

Report of the General Secretary

To be tabled

SQA Report

The General Secretary Seamus Searson, Vice President Kevin Campbell, Professional Officer Iain Glennie, Convener Ruth French and Education Committee member, James Cowans have met with SQA only once this session. There was much to discuss. Apart from all of the changes to examinations, there was payment for internal marking and our disappointment that a final examination for National 4 was still not being considered. They have been given the results of our survey and an anonymised copy of all the statements made by colleagues. I hope that the next meeting will not be so far away. These are useful encounters made even more useful by the results of the questionnaire. Thank you again all those who took the time to fill them in.

Ruth French
Education Committee Convener

Report of the Education Committee

The Committee has met 4 times this session. Saturday mornings are not always easy but I am very grateful for all those who have attended and their contributions.

Many topics have been covered, including:-

- Changes to examination structures and yet more changes to content
- Changes to rules regarding fall back
- Benchmarks
- Multi-level classes
- Lack of resources within schools to support the examination requirements
- Questionnaire
- Insight

We have considered the many effects of these on pupils and teachers eg. workload, work/life balance, mental health, sustainability to mention but a few. The dedication of my colleagues to do the best for their pupils, often at very real cost to themselves, continues to amaze me.

We continue to be grateful for all of those who take the time to complete our questionnaires and add their take on the situation they find themselves in. This information gives us real power when talking to people with influence.

As ever we need new people to come onto the committee. If you would be interested or know someone who might be then please give your name to myself, anyone from the committee or the office so that we might let folk know when the next meeting happens.

I am retiring from this position and I would like to take this opportunity to thank members of the committee and especially our Professional Officer Iain Glennie for the support and guidance I have had these past two years.

Ruth French
Education Committee Convener

SNCT Report

Over the past year the SNCT has focused on taking forward action advised by the SNCT Support Group. The SNCT have made it clear that a core action relates to the monitoring of Teacher Workload, Which should continue to be central to LNCT agendas. SSTA representatives have highlighted the impact on Teacher Workload due to changes to National Qualifications, Benchmarks and National Standardised Assessments. We have stressed the importance of negotiating time to carrying out the work required to deliver these initiatives via SIPs and WTAs and the necessity for scrutiny at LNCTs to ensure appropriate steps to control Teacher Workload have been taken.

SSTA representatives have ensured that the voice of secondary school teachers has been at the forefront of negotiations concerning other major developments, one of which is the creation of a National Supply Teachers Register. The use of the Register has now been piloted in a few Local Authority areas and a report is to be presented at the next meeting of the SNCT.

A proposed change to existing Conditions of Service involves harmonising the leave year with the pay year. Work on this is ongoing and discussions regarding the mechanisms that will be used by employers and the SPPA continue. This should lead to the establishment of common practice between Local Authorities regarding calculation of pay, pensions and working benefits.

Job Sizing has been an issue that has been tackled by the creation of an expert group of job size specialists. A revised set of FAQs and advice about job sizing calculations now appears in the SNCT Handbook.

Another change to the Handbook concerns Notice Periods, which have been revised as has the definition of the working week. The issue of Practical Class Size designation was raised at the Support Group. It was decided that this is best dealt with at local level but should agreement not be reached complainants should seek to utilise the SNCT appeals procedure currently in place.

The next round of Pay and Conditions of Service negotiations has been initiated but no further progress can be made until after the Local Council Elections.

Catherine Nicol
Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee Convener

Report of the Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee

Much of the business considered by the committee has been covered in the SNCT report. The committee discussed issues included in that report at length during meetings and identified action points that were followed up by SSTA representatives at SNCT Support Group and SNCT. Addressing issues raised by members at last year's Congress, Workload and the ongoing Industrial Action have been core to the work of the committee. In this regard engagement with members via surveys has been hugely valuable. The responses were analysed and this led to action to address concerns highlighted. The committee have taken measures such as raising motions at Council, the issue of advice notes for members and making contact with the Deputy First Minister, Education Scotland and the SQA. The committee have endeavoured to communicate news regarding progress and action taken by making use of the District Secretaries and School Representatives network, the SSTA website and the Newsletter.

Other business considered by the Committee has concerned career structure and progression. Our focus is on formulating mechanisms which could be introduced to bring about proper remuneration for workload associated with job specifications and to support retention of teaching staff. All this work is on going.

I would like to express my gratitude to colleagues on the committee who have put a great deal of thought and energy into supporting fellow teachers through their work this year. Members who serve on the Committee would like to thank all the SSTA staff who have laboured hard to support our work over the year. The exceptional service you provide to members of our group and the Association is very much appreciated.

Catherine Nicol
Convener
Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee.

GTCS Professional Updates Steering Group Report

The GTCS Professional Update Steering Group last met in June 2016.

It began with the annual evaluation of Professional Update noting the following:

- there continue to be issues of space and time for PRD and workload;
- different perceptions of reviewers and reviewees are a matter of concern;
- questions over what constitutes evidence continue to be asked and having a balance between support and challenge was seen as being a crucial issue;
- the need for ongoing advice and support on coaching and mentoring was recognised;
- teachers feeling an increasing sense of ownership of the PRD process;
- maintaining a high profile for PU is valuable;
- there is a need to continue to be aware of supply teachers and their specific requirements;
- the SQA has a role in supporting the professional learning of teachers involved with it, and such learning needs to be recognised by the teachers themselves;
- the GTCS has been taking forward work on coaching and mentoring with local authorities.

With regard to Professional Update 2014/15:

- the GTCS had tried to identify and support the small number of teachers who had not signed-off in the first full year of the programme;
- those who had not signed off would move to Associate status over the summer, anyone wishing to move back to General status would be required to complete the PU sign-off process;
- in future years steps should be taken more quickly to ensure the sign-off process was completed earlier in the timeline.

With regard to Professional Update 2015/16:

- the current picture for 2015/16 is a positive one;
- recognising factors such as workload and changes in timetable, GTCS would remind schools not to leave PRD processes to the last minute;
- it was noted that some Local Authorities had moved their PRD process to after the summer: a clear message of the PU development was that the actual meeting between reviewer and reviewee was only one component of the PRD process;
- any non-signed-off teachers would be moved to Associate status at the end of March 2017 for the 2015/16 cohort.

Emerging Issues from Group Members:

- it was noted that there is a continuing need for employers to provide teachers with resources and advice on PRD and PU;
- the GTCS will be revalidating employer PRD schemes which had already been through the initial process in the near future.

MyProfessionalLearning:

- teachers within the pilot Local Authorities and the independent school sector have been asked to volunteer to help with the development of the new MyPL system;
- it is planned to bring together the two advisory groups for Professional Update and MyPL with nominations from each organisation represented invited;
- the new joint group will not be simply about the technicalities of MyPL but is expected to maintain a strong focus on PU and its evaluation, particularly as it was extended to the College sector.

Euan Duncan

SSTA Representative on GTCS Professional Update Steering Group

Report from Additional Support Needs Advisory Panel

This year the ASN Advisory Committee has focussed on 2 main areas:

1. "Keeping Teachers Safe" poster
2. Freedom of Information Request relating to ASN staffing in secondary schools

1. "Keeping Teachers Safe" poster

A poster intended to raise the awareness of teachers about relevant health and safety matters has been completed and disseminated to each local district. This poster has also been viewed by the Health and Safety Advisory Panel.

2. Freedom of Information Request relating to ASN staffing in secondary schools

For a number of years the SSTA has raised concerns about ASN staffing levels in secondary schools. In 2010 and again in 2016 the SSTA forwarded Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to all of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities in order to obtain information about ASN staffing levels and other matters relating to ASN. In addition to this we very recently compiled a report based on our findings from the Scottish Government's "Census Supplementary Data, 2010 & 2016" and submitted this report to the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee. We understand that this report will be made available during Congress.

Government census data indicates a reduction in ASN staffing levels and a wide variation in ASN staffing levels across Local Authorities. ASN staffing levels in each Local Authority do not always match the anticipated level of need as suggested by free school meal entitlement. In consequence, it is our view that a 'postcode lottery' of ASN provision may be starting to develop across Scotland.

As a result of the evidence received from the SSTA as well as from many teachers, parents and other organisations the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee has decided to produce a formal report to the Government which will include recommendations for change.

The committee would like to thank Liz Hunter and Yvonne Stewart (Professional Officers) for all of their support. We should also like to thank Michelle Moran who organises and disseminates the paperwork which is necessary to enable the committee to function efficiently.

Since I retired from my teaching position just before Christmas, this will be my last Congress. I should therefore like to take this opportunity to thank members of the ASN Advisory Panel for their support over the years. I should also like to thank the SSTA for the many opportunities which it has made available to me and also for the genuine comradeship and support which I have enjoyed since I first joined the SSTA in 1977.

Anne O'Kane
ASN Panel Convener,

Report from the Equalities Panel

Members of the panel have been active in attending conferences and training events over the past year.

In June 2016, the President and Noel Wray attended the Stonewall Education Conference. In October 2016, Monique Dreon – Gould, Alison Karalar and Maggie Nesbitt attended the STUC women's conference held in Perth, with Alison speaking in support of a motion titled "Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children and Young People". The impact the motion debated was emphasising the educational impact which abuse has on children in our schools.

In January 2017, Caroline Cumming & Maggie Nesbitt attended an Equality Rep Training event run by STUC, then another, also organised by them on Equality & Fair Working in March 2017.

There is another Stonewall Education Event taking place at the end of May which several members are hoping to attend.

There has been a change of membership of the panel over the course of this year, and on behalf of the other panels members and myself & would like to thank those who have moved on for their great efforts over their tenure.

Maggie Nesbitt
Equalities Panel Convener

Report from Health and Safety Panel Report

The Panel has had a much quieter year this year, perhaps a reflection of the increasingly fraught and stressful situation most teachers are experiencing at work. It is this very experience of real life that adds depth to our meetings and a reality to our discussions.

This year the Panel has increased and we find ourselves at a maximum for the first time in many years. As I always say we are not experts but having new members always presents new views and ideas as we come from such diverse teaching backgrounds, subjects and experiences.

We presented two articles for the December newsletter, one on Risk Assessments by Kevin Bollard and another on Asbestos by Edwin Philpot. I would like to thank both on behalf of the Association for their contributions.

By the time of Congress we will have delivered another (hopefully successful ?) training day for Health and Safety representatives from across Scotland in Stirling, on the 12th May. As such, most of this year has been taken up planning, selecting topics, and preparing presentations. The day consisted of a packed agenda presented by the panel members and guests. So I would like to thank everyone wholeheartedly for their effort, their time, help and support without which we would not have had such a day.

As always give I would like to give a particular thank you to Fiona Dalziel, for her ceaseless advice, sharing her expertise and guidance and for finding time in her busy schedule to support this panel.

Sue Edwards
Health & Safety Panel Convener

Report from Senior Managers' Advisory Panel

The Senior Managers' Advisory Panel met regularly throughout the year. The regular attendance and contribution of Panel Members is appreciated as is the presence of the Union's senior officers. The Senior Managers' Advisory Panel provides a unique forum for debate and discussion and can have a positive impact on the way members can operate as senior managers in their schools and as officers of their local authorities. It is also unique in the way the union's senior officers engage in a positive manner with senior managers. This does not happen in other teaching unions.

Topics covered this year included the National Improvement Framework, Education Scotland, Benchmarks, Tackling Bureaucracy, teacher recruitment and the well-being of staff.

Following guidance from senior officers a number of changes have taken place this year. There is now greater collaboration between different panels providing a more joined up approach to the work of the Panels. This collaboration has included consultation and dialogue on reports and delivering professional learning. Working with the Health & Safety Panel members of SMAP have planned, and will deliver, a seminar for members. Hopefully, this approach will encourage more members to attend both the seminars and the panels themselves. In another small test of change SMAP now meets in the afternoon following a meeting of the Executive. This allows more senior officers to attend and also gives a clear link to the work of the Executive for the Panel.

Members of the Panel would like to thank John Crichton for his support and wish him all the best for his retirement.

Archie Bathgate
Senior Managers' Advisory Panel Convener

Report from the STUC Committee

Report on the STUC Conference, Aviemore, 24th-26th April 2017

You wait ages for a political leader to come along and then two turn up at the same time. So it was at the STUC conference this April in Aviemore. The first day was graced by the appearance of Nicola Sturgeon and Jeremy Corbyn. Something is clearly afoot, or perhaps they were simply snowed in. Unfortunately I was not present and can't report their speeches. I have a suspicion the weeks ahead will provide enough insight.

Tuesday's education day began with a thoughtful speech by Ken Loach, the film director, analysing social trends in modern, austerity Britain and the scapegoating of migrants, refugees and Muslims was evidenced. The implications of Brexit, socially and financially, was the focus of an excellent presentation by UCU. In Scottish Universities 16% of all staff are EU nationals, 23% of research only staff and 13,000 undergraduates. Scotland receives 111 million euros of research funding. The implications for Erasmus programmes, school trips, the recruitment and retention of teachers require investigation of such impacts against the potential detrimental effects on Scottish education.

The continuing impact of austerity and budget cuts featured in many motions. The British Dietetic Association highlighted the impact of food poverty and its implications for health and, for teachers, general wellbeing and a child's ability to learn. Cuts to educational funding was the thrust of an NASUWT motion which expressed deep concern that children and young people's educational entitlements were jeopardised. In this situation teachers were expected to plug gaps in schools caused by support staff reductions. Financial restrictions featured in an EIS motion reminding Local Authorities of their statutory duties to meet the needs of ASN children to access timely and accurate assessments for their learning needs.

The first of two SSTA motions dealt with Rights Respecting Schools. Kevin Campbell spoke to the motion regarding their importance, especially when human rights are under attack globally. The present anti-rights agenda that proposes withdrawal from the European Charter on Human Rights and repeal of the Human Rights Act, make it incumbent upon teachers to support actively the UNICEF Rights Respecting schools. Inclusiveness also featured in many motions. Community argued for equal access opportunities for disabled workers. In Scotland less than 1% of modern apprenticeships were undertaken by disabled people compared with 8% in England. Inclusivity was the basis for Ward McCormick's motion urging the Scottish Government to reform Scotland's commitment to reform gender recognition laws. It was important that priority be given to supporting young people to deal with the whole spectrum of LGBTI with enhanced resources and school personnel to support this need.

Mental health awareness in the workplace was again a concern. The rising incidence of mental health issues, resulting from demands placed on workers, and employers failure to act on signs was exacerbated by stringent policies. Staff being forced to turn up when at their most vulnerable is a concern for all.

In closing, something new to keep an eye out for: neurodiversity. What is it? It is the difference in the neurological make-up or brain wiring of a population and includes such conditions as Autism, Bipolar disorders, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, OCD and Tourette's. The Neurodiversity movement seeks workplace champions to support neurodiverse individuals. Watch this space.

Alan Johnston
STUC Committee Convener

Scottish Advisory Group for Relationships and Behaviour in Schools

(SAGRABIS)

This year the focus of the group has been:-

- **Behaviour in school's survey research (BiSSR).** This survey conducted by IPSOS-MORI looks at levels and types of behaviour in Scottish schools and examines changes over the last 5 years (since the 2012 survey). The survey was completed by a large sample of teachers, support staff and head teachers from all secondary schools and 871 primary schools (4157 responses which represented 48% of the sample). In summary, the survey results suggest that there has been little change in low level disruptive behaviour since 2012 in Scottish secondary schools but there has been an increase in incidents of verbal abuse towards support staff. The report makes suggestions about what factors influence behaviour in schools, such as levels of pupil engagement, digital technology, parent-child relations, school ethos etc.. The report identifies the most commonly used whole school approaches to behaviour management in schools and how effective school staff feel these are. School staff emphasised the importance of prevention rather than reactive strategies and on a whole school level feel nurturing and restorative approaches, and building pupil resilience and emotional intelligence are the most effective strategies for promoting positive behaviour. On a more operational level, school staff feel setting and reinforcing expectations, adapting approaches to suit different pupils' needs, consistency and fairness, and rewarding positive behaviour are effective strategies in reducing behavioural issues. The survey also highlights a difference in opinion between teachers and support assistants. For example, teachers generally feel more positive about pupil behaviour and feel that they have had adequate training in behaviour management compared with support assistants who do not. The final report should be available from May/June 2017.

The report also highlights a number of concerns that school staff feel could have a negative impact on behaviour in schools, such as, the availability of resources – teacher shortages, lack of supply cover, reduction in support assistants (particularly in ASN settings) and reduction of external supports.

- **'Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2' refresh.** The primary purpose of this document is to provide supporting guidance for local authorities and schools on the prevention and management of school exclusion in line with current legislation. Over the last 2 years this document has been redrafted in the context of implementation of GIRFEC, Children and Young Peoples Act (2014), NIF, Scottish Attainment Challenge, Building the Ambition and recent research. The Deputy First Minister has recently given approval for the guidance to include a section on restraint and seclusion, and in light of the Bailey Gwynne tragedy, guidance on how to manage violence or a situation which may involve a weapon. The final document should be available soon.
- **'Respect for ALL' (the government's anti-bullying guidance) refresh.** This document is being redrafted in light of changes in legislation and policy including UNCRC, Equalities Act (2010), Children and Young Peoples Act (2014), NIF, Scottish Attainment Challenge, Building the Ambition and recent research. The group are currently promoting a national approach towards anti-bullying which would stretch across all settings involving children and young people. The production of the document has recently been put on hold at the request of the Scottish Government to give the Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee time to provide input with regard to bullying and harassment in schools on grounds of protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010. No timescales have been given for it's production.

Other considerations of the group this year:-

In the October meeting the group received presentations from LGBT Youth and Stonewall Scotland. The presentations presented some alarming statistics:-

- 48% of LGBT students said issues not discussed in classroom
- 90% of teachers stated homophobic bullying took place to all pupils
- 44% of teachers are told not to discuss LGBT issues
- 80% of teachers have had no specific training
- 60% of LGBT students said bullying had an impact on their school work
- 23% of LGBT pupils have considered taking their own life and 53% have harmed themselves

LGBT Youth highlighted a number of areas that are currently being prioritised or should be prioritised by the Scottish Government:-

- All teachers to undertake training
- Supporting Transgender Young People in Education – guidance being produced
- Production and promotion of the RespectMe document (see above note)
- Expansion of Education Champions in LAs
- Awareness and training at Initial Teacher Education level
- Refresh the Toolkit (Education Scotland)
- Introduce a Professional learning programme and give support to staff in secondary schools (including a focus on school leaders)
- Inspection Framework should be used to gauge the impact in schools

In the March meeting the group received a presentation from Dr Gillian McCluskey (University of Edinburgh) on her research on school exclusion. The presentation made two key points:-

- Exclusion from school is likely to have a detrimental impact on a child's life chances, dislocating them from their peer group, depriving them from access to the mainstream curriculum and exposing them to serious risks of under-achievement, victimisation and offending, long term unemployment and poverty.
- If we can close 'the discipline gap' we make a significant contribution to closing the attainment gap.

The group also receives regular updates from Education Scotland on the various training programmes they run (Restorative and nurture approaches) or support (Mentor in Violence Prevention and Rights training) and the resources that they produce to promote positive behaviour in schools (many of which can be found on GLOW).

Janine McCullough
SSTA Representative on SAGRABIS

Report of the Scottish Joint Committee on Religious and Moral Education

To be tabled

SSTA Representative Mandy Davidson