

# SEA Conference resolutions 2013

## 1. **New Officer Position**

This conference calls for the creation of a new National Executive Committee post of deputy secretary. This post could focus on organising appropriate events and be proactive with our parliamentary members and contacts and work to strengthen our London base.

Secondly, conference calls on all members of the SEA executive to take a more active role in helping to establish stronger SEA bases in their locality - in order to develop increased membership and increased regional reporting of appropriate events in Education Politics.

**Remitted to NEC**

## 2. **Safeguarding Trade Union Rights**

Conference believes that the biggest problem facing schools at the moment is maverick heads, governing bodies and academy chains. We affirm the essential role of Trade Unions in defending education as well as the rights and livelihood of teachers. We therefore condemn attempts to undermine and diminish their role.

## 3. **'A Better Future for Our Schools'**

The SEA supports the widest possible collaboration between it and like-minded organisations in defending state education and proposing a constructive alternative to Gove's ruinous policies. It therefore pledges to continue working with CASE, Comprehensive Future and ISCG in promoting 'A Better Future for Our Schools' and will endeavour to gain its acceptance on the part of the Labour Party as the basis of the education manifesto for 2015.

## 4. **Rejecting the Profit Motive**

SEA notes that pressure for introducing the profit motive into education is growing but is confined to the Tory Party, and is opposed by public opinion. SEA rejects the profit motive in education and recognizes the need to campaign with other bodies to ensure that the current opposition is maintained and strengthened. SEA therefore adopts the principle that monies allocated for education shall be spent on education and not diverted to private gain.

SEA further notes that education is being softened up under the Coalition for a profit making shift in the future by changes to teachers and lecturers regulations, notably the abolition of QTS as a requirement to work in Academies and Free Schools, similar moves in FE following the Lingfield Report, and the removal of national pay scales. Labour welcomes the campaign by Labour against the reduction in both the overall numbers in post and the numbers of qualified teachers, seeing this as part of a campaign to cut costs at the expense of standards and not for profit provision.

However, SEA recognises that the threats are immediate and cannot be tackled only by a future Labour government. SEA will therefore campaign with like-minded organisations for the immediate suspension of deregulation of teachers' pay and conditions and related matters, and for an independent inquiry into the pay, conditions, morale and supply of qualified teachers in state education. SEA will further seek to work with like-minded organisations to define the boundary of acceptable and unacceptable provision of services by for profit organisations (i.e. those not specifically targeted on providing educational services, e.g. utilities providing gas and electricity) as the dividing line is becoming blurred.

## **5. Joint Union Action**

Conference commends the action of the two main teacher trade unions in actively opposing Michael Gove's attack on and denigration of teachers.

Conference notes that NASUWT/NUT represents 9 out of 10 classroom teachers. Conference urges the Labour Party to establish, as a priority, a meaningful dialogue with NASUWT/NUT, to inform party policy and redress the damage done to the state system of education by the Coalition Government.

## **6. Governing Bodies**

The current composition of governing bodies in community schools should be retained with representatives of parents, teachers, support staff, nominees of the LA and of the local community.

The number of Governors should be large enough to include representatives from all these groups but need not be as large as at present in the case of smaller schools. There need to be enough Governors to fill the posts of committee chairs so that the work of the GB can be shared.

Interaction and cooperation between Governors from different schools needs developing but the idea of grouping schools under one GB would undermine the concept of the Governors representing the stakeholders of that particular school (except in the case of infant and junior schools on one site).

Governing Bodies should operate democratically with elected Chairs. For Chairs to be appointed from a list of applicants would completely change the democratic nature of GBs. To pay Chairs would turn them into officials and use money needed for school development. Current regulations make clear that Chairs cannot take unilateral decisions but must act in conjunction with the GB and report to it. This is a necessary protection against Chairs seeing themselves as Chief Executives and starting to interfere with the day to day running of a school.

The responsibilities of GBs are extensive and Governors need to be properly trained to understand their functions. It should be the role of the LAs to organise such training either directly or by commissioning. Clerks also need training and in the past received it through LAs. Good Clerks have always given advice about the responsibilities of governors, the legal position etc. The suggestion that this role could be extended should be explored.

The major immediate task is to recruit and train a wider pool of LA Governors.

## **7. Selection**

Conference calls on a future Labour government to legislate to ensure that no school in receipt of public funding should be permitted to operate a selective pupil intake based on academic or social tests or criteria and be required to adhere strictly to the national Admissions Code.

## **8. SEA Supporters**

Conference calls on the NEC to set up an arrangement whereby individuals, who do not yet wish to, or are not eligible to join, can become subscribers to 'Education Politics'.

## **9. School Performance**

SEA notes that the recent Pearson report on School Performance rated the English system as the 6th best performer in the world. Alas politicians constantly denigrate English schools and use manipulated data to support intervention and interference, with disastrous results. Given the imminent appearance of the PISA tables and Michael Gove's claims PISA results support his schools revolution, SEA will

campaign with like-minded organisations for an independent inquiry into English School Performance on the international stage in the light of PISA and other data. The current rush of educational reforms are to be suspended pending the outcome of the independent review, ideally conducted as a Royal Commission.

**Remitted to NEC**

## **10. Campaign Priorities**

This conference calls upon the Labour Party to pledge that it will oppose all attempts to privatise state education and to introduce education for profit, either overtly or covertly, through the extension of the academies programmes

It calls upon the Labour Party to commit itself to the following five pledges in its election manifesto for May 2015:

- Place all publicly funded schools within a common administrative framework, ensuring that public money is subject to public scrutiny.
- To require that a broad and balanced National Curriculum applies to all state funded schools.
- To ensure that there is a broad range of qualifications, academic, practical and vocational, which enable young people to access employment, apprenticeships or higher education and that such qualifications are given equal status and respect.
- To ensure all children have access to high quality, free early years provision and re-establish the network of Sure Start centres.
- To establish an independent Educational Inspectorate, free from political interference with the responsibility for identifying and sharing best practice and promoting evidence-based policy making.

Conference also agrees to promote a pledge card containing those agreed key commitments based on the outcome of debate at conference.

## **11. Challenge 2020**

Conference notes and endorses the statement of SEA Cymru to the Challenge 2020 consultation on the Labour Party manifesto for the next Wales Assembly election in 2016.

**Remitted to NEC**