

## **SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION**

Minutes of the 72nd Annual Congress of the Association held in the Crieff Hydro Hotel, on Friday and Saturday 20 and 21 May 2016 in five sessions.

The President, Euan Duncan, was in the chair.

At the end of the third business session, the President conferred Life Membership upon Margaret Smith and Alan McKenzie.

### **186 Welcome:**

The President welcomed all members and guests.

### **187 Announcements:**

- 1 The Vice President announced several housekeeping matters, including Fire Drill, payment of expenses and catering arrangements.
- 2 He also announced that the Finance Report and Confidential Minutes for 2015 would be available at the beginning of the Private Session.
- 3 The Vice President asked Congress to remember all those who had been associated with the SSTA and who had died during the last year. Congress stood in silence in their memory.

### **188 Presidential Address:**

The President spoke on the theme of "Supporting Leadership in Teaching". He spoke of attending a recent Education International (EI) conference entitled "Protecting and Promoting Education as a Public Good" and which had highlighted the risks presented by the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) which threatened the teaching profession by prioritising and imposing a business model on education. As it strengthens its position, this movement poses a real threat to public education. He explained that education in countries all over the world was finding itself threatened by education reform which is diminishing public schooling, promoting privatisation and destroying teacher professionalism. He was highly critical of educational businesses whose main interest was in making a profit rather than producing quality materials.

The President went on to highlight that one of the biggest barriers to achieving high quality publicly funded education was workload. He was also of the opinion that this workload issue meant that teaching was no longer viewed as an attractive profession and this had caused problems in recruiting and retaining teachers in recent years. He concluded by stating that this is the time for teachers to get involved in leading education, to wrest control from the politicians, the bureaucrats and the profiteers and to take the opportunity to make the whole of Scottish education truly excellent.

189 **Sederunt:**

See appendix to official copy of this minute.

190 **Apologies for Absence:**

The President reported that apologies had been received from John Swinney, Depute First Minister and newly appointed Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning.

Apologies were also received as follows:

Invited Guests:

Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI), General Secretary, Kieran Christie, Elizabeth Smith (MSP), Education Scotland, Chief Executive - Bill Maxwell, Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT), President – Michael Delargey, General Secretary – Mike Jennings, National Union of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT), General Secretary, Chris Keates, National Organiser – Jane Peckham, Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL) Chair – Tony Finn, Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) – President Gerry Quinn, Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU), Deputy General Secretary – Jacquie Reid.

Council:

Iona Reid (8), Sally Shearer (19), Matthew Cavanagh (28), Nicol Lumsden (31), Sandra Dolan (34), Iain McRobbie (52).

Congress Representatives:

Joe Keegan (88)

Past Presidents:

Douglas Campbell, Bill Fitzpatrick, John Gray, John Small, Tom Wallace, Peter Wright,

Life Members:

Norman Anderson, Donald Cumming, John Fraser, Willie Fraser, George Stock, Isabel Martin, Joe McKelvie, Matthew MacIver (118) Alistair Peden, Bill Thomson, Bill Walker.

191 **Order of Business:**

The President indicated the timings of certain significant items of business, including the Guest Speaker and the Report of the General Secretary. He also indicated that two emergency motions would be taken at appropriate points in the agenda.

The order of business was approved.

**192**      **Minutes of Congress of 8 and 9 May 2015:**

The minutes of Congress of 8 and 9 May 2015 were approved on the motion of Ward McCormick and seconded by Janine McCullough.

**193**      **Education:**

(a)      **Emergency Motion 1:**

On behalf of Executive, the Vice President, seconded by the Minutes Secretary, moved:

*Congress congratulates John Swinney on his appointment as Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning.*

*We look forward to developing a fruitful working relationship which will address critical issues in education such as*

- *Supply Teachers*
- *Workload, including National Qualifications*
- *Teachers' Pay*
- *Retention and Recruitment*
- *Named Person*

The motion was largely carried.

(b)      **SQA Report :**

Ruth French indicated that the report had been subsumed into the report of the Education Committee, printed on page 5 of the Congress booklet.

(c)      **Report of the Education Committee:**

The Convener, Ruth French, presented the report printed on page 5 of the Congress booklet. She added that the Committee wished to see published the report of the Assessment and National Qualifications Working Group.

The reports were approved.

(d)      **Motions:**

1

**Motion A**

On behalf of Renfrew Area, Sarah Dargie, seconded by John Guidi, moved:

*Internal assessment demanded by the SQA varies considerably for all levels of national exams. It places onerous and unsustainable demands on teachers.*

*The SSTA demands from Scottish Government, Local Authorities, employers, Boards of Independents Schools and SQA an immediate and significant reduction in internal assessment.*

An attempt to amend the motion was defeated by a majority. A further attempt to amend the motion was ruled unacceptable by the President.

The motion was carried unanimously.

2

**Motion B**

On behalf of Perth and Kinross, Alan Johnston, seconded by Mathew Mackie, moved:

*Congress is concerned about the lack of subject choice in the Senior Phase and the variation in the number of qualifications taken by pupils in different Local Authority areas. Congress calls on the CfE Management Board to re-examine this issue.*

The motion was carried unanimously.

3

**Motion C**

On behalf of the Education Committee, Ruth French, seconded by James Cowans, moved:

*The SSTA calls on the Scottish Government to introduce a National 4 gradable, external examination in order to improve the value of the qualification.*

The motion was largely carried.

194

**GTCS Chief Executive, Ken Muir:**

Mr Muir spoke about the GTCS role in encouraging more teachers into the profession and stressed the importance of collaboration amongst the main players in education in this regard. He explained the need for the GTCS to adapt to the changing needs in education. He talked about the development of the GTCS which was originally formed to register teachers but later became a regulatory body. In this respect, he highlighted the GTCS role in removing on average 30 teachers a year from the Register. More recently the GTCS has been working to support the education system

in Scotland. Over the past 5 years, and for the foreseeable future, professional learning has become much more prominent.

He stressed that unqualified teachers should never be allowed into the profession and explained that the registration fee allows the GTCS to have a regulatory function which ensures the quality provision of education. He indicated that they have recently produced a lot of materials to support e-learning and have been trialling a national e-portfolio.

He then answered a number of questions from the floor.

195

**Report of the General Secretary:**

General Secretary, Seamus Searson spoke about the important role the SSTA has to play in shaping the future of Scottish education. He stressed that the Association and its members must be prepared to work with all those who care about education in Scotland. He agreed with the SNP Government's statement in its manifesto that, although "Scotland has a good education system with great schools and great teachers", we still need to do more for children from less advantaged areas. He stressed that teachers in the classroom need to be listened to and trusted to deliver the education system of the future.

He welcomed the Government's commitment to protecting the Education Maintenance Allowance which helps young people stay in education and also agreed with the need to tackle child poverty and educational underachievement. He believed that the Attainment Challenge needs to support the family before education begins as schools can make a difference but can't do it all on their own. While welcoming the additional £750 million for this project, he expressed concerns about this undermining the role of Local Authorities and adding to the pressure on teachers and Head Teachers.

The General Secretary spoke of the need to have a curriculum which meets the aspirations of all our young people and was concerned that education cuts and shortages of teachers will lead to a narrowing of the curriculum and disengagement of some pupils. He said that qualifications and assessments must fit the teaching and learning and not the other way round and that teachers' professional judgement had to be respected.

He referred to the lack of any real progress in reducing workload and indicated that the Association had no choice but to move to an indicative ballot for industrial action.

He spoke of the Government's failure to address the fundamental issue of teachers' pay, which was critical in retaining existing teachers but also in terms of recruitment of the highest quality of graduates into the profession. The General Secretary was also critical of recent government proposals, for example, giving teachers, parents and communities more responsibility for schools and reviewing school governance etc, none of which had been proposed by teacher unions.

He concluded by advising the Government not to implement policies without consultation but to work with the teacher unions to support and defend our “good” education system.

The report of the General Secretary was approved.

**196 Guest Speaker, Professor John Visser:**

Professor Visser spoke on the theme of “Inclusion in Education”. He indicated that there is a fundamental problem identifying exactly what is meant by inclusion. He stressed the need to value the individual but also that children need to have positive boundaries.

After an informative and stimulating talk, he answered questions from the floor.

**197 Salaries and Conditions of Service:**

**(a) Report of Representatives on the SNCT:**  
Catherine Nicol presented a tabled report.

She reported that the AGM of the SNCT had been held on 16 May 2016, at which membership of the committee and office bearers had been confirmed.

She indicated that an attempt to align the Pay and Leave Year was continuing and had been referred to SPPA for an opinion. She reported that the situation with Chartered Teachers was still unclear with regard to their pay scale. She also indicated that LNCTs had been asked to monitor impact on workload of the 2015-17 pay agreement.

The report was approved.

**(b) SNCT Working Group:**  
Catherine Nicol spoke to a tabled report and indicated that the group had not met recently.

The report was approved.

**(c) Report of the Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee:**  
The Convener, Catherine Nicol spoke to a tabled report outlining the work of the committee over the last year. She added that the committee had also recently considered the confidential report on National Qualifications Assessment.

The report was approved.

**(d) Motions:**

1        **Emergency Motion 2:**

On behalf of Ayrshire Area, Neil Sinclair, seconded by Douglas Innes, moved:

*Congress urges the Scottish Government to delay further implementation of the Named Person legislation until a thorough review of its implications for teachers takes place*

After a number of contributions both for and against, the motion was carried by a majority.

2        **Motion D**

On behalf of Renfrew Area, James Cowans, seconded by Rory Nicolson, moved:

*Congress notes the general requirement to raise attainment for all and calls on the SNCT to increase the amount of time teachers have available for preparation and assessment procedures by agreeing a reduction in class contact time.*

The motion was carried unanimously.

3        **Motion E**

On behalf of the Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee, Catherine Nicol, seconded by Sid Sandison, moved:

*Congress notes that the distinction between practical and non-practical classes has become blurred over time, therefore the SSTA urges a re-evaluation of practical/non-practical subject status by the SNCT.*

The motion was carried *nem con*.

4        **Motion F**

On behalf of Lothian Area, Stuart Hunter, seconded by Monique Dreon-Gould, moved:

*To avoid local variations, the SSTA calls on the SNCT to negotiate national Sickness Absence Management policies that would apply to teachers across all Local Authorities.*

The motion was carried unanimously .

5

**Motion G**

On behalf of Ayrshire Area, Catherine Nicol, seconded by Andy Sinclair, moved:

*The SSTA is alarmed that teaching is increasingly perceived as an unattractive profession. The opportunities for career progression are limited by the classification, category and number of promoted posts currently available in Secondary schools. The Association calls on employers to ensure that there are appropriately remunerated career progression opportunities available.*

The motion was carried *nem con*.

6

**Motion H**

On behalf of Aberdeenshire, Ruth French, seconded by Sid Sandison, moved:

*The SSTA is aware that Guidance teachers already face considerable levels of stress. Congress believes that duties associated with Named Person provision will generate an unsustainable burden.*

*The SSTA urges employers to improve the provision of counselling support for those affected.*

The motion was carried unanimously.

7

**Motion I**

On behalf of Aberdeenshire, Kevin Madill, seconded by Barbara Adams, moved:

*Congress affirms that the provision of specialist Guidance teachers in secondary schools has been one of the great successes of Scottish Education in terms of meeting the Health & Wellbeing needs of our pupils, as well as a vital part of enabling young people to find the most appropriate pathway to positive destinations.*

*The SSTA opposes any attempt by employers to seek to achieve budget cuts at the expense of guidance provision.*

During debate, Alex Taylor, seconded by Sid Sandison, successfully moved an amendment to add "Principal Teachers of" after "specialist" in the first line and to delete the word "teachers following the word "Guidance".

The substantive motion was largely carried.



**Motion J**

On behalf of Orkney, Jacqueline Bradley-Heeps, seconded by John Bennett, moved:

*The burden of new qualifications, excessive internal assessment, the lack of available applicants to fill vacancies and the lack of supply teachers have resulted in the majority of teachers working in conditions of severe long term stress with a significantly poorer work/life balance. The SSTA calls on the Scottish Government and employers to take immediate steps to reduce the workload of teachers by calling a moratorium on any further changes in the classroom, reducing the assessment burden and ensuring there are sufficient qualified staff to fill vacancies and cover for absence.*

The motion was carried unanimously.

**198 GTCS Professional Update Steering Group:**

The President presented the report printed on page 9 of the Congress booklet.

The report was approved.

**199 Additional Support Needs Advisory Panel:****(a) Report:**

The Convener, Anne O'Kane, presented the report printed on page 10 of the Congress booklet. Anne reported that the Panel had focussed on two main issues over the last year. These were:

- Managing Challenging Behaviour
- The Role of the Named Person

Anne also indicated that the paper referred to in the report about challenging behaviour had now been converted into a draft poster which when finalised, would be issued to District Secretaries and thereafter to schools.

She thanked Tom Watts, who had recently retired, for his support over a number of years. She also thanked PO Liz Hunter and Michelle Moran for their help and support.

The report was approved.

**(b) Motions**

1            **Motion K**

On behalf of the Additional Support Needs Advisory Panel, Janine McCullough, seconded by Neil Sinclair, moved:

*The inclusion agenda has been largely met over the last 15 years through the dedicated efforts of mainstream schools to provide appropriate support for pupils with Additional Support Needs. This support has comprised adequate levels of support staff including classroom support, librarians, technician and admin staff. Local Authority cuts are having a detrimental impact on these levels of support. Consequently the SSTA calls on the Scottish Government to protect support staff numbers in order to sustain and realise fully the inclusion agenda in Scottish schools.*

The motion was carried unanimously.

2            **Motion L**

On behalf of the Additional Support Needs Advisory Panel, Anne O'Kane, seconded by Janine McCullough, moved:

*The SSTA acknowledges the principles underpinning the Named Person's role. However in order to protect our most vulnerable children, the SSTA insists that adequate time for tasks is provided for those teachers who will be expected to undertake this important role.*

The motion was carried unanimously.

200        **Equalities Panel:**

(a)        **Report:**

The convener, Maggie Nesbitt, presented the report printed on page 11 of the Congress booklet.

The report was approved.

(b)        **Motions:**

1

**Motion M:**

On behalf of the Equalities Panel, Maggie Nesbitt, seconded by Susan Thorburn, moved:

*The SSTA recognises the importance of the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award in recognising and realising the rights of all children and calls upon all Local Authorities and Boards of Management of Independent Schools to promote participation in the scheme to help create safe, healthy and respectful schools across Scotland.*

The motion was carried *nem con*.

2

**Motion N:**

On behalf of Executive, Janine McCullough, seconded by Stuart Hunter, moved:

*The SSTA welcomes the recent commitment from the First Minister to reform gender recognition in line with international best practice. The SSTA urges the Scottish Government to ensure that in any such reform, priority is given to supporting young people, particularly those under the age of 16, in all school environments in dealing with the whole spectrum of LGBTI issues and of gender recognition including that of non-binary.*

During debate, an attempt to amend the motion was defeated by a large majority.

The motion was carried *nem con*.

201

**Health and Safety Advisory Panel:**

(a)

**Report:**

On behalf of the Convener, Sue Edwards, Barbara Adams presented the report printed on page 12 of the Congress booklet.

She reported that the Panel continues to meet three times a year and that the main issues discussed had included stress, workload and asbestos awareness. She also highlighted a very successful training day which is detailed in the printed report.

The report was approved.

(c)

**Motions:**

1

**Motion O:**

On behalf of Renfrew Area, James Cowans, seconded by Paul Cochrane, moved:

*Health and Well Being is an intrinsic part of CfE for pupils. The delivery of CfE and the new National Qualifications is having an impact on teachers' health and wellbeing.*

*The SSTA calls on the Scottish Government to ensure that all local authorities are proactive in implementing workplace policies which promote and improve teachers' health and wellbeing.*

The motion was carried unanimously.

2

**Motion P:**

On behalf of the Health and Safety Advisory Panel, John Bennett, seconded by Paul Cochrane, moved:

*Every day teachers in Scotland are facing increasing levels of false allegation, violence and abuse allegations from pupils and parents. Only incidents which require 5 days or more absence from work by an employee are required to be recorded by the Scottish Government. The SSTA calls on the Scottish Government to require all 32 local authorities to adopt a zero tolerance approach to violent behaviour in schools and to encourage actively the recording of all violent incidents, whether physical or verbal, and to request submission of these recordings for proper scrutiny and response by their officers.*

The motion was carried *nem con*.

202

**Senior Managers' Advisory Panel:**

On behalf of the Convener, Archie Bathgate, the General Secretary presented the report, printed on page 13 of the Congress booklet, which was approved.

203

**Transferred Schools Committee:**

There was no report.

204

**STUC Committee:**

The convener, Alan Johnston, presented the report printed on page 15 of the Congress booklet.

The report was approved.

**205 District Motions:**

There were none.

**206 Reports of Representatives on Outside Bodies:**

(a) Scottish Advisory Group for Relationships and Behaviour in Scottish Schools (SAGRABIS):

Janine McCullough presented the report printed on page 16 of the Congress booklet. She indicated that the Group was now looking at the results of the survey which it had issued in February this year as a follow up to the one issued in 2012. They intended to interview pupils and teachers about the initial findings in Autumn 2016 and hoped to produce a final report around Spring 2017.

The report was approved.

(b) The Scottish Joint Committee on Religious and Moral Education:

On behalf of Mandy Davidson, the General Secretary presented the report printed on page 18 of the Congress booklet.

The report was approved.

(c) The Pensions Advisory Group:

Depute General Secretary, Fiona Dalziel presented a tabled report.

The report was approved.

**207 – 214 Private Session:**

Items 207 – 214 were discussed during a private session.

**215 Vote of Thanks:**

The Vice President, Kevin Campbell thanked the Manager and staff of the Crieff Hydro Hotel; Tapestry AV for the staging; Life Members, Past Presidents and guests; the invited speakers, Ken Muir and Professor John Visser; members of the press and exhibitors; the Office Bearers, the General Secretary, Depute General Secretary and Professional Officers; Michelle Moran for her organisation of Congress arrangements; the other office staff in attendance, office manager, Andrew Brown, Claire Middlemass, Carine Monpriat and Matilda Thoronka; and delegates for their contributions. He also thanked the companies who had donated prizes for the Benevolent Fund prize draw.

Kevin concluded by paying tribute to the President for his excellent chairing of Congress.

Congress rose at 12.40 pm

## APPENDIX

### **ATTENDEES**

#### Invited guests

Careleavers, Ambassador, Ashley Cameron, Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI), General Secretary, Pat King, AVIVA, Bob Gaster, Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), General Secretary, Larry Flanagan, President, Tommy Castle, General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS), Chief Executive/Registrar, Ken Muir, J7 Management Information Services, Director, Graeme Whyte, Morton Fraser WS, Partner, David Hossack, National Union of Teachers (NUT), President, Philipa Harvey, School Leaders Scotland (SLS), President, David Mitchell, General Secretary, Ken Cunningham, Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL), Chief Executive, Gillian Hamilton, Scottish Conservative Party, MSP, Liz Smith, Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), Chief Executive, Janet Brown, Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC), General Secretary, Grahaeme Smith, Tollcross Garage, Managing Director, Lewis Pryor, Thompsons Solicitors, Associate, Jayne Crawford, Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU), President, Julie Orr, General Secretary, Avril Hall-Callaghan

#### Council

Euan Duncan (1), Kevin Campbell (2), Seamus Searson (3), Elaine Henderson (4), Alan Taylor (5), Karen Liddle (10), David McColgan (11), Peter Thorburn (15), Andy Sinclair (16), Charles Ronald (20), Alison Karalar (22), Anne O'Kane (23), Gordon Suttie (24), David Allan (30), Andrew Sutcliffe (32), Barbara Samson (35), Val Stewart (36), Alan Johnston (38), Matthew Mackie (39), Sid Sandison (9), Barbara Adams (12), Kevin Madill (13), Gordon West (14), Andrew Campbell (17), Jay Young (18), Noel Wray (25), John Brown (26), Eleanor Campbell (27), James How (29), Rosemary McLaughlin (37), Janice Chapman (40), Gavin Munro (41), Lee Charnley (43), Jacqueline Bradley-Heeps (44), Janine McCullough (45), Claire Mackenzie (46), Tony Zerebiec (47), Ward McCormick (48), Catherine Nicol (49), Paula Nimmo (50), Alistair Murdoch (54), Liz Young (55), Lesley Roberts (56), Colin Stewart (57), Ann Stewart- Kmicha (58), Christopher Stewart (59), Stuart Hunter (60), Monique Dreon-Goold (61), Sandra Richardson (62), Maggie Nesbitt (51), Peter Donnelly (53), Paul Cochrane (63), James Cowans (64), John Guidi (65)

#### Congress Representatives

Christine Kelt (69), Sheena McGregor (70), Susan Thorburn (74), Fiona Gibbs (75), Keith Gilmour (77), Mark Gibson (78), Genevieve Orr (79), Gareth Surgey (80), Graham Thompson (81), Stuart Allison (131), Isabella McPhee (85), Ed Philpott (67), Alex Taylor (68), Carl Boyd (71), Ruth French (72), Kevin McIntosh (73), Shirley Lemmon (76), Lucy Davidson (82), Alan McKenzie (83), James Callaghan (132), John Bennet (84), Chris Healy (86), Gillian Miller (87), Joan De Cecco (89), Douglas Inness (90), Louisa Maestranzi (91), Neil Sinclair (92), Sara Dargie (98), Trevor Jones (99), Val Liddell (100), Leila McCardle (93), Liane Montgomery (94), Lynn Myles (95), Rory Nicolson (96), Beth Vanson (97)

Members of Staff

Andrew Brown (101), John Crichton (102), Fiona Dalziel (103), Iain Glennie (104), Liz Hunter (105), Claire Middlemass (106), Carine Monpriat (107), Michelle Moran (108), Yvonne Stewart (109), Matilda Thoronka (110),

Life Members

Douglas Amos (111), Jim Docherty (112), Jean Donaldson (113), Angela Gallagher (114), Norman Geekie (115), Louise Goldsack (116), Kaye Macaskill (117), Graham Souter (119), Ivor Sutherland (120)

Past Presidents

Marie Allan (122), Barbara Clark (123), Ian Goldsack (124), Bill Guthrie (125), Donald Halliday (126), Albert McKay (127), Margaret Smith (128), George Sturrock (129), Dougal Roy (130),

Members of the Press

The Herald - Andy Denholm  
Times Education Supplement Scotland - Julia Belgutay