

SEA Annual Conference 2019: Resolutions Passed

1. Private Education

Conference notes:

- Only 7% of UK students attend private schools, yet they facilitate elitism so stark that the Sutton Trust described it as “social engineering”: 32% of MPs, 55% of Permanent Secretaries, and 74% of judges are privately educated.
- Children at private schools have 300% more spent on their education than children in state schools, including a disproportionate amount of government’s direct and indirect education expenditure (25.1%).
- 63% of the public agree, “it is unfair that some people get a better education and life chances for their children by paying for a private school.”

Conference believes:

- Labour must go further to challenge private schools than the 2017 manifesto.
- The continued existence of private schools is incompatible with Labour’s pledge to promote social justice, not social mobility in education.

Conference resolves:

- To include in the next Labour Party general election manifesto a commitment to integrate all private schools into the state sector. This could include, but is not limited to:
 - Withdrawal of charitable status and all their other public subsidies and tax privileges, including business rate exemption.
 - Ensure universities admit the same proportion of private school students as in the wider population (currently 7%)
 - Investments and properties held by private schools to be placed into a national educational endowment, with these resources democratically and fairly distributed across the country’s educational institutions.
- To commit Labour’s Shadow Education team to publicly support the Labour Against Private Schools campaign.

Proposer: Steve Longden

2. Delivering a commitment to Social Justice

SEA welcomes the recent statements by the party leadership highlighting a change from seeing social mobility as the key objective of social policy to a broader commitment to social justice and greater equality.

SEA believes that the roots of educational underachievement lie in the economic inequalities that scar our society and which have become worse over the past 40 years. It therefore urges the party to commit itself to a broad programme designed to reduce inequality addressing areas such as income inequality, Insecure employment, lack of regional and industrial strategies, Inadequate and insecure housing, endemic discrimination against minority groups of all kinds and our punitive welfare system.

Although education alone cannot compensate for the disadvantage suffered by too many young people, SEA does also believe that the party should commit itself to a comprehensive programme of educational designed to contribute to the overall goal of broadening opportunity and reducing inequality. This should include:

- Comprehensive high quality early years provision available to all;
- The reestablishment of a broad and balanced curriculum for all including creative and artistic subjects;
- The ending of formal 11+ selection and of informal selection designed to provide favoured intakes for a minority of schools;
- Developing a strategy for reducing the influence of and ultimately phasing out private education;
- Valuing and supporting vocational education and real apprenticeships alongside academic pathways;
- Providing long term funding support for schools and colleges in areas of economic disadvantage;
- The ending of all fees for education.

Proposer: John Bolt

3. Parenting

80 - 90% of school students are likely to become parents, step-parents, foster or adoptive parents. Parenting is one of the most difficult and important roles in life, yet most new parents are ill prepared. The quality of parenting has enormous implications for the emotional, physical and social health of society.

SEA proposes that well taught education specifically about good parenting is mandatory in every school for every student, over and above the guidance in the new Relationships and Sex curriculum from September 2020.

Proposer: Ros Kane

4. Restoration of the education function of local authorities

Conference notes:

It has now become obvious that Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) and even stand-alone academies are a charter for profiteering and even at times outright corruption, with lucrative contracts handed to family and friends. It is also true that too many private companies are providing services to schools that could better be provided in house. The result is public money meant for front line educational services finding its way into the pockets of private individuals.

Conference welcomes:

1. The commitment announced at the last conference, to consult on and establish a new regulatory framework for schools, to ensure that all schools follow the same rules, with schools being regulated by statute, rather than thousands of individual contracts.
2. The paper "Academies, autonomy, equality and democratic accountability: Reforming the fragmented publicly funded school system in England" (Wolfe and West) and the document

“Restoring a democratically accountable school system” from the SEA setting out a coherent plan for implementing this pledge.

3. The commitment made by John McDonnell in February 2018 when he declared Labour’s intention to “properly fund local authorities”, “bring services back in house” and “strengthen local democracy”.

Conference believes the Labour party should now commit to ensuring:

1. Local Authorities establish reformed, democratically accountable local education committees with stakeholder representation.
2. That all publicly funded schools be brought back under the control of these new local education committees.
3. The newly empowered local education committees will be the default providers of school services and will be appropriately funded.

Proposer: Melanie Griffiths

6. Equalities issues

Conference notes:

That protests against the teaching of LGBT equality issues have been taking place at two Birmingham primary schools, specifically against the teaching of the 'No Outsiders' programme at Parkfield Community School (academy) and the inclusion of LGBT awareness in the provision of equality education at Anderton Park School (local authority community school).

That the protesters are not always parents and that there is an element of input from national campaign groups such as StopRSE.

That protests have frequently been homophobic and sometimes misogynistic in nature.

That a lack of clarity in the Equalities Act over what constitutes age-appropriate equalities education compounded by a lack of political leadership on this at national and local levels has left school leaders isolated and vulnerable to attack, and that, in the case of the headteacher and staff at Anderton Park, subject to very personal verbal abuse and intimidation on an unacceptable level.

That the provision of equality and diversity education is central to our vision of the purpose of education as well as being a legal requirement under the Equality Act.

Conference supports:

1. The entitlement of all children to receive education in equality issues as laid out in the Equality Act.
2. The entitlement of all groups with 'protected characteristics' to be included in this provision
3. The principled defence of these entitlements by Sarah Hewitt-Clarkson , headteacher at Anderton Park School, in the face of an abusive and personal campaign against her.

Conference calls for:

1. The DfE to give unequivocal national guidance on requirement for equality education under the Equality Act within schools and make clear that the provision of this education is not at the discretion of the headteacher as this suggestion has left headteachers exposed to attack.
2. Local authorities to conduct consultation as appropriate and issue detailed guidance to schools and information to parents on what constitutes age-appropriate equality education.
3. Local authorities to audit their local schools to establish the extent and quality of equality education taking place and to implement a program of support to ensure all schools meet expectations.
4. Local authorities to take steps to ensure headteachers and schools can carry out their duties under the Act free from intimidation, for example by making their expectations of schools very clear to parents and providing appropriate channels for any dispute to be taken up with the local authority rather than an individual school.
5. A future Labour government to ensure all schools are subject to the oversight of properly funded local authorities and that the provision of equality and diversity education is one of the mandatory powers of the new local education committees.

Proposer: Birmingham SEA