

SEA Conference Resolutions 2014

1. The Blunkett Report

This conference notes the partial clarification of the Parliamentary Labour Party's education policies, as shown in David Blunkett's report on strategy for school improvement. However the Coalition Government's education policies are resulting in an increasingly fragmented, unaccountable, underfunded and privatised state system and this report does not go far enough.

Conference also notes that this current situation is detrimental to a) the educational and social well-being of many children and young people and b) the morale of the teaching staff, as many feel scapegoated and de-professionalised.

Therefore Conference instructs the executive to arrange talks with the shadow education team on the need to return to enforcing greater equality with in the state education system by:

- a) halting any further development of Academies and Free Schools,
- b) returning any of these schools that are failing to their local educational authority,
- c) ensuring that these schools, democratically elect school governors from their support staff, teachers, parents, local authority elected representatives and educational department staff.
- d) ensuring that school admissions be conducted by an independent local authority body, on the basis of fairness and equal ability range.

Chris Newman

2. Reclaiming Education Alliance

Conference endorses the work undertaken under the Picking up the Pieces banner, and specifically the 7 point charter adopted on April 8th to wit:

- a) The national curriculum should be an entitlement, broadly based, for all children in all English state schools.
- b) Inclusion and equal opportunities need to be at the heart of educational provision
- c) A fair admissions code should operate in a geographical area implemented by a locally elected education service.
- d) All schools should have the same responsibilities and powers and receive funding according to a common funding formula.
- e) All schools should co-operate with the support and guidance of a suitably resourced democratically elected local education service.
- f) The inspection and monitoring of English education must become supportive.
- g) All front line staff in children's education should have QTS.

SEA further believes that the objectives should be widely promulgated and support from organisations who accept them should be mobilized under the heading of the Reclaiming Education Alliance.

Trevor Fisher

3. Governing bodies

The SEA strongly supports the principle that Governing Bodies of all State Funded schools should include representatives of all those involved with the work or life of the School. Accordingly it calls on a future Labour Government to amend the current legislation to ensure that all school Governing Bodies - including Academies and Free Schools - must include democratically elected Governors from the parents and staff of the School together with representatives of the School's local community and not less than TWO Governors appointed by the relevant Local Authority. Existing rules permitting a Governing body to reject appointees by an LA should be rescinded.

Michael Elliott

4. Sweat Shop Schools

Conference notes the developing crisis in retention of staff, with 40% of teachers leaving within 5 years of starting. SEA places the blame for this on the draconian sweat shop conditions developing in English schools through control methods from government, OFSTED and school managers. SEA resolves to campaign against sweat shop methods applied to classroom staff and that advice of best practice should be sought from Scotland, where 90% of staff are in post after 5 years.

Trevor Fisher

5. Inclusion

This Annual Conference welcomes and supports the proposed amendment to the second Year Education and Children document submitted by the Labour Party Disabled Members Group following consultation with SEA NEC which reads as follows:

Page 11, line 3 after the sentence ending "Children and Families Bill" insert "Under a Labour Government there would be a strong presumption in favour of inclusion in mainstream education for disabled children with special educational needs with the necessary support and safeguards. The previous Labour Government committed under Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to "continuing to develop an inclusive education system" and Labour will therefore repeal Section 39 of the Children and Families Act 2014 which allows children to be placed in a special academy or special free school without an education, health and care plan and a national minimum standard would be set for the "local offer" introduced by the Act. To make this a reality disabled learners would receive the necessary individualised support by reinstating individual education plans removed by the latest revised draft of the SEN Code of Practice and maintaining well trained and qualified head-teachers, teachers and teaching assistants. SENCOS would hold an appropriate SENCO qualification and be members of the school's senior management team. Reasonable adjustments would be made to all mainstream course curricula, examinations (including the reinstatement of continuous assessment) and assessments to make them accessible for disabled learners. There would also be a requirement for all new, upgraded and rebuilt education establishments to be fully accessible for disabled people and Labour would look to find ways of improving disabled access to existing school buildings. Disabled head-teachers, teachers and teaching assistants are positive role models in schools and would be supported in qualifying for, entering and staying in the profession. All education professionals and staff would receive disability equality training as part of initial training and continuous professional development. Equality training would become a compulsory part of the national curriculum and cover all "protected characteristics" under the Equality Act 2010 and there would be compulsory reports on discriminatory bullying incidents also covering "all protected characteristics" to school governing bodies.

We agree to adopt the amendment as SEA policy and work with the Labour Party Disabled Members Group to get as much of it as possible included in the final policy document adopted by the National Policy Forum and Annual Conference.

Nicholas Russell

6. Continuing Labour Party Reform

Whilst welcoming the increased opportunities for socialist societies to be involved in the National Policy Forum and the agreement of Party policy as a result of 'Re-founding Labour', we believe that there is still room for further improvements including:

- a) Not asking CLPs and affiliates to agree amendments to second year documents during major election campaigns
- b) Allowing Socialist Societies whose work concentrates on the areas covered by just one or two of the documents to use more than four out of their ten amendments on one document.
- c) We believe that the expertise of socialist societies should be made available to policy commissions and in order to bring that about, in the same way as all full National Policy Forum members get to sit on one policy commission, each socialist society observer should get to sit on one policy commission with speaking and voting rights.

We call on the incoming NEC to submit an early report to the Socialist Societies Executive incorporating the ideas above and any other ideas they may have for improving the National Policy Forums processes for agreeing Labour Party policy.

Nicholas Russell

7. Continuing collaboration

SEA Conference 2014 agrees to continue working with a wide range of like-minded organisations such as Compass and New Visions, as well as our longstanding partners in the 'Reclaiming Education Alliance'. We will campaign for a properly funded, coherently organised national education service based on providing equal opportunities for all young people. We call for the restoration of local democratic accountability and the restoration of a proper role for local authorities in providing school places and monitoring the performance, management and governance of all state-funded schools in their area, including free schools and Academies.

Martin Doré

8. New Officer Post

This conference agrees to add the role of Deputy General Secretary to the list of SEA officers by amending the constitution as follows:

Add to Section 7 ii a) immediately after 'General Secretary', the words '**Deputy General Secretary,**' and in **Appendix 5, Role of Officers, insert new paragraph** after paragraph c) General Secretary: '**d) The Deputy General Secretary shall deputise for the General Secretary as appropriate. He/she may also assist the General Secretary in the execution of duties agreed on a yearly basis at the first meeting of an incoming NEC.**'

[All subsequent officer role descriptions to be re-lettered accordingly].

John Bolt

9. Threats to public service.

Conference sees common threats to workers in public service from austerity and control methods in teaching, hospitals, social work and other public services. It notes that management methods, targets and bureaucracy affect both classroom teachers and nurses. Conference therefore resolves that SEA will seek to work with SHA and other organisations in the NHS on common approaches to common

problems facing front line workers.

Trevor Fisher

10. Education Not for Sale

This conference congratulates the TUC and their authors for producing the 'Education Not for Sale a TUC campaign report'. It is an excellent document and one that we should support.

Conference calls on the National Executive to seek talks with appropriate TUC representatives to form a collaborative General Election campaign based around the issues raised in the report.

Chris Newman