

Minutes of the 37th ACCS Annual Convention 2019

Theme: Promoting Creativity and Engagement in Schools

The 37th ACCS Annual Convention took place in the Slieve Russell Hotel Golf and Country Club, Ballyconnell, Co. Cavan on Wednesday 27th to Friday 29th March 2019. It was attended by 191 delegates representing 86 schools.

The President Mr. Paul Fiorentini opened the Convention and welcomed all delegates.

Adoption of Standing Orders

Standing Orders for Convention were adopted on the proposal of Mr. Denis Ring (Blackwater Community School) and seconded by Ms. Noralene Ní Urdail (Beara Community School).

Appointment of Timekeeper

Ms. Elizabeth Tierney was appointed on the proposal of Ms. Mary Jackson (Ardee Community School) and seconded by Ms. Brenda Kelly (Holy Family Community School).

Appointment of Tellers

Mr. Frank Moran, Mr. Pat McKenna and Ms. Noreen Rafferty were appointed on the proposal of Mr. Jimmy Keogh (Coláiste Cholmille, Ballyshannon) and seconded by Ms. Mary Jackson (Ardee Community School).

Minutes of the 36th Annual Convention

The Minutes of the 36th Annual Convention 2018 were adopted on the proposal of Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt (ACCS Executive) and seconded by Ms. Noralene Ní Urdail (Beara Community School).

General Secretary's Report

The General Secretary, Mr. John Irwin, presented his report of the activities of ACCS during the past year as outlined in the Convention Handbook. In doing so he drew attention to a series of particular issues:

- The need to end the moratorium on the appointment of clerical and caretaking staff in schools.
- The appointment of additional Deputy Principals in schools with 700 plus enrolment and the promotion by ACCS/JMB/ETBI of the further extension of this facility to all DEIS Schools with 600 plus enrolment in the school year 2019/2020 and with 500 plus enrolment in the school year 2020/2021.
- The issue of teacher supply and its effect on schools. He outlined the efforts made by the Teacher Supply Steering Group, chaired by the General Secretary of the DES, to deal with the issue and recommended that all schools should, in so far as possible try to ensure that appointments made should be for the full 22 hours.
- The provision of capital funding for the maintenance of school buildings.
- The continued need for teacher and leadership training and its essential contribution to educational development.
- The engagement of Parents and Students in the continued development of our schools.
- Role of Boards of Management and the development of Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections.
- Expansion of the ACCS team. He welcomed the appointment of Data Protection Advisor, Ms. Hilary Treacy and Vetting Administrator Ms. Fiona Mac Cormac.
- The Dignity at Work Policy recently developed in collaboration with the Workplace Relation Commission and Trade Unions to deal with conditions of work.
- The particular contribution to our schools of state bodies such as the State Claims Agency (SCA) and the Financial Services Support Unit (FSSU) and the Schools Procurement Unit (SPU).
- The importance of autonomous voluntary Boards of Management in leading schools within their communities consistent with the ACCS

motto “Your School, Your Community” and the essential service of ACCS training programmes, Publications, Website and continued advice and guidance in assisting Boards of Management.

The General Secretary’s report was adopted on the proposal of Mr. David McEvoy (St. Attracta’s Community School) and seconded by Ms. Eileen Salmon (Pobalscoil Rosmini).

Honorary Treasurer’s Report

The Honorary Treasurer’s Report and the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December, 2018 were presented by Mr. Paul Thornton (Honorary Treasurer). He drew attention to the decision of the Executive to introduce a catering charge for those attending ACCS Continuous Professional Development courses. This charge was considered essential to meet the cost of these courses.

The Treasurer’s Report was adopted on the proposal of Mr. John McKennedy (St. Colmcille’s Community School) and seconded by Mr. Peter Keohane (The Donahies Community School).

The Auditor’s Report (as circulated) was adopted on the proposal of Ms. Nuala Fox (St. Kilian’s Community School) and seconded by Mr. David Gray (St. Patrick’s Comprehensive School, Shannon).

McFeely and McKiernan were re-appointed as Auditors for ACCS for the coming year on the proposal of Mr. Patsy McVicar (Pobalscoil Chloich Cheannfhaola) and seconded by Mr. David Hayes (Malahide Community School).

Human Resources Manager’s Report

The ACCS Human Resources Manager’s Report was presented by Ms. Anne Marie Dillon (Human Resources Manager, ACCS) and adopted on the proposal of Mr. Paul Mulhern (St. Mark’s Community School) and seconded by Mr. Diarmuid Ó Murchú (Trinity Comprehensive School, Ballymun).

Election of President 2019/2020

Mr. Paul Fiorentini (Carndonagh Community School) was nominated for the office of ACCS President for 2019/2020 by 61 Boards of Management. His appointment was approved on the proposal of Mr. Martin Farren and seconded by Ms. Kathleen McKeague (Carndonagh Community School).

Navigating the Landscape and Not Just Dancing in the Dark

This entertaining and informative presentation was made by “The Real” Mr. David Cameron. Mr. Cameron has fulfilled a large number of important roles in the education service in Scotland. He has worked regularly with schools alongside many of the best practitioners in the world of education and training.

He presented Convention with a wide range of ideas on the role of schools in the development of students in a changing world. Delegates were presented with challenging thoughts on the need for change in the management of schools and on the relevance of the current curriculum and school life – “Enough change, Time to make a difference”!!



The Real David Cameron.

Election of the 2019/2020 ACCS Executive Committee

Constituency meetings were convened for the election of area representatives on the incoming Executive Committee.

The following were elected:

CITY AND COUNTY OF DUBLIN	Mr. Pat McKenna Ms. Brenda Kelly Ms. Elizabeth Tierney
LEINSTER	Mr. Paul Thornton Ms. Geraldine Keena Ms. Mary Jackson
MUNSTER	Mr. Dermot Healy Mr. Denis Ring Ms. Noralene Ní Urdail
CONNACHT	Mr. Adrian Jackson Mr. Michael Brett
ULSTER	Mr. Patrick McVicar Mr. Jimmy Keogh
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS	An t-Úas. Tomás Ó Nidh Mr. Craig Petrie
CO-OPTED	Mr. David Leahy Mr. James Duignan

ACCS Sub-Committee Reports

Chairperson: Mr. Paul Thornton (ACCS Executive)

Report of ACCS Continuous Professional Development Sub-Committee 2018/2019

Presented by Ms. Áine O'Sullivan, Assistant General Secretary and adopted on the proposal of Ms. Maria Barry (St. Wolstan's Community School) and seconded by Mr. John McKennedy (St. Colmcille's Community School).

Report of ACCS Constitution and Convention Sub-Committee

Presented by Mr. James Duignan and adopted on the proposal of Ms. Geraldine Keena (Gallen Community School) and seconded by Mr. Frank Moran (Killinarden Community School).

Report of ACCS Education Sub-Committee

Presented by Mr. Paul Crone and adopted on the proposal of Mr. Joe Sweeney (Coláiste Chiaráin) and seconded by Ms. Brenda Kelly (Holy Family Community School).

Report of ACCS Further Education Sub-Committee Report

Presented by Ms. Áine O'Sullivan, Assistant General Secretary and adopted on the proposal of Ms. Maria Barry (St. Wolstan's Community School) and seconded by Mr. John McKennedy (St. Colmcille's Community School).

Report of ACCS Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Sub-Committee

Presented by Mr. Paul Thornton and adopted on the proposal of Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt (St. Mark's Community School) and seconded by Mr. John McKennedy (St. Colmcille's Community School).

Report of ACCS In-School Management Task Group

Presented by Mr. Denis Ring and adopted on the proposal of Mr. Jim Twohig (John the Baptist Community School) and seconded by Mr. Adrian Jackson (Carrick-on-Shannon Community School).

Report of ACCS Special Education Needs Sub-Committee

Presented by Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt and adopted on the proposal of Ms. Mary Jackson (Ardee Community School) and seconded by Mr. John McKennedy (St. Colmcille's Community School).

Report of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) 2018

Presented by Ms. Áine O'Sullivan, Assistant General Secretary and adopted on the proposal of Ms. Maria Barry (St. Wolstan's Community School) and seconded by Mr. John McKennedy (St. Colmcille's Community School).

Report of the Teachers Conciliation Council

Presented by Mr. John Irwin, General Secretary and adopted on the proposal of Mr. Denis Ring (Blackwater Community School) and seconded by Mr. Adrian Jackson (Carrick-on-Shannon Community School).

Report of ACCS School Building Projects Advisor

Presented by Mr. Jim Twohig, ACCS School Building Projects Advisor and adopted on the proposal of Mr. Joe Sweeney (Coláiste Chiaráin) and seconded by Ms. Noralene Ní Urdail (Beara Community School).

Report from the Teaching Council 2018

Presented by Mr. John Irwin, General Secretary and adopted on the proposal of Mr. Denis Ring (Blackwater Community School) and seconded by Mr. Adrian Jackson (Carrick-on-Shannon Community School).

Report from the Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU)

Presented by Mr. John Irwin, General Secretary and adopted on the proposal of Mr. Denis Ring (Blackwater Community School) and seconded by Mr. Adrian Jackson (Carrick on Shannon Community School).

Report from the State Claims Agency

Presented by Mr. John Irwin, General Secretary and adopted on the proposal of Mr. Denis Ring (Blackwater Community School) and seconded by Mr. Adrian Jackson (Carrick-on-Shannon Community School).

Convention 2019 Motions

1. Due to an improvement in the Economy, the Government has lifted the moratorium on some appointments and promotions within the DES. We propose that the ACCS negotiate with the DES to lift the moratorium on appointments of Administration Staff, Caretakers and Cleaners. This will alleviate a major problem which has arisen in many Community Schools.

St. Brendan's Community School, Birr

Proposed by Mr. Denis Magner (St. Brendan's Community School) and seconded by Mr. Malachy Molloy (Carrick-on-Shannon Community School).

The motion was adopted unanimously

2. That ACCS calls on the Department of Education and Skills to revise the current leadership and management arrangements to allow schools, when interviewing, to create an order of merit for AP1 or AP2 posts which would allow for the appointment of staff to such vacancies as arise on a temporary or permanent basis during a given school year.

East Glendalough Comprehensive School

Proposed by Mr. Craig Petrie (East Glendalough Comprehensive School) and seconded by Mr. Adrian Landan (Ashton Comprehensive School).

An Amendment to delete the words “or permanent” from the text was proposed by Mr. John Irwin, General Secretary and seconded by Mr. Joe Sweeney (Coláiste Chiaráin). This amendment was adopted.

The amended motion:

“That ACCS calls on the Department of Education and Skills to revise the current leadership and management arrangements to allow schools, when interviewing, to create an order of merit for AP1 or AP2 posts which would allow for the appointment of staff to such vacancies as arise on a temporary basis during a given school year.”

was adopted unanimously.

School Governance

Chairperson: Mr. Adrian Jackson (ACCS Executive)

Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection Model

Mr. Brian Mac Giolla Phádraig, Divisional Inspector, Department of Education and Skills presented to Convention an overview of the recently introduced procedures for Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections.

He outlined the obligations of schools in implementing the procedures contained in the 2017 “Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools” and the essential features and procedures of the Inspection model.

Evaluation of Provision for Students with Additional and Special Educational Needs in Post-Primary Schools.

Ms. Maria Lorigan, Senior Inspector, Department of Education and Skills presented to Convention an outline of the new model for the assessment of students with Special Educational Needs and for the provision of necessary resources to schools to meet those needs.

She noted the recent publication of “Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools - Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools” and the overall responsibility of all teachers in the implementation of the Guidelines.

The Chairperson Mr. Adrian Jackson thanked both speakers for their contribution and noted the circulation to all delegates of Powerpoint documents outlining their presentations.



Adrian Jackson, ACCS Executive, Antoinette Nic Gearailt, former ACCS President, Maria Lorigan, DES, Paul Fiorentini, ACCS President, Brian Mac Giolla Phádraig, DES, Aine O'Sullivan, Assistant General Secretary, ACCS, John Irwin, General Secretary, ACCS.

Panel Discussion on Promoting Creativity and Engagement in Schools

Facilitated by Ms. Áine O'Sullivan, Assistant General Secretary, ACCS

Ms. Frances Neary, Principal and Ms. Fiona Gallagher, Deputy Principal of Trinity Comprehensive School, Ballymun gave an inspiring presentation on Art in Education and its Place in Trinity Comprehensive School. They outlined the "Arts Guarantee" project in the school and the engagement of pupils and staff at all levels in the use of the School Library, Art, Music and Drama.

Mr. Barry Peak, Learning and Practice Officer, Young Social Innovators outlined the work of his organisation on the involvement of students in the development of a future just and equal society.

"The Real" Mr. David Cameron re-emphasised the issues raised in his previous presentation regarding the investment of school in the development of students, in a true commitment to learning and in the necessary change in school culture required for the future.

Ms. O'Sullivan engaged in further discussion with the panel on the subjects raised. Delegates expressed their thanks and appreciation of the presentations.



David Cameron, Fiona Gallagher, Deputy Principal, Trinity Comprehensive School, Áine O'Sullivan, Assistant General Secretary, ACCS, Frances Neary, Principal, Trinity Comprehensive School and Barry Peak, Learning and Practice Officer, Young Social Innovators.

Presidential Address Convention 2019

The Minister for Education and Skills, Mr. Joe McHugh, T.D. attended the Presidential address together with senior members of staff in the Department of Education and Skills. All were welcomed by the Chairperson Mr. James Duignan, ACCS Vice President.

Presidential Address by Mr. Paul Fiorentini, President ACCS

Mr. Fiorentini welcomed all delegates and guests to Convention. He extended a particular welcome to the Minister, Mr. Joe McHugh and to the officials from the Department of Education and Skills. He expressed the appreciation of ACCS for their continued engagement with and support for the Association.

He continued his address with a comprehensive review of the many relevant issues which have engaged our schools during the course of the past year.

He particularly referred to:

- The development of the curriculum to meet the current development of society. In particular he referred to the Junior Cycle curriculum



Paul Fiorentini, ACCS President and Minister Joe McHugh.

reform and the prospective reform of the Senior Cycle.

- The challenge of serving on a school Board of Management and its commitment to the local community.
- Teacher Supply as highlighted many times at Convention.
- Provision for Special Needs Education and the profiling of school needs.
- The need to address the moratorium in the provision of appropriate clerical/administrative and caretaking support for schools.
- The training and continuous professional development of teachers.
- The contribution of ACCS, it's staff and the variety of voluntary committees to the support of Community and Comprehensive Schools.

Mr. Fiorentini presented the policies (priorities) of ACCS in addressing these and many other issues. His address was acknowledged by all and a presentation was made to him on behalf of the Association.

Address by the Minister for Education and Skills Mr. Joe McHugh, T.D.

Mr. McHugh thanked the President for his comprehensive address and the many current issues raised which require attention in schools.

He acknowledged the pressing issue of teacher supply as raised by the President. He noted the large number of Irish teachers who are working in other countries and who would dearly wish to return home. However, the difficulty of gaining employment commensurate with their present positions and of finding appropriate living conditions is a major problem for them and consequently for Irish schools. He emphasised the need for the DES and School management bodies to work together to seek appropriate solutions to this issue.

He further urged school managements to avail where possible of the "shared teacher scheme" which may go some way towards alleviation of the problem. He further acknowledged the issue of unequal pay for newly qualified teachers and indicated his intention to do all possible to rectify the situation.

He referred to the need for school leadership to engage in the necessary change to meet the future needs of students. He outlined a number of sources of training which have been made available for school leaders to meet this need.

The Minister referred to the DES Capital Works programme and set out plans for the continued development of additional schools and acknowledged the need for additional funds to meet the demands of schools for repair and maintenance work. He assured Convention that the Summer Works scheme will soon invite applications from schools.

He drew attention to the greatly increased participation of students in many issues of national significance and encouraged schools to support and promote such activities among their students. He noted, in particular, the recent campaign by students regarding climate change and the need for greater effort on the part of Irish authorities. He outlined current arrangements to support a number of schools to improve their energy efficiency.

He referred to the current activity of his Department in the provision of ICT and modern technology resources for schools and emphasised the effect of this provision and the work of teachers in preparing students for their future environment. He noted also the recent changes in Junior Cycle curriculum and its influence on present day Senior Cycle development.

He referred also to the continued development of the Irish language. The Department of Education and Skills is aiming to ensure that Irish remains as an active constituent of the curriculum at junior and senior level and that it is encouraged as an everyday language rather than a purely academic one. It is envisaged that appropriate supports will be available to schools in the continued promotion of the language.

He acknowledged the concern of ACCS regarding the moratorium on the employment of Secretarial and Caretaking staff in our schools. He announced that this moratorium is relieved, with immediate effect, for schools with an enrolment of 700 or more. This relief will apply to 37 Community and Comprehensive Schools.

He emphasised the continued effort of his Department to support the education of children with special educational needs. Recent initiatives have been welcomed and he promises to continue his efforts in this regard.

The Minister thanked ACCS for the opportunity to address the convention and promised his continued support for the Association.



Paul Fiorentini, ACCS President and Minister Joe McHugh.

ACCS Banquet Reception

On the evening of March 28th all delegates, together with guest representatives from the Department of Education and Skills, School Management Organisations and other relevant bodies were invited to a formal reception and banquet.

The banquet was preceded by an excellent and enjoyable musical recital by students of Mount Temple Comprehensive School. Presentations were made to Mr. Michael Moriarty, Former General Secretary, ETBI, Mr. Ted Owens, Former Chief Executive, Cork ETB, Ms. Gemma D'Arcy, Lead Risk Manager, State Claims Agency and Ms. Connie Carolan, former Hon. General Secretary of PACCS.

Open Forum – Current Issues

Chairperson: Mr. Paul Fiorentini, President ACCS

Panel:

- Mr. John Irwin, General Secretary, ACCS
- Ms. Áine O’Sullivan, Assistant General Secretary, ACCS
- Ms. Anne Marie Dillon, Human Resource Manager, ACCS

Current issues were outlined which are under consideration by ACCS.

1. Proposed changes in the recording and distribution of examination information.
It is proposed that student examination information will be entered by teachers on the local computer system and that such information will be automatically uploaded to the P-Pod system. Secretarial staff will not be required to access the P-Pod system. The implementation of this proposal will be discussed with DES.
2. Upgrading of the system for appealing of Junior Cert and Leaving Cert results.
It is expected that the time limit for the publication of Leaving Cert result appeals will be reduced by 20 days to ensure that such appeals are taken into account in the allocation of CAO offers.
It is under consideration that the publication of Junior Cert results may be deferred until October mid-term break.
3. Timing of Junior Cycle SLAR meetings in school time.
DES is currently in consultation with Teacher Unions re SLAR meetings and the reduction in tuition time which arises from them.
4. New Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection Model (CPSI).
Attention was drawn to the recently announced CPSI model of DES inspection. The additional responsibilities of teachers in meeting the needs of this procedure were noted. It is suggested that its details may be considered in the upcoming ACCS Education Conference
5. Teacher Supply.
The issue of teacher supply was further addressed. Possible actions were considered while noting the difficulties faced by the DES in implementing possible solutions to the issue. The necessity that schools should, in so far as possible, ensure that advertised teaching positions are for the full 22-hour allocation was emphasised.
6. Assessment Procedures.
The need to reconsider the current procedure for the assessment of students was debated. The possible continued assessment over the school year was suggested as a possible relief of the stress imposed on students in the present system. It was further noted that the present system is particularly unfair to students who may suffer illness or tragic events at the time of the present examinations. It was suggested the views of students should be noted in consideration of this issue.
7. Celebrating our Schools.
It was noted that ACCS is currently attempting to celebrate the achievements and activities in our schools. Schools are asked to send information on particular school events and achievements to Head Office for inclusion in the ACCS Newsletter.
8. Financial Services Support Unit (FSSU).
Attention was drawn to the increased workload arising from essential developments introduced by FSSU in the management of school finances particularly in the context of the moratorium on the appointment of Secretarial staff. The introduction of new measures to deal with these issues was particularly welcomed.
9. Wellbeing.
The NCCA is actively considering support mechanisms for the wellbeing of students as a particular consideration for all schools. The subject will form part of the agenda for the upcoming ACCS Education Conference.
10. Deputy Principal Appointments.
ACCS is actively seeking the appointment of a second Deputy Principal in all DEIS Schools.

Humanology: A Scientist's Guide to our Amazing Existence

This presentation was delivered by Professor Luke O'Neill who holds the chair of Biochemistry at Trinity College and is an elected Fellow of the Royal Society.

In a very entertaining and interesting presentation he outlined a scientific view of the source and development of human life and of our world. He provoked deep thought on "where we came from, where we are and where we are going". His presentation title is also the title of his acclaimed publication "*Humanology: A Scientist's Guide to our Amazing Existence*".



John Irwin, General Secretary ACCS, Paul Fiorentini, President ACCS, Professor Luke O'Neill and Áine O'Sullivan, Assistant General Secretary, ACCS.

Concluding Remarks

Mr. Paul Fiorentini, President ACCS, thanked all members for their participation in Convention and assured them of the continued dedicated effort of the Executive and Staff of ACCS in the coming year.