

SEA Annual Conference Resolutions 2011

Higher Education

1. If the Labour Party is to convince the younger generation that it is their champion, it must oppose all forms of putting the burden of funding our HE institutions on their backs - i.e. it must oppose both loans-funded fees and the type of graduate tax which the old NUS leadership was proposing and which has up to now attracted Ed Miliband's support.
2. If the marketisation of our Universities is to be prevented from turning British Universities into the finishing schools of the rich, both British and overseas, then regulations need to be introduced fixing a quota of places in all HE institutions receiving state funding which must be filled by students who have attended British state schools. [N.B state schools not fee paying public or private schools. This would need to be phased in as at the moment approx 50% of students at Oxbridge come from fee-paying schools.

Carried

3. If the Labour Party wishes to support widening access in the most immediate and practical way, it should campaign vigorously for the continued funding of those courses, mainly in the new universities, which have attracted many students from poorer backgrounds and which are currently faced with the threat of closure.
4. The Labour Party should not hesitate to propose that existing wage and salary earners whose careers have benefited from free university education in the past have a duty to the country and the younger generation to fund higher education either through income tax or some form of hypothecated levy. A highly educated population is necessary both for servicing the nation's infrastructure and for informed participation in all forms of community action.

Carried

5. This conference believes that the Labour party's education policy should include plans for a phased return to a fully publicly funded system of higher education and the abolition of tuition fees.

Carried

6. This conference believes that all publicly funded universities should be required, as a condition of their funding, to develop plans for widening access and responding to the educational needs of their communities.

Further Education

7. This conference believes that the Labour party's plans for government should include, as a high priority, the introduction of an entitlement to full EMAs for all young people aged 16-19 in full-time education or training.

Priorities for 2011-12

8. Conference pledges that a priority for the SEA in 2011/12 will be to seek an alliance with other educational organisations such as CASE, Comprehensive Future and the Anti Academies Alliance in defence of state education. It will work to establish an umbrella organisation with a common message and a high profile campaign to wrest back the educational agenda from Michael Gove in his attempts to destroy comprehensive state education. The SEA will submit policies to the Labour Party Education Commission, based on extensive research and which reflect our commitment to a good local school for every child. The SEA will take all steps possible to persuade the Labour Party to create an education manifesto based on community, democratic accountability and equal opportunities for all.

Carried

Single Status for all Schools

9. Conference is alarmed at the prospect of the collapse of local authority control of education through the coalition government's policy of cuts in public expenditure and the establishment of yet more Academies and "Free Schools". The latter policy will entitle these schools to withdraw from local democratic control and yet still receive state funding.

The withdrawal of central government funding to LAs will lead to greater inequalities as the Academies and "Free Schools" will become more selective in their admissions policy and practice. This situation will result in the most vulnerable children being denied quality educational provision through the break up of the network of state comprehensive schools. Therefore, conference calls on the NEC of the SEA to arrange talks with the Labour education spokespersons to draw up educational policies based on the ideal of a good local community school for all children. This can be achieved by announcing that a Labour Government will take back control of all "Free Schools" and Academies and reintegrate them into the family of neighbourhood comprehensive schools.

Carried

Local Democratic Accountability

10. Conference urges the Labour Party to either endorse the local authority as a means of ensuring local democratic accountability or explore more direct means of ensuring local democratic accountability, e.g. elected local school boards.

Carried

Emergency motion

11. Conference notes the reports in the media (16/6/11) that Gove intends to impose academy status on 200 primary schools, where test results are below average, in the next school year.

Conference accepts that opposing academy and free school status on a case by case basis is becoming logistically impossible.

Conference calls on the SEA NEC to elaborate a policy for the return of all schools to democratic accountability through Local Authorities or other elected bodies.

Carried as amended