

NORTHERN IRELAND TEACHERS' COUNCIL

By Email

3rd May 2022

Dear

I write on behalf of the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council [NITC], the negotiating body of the five recognised teachers' unions, concerning the failure to secure an acceptable pay rise for teachers in the 2021/22 year.

Teachers and school leaders over the course of the Covid -19 pandemic have given tremendous service to the entire community and the local economy. These professionals, at considerable risk to their own health and those of their loved ones, continued to work enabling and supporting the education of our children and young people in the face of the pandemic. They further adjusted their working practices and upskilled themselves to meet the demands forced upon them by Covid as they maintained the continuity of learning for those in their care.

The pay offer made to the profession by the Department of Education and the employing authorities was a terrible slap in the face to our members who rightly feel aggrieved. The NITC is anxious to ensure that a revised pay offer is made to our members, one which recognises and rewards their efforts over the course of the pandemic and that also addresses the considerable devaluation of their salaries that has been brought about by the cost-of-living crisis we are all experiencing. Teachers and school leaders stood by the community during the pandemic, and it is only fair that you as the elected representatives of the same community stand with them now.

You can do this by ensuring in the political talks which will follow Thursday, May the fifths election include resolving the issue of teachers' pay as a substantive agenda item. It is crucial that this issue is resolved as a failure to do so will inevitably lead to escalated, wide-spread, and disruptive industrial action across the education sector. Such industrial action coming on the back of previous industrial action of the last decade and the effects of the pandemic will further inhibit the recovery of the system and its capacity to meet the needs of our children and young people.

The last thing teachers and school leaders want to do is go down this route however the mood amongst the profession grows more resolute as the weeks progress. Frustration is growing and the likelihood that we all find ourselves in such a dispute appears inevitable should a revised and much improved pay offer not emerge.

I ask on behalf of my NITC colleagues that you employ your best offices to help us all avoid such a situation developing. Teachers and school leaders are reasonable people, but they have had enough of being taken for granted and only a fair pay increase reflective of their worth to society and sufficient to protect the value of their salaries against the cost-of-living crisis will suffice. Please do all you can to ensure that a positive resolution is found which is acceptable to all.

Yours sincerely



GERRY MURPHY
Northern Secretary of INTO
Chairperson of the NITC