, WEDNESDAY 29TH OCTOBER

We know now that Minister Lenihan neglected to mention the most savage cuts to education by any Finance Minister. In fact, he brazenly painted a rosy picture of the education estimates.

Later that evening, a document entitled Main Estimate Features was circulated by the Department of Education and Science. It was suddenly very clear that a range of savage cuts would plunge education in Ireland into crisis.

Increase of the Staffing Schedule

TUI estimates that the change in the pupil teacher ratio upwards from 18:1 to 19:1 will mean the loss of approximately 1,000 teaching posts at second level.

At a time when we should be trying to kick-start economic recovery through our education system, the Government's solution is to increase class sizes and restrict subject choice. It is as unconscionable as it is foolhardy.

Among OECD countries, just the Slovak Republic and Greece spend less than Ireland on education. This retrogressive move shows no commitment or political will to rectifying this situation. In fact, it will clearly exacerbate an already unacceptable situation.

Ceiling of two on number of language support teachers

We are abhorred by the increase in the staffing schedule for teachers and the restrictions to be introduced to substitution cover and other teacher allocations including English language support. Withdrawal of language support in the first instance will impact negatively on the development of competence in the English language. It will thereby adversely affect the learning environment in all classes and the capacity of minority ethnic students to achieve in the range of subjects and perform in the State Examinations. It will also inhibit efforts to promote interculturalism throughout the school population.

Inevitably, these cuts are a direct attack on those families already marginalised by society and will escalate the problems of educational disadvantage.

Withdrawal of Substitution Cover

Withdrawal of substitution arrangements will affect the availability of qualified teachers to teach classes when their colleagues are legitimately absent. It will also put immense pressure on schools with regard to organising study visits and field work. Apart from the general value of such activities in enhancing teaching and learning they are essential components of some examination subjects and underpin second assessment components e.g. LCA.

In the event that schools have to withdraw from field work and study visits the quality of teaching and learning will be adversely affected and integrity of the state examinations may be undermined.

Case Study:

School Y has 45 teachers. On a particular Tuesday, three teachers are absent on uncertified sick leave. The same day, two teachers are scheduled to partake in a professional development seminar at their local education centre related to changes in their subject curriculum. Two teachers have also taken a study group on a geography field trip to support core curricular activity.

This means seven of the teaching staff are not available to take classes on that day. Taking seven as the average number of classes each teacher was due to teach

that day, this leaves 49 classes to be covered with no option of substitution cover available.

Anti-Disadvantaged Budget

There is particular concern at the overall anti-disadvantaged flavour of the education aspect of the budget. Cutting the language support cap back to two teachers just weeks after it has been lifted hits the language disadvantaged.

Withdrawal of some 200 posts provided to non-DEIS designated schools also hits the disadvantaged as does the reduction in capitation funding for traveller education and the reduction by 100 of the places in Traveller education, the reduction of 500 places in the Back To School Initiative. Meanwhile there is mere tinkering with the privileged whose fee paying schools still retain the full funding of teachers' salaries out of the same taxpayer's pocket.

The Government commitment to protect the weakest in society is rendered a total lie by the actions of the Ministers collectively. Clearly, the weakest and those without a powerful voice to raise their issues have been brutally attacked.

Withdrawal of Library Grants

Most schools have limited or no library facilities. Where there is a school based library it is often poorly resourced. Withdrawal of library grants through the local authorities is a draconian measure. The impact of this measure will be most severe in localities where there is less social and cultural capital within the local community and/or at home. Once again the most likely students to be adversely affected are those who are already disadvantaged e.g. whose families are on low income families, whose parents have low or no formal qualifications, who have access to few educational materials and resources at home, who are from communities of high socio economic disadvantage.

Student Drop-Out

Latest figures show that one-in-five students does not stay to complete the Leaving Certificate. Cuts to the Leaving Certificate Applied and Junior Cert Schools Programme are a direct attack on those most vulnerable students whose retention within the system for both the Junior and Leaving Certificate cycles is already an uphill struggle.

These vital programmes, along with capitation for Traveller students, have proven invaluable in retaining marginalised students. They promote and support retention through a variety of innovative learning experiences. Our already unacceptable drop-out figures are set to rise starkly in the coming years.

Further Education Staff Schedule Change 'a Logistical Nightmare'

Almost a month after the initial Budget announcements, it was revealed that that an increased pupil to teacher ratio is also to apply to the Further Education Sector, the Leaving Cert Vocational Certificate, the Leaving Cert Applied Programme and other programmes that were designed to respond to specific needs.

The change in the staffing schedule will inevitably have a hugely detrimental effect on the diversity of courses offered to students, with an inevitable follow-on effect on their employment prospects. It will undo years of magnificent progress in the sector.

Many courses run for more than one year so the new pupil teacher ratio will throw the system into absolute chaos. Put simply, a logistical nightmare lies ahead for course co-ordinators.

Higher Education Cutbacks

Even before the Budget cuts announcement, there was serious concern among TUI members in Institutes of Technology regarding the lack of funding in their colleges. TUI anticipates that the reduction in provision for higher education of €43m, coupled with the recent 3% pay budget cut, will intensify these problems.

The union is also concerned that the increase in the student registration fee by €600 will act as a disincentive against third level access families just outside the maintenance grant threshold.



EDUCATION CUTBACKS PROTEST, WEDNESDAY 29TH OCTOBER

Key Budget Cutbacks in Post-Primary Schools

In addition to job losses, the following will result in damaging consequences for teaching and learning, access to and participation in education and quality educational outcomes for our young people.

- Increase in pupil:teacher ratio to 19:1
- Re- introduction of cap of 2 language support teachers
- Withdrawal of additional posts under disadvantaged status
- Withdrawal of grants to subjects and programmes
- Transition Year: €100 per student per annum

- Leaving Cert Applied: €159 per student per annum
- Junior Cert Schools Programme: €63 per group per three year cycle
- Home Economics: Ingredients Grant- €50 per senior class and €38 per junior class group per annum
- Equipment Grant depending on school size and circumstances
- Physics and Chemistry: €13 per student per annum
- Reduction in Capitation Grant for Travellers from current level of €427 per student per annum

- Withdrawal of School Book Aid to non-DEIS schools
- Withdrawal of Grants held by non-DEIS schools under measures to address educational disadvantage
- Increase in School Transport Costs by €132 for junior cycle student and €66 for senior cycle students up to a maximum of €600 per family of €600 per annum
- Increase in Examination Fees by 8%
- Withdrawal in Library Support via Local Authorities

SCHOOL A – WEST DUBLIN, SERVING LARGE SUBURBAN AREA, DEIS STATUS

Number of students - 480	Loss of 1.3 teachers
Number of Travellers -10	Possible loss €4,270.
Number of Foreign Nationals – 288	Loss of up to 4 language support teachers
Number doing Junior Certificate School Programme - 60.	Loss of approx €315
Number doing Transition Year - 70.	Loss of €7,000
Number doing Leaving Certificate Applied Programme - 40.	Loss of €6,360
Number doing Physics and Chemistry - 25	Possible loss €325
Number doing Home Economics – 250	Loss of approx €1,500 - ingredients and basic equipment
Loses benefit of library support from local authority.	

Summary

Loss of 1.3 teachers - Loss of 4 language support teachers - Loss of €19,770 (programme and subject aid) - Loses benefit of library support from local authority - Increase in Exam fees affecting approx 30 students - additional cost to parent group €300

SCHOOL B – NORTH EAST, DUBLIN COMMUTER BELT, SERVING URBAN CATCHMENT AREA AND SOME RURAL STUDENTS, DEIS STATUS

Number of students - 320	Loss of .95 (1) teacher
Number of Travellers -20	Possible loss €8,540
Number of Foreign Nationals - 120	Loss of up to 4 language support teachers
Number doing Junior Certificate School Programme – 40	Loss of approx €189
Number doing Transition Year - 40	Loss of €4,000
Number doing Leaving Certificate Applied Programme - 50	Loss of €7,950.
Number doing Physics and Chemistry - 15	Possible loss of €195
Number doing Home Economics -160	Possible loss of €1,200 - ingredients and basic equipment
Loses benefit of library support from local authority	

Summary

Loss of 1 teacher - Loss of 4 language support teachers - Loss of €22,074 (programme and subject aid) - Loses benefit of library support from local authority - Examination fees to affect 50 students – additional cumulative

SCHOOL C – NORTH DUBLIN, SERVING LARGE SUBURBAN CATCHMENT AREA WITH SIGNIFICANT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE, DEIS STATUS

Number of students - 455	Loss of 1.5 teachers
Number of Travellers - 40	Possible loss €17,080
Number of Foreign Nationals - 14	
Number doing Junior Certificate School Programme - 60	Loss of approx €315
Number doing Transition Year - 40	Loss of €4,000
Number doing Leaving Certificate Applied Programme - 49	Loss of €7,791.
Number doing Physics and Chemistry - 15	Possible loss of €195
Number doing Home Economics -375	Possible loss of €1,700 - ingredients and basic equipment
Loses benefit of library support from local authority	

Summary

Loss of 1.5 teachers - Loss of 4 language support teachers - Loss of €23,290 (programme and subject aid) - Loses benefit of library support from local authority - Examination fees to affect 70 students – additional cost to parent group €600 approx

SCHOOL D – WESTERN SEA BOARD, SERVING LARGE URBAN AND RURAL CATCHMENT AREA, NON- DEIS STATUS

Number of students - 700	Loss of 2.2 teachers
Number of Travellers -2	Possible loss €845
Number of Foreign Nationals - 25	No Loss of language support teachers
Number doing Junior Certificate School Programme – 0	
Number doing Transition Year - 26	Loss of €2,600
Number doing Leaving Certificate Applied - 25	Loss of €3,975
Number doing Physics and Chemistry - 122	Possible loss of €1,586
Number doing Home Economics – 14 class groups	Possible loss of €1,542 – ingredients and equipment
School Book Aid	Loss of €10,744
420 students using school transport service	Possible additional cumulative cost to parent group €39,600
Increase in examinations fees affects majority of students	Approx. additional cumulative cost to parent group €2,000
Loses benefit of library support from local authority	

Summary

Loss of 2.2 teachers - Loss of €21,292 (programme, subject and book aid) - Increased cost to parent group (transport/exam fees) €41,600 - Loses benefit of library support from local authority

SCHOOL E – SOUTH EAST, SERVING VERY LARGE RURAL AS WELL AD SMALL URBAN CATCHMENT AREA, SOUTH EAST, NON- DEIS STATUS

Number of students - 695	Loss of 2.1 teachers
Number of Travellers - 0	
Number of Foreign Nationals - 2	No Loss of language support teachers
Number doing Junior Certificate School Programme – 46	€945
Number doing Transition Year - 100	Loss of €10,300
Number doing Leaving Certificate Applied - 29	Loss of €4,611
Number doing Physics and Chemistry - 52	Possible loss of €676
Number doing Home Economics – 15 class groups	Possible loss of €1,592
School Book Aid	Loss of €26, 942
Additional Grant Aid	Loss of €14,285
500 students using school transport service	Approx. additional cumulative cost to parent group €42,800
200 students affected by increase in Examinations Fees	Approx additional cumulative cost to parent group €1711
Loses benefit of library support from local authority	

Summary

Loss of 2.1 teachers - Loss of €45,066 (programme, subject and book aid) - Loss of additional grant aid €14,285 - Loses benefit of library support from local authority - Transport and Exam Fees - Increased cost to parent group €44,511

SCHOOL F – NORTH WEST, SERVING LARGE RURAL AND URBAN CATCHMENT AREA, NON- DEIS STATUS

Number of students - 403	Loss of 1.5 teachers
Number of Travellers - 0	
Number of Foreign Nationals - 0	
Number doing Junior Certificate School Programme – 0	
Number doing Transition Year - 21	Loss of €2,100
Number doing Leaving Certificate Applied - 20	Loss of €3,180
Number doing Physics and Chemistry - 20	Possible loss of €260
Number doing Home Economics – 20	Possible loss of €7,000 (ingredients plus equipment grant)
School Book Aid	Loss of €9,000
Additional Grant Aid including school meal scheme	Loss of up to €115,000
350 students using school transport service	Approx. additional cumulative cost to parent group €42,800
185 students affected by increase in Examinations Fees	Approx. additional cumulative costs to parent group €1500
Loses benefit of library support from local authority	

Summary

Loss of 1.5 teachers - Loss of €21,540 (programme, subjects and book aid) - Loss of additional grant aid €115,00 - Loses benefit of library support from local authority - Increased cost to parent group (transport/exam fees) €44,311

Educational cuts - The Cost to Families

Family Profile A Lone parent with three children, living in rural area ineligible for medical card or third level grant aid

1 CHILD IN THIRD LEVEL	
Increase in registration fees	+ €600
2 CHILDREN IN POST PRIMARY (one in junior cycle and one in senior cycle)	
Increase in transport costs	+ €198
Withdrawal of book rental/grant schemes	+ €350
Withdrawal of lunch subsidy	+ €300
PLUS	
Effects of increase in pupil teacher ratio and withdrawal of substitution cover and	
Larger class size - less personal attention for each student	
Less subject choice - more limited access to some third level options and restricted career choice	
Severe restrictions on educational field trips that support curricular activities and state examination components.	
INCREASED COST TO FAMILY PER ANNUM	€1,438 APPROX

Family Profile B Married couple with four children, living in rural area ineligible for medical card or third level grant aid

2 CHILDREN IN THIRD LEVEL	
Increase in registration fees	+ €1,200
2 CHILDREN IN POST PRIMARY (one junior cycle, one senior cycle taking Leaving Cert Applied)	
Increase in transport costs	+ €198
Withdrawal of book rental/grant schemes	+ €200
Withdrawal of lunch subsidy	+ €300
Withdrawal of programme grants	+ €100
PLUS	
Effects of increase in pupil teacher ratio and withdrawal of substitution cover and	
Larger class size - less personal attention for each student	
Less subject choice - more limited access to some third level options and restricted career choice	
Severe restrictions on educational field trips that support curricular activities and state examination components.	
INCREASED COST TO FAMILY PER ANNUM	€1,998 APPROX

Family Profile C Married couple with five children, living adjacent to main city but ineligible for medical card or third level grant aid

3 CHILDREN IN THIRD LEVEL	
Increase in registration fees	+ €1,800
1 CHILD IN POST PRIMARY (One junior cycle, one senior cycle in Transition Year)	
Increase in transport costs	+ €198
Withdrawal of book rental/grant schemes	+ €150
Withdrawal of lunch subsidy	+ €300
Withdrawal of programme grants	+ €100
PLUS	
Larger class size	
Less personal attention for each student	
Less subject choice, more limited access to some third level options and restricted career choice	
Severe restrictions on educational field trips that support curricular activities and state examination components.	
One child in primary school with special educational needs	
Withdrawal of grant aid and other learning supports	€100
PLUS	
Larger class size leading to less individual attention	
Restricted teaching aids	
INCREASED COST TO FAMILY PER ANNUM	€2,690 APPROX

TUI to support those hit by Early Retirement Cut

One of the least publicised provisions of the Budget has been the suspension of the Early Retirement Strands for teachers. These are known as Strands 1, 2 and 3, which were introduced under the provisions of the PCW 10 years ago and which have allowed a number of teachers to take early retirement since.

In the letter issued by the Department of Education and Science towards the end of 2007 inviting applicants for the Early Retirement Strands, i.e. for those who wished to retire at the end of that academic year, there was a very clear statement by the Department of Education and

Science that the Strands would continue for at least one further year, i.e. until the end of the current academic year. TUI Head Office has been inundated with calls from teachers who were advised by this circular letter that these Strands would be available and consequently postponed their decision to seek early retirement to the current year. This withdrawal, without notice, by the Minister is regarded by the Union as an outrage and is also a remarkably shortsighted decision. In addition to the benefits of the Strands as set out in the agreement, the effect of a teacher retiring and being replaced by a teacher low down on the salary scale is not enormously costly.

TUI has written to the Minister for Education and Science stating that it believes that the issue of the circular letter referred to above in 2007 conveys a legal right of legitimate expectation to any teacher who postponed their decision with a view to seeking early retirement this year. The Union is prepared to support any teacher seeking to assert this right in the first instance by obtaining legal advice for the member in question.



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12,000 Brave Elements to Protest at Education Cuts outside Dáil

TUI members joined other unions, parents and students as 12,000 protested against the education cuts outside the Dáil on October 29th. On a cold wet night, a clear message was given to Government that the fight against the education cuts is really only beginning.



TUI PRESIDENT DON RYAN ADDRESSES PROTESTERS

TUI President Don Ryan reminded the crowd that “last week the Government called on our patriotism. What Ministers Lenihan and O’Keeffe did in the Budget was grievously unpatriotic. You have undermined and damaged the future of young Irish people.”

Mr Ryan highlighted our poor levels of funding compared with our OECD neighbours and shattered the Government’s spin on the increase in the staffing schedule.

“The Government is saying that the worsening of the Pupil/Teacher ratio will only mean a couple of additional children in classes here and there. But this is not about class sizes. It is about the existence of classes.”

Even a small to medium sized school will lose a teacher or 33 classes of teaching each week, Mr Ryan said. Irish children will be the main victims of this decision with in excess of a million classes of teaching withdrawn from the system.

The abolition of funding for specialist programmes for weaker pupils at Junior and Leaving Certificate level and funding for schoolbooks are outrageous cutbacks, Mr Ryan said.

“These cuts illustrate the Government’s complete disregard for disadvantaged students and their families. Disadvantaged individuals, families and communities are clearly not a priority for this Government.



“Minister O’Keeffe, if you want the last vestige of partnership to remain; if you want the last remnants of trust to remain, reverse your immoral decision of last week. Sit down with the parents, management bodies and teachers of this country and try to re-establish your credibility to hold the Ministry that is charged with safeguarding the educational welfare of the young people of this state.”

TUI’s Education Partners – United in Anger

TUI has met with parent and managements bodies, education spokespersons for the Opposition parties and principals in the aftermath of the cuts. This situation is unique in that all parties are abhorred by the nature and viciousness of the cuts.

The Post-Primary Education Forum (consisting of the National Parents’ Council Post-Primary, JMB, ACCS, IVEA, TUI and ASTI) also held a press conference to show solidarity among education partners in opposition to the cuts. A joint press release was issued.

TUI also met with representatives of the National Parents Association for Vocational Schools and Community Colleges (NPAVSCC) and the Parents Association for Community and Comprehensive Schools (PACCS).

There was absolute agreement that the cutbacks detailed in the budget must be strongly resisted because of their impact on the most disadvantaged.

The GAA has also protested that the substitution withdrawal will negatively impact on the playing of GAA post-primary school competitions.



Budget Cutback Media Campaign

TUI has issued a range of press statements since the Budget cuts, which have been covered extensively in the Irish Times, Irish Independent and Irish Examiner.

An opinion editorial by President Don Ryan was published in the Irish Times on Wednesday November 5th.

TUI representatives have also been interviewed on RTE 6:1 and 9 O’Clock bulletins, TV3 News, on Today FM and Independent Network News bulletins and by various regional media outlets.

The union also issued joint press statements with:

- The Post Primary Education Forum (PPEF)
- Parents groups the National Parents Association for Vocational Schools and Community Colleges (NPAVSCC) and The Parents Association for Community and Comprehensive Schools (PACCS)
- Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) and National students’ union the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) on third level issues

Statements and details of coverage are available on the TUI website.

Stop Press – ICTU special delegate conference votes to accept Agreement

A special delegate conference of ICTU voted to accept the National Wage Agreement negotiated in September.

The TUI delegation voted in favour of the deal in accordance with the results of the ballot of members, which was passed by 71% to 29%.

Pay Update

Payment of 2½% at Second Level

The situation with regard to the 2½% payable to teachers with effect from September, 2008, is that there are two issues of significance currently being dealt with.

Posts of Responsibility

A new system of posts of responsibility has been proposed which brings about five criteria as follows:

- Seniority
- Knowledge and capacity to meet the needs of the job
- Capacity to contribute to the overall development of the school
- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Capacity to contribute to the organisation and management needs of the school.

Each of the above five criteria will attract 20% of the marks. The weighting for seniority has therefore been reduced in both VEC and in C&C schools from 30% to 20%. In addition, the other criteria have been redefined.

It has been agreed that a candidate, following an interview for a post of responsibility, can obtain the marks that they received together with other appropriate feedback. This will, in future, be available on request by the teacher without the necessity of entering an appeal.

The composition of the selection board has also been changed to comprise:

In the VEC sector

- A member of the VEC;
- The CEO or his/her nominee (this may include the principal of the school in question); and
- An independent person from a panel to be agreed between the management and the union

In the C&C sector

- A nominee of the trustees of the school
- The school principal; and
- An independent third party from a panel to be agreed with the unions.

There will be some minor change to the appeal system in that the appeals will be heard by a three person board, one representing the union of the appellant, one representing the employer and an independent arbitrator.

In addition, at the request of TUI, it has been agreed in principle that appointments to the positions of deputy principal and principal will have an appeals process.

The above arrangements will apply from 1st September, 2009, other than the criterion for seniority which will be phased in over a 5 year period commencing on 1st September, 2009.

Teachers Experiencing Professional Difficulties

Negotiations are continuing with a view to agreeing procedures in relation to teachers who are considered to be experiencing

professional difficulties. In the first instance, these procedures will focus on providing support for the teacher in question and only where such support has been unsuccessful will any adverse action be considered against the teacher.

At the insistence of the TUI, the inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science will be centrally involved in any such process once it goes outside of the school. In addition, the Union is seeking an increased second level support service for teachers who may be experiencing such difficulties.

In addition to these procedures there is also being discussed disciplinary procedures for the processing of issues where there are allegations in relation to the conduct of a teacher. In these discussions, the Union is seeking that there be adequate protection for the teacher in all situations.

Payment of 2½%

In accordance with the national agreement Towards 2016, the Education Sector Performance Verification Group and the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science must be satisfied that the above issues have been agreed to the satisfaction of the Department of Education and Science. TUI is seeking that this agreement be reached as quickly as possible with a view to ensuring that full payment is made to teachers with effect from 1st September, 2008.

The GAA has also protested that the substitution withdrawal will negatively impact on the playing of GAA post-primary school competitions.

Payment of 2½% at Third Level

The provisions of the national agreement Towards 2016 require that certain items be agreed prior to the Education Sector Performance Verification Group and the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science agreeing to the payment of the 2½% to TUI members in Institutes of Technology. Agreement to this end is being sought in order to ensure that the payment is made with effect from 1st September, 2008, in accordance with the agreement. The issues concerned are set out below.

Apprentice Year

As set out in the agreement, the Union is committed to addressing the issue of the Apprentice Year so that the traditional "Easter Break" will take place between apprentice blocks 2 and 3.

Quality Assurance

The Union is committed to the completion of Quality Assurance form QA1 electronically subject to the satisfactory assurance that the ownership of the content of the form completed by the student remains that of the lecturer exclusively. In addition, adequate security must also be addressed.

Revised Agreements on Discipline Procedures

Significant progress has been made towards the revision of grievance and discipline procedures and it is hoped that these can be concluded in the very near future.

Academic Contract

A provision of the national agreement is that there would be discussions towards an agreed contract for academic staff. Very little progress has been made in regard to this matter and no significant proposals have been made to the Union.

The Union has indicated that it is not disposed to contract discussions being dealt with in a piecemeal manner and is resisting attempts by institute management that the Union make concessions in regard to certain issues which might arise within the contract before discussions on the contract commence.

Each of the above items are being actively discussed between the Union and institute management.

Payment of 2.5 % from the 1st of September – Adult Education and Youthreach grades

Circular letter 97/2008 issued on the 15th October 2008 confirming the payment of 2.5% to a number of education grades which are represented by TUI and comprehended by the VEC National Partnership Forum including:

- Adult Education Officers
- Adult Education Guidance Counsellors and Co-Ordinators
- Adult Literacy Organisers
- Community Education Facilitators
- Psychologists (City of Dublin and Co Dublin VEC)
- Youthreach Co- Ordinators and Resource Persons

The 2.5 % increase will be applied from the 1st of September 2008 to salaries and allowances.

Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

Certificate Examinations 2009

Appointment for Oral and Practical Examinations.

Applications are invited for appointment as Assistant Examiner of :-

- Oral tests at the Leaving Certificate Examinations
- Practical / Project tests at the Certificate Examinations

Completed application forms should be returned to the State Examinations Commission (SEC) to arrive no later than Friday 28th November 2008. Postage must be prepaid on all applications.

A supply of application forms for the above positions has issued to all second level schools.

Application forms are also available from the recruitment section of the SEC website www.examinations.ie or by contacting :

Orals Section :090644 - 2745 / 2747
e-mail: orals@examinations.ie

Practicals Section: 090644 - 2751 / 2862
e-mail: practicals@examinations.ie

Application forms through Irish are available on request from the SEC, Cornamaddy, Athlone.

The SEC is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.

TUI Credit Union News

Congratulations to the recent winners of the monthly draw:

AUGUST 08

P. Quinn, Dublin - €1500
ANON, Carlow - €1000
P. Byrne, Dublin - €500

SEPTEMBER 08

M. O' Brien, Carlow - €1500
P. O' Riordan, Cork - €1000
R. McCarthy, Dublin - €500

OCTOBER 08

F. Duignan, Dublin - €1500
C. Smith, Dublin - €1000
G. Howley, Waterford - €500

The results of the November and December draws (including the Christmas car) will be given at the AGM of the TUI Credit Union on 12th December 2008. The venue is the Clarion Hotel, Co Dublin at 8.00 pm. Credit Union President Frank McGinn cordially invites all members and friends to attend the event.

Reminder

To join the TUI Credit Union or the members' monthly draw, please contact Head Office, 73 Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6
Email tuicreditunion@eircom.net
Phone 01-4922355
Fax 01-4929865

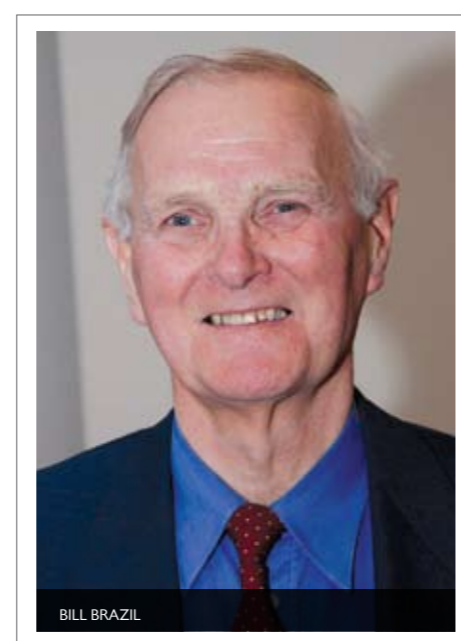
Our administrative staff, Madeleine, Nadia and Fiona are always happy to help.

Welcome News

Your savings/shares in TUI Credit Union are SAFE. The State's Deposit Protection Scheme now covers credit unions.

Finally the Board of Directors Supervisors and Administrative Staff send good wishes to our friend and colleague Bill Brazil. After many years of devoted service to the TUI Credit Union, Bill is retiring. Míle Buíochas duit-se Bill, agus gach beannacht!

Eileen Clancy - Chair, Marketing/Promotions Sub Committee



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www.tuicu.ie

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Teachers' Union of Ireland Credit Union Ltd. 73 Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6. Tel: 01 492 2355 (from the 01 area), 1850 741 600 (from outside the 01 area)
Fax: 01 492 9865, E-mail: info@tuicu.ie, Web: www.tuicu.ie

Further Education Consultative Conference Portlaoise 14th October 2008



GENERAL SECRETARY PETER MACMENAMIN, VICE PRESIDENT BERNIE RUANE, PRESIDENT DON RYAN, DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY ANNETTE DOLAN, FURTHER EDUCATION SUB COMMITTEE CHAIR TOM CREEDON

The Further Education Consultative Conference was held in Portlaoise on 14th October 2008. Only a week after the conclusion of the negotiations on the 23rd July 2008 TUI was informed by the Minister that while the Government was committed to the Proposed Agreement for the PLC sector, the money was not there at present for its implementation. TUI has since met with the Minister, the Secretary General, the IVEA and FETAC, with the objective of changing this Government decision.

The General Secretary Mr Peter MacMenamin outlined the origins of the proposed agreement, emanating from a commitment in Towards 2016.

Mr MacMenamin took the lead position in these negotiations from the beginning of 2008 with the then President Tim O'Meara, Annette Dolan, now Deputy General Secretary, the then Vice President, Don Ryan (now President) and Bernie Ruane (now Vice President). The negotiating team were later joined by the chair of the Further Education Sub Committee Tom Creedon.

The General Secretary stated that TUI entered negotiations to maximise the implementation of the recommendations in the Mclver Report, in accordance with TUI policy. The General Secretary stated that the proposals set out in the document were "the best available at this time." He also stated that "that this is not the end of the linewe are committed by policy decisions to continue to pursue this matter to ultimate conclusion."

Mr MacMenamin stated that if we agree to the proposals then we will seek implementation by getting the agreement of the Teachers' Conciliation Council in the first instance. On the other hand, if we do not agree to the proposals we cannot seek implementation and we may have lost the opportunity presented under Towards 2016. The General Secretary also stated that the TUI Executive will decide on the next step and in so doing will take the views expressed by TUI members at the Consultative Conference into consideration.

The TUI President, Mr Don Ryan in addressing the Conference stated:

"I know that the negotiated proposal is not the full sum of our demands. I genuinely believe that it is a significant step in the right direction; it is a start, and one of the important aspects of the proposal is that there is a clear understanding that the proposals are not a full and final settlement of our claims in respect of the establishment of a discrete and adequately supported Further Education Sector."

In referring to the additional duties to be carried out by PLC teachers, the President stated that TUI "is adamant that these new duties and responsibilities can only be carried out when the resources needed to undertake them are made available."

It is in this context that the TUI letter of instruction to TUI PLC teachers was issued and will remain in place until the resources required to do the new work associated with Quality Assurance requirements are made available.

Annette Dolan, Deputy General Secretary explained the details of the proposed agreement, stating that:

The result of the negotiations was a range of advances in terms of:

- Time table remission for PLC teachers- 2 hour reduction
- A Revised promotion structure- new posts of academic manager and academic middle manager, additional deputy principal posts in larger colleges
- Increased capitation grant
- Additional guidance hours

The Deputy General Secretary outlined that teachers in the PLC sector will be engaged in a number of duties which will be carried out with an annual 735 hours over 33.4 weeks of an academic year. To enable PLC teachers to carry out additional duties specific to the PLC sector including additional work associated with the new

Quality Assurance requirements, the structure of the 33.4 weeks will change for PLC teachers. For the PLC teacher the 22 hour week will consist of class contact hours and non class contact hours for additional duties specific to the PLC teacher.

- The class contact hours will consist of 20 timetabled class contact hours per week for 29.4 weeks of the school year.
- The non-class contact hours will consist of 22 hours for the first two weeks of the year and 22 hours for the last two weeks of the year and two hours per week for 29.4 weeks of the year.

Ms Dolan explained the specific details in relation to revised promotion structures. She stated that the initial filling of academic

manager posts will be confined to existing assistant principals. Academic managers will have 13 class contact hours (5 hour reduction will be replaced). Academic managers who will have an allowance 50% greater than Assistant principals will be appointed at the following intervals:

- 1@150 PLC students
- 2@400 PLC students
- 3@600 PLC students
- 4@800 PLC students
- 5 @1000 PLC students
- 6 @1250 PLC students.

The initial filling of academic middle manager posts will be confined to existing special duties post holders who will have 18 class contact hours (3 of the 4 hour reduction will be replaced)



DEIRDRE O' SULLIVAN, RUTH KELLEHER, GERALD BRENNAN AND VIVIENNE MACSWEENEY

Academic middle managers will have an allowance 50% greater than that of a special duties post holders and will be appointed at the following intervals:

- 1@150
- 2@300
- And another 1 at each interval of 200

Assistant Principals will have 17 hours of class contact (the one hour reduction will be replaced).

Additional guidance hours will be available to PLC colleges with 150+PLC students.



DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY ANNETTE DOLAN AND VICE PRESIDENT BERNIE RUANE



CATHERINE COONEY AND ANN-MARIE CASEY

The consensus from the majority of branches at the conference was that while the proposed agreement was not Mclver it was a step in the right direction and that the union should accept the proposed agreement and seek its implementation.

The Executive Committee of TUI at its recent meeting endorsed the recommendation of the Further Education Sub-Committee to accept the proposed agreement for the PLC sector. The Executive also endorsed the recommendation of the Further Education Sub Committee to campaign for the implementation of the proposed agreement for the PLC sector.

Special Congress on Teacher Union Co-Operation

At a special Congress in the Burlington Hotel in Dublin on October 18th, TUI agreed to further the agenda of greater teacher union co-operation by agreeing in principle the concept of a teacher union federation among the four teacher Unions.

General Secretary Peter MacMenamin said that the closer co-operation among teacher unions will give a force of 55,000 teachers unified in total opposition to the savage cuts in the education service.

TUI has scheduled further meetings with the presidents and general secretaries of the other three teacher unions with a view to making a full report to Congress 2009.



NATASHA CALLINAN AND DERVAL GLAVIN AT SPECIAL CONGRESS



STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE MEMBERS FRANK DOOLEY, AIDAN KENNY AND VINCENT BRESLIN



AUSTIN FENNESSY, MICHAEL STANLEY AND KEVIN WHYTE AT SPECIAL CONGRESS



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Annual Congress 2009 - Cork April 14th to 16th

Annual Congress 2009 will be held in Rochestown Park Hotel, Douglas, Cork.
Reservations for accommodation during Annual Congress can be made as follows:

Rochestown Park Hotel, Douglas, Cork

Tel: 021 489 0800

Fax: 021 489 2178

Please note that Rochestown Park has been fully booked at this point.

Silversprings Moran Hotel, Tivoli, Cork

Tel: 021 450 7533

Fax: 021 450 7641

B&B €70.00 pps
€110.00 single

**Children up to 5 years of age – Free

5 – 12 years of age –€25.00 B&B

Radisson (Airport) Hotel, Cork Airport.

Tel: 021 494 7500

Fax: 021 494 7500

B&B €71.00 pps
€115.00 single

**Children up to 12 years of age free accommodation

€10.00 Breakfast

International (Airport) Hotel, Gate No.2, Airport Business Park, Cork Airport.

Tel: 021 454 9800

Fax: 021 454 9999

B&B €71.00 pps
€115.00 single

**Children up to 6 years of age – free

6-16 years of age - €10.00 B&B

Carrigaline Court Hotel, Main Street, Carrigaline, Cork

Tel: 021 485 2100

Fax: 021 437 1103

B&B: €71.00 pps
€115 single

**Children up to 5 years of age - free

5 – 12 years of age €30.50 B&B,

siobhanorourke@ferrycarrighotel.ie

**Please note that the rate for children is based on sharing with two adults.

***Bookings must be made before 31st December 2008 to avail of the above rates

Crèche

A crèche under professional supervision will be provided in Rochestown Park Hotel. Further information regarding the crèche, including application forms, will be issued to Branches and will also be available on the website www.tui.ie when details have been finalised.

Important Dates to Congress 2009

6th January 2009

Last date for receipt of motions from Branches to Head Office for submission to Standing Orders Committee.

12th January 2009

Last date for receipt of nominations for positions of Vice-President, Security Fund Committee and Area Representatives for the following areas:

Area:

2. Roscommon, Longford, Westmeath and Offaly.
4. Wexford, County Waterford, Waterford City, Tipperary S.R. and Kilkenny.
6. Dublin County, Borough of Dun Laoghaire
8. Sligo County, Leitrim and Donegal
10. Dublin City.
12. Community & Comprehensive Schools in Counties Donegal, Galway, Leitrim, Longford, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo, Westmeath.
14. Community & Comprehensive Schools in Counties Carlow, Clare, Cork, Kerry, Kilkenny, Laois, Limerick, Offaly, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford.
16. Third Level Colleges - Dublin City.
18. Third Level Colleges – Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Longford, Roscommon, Westmeath.

28th January 2009

Issue ballot papers for elections.

10th February 2009

Preliminary Agenda will be issued to Branches.

24th February 2009

Last date for receipt of:

- amendments to Preliminary Agenda
- order of priority for motions in each section
- names of delegates to Congress.

25th February 2009

Last date for receipt of annual election ballot papers.

24th March 2009

The Final Agenda will be issued; also the General Secretary's Report; Balance Sheet and Financial Statement; names of delegates to Congress and the Branches represented.

7th April 2009

Last date for receipt of questions on the Annual Report and Annual Accounts.

14th April 2009

CONGRESS OPENS

Note: Rule 13 (ii) which reads as follows determines the number of delegates:

“One delegate from each Branch of which the members in benefit do not exceed thirty and one delegate for each fraction of thirty, as per the following table:

Members	Delegates
1 - 30	1
31 - 60	2
61 - 90	3
91 - 120	4
121 - 150	5
151 - 180	6
and so on”.	

In-benefit members for the purpose of arriving at the number of delegates to the Annual Congress are fully paid-up members for the month of December whose subscriptions have been received by the General Secretary on or before the last Friday in February, i.e. Friday, 27th February 2009.

5th May 2009

Last date for receipt of nominations for the position of President.

12th May 2009

Ballot papers for election of President will be issued.

28th May 2009

Last date for receipt of ballot papers for Presidential election.

Branch Treasurers' Seminar

A Seminar for Branch Treasurers was held in Dublin on Wednesday, 10th September 2008.

The Seminar, which was well attended, was opened by the President, Don Ryan and Chaired by Denis Magner, Hon. Treasurer.

Margarita Martin of Deloitte advised the Treasurers on the completion of the Annual Accounts Returns for the year ended 30th September 2008.

The format for the Annual Returns has been revised and Margarita brought the Treasurers through the new format and dealt with general queries on Branch Accounts.

Hilary O'Byrne, Administrative Officer dealt with the day to day role of Treasurers and John O'Reilly, Assistant General Secretary, advised on the Recruitment Campaign.

The feedback from the Seminar has been very positive.



MICK GLYNN DUBLIN C&C AND HELEN BRENNAN DCPP AT BRANCH TREASURERS' TRAINING



GERARD WOODS DUNDALK IT, GERARD PHELAN TALLAGHT IT AND PEADAR O' KELLY COUNTY DUBLIN BRANCH



DENIS MAGNER (HON TREASURER, TUI), HILARY O' BYRNE (ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, TUI), DON RYAN (PRESIDENT, TUI), MARGUARITA MARTIN (DELOITTE)

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Budget Cuts – Throwing out the Baby by Berni Brady, Director of AONTAS,

AONTAS is the Irish National Association of Adult Education, The TUI is affiliated to AONTAS as are many of its members such as Adult Education Officers, Adult Literacy Organisers, Community Education Facilitators and a wide range of others involved in adult education.

The recent budget estimates announced on October 14th were expected to be austere but the cutbacks announced for education have sent shockwaves through the entire education system. The raising of the teacher pupil ratio for primary schools was not expected and makes Ireland a leader across Europe for all the wrong reasons. Coupled with the cuts in language supports for our new ethnic groups at a time when the government is consulting stakeholders on the development of intercultural education is such a contradiction that it hardly seems to make any sense.

Cutbacks at post primary level, targeting activities such as those delivered through the transition year which are vital to enabling young people to broaden their horizons beyond the boundaries of the formal curriculum, portray a crude instrumental vision of education which does not serve our country or society well at a time of rapid change.

Funding for the adult and community education sector will be reduced by €8.5million or just under 5% on the 2008 spend. This represents an estimated 1.82% of the overall education budget which is an erosion from an all time high of 2.8% in 2004. The government has indicated that this will mean an overall reduction of 500 places on the Back to Education Initiative and the number of places available in Senior Traveller Training Centres will also be reduced by 100.

VECs have been asked to cut their administration budgets by at least 3% and, given that they are the key providers of adult and community education, this is

bound to have a knock on effect across the board. The outcomes of a reduction in expenditure will not become clear until 2009.

Schemes such as BTEI which was initiated in 2002 were designed to increase the participation of young people and adults with less than upper second level education in a range of flexible learning opportunities leading to formal qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework with particular emphasis on Levels 3 and 4.

Almost 26,000 learners took up these opportunities in 2007. AONTAS also welcomed the opening up in 2007 of the BTEI to people earning low incomes. The introduction of this programme and other initiatives put in place following the publication of the White Paper on Adult education in 2000 were seen as a major breakthrough for a sector which subsisted on minimal resources up until 1997.

Strategic targeting of people who had gained least from or missed out on formal education system was seen as an enlightened move by government and one which demonstrated a commitment to investing in lifelong learning. It is not only hugely disappointing but it is also extremely short-sighted to now target people who are the most vulnerable groups in the sector.

Arguments have been put forward by government that we are all in this together and that the pain must be borne by everyone. This argument must be unpicked and strongly contested. We are not all in this together. The groups who access second chance education and

training opportunities are singularly the most voiceless people in Irish society and have had no say in the decision making which leads our government to bail out the banking system and shore up powerful interests. Introducing the notion of equality in bearing the brunt of cuts is almost laughable if it weren't so sad.

No-one can predict what the outcome of the current global financial turmoil will be and certainly our government seems to be at a loss when it comes to putting forward imaginative and strategic responses to it.

But there is one thing that we do know and that is that the rebuilding and future sustainability of our economy and civil society will be done by people who are equipped with the skills knowledge and attributes to be innovative, imaginative and strategic. That is why governments should invest even more in lifelong learning in critically difficult times.

Berni Brady, AONTAS November 2008

If you are working in adult education and are a member of the TUI let us know what your experience of the cuts are and how they are affecting the delivery of services and programmes in your area. Post or Email your comments to TUI Head Office (showard@tui.ie).

Cutbacks in Adult Education : The Local Experience

Significant deterioration in service provision is predicted by local service managers at a time when expansion and improvement should be a government priority.

VECs will have to bear a 5% cut in non-pay grant provision in addition to the 3% cut in payroll costs announced in July 2008. The negative impact of these cuts will be quite significant in terms of overall programme provision at local level. According to local service managers the cutbacks are likely to have devastating affects including:

- A reduction in the number of courses available particularly under the BTEI and Adult Literacy and Basic Education Services –both primarily target those with low or no formal qualifications.
- Further restrictions on local capacity to meet the needs of the most vulnerable groups in society for whom part-time provision is crucial to support entry and progression e.g. those with a disability, those in low paid work whose need to improve their qualifications, the unemployed who need to up-skill and re-skill, Travellers and those for whom English is a second language.
- The demand for part-time courses leading to certification at the early levels on the national framework (1-4) already exceeds resources. Demand at these and other levels is expected to grow given a steady increase in unemployment but there will be no capacity to expand course provision.
- Restriction on expenditure on accommodation will lead to a reduction in the number of courses provided in outreach locations and local communities again hitting the most vulnerable e.g. those with no access to public transport, those with a disability,

those who need community support before retuning to more formal learning environments.

- A number of courses being delivered on a modular basis leading to a full award over a two or three year period may have to be suspended. This will leave participants in position where a full award will not be possible.
- Cutbacks in local promotion and advertising initiatives will mean that local communities will not have access to regular and accessible information about what courses are being provided and what supports are available.
- Essential supports such as childcare and guidance will be curtailed. Experience has identified these as crucial to enabling initial engagement, on-going participation, completion and progression to further training and education at a higher level. A reduction in these services will mean that some learners will be lost at a time when engagement in education is crucial.
- Inability to provide adequate cover

when teachers/tutors are out on statutory leave such as maternity leave will lead to some courses being suspended.

- A number of tutors will not be re-employed and their expertise will be lost to the system.
- An essential aspect of quality adult education is the development of teaching materials and resources as set textbooks are often inaccessible or inappropriate.

Suspension of such activity and a curtailment of Continuing Professional Development for tutors will contribute to a further deterioration in the service provided and quality assurance may be compromised.

At a time of soaring unemployment levels and a message by government that education and training responses will be critical to reduce budgets for the delivery of adult and further education and prevent providers from being able to respond effectively is contradictory and unjustifiable.

Restriction on expenditure on accommodation will lead to a reduction in the number of courses provided in outreach locations and local communities again hitting the most vulnerable e.g. those with no access to public transport, those with a disability, those who need community support before retuning to more formal learning environments.

Project Maths - Underway since September 2008

This new initiative got under way in September 2008. Schools were invited to indicate an interest in participating toward the end of the last academic session. The final selection of 24 schools was guided by the Education Research Centre, Drumcondra to ensure a mix from the different school types and a regional spread. The first two of five syllabus strands will be introduced for incoming first year and fifth year students.

The new approach will see:

- A much greater emphasis being placed on student understanding of mathematics concepts
- In tandem with curriculum changes there will be changes in the way mathematics is assessed, to reflect the different emphasis on understanding and skills in the teaching and learning of mathematics
- Increased use of contexts and applications that will enable students to relate mathematics to everyday experience
- A stronger focus on developing students' problem-solving skills
- Teachers in the participating schools will engage with the revised syllabus strands and will be supported in bringing about a new approach to the teaching and learning of mathematics through a specially designed professional development programme and tailored resources.

The full list of participating schools is available on the NCCA website. If your school is participating the TUI invites you to keep the TUI representatives on NCCA Maths Committees (see www.tui.ie for current representatives), your local branch and your TUI Area Representative informed of your views on and experience of the pilot phase. Such feedback is crucial if the union is to represent the interests of its members as the final version of the revised syllab

Separated Teachers' Support Group

Next Meeting: Saturday 24th January 2009.
Time: 11.00am
Venue: Grand Hotel(Baird Suite),Malahide, Co. Dublin.
 New members welcome. Separated, Divorced, Widowed, Lone parents. INTO, ASTI, TUI, IFUT members welcome.

20th Anniversary Dinner Dance.
 Grand Hotel, Malahide, Co. Dublin.
 8.00pm. Sat. 24th Jan'09.
 Past members welcome.
 Tickets available from committee.
 Further information from:
 Chairperson: Maura Killackey 0505 21674 or 087 1233456
 Secretary; Christina Henry 01 8481405 or 087 6201153

Woodwork Teachers

Gorey Class of 1979
 Hoping to Have a Class Reunion
 To Mark 30 Years of Teaching
 Venue to be Arranged (Possibly in Gorey)
Date: May 2009
Contact:
 John Tutty @ [087 2744962](tel:0872744962) or john.tutty@terenurecollege.ie
 Mick Conroy @ [087 4188394](tel:0874188394)
 Paddy Garry @ [014926196](tel:014926196)

TUI member receives honorary degree in Canada

TUI member John Ennis, head of Humanities at Waterford Institute of Technology in Ireland and an acclaimed poet, received an honorary doctor of laws degree from Memorial University of Newfoundland in Canada in October.



Dr. John Ennis has been head of Humanities at Waterford Institute of Technology since 1980, first as head of department and, since 1992, as head of school.

Dr. Ennis is originally from Westmeath, and has a BA from University College Cork, an MA from University College Dublin and an H.Dip.Ed. from the National University of Ireland. He has spent 38 years in Waterford – receiving his PhD there – and has been a major contributor to the development of the institute.

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Grade Inflation in Second and Third Level Education

by Dr Brendan Guilfoyle

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During the last year evidence has emerged that substantial grade inflation has been occurring in the Irish education system over the last decade. This phenomenon, whereby higher and higher awards are being given without any real improvements in learning, is of critical importance to Irish education, and requires serious consideration beyond the pejorative “dumbing down” rhetoric favoured by the media. As trade union members working in education, grade inflation doubly affects us: firstly as citizens (particularly if we have, or will have, children) and secondly, as professionals, upon whom society depends for the integrity of our educational system. In grappling with this issue, we must consider exactly what is happening, why it is happening, what the implications are and what steps need to be taken.

What is happening?

At third level, the percentage of higher awards has rocketed over the last decade and a half. For example, in 1994 the percentage of first class honours awarded across Irish Universities was 7%. By 2005 that figure had jumped to 17%. In the Institutes of Technology over the same period there was a 52% increase in the award of first class honours degrees. While there has been variation in these increases between institutions, the trend has been the same - inexorably upwards.

At second level, a similar trend appears: the percentage of higher awards has soared. The accompanying table contains a comparison of the percentage of students obtaining either an A or B in the Leaving Certificate in 1991 and 2006 at Higher and Ordinary level in the most popular subjects.

Of course, a simplistic explanation of these increases could be that the abilities of our students and graduates are improving. Unfortunately, such an explanation does not bear up under any kind of scrutiny. At second level, in the most recent European-wide PISA study, there has been no detectable improvement in mathematics, reading and science in Irish 15 year olds between 2000 and 2006 and so such an explanation of the increased Leaving Certificate results does not hold up.

At third level, it has been shown that there is no correlation between the CAO points of entrants and the level of awards being given by institutions. Indeed, in the Institutes of Technology, CAO entry points have fallen steeply while the level of final awards has been increasing. The inevitable conclusion is that, at both levels, standards are declining.

Why is it happening?

Understanding why grade inflation is occurring so rapidly and in every area requires careful consideration and has no simple answer. Indeed, the reasons why it is happening at second level may well be different from those at third level. However, one common thread has been the move towards universal educational access at third level – up from 25% of school leavers in 1986 to 54% in 2003 - and this has had ramifications at both levels. In the first instance, third level education has become the norm, and failure to attain this level of education is likely to have negative repercussions throughout a person’s life. This has been exacerbated by

the academisation of hitherto professional qualifications.

This has led to the proliferation of grind schools, increased examination scrutiny and endless pressure on Leaving Certificate examiners to set predictable exams. The result has been a small drop in the percentage of failures in most subjects of the Leaving Certificate and a massive increase in the percentage of students achieving grades at the top of the scale. In addition, the percentage taking Higher level subjects has increased dramatically and added to inflation in CAO points.

Against this background, third level institutions have set institutional expansion as their primary goal, and failed to deal with the fact that continuing growth can only be achieved by drawing academically weak and unmotivated students into third level courses. Moreover, the procedures for examining students and arriving at grades in third level educational institutions have proven to be remarkably susceptible to pressure to degrade standards. In this context, the educational regulatory authorities must accept a large proportion of the responsibility for the outcome. For example, between 1990 and the present, HETAC and its predecessor the NCEA oversaw 20 different regulation changes in the IoT sector whereby the academic demands made on students were lowered for qualifications.

The final result has been the paradoxical situation where weaker and weaker students have been entering third level education and somehow obtaining higher and higher awards.

What are the implications?

There is a wide variety of negative impacts of grade inflation. Fundamentally, it undermines the delivery of quality education. Because grades are no longer a faithful representation of actual performance, the value of

examinations as a quality control mechanism on educational standards is undermined, and formulators of educational policy may be misled about what is being achieved in the education system.

Moreover, both teachers and students grow less motivated to achieve, since apparent success can be attained with less effort. This particularly affects the better students, whose efforts and abilities are not rewarded. Indeed, one could argue on a purely pragmatic basis that the benefit bestowed upon the small number of weaker students who are being allowed to “squeeze through” is completely out-weighted by the disadvantage being experienced by the brightest students who find themselves undifferentiated from their medium-ability peers. Finally, grade inflation presents serious difficulties for employers who are faced with the challenge of differentiating between those whose qualifications and grades are backed up by actual learning and the great many whose grades are deeply misleading.

What needs to be done?

Grade inflation is a complex problem with many facets: societal factors, student expectations, educational policy, quality assurance mechanisms and institutional priorities. In the US and UK, where it has been recognised as a serious threat to educational quality, there have been a number of different attempts to address the issue.

Three years ago in Princeton, one of the more prestigious US universities, a policy of capping the proportion of higher grades was adopted as a direct attempt to halt grade inflation. More recently, due to grade inflation in the A-levels, Imperial College, London, announced that it is establishing its own entrance exams to differentiate between applicants. Should grade inflation not be addressed in Ireland, such unilateral actions will become necessary for institutions here. Indeed, we may well see the reintroduction of the matriculation examination. In the examples above, both institutions are in the elite category of their respective countries, and it is precisely this aspect of the problem where the most negative impact on our

education system may lie. In the future, it may not be the educational qualification itself that will be used as a selection criteria – but which institution awarded it. Thus we will have the irony of a false educational egalitarianism leading to a new elitism.

The first step in combating grade inflation is to ensure that the level of educational awards is independently monitored. Indeed, the very fact that it has been left to individual academics to collect, analyse and publicise data on such a crucial issue highlights a serious short-coming in the Irish educational system.

Such short-comings are easily exploited by institutions seeking to avoid scrutiny. Most recently, many IoT’s have refused to release grade data for a variety of concocted reasons: lack of resources (IT Blanchardstown), questions about objectivity (Limerick IT), ethical issues (Dundalk IT), fear of undermining confidence in the sector (Athlone IT), or for no reason at all (IADT).

Secondly, a broad consensus must emerge amongst academics, institutions and policy-makers that grade inflation is a serious threat to the integrity of Irish educational awards. As a part of this, third level institutions must restore priority to the maintenance of educational standards. Individual academics must also shoulder their professional responsibilities to resist the pressures that erode the quality of academic awards. At second level, the current emphasis on regurgitation and rote learning must be abolished. Examinations and marking schemes must be more specifically designed to reward the better students and decompress the top grades. In the same vein, the Leaving Certificate must adapt to the changing student ethos and become less predictable.

Finally, academics must demand, and take steps to ensure, that educational institutions live up to their public duty of ensuring standards that are fair both to the weaker and the stronger students.

Subject	Level	1991	2006
IRISH	H	28	48.8
	O	15.2	34.5
ENGLISH	H	18.7	38.1
	O	9.8	40.7
MATHEMATICS	H	29.1	49.1
	O	29.6	38.5
HISTORY	H	25.4	42.7
	O	34.4	49.1
GEOGRAPHY	H	20.2	41.4
	O	23.7	30.3
FRENCH	H	28.2	40.1
	O	8.6	21.5
ART	H	20.1	37.8
	O	15	23
PHYSICS	H	31.8	47
	O	23.2	45.7
BIOLOGY	H	27.3	43.9
	O	20.9	30.5
ACCOUNTING	H	31	52.6
	O	30.4	43.2
BUSINESS	H	20	39.8
	O	22.2	40.7

Comparison of the percentage of students obtaining either an A or B in the Leaving Certificate in 1991 and 2006.

Equality Issues

The most recent census showed that non-Irish nationals accounted for 10% of the total population. It is in the context of the significant proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and the concentration of such students in schools in which TUI has members that the TUI Equality Council is currently developing its policy on racism, interculturalism and resources for minority ethnic students.

The Minister for Education and Science Mr Batt O' Keffe speaking at a conference on the 1st of October stated: "At first and second level, a key priority for my Department is to ensure that young migrant students who arrive here with little or no English become proficient in the language as soon as possible, so that they can participate and achieve on a par with their English speaking peers. The TUI Equality Council find it inexplicable therefore that the Minister could re-impose the ceiling of two on the number of language support teachers per school.

The TUI Equality Council is of the view that additional targeted resources for English language tuition are required, not cuts in existing provision, in order to give minority ethnic students, for whom English is not their first language a fair chance to reach their potential in the education system.

In addition the Equality Council is adamant that if we are to work against the development of racism in our schools, additional investment for intercultural inservice education for all teachers should also be made available.

In addition, the Equality Council is of the view that resources for interpreter services to enable schools to involve parents of minority ethnic students in the education of their children are urgently required.

The Equality Council is also greatly concerned by the cuts impacting severely on the most disadvantaged and marginalised of students. These cuts are dealt with separately in this magazine.

Inexplicable Cuts Undermine Equality

It is only in the recent past that comprehensive equality legislation has been introduced into this country and supported by the introduction of various Equality Rights bodies. The savage nature of the cuts imposed question the commitment of the Government to the nine equality grounds comprehended by the equality legislation. The Equality Council question the commitment of the Government to the increased participation of Travellers in education with the reduction in capitation funding for Travellers and the reduction of the number of places in Senior Traveller Education Centres.

The axing of funding (€5m) to the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) is also reprehensible. The office of the NCCRI will therefore close with a lay off of all staff. This closure means that the collective

expertise of the NCCRI built up over the past decade which has played such a key role in shaping government policy in anti racism and integration will be lost.

Other unacceptable cuts in the area of equality include :

- EQUALITY AUTHORITY (GRANT-IN-AID) down 43%
- GRANTS TO NATIONAL WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS down 5%
- EQUALITY PROOFING down 30%
- Cosc - DOMESTIC, SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE down 18%
- EQUALITY MONITORING/ CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES down 8%
- GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND POSITIVE ACTION FOR WOMEN down 45%
- OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR INTEGRATION down 26%
- STATUS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES down 5%
- NATIONAL DISABILITY AUTHORITY down 2%
- DISABILITY PROJECTS down 10% (National Framework Committee for Work Life Balance -a 50% cutback in the budget from 3.5m to 1.75m.),



The following pre-retirement seminars have been scheduled.

DATE	LOCATION	VENUE
26th & 27th Feb. 2009 5:30pm – 9:00pm 9:30am – 4:00pm	Tullamore (1½ day)	Tullamore Court Hotel, Tullamore, Co. Offaly

Please note:

There is an upper limit in terms of numbers for attendance, so early booking is strongly advised.

* **Note:** Please complete the form in full

APPLICATION FORM	
Name	
School Name and Address	School Telephone
Home Address	Home Telephone
Fax Number	E-Mail Address

Please send completed form to:

Jane O'Sullivan, TUI, 73 Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6
 Telephone: (01) 492 2588 Fax: (01) 492 2953
 E-mail: josullivan@tui.ie

Retired Members' Association News

Well, we are certainly living in interesting times. Your grandchildren will ask: "where were you on Wednesday the 22nd October 2008?" Can you show them the photographs?

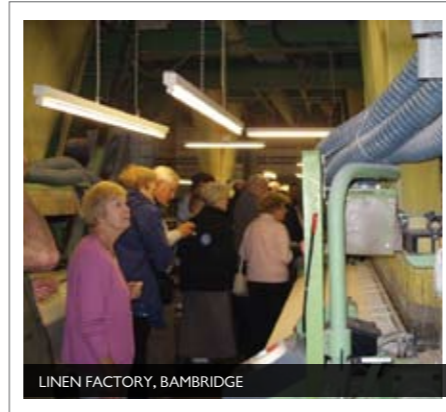
It reminded me of Limerick when Charlie McCarthy asked "where is the Minister?" Or Athlone when we marched to Mary O'Rourke's constituency or Croke Park when we were looking for Niamh Breathnach. The difference this time was the common bond - we were all pensioners, not teachers.

The Budget was announced as we were enjoying the delights of Carlingford and its surroundings. As usual Dora supplied the beautiful weather which makes Carlingford a dream place to be when the sun shines. We visited a linen factory in Bambridge where we were given a brief history of the Linen Trade in Ireland and saw the cloth being woven with computerised machines.

It was most interesting to see the speed of the machines and how they were capable of self-repairing. Later we went to the outlet shop at the factory where some serious buying was done - great bargains! We can't seem to escape from William Butler Yeats, for there outside Bambridge in a village called Tullylish is a Church of Ireland parish where William's grandfather was the Rector. We made a visit to the

church and had a little history lesson on the Rev William Butler Yeats and were given a copy of an letter he wrote to the "Northern Whig" seeking support for the poor of the parish in which he said "then, sirs, I appeal neither to your fears nor to your cupidity, nor your pity: I lift myself up and as man to his fellow man, I ask, for our suffering fellowmen, in the name of common humanity and by the stern necessities of justice, that you do your duty, and give liberally", £608 was raised, that was in the 1840's. Later we went to the Outlet in Bambridge where purchasing therapy was again applied.

On Thursday we went to Oldbridge, the site of the Battle of the Boyne and where the new interpretive centre is, when we arrived the sun was shining brilliantly so we saw it at its best. The centre was opened this year at a cost of €20m and they have done a magnificent job. In addition to the displays which are very elaborate with high tech involvement, we saw an audio-video presentation of the battle. We had lunch in the café which overlooks the walled gardens, and after lunch we made for the home of Frances Ledwidge the Meath poet.



His home is on the side of the road leading out from Slane towards Drogheda. Here we were met by a committee member of the Ledwidge society who gave us a very informative and moving account of the poet's life and death. A feature of this autumn break was that we had a qualified guide for all our excursions including our very own Meath man Liam Carey who gave us a very enlightened guide as we wended our way through the Royal County.

Many of you have contacted me re the pension increase due since September. Pension increases cannot be paid until salary increases have been signed off on. The reason for the delay in this is set out on p.12 and p.13.

Our next outing is to Newcastle in County Down, staying in the Slieve Donard Hotel the top hotel in Northern Ireland. The dates for this trip are Monday 23rd until Wednesday 25th March 2009, that's three nights Dinner, B&B for £90 pps with a single supplement of £20 per night.

Christy Conville, RMA Secretary



National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA): TUI Nominations to Course Committees

Earlier this term correspondence issued to schools representatives and branches inviting nominations for vacancies that have arisen on NCCA Course Committees. Considerable curriculum change is underway across junior cycle and senior cycle subjects. Therefore, it is important to maximise teacher representation on all committees to ensure that the interests and concerns of the union and its members are well represented and understood. The list of current vacancies is set out below and nominations forms can be accessed on the TUI website at www.tui.ie. Please note that nomination forms should be signed off by the branch.

To be nominated by TUI to an NCCA Course Committee you must:

- Be appropriately qualified in the subject and have relevant experience of teaching the subject at the appropriate level.
- Have a familiarity with general developments in the subject area. Practising teachers will have acquired this as part of their normal teaching responsibilities.

- Be familiar with general trends and issues in curriculum development and assessment. The necessary information and detail will be generated through the work of the course committee. Be a member of the TUI and be nominated via your local TUI Branch.
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If you sit on a Course Committee on behalf of TUI, you are required to:

- Attend course committee meetings as scheduled by the NCCA. Depending on the status of developments in a given subject the frequency of meetings varies across committees. Substitution is available at school level through formal arrangements with school management and travel and subsistence costs are met by the NCCA in line with public service rates.
- Become conversant with TUI policies in relation to curriculum and assessment

- issues and represent these as appropriate at the course committee.
- Provide regular feedback to TUI on developments and changes that are being considered and proposed by the course committee. Feedback forms are available to facilitate this.
- Occasionally provide comments to the media on examinations.

TUI will support participation on course committees through on-going contact with the Education and Research Officer ([ph: 01 492 2588 or email bjudge@tui.ie](mailto:bjudge@tui.ie)), subject meetings as required and occasional seminars to address issues common to all course committees.

If you are interested in being nominated to a Course Committee contact your local TUI Branch. Closing date for receipt of nominations from Branches is 28th November 2008.

NCCA COURSE COMMITTEES			
Vacancies to be filled in Junior and Senior Cycle			
JUNIOR CYCLE		SENIOR CYCLE	
Subject	No. of Positions	Subject	No. of Positions
Business Studies	1	Agricultural Economics	1
German	1	Geography	1
Italian	1	Spanish	1
Maths	1	French	1
Science	1	Physics	1
Spanish	1	SPHE	1
		Technology	1
		Applied Maths	1
		*Maths	1

* There may be a vacancy on the Senior Cycle Maths Course Committee over the next year.

Global Schoolroom 2009

Do something really worthwhile next Summer in India!

Global Schoolroom is an initiative designed to help Irish teachers share their educational experience with their counterparts abroad. The aim is to improve teaching standards - so raising the quality of education provided and over the longer term helping to eradicate poverty and increase living standards. The programme was set up in 2006 by two Dublin based teachers, Gwen Brennan and Dr. Garret Campbell, who spent 4 weeks in the northeast of India facilitating teacher training workshops in collaboration with a network of Don Bosco schools in the region.

Following a very successful trip by 8 Irish teachers in 2007, this year a team of 18 (including both primary and secondary teachers and three Cornmarket employees) travelled from Ireland to India's Northeast and spent the month of July there, where many local teachers find it difficult to access in-service training given the remoteness of their schools. Prior to their departure, this year's team prepared for their trip and trained in the delivery of Global Schoolroom's new 3 year Diploma in Teacher Education. This course has been accredited by UCD and diplomas will be awarded to Indian teachers who successfully complete all the required modules over the three years of the programme. Conditions were sometimes challenging but the work was extremely rewarding with very positive feedback from the local Indian teachers who enrolled in the programme.

Talking of her experience in India this year, Primary School Teacher and Global Schoolroom 2008 team member, Joni Clarke said: "People who have travelled and worked in remote and challenging communities will often tell you that 'you get so much more back than you give.' Soon after beginning work in Umkiang, a small jungle village in remote North East India I came to know and understand this deeply. The dedication and interest shown by the Indian teachers was inspiring. The insights and experiences within this intimate community were as special and unique as one could ever hope for.

It was an incredible opportunity for me professionally and personally. So now I am one of those people who say, 'you get so much more back than you give', and it's true." Global Schoolroom has been sponsored since the outset by Cornmarket and is also supported by the TUI, INTO and ASTI. This year the Irish participants trip will be subsidised by Cornmarket but team members will also be encouraged to raise €1500 each towards the cost of the trip.

The planning and preparation for Global Schoolroom 2009 is currently underway. As last year, the 2009 Global Schoolroom team will be split up into groups to deliver the course in a number of different centres in India. Venues will range from very

remote mountain valleys such as Umswai to the teeming bustle of Shillong, with its population of several hundred thousand.

If you would like to apply for a place on Global Schoolroom's trip to India in July 2009, log onto www.cornmarket.ie/globalschoolroom to download an electronic copy of the application form. Alternatively, please contact Breda O'Driscoll on (01) 408 4116 or e-mail breda.odrsicoll@cornmarket.ie for more information.

Please note: The deadline date for application forms is 1st December 2008. Interviews for the trip are scheduled to take place on 6th and 7th December 2008.



IRISH TEACHERS WITH INDIAN COLLEAGUES IN NAMDONG, INDIA, 2008

The Future Role of Special Schools and Special Classes

The Special Education Department, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra has been commissioned to conduct research on the future role of special schools and special classes. Short submissions were invited from a range of stakeholders. In its submission the TUI recognised that education as a fundamental human right and the principles of equality of opportunity and meaningful participation within society for children and young people with special educational needs have been acknowledged in Ireland.

It emphasised that despite this significant issues continue to exist in respect of what constitutes an appropriate education for children and young people with special educational needs. The union endorsed the right of everyone to develop their inherent potentials through education provision that is delivered in a learning climate which is conducive to the realisation of the individual's true potential.

In this regard the submission strongly supported the:

concept that special education provision should be an integral element of the education continuum that is available to children and young people idea that children and young people with special educational needs should be enabled and supported to participate in mainstream classes in mainstream schools retention of special education schools, especially with reference to addressing low incidence special educational needs continued provision of special classes in mainstream schools as these have demonstrated their potential to deliver effective education to those with special education needs and have significant potential to promote a culture of inclusion and integration within a whole-school approach promotion of integration and inclusion through well planned initiatives to ensure collaboration

and joint action between specials school/classes and mainstream schools/classes.

While supporting the participation of those with special educational needs in mainstream schools/classes, the TUI considered this cannot be achieved without the requisite support in respect of additional teacher allocation and planning time, professional development of teachers, appropriate student supports, curricular and learning supports and physical infrastructure. Drawing on the work of Griffin and Shevlin (2007) the union noted that equality of opportunity is often misunderstood to mean treating everyone in the same way.

However, to treat people equally means taking account of the diversity among

children and since children are different from each other, they must be treated in different ways in order to reach common goals (Hegarty, 1993). The success or failure of differential educational treatment of children and young people with special educational needs, whatever the context, will depend on what and how resources are allocated and deployed to ensure appropriate pedagogy, infrastructure and supports.

(See www.tui.ie for the full TUI submission).

References:

Griffin, S and Shevlin, M, (2008), Responding to Special Educational Needs, Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.

Hegarty, S. (1993), Educating Children



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NATIONAL PROTEST AGAINST EDUCATION CUTS, SATURDAY DECEMBER 6TH 2008

TUI WILL JOIN WITH ITS EDUCATION PARTNERS IN A NATIONAL PROTEST AGAINST THE EDUCATION CUTBACKS IN DUBLIN ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6TH.

ASSEMBLY POINT IS PARNELL SQ.
AT 12 O' CLOCK WITH A RALLY SUBSEQUENTLY
PLANNED FOR MERRION SQ.

WE ENCOURAGE ALL MEMBERS TO VOICE
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EDUCATION CUTBACKS IN LIVING MEMORY.

See www.tui.ie for further details