



FORSÅ



**EDUCATION
DIVISION**

2019-2021
Biennial Conference

AGENDA

9th April 2021

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Conference timetable

09.00	Registration opens	14.20	SNA duties: Motion 5
10.30	Conference opened by Cathaoirleach	14.30	SNA application form: Composite motion 2
10.40	Adoption of general standing orders	14.35	Guest speaker
10.45	Standing Orders Committee reports	14.55	General terms and conditions: Motions 8 to 14 (motions 8 to 11 should be taken in common debate)
11.00	Video presentation	15.15	General terms and conditions: Motions 16, 18, 19 and 23 to 25
11.05	Fórsa President's address to conference	15.35	Schools completion programme: Motions 26 and 27
11.15	Cathaoirleach's address to conference	15.40	Address by John Boyle, General Secretary, Irish National Teachers' Organisation
11.25	Declaration of outcome of election results	15.55	Video presentation on Strategic Organisational Review Project
11.30	Guest speaker	16.00	Front line staff: Motions 28 to 30
11.50	Address by Andy Pike, Head of Fórsa Education Division	16.10	School secretaries' contract: Motions 31 and 32
12.05	Report of Divisional Executive Committee	16.20	Technological university governance: Motion 34
12.30	Covid-19 vaccinations: Composite motion 1	16.30	National issues: Motions 35 to 39
12.40	Boards of management: Motion 1	16.50	Closing business
12.50	Distinguished service awards	17.00	Conference closes
13.00	Conference adjourns		
14.00	Conference resumes		
14.00	Special Education Needs: Motion 2		
14.10	Special Leave: Motions 3, 4 and 33		

Standing Orders Committee

Civil Service Division

Helen Lundy

Education Division

Eileen Coman

Audrey Warren

Health and Welfare Division

Gerry Foley (Chairperson)

Jennifer Verling

Local Government and Local Services Division

Rose Marie Conroy (Returning Officer)

Stephen Murphy

Municipal Employees' Division

Thomas Kavanagh

Michael Kieran

Services and Enterprises Division

Anna Farrell

Teresa Kearns (Vice-Chairperson)

General standing orders for conference

1. These standing orders shall be read in conjunction with the constitution of the union. If there is conflict on meaning then the constitution shall prevail. ***They should also be read in conjunction with guidance to be distributed on the manner in which conference 2021 will be managed.***
2. The Standing Orders Committee shall recommend the timetable for Conference and the order in which motions and amendments submitted shall be taken. When the time allotted to a group of motions has elapsed, the chairperson shall allow the debate in progress to finish. S/he shall then proceed to the next group of motions, thus guillotining any remaining motions in the current section. Such guillotined motions may be taken up by the chairperson later in Conference as time permits. Otherwise they are automatically referred to the appropriate executive committee.
3. Unless otherwise decided by Conference, only one motion may be before Conference for discussion at any time.
4. Individual motions and amendments should be proposed by a speaker from the appropriate executive committee or from the branch which gave notice of the motion or amendment. Where no delegate of that branch is present, the motion may be proposed by any other member of Conference. In the case of motions in common debate, all motions and amendments shall be deemed to be formally proposed, unless the Conference has been given advance notice that the proposer of a motion or amendment does not wish it to be proposed. There is no requirement for any motion or amendment to be seconded. Once the agenda has been adopted, motions may only be withdrawn with the agreement of conference.
5. Only members of conference as defined by Rules 16(i) and 20(ii) of the equivalent grade committee representatives as defined in Rule 25(ii)(e) of the Constitution may address conference¹. This rule shall not preclude the Standing Orders Committee from making recommendations to conference, which shall be considered immediately by conference.
6. Unless otherwise agreed by conference, no member shall address conference unless s/he is proposing or speaking to a motion or amendment or
 - (i) is raising a point of order; or
 - (ii) is raising a point of fact; or
 - (iii) is delivering the chairperson's address.
7. All speakers should address conference only when asked to do so by the chairperson, and should announce her/his name and branch or committee. The proposer of a motion shall speak for not more than four (4) minutes, and all other speakers shall have not more than three (3) minutes. Members of the relevant Executive Committee and members of staff will be limited to three (3) minutes when clarifying points or answering questions.

1 In accordance with rule 20(iv) and with the exception of the casting vote of the conference chairperson, only delegates and members of the divisional Executive Committee may vote at conference.

8. Where several motions and/or amendments submitted deal with the same topic, Standing Orders Committee may produce a composite or comprehensive motion. If it is not possible to do this, there may be a common debate on the issue covered by the group of motions and/or amendments. The first speaker on behalf of the proposing branch or the first speaker on behalf of the DEC in the case of motions proposed by the DEC shall be deemed to be the proposer of the motion. Each proposer shall have a maximum of four (4) minutes. In the subsequent debate, no-one may speak more than once, but each speaker may refer to any of the motion(s)/amendment(s) then before conference, up to a maximum of three (3) minutes. Proposers of motions taken in common debate shall, subject to the discretion of the conference chairperson, have the right of reply but only in respect of the motion proposed by her/him and the right of reply shall be strictly confined to answering previous speakers on that motion and/or where clarification has been sought and the proposer shall not introduce any new matter into the debate. When the chairperson is satisfied that sufficient time has been allowed for debate, each motion and/or amendment shall be voted on separately in accordance with the relevant Standing Orders Committee report.
9. Amendments to amendments may not be moved, even under the terms of Rules 17(ix) and 21(ix) of the constitution.
10. Except as otherwise provided, no member of conference shall speak to a motion more than once. For the purpose of this standing order, an amendment to a motion and a motion which has been amended shall each be considered to be a new motion.
11. Subject to the discretion of the conference chairperson, the proposer of a substantive motion, not in common debate, shall have a right to reply immediately before the motion is put to conference, provided that opposition has been expressed or clarification has been requested. However, the right of reply shall be strictly confined to answering previous speakers on that motion and/or where clarification has been sought and the proposer shall not introduce any new matter into the debate. The proposer of an amendment shall not have a right of reply.
12. The following types of motion may be moved at any time:
 - i. Motion to “refer to the National Executive Committee or Divisional Executive Committee.” The chairperson of conference will then ask the proposer of the motion or amendment if s/he agrees. If not, there will be a short debate on the motion to refer, before conference decides the issue by voting. If the motion to refer is defeated, the original debate will continue.
 - ii. Motion “that the question be now put.” This motion may only be put to conference if the chairperson is satisfied that a reasonable amount of time for debate has been allowed. If the chairperson is so satisfied, the motion shall be put without discussion.
 - iii. Motion “that conference proceeds to next business.” After this motion has been moved the proposer of the motion/amendment under discussion has the right to speak briefly against the procedural motion, which shall then be put without further discussion. If it is defeated, debate shall continue on the original motion/amendment.
 - iv. Motion to “suspend standing orders.” Such a motion shall state the purpose and period of time for which standing orders shall be suspended. This procedural motion must be passed by three-quarters of the delegates present and voting to be adopted.
13. If two or more members of conference wish to speak, the chairperson will call on the members whom s/he first observes, except that when a member of the Standing Orders Committee proposes to speak, s/he shall be the next to speak.
14. If, in the opinion of the chairperson, grave disorder has arisen, s/he may at her/his discretion, adjourn the meeting for a specified time.
15. Mobile phones may not be used while conference is in session.
16. No literature, other than conference documents – agenda, minutes and reports – may be circulated to the conference without the express advance approval of conference by a simple majority of delegates present and voting.

Electronic voting arrangements

Elections to divisional officer, executive and SOC positions 2021

1. Following a decision by the NEC, the 2021 elections to divisional officer, executive and SOC positions are being conducted through electronic ballots, which will take place in advance of conference.
2. Under rule, branch voting entitlements are set on the basis of branch membership in the division as a proportion of total divisional membership. This is calculated on the basis of branch membership on 31st December 2020. Details of individual branch voting entitlements were sent to branches by email on 3rd March 2021, with a 12th March 2021 deadline for the submission of queries or challenges.
3. The entire branch voting entitlement for the elections will be allocated to a single branch principal delegate, who will receive unique voter codes. These will be sent via email to the principal delegate's email address, as provided to the union by the branch. It is, therefore, essential that the names and full contact details of principal delegates are submitted to the relevant head of division as requested.
4. Under rule, members of each DEC are also entitled to vote. They will also receive a unique voter code, which will be sent via email to the email address provided to the union by the DEC member.
5. Each division will have up to five separate elections (the precise number depends on the number of nominations to positions):
 - a. Chair/Cathaoirleach
 - b. SOC members
 - c. Vice Chair/Leas Cathaoirleach
 - d. Divisional Executive Committee members
 - e. Third seat on NEC.
6. The names of nominees for the positions, and the numbers of positions available, are set out in the provisional agendas and final agendas.
7. The (up to) five elections in each division will be held sequentially, so that principal delegates and DEC members know the outcome of each contest before the next commences. Where appropriate, the electronic ballot papers will be amended to reflect the outcome of previous elections and (where possible) any withdrawals from contests.
8. A ballot timetable was circulated to Branches.
9. Each principal delegate will be circulated with a number of unique voter codes that reflects the branch voting entitlement. For example, if the branch is entitled to 20 votes, its principal delegate will receive 20 unique voter codes. This allows for principal delegates to divide their votes among candidates if they want to.

10. Once the unique voter codes are despatched, responsibility for their safety and security passes to the principal delegate or NEC member.
11. The same unique voter codes should be used in each separate election within each division. They can only be used once in each separate election. (Note that it will be possible to cut and paste the codes into the appropriate place on the electronic voting platform.)
12. Principal delegates and DEC members will receive email notification, and a link to the voting platform, as each separate election opens. In any case, they should familiarise themselves with the ballot timetable set out below.
13. The PR method used in the ballot is exactly the same as that used in previous Fórsa elections for officer, executive and SOC positions. It is the Seanad Éireann PR election system.
14. The electronic voting platform has been established, and is operated by, an external independent supplier called Mi-Voice, which is registered in the UK and Ireland and used by scores of Irish and UK-based trade unions. Mi-Voice is a UK-Government approved trade union scrutineer with years of experience operating in a legal environment that requires all significant union ballots to be conducted by independent third parties.
15. It is a secret ballot. Neither candidates, branches, principal delegates, DEC members nor union officials and staff will receive any data on whether or how individual branch votes are cast. The only data available will be aggregate data on the outcomes of each election and (where relevant) its individual counts.
16. The outcome of each election will be made known to candidates in the first instance. Branches will then receive the results prior to the commencement of the next election. The outcome of all the ballots will be declared at the appropriate divisional conference.
17. The departures from normal election procedures are prompted only by the extraordinary restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. They do not represent any new precedent or permanent departure from normal conference or electoral procedures and practices.

Proportional representation system

There are various different electoral systems used in different countries and organisations to achieve what are considered in those areas to be democratic outcomes. The UK has the first past the post system in single seat constituencies where the person with the largest vote – even if well below 50% – gets elected. In France, there are often two rounds – the first to eliminate those other than the top two – and the second round where one candidate must get a majority to win. In Ireland, we have multi-seat constituencies with a system of proportional representation (PR) with transferable votes. This applies if your first (or second etc.) choice is not elected or is elected with a surplus of votes. The ‘left over’ votes are then transferred to other candidates of your choice. There are some differences between the PR system used for Dáil elections and those used for Seanad elections – where the Panel elections and University Seat elections use further variations of the PR system. Some years ago, the former IMPACT decided on a hybrid version close to the Seanad Panel election system where each vote is treated as being equal to 1,000 votes. CPSU and PSEU operated broadly equivalent arrangements. While the Fórsa system is designed specifically for NEC and DEC elections it can be used for elections at branch and other levels. Branches and vocational groups are, of course, free to use any of the other Oireachtas models of PR should they wish.

Ballot paper

In any election it is important that the ballot paper is accurate, with candidates listed in alphabetical order (by surname, then first name).

While the ballot paper may give instructions as to how to vote (eg mark, 1, 2, 3 etc. opposite each candidate in order of your choice), the ballot paper may not contain any advice or recommendation as to who to vote for.

All ballot papers should have security features. This applies especially where postal ballots are used or when voters have possession of ballot papers for a period before the vote. Security features could include a ‘punched’ watermark, different coloured ink/paper, signatures of returning officers and/or other features that make them difficult to reproduce.

The system of distribution of ballot papers must also ensure that only those eligible to vote receive ballot papers, and that nobody can receive more than one ballot paper. The ballot papers should be placed in a sealed box, which is stored safely until the count. Postal ballots received should be placed on arrival in the count centre in a sealed container. It is essential that the ballot paper cannot identify the voter.

Returning Officer

A Returning Officer, preferably agreed, should be appointed in every case as decisions may be required in relation to

- The validity of ballots
- The order of distribution of surpluses or
- The elimination of candidates or
- In relation to requests for recounts.

While the Returning Officer may be assisted by various scrutineers (vote counters), only the Returning Officer can make decisions. Everyone else is there to assist only.

Valid ballot papers

One of the first jobs of the Returning Officer is to identify any spoiled or invalid ballot papers. The latter includes 'forgeries' or any ballot paper that does not carry the security marks. All photocopies of ballot papers are considered to be invalid.

Spoiled votes are those where the ballot paper either does not contain any votes (but might include uncomplimentary remarks) or does not clearly indicate a preference (eg more than one candidate with the same preference or 'X' etc. marked against them). A ballot paper may be deemed valid for the first or second preferences but invalid for subsequent counts (eg ballot paper marked 1, 2, 3, 3, 3. This identifies the first two preferences but not subsequent preferences).

First count

All of the valid ballot papers are sorted into parcels according to first preference vote. Each ballot paper is given a value of 1,000.

The quota

The quota is calculated by adding all of the valid first preference votes and dividing that number by the number of places to be filled plus one (ignoring any fractions), and then by adding one to the result. For example, if the number of valid votes was 100,000 (100 votes at value of 1,000 each) and the number of seats to be filled was 4, the quota is 20,001 ie $[100,000 \div (4+1) + 1]$.

Once a candidate reaches or exceeds the quota, on the first or subsequent counts, that candidate is elected. It is not possible, using this quota system, for more candidates to be elected than the number of places to be filled.

Distribute or eliminate?

The biggest causes of confusion in the PR system are:

- To decide whether to distribute one or more surpluses or to eliminate the lowest candidate(s), and
- If a surplus is to be distributed, how to calculate this and which votes, physically, are transferred.

In one-seat elections, eg union president, treasurer, chairperson of division, this is easy. If one candidate exceeds the quota (50% plus 1 in this case) he/she is elected. If no candidate reaches the quota, then the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated. More than one candidate may be eliminated at the same time; if for example, the total of the bottom two candidates does not exceed the votes of the next highest candidate.

In the single seat election, the lowest placed candidates are eliminated in order and their second preferences (or third preferences etc., if their second preference candidates are already eliminated) are transferred until one candidate either reaches the quota or only two candidates remain in the race. In the latter situation the candidate with the highest vote is deemed to be elected without reaching the quota. The ballot papers to be physically transferred in the case of eliminated candidates are the actual ballot papers showing the next highest preference. Where there is no remaining preference, then the vote is non-transferable.

However, where there is more than one position to be filled, the position becomes more complex.

In multi-seat elections (eg union vice president, 'ordinary' DEC members), the likelihood is that a number of candidates will exceed the quota on the first count. The surpluses in these cases may be very small in each case. The issue for the Returning Officer is to decide whether to eliminate one or more candidates or whether to distribute the surplus(es).

The Returning Officer will distribute the surplus(es) where the total value of all surpluses to be distributed exceeds the difference in votes between the lowest two candidates. This may alter the order of these lowest candidates and in particular the order in they might be eliminated or moved up the list. The Returning Officer will distribute all surplus(es), (where available) before anybody is eliminated. When each surplus is distributed the lowest candidate will be eliminated.

The order in which surpluses are distributed is as follows:

- The greatest surplus is distributed first.
- If there are two or more surpluses that are equal the first to be distributed is the surplus that arose on the earliest count.
- Where this is also equal the surplus to be first distributed is that of the candidate with the highest first preferences.
- If all of these are still equal, the first surplus to be distributed is that of the candidate who was first ahead of the other candidate at the first count at which they were unequal.
- If there was no such count (eg first count surplus only to be distributed) then the Returning Officer shall decide by lot* which surplus to distribute first.

The order in which candidates are eliminated is as follows:

- The candidate with the lowest vote (total original and transferred) is first eliminated.
- Where two or more candidates equally have the lowest vote, the candidate who is first eliminated is that who received the lowest first preference votes.
- Where these are equal, the first candidate to be eliminated is that which was lowest at the first count at which they were unequal.
- Where these are equal (or cannot arise, as in the first count) the Returning Officer can exercise judgement based on a scrutiny of the preferences cast, however if the judgement of the Returning Officer is that they are still equal he/she shall decide by lot* which of them is to be eliminated first.

Where the votes of the lowest two or more candidates together with the total surpluses to be distributed does not exceed the votes of the next highest candidate, these may all be eliminated together.

*For the avoidance of any doubt "by lot" means a first preference paper of each equal candidate is placed in a hat and one is drawn out. The remaining paper (NOT the paper that has been drawn out) is the candidate to remain in the election.

Physical transfer of ballot papers

Where a surplus is to be distributed, the number of second preference (or next highest preference votes if the second preference is already elected or eliminated and so on) is calculated and the ballot papers are placed in bundles by reference to the second (or next highest preference vote as the case may be). Non-transferable votes (if such exists) are placed in a separate bundle. A ballot paper is non-transferable if it does not indicate a preference for a remaining candidate (eg there may not be any second or later preference indicated or any such candidate(s) may be already elected or eliminated).

The value of each bundle of votes is calculated by assigning a value to each vote by reference to the proportion of the surplus votes (of the elected candidate whose surplus is being distributed). These bundles (of ballot papers) with the 'adjusted' value written on the top are then physically transferred to the bundle of the appropriate candidate's first and any other transferred votes.

Where a candidate is eliminated their second preference votes (or remaining preferences as appropriate) are transferred to the remaining candidate who is named next highest on their list of preferences. Each of these transferred votes (if original votes or votes already valued at 1,000 from other eliminated candidates) is valued at 1,000 each, exactly the value as if they were first preference votes. This does not apply where the eliminated candidates' votes contain original and transferred "surplus" votes.

The value of each of the transferred "surplus" votes in this case is based on the value allocated at the time of the transfer. The other original votes and preference votes (but not those not containing "surplus" votes - see last paragraph) transferred from other eliminated candidates are valued at 1,000 each.

Elected without reaching the quota

Where at the end of any count the number of remaining candidates equals the number of vacancies remaining to be filled, they are deemed to be elected even if they have not reached the quota.

Where there is only one vacancy remaining and the highest placed candidate cannot be overtaken by any other remaining candidate (even if the next highest placed candidate were to receive the total value of any undistributed surpluses and the votes of all candidates to be eliminated) then that candidate is deemed to be elected.

Result sheet

The Returning Officer should complete the result sheet as the election proceeds showing:

- (1) The total number of votes cast.
- (2) The number of spoiled votes.
- (3) The total valid poll.
- (4) The number of seats to be filled.
- (5) The quota.
- (6) The list of candidates and their votes, showing transferred votes etc., at each count.

This result sheet should be made available to all candidates and everyone else with an interest in the outcome of the election eg a copy could be posted in the count centre, conference hall, etc. The Returning Officer will make the result sheet available to the candidates, and respond to any queries they may have, prior to making it available to others with an interest in the election.

Re-count

The conference election procedures do not specifically provide for re-counts.

However, the Returning Officer may at any time during the count require a re-count of some or all of the ballot papers if he/she has any reason to be concerned that an error may have been made.

There is no specific provision for candidates to seek a re-count either in part or in total. However, a Returning Officer would be required to have regard to any points made by candidates as to why a full or partial re-count should take place when deciding whether to order such a recount, eg if a clear error was spotted, where in the judgement of the Returning Officer the votes are close enough for any possible error to have a material effect on any outcome.

It would generally be useful to agree the timescale within which candidates could seek a re-count. This is required for very practical reasons, including that the conduct or outcome of later elections may be dependent on the outcome of the election in dispute, eg at union conference the vice president elections are not held until the presidential and treasurer election results are known. The security of the ballot papers is also an important factor if there were delays in holding a recount. As such, any requests for re-counts should preferably be made before the declaration of the results.

Fórsa conference election procedures

Rule 19 covers the divisional executive and its officers.

The election of the chairperson or Cathaoirleach is straightforward. A standard PR STV election is conducted and the winner is elected.

Following that election, any candidates from the winner's constituency for the positions of vice-chairperson or leas-cathaoirleach are excluded from the election and any preferences voted for any such candidate move to the next preference. However there is a possibility that two candidates from the same constituency could be 'elected' in the vote for vice-chairpersons or leas-cathaoirleach. In that event, the last candidate elected from a constituency that has had a candidate already elected shall be replaced by the last eliminated candidate from a constituency that has not had a candidate elected.

If a vacancy subsequently arises in the office of chairperson or cathaoirleach, it shall be filled by the election by the DEC of a vice-chairperson or leas-cathaoirleach. In turn, the Divisional Executive shall elect a member of the Divisional Executive to fill that vacancy of a vice-chairperson or leas-cathaoirleach from the constituency of the original chairperson or cathaoirleach in order to fulfil the requirement regarding the three officers coming from different constituencies.

Rule 23 covers the National Executive and its officers. The president, treasurer and three vice-presidents must be from different divisions.

The election of the president is straightforward. A standard PR STV election is conducted and the winner is elected. Following that election, any candidates from the president's constituency for the position of treasurer are excluded from the election and any preferences voted for any such candidate move to the next preference.

The election of the treasurer is also straightforward. A standard PR STV election is conducted and the winner is elected. Following that election, any candidates from the treasurer's and president's constituencies for the positions of vice-presidents are excluded from the election and any preferences voted for any candidates move to the next preference.

However there is a possibility that two or three candidates from the same constituency could be 'elected' in the vote for vice-president. In that event, the last candidate elected from a constituency that has had a candidate already elected shall be replaced by the last eliminated candidate from a constituency that has not had a candidate elected. In the event that this does not satisfy the rules, then the second last candidate from a constituency that has had a candidate already elected shall be replaced by the last eliminated candidate from a constituency that has not had a candidate elected.

When a vacancy arises in the office of president, it shall be filled by the senior vice-president.

When a vacancy arises in an office of vice-president, subject to the requirement that the president, treasurer and three vice-presidents must be from different divisions, the rule prescribes that it shall be filled by the person who, in the election held at the previous biennial meeting of the union conference, most closely failed to be elected, provided that, when there is no such person, the vacancy shall be filled by the election of a member by the National Executive.

Standing Orders Committee report No.2

This report is a consolidated report including Standing Orders Committee Report No.1.

1. Conference timetable

The foregoing timetable for conference is recommended.

2. General standing orders

The foregoing General Standing Orders are recommended.

Where branches or the DEC have queries or wish to seek changes to General Standing Orders or to SOC reports they are asked to raise these in writing (soc@forsa.ie) with the SOC as soon as possible and in any event not later than one week prior to conference.

3. Motions received

Forty (40) motions were received by the deadline and thirty-eight (38) are included on the agenda.

4. Motions considered as out of order

Two motions are considered to be out of order, as such, at this stage. The SOC has adjusted the union terminology in some to make them in order. A number of motions were considered by the SOC to be more appropriate to the national conference and this is indicated on the agenda.

5. Advisory motions

In accordance with the rule, and until otherwise determined by national conference, each divisional conference shall determine policy on pay, conditions and other matters affecting only the members in the division. However, divisional conferences may also consider other matters provided that they are not matters which are of sole concern to the members of another division or which conflict with policy as previously determined by the union conference. Decisions of divisional conference in relation to such matters have the status of recommendations to the National Executive who shall decide on any action to be taken.

Where a motion covers a matter that has, or could have, both divisional and central (ie, more than one division) dimensions, it is recommended that unless the substance or text of that motion clearly requires otherwise, it should be presumed that it is intended by the proposers as a matter for action at divisional and not at central level within the union. As such, motions in this category would not be deemed to fall into the category of advice to the NEC. However, such motions cannot be portrayed as deciding anything other than divisional policy on the issues covered.

6. Amendments received

No amendments were received and no amendments were received late.

7. Composite motions/amendments

Two composite motions are included on the agenda.

General Standing Orders No.8 provides that the SOC may produce a composite or comprehensive motion where several motions or amendments submitted deal with the same topic. A composite motion is where the main items in the motions on the same topic are combined within it, while a comprehensive motion is one that is fully inclusive of all of the separate elements of each motion on the same topic. In general, the SOC tries to use the text of an actual motion submitted as the text for a composite motion rather than to draft a separate text.

8. Common debates

It is recommended that the following motions be taken in common debate:

Motions 8, 9, 10 and 11.

9. Guillotined motions

These will be taken during conference at the end of other sections if time permits, with the balance, if any, of guillotined motions being taken at the end of conference.

It is recommended that guillotined motions be taken in the order they were guillotined, with all guillotined motions in a section being completed before moving to the next set of guillotined motions.

10. Emergency motions

Branches are asked to advise the SOC of any emergency motions as soon as possible so that these might be included in a Standing Orders Committee report to conference. Notice of a proposed emergency motion in the name of the Divisional Executive Committee was received as follows:

Emergency Motion Number 1

Conference notes that since the Covid-19 Pandemic arose the role of Special Needs Assistants has been the subject of intense debate and public comment. SNAs were firstly offered up for transfer to the HSE as Healthcare Assistants in March 2020 and latterly SNAs were then unfairly blamed by policy makers for the failure of ill thought through plans to reopen SEN services as per normal in January 2021. Throughout the pandemic SNAs have worked to support students in new and innovative ways. SNAs were more than willing to support students through HSE Disability Services during the first lockdown and in were willing to return to in-person services in schools as soon as the necessary health and safety issues were addressed during the second lockdown. The designation of SNAs as essential staff confirms that they are critical to the provision of education to thousands of students in our schools who have additional needs. Conference calls on the incoming EDEC to make clear to Government that it is now time to recognise the essential and critical role of SNAs by addressing the outdated conditions of service, raising the minimum essential qualification and for the first time providing SNAs with genuine career progression.

The Standing Orders Committee do not believe that the subject matter of the motion is such that timely notice could not have been given in accordance the provisions of rule 17 (ix) and the timetable for the submission of motions for inclusion in the agenda of the meeting. Accordingly, the SOC cannot recommend its inclusion in the business of the meeting.

11. Withdrawal of motions

Branches are asked to advise the SOC of any motions that they wish to withdraw so that these can be included in a Standing Orders Committee report to conference. Forms are appended to withdraw motions and nominations at the rear of this booklet.

12. Officer elections and votes

The outcome of the elections held in advance of Conference will be declared to Conference by Returning Officer Rose Marie Conroy.

13. Conference votes

Guidance on the conduct of votes at the conference will be circulated separately to delegates.

14. Standing Orders Committee

The Standing Orders Committee for the Education Division will be Audrey Warren and Eileen Coman. However, these will be assisted by other members of the national SOC as necessary at the divisional conference.

Nominations

Cathaoirleach/Chairperson (1)

Noreen O'Mahony (Munster SNA)

Nominating branch

Connaught/Ulster SNA
Munster SNA
NDNL SNA
School Completion Programme
SDSL SNA

Leas Cathaoirleach/Vice-Chairperson (1)

Claire Keaveney (NDNL SNA)

Eilise McGarrell (Connaught/Ulster SNA)

Ursula Cox (Higher Education)

North Dublin/North Leinster
Connaught/Ulster SNA
Munster SNA
Higher Education

Divisional Executive Member (13)

Anne Marie Melia (NDNL SNA)

Annette Murphy (SDNL SNA)

Cáit Ní Mhurchú (School Completion)

Claire Keaveney (NDNL SNA)

Eilise McGarrell (Connaught Ulster SNA)

Joan Regan (NETB)

Kathleen O'Doherty (School Secretaries)

Ursula Cox (Higher Education)

Connaught/Ulster SNA
South Dublin/South Leinster
School Completion Programme
North Dublin/North Leinster
Connaught/Ulster SNA
NETB
Connaught/Ulster SNA
Munster SNA
School Secretaries
Higher Education

3rd Seat - Divisional Representative on NEC (1)

Joan Regan (NETB)

Kathleen O'Doherty (School Secretaries)

Nominating branch

NETB
Munster SNA

Standing Orders Committee (2)

Anne Marie Melia (NDNL)

Audrey Warren (SDSL)

Clare Keavney (NDNL)

Eileen Coman (NETB)

Connaught/Ulster SNA
Munster SNA
South Dublin/South Leinster
North Dublin North Leinster
Munster SNA
NETB

Motions

Composite Motion 1 covering motions 7, 20, 21 and 22: North Dublin/North Leinster SNA Branch and South Dublin/South Leinster Branch

Conference calls on the Divisional Executive to urgently seek clarification as to when special needs assistants will receive the Covid-19 vaccination. The schedule produced by Government does not state when SNAs will be vaccinated nor does it appear to give SNAs sufficient priority. SNAs are required to work closely with students and cannot practice social distancing when attending to or caring for students who may have complex needs. Many SNAs have underlying health conditions that place them at high risk should they contract Covid-19. SNAs are now working alongside nurses and other healthcare staff who have all received the vaccine and yet there is no date on which this will be made available to them. As the Government has designated SNAs as essential staff it is imperative that the vaccination programme for SNAs commences without further delay to ensure all SNAs are vaccinated as soon as possible. This is the single most effective measure that could be taken to ensure our schools stay open during the pandemic.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 1: Munster SNA Branch

We call on our trade union Fórsa to pursue our request with the Department of Education and Skills to have Special Needs Assistants included in the Government Manual as a suitable staff representative alongside their teaching colleagues, this in turn would allow us the opportunity to be considered as NTS Reps on the Board of Management.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 2: Munster SNA Branch

We are all aware of the continuing problems for children with special educational needs and their parents who cannot access a school placement. This is a breach of Ireland's obligations under the UN Convention for the Rights of the Disabled, which guarantees children with a disability the right to receive an inclusive education. We call on Fórsa to engage with the Government to increase access to SEN school placements by increasing investments in staffing, training and infrastructure to ensure all our children have access to education in their local community. School places for SEN students must be available in every local community as a right.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 3: Munster SNA Branch

We call on the union to address the issue of members who have a long term illness or disability having to use their sick leave to attend hospital appointments and we call on Fórsa to address the requirement for SNAs to be Garda Vetted for every school they work or provide substitution in.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 4: Munster SNA Branch

We call on the union to address the issue of bereavement leave for SNAs. It seems unfair when teachers get one day to attend the funeral of an aunt or uncle but they are not listed as being allowed for an SNA.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 5: Munster SNA Branch

In the month of June post-primary SNAs do not have students to assist outside of state examinations. During this time we are asked to and sometimes feel obliged to carry out unnecessary and inappropriate work. We ask that Fórsa address the need for SNAs to be in the school if there is no appropriate work available.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Composite motion 2 covering motions 6 and 17: Munster SNA Branch and North Dublin/North Leinster SNA Branch

Conference calls on the Divisional Executive to seek a revision to the standard SNA application form. The current form is so short and restrictive that it does not permit a candidate to set out in full the knowledge, skills and experience that makes them suitable for the position. The lack of space afforded implies that it is not important for schools to seek or obtain this information from potential candidates. This is another example of the low esteem in which SNAs are held by the Department of Education and could be easily rectified by redesigning the form to allow SNA candidates to set out in full the information that they believe makes them suitable for the post.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 6: Munster SNA Branch

We call on Fórsa to request a review of the SNA standard application form currently in use by the Department of Education. Its brevity implies that the knowledge and experience of potential candidates are not worth expanding on.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 7: South Dublin/South Leinster Branch

The annual general meeting seeks to have Fórsa have educational staff prioritised for access to the Covid-19 vaccine in the same manner as other frontline workers. As special needs assistants we work intimately with vulnerable children and want to see our schools stay open, however we also wish to have a safe work environment as is our right under the Safety Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005 and to work without the undue stress that we have endured to date.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 8: South Dublin/South Leinster Branch

As Fórsa enters the Workplace Relations Commission and the pay talks this annual general meeting mandates Fórsa to seek to negotiate a properly equitable contract for special needs assistants that recognise the value of the work we do through better pay, terms and conditions and job security.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 9: South Dublin/South Leinster Branch

As Fórsa enters the Workplace Relations Commission and the pay talks this annual general meeting mandates Fórsa to seek the abolishment of the 72 hours from our contracts of our employment due to the high levels of inappropriate work that we are forced to undertake and the extra work expectations that this bank of hours creates for special needs assistants.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 10: South Dublin/South Leinster Branch

As Fórsa enters the Workplace Relations Commission and the pay talks this annual general meeting mandates Fórsa to seek parity and recognition with teachers for the training we undertake in the form of EPV days.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 11: South Dublin/South Leinster Branch

As Fórsa enters the pay talks and the significant review of the SNA contract committed to in the new pay deal Fórsa should seek to address the lack of equal opportunities for transfer of special needs assistants as other public sector workers enjoy. Such workers can relocate to do the same job in other employment while special needs assistants currently cannot move to another school to work without breaking their service. This motion does not seek transfer of seniority but is seeking freedom to change other school/employment without losing service.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 12: South Dublin/South Leinster Branch

Following on from the 2020 summer provision scheme this delegate conference mandates Fórsa to seek pay parity with teachers in the provision of the above scheme commonly known as July provision. The inequality that exist based on the current scheme as introduced by the Department of Education unfairly places the expectation of an identical service on special needs assistants as on teachers in the minds of the parents of vulnerable children. A special needs assistant should not face reputational damage by not partaking in the service when asked while being at a financial disadvantage for doing identical work if they do. There are not two levels of July provision, only one for which the pay must be equal for all providers. Should the Department of Education not accede to this point and insist that there is a difference then such differences in the provision by special needs assistants and teachers must be made entirely clear to parents availing of this service.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 13: South Dublin/South Leinster Branch

As Fórsa enters the pay talks and the significant review of the SNA contract committed to in the new pay deal Fórsa should seek to address and correct the discrimination that exists in the school work place setting with respect to redundancy payments. Compared to teaching staff special needs assistants are at a disadvantage as the scheme under which teachers operate allow for the carrying forward of accrued redundancy entitlements should they take up employment in another school, this facility is not open to special needs assistants and parity should be sought.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 14: South Dublin/South Leinster Branch

That this delegate conference seeks a review of the grievance and disciplinary procedure governing special needs assistants to remedy the inherent deficiencies in said Department of Education and Skills grievance and disciplinary procedures. Primarily that on the conclusion of any disciplinary procedure and irrespective of the outcome there is no recourse open to the respondent to complain and seek redress about undue and unfair procedural matters which may have arisen during the course of a disciplinary action. At present it is prohibited to do so. This conference proposes that an ombudsman (person) is appointed with statutory powers to investigate current and historical complaints arising from investigative and disciplinary procedures under 0072/2011 as is the case in other sectors of the public service.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 15: NETB Branch

We call on conference to recognise the increasing demands being placed on our members in respect of the growing number of returns being requested by multiple Government departments. These requests for data entail huge amounts of work by our Members and often come with unrealistic deadlines for return.

We ask that the Education Division seek to ensure either sufficient additional staffing is provided prior to any request for data or that members are properly remunerated to carry out these additional duties with the provision of more realistic timeframes for completion.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 16: North Dublin/North Leinster SNA Branch

The minimum qualifications of 3 Ds in the junior cert or equivalent does not represent the vast majority of SNAs. These minimum entry qualifications are outdated and diminishes the role SNAs have in their schools. Conference requests that Fórsa continue to voice our objections to these requirements and demand that the role require a minimum entry qualification of QQI level six.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 17: North Dublin/North Leinster SNA Branch

Conference calls on Fórsa to request that the standard application form for SNAs to be amended. This form perpetuates everything wrong with how we treat staff and gives the absolute wrong impression to SNAs newly applying to the role.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 18: North Dublin/North Leinster SNA Branch

Conference requests that the union set up a mentoring program for new SNAs. It is to especially assist new SNAs in small schools or one person schools. The mentor can be in a different school. This mentor would give support on union issues, as well as issues that often come up for new SNAs, such as challenging behaviour. Once a consent and GDPR box has been ticked in the membership form the Equality Officer can allocate a mentor that has already volunteered to help. The mentor does not have to be a rep or branch executive member.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 19: North Dublin/North Leinster SNA Branch

Conference asks Fórsa to explore the issue of voluntary redundancy for SNAs. SNAs serving for many years should be given the option to accept voluntary redundancy when a school has to 'let someone go'. In some cases those who are newly employed would be happy to stay on and a longer-serving SNA may be happy to leave.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 20: North Dublin/North Leinster SNA Branch

Conference asks that all school staff be vaccinated alongside doctors and medical staff as we are now front line workers.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 21: North Dublin/North Leinster SNA Branch

Conference asks Fórsa to ensure SNAs who are at high risk of contracting Covid-19 19 are given priority to the C19 vaccine.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 22: North Dublin/North Leinster SNA Branch

Conference requests that Fórsa actively seek clarification on when SNAs will be vaccinated. SNAs have continued to work through very stressful and high risk situations during the Covid-19 pandemic. The classification of who will be prioritised for vaccination is unclear. SNAs could fit into at least three of the classifications. SNAs need to know exactly when we will be vaccinated.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 23: North Dublin/North Leinster SNA Branch

Conference asks that Fórsa work to end the reasons for pension poverty that affects many of its members. Pension poverty affects many members. The majority of those affected are women who temporarily gave up paid employment for family reasons. Some employments eg SNAs pensions are wholly inadequate to support any standard of living. For example after working for 18 years an SNA receives €57 per week pension. This cannot be allowed to continue and conference asks that Fórsa seek to have the pensions of lower paid workers improved.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 24: See 'motions deemed to be out of order' below.

Motion 25: Connaught/Ulster SNA Branch

Conference asks Fórsa to seek CPD days for SNAs who complete further education courses relevant to our role with a resolution on this by the end of June 2021.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 26: Schools Completion Programme Branch

Conference notes that at the heart of the School Completion Programme, is a person-centred approach, with the ability to be flexible and responsive to the needs of young people and respectful of the rights and dignity of children, families and personnel. These are core values of the School Completion Programme. This conference calls on DES to support local programmes in continuing to meet the needs of young people while encouraging and supporting front line workers.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 27: Schools Completion Programme Branch

This conference calls on the Department of Education and Skills to restore the School Completion Programme budget to allow the programme implement necessary supports for young people experiencing educational disadvantage. In particular, we call on the department to fully utilise the resource that SCP is across the schools system in supporting young people impacted by Covid-19 school closures.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 28: Schools Completion Programme Branch

This conference calls on the Department of Education and Skills to prioritise the well-being of staff working on the frontline of education during the Covid-19 crisis. The demands made on all education workers have been immense and the needs of staff should be listened to, understood and appropriately addressed going forward.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 29: Schools Completion Programme Branch

This conference calls on the Government to immediately address the deficits in services to meet the mental health needs of young people. The Covid-19 crisis only highlighted what frontline workers in education have been seeing for years, that there is insufficient funding for services to address the wellbeing of young people experiencing mental health challenges. We call on the Government to look again at how services can be delivered in a child friendly and timely way so as to adequately meet the needs of young people going forward.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 30: Schools Completion Programme Branch

This conference calls on all education workers to unite in seeking fair and just terms and conditions for all staff working to support young people and in supportive services across the education sector. Following the Covid-19 crisis we hope that both the Government and general public see the value and necessity of the diverse range of services provided in education and value our public services appropriately.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 31: School Secretaries Branch

As Fórsa enters the Workplace Relations Commission to negotiate a new, standardised contract of employment for school secretaries this divisional conference mandates our negotiators to seek uniformity of terms and conditions with our colleagues who are department paid for currently grant paid school secretaries relating to pay, pensions, leave and other associated benefits and recognition as public service employees.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 32: School Secretaries Branch

That this divisional conference mandates Fórsa to seek continuous and ongoing training in order to create uniform and standard training for school secretaries in order that they be able to meet the increasing technological challenges and changes facing them in their working lives as it has become obvious (during this Covid-19 period), that ongoing training in digital platforms/digital communication with parents/digital document distribution/saving has become a vital necessity to the school secretary role.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 33: Higher Education Branch

Conference calls on the DEC to pursue with the Department of Higher and Further Education the issuing of the circular on bereavement leave as agreed at the WRC.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 34: Higher Education Branch

Conference calls on the DEC to seek a review of the Technological University Act with a view to amending the governing body representation as it is clearly demonstrates inequality and lack of acknowledgement of value and professionalism of the professional management, and support staff in our technological universities.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motions appropriate to national conference

Motion 35: NETB Branch

Conference calls on the DEC to seek parity for all new entrants and align annual leave entitlements to those of their colleagues.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 36: Higher Education Branch

Conference calls on the DEC to pursue the removal of the recently introduced 28-day cap on Covid-19 special leave with pay, as it will severely disadvantage those employees who may have utilised their sick leave in the previous four-year rolling period.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 37: North Dublin/North Leinster SNA Branch

Conference notes that Long Covid-19 or complications of Covid-19, which manifest weeks or months after the initial infection. As it stands today, if someone returns to work after Covid-19 they are not recognised at any higher risk than the rest of the population of a re-emergence of the infection, but it is well documented that there are potential long term effects suffered by people who've had Covid-19.

When someone has complications at a later stage, they have no access to Covid-19 leave/payment. They must use up any sick leave they may have left, which can run out pretty quickly leaving the person with no payment from the DES. This despite them getting themselves deemed fit and putting themselves out there on the frontline for the greater good. SNAs are being put under undue financial and mental and physical stress if this is let continue.

Conference asks Fórsa to please seek recognition for these conditions which are no fault of their members but which may affect many of us during the course of our work. Conference also asks that Fórsa lobby the department for access to Covid-19 leave and payment in these circumstances. Conference thanks Fórsa for their representations throughout this pandemic this far.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 38: North Dublin/North Leinster SNA Branch

Conference calls for Fórsa union to petition the Government to remedy the situation regarding the marriage bar. Some of our female members are retiring and have previously worked for the civil service. They have a reduced pension because they were not allowed to work once they got married. This was clearly discriminatory and should be rectified immediately.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 39: Schools Completion Programme Branch

That this conference recognises the right of all employees to be treated with dignity and respect and that they should work within a safe working environment, which is free from bullying and harassment.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motions deemed to be out of order

These motions are regarded as out of order as their meaning is unclear or they are not framed in the form of a motion.

Motion 24: Connaught/Ulster SNA Branch

Conference seeks that Fórsa trade union address the need for anyone wanting to return to work as an SNA to have at least full Level 5 qualification to change on the standard circular over 15 years old must change and a full qualification must be requested.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

Motion 40: North Dublin/North Leinster SNA Branch

To address the shortfall in pensions for SNAs on junior infant hours, a person on a junior infant contract works bell to bell.

Withdrawn Amended Carried Not Carried Remitted

EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2021

Motion, amendment
and nomination
withdrawal forms

Fórsa education conference 2021

Motion, amendment and nomination withdrawal form

.....Branch wishes to withdraw:
[Please use BLOCK capitals]

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Signature of principal delegate	
Date	Time
SOC signature	Date Time



Fórsa education conference 2021

Motion, amendment and nomination withdrawal form

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Fórsa education conference 2021

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Fórsa education conference 2021

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Fórsa education conference 2021

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