

Annual Conference Resolutions 2001

Secondary Education

A1. Conference emphasises that selection in secondary education is not confined to the continuance of grammar schools and the 11+ but is a cardinal feature of the Government's flagship policy of creating and extending specialist schools. Conference demands that the Government ends this anti-comprehensive policy and extends to all secondary schools the privileged funding now accorded to specialist schools.

Max and Margaret Morris (Haringey SEA)

A2. SEA condemns the Government's failure to eliminate selection at 11 in those large areas of England where it still exists, despite its recognition that selection at 11 is divisive, unfair and has an adverse effect on educational standards.

The ballot system is designed to maintain the status quo and actually makes it more difficult to change the organisation of education after the age of 11. It deplores the government's proposals to extend selection by increasing the number of specialist schools and calls on the Government to abandon these plans, substituting for them proposals to enable all secondary schools to be funded and staffed to at least the same level as specialist schools but offering excellence in all subjects.

Tony Pearce (Stoke and Staffordshire SEA)

A4. This conference must immediately reiterate to the Labour Government its alarm regarding proposals to increase the number of religious schools which separate children and infringe teacher's rights to apply for a job at any state school.

If this trend continues (which the Tories refused to follow) the whole education service will degenerate into sectarianism and further confuse admission policies throughout the country.

Bob Tutton (Reading SEA)

Relations with the Government

B1. SEA welcomes the appointment of Estelle Morris as Secretary of State for Education and looks forward to a full discussion with her on the Labour Party and SEA's policies.

Peter Holland (Stoke/Staffordshire SEA)

B.2. The Socialist Education Association welcomes the recent declaration by the new Secretary of State for Education to establish a partnership with teachers ; requests that she and her Ministers will thus engage in regular conversations with this Association concerning the means of delivering the commitments made in the election Manifesto of 2001 towards our common concern for supplying the varying needs of each pupil and the creation of optimum educational and social environments most suitable for their progress

Nigel Spearing

C. Conference notes the widening gap between its policies and those of the government. It also notes the progressive nature of the educational policies of the Liberal Democrats which appear much closer to the policies of SEA. It calls upon the NEC to undertake a fundamental review of the role of SEA, including its relationship with the Labour Party, and to report back to the next Conference.

Tony Pearce

Performance Related pay

F. SEA calls upon the Government to abandon performance —related pay for teachers for the following reasons:

- a) it has generated an enormous amount of bureaucracy, increasing the already unrealistic workload of teachers.
- b) it has placed even greater power in the hands of headteachers
- c) In spite of the ‘moderating’ role undertaken by CLA, there are wide variations in the success rate from school to school
- d) The cost has been totally out of proportion to the supposed benefits
- e) It has failed to raise morale or improve teacher recruitment. Those who have been successful resent having had to ‘prove’ their competence. Those who have failed are demotivated and demoralised.

Tony Pearce

OFSTED

G. SEA welcomes the indications of change in terms of OFSTED. and calls upon Government to require schools to adopt a SRRE cycle in Partnership with officers of the LEA and subject to quality audits by OFSTED/HMI.

Richard Sidley (Stoke/Staffordshire SEA)

Adult Education

H. The SEA should strive to promote affordable accessible adult education courses for all, particularly for those over 60.

Carlie Newman (Camden SEA)

Testing

I This conference notes with grave alarm that by the time a child transfers to secondary school, that pupil could have sat an estimated 30 national assessments.

It is ten years since national testing was introduced and it has become the most extensive system of national assessment at primary level.

Conference believes that subjecting young children to such heavy assessment is damaging and counterproductive.

This SEA conference instructs the executive to call on the government to discontinue national tests and school performance league tables and the links with performance related pay instead adequately funding and resourcing all children’s educational needs.

Chris Newman, Haringey Branch

Education Funding

J. Conference calls upon the Government to ensure that local authority education spending is fully supported by revenue support grant. Given the regressive nature of Council tax, it urges the government to increase the proportion of spending funded by RSG.

Tony Pearce, (Stoke/Staffordshire)

Inclusion

K. Conference approves of the concept of inclusion but is concerned at the pressures placed on schools to retain students who display the most challenging behaviour at the expense of the education of mainstream students and the well being of teaching and support staff.

The inclusion agenda should be properly funded through the LEAs to provide appropriate EBD provision LEAs should be appropriately and realistically resourced in terms of Educational Psychologists to meet the needs in schools presented by increasing numbers of EBD students.

Richard Sidley (Stoke/Staffordshire SEA)

Counselling and Guidance

L. Conference should be aware that mental health problems among students are widespread and increasing. Conference urges the NEC to produce a policy for Labour with guidelines for

1. Providing at all stages of education — including teacher training — appropriate curricula content;
2. the provision of an integrated system of guidance and counselling ensuring at least one qualified worker in each secondary and tertiary education establishment.

Sidney Lubin (Kent SEA)

Post-16 Education

Conference endorsed the approach of the paper presented to conference (published in the last issue of Education Politics) and passed the following motions proposed by Eddie Playfair:

1. SEA reaffirms its commitment to a coherent, comprehensive and democratically controlled post-16 education system which is accessible to all and provides parity of funding for all learners and types of provision.

In order to promote these principles, SEA will consult widely to develop new policies and campaign for changes which aim to:

- extend coherent planning and parity of funding and learner support post- 16 to all provision, including universities.
- extend the comprehensive principle to all forms of provision and widen access to those providers which are currently most exclusive.
- address the democratic deficit at the heart of the Learning and Skills Council and HE Funding Council structure (eg: through elected regional assemblies in England).
- develop a progressive modular curriculum framework for all learners over 14 which encompasses all current “vocational”, “academic” and key skills qualifications and allows for credit accumulation throughout life.
- develop overarching awards (eg: graduation at 19+) which celebrate achievement and are genuinely inclusive.

2. New Sixth Form Colleges

SEA believes that the model of the sixth form college catering exclusively for advanced level students is outdated and inappropriate.

SEA believes that any new sixth form colleges established should be clearly comprehensive in character; with a duty to provide for the educational needs of all school leavers in their area. To be effective, such colleges will need to be of sufficient size to be able to offer a broad range of vocational and general options at all levels.