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Irish
National
Teachers'
Organization

Cumann
Múinteoirí
Éireann

February 2008

Time to call a Halt

The immediate outlook for education and teachers is bleak – pay cuts, no implementation of the Curran recommendations, no PPA time, increasing levels of workload and bureaucracy, more initiatives – the awful new School Improvement Programme, under-funding – particularly of primary schools, diktats - including the removal of added years, usually without any meaningful consultation.

This is on top of increasing workload, proposals for radical surgery of schools with resultant closures, amalgamations and collaborations, a drive towards factory sized schools, abolition of the CCMS and Education and Library Boards, [but maybe not grammar schools, as employing authorities!] a proposed new entity –the Education and Skills Authority [ESA] which, despite its name, has not got a single educationalist on its project board, money for the architects of rationalisation to cut teachers' jobs - nothing for the teachers.

Reviews on SEN and Pre-school Provision, Post- Primary review, 'graded' school inspections by ETI and ESA, failed proposals from England and Wales such as 'Special Measures', Area-Based Planning proposals, Sustainable Schools' proposals, INCAs, MidYIS, YELLIS. Change. Change. Change. How much more can teachers take? Is the baby going out with the bath water? INTO believes it is time to call a halt. Our

young people are our most precious resource and no-one has the right to undermine their life opportunities.

Come to Northern Conference in Newry on 29th February 08 and join the fight back. To those who know the cost of everything and the value of nothing the message is: **you ignore teachers at your peril.**

If a doctor, lawyer, or dentist had 40 people in his office at one time, all of whom had different needs, and some of whom didn't want to be there and were causing trouble, and the doctor, lawyer, or dentist, without assistance, had to treat them all with professional excellence for nine months, then he might have some conception of the classroom teacher's job.

Donald D. Quinn

INTO eNewsletter

Have you registered for the INTO eNewsletter? If not, you may be missing out on the latest news etc. Send your email address to infoni@into.ie or register directly on the INTO website www.into.ie



Medal Winners for the students achieving the highest standard in teaching practice.

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'As I see it'

"Theres a lot of blowhards in the political process, you know, a lot of hot air artists, people who have got something fancy to say"

George W Bush 2007



Mary Cahillane, Chairperson,
Northern Committee

Since May of last year this is exactly what we have been witnessing from most of the folks on the hill. A lot of talk with precious if any positive results. For teachers and schools the results have been mostly negative.

Most people involved in education welcomed a local assembly that would understand the needs of schools, teachers and pupils in Northern Ireland. Expectation was high that we would be listened to and consulted with on the needs of our pupils and the needs of our teachers.

The Ministers statement that academic selection would end in 2008 was welcomed by INTO. However as the deadline closes in schools and teachers are as much in the dark about its replacement as the rest of the public. Schools are not places that deal well with uncertainty. The Minister may have a vision but a vague notional vision does not allow schools the time to prepare pupils or receive pupils. Concrete proposals must be put forward and the uncertainty removed from the education system.

After the classroom assistants dispute the Minister announced a review of the terms and conditions of all workers in schools. The INTO remains very concerned about this review. It is hard to envisage a review taking place of teachers terms and conditions without their trade unions being informed of it. Is the review an attempt to bring into Northern Ireland

HLTA's and under this guise give teachers PPA?

To add insult to injury the Department of Education then announced an end to PRC. Overnight added years were removed without a thought to the disastrous consequences for young teachers jobs, compulsory redundancies or school amalgamations or closures. This is a severe attack on teachers but particularly young teachers who will now find it even more difficult to get jobs as teachers will not be as willing to retire early.

And finally we were then presented with the new school improvement programme Every School a good School. A horrendous document which is designed to penalise and demotivate rather than improve morale in education.

Education and teachers are in a very dark place at the moment. The future is more change more uncertainty and undoubtedly job losses. Its time that the mandarins on the hill took cognisance that unless a workforce is motivated and happy results will suffer. So far the mandarins have chosen to demoralise an already demoralised teaching force.

TEACHERS' PATERNITY LEAVE

Northern Office is receiving an increasing number of queries about teachers' rights to paternity leave. The following is the current guidance.

Paternity leave is absence from work for the purpose of caring for a newborn child or for supporting the child's mother.

Am I entitled to paternity leave?

You will be entitled to take statutory paternity leave if you:

- are the child's father or the spouse or partner (same or opposite sex) of the child's mother;
- have or expect to have responsibility or the main responsibility for child's

upbringing;

- have been continuously employed by your employer for at least 26 weeks ending with the 15th week before the expected week of birth; and
- give proper notice and evidence to your employer.

How much statutory paternity leave can I take?

If eligible, you may choose to take either one or two consecutive weeks' paternity leave. If you are also entitled to receive statutory paternity pay this will be payable for either one whole week or two whole weeks.

When can I take statutory paternity leave?

You may take paternity leave before 56 days from the date of the child's birth.

Statutory paternity leave cannot start before the birth of the child. You may begin your period of leave on the date the child is born, or on a date falling a specific number of days after date child is born, or on a specific predetermined date after the expected week of the birth.

How do I apply for statutory paternity leave?

You must give your employer notice of your intention to take paternity leave by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of the birth. Your notice must specify the expected week of the birth, the length of leave you wish to take and the date you wish your leave to begin.

How much paternity pay will I receive?

Paternity pay is currently £112.75 per week.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Middletown Autism Centre

It is over one year since former Education Minister, Maria Eagle MP, and Mary Hanafin TD finally announced the Chief Executive Designate, James G Cooper (formally principal, Knockmore Primary School, Lisburn) and the Board of Directors for the Centre. "The appointments", declared Eagle "will now allow us to start the delivery of much needed services at the Centre". PWC were the lucky consultants, paid to make James Cooper's appointment. Middletown is supposed to provide:

- A training and advisory service
- A research and information service
- An educational assessment service and
- A learning support

The services of Middletown have been announced now by at least five Education Ministers but are any services available currently? Information welcome.

Ethos and the Man

Teachers were gob smacked when CCMS Chief Executive, Donal Flanagan argued that to remove the CCMS from educational administration would diminish educational standards! Donal said '...What we are saying is that our ethos adds value to children's standards. Teachers and ethos are inextricably linked....' Sounds painful. But this baloney has surfaced again in the Department's School Improvement Programme – without any concrete evidence.



Donal Flanagan

Congratulations

Congratulations to Donal Flanagan, Chief Executive CCMS – not for his OBE – but for his appointment as Vice-Chair of Middletown Autism Centre. Donal is also a member of the Down and Lisburn Health Trust for which he receives remuneration of £5k per annum plus travel and subsistence allowances, as well as being an Independent Board Member to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

True but not funny

The Southern Education and Library Board Welfare Services Unit organised a seminar on 'Practical Absence Management'. It was attended by 120 SELB Managers. [120 - I kid you not!] including Helen McClenaghan, Chief Executive SELB and the Senior Management Team'. [Source: SELB News].

Governing Bodies Association (GBA)

The Grammar Schools' outfit GBA (superbly served by John Miskelly, former Bursar, Belfast Royal Academy (BRA)) has got a new member. None other than the formidable former Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, Sir Gerry Loughran, KCB. Sir Gerry, Holy Cross Boys' Primary School, St Malachy's College old boy (and governor) has 'a no nonsense approach' (Guardian). Gerry is a busybody since leaving public service being Group Non-Executive Chairman Phoenix Gas, Chairman Grafton Recruitment, Chairman Partenaire Ltd, Director Allied Irish Bank (UK), Director Kellen Acquisitions Ltd, Honorary Professor of Innovation Queen's University Belfast and Director Louvain Institute for Ireland in Europe.

DE Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Pathfinder Programme

In September 2000 Martin McGuinness MP MLA and then Education Minister announced that St Genevieve's High School, West Belfast would be a PFI contract for the provision of the new school and related services. Martin said '....I am delighted that substantial private sector investment of over £14



Martin McGuinness MP MLA Former Education Minister

million in St Genevieve's has now been achieved in a way that represents value for money for the taxpayer...'.

Other 'Pathfinder' school projects included Balmoral High School (soon to be defunct at less than value for money for the taxpayer), Wellington College, Belfast and Drumglass High School, Dungannon involving overall capital investment of some £50 million. St Genevieve's was built by Belfast Education Services Ltd – a special purpose company established by Building and Property Ltd, London. The question for the taxpayer is; what are the actual costs of the related support services, being provided over the 25 year period?

Comments to infoni@into.ie

Have you got an article for Printout?

Could you write an article for Printout? Have you strong views on any aspect of the education world? We particularly welcome articles on educational subjects. Articles should be around 600 - 800 words and ideally should be accompanied by a photograph(s).

INCAS – INTO/UTU SURVEY



Brendan Harron

INTO's fears that the INCAS tests were being introduced with undue haste, that many teachers did not have the requisite computer hardware and that the Organisation was right to insist that 2007-08 be a pilot year for the tests.

The survey found that the majority of Year 5 teachers did not have wireless access in their classrooms and that many pupils did not have the opportunity to complete the tests in a quiet, undisturbed environment. Teachers were surprised to find that the laptops that were provided for the tests did not have the basic accessory of a mouse. Schools had to rush to computer supply shops to purchase mice. These are matters that will have to be addressed before INTO will give its blessing to any whole scale introduction of INCAS.

The majority of teachers carried out the tests in their classrooms or in the school computer room. INTO is deeply concerned, however, that a significant number of pupils had to complete the tests in the school office, the staffroom and even in school corridors. This is simply unacceptable.

A majority of teachers found that the tests pinpointed pupils' areas of weakness but the same teachers made it clear that they had already been aware of these. Teachers found that the tests interrupted their normal classroom routine and questioned the value of this as the tests didn't tell them anything new. They also reported that the outcomes of the tests in English were of more use as a planning tool than those in Mathematics.

Just over half of teachers found the INCAS training that they had received was adequate.

Brendan Harron, Senior Official, who represents teachers on the Partnership Management Board which is responsible for the implementation of the revised curriculum, said,

"Some of the INTO findings are very disturbing, particularly those relating to inadequacies in computer hardware and in the training that Year 5 teachers received. PMB will have to address these issues urgently."

INTO and UTU recently carried out a survey of Year 5 teachers to ascertain their experiences of the new Interactive Computer Assessment system. The Organisation wishes to extend its thanks to the many members who returned completed questionnaires. The information that was gathered will be brought to the relevant bodies, such as DE and CCEA, to inform the future development and roll out of the system. The results of the survey resoundingly confirmed

International School Twinning



Don Campbell

In recent months, a UNESCO task force has been established to attempt to answer the many and varying questions related to "International School Twinning".

It transpires that this is a very complex issue, with a great variety of links, through a plethora of organisations and individuals.



When twinning organisations are approached for statistics they only have available to them the links related to their own projects and at times these have appeared to be less than complete.

The first figures, regarding N. Ireland, portrayed us in a poor light only because the statistics required were not centrally available. We actually believe that between 25% and 50% of all schools in N. Ireland may have a link with a school overseas.

In an attempt to clarify **Northern Ireland's School Links** the unions have kindly agreed to publish this item.

If your school is linked in anyway with another school, (including within N. Ireland) could you please send to me the details as follows to don@unesco.co.uk

School Name
Address and Postcode
Location of link and with whom
Scheme if appropriate.
Any other information.

It is recognised that links between N. Ireland schools, have been an important aspect of our education system for many years, and therefore it would be necessary that these are also taken into consideration.

Thank you
Don Campbell, Northern Committee

JOLLY PHONICS

Anne McKeefry

Discovering Jolly Phonics happened quite by chance. We were about to have a snack with my sister and her family who live in Scotland and were here on holiday. I was looking at my niece Molly 'pretending' to read the menu until she asked Lucy, "Mum, what's mer- ing- ue?" To my amazement I discovered she really could read most of the menu. Lucy told me that the reason Molly could read and spell so competently was due to the Jolly Phonics Programme she had been following in Primary One. Later when she returned to Scotland my sister sent me Molly's P1 books of independent writing. I was enthralled as I read and re-read her stories. In ten years of teaching primary one I had never seen comparable work.

This is my seventh year teaching children how to read and write through Jolly Phonics. On reflection it was with a certain amount of trepidation that I taught my first Jolly Phonics lessons. Although I had read the introduction in Sue Lloyd's 'Phonics Handbook' several times and was happy enough about the pronunciation of the sounds and

telling the stories I wasn't completely sure how the blending would go! However some of the children recognized the words I attempted to sound out eg s- u- n, c- a- t, d- o- g, c- u- p, t- a- p. With practice we all managed to get the hang of it!

The programme is multi sensory and very appealing to young children. The pace is fast 4-5 sounds a week. From the beginning the children loved the Finger Phonics Big Books which beautifully illustrate a story for each of the 42 sounds. There is also an action, jingle or song and a sound sheet to re enforce each sound. Every morning they eagerly asked what the next sound would be and I was literally keeping one step ahead.

There has been much talk and debate recently about the important role of synthetic phonics in teaching children how to read and write successfully. My experience and the results I have seen have convinced me that if pupils followed a systematic programme like Jolly Phonics from the beginning of Primary One and through Key stage 1 and beyond if necessary we really could eliminate under achievement in literacy in a very short time.

Since I began teaching more than thirty years ago I have tried many approaches to teach literacy but no other method comes close to achieving the success and enjoyment I have seen with Jolly Phonics.



Unfortunately there is a shortage of experienced trainers in synthetic phonics in Ireland. I have decided to retire early from my position in St Malachy's PS Castlewellan and help to meet the ever increasing demand for high quality training. I have already done presentations for teachers and parents both in the North and South. Last February Chris Jolly, Managing Director of Jolly Learning asked me to do training and I had the privilege and amazing experience of travelling to Pakistan where I did presentations and workshops attended by more than 600 teachers.

I very much look forward to sharing my knowledge and expertise with others. If you would like more information my email is amckeefry@onetel.com or log onto www.jollylearning.co.uk

Review?



Frank Bunting,
Northern Secretary

INTO has learned that Education Minister, Caitriona Ruane MLA, has decided to carry out a review of the salaries and conditions of service of teachers in Northern Ireland.

The review will also consider the terms and conditions of school support staff.

INTO is not committed of the need for a review, given that the recommendations of the last Independent Inquiry into NI teachers' salaries and conditions (the Curran Inquiry) have not been implemented.

Northern Secretary, Frank Bunting, has protested in the strongest of terms to Will Haire, permanent secretary, DE.

Frank stated,
The terms of reference for the Curran Inquiry were the subject of

detailed consultation and agreement with the teachers' unions, yet on this occasion, the Department has developed draft terms of reference with no consultation with the teachers' unions.

"A teacher affects eternity. He can never tell where his influence stops."

Henry Brooks Adams

To SIP or not?

The so-called school improvement programme (SIP) with its joke strap line 'Every School a Good School' is a devastating example of what is so wrong with education in Northern Ireland.

This SIP is a continuation of teacher bashing. It seeks to introduce an ETI league table of schools graded 1 to 6 in opposition to the professional views of all NI Teachers' Unions. It advocates the sacking of teachers whose work is found to be unsatisfactory (3.13). It seeks to empower a body – the Education and Skills Authority – which has no statutory basis to challenge schools about their performance and standards of attainment. It blames

teachers for the failure of DF initiatives. It introduces the English process of "Special Measures" with its powers to seek principals and governors – in spite of the spectacular failure of these measures in Britain.

Above all there was zero consultation with teachers' unions in any aspect of this SIP (just like the last six pack SIP). It is increasingly difficult to understand DF gobbledegook but it claims this SIP 'has been developed in consultation with 'education partner bodies' principals and pupils from across Northern Ireland. Really! What is an Education Partner Body these days? Why is DE so economic with the actuality when it comes to

consultation or the lack of it? So many questions, so few answers.

DE says '.... We are now in a position to test the ideas with a wide range of interested groups and individuals. How fortunate are we! INTO is not an 'interested group'. INTO is a professional union of thousands of committed teachers. This SIP is an affront to their professionalism. INTO policy remains - No! to any new initiative which has not been the basis of meaningful consultation with teachers, representative of the profession.'

Enough is Enough

INSPECTORS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF REVISED CURRICULUM

ETI has published a report evaluating the arrangements for the implementation of the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum during the 2006/07 school year.



Marion Matchett

The report examines how schools, the Department of Education and the Partnership Management Board - a group representing key educational stakeholders, are working together to ensure the implementation of the Revised Curriculum. The report identifies a number of areas where action needs to be taken to ensure a more effective implementation process.

Marion Matchett, Chief Inspector, said: "While the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum builds on existing good

practice in schools, it constitutes a change in approach for many teachers and principals. It is essential, therefore, that practitioners are properly supported in managing the process of change in their schools.

"This report highlights a number of areas for improvement in the implementation process. It indicates that some of the training provided, particularly for school principals, has not been sufficiently successful in preparing them to lead implementation within their school.

"The report also highlights the need for a more strategic approach by the Department of Education in communicating the arrangements for the Revised Curriculum, to groups such as parents and the wider community.

"Despite the areas we have highlighted for improvement, the report indicates that progress is being made in a majority of schools towards the implementation of the Revised Curriculum.

Brendan Harron, Senior Official, who represents NI teachers on the Partnership Management Board, stated,

"The report reaffirms what INTO has been expressing concern about over a two year period. Schools and teachers are doing their very best to embrace the revised curriculum, at a time when, as the report confirms, resources for the implementation of the new arrangements are inadequate, the quality of the training, particularly for principals and school leaders is less than adequate, and the Department has signally failed in its responsibility to communicate the new arrangements to parents and the wider community. It is hoped that DE and other stakeholders will take note of the report's recommendations and act on them swiftly.

A copy of the report can be found at http://www.etini.gov.uk/revised_ni_curriculum-6.pdf

PAY AWARD IN ENGLAND AND WALES 2008 - 2011

MAIN PAY SCALE SALARY POINT	1 Sept 07	1 Sept 08	1 Sept 09	1 Sept 10
M1	20,133	20,627	21,101	21,587
M2	21,726	22,259	22,771	23,295
M3	23,472	24,048	24,601	25,167
M4	25,278	25,898	26,494	27,103
M5	27,270	27,939	28,582	29,239
M6	29,427	30,148	30,841	31,551
UPPER PAY SCALE				
UPS1	31,878	32,660	33,411	34,180
UPS2	33,060	33,870	34,649	35,446
UPS3	34,281	35,121	35,929	36,755
Teaching Allowances				
TA 1	1,722	1,764	1,806	1,848
TA 2	3,480	3,564	3,648	3,735
TA 3	5,976	6,126	6,273	6,420
TA 4	8,232	8,436	8,634	8,838
TA 5	11,109	11,388	11,655	11,931
SEN 1				
SEN 1	1,866	1,912	1,956	2,001
SEN 2				
SEN 2	3,687	3,778	3,865	3,954
Recruitment & Retention 1				
Recruitment & Retention 1	1,116			
Recruitment & Retention 2				
Recruitment & Retention 2	2,193			

PAY SPINE FOR THE LEADERSHIP GROUP

LEADERSHIP GROUP SALARY POINT	1 SEPT 2007	1 SEPT 2008	1 SEPT 2009	1 SEPT 2010
1	34,938	35,794	36,617	37,459
2	35,814	36,692	37,536	38,399
3	36,708	37,608	38,473	39,358
4	37,623	38,545	39,432	40,338
5	38,559	39,504	40,413	41,342
6	39,525	40,494	41,425	42,378
7	40,590	41,585	42,541	43,520
8	41,526	42,544	43,523	44,524
9	42,564	43,607	44,610	45,636
10	43,656	44,726	45,755	46,807
11	44,790	45,888	46,943	48,023
12	45,822	46,945	48,025	49,129
13	46,968	48,119	49,226	50,385
14	48,138	49,318	50,452	51,613
15	49,338	50,547	51,710	52,899
16	50,649	51,890	53,083	54,304
17	51,813	53,083	54,304	55,553
18	53,115	54,417	55,669	56,949
19	54,432	55,766	57,049	58,361
20	55,782	57,149	58,463	59,808
21	57,162	58,563	59,910	61,288
22	58,581	60,017	61,397	62,810
23	60,033	61,504	62,919	64,366
24	61,521	63,029	64,479	65,962
25	63,051	64,596	66,082	67,602
26	64,611	66,194	67,716	69,274
27	66,210	67,833	69,393	70,989
28	67,854	69,517	71,116	72,752
29	69,534	71,238	72,876	74,553
30	71,265	73,011	74,690	76,408
31	73,026	74,816	76,537	78,297
32	74,841	76,675	78,439	80,243
33	76,701	78,581	80,388	82,237
34	78,597	80,523	82,375	84,270
35	80,550	82,524	84,422	86,364
36	82,545	84,568	86,513	88,503
37	84,597	86,670	88,663	90,703
38	86,691	88,815	90,858	92,947
39	88,803	90,979	93,072	95,212
40	91,020	93,250	95,395	97,589
41	93,294	95,580	97,778	100,027
42	95,631	97,974	100,227	102,533
43	98,022	100,424	102,734	105,097

PAY

INTO has submitted a salary claim to the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC), seeking a 10% increase for teachers, principals and vice-principals. Since the Curran Independent Inquiry published its recommendations, NITC has accepted that parity with teachers' salaries in England and Wales shall broadly pertain. The main exception to this is Teaching Allowances (TAs) rather than Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLRs). Note briefing article on TAs.

Some English teachers' unions have trumpeted their close working relationship with Government, but the reality is that inflation for several years now has actually cut the real value of teachers' pay. The 27 year annual 2.5% pay deal ends in August 2008. Government intends to replace this with a 3-year pay deal paying 2% or even less per year. This at a time when retail price index inflation is currently 4.3% and Labour MPs are awarding themselves a 3% annual rise.

No school funding has as yet been awarded for Northern Ireland Schools arising from the Executive's Programme for Government. In Britain, Government has announced a tight school funding round of 2.1%, which is not enough to pay for increased heating costs – let alone teachers' pay.

Teachers' pay continues to compare poorly against comparable professions. The latest IDS survey of managerial pay showed that the average mid-point salary for middle / junior managers in the period February / April 2007 was £51284. Such a salary level is only available in the teachers' pay structure at points 18 and above of the Leadership Group pay spine.

Northern Committee is considering an industrial action ballot should the miserable parity of pay cuts for teachers be inflicted on NI teachers for the next 3 years, from September 2008.

REMOVAL OF ADDED YEARS – NO CONSULTATION

9th December was a black winter's day when DE, without consultation with the teachers' unions removed added years from redundant teachers' Premature Retired Compensation [PRC] and from the principals and vice-principals Efficient Discharge [ED] Scheme. The letter is published on the website www.into.ie. DE state they were acting under the direction of the Education Minister, Caitriona Ruane, MLA. A working group consisting of employing authorities and teacher unions from the NITC was to have considered the costs of added years in PRC and agreed changes it was never convened by DE.

Did the Education Minister or DE pause to consider the implications of this decision? By December in the school year Governors had already identified teachers in schools wishing to consider voluntary redundancy on the basis of added years being available to them. Such determinations are life changing. Suddenly, the dark, December day changes the goal posts. It is little wonder that a wave of anger and despair swept through Northern Ireland schools. Take it as read that teacher morale, well-being and welfare were not to the forefront of the minds that ended added years, allegedly from 1st April 2008, but actually with almost immediate impact.

What does this mean for teachers?

DE intends that any teacher who is made redundant on 31st August 2008, and being over 50, opts for premature retirement compensation, will receive a pension based on his/her actual years and days of service. There will be no added years unless the Education and Library Board / Board Governors pays the costs. The likelihood of this is infinitesimal.

However, worse is to come from next school year, post April 2009, a teacher being made redundant in the circumstances described above, will not receive added years and, in addition, will have their actual years and days of service actuarially reduced by up to 40 per cent. Teachers are being singled out for some heavy treatment. The same applies to Principals and Vice Principals in the Efficient Discharge scheme. Is this what the Education Minister intended?

Worse to follow!

The implications do not end with the blighting of individual teachers'/ principals' lives. Teachers in their 50s will be unlikely to flush their pensionable service down the pan with ARB. With fewer teachers opting for voluntary redundancy, employing authorities will have less opportunity to redeploy teachers who are being

made redundant. The spectre of the compulsory redundancy of teachers is now with us. This effectively means teachers being deprived of their livelihoods and having to scavenge for scraps of work. The prospect for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) getting jobs and the age profile of the teaching workforce are dire. This is not what INTO members voted for and they are rightly upset.

What's to be done?

INTO has met with DE representatives who have promised a new working group on all aspects of PRC, on which there will be NITC representation. INTO has called on Minister Ruane to reconsider the decision to axe PRC added years and, at the very least, to phase in the change in a planned way. The panels of teachers – which were stood down due to the success of the employing authorities with redeployment, using added years – must be re-established. Teachers, like other public servants, need to be compensated with severance payments of up to two years full pay. Above all DE must follow through with its agreements on meaningful consultation with teachers' unions.

Should we be doing more? Let us know your views. Email your comments to fbunting@into.ie

Actuarially Reduced Pension Benefits (ARB)

Age	NI (% Pension Received)	Teachers from age 55 can now receive Actuarially Reduced Benefits (ARB). They reduce pensions drastically. The percentage in the table is what a teacher receives on the basis of their reckonable service.									
50	61.7	E.g. A teacher of 55 years of age with 35 years teaching service would only receive 77.3% of their 35 years' pensionable service. If the teacher was earning £40,000 the difference ARB makes to their pension is:									
51	64.3										
52	67.2										
53	70.3										
54	73.7										
55	77.3										
56	81.3										
57	85.5										
58	90.0										
59	94.8										
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>PENSION</th> <th>LUMP SUM</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>With normal pension service</td> <td>£17,500.00</td> <td>£52,500.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>With ARB</td> <td>£13,527.50</td> <td>£40,528.50</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		PENSION	LUMP SUM	With normal pension service	£17,500.00	£52,500.00	With ARB	£13,527.50	£40,528.50
	PENSION	LUMP SUM									
With normal pension service	£17,500.00	£52,500.00									
With ARB	£13,527.50	£40,528.50									

SEN SURVEY

INTO and UTU recently carried out a survey of special Educational Needs permission in schools. There was a fantastic response from members. Mary Dorman, Northern Committee here reveals some of the findings. INTO will take the results to the SEN Review team and the Minister. This evidence will help support INTO discussions and contributions to consultations.



Mary Dorman, SEN Advisor, Northern Committee

The most positive outcome from the survey was that the majority of respondents felt that their role was supported by the Senior Management team (71%). This is important that teachers are supported by our colleagues.

Educating children increasingly requires a collegiate team approach for the best outcomes. Many queries we receive in the office, concerning Health and Safety, have arisen directly as a result of SENDO legislation. However 70% of respondents felt that this area had been dealt with appropriately. Almost two thirds of respondents felt that the following areas had been positively managed:

- SEN related training, (65%)
- Policy of inclusion (66%) and
- liaison with outside support agencies (64%)

These are strengths that can be built upon.

A less positive response was received about the resourcing of the role of SENCo and the impact of ICT. While 41% felt that their role was adequately resourced 39% felt that their role was not adequately resourced. This disparity of provision needs to be addressed.

Only 30% of respondents felt that ICT was making the role of SENCo more manageable. It is clear that the full potential of ICT to support the work of teachers is not being utilised. ICT should be used to replace traditional paperwork, not add to it. It is important that the Department of

Education takes note of this finding and works to produce more compatible systems. Currently, in one school, data forms in different formats have to be completed and this requires the repetitive input of information.

The most concerning outcome of the survey is that, in spite of the government 'directive' to reduce paperwork, 75% of respondents felt that the issue of paperwork relating to SEN was becoming even more increasingly unmanageable. The paperwork associated with drawing up, maintaining and reviewing the SEN register, together with IEPs, has added greatly to the burden on teachers.

Current procedures for the referral of pupils to the educational psychology support service or the multi-agency support team (MAST) are time consuming and confusing. The impact of the amount of paperwork is that the most valuable resource in education i.e. the teacher, spends an inordinate amount of time shuffling paper and consequently, less time supporting the pupils. This, combined with the concerns raised about resources and the role of ICT, would indicate that this issue should be addressed urgently.

The issue of paperwork was raised with and acknowledged by the SEN Review team. INTO trusts that the Education Minister and DE takes note of these findings and works to produce a system that supports educational learning. If more teacher friendly are not supported adequately they will be unable to support pupils, whatever their needs are, in the most beneficial way.

The move towards increased accountability and measuring of outcomes needs to be completed with caution. Often the most effective outcome in SEN is not measurable in a reading test. It may be that the child has developed a more positive attitude to reading or that the child will now use one reading cue to help read familiar texts. Pupils are not commodities who can be measured. They are individuals who should be valued.

Once again, a big thank you to all members who returned the questionnaires.

NITC

The Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) is constitutionally the teachers' side of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee (TNC). The TNC determines the salaries and conditions of service of Northern Ireland teachers.

The NASUWT General Secretary recently withdrew the union from the NITC – effectively removing its ability to negotiate on behalf of its members on salaries and conditions of service matters. As this is the main reason why a teacher would join a teachers' union, the General Secretary's action is strange and Northern Ireland members, if they were told the truth would be puzzled and troubled. NITC Secretary has written to NASUWT seeking clarification on its position but it seems likely that – whatever the disadvantages for its members and the unity of the teachers' unions – it is determined to spend 40 days in the wilderness.

Negotiations continue and there has been much progress. New procedures have been finalised and these include:

- Revised Disciplinary Procedure
- Revised Grievance Procedure
- New Managing Attendance Procedure
- New Collective Agreement for school rationalisation
- New Threshold and Upper Pay Scale arrangements
- Revised PRSD Scheme

Incidentally, the Northern Ireland PRSD Scheme is vastly more teacher-friendly than the equivalent Performance Management Scheme in England and Wales implemented there by NASUWT / ATL through their much trumpeted 'National Agreement'. So the benefit of the TNC in Northern Ireland and INTO urges NASUWT to put its members before hopeless postures.

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Please note: "Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on your mortgage"
"There may be a fee for mortgage advice, although this is normally paid by way of an introduction fee
from the lender we arrange your mortgage with. The precise amount of any fee will depend on your
own circumstances, but typically this could be 0.5% of the amount borrowed."



'Elephant, Bee or Other: Including Everyone in Our Schools'



Roisin Marshall (IntegratING Education Project Manager), Michael Wardlow (NICIE CEO) and Denis Rooney (Chief Executive of IFI) at the launch of 'Elephant, Bee or Other' at W5 on 7 December 07

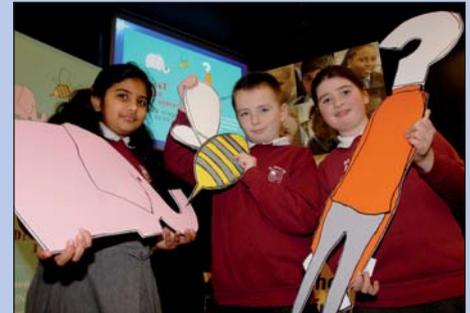
The IntegratING Education Team, managed by the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) and funded by the International Fund for Ireland, has launched an exciting new educational resource 'Elephant, Bee or Other, Including Everyone in Our Schools'. The launch took place in W5, Odyssey on 7 December and brought together over 120 key education stakeholders who were provided with the opportunity to gain some insight into a number of the practices highlighted in the book.

Roisin Marshall, IntegratING Education Project Manager said, "The publication is the result of a two year project which involved schools across Northern Ireland in identifying, developing and sharing principles, policies, practices and resources to promote good relations and inclusion. It has been designed to share sound practices currently used in schools which promote and demonstrate inclusion with all members of the 'education community. We chose this title because it visually describes people's responses to sensitive issues

such as religion and cultural diversity. The 'elephant' refers to the elephant in the room scenario - issues everyone knows about but avoids. The 'bee' refers to issues people buzz about, and therefore remains high on agenda, and the 'other' refers to all other issues".

In the context of recent proposed education reforms and Government policies such as 'A Shared Future' and, as the Northern Ireland population becomes increasingly diverse, schools are being asked to take on a greater role in advancing social cohesion. It is expected this publication, 'Elephant, Bee or Other', will act as a valuable signpost for those interested in developing a more inclusive approach to educational diversity and equality.

In the short term, until there are changes in government policy - matched with appropriate funding - there is a need to demonstrate to education stakeholders, the positive effects of curricular activities, policies and aspects of governance which promote and embrace diversity.



Emma McAllister, Adam McQuoya, Aleena Selestine, pupils from St James PS (Belfast) at the launch of 'Elephant, Bee or Other' at W5 on 7 December

Denis Rooney, Chief Executive of IFI said, "The two year Integrating Education project, which the International Fund for Ireland was delighted to support, has done tremendous work with schools across Northern Ireland. It is one of a number of interventions that the Fund is currently making within education, which we see as a very powerful vehicle by which to engage positively with the community, in a way that benefits everyone and threatens no-one."

Michael Wardlow, Chief Executive of NICIE said, 'This is an excellent resource which offers a range of well tested methods and ideas of how to deal with diversity in schools. It will provide a much needed resource to teachers who want to help young people understand what it is to be an active citizen in an increasingly multi-cultural society'.



The IntegratING Education team: Judith Searle, Grainne Teggart, Cliodhna Scott Wills, Kelly McKeaveney, Terry McMackin and Roisin Marshall

References



INTO receives requests on the issue of references for appointment and promotion in schools. In these cases the member believes that the reference has been used to unduly influence an appointment

panel in relation to the selection of an individual for a certain position.

The purpose of references is to obtain information about a candidate's employment history, qualifications, experience and/or an assessment of the candidate's suitability for the post in question. Prospective employers may seek information on matters including length of employment, job title, brief details of responsibilities, abilities, overall performance, time-keeping and reason for leaving. It is estimated that one in eight people exaggerate or falsify their qualifications! INTO recommends that references should not collect subjective information as to the applicant's suitability for the job on offer.

Generally, references are sought from current and former employers and sometime personal referees as well.

Case law has resulted in a cautious approach from people giving references. Data given in a reference should be based on fact or capable of independent verification. As a guide, references should be fair, accurate and not give a misleading overall impression of the employee.

Referees should be cautious about giving any subjective opinion about an individual's performance, conduct or suitability, which they cannot substantiate with factual evidence.

Employers should remember that because a job applicant is being asked to give the names of referees, they are highly unlikely to choose anyone who will give them a bad reference and therefore potential inaccuracies may arise. Bad references are rare!

References tend towards 'leniency errors' and, like interviews, offer a great deal of scope for both direct and indirect bias. Employers can improve validity and reliability by using a highly-structured rating form. References tend to be more reliable if:

- other benefits; and
- dismissal of an employee or causing him/her any other detriment.

It is unlawful for an employer to harass an employee or a job applicant for a reason which relates to a disabled person's disability. The DDA places a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments if employment arrangements, or the workplace itself, place a disabled person at a **substantial disadvantage** compared to a non-disabled person. Reasonable adjustments have to be considered at every stage of employment. The duty is 'reactive' and requires the employer to have knowledge of the person's disability and the fact that they will be placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to others who do not have the particular disability.

Examples of reasonable adjustments include:

- altering the person's hours of work or training;
- allowing for absences for rehabilitation/treatment;
- assigning him or her to a different place of work or training;
- re-allocating minor duties;
- modifying equipment;
- giving or arranging training or mentoring; or
- providing supervision or other support.

- the old and new job are very similar in content
- questions are based on job analysis
- facts, rather than opinions and evaluations, are requested
- where personality traits have to be measured, they are defined and specific examples requested
- relevant information about the job vacancy was provided for the referee
- the opportunities the referee has had to directly observe the employee are identified.

The following legislation is relevant.

- The Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977 may apply to attempts to disclaim liability for a reference.
- The Data Protection Act 1998 may apply to the processing of information in the provision of a reference.

It is clear that discriminatory and certain detrimental acts committed by any employer after termination of an employee's contract are within the remit of the discrimination legislation and the detriment provisions of the Employment Rights Act 1996. As such the full remit of anti discrimination legislation may be available to a potential applicant who is unsuccessful in an appointment.

RECENT SUCCESSES

INTO has been successful in challenging unlawful and discriminatory acts through industrial tribunal claims. Three cases were based on disability discrimination and the failure of the school to operate reasonable adjustments in respect of the teacher's disability.

In one case a teacher who is bipolar was awarded £32,000 against her employer because of ongoing treatment which took no account of her mental disability. In another case, a teacher in a secondary school was awarded £8,000 because of her treatment and the failure of the school to provide reasonable adjustments on account of her physical condition. The third case involved a primary teacher. She was awarded £12,000 because of alleged victimisation and removal of reasonable adjustments because of her disability.

Schools need to consider disability and the provision of reasonable adjustments. The Disability Discrimination Act applies to all employers, regardless of size. It is unlawful for an employer to discriminate in:

- recruitment and selection, including arrangements for deciding who should be offered employment;
- the terms and conditions of employment;
- the opportunities afforded for promotion, transfer, training or any

REVISED PROCEDURES

INTO has worked to secure agreement on a variety of new, revised procedures. This article outlines the changes to the procedures. Full details of the revised procedures are available on the INTO website www.into.ie

Grievance Procedure

The main changes are:

- Removal of the conciliation stage and the incorporation of an independent mediation stage at the commencement of the Grievance Procedure;
- Incorporation of a Statutory Grievance process for complaints which fall outside the current procedure or when the teacher is no longer employed by the school;
- Changes to time limits between stages.

Managing Attendance at Work Procedure:

The main changes are:

- Incorporation of guidance on disability
- Incorporation of guidance on the issue of medical reports
- Reference to welfare services

Teachers' Occupational Maternity Scheme

The main changes are:

- Extension of paid maternity leave to 39 weeks
- Introduction of 10 'keeping in touch' (KIT) days
- Availability of teachers' sick pay scheme to teachers who plan to return early, but become ill with a non pregnancy related illness.

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International School Award

Nine schools have recently received the British Council's International School Award. The award, accredited by the Department for Children, Schools & Families gives recognition to the international dimension in the curriculum. The nine schools honoured were:

Fleming Fulton, Grosvenor Grammar, Stranmillis Primary, Taughmonagh Primary, Ballymena Primary, Limegrove, Loreto Convent Primary, Omagh High, and St Mary's Girls Primary.

There was delight at Fleming Fulton, the Belfast based special school serving disabled pupils from all over Northern Ireland, as this was its second International School Award, following on from its first success in 2003.

Fleming Fulton has a long and successful history of international work. Among many past activities pupils have conducted research into wheelchair access in major cities across Europe, have hosted other disabled

teenagers at a European pupil "summit", created animated films about the experience of being disabled for an international film festival, sung and given musical performances in Boston, Paris and Cologne, and attended and competed in the Paralympics at both Atlanta and Sydney.

Indeed the good practice at the school has not gone un-noticed. Jeremy Taylor, Deputy Head and Co-ordinator for the school's international programme, was recently seconded to the Education & Training Inspectorate with the brief of identifying the benefits of international links for schools. "What I discovered when on secondment to the inspectorate echoed our own experiences at Fleming Fulton. Every school I visited testified to the enormous benefits from international links both for pupils and for staff. Importantly, the benefits are seen throughout the whole school community – pupils, teachers, and school leaders. The biggest winners of

course are the pupils – they get a chance to practise that are central to the Revised Curriculum, particularly writing and ICT skills. I also found that pupil values and attitudes are positively affected – self esteem, tolerance and motivation all increased. Teachers too benefit – there are great opportunities for professional development, younger teachers get to develop their CVs, and motivation and teamwork noticeably improve. There wasn't a single school which didn't express delight that it had become involved with international links. In today's world, schools have to look to the future and recognise that they are helping develop global citizens.

Anyone interested should take a look at the British Council's websites – www.britishcouncil.org/nireland or www.globalgateway.org – or contact the British Council on 028 9024 8220. Jeremy Taylor can be contacted at Fleming Fulton School – 028 9061 3877.



Frank Bunting, Northern Secretary, congratulates Nora O'Neill, St Mary's University College, on receiving the annual Vere Foster Medal for the student achieving the highest standard in teaching practice



Jim Magee, Newry Branch, congratulates Sheila Fullerton, St Mary's University College, on receiving the annual John Cull Memorial Medal for the overall best mature student

NORTHERN CONFERENCE 2008

Northern Conference 2008 will take place in the Canal Court Hotel, Newry on Friday 29 February 08 and Saturday 1 March 08. The theme of this year's conference is "INTO The Future"

Some of the key issues for debate are:

- Pensions and Added Years – the INTO campaign for jobs for young teachers and against compulsory teacher redundancies
- Salaries – Parity with teachers in Britain
- Funding – The inequity of LMS and Primary School funding
- Review of Teachers' Conditions of Service – Implementing the Curran Report?
- School Improvement Programme 'Every School a Good School' – No consultation No SIP
- Chairperson's Address – Mary Cahillane

REDUNDANCIES

Northern Office is receiving a steady flow of redundancy notices from schools that are proposing to reduce staffing at the end of August 2008. Members in the schools affected will have received copies of the notices. The notices must contain the following information:

- the reasons for the proposals;
- the numbers and descriptions of employees whom it is proposed to dismiss as redundant;
- the total number of employees of any such description employed at the establishment in question;
- the proposed method of selecting the employees who may be dismissed;

- the proposed method of carrying out the dismissals, with due regard to any agreed procedure, including the period over which the dismissals are to take effect; and
- the proposed method of calculating the amount of any redundancy payments which the employer proposes to make (other than those required by statute).

This information must be given to INTO. In addition the /Board of Governors must allow time for meaningful consultation to take place. Such consultation must include consultation about ways of:

- avoiding the dismissals;
- reducing the numbers of employees to be dismissed; and

- mitigating the consequences of the dismissals.

This consultation must be undertaken by the Board of Governors with a view to reaching agreement with the INTO representatives.

A number of schools this year have attempted to introduce selection criteria that are unacceptable to INTO. The schools concerned have been notified accordingly.

INTO advises members and representatives to scrutinise letters of redundancy carefully and to advise their Northern Committee or CEC representative or the Northern Office of any concerns relating to the criteria to be applied or the process being used.



Brendan Harron, Senior Official (R) presents a new INTO-sponsored cup to Robert Donnell (L), Chairman of Coleraine and District Under 16 Schools' Soccer League. Also in picture is Jobby Crossan, former Manchester City, Sunderland, Standard Liege, Sparta Rotterdam and Northern Ireland player, then the proprietor of Crossan Sports, Derry

Our Pupils Deserve Better



education in the Assembly on 4th December 07, she has been continuously harangued and castigated by members of the Education Committee for an alleged lack of clarity in her plans.

Whilst the members of the Education Committee are quite entitled to their views, one must question the message that they are sending out to parents, pupils and teachers, as they all await the day when Caitriona Ruane will put flesh on the bones of her 'vision'. Parents, teachers and pupils are nervous and uncertain about what will happen to the current Year 5 pupils in September 2010 and it does nothing to alleviate their concerns when they see in the newspapers and on the television news, the Education Minister and members of the Education Committee sniping at each other in a very rude and disconcerting manner. It appears as though they are playing a political game, as opposed to dealing with the future of Northern Ireland's most important resource – its children. The children, parents and teachers of Northern Ireland deserve much better.

The Minister has made it clear that the current transfer tests will not take place after November 2008 and that, from 2010 onwards, pupils will transfer to post primary schools on the basis of geographical, family and community criteria. She has yet to indicate how these criteria will be applied or what her Department will do about the 25 Grammar schools that are threatening to introduce their own entrance tests.

In response to a question from Brendan Harron, INTO Senior Official, on how she intends to get her plans through the Assembly, the Minister could only state that she intends to build a 'consensus'. If the shenanigans that the people of Northern Ireland are witnessing almost daily are anything to go by, it is difficult to see how any consensus can be built.

The time is long past for Caitriona Ruane and the other folks on the hill to give the pupils, parents and teachers here a sense of certainty about the future.

INTO is deeply concerned at the continuous back biting and political point scoring that the Education Minister and members of the NI Assembly Education Committee are engaged in.

Since the Minister, Caitriona Ruane, MLA, announced her vision for the future of transfer to post primary

NIPSA Classroom Assistants' Dispute



Mary Cahillane, Chair Northern Committee, joins the picket line at Fleming Fulton School during the recent NIPSA classroom assistants' strike. Also pictured are INTO member, Jim Savage and NIPSA Deputy General Secretary, Alison Millar

INTO YOUTH CONFERENCE

Heritage Hotel
Portlaoise

Fri 18th/Sat 19th April 2008

As part of the ongoing project to increase and enhance participation in INTO affairs, a conference for younger members has been organised in the Heritage Hotel, Portlaoise on Friday 18th and Saturday 19th April 2008. The conference will begin at 5.30pm on the Friday and conclude at 2.00pm on the Saturday.

INTO is strongly encouraging all Branches to ensure that they are represented at the conference. Branch Secretaries have been provided with nomination forms, which must be returned to Head Office by Friday 29th February 08.

Youth Coordinators for INTO in Northern Ireland are:

District 1	Andrea Higgins	contact: niuiginn@hotmail.com
District 2	Mark Murtagh	contact: St Patrick's Boys' PS, Newry Tel: 028 3026 3466

considered for a job sharing

months.

Do You Want To Move To Part-Time Working?

Northern Office continues to receive a high number of queries from members who would like to move to part-time or flexible working. A teacher does not have a legal right to move from a full-time to a part-time contract.

What are your options?

Part-Time working

A teacher can apply to the Board of Governors and request a move to part-time working. It is a good idea to discuss the matter with your principal in the first instance, as the Board of Governors will be influenced by the principal's views. You should make clear the reasons for your request. The decision is entirely a matter for the Board of Governors.

Job Sharing

Job sharing is a method of working where two teachers share one full-time post. A teacher can apply to be

arrangement or two teachers can apply together for a job sharing arrangement. Job sharing is different from part-time work in that, although the hours worked by each teacher are part-time, together the teachers take joint responsibility for the full-time post and are regarded as a full-time unit. In assessing each application the Board of Governors will consider:-

- i. *The needs of the school;*
- ii. *The welfare and education needs of the pupils.*

Temporary Variation of Contract

A teacher can request a temporary variation of contract for a specific period e.g. 12 months. Such arrangements are becoming increasingly common and usually operate for a 12 month period, with an option to extend it for a further 12

Flexible Working

If you have a child under the age of six, or a disabled child under the age of 18, you have a statutory right to ask for flexible working arrangements and to have your request seriously considered. You could apply to work mornings/afternoons only, to work fixed/variable hours or to work only on certain days. If your employer rejects your request, they must demonstrate a clear business case for so doing.

Career Break

A permanent teacher, who has completed at least three year's service, can apply for a Career Break, which is a period of special leave of absence, without salary, for not less than one year and not more than three years. A Career Break will not normally be permitted for the purpose of taking alternative salaried employment.

INTO School Representatives Training Course

Monday 14th and
Tuesday 15th April 2008

City Hotel, Derry

There are still places available on the above 2-day training course. The training is delivered by Brendan Harron, Senior Official and Mark McTaggart, Secretary of District 1 and life-long INTO activist.

"Highest Paid Classroom Teacher"

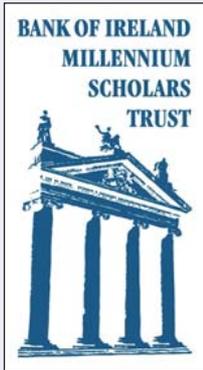
There is no longer any justification for the use of UPS1 (2001 pay settlement) as the basis for determining leadership group pay. The INTO view is that UPS3 should be the baseline. This change is needed to promote equity. The current position is unacceptable where some schools do – and others do not – take account when determining the leadership pay group that many classroom teachers are paid at UPS3. INTO is seeking NITC support to have this anomaly changed.

NORTHERN COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS

AREA	NAME	HOME No.	SCHOOL No.
CEC 1	Mary Cahillane	9022 0349	-
CEC 2	Tony Lappin	3833 6334	9261 1732
BFC	Patrick McAllister	9445 2728	3884 0825
NEELB Primary	Don Campbell	2763 8472	2763 8318
NEELB Post-Primary	Barney Magill	9077 7742	9084 8433
SEELB Primary	Kevin Smyth	9020 1571	9030 1714
SEELB Post-Primary	John McAnulty	9060 1555	4483 0311
BELB Primary (1)	Gerry Murphy	3753 9591	9023 8773
BELB Primary (2)	Eddie Keenan	9059 2401	9035 1023
BELB Post-Primary	Des McDonagh	9084 9797	9080 8050
SELB Primary (1)	Mary Dorman	8774 1229	8676 3151
SELB Primary (2)	Mary Hughes	3755 1136	3753 1284
SELB Post-Primary	Jim Magee	3026 8178	4175 3366
WELB Primary (1)	Charlie Glenn	7134 1578	7135 1830
WELB Primary (2)	Rita Fox	8076 1647	8224 5628
WELB Post-Primary	Damien Walls	7126 9728	7128 5000

A Third Level Lifeline

One of the largest scholarship trusts for third level education on the island of Ireland has announced it will be awarding additional scholarships in 2008.



Entering its ninth year, the Bank of Ireland Millennium Scholars Trust will, in 2008, increase the number of students it supports for third level study, offering a lifeline to more students than ever before.

Reacting to the announcement, Assistant Principal of Loreto College in Dublin, Dorothy Lavery, who has witnessed five of her own students progress with Scholarship backing said the increase was "such a welcome development". The Trust, she added, was often "simply the difference between going and not going to college. It's a wonderful thing. It changes lives."

Established in 2000, with an allocation of €12.5 million, the Bank of Ireland Millennium Scholars Trust remains one of the largest millennium initiatives from either State or private industry offering a progression path to students.

Administered by the National College of Ireland (NCI) from its base in Dublin's docklands, the Trust annually receives nominations from some 900 bodies dealing with second and third level students, mature candidates and other progression route candidates who, due to economic, social and other barriers, might not otherwise get the opportunity to bring their talents and skills on to third level. In addition, students currently at third level who might not be able to continue their studies without such support may also be eligible.

Scholarship awards from €3,200 to €6,300 per annum are available, depending on the individual's

circumstances. Awards of varying amounts are also made to students studying in the creative and performing arts. The scheme also provides for a range of supports as the student makes his or her transition to college life.

Who is eligible to apply?

The Trust welcomes applications from individuals who have the ability and motivation to participate successfully at third-level, but who because of economic circumstance or other barriers such as disability, are prevented from doing so.

A student still experiencing the benefits of her scholarship is Roisin Kavanagh, who graduated with a first class honours degree in Combined Science from the University of Ulster in 2004. A motivated individual, Roisin remained undaunted by her Multiple Sclerosis, and confinement to a wheelchair to pursue her academic desires as far as was possible alone.

Moving past both Certificate and then Diploma levels in her field, it was the cost of attending college full-time towards a Degree that seemed a bridge too far when travel, fees and books were taken into account.

Word of mouth led her to the Bank of Ireland Millennium Scholars Trust.

"It has made so much possible," says Roisin, who has just started a PhD in Trinity College Dublin in September.

"I love college," Roisin asserts.

What she loves more is the example she has been able to become through her studies, not least to her daughter, who is now considering her own college options.

"It may sound daunting," she tells others considering her path, "but you have nothing to lose by applying. And everything to gain."

How to apply for a scholarship
Candidates must be proposed by a Nominating Body – an organisation, group or institution registered with

the Trust. Nominating Bodies will have close contact with candidates and will be in a position to provide a personal reference confirming their eligibility.



What kind of courses are eligible for scholarships?

Third-level educational opportunities from Level 7 in the National Framework of Qualifications, and from Level 6 which give access to/progress to a Level 7 or Level 8 qualification. Courses recognised by Universities, DIT, the Institutes of Technology, the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and the Institutes of Further and Higher Education in Northern Ireland. Other courses may be considered. Advanced studies in the creative/performing arts are also eligible for funding.

How to register as a Nominating Body

Registrations may be made at any time and will be considered by the Trust at timed intervals throughout the year. Registration forms are available from the Trust Office.

Further details and application forms can be gained from the Trust Office at National College of Ireland (00353 449 8500) or can be downloaded from the Bank of Ireland and NCI websites: www.bankofireland.com – see *In the Community* and www.ncirl.ie – see About NCI.



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