



NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS

DERBYSHIRE ASSOCIATION

September 2008

Dear Colleagues,

Well, what a year we have had! For the first time in nearly twenty years teachers have felt strongly enough to vote for and take national strike action. After the below inflation pay impositions of the last two years, 2.5% each, we were given the prospect of even less over the next three years. 2.45% goes nowhere near the true inflation rate at the moment, and things are getting worse rather than better. Some calculations even give a rate of over 9% for the 'ordinary' person in the street. Clearly our younger colleagues who face loan repayments, (ironically at 4.8% because that represents 'the true rate of inflation' according to the minister!), and high costs of housing, are particularly badly affected. It was pleasing to see many of them alongside other colleagues at the rallies in Chesterfield and Derby. That is why the NUT is leading the campaign nationally to try to prevent a return to the 'boom and bust' pay cycles of the last two or more decades.

What is happening next?

- ❑ **There is now, as you may be aware, a TUC public sector pay campaign.** There has been much co-operation between unions over opposing the government'. We are actively trying to involve our sister teacher unions but, so far, they have felt unable to join in the campaign, perhaps due to the constraints of the 'social partnership' into which they joined with government.
- ❑ **The NUT and others asked the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) to implement the review of the 2006-8 pay 'deal'** that was promised if the inflation rate rose above 3.25%. This should have happened last year but was refused by the then Secretary of State, Alan Johnson. We have recently heard that the STRB has decided not to ask Ed Balls for the remit to carry out that review. They argue that current teacher supply does not warrant any further pay even though they accept that inflation is far beyond the award they made!
- ❑ **The union will be continuing the campaign this term.** More materials will be sent into school as a build up to a further ballot for action in November. This may include other forms of action or action on a local or regional basis
- ❑ **If possible, any action will be co-ordinated with other unions to maximise the effect.**

And what else is going on?

- ❑ **The Union's campaign on workload will continue.** We are increasingly receiving complaints of excess planning, excess and unsympathetic observations, crazy meetings schedules and other workload issues. We are covered by a previous ballot against this, and we will represent members to negotiate reduction if possible. If necessary, and if members wish it, we will conduct ballots for action.
- ❑ **We continue to campaign against the Academies & Trust Schools agenda.** At the moment this is a lesser problem in Derbyshire, but the government is increasingly insistent on local authorities going down this road. Money for new build seems to rely on this! Any new school project has to be put out to 'tender' and could become a trust school with the accompanying contract problems and possible loss of conditions. We continue to promote the state system with the Union's 'A GOOD LOCAL SCHOOL FOR EVERY CHILD AND FOR EVERY COMMUNITY' available on the union website at www.teachers.org.uk.
- ❑ **TLRs. You will be aware that if you still have a 'safeguarded sum' remaining from one of the old 'Management Allowances', that will cease to be paid from December 31st.** Likewise, any work that you are doing as part of that role should cease at that point. We will do all we can to support members where there is any attempt to make them continue that role without proper remuneration. This may be more of a problem in primary where it is often said 'we can't afford a TLR' Given the tiny percentage of the budget involved, this is not a very good argument. The Union has a clear view that any responsibility beyond that of an ordinary teacher should be paid an allowance.
- ❑ **We will continue to build our membership locally and nationally.** More and more teachers realise that we are the one union that is consistently standing up for teachers rather than entering into 'partnerships' with government which undermine our pay and conditions. It is worth noting that our membership is still rising steadily.

What is on the cards for the next term or so?

- ✓ **The local union will be, as always contacting all Newly Qualified Teachers about their Induction Process.** Every year most NQTs have a very successful experience. But every year there are a few who need support, advice and representation from the Union where they have been let down, or have run into trouble
- ✓ **There will be more briefings** – for members and School Reps on various topics including Coaching & Mentoring, PPA time and Harassment & Bullying. Try to get to one of the sessions – it could make a big difference to you!
- ✓ **Another "Planning Retirement" seminar** for teachers in mid to late career will be organised. This will include getting advice from Teachers' Assurance, part of our "union family" of companies
- ✓ **Our Learning Reps** will be in touch with you and your school, keen to find/provide the kind of professional and personal training and development activities that you identify
- ✓ **Our "Roving Health & Safety Rep"** will be visiting schools where there is no teacher trade union H&S Rep. He will be inspecting the schools, and meeting with Headteachers and NUT members **[cont. overleaf]** . . .

- ✓ **We'll be organising a dinner** to welcome NQTs, new Union members, newly appointed colleagues – and to say thank you to our School Reps. This is a very popular event. If you fit any of the categories (or if your school doesn't have a Rep and you'd like to take it on) make sure you book early. Guests welcome by arrangement. The National President will attend.

These are just a few of the things the union has to offer directly to members this term. If you need our help, advice or support in any way, do not hesitate to phone or email us. Normally you will get someone immediately, but if not we will do our best to get back to you within 24 hours. We aim to make teachers powerful – individually, in school groups, across the County and the country. We'd welcome your ideas and help in making this happen.

I hope to see you during the term!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Holmes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.