October 2017

Dear Colleague

As we approach the first half term of the 2017/2018 school year, the Chairperson of the Northern Committee, Ms Dorothy McGinley and myself, feel it is appropriate that we provide an update to every member as to where we currently sit in regards to our ongoing industrial disputes with the employing authorities and the Department of Education.

The Northern Committee and the Officials in Northern Office have been doing the rounds of the October branch meetings providing updates and this communication is designed to ensure, that every member has access to the information provided by the Committee’s members and Officials.

The disputes which we are engaged in are three in number, the longest running being our action in regard to the failed assessment policy which DE continues to hold on to at present; a second dispute begun in the 2014/2015 year concerning cuts to the budget in that year as part of the failed austerity policies foisted upon us since the 2010/2011 year and finally the latest dispute concerning the withholding of a cost of living increase in the 2015/2016 year from INTO members.

Bulletins 1, 2 and 3 of the 2017/2018 year available on our website (www.into.ie/NI/Publications/Bulletins) and displayed on every staffroom wall, indicate the scope of the industrial action you have been directed to follow in pursuit of the Organisation’s objectives. This industrial action has come about following properly conducted ballots of the entire membership and all of the industrial action outlined in detail in the bulletins remains in place.

It is the case that we are talking to the Employing Authorities and the Department of Education. The Department and the Employing Authorities are adamant they are not “negotiating” with us, rather simply “engaging”. What this appears to mean is that they can pretend to be serious about seeking to resolve the difficulties we all face, whilst never actually having to commit to do anything other than restate what they are not prepared to do. Therefore there is no incentive for us to step away from the industrial action we are legitimately engaged in.

So as to remove any doubt, we wish to restate that the industrial action remains in force, including the non-co-operation with the ETI and will remain so until the employers and the Department are prepared to come to their senses and meet the reasonable demands unanimously supported by the membership. We are prepared to negotiate given the opportunity to do so however the Employing Authorities and the Department remain unwilling to negotiate at this time. This is the INTO position.
Be assured that you will be kept fully informed of all developments as the situation evolves and
the elected members of the Northern Committee will continue to lead and direct the Officials in
the management of this dispute. The INTO will also be playing a major part in the upcoming ICTU
campaign for “Better Lives, Better Jobs” which will focus on greater investment in public services,
ending the pay cap and seeking to improve the quality of jobs available. This will be a sustained and
focused campaign which if successful will have real benefits for INTO members.

Enjoy your hard earned midterm break and thank you for your continued support which we very
much appreciate.

Yours sincerely

DOROTHY McGINLEY  GERRY MURPHY
Northern Committee Chairperson  Northern Secretary