

Annual Conference Resolutions 2009

Abolition of SATs

1. The deleterious effects of SATs upon the English education system have been clearly shown. We want our Government to follow the example of the Welsh and Scottish Parliaments and abolish SATs.
2. Conference calls upon Conference to support the campaigns for the abolition of Key Stages 1 and 2 SATs in favour of rigorous teacher assessment, nationally moderated.

SATs Boycott

3. Conference strongly supports the call from the NUT and NAHT for a boycott of national tests (SATs) at ages 7 and 11.
4. Conference welcomes the joint NAHT/NUT campaign to boycott SATs at Key Stage 2 and endorses the joint statement on testing and assessment.

The SEA likewise believes these proposals represent the future of assessment in primary schools and that, from 2010, tests at Key Stages 1 and 2 should be optional.

Whilst welcoming the decision to remove National Curriculum testing at Key Stage 3, Conference rejects the Government's argument for maintaining them in primary schools.

Conference asserts, therefore, that unless the Government sees fit to respond to overwhelming evidence for ending the statutory tests at Key Stages 1 and 2, the SEA will support the joint action needed to be taken to prevent their continuation.

Conference applauds the stand taken by the NUT and the NAHT that: 'once all other reasonable avenues have been exhausted, (they will) ballot all relevant members for joint action to boycott the Key Stages 1 and 2 statutory tests, for the academic year 2009-2010, if the Government refuses to remove them.'

Reforming the Primary curriculum

5. We urge that, in order to achieve the optimum outcome in reforming the primary school curriculum, full and urgent consideration is given by the Government to both the Rose Report and the Cambridge Review.

Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training

6. The SEA welcomes the final report of the Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training.

Trust Schools

7. The SEA is opposed to Trust schools. Whilst it recognises that they are different to Academies in some respects, it believes that Trust schools are part of the government's fragmentation plan, masquerading under the guise of 'choice' for parents and students. We reject the 'neo-liberal' philosophy behind Trust schools which reduces LAs to mere commissioners of education rather

than providers. We reject the notion that trusts can not only control the school via a majority of governing body appointees, but also their 'rights' to 'flexibilities' in the admissions process. The SEA therefore opposes any Local Authority school becoming a Trust school and will campaign with the Anti Academies Alliance and others to oppose this flawed government policy.

Class size

8. The maximum number of any class of pupils in the state system must be 25 from September 2011.

This motion was remitted to cost the implications.

Democratic accountability

9. Conference notes that the Labour Movement's principle of democratic accountability has largely been side-stepped by the government in favour of its pursuit of market forces in the public sector.

In the case of education we have seen; the demise of Local Authorities, increased centralised control over educational funding, government policy of Choice and Diversity resulting in competitive pupil admissions policies and unaccountable control over schools.

Therefore, Conference instructs the Executive to enter talks with education ministers, to return to the principle that all schools that receive state funding must be accountable to a reinvigorated local authority which operates functioning democratic and transparent procedures for local communities, staff, pupils, students, parents and other stakeholders, for the purpose of determining local educational priorities.

Income inequality

10. Wilkinson and Pickett, in their book 'The Spirit Level', demonstrate the grievous effects of income inequality in a society on educational achievement and on the psycho-social consequences on society. We call upon the Government positively to promote the vision of a more equal society in all areas of our national life.

SEA affiliation

11. Conference believes that SEA can no longer fulfil its traditional role of acting as a policy development agency on education for the Labour Party. It therefore agrees to explore alternatives, including acting as a non-affiliated campaigning organisation for progressive educational policies.

12. Conference instructs the National Executive not to pay affiliation fees to the Labour Party until further notice.

Motions 11 and 12 were not carried

Labour Party democracy

13. This conference believes that the recent scandals over MPs' expenses, bankers' bonuses and the government's failure to halt rising inequality are a threat to our democracy.

Conference notes that:

- a) Labour inherited in 1997 one of the West's most unequal societies from the Conservatives, and, far from reversing the trend, it has allowed the gulf between rich and poor to widen,
- b) Labour's insistence on upholding conservative economic /monetary policies of deregulation and de-unionising the workforce has led to a heightened pattern of greed among those at the top, but downward pressure on wages, benefits and pensions for those at the bottom,
- c) The Labour Movement's all-important principle of democratic accountability that helped to ensure greater transparency has been dramatically eroded by the increased use of "Commercial Confidentiality" and the insistence of "rolling back the state" as seen in government policy on privatisation,
- d) The root cause of our economic problems is the bankruptcy of the prevailing political dogma of past and present governments.

Therefore, the SEA Conference calls on the Labour Government to:

- a) Show greater respect to the Labour Movement by:
 - 1) Allowing CLPs full rights to select MPs and deselect those that they judge to have behaved in a fraudulent or unethical manner,
 - 2) Restoring the democratic traditions that allowed the rank and file member to participate more fully, thus reversing the decline in membership,
 - 3) Discussing future policy, meaningfully, with CLPs, the appropriate trade unions and socialist societies,
- b) Work with other international governments to ensure tax havens comply with required economic disclosure,
- c) Return to a more progressive direct taxation policy in order to ensure greater distribution of wealth.

This motion was remitted