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Irish
National
Teachers'
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Cumann
Múinteoirí
Éireann

May 2008

Every School a Good School?

The Department of Education received over 200 responses to its draft School Improvement Policy. Whether the responses have gone into a black hole in Rathgael House, only time will tell. The INTO response was critical and is available on the website www.into.ie. INTO remains determined to resist the implementation of harsh, teacher-unfriendly policies and strategies such as this.

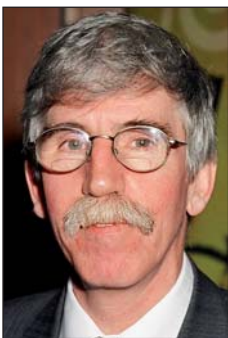
How bad is it?

Peter Scott, NASUWT Education Committee member says 'Every School' reflects the worst aspects of English OfSTED reports, almost on a word for word basis. Can there be any excuse to this lazy approach to education policy making?

Brendan Harkin, legendary Northern Ireland trade union leader, founder of NIPSA and first Chair and Chief Executive of the Labour Relations Agency had a famous saying; 'Parity not Parrotty.' Surely Northern Ireland education deserves better.

Some say it is merely a language matter, which can be sanitised. It is much more fundamental than that. Frank Bunting, Northern Secretary, said: 'The Department wants to be responsible for policy in the new dispensation. To be successful in this aspiration DE must work with teachers, not against them. Teachers know a thing or two about teaching and learning. They do it every day. For this they should be valued.'

Opinion



Kevin Smyth

Kevin Smyth, Vice Chair, Northern Committee has been nominated by ICTU to the Central Area Planning Board, set up by Education Minister, Caitriona Ruane, MLA. Kevin said he was very honoured to be

selected by all the teachers' unions as their representative continuing 'This trust is symbolic of the teacher union unity that teachers in Northern Ireland

expect, to protect their jobs, at this time of massive change.'

The misnamed Association for Quality in Education has set up a private company to help administer entrance tests for 11 year olds whose parents seek for them admission to a small band of grammar schools. Irish News journalist Simon Doyle has exposed many of these schools as serious under-performers, as 'academic' schools. Indeed many already take all the pupils they can grasp, without regard to their academic grades. So why an entrance test?

The principles outlined in the Costello report were accepted by all. The Education Minister's vision for education is a splendid statement. But the fears of parents and teachers are being whipped

up by a personal campaign against her which has all the appearance of a vendetta. But she is getting off lightly. Lord Melchett, Labour minister in the 70s got a far worse time at the hands of Jean Gourley's 'Parents' Union' Now, those in favour of perpetuating the status quo into the indefinite future sit on uncomfortable chairs in the Lisburn Leisure Centre, taking in the admittedly enjoyable repartee of Sammy Wilson. Can we really wait another 30 years before all our children are treated equally and snobbery and social class in education are finally consigned to the dustbin of history?

Initiatives come and initiatives go. Teachers were elated to learn that the publication of the DE draft Literacy and Numeracy initiative, developed without consultation with the teaching profession [so what's new?], was delayed by two months, while it is translated into Irish. Surely, when this task has been completed, it must be translated into Ulster Scots? Polish? Portuguese? Lost in translation is good for our children's education.

New Leaders



Mary Hughes Chair,
INTO 2008-2009



Melanie Houston
President, UTU
2008-2009

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Mary Hughes – New Chair

Mary Hughes, Chair of Northern Committee 2008/9, is a teacher in St. Francis of Assisi P.S., Keady, Co. Armagh. She has taught in Keady for 18 years and before that, in St. Malachy's P.S., Ballymoyer. Prior to completing her PGCE in St. Mary's Belfast, she taught 'Social and Lifeskills' to YTPs in Armagh and Keady and worked in industry in Work-study and Time and Motion.

She is married to Peter and they have two daughters, Sinead and Helen. Both girls are married and Mary has two grandchildren, Alicia and Nathan.

Mary first became active in the union when she taught in St. Clare's P.S., Keady. She was Branch secretary for South Armagh for ten years and has represented the SELB primary area on Northern Committee for seven years. She has a special interest in pre-school education and submitted a paper on it to Northern Conference in March. Mary sits on the INTO Education Committee and is a member of Northern Ireland Teachers Council, she represents INTO on the SELB Primary Consultative

Committee, Primary Teachers' Council, INTO/UTU Board and the Women's Committee of ICTU. As chair this year she will sit on the Teachers' Negotiating Committee.

Mary feels that during this turbulent time in education it is more important than ever to be a member of a union and INTO offers the highest standards of professionalism and representation to all its members. There are a number of issues which she feels strongly about, including; the implementation of the revised curriculum, class sizes, professional development and funding.

The INTO/UTU Board is looking at some of these issues as areas where both unions can work together, for the benefit of all teachers in Northern Ireland. She feels that combined knowledge and expertise can make a real difference to outcomes and the accessibility of local politicians means that concerns can be brought directly to the decision makers.

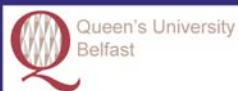
Rationalisation and the imminence of ESA are also major factors which will impact on teachers and teaching jobs. That, coupled with the attack on teachers' conditions of service by removing added years and the introduction of actuarially reduced



Mary Hughes address

pension benefits, means that the coming year will be a very busy one. Mary hopes to attend as many branch meetings and to meet as many members as possible.

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NORTHERN CONFERENCE 2008

CHAIR'S ADDRESS

Northern Committee Chairperson,
Mary Cahillane's Address to
Northern Conference 2008

Education Reform

Ten years ago the Department adopted a revised reform agenda from Britain and called it 'school improvement'. Improvement and reform became their buzzwords in education. Today the Department is still at it with the patronizingly entitled 'Every school a good school.' Yet, twenty years of reform with its associated data collection, assessments, measurement of inputs and outputs, inspections and special measures has resulted in the UK falling to 17th place in literacy and numeracy in the OECD league table. The UK is now outranked by South Korea, Finland, Hong Kong and the Republic of Ireland.

School Improvement Programme

INTO has many serious difficulties with 'Every School a Good School', not least because it was produced without one iota of consultation with INTO or any other teachers' union. It is the latest in a series of school improvement programmes, introduced by the Department in the last ten years, but it is by far the most draconian. All the worst features of the failed UK policies such as special measures, the blame and sack teachers culture, sacking principals, sacking governors, closing schools are all contained in 'Every School a Good School.' And it contains the double whammy of double inspections. Every proposal in the policy document is to be measured in data, comparisons, statistics, inputs and outputs. It is the antithesis of what education is about.

Richard Pringle the lead author of the Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education in 2007 was warmly welcomed by teachers, schools and parents when he tried to get to the bottom of the Government's obsessive love affair with data and measurement. He questioned the emphasis that is being placed on what he called the delivery of education rather than on what is learned by pupils.

Learning is being measured by an audit of qualification rather than the quality of what pupils are learning. If teachers wanted to deliver something they would have chosen different careers such as milkmen or midwives. Teachers want to get on with the job of teaching. The language and thinking used in 'Every School a Good School' is mega managerial. It is the language of the production line not the language of education. Schools are not factories, pupils are not products. Teachers are not accountants. Education is not a commodity and it is not for sale at the cheapest price for the crudest, data-driven yardstick.

Rationalisation

The gallop towards rationalization is one of the many ways in which 'Every School...' will roll out and develop. The big macro picture is as yet unrevealed but beneath the surface of the Department's agenda is the closure of many schools and the amalgamation of many others. The end result could be the eradication of up to 6,000 teachers' jobs and the creation of large, factory type, troglodyte structures that will be called schools.

The manner in which schools are being selected for rationalization is wrong. Parents are being informed by so-called consultants that schools may amalgamate and the seeds for closure are automatically sown through the lens of amalgamation. A proposed amalgamation creates a ripple effect amongst parents who vote with their feet and choose other schools, resulting in falling numbers and empty desks. Parents, community groups and political parties who oppose amalgamation or closure are also largely ignored. In Larne we see the wishes of parents, pupils and teachers being ignored with the ridiculous proposal to close St Comgall's High School and bus the pupils twenty miles every morning and back again up a dangerous coast road. This isn't rationalization, this is madness.



Mary delivers an outstanding address to Conference

But we seem to do everything backwards in Northern Ireland. In England where one in seven children attends a school with over 1,500 pupils the drive is on to create smaller schools. In New York and Chicago there is a similar drive. Realization is dawning that super schools create too many difficulties and that big isn't beautiful. Learning is more effective in smaller schools; there are less behavioral problems and early intervention is easier.

The "pile them high" approach has been particularly damaging to disadvantaged pupils who are more likely to have difficulties in large sprawling campuses. INTO supports the concept of the Entitlement Framework and equality of opportunity for all children. But INTO does not support the Entitlement Framework if it is at the cost of teachers' jobs, the closure of small schools, the overall detriment of education and the huge cost to the community, where only the fittest survive.

We should bear in mind the words of Mark Twain and Victor Hugo who both said the same thing in different ways:

Victor Hugo "He who opens a school door closes a prison";

Mark Twain "Every time you stop a school you will have to build a jail".

NORTHERN CONFERENCE 2008

MOTIONS FROM CONFERENCE

Academic Selection

Conference welcomes the clear and unambiguous statement from Education Minister Caitriona Ruane MLA, bringing selective transfer to an end in 2008.

Conference demands an urgent statement from the Minister outlining a clearly defined structured means of transfer from Primary to Post Primary school.

Premature Retirement

Conference deplores the "de facto" abolition of the Premature Retirement Compensation scheme without consultation with the teachers' unions.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to demand an urgent meeting with the Minister of Education to have the decision put on hold until the promised consultation takes place.

Funding

Conference notes with concern the fact that the LMS budget is insufficient to meet the costs of running schools.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to campaign for additional funding to be made available to all schools but specifically to address the long-standing under funding of primary education.

Conference calls on Education Minister Caitriona Ruane, MLA to:

- (i) Ensure teachers' salaries are fully funded in the LMS Scheme;

- (ii) Introduce PPA time for teachers as a priority;
- (iii) Guarantee that no teacher will be made compulsorily redundant by establishing a Northern Ireland supply teachers' panel.

The Revised Curriculum

Conference notes the introduction of the Revised Curriculum, which aims:

- (a) To give every pupil the opportunity to experience success in learning while achieving as high a standard as possible and where:
- (b) Approaches to learning and teaching should provide suitably challenging opportunities for all pupils to take part in lessons fully and effectively and should allow each child to achieve.

Conference deplores the lack of funding for, and the additional and unnecessary bureaucratic workload for all teachers due to the implementation of the Revised Curriculum and the uncertainty about the curriculum that remains in schools.

Conference demands that:

- (i) The aims and objectives of the Revised Curriculum, which put the pupil first, are not jeopardised by the retention of any form of academic selection, including computer adaptive assessment.
- (ii) The delivery of the Revised Curriculum is supported by high quality training and adequate funding and resources.

- (iii) Principals and teachers are given adequate time to adjust to the requirements of the Revised Curriculum before being subjected to scrutiny by the ETI.
- (iv) Teachers' views on all aspects of the implementation of the Revised Curriculum are acknowledged and taken into account in future planning.

Curran Inquiry Recommendations

Conference calls for the long overdue implementation of the recommendations of the Curran Independent Enquiry into teachers' salaries and conditions of service with specific reference to:

- (i) A guaranteed teaching year for all Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs);
- (ii) PPA time of at least 10% teaching time;
- (iii) Two days administration time plus PPA for all teaching principals; A winding down scheme for teachers 55+.

RPA

Conference calls on Education Minister Caitriona Ruane MLA to rethink the Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland by:

- (i) Ensuring educationalists have a primary role in education administration;
- (ii) Guaranteeing democratic accountability within any employing authority for teachers and support staff;
- (iii) Halting the proposed establishment of publicly funded



Gerry Murphy
Northern Committee



Jimmy McDermott
District 1



Rita Fox
Northern Committee

NORTHERN CONFERENCE 2008

sectoral support bodies in education;
Maintaining high quality support for schools in Northern Ireland.

INTO/UTU Relations

Conference, recognising the objects of the Organisation in uniting and organising teachers and cultivating a spirit of fraternal cooperation with kindred teachers' unions:

- (i) Welcomes the continuing and deepening collaboration between the Organisation and the Ulster Teachers' Union; and
- (ii) Endorses the agreed establishment of a Shadow Board by the two unions.

Conference calls on Northern Committee and the CEC to take every step to promote this process and to report on progress to Northern Conference 2009.

School Improvement

School Improvement Programme - Every School a Good School.

Conference notes that this document:

- (i) Was drawn up without consultation with INTO or any teachers' union;
- (ii) Is in contravention to Conference policy;
- (iii) Is ignorant as to how schools act as professional communities;
- (iv) Ignores DE structural policies which impact on school performance;
- (v) Proposes roles for ESA that would massively increase teacher workload and stress.

Conference demands:

INTO make a robust response to the DE on this development;
(b) INTO ballot members on industrial action up to and including strike action should any attempt be made to impose this programme in its present form.

SEN Inclusion

Conference recognises the promotion of inclusion through SENDO.

Conference notes with concern the under-funding of schools in meeting the needs of children under this order.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to work tirelessly to ensure that additional funding is made available to ensure that the needs of these children are met.

PRSD

Conference is concerned at the high levels of stress encountered by teachers as a result of the PRSD scheme.

Conference calls on the Northern Committee, with the support of the other teachers' unions to seek a review of the PRSD scheme in order to evaluate its usefulness with regard to the professional development of the teaching profession.

School Development Planning

Conference condemns the increasing bureaucracy, and demand for compliance from the Education and Library Boards in relation to School Development Planning.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to make representations to the Department of Education to end these unnecessary practices.

Entrance Tests

Conference condemns those post-primary schools that are proposing to use common entrance tests to select pupils on an academic basis post 2009.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to lobby for the withdrawal of Departmental Funding from such schools should this practice begin.

LMS Funding

Conference calls on Northern Committee to analyse funding mechanisms for schools in the Republic of Ireland and in the UK, to see if there is a method of funding which is more equitable.

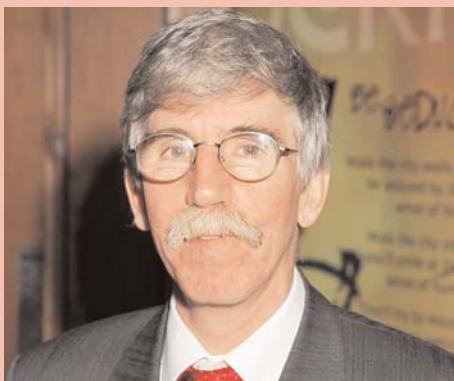
Conference calls on Northern Committee to use this information to lobby the Minister of Education to review delegated school budgets and to initiate a review of school funding by looking at a particular model which excludes teachers' salaries from the LMS budget and which at the present time create disadvantages in schools with higher salary costs especially small schools.

Movement on Salary Scales

Conference demands that Northern Committee take urgent action to ensure that all Principals are given the same treatment as teachers in regard to their movement along the salary scale, rather than this being at the discretion of the Board of Governors and budgetary requirements.

ICT Development

Conference notes the £50 million spend on ICT development in NI schools.



Kevin Smyth
Northern Committee



Mark McTaggart
District 1



Mary Hughes
Northern Committee

NORTHERN CONFERENCE 2008



*Daisy Mules
Derry City Branch*

Conference notes with concern that, despite the spend, the roll out of the Lot 6 part of the ICT development has been haphazard and unsatisfactory.

Conference demands that Northern Committee investigates and reports to the Department of Education the unacceptable manner in which Lot 6 was rolled out and the subsequent unrealistic expectations for the use of these technologies.

RPA

Conference calls on Northern Committee to closely monitor the education components of RPA to ensure, firstly that real savings are made from a streamlining of bureaucracy and secondly that these savings are passed directly to schools in the shape of increased employment and resources.

Substitute Cover for Training Courses

Conference calls on Northern Committee to examine the case for introducing substitute cover payments to schools for teachers attending INTO courses in order to stimulate greater participation in the Union and encourage professional development.



*Angela Dunne
INTO President*

Recruitment

Conference demands that Northern Committee reviews and revises, where necessary, recruitment strategies, to ensure that new members are engaged in a positive manner and are encouraged to play a full and active part in Union activities at branch level and beyond.

Participation

Conference demands that Northern Committee immediately sanction a study into how retired teacher and associate members of the INTO might best be utilised as a valuable resource aiding full-time officials in carrying out their duties, with particular emphasis on encouraging members' participation at branch level.

NISTR

Conference calls on Northern Committee to seek a review of the Northern Ireland Substitute Teacher Register in view of the delays experienced by NQTs in registering on the system and the difficulties experienced by schools seeking substitutes who appear to be available, but are not.



*Brendan Sadlier
Lisburn Branch*

Biometric Technologies

Conference demands that (parents, pupils) and teachers should have the right to opt out of processes involving biometric technologies without de facto exclusion from accessing such services as school canteens, libraries, photocopying and registrations.

Vere Foster Fund

Conference calls on Northern Committee to make an annual report to Conference on its progress in the setting up of the All-Ireland Fund for the promotion of the Vere Foster ideals, the up keep of his final resting place and the making of adequate provision for a fitting annual commemoration, called for at Northern Conference 2007.

Creationism/Science

Northern Conference condemns the attacks on science represented by the inclusion of creationism and intelligent design in the revised science curriculum.

Conference calls on the Northern Committee to protest at this degradation of science and rationality to the relevant authorities.



*Seamus Hanna
District 1*



*Anne Sands
Derry City Branch*



*Barney Magill
Northern Committee*

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own circumstances, but typically this could be 0.5% of the amount borrowed."



IS THE REVISED CURRICULUM DEAD?

We are rapidly approaching the end of the Transition Year for the introduction of the Revised Curriculum. In theory, the great experiment is now ready to become central to the school experience of every primary age child in the Northern Ireland. But how closely does reality match that theoretical readiness? I would suggest that they are still separated by a considerable margin.

I should begin by declaring my hand. I am aware that many teachers were, and remain, extremely sceptical about the whole idea of the Revised Curriculum, not least because of a well grounded distrust of anything they suspect originates from the Byzantine realms of Northern Ireland's hyperactive curriculum development industry or worse yet, from the dark Satanic mills of Whitehall's Initiative factories. However I am not one of those teachers. In fact I am an early convert, a true believer and up to now, an enthusiastic preacher for the cause of the Revised Curriculum. I therefore express my concerns here more in sorrow than in anger. So why have I changed my mind? Well actually in most regards I haven't.

Over the past ten or more years it had become as obvious to me as to others that a considerable number of our pupils, mainly, but not exclusively boys, were becoming alienated from the entire educational process. It was becoming clear from similar experience in other communities in Britain and the US that we were looking at the beginning of a serious long term problem. Just at the moment that I was pondering this



problem, Derry's own Carmel Gallagher of CCEA appeared with what seemed to be the first serious attempt to address these issues. This involved a view of these difficulties as educational issues, amenable to rational solutions, rather than some sort of moral flaw to be simply deplored and which drew on the best practice of our more educationally successful European neighbours as well as the latest neuropsychological and pedagogical research.

I have changed my mind about none of the above, so whence then come my current misgivings? These arise in a number of areas. Three questions that interact powerfully are:

- (a) How radical a shift in thinking and practice is involved?
- (b) Is the training provided adequate to reflect this? and,
- (c) Is the implementation timetable realistic?

My informed view is that a serious rethink is required in all three areas. With regard to (a) I initially accepted the official view that the Revised Curriculum merely involved current best practice with a manageable shift in emphasis. I now regard this view as being much too simplistic. If the Revised Curriculum is to make a real and significant difference to school experience and outcomes for our pupils it is axiomatic that it will involve a significant difference to our experience as teachers. Yet this rather obvious conclusion appears to have been missed or concealed.

Following on from this, the implications for both training and timetabling are glaringly obvious and indeed teachers have become increasingly exercised about the training that they have received. However the PMB, the body which is nominally charged with the rollout of the revised curriculum, maintains that the training has been well received by teachers. Its position seems to be based on the evaluations completed at courses. As the feedback we in INTO have been receiving is rather different, we take a jaundiced view of these evaluation sheets for the following reasons. Firstly, teachers are often sympathetic to, and reluctant to criticise colleagues who are delivering this material and indeed the worse the

material the more sympathy they may have for the unfortunate deliverer. Secondly, as I know from my own responses, teachers may applaud the skilful delivery of material without thinking deeply about how well it actually prepares them to implement the curriculum. The INTO view is that only a more sophisticated "rolling" evaluation model will give us the true picture.

This brings us to the question of timetabling. In assessing whether the rollout timetable is adequate we simply need to ask ourselves one question. Would most primary teachers be comfortable to be inspected in their delivery of key areas of the Revised Curriculum from September 2008? The views reaching INTO would suggest that many would not. They suggest that a more robust training evaluation process, coupled with a further one, or ideally two, transition years would produce a much more significant and durable outcome.

I cannot conclude without reference to what could very well be a dagger pointed directly at the heart of the Revised Curriculum. They say that the essence of good comedy is timing but the timing of "Every School a Good School" is no joke. This panic stricken response to a thorough wiggling of DE by the Public Accounts Committee at Westminster has a greater potential to derail the Revised Curriculum than anything else I have mentioned. No teacher in NI will be able to focus their minds on the Elysian Fields of the Revised Curriculum while anticipating the arrival of an infernal messenger from the Hades outlined in this document. And, to thoroughly mix my metaphors, the DE Literacy and Numeracy "Surge" is to be accomplished with less, rather than more, boots on the ground as the teaching workforce declines.

The great Czech novelist Milan Kundera once wrote, "All predictions are wrong, that's one of the few certainties granted to mankind." However I would risk one prediction; that, no matter how flawed this process, the teachers of Northern Ireland will apply their outstanding commitment and expertise to ensure the best possible outcomes for their pupils.

Charlie Glenn

CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECKS – NEW ARRANGEMENTS

Lawful access to a person's criminal or police record can be a vital if highly sensitive part of the recruitment and selection process. With effect from 1st April 2008, Part V of the Police Act 1997 now applies in Northern Ireland.

This provides now allows an individual's criminal history and other relevant information can be provided to employers and other organisations about potential employees and volunteers. In order to allow for the changes a new organisation ACCESSNI has been created. "A Guide to Access Northern Ireland" is available on AccessNI's website which contains all relevant information and a particularly useful FAQ section: <http://www.accessni.gov.uk/index.htm>.



Tony Carlin,
Equality Officer

MAIN FEATURES

The main features of the new arrangements are as follows:

- * AccessNI provides access to criminal history information for individuals and, in certain circumstances, to registered organisations/employers.
- * To register, organisations must complete an application form and pay a £150 registration charge. A named individual (Lead Signatory) must be put forward as part of this process and this person will be the subject of a suitability assessment. Application forms are available from the AccessNI website or by contacting it directly.
- * Organisations likely to register will generally be those required by law to consider the suitability of an applicant for certain positions or to ensure that they are not barred from working with children or vulnerable adults.
- * Upon receipt of an application for a criminal records check, AccessNI will provide within a target of 2 to 4 weeks a Disclosure Certificate which either shows a person's criminal history or which states that no information can be found.

DISCLOSURE SERVICES

There are three disclosure services available from AccessNI:

1. **Basic Disclosure** - a copy of a person's unspent criminal record. This service is available to individuals only.
2. **Standard Disclosure** - a copy of a person's full criminal record, including spent/unspent convictions and cautions. Standard Disclosures are primarily available for anyone in a position where they have access to children or vulnerable adults in the normal course of their duties, as well as certain other occupations and entry into professions. Examples of such positions include teachers, FE lecturers, solicitors, dentists, doctors, nurses and midwives. Also covered are certain employments in connection with the provision of personal social services and health services.
3. **Enhanced Disclosure** - a copy of a person's full criminal history, including spent and unspent convictions; cautions; and any other material (sometimes known as 'soft intelligence') considered by the police to be relevant to the position applied for. Positions requiring an Enhanced Disclosure may involve for example regularly caring for, supervising, training or being in sole charge of young people; or regular contact with residents of care homes or providing services to unwell, infirm or disabled people in their own home..

CODE OF PRACTICE

A Code of Practice has also been issued with the intention of ensuring that information released in Standard and Enhanced Disclosures is used fairly. The Code also seeks to ensure that sensitive personal information is handled and stored appropriately and kept for only as long as is necessary (usually a maximum of 6 months).

Employers should not refuse to employ simply because an applicant has a criminal record. Instead, the Code recommends that the employer should assess the seriousness of the conviction and its relevance to the particular job, how long ago the offence took place, whether the individual's life has changed, the circumstances surrounding the offence and, very importantly, what the individual has to say about it.

Is your school a FairTrade School?

The Fairtrade Foundation (www.fairtrade.org.uk) has now introduced Fairtrade School guidelines. These are the goals that you need to work towards to achieve the award:

- GOAL 1: the school has set up a Fairtrade School Steering Group. The steering group is a group of people - teachers, pupils, other adults in the school community - who get together to lead the school in becoming a Fairtrade School.

- GOAL 2: the school has written and adopted a whole school Fairtrade Policy. The Fairtrade Policy puts in writing your decision to become a Fairtrade School, what that means for your school, and says that the whole school supports it.
- GOAL 3: the school is committed to using, promoting and selling Fairtrade products. This is about making Fairtrade products (things such as drinks, snacks, footballs, fashion ...) available in your school and beyond.
- GOAL 4: the whole school learns about Fairtrade issues. A Fairtrade School uses every opportunity to learn about the people who make the products, and

how Fairtrade makes their lives more secure.

- GOAL 5: the school is committed to promoting and taking action for Fairtrade in school and the wider community. Fairtrade is getting more popular as people realise the good it does - but its important to keep spreading the message, and encouraging more people to take action.

If you wish to consider being a FairTrade School then contact the Northern Office for details of Key FairTraders in your area.

*If not us, then who?
If not now, then when?*

(Nelson Mandela, 2005)

'Added Years' Update

In December 2007, the Department of Education, without consultation, removed added years from the pensions of teachers being made redundant or subject to Efficient Discharge in their 50s. The maximum value of the added years' component to teachers and principals was £150,000 so this action has dire implications for the hundreds of teachers due to be made redundant this school year under the LMS school under-funding formula.. Needless to say they are grievously upset as are the local teachers' unions- INTO, UTU and the NAHT. Unfortunately, two unions NASUWT and ATL, have accepted this change to teachers' salaries on the basis that it moves teachers into line with the situation in England and Wales where added years were removed from teachers in 1997.

The problem is Northern Ireland is not like Britain. Britain is in crisis over teacher supply. Northern Ireland has about 7,000 young Newly Qualified Teachers who cannot find a permanent job. Northern Ireland is facing major structural change in education-with Bain proposals for a major rationalisation of schools and teachers' jobs, the axing of the 5 Education and Library Boards, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and the possible establishment of a single Employing Authority, a new Revised Curriculum, new Pupil Assessment arrangements, crazy LMS school funding arrangements, a myriad of educational initiatives like Specialist Schools, Wraparound Schools, and a host of reviews in Pre-School Education and Special Education Needs. And these are just a taster. Bearing the brunt of all this change is the teacher in the classroom.

Through all the so-called 'troubles', teachers successfully maintained schools as sanctuaries and teaching and learning continued in spite of critical convulsions in the community. Teachers gave their all. Apart from these special circumstances, teaching is an emotionally draining if intensely rewarding profession. Many teachers were looking forward to the benefit of

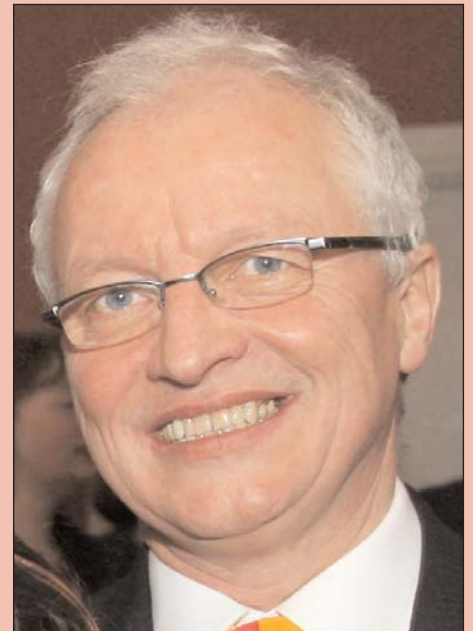
added years and suddenly the goalposts have been changed with little thought given to either them or the needs of the Northern Ireland schools' system.

Key INTO Points

- Undo the decision to abolish added years until consultations have been completed
- No compulsory redundancies of teachers
- Establishment of teacher supply pools in each Education and Library Board area
- Guarantee on existing teacher numbers
- Introduction of PPA
- Guaranteed 1 year's teaching for all NQTs
- Enhanced redundancy arrangements for teachers, similar to arrangements in education administration

The knock-on consequences of the Department's determination are enormous. Teachers in their 50s will be reluctant to sustain the financial surcharges of retirement before 60. They will be forced to remain in their classrooms. The opportunity for employing authorities to redeploy young teachers who are being made redundant under LMS School Funding arrangements will disappear. The result will be massive compulsory redundancy of teachers, teachers being thrown on the scrap heap with little prospect of work to pay the mortgage and keep the wolf from the door. As if this is not bad enough, the prospects for young Newly Qualified Teachers getting permanent jobs in teaching become ever more dim. In typical 'bear in the china shop' fashion the Department has responded by seeking to slash the number of student teachers entering St Mary's and Stranmillis University Colleges. It is a catastrophe of missed opportunity.

In Scotland teachers are not made redundant. Their Executive has guaranteed the maintenance of its 57,000 teaching workforce. Falling demography is used to reduce class size and increase the educational potential for Scottish children. The Scottish Nationalist Executive have set 18 as a maximum class size during the lifetime of their government. Compare this with class size in Northern Ireland primary schools of 29 to 34 and with the pupil teacher ratio rising year on year and now at its highest level in 10 years.



Frank Bunting, Northern Secretary

Belatedly consultations have opened up and discussions are taking place about possible enhanced redundancy packages for teachers retiring early next year. For teachers retiring this year the system is in a DE engineered crisis. What is needed is a 'Scot-type' guarantee on existing Northern Ireland teacher numbers. Teaching supply pools need to be re-established across the North to facilitate teacher redeployment and INSET for the Revised Curriculum. How much our society cares for teachers and their pupils will soon be known.

SEN REVIEW – Latest

The proposals emanating from the SEN Review have been approved by the Minister but still need to be seen and approved by the Education Committee and possibly by the Health Committee. They remain confidential. Consultation is expected in Sept/Oct 08.

The proposals are based on best practice and the keystones are the securing of a continuity of provision and early identification of need throughout the education system

Inclusion

The school will have to examine and remove or reduce the barriers to learning rather than assisting the child through the barriers. The SMT is to be accountable for the effectiveness of interventions. Strong emphasis will be laid on evidence-based evaluations. This will not be the lone responsibility of the class teacher. Work is ongoing with CCEA to ensure the education plans fit more readily into the system rather than being add-ons.

Key Points

Secured money to finance a pre-implementation plan (£.75m) to finance pilot schemes and preparing for legislative changes etc in 09/10. There are financial implications for the transition between old and new systems. Inset and capacity building for the education community (teachers, SENCos,



May Dorman, Northern Committee

principals, classroom assistants, governors, ITT) (£24.5m in 2010/11 for capacity building and implementation.) Much more responsibility directly upon the principal. Standards are to be set for schools in the area of SEN (ESAGS). Enhanced role for SENCo - now Learning Support Coordinator (LSC), on SMT (may be statutory) specialist qualification, timetable to do their job. Training to do low level assessments. Learning communities - size or number to be decided - to work collaboratively supporting, sharing resources and

expertise. Special schools have an important role.

Collaborative working between Health, DEL and DE

Network of multidisciplinary groups - MGs to give advice and support to schools and teachers, evaluate next steps for pupils and identify those needing statutory assessment.

A group has been set up to devise access criteria to denote levels of intervention so that support will not vary geographically.

Statements will be for those with complex and multiple barriers to learning. CSP (coordinated support plan). Extending COP to PEAGS via Early intervention officers, but not to voluntary playgroups etc

Impact

The class teacher should feel better skilled to meet the demands. Support for the teacher should be more immediate and effective. The support will be for the school to assist the child rather than directly assisting the child. Much more responsibility on principals to gather evidence and be accountable for SEN in their school. CoP to be rolled out into some preschool provision. There is a possibility of earmarked, SEN capacity building days. MG is a support service – it may become the new gatekeeper.

Steve Sinnott 1951-2008

NUT General Secretary, Steve Sinnott, died suddenly on 5 April, 2008. He was 56. His loss will be keenest felt by his beloved wife Mary, his son, daughter, grandchildren and extended family.



Steve Sinnott

Steve was General Secretary from 2004, having served the Union previously as member of the National Executive, President and Deputy General Secretary.

Amongst the many tributes to Steve, Prime Minister, Gordon Brown said, "Steve Sinnott was inspirational in his devotion to teaching, not just for children in Britain, but around the world. His commitment to teachers and education will be remembered."

Melanie Houston UTU President 2008-09

EDUCATION

Armstrong Primary School
Armagh Girls' High School
Q.U.B. - Joint Honours Degree in Modern History and Social and Economic History
Stranmillis College - P.G.C.E.

Also gained a Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Technology (University of Ulster) and a Postgraduate Certificate in Business Administration (University of Hull).

TEACHING CAREER

Keady Primary School (1986 - 1999) - Reception, P.1 & 2
Cortamillet Primary School (1999 - 2004) - Principal and Teacher of Reception, P.1 & 2.
Fivemiletown Primary School (2004 -..) Principal and P.2 teacher

PARTICULAR INTERESTS IN EDUCATION

Early years
Special Educational Needs (Particularly speech and language)
Access to P.E. and sport
Access to Music
Invitational Education
Funding of Education
Workload of teachers
Support services for teachers including disabled teachers
Support for Principals and Vice Principals

UNION MEMBERSHIP

Member of UTU since a student teacher
Chairperson of Armagh Branch of UTU
Hon. Secretary of Southern Area Association of UTU
Vice President of UTU 2007 - 2008
President of UTU 2008 - 2009



Melanie Houston,
President,
UTU 2008-2009

CONGRESS 2008

Declan Kelleher

Incoming President 2008-2009

Declan Kelleher is a native of Co Clare. He attended Kilnaboy and Corofin National Schools and St Flannan's College, Ennis. He qualified as a primary teacher in St Patrick's College, Drumcondra and he later studied in UCD (BA) and Trinity College (H Dip Ed). While in St Patrick's College he was elected president of the Students' Union and has been actively involved in INTO affairs ever since

He taught in St Brigid's Boys' NS, Killester, in Dublin before moving back to Ennis NS and since 1979 has been a teaching Principal of Corofin NS in North Clare.

Declan is a former Branch Cathaoirleach of both the North Dublin and Ennis INTO branches and was elected to represent District XI (Clare, Tipperary and Waterford) on the INTO Education Committee where he served for 11 years before being elected in 1996 to the Central Executive Committee.

As a CEC representative, Declan has been closely involved in the Union's campaigns to highlight substandard school buildings, to secure adequate resourcing for primary education, to provide for children with special education needs in mainstream primary schools and to reduce class sizes.

He represents the INTO on the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

As INTO Vice President Declan took on the role of Project Manager on Participation aimed at getting the INTO's thousands of younger members to participate more actively in union structures.

This special project will culminate in mid-April when the INTO will welcome over 400 young teachers from North and South to the Heritage Hotel in Portlaoise as delegates to the first ever Youth Conference organised by a teaching union on this island.



Máire Ní Chuinneagáin

Incoming Vice President 2008-2009

Máire Ní Chuinneagáin is a native of Corofin, Co Galway. She attended Ballinderry National School where both her parents were teachers and Coláiste Muire, Tuar Mhic Éide, where she first became interested in Irish. She is Principal of Scoil Fhursa Modhscoil in Galway where she has taught since leaving Mary Immaculate College of Education. She completed her M Ed. in NUIG in 1999.

Máire has represented Co Galway and Co Roscommon since 1997 on the Central Executive Committee, having been an active member of Galway Branch and District VI Committee. She is a member of the Comhairle Oideachais Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG).



CONGRESS 2008

President lays out the issues

INTO President Angela Dunne outlined the challenges facing the INTO in the coming year as well as reflecting on the many highlights of her year as President. Angela said that the classroom teacher is the foundation stone of the primary school. While acknowledging that Education Minister Mary Hanafin had increased support for special education, newcomer children, and educational disadvantage, she said that for the vast majority of the day the class teacher had to teach a general programme, modify it to meet the individual needs of children and provide continuous support for an increasingly diverse group of children in a mainstream class setting. She said the revised curriculum, with the pupil-centred hands on group work, cannot be implemented in classes of anywhere between 30 and 37.

Moving on to pupil behaviour Angela said that the vast majority of primary pupils are well behaved and their parents are very supportive of the school and its teachers. But she said that there is a small group of children who not only make life a misery for their teachers, but for all the children who happen to be in their class. Angela called for the long promised



NEWB Guidelines for Codes of Behaviour to be of real use of schools when they issue. She said schools must have a range of sanctions up to and including suspension and expulsion available to teachers. She said a full class of primary school pupils should not be held to ransom by a single 'Bugsy Malone' and that all schools must be given the resources and training in relation to implementing codes of behaviour fairly and appropriately.

On the issue of special needs the President said that the implementation of the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act will require appropriate training for all teachers and boards of management, substitution to allow time for planning and meeting with other professionals, and appropriate professional support for identified needs. She also said that support for principals was a critical issue given their role under the EPSEN Act and this must include appropriate administrative and IT support at school level.

Angela went on to emphasise the vital importance of active trade union membership in a society where the rich get richer and where private sector employment seeks to exploit workers and undermine and marginalise any union involvement amongst their workforce. Calling for an active involvement by the younger members of the INTO she said it was vital, both in terms of working conditions as well as ensuring the development of the profession, that they continue to become involved at local and national level.



Micheál Bows Out

Micheál Ó'Gríofa, the Chairperson of the Standing Orders Committee that decides on the issues for debate at INTO Congress, retired from teaching recently and stepped down as Cathaoirleach of the Standing Orders Committee at this year's Congress.

A presentation was made to mark his long years of service to the INTO in a number of roles at branch and district level.

Pictured in the photograph are: Derry Keogh, Secretary of the Standing Orders Committee, Micheál, Julie O'Connor, Deputy Secretary, and Joe Cashin, Leas Cathaoirleach.

CONGRESS 2008

General Secretary slams broken promises

In a hard hitting response to the speech by Minister Mary Hanafin, TD, General Secretary John Carr said that the failure to deliver on a range of promises in the programme for Government was inexcusable. He said that last June the Government published a new programme for Government, and that a year later the vast majority of those objectives had been cast aside and significant time bound promises had been cynically broken.

John said that the betrayal on the issue of class size reductions is the hardest of all to comprehend. He said that at INTO Congress in Cork last year, the Minister made specific commitments to the delegates which were subsequently written into the Programme for Government. He said that in the budget, the Government had turned its collective back on primary school children, their parents and their teachers. John said he wanted both the Minister and her colleagues in Cabinet to know that the INTO campaign to end the scandal of over-crowded classes in primary school will go on until the promises that were made in 2002 and 2007 are delivered. He called for a study of the supply and demand situation for primary teachers, including substitute teachers for the period 2008 – 2016. John said the most basic resource every child deserves is a fully qualified primary teacher and he warned the Minister not to come looking



John gets passionate!

for educational standards to be raised, for more productivity, modernisation and change, when the Department of Education and Science can't even provide every child with a trained teacher.

Speaking on the Teaching Council, John said it was time to end forever the scourge of unqualified personnel in our schools.

John said that the failure to reward teachers for their professional commitment to their pupils was in stark contrast to the generous pay rewards to those already earning high salaries. He said that calls for pay pauses and wage restraint from these same top earners, only fuelled anger and increased determination to resist any attempts to worsen our living standards.

John also spoke about the challenge of inclusion facing primary schools. He said that the Department of Health had not ensured that speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, and physiotherapists are in place to meet the ever increasing complex and diverse needs of the school population. He said a failure to properly resource the EPSEN Act meant that it would be unimplementable.

John said that the past year had been a mixed one for school leaders. While the INTO made significant progress on its salary claim for principal teachers, more needed to be done. The INTO would not stop until the cap on a number of primary teachers being counted for salary purposes was removed, full parity in second level was achieved and all staff counted for salary purposes. John also called for the extension of supply panels to all parts of the country to provide a basis for increasing release time for teaching principals.

Sheila speaks out

Chairperson of the INTO Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Teachers Group, Sheila Crowley, spoke to Congress on Monday evening. She said that many gay, lesbian and bisexual teachers live in fear for their promotional prospects, and even their jobs, because of existing employment legislation. She said that Section 37/1 of the Employment Equality Act, which referred to the religious ethos of an institution, cast a long shadow and that many LGB teachers could not take the risk about being open about their sexuality. She said that this clause exists and is enshrined in legislation in the Republic of Ireland in the 21st

century beggars belief. Sheila went on to speak about the experiences of LGB teachers within the school system. She said that of the 35 teachers in the INTO LGB Group, only six felt in a position to be open about their sexuality. She said the experience of the group was that LGB teachers meet isolation, alienation, harassment, discrimination and downright bigotry on a regular basis. Sheila went on to praise the INTO for the support it offers lesbian, gay and bisexual teachers. In 2004 the INTO was the first teacher union in Ireland to establish, fully support and endorse an LGB Teachers Group. Sheila received a



Sheila Crowley and Noel Ward, Equality Officer, pictured at Congress

standing ovation from delegates following her address to Annual Congress.

CONGRESS 2008

Reflecting on achievements and challenges

In her speech to INTO Congress Minister Mary Hanafin, TD talked about planning for a more diverse society. The Minister said that next September a very significant development will take place with the commencement of three community national schools under the patronage of County Dublin VEC. She also announced that she will be hosting a conference in June on 'The Governance Challenge for Future Primary Education Needs'. She said this will allow all stake holders, including the INTO, to publicly consider together the implications of diversity for the future organisation of our schools.

On special education the Minister said that primary teachers have been among the leaders in Irish society in promoting inclusion for children with special educational needs. She went on to outline the significant investment in the special education area including the number of additional teachers, SNAs, training processes, and the establishment of



*Mary Hanafin TD
Minister for Education*

the National Council for Special Education.

The Minister announced that she intended to commence Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act later this year and that thereafter only registered

teachers will be entitled to be paid on an ongoing or open ended basis. She also said she will be signing regulations under which schools will only be permitted by law to use unregistered personnel as an absolute last resort and that she was looking at the best manner in which this can be time limited.

The Minister also announced that she will be publishing a major evaluation by the Inspectorate of the impact of ICTs in teaching and learning and also the support and recommendations of the Strategy Group which was to advise on priority for investment in this area. She said the investment proposed in the National Development Plan of over k250 million would address a wide range of needs from hardware and software, to teacher training, curriculum relevant digital content, maintenance and technical support.

Modernising Northern education

In her address to Congress the Education Minister, Caitríona Ruane, outlined the remarkable political changes that had taken place over the past year and highlighted her commitment to modernising the education system.

She said "Education is undergoing much needed change and I have a programme of progressive reforms underway. I want to reduce levels of underachievement and ensure every child has access to the best educational opportunities possible". Delegates gave their support to the Minister's criticisms of schools planning to introduce entrance tests to select pupils. General Secretary

John Carr echoed the Minister's views and criticised Derry's Lumen Christi College for planning entrance tests.

The Minister outlined the areas of North South co-operation in education.

Minister Ruane also spoke about the growing demand for integrated education and Irish medium education and said

"I have a duty to support Irish medium education where demand is growing in a school population that is shrinking overall."



Minister Caitríona Ruane, MLA

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