



news

BALLOT SPECIAL

NOVEMBER 2024

TEACHERS' UNION OF IRELAND / AONTAS MÚINTEOIRÍ ÉIREANN

Ballot – Industrial Action to Protect Terms and Conditions in the ETB sector

A Word from the President

Colleagues,

Regrettably, in recent times, management at a variety of levels in the Education and Training Board (ETB) sector has sought to make unilateral changes that increase the workload of our members, change established policies, and depart from our collective agreements. Associated with this trend has been a disregard for your established procedures and negotiated terms and conditions. For example, in some workplaces this is resulting in the issuing of unagreed contracts, failure to implement the Supervision and Substitution circular letters correctly and non-consultation with staff in relation to 'Croke Park' calendars, hours etc.

The Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) is committed to protecting your working conditions and terms of employment. To address these immediate threats and ongoing challenges, the Union's Executive Committee has decided to seek a strong mandate for industrial action, up to and including strike action, in the ETB sector.

In this national ballot, the TUI's Executive Committee urges members within the ETB sector to vote 'YES' to support this proposed campaign of industrial action.



TUI PRESIDENT, DAVID WATERS

While issues are not as pronounced in some ETBs as they are in others, there is an evidential link between the ETBs who do not have meaningful consultation locally with the TUI with the ETBs who are in breach of circular letters and collective agreements.

It is of critical importance that the Executive Committee is provided with as strong a mandate for industrial action as is possible. As always, the Union will make it clear that it is prepared to resolve the issues of concern through active negotiation but, should that not

prove possible, stands equally prepared to take effective, escalating industrial action.

Of course, it is essential that members comply with all the existing Union directives and with any further additional directives that may issue in exercise of a mandate for industrial action to protect terms and conditions.

Please carefully read this TUI News ballot special before completing the ballot paper and returning it to the auditors (Deloitte) ahead of the closing date of Friday, 15th November. Ideally, ballot papers should be posted by Tuesday, 12th November to ensure their return before the closing date in case of any postal delays.

Defend your terms and conditions of employment within the ETB sector – vote 'YES' in this important national ballot.

Who is being balloted?

All TUI members, irrespective of grade, who are employed by ETBs.

Background/Reasons to vote 'YES' in this national ballot

- **Circumvention of Collective Agreements:** There is growing evidence that management in some ETBs has been attempting to bypass or ignore agreed terms, nationally approved contracts and the mandatory provisions of Circular Letters e.g. the issuing of unagreed contracts, failure to implement the S&S circular letters correctly, non-consultation with staff in relation to 'Croke Park' calendars etc.
- **Introduction of unapproved titles, positions and job descriptions:** New titles and roles have been introduced without referral to national industrial relations fora. This has led to confusion and disruption of agreed responsibilities and established reporting structures, undermining the clarity of roles, increasing workload and impacting operational effectiveness.
- **Failure to consult/engage meaningfully with the TUI:** The relevant authorities in the sector, particularly ETBs and ETBI, have, with increasing frequency, failed to engage in proper consultation and negotiation with the TUI in relation to proposed reforms and work practice changes that directly or indirectly impact TUI members' workload and working conditions e.g. consulting with staff on local issues/policies/concerns only by way of online polls with no transparency, having staff 'briefings' as opposed to staff 'meetings'
- **Deterioration in Terms and Conditions:** This drift towards unilateralism, diktat and a culture of autocratic management is having a seriously adverse effect on members in the sector, including:
 - reduction in promotional opportunities and, for some members, in the value of allowances
 - forced amalgamation of workplaces

- unilateral creation of new entities with a resultant increase in workload
- erosion of collegiality in the working environment
- elimination of protections secured for TUI members in collective agreements
- at the level of ETB management, there is a lack of familiarity and compliance with key Circular Letters, including those relating to nationally agreed contracts, working hours and patterns, the award of CIDs, the mandatory sequence for assigning new hours, supervision and substitution and various types of approved leave.

What are you being asked in this ballot?

Due to:

- increasing evidence of attempts by ETB management to circumvent or disregard collective agreements and/or the mandatory provisions of Circular Letters
- the introduction (without use of or referral to the relevant national industrial relations fora) of new, unapproved titles/positions, with the consequent blurring and/or disruption of agreed responsibilities and reporting structures
- the continuing failure of the relevant authorities and agencies, including the relevant government Departments, various Education and Training Boards and the ETBI to engage, consult and, as necessary, negotiate with the Teachers' Union of Ireland in relation to proposed reforms and/or changes in work practices that, actually or potentially, adversely affect the terms and conditions of members and their working environment in the ETB sector (in respect of allowances, the number of Posts, increased workload etc.).

Do you agree to engage in a campaign of industrial action, up to and including strike action, as directed by the Executive Committee of the TUI?

What is the TUI Executive Committee recommending?

To address the immediate and ongoing challenges and to ensure that your rights are upheld, the Executive Committee of the TUI has decided to seek a strong mandate for a campaign of industrial action, up to and including strike action, in the ETB sector.

The TUI Executive Committee is, therefore, recommending that all members vote 'YES'.

Why is the TUI Executive Committee recommending that you vote 'YES' to provide a mandate for industrial action on this issue?

The TUI is committed to protecting your working conditions and terms of employment.

If you, the members, provide the mandate sought, the Executive Committee will exercise it with all due care and prudence.

As always, the TUI will make it clear that it stands prepared to resolve the issues of concern through negotiation but, should that not prove possible, stands equally prepared to take effective industrial action.

When will the ballot take place?

Ballot papers will issue to members to arrive in ETB workplaces on Monday 4th November with a return date to the Union's auditors, Deloitte, of 5p.m. on Friday 15th November 2024.

To ensure that completed ballots reach Deloitte by the closing date, members should post their ballots early owing to reported delays in the postal service e.g., if possible, post all ballots by Tuesday, 12th November.)