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into 
Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

February 2015



**Stormy times ahead
for education**

Get Up Stand Up

INTO is a trade union, which at its heart is committed to the preservation and promotion of social justice. At the end of November the draft Budget for Education was published and it was inevitable that it would provoke the visceral reaction it did amongst INTO members and indeed the wider education community. The Northern Committee of the union moved with remarkable speed to challenge the threat this draft budget posed to the provision of education across the north. They saw, before others in the trade union movement, that what was being proposed would undermine the educational advances achieved for young people of the north. Furthermore, it was apparent to the Northern Committee that teachers, whose hard work and sacrifice had delivered these positive advances, were to suffer further with jobs and professional support subjected to a fifth year of cuts.



GERRY MURPHY,
Northern Secretary

It was hardly surprising that when INTO organised a series of public meetings to provide a forum for teachers to come together and express their anger, that hundreds of teachers, parents and colleagues employed in a support role in schools turned our across the North to articulate their anger. The INTO consolidated these public meetings with a concerted lobbying campaign via social media and the more traditional personal

lobbying, emailing and letter writing. The responses of our local politicians ranged from the supportive to disinterested. The enormity of the INTO's response seemed to have taken them back and established a new record for a response to a consultation; indeed, if the consultation period had been of the statutory length they might well have received double the 21,000 responses officially acknowledged. INTO's Northern Committee has demonstrated, by engaging in this activity, that politicians in Stormont are not immune to public pressure no matter how remote they can at times appear.

Cuts of £162 million to the education budget have now been reduced to cuts of £90 million. This reduction would not have been achieved without INTO taking a campaigning stand against the draft budget. While it is right to acknowledge the success that this represents, effectively reducing the cuts in the 15/16 year by close to 50%, it is important to realise that our success is a qualified one. The remaining £90 million in cuts will still have to be extracted from an education system already reeling from a cycle of cuts dating back to 2010/11. Not only is it imperative that INTO continues to resist the remaining cuts, we must steel ourselves for four more years of Tory inspired cuts to public service provision as signalled by George Osborne in the Au-

turn Statement. This will involve the INTO continuing to campaign and organise against cuts which, if enacted, will reduce our education system to a Dickensian monochrome experience for our young people and those teachers who remain.

INTO members across the north, with the support of our colleagues in the Republic, are prepared to engage in what is going to be a difficult and prolonged campaign of opposition to these proposed cuts. It is important that our members understand that what we face now and over the next four years is year on year job losses and cuts. These cuts have not arisen simply as a result of a reduction in the block grant. Rather, they are the outworking of the ideology of the Conservative Party's "think tanks" which seek to remove reliance on the state whilst purportedly incentivising the individual to assume ever increasing levels of responsibility for themselves. One manifestation of this idea is a reduction in public spending, and a promotion of austerity. The challenge INTO members face is that in order to successfully combat the present government's austerity programme, we must undermine it and expose its limitations, while simultaneously offering an alternative credible option. Furthermore, INTO must consider how our response fits with the demands of broader society in a way that draws support from a wider base than we have previously considered necessary.

INTO is determined to be successful. We will support our colleagues in the wider trade union movement whose jobs are threatened. Our campaign against the draft Budget prior to Christmas is cause for us to be optimistic that we can succeed. Never-

Committee Information

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theless, we must be careful not to become complacent. It is reasonable to expect that not only will we have to survive attacks from the establishment, but we will also need to manage our own expectations and those of our supporters.

The pathway we are set on is one that will demand discipline and an acceptance that there will be no quick fix. INTO has been engaged in helping to lay the ground work for such a campaign in the weeks since the draft Education and Executive Budgets were published. Now that the budgets have been passed by the administration at Stormont, it has fallen to INTO again to take the lead in the next step in this campaign. We are not prepared to see what will amount to the loss of another thousand teaching posts to our education system neither can we simply acquiesce as the level of service provision is reduced again across the education system. It is imperative we prevent the integrity of the system from being weakened further so that when the recovery comes we are better placed to take advantage of the opportunities this will present.

To this end, INTO will, in the first week in February be asking every INTO member in the north to cast their ballot in favour of industrial action. Members will also be asked to give a mandate to INTO to call them out on strike as part of a trade union wide day of action on March 13th. Unlike the previous trade union wide action, INTO has been central to ensuring this will be more than a one day event. We supported this proposal on the basis there would be a genuine and prolonged campaign which may involve further withdrawal of labour should that be necessary. INTO will also be asking mem-

bers to mandate the union to initiate a series of actions short of strike. These actions will involve us in undertaking industrial action designed to frustrate the working of the employers and the Department of Education. These bodies cannot expect to facilitate reductions in the numbers of teachers, reduce the level of support to schools, preside over increases in class sizes and continue to make ever increasing demands of INTO members without a serious backlash.

INTO actions will also focus on the issue of how our education system is funded and the place it has in broader socio-economic policy. We will seek to place this issue in the forefront of the opinion formers and policy makers' minds. It will also contribute to challenging that flawed ideology mentioned previously. More importantly in the short term it will ensure that INTO members will not have the inevitable service shortfall thrust on them with the resultant increased workload.

It is vital that INTO members complete and return their ballot papers. It is essential that we all work together to maximise turnout and secure the necessary mandates for action. Over the next weeks your Branch officers and Northern Committee members will be in touch to inform and support you through the process. Should you not receive a Ballot paper please contact your Branch officers who will ensure you get a ballot. The INTO commitment to social justice is absolute and a successful Ballot supporting the Northern Committees position will confirm this. A resounding level of support for industrial action will also encourage our trade union colleagues and signal the beginning of the end for austerity.

Forthcoming Events

INTO Pre-Retirement Seminars

Thurs 5 February 2015
Tullylagan Hotel, Cookstown,
4-6pm

Thurs 12 February 2015
City Hotel, Derry,
4-6pm

Tues 3 March 2015
Adair Arms Hotel, Ballymena,
4-6pm

Thurs 2 April 2015
Northern Office, Belfast,
1.30 - 4pm

Northern Conference

Fri 27 Feb – Sat 28 Feb 2015:
Radisson Roe Hotel,
Limavady

School Representative Event

Fri 15 May – Sat 16 May 2015:
The Manor House Country Hotel,
Enniskillen

The INTO Benevolent Fund

A special service to INTO members

A special feature of being a member of the INTO is access to support from the Benefits Fund Committee or BFC. The BFC is made up of 5 elected members from different parts of Ireland. Paddy McAllister represents Ulster, Leitrim and Louth. The BFC carries out two main functions.

- 1. Death Grants.** Death Grants are paid on the death of member or their spouses. 4,000 Euros are paid in the event of the death of a member and 2,000 Euros are paid on the death of a spouse. In the event of both teacher and the spouse being INTO members 6,000 Euros can be paid.
- 2. Help in cases of hardship.** If a member falls into severe

financial difficulty the BFC may be able to help. We cannot provide financial advice but give financial support in certain circumstances. The member meets the BFC representative to discuss the difficulty. It is then brought to the BFC for consideration. The BFC may decide to give support. All discussions are confidential within the small committee. The member may however decide to share the outcome with family, friends or other INTO members but that is up to them.

If you wish to contact Paddy McAllister you can drop him an email at pmcallister@into.ie or ring him on 07828 768034. All contacts are confidential.

Employment issues for teachers

Recent Employment Law cases

Over the past few years a few teachers have found themselves at an independent hearing before the Labour Relations Agency. Even with a positive outcome for the teacher, a few Boards of Governors have refused to accept the binding nature of an Independent Appeal decision. This has led to further anguish and grief for the teachers. However, a recent tribunal case in Belfast relating to unfair dismissal may hopefully clarify this situation.

The claimant was a teacher. He had been employed by a Voluntary Grammar School (VGS) since 1 March 2004. He was suspended on 22 August 2011 following allegations of misconduct. Those allegations led to a criminal prosecution. The claimant was acquitted on 18 January 2013. He had, at that point, been suspended on full pay from employment for some 16 months.

The tribunal was asked to adjudicate on

a number of issues including:

- What was the legal effect of the decision of the LRA appeal on 5 December 2013? Was the claimant's employment reinstated at that point? Did the first named respondent have the power in the circumstances of this case to refuse to comply with the LRA decision?

In respect of the point above the tribunal found:

The tribunal concluded, "The wording of TNC 2007/5 does not state specifically that the decision on appeal is binding or that the decision on appeal is merely advisory. However **it seems perfectly plain to this tribunal** that the ordinary meaning of the wording of this document means that the decision of the Independent Appeals Committee of the LRA **was in fact binding and final.**" The tribunal concludes that the decision of the LRA was not simply advisory or simply a recommendation.

It was clear. It was final. It upheld the appeal against the dismissal. The reference to returning at the earliest practical date with full continuity of service and pay and to an appropriate support mechanism were over and above the clear and unambiguous finding within the terms of TNC2007/5. The recommendations were therefore separate to the decision to uphold the appeal against the decision to dismiss and related only to the practical outworking of that decision to uphold the appeal.

This should hopefully be a reassurance to INTO members who are pursuing cases through the agreed grievance procedure or are unfortunately facing a potential dismissal as a result of disciplinary proceedings and are at an Independent Appeal under the offices of the Labour Relations Agency, that the decision is as the tribunal made clear, "binding and final."

I'm working part time on a temporary contract. What are my rights?

The following apply to all individuals who have completed at least four years on a temporary basis in a school.

The Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations came into force on 1st July 2000.

The Regulations make it unlawful for part-time workers to be treated less favourably than full-time workers. This means the following:

1. Part-time workers should receive the same hourly rate as full-timers.
2. Part-time workers should not be excluded from training simply because they work part-time.
3. Part-time workers have the same entitlement as full-timers to maternity / parental leave and annual leave on a pro rata basis. The calculations used and the length of service required should be the same for both part-time and full-time staff.
4. Part-time workers have the same entitlements to pensions, perks and sick pay on a pro rata basis as full-timers. This will include the same entitlement to bonuses, shift allowances etc.
5. Entitlement to written reasons for any

treatment they consider less favourable under the Regulations. The employer must respond to a request by an employee for a written statement within 21 days.

To decide whether there has been unlawful treatment of a part-time worker they will be able to compare themselves with full-time workers on similar contracts working for the same firm. If there is no full-time worker in the same firm doing similar work the part-timer can compare themselves with a full-timer engaged in similar work in a different establishment for the same employer.

As statistically most part-time workers are women, an employer could also face a claim for sex discrimination by discriminating against part-timers. Therefore, even if different treatment between part-timers and full-timers can be justified on objective grounds, employers have to ensure that such grounds are unrelated to the sex of the employee and there is no disproportionate impact on women.

Part-timers should have the same access to occupational pension schemes as full-timers, unless exclusion can be justified on

objective grounds. Furthermore, it is no longer acceptable to choose to make part-time workers redundant before full-time workers. This would be unlawful under the Regulations and might also amount to sex discrimination if the majority of the part-time workers were women. The criteria for selecting jobs for redundancy must be objectively justified and not cause less favourable treatment between full-timers and part-timers.

Career break schemes should be made available to part-time staff in the same way as that of full-timers, unless exclusion can be objectively justified on grounds other than part-time status. Although there is no legal right for a worker to be able to change their hours of work, the employment tribunals have in the past made rulings that where women returning from maternity leave are refused part-time hours this could amount to indirect sex discrimination. As such employers must be sensitive to requests to work part-time and look at such requests sympathetically. Employers should consider establishing written procedures for considering requests by workers to change their hours.



Use of Management Consultants

Over the past few months there has been an unexplained growth in the use of Management/ Legal /HR consultants by Boards of Governors to conduct so called independent investigations in a range of issues relating to parental complaints and the terms and conditions of teachers.

INTO is very clear on this matter. The agreed procedures specifically state that Legal representation is not permitted at any stage in the agreed procedures. Similarly, the use of other consultants should be resisted by INTO members where unless there has been specific agreement with INTO from the outset.

INTO members who are faced with attending such meetings should immediately contact their CEC, Northern Committee or the Northern

Office before attending any meeting. To fail to do so may prejudice the issue under examination as well as impact on their rights.



TONY CARLIN,
Senior Official

Sick days

If your alarm clock's going off but you still want more sleep, your friend's in town for the weekend, there's a project you'd like more time to work on or your DVR is about to reach its limit of saved shows, you've probably considered calling in sick from work. Here are some of the excuses perhaps you shouldn't use!!

- Employee's false teeth flew out the window while driving down the road;
- Employee's favourite football team lost on Sunday so needed Monday to recover;
- Employee was quitting smoking and was grouchy;
- Employee said that someone glued her doors and windows shut so she couldn't leave the house to come to work;
- Employee bit her tongue and couldn't talk;
- Employee claimed a swarm of bees surrounded his vehicle and he couldn't make it in;
- Employee said the chemical in turkey made him fall asleep and he missed his shift;
- Employee felt like he was so angry he was going to hurt someone if he came in;
- Employee received a threatening phone call from the electric company and needed to report it to the police;
- Employee needed to finish Christmas shopping;
- Employee's fake eye was falling out of its socket;
- Employee got lost and ended up in another town; and
- Employee couldn't decide what to wear.



The NEW Teachers' Pension Scheme from 1 April 2015

From 1 April 2015 there will be a new Northern Ireland Teachers' Scheme NITPS.

The pension landscape for teachers' pensions has changed dramatically over the past decade. In 2007 the NI Teachers Pension Scheme (NITPS) was reformed resulting in the normal pension age for new entrants increasing to 65 from 1 April 2007. The changes being introduced from 1 April this year will see pension ages for many rise to 65, 66, 67 or 68.

Between April 2012 and April 2014 there have been annual increases in member contribution rates. Scheme members now pay an average of 9.6% of Salary. Member's monthly contributions are based on their actual salary. From 1 April 2015 the contribution rates for the NITPS are changing to the table shown below:

Actual annual pensionable earnings	Member Contribution Rate
Up to £25,999	7.4%
£26,000 to £34,999	8.6%
£35,000 to £41,499	9.6%
£41,500 to £54,999	10.2%
£55,000 to £74,999	11.3%
£75,000 and above	11.7%

The **NEW** Northern Ireland Teachers' Pensions Scheme (**NITPS**) will come into effect on **1 April 2015**. The main features of the new scheme include:

- ✦ A pension design based on career average earnings instead of final salary.
- ✦ An accrual rate of 1/57th of pensionable earnings each year rather than 1/80th or 1/60th.
- ✦ Optional lump sum commutation at a rate of 12:1, in accordance with HMRC limits and regulations.
- ✦ Normal Pension Age (NPA) equal to State Pension Age (SPA), which applies both to active members and deferred members (new scheme service only).
- ✦ If a member's SPA rises, then NPA will do so too for all post-2015 service. You can check your State Pension Age (SPA) by filling in the calculator on the NI Direct website or use the link: <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/calculating-your-state-pension-age>
- ✦ Revaluation of active members' benefits in line with consumer prices index (CPI) +1.6%.
- ✦ Average member contributions of 9.6% with some protection for the lowest paid. (see table above)
- ✦ Actuarially fair early/late retirement factors on a cost neutral basis except for those with a NPA above age 65, who will have early retirement factors of 3% per year for a maximum of 3 years in respect

of the period from age 65 to their NPA.

- ✦ Public sector transfer club will continue but the existing arrangements for transfer of service from Scotland, England and Wales will no longer apply. Previous pensionable teaching service in Scotland England and Wales **MUST be transferred** into the NITPS within two years, by **31 March 2017**, to be included in a teachers' NITPS pension.
- ✦ Members who leave the scheme and return within 5 years will have their accrued service in the current (NPA 60/65) scheme linked to their final salary at retirement.
- ✦ Flexibilities have been introduced in the new scheme, Faster Accrual Rate and Actuarial Buy-out: (see details below)
- ✦ Members who in the new scheme have a NPA higher than 65 will have an option in the new scheme to pay additional contributors to reduce or, in some cases, remove any early retirement reduction that would apply, if they retire before their normal pension age.
- ✦ Only reductions that would apply in respect of years after age 65 can be bought out and the maximum reduction that can be bought out is for 3 years (that would apply to a member with a Normal Pension Age of 68 or higher). ill-health benefits the same as those in the current final salary scheme.
- ✦ Annual Statements of benefits will be issued to individual members from DE from September 2016.

The changes do not apply to all members of the current scheme.

1. Fully Protected Members

Teachers born on or before 1 April 1962 will be fully protected and remain in the current Final Salary Arrangements.

2. Tapered Protection Members

Teachers born between **2 April 1962** and **1 October 1965** and who are active members in the NITPS NPA 60 or NPA 65 schemes are **tapered protection members**.

This means that they will have a transition date to move to the career average scheme and their Pension will be based on both final salary and career average.

Details of when these teaches will move to the career average scheme will be available on eth DE and INTO websites.

NB 'Full and Tapered protection' is only available as long as a member does not have a continuous break of more than five years or does not take their pension benefits (other than phased benefits).

3. Transitional Members

Teachers who were born after **1 October 1965** move to the career average scheme on **1 April 2015**. Their pension will be based on final salary and career average.

4. New Entrants

New members who enter the NITPS scheme on or after **1 April 2015** will join the career average scheme and their **pension will be based on career average only**.

Flexibilities (these apply to members in the Career Average scheme, CARE, only)

1. Faster Accrual Rate

Members, in the Career average scheme only CARE, can elect to pay higher contributions to

earn a higher pension.

The normal rate of accrual in the CARE scheme is based on 1/57th of their actual earnings that year.

If members elect to pay higher contributions their accrual rate will rise to 1/45th, 1/50th or 1/55th, depending on how much more the member elects to pay.

Each election made lasts for 1 financial year only. (1 April to 31 March the following year.)

An election must be made in the year before the member wants it to take effect, i.e. before the end of January preceding 1 April.

2. Actuarial Buy-out

Members, in CARE, can pay additional contributions, which would allow them to retire from age 65, but before their normal pension age (NPA) of 66, 67 and 68, without their benefits being actuarially reduced.

Members can purchase 1, 2 or 3 years buy-out depending on their NPA of 66, 67 or 68.

The additional contributions are paid throughout a member's career. IT is not possible to opt in and out of this flexibility.

NB To avail of this actuarial buy-out members **MUST** make an election to do so within six months of entering the CARE scheme.

Information on the additional cost to member's contributions will be available from the DE on request.



NUALA O'DONNELL,
Senior Official

“So I can’t be forced to mark at home?”

The Workload Agreement

Teachers from all over Northern Ireland have been giving up their free time and battling the elements throughout January to attend the workload workshops that were organised by the Northern Committee. These workshops kicked off in Lurgan and were followed by workshops in Belfast, Derry, Newry and Omagh.

The purpose of the workshops was, to enlighten INTO members and provide them with a greater understanding of the workload agreement in particular the positive benefits it can have on their individual workloads. Ultimately the workshops were about empowering members to ensure that this statutory agreement is fully applied in their own schools.

The workshops were well attended by both teachers eager to have their queries around the outworkings of the Workload agreement addressed and teachers who were barely aware of its existence. However, the feeling at the end of each workshop was that teachers came away with a clearer understanding of the detail of the agreement and felt a sense of empowerment for their return to work.

At each workshop the detail of the workload agreement was presented using PowerPoints, small focus groups and time-budget workshops focusing on either the primary or post-primary sector. Each teacher attending was given the training needed to fill out a time-budget and they felt they would be confident on their return to work to help other teachers draw up time budgets.

A common question at all of the workshops was in relation to being required to mark books and prepare lessons at home. Teachers attending the workshops were given examples of how their Principals were telling them that they were contrac-

tually required or obliged to complete their planning, preparation and assessment at home. They felt that their workload was impacting on their home life but since it was part of their contractual duties what option had they? At this point attention was repeatedly brought to the finer detail of the workload agreement to answer some members’ queries. In regards to Principals’ instructions, teachers welcomed the Workload advice that, “The practice of teachers carrying out their planning, preparation and assessment outside of their normal teaching hours, and in isolation from each other, is not considered satisfactory.”

“So I can’t be forced to mark at home?”
“No.”

“And what about teaching allowances, what if I have teaching points?”

The documents states, ‘Contractual du-

ties will normally be completed within contractual hours’ and management allowances, ‘Must also be allowed for within the time budget of 1265 hours.’ The teachers at the workshops welcomed this but were further encouraged where the workload states, ‘If a teacher is expected to carry out any duty that is deemed reasonable and in balance with the duties allocated to colleagues, then it must be accounted for in the time budget.’

Paul Groogan, Northern Committee Primary Representative for the Western Area Board did, at each of the workshops, guide teachers through the process of how an individual time budget is arrived at,

he quoted from the Workload agreement by telling teachers that, “The Principal is responsible for determining a time budget



TOMMY MCGLONE,
Trade Union Official

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Attending workshops



The Workload Agreement

Have you

Continued from p7

to each member of the teaching staff, attending teachers felt that the information provided by the workshop meant that teachers could challenge unfair interpretations of the agreements.

Other areas, besides school cover policies, which were raised included questions regarding lunchtime supervision and school trips. Teachers were pleased to find that the workload agreement clearly spelt out that, 'Unless employed under a separate contract as a mid-day supervisor,

a teacher shall not be required to undertake mid-day supervision.' Regarding school trips, the workload agreement is quite clear. 'Principals cannot direct teachers to take pupils on educational visits involving overnight stays.'

As they left the workshops some teachers said that they would probably think of other queries when they got home but were assured that the volume of literature they took away with them would answer all their future questions. In the end they agreed it to be a case of knowledge being power.

The workload agreement established limits to the demands that can be placed on all teachers – primary, post-primary, including post holders. Everything that a teacher is required to do should be possible to be completed with contractual hours (up to 1265 hours per year).

What am I expected to do?

The frequently referenced Jordanstown agreement refers to the duties of a teacher in the following terms;

"A teacher shall be required to carry out a range of professional duties as may reasonably be determined by the relevant body or its representative to be appropriate in his/her case and a teacher shall obey the reasonable directions of an employing authority or its representative."

The paragraph contains a number of important phrases:

- ✦ **Relevant body / representative** – i.e. Board of Governors / Principal
- ✦ **Reasonably** – able to be performed to a professional standard within the time allocated.

Teachers are required to
The time allocated is as follows:

	Pupil Contact (max)	Non Pupil Contact (max)	Max working hours (per week)
Primary	25h (includes 1.5h religious education)	7.4h	32.4
Post Primary	23.5h	8.9	32.4

Teachers are required to be available for work for 195 days and pupils must attend for 190 days (i.e. 38 weeks). The remaining time is to be used for staff development. Additional exceptional closure days for training are taken out of the 190 teaching days.

What are the reasonable duties?

The following are listed:

- a) Planning and preparing courses and lessons.



WORKING FOR YOU!

For details on the INTO Workload Campaign please visit www.into.ie
Members can download a copy of the Workload Agreement and "The Workload Agreement - a guide"



a work-life balance?



preparation and assessment outside of their normal teaching hours, and in isolation from each other, is not considered satisfactory...’ para 5.2 Workload Agreement.

How do I assess if my work is excessive?

1. Obtain a copy of the Workload Agreement (TNC 2011/ 8). Downloadable from the INTO website (www.into.ie).
2. Complete the time budget appendix associated with the Workload Agreement (below).
3. Raise the workload issue with your INTO school representative and Principal. Use the information obtained to show that you workload is excessive and your work / life balance is being impacted.
4. If you are unable to resolve these matters informally with your Principal INTO members may wish to raise a formal grievance in accordance with the Workload Agreement.

- b) Teaching, according to their educational needs, - the pupils assigned to her/him, including the setting and marking of work to be carried out by the pupil in school and elsewhere.
- c) Assessing, recording and reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils.
- d) Making records of and reports on the personal and social needs of pupils except in instances where to do so might be regarded as compromising a teacher’s own position.
- e) Communicating and consulting with the parents of pupils.

⌘ Work carried out at home **DOES** count toward the working hours and should be included in any discussion about a teacher’s workload. The practice of teachers carrying out their planning,

The entire list is contained in the Jordanstown Agreement or on the INTO website. However, there are few points to note:

- ⌘ The teacher should be **consulted** and the range of duties **agreed in advance**.
- ⌘ The agreed duties should be able to be completed to an agreed professional standard in the time allocated i.e. 1265hours.
- ⌘ Teachers should **NOT** be timetabled to the maximum.

Morning	Number of Hours		Total Number of Hours
Directed Time before school		X 190	
Teaching – time morning		X 190	
Morning Break		X 190	
Lunch time supervision at beginning and end of break		X 190	
Afternoon			
Teaching- time		X 190	
Supervision time after school		X 190	
Directed time after school	Per week	X 38	
Baker Days		X 5	
Parents’ evenings; preparation for sacraments; school shows; sporting activities etc.			
The total number of hours cannot exceed 1265. It must be remembered that this is a maximum number of hours. Most schools will wish to keep some hours in reserve for attendance at special events etc.		Grand Total	
		Reserve	

Campaign of industrial action –

In the next few weeks you will receive a ballot paper from INTO inviting you to cast your vote in a ballot to determine whether or not INTO will involve itself alongside the wider trade union movement in a campaign of industrial action. This invitation to participate in a ballot that may lead to industrial action and depending on the result that action may include strike action.

The reasons the Northern Committee has decided to seek this mandate is its belief that the 15/16 Education Budget coming on the back of reduced funding to the education system over the previous

four years compromises the ability of INTO members to discharge their professional responsibilities with integrity.

Furthermore, in the Northern Committee's view, the cuts flowing from the 15/16 Education Budget will:

- ✦ undermine educational outcomes and pupil achievements,
- ✦ increase levels of risk to the health and wellbeing of both pupils and teachers,
- ✦ place further unreasonable workload demands on INTO members already subject to excessive workloads.

Important dates to note

Wed 4 March 2015: Ballot paper must be returned to Henry Murray and Co, 23 Church Place, Lurgan, Craigavon, County Armagh BT66 6EY, the independent scrutineer, no later than 12.00pm on Wednesday 4 March 2015 in the prepaid envelope provided.

Thurs 5 March 2015: Announcement of ballot result.



raising public awareness

Out and About



Round of Applause for School Reps

Support to colleagues, dealing with employers, working conditions and rights, answering questions members may have, ensuring that all members are receiving the benefits and rights they are entitled, maternity leave queries, leave of absence queries, sick pay, discipline procedures, workload, CPD, PRSD, general agony aunt and sounding board; all in a week's work for a school union representative. A lot of which, although much appreciated by the recipient, goes generally unnoticed and save for the satisfaction of helping a colleague and standing up for what is right; generally unrewarded.

INTO currently offers a very comprehensive training programme which is availed of by large numbers of school reps every year, leaving our school representatives well-versed in industrial relations and employment contracts, management methods and general terms and condi-

tions of employment. Representatives through training, are made aware of any workplace issues affecting their members, they also develop a sound knowledge of the organisations for which their members work. Reps frequently act as a liaison between the management and the union members, often addressing large groups of people on issues affecting their union, making sure that all members understand their rights. It cannot be underestimated just how valuable a good school representative is, not only to members but the entire organisation.

With that in mind and in recognition of the important role played by INTO school representative we would like to invite all our reps to a School Representative Event. This is a residential and will take place in The Manor House Country Hotel, Enniskillen Friday 15th–16th May. Registration will be at 4:30pm on the

Friday, followed by a short evening session, with dinner in the Hotel at 8pm. Saturday's session will begin at 10am and conclude at 1pm.

This is an informal event where reps will have an opportunity to meet Northern Committee members and officials; gain a better understanding of the structure of the organisation and your role within it. It will also provide an excellent forum for reps to network and share experiences with other reps in their area but most importantly it will give INTO representatives an opportunity to let INTO know what we can do for our representatives, ensuring the continuation of a strong and active union, strengthening the "Root and Branch" of this organisation.

ANNMARIE CONWAY, *Northern Committee Chairperson*

If you're not in you can't win!

In updating the data base for Belfast Branch, school reps were contacted and asked to return contact information for members in their schools. All who did so were entered into a draw for an ipad.

The draw was held at the autumn branch meeting on 15th October in the newly refurbished Northern Office at 24 College Gardens.

The excitement was tangible as the winner's name was read out. Well done to Moya McParland from Scoil an Droichid who was phoned immediately and received her brand new device the following day !!

Many thanks to all those who took part, and commiserations. Who knows what next year's incen-



tivewill bring?? Watch this space....

(Please note that all information is treated in the strictest confidence)








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End of Key Stage Assessment and ongoing industrial action

As we move into Term 2 of this Academic year many schools will be receiving communications from CCEA with regard to the End of Key Stage Assessments and portfolios of evidence. As teachers, we understand that assessment is a core tool in our endeavours to ensure that every child achieves their full potential. Teachers are continuously engaged in meaningful assessment throughout the school year. Unfortunately the End of Key Stage Assessments as currently configured, do not assist us in this work. INTO continue to be opposed to the arrangements for End of Key Stage Assessments. The assessment arrangements continue to be flawed in several areas.

- ⌘ Workload attached to the generation, administration and moderation of the assessment arrangements.
- ⌘ The distorting impact of the assessments on the teaching and learning

⌘ The misuse and abuse of the data generated for non teaching and learning purposes.

INTO has continued to engage with DENI and CCEA to try and develop a process that prioritises the needs of pupils, teachers and schools. However, despite this engagement the issues remain significant. The on-going industrial action related to the End of Key Stage Assessment has been extremely effective. 80% of schools did not return End of Key Stage Assessment data to CCEA or DENI in 2013/14. This overwhelming response to the call for industrial action is indicative of the total loss of confidence that the teaching

profession in all sectors and in all phases is experiencing.

Last year teachers and pupils were free to focus upon teaching and learning. This year the industrial action remains in place. This is outlined in Bulletin 5 November 2014.

Members are reminded that they should not use the new Levels of Progression (LoPs) to assess or grade pupil achievement, they should not use the LoPs in any moderation of pupils' work and they should not use LoPs to report pupil outcomes to parents. No assessment data, which uses the new Levels, should be submitted to CCEA/DE.



MARY DORMAN, Northern Committee

Honouring retired members at Limavady Dungiven branch

A warm welcome was extended to our President, Mr Seán McMahon on the occasion of the retirement of members in the Limavady/ Dungiven branch on 18th November. Seán was greatly impressed by the collegiality and strength of the Limavady/Dungiven Branch and was delighted to share in the honouring

of the retired members. The President, accompanied by Annmarie Conway, Chair of Northern Committee and the Western Area Primary Representative Annette Comey, extended his best wishes to the Branch Chair Joan Guthrie, the branch officers and the newly retired members of Limavady/Dungiven

branch: Anne Marie O'Hagan, Eamon Mullan, Mary Quigg and Bernie O'Kane. The President then regaled the branch with anecdotes from beautiful West Clare, drawing comparisons with the stunning surroundings of the Roe Valley, finishing with the poem 'The Station' by Robert J Hastings.



Back row (l. to r.), retiring teachers Anne Marie O'Hagan, St Canice's, Feeny, Eamonn Mullan, St Patrick's & St Brigid's, Claudy, Mary Quigg, St Canice's, Feeny, Bernie Kane, St Mary's, Limavady. Front row (l. to r.) Joan Guthrie (Limavady/Dungiven branch Chairperson), Sean McMahon President INTO, Briega O'Neill, (Limavady/Dungiven branch Vice chairperson).



Back row (l. to r.), Sean Mullan, Limavady/Dungiven branch treasurer, Moira O' Kane, Limavady/Dungiven branch auditor, Debbie Mullan, Limavady/Dungiven branch auditor, Marty Khera (Limavady/Dungiven branch secretary). Front row (l. to r.) Joan Guthrie, Limavady/Dungiven branch Chairperson, Sean McMahon, President INTO, Briega O'Neill, Limavady/Dungiven branch Vice chairperson.

Official opening of no 24 College

In 1963 INTO moved from High Street to lease offices on 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors of 23 College Gardens. It was in 1971 that INTO purchased the leased floors and subsequently in 1973, the whole property, which included a sitting tenant, a Mrs Hall who lived on the ground floor rent free until her death in 1976. The building on 23 College gardens has remained INTO's home ever since, servicing 6,000 plus Primary and Post Primary teachers in the north of Ireland.

In 2011 Head office in Dublin took the innovative decision to expand its property portfolio in the north and acquire the property next door. As membership in the north expanded so too did the need for increased provision of service to members, so it was perhaps fortuitous and timely that the property became available when it did. Teachers in the north have seen an excessive increase in workload over the last number of years, this has been coupled with a decrease in budgets and a virtual halt in any meaningful CPD provision from the employers, here INTO realised that they could enhance the already exceptional service they provide.

Work on the Listed building began 2013 headed by Lisa Mc Veigh from DMVF Architects Dublin, it took twelve months to get the building ready for use, but it was most definitely worth the wait with many of the Victorian features refurbished, while respecting all the important protected elements. The architect of 24 College Gardens managed to transform



Gardens



the late 19th Century property into a stylish mix of the historical with the modern, in a fully functional working environment, providing conference rooms; individual office space; with reception area; and catering facilities; all within the four storey terraced Victorian house. In essence INTO have doubled the size of the Belfast Head Quarters, ready to meet the demands of its increasing membership and exceptional service and training output.

INTO members, officials previous and current Northern Committee members and friends of INTO were welcomed to the official opening of the newly refurbished 24 College gardens on December 5th.

The current Northern Chair, Annmarie Conway noted that, "it was nice to take time to celebrate something in a week that has left teachers and union representatives very little worth celebrating. In fact it has been a week where we may be forgiven for throwing our hands up in dismay and running for the hills. But that is

not the INTO way, and 24 College Gardens, its purchase and refurbishment is testament to that."

The Northern Chair went on to commend the INTO branches in the north for their generous contributions that made the building possible, she also commended our colleagues in the south for their generosity and foresight in facilitating the acquisition and refurbishment of the building, praising the salubrious surroundings and vision of the architect of the project Lisa Mc Veigh.

"That is why this union is a success, because it is led by its members and it has its strength, power and determination in root and branch level."

The Chair encouraged guests to, "remember that strength, power and determination, for it will," she concluded, "be the same strength, power and

determination used in the upcoming months to circumvent the proposed budget cuts and attacks on an already exhausted over-worked underfunded education system."



Like to work in INTO Northern Office? An bhfuil tú ag iarraidh bheith ag obair in Oifig an Tuaiscirt CMÉ?

The INTO invites applications for the position of paid intern

This position will be for the remainder of school year 2015/2016. The person appointed will be located in INTO Northern Office (23 & 24 College Gardens, Belfast, BT9 6BS).

The position will be filled by an INTO member on secondment from their teaching post and subject to the person concerned securing approval as necessary from their Board of Governors.

The person appointed will be required to work normal office hours, Monday to Friday, from 1 September 2015 to 31 August 2016. They will be subject to INTO Northern Office conditions and protocols, in terms of hours, holidays, and other relevant staff policies. The person will continue to be paid their normal salary and to accrue pensionable service as teachers, and receive an additional allowance subject to a maximum combined amount.

A full statement of conditions of employment is available on request: email cmcdonnell@into.ie

INTO is seeking members who are:

- ✦ enthusiastic about INTO and its services to members;
- ✦ seeking more experience of INTO and its operation;
- ✦ have excellent oral, written, communication and interpersonal skills;
- ✦ are trustworthy and appreciate the confidentiality associated with handling issues for INTO members;
- ✦ have basic IT skills;
- ✦ have high standards and vision for INTO and for education.

The responsibilities of the internship will include working directly with sections within INTO as assigned, assisting with members' queries and cases as assigned, attending meetings and preparing papers as required, researching specific issues, participation in internal meetings, providing administrative support and such other duties as may be assigned by the Northern Secretary.

To apply, please forward:

- ✦ a copy of your CV;
- ✦ a cover letter outlining your interest in INTO and how you believe you could contribute to/benefit from working with our Northern Office team;
- ✦ names and contact details of two referees (with a note of how each person knows you).

Your application, including the above material, should be sent to Internships, Northern Secretary's Office, INTO, 23 College Gardens Belfast BT9 6BS, or by email entitled 'Internships' to cmcdonnell@into.ie

All applications must be received not later than 5pm on Monday, 16 March 2015.

It is anticipated that a short-listing and interview process will take place. All applicants will be advised of the outcome. The INTO is an equal opportunities employer.

Tá CMÉ ag iarraidh iarratas don phost mar intéirín íoctha

Mairfidh an post go deireadh na scoilbhliana 2015/2016. Beidh an duine a cheapfar lonnaithe in Oifig an Tuaiscirt CMÉ (23 & 24 Gairdíní an Choláiste, Béal Feirste, BT9 6BS).

Ball de chuid CMÉ atá ar iasacht óna phost múinteoireachta a lionfaidh an folúntas ach é an cead riachtanach a fháil óna Bhord Gobharnóirí.

Beidh ar an duine a cheapfar obair le linn gnáthuaireanta oifige, Luan go hAoine, ó 1 Meán Fomhair 2015 go 31 Lúnasa 2016. Beidh sé faoi réir choinníollacha agus phrótocail Oifig an Tuaiscirt CMÉ, maidir le huaireanta oibre, laethanta saoire agus polasaithe foirne ábhartha eile. Gheobhaidh an duine a ghnáth-thuarastal i gcónaí agus fabhróidh sé seirbhís inphinsin mar mhúinteoir, agus gheobhaidh sé liúntas breise atá ag brath ar uasmhéid comhcheangailte.

Gheobhfar ráiteas iomlán coinníollacha fostaíochta ach sin a iarraidh: ríomhphost cmcdonnell@into.ie

Tá CMÉ ag iarraidh ball:

- ✦ atá díograiseach faoi CMÉ agus a sheirbhísí dá bhaill;
- ✦ atá ag iarraidh tuilleadh taithí ar CMÉ agus a oibríocht;
- ✦ a bhfuil scileanna labhartha, scríofa agus idirphearsanta sármhaithe acu;
- ✦ atá iontaofa agus ar mór leo an rúndacht a bhaineann le ceisteanna a láimhseáil do bhaill CMÉ;
- ✦ a bhfuil bunscileanna TF acu;
- ✦ a bhfuil ardchaighdeán acu agus fíis do CMÉ agus don oideachas.

Mar chuid de fhreagrachtaí na n-intéirneachtaí beidh ar an duine obair go díreach le rannóga taobh istigh de CMÉ mar a shanntar, cuidiú le ceisteanna agus cásanna ball nuair a shanntar, freastal ar chruinnithe agus páipéir a ullmhú nuair is gá, taighde a dhéanamh ar cheisteanna áirithe, bheith rannpháirteach i gcruinnithe inmheánacha, tacaíocht inmheánach a sholáthar agus dualgais eile a chomhlíonadh a shannfaí Rúnaí an Tuaiscirt.

I d'iarratas, seol chugainn:

- ✦ cóip de do CV;
- ✦ litir mhínte agus cur síos ar an spéis atá agat in CMÉ agus ar an dóigh a síleann tú a chuideofa lenár bhfoireann in Oifig an Tuaiscirt agus ar an tairbhe a bhainfeá as;
- ✦ ainmneacha agus sonraí teagmhála dhá réiteoir (inis cad é an aithne atá acu ort).

Cuirtear d'iarratas, agus an t-ábhar thuasluaite iniata, chuig Intéirneachtaí, Oifig Rúnaí an Tuaiscirt, CMÉ, 23 Gairdíní an Choláiste Béal Feirste BT9 6BS, nó trí ríomhphost dar teideal 'Intéirneachtaí' chuig cmcdonnell@into.ie

Ní mór do gach iarratas bheith istigh tráth nach déanaí ná 5pm Dé Luain, 16 Márta 2015.

Síltear go dtarlóidh próiseas gearrliostaithe agus agallaimh. Inseofar an toradh do gach iarrthóir. Is fostóir comhionannas deiseanna é CMÉ.

STORMONT HOUSE IS NO DEAL!

STRONGER TOGETHER
CONGRESS
Northern Ireland Committee

STRONGER TOGETHER
CONGRESS
Northern Ireland Committee

Why the Trade Unions disagree with this agreement:

- There is NOT £2 Billion in new money •
- The Tories are making the NI Executive take a pay-day loan •
 - The biggest loan is for redundancy payments only •
 - At least 20,000 jobs may disappear - for ever •
- The savings from these redundancies will pay for a tax cut for big business •
- There is no guarantee that a single job will be created because of this hand-out to business •
- There is an absolute certainty that thousands of jobs and millions of pounds will be taken from the public, never to return •
- Those thousands of sacked public servants will face the UK's lowest wages, or face the everyday humiliations built in to the cruel Tory vision of welfare •
- Our inefficient private sector cannot provide enough decent jobs for school leavers and graduates •
 - We cannot afford to waste the talents of skilled public servants working in education, health, tourism, arts, transport, social care •
- This is a bad deal, fit only for a land of pound shops and food banks, rather than the society YOU voted for at the last election •

NO-ONE VOTED FOR OUR ELECTED POLITICIANS TO DO A DEAL LIKE THIS.

THE TRADE UNIONS REJECT THE STORMONT HOUSE DEAL

**IT IS BAD FOR WORKERS, FOR ALL COMMUNITIES, FOR SOCIETY,
AND FOR EQUALITY**

Join In With Our March And Rally On

13th March, Belfast!

**HEAR THE CASE AGAINST THE DEAL AT PUBLIC MEETINGS IN YOUR AREA:
21 January - Derry and Omagh**

Further Meetings to be held in -

- Strabane • Enniskillen • Newry • Lurgan • Ballymena • Coleraine •
- Bangor • Newtownards • Magherafelt •
- Plus a series of public meetings around Belfast •

See local press, Facebook and website for details www.ictuni.org

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Fighting back against the Stormont sell out and austerity agenda

STRONGER TOGETHER
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Northern Ireland Committee

Presidential visit to Districts 1 and 2

Following an invitation from Northern Committee, INTO President Sean McMahon agreed to clear some time in his busy schedule to visit schools and members in Districts 1 and 2.

St Patrick's Primary School Crossmaglen was the first stop in a very busy three days for INTO President Sean McMahon. St Patrick's Primary School sits in the shadow of Slieve Gullion. The school has a thriving Irish Medium unit-Gael scoil Phádraig Naofa and Nursery Unit. The President, having met an INTO member at Congress in Kilkenny, was keen to visit the area and meet members working in the school. The President was delighted to receive such a warm welcome from the children and staff.

This was followed by a visit to St John's Primary School Moy. This school close to the Armagh and Tyrone border provided an opportunity to meet hardworking INTO branch officers who undertake voluntary work throughout the year on behalf of members. This visit also provided an opportunity to discuss the issues around small schools and the proposal for a Shared Education Campus with the local Controlled Moy Regional Primary School.

The school generously provided refreshments for the delegation before they made the brief journey to the home of the O'Neills and the new established Gael Scoil Aodh Rua in Dungannon. The school entertained the President with a range of talents. The children were delighted that their visitor engaged with them *as Gaeilge* and suggested they have a night free from homework in recognition of their endeavours. This was followed by an opportunity to meet the staff and investigate the challenges of teachers in this sector regarding the sourcing of appropriate resources. This conversation was accompanied by Lemon Drizzle Cake and a selection of pastries.

The day was not yet over for the President as he made the scenic trip up the Glenshane Pass to one of the most northerly branches of INTO. The President was there to assist with presentations to long serving branch members who had retired. Sean spoke eloquently about the challenges facing members both north and south of the border.

Day 2 of the visit started with a trip to Rathgael House as part of an inter-union delegation to meet Minister O'Dowd. He spoke impassionedly about the impact upon all teachers of badly implemented policy. He also drew the Minister's attention to the fact that despite all the financial challenges faced by the government in the south not one teaching post was made redundant.



The delegation then travelled back into Belfast to visit Glenveagh Special School. During this visit the President was impressed by the dedication of all the staff to work collectively to meet the challenges that this setting provides on a daily basis.

The final visit of the day was to the thriving Colaiste Feirste. This was a very different school environment from the rural primary school that the President is more familiar with. The visit provided the opportunity for the President to meet post-primary members and discover how INTO can meet the needs of this sector.

The final morning for the President started with a visit to the Holy Cross Girls School in North Belfast. On a previous visit to Belfast the President had been struck by the amount of security measures that continue to be required in a school on the interface. On this occasion he was able to see the work that goes on inside the school rather than just the external view of the school. He

met the current and previous principals and discussed the very real challenges that the school faces on an ongoing basis.

This was followed by a short trip down the Crumlin Road to the newly amalgamated St Patrick's Primary School in North Belfast. The President was given the tour of the split site and heard about the ambitious plans to develop a world class educational facility in one of the most economically deprived areas of Ireland. Staff spoke about their hopes and expectations for the future as well as the ongoing challenges that they are managing.

The final stop of the presidential tour of northern schools was St Bernard's Primary School. St Bernard's Primary School nestled in the hills in East Belfast with views over the city, clearly demonstrated its motto 'Be the best you can' on this occasion. The President was impressed by the enthusiasm for learning clearly evident throughout the school.





Coping with Bereavement

We're all adults here. We've all experienced the death of family or friends. We try to make sense of it. I have. I'm not good at it. I try to see the positive in every situation but death far too often defies this. And yet I find myself needing to explain death, loss and grief to the children I work with; wanting to provide support and guidance to the teams I work with; and helping, comforting, and grieving with parents and family members. It's an emotional whirlwind.

In my 17 years experience in a Special School setting I have had the pleasure of teaching and learning with hundreds of children & young adults. I have also had the sadness of coping with the death of 11 of the pupils in my class.

There is a lot of support out there. Amazing agencies that will step in to advise how we help the children or ourselves, there is a bounty of information on the internet and some great literature. But it is essential that the school community knows how we support each other, and that only happens through communication and trust.

I have had the honour of being asked 3 times to speak for my pupils at their funerals. I have always approached these with pride. Pride that we have created a trust with that family, a belief that we knew, respected & enjoyed working with their child. The stories & pictures that I have shared with the families and friends have made me laugh and cry; I have cried a lot. Essentially what I have needed to cope with this, is the support of my school.

As a Special School, that was experiencing the loss of children throughout the years, we needed to spend time thinking about how we dealt with this for our children, our staff and our parents. I have developed, with the help of an incredible team of teachers & assistants a strategy at school that embraces the emotions and provides a structure that we can fall back on when we become emotionally too drained to make a decision. In our school community we have evolved, through too many experiences, a support that works for us.

When I've heard the sad news, after the initial devastation (which isn't any easier if you're prepared for it):

- ✳ I think of my team & the staff that supported that child outside the classroom. How can I best support them? We take time. Time to talk, classes get covered, and a team is gathered to step in.
- ✳ We arrange to visit the family together or alone – how an individual copes is respected.
- ✳ Anyone that wishes to attend the funeral does, their peers or parents are always accommodating when they can be.
- ✳ We get together as a whole school, gathering to remember and celebrate the child; their friend. We talk directly to the children and show them how much we cared. The family are welcome, with no pressure to attend. To make concrete the idea of letting go, which summarises grief for our children, we release beautifully bright balloons.

Every child or adult who wants a balloon gets one. The sky is quite beautiful and there is a natural silence.

- ✳ No matter how many years pass we remember all the children that have passed away and fondly talk about the experiences and mischief that they had at school.
- ✳ A couple of years ago, a new teacher came to my class the morning we heard of a death. She had a card that her children and staff had made and signed for my class. We encourage children to tell us when they are upset, but it is all too easy not to mention it to a colleague, one of the few people who will understand the relationship we have with the children in our care.

I don't have answers, but, if I was to pass on two pieces of advice, it would be these:

1. Talk openly about a strategy your school does or should have before you need to.
2. If it happens in your class or in your school, show emotion, talk when you need to and if one of your colleagues is experiencing it, let them know you care with just a few words.

Thank you to Kalon, Gerard, Emma Louise, Paul, Conor, Liam, Laura, Damian, Jordan, Beatta & Aisling who I so enjoyed teaching & their families who I think of often.

CAROLINE MCCARTHY, *Northern Committee Representative*

Sexual Orientation Survey

Evidence is the key to making services reflect everyone's experiences and meet their needs. It is the intention of Northern Committee to survey each and every member in term two that will gather specific sexual orientation data in education. This is the first survey of its kind for teachers here, and the INTO are proud to lead the way. We have shown year after year at Northern Conference, motions specific to the protection of our LGB&T teachers, as well as supporting Pride festivals throughout the country and numerous other events. Due to long standing nervousness and reluctance in dealing with LGB issues there has been little or no concerted effort to collect data on the size, location, or specific needs of the LGB population across education nor has there been any effort to gauge the appetite

for the training needs of teachers in general here in sexual orientation awareness. Furthermore we have no data as to the amount of homophobic language or bullying endured by teachers or students in our schools here. The quantitative data that we receive will instruct Northern Committee to inform policy, lobby our education authorities for the facilitation of sexual orientation training of our members and to continue to show excellence in our support of our teachers with a same sex attraction. We are conducting this research on the instruction of our Northern Conference in Enniskillen in 2014. (see Belfast West Branch motion below, and passionate speeches at the following link <http://www.into.ie/NI/NewsEvents/NorthernConference/NorthernConference2014/ConferenceWebcast/>)

Conference:

- (i) Condemns the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFM&DFM) for its failure to publish a sexual orientation strategy by the end of 2013 in spite of repeated commitments to do so.
- (ii) Instructs Northern Committee to work with the NITC to call for immediate sexual orientation awareness training for all GTCNI registered teachers to ensure that teachers feel confident and comfortable in talking about sexual orientation issues and responding to homophobic incidents.
- (iii) Instructs Northern Committee to conduct research on the experiences of LGB&T INTO members within schools throughout the North.

TTIP – The Threat to Public Services and Education

What is TTIP?

TTIP is the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, a proposed Trade Agreement between the EU and the USA. It is being driven in large part by Transnational Private Corporations.

What does the TTIP agreement propose?

TTIP is aimed in the main at harmonising Trade laws across the European Union and the USA. This will cover Employment Law, Environmental Law, trading of goods and services and removing non-tariff trade barriers. It is also aimed at 'creating new markets'.

What are the dangers of the TTIP Agreement?

There are many. Among the most concerning elements are:

- ✦ Employment Law and Environmental protections in the EU are generally better than they are in the USA. While they are far from perfect here, there is a very real danger that harmonisation will lead to further erosion of the rights of European Workers and no improvement for workers on the other side of the Atlantic.
- ✦ 'Harmonisation' may well be a by word for 'Deregulation' that will lead to less protection in Europe for Public Safety, Food Safety, Health and Safety at work and so on.
- ✦ The 'creation of new markets' essentially means more privatisation and opening up Health, Education and other key services to yet more private procurement. History shows that Privatised Industries invariably leads to worsening Terms and Conditions of employment and lower wages. This is the greatest danger for Education here in Ireland, north and south. Potentially this could lead to the type of fragmented Education Service currently in operation in England, with Free Schools, Academies and a weakening of

the ability of Education unions to bargain collectively and protect and promote our members' interests. It is worth remembering that privatising of public services is to transfer public money and assets to private companies whose primary consideration is not the service they provide but their shareholders money.

- ✦ According to leading Environmental and Social Justice Activist, George Monbiot, Trade Agreements that were once aimed at removing protectionism 'now promote the interests of transnational capital by downgrading the defence of human health, the natural world, labour rights and the poor'. That is the crux of the matter and the reason TTIP must be opposed by organised labour.

How could TTIP effect Education?

Primarily through an increased threat of the privatisation of Public Services. Governments, including devolved assemblies such as Stormont, would come under immense pressure to put more and more services out to tender and could potentially be sued by private corporations if they are seen to treat state schools more favourably than private schools. It could lead to privatisation by stealth through increased outsourcing of services within schools like the provision of teaching assistants, CPD courses and so on or the more overt opening of Academies, low fee private schools, for profit universities and so on. Here in Northern Ireland, it does not take a great leap of imagination to realise what this might mean for efforts to end academic selection in education.

What is the Standstill Ratchet Clause that is proposed?

This is a clause that effectively 'locks in' any privatisation or liberalisation. It would impose punitive penalties for re-

versing changes made under the agreement, thus making reversal of the sell off of public assets and services very difficult if not impossible.

What, if anything, can be done about this?

The good news is that as a result of a European wide Trade Union led campaign to bring the TTIP negotiations out in to the public eye the EU has already rolled back on some elements of the TTIP proposals and has been forced to negotiate this treaty in full view of European Citizens and their representatives.

As many as 150,000 responses were received in relation to the Investor State Dispute Settlement, the vast majority of which were against the idea. Over 52,000 of these responses came from the UK, in large part as a result of the efforts of the Trade Union Movement and Environmentalists. As a result the Investor State Dispute Settlement which would have set up offshore tribunals to arbitrate on disputes and over ridden the legal systems of sovereign states, has been taken off of the negotiating table.

Despite this victory the dangers of increased privatisation and worsening of employment and environmental protections is still a real danger and it remains incumbent upon activists to campaign against this unfair trade agreement. As George Monbiot stated in the Guardian newspaper, a previous manifestation of this agreement (The Multilateral Agreement on Investment) was defeated by pressure from progressive elements in 1998.

Keep responding to consultations and petitions against TTIP and let your political and Trade Union representatives know about it and ask them to speak out.

KEVIN DALY, *Northern Committee*

INTO SEN SEMINAR

INTO presented the third in a series of SEN Seminars on Saturday 22 November 2014. The Seminar took place in the recently opened extension to Northern Office, 24 College Gdns.

The theme for the Seminar was Challenging Behaviour, a topic which obviously struck a chord as quite a number of members were in attendance, foregoing their Saturday morning lie-in to be in Belfast for a 10 o'clock start.

The first session on Challenging Behaviour was delivered by Peter McAllister and Caroline McCarthy, both with a wealth of experience in this field as a result of their work in the Special School sector. After a break for

tea, scones and chat in the amply furnished new kitchen, everyone made their way back to the Conference room, where Mary Dorman took us through the pitfalls and paperwork associated with Risk Assessment.

Feedback from the Seminar was extremely positive, with a request for it to be re-run on an evening after school, so that more members could avail of the opportunity to learn strategies that would be of benefit to them in their daily practice.

In the meantime, the information from this and the 2 previous seminars is available on the INTO website.

CATHY CROZIER, *SEN Sub-Committee*



The Down Branch recently held a charity branch meeting and quiz at the Harbour House Inn Newcastle, in aid of The Belfast Royal Neo-Natal Unit in which over £500 was raised. (From left to right) Paula Tumelty Down Branch Chairperson, Staff Nurse Yvonne Simpson, Dr Una Robinson, Frank Quinn INTO Northern Committee.

A Place with a Mission

I write to thank INTO northern secretary, Gerry Murphy, and members of INTO for their expressions of support at a very challenging time for St Mary's University College. This is also an opportunity, for which I am very grateful, to explain the main aspects of the problems we are experiencing to INTO members, many of whom are graduates of St Mary's.

The facts of the situation are straightforward. DEL Minister, Dr Stephen Farry, has proposed to remove the small and specialist premia payments which are received by St Mary's and Stranmillis and which enable the institutions to be sustainable. The Westminster government devised premia funding because it recognised that whilst the quality and diversity offered by small and specialist institutions was of significant value, it could not be delivered solely based on a funding model that was geared to the economies of scale of a large university.

The Minister insists that the proposal is a financial issue alone. However, I contend that his plan has less to do with his Department facing budget cuts and more to do with a blatantly opportunist decision to try to force an outcome to his review of Initial Teacher Education. In fact, in the same letter in which he proposed the removal of the premia, he informed the College that he has asked the Vice-Chancellors of the two universities to develop proposals for the future of initial teacher education which have no place for an autonomous Catholic higher education institution like St Mary's. I am not alone in having this view of the Minister's proposal. The chairman of the Employment and Learning Committee, Robin Swann of the UUP, has also raised concerns. He told 'The Irish News' that:

"The Alliance Minister was accused, and rightly so, of using the opportunity presented by the budget to circumvent the international panel's work on the future of teacher training, and he has used the information from the report to bring forward his own political agenda."

The Minister's political agenda is the integration of initial teacher education and, if he had consensus for his agenda, St Mary's would have no case. His problem is that he does not have consensus and, in its absence, he plans to use financial leverage to force through his political goal before the next Assembly election in 2016. Whilst most parties favour a shared approach as the way forward for education, Dr Farry sees an opportunity to force the Alliance agenda of integration. He has therefore re-



jected the vision which St Mary's presented in December 2013 to create a world-class system of Initial Teacher Education in the north of Ireland which would display three key attributes:

- ✦ It would be pluralist.
- ✦ It should be shared.
- ✦ It should have a distinctive role for St Mary's as an autonomous institution.

Minister Farry does not accept the College's case for autonomy. However, if an institution such as St Mary's loses the authority to take decisions on issues of significance, then it no longer has the capacity to pursue its mission. Of course the College must operate within the same legislative framework as any other publicly-funded body, and is happy to do so. But without the capacity to make decisions about matters such as values, priorities and ethos, the College's provision would be no different from that of a secular university, and so it would have no reason to exist. St Mary's has a very clear mission to make a distinctive contribution of service and excellence, in the Catholic tradition, to higher education. The College has a Catholic identity and wherever Catholic higher education is found throughout the world, it seeks to integrate intellectual, personal, ethical and religious formation; and to unite high academic achievement with service to others. Such a mission, in my view, has sufficient common ground with the outlook of secular universities for there to be ample opportunity for a shared approach to our collective work.

Dr Farry, speaking in the Northern Ireland Assembly on Monday January 19th 2015, also spoke about this "not being about institutions" as if institutions are not important. How wrong he is. Jean Monnet,

regarded by many as the chief architect of European unity, once said that people can come up with ideas but only institutions can turn ideas into concrete actions. That gives you an insight into why we are so determined to maintain the integrity of St Mary's as an autonomous institution, albeit in a collaborative partnership with others.

The idea that we espouse, in the sense that Monnet used the term, is that of faith-based education. In its final report, the international panel appointed by the Minister articulated the idea of faith-based education so well that I will quote from section 6.4. In the faith-based model, it is argued:

"the process of becoming a teacher is not simply a form of intellectual engagement with relevant academic and pedagogical studies, combined with the acquisition of a repertoire of skills and strategies through which pupils' learning is progressed ... in addition ... it is an integral feature of learning to teach that students ... espouse certain values, which give point and purpose to the whole professional undertaking. These values are absorbed through the lived experience of participating in an educational community; they are exerted by, and implicit in, that community's whole mode of operation."

This pervasive and integrated lived experience of a faith based community cannot, we believe, be successfully accommodated by integration or merger into what is a secular system. I trust that members of INTO understand and appreciate why we take the position that we do. Put simply, St Mary's requires autonomy to be mission-effective and the Minister's proposal is a direct attack on that.

PROFESSOR PETER FINN, *Principal of St Mary's University College, Belfast*

Professional development

Are teachers too busy for professional development? What are the benefits of taking time out to have an international experience and why is it more than just 'nice to have'?

Alexander Scott, Principal of Gracehill Primary School, Ballymena and Brian McGrath, Principal of St Martin's Primary School, Garrison share their experience of the international programmes run by British Council Northern Ireland and give some advice to those starting out in their careers.

Alexander, who has been a head teacher for a number of years, has taken part in a variety of professional development opportunities through the British Council, including the former Comenius programme (now Erasmus+) and international study visits. About these opportunities, he said:

Making time for Professional Development can be very difficult as school life is always very busy and sometimes there is the temptation not to bother. There are no easy answers but it's important to build time both for your own development and for your staff.

In our school I think many of the teachers, including myself, have gained significantly from international links. Recently I had the opportunity to visit Brazil on an International Study Visit and was greatly impressed with the efforts that are being made there to ensure that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are given opportunities to use technology and travel abroad.

With a range of post-graduate studies and courses run by the ELBs and the Regional Training Unit, teachers are constantly deepening their pedagogical knowledge and looking to specialise in areas such as special education or CRED.

In today's more dynamic and competitive environment, thinking outside the box can help keep staff and pupils on top of



Brian McGrath, INTO Principal in St Martin's Primary School, Garrison who took part in a recent visit to China

their game. Brian McGrath is now in his second year as Principal of St Martin's Primary School, Garrison. He feels that tapping into local resources, such as the British Council, can create a wealth of opportunity. He said:

The international dimension is one way teachers can develop their skills and gain knowledge. These can then be taken forward into learning areas such as 'The World Around Us'.

For Brian, who took part in a study visit to China in early 2014, the British Council is:

... an excellent starting point for any new teachers. ... It showed how much our school systems have in common and helped us bring an extra in-

ternational dimension to the school; with some of the kids now learning Mandarin.

The experiences I brought back had a major impact on the children's interest and willingness to become informed on international issues.

'SchoolsOnline' is the British Council's portal for teachers, pointing you to professional development opportunities as well as funding for international linking and free curricular resources to enhance the teaching and learning of your pupils. Sign up for the 'SchoolsOnline' newsletter, which from October 2014 will contain Northern Ireland news stories and announcements. For more information visit <https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org> or <http://n.ireland.britishcouncil.org>.

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. We work in over 100 countries worldwide to build engagement and trust for the UK through the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people. We work in the arts, education, English, science, sport and governance and last year we engaged face to face with 18.4 million people and reached 652 mil-

lion. We are a non-political organisation which operates at arm's length from government. Our total turnover in 2009/10 was £705 million, of which our grant-in-aid from the British government was £211 million. For every £1 of government grant we receive, we earn £2.50 from other sources. For more information, please visit: <http://nireland.britishcouncil.org> or follow us on Twitter: @BCouncil_NI

Retirement for Rita and Brendan

Tyrone Central Branch were pleased to be able to 'celebrate' the retirements of Rita Fox, Northern Committee Representative Western Area Primary A and Brendan Harron, Senior Official. Rita has been a stalwart for Tyrone Central for quite a number of years and thanks to her drive and passion Tyrone Central has become one of the strongest and most vibrant INTO branches in the North. Brendan, who also hails from Tyrone, has been a dedicated and tenacious servant for our members and it was fitting that Tyrone Central members and our comrades from



Enniskillen Branch were able to show their gratitude to Rita and Brendan on their retirement.

Stranmillis GAA Club



INTO Sponsors Festival Concerts for Schools

Ireland's ecclesiastical and cultural capital, Armagh City, was the setting as INTO Southern Area Branches were delighted to once again sponsor the William Kennedy Piping Festival School Concerts. This year the best part of a thousand young people and their teachers were treated to world class musical performances from the best piping talents in Ireland, Scotland, Galicia and beyond. Schools from all sectors were represented at Primary and Post Primary level.



Feis an Earraich Group from the Isle of Skye, Scotland

Kevin Daly, Northern Committee representative for the area said 'For the second year I am delighted to have been involved in these events. They are an important part of the cultural education of the young people in this area and it is always great to see INTO involved at the heart of community based educational activities fulfilling our remit as a Union to support the arts and culture of working people.'



member of Anxo Lorenzo Band from Galicia in Spain.

Among the performers were Monaghan musician and former INTO member Tiarnán Ó Duinnchinn who gave an expert recital of Uilleann Pipe music as well as an explanation of the complicated workings of the pipes. Anxo Lorenzo, world famous Galician Piper was also on hand to perform and stunned the large audience with a virtuoso performance of the Galician pipes or 'Gaita' as they are more properly known.

The festival coincided with the first ever visit north of the INTO Education Conference and Printout is reliably informed that some delegates were entertained by a number of musicians in a local hostelry.



St Patrick's PS Armagh, with Principal, INTO member Jarlaith Monaghan



Contributing to Greater Understanding

The NITC LGBT Group made its annual award for outstanding work in promoting greater understanding of LGBT equality in November 2014.

2014's recipient was Hazelwood Integrated College for their creation of a Gay Straight Alliance or "GSA". GSA clubs provide a safe, welcoming and supportive environment for all students and have been very effective in dealing with homophobia through the promotion of mutual respect and greater understanding. Teacher Hilary Donnan, accepted the award on behalf of the school and the GSA.

The award was made in memory of Karen Sims, who sadly passed away last year. Karen, a much missed member of the group, was a tireless worker in the area of LGBT issues and equality.



INTO Retired Teachers Group Retired or retiring soon?

If you wish to maintain contact with the fast changing worlds of education and trade union activism and if you seek opportunities to connect with those with a similar background and range of interests then the INTO Retired Teachers' Group wants your input. You will have opportunity to form and influence the goals and direction of the group from its inception. Interested? Contact Northern Office for more details.

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