INTO and the Year Ahead

Colleagues

In September our schools will, once again, open their doors to admit children and young people eager to learn and keen to succeed. The learning and the success the students will enjoy comes, in no small part, from the hard work and efforts of INTO members employed to lead learning in the classrooms and schools.

Yet these hard working teachers are now returning from a well-deserved summer vacation to schools which are still subject to severe budgetary pressures. Many will begin the new school year without the sufficient staff or resources needed to properly manage schools. Indeed, the future for both teachers and students remains bleak and threatening. The education system is mired in a number of disputes and unfinished work; at least one case, initiated more than a decade ago, remains vital to the terms and conditions of employment for INTO members.

INTO, on your behalf, remains determined to continue the work of bringing about real and substantive improvements to teacher wages and terms and conditions. However, in order to achieve these improvements we will need to campaign and lobby for a significant increase in the overall funding for the education sector. INTO has been to the fore in making this case for several years now and in the coming years our work will be of even greater importance.

Currently we sustain our industrial action on two fronts. The action we have been engaged in concerning the assessment arrangements in schools continues. We know the Department of Education are most anxious to resolve this issue, however, they seem determined to ignore INTO and Northern Ireland Teachers’ Council (NITC) proposals which would bring about an end to the dispute. INTO are being joined in taking industrial action over the cuts to the Education budget by the majority of teaching unions on the NITC. Our action may change and evolve over the course of the coming year as we adjust to meet changing circumstances. Nevertheless as we go into the new school year, the actions we have been engaged in all remain in place and any changes will be notified to you in September 2015.

The Northern Committee would like to thank you for your resolute support over the course of the last year. The Committee is aware that over this coming year and the next few years our education service will be subject to further savage cuts and it is determined to provide to you with the necessary leadership and support to resist these cuts.

INTO will work with our colleagues across the education sector and the wider trade union movement to bring about positive change. This work will be accomplished more effectively by a united trade union movement. INTO is committed to playing a leading role in this work and every member has a part to play.

Northern Secretary