

# MISSOURI NEA RESOLUTIONS

Revised Spring 2024

MISSOURI NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION  
1810 EAST ELM STREET  
JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI 65101



**PREAMBLE TO THE MISSOURI NEA CONSTITUTION**

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We, the members of the Missouri National Education Association, stand resolute in our commitment to:

- serve as the state voice for quality and visionary public education;
- advance the cause of education for all individuals;
- promote the health and welfare of students;
- promote professional excellence among education employees;
- gain recognition of the importance of public education employees in the learning process;
- protect the rights of public education employees and advance their interests and welfare;
- secure professional autonomy;
- unite education professionals for effective citizenship;
- promote and protect human and civil rights;
- obtain for our members the benefits of an independent, united education profession; and
- shape a future where public education is the cornerstone of a just, equitable, and thriving society,

do hereby establish this Constitution to ensure the furtherance of these goals.

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**2023-2024**

**MNEA RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE**

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# RESOLUTIONS TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

## A. Serve as the state voice for quality and visionary public education

A-1	Public Educational Opportunity for All	1
A-2	Effective School Climate	1
A-3	Shared Responsibility for Support of Public Education	1
A-4	School Accountability	1
A-5	Federally and State-Mandated Choice/Parental Options	2
A-6	Charter Schools	2
A-7	Virtual/Distance Education	3
A-8	Home Schooling	3
A-9	Federal and State Legislative Mandates	4
A-10	Financial Support of Federally Funded Programs	4
A-11	State and Local Financial Support	4
A-12	Allocation and Expenditure of Teachers' Fund	4
A-13	Protested Taxes	5
A-14	State Board of Education	5
A-15	Elected Governing Boards	5
A-16	Reasonable Reserves and Balances	5
A-17	Funding of Higher Education	6
A-18	Rural Education	6
A-19	Assisting Schools/Districts in Academic Crisis	6
A-20	Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Advisory Committees	7
A-21	Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA)	7
A-22	Employee Rights During Structural Change	7
A-23	District Consolidation/Deconsolidation	7

## B. Advance the cause of education for all individuals

### Lifelong Learning

B-1	Early Childhood Education and Kindergarten	8
B-2	High School Graduation Requirements	8
B-3	Higher Education	8
B-4	Career Awareness and Exploration	8
B-5	Career and Technical Education	9
B-6	Community Service/Service Learning	9
B-7	Reading Education & Intervention	9
B-8	Critical Thinking, Listening/Speaking Skills	10

### Educational Equity

B-9	Educating Students From Diverse Backgrounds	10
B-10	Use of Educational Facilities	11

### Special Programs from Individuals

B-11	Education For All Students With Special Needs	11
B-12	Educational Programs In Support of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Students	12
B-13	Independent Reading Skills	12
B-14	Left-Handed Students	12

### Curriculum Content

B-15	Diversity of Educational Curriculum	12
B-16	Multicultural/Global Education	13
B-17	World Language Education	13
B-18	Equal Opportunities Through Mathematics and Science Education	13

B-19	Energy and Environmental Education	13
B-20	Family Life Education	14
B-21	Fine Arts Education	14
B-22	Physical Education	14
B-23	Gifted and Talented Education	14
B-24	Law In A Democratic Society	14
B-25	Genocide and The Holocaust Education	14
B-26	HIV/AIDS Education	15
B-27	Sex Education	15
B-28	Science Education Standards	15

**Learning Issues Not Related To Specific Disciplines**

B-29	Social – Emotional Learning	15
B-30	Library/Media Programs	16
B-31	Social Skills Education	16
B-32	Technology In The Educational Process	16
B-33	Media	16
B-34	Artificial Intelligence	17
B-35	Internet Access	17
B-36	Evaluation of Student Learning	17
B-37	Mandated Assessments	18
B-38	Missouri Learning Standards	18
B-39	Student Attendance and Achievement	19
B-40	Uninterrupted Class Time	19
B-41	Education Initiatives	19
B-42	Discipline	19
B-43	Business Support for Public Education	20

**C. Promote the Health Welfare of Students**

C-1	Parent/Guardian Involvement	21
C-2	School and Community Cooperation	21
C-3	Volunteers in Public Schools	21
C-4	Before and After School Programs	21
C-5	Children in Foster Care/Kinship Program	22
C-6	Child Support Payments	22
C-7	Impact of Homelessness and Poverty on Children	22
C-8	Rural Family Crisis	22
C-9	Safe School Environment	23
C-10	Weapon-Free Schools	23
C-11	Bullying in Schools	24
C-12	Campus Safety	24
C-13	School Emergency Plans	24
C-14	Healthy School Environment	25
C-15	Student Rights and Responsibilities	25
C-16	Child Abuse, Neglect, Harassment, and/or Exploitation	25
C-17	Media and Children	26
C-18	Student Use of Electronic Social Media	26
C-19	School Transportation	26
C-20	Comprehensive School Counseling	27
C-21	Lifesaving Techniques	27
C-22	Student Health and Personnel Services	27

C-23	Physical Activity and Recess -----	27
C-24	Medication and Medical Services in Schools -----	28
C-25	Student Stress and Mental Wellness -----	28
C-26	Nutrition -----	29
C-27	Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting -----	29
C-28	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity -----	29
C-29	Substance Misuse -----	30
C-30	Drug and/or Alcohol Testing of Students -----	30
C-31	Placement of Students with HIV or HIV-Related Diseases -----	30

**D. Promote Professional Excellence Among Education Employees**

D-1	Professional Excellence -----	31
D-2	Promotion of Teaching as a Career Choice -----	31
D-3	Teacher Preparation -----	31
D-4	Student Teaching -----	32
D-5	Subcontracting/Contracting Out -----	32
D-6	Licensure Reciprocity -----	32
D-7	Certification of School Social Workers -----	32
D-8	Competency Testing and Evaluations -----	32
D-9	Participation in Professional Associations -----	33
D-10	Quality Instructional Time -----	33
D-11	Quality Planning Time -----	33
D-12	Qualified Teachers in the Classroom -----	34
D-13	Substitute Education Professionals -----	34
D-14	Class Size -----	34
D-15	School Facilities -----	34
D-16	School Nurses -----	35
D-17	School Health Care Facilities -----	35
D-18	School Libraries/Media Centers -----	35
D-19	Higher Education Research and Study Grants -----	35
D-20	Peer Assistance and Review Programs -----	36
D-21	Evaluation of Educators -----	36
D-22	Evaluation of Education Support Professionals -----	37
D-23	Administrator Training and Evaluation -----	38
D-24	Evaluation and Promotion in Higher Education -----	38
D-25	Intern Programs -----	38

**E. Gain Recognition of the Importance of Public Education Employees in the Learning Process**

E-1	Instructional Excellence -----	39
E-2	Participation in Decision-Making -----	39
E-3	Faculty/Staff Governance in Higher Education -----	39
E-4	Academic and Professional Freedoms -----	39
E-5	Professional Choice of Instructional Methods and Programs -----	40
E-6	Support Services -----	40
E-7	Cultural Diversity in Instructional Materials and Process -----	40
E-8	Women in Instructional Materials -----	40

## **F. Protect the Rights of Public Education Employees and Advance Their Interests and Welfare**

F-1	Collective Bargaining	42
F-2	Written Personnel Policies	42
F-3	Extended Learning Time	42
F-4	Education Employee Compensation	42
F-5	Employee Benefits	44
F-6	Insurance Programs	44
F-7	Leaves of Absence/Release Time	44
F-8	Duty-Free Lunch	44
F-9	Guaranteed Due Process/Tenure	44
F-10	Grievance Procedures	45
F-11	Nondiscriminatory Personnel Policies/Affirmative Action	45
F-12	Protection of Education Professionals	45
F-13	Accusations Against Education Professionals	46
F-14	Higher Education Professional Staff Protection	46
F-15	Graduate Student Employee Protection	47
F-16	Use of Social Media	47
F-17	Employee Liability	47
F-18	Right to Privacy	47
F-19	Work Place Bullying	48
F-20	Accountability	48
F-21	Reduction in Force	49
F-22	Retirement	49
F-23	Retirement System Benefits	49
F-24	Working After Retirement	50
F-25	Part-Time Education Professionals	50
F-26	Wellness Programs for Education Professionals	50
F-27	Drug and Alcohol Testing	51
F-28	Education Professionals with HIV/AIDS or HIV-Related Diseases	51
F-29	Employee-Student Communications Policy	51
F-30	District 403(b) Plans	51
F-31	Educator Recruitment and Retention	51
F-32	Administrative Leave	52

## **G. Secure Professional Autonomy**

G-1	State Standards Board	53
G-2	Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Programs	53
G-3	Certification	53
G-4	Certification Requirements	53
G-5	Certificated/Licensed Educator in Every Position	54
G-6	National Board Certification for Teachers	54
G-7	National Certification for Education Professionals	54
G-8	Alternative Routes to Certification	54

## **H. Unite Education Professionals for Effective Citizenship**

H-1	The Education Professional as a Citizen	55
H-2	The Right to Vote	55
H-3	Political Action	55
H-4	Nonpartisan Approach to Redistricting	55

## **I. Promote and Protect Human and Civil Rights**

I-1	Civil Rights-----	57
I-2	Social Justice-----	57
I-3	Racial Justice-----	57
I-4	Positive School Environment-----	57
I-5	Personal Relationships in Education-----	58
I-6	Integration in Public Schools-----	58
I-7	Inclusive Medical Studies-----	58
I-8	Individual Privacy-----	58
I-9	Role of Religion in Public Schools-----	58
I-10	Linguistic Diversity-----	59
I-11	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day-----	59
I-12	Historically Black Colleges and Universities-----	59
I-13	Veterans' Day-----	59
I-14	Institutional Discrimination-----	59
I-15	Discrimination-----	60
I-16	Discrimination by Organizations-----	60
I-17	Hate-Motivated Groups-----	60
I-18	Disabilities Awareness-----	60
I-19	Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities-----	60
I-20	Equal Gender Rights-----	61
I-21	Women's History Month-----	61
I-22	Equity in Athletic Programs-----	61
I-23	Title IX-----	61
I-24	Fair Housing-----	61
I-25	World Peace-----	61

## **J. Obtain for Its Members the Benefits of an Independent, United Education Profession**

J-1	Coordinated Services-----	62
J-2	Strong Professional Association-----	62
J-3	Membership Participation in the Association-----	62
J-4	Supporting Locals in Jeopardy-----	62
J-5	Retired Member Participation-----	63
J-6	Minority Participation-----	63
J-7	Aspiring Educators Participation-----	63
J-8	Educators Rising Participation-----	63

## **A. SERVE AS THE STATE VOICE FOR QUALITY AND VISIONARY PUBLIC EDUCATION**

### **A-1 PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL**

The Missouri NEA believes that free public schools (PreK-12) are the cornerstone of social, economic and political structures and are of utmost significance in the development of moral, ethical, cultural, and democratic values.

The Association also believes a fully accessible and inclusive educational environment must ensure equitable access and match the learning needs of all students. The Association urges the Missouri General Assembly to fulfill its constitutional obligation to make public education its first priority and further ensure that public funds remain dedicated to public education.

The Association further believes that access to quality, affordable higher education is vital to democracy and our economic security. The Association urges adequate support of public institutions of higher learning.

The Association supports access to higher education for in-state residents regardless of immigration status as well as paths to legalization for undocumented high school graduates. (75, 07, 08, 13, 16, 21, 24)

### **A-2 EFFECTIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE**

The Missouri NEA believes that an effective public school climate is necessary for promoting educational excellence. An effective school has a stable, positive environment in which students, parents, education professionals and community members trust, respect and encourage one another. (88, 04, 08, 11, 17)

### **A-3 SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUPPORT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA recognizes its responsibility to promote an understanding of the history and continuing importance of public education and to support public education and public education employees. The Association encourages wide community and parental participation in achieving and maintaining educational excellence.

The Association believes that elected governing boards and other stakeholders also have a responsibility to promote public understanding of the importance of public schools.

The Association also believes that public education should be publicly and democratically controlled, without undue influence in decision making on the part of any private interests, including, but not limited to, business concerns and philanthropic organizations. (18, 20)

### **A-4 SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Missouri NEA supports effective and fair school accountability systems. The Association believes that these systems must promote student excellence and growth that reflect meaningful, high quality learning and ensure that the best teaching practices are supported and utilized.

The Association also believes schools targeted with academic sanctions or any other form of takeover must have access to a formal appeals process.

The Association further believes effective and fair school accountability systems must:



- a. Align assessment policy with goals for high-quality curricula and instruction
- b. Provide for reciprocal accountability
- c. Ensure that representative community members play a meaningful role in the system
- d. Include a broad array of school quality indicators
- e. Produce interpretable and actionable results

Evolve and improve. (22, 24)

#### **A-5 FEDERALLY AND STATE-MANDATED CHOICE/PARENTAL OPTIONS**

The Missouri NEA believes that local control is important for each of Missouri's many communities. Public school tax rates are set by elected governing boards and local voters, and all funds generated from these taxes should stay in local public schools.

The Association also believes that federally or state-mandated parental option plans compromise free, equitable, universal and quality public education for every student. Such plans include tax credits for tuition to private and parochial schools, voucher plans, or funding formulas that have the same effect. Local districts, in partnership with state and federal governments, must provide a quality education for every student by securing sufficient funding to maintain and to enhance excellence in each local public school district.

The Association further believes that public school choice plans with state funding may harm students and our public schools unless essential criteria are in place for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating their effectiveness. A public school choice plan must state its purpose and intended outcomes at the outset, be designed primarily to improve the quality of instructional and educational programs in the public schools, promote equal educational opportunity for all students and operate in ways that facilitate better racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic balances in the public schools. (90, 07, 08, 10, 15, 19, 21, 23)

#### **A-6 CHARTER SCHOOLS**

The Association is committed to rigorous learning standards, decentralized and shared decision making, diverse educational offerings, and the removal of restrictive requirements within the public schools.

Charter schools serve students and the public interest when they are authorized and held accountable by the locally elected school board. Charter schools should be authorized or expanded only after a district has assessed the impact of the proposed charter school on local public school resources, programs and services.

Public charters, like all public schools, must provide students with a free, accessible, non-sectarian, quality education that is delivered subject to the same basic safeguards and standards as every other public school. Fully virtual or online charter schools cannot, by their nature, provide students with a well-rounded, complete educational experience, including optimal kinesthetic, physical, social and emotional development and should not be authorized.

Funding for charter schools should not diminish funding for the school district in which a charter school operates. State law should hold charter schools and sponsors accountable, make the operations of schools transparent and protect the rights of schools, parents, teachers and other school employees. For-profit management companies should not operate charter schools.

Charter school personnel policies should contain effective safeguards to ensure that teachers and other staff

are not terminated arbitrarily or capriciously or for standing up for the best interest of students when the profit motive controls charter school decisions. (21)

## **A-7 VIRTUAL/DISTANCE EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that quality virtual/distance education can create or extend learning opportunities but is not a replacement for traditional education. Students learn best when they have the opportunity for face-to-face interaction with other students, peers and teachers.

The Association also believes that all opportunities for in person instruction be considered prior to moving a student to virtual/distance learning.

The Association further believes that virtual/distance education should not be a substitute for a highly qualified teacher in every classroom. Virtual/distance education should:

- a. Include a process for enrollment based on meeting the needs for a student to be successful
- b. Provide all services required to ensure a free and appropriate public education
- c. require that teachers be licensed in the subject matter taught
- d. provide courses that are as rigorous as similar courses delivered by more traditional means
- e. utilize appropriate technological safeguards to validate and authenticate student work.

The Association also believes that virtual schools should incorporate public accountability that includes annual evaluations and reviews of the programs. (07, 08, 10, 15)

## **A-8 HOME SCHOOLING**

The Missouri NEA believes that a child's educational and social development is best taught in a school setting. In some cases, however, children are being taught at home. To ensure that all children have an equitable and quality education, guidelines for home education programs must exist. The following guidelines should be adopted:

- a. providers of home instruction programs must meet either the state certification/licensure requirements or special requirements approved by the state
- b. authorized state or local permission must be required annually for home schooling. The decision shall be based on an individual education program and compliance with curriculum and health requirements
- c. home schooling should be monitored by local school personnel knowledgeable about excellence in the teaching-learning environment
- d. students must receive regular and thorough instruction in a program of study equal to that taught to students of the same age in a public school
- e. students must participate in all federal and state mandated testing
- f. compulsory recordkeeping must include a register of work, time at instructional activities, and progress. Submission of these records shall be required for transfer to a public school
- g. home schooling is a matter of parental preference, any extra expenses incurred by the school district in helping with the education of home-schooled students must be borne by the parents. The home-schooled student should be allowed access to school facilities and equipment if such access does not interfere with usage by public school students
- h. state statutes must include carefully delineated definitions of and distinctions among home schooling, private schools and home-bound students. (85, 07, 08, 19)

## **A-9 FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATIVE MANDATES**

The Missouri NEA believes that federal and state mandates regarding school programs should be only broad, general guidelines and should not be based on student achievement. Mandated programs should be established only in conjunction with the Association and its local affiliates. These mandates should be assessed by affiliates with particular attention to the impact upon students, education professionals and other school programs and finances. All education stakeholders should be involved in the development and implementation of education legislation. (94, 05, 08, 17, 19)

## **A-10 FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF FEDERALLY FUNDED PROGRAMS**

The Missouri NEA believes that federal funding for public education should be increased to fully fund all federal education mandates.

The Association also believes that local advisory committees of federally funded instructional programs should reflect the ethnic makeup of local communities and maintain a gender balance to ensure accountability and equity. Students, parents and educators should be included as members of these committees. (75, 07, 08, 09, 19)

## **A-11 STATE AND LOCAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

The Missouri NEA believes that equitable and adequate funding is critical to the future of public education in Missouri. The total wealth of the state should be distributed as equitably as possible for the public education of each child in Missouri. State support for public education should be no less than one third of the state general revenue. Local school tax levies and bond issues should be passed by simple majority. Property values should be fairly assessed and regularly reassessed. Assessor's offices should have adequate resources, data and professional staff and be held accountable to regular review by the state.

The Association also believes that state and local revenues should be partially derived from a progressive, broad-based system of personal and corporate income tax, which reduces the heavy reliance on property taxes and protects the property of those on subsistence income.

The Association strongly opposes Tax Increment Financing (TIF) that decreases local funding for school districts. The amount of state and local money designated for education shall not be decreased when monies from other sources are allocated to public education.

The Association further believes that state support must be predictable for long-range and year-to-year planning. If the foundation formula is changed, no district should receive less money per eligible pupil than in the last year prior to implementation of the change. (95, 07, 08, 20, 21)

## **A-12 ALLOCATION AND EXPENDITURE OF TEACHERS' FUND**

The Missouri NEA believes that allocations for the Teachers' Fund must be based on current fund placement law and are at least equal to or exceeding the percentage of revenues received in the current year.

The Association also believes that all state and local monies allocated for the Teachers' Fund should be expended during the year in which the funds are received. Further, local levy receipts applied to the Teachers' Fund should be expended for teacher salaries in the fiscal year for which the receipts are levied. Revenues from tax levies passed to improve teacher salaries should be expended for teachers' salaries in the current fiscal year. (75, 07, 08)

### **A-13 PROTESTED TAXES**

The Missouri NEA believes that protested taxes may be detrimental to school districts planning yearly budgets. Protests over tax amounts or rates must be processed and resolved in an efficient and expeditious manner. Taxes that are protested but not litigated within a specified period of time shall automatically become payable to the applicable taxing authority.

The Association also believes that local government should close loopholes for businesses/individuals taking advantage of current tax practices. (75, 05, 08, 15)

### **A-14 STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that the State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education have an obligation to propose an education budget that will meet the educational needs of Missouri's students. The State Board and the Commissioner must request sufficient appropriations so as not to jeopardize the future of public education in Missouri.

The Association also believes that active classroom teachers and education support professionals should constitute a majority of the membership of the State Board. The State Board should have the sole authority to hire the Commissioner of Education.

The Association further believes that the State Board must maintain two-way communication with all professional educators. (76, 05, 08, 09)

### **A-15 ELECTED GOVERNING BOARDS**

The Missouri NEA believes that local control is important for each of Missouri's many communities. Elected governing boards must be representative of the population within the geographic boundaries of the educational institution, including minority groups. The members of a board must be elected by the voters of that district and must be charged with the responsibility of promoting public understanding of the schools. Elected governing board members have a fiduciary responsibility and must seek adequate levels of local funding in a timely manner.

The Association also believes that board members must be responsive and accountable to the voters. Board meetings must be held at times and in places that allow education professionals and community members to attend and must be conducted in a manner that guarantees their right to participate.

The Association further believes elected governing boards need to engage parents, students, education professionals, and community members in the collaborative development and implementation of policies. (97, 04, 08, 17, 20, 23)

### **A-16 REASONABLE RESERVES AND BALANCES**

The Missouri NEA believes that a reasonable balance in a district's operating fund should be maintained to cover emergency expenses in staffing and district maintenance, but this should not interfere with student achievement or the hiring and retention of high quality staff. (75, 04, 08, 19)

## **A-17 FUNDING OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes in the maintenance and expansion of funding for higher education. State funding should increase to match or exceed the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI). The Association further believes that tuition caps are detrimental to a world-class higher education. (90, 07, 08)

## **A-18 RURAL EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes in a strong rural educational system and the preservation of the community infrastructure in rural Missouri.

The Association also believes that programs must be developed to address the fluctuating conditions of the rural environment. Equitable educational programs and funding of these programs are necessary. Institutions of higher education and state agencies should promote training of personnel that will address the special needs and problems of rural schools.

The Association recognizes that small communities may wish to maintain their autonomy through local control of schools. When a district can no longer meet the educational needs of its students, alternative strategies should be considered. (87, 04, 08)

## **A-19 ASSISTING SCHOOLS/DISTRICTS IN ACADEMIC CRISIS**

The Missouri NEA believes that schools/districts in a state of academic crisis must be provided with the necessary resources to remedy the crisis.

The Association also believes that when turning around the lowest performing schools, control should remain with the locally elected school board and be supplemented with state-supported funding, resources, and planning for improvement. The plan for improvement should entail numerous, coordinated, and aggressive changes in policies, programs, and behavior within school systems. It must assess and thoughtfully address school organization and structure, leadership and governance, staff recruiting, development and retention, instructional and curricular practices, support services and resources, parent and community involvement, overall school infrastructure, culture, and climate and other factors.

The Association further believes that open enrollment, like unaccredited district student transfer programs, destroys communities, undermines the stability of local schools, drains resources, and sanctions the recruitment/siphoning of student scholars, athletes and other curricular and extra-curricular activity participants.

The Association also believes that successful school improvement requires cooperation between the Association, the school administration, and parents.

Such efforts must—

- a. Adhere to collectively bargained labor agreements
- b. Comply with all appropriate school board policies
- c. Exhaust all viable evidence-based internal school improvement plans that address the needs of the whole student
- d. Identify, analyze, and evaluate the impact of restructuring and its funding
- e. Deliberate restructuring proposals in open meetings and public hearings
- f. Develop procedures and criteria that support and attract staff transfers to/from restructured schools.

The Association further believes that should all these options be exhausted there is a process for a formal appeal for every school or district that is being targeted with academic sanctions or any form of takeover. (87, 04, 08, 09, 11, 15, 23)

#### **A-20 DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION (DESE) ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

The Missouri NEA believes in the importance of having more teachers and education support professionals on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Advisory Committees. At least seventy-five percent (75%) of the membership of DESE Advisory Committees should be teachers and education support professionals. (81, 05, 12)

#### **A-21 MISSOURI STATE HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION (MSHSAA)**

The Missouri NEA believes that the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) is a voluntary, nonprofit, independent educational organization of Missouri's public, private and parochial secondary schools. MSHSAA is a democratically run association with member schools not only electing the governing board but also setting major rule changes through elections by the members. Educators should continue to establish the policies and procedures that govern the activities of the thousands of Missouri students who participate in school activities. (21)

#### **A-22 EMPLOYEE RIGHTS DURING STRUCTURAL CHANGE**

The Missouri NEA believes that in the event that a school district or public college/university is re-structured, it is critical to the students that the certified and noncertified staff who educate them be protected. Government entities must preserve the rights, salaries, tenure and accrued benefits of the certified and noncertified employees in the event of restructuring. (21)

#### **A-23 DISTRICT CONSOLIDATION/DECONSOLIDATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that any proposal that calls for the consolidation/deconsolidation of districts should be brought forth by locally elected school boards of affected districts.

The Association also believes that district consolidation/deconsolidation must employ a democratic process that meaningfully involves local associations and other stakeholders in all decision-making.

The Association further believes that if districts undergo consolidation/deconsolidation, all education employees in the new district(s) should be treated equitably with no reduction in the salary, benefits, protections, bargaining rights, or due process rights of the employees. Employees of these public school districts should remain bargaining unit members of local, state, and national affiliates. (23)

## **B. ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF EDUCATION FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS**

### **B-1 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND KINDERGARTEN**

The Missouri NEA believes in the establishment of fully funded early childhood education programs in the public schools for children from birth through age eight. Such programs should be held in easily accessible facilities that are appropriate to the developmental needs of these children. Early childhood education programs should include a full continuum of services for parents and children, including Parents as Teachers (PAT), English Language Learner (ELL) programs, child care, child development information, appropriate developmental curricula, special education and appropriate bias-free screening devices. Early childhood education programs must be sensitive to and meet the health and nutritional needs of children and provide services necessary to assist children with special needs.

The Association also believes that early childhood education should culminate in the equitable availability, in each district, of compulsory, all-day kindergarten with an appropriate balance of developmental, transitional and academic activities geared to the needs of the individual student.

The Association further believes that early childhood programs must be staffed by certificated/licensed personnel and qualified/ trained support staff. (75, 07, 08, 15)

### **B-2 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

The Missouri NEA believes high school course requirements established by the state should provide a comprehensive core of study for all students while retaining flexibility to meet the varying educational needs of students and allow schools and teachers flexibility in meeting those needs. The State Board of Education should consider the impact of additional course requirements on student participation in other required and elective subject areas and on the ability of students to meet all requirements with a normal course load. (21)

### **B-3 HIGHER EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that students should be encouraged to further their education through institutions of higher education.

The Association also believes that guaranteed student loan programs, grants and health care insurance should be fully funded in order to ensure quality, affordable higher education opportunities for all.

The Association further believes that Selective Service registration or citizenship status should not be used as a criterion for admission and student aid.

The Association also believes that care must be used to consider all aspects of higher education (graduate, four-year, community college, vocational, etc.) and to ensure that no higher education institution benefits at the expense of other higher education institutions. (84, 07, 08, 12, 13, 20)

### **B-4 CAREER AWARENESS AND EXPLORATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that all individuals, early childhood through adulthood, should be provided opportunities to become productive citizens. The career education concept must be interwoven with the total educational system.

The Association also believes that educational programs should be developed that assure opportunity for

career awareness on the elementary level and offer career exploration on the secondary level.

The Association further believes that provisions for professional development experiences and release time for educators for curriculum development in career education are needed. Partnerships should be developed in cooperation with industry and agencies for the creation and support of career education programs. (89, 04, 08, 15)

#### **B-5 CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that career and technical education is a major component of education and advocates that every student should have the opportunity to enroll in such classes. Career and technical education should be preceded by a program of awareness and exploration to aid students in career choices.

The Association also believes that, where appropriate and the law allows, districts should be encouraged to allow a student to use technical education credits to replace required credit courses.

The Association encourages career and technical educational programs to offer education career pathway courses with Educators Rising as their career and technical organization. (77, 04, 12, 15, 17)

#### **B-6 COMMUNITY SERVICE/SERVICE LEARNING**

The Missouri NEA believes that all students should have equal opportunities to participate voluntarily in community service/service learning programs throughout their school careers. Participation in community service/service learning programs may be used for elective credit but should not be used as a requirement for graduation from high school and institutions of higher education.

The Association also believes that education professionals who supervise students involved in community service/service learning programs should be given appropriate compensation, planning time, program support, funding, recognition and time to evaluate the service and learning goals.

The Association further believes that school districts and institutions of higher education should work with communities to provide students with voluntary program opportunities for community service/service learning. (92, 07, 08)

#### **B-7 READING EDUCATION & INTERVENTION**

The Missouri NEA believes that schools should support individuals who have unexpected difficulty in reading, dyslexia, or other literacy disabilities. Failure to read not only limits achievement at the individual level, but also affects the well-being and economic growth of the community. This issue disproportionately impacts students with disabilities and students of color. The Association recognizes that dyslexia and other reading comprehension difficulties are life-long challenges that require systematic and explicit support.

The Association also believes that early intervention leads to better outcomes for struggling readers. Student reading progress should be carefully monitored and assessed, particularly in the early grades. Reading instruction, with appropriate evidence-based reading intervention, especially in the early grades, is essential for learning and achieving high standards in all content areas. These interventions should reflect the hierarchy of reading development, including phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

The Association further believes schools should provide all in-service teachers with quality professional development opportunities in literacy and reading instruction. The Association supports evidence-based



instruction and ongoing professional development in the teaching of reading to struggling readers, including those with dyslexia.

The Association also believes institutions of higher education that prepare teachers should adequately prepare all teaching students to provide effective literacy and reading instruction and actively involve classroom teachers and professional organizations in designing this training. Educators offering services to remediate reading disabilities should be licensed by an appropriate agency.

The Association further believes that schools and communities should work together in raising awareness of the link between language development and reading skills acquisition.

The Association also believes public school districts and public charter schools should create, maintain and annually update literacy plans to address the needs of all students. (21)

### **B-8 CRITICAL THINKING, LISTENING/SPEAKING SKILLS**

The Missouri NEA believes that critical thinking and listening/speaking skills are vital components of a school curriculum. The Association understands that these skills are not suited to measurement by standardized testing but are essential for students to be able to adapt in a changing world. The Association supports the development of authentic assessments embedded in instructional practice and scored by teachers for use in state accountability metrics.

The Association also believes that educators play a vital role in teaching critical thinking through developmentally appropriate practices.

The Association further believes that developmentally appropriate practices enable students to analyze, synthesize, evaluate and determine the importance and relevance of ideas. Students should be able to identify erroneous or fallacious reasoning and logic. (94, 02, 08, 17, 20)

### **B-9 EDUCATING STUDENTS FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS**

The Missouri NEA believes that every student enrolled in a public school deserves a quality education. The complex needs of students from diverse backgrounds require the direct involvement of parents, educators, tribal/community leaders, and other cultural groups in developing programs that meet the cultural, language, and learning characteristics of these students. Immigration status should not determine access to educational opportunities.

The Association supports efforts to improve student learning by providing adequate funding for:

- a. developing and implementing strategic action plans to close the achievement gaps
- b. opposing the segregation of students from culturally diverse backgrounds through special classes in public schools (excludes ELL classes)
- c. establishing educational opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds through the use of federal and state programs
- d. expanding graduation options to maximize graduation rates and minimize student drop-out rates.

The Association also supports efforts that provide adequate funding and understanding for education professionals through:

- a. recruitment, training and employment of education professionals, including bilingual educators and

- counselors, who reflect the diversity of the students
- b. scholarships and loan resolution programs that encourage and/or enable education professionals from diverse backgrounds to remain in the profession
- c. pre-service and continuing education programs that encourage and/or enable education professionals from diverse backgrounds to remain in the profession
- d. dissemination of information and materials to educate the community about the importance of maintaining and celebrating the heritage and diversity of all students.

The Association further supports the use of audits to ensure equity in all programs and educational opportunities throughout the state. (08, 12, 15, 17)

#### **B-10 USE OF EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES**

The Missouri NEA believes that elected governing boards should work with affiliates to develop programs that make educational facilities available to the community throughout the year. Facilities should be utilized by the community whenever possible, excluding times that would infringe upon students, education employees or educational programs. (75, 06, 08, 20)

#### **B-11 EDUCATION FOR ALL STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

The Missouri NEA believes that students with special needs are entitled to a free, appropriate public education. These students must be identified and evaluated on a case-by-case basis by a legally constituted assessment team. The Association advocates:

- a. general and special education teachers, other education professionals, parents and medical personnel, as appropriate, must share in all planning and decision making that involve placement and provision of services to students with special needs. A full continuum of services must be provided and examined
- b. the educational environment, including appropriate space, equipment, materials and educational opportunities, must meet the learning needs of all students
- c. functional, age-appropriate skills should be taught to prepare students to lead active lives in integrated living, community, occupational and recreational settings. The curricula should be taught in the most appropriate setting for specific skill acquisition and should focus on present and future real life experiences
- d. suspension and expulsion policies and practices must be applied consistently to all students, except when the misconduct is related to the child's disability or to improper placement. If the misconduct is due to improper placement, a change of placement must be considered
- e. all educational professionals must be appropriately trained, certificated or licensed for their responsibilities prior to and during the placement of a student with special needs in the classroom. Districts should provide adequate training, compensation, planning time, materials and facilities for teachers, counselors and appropriate education support professionals
- f. all involved education professionals must be accorded the right of dissent in regard to diagnosis and/or an individual educational plan, including the right to have their dissenting opinion recorded. The appeal procedure should be followed so that decisions perceived as inappropriate may be reviewed
- g. placement based on individual needs and mandated by the individual education plan should include modification of class size and staff allocation, use of a weighted formula and schedule modifications and/or adapted curricula
- h. placement patterns must be examined periodically to determine whether students are placed in programs disproportionately by ethnicity, sex, gender, or race
- i. funding provided for special education services must be used solely for that purpose
- j. adequate release time or funded additional time, including regularly scheduled time for

communication between special and general education personnel, must be made available so that responsibilities can be met

- k. both general and special education professionals should be appointed to local and state advisory boards and must be included in on-site visits by the U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Service
- l. local affiliates must monitor their school districts' compliance with special education legislation. (86, 07, 08, 15, 17)

#### **B-12 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN SUPPORT OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, AND QUESTIONING (LGBTQ+) STUDENTS**

The Missouri NEA supports appropriate and inclusive educational programs that address the unique needs and concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ+) students. The Association also supports efforts and contributions by educators, parents/guardians, community leaders, organizations, and partners in the development of these programs. Specific programs should provide:

- a. Acknowledgement of the significant contributions of diverse LGBTQ+ persons in American history and culture
- b. Involvement of educators knowledgeable in LGBTQ+ issues in the development of educational materials that integrate factual information about the history, social movements, and current events of LGBTQ+ people
- c. Developmentally appropriate local, state, and national resources. (16, 19)

#### **B-13 INDEPENDENT READING SKILLS**

The Missouri NEA believes it is critical that students become independent readers to succeed in school and life. Reading instruction, with appropriate evidence-based reading intervention, especially in the early grades, is essential for learning and achieving high standards in all content areas.

The Association also believes the acquisition of the primary language spoken within the home is the foundation for reading skills development. Emerging literacy skills begin with the interaction and communication between children and adults. An increased number of words spoken to a child during language development increases future reading proficiency.

The Association also believes teachers' efforts to value and promote reading should be supported by parents/guardians, library media specialists, other education employees and communities. (18, 19, 21)

#### **B-14 LEFT-HANDED STUDENTS**

The Missouri NEA believes that the needs of all students, including left-handed students, should be met. The Association also believes that appropriate governing agencies should provide all materials and instruments necessary for left-handed students to achieve on an equal basis with right-handed students.

The Association strongly recommends pre-service preparation and staff development for education professionals that present strategies for handwriting instruction to left-handed students. (06, 08, 19)

#### **B-15 DIVERSITY OF EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM**

The Missouri NEA believes in the diversity of students and the complexity of the world for which they must be prepared. Similarities and differences among race, ethnicity, color, national origin, language, geographic

location, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical and mental ability, size, occupation, and marital, parental, or economic status form the fabric of society. Education should foster a vibrant, pluralistic, intrinsically equitable and just society that authentically reflects diverse populations and cultural perspectives. To meet this challenge, students from early childhood through higher education should have access to a diverse, equitable curriculum.

The Association also believes curriculum should include observances and programs that accurately portray and recognize the roles, contributions, cultures, and history of diverse groups and individuals. The teaching of current and historical truths, including wrongs done to marginalized and oppressed peoples, should connect students to the past in order to foster critical thinking and growth.

The Association further believes that adequate funding must be provided for the effective development and implementation of a diverse, equitable curriculum. (91, 07, 08, 22, 23)

#### **B-16 MULTICULTURAL/GLOBAL EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that multicultural/ global education promotes knowledge and attitudes in students which enable them to have a better understanding and appreciation of their own cultural legacy and to recognize their part in the cultural diversity of the world.

The Association also believes that encouraging a global perspective provides a means to examine events from a variety of points of view, to understand how actions taken in one place may have immediate and far-reaching ramifications in another, to understand the interplay between forces of change and stability in the world, and to use such understanding in responsible ways. Multiculturalism/global education should include collaboration among the diverse groups in the community, nation and world.

The Association further believes that comprehensive professional development and training programs for educators of multicultural/global education should be implemented. (85, 07, 08, 12)

#### **B-17 WORLD LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that world language instruction is a vital part of the total educational process. Students should have the opportunity to acquire age-appropriate world language skills. Instruction should include integrated, authentic, and practical curriculum and materials from Pre-K through higher education.

The Association also believes that current programs should be maintained and additional world language and international studies programs, including teacher and student exchange programs, should be developed and implemented at all educational levels. (97, 05, 08, 16)

#### **B-18 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that unbiased mathematics and science programs should be developed and maintained to meet the needs of women and ethnic groups. These programs can help provide women and minorities access to equal opportunities and equitable treatment for full employment and full participation in society. (93, 07, 08, 10, 19)

#### **B-19 ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that educational programs that increase understanding of energy, alternative energy sources, energy conservation and environmental awareness are necessary in order to prepare students for their role in global responsibility. (92, 03, 08)

## **B-20 FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that students should be prepared for the roles and responsibilities of family life. A comprehensive educational program developed for family life education should be unbiased and culturally sensitive. These programs should include but not be limited to: relationships, etiquette, family planning, parenting, values and decision making, sexuality, nutrition, food preparation, home management, access to community resources and care of family elders. (94, 04, 08, 19)

## **B-21 FINE ARTS EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that a student's opportunity for artistic expression is essential to an individual's intellectual, aesthetic, emotional and educational development. Fine Arts programming must take place under the instruction of a certificated/licensed fine arts instructor in a facility designed for that purpose. Each curriculum must include a balanced, comprehensive and sequential program of fine arts instruction that provides for emerging technologies.

The Missouri NEA believes that sacred and secular music are integral components of a balanced music program and valid resources in teaching form, performance techniques and cultural heritage while maintaining the separation of church and state. (91, 04, 08, 12, 19)

## **B-22 PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that physical activity and exercise are essential for good health and must be encouraged during the developmental years of students.

The Association also believes that a comprehensive program of physical education should be provided in grades pre K through adult in or on facilities designed for that purpose. Physical education programs and curricula should follow state and national standards as set forth by the appropriate professional organizations; should be developmentally appropriate, sequential, cooperative in nature, and culturally and gender sensitive. (19)

## **B-23 GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes educational programs and services for gifted and talented students must be supported by federal and state funding. Well-developed criteria and guidelines for identifying and teaching these students are essential.

The Association also believes that comprehensive professional development and training programs for educators of gifted and talented students should be implemented. (13)

## **B-24 LAW IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY**

The Missouri NEA believes that an informed citizenry is the key to a democratic society. Educational programs should promote responsible citizenship and an appreciation of a democratic society, as well as an understanding that laws form a structure of guidance in a free society. (94, 04, 08)

## **B-25 GENOCIDE AND THE HOLOCAUST EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA deplors any act of genocide, defined as the deliberate and systematic eradication of members of any group based on culture, ethnicity, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion and sexual

orientation or gender identity. Acts of genocide must be acknowledged and taught in order to provide insight on how this inhumanity develops, how to prevent its occurrence and how to preclude its reoccurrence. The Association believes the historical events of the Holocaust must be taught to provide insight into how atrocities of this magnitude develop.

The Association also believes that Holocaust education promotes human rights, prevents future genocides and reduces doubt that these horrifying events occur. (20)

#### **B-26 HIV/AIDS EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that students must know how to protect themselves from human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS). Educational institutions should establish comprehensive HIV/AIDS education programs which must include education about all means of transmission, including unprotected sex and unsanitary methods of tattooing, body piercing, and intravenous drug use. Information on prevention options must include abstinence and medically accepted protective devices.

The Association also believes that proper implementation of comprehensive programs requires employee training and input. These programs shall be presented by properly trained certificated/licensed personnel.

The Association further believes that adequately funded community education programs by health departments and related agencies must be supported and maintained in order to educate the public about the nature of HIV/AIDS. (08, 15)

#### **B-27 SEX EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that the sensitive presentation of sex education can be a positive force in promoting physical, mental, emotional and social health. Public schools are assuming an increasingly important role in providing the instruction. Teachers and health professionals must be qualified to teach evidence-based information in this area and must be legally protected from censorship and lawsuits.

The Association also believes that appropriately established sex education programs must be supported and maintained. These programs must provide information on human reproduction, sexual abstinence, birth control, family planning, parenting skills and responsibilities, prenatal care, and diversity of sexual orientation. Programs must also include information regarding sexually transmitted diseases, incest, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, preteen / teenage pregnancy, and the effects of substance abuse during pregnancy. (90, 05, 08, 19)

#### **B-28 SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARDS**

The Missouri NEA believes Students in public schools deserve to receive a science education that provides them with a foundation in understanding the scientific method and tested scientific principles. Curriculum decisions should be locally decided, and proposals that are not subject to the standards of scientific review should not be mandated in public school science curricula. Inclusion of such proposals in public school curricula should be a matter of local control along with the manner in which such proposals are discussed. (21)

#### **B-29 SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

The Missouri National Education Association believes that students must learn the social-emotional skills of self-awareness, self-management, social management, decision-making, and relationship management. The

development of these competencies is necessary in the learning process to provide pathways for both academic success and achievement.

The Association also believes evidence-based instructional methods and adequate staffing of specialized instructional support personnel (school counselors, social workers, mental health workers, nurses, and/or psychologists) should be used to provide services, including peer support, designed to develop and promote healthy social and emotional skills in all students for their lifelong learning process.

The Association further believes that local educational institutions should develop or adopt and implement social-emotional learning curriculum and assessment based on student needs. (87, 03, 08, 15, 16, 24)

### **B-30 LIBRARY/MEDIA PROGRAMS**

The Missouri NEA believes that all students and education professionals deserve the benefit of a comprehensive library media program within educational settings. All students should have access to independent reading choices through library media centers in their building. Public school institutions and library media centers should include culturally responsive materials to meet the needs of a diverse student population. These centers should be staffed by certified library media specialists in their buildings. Teachers should be encouraged to use certified library media specialists' expertise to address the diverse needs of students. (95, 05, 08, 18, 21, 22, 23)

### **B-31 SOCIAL SKILLS EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that the acquisition of positive social skills is a vital component of a child's education. These skills promote relationships, respect and etiquette and build self-esteem, trust and acceptance in school, on the job, and in the community. These skills also reduce incidences of bullying and other conflicts. (95, 03, 08)

### **B-32 TECHNOLOGY IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS**

The Missouri NEA believes that technology and access to electronic/digital communication increases the opportunity to reduce educational inequities within and among schools and school districts. The advancement and application of instructional technology materials and devices provide new opportunities for developing skills, furthering research and expanding knowledge. Local associations should support efforts to use technology to improve the quality of instruction in local schools, to enhance the working conditions of their members and to protect members' rights. Technology should be used to enhance the roles and instructional opportunities of education professionals. Social media guidelines/policies should be developed cooperatively by local affiliates and elected governing boards.

The Association also believes that state and local budgets for school technology programs must include monies for equipment purchases and upgrades, maintenance, technical support, training, evaluation and staffing. (97, 06, 08, 10, 12, 19, 20)

### **B-33 MEDIA**

The Missouri NEA believes that the media has an obligation to provide full, constructive and accurate presentations. Visual media, including that of the Association, shall include closed captioning for the hearing impaired. The media has the right to protect information and sources of information from mandated disclosures and search and seizure.

The Association also believes that educators must become involved in media program development and

monitoring of media resources. (97, 06, 08)

### **B-34 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

The Missouri NEA believes that the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) should be continually evaluated in terms of its impact on educational outcomes and its influence on the lives of those in public education.

The Association also believes that the use of AI in Public Education should align with the following principles:

- a. AI tools should support the needs of students and educators
  - b. The implementation of AI must be equitable, accessible, and inclusive to ensure that no community is disadvantaged or excluded
  - c. AI tools and their implementation must be free of crucial, racial, and gender biases, and they should not perpetuate or amplify existing biases or discrimination
  - d. Educators should be involved in the development of best practices for pedagogical applications of AI
  - e. The use of AI in public education should be transparent, including its applications, what data is collected, and how that data is used
  - f. AI should not compromise the privacy of educators, students, or their families
  - g. Educators and students should be provided guidance and training on the ethical use of AI tools: how and when it is appropriate, and the benefits and drawbacks of its use.
- (24)

### **B-35 INTERNET ACCESS**

The Missouri NEA believes that affordable, high-speed, seamless and equal access to the internet should be appropriately available to all staff and students in all schools.

The Association also believes that education employees are essential to the development of an acceptable use policy (AUP) and to the appropriate use of the internet. Filtering of internet web sites must maintain a balance between the protection of students and the open flow of information.

The Association further believes that an acceptable use policy that requires the signatures of parents/guardians and students must be in place before allowing student access. (19)

### **B-36 EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING**

The Missouri NEA recognizes the need for ongoing comprehensive evaluation of student progress. Student learning must be assessed with authentic measures directly linked to the lessons teachers teach and the materials teachers use.

The Association believes that the major purposes of such evaluations should be to:

- a. develop age appropriate and relevant learning experiences for students
- b. provide faculty with information to improve knowledge of individual student learning styles and aptitudes
- c. assist students in identifying their own strengths and weaknesses
- d. help students choose more wisely among options



- e. encourage the development of an appreciation for lifelong learning skills
- f. provide highly qualified technology teachers to instruct students in the skills necessary to navigate the assessment
- g. provide appropriate technology in the classroom.

The Association also believes that teacher-developed tests, formal and informal observations, and project/performance-based assessments are effective evaluative measures. None of these measures should be used as the single evaluation score. All methods of evaluation shall be free of cultural, racial and gender biases.

The Association further believes that, as an aspect of academic freedom, teachers should have the final authority to determine criteria for evaluating and assigning grades to students. (97, 06, 08, 15)

### **B-37 MANDATED ASSESSMENTS**

The Missouri NEA believes that standardized tests and/or assessments should be used only to improve the quality of education and instruction for students. Assessments should be student-centered and support teaching, learning, and program improvement.

The Association also believes that assessments should be monitored and audited to ensure that they are bias-free, reliable, valid and non-duplicative. Procedures allowing each test-taker, educator and parent to request a post-test review of all questions, scores and rationale for correct answers should be adopted. The Association further believes that assessments are most reliable and useful when developed, administered, and interpreted by educators in time to facilitate modification of the instructional program.

The Association also believes that the scores of students who “opt-out” of assessments should not impact any evaluation of a district, building or teacher.

The Association further believes that the assessment systems should use a variety of developmentally appropriate assessments.

The Association also believes assessments must not be used for:

- a. Compensation or comparison of one teacher, school or district to another
- b. High-stakes criteria for high school graduation
- c. Discouraging learning or constraining the curriculum in a way that threatens the quality of instruction and learning for students
- d. The requirement of summer school attendance. (76, 06, 08, 13, 15, 17, 22, 24)

### **B-38 MISSOURI LEARNING STANDARDS**

The Missouri NEA believes that there should be continued development of Missouri Learning Standards. Clear performance standards also need to be developed for both core and non-core areas. The effectiveness of these programs depends on continuous development, implementation and evaluation. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) should provide technical assistance, funding, model programs and periodic review to assist districts in developing their local curricula. Local districts should provide time and resources for professional development to implement these standards.

The Association also believes that these programs should be monitored by local affiliates with particular attention to their impact on students, school professionals, school programs and finances. (06, 08, 13)

### **B-39 STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT**

The Missouri NEA believes that students must be in class to learn at their optimal level. Excessive student absences have adverse effects on program continuity and student achievement.

The Association also believes that policies and procedures concerning all school absences should be reviewed and modified to ensure maximum classroom attendance.

The Association further believes that, although some students need to be gainfully employed, parents, students and employers should be made aware of the adverse effects of excessive working hours upon student achievement. (84, 04, 08)

### **B-40 UNINTERRUPTED CLASS TIME**

The Missouri NEA believes that uninterrupted class time is vital for optimal learning. Excessive or unscheduled interruptions (such as announcements, visitors and assemblies) have an adverse effect on curricular continuity, student concentration and achievement. Policies and procedures concerning excessive changes to instructional times and class time interruptions should be adopted, reviewed and modified in a timely manner to ensure optimal class time usage. Field trips should have clearly defined educational goals which are supportive of the curriculum. (98, 05, 08, 11)

### **B-41 EDUCATION INITIATIVES**

The Missouri NEA believes that changes in student instruction and assessment must be carefully implemented.

The Association also believes that development of education initiatives must, at the outset, include all stakeholders.

The Association further believes that the most important place where implementation occurs is in the classroom. Staff must have adequate time and training as well as appropriate and adequate resources to implement new initiatives.

The Association also believes that student assessment is vital to help individualize teaching and measure student learning. Implementation of new education initiatives must occur before assessment of new education initiatives. Assessments must measure what was actually taught and be in a form familiar to the student.

The Association further believes that any education initiative not meeting the above criteria will fail and will harm our children, our profession, public education, and our nation.

The Association also believes that educational initiatives designed to limit the teaching of the history of marginalized and oppressed peoples harm all stakeholders. (97, 06, 08, 19, 22)

### **B-42 DISCIPLINE**

The Missouri NEA believes that an atmosphere of positive discipline is essential to promoting optimum learning in schools. Effective discipline enhances high expectations and quality instruction, thereby promoting self-control and responsible behavior in students. The Association opposes the use of corporal punishment in Missouri schools.

The Association also believes that student and teacher rights and responsibilities in the educational process must be clearly written in policy and procedure. Positive disciplinary procedures within the educational process not only protect a student's right to a fair hearing but also provide the classroom teacher with the authority to maintain internal classroom management.

The Association further believes that local affiliates should collaborate on a process whereby administrators, teachers, other education professionals, parents and students will be involved in identifying and understanding causes of disruptive behavior.

The Association also believes that equitable discipline practices should be prescribed, implemented and evaluated in order to address behaviors in the school community.

The Association further believes the reduced use of zero-tolerance policies and the use of trauma informed and restorative justice practices will meet the needs of a diverse population. (76, 06, 08, 17)

### **B-43 BUSINESS SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that the business community should play a cooperative role with the Association in the support of public education. Affiliates should develop strong coalitions with the business community to advocate adequate and stable tax funding for public education. The business community is encouraged to develop partnerships with schools to supplement activities such as cooperative programs, resource assistance, release of employees for parent/teacher conferences and the donation of specialized equipment. (87, 04, 08)

## **C. PROMOTE THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF STUDENTS**

### **C-1 PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT**

The Missouri NEA believes that parent/guardian involvement in a child's development and education is essential throughout a child's school career. School districts should utilize a variety of means to communicate effectively between school and home.

The Association also believes that schools, teachers, parents/guardians and students should actively participate in organizations and activities which promote cooperation. Schools and teachers should communicate with parents/guardians about students' attendance, academic performance and behavior. Parents/guardians should be encouraged to communicate with schools and teachers concerning situations at home which may affect the student's health, safety, and/or ability to learn.

The Association further supports the provision of training programs that prepare parents/guardians to take an active role in their child's education. These programs should provide an awareness of the expectations that will be placed on children and parents/guardians as well as familiarization with the policies and procedures that children will experience during their formal education. (77, 04, 08, 15)

### **C-2 SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY COOPERATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that ongoing communication, service and partnerships between schools and the community lead to quality education. All students, parents, community leaders and education personnel should develop and support community partnerships. (98, 04, 08)

### **C-3 VOLUNTEERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The Missouri NEA believes that parents/guardians and other community volunteers play a valuable role within the public schools. The proper use of volunteers is essential for the preservation of quality educational programs for children. Volunteers should be appropriately screened and trained, as determined by the needs of the local school system. The screening should be for the sole purpose of eliminating volunteers who are convicted felons, child abusers, or sex offenders. Training should include, but not be limited to, the development of age appropriate activities and sensitivity to diversity issues.

The Association also believes that education employees should be involved in the decision-making process regarding the utilization of volunteers within local school systems. (16)

### **C-4 BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

The Missouri NEA believes that all children need and benefit from adequate adult supervision and guidance before and after school hours.

The Association also believes that local, state and/or national programs should be developed and staffed by qualified and trained personnel to assist children who have limited or no adult supervision before and after school. Programs should be provided regardless of ability to pay and should include opportunities for children to develop physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually by participating in study-skill sessions, counseling and guidance in addition to recreational activities. (97, 04, 08)

## **C-5 CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE/KINSHIP PROGRAM**

The Missouri NEA believes that it is in the best interest of all children to live in a secure and stable family environment. Every effort should be made to provide a family with a supportive community to allow the family to stay together and care for the children in a safe and nurturing environment. If a child's immediate and/or extended family is unable to care for him or her, community support should be provided with attention to the following concerns:

- a. the child may need temporary foster care while, at the same time, efforts are made to work with the family toward reunification with the child. The foster care system should provide:
  1. screening and training of potential foster families
  2. continued training and supervision of families providing foster care
  3. auxiliary services, including therapy, for children who need them
  4. ongoing communication of pertinent information between the social service agency and school personnel when appropriate
  5. protection and counseling for the child who has been abused
  6. adequate financial support to foster care providers that reflects both the needs of the child and the importance of the care.
- b. when a child is placed in temporary foster care, every effort should be made to ensure the stability of the child's educational environment by minimizing changes in the schools attended
- c. parents who place a child in foster care must be accountable for their efforts to rehabilitate themselves and demonstrate that they are actively working toward the return of the child to the home
- d. if it becomes clear that a family is not able to make a home for a child and is unable to resume parenting, efforts should be made for the child's legal release for adoption.

The Association supports the kinship program, which is part of the foster care program, in which other vested adults provide a nurturing environment for children. (88, 04, 08, 09, 16)

## **C-6 CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS**

The Missouri NEA believes that parents and county, state and federal agencies should enforce adequate child support guidelines and improve the effectiveness of the collection of court-designated child support. (83, 07, 08)

## **C-7 IMPACT OF HOMELESSNESS AND POVERTY ON CHILDREN**

The Missouri NEA believes in the right to education, health care and adequate housing for all children, including those without a permanent legal address. Homelessness can limit the knowledge of, and access to, services such as education, housing, jobs, health care and other human service agencies.

The Association also believes that schools need to work collaboratively with the community, local, state, and federal agencies, and higher education to create opportunities to enhance student access.

The Association further believes that society has the responsibility to lessen the effect of homelessness by assisting children and youth to develop necessary life skills, to learn new concepts, and to function successfully in diverse settings. (89, 04, 08, 16)

## **C-8 RURAL FAMILY CRISIS**

The Missouri NEA believes that schools and communities should seek clear understanding of the statewide

ramifications of the rural family crisis, including high turnover in student population, lack of access to support services, and a lack of access to technology. Programs must be developed which are tailored to assist students and education professionals affected by the changing rural environment. The current foundation formula does not provide equitable funding for rural schools.

The Association also believes in equitable funding of rural school districts which should not be dependent on geographical location, density of population, or consolidation of rural schools.

The Association further believes that schools and communities should be made aware of the impact of the increasing economic and social crises in Missouri's rural areas on students and education professionals. (89, 04, 08, 10, 19)

### **C-9 SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

The Missouri NEA believes that all students should feel physically and emotionally safe while in the school environment. The Association supports procedures that eliminate physical violence, verbal abuse and intimidation in all schools. Procedures to ensure a safe school environment should include:

- a. a mandate that school districts adhere to laws requiring that a student's records relevant to violent behavior, or potential for such behavior, be provided to all school employees prior to the student's being admitted to the school
- b. professional development opportunities for education professionals to learn how to manage disruptive students
- c. a requirement that all districts provide professional development activities for general and special education staff about legislation and court cases regarding the discipline of students with special needs and about the development of individual educational plans (IEPs) and 504 plans, so that a student's plan is a proactive measure and is not an excuse for violent acts or possession of weapons
- d. funding for districts to provide:
- e. continuous training for employees about harassment, violence, gangs, possession of weapons and substance abuse
- f. school-based programs to deal with situations before they reach crisis proportions
- g. for students who need alternative placement due to their behavior
- h. police, juvenile authorities and workers to cooperate with schools in dealing with juvenile offenders
- i. assistance to parents or guardians of disruptive students or juvenile offenders to learn parenting skills needed to help their children
- j. provisions to exempt districts and their employees from liability while engaged in maintaining discipline and mitigating or preventing violence in the schools in accordance with state laws and school policies
- k. mandatory reporting of "neglect" to the Children's Division when parent(s) or guardian(s) of a suspended student fails to attend a conference with teacher(s), counselor(s) and administrator(s) within ten school days of a suspension
- l. enforced penalties for criminal actions involving guns and other weapons in school settings. (97, 06, 08, 09, 10, 15)

### **C-10 WEAPON-FREE SCHOOLS**

The Missouri NEA believes that all students and education employees must be allowed to learn and work in an environment free of unauthorized guns and other deadly weapons. Severe penalties should be enacted and strenuously enforced for criminal actions involving guns and other deadly weapons, especially in school settings.

The Association also believes that arming educators as a method of school security or violence prevention increases the risk of potential violence and accidental shootings endangering all stakeholders.

The Association further believes that individuals who bring unauthorized guns or deadly weapons to school should be excluded from school and school grounds until undergoing mandatory prescribed intervention. Furthermore, we believe only law enforcement personnel should be allowed to carry weapons on school grounds. (15, 19)

### **C-11 BULLYING IN SCHOOLS**

The Missouri NEA believes that the school environment must be free of all forms of physical and psychological bullying, including cyberbullying.

The Association also believes that its local affiliates, collaborating with local school districts and institutions of higher education, should involve all stakeholders in developing comprehensive school-wide programs to address all forms of bullying. Such programs should:

- a. establish strong policies prohibiting bullying that include the definition, consequences, and procedures for reporting and appeals
- b. develop and implement educational programs designed to help students and education professionals recognize, understand, prevent, oppose, and eliminate bullying
- c. provide resources and support to perpetrators, victims, bystanders, and upstanders\* who have been involved in bullying
- d. provide training and ongoing support for all school employees in bullying prevention and intervention, including professional development and resources
- e. be reviewed, revised and updated to reflect changing needs.

\*Upstander: A person who stands up for something, as contrasted to a bystander who remains inactive. (14)

### **C-12 CAMPUS SAFETY**

The Missouri NEA believes that a safe campus climate is the right of all students and education employees.

The Association also believes that it is in the best interest and safety of all students and staff that campus officials are immediately informed of students with known serious behavior problems or violence-related potential. Students and employees must be safe from any form of physical, verbal, sexual or psychological forms of harassment. All perpetrators and victims should be provided due process.

The Association further believes that victims must be provided a safe and accessible source of counseling. (17)

### **C-13 SCHOOL EMERGENCY PLANS**

The Missouri NEA believes in the safety of all students and staff. All schools, school districts and school transportation systems must have written plans that delineate procedures that include, but are not limited to emergencies, lockdowns, violence, evacuations, and weather related conditions.

The Association also believes that for these plans to be effective they must be practiced and updated on a regular and consistent basis. (15)

## **C-14 HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

The Missouri NEA believes in a safe and healthy school environment. All educational facilities must be smoke-free and safe from all environmental and chemical hazards. Stringent standards should be established and enforced for ensuring health and safety at least equal to private sector Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards. School districts should adhere to local, state and federal requirements to ensure these health and safety standards, and adequate funding should be available. These standards and any noted deviations should be posted at the facility.

The Association also believes ongoing standardized training and certification of education professionals working with potentially hazardous school equipment and in hazardous facilities must be provided. Such training must include the proper handling, storage and disposal of hazardous materials and instruction on Safety Data Sheets (SDS) which should be on file in each school building and available to employees upon request.

The Association further believes that school personnel, students and their families should be notified of potential hazards and the action plan for corrections. Alteration or repair of facilities should not create additional health hazards. Affected local districts have a responsibility to post immediate notice of these hazards through the public media. (97, 03, 08, 11, 15)

## **C-15 STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Missouri NEA believes that basic student rights include equal educational opportunity, free inquiry and expression, due process participation in the governance of the school, college or university, freedom of association, freedom of peaceful assembly and petition, and freedom from discrimination.

The Association also believes that student responsibilities include regular school attendance, conscientious effort in classroom work and adherence to school regulations. Students in partnership with the administration, faculty and staff have the responsibility to develop a climate within the school that is conducive to wholesome learning and living. No student should interfere with the education of other students. It is the responsibility of each student to respect the rights and safety of other students and education professionals.

The Association opposes dissemination of student information to any organization or institution without the consent of the student and/or parent or guardian, except as mandated in the Safe Schools Act. (76, 05, 08, 15)

## **C-16 CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT, HARASSMENT AND/OR EXPLOITATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that all children should be protected from any form of child abuse, neglect, harassment and/or exploitation, and that all education professionals are in a position to observe, recognize and report abuse which has been inflicted on children.

The Association also believes that parental failure to require regular, punctual school attendance is a form of neglect.

The Association supports efforts to educate parents and the community to increase public awareness and understanding regarding the physical, emotional and/or educational neglect and abuse that is part of many children's lives.

The Association also supports rigorous enforcement of laws that:



- a. provide for protection of children from harm, including abuse by other children
- b. provide for preventive custody for children when necessary
- c. prohibit the use of children in the creation and production of obscene and pornographic material
- d. protect students from sexual abuse in any form.

The Association, through its affiliates, should:

- a. encourage the development and use of materials to increase student awareness of child abuse, neglect, harassment, and/or exploitation
- b. encourage development of teacher preparation courses and professional development programs that stress the identification of reporting procedures for, and techniques in dealing with, abused, neglected, harassed and/or exploited children
- c. advise education professionals of their liability in child abuse, neglect, harassment and/or exploitation cases. (97, 05, 08, 09, 16)

### **C-17 MEDIA AND CHILDREN**

The Missouri NEA believes that children must be protected from media containing violence, prejudice, sexual content and stereotyping. Children must also be protected from exploitation by advertisers, media professionals and the Internet. The media should de-emphasize coverage of gratuitous violence, as repeated coverage of violence fosters mimicry, fear and anxiety. Parents have a responsibility to determine appropriate programs for their children at home.

The Association also believes that radio and television programmers and manufacturers of games and toys should disclose to consumers the nature of product contents through specific labeling. Parents have a responsibility to determine appropriate games and toys for their children at home.

The Association further believes that advertisers and media professionals should use standard grammar and correct spelling, refrain from the use of sexist terminology and profanity, and promote positive educational programming. The movie industry should continue to edit movies for educational use and make them available in all current formats. (97, 05, 08, 11, 15)

### **C-18 STUDENT USE OF ELECTRONIC SOCIAL MEDIA**

The Missouri NEA recognizes the popularity and accessibility of electronic social media, including personal websites, blogs, text messages and social networking sites. The Association believes that students should be informed of the possible dangers of posting personal information electronically. Students should be encouraged to report incidents of cyber-bullying and other inappropriate communications received using electronic social media. (10, 15)

### **C-19 SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that free transportation should be provided for all public school students residing beyond a reasonable and safe walking distance from their assigned schools. Local school districts should provide students who officially represent the district with transportation for school-related activities. Districts should be provided adequate state funding to ensure safe and secure pupil transportation.

The Association also believes that all aspects of transporting students require close scrutiny. Overcrowding of buses must be prohibited and safety requirements for buses and other designated school vehicles must be stringently enforced. Yearly bus evacuation drills for all student passengers must be conducted.

The Association further believes that school bus personnel should be utilized to transport students at all times. No other school employee should be required to transport students as a condition of employment. Appropriate health and safety training including issues of student management, discipline and violence must be provided for all school bus personnel. Districts should not be required to transport students to other school districts except in the case of special needs or programs. (95, 01, 08, 19, 23)

#### **C-20 COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING**

The Missouri NEA believes that comprehensive school counseling programs should be integrated into the entire education system, beginning at the pre-kindergarten level. Comprehensive school counseling programs should be provided through counselor/student ratios of up to 1:250 that best support students in realizing their full potential in all areas of growth and achievement. (96, 04, 19)

#### **C-21 LIFESAVING TECHNIQUES**

The Missouri NEA believes that education employees and students should be trained in basic emergency lifesaving techniques. Such training should be included in both school curriculum and staff development.

The Association also believes that education employees should be provided the opportunity for training in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and the proper use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs), Narcan (Naloxone) and emergency epinephrine dispensers by licensed/trained personnel. (97, 04, 15, 19)

#### **C-22 STUDENT HEALTH AND PERSONNEL SERVICES**

The Missouri NEA believes that every student must have direct and confidential access to comprehensive health, social and psychological programs and services. Such services must be provided in a timely fashion by appropriately certificated/licensed professional personnel in both the education and community settings.

The Association also believes that services dealing with children's physical, mental and psychological well-being are best delivered when there is coordination within the schools, as well as among the school, home and community. These services must include:

- a. preventive programs to promote optimum wellness in physical, social and emotional health to allow for the maximum level of school performance
- b. programs for early identification and diagnosis of health and/or other special needs
- c. programs that address identified special needs through direct services within the schools
- d. programs that promote health awareness for students, school employees, parents and community
- e. age-appropriate health education and physical education
- f. comprehensive school-based, community-funded student healthcare clinics that provide basic health care services and preventative care, which may include diagnosis and treatment to supplement, but not supplant, school nurses
- g. efforts to educate and encourage students and parents to avail themselves of the recommended immunization schedule.

The Association further believes that schools must assume an advocacy role for those students affected by circumstances that prevent them from functioning adequately in educational settings. (86, 07, 08, 15, 18)

#### **C-23 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND RECESS**

The Missouri NEA believes that regular physical activity provides an active form of learning that encourages a

healthy lifestyle and promotes physical, mental, and emotional wellness. This physical activity should be provided through developmentally appropriate physical education classes, recess, and movement activities scheduled throughout the day.

The Association also believes that recess allows students to develop interpersonal and problem-solving skills and that it is not a substitute for a comprehensive physical education program.

The Association further believes each school should develop reasonable policies regarding withholding of recess for any cause.

The Association also believes recess frequency and time should be developmentally appropriate and not curriculum driven. (17)

#### **C-24 MEDICATION AND MEDICAL SERVICES IN SCHOOLS**

The Missouri NEA believes that safe procedures must be established and implemented for students who use prescribed medication or who need other medical services during school hours. District procedures should provide that:

- a. only medical personnel or their trained designees administer such medication or perform such medical services
- b. a physician's written verification of the student's need for medication or services be required
- c. medication be delivered to designated school personnel by the parent/guardian in its original labeled container with written authorization for its administration
- d. the initial dosage of medication, the first dosage administered from the prescription, not be given in the school except in life-threatening situations
- e. each medication given be recorded on an individual medication log that includes date, time and signature of the person giving the medication
- f. medication be dispensed from a container properly labeled with the name and strength of medication, name of patient, name of physician, date of the original prescription and directions for use
- g. secured proper storage for the medication is available.

The Association also believes that all personnel have the right, without fear of disciplinary repercussions, to refuse to administer medication and/or medical services for which school personnel feel unqualified or for which proper equipment has not been provided. Personnel must be provided additional, updated, continuous training funded through the district prior to performing the medical services. (91, 04, 08)

#### **C-25 STUDENT STRESS AND MENTAL WELLNESS**

The Missouri NEA believes that mental, emotional and environmental pressures upon children and youth result in increased illness, absenteeism, truancy, dropout rates, drug and alcohol abuse, violence, vandalism, and suicide.

The Association also believes that mental and emotional health screenings should be a part of regular medical checkups throughout childhood and adolescence. Such screenings have the potential to increase early detection of mental and emotional health issues, reduce the stigma associated with said conditions, improve access to counseling, therapy, and other treatment methods and decrease incidences of self-harm, suicide, substance abuse, and /or violence.

The Association further believes that school counselors, psychological examiners, and school psychologists

have a unique expertise in providing proactive guidance, diagnostic assessment, psychotherapeutic intervention, and appropriate referrals. These professionals should be utilized to the maximum benefit of all students. The roles of school counselors, psychological examiners, and school psychologists must emphasize the emotional well-being of students, assisting students to overcome obstacles to academic achievement and enabling students to maximize academic progress. (92, 05, 08, 15)

## **C-26 NUTRITION**

The Missouri NEA believes that proper nutrition is essential to student success. For many students, school meals are their primary source of nutrition. Proper nutrition must be a part of prenatal care and must continue throughout life.

The Association also believes that educational programs should promote an understanding of proper nutrition. School food service programs must be nutritionally sound, appealing and affordable. Portions and/or serving sizes should be appropriate for various age groups within the school. A choice of nutritious plant-based foods should be available. Schools should strive to provide nutritional beverages and snacks and eliminate student access to sugary and high fat alternatives.

The Association further believes that school food service programs should be supported by public funds, regulated by uniform standards, be readily accessible, and appropriate for students who have medically diagnosed and documented dietary needs. (91, 06, 08, 13, 15, 16)

## **C-27 ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY AND PARENTING**

The Missouri NEA believes that special efforts must be made by school districts to meet the needs of pregnant students and teen parents so they may receive a quality public education.

The Association also believes that programs should be implemented for pregnant students and teen parents to include:

- a. flexible scheduling and attendance policies
- b. guidance in continuing education, gainful employment and the importance of lifelong learning
- c. sound health principles regarding nutrition, substance abuse, exercise, family planning and parenting skills
- d. establishment of on-site child-care services
- e. provide a reasonable time and a suitable place, other than a restroom, for students who are nursing.

The Association further believes that pregnant students and teen parents should not be discriminated against or denied equal educational opportunities. (88, 05, 08, 10, 20)

## **C-28 SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY**

The Missouri NEA believes that all persons, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, should be afforded equal opportunity and guaranteed a safe and inclusive environment within the public education system.

The Association also believes that, for students who are struggling with their sexual orientation or gender identity, every educational institution should provide counseling services and programs, staffed by trained personnel, which deal with suicide, dropout rates and prostitution.

The Association further believes that conversion, reorientation or reparative therapies are harmful to the emotional development of LGBTQ+ students.

The Association believes that all transgender students should be able to use the bathroom or locker room of their choice. (89, 04, 15, 18, 19)

### **C-29 SUBSTANCE MISUSE**

The Missouri NEA believes that substance misuse negatively impacts all children. There is a need for improved educational programs about alcohol, opioids, and other controlled or mood altering substances. The Association recognizes that substance use disorder (SUD) is a chronic and lifelong disease.

The Association also believes that the use of controlled or mood altering substances should be prohibited except for prescribed medical purposes. Penalties for their production, distribution and sale should be strictly enforced.

The Association strongly supports:

- a. Prohibition of the production, sale, distribution and possession of drug paraphernalia.
- b. Creation and improvement of drug prevention, treatment and recovery programs, including recovery high schools
- c. Opportunities for drug treatment programs for any violation or conviction, whether civil or criminal, resulting from the possession or use of a controlled substance
- d. Comprehensive training programs for educators on how to recognize an opioid overdose and the use of Narcan (Naloxone).
- e. Elimination of alcohol and controlled substance marketing strategies that target children.
- f. Enforcement of policies and laws concerning the possession or use of alcohol or other controlled or mood altering substances. (88, 05, 08, 10, 21)

### **C-30 DRUG AND/OR ALCOHOL TESTING OF STUDENTS**

The Missouri NEA believes that mandatory drug and/or alcohol testing of students without probable cause is an unwarranted and unconstitutional invasion of privacy. Parents/guardians of students suspected of substance abuse must be notified immediately and be provided information about support services. (88, 04, 20)

### **C-31 PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS WITH HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV) OR HIV-RELATED DISEASES**

The Missouri NEA believes in free, appropriate public education for all students with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or HIV-related diseases in a least-restrictive environment.

The Association also believes that thoughtful, rational behavior by the community is vitally important concerning the humane treatment of persons with HIV/AIDS in the classroom. Students shall not be subjected to mandatory/involuntary HIV testing, nor suspended, transferred, refused admittance to school, or subjected to any other adverse action solely because they have tested positive for HIV or HIV-related diseases. (88, 02, 08, 10)

## **D. PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE AMONG EDUCATION EMPLOYEES**

### **D-1 PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE**

The Missouri NEA believes that professional excellence requires continuing high-quality professional development. High-quality professional development programs are defined by the National Staff Development Council Standards as measured by the Missouri's model teaching standards, the Missouri criteria for meeting high-quality professional development under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP). These programs should provide opportunities for education professionals to gain knowledge and skills important to improving the education of students.

The Association also believes that Professional Development Committees (PDCs) provide an opportunity for educators to have a decisive voice at every stage of planning, implementation and evaluation of staff development programs. The district's educators shall elect members of the PDC. The PDCs should be fully funded with release time for committee members. The PDC will determine administrative membership and roles on the PDC. (75, 05, 08, 10, 19)

### **D-2 PROMOTION OF TEACHING AS A CAREER CHOICE**

The Missouri NEA believes that a highly qualified teaching force is crucial to the future of the teaching profession. Educators should take the lead in encouraging students to consider teaching as a career option. Recruitment programs should be provided at high schools, community colleges and four-year institutions with emphasis placed on the recruitment of minorities and other areas of documented need.

The Association also believes that additional state-financed and private sector loan and grant programs should be established to encourage students to become professional educators. Progressive forgiveness of the loan should be based upon the recipient's years of professional service in public schools.

The Association supports the dissemination of information including Degrees not Debt to assist in student loan forgiveness. (90, 06, 08, 10, 15, 19)

### **D-3 TEACHER PREPARATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that teachers and aspiring educators must be directly involved in evaluating and improving the standards for teacher preparation and certification/licensing. Teacher involvement is necessary in planning and implementing quality education programs. Classroom teachers, teacher educators and representatives of higher education should develop joint councils in which they can share needs and concerns and plan strategies to enhance teacher preparation.

The Association also believes that requirements for admission into a college of education program should be rigorous yet flexible enough to allow admittance to those who demonstrate potential for effective practice. Admission to education programs should not be based solely upon standardized test scores but rather upon multiple considerations, including test scores, faculty recommendations, grade point average, personal interviews, portfolio review and recommendations of persons in related fields.

The Association further believes that institutions of higher education that prepare teachers should actively involve classroom teachers and professional organizations in designing teacher preparation programs. These programs should include training in the analysis of contract language, salary schedules, benefit programs, board policy handbooks, working conditions, and opportunities to participate in professional and pre-professional organizations. (75, 06, 08, 19)

#### **D-4 STUDENT TEACHING**

The Missouri NEA believes that the student teaching experience at the appropriate certification level is an essential phase of teacher preparation. The responsibility for the student teaching experience must be shared by prospective teachers, public schools, teacher preparation institutions and professional associations.

The Association also believes that school systems should develop standards that include guidelines for cooperating teachers and college coordination of prospective teachers. Cooperating teachers should have reduced teaching loads and be given an established compensation.

The Association further believes that the rights and responsibilities of prospective teachers must be assured in the agreement between school districts and college/university administrations. Prospective teachers should be provided financial assistance, internship programs or tuition waivers by the state.

The Association also believes that the final decision regarding readiness to enter the teaching profession should be based on a collaborative effort among the prospective teacher, university supervisor, cooperating teacher and school administrator. (90, 06, 08, 19)

#### **D-5 SUBCONTRACTING/CONTRACTING OUT**

The Missouri NEA believes that public school services should be performed by public education employees. The Association opposes, in public school districts and educational institutions, subcontracting/contracting out arrangements that:

- a. transfer or displace education employees
- b. replace full-time positions with temporary, part-time or volunteer workers
- c. replace services that are, or could feasibly be, provided by public education employees
- d. repeal previously contracted benefits, reduce compensation, deny benefits, and/or reduce or eliminate accumulated retirement experience and benefits
- e. have not been agreed to by the local affiliate. (79, 06, 08, 11, 15)

#### **D-6 LICENSURE RECIPROCITY**

The Missouri NEA believes that acceptable reciprocal plans must include only teachers with National Board Certification and teacher candidates who have graduated with and/or obtained teaching credentials from a National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) institution or an institution with equivalent requirements. (90, 07, 08, 17)

#### **D-7 CERTIFICATION OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS**

The Missouri NEA believes that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) should certify school social workers. The certification/licensing requirements should meet the standards for professional preparation required by the American Psychological Association, the National Association of School Psychologists, and the National Association of Social Workers. (84, 06)

#### **D-8 COMPETENCY TESTING AND EVALUATIONS**

The Missouri NEA believes that competency testing should be administered prior to certification/ licensing only if it is one of many components, such as graduation from an accredited teacher education program with a qualifying grade point average, recommendations from at least three professional educators, and satisfactory

completion of student teaching. Competency testing must not be used as a condition of employment, recertification/relicensing, evaluation, placement, ranking or promotion of certified teachers.

The Association also believes that the use of pupil progress, standardized achievement tests or any other method of student assessment must not be used for purposes of teacher evaluation, ranking or promotion of teachers and/or the determination of salary or tenure. (79, 06, 08)

#### **D-9 PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

The Missouri NEA believes that every education employee has the right and professional responsibility to participate fully in professional associations and have the right to payroll deduction for dues. School policies should provide release time without loss of pay to education employees who are fulfilling leadership responsibilities or attending professional meetings. Release time should be equitably provided, without preference given to administrative personnel and/or to those whose positions do not require substitutes. (87, 06, 08, 11)

#### **D-10 QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL TIME**

The Missouri NEA believes that quality instructional time is essential to learning. Local affiliates should strive for equality of teaching and preparation time at all levels of education. This time must include but not be limited to:

- a. unencumbered planning time and duty-free lunch period
- b. class size adjustment related to the particular learning process
- c. creation of a consistent and stable school schedule
- d. limitation of non-instructional tasks and interruptions
- e. adequate time for implementation of legislated requirements
- f. sufficient compensation for educators who travel between buildings. (75, 06, 08, 11)

#### **D-11 QUALITY PLANNING TIME**

The Missouri NEA believes that education professionals need adequate, unencumbered planning periods during each school day in order to be fully prepared to deliver high-quality education to students. Appropriate planning time activities may include, but are not limited to:

- a. lesson planning, both individually and collaboratively
- b. preparing of materials for lessons and activities
- c. assessing or grading student work
- d. contacting parents/guardians regarding student achievement or behavior
- e. consulting with colleagues.

The Association also believes that administrators should respect the planning time of each staff member. Administrators should not abuse the right to hold mandatory meetings during staff planning time. Other meetings should not be scheduled during an education professional's planning time; if this is unavoidable, the education professional should be compensated for the additional time. Meetings, such as those for the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process should only be held when collaboratively scheduled with all parties involved. (10)



## **D-12 QUALIFIED TEACHERS IN THE CLASSROOM**

The Missouri NEA believes that every child should have a qualified teacher in the classroom at all times.

The Association also believes that the expertise that a retired teacher brings to the classroom is a valuable asset. Retired teachers should be allowed to substitute without loss of retirement benefits. However, retired teachers should not be employed in place of a full-time teacher.

The Association further believes that positions created by extended absence should be filled by available certificated/ licensed teachers who are eligible to be placed on contractual status by the school district. Certificated/licensed teachers substituting for personnel on extended leave should receive full pay plus basic and fringe benefits. (76, 06, 08, 19)

## **D-13 SUBSTITUTE EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS**

The Missouri NEA believes that substitute education professionals play a valuable role in maintaining high-quality education in the absence of an education professional. School districts should develop and maintain high standards for their substitute pools. Professional development, including classroom management, should be required for all substitutes wishing to work in a district. Substitutes should be held to the same workplace standards as all school staff, including professional conduct and appearance. Substitutes filling long-term or extended leave positions should hold the appropriate certification for the position. (10, 19)

## **D-14 CLASS SIZE**

The Missouri NEA believes that an ideal class is one in which every student has opportunities for optimal learning. As class size increases, learning opportunities for students decrease. Large class sizes adversely affect quality instructional time.

The Association recognizes that the instructional needs of some students are more demanding than others. All students attending a class should be listed on the class roster for purposes of determining class size. The ratio of students to certificated/licensed staff should be maintained at the level teachers determine to be essential to improve learning. Equity should be considered for teachers whose classes include students with exceptional needs. Class sizes should be weighted accordingly and should not exceed the following:

- K-2: 17 students per regular class
- 3-4: 20 students per regular class
- 5-6: 22 students per regular class
- 7-12: 25 students per regular class

The Association further believes that recommended higher education class size ratios should be established with input from faculty and professional organizations. (79, 06, 08, 19, 20)

## **D-15 SCHOOL FACILITIES**

The Missouri NEA believes that adequate school facilities are an essential component of a quality educational environment. All education professionals should be provided school facilities that are safe and adequate in terms of communications, technology, space, equipment, supplies, climate control and furnishings. Physical accommodations must include adaptations for employees with special needs.

The Association also believes that school facilities should make every effort to utilize alternative and

renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, landfill gas, biomass, and small hydroelectric projects. (91, 06, 08, 15, 21)

#### **D-16 SCHOOL NURSES**

The Missouri NEA believes that school districts should provide full-time, daily services of a professional school nurse on every campus. The student to nurse ratio should never exceed 750 to 1 in general school populations; 225 to 1 in mainstreamed populations; 125 to 1 in severely/profoundly disabled populations.

The Association also believes that school district nurses should enroll in active Association membership and should be included in collective bargaining agreements. School district nurses are entitled to professional pay status with all rights, privileges and acknowledgments as given to any certificated/licensed professional in a school district setting.

The Association further believes that professional development programs should be made available to all school district nurses to augment their skills in the delivery of health care services. (84, 06, 08)

#### **D-17 SCHOOL HEALTH CARE FACILITIES**

The Missouri NEA believes that adequate student health care facilities are an integral part of the successful delivery of quality health care. All schools should maintain student health care facilities that are adequate in terms of communications, technology, space, appropriate health-related equipment, supplies, climate control, and furnishings. Physical accommodations must include adaptations for employees and students with special needs. (92, 06, 08, 15)

#### **D-18 SCHOOL LIBRARIES/MEDIA CENTERS**

The Missouri NEA believes that comprehensive library/media programs must be run by certificated librarians/media specialists. Media programs should include print and non-print resource materials, access to technology for teachers and students, hours that allow for before and after school use, and instruction in library research and information skills. Certificated librarians/media specialists should be provided for each elementary and secondary school.

The Association also believes that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) should provide leadership in the form of a state-level library/ media specialist. This media specialist should be an advocate for library/media specialists statewide. (84, 06)

#### **D-19 HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH AND STUDY GRANTS**

The Missouri NEA believes that public and private sectors should provide research and study grants to higher education faculties in all academic areas. Such grants should be awarded on the basis of merit without discrimination. The dissemination of grants should not be used to influence university decisions and policies.

The Association also believes that study and research grants should not influence either undergraduate or graduate curricula until such time as the research is completed and systematically integrated into the curriculum. Academic freedom should be applied to research and the dissemination of research results. (89, 06, 08)

## **D-20 PEER ASSISTANCE AND REVIEW PROGRAMS**

The Missouri NEA believes that peer assistance and review programs can be an effective mechanism to achieve high standards and continuous improvement in the teaching profession. The goal of any such program is to provide assistance, improve professional knowledge and practice, and retain quality teachers. A local association may choose to include a review component in the program. The program should:

- a. be developed through a collective bargaining process or a joint association/school district agreement
- b. be governed by a joint body composed of at least an equal number of association representatives
- c. acknowledge that the school district makes the final decision on retention, non-renewal or termination, but that recommendations forwarded by the joint governing body are routinely accepted and acted upon by the district
- d. ensure that consulting teachers are deemed highly skilled practitioners by their peers, that their expertise is similar to that of the participating teacher, and that they be chosen by the joint governing body with approval of the participating teacher
- e. seek consulting teachers who reflect the diverse population of the teaching staff
- f. provide that consulting teachers are properly compensated and provided adequate time to fulfill their responsibilities
- g. provide that consulting teachers receive extensive and ongoing training in mentoring/coaching skills, district initiatives and resources and current education instructional methods
- h. establish guidelines for the referral of teachers as well as safeguards to prevent unwarranted referrals
- i. establish clear rules on allowable uses of documents, products and communications arising from the program
- j. require extensive documentation based on ongoing assessments of each participant
- k. ensure that the participating teacher is provided rigorous and extensive assistance before a recommendation of non-renewal or termination is issued.
- l. ensure due process protection and duty of fair representation procedures
- m. guarantee that participating teachers, consulting teachers and teachers who sit on governing bodies do not lose their Association membership or bargaining unit status by virtue of their participation in the program. (98, 06, 08, 16)

## **D-21 EVALUATION OF EDUCATORS**

The Missouri NEA believes that a high quality evaluation system is the appropriate way to assess and assure the competency of educators. The evaluation process should be flexible enough to allow for the recognition of effective instruction, which may not fit a single instructional model. Evaluators should be adequately trained to recognize many different forms of effective instruction. The appropriate use of formative evaluation to assist educators with professional growth should be stressed in effective training for evaluators. Evaluations must not be conducted by private and/or for-profit groups.

The Association also believes that evaluation of teachers must be comprehensive, based on multiple indicators, and provide teachers with timely feedback and support to enhance their practice. Components of effective evaluation should include indicators of teacher practice, professional growth and contributions to student learning, growth and development.

The Association further believes that Value-Added Models do not measure teacher effectiveness because they are based on a single test score without consideration of individual student growth, differences, learning styles, socio-economic status or other factors beyond an educator's control.

The Association also believes that effective district evaluation procedures should be developed and maintained

in conjunction with representatives selected by local affiliates and should include:

- a. proper training for administrators to be held accountable for the implementation of appropriate and fair evaluation systems
- b. evaluators who are adequately trained and objective
- c. well-developed professional development programs that enable educators to keep abreast of developments in their areas of specialization
- d. clear performance expectations that are specific to the job description
- e. regular observation of classroom performance with advance notice, agreement on time frame, discussion of evaluation visits and timely consultation after each visit
- f. evaluation of probationary educators not less than twice yearly with consultation by the evaluator following each evaluation
- g. a student's refusal, based on religious belief, to participate in state or district standardized testing/assessments or in selected academic curricula, shall not impact educator evaluations including performance based evaluations
- h. acceptance of a variety of teaching styles that tailor and deliver instruction that engages every student
- i. a written evaluation report provided to the educator
- j. opportunity for a substantive appeals process prior to the placement of the evaluation in the personnel file
- k. support for personnel with instructional deficiencies providing counseling, supportive resources, opportunities to observe their peers and other remedial options
- l. evaluation by a second evaluator before a teacher is recommended for non-renewal.

The Association further believes that participation in an evaluation process should not waive an educator's right to due process in any subsequent contractual or legal proceeding. (86, 07, 08, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19)

## **D-22 EVALUATION OF EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS**

The Missouri NEA believes that a high quality evaluation system is the appropriate way to assess and assure competency of education support professionals (ESP). The evaluation process should be flexible, and evaluators should be adequately trained to recognize different forms of effective job performances.

The Association also believes that effective district evaluation procedures should be developed and maintained in conjunction with representatives selected by local affiliates and should include:

- a. proper training for administrators to be held accountable for the implementation of appropriate and fair evaluation systems
- b. evaluators who are adequately trained on a yearly basis and objective
- c. well-developed professional development programs that enable education support professionals to keep abreast of developments in their areas of specialization
- d. clear performance expectations that are specific to the job description
- e. regular observation of job performance with timely evaluation
- f. evaluation of probationary personnel not less than twice yearly with consultation by the evaluator following each evaluation
- g. a written evaluation report provided to the education support professional
- h. opportunity for a substantive appeals process prior to the placement of the evaluation in the personnel file
- i. support for education support professionals with instructional deficiencies providing counseling, supportive resources, opportunities to observe their peers and other remedial options.

The Association further believes that participation in an evaluation process shall not waive an education support professional's right to due process in any subsequent contractual or legal proceeding. (91, 06, 08, 13)

#### **D-23 ADMINISTRATOR TRAINING AND EVALUATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that administrators and staff are partners in the total school program.

The Association also believes that quality administrative support is an important factor in educators' well-being and has a significant impact on educator retention.

The Association further believes administrators must maintain valid administrator certification/licensure and participate in ongoing and comprehensive professional development to include in-classroom experiences. Areas of training should include participatory decision-making, interpersonal skills, personnel selection, staff evaluation, curriculum, school management techniques, and ethics training. Prior to credentialing, an administrator should have successfully served a minimum of five years in a full-time teaching position in a classroom.

The Association believes that procedures for evaluation of administrators must include participation from school employees under their direct supervision. If, after being given sufficient time, guidance, and opportunity for improvement, an administrator is found to lack proficiency in critical school leadership skills, the chief administrator should begin dismissal proceedings with guaranteed due process. (86, 06, 08, 24)

#### **D-24 EVALUATION AND PROMOTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that teaching should be a priority in institutions of higher education. Research and publication should not be the only criteria by which higher education faculty are compensated, evaluated and/or promoted. Through a collective bargaining process, higher education faculty should be allowed to determine the methods by which they are compensated, evaluated and/or promoted. (89, 07, 08)

#### **D-25 INTERN PROGRAMS**

The Missouri NEA believes that intern programs should be utilized solely for the development of professional expertise and not as a means of supplanting or reducing educational staff and/or budget. (87, 06, 08)

## **E. GAIN RECOGNITION OF THE BASIC IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION EMPLOYEES IN THE LEARNING PROCESS**

### **E-1 INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE**

The Missouri NEA believes that the Association and its affiliates should encourage ongoing improvements in the quality of instruction via curricular and professional development activities. The primary authority to recommend instructional improvements should lie with educators participating in a democratic decision-making process.

The Association also believes that, in order to facilitate these activities, educators should be provided with onsite training, release time and materials that have been field-tested and proven effective in classroom situations. (87, 05, 10, 19)

### **E-2 PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING**

The Missouri NEA believes that its affiliates should be actively involved, through collective bargaining, in making decisions regarding the terms and conditions of professional services and other matters of mutual concern, including the development, implementation and evaluation of instructional programs, policies, wages and benefits. (75, 04, 08, 09, 19)

### **E-3 FACULTY/STAFF GOVERNANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that faculty and staff in higher education should participate in the governance of their educational institutions and should have primary responsibility for determining curricula, methods of instruction, and subject matter; establishing requirements for earning degrees and certificates; reviewing institutional budget; and making recommendations on financial issues that impact academic programs. Faculty and staff should participate in the selection and evaluation process and determine the status of colleagues and administrators, especially appointments, re-appointments and tenure.

The Association also believes it is the primary responsibility of faculty and staff to establish procedures relative to promotions, sabbaticals and research support.

The Association further believes that collective bargaining provides an additional method of institutional governance. Faculty and staff should determine policies and procedures to govern salary structure, pay increase, benefit programs, calendar and working conditions. (17, 19)

### **E-4 ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL FREEDOMS**

The Missouri NEA believes that academic and professional freedoms are essential to the teaching profession. Academic freedom includes the rights of educators and learners to explore, present and discuss divergent points of view under conditions permitting independence of thought and expression. Controversial issues should be a part of instructional programs when judgment of the professional staff deems the issues appropriate to the curriculum and the maturity level of the student. As an aspect of academic freedom, the right of educators to decide upon criteria for evaluating and assigning grades to students must be guaranteed. Educators should have the final authority in all such decisions and evaluations. Professional freedom includes the educator's right to evaluate, criticize and/or advocate a personal point of view concerning the policies and programs of the schools.

The Association also believes that education employees should own the copyright to materials that they create

in the course of their employment.

The Association further believes that educators should have the right to assist colleagues when their academic or professional freedoms are violated. An educator should not be terminated, transferred or removed from a position for refusing to suppress the free expression rights of students or for advocating for professional freedoms. (76, 06, 08, 10, 19, 23)

#### **E-5 PROFESSIONAL CHOICE OF INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND PROGRAMS**

The Missouri NEA believes that educators are best suited to develop and deliver appropriate instructional programs that are consistent with state curriculum standards. Direct observation of students and analysis of data by the educator must guide instructional decisions.

The Association also believes that while programs focusing on scripted learning and pacing charts can serve as viable frames of reference, it is still incumbent on the classroom teacher to evaluate the efficacy of all instructional programs and to modify them when necessary in order to address the needs and facilitate the success of each student.

The Association further believes that education professionals should have the freedom to modify and/or supplement curriculum to meet student needs without fear of reprisals. (06, 08, 10, 19)

#### **E-6 SUPPORT SERVICES**

The Missouri NEA believes that educators should be provided adequate support staff, equipment, supplies and materials. This includes access to secretarial staff to handle paperwork, electronic devices and internet access in every classroom as well as in areas where confidential conversations may be held and an office area where conferences and planning may occur without distraction.

The Association also believes that education support professionals should be utilized to supplement, not replace, the classroom teacher, and their presence should not be an excuse to increase class size or teacher workload. (76, 06, 08, 19)

#### **E-7 CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND PROCESSES**

The Missouri NEA believes that educational materials and processes should accurately portray cultural diversity and the contributions of ethnic minority groups. Ethnic minority education professionals should be given the opportunity to be involved in selecting educational materials and in preparing them for use.

The Association also believes that additional instructional materials chosen for classrooms and libraries should contain various points of view to expose students to the attitudes and contributions of diverse segments of the literary world. Governing boards should adopt only those educational materials that include accurate portrayals of the societal contributions and lives of ethnic and other minorities. (78, 06, 08, 10, 20)

#### **E-8 WOMEN IN INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

The Missouri NEA believes that educational materials and processes should accurately portray the contributions of women both in the past and in the present and that women must be involved in the selection of these materials and in preparing educators to use them.

The Association also believes that non-sexist language should be used by all schools. Educators should use

instructional materials that portray various careers and personal roles as acceptable and attainable for all individuals. (15, 16)



## **F. PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS AND ADVANCE THEIR INTERESTS AND WELFARE**

### **F-1 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

The Missouri NEA believes in the necessity of a state collective bargaining law that protects the interests of all public employees and their right to organize and bargain collectively.

The Missouri NEA also believes in the constitutional right to collective bargaining for public employees, as affirmed by the Missouri Supreme Court; and that this right supersedes statute, or the absence of a statute. In the absence of a statute, it is the responsibility of employers to recognize and implement this right in a manner which reflects all of the inherent elements of real collective bargaining.

The Association further believes that the right to collective bargaining necessarily includes the right of employees to democratically elect an exclusive bargaining representative. All MNEA locals should establish a goal of becoming an exclusive bargaining representative in their districts or institutions.

The Association also believes that the goal of all collective bargaining should be the creation of a legally binding, enforceable, written collective bargaining agreement that establishes, maintains, protects and improves terms and conditions for professional employment and other matters of mutual concern. The goal of collective bargaining in our public schools is the creation of a great public school for every student, and this goal is best attained when the collective bargaining process includes a formal, non-disruptive process for the resolution of impasse and disputes.

The Association further believes that implementation of the right to bargain collectively inherently includes a formal, enforceable requirement that the parties bargain in good faith. (75, 07, 08, 10, 16, 17, 19, 21)

### **F-2 WRITTEN PERSONNEL POLICIES**

The Missouri NEA believes that personnel policies should be written and developed cooperatively through bargaining by local affiliates and governing boards and that all such policies must be mutually binding. (75, 04, 08, 16)

### **F-3 EXTENDED LEARNING TIME**

The Missouri NEA believes that local affiliates must participate fully in the design, authorization, implementation, evaluation, and continuation of summer school, alternative calendars, extended school day/year, and year-round school programs. Policies governing these programs must take into consideration the impact on the community and be in accordance with the Association's principles for professional salaries and class size. These programs must be staffed by properly certificated employees. Employment in these programs must be on a voluntary basis. (97, 07, 08, 11, 12)

### **F-4 EDUCATION EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that salary schedules, extra duty compensation and placement on professional pay plans are matters for collective bargaining. All education professionals should be placed on the established and bargained salary schedule that needs to:

- a. be established by every elected governing board in the state
- b. be based solely upon professional preparation, academic degrees, years of experience, specialized

training and professional growth

- c. include significant, additional compensation for teachers who achieve National Board Certification
- d. give full credit for experience acquired in other public and non-public school systems
- e. provide for entry-level salaries and career earnings comparable to those of other professions and occupations with similar preparation and responsibilities
- f. have structural continuity through the use of an index ratio or percentage guide
- g. be revised by methods that prevent deterioration in the ratios of maximum salary increments
- h. permit the attainment of the maximum salary in a given classification in no more than ten (10) years of certificated/ licensed educators and seven (7) for all other education professionals
- i. provide maximum salaries at least three times the entry-level salary
- j. provide a living wage for all Education Support Professionals
- k. provide for cost-of-living as a factor in salary adjustment
- l. provide compensation for continuing education
- m. provide compensation levels that encourage education professionals to remain in the educational setting and/or classroom
- n. be equitable as to grade or subject taught, job classification, residency, creed, race, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, marital status or number of dependents
- o. be applied uniformly in actual practice
- p. be independent of any alternative pay schedule.

The Association also believes that professional salary schedules should not be based upon ranking of individuals according to the results of performance-based evaluations, student test scores or ranking by any other subjective method. Unilaterally imposed merit pay programs should not be used to increase the salary of selected education professionals.

The Association further believes that any alternative pay plan should be considered only after a district or education institution has, over time, implemented a strong salary schedule. Any professional compensation plan should: provide professional beginning salaries with a path for growth through a strong salary schedule, recognize and reward educators who attain and can demonstrate knowledge and skills that improve their professional proficiency, recognize and compensate improved teacher practice that is a factor in student learning and other student outcomes, provide an outline for career growth for educators who want to seek additional responsibility without leaving the classroom or work site, and compensate all education employees on par with the salary, professional growth opportunities and career earnings of comparably prepared professionals.

The Association also believes that education professionals should receive compensation for added duties or extracurricular activities and for additional days added to each school calendar year. Additional compensation should be based on the individual education employee's hourly pro-rata salary. It is essential that public education institutions compensate education professionals who assume extracurricular duties in a timely and equitable manner.

The Association further believes that education employees have the right to payroll deduction for any type of dues. This right must be protected.

The Association also believes that education professionals who are asked to substitute for educators should be given the option of receiving payment or compensatory time.

The Association further believes that educators should have the opportunity to change their employment from one public education institution to another without financial penalty. To assist the individual to accomplish this goal, institutions should accept unlimited prior experience and place the individual on the appropriate salary

placement step. (97, 07, 08, 11, 12, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21)

#### **F-5 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

The Missouri NEA believes that education professionals are entitled to a fully funded employee benefit program equal to, or surpassing in value and scope, those in professions and occupations requiring comparable preparation and responsibilities. Employee benefits should be exempt from state and local taxes.

The Association also believes that there are educational, economic and practical benefits for allowing a student to attend school in the district wherein his/her parent/guardian is employed. (75, 04, 08, 20)

#### **F-6 INSURANCE PROGRAMS**

The Missouri NEA believes that affordable comprehensive insurance programs are important elements of compensation. Education professionals, their spouses, dependents and domestic partners should be provided benefits including but not limited to accident, health, dental, vision, hearing and life insurance. All education professionals should also be provided legal and worker's compensation insurance.

The Association also believes that an effective and affordable statewide participatory plan of basic health and accident insurance should be made available to education professionals and their dependents. (92, 07, 08, 19)

#### **F-7 LEAVES OF ABSENCE/RELEASE TIME**

The Missouri NEA believes that elected governing board policies should provide for leaves of absence and/or release time for all education professionals. These absences should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a. association leave
- b. bereavement leave
- c. dependent care leave
- d. maternity/paternity/adoption leave
- e. military leave
- f. parent care leave
- g. personal leave, unlimited accumulation
- h. political leave
- i. professional leave, paid
- j. religious leave
- k. sabbatical leave
- l. sick leave, unlimited accumulation. (95, 06, 08, 20)

#### **F-8 DUTY-FREE LUNCH**

The Missouri NEA believes that every education professional should be guaranteed a duty-free lunch period of at least 30 minutes each day. Duty-free lunch excludes any assigned supervision of students. Use of this time should be determined by the employee and should not be limited by location or assignment or mandatory meetings with parents, administrators, or other staff. (75, 05, 08)

#### **F-9 GUARANTEED DUE PROCESS/TENURE**

The Missouri NEA believes that education professionals are entitled to due process and opposes the

elimination of tenure without a due process guarantee. Any action taken by administration due to alleged failure of an employee to complete his/her duties as defined, should be appropriate, ethical and afford the employee all rights of due process. Every education professional should have the inherent right to substantive due process in cases of dismissal or denial of any employment benefit. Substantive due process should be readily available and a part of written policy for all education professionals. Any education professional facing dismissal should have the right to review by an impartial hearing officer.

The Association also believes that probationary teachers and public community college faculty should be entitled to the same protection as is currently granted to other public school faculty under the Missouri Teacher Tenure Law.

The Association further believes that tenure is fundamental for academic freedom of higher education faculty. Increasing reliance on non-tenured, adjunct faculty threatens tenure and the vitality of higher education. (75, 07, 08, 17)

#### **F-10 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

The Missouri NEA believes that grievance procedures should be provided for education professionals with defined and specific steps to appeal the application or interpretation of their governing board policies. Due process should include binding arbitration as a part of the grievance procedure. Grievance procedures should be cooperatively developed by recognized local affiliates and their governing boards. (75, 06, 08, 17, 19)

#### **F-11 NONDISCRIMINATORY PERSONNEL POLICIES/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

\*references NEA Policy Statement on Affirmative Action

The Missouri NEA believes that personnel policies and practices must guarantee that no person be employed, retained, paid, dismissed, suspended, demoted, transferred, retired, marginalized, bullied, or harassed because of race, color, national origin, cultural diversity, accent, religious beliefs, residence, physical disability, mental health issues, political activities, professional association activity, age, size, marital status, family relationship, sexual orientation or gender identification. In personnel matters applicable to any of the above, no definitive action should be taken without due process.

Affirmative Action plans and procedures that encourage active recruitment and employment of persons from populations under-represented in particular employment categories should be developed and implemented. (75, 05, 15, 16, 17, 19)

#### **F-12 PROTECTION OF EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS**

The Missouri NEA believes that education professionals must be safe from threats and/or attacks on their persons or property. All credible threats should be conveyed in a timely manner to staff in the targeted worksite. Education professionals must be reimbursed for injury and/or loss of property. In no event should time lost due to injury caused by physical attack be deducted from the education professional's accumulated sick leave.

The Association also believes that education professionals must receive the full support of their employer in pursuing legal, medical, and all other remedies when they are the victims of any of the following by any individual:

- a. physical attack
- b. theft

- c. verbal abuse
- d. bullying
- e. sexual abuse
- f. electronic/social media misuse
- g. unauthorized use of teacher instructional materials, including any recordings or manipulation of materials for purposes other than their prescribed purposes
- h. other forms of harassment.

The Association further believes that guidelines must be developed that lead to the prevention of physical abuse, verbal abuse, bullying or any other harassment of educators and other school personnel. (07, 08, 10, 12, 17, 19)

### **F-13 ACCUSATIONS AGAINST EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS**

The Missouri NEA believes that substantive due process procedures must be afforded to education professionals accused of child abuse, neglect or exploitation while performing their duties.

The Association also believes that affiliates should work with elected governing boards, law enforcement agencies, juvenile court systems and child welfare agencies to assure that:

- a. the initial step of any investigation is the prompt notification of the accused
- b. allegations are investigated and resolved immediately
- c. a fair and prompt exchange of information takes place
- d. "reason to suspect" charges are clearly enumerated
- e. education professionals are allowed representation at inquiries, hearings or related meetings
- f. hearings are held where the accused or representatives of the accused have full opportunity to confront and interview those individuals making allegations
- g. juvenile law in cases involving disturbances in the public schools are strictly enforced
- h. exoneration of the wrongfully accused is swift and public
- i. all unsubstantiated allegations are removed from the education professional's record
- j. the name of the education professional is not publicly revealed until and unless there is a finding of guilt.

The Association further believes that equivalent substantive due process procedures must be afforded to higher education professionals. (07, 08, 17, 20)

### **F-14 HIGHER EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL STAFF PROTECTION**

The Missouri NEA actively supports creating new full-time faculty positions within colleges, universities, and community colleges, and, in doing so, giving priority to contingent faculty seeking full-time positions. Contingent faculty and professional staff are valuable and, in many cases, necessary to the programs of colleges and universities and should be treated no differently than full-time, tenure-track, or permanent faculty or professional staff for purposes of employment conditions, including eligibility to bargain collectively. However, the excessive use of academic appointments on contingent, temporary, non-tenure track, and/or multiple-year contracts may undermine academic and intellectual freedom, opportunity for tenure, and participation in the governance structure.

The Association believes that equitable policies and practices must be in place so that contingent faculty are treated as institutionally supported professionals and can better serve students as an integral and valued part of these institutions of higher education. (16, 19)

## **F-15 GRADUATE STUDENT EMPLOYEE PROTECTION**

The Missouri NEA believes that graduate students employed within higher education institutions are valued employees deserving equitable treatment. Graduate student employees should be entitled to similar rights and access to resources that faculty receive, including but not limited to:

- a. wages and benefits proportionate to their assigned work, including course preparation time, research conducted, office hours, committee appointments and involvement in governance
- b. equitable access to resources such as office space, phone usage and computers with Internet access for work purposes, storage space, ability to receive mail, office supplies, educational materials required for classroom instruction and/or research and printing facilities for work related duties
- c. a fair and transparent evaluation and discipline process, appropriate and ethical due process as well as a grievance procedure available to faculty and other staff of the employing institution
- d. access to professional development opportunities.

The Association also believes that over-reliance on graduate student employees in response to government under-funding and other fiscal crises is detrimental to the institution, the employees and the students. Equitable policies and practices must be in place so graduate student employees can function as professionals in institutions of higher education and continue to successfully proceed toward completion of their graduate and postgraduate degrees. (17, 19)

## **F-16 USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

The Missouri NEA believes that education professionals have the right to participate in electronic social media without fear of reprisals. Education professionals must be informed of the possible dangers of posting personal information electronically. Education professionals must be aware of the contents of their websites, blogs or profiles on electronic social media websites, including content posted by other people and the lasting impact of their digital footprint. (10,18, 19)

## **F-17 EMPLOYEE LIABILITY**

The Missouri NEA believes that educational institutions should provide legal liability protection for all education professionals when their duties require assistance to students. This should include:

- a. payment of all costs, including legal fees, expenses and damages incurred by education professionals and other agents in defending any civil action arising out of acts or omissions during the performance of their duties. These duties include physical assistance of students with temporary and/or permanent special needs, and/or life-threatening medical conditions.
- b. reimbursement of education professionals and other agents for all costs incurred in defending any criminal action arising out of acts or omissions occurring during performance of their duties.

The Association also believes that educational institutions should secure appropriate insurance to provide adequate protection of education professionals. (87, 07, 08, 10, 15)

## **F-18 RIGHT TO PRIVACY**

The Missouri NEA believes that education professionals should be guaranteed the rights of privacy.

These rights must include:

- a. the ability of the education professional to access their personnel file, including a list of all records
- b. the ability to inspect, review and obtain copies of records, explanations, and interpretations of such records, and a record of past accesses
- c. notification within five working days of any placement of materials in an education professional's file
- d. an opportunity to respond to and challenge any materials and purge those that are inaccurate, misleading and distorted
- e. a provision to consent to or deny release of such records including digital surveillance and the right to receive copies of released material
- f. a guarantee that only one personnel file will be maintained for each education professional
- g. freedom from fingerprinting as a condition of continuous employment
- h. the right to refuse a polygraph, lie detector or other invasive method of evidence
- i. freedom from unauthorized recordings and/or monitoring using telephones cellular devices and other electronic communication devices
- j. confidentiality of medical records. (87, 07, 08, 17, 19)

### **F-19 WORKPLACE BULLYING**

The Missouri NEA believes that education employees should be protected from workplace bullying. Bullying creates an unhealthy and unprofessional power imbalance between bully and target. The Association encourages its locals to work with school districts and institutions of higher education to discipline an administrator, board member, educator or staff member who engages in any form of workplace bullying.

Workplace bullying can include, but is not limited to:

- a. systematic aggressive communication
- b. manipulation of work assignments
- c. repeated mistreatment
- d. verbal abuse
- e. conduct which is threatening, humiliating, degrading, intimidating, or sabotaging. (14, 19)

### **F-20 ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Missouri NEA believes that education professionals can be accountable for educational excellence for each student only to the degree that they share responsibility in educational decision-making. Other parties who share this responsibility – parents, students, legislators, other government officials, school boards, administrators and taxpayers – must also be held accountable.

The Association also believes that accountability systems should include:

- a. education professionals taking the major role in developing and implementing accountability programs at all levels
- b. recognition that performance criteria are not always uniformly or universally applicable to a given population
- c. sufficient additional funds for planning, research and measurement to improve accountability.

The Association further believes that students, education professionals and/or school systems must not be solely assessed using a single state testing program. (76, 07, 08, 10)

## **F-21 REDUCTION IN FORCE**

The Missouri NEA believes that decreased enrollments, financial conditions and/or reorganizations should not be used to justify a reduction in staff to the point that class sizes are increased beyond recommended standards. A declining enrollment should involve a reduction in class size and/or an expansion of educational programs.

The Association also believes that local affiliates should work with the local governing boards to develop policies and procedures for reduction in force. The practice of placing full-time faculty on layoff status and replacing them with part-time faculty in order to meet staffing guidelines and ratios is not acceptable. Evaluations and test scores should not be used as instruments for reduction in force.

The Association further believes that school districts should initiate programs of staff diversification in order to utilize presently employed teachers to meet the educational needs of the local district. Local affiliates should work cooperatively with local governing boards and community leaders to provide financial assistance for recertification/relicensing and/or alternative career training to assist in rehiring or relocating laid-off education professionals. (75, 06, 08, 11, 12)

## **F-22 RETIREMENT**

The Missouri NEA believes that education professionals have the right to a secure and dignified retirement. Efforts should be made to continue retirement system policies that provide a defined benefit.

The Association also believes that state and local retirement systems should include:

- a. actuarial and investment policies that produce sound financing
- b. investment policies geared toward growth and increased returns
- c. portability coverage
- d. a cost of living adjustment (COLA) as based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI)

Decisions affecting the Public School Retirement System (PSRS) and the Public Education Employee Retirement System (PEERS) should be made by a board elected by the members of those systems.

The employee contribution rate should be set at a lower level than the employer contribution rate. The PSRS Board should have the authority to set the employer rate to maintain current benefits and to raise only the employer rate to cover the cost of further improvements.

The Association also believes the current Social Security offset provisions (the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision) for professionals covered by the Public School Retirement System should be repealed.

(76, 07, 08, 11, 15, 17, 19, 21)

## **F-23 RETIREMENT SYSTEM BENEFITS**

The Missouri NEA believes every effort be made to ensure that the benefits of current and future retirees are adequate, consistent and guarantee a pension payment throughout the life of an eligible employee.

The Association also believes benefit structures within the retirement system must ensure:



- a. all federal, state and local compensation, including extra duty pay, be included in computing retirement benefits
- b. education professionals be permitted to purchase credit for creditable service and leaves of absence.
- c. that "Twenty-five and Out" be calculated with full formula benefits for all education professionals.
- d. 2.55 benefit factor for retirees with 31 years or more of service be reinstated and made permanent for all education professionals.
- e. education employees have access to comprehensive health care in their retirement years with emphasis on availability of reasonably priced prescription drugs.
- f. members have access to group comprehensive health insurance including prescription drug benefits for retired education employees
- g. a guaranteed right to adequate benefits for every education employee if permanent disabled regardless of years of experience
- h. education employees who have been declared eligible for disability retirement and who wish to teach part time and are physically capable of doing so be eligible for partial disability payment in the event that part-time employment is realized
- i. members have access to payroll deduction from retirement benefits for professional dues, regular charitable contributions, and other regular expenses.

#### **F-24 WORKING AFTER RETIREMENT**

The Missouri NEA believes that retirees have the right to work after retirement (WAR). The drawing of a pension from PSRS/PEERS should not restrict the retiree's ability to draw a paycheck from a member school district in the State of Missouri. Retirees offer school districts a veteran voice that enhances the classroom experience and school culture and provides a steady hand when working with students in the school community.

The Association also believes that there should be a cap in the maximum number of hours worked or income earned by a retiree during the fiscal year. This cap is to ensure that school districts do not hire multiple employees for the purpose of decreasing institutional budgets, replacing the number of full-time education employees, or avoiding the maintenance of an increase in the number of tenure track positions.

The Association further believes retirees working through third party agencies should be held to the same standards as those directly employed by school districts. (17, 19)

#### **F-25 PART-TIME EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS**

The Missouri NEA believes that part-time education professionals should receive, at a minimum, prorated salary and fringe benefits based on a full-time employee compensation package. (82, 07, 08)

#### **F-26 WELLNESS PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS**

The Missouri NEA believes that adverse and stressful classroom and school conditions have led to increased emotional and physical needs among education professionals. The association supports stress management and wellness programs that facilitate the recognition, prevention and treatment of stress-related problems. Local districts in cooperation with local affiliates should establish employee wellness programs. These programs should focus on employee wellness in the areas of stress management, bullying, nutritional counseling, holistic health, exercise and physical fitness.

The Association also believes that employee assistance programs (EAPs) should be a voluntary resource to assist education professionals who are experiencing professional or personal problems. Confidential,

professional counseling leading to improved health and job effectiveness should ensure treatment without personal jeopardy.

The Association further believes that educators experiencing workplace-induced trauma should be provided access to quality, safe mental health services unaffiliated with their institution. (81, 07, 08, 10, 15, 22)

#### **F-27 DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING**

The Missouri NEA believes in a drug- and alcohol-free workplace. However, the Association believes that mandatory and/or random drug and alcohol testing of education professionals and job applicants is an unwarranted and unconstitutional invasion of privacy. The Association opposes such testing. (88, 05, 08, 10)

#### **F-28 EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS WITH HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY DISEASE/ACQUIRED IMMUNODEFICIENCY DISEASE (HIV/AIDS) OR HIV-RELATED DISEASES**

The Missouri NEA believes that mandatory/involuntary testing of education professionals and job applicants for Human Immunodeficiency Disease/Acquired Immunodeficiency Disease (HIV/AIDS) must be opposed.

The Association also believes that education professionals should not be fired, non-renewed, suspended (with or without pay), transferred or subjected to any other adverse employment action solely because they have tested positive for the HIV antibody or have been diagnosed as having AIDS or any other HIV-related disease.

The Association further believes that the privacy of any professional who is HIV positive or has HIV/AIDS must be protected. (07, 08, 10)

#### **F-29 EMPLOYEE-STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

The Missouri NEA believes all employee-student communication should be conducted in a way that is appropriate, professional and governed by locally determined policies.

The Association also believes that these policies must protect student and educator safety and well-being, promote student learning and success, and respect employee-student relationships that exist outside of the school context.

The Association further believes these policies must provide clear and practical guidance to educators and be responsive to changing technologies and district needs. (21)

#### **F-30 DISTRICT 403(b) PLANS**

The Missouri NEA believes that public education institutions should have full fiduciary responsibility regarding their 403(b) plans.

The Association also believes public education institutions should offer competitive 403(b) plans subject to industry-standard requirements designed to serve the interests of the participants by operating solely in their interests. These plans should have reasonable, transparent costs and feature broadly diversified investment options designed to reduce risk and increase return in a portfolio. (21)

#### **F-31 EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

The Association believes that state and local agencies should conduct practical research into the causes of

educator exodus, stress-induced leaves of absences, and lack of participation in and withdrawal from educational preparatory programs. This research should include soliciting educator feedback from across the state using methods that are free from bias and encompass all issues affecting educators.

The Association also believes solutions and conversations should be educator-led and also include other affected stakeholders.

The Association further believes schools and districts should maintain a sustained commitment to listening to educators regarding key factors in school conditions that strongly relate to teacher outcomes and then act on that information and reform schools to create the working conditions necessary for student and teacher success. (22)

### **F-32 ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE**

The Association believes administrative leave causes irreparable harm to the educator and the learning environment. All options for a resolution should be attempted prior to placing an educator on administrative leave.

The Association also believes that administrative leave should only be employed in instances where there is sufficient evidence from the outset to warrant an investigation. Due process should be afforded the educator, and the investigation should be conducted in the most expedient manner possible, with the goal being to come to a fair and appropriate resolution. Investigations done for lesser issues should occur while the educator is still on duty and should be handled professionally. (24)

## **G. SECURE PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY**

### **G-1 STATE STANDARDS BOARD**

The Missouri NEA believes that the education profession must govern itself. To this end, an autonomous state standards board should be established for the licensure of teachers, composed of a majority of practicing preK-12 public school teachers, as well as faculty from institutions of higher education. The state standards board should have the legal responsibility for:

- a. determining policy and procedures for teacher certification
- b. issuing and renewing licenses to practice in the state
- c. suspending or revoking such licenses
- d. approving of teacher preparation programs
- e. recognizing of national accreditation of preparation programs
- f. designing programs to improve teacher education. (69, 07, 08, 15)

### **G-2 ACCREDITATION OF TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS**

The Missouri NEA believes that all teacher preparation programs in Missouri should undergo a rigorous and regular evaluation by a trained team of evaluators based upon the professional accreditation guidelines of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Each evaluation team should include practicing, public school classroom teachers. (90, 07, 08, 17)

### **G-3 CERTIFICATION**

The Missouri NEA believes in rigorous state standards for entry into the teaching profession. These standards, as established by a state standards board, should include above-average college grades, field training experience that includes successful completion of student teaching, and passage of appropriate pedagogical and subject matter tests. Tests should be only one element of comprehensive assessment for completion of a teacher preparation program as well as for certification/licensing into the profession.

The Association also believes that certification procedures should be regularly evaluated to determine whether biases – cultural, economic, sexual orientation, gender identification, racial or age – are perpetuated by the requirements for certification. A teaching certificate/license should signify that an individual entering the teaching profession is highly qualified and competent to teach. The certificate/license should be legally recognized as the primary requirement for employment as a teacher in every public and private school (preK-12). No certificate/license should be issued unless an individual possesses the entry-level knowledge and skills required for teaching. No assignments should be permitted outside the teacher's area of certification/licensure without appropriate concurrent retraining approved by the teacher and funded by the local district.

The Association further believes that the practice of issuing a teaching certificate/license to an individual who has not completed an approved teacher training program should be eliminated. (86, 07, 08, 10)

### **G-4 CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

The Missouri NEA believes that a broad range of multiple criteria should be used to determine who should study for and be certified/licensed in the teaching profession. Rigorous and relevant evaluation in selecting and preparing teachers is essential to assure quality professionals. Teacher educators and local teachers must be fully involved in certification/licensing. (79, 06, 08, 19)

## **G-5 CERTIFICATED/LICENSED EDUCATOR IN EVERY POSITION**

The Missouri NEA believes that all professional teaching positions should be filled by a certificated educator. All educators and specialized personnel must have the knowledge, skills and certificate necessary to perform their duties.

The Association also believes that school districts should resist any attempts to diminish the quality of learning or services through the elimination of teaching positions, involuntary assignment out of field, placement of teaching professionals without due compensation for job requirements or the revision of school staff management under the guise of improving educational opportunity. All such teaching positions should be subject to the established certificated salary schedule. (75, 06, 08, 17, 19)

## **G-6 NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION FOR TEACHERS**

The Missouri NEA believes that National Board Certification (NBC) is a rigorous professional development opportunity as granted by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and should be recognized by the state with a significant salary supplement.

The Association also believes that local districts should encourage teachers to pursue NBC by providing resources and release time for NBC candidates. (06, 07, 08, 15, 17, 19)

## **G-7 NATIONAL CERTIFICATION FOR EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS**

The Missouri NEA believes that all education professionals who earn national certification in their respective fields should be recognized for their achievement. These areas may include, but not be limited to, speech pathologists, school psychologists, registered nurses and school counselors.

The Association also believes that Missouri should offer reciprocity certification for anyone who has earned national certification in his/her respective field and provide an avenue for those persons to obtain a continuous professional certificate as applicable.

The Association also believes that additional compensation for education professionals who earn national certification should be bargained with the local district. (07, 08, 19)

## **G-8 ALTERNATIVE ROUTES TO CERTIFICATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that alternative routes to certification must not be based solely upon performance on a written test. Such routes must include professional teacher preparation and mentoring. American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) as a means for certification should be rejected. The State Board of Education must use discretion when issuing temporary authorization certificates to individuals seeking certification through alternative routes.

The Association also believes that the traditional route for certification provides a more rigorous foundation and field experience for teacher preparation and should be preferred. (79, 06, 08, 11, 15, 19)

## **H. UNITE EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS FOR EFFECTIVE CITIZENSHIP**

### **H-1 THE EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL AS A CITIZEN**

The Missouri NEA believes that every education professional has the right and obligation to be an informed and politically active citizen. As private citizens, education professionals have the legal right to express their personal viewpoints in public and to participate in the political process without fear of censorship or intimidation. Board policies should guarantee education professionals their constitutional political rights.

The Association also believes educators should have the opportunity to actively participate in the American political process. The Association supports districts allowing leaves of absence to both campaign full-time and serve in public office.

The Association further believes that provisions should enable all education professionals to serve in public office without curtailment of annual increments, tenure, retirement or seniority rights, or to serve on a jury without personal financial loss. (87, 07, 08, 18)

### **H-2 THE RIGHT TO VOTE**

The Missouri NEA believes that the constitutional right to vote should be guaranteed to all citizens. The Association supports continued maintenance of the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Simplified voting, absentee voting provisions, transparency in ballot counting, and uniform residency requirements should be implemented throughout Missouri. Electronic voting equipment should provide a paper ballot receipt for use in a recount. Voter education should be provided to alert new voters to voting laws, procedures and issues.

The Association also believes that barriers that reduce access to voting and participation in the political process should be removed to allow for involvement by all eligible citizens. (84, 04, 08, 15, 16)

### **H-3 POLITICAL ACTION**

The Missouri NEA believes that it is the responsibility of education professionals, regardless of party affiliation, to be informed and politically active. Public education professionals must constitute a strong political force to secure legislation for the improvement of public education. Public education professionals should also involve themselves in the selection and election of qualified, committed candidates who support public education. Candidates for public office, regardless of party affiliation, should be supported based on their positions on issues affecting public education.

The Association also believes that members should support the political action committees and the government relations teams of the Association. Political action fundraising should be a priority for the Association and each individual member.

The Association further believes the collection of voluntary funds for political action must be protected. (75, 07, 08, 10, 12, 15, 19)

### **H-4 NONPARTISAN APPROACH TO REDISTRICTING**

The Missouri NEA believes that the state of Missouri should enact a new redistricting plan that functions in an efficient and timely manner without political gridlock thereby preventing political gerrymandering or forcing a last minute decision by the courts.

The Association also believes the new redistricting plan must include consistent redistricting principles including population equity, respect for political subdivisions, communities of interest, contiguity, compactness, natural boundaries and interrelationship of districts. (15, 19)

## **I. PROMOTE AND PROTECT HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS**

### **I-1 CIVIL RIGHTS**

The Missouri NEA believes in the achievement of a totally integrated society. The Association calls upon Missourians to eliminate barriers which prevent individuals from exercising civil rights decreed in common law, the Constitution and statutes of Missouri and the United States.

The Association opposes any local, state or federal law; Executive Order; and/or amendment to the U.S. or state constitution that curtail basic civil rights.

The Association also opposes harsh sentencing measures such as mandatory minimums and other national, state, and local laws which have contributed to mass incarceration of racial and ethnic minorities. (06, 08, 09, 18)

### **I-2 SOCIAL JUSTICE**

The Missouri NEA believes all people share a common humanity with the right to equitable treatment, equal opportunity and a fair allocation of community and public resources to ensure access and opportunity for everyone, particularly those in greatest need. (16, 18)

### **I-3 RACIAL JUSTICE**

The Missouri NEA believes in the necessity of racial healing to strengthen our society as a whole. Racial justice in education will be realized when we ensure systematic fair treatment resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all people. The Association acknowledges that both historical and current practices have systematically given advantages and privileges to people of white European ancestry while disadvantaging and denying rights, opportunities, and equality for people of all races. Implemented through both policies and laws, these biased practices have been manifested in conditions our students and educators face in their schools and communities.

The Association also believes that honest and open conversations about the sources of institutional racism that continue to threaten equity, fairness, and justice in our nation are necessary to produce the critical changes needed to achieve racial healing and justice.

The Association further believes its affiliates should educate members about the ways race privileges impact certain people. The Association believes its affiliates should work with family and student partners to develop, initiate, and promote programs that will lead us to repair, heal, organize and advocate to achieve racial justice so that every student and educator may fulfill their full potential. (18)

### **I-4 POSITIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

The Missouri NEA believes that a positive school environment is necessary for educational success.

To create and promote a positive school environment:

- a. school recruitment policies should ensure culturally diverse education professionals
- b. racial or ethnic-minority education professionals should be employed to achieve a percentage at least equal to, but not limited to, the percentage of the ethnic minority in the regional population
- c. police-community and police-student relations must be strengthened through joint efforts of school,



- community and law enforcement agencies
- d. joint community and school education programs should be developed to promote understanding of human and civil rights and responsibilities in all segments of society
  - e. activities for students should be responsive to the cultural diversity and historical backgrounds of all segments of society. (76, 06, 08, 18, 19)

#### **I-5 PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN EDUCATION**

The Missouri NEA believes and recognizes that establishing positive and appropriate personal relationships with students is important in education. However, such relationships should not be used to coerce or influence others for personal advantage. The Association encourages its affiliates in all institutions, at all ages and grade levels, to establish strong policies regarding personal relationships. (17)

#### **I-6 INTEGRATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The Missouri NEA believes in the full integration of public schools. Policies and guidelines for school integration must be strengthened and must comply with judicial decisions and civil rights legislation. Education professionals, parents and students should be involved in the development of plans designed to achieve integration or reorganization.

The Association also believes that the rights of education professionals should be protected in all matters affecting their employment as a result of the implementation, reconstruction or dismantling of an integration plan. (76, 06, 08, 16)

#### **I-7 INCLUSIVE MEDICAL STUDIES**

The Missouri NEA believes that children, women and members of ethnic minority groups must be included in the samples of all medical studies, surveys and research purporting to yield results applicable to all segments of a population.

The Association also believes that national, state and local agencies should conduct research specifically related to health problems and concerns of children, women and ethnic minority groups. (92, 06, 08)

#### **I-8 INDIVIDUAL PRIVACY**

The Missouri NEA believes that federal and state guarantees are necessary to protect an individual's privacy. Information on credit and medical histories should never be released without explicit permission from the persons involved, except for those with the legal "need to know."

The Association also believes the use of surveillance of individuals by private or government agencies and school authorities should respect the fundamental right to privacy. The Association strongly opposes the sharing and exchange by private and government agencies of computerized information and digital surveillance that includes prejudicial reports on individuals. (70, 06, 08, 10, 19)

#### **I-9 ROLE OF RELIGION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The Missouri NEA believes that freedom of religion is a fundamental human right. Because the choice of religion is an intensely personal decision, instruction in religious doctrines and practices is best provided within a family setting or by religious institutions.

The Association also believes that schools should teach the rights and responsibilities associated with the freedom of religion, the religious heritage and diversity of the United States, respect for the religion of others, and the historical and cultural influences of world religions. Educational materials should accurately portray the influence of religions in the nation and throughout the world.

The Association further believes that the constitutional provisions of the establishment and exercise of religion in the First Amendment require that there be no sectarian practice in public school programs. The Association opposes state legislation that would promote religious doctrines and mandate school prayer. (06, 07, 08, 18, 19)

#### **I-10 LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY**

The Missouri NEA believes that although English is the primary language of political and economic communication in the United States, efforts to legislate English as the official language disregard cultural pluralism, deprive those in need of education, social services, and employment.

The Association also believes that an individual's native language and culture need to be promoted and preserved through instruction, and other forms of communication.

The Association further believes that districts should make every effort to communicate with families in the language used in the student's home. (90, 07, 08, 19)

#### **I-11 DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY**

The Missouri NEA believes Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day should be maintained as a legal holiday. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. brought about significant racial justice, both socially and politically, through the exercise of First Amendment rights using non-violent protests. Affiliates and school systems should plan observances of this date. (88, 06, 08, 18)

#### **I-12 HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

The Missouri NEA believes that Historically Black Colleges and Universities and their programs play a vital role in helping Americans in their efforts toward building a more just, pluralistic society. The Association supports and promotes these institutions and programs as full education partners. (80, 06, 08, 18)

#### **I-13 VETERANS' DAY**

The Missouri NEA believes that all Americans should honor and memorialize the sacrifices and heroic acts of men and women who have served in the Armed Forces. Veterans' Day should be maintained as a legal holiday. Students should be taught the importance and magnitude of the armed services in the protection of the United States during war and peace. Affiliates and school systems should observe this date to promote the celebration of our veterans' courage, patriotism and sacrifice for our country. (01, 06, 08, 19)

#### **I-14 INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION**

The Missouri NEA believes the fabric of our society is strengthened when the contributions of all its diverse members are encouraged and embraced.

The Association also believes social, institutional, and governmental actions and policies that engender discriminatory practices should be removed. The Association encourages its affiliates, in concert with

community organizations, to educate the public to bring about an awareness of such policies and practices and to actively work to eliminate them. (16, 18)

#### **I-15 DISCRIMINATION**

The Missouri NEA believes in the equality of all individuals. Discrimination and stereotyping should be eliminated. Plans, activities and programs for children, parents, staff and the community should be developed to identify and eliminate discrimination and stereotyping.

The Association also believes individuals should not be discriminated against based on: race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic status, disability or age as it relates to education, employment, housing and public accommodation.

The Association further believes its members and all other members of the educational community must engage in honest and open conversations to examine assumptions, prejudices, and the effects of discriminatory practices. (96, 06, 08,15, 17, 18, 19)

#### **I-16 DISCRIMINATION BY ORGANIZATIONS**

The Missouri NEA believes that organizations are strengthened by offering memberships on a nondiscriminatory basis.

The Association also believes both our state organization and its affiliates should only participate in programs and use the facilities of organizations that do not deny membership on a discriminatory basis.

The Association also believes our members who hold membership in such organizations should work actively from within for the total elimination of such exclusionary policies. (17, 18)

#### **I-17 HATE-MOTIVATED\_GROUPS**

The Missouri NEA believes in freedom of speech and association as protected by the First Amendment. American values of free speech and commitment to equality are threatened by the philosophy and practices of organizations and groups that foster hate and encourage intolerance. The Association condemns attempts by such groups to recruit and influence young people in schools. Educators must take a significant role in countering the effects of such speech, actions and racism in our students, families and communities. (89, 06, 08, 19)

#### **I-18 DISABILITIES AWARENESS**

The Missouri NEA believes that the human and civil rights of individuals with disabilities must be protected.

The Association also believes that all schools should educate staff, students, parents and education employees to bring about awareness of disability issues. (17)

#### **I-19 ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

The Missouri NEA believes that all schools should comply with the accessibility standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) including service animals accompanied by students, parents, education employees and all other individuals. (17)

## **I-20 EQUAL GENDER RIGHTS**

The Missouri NEA believes that equality under the law must not be denied or abridged on account of gender identity, gender expression or perceived gender. To achieve this, the Association supports:

- a. laws using neutral language
- b. a state equal rights amendment
- c. ratification of a national equal rights amendment. (76, 06, 08, 13, 15)

## **I-21 WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

The Association encourages the celebration of Women's History Month as a means of acknowledging the contribution of women to history and the development of world progress. (78, 06, 08, 16)

## **I-22 EQUITY IN ATHLETIC PROGRAMS**

The Missouri NEA believes that all students must have equal opportunity to participate in athletic programs at all educational levels. Athletic funds for facilities, equipment and remuneration of staff must be equally allocated regardless of a student's gender identification. (84, 06, 19)

## **I-23 TITLE IX**

The Missouri NEA believes that the Title IX 1972 Education Amendment is a comprehensive statute intended to eradicate discrimination at schools that receive federal funds. The Association opposes any narrow interpretation of Title IX statutes that would allow gender discrimination in Missouri education. (85, 06, 10, 19)

## **I-24 FAIR HOUSING**

The Missouri NEA believes that all individuals should be free to reside in the communities of their choice and opposes the systematic denial of various services to residents of specific, often racially associated, neighborhoods or communities either directly or through the selective raising of prices. (84, 06, 19)

## **I-25 WORLD PEACE**

The Missouri NEA believes in programs that support the concept of world peace and the interdependence of all people. Programs should offer training in peacemaking, mediation and conflict resolution. (83, 06, 19)

## **J. OBTAIN FOR ITS MEMBERS THE BENEFITS OF AN INDEPENDENT, UNITED EDUCATION PROFESSION**

### **J-1 COORDINATED SERVICES**

The Missouri NEA believes in an independent united education profession to provide a coordinated program of services to members with enrollment open to all eligible public education professionals. Efforts to form new affiliates are necessary to bring all eligible education professionals into the United Education Profession. (75, 98, 08)

### **J-2 STRONG PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that a unified effort of a professional organization promotes the interests of its members and advances a strong, healthy learning environment. The status of the Association as an independent and professional organization is vital to its members and affiliates. This independence should not be compromised in any alignments with other organizations. (84, 04, 08)

### **J-3 MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION IN THE ASSOCIATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that every member has the right and professional responsibility to participate fully in the Association. The opportunity to participate in the Association must be afforded every member without fear, intimidation, or retribution. Members participating in local, state, and national association activities must be free from all forms of bullying.

The Association also believes school policies should provide release time without negative consequence or loss of pay or benefits to those who are fulfilling leadership responsibilities in professional organizations, attending professional meetings or participating in other Association activities. Release time should be equitably provided, without preference to those whose positions do not require substitutes. School policies should also provide leaves of absence for Association leaders who must temporarily vacate their professional district obligations in order to fulfill their duties as an Association officer.

The Association further believes that all members have the right to receive non-political union communication at their work sites from their local, state, and national associations.

The Association also believes that early-career members should be encouraged to participate in and pursue appropriate leadership opportunities at the local, state and national levels of the union. The Association supports and encourages policies and practices such as affordable child-care services so that members with children may have improved opportunities to participate in Association activities. (84, 04, 08, 16, 18, 19)

### **J-4 SUPPORTING LOCALS IN JEOPARDY**

The Missouri NEA believes that direct and immediate assistance should be afforded to affiliates of the Association that exist within the concentrated territories of competing organizations. Affiliates should initiate and support programs that will strengthen and enhance the local organizational structure and promote membership growth within the Association. Direct and immediate assistance should be given by the Association to local affiliates that have been:

- a. targeted for take-over efforts
- b. taken over by competing organizations

- c. targeted as the object of "Association busting"
- d. attacked by anti-public education activists.

The Association also believes that procedures should be implemented to ensure an effective means for processing and resolving grievances of members of local affiliates that are not the bargaining agent. (84, 04, 08, 16, 17)

#### **J-5 RETIRED MEMBER PARTICIPATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that retired members are a valuable asset and should be active participants within the Association at the national, state, and local levels. The expertise of retired members should be utilized in all areas of the Association.

The Association also believes that its members should promote retired membership to all eligible members. (85, 05, 16, 24)

#### **J-6 MINORITY PARTICIPATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that minority participation should be at least proportionate to the identified ethnic minority population of the state at every phase of governance and on all decision-making levels of the Association.

The Association also believes that racial or ethnic minorities should be included as candidates for positions at all levels. Minority participation in program development and employment of minorities and women in staff positions should be consistent with Association affirmative action policies.

The Association further believes that local affiliates should maintain the commitment to organizational policies and programs that promote the training and involvement of minorities at all levels of the organization. (86, 05, 08)

#### **J-7 ASPIRING EDUCATORS PARTICIPATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that college students should have the opportunity to join and participate in the Association at the local, state and national levels. Pre-professional leadership training should be a priority. Local advisers should be members of the Association. (93, 04, 08, 19)

#### **J-8 EDUCATORS RISING PARTICIPATION**

The Missouri NEA believes that Educators Rising high school programs are vital to the future of the teaching profession. Educators Rising should be open to students at all levels who are interested in a career in education. Local affiliates are encouraged to sponsor and support Educators Rising chapters. Affiliate members should be encouraged to serve as advisors. (97, 06, 08, 16, 19)