

# STA MOTIONS FOR NEU CONFERENCE 2019

## 1. A NATIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE

Conference notes:

1. Successive governments have failed children and the education system in this country, leaving it chaotic, under-funded and unaccountable to local communities, including parents, students and school staff
2. The academies and free schools programme has failed to deliver a genuine improvement in educational outcomes for our students, and is disintegrating as evidenced by the collapse of many free schools, and the withdrawal of academy chains from schools for which they are responsible
3. There is a growing crisis in teacher recruitment and retention
4. The accountability agenda, with its emphasis on data and a narrow range of educational outcomes and testing, has limited students' access to creative and critical approaches to learning and has contributed to the rise in students experiencing issues with mental health

Conference:

- (a) welcomes plans set out by the Labour Party for a comprehensive National Education Service and
- (b) instructs the NEU Executive to support the development of a National Education Service and to initiate a national roadshow to contribute to the development of a National Education Service through discussion and consultation with school staff, parents and the wider community

Conference believes the following principles are important for a National Education Service

- i. The restoration of previous funding levels and their eventual improvement for all schools and sixth form colleges
- ii. The restoration and extension of the 'Sure Start' programme
- iii. The re-establishment of local accountability for education, including oversight of school admissions and funding, including that for students with educational special needs and the reintegration of free schools and academies into a locally run and democratic system of education
- iv. A return to national pay scales and conditions of employment for all teachers and support staff
- v. The abolition of Ofsted and the establishment of an inspectorate that will work cooperatively with schools and local bodies to support students' education
- vi. The abolition of testing in primary schools and of school league tables
- vii. A review of the secondary curriculum and examination arrangements that limit the curriculum and place an over-emphasis on data.

## 2. ANTI-RACISM

NEU Conference:

Notes with concern:

1. The growth of racism internationally, as seen for example, in the United States and Europe
2. The growth in this country of extremist far right organisations and campaigns, such as The Football Lads Alliance, the Free Tommy Robinson campaign, Generation Identity and others

3. The continuing rise in racist hate crime, including the increase in Islamophobic and anti-Semitic abuse and attacks
4. The impact of the so-called 'hostile environment' on our communities, most notably those of the Windrush generation and their families, including the children we teach
5. The continuing failure of the government to implement the 'Dubs amendment', this leaving vulnerable children who are entitled to a welcome in this country in a desperate situation

Conference affirms its commitment to building a society in which every child is valued, whatever their background, religion or culture

Conference instructs the NEU executive to:

1. Affiliate to Stand Up To Racism, Love Music Hate Racism and Hope not Hate, and to publicise activities organised to combat the rise in racism in our society
2. Support and publicise the activities of Show Racism the Red Card
3. Continue to work with the TUC to promote joint work by trade unions to combat racism

### **3. CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES AND EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE**

Conference notes

- The increase in gender stereotyping in society and its pernicious effects on the wellbeing of all our young people and their ambitions
- The gendered nature of apprenticeships and A Levels including of low numbers of both girls pursuing STEM qualifications and boys in non-traditional fields
- The high levels of anxiety, self-harm, poor body image, sexual harassment suffered by girls
- The high levels of male suicide in society
- The high number of women in the UK killed by their partner or male family member

Conference believes we must urgently address the prevalence of stereotypes which are trapping our young people into restrictive roles and damaging behaviours.

We believe all young people should be free to express themselves without discrimination and that they should be supported to positively explore their interests and ideas.

Conference instructs the Executive to

- Expand the 'Stereotypes stop you doing stuff' resources for secondary schools to promote more diversity, inclusion and representation across all subjects and professions
- Lobby the government to make sure that mandatory Relationships and Sex Education is inclusive and fully funded, staffed by trained specialists using high quality resources with dedicated time on the curriculum
- Campaign for the proper provision of mental health support services, funded nationally to ensure universal access for all young people
- Create resources to promote positive role-models of diverse people in different fields and roles to challenge negative or limiting stereotypes to include posters for use in schools and other teaching ideas
- Work to build a holistic curriculum which gives all students a breadth of knowledge and skills and supports their personal development as healthy, contented adults

#### **4. SUPPORTING NEW PROFESSIONALS IN UNION ACTIVITY**

Conference notes with concern the growing and serious recruitment and retention crisis in education:

- The huge numbers of teaching staff leaving within three years of joining the profession
- The failure of government to recruit enough teachers and specialists to meet the needs of the education system
- The growing evidence of stress, anxiety and other mental health concerns
- The work being carried out within regions by lay & Union officials to encourage active involvement by NQTs and early career professionals in the Union and its campaigns such as the RECT & GAIN conferences in the Northern Region and CPD offered by Norfolk NEU

Conference believes that active involvement with the Union can prevent staff from leaving both by ensuring they have good knowledge of their rights in the workplace and by helping them to tackle unnecessary workload.

Conference further believes that while the Union's campaigning pressure has resulted in positive initiatives from the DFE and OFSTED, such as the workload toolkit, government has failed to properly address the drivers of this crisis:

- The onerous workload driven by the DFE and OFSTED
- The accountability systems in schools which generate tasks with little positive impact on pupils' achievement and progress
- The refusal to implement in full the recommended pay award for all teaching staff or to ensure it is fully funded
- The below inflation pay award for support staff

Conference instructs the Executive to:

- Make recruiting new staff into active union involvement a priority and to share the good practice from the regions through union communications, NOFS, Secretaries' briefings, CPD, social and print media
- Encourage regions to approach ITT providers to develop programmes such as the NEU Ideas PGCE initiative in Newcastle, and to run CPD and training aimed at new and early careers teachers
- Increase the pressure on government to remove the drivers of excessive workload and mental health problems
- Prioritise the use of workload audits and impact assessments to eliminate unnecessary tasks and demand enforceable work-life balance for our members
- Encourage members to take steps to demand workload reduction up and to and including strike action.

#### **5. RETIRED TEACHERS AND AN ENTITLEMENT TO VOTE**

Conference recognises the valuable work retired members do in supporting the work of the union and especially at Branch and District level.

Many members maintain their union membership, as a retired member, after a long period of union activism.

Conference recognises that retired members have a legitimate interest in voting in NEU elections and resolves to amend NEU Rule to enable this to be achieved.

To this end Conference instructs the Executive to amend Rule 11.16.1 (a) by the deletion of 'retired'.

## **6. BUILDING THE NEU AT THE WORKPLACE**

Conference notes that the continuing fragmentation of education provision, means the that there are now over 6,000 employers, many of whom operate beyond the boundaries of individual Local Authorities.

Conference also notes that, as a result of successive education policies, more are more decisions are being made or implemented at individual schools level.

Conference further notes:

- i) the vital work carried about by NEU representatives in workplaces across our union, sometimes in increasingly hostile and intimidating school environments;
- ii) that union commissioned research, and internal analysis, shows a clear link between the presence of an NEU workplace representative and member engagement, including participation in industrial action;
- iii) the vital role local association officers play in recruiting, mentoring, supporting reps, building rep networks and directly supporting members especially when there is no trained rep;

Conference believes that:

- a) Workplace Reps fulfil a unique role in the union, as they share the lived experience of members on a day to day basis;
- b) successful workplace organising, where members and reps participate in negotiations on their conditions of employment, is an effective way to challenge fragmentation and build the union on a participatory basis;
- c) the future success of union membership recruitment, wider campaigns and any associated action ballots all depend on us enhancing our work with workplace reps;
- d) it has been established that with the right training and support, workplace reps can play an important role in taking on some school based casework thereby reducing the burden of casework on local secretaries;
- e) recruiting, supporting and developing a representative in every workplace must be a key union priority;

Conference instructs the NEU Executive to:

- i) commit to building an active union presence in as many workplaces as possible;
- ii) prioritise the recruitment, training and organising of workplace representatives;
- iii) launch a serious campaign to recruit a rep in every college, secondary and larger primary and special school and as many reps as possible in smaller schools;
- iv) develop a "Workplace Representation Strategy", which should include training and support for local officers in recruiting and supporting school and college Reps.

## **7. SCHOOL FUNDING**

Conference notes:

1. The reduction in per pupil spending since 2010 that increased sharply in 2015.

2. The vocal campaigns run by parents' groups and the teacher unions to demand a reverse to school cuts.
3. The concession in July 2017 to increase school funding by £1.3 billion in 2018/19 and 2019/20. The further concession to part fund the teachers' pay award in July 2018 amounting to £500 million.
4. The removal of the ring fence around SEN funding in 2010. The cut in the number of pupils on the SEN register from 1.5 million in 2010 to 1 million today.
5. The increase in the number of pupils with a statement or EHCP from 240,000 in 2015 to 320,000 today. This increase was not accompanied by a significant rise in funding. The strain resulting strain on the high needs budget which has led to many local authorities running a deficit; money being transferred from the schools' budget to supplement the high needs budget; and significant cut backs in provision.
6. The successful court case brought against Bristol Council in July 2017 by parents of children with special needs against cuts in provision.
7. British primary schools have an average class size of 27 compared with 20 for the rest of Europe.
8. That school staffing numbers were cut by 10,800, including 5,400 teachers, in England in 2017 and that the pupil population increased by 66,000.
9. The scheduled increase in the employers' contributions to the Teachers' Pension Scheme of 7% in September 2019. This will cost £1.75 billion for England & Wales per annum.

Conference believes:

1. School funding will continue to be squeezed as part of the Government's austerity programme.
2. School funding will continue to an important political issue for teachers, parents and the wider community.

Conference instructs the Executive to:

1. prioritise our campaign to increase school funding.
2. seek to unite all education unions in a joint campaign to fight for more funds.
3. consult our members on a national campaign up to and including strike action to oppose cuts in educational provision.

## **8. ACCOUNTABILITY & ASSESSMENT**

Conference affirms that:

- i) good assessment practice is vital to successful teaching and learning;
- ii) schools have responsibilities to their learners, to parents, and to the wider public interest;

Conference believes that England's current system of accountability and assessment is a barrier to good practice in teaching and learning, and inhibits, rather than promotes, a positive relationship between schools and their stakeholders.

In particular Conference believes that the current system:

- a) Lowers the quality of education by narrowing the curriculum and steering schools towards teaching to the test;
- b) Imposes on schools a flawed system of progress measurement;
- c) Retains an inspection system, based on Ofsted, which acts as a vehicle for government policies, rather than an agency that supports school improvement;
- d) Contributes to problems of mental health among learners;
- e) Increases teacher workload and stress.

Conference notes:

- i. the growing political and public opposition to this system, expressed by leaders of the OECD and CBI, by the Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green parties, and by many parents;
- ii. the devastating critiques of key elements in the system, including the response of the British Educational Research Association to Baseline Assessment, and of head teachers and researchers to Progress 8;
- iii. the rising criticism of Ofsted, including the judgment of the Public Accounts Committee that it is an institution incapable of assuring quality in education;
- iv. the warnings by the House of Commons Education Committee (2017) that young children are at risk of developing mental health problems as a result of high-stakes SATs testing, and by school leaders in 2018 that 'reformed 'GCSEs have harmed students' mental health.
- v. evidence from teacher surveys, that demonstrates the extent of unnecessary and burdensome demands on teachers, arising from the pressures of accountability.

Conference instructs the Executive to:

- A. call for a comprehensive independent review of curriculum and assessment;
- B. continue to resource and support, with trade union action where necessary, campaigns against features of the assessment system as Baseline, the Phonics Check, SATS and Ebacc.
- C. call for the abolition of Ofsted.
- D. seek active support from political parties for these objectives.

## **9. FAIR PAY FOR TEACHERS**

Conference notes that:

- i) successive years of below-inflation pay deals has seen teachers' pay fall in real terms since 2010;
- ii) the government has missed their teacher recruitment target for six successive years;
- iii) teachers continue to leave the profession in record numbers;
- iv) the teacher vacancy rate continues to increase;
- iv) the relative decline in teachers' pay is a major factor in the recruitment and retention problems facing schools;

Conference is appalled that Damian Hinds refused to implement the STRB recommendations for the 2018 pay increase, becoming the first Secretary of State to do so.

Conference welcomes:

- i) the work done by the NEU, in conjunction with NAHT and ASCL to campaign against this injustice, as part of the campaign on funding;
- ii) the decision to conduct an indicative ballot of members.

Conference believes that the Union must continue to campaign for:

- a. A commitment from government to restore the real value of all teachers' salaries to what it was in 2010;

- b. The restoration of mandatory pay scales and responsibility payments for all teachers whose employment is publicly funded, including those in academies, free schools and sixth form colleges;
- c. The restoration of national pay bargaining;
- d. An end to the current system of so-called “performance related pay” that has been so arbitrary and so destructive of teacher morale.

Conference therefore instructs the Executive to:

- i) work with other teacher unions with a view submitting a joint pay claim for all school staff;
- ii) ensure that a key demand in such a pay claim is that it is fully funded by the government;
- iii) develop campaign materials, that link our pay claim to the need for increased school funding;
- iv) work with local associations and regional offices to monitor LA and MAT pay policies to ensure that joint union guidance on the 2018 increase is being implemented and support action where this is not happening;
- v) support the claim by unions representing school support staff and include the need for school support staff to have a pay increase in our publicity and materials.

## **10. PALESTINE**

Conference notes

- The ongoing illegal occupation of the West Bank and siege of Gaza which are subjecting the Palestinian people to human rights violations, such as the maltreatment of Palestinian children in the Israeli military court system, injury and death
- The plight of millions of Palestinian refugees, many of whom are stateless, who are refused a right of return to their homeland
- The status of Palestinian citizens of Israel who are subject to different treatment by over 20 laws including the recent Nation State Law which excludes them from self-determination and relegates Arabic to a lower status in law

Conference congratulates all those members who have been active over many years in challenging the unjust treatment of the Palestinian people and in demanding and a just and peaceful resolution.

We affirm our ongoing commitment to solidarity with the Palestinian people and pledge to continue our work to build understanding of the situation they face.

Conference instructs the Executive to

- Develop resources and CPD through our International section and ISO fora to ensure our members are fully informed and supported in their work
- Continue facilitating delegations to visit Israel and Palestine as long as there is interest from members in taking part
- Make challenging the detention, arrest and conviction of Palestinian children in Israeli military courts a key campaigning priority in the coming year.
- Affiliate to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and encourage affiliation by districts/branches and individual members of the Union.

## **11. SEXISM AND HARASSMENT IN UNIONS AND OUR WORKPLACES**

Conference notes:

1. The findings of the NEU/UK Feminista report 'Its Just Everywhere' highlighted widespread prevalence of sexism and sexual harassment in schools.
2. The NASWUT's recent survey found a fifth (20 per cent) of teachers surveyed said they had experienced sexual harassment since joining the profession.
3. The report by the TUC, Still Just a Bit of Banter? On the commonplace and persistent sexual harassment of women at work including our members.
4. Sexism affects all members but women are disproportionately affected.

Conference believes that:

- i. Sexual harassment, violence and abuse is rooted in sexism which is deeply entrenched in our society of which schools and unions are microcosms.
- ii. Clear guidance needs to be given to districts on how to eradicate sexist practices and put policies in place that minimise the risks of sexual harassment.
- iii. We need to work with male members of the union to help them to become active allies in bringing about real and lasting change.
- iv. Practices at Union organised residential and delegation events need to be reviewed to minimise risk of sexual harassment.

Conference calls on the Executive to:

- a. *Write and conduct a survey for all members*
- b. *Write a report to follow on from It's Just Everywhere for school staff and union members.*
- c. *Enlist a NOF/ task force to act upon the survey results.*
- d. *Write a model policy to be followed by all districts to address sexism and representation of women*
- e. *Develop a code of practice for residential and delegation events "Sign up" & agree.*
- f. *Highlight our review of practice to TUC and help other unions develop policy to review themselves.*
- g. *Work with other unions and organisations to share these objectives.*
- h. *Survey members again before the next conference to review impact of survey and policy changes.*

## **12. CLIMATE CHANGE**

Conference recognises that the latest UN climate report shows that:

- without more rapid action, there will be at least a 3 degrees temperature rise by 2100.
- 1 degree rise above pre-industrial levels has already led to increasing fires, hurricanes, floods and droughts.
- the transition to a zero carbon society to keep below a 1.5 degree increase is the most urgent problem facing humanity and is technically feasible.
- the obstacles are entirely political.

Conference believes that:

- the consequences of a failure to act - or an unjust transition, whereby those with wealth

and power dump the costs downwards - will be severe for our members, our communities, the children we teach and - in the worst case - could threaten our survival.

- we therefore have to help lead a Just Transition; shifting energy production, transport, housing and agriculture onto a sustainable basis within the lifetimes of the children currently in our schools; with workers and communities most directly affected not dumped into destitution like the miners, but re-skilled to carry the transition out.
- this needs immediate government investment for a qualitative shift within 12 years.
- including a significant shift in the focus and aims of Education.
- the current government's market solutions are failing; and leading to the UK missing its targets.
- the Labour Green Transformation plan grasps the scale and speed of the transition required
- but this must be integrated into every level of the National Education Service.

Resolves to approach NUS, UCU, other education unions and interested parties to

- Make a joint approach to the government to press them on plans to carry out their obligation under the Paris Agreement to educate the public about the scale of climate change and the measures needed to deal with it - including through schools curricula - and a recognition that for every school to be zero carbon by 2030, significant investment will be required.
- Make Just Transition a key narrative in our discussions about the NES.
- Hold an Education for a Just Transition conference in the Autumn.

### **13. SUPPORTING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES**

Conference notes that all students are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum. Conference is appalled that thousands of students with SEND are currently without any school placement. These extremely vulnerable students are being let down by a system that is characterised by high stakes testing, academisation and chronic underfunding.

Conference further notes that students with SEND make up nearly half of all permanent exclusions, but less than 15% of the school population. These students are being disproportionately failed by a curriculum that does not meet their needs and conference condemns the practice of removing students with SEND from roll in an effort to improve exams results.

Conference is concerned that education funding cuts are forcing local authorities to raid higher needs budgets, which, in addition to academisation, is compounding their ability to effectively plan for SEND provision. This cannot be allowed to continue and conference congratulates the 39 local councils who wrote to the Government last year to urge them to increase funding for students with SEND.

Conference is further alarmed that support staff who work with students with SEND are often the first to lose their jobs when schools and colleges are forced to make cuts due to falling budget.

Conference notes that a petition with 34,000 signatures was presented to Government last year condemning the cuts to SEND funding and conference congratulates the parent/carer-led campaign groups who are fighting back against these cuts.

Conference instructs the Executive to:

- Support action up to and including strike action to defend members' jobs and conditions of service
- Lobby the Government to increase spending on SEND provision
- Work with all interested groups, including, but not limited to, parents, local authorities, trade unions and other professional groups to highlight and publicise the crisis in SEND funding
- Publicise any incidents of schools "off-rolling" students with SEND
- Work with teachers and support staff to design and inclusive model curriculum, which allows all students to enjoy and achieve

## 14. WORKLOAD AND PEDAGOGY

Conference notes:

1. In a 2018 NEU survey, more than 80% of respondents said that they were thinking about other careers because of the long hours required of classroom teachers.
2. Despite the NEU campaign which led to the government and Ofsted producing guidance on reducing workload, according to the House of Commons Education Committee's 2017 report on recruitment and retention of teachers, a key driver for teachers leaving the profession is unmanageable workload
3. The government 2018 'curriculum fund programme' pilot, whose aim is to reduce teacher workload and improve pupil outcomes, was only open to schools that had developed knowledge-rich curriculum programmes.

Conference believes that:

- a) The government's use of the curriculum fund to support the development and sharing of curriculum materials that are 'knowledge-rich, and have teacher-led instruction and whole-class teaching at their core', shows a clear bias to a particular style of teaching, which takes away a teacher's professionalism and freedom to use a range of teaching styles and techniques, including creative, enquiry-based instruction
- b) To solve the workload crisis, schools should not adopt teaching practices which require all teachers in the school to teach in the same way using the same materials
- c) The most effective way for teachers to tackle workload is for them to take control of their profession and professionalism and take collective action over practices in a school which are overly burdensome and fail to address their students' needs

Conference instructs the NEU executive to:

- i) Campaign to ensure that while measures are taken to tackle workload, as a union we also promote the idea that teachers should maintain autonomy over the way they teach and are free to determine for themselves the best pedagogical methods
- ii) Continue to provide a clear list of tasks that teachers shouldn't be expected to carry out, and encourage school groups to take action **whenever these tasks are imposed**, up to and including strike action
- iii) support school groups that wish to oppose any attempt to impose a school-wide 'teacher-led instruction' teaching style in taking action up to and including strike action

## **15. DISCUSSION AND DEBATE IN THE UNION AND SCHOOLS**

Conference condemns recent attempts by elected national and local politicians to silence school staff, especially Headteachers, who have spoken out on 'political' issues such as funding and recruitment problems in schools.

Conference notes the intemperate nature of much recent public debate on a range of issues and condemns any vitriol or personal attacks and any silencing of legitimate discussion on divisive or controversial subjects.

Conference believes that freedom of speech and respectful debate must be part of any properly functioning democracy. Such debate should address the issues of concern without resorting to personal attack, threats, violence or hate.

Conference further notes that there is some very good work happening in schools and colleges and applauds such efforts to ensure our young people learn the skills of debate and how to look at issues from different perspectives. However, we are concerned that the squeezing of the curriculum will limit access for many young people to such opportunities and we call for the reinstatement of Citizenship to the curriculum.

Conference further believes:

- a) That young people should be supported in schools to discuss and address difficult issues in a constructive and respectful way,
- b) That NEU members should be supported to hold personal views that they can discuss in a constructive and respectful way, both in their workplaces and in the Union.

Conference instructs the Executive to:

- i) *Ensure that the Union is a safe place for all such difficult discussions by allowing any topic to be brought for discussion at any level of the Union;*
- ii) *Do what it can, through collation of best practice and disseminating through Briefings, Equality Conferences, Annual Conference and other opportunities, to ensure full member participation in the democratic processes of the Union.*

## **16. NURSERY SCHOOLS FUNDING**

Conference notes that:

1. According to a survey by Early Education, 3 in 10 maintained nursery schools are unsure about their immediate future, due to significant concerns about finances past 2020 when supplementary funding ends.
2. By 2019-20, the number of maintained nursery schools with budget deficits is set to triple and more than 60 per cent of heads think their budget will be in deficit by 2020
3. Nursery schools' budgets are being impacted by a lower lump sum, fluctuations in the number of children, increased costs and transitional funding only being provided for the universal 15 hours and not the 30 hours.
4. Maintained nursery schools have a proven record of narrowing the attainment gap between poorer children and their peers and support a far greater number of vulnerable children and those with special educational needs, than private nurseries

5. According to the 2016-17 Ofsted report, 63% of maintained nursery schools were rated outstanding and 100% achieved at least a good grade, while 64% are located in the country's most deprived areas.
6. NAHT has formed a partnership with the All-Party Parliamentary group (APPG) on Nursery Schools, Nursery and Reception Classes and Early Education to campaign for more certainty about the future funding of maintained nursery schools in England

Conference believes that:

- a) alongside cuts to children's centres, any closure of maintained nursery schools will disproportionately disadvantage the most vulnerable children in our communities
- b) campaigning for maintained nursery schools' funding should be an integral part of any future school funding cuts campaign

Conference instructs the NEU executive to:

- i) work with 'School Cuts' to include figures for maintained nursery schools on their website and in press releases*
- ii) explore the possibility of working with the APPG and campaigning alongside 'Early Education'*
- iii) include maintained nursery schools in any future campaigning on school funding*