Dear Colleague

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

The UTU action which commenced on 30th March is now well underway with a minimum number of queries from schools. Teachers should bear in mind that this action is being taken as a result of the overwhelming vote (79% in favour) to take action short of strike. Four of the five recognised teachers’ unions – ATL, INTO, NASUWT and UTU – are engaging in action and NAHT, which did not ballot, has assured the other unions that they will not obstruct the action. Please contact UTU Headquarters for advice if you are experiencing any difficulties in applying the action in your school. (Full details of the action are displayed on the UTU website.)

PLEASE ASSURE MEMBERS THAT THE BALLOT RESULT MEANS THAT WHILE THEY ARE TAKING INDUSTRIAL ACTION THEY MAY BE TECHNICALLY IN BREACH OF CONTRACT BUT THEY ARE PROTECTED. IF ANY TEACHER WISHES TO DISCUSS THIS THEN PLEASE CONTACT US AND REQUEST A VISIT FROM A UTU OFFICIAL.

The Management Side has requested that we enter into talks to see if there is anything they can do to improve the situation in schools and they will be sending out a letter to Principals advising them to have due regard for the Workload Agreement, so already the action has had some impact.

We have had queries from schools in relation to planners – some Principals are requesting that teachers complete written evaluations of their daily/weekly notes. Please note that it is entirely up to teachers whether or not they wish to do this – if it assists them in their professional duties then it is their decision but they cannot be forced to do so.

THIS ACTION SHOULD DRAW ATTENTION TO ALL THE UNPAID ADDITIONAL WORK THAT TEACHERS DO – THIS IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO CUT BACK YOUR WORKLOAD TO A REASONABLE LEVEL. TOO MANY TEACHERS ARE WORKING BEYOND THEIR CONTRACTED
HOURS WITH LITTLE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE VITAL PART THEY PLAY IN ENSURING THAT PUPILS ARE NOT IMPACTED ON BY THE CUTS TO THE EDUCATION BUDGET.

SALARY CLAIM – SEPTEMBER 2014

It is the government’s intention to try to negotiate a more “robust” way of teachers receiving incremental credit. Their offer of “up to 1%” from September 2014 is conditional on the teacher unions engaging with Management Side in considering how that might be achieved. Four of the teacher unions have had an initial “without prejudice” engagement to see what might be on offer. The NASUWT has refused to be involved, despite the fact that in England & Wales automatic progression has already disappeared.

PEOPLE’S VOICE

Please find enclosed a copy/copies of the Irish Congress of Trade Union’s publication “People’s Voice”. This is a one-off election special publication and highlights some of the issues of importance around health and education. Further copies are available from the ICTU office in Belfast on request.

MAY DAY FESTIVAL

Saturday. 2nd June, is the date for the annual May Day celebrations. In Belfast there will be a parade with bands, balloons and plenty of fun. The Festival programme includes a number of special events and can be viewed on the UTU website along with full details of parade which assembles at 11.30am. The teacher unions walk together – look out for the banners and come and join us!

REDUNDANCY 2015

The redundancy process has been underway since the autumn and many redundant teachers have already been redeployed or offered a severance package. The second phase of the redeployment procedure – or ‘trawl’ as it is commonly known – starts at the beginning of May. This is when the catchment area is extended and teachers are redeployed on an NI-wide basis. If you have any queries about redundancy please do not hesitate in contacting Headquarters for advice.

FINALLY

We have experienced a significant increase in our membership this term already and we would ask that you maximise recruitment efforts – unity is strength. If you feel that your staff would like to meet with a UTU Official, or if you would like a private meeting with someone who can answer your queries about any aspect of your job, then simply contact us on 9066 2216 and we will arrange for a visit at a time and place that suits you.
We are in the process of upgrading our UTU website so if there is some aspect of the UTU’s work that you would like further information about then please feel free to phone – we will be more than happy to advise you. That is one of the benefits of being a member of UTU - A LOCAL UNION LOOKING AFTER LOCAL TEACHERS.

Yours sincerely,

Avril Hall-Callaghan
General Secretary