

Minutes of PACCS 21st Annual Conference held on 4th & 5th March 2005 in Breaffy House Hotel, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.

Theme: Parents.....An Underused Resource in Education.

Jim Jackman, Vice President opened Conference and introduced Mr. Sean Staunton, Editor of Mayo News who addressed the Conference.

Mr. Sean Staunton delivered the opening address to Conference. When asked to address the question of whether parents are an underused resource he said he had never made a conscious decision to become involved in his children's education and had no five or ten or even twenty-year plan. He went on to say that he was first and foremost a parent and has watched his children go through primary, secondary and third level and one has now re-entered education as a teacher. He has also served on various boards of management and committees and as a politician for many years has developed an understanding of the issues that drive people and inspire their passion and fury. He went on to say that he hoped that he had also developed an understanding that resolution can be reached if people are open to the views of others.

He concluded by commending PACCS and their predecessors on the work over the past twenty-two years.

Minutes of Conference 2004 were presented; they were proposed for adoption by Tommy Walsh and seconded by Christopher Taitt.

Treasurer's Report was then given. This was proposed for adoption by Pat Murphy and seconded by Teresa Byrne. The Secretary's Report was then given. This was proposed for adoption by Pat Murphy and seconded by Ann Kelly.

Roll call was taken. Standing Orders was proposed for adoption by Humphrey O'Riordan and seconded by Grace Mooney.

The constitutional motions were then taken as per our timetable.

The evening session concluded. A Buffet followed.

Jim Jackman, Vice President and P.R.O. welcomed everyone on Saturday morning and referred to the theme of the conference. He said never in the history of education has there been a greater need of parents but sadly it has to be said that by and large parents are less involved. There are many and varied reasons for this and maybe we as parents should take some of the blame as if we are prepared to hand over the education of our children lock stock and barrel to the state as if we had no role to play whatsoever in aiding and helping our young people to reach adulthood, one can understand why the situation is the way it is.

However that is the past – we are here today in Castlebar from the four corners of Ireland and let us make this a Conference one to remember and go away knowing in our hearts that parents do have a vital role to play in our Children's education.

Conference broke into three groups to attend the workshops:

1.

Health Matters for Teenagers – Kate Fahey – The report on this was Ann Leamy.

Committee Skills – Pat O'Dwyer – Sean Staunton reported on this workshop.

Parents regaining their influence – Jim Jackman and Teresa McDonagh.

Reports from these workshops were given later in the day.

The President, Humphrey O'Riordan then gave his address.

He opened his speech with a welcome to all the parents to conference and said that PACCS has fulfilled an important role in presenting the views of parents in the C & C sector since its foundation in 1983.

He spoke of the students' councils and that nearly 70% of the schools in our sector now have active students' councils. Parents need to work closer with these councils to help each other achieve their goals.

He referred to the loss of teacher contact time in our schools due to in-service and said this could not continue and a way must be found whereby this in-service could be done at week-ends or during school holidays.

The other issues he addressed the delegates on were under performing teachers, the fact that we were still waiting to have parents on Boards of Management of the Comprehensive schools and the important issue where some students due to illness or close family bereavement do not complete their leaving certificate and to date no solution has been found. But, he said, these were issues that PACCS would continue to pursue until we had reached a solution.

He thanked the delegates, observers and guests for their attendance and referred to the increase in schools being represented at this conference and concluded with what he felt was a good definition of a successful life:

To laugh often and much;

To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life breathed easier because you lived.

Eleanor Petrie, President of NPCpp gave the keynote address. She outlined her vision of how far parents and parent associations have come since their beginnings. There was a very positive response to her speech. (A full report is on our Website.).

The incoming Executive was then ratified.

Dublin: Jim Jackman, Coolmine

Mary Hughes, Coolmine

Teresa Byrne, Rosmini

Valerie Burke, Ballinteer

Noreen Duggan, Tallaght

Marion Stewart, Old Bawn

Southern: Humphrey O'Riordan, Millstreet

Mary Shannon, Carrigaline

Pat Murphy, Boherbue

South East: Margaret Molloy, Gorey

Margaret Donohoe, Gorey

Mid West: Teresa McDonagh, St. Patrick's, Shannon

Ann Leamy, Cashel

Mary Reidy, Crescent

Tommy Walshe, Moate

Donegal: Christopher Taitt, Carndonagh

Sean Staunton, Ballyshannon

North East and West – Names to be advised.

Humphrey O'Riordan was elected president for a further year. He was proposed by Gerard Horgan and seconded by Eamon Shannon.

Carmel Kelly then addressed conference on the use of the Library in our schools.

Jim Jackman then addressed the conference.

'**Safe Pass**'. Eddie Colfer, President of PAVSCC outlined details of this and how it affects our students who wish to obtain work experience or summer work.

The remainder of the motions was taken as per timetable.

Conference closed. A Reception and Banquet was held in the hotel where PACCS were joined by their guests.