Mr. Joe McHugh, T.D.

Minister for Education and Skills

Department of Education and Skills

Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

31st October 2018

**Re:“New Entrant” pay**

Dear Minister,

I write regarding the issue of the discriminatory pay rates that continue to apply to those first appointed to positions in the public service on or after 1st January 2011.

As you are aware, the measure that resulted from the recent engagement between the public service unions and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform was put to a ballot of members of the TUI in the following terms:

*“Do you accept the proposed measure on salary scale issues in the context of the Union’s ongoing campaign for pay equality”.*

The Union was clear and deliberate in informing members that

* while the measure represents further movement, “it will not of itself deliver pay equality”
* irrespective of the decision of members in the ballot, securing pay equality would remain the Union’s main priority
* the TUI’s ongoing campaign will continue until pay equality is secured
* in this regard, the Union already has a mandate for industrial action and
* regardless of the outcome of the ballot, this mandate can be activated by the Union if and when it sees fit to do so

On the basis of this understanding and in the context of a campaign that would continue beyond the ballot, members accepted the measure, by a narrow margin.

Specifically in relation to “new entrant” teachers, whose rates of pay were cut more often and more deeply than any other grade of public servant, the TUI is unequivocal in its demand for:

* payment of the pensionable Higher Diploma in Education (now Professional Master of Education) allowance to those appointed on or after 1st February 2012
* reinstatement of initial placement on the third point of the teachers’ salary scale in recognition of the period of unpaid pre-service training that is required to acquire the mandatory qualifications for registration as a teacher
* elimination of the remaining differentials between the scale that applies to “new entrant” teachers and the scale that applies to their peers appointed on or before 31st December 2010.

It is noteworthy, Minister, that the crisis in recruiting and retaining teachers has developed since commencement of the practice of discriminating against new entrants in pay terms. The dramatic collapse in the numbers applying (through the CAO system) for the PME/H.Dip., also coincided with the introduction of this discriminatory practice, as did the dramatic rise in the proportion of PME/H.Dip. graduates who have chosen to emigrate.

Your Department has recognised that there is a teacher supply crisis and has established a Steering Group to consider the matter. The TUI has strongly advised the Department that the best efforts of the Steering Group will be of little avail if the discriminatory pay rates are not addressed and pay inequality eliminated.

What has long been obvious to the TUI should now be obvious to any objective observer - absent pay equality, the Irish public education system will continue to face a crisis in the recruitment and retention of teachers, the anger of longer-serving teachers at the treatment of their “new entrant” colleagues will deepen, service to students will become increasingly fractured, new initiatives will founder and there will be on-going, acute industrial relations difficulties.

It is in the interests of all concerned that such eventualities be avoided.

Therefore, on behalf of the TUI, I would ask that you engage with us with a view to resolving the outstanding “new entrant” issues and that, in the first instance, you meet with representatives of the Union.

Yours sincerely,

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John MacGabhann

General Secretary