

**Draft Response to Management Side Letter of 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018 for consideration by the NITC.**

Dear Mr Boyd,

I have been asked by the NITC to write on behalf of Teachers Side [TS] in response to the Management Side [MS] letter dated January 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 and the accompanying paper entitled "Offer Paper on Pay, Workload and Accountability". TS are disappointed by the tone of the letter to the NITC Chairperson and the content of the attached paper.

TS refute, again, that the TS Industrial Action currently in place has negatively impacted on the quality of education available to the children and young people here. We contend rather that the action has in fact contributed to an improvement in educational outcomes for pupils. I have been asked to point out to you, again, that the most recent TIMMS and PIRLS research had seen the Primary system benchmarked as globally leading with achievement levels only surpassed by a small number of countries on the Pacific-rim. The most recent GCSE and A-Level results have also improved again. The GCSE performance (A\*-C) has risen in the past year by 2.4% with improvement most marked amongst FSM / disadvantaged pupils. A-Level performance for the most recent year had risen nearly 3%. These facts are at odds with the opinion expressed in your letter to Mrs Hall-Callaghan.

The attempt in your letter to manipulate continuing improved pupil achievement to suit the MS agenda is a gross dis-service to the pupils concerned, reducing their hard work to the level of a bargaining chip. Furthermore seeking to blame teachers engaged in legitimate industrial action for the collapse in school development activity and professional development work conveniently allows MS to step away from the leading role it has played in bringing about this sorry state of affairs. Orwellian, is how we view the blaming of the ongoing industrial action for schools finding themselves in budgetary distress. MS might consider diverting more of the approximately 40% of the total educational spend currently disappearing into the administrative black hole at the centre to schools as a means of alleviating this financial distress.

TS reminds you again that the Industrial action being engaged in by four of the five trade unions representing the vast majority of education professionals here, is focussed on non-co-operation with needless tasks of nugatory educational value and is allowing teachers to exercise professional discretion and to focus more on learning and teaching. TS maintain the ongoing industrial action is creating space for better classroom practice and that pupils are reaping the rewards. The continued improvement in results confirm this.

We agree that the status quo is not an option and we note the MS acceptance that all public servants have experienced a real term reduction in their wages. What is unacceptable is MS then brushing this injustice aside and retreating behind the skirts of a failed Public Sector Pay Policy and a budgetary mess brought about by government and their friends in the financial sector. If MS are prepared to join with TS in a campaign aimed at bringing about a significant increase in the gross education budget this would go some way to convincing the teachers and others employed in the education sector that MS care about their workforce more than their bottom lines.

The paper appended to your letter entitled "Offer on Pay, Workload and Accountability" does not represent an offer but rather a precondition to be satisfied by TS, followed by a number of hoops TS will then be obliged to jump through. It is most disappointing that after almost a year of prevarication on your part it appears MS has forgotten what it means to engage in a negotiation and has a remarkable lack of understanding of those in its employ. The possibility of a cost of living uplift of up to 1% is unacceptable to TS. Equally unacceptable is the failure of MS to offer anything on workload despite the "great deal of work" we have already "engaged" in across this area. TS remains open to a negotiation, indeed we have been ready for months for such a negotiation. TS is not prepared to end or indeed suspend its industrial action on foot of the paper provided by you.

TS is prepared to enter into a negotiation on pay and workload on the basis of no preconditions. There already exists the basis for such a negotiation, TS have tabled a pay claim and we have identified through the working groups on workload issues needing addressed. This negotiation can begin now. We have the outline framework and don't need to discuss it until February 28th, what we do not have is a genuine commitment on the part of MS to enter into a genuine negotiation with TS. A period of industrial relations peace would be welcome and TS remains willing to contribute to such a peace, are MS?

Yours sincerely,

Gerry Murphy  
NITC Chair  
02890381455  
gmurphy@into.ie