

## Too Cool for School?

**With plans to increase the school leaving age, Dave explores the different proposals to lower leaving rates.**

In a recent report Alan Johnson, England's Education Secretary, stated that "staying on rates must improve" in education, claiming that it is unacceptable for a 16 year old to be unemployed and to leave compulsory education.

New proposals, such as the 'EMA scheme' (Education Maintenance Allowance) have already been set up in an attempt to increase the number of young people staying on at school. The scheme works by giving a maximum of £30 per week to pupils staying on after the leaving age. The scheme has proved very successful, as not only have staying on rates improved, but pupils' attendance has also increased.

The downside to this however is the fact that it is means-tested, and thus the supposedly 'more privileged' are left out of the scheme. This especially puts pressure on middle-income families to provide for their children. Another downside is that young people may keep on schooling for the wrong reasons; just for the money.

However there are also other plans to provide training opportunities and apprenticeships for people who wish to leave school. The aim of this is to give post-16 year olds a choice in a learning programme that interests them the most.

I think this is a good idea, seeing as it gives someone the opportunity to remain in 'education', even if they don't enjoy, or simply feel unsuited to the school system. After all, everyone likes to learn, but no one likes to be taught!

For many, the idea of an increased leaving age can be a daunting and scary one. For some, schooling has never been a pleasant experience, but I think with this more open ended approach, staying in education seems more inviting, and gives young people the chance to specialise in what they want.

### About this article

This article was written by David McCreynolds, 16, and published on the [Reach for the Sky](#) website.

### 2 comments

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crime and unemployment is the consequences of prematurely finishing statutory education at 16 years old every child should be encouraged to reach their full potential and there should be more emphasis placed on this by awarding EMA to every child regardless of the family income no one reaches their full potential at 16 a adolescence is too young to vote too young to buy alcohol but too old for school what nonsense no other country has such a premature age to cease statutory education. this is long over due for the betterment of this country and future generations to prepare our children for life as a adult in a civilised society, unisersities should be free to encourage progress and minimise hardship and drop outs.it is time we wake up in this country and smell the coffee, education is the key to success for us all

pepper 2 , 30 December 1899 00:00

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If we're going to look at an increased leaving age then i agree with the last comment, we do underprepare a lot of young people, a lot of people do not reach their full potential! Is this due to school leaving age or is it due to fundamental failure in the education system? Are we simply trying to institutionalise young people or do we want to create a more holistic 'education' that encourages learning, creativity, individuality and autonomy. People's potential cannot be taught to them, it is within them.

Jo from Lancaster, 30 December 1899 00:00

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