

Top 100 earners in education

Thu, Nov 11, 2010

Madam, – Seán Flynn and Peter McGuire’s report on salaries in third-level education reveals that, of the more than 20,000 people who work in higher education, less than one third of one per cent (0.3%) earn more than €150,000.

In the education sector as a whole (95,554 full-time staff), there are a mere six people out of every 10,000 earning more than €150,000.

The cases shown, of a small number of very highly paid staff, confirm issues raised by the Irish Federation of University Teachers in 2008 over undisclosed pay arrangements for a small number of senior personnel in the universities. At the time the federation condemned the decision by the Higher Education Authority not to disclose the details of exceptionally high salaries paid to certain senior personnel in the universities under its remit, a situation exposed by the federation only through persistent use of the Freedom of Information Act.

The statistics in The Irish Times show there is no other sector of Irish society with such a low number of high earners. One has only to think of the number of those earning more than €150,000 in banking, financial services, the health service, and so on.

Looking at the list of the top 100 earners, one cannot help but be struck by the almost total absence of frontline educators. The list is almost exclusively made up of administrators, bureaucrats and managers.

I can imagine the frustration that will be felt by assistant lecturers (starting salary €33,623) or college lecturers (€48,306) at the perception, which the report may mistakenly convey, that they are “high-flyers”.

University staff have already taken earnings cuts of approximately 20 per cent, while the numbers of students they teach have reached the highest levels in Irish history – up 15 per cent in the past two years alone.

Clearly anyone who aspires to be rich should not be looking for a job in education. – Yours, etc,

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