



National Association of COMPASS

Co-operation of Minority Religions & Protestant Parent Associations (Post Primary)

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Secretary's Report for Academic Year 2018-2019

Church of Ireland Board of Education Seminar and Service of Choral Evensong

The year commenced with the bi-annual Church of Ireland Board of Education Seminar which was attended by four members of the Executive. This event was entitled *Quo Vadis?* was on the role of Church of Ireland/Protestant Second Level Schools in a changing Ireland. The speakers on the day were Professor Annette Scheunpflug – Chair of the Education Foundation and Centre for Global Learning in the University of Bamberg. Also Andy Wolfe – Deputy Chief Education Officer with the Church of England's Foundation for Education Leadership. Both talks were extremely interesting and informative.

One of Compass Executive Committee Members, Dr Nita Mishra, after attending this Seminar wrote an academic paper which was published entitled:

Mishra, N (2019) 'Long Walk of Peace: Missing Dimensions', Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review, Vol. 28, Spring, pp. 108-127

The seminar was preceded by the annual service of Choral Evensong for the Opening of the Academic Year in St Patrick's Cathedral.

Executive Committee

The Chairperson of PTAs/PAs received a letter from our President, Patrick Empey, last September to briefly mention a few developments that had taken place and some that were likely to take place. Schools were advised that some of the Executive had been contacting all schools in order to update our records and identify a reliable line of communication between Compass and the school. One of the main items in the letter was advising that National Parents Council Post Primary (Npcpp) had undertaken considerable work revising its governance and operations in order to better fulfil its mandate and establish a more professional structure. Compass is the link between PTAs/PAs, Npcpp and the Department of Education. Considerable work had been done by Npcpp in advocating for the Parent Student Charter (which is now in the final stages of legislative procedures). The last item in this letter referred to Affiliation Fees. In light of the Compass Executive receiving the assurance that financial affairs within the Npcpp were in order Compass advised all our member bodies to remit the annual affiliation fees to Npcpp directly.

The Executive Committee (which comprises of eleven members) had four (quarterly) meetings. A lot of time at these meetings this year was taken up with the New Npcpp Constitution to ensure our Organisation was catered for in any changes that were going to be made. Compass had four Executive Members elected as Directors of Npcpp and two of these served on the Npcpp Constitution Review Group. The Executive also discussed the matter of outreach to our schools which has been impeded/affected by GDPR. A working group was formed to

work on a presentation on Compass for information for our schools (this is the presentation that was used at the EGM). We have also encouraged parents to complete surveys in relation to Schools costs and RSE subject review. Shane Bennett also completed a paper on the area of Grinds. Our Interactive Meeting this year was kindly hosted by Dr Gash and the PTA of Midleton College which was much appreciated. The Speaker on the day was Brendan Dennehy (facilitator, trainer, author and Npcpp Director) who spoke on *Your Parental Wellbeing and its' impact on your Children*.

In May of this year our President again wrote to the Chairperson of PTAs/PAs advising that given the significant changes taking place in Npcpp our AGM would be deferred and instead an EGM was held on the 25th May. Fourteen of our twenty-nine schools confirmed their attendance. The meeting informed those present of exactly what Npcpp does and the role Compass has as a conduit and secondly the opportunities a restructured Npcpp will present for those that wish to engage.

National Parents Council Post Primary

For the last academic year Compass had four Directors on the Board. They attended monthly Board Meetings and Directors were also involved in various working groups and sub-committees. They also represented Npcpp at various meetings with various partners in Education and other bodies.

Obviously the workings on the New Constitution took up a serious amount of time and input from those concerned. One the biggest changes as a result is the restructuring is bringing the number of Directors down from 20 to 12. Each of the four constituent bodies being represented by four members.

The Organisation itself provides

- Day to day information and support for parents
- Training and information sessions for Parents
- Oireachtas Representation and Lobbying
- Researched and informed policies and positions
- Informed representative and spokesperson on issues e.g. DES, NCCA, Teaching Council, Teachers Unions and IEPA.
- Evaluation and consultations towards positive change
- Professional and cohesive representation for parents
- Support for unique concerns of constituent bodies

One of the main events is the Leaving Cert Helpline which is run annually in August. This is supported by the Department of Education and the Irish Independent and manned by the Irish Guidance Counsellors.

The Annual Conference was held on 13th October and the theme was 'Parents your voice in Education'.

The cost of schooling has been high on the Agenda with a submission being made to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills. There were also Directors who have been involved in discussions with the school book publishers.

The Spring Seminar on 'Building Resilience' was held on 27th April.

Directors have also been actively involved in discussions regarding HPV Vaccine.

Don't forget our website is www.compassparents.org and email address is parentline365@gmail.com

Julie Carr
Secretary