

2007-2008 NEA RESOLUTIONS

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A. SERVE AS THE NATIONAL VOICE FOR EDUCATION

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION

A-1. Public Education

The National Education Association believes that public educational opportunities for every American must be preserved and strengthened.

The Association also believes that public education is the cornerstone of our social, economic, and political structure and is of utmost significance in the development of our moral, ethical, spiritual, and cultural values. The Association further believes that each state must maintain a system of public education that prepares its citizens to—

- a. Achieve functional proficiency in English, with emphasis on the development of basic reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills
- b. Compute effectively to procure and/or dispense services and materials
- c. Use critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem-solving skills
- d. Exercise attitudes of good citizenship, societal productivity, and global awareness
- e. Care for the environment
- f. Appreciate the aesthetic and moral qualities of life
- g. Formulate values that lead to continual growth and self-fulfillment
- h. Recognize and appreciate cultural, social, political, and religious differences
- i. Use leisure time effectively and develop sound physical health habits
- j. Develop skills in and/or an appreciation for the practical/vocational and fine arts.

The Association believes that its members should support public education by sending their children to public educational institutions. (1969, 1998)

A-2. Educational Opportunity for All

The National Education Association believes that each student has the right to a free public education that should be suited to the needs of the individual and guaranteed by state constitutions and the United States Constitution. Education is a lifelong process, and public education serves a constituency that embraces all age groups. Access to and opportunities for postsecondary education should be widely available, and no qualified student should be denied such opportunities because of financial considerations.

The Association also believes that all schools must be accredited under uniform standards established by the appropriate agencies in collaboration with the Association and its affiliates, and that the accreditation process must provide sufficient flexibility to enable individual schools to achieve educational excellence and respond to the needs of their students and community. The development of a periodic review of locally established programs should involve community members, parents/guardians, students, teachers, and education support professionals. The Association further believes that individuals, at their expense, should be free to choose, to supplement, or to substitute education in privately supported, nonsegregated, nonpublic schools.

The Association believes tax-exempt status should be denied to those institutions whose policies and/or practices prevent the integration of the institutions. (1969, 2006)

A-3. Understanding and Support of Public Education

The National Education Association 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 school boards and other stakeholders also have a responsibility to promote public understanding of the importance of public schools.

The Association also believes that the success of our nation depends upon high standards of educational excellence. The Association supports a positive school environment; excellence in teaching; high standards for success, learning, and student behavior; and extensive parental involvement. The Association also recognizes its responsibility to promote excellence in public education and supports efforts to improve it. (1969, 2007)

A-4. Parental Involvement

The National Education Association believes that a community engaged in the life of its public schools is paramount to the future of public education. The Association also believes that a strong partnership must be formed among parents/guardians, schools, the Association, and the community to address the mutual interests of the entire community.

The Association further believes that parents/guardians who are active participants in the education of their children increase the likelihood of the achievement of educational excellence. Parents/guardians, teachers, other education employees, school board members, and the community must set high expectations for student behavior and academic success and provide the encouragement and support for each student to achieve his or her full potential.

The Association believes that innovative programs should be developed and resources committed to promote and increase family and community involvement in public schools and to promote and increase the involvement of education employees in the community. The Association encourages its affiliates to work collaboratively with the community in establishing such programs and finding the resources necessary to make the programs successful.

The Association also believes that parents/guardians should be encouraged to visit their children's schools and communicate with their children's teachers and other education employees with whom the children have daily contact. In addition, schools should communicate with parents/guardians in their native language. The Association further believes that parents/guardians, students, community members, teachers, other education employees, and school board members should promote the successes of the collaboration between the school and the community. (2001, 2007)

A-5. American Education Week

The National Education Association believes that American Education Week is an important observance during which positive attention should be focused on the contributions of public education and education employees. (1997, 2006)

A-6. Excellence in Education

The National Education Association believes that continued success of the United States as a participatory democracy and as a world leader is dependent upon a shared national, state, community, and individual commitment to excellence in education. The Association also believes that excellence in education requires that students achieve mastery of learning so that they have the ability to use what has been taught and have command of subjects sufficient for problem solving, decision making, and further educational growth. The Association supports high standards for teaching and learning in which the student becomes an active participant in the mastery process.

The Association further believes that sufficient resources, interventions, and program alternatives must be provided for the proper placement of each student. (1983, 2004)

A-7. U.S. Department of Education

The National Education Association believes that the U.S. Department of Education must be a viable force for the maintenance and improvement of public education. The Association also believes that Association members must be fully involved in establishing goals and planning programs with the Department.

The Association further believes that internal and external attempts to dismantle and to erode the effectiveness of the Department of Education through the federal budgetary process are detrimental to the public interest. (1980, 1988)

A-8. Appointments by the President of the United States

The National Education Association believes that the need for quality education demands that criteria for presidential appointments in the field of education shall include a commitment to public education and significant contributions to the education community. Education employees should be included in such appointments. (1970, 1990)

A-9. Business Support for Public Education

The National Education Association believes that the business community and the Association should work cooperatively in promoting, planning, implementing, and evaluating school-community-business partnerships in the support of public education.

The Association welcomes from the business community supplementary activities such as cooperative programs, resource assistance, release of employees for parent-teacher conferences, funding for scholarships, and the donation of specialized equipment.

The Association also believes that the use of programs that involve the marketing and/or promoting of products that exploit students and/or institutions should be prevented. (1984, 1996)

A-10. School Boards

The National Education Association believes that it is the responsibility of school boards to provide a quality education to each student within a school district. The Association also believes that school boards must provide resources and support so that each school in a district meets standards for educational excellence. The Association further believes that school boards must promote public understanding of the importance of public education and the schools and programs within their school districts.

The Association believes that the composition of school boards must be representative of the population within the school district, including minority groups; that board members must be elected by the voters in the school district; and that board members must be elected from representative districts. The Association opposes federal, state, and local takeovers of public schools, public school districts, and their governing boards. The Association also believes that the closing of schools by school boards to avoid legislative corrective action is not in the best interest of students, parents, or school employees. The Association further believes that provisions should be made for parents/guardians of students who are attending school in a district other than their home district as part of a court-ordered interdistrict busing plan to have substantive influence on board actions and policies.

The Association believes that student participation in a school board's deliberative process should be encouraged, and that student input in the voting process should be advisory only. Wherever a school board includes student members, they should be excluded from participating in discussions, receiving information, and voting on issues dealing with education employees and items contained in negotiated agreements.

The Association further believes that school board meetings must be held at times and places that allow education employees, local affiliates, and the community to participate in educational decision making. (1980, 2006)

A-11. Use of Closed Public School Buildings

The National Education Association believes that closed public school buildings that have been deemed safe can be used effectively for public preschool, day care, job training, and adult education centers. The Association also believes that closed public school buildings should be sold or leased only to those organizations that do not provide direct educational services to students and/or are not in direct competition with public schools. (1982, 2000)

A-12. Black Higher Education Institutions

The National Education Association recognizes that historically Black institutions of higher education have played a vital role in helping Americans in their efforts toward building a truly pluralistic society.

The Association believes that the programs of historically Black institutions should continue to be reviewed and updated so that they maintain diverse and quality faculties and student bodies.

The Association urges its affiliates to be in the forefront of all efforts that seek to support, maintain, and promote these invaluable institutions, their programs, and their full participation in the mainstream of education. The Association also believes that closing, downgrading, or merging historically Black institutions is not in the best interest of the educational community. (1980, 1995)

A-13. School Accountability

The National Education Association supports effective and fair school accountability systems. The Association believes that these systems must promote high levels of student excellence that reflect meaningful, high quality learning and ensure that the best teaching practices are supported and utilized. The Association also believes that the focus of the accountability system must be on the school, not on individual stakeholders, as the unit for evaluation and improvement of student learning. Development and implementation of the accountability system must ensure that the stakeholders at the school, district, state, and national levels share the responsibility for establishing clear goals, adopting high expectations for student learning, demonstrating multiple methods of student success, and providing adequate and equitable funding and support systems.

The Association further believes that a school accountability system must—

- a. Promote educational excellence
- b. Ensure the alignment of standards, assessments, and curricula
- c. Balance its focus on school context, process, and student performance
- d. Set high standards for student learning, levels of support by each stakeholder, and clearly defined goals for the school as a unit
- e. Provide for the development and implementation of a valid methodology for use as an assessment tool to determine the required funding necessary to enable all students to achieve educational excellence
- f. Provide professional development for all education employees prior to implementation of the system
- g. Use multiple assessment tools that are universally designed and sources of data that are meaningful, relevant, valid, and reliable
- h. Include necessary accommodations and modifications to maximize the success of all students
- i. Include measures to improve school accountability
- j. Identify how the school as a unit achieves its goals
- k. Identify the quality, quantity, and impact of support provided by each stakeholder
- l. Identify and address the internal and external factors that impact student learning and development
- m. Provide for the timely dissemination of assessment results to all stakeholders
- n. Be applied in a fair and equitable manner
- o. Include periodic evaluation and modification of the system
- p. Provide for the development of a school improvement plan.

The Association believes that the school improvement process must, at a minimum—

- a. Involve all school staff as active partners in the development of the plan
- b. Provide the additional funding, resources, and assistance necessary to accomplish the plan
- c. Identify the responsibilities of each stakeholder—students, education employees, parents/guardians, community members, government, policymakers, social agencies, and taxpayers—in the implementation of the plan
- d. Provide time for planning, implementation, and reassessment
- e. Be consistent with education employees' rights and responsibilities as set forth in laws, contracts, policies, and/or local agreement processes. (1971, 2007)

FINANCING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

A-14. Financial Support of Public Education

The National Education Association believes that every state should ensure its students a quality education by providing the funding needed to enable all students to achieve educational excellence. Such an education requires adequate and equitable funding from public tax sources for schools to obtain the resources (e.g., personnel, programs, materials, buildings, and technology) to meet the needs of all students. The Association also believes that—

- a. An increasing portion of public funds should be for direct instruction of students.
- b. The amount of aid must be generally predictable for long-range planning and specifically predictable for year-to-year planning.
- c. Present programs of specific aid must be expanded and improved by consolidation and simplification of administration.
- d. Tax revision favorable to public education should be encouraged and continually reviewed at every governmental level.
- e. Local governing boards must be fiscally independent, and restrictive limits must not be imposed on their budgets or long-term borrowing.
- f. The state and local share of finance must be derived from a tax system that is balanced and complementary in nature, includes all broad-based taxes, reduces the excessive reliance on property taxes, and protects subsistence income.
- g. Provisions must be made for research, development, implementation, continuation, and improvement in education practices. Funding must be included for resources such as personnel, time for staff planning, training and professional development, facilities, equipment, and materials.
- h. State and federal mandates affecting public education programs must be accompanied by adequate and equitable funding.
- i. School trust lands must be administered with the generation of funds for public education as a primary goal and in a manner that ensures the sustainable use of those lands by current and future generations. State school trust funds should be fairly compensated by the federal government for school trust lands included in national parks, monuments, or wilderness areas.
- j. Efforts should be made at the state and federal levels to ensure stable, adequate, and equitable funding of public schools historically receiving revenues derived from state and federal lands and natural resources. These efforts should include, but not be limited to, ensuring the sustainable use of these public lands and resources by current and future generations.
- k. Additional funding must be provided to cover the cost of achieving the goals of raising student performance, implementing new programs, and raising standards of student learning.
- l. Funding should be greater for students facing social, economic, and/or education challenges.
- m. Funds must be provided for programs to alleviate race, gender, and sexual orientation discrimination and to eliminate portrayal of race, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identification stereotypes in the public schools.
- n. Public funds must not be expended for any materials used to promote race, gender, or sexual orientation and gender identification stereotypes and/or biases.
- o. Public funds must not be expended in institutions where either specific programs or the institution has been found guilty of discrimination.
- p. Categorical funding must be assured in areas such as special education, bilingual/English as a second language, class size reduction, and the economically/educationally disadvantaged.
- q. Any institution, agency, or individual receiving financial aid from federal, state, or local governments must adhere to all applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations.
- r. Full-day, every day kindergarten programs should be fully funded.
- s. Federal, state, and, as appropriate, local governments should provide funds sufficient to make pre-kindergarten available for all three- and four-year-old children.
- t. It is inappropriate to support the educational programs of a public school by the sale of non-nutritious foods and beverages to students during the school day.
- u. Public funds should be based on student enrollment rather than student attendance.

The Association opposes providing any public revenues to pre-K through 12 schools for sectarian instruction. The Association also opposes providing such revenues to sectarian and nonsectarian pre-K through 12 private schools or to nonpublic school students in pre-K through 12 education, unless such revenues are used for educational services that are not available in public schools to which students have reasonable access. (1997, 2006)

A-15. Federal Financial Support for Education

The National Education Association believes that the federal government has a legitimate and proper concern and responsibility for the quality of public education provided to its citizens.

The federal government should—

- a. Ensure equity and adequacy of educational opportunity for all
- b. Collect basic data to be used in public schools and to engage in research, development, and consultation activities that support quality state and local education programs
- c. Grant supplemental aid to states that are not able to raise adequate funds to provide all students with a high-quality education and to provide funding to support state and local government efforts in pursuit of national interests in public education.

Federal funding formulas should reflect the most current and accurate accounting of the public school population; measurements of poverty; and the state's ability to raise adequate funds. The Association also believes that funding for federal programs should be substantially increased, not merely redistributed among states or other federal initiatives.

The Association further believes that there should be federal support for education whereby:

- a. The federal government assumes a full partnership role with local school districts by providing significant levels of federal funding for elementary and secondary education through a program of general aid and categorical assistance along with the mandatory full funding of mandated federal programs.
- b. Federal education funding is clear and identifiable within the federal budget.
- c. Federally funded instructional programs have maximum teacher involvement in their development at the federal level and must be implemented at the local level only after the involvement and approval of the recognized bargaining agent or local affiliate.
- d. Advisory committees for federally funded programs reflect the ethnic makeup of local communities and maintain a gender balance to ensure accountability and equity. Parents/guardians, students, and educators should be included as members of these committees.
- e. The amount of aid is generally predictable for long-range planning and specifically predictable for year-to-year planning.
- f. Federal legislation complies with civil rights statutes and is consistent with the constitutional provision respecting the establishment of religion and provides for judicial review as to its constitutionality.
- g. Categorical funding is assured in areas such as special education, bilingual/English as a second language, and the economically/educationally disadvantaged.

The Association believes that federal monies budgeted for pre-K through adult education must be equitably and adequately expended for public education. The Association opposes any federal legislation, laws, or regulations that provide funds, goods, or services to sectarian schools. The Association also opposes providing such funds, goods, or services to nonsectarian private schools or nonpublic school students in pre-K through adult education, unless those funds, goods, or services are used for educational services that are not available in public schools to which students have reasonable access. The Association condemns and deplors federal policies and programs that serve to undermine America's historical commitment to free public education. (1983, 2007)

A-16. Financial Support for Postsecondary Education

The National Education Association supports the maintenance and expansion of funding for postsecondary education, including programs of institutional and scholar support, research grants, support for historically Black and developing institutions, and student financial assistance to assure access and choice for all qualified students—regardless of personal financial means—who wish to pursue

postsecondary education. The Association believes that student need and enrollment should be criteria for funding postsecondary education. The Association also believes that need-based student financial assistance should be available through all postsecondary education institutions and governmental agencies. (1986, 1998)

A-17. Higher Education Research and Study Grants

The National Education Association believes that both the governmental 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 the process of study and research grants provided should not influence undergraduate or graduate curricula until such time as the research is completed and systematically integrated into the curricula.

The Association further believes that our national economic well-being is dependent upon the expansion of the highest quality research and training in our professional and graduate schools as well as the recruitment and training of a diverse and highly skilled workforce.

The Association believes that academic freedom applies to research and the dissemination of research results. (1985, 2001)

A-18. Financial Crisis

The National Education Association believes that free public education is in a financial crisis. The Association seeks to maintain and expand educational programs for students by advocating adequate and equitable public and legislative financial support. The Association also believes that quality education requires adequate personnel, teaching materials, and supplies as priorities to be considered in the event of financial crisis.

The Association opposes the establishment of ad hoc classrooms in the event of school closures. (1975, 2002)

A-19. Public Education/National Defense

The National Education Association believes that maintenance of a strong system of public education is paramount to maintaining a strong national defense. Whenever there is a redirection of resources from military purposes, the Association supports a policy of economic conversion to facilitate the orderly redirection of such resources to alternative civilian uses, with public education being one of the highest priorities. (1985, 2007)

A-20. Federal Impact Aid

The National Education Association supports funding to maintain quality education for students in school districts impacted by federal policies, lands, activities, and installations. A financial crisis exists in many impacted areas because of insufficient, temporary, year-to-year appropriations.

The Association urges a permanent solution to the financial problems of severely impacted school districts, ensuring federal support at least to the degree that their local revenues are impaired or their costs increased.

The Association endorses the concept of a national payments-in-lieu-of-taxes program. This endorsement does not affect the Association's continued support of current impact aid programs. The establishment of any payments-in-lieu program should not adversely affect any locality currently receiving impact aid. (1970, 1994)

A-21. Educational/Economic Stability of States

The National Education Association believes that the educational well-being of the country depends upon the economic health of each of the regions, states, and localities.

The Association supports efforts to alleviate the effects of unemployment and supports retraining and appropriate job-creation legislation.

The Association also supports efforts to correct policies that contribute to the particular economic difficulties of individual regions, states, and localities. (1981, 1993)

A-22. Tax Reform

The National Education Association supports tax reform and believes that it should—

- a. Increase tax fairness and raise revenue necessary to finance quality public education and other public services
- b. Prevent excessive reliance on property tax or any other single tax
- c. Reflect the findings of comprehensive studies of the total individual and corporate tax burden
- d. Assure a tax burden distribution that reflects the ability to pay and that safeguards family subsistence
- e. Assure that statewide uniformity in property tax effort be required
- f. Provide for increased local and state funding of public education
- g. Not be used to place arbitrary maximum limits on any state or local government's ability to spend or tax, particularly since such limits have a negative impact on the full funding of schools
- h. Eliminate tax laws and rulings that are harmful to education employees and educational needs. (1978, 1996)

A-23. Privatization and Subcontracting Programs[†]

The National Education Association believes in promoting the importance of quality public education, the principle of separation of church and state, the economic security of public education employees, and racial integration in the public schools.

The Association opposes any privatization or subcontracting arrangement that—

- a. Has the potential to reduce the resources that otherwise would be available to achieve and/or maintain a system of quality public education or the potential to otherwise negatively impact on public education
- b. Allows public funds to be used for religious education or other religious purposes or that otherwise weakens the wall of separation between church and state
- c. Places the economic security of public education employees at risk, without regard to individual job performance, so that the services in question can be performed by private sector employees
- d. Replaces services that are, or could feasibly be, provided by the public schools
- e. Has the purpose or effect of causing or maintaining racial segregation in the public schools
- f. Has not been agreed to by the affected affiliate. (2000)

A-24. Voucher Plans and Tuition Tax Credits

The National Education Association believes that voucher plans, tuition tax credits, or other funding/financial arrangements that use tax monies to subsidize pre-K through 12 private school education can undermine public education; reduce the support needed to adequately fund public education; cause racial, economic, and social segregation of students; and threaten the constitutional separation of church and state that has been a cornerstone of American democracy.

The Association opposes voucher plans, tuition tax credits, or other such funding arrangements that pay for students to attend sectarian schools. The Association also opposes any such arrangements that pay for students to attend nonsectarian pre-K through 12 private schools in order to obtain educational services that are available to them in public schools to which they have reasonable access.

[†] See the *NEA Handbook* for the Policy Statement on Privatization and Subcontracting adopted by the 2000 Representative Assembly.

The Association also believes that any private school or agency that receives public funding through voucher plans, tax credits, or other funding/financial arrangements must be subject to all accountability measures and regulations required of public schools. (1970, 2003)

A-25. Deleterious Programs

The National Education Association believes that tax credit programs, management-by-objective systems, block grants, and revenue sharing programs have at times been implemented in ways that are harmful to public education. The Association also believes that such programs should be monitored to prevent such abuses. (1974, 2000)

A-26. For-Profit Schools

The National Education Association believes that there is an inherent conflict between serving the needs of children and serving the needs of stockholders in an educational setting, and opposes education for profit. (2000)

A-27. Funding for Extracurricular Programs

The National Education Association believes that every public school student must have an opportunity to participate in school-sanctioned and funded extracurricular programs.

The Association urges that equitable funds for transportation, facilities, equipment, and remuneration of staff be provided for all school-sanctioned extracurricular activities. Funding should be equitably distributed between athletic and nonathletic extracurricular activities. The Association also believes that extracurricular fundraising is not an acceptable substitute for district funding of extracurricular activities. (1975, 2001)

A-28. Local Education Foundations

The National Education Association believes that local education foundations (LEFs) can strengthen the educational objectives of a school system by supporting programs that will enhance the approved school curriculum. LEFs are nonprofit organizations whose boards represent local community and education leaders. Each LEF is unique in its operation with the purpose of generating resources for local public education programs.

The Association also believes that LEFs should be separate from the local board of education and district administration and must not supplant local budgets. The Association further believes that education employees in positions within an LEF-funded program must be a part of an existing collective bargaining unit or, in nonbargaining jurisdictions, must be subject to the existing legislation, employer policy, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment. The Association believes that projects and programs developed by LEFs must not replace current educational programs offered by the district and must not displace members from assignments held in the district. The district must be reimbursed for the use of facilities, resources, or services at the full rate.

The Association also believes that LEFs should grant awards to education employees in a fair, equitable, and nondiscriminatory process. LEFs should establish, publish, and implement clear guidelines for granting awards.

The Association further believes that education employees included in LEF grant programs must be protected from reproach by school and/or community members. (2006, 2007)

QUALITY EDUCATION

A-29. Educational Bureaucracy

The National Education Association believes that expanding the educational bureaucracy severely limits optimal classroom instruction. Affiliates should work toward a teacher-led educational system that will reduce bureaucracy. (1977, 1996)

A-30. Improving and Maintaining Educational Facilities

The National Education Association believes that many educational facilities are in a state of decay, neglect, and/or deterioration. The Association supports funding to modernize, expand, replace, and/or maintain these facilities in order to provide a safe, healthy, and effective teaching and learning environment for students and education employees.

The Association also believes that the community, parents/guardians, students, and education employees must be effectively involved in the development of plans to modernize, expand, and/or replace facilities.

The Association further believes that preventive maintenance in all facilities is equally important in achieving this goal. (1969, 2003)

A-31. Acceptable Charter Schools and Other Nontraditional Public School Options[†]

The National Education Association supports innovation in public education. The Association believes that acceptable charter schools, which comply with Association criteria, and other nontraditional public school options have the potential to facilitate reforms, such as decentralized and shared decision making, diversity in educational offerings, and the removal of onerous administrative requirements. By developing new and creative methods of teaching and learning that can be replicated in mainstream public schools, these schools may be agents for positive change. The Association also believes that, when concepts such as charter schools and other nontraditional school options are proposed, affected public education employees should be directly involved in the design, implementation, and governance of these programs.

The Association further believes that plans should not negatively impact the regular public school program and must include adequate safeguards covering contract and employment provisions for all employees, voluntary participation, health and safety standards for all students and employees, nondiscrimination and equal educational opportunity, staffing by licensed education professionals, and financial responsibility.

The Association believes that programs must be adequately funded, must comply with all standards for academic assessment applicable to regular public schools, must include start-up resources, must not divert current funds from the regular public school programs, and must contain appropriate procedures for regular periodic assessment and evaluation, as well as adequate attendance and record keeping procedures.

The granting of charters should be consistent with the following principles:

- a. Charter schools should serve as a laboratory for field-testing curricular and instructional innovations and/or to provide educational opportunities for students who cannot adequately be served in mainstream public schools.
- b. Charter school programs must be qualitatively different from what is available in mainstream public schools and not just an avenue for parental choice.
- c. Local school boards should be the only entity that can grant or renew charter applications.
- d. The criteria for granting a charter should include a description of clear objectives, missions, and goals. Renewal of a charter should be contingent on the achievement of these objectives, missions, and goals.
- e. Appeals of local school board decisions in charter applications should be made to a state education agency but appeals should be heard only on the grounds of arbitrary, capricious, or unreasonable decision making, not on the educational judgment of the local school board.
- f. Private, for-profit entities should not be eligible to receive a charter.
- g. Charter schools should have a limited right to contract with for-profit entities for services only to the extent that mainstream public schools can do so.

[†] See the *NEA Handbook* for the Policy Statement on Charter Schools adopted by the 2001 Representative Assembly.

- h. Charters should not be granted for the purpose of home schooling, including providing services over the Internet to home schooled students.
- i. Charter schools should be nonsectarian in nature.
- j. Private schools should not be able to convert to charter school status. If state law allows such conversions, the chartering agency should ensure that the converted school is significantly different in student body, governance, and education program than its predecessor. This assurance should be especially vigorous in the case of schools with prior religious affiliation.
- k. Charters should be granted for a limited period, with five years being the norm.
- l. Charter schools should be monitored on a continuing basis and the charter should be subject to modification or revocation at any time if the children's or the public's interest is at stake.
- m. Charters should not be granted unless the chartering agency is satisfied that adequate startup resources will be available.
- n. Charter schools should secure insurance for liability, financial loss, and property loss. A school district should not be responsible for debts of a charter school, except for debts previously agreed upon in writing by both the district and the governing body of the charter school.
- o. School boards must be authorized to deny applications that do financial harm to the authorizing school districts.

Charter schools should be designed and operated in accordance with the following principles:

- a. Charter schools may have flexibility within the requirements of law dealing with curriculum, instruction, staffing, budget, internal organization, calendar, and schedule.
- b. Charter schools must meet the same requirements as mainstream public schools with regard to licensure/certification and other requirements of teachers and education employees, health and safety, public records and meetings, finance and auditing, student assessment, civil rights, and labor relations.
- c. Teachers and education support professionals should be considered public employees.
- d. Teachers and education support professionals should have the same constitutional and statutory rights as other public employees.
- e. Charter schools should be subject to the same public sector labor relations laws as mainstream public schools and charter school employees should have the same collective bargaining rights under law and local practice as their counterparts in mainstream public schools.
- f. Students should not be charged tuition or required to pay a fee to attend a charter school.
- g. Students should not be involuntarily assigned to attend a charter school.
- h. Charter schools should have some discretion in selecting or rejecting students if they are designed to serve a targeted student population. Students shall not be screened on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and/or gender identification, English-language proficiency, family income, athletic ability, special needs, parental involvement in school affairs, intellectual potential, academic achievement, or cost of educating the student. Indirect screening such as denying admission because of the cost of transportation of a student shall not be permitted.
- i. Charter schools should meet the needs of at-risk students and those students requiring special education services.
- j. Employment in a charter school should be voluntary. Employees in conversion charter schools should be afforded an opportunity to transfer to a comparable position at another mainstream public school.
- k. Charter schools should not disproportionately divert resources from mainstream public schools. Charter schools should receive the same amount of money as a comparable mix of students in a mainstream public school. Adequate funds must be available for capital expenditures such as buildings and equipment that do not come from the operating budget of the charter school or the host district. (1993, 2007)

A-32. Takeover of Public Schools or Public School Districts

The National Education Association believes that the locally elected school board should govern the school district to provide an educational program designed to meet the needs of all students in the district. School boards of public school districts undergoing a program improvement process should maintain their authority over school district business as duly elected officials of the school district.

The Association also believes that if a takeover of a public school or a public school district occurs, current collective bargaining agreements and due process rights must be maintained. Employees of these public schools and public school districts should remain bargaining unit members of local, state, and national affiliates.

The Association further believes that federal, state, and local support should be given to public schools and public school districts undergoing a program improvement process. Support should also be provided by local and state affiliates, as well as the Association.

The Association believes that if charter schools are created to replace public schools that have been taken over, they must follow all current laws regarding charter schools and comply with the Association's criteria for acceptable charter schools. (2006)

A-33. Federally or State-Mandated Choice/Parental Option Plans

The National Education Association believes that federally or state-mandated parental option or choice plans compromise free, equitable, universal, and quality public education for every student. Therefore, the Association opposes such federally or state-mandated choice or parental option plans.

The Association also believes that local districts, in partnership with state and federal governments, must provide a quality education for every student by securing sufficient funding to maintain and enhance excellence in each local public school district.

The Association supports alternative programs for specific purposes in the public schools. (1989, 2001)

A-34. School Restructuring

The National Education Association believes that school restructuring efforts must employ a democratic process that meaningfully involves local associations and other stakeholders in all decision making. Such efforts must –

- a. Adhere to collectively bargained labor agreements
- b. Comply with all appropriate school board policies
- c. Provide the funding necessary to implement and sustain the restructuring
- d. Weigh the consequences of restructuring on all students, education employees, the entire school system, and the community. (2006)

A-35. Media Utilization

The National Education Association believes that the broadcasting industry must serve the public interest and educational process. The Association encourages the creative and innovative use of media for improving instruction. It is essential that teachers or their designees have the right to record programs off the air and play them back on a delayed basis sufficient to meet the needs of effective teaching.

The Association also believes that the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), National Public Radio (NPR), and expanding cable television (CATV) should provide communication services for education. Federal regulations should guarantee the reservation of at least 20 percent of the channel capacity of CATV systems for public school access and other public purposes.

The Association urges its affiliates to become involved in the program development and utilization of each of these media resources. The Association also urges continued local, state, and federal financial support for public broadcasting. (1981, 1996)

A-36. Community Education

The National Education Association believes that the concept of community education encourages schools to provide leadership in solving community problems.

The Association urges its state affiliates to become involved in the promotion, expansion, and implementation of community education programs in their states. (1977, 1986)

A-37. Rural Education

The National Education Association supports a strong rural educational system and the preservation of the community infrastructure in rural America.

The Association believes that rural areas contain a range of conditions that make them unique and supports the development of programs that recognize and deal with rural needs. The Association recognizes that equal per pupil funding may not provide equal education. The Association also believes in equal educational programs and the equitable funding of such programs, and that neither should be dependent on geographical location, density of population, or consolidation of rural schools. (1976, 1997)

A-38. Urban Development

The National Education Association believes that professional organizations should be concerned about the quality of life in our cities and should advocate policies or programs concerning land use, zoning, urban development, economic growth, plant closings, mass transit, rent subsidy, or other issues vitally affecting patterns of community development and subsequently the quality of education in our schools. (1974, 1988)

A-39. U.S. Federal Schools

The National Education Association believes that all federal schools, except those under the control of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, should come under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Education.

The Association also believes that all dependents of U.S. government employees in Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools should be afforded the opportunity to attend such schools and opposes any attempt by Congress to privatize these federal schools. (1980, 2002)

B. ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS

LIFELONG LEARNING

B-1. Early Childhood Education[†]

The National Education Association supports early childhood education programs in the public schools for children from birth through age eight. The Association also supports a high-quality program of transition from home and/or preschool to the public kindergarten or first grade. This transition should include communication and cooperation among parents/guardians, the preschool staff, and the public school staff. The Association believes that such programs should be held in facilities that are appropriate to the developmental needs of these children. The Association also believes that early childhood education programs should include a full continuum of services for parents/guardians and children, including child-care, child development, developmentally appropriate and diversity-based curricula, special education, and appropriate bias-free screening devices. Early childhood education programs also must be sensitive to and meet the physical, social, mental, and emotional health and nutritional needs of children.

The Association further believes that early childhood education programs should maintain small group size with appropriate staff/child ratios for each age level. These programs must be staffed by the appropriate ratio of teachers, administrators, and support staff who are prepared in early childhood education and child development. When two half-day sessions are taught by one teacher, the total class load for both sessions should not exceed the number of students in a first-grade class. Males should be encouraged and recruited to enter and be actively involved in early childhood education. Preparation programs for staff should lead to credentials consistent with the educational standards in each state.

[†] See the *NEA Handbook* for the Policy Statement on Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten adopted by the 2003 Representative Assembly.

The Association recognizes the importance of parental involvement in a child's development. The Association further supports the provision of training programs that prepare parents/guardians to take an active role in the child's education. These programs should provide an awareness of the expectations that will be placed on the child as well as familiarization with new policies and procedures that the child will experience in the new environment.

The Association also believes that federal legislation should be enacted to assist in organizing the implementation of fully funded early childhood education programs offered through the public schools. These programs must be available to all children on an equal basis and should include mandatory kindergarten with compulsory attendance.

The Association supports regulations requiring children starting kindergarten to have reached age five at the beginning of a kindergarten program.

The Association advocates the establishment of fully funded early childhood special education programs. These programs and necessary services should be readily accessible for children with disabilities and staffed by certified/licensed teachers, qualified support staff, and therapists. (1975, 2003)

B-2. Independent Reading Skills

The National Education Association believes that it is critical that students become independent readers to succeed in school and life. Reading instruction, with appropriate intervention, especially in the early grades, is essential for learning in all content areas and for achieving high standards. Teachers at all levels should be provided adequate resources, including a fully funded and staffed school library media center, and encouraged to use their expertise to address the diverse needs of students.

The Association also believes that teachers' efforts to value and promote reading should be supported by parents/guardians, school library media specialists, other education employees, and communities. (1998, 2005)

B-3. Middle School and Junior High School Programs

The National Education Association recognizes the academic, personal, and special needs of the early adolescent or middle school learner.

The Association encourages development of a curriculum that establishes realistic academic challenges that include character development, career exploration, and self-awareness that foster positive self-esteem.

The Association also encourages the development of guidance and counseling programs that stimulate parental and community involvement, and promote health services. (1976, 2005)

B-4. Color Vision Deficient Students

The National Education Association believes that the needs of all students, including color vision deficient students, must be met. All educational materials that use color coding for referencing information should be accompanied by an alternate method of identifying these items of information such as numbering or labeling the names of each color.

The Association encourages preservice preparation and staff development for education employees that present strategies for working with color vision deficient students. Such training should also address sensitizing instructional staff to the needs of color vision deficient students. (2004, 2005)

B-5. High School Diploma/Equivalency

The National Education Association supports the concept of a high school education for all and believes that every student should earn a high school diploma or its equivalent. The Association also believes in the value of academic preparation, school attendance, and social interaction for meeting the requirements of high school graduation.

The Association further believes that high school equivalency testing can be misused and can have a negative impact on secondary education. The Association recognizes that in some instances the use of high school equivalency tests is acceptable when the best interests of the students are served.

The Association believes that any state or district plan to use equivalency testing as the basis for qualification for a high school diploma should be developed cooperatively by classroom teachers, administrators, and governing boards. The plan should include provisions for recommendations from the local school faculty. Recommendations should be based, at a minimum, upon achievement record, ability, and age; and should be developmentally appropriate for the student. (1976, 1995)

B-6. Adult Education

The National Education Association supports adult education programs that provide lifelong educational and career opportunities. The Association recognizes the importance of high school completion, English language acquisition, parenting education, career training, and other adult education programs that provide students with an opportunity to become productive, effective, and responsible parents, citizens, and community members. (2006)

B-7. Higher Education

The National Education Association supports higher education as an essential part of the education process. The Association believes that postsecondary education serves an invaluable function for intellectual development, research and scholarship, career preparation, and preparation for life.

The Association also supports access to postsecondary programs for all qualified students without regard to age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, race, military registration status, or ability to pay. The Association also believes that postsecondary institutions should not penalize degree-holding students who return to upgrade or develop new skills.

The Association further supports fully funded, guaranteed student loan and grant programs, including fully funded health care insurance. Guaranteed loans should be made available for all students. Criteria for grants should include the total financial situation of the family, other family members currently enrolled in institutions of higher education, and parents'/guardians' ability to contribute financially.

The Association further believes that clear admission and graduation standards, careful student counseling, tutorial and other support services, the right to complete coursework during or after the quarter/semester missed due to documented extended illness, active participation of students in their own learning, and a thoughtfully articulated curriculum can significantly help increase the number of students successfully completing their degrees.

The Association believes that all courses must be offered with sufficient frequency and with a sufficient number of sections to enable students to graduate within the time prescribed for each program. (1980, 2002)

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

B-8. Class Size

The National Education Association believes that excellence in the classroom can best be attained by small class size.

The Association also believes in an optimum class size of fifteen students in regular programs and a proportionately lower number in programs for students with exceptional needs. Class size maximums must be based on the type of students, subject area content, physical facilities, and other criteria. Weighted class size formulas should be implemented to reflect the inclusion of exceptional students. State departments of education should collect and report class size data that reflect the class size experienced by most students. (1982, 1997)

B-9. Diversity

The National Education Association believes that a diverse society enriches all individuals. Similarities and differences among race, ethnicity, color, national origin, language, geographic location, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, physical ability, size, occupation, and marital, parental, or economic status form the fabric of a society.

The Association also believes that education should foster the values of appreciation and acceptance of the various qualities that pertain to people as individuals and as members of diverse populations.

The Association further believes in the importance of observances, programs, and curricula that accurately portray and recognize the roles, contributions, cultures, and history of these diverse groups and individuals.

The Association encourages affiliates and members to become part of programs and observances that may include cultural and heritage celebrations and/or history months. (1995, 2002)

B-10. Racial Diversity Within Student Populations

The National Education Association believes that a racially diverse student population is essential for all elementary/secondary schools, colleges, and universities to promote racial acceptance, improve academic performance, and foster a robust exchange of ideas. The Association also believes that a racially diverse student population may not be achieved or maintained in all cases simply by ending discriminatory practices and treating all students equally regardless of race.

The Association further believes that, to achieve or maintain racial diversity, it may be necessary for elementary/secondary schools, colleges, and universities to take race into account in making decisions as to student admissions, assignments, and/or transfers. (1999)

B-11. Racism, Sexism, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identification Discrimination

The National Education Association believes in the equality of all individuals. Discrimination and stereotyping based on such factors as race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, ethnicity, immigration status, occupation, and religion must be eliminated.

The Association also believes that these factors should not affect the legal rights and obligations of the partners in a legally recognized domestic partnership, civil union, or marriage in regard to matters involving the other partner, such as medical decisions, taxes, inheritance, adoption, and immigration.

The Association further believes that plans, activities, and programs for education employees, students, parents/guardians, and the community should be developed to identify and eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in all educational settings. Such plans, activities, and programs must—

- a. Increase respect, understanding, acceptance, and sensitivity toward individuals and groups in a diverse society composed of such groups as American Indians/Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders, Blacks, Hispanics, women, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered persons, and people with disabilities
- b. Eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in curricula, textbooks, resource and instructional materials, activities, etc.
- c. Foster the dissemination and use of nondiscriminatory and nonstereotypical language, resources, practices, and activities
- d. Eliminate institutional discrimination
- e. Integrate an accurate portrayal of the roles and contributions of all groups throughout history across curricula, particularly groups that have been underrepresented historically
- f. Identify how prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination have limited the roles and contributions of individuals and groups, and how these limitations have challenged and continue to challenge our society
- g. Eliminate subtle practices that favor the education of one student over another on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, ethnicity, or religion
- h. Encourage all members of the educational community to examine assumptions and prejudices, including, but not limited to, racism, sexism, and homophobia, that might limit the opportunities and growth of students and education employees
- i. Offer positive and diverse role models in our society, including the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of diverse education employees in our public schools
- j. Coordinate with organizations and concerned agencies that promote the contributions, heritage, culture, history, and special health and care needs of diverse population groups
- k. Promote a safe and inclusive environment for all.

The Association encourages its affiliates to develop and implement training programs on these matters. (1996, 2006)

B-12. American Indian/Alaska Native Education

The National Education Association recognizes that the complex and diverse needs of American Indian/Alaska Native children require the direct involvement of parents/guardians, Native educators, tribal leaders, and other Native groups in developing programs that preserve the rich heritage of their cultures.

The Association believes that funding for American Indian/Alaska Native education must provide for improvements. The Association supports the movement toward self-determination by American Indians/Alaska Natives provided that such programs are voluntary. Any termination of federal support as either a direct or an indirect result of efforts to extend self-determination is opposed.

The Association also believes in efforts that provide for—

- a. Involvement and control of the education of American Indian/Alaska Native students by their parents/guardians, communities, and educators
- b. Opportunities for higher education for all American Indian/Alaska Native students through direct governmental assistance in graduate and undergraduate programs
- c. Involvement of American Indians/Alaska Natives in lobbying efforts for federal programs
- d. Protection and maintenance of the integrity of American Indian/Alaska Native families and their tribal cultures so that, if a child has to be removed from his or her home, placement should be determined by the child's tribe
- e. Recognition of American Indian/Alaska Native educators as role models
- f. Involvement of American Indians/Alaska Natives in professional development programs dealing with cultural pluralism and Native values
- g. American Indian/Alaska Native involvement in developing multicultural learning centers at higher education institutions
- h. English proficiency programs that are designed to meet the language needs of American Indian/Alaska Native students
- i. Instruction in treaty rights and traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering practices by American Indians/Alaska Natives
- j. Assistance to affiliates in meeting the educational needs of American Indian/Alaska Native students
- k. Coordination with American Indian/Alaska Native organizations and concerned agencies that promote the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of American Indian/Alaska Native peoples
- l. Dissemination of information and programs that include the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of American Indians/Alaska Natives
- m. Control of Native lands by American Indians/Alaska Natives. (1976, 2000)

B-13. Hispanic Education

The National Education Association recognizes that the complex and diverse needs of Hispanic children require the direct involvement of Hispanic educators, parents/guardians, and community leaders in developing programs that meet the cultural, language, and learning characteristics of these children.

The Association believes in efforts that provide for—

- a. Programs establishing appropriate educational opportunities for Hispanic students
- b. Grants and scholarships for higher education that will facilitate the recruitment, entry, and retention of Hispanics
- c. Recognition of Hispanic educators as role models
- d. Hiring and promotion of Hispanic educators at all levels of the education profession
- e. The recruitment, training, and employment of bilingual teachers, counselors, and other professional and support staff to meet the needs of Hispanic students
- f. English proficiency programs that are designed to meet the language needs of Hispanic students

- g. Dissemination of information and programs that include the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of Hispanics.

The responsibility for developing and implementing programs for Hispanic children should be realized by state and local agencies, regardless of the availability of federal funds. (1972, 2000)

B-14. Asian and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Education

The National Education Association recognizes that the complex and diverse needs of Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander children require the direct involvement of Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander educators, parents/guardians, and community leaders in the development of programs that preserve the rich heritage of their cultures.

The Association believes in efforts that provide for the—

- a. Preservice and continuing education of teachers
- b. Development of curriculum and instructional materials and programs, including English proficiency programs that are designed to meet the language needs of Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students
- c. Education of Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander adult refugees
- d. Dissemination of programs and information that include the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders
- e. Recognition of Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander educators as role models.

The Association encourages opportunities to preserve, promote, and perpetuate Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander heritage and culture. (1979, 2007)

B-15. Black American Education

The National Education Association recognizes that the complex and diverse needs of Black American children require the direct involvement of Black American educators, parents/guardians, community leaders, and groups to assure the development of adequate and equal educational programs.

The Association believes that the infusion of Black studies and/or Afrocentric curricula into the instructional program acknowledges the contributions of African Americans to history and Africa as an integral part of world history. The Association also believes that these curricula must show a correlation among social, historical, political, and economic developments and events regarding Africa, African-Americans, Europeans, and their descendants worldwide.

The Association further believes in efforts that provide for—

- a. The preservation of Black heritage and culture
- b. Funding of scholarships to facilitate the entry of Black students into the teaching profession
- c. Recognition of Black educators as role models
- d. Recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion of Black educators, especially Black males at all levels of the education profession
- e. Involvement of Black educators in developing educational materials used in classroom instruction
- f. English proficiency programs in the regular instructional process for those Black students experiencing difficulty with standard English
- g. Programs that address the alarming dropout rate among Black male students and the disproportionate teen pregnancy rate among Black female students and encourage continued education, thereby increasing their participation in the work force
- h. Development of athletic programs that promote educational excellence, not just athletic power
- i. Opposition to the resegregation of the public schools through special classes
- j. Dissemination of information and programs that include the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of Black Americans. (1981, 2000)

B-16. Discriminatory Academic Tracking

The National Education Association believes that the use of discriminatory academic tracking based on economic status, ethnicity, race, or gender must be eliminated in all public school settings. The Association urges its affiliates to oppose these practices. (1988, 2005)

B-17. Equal Opportunities Through Mathematics and Science Education

The National Education Association believes that mathematics and science education provide women and minorities access to equal opportunities and equitable treatment for employment in mathematics and science-related careers.

The Association supports the development and maintenance of gender-free and culturally unbiased mathematics and science programs. The Association encourages the recruitment of females and minorities to enroll and participate actively in mathematics and science courses and/or to become professionals in those fields. (1992, 1999)

B-18. Left-Handed Students

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

The Association strongly recommends preservice preparation and staff development for education employees that present strategies for handwriting instruction to left-handed students. Such training should also address sensitizing instructional staff to the needs of left-handed students. (1979, 2001)

B-19. Student Peer Mentoring Programs

The National Education Association supports student peer mentoring programs that provide incoming students the opportunity to make a smooth transition to new schools. The Association believes that student peer mentoring programs should be supervised by appropriate staff and/or administration. Such programs should be student-based and ongoing. (2004)

B-20. Education of Refugee and Undocumented Children and Children of Undocumented Immigrants

The National Education Association believes that, regardless of the immigration status of students or their parents, every student has the right to a free public education in an environment free from harassment. The Association supports access to higher education for undocumented students and access to financial aid and in-state tuition to state colleges and universities in the state where they reside. The Association also believes that the determination of legal residency status is the responsibility of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, not of educational systems or their employees.

The Association further believes that students who have resided in the United States for at least five years at the time of high school graduation should be granted amnesty by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, granted legal residency status, and allowed to apply for U.S. citizenship, and that legalization not be used as an incentive for or be dependent on military service. (1980, 2005)

B-21. Education of Migrants

The National Education Association believes that migrant workers and their children are entitled to educational opportunities that address their diverse and unique educational needs.

The Association advocates the implementation of bilingual/bicultural and remedial instructional programs that address the individual instructional needs of migrant students in the United States, regardless of the availability of federal and state funds to support such programs. (1975, 1996)

B-22. Communication Between Educators and Non-English Speaking Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers

The National Education Association believes that meaningful communication between educators and parents, guardians, and caregivers who lack English language proficiency is necessary to assist in their

children's development and the family's integration into United States society. Such communication is especially important when communicating educational plans for students with special needs.

The Association also believes that school districts should compile a directory of individuals fluent in specific languages who could be available to translate when necessary.

The Association further believes that educators who fulfill the role of translator beyond the scope of their normal duties should be compensated at their equivalent hourly rate. (2005)

B-23. Equity for Incarcerated Persons

The National Education Association believes that incarcerated persons, regardless of gender or age, are entitled to equal access to medical and mental health services as well as educational, recreational, and rehabilitative programs within all correctional systems.

The Association also believes that when a student is incarcerated and has been identified as having a disability by standards of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or a 504 plan, the plans for the student should be implemented during the duration of the incarceration. (1990, 2007)

SPECIFIC PROGRAMS FOR INDIVIDUALS

B-24. Alternative Programs for At-Risk and/or Students With Special Needs

The National Education Association recognizes that there must be increased development and maintenance of alternative programs to meet the needs of at-risk and/or students with special needs, pre-K through adult. The Association recommends early access to intervening services and appropriate identification and placement of these students. Teachers, related service providers, and administrators should receive necessary training in diagnostic processes and alternative methods of teaching and learning, including culturally responsive teaching practices. Appropriate training should also be provided to education support professionals. In addition, parents/guardians, school security personnel, and other school community members should be encouraged to acquire the training to effectively meet the needs of these students.

Programs should include appropriate monitoring of student progress and emphasize a broad range of approaches for addressing students' differing behavioral patterns, interests, needs, cultural backgrounds, and learning styles. These programs must be evaluated on stated objectives and standards. Teachers in these programs must have a major role in designing the objectives and evaluations and working with appropriate school and community personnel to execute these objectives and evaluations.

The Association believes that at-risk students who are assigned to an alternative placement due to discipline issues should be required to exhibit regular attendance and adequate academic and behavioral progress, in accordance with planned interventions for the student's individual needs, prior to their return to a regular educational setting.

The Association also believes that the rights of students who are protected under the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Americans with Disabilities Act must be preserved.

The Association urges its affiliates to seek adequate compensation, planning time, materials, and facilities for all education professionals involved in these programs.

The Association supports the efforts of its affiliates to negotiate and legislate for the training of teachers seeking additional certification and hiring of an increased number of teachers with education in special areas.

In higher education settings, faculty and education support professionals who are working with students with special needs should be provided with appropriate resources to accommodate these students' special requirements.

The Association encourages its state affiliates to seek legislation that would require any person offering services to remediate, correct, or ameliorate reading, speech, language, behavioral, emotional, or learning disabilities, or related problems to be licensed under regulations of each state's department of public instruction or other appropriate agency. (1977, 2007)

B-25. Gifted, Talented, and Creative Students

The National Education Association believes that there must be educational programs and services for gifted, talented, and creative students, and supports federal and state funding for the education of these students. The Association also believes that there must be well-developed criteria and guidelines for identifying and teaching these students. Such identification must be culturally sensitive and must not discriminate on any basis other than the exceptionality being identified.

The Association further believes that professional development programs in gifted and talented education must be provided for all appropriate education employees. This professional development should be culturally responsive.

The Association urges its affiliates to promote the development and implementation of such services to gifted children and support for all educators working with this special needs population. (1980, 2007)

B-26. Educational Programs for English Language Learners

The National Education Association believes that English Language Learners (ELLs) must have programs available to them that address their unique needs and that provide equal opportunity to all students, regardless of their primary language. Programs for ELL students should emphasize English proficiency while concurrently providing meaningful instruction in all other curriculum areas. In planning a comprehensive program for ELL students, age as well as academic needs must be considered.

The Association also believes that ELL students should be placed in bilingual education programs to receive instruction in their native language from qualified teachers until such time as English proficiency is achieved. If no bilingual programs are available, these students should be taught in language acquisition and development programs designed to meet their specific needs. Students should be in classes that are limited in size; methods such as weighted formulas should be used; and additional staffing, modified scheduling, and/or curriculum design to accommodate the demands of each ELL student should be provided. Students should not be enrolled in special education classes solely because of linguistic differences.

The Association further believes that model bilingual education programs in which language minority students demonstrate an increase in English language acquisition and success throughout the grade levels should be promoted and supported at the federal, state, and local levels. The Association advocates full funding of all instructional materials, resources, and programs for ELL students as well as professional development programs for education employees who work with these students. The school district or other appropriate agency should provide released time for the training of teachers who instruct ELL students.

Educators, through a bargaining or other bilateral decision-making process, must be fully involved in the development and implementation of programs serving ELL students, including the assignment of teachers and the terms and conditions of their employment. Teachers should be compensated at the teacher's hourly rate of pay for any additional time spent in training. They should also be reimbursed for the cost of tuition, textbooks, and travel incurred in such training.

The Association values bilingual and multilingual competence and supports programs that assist individuals in attaining and maintaining proficiency in their native language before and after they acquire proficiency in English. (1981, 2007)

B-27. Speakers of Nonstandard English

The National Education Association believes that students who enter school as speakers of nonstandard dialects are learners with unique needs, and these needs must be provided for in the overall program in each local school district. The Association also believes that programs for these students must provide equal opportunity, should emphasize proficiency in standard English that provides them the opportunity to succeed in all aspects of daily life, and should concurrently provide meaningful instruction in all other curriculum areas. The Association advocates programs that begin with the linguistic proficiencies demonstrated by entering students, and build a program from that starting point.

The Association further believes that, in all cases, the students' linguistic and/or cultural backgrounds must be respected within the school setting. Students who speak nonstandard dialects must not be enrolled in special education classes solely because of linguistic differences. (1997)

B-28. Education for All Students with Disabilities

The National Education Association supports a free, appropriate public education for all students with disabilities in a least restrictive environment, which is determined by maximum teacher and parent/guardian involvement. There must be a full continuum of placement options and services/delivery models available to students with disabilities. In order to implement federal special education legislation effectively, the Association recognizes that—

- a. A fully accessible educational environment, using appropriate instructional materials, support services, and pupil personnel services, must match the learning needs of both students with and students without disabilities.
- b. Student placement must be based on individual needs rather than on available space, funding, or local philosophy of a school district. Student placements must be examined on a regular basis to ensure appropriateness whereby all needed services and support will be provided and should not be made disproportionately by ethnicity or gender. Necessary building/staff modifications must be provided to facilitate such placement.
- c. General and special education teachers, pupil personnel and related service providers, and education support professionals who work with the student, and administrators, parents/guardians, and the student, as appropriate, should have input in the development of the individualized education program (IEP) and must have access to the IEP.
- d. General and special education teachers; pupil personnel and related service providers; education support professionals; and administrators, parents/guardians, and students, as appropriate, must share in implementing the IEP. Prior to implementation, all necessary educational materials, professional development, and supportive services must be provided.
- e. Students with physical disabilities and/or medical needs requiring nursing procedures must have their medical needs met by certified/professional school nurses.
- f. All impacted staff members must have an appeal procedure regarding the implementation of the IEP, especially in terms of student placement. The procedure must include the right to have the dissenting opinion recorded and attached to the IEP.
- g. Suspension and expulsion policies and practices used by local education agencies must be applied consistently to both students with and students without disabilities where misconduct is shown to be unrelated to either the disabling condition or to improper placement.
- h. A plan recognizing individual differences must be used in a systematic evaluation and reporting of program development.
- i. Limitations must be made in class size, case loads, and/or work load of teachers, nurses, speech and language specialists, and other designated instructional service specialists, using methods such as weighted formulas, modified scheduling, and/or curriculum design to accommodate the demands of each IEP.
- j. All teachers who serve students with disabilities must have scheduled access to resource personnel, instructional assistants, paraprofessionals, co-teachers, and special education teachers.
- k. The student's IEP should not be used as criteria for the evaluation of education employees.
- l. Communications must be maintained among all involved parties.
- m. Staff must not be reduced.
- n. All school personnel, including substitutes, must be adequately prepared for their roles, including addressing the identified individual needs of students, through appropriate licensing and/or ongoing professional development.
- o. Incentives for participation in professional development activities should, as mandated by law, be made available for education employees.
- p. Education employees, as mandated by law, must be appointed to local and state advisory bodies on special education.
- q. Education employees must be allowed to take part in the U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services on-site visits to states. Education employees should be invited to these meetings.
- r. Local affiliates and education employees must be recruited, trained, and involved in monitoring school system compliance with federal special education legislation.

- s. Adequate released time or funded additional time must be made available so that teachers can carry out the increased demands placed upon them by federal special education legislation.
- t. Collective bargaining and other means should be used to minimize the potentially severe impact on staff that results from the implementation of special education legislation.
- u. Benefits for staff working with students with disabilities must be negotiated through collective bargaining agreements and must be honored.
- v. Full funding must be provided by local, state, and federal governments.
- w. Students are better served if the person working with them is prepared to deal with their needs. Substitute employees should be made aware that the assignment offered is a special needs program. (1978, 2007)

B-29. Educational Programs for Adolescent Parents

The National Education Association believes that school districts must meet the educational needs of adolescent students who are parents or who are about to become parents. Such students should not be discriminated against or denied equal educational opportunities.

The Association recommends programs for these students that include—

- a. Flexible scheduling and attendance policies
- b. Appropriate guidance in continuing/alternative education programs and productive employment
- c. Career development skills
- d. Development of self-esteem
- e. Promotion of sound health practices regarding nutrition, substance abuse, exercise, family planning, and parenting skills
- f. On-site preschool and child care services
- g. Free transportation. (1987, 2005)

B-30. Homebound Instruction

The National Education Association believes that homebound students, those educated in the home because of individualized student needs determined by established local school procedures, must receive instruction that follows the regular curriculum. This instruction must be implemented, documented, monitored, and assessed by a licensed teacher. The Association also believes that credits earned through such homebound instruction should be accepted toward promotion and/or graduation requirements. (1988, 2002)

B-31. Correspondence Programs

The National Education Association believes that state and local school correspondence programs that are funded by state or local school districts must be implemented by licensed educators. These alternative programs must use a curriculum approved by the state education agency. A student's progress must be documented and monitored by a licensed educator. Such approved courses must be transferable as graduation requirements for the participant. (1988, 1993)

B-32. Youth and Adult Training Programs

The National Education Association believes that public schools should be involved as an equal partner with government, labor, business, agriculture, and community-based groups in youth and adult employment and training programs. The Association also believes that these programs should supplement, and not supplant, the vocational, career, and technical education programs provided in public schools.

The Association further believes that the use of funds for and the duration of these programs should be flexible in order to accommodate the differing learning needs of students. The amount of funding should be predictable in order to facilitate year-to-year planning. These programs should provide opportunities for women, persons with disabilities, and ethnic minorities in nontraditional occupations. (1980, 2006)

B-33. Education Through Service Learning and Community Service

The National Education Association believes that learning through voluntary community service should be encouraged as an integral part of a student's education. Participation by students in community service and service learning programs may be required for high school graduation or made available for elective credit. The Association also believes that school districts should work with community groups to provide students with the opportunity to participate in such programs.

Education employees who supervise students involved in these programs should be given appropriate compensation, planning time, program support, recognition, and time to evaluate the service and learning goals. Participation of education employees in such programs should be on a voluntary basis. (1990, 1997)

CURRICULUM CONTENT

B-34. Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps

The National Education Association believes that the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps programs, which exist within the public schools, must meet all local and state educational standards and policies, including the employment of fully licensed teaching personnel. Such programs should be subject to and conform to the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement. Any programs that currently do not meet said conditions should be brought into compliance. (1997, 1998)

B-35. Multicultural Education

The National Education Association believes that multiculturalism is the process of valuing differences and incorporating the values identified into behavior for the goal of achieving the common good. The Association also believes that multicultural education is a way of helping students perceive the cultural diversity of the United States so that they may develop pride in their own cultural legacy and awaken to the ideals embodied in the cultures of their neighbors. Multicultural education should promote the recognition of individual and group differences and similarities in order to reduce racism, homophobia, ethnic and all other forms of prejudice, and discrimination and to develop self-esteem as well as respect for others.

The Association further believes that multicultural education encompasses at least three things: an idea or concept, an educational reform movement, and a process. As an idea or concept, multicultural education assumes that all students can learn. As an educational reform movement, multicultural education seeks to develop an entire school environment that is inclusive of cultural considerations (e.g., curriculum, instructional materials, learning and testing, respect for cultural differences, etc.). As a process, the development of a multicultural school environment is ever evolving and ongoing. (1981, 2001)

B-36. Global Education

The National Education Association believes that global education increases respect for and awareness of the earth and its peoples. Global education imparts information about cultures and an appreciation of our interdependency in sharing the world's resources to meet mutual human needs.

The Association also believes that curriculum and instruction about regional and international conflicts must present a balanced view, include historical context, and demonstrate relevancy and sensitivity to all people. The achievement of this goal requires the mastery of global communication and development of an appreciation of the common humanity shared by all peoples.

The Association further believes that the goal of appreciation for and harmony with our global neighbors depends on a national commitment to strengthening the capability of the educational system to teach American children about the world. (1995, 1998)

B-37. Multiple World Language Education

The National Education Association believes that the acquisition of multiple world languages is a vital part of the educational experience and that those who leave school speaking more than one language will be more competitive in the global marketplace. The Association also believes that the cumulative hours of exposure to the target language during a student's educational career is the most important determinant leading to fluency and proficiency in a second language. Students should have the opportunity to acquire age-appropriate world language skills from an integrated curriculum throughout the pre-K through higher education experience.

The Association supports the maintenance of current programs and the further encouragement and development of world language instruction and international studies at all educational levels.

The Association recognizes the need for teacher preparation programs for world language teachers and supports teacher and student exchange programs. (1981, 2006)

B-38. School-to-Work/Career Education

The National Education Association believes that a goal of public education is to provide all individuals, preschool through adult, opportunities to become effective, responsible, productive citizens. To achieve this goal, career education must be interwoven into the total educational system and should include programs in gender-free career awareness and exploration to aid students in career course selection. These programs should be combined with cooperative efforts on the part of educators and leaders from labor, business, and the community to provide school-to-work experiences that meet rigorous academic standards and are accorded the same level of accreditation as other education programs.

The Association also believes that educational programs for all students should offer a variety of exploratory career experiences that are developmentally appropriate. In addition, these programs should enhance self-esteem and assure equal opportunity for career development and equal access to college and university admissions. (1976, 2001)

B-39. Vocational, Career, and Technical Education

The National Education Association believes that preparation of students for vocational, career, and technical jobs should be the responsibility of secondary, adult, and higher education in collaboration with labor and business. Educational programs that ensure equal opportunity for occupational development and encourage students to consider nontraditional vocations should be developed for all students at all levels. Vocational, career, and technical education should provide a comprehensive program of lifelong learning for the training, advancement, and promotion of all students.

The Association supports vocational, career, and technical education as a major component of education and advocates that every student have the opportunity to enroll in such classes without restrictions. To be effective, vocational, career, and technical education should be preceded by career awareness and exploration programs. These vocational, career, and technical education courses should be coordinated and integrated with traditionally academic courses. These integrated programs should be combined, when appropriate, with cooperative efforts on the part of educators and industrial and business leaders to provide school-to-work experiences for students. Organized vocational, career, and technical education programs offer a sequence of courses that are directly related to the preparation of individuals in paid or unpaid employment in current and emerging occupations. Such programs shall include competency-based applied learning that contributes to an individual's academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning and problem-solving skills, work attitudes, interpersonal and collaborative skills, general employability skills, and the occupational-specific skills necessary for economic independence as a productive and contributing member of society.

The Association also believes that adequate resources must be provided for educators to maintain, enhance, and expand quality vocational, career, and technical education programs; to procure up-to-date equipment and materials for those programs; and to prepare students for a highly technical work environment. The Association further believes that the involvement of education employees, private sector employment and training program personnel, and the labor and business communities is essential to the development of quality vocational, career, and technical education programs. The Association

believes such resources should be substantially increased, not merely redistributed among states or other federal initiatives. (1976, 2006)

B-40. Vocational, Career, and Technical Student Organizations

The National Education Association believes that vocational, career, and technical student organizations are an integral component of a quality vocational, career, and technical education program. Vocational, career, and technical student organizations provide opportunities for leadership development, career preparation, and community involvement for secondary school students. Active participation in a vocational, career, and technical student organization at the national, state, and local levels encourages young men and women to become better prepared for the multiple adult roles of wage earner, community leader, and family member. (2001, 2002)

B-41. Fine Arts Education

The National Education Association believes that artistic expression is basic to an individual's intellectual, aesthetic, and emotional development. The Association also believes that fine arts transcend cultural barriers, foster multicultural understanding, and enhance critical thinking skills. The Association therefore believes that pre-K through adult education curricula must include a balanced, comprehensive, and sequential program of fine arts instruction for all students taught by a licensed specialist in a facility or room designed and equipped for that purpose. Resources must be provided to maintain and upgrade materials and provide for emerging technologies.

The Association urges its state affiliates to become involved in the promotion, expansion, and implementation of an academic fine arts program in curricula. (1980, 2007)

B-42. Physical Education

The National Education Association 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 daily in grades pre-k through adult in or on facilities designed for that purpose. Physical education programs and curricula should follow national standards as set forth by the appropriate professional organizations; should be developmentally appropriate, sequential, cooperative in nature, and culturally sensitive; and should—

- a. Emphasize physical activity, fitness, exercise, and good health; skills of sports, games, dance, and basic movement; and related concepts and knowledge
- b. Assess students, including physical fitness testing, as a culmination of preparatory activities
- c. Provide for the special needs of students with low fitness, physical disabilities, or learning disabilities
- d. Be taught by teachers licensed in physical education
- e. Be taught with the same student/teacher ratio as other grade-level class sizes. (1991, 2004)

B-43. Family and Consumer Sciences Education

The National Education Association believes that family and consumer sciences education programs prepare students to manage, with reason and creativity, the challenges across the life span of living and working in a global society.

The Association also believes that family and consumer sciences education programs should—

- a. Follow national standards as set forth by the appropriate professional organizations
- b. Be developmentally appropriate
- c. Be cooperative in nature and culturally sensitive. (2005)

B-44. Family Life Education

The National Education Association recognizes the myriad family structures in society and the impact of these family structures and other close personal relationships on the quality of individual lives and

upon society. The Association also recognizes the importance of education in the maintenance and promotion of stable, functional, healthy families and the emotional, physical, and mental health of people within these families.

The Association believes that programs should be established for both students and parents/guardians and supported at all educational levels to promote—

- a. The development of self-esteem and positive self-concept in individuals of all ages in various family roles
- b. Learning and practicing positive interpersonal communication skills and conflict resolution
- c. Education in human growth and development
- d. Positive parenting techniques that include strategies to deal effectively with violent behavior
- e. An understanding of societal issues and problems related to children, spouses, parents/guardians, domestic partners, older generation family members, and other family members.

The Association also believes that education in these areas must be presented as part of an antibiased, culturally sensitive program. (1994, 2001)

B-45. Environmental Education

The National Education Association believes that the environment must be protected. The Association urges the establishment and maintenance of federal wilderness areas, recreational areas, refuge areas, and designated local green areas. The Association supports educational programs that promote—

- a. The concept of the interdependence of humanity and nature
- b. An awareness of the effects of past, present, and future population growth patterns on world civilization, human survival, and the environment
- c. The protection of endangered, threatened, and rare species
- d. The protection of the Earth's finite resources
- e. Solutions to environmental problems such as nonrenewable resource depletion, pollution, global warming, ozone depletion, and acid precipitation and deposition
- f. The use of reusable and recyclable products and discourage the use of disposable products
- g. An understanding of energy, alternative energy sources, and energy conservation
- h. The use of disposal methods that do not contaminate the environment
- i. The recognition of and participation in such activities as Earth Day, Arbor Day, and Energy Education Day
- j. The understanding of the value of the world's ecosystems.

The Association also urges its affiliates to support environmental programs in school systems and educational institutions and supports legislation and local policies that ensure a safe and healthy environment. (1973, 2006)

B-46. Science Education

The National Education Association believes that the content in science education must be based on empirical evidence derived from the scientific method and must include the processes of that method. The Association also believes that content and curriculum must be based on the National Science Education Standards of the National Research Council (NRC) and/or the Benchmarks for Science Literacy of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). (2005, 2006)

B-47. Sex Education

The National Education Association believes that the developing child's sexuality is continually and inevitably influenced by daily contacts, including experiences in the school environment. The Association recognizes that sensitive sex education can be a positive force in promoting physical, mental, emotional, and social health and that the public school must assume an increasingly important role in providing the instruction. Teachers and health professionals must be qualified to teach in this area and must be legally protected from censorship and lawsuits.

The Association urges that formal sex education should include parent/guardian orientation and be planned and implemented with careful attention to developmental needs, appropriateness to community settings and values, and respect for individual differences.

The Association also believes that to facilitate the realization of human potential, it is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information and knowledge about sexuality and encourages affiliates and members to support appropriately established sex education programs. Such programs should include information on sexual abstinence, birth control and family planning, diversity of culture, diversity of sexual orientation and gender identification, parenting skills, prenatal care, sexually transmitted diseases, incest, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, homophobia, the effects of substance abuse during pregnancy, and problems associated with and resulting from pre-teen and teenage pregnancies. (1969, 2002)

B-48. HIV/AIDS Education

The National Education Association believes that educational institutions should establish comprehensive human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) education programs as an integral part of the school curriculum. HIV/AIDS education 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. Instruction in decision-making skills to assist students in correlating health information and personal behavior is essential.

The Association also believes that proper implementation of these programs requires education employee training and input. These programs should be presented by properly licensed/trained personnel and should be planned with the input of parents/guardians and other community representatives. (1987, 2000)

B-49. Lifesaving Techniques

The National Education Association 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 CPR and the proper use of defibrillators by licensed/trained personnel. (1982, 2007)

B-50. Democracy and Citizenship Education

The National Education Association believes that education about democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizens is essential for the survival of American democracy. The cornerstone of such education should be the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

The Association also believes that democratic ideals should be practiced as part of the total education process. The following concepts should be an integral part of the curriculum within public schools and other educational institutions:

- a. The dignity and worth of the individual
- b. Due process of law
- c. Rule of the majority tempered by respect for minority rights
- d. Individual responsibility
- e. Equal justice under the law
- f. Civil liberties as guarantors of individual rights
- g. One-person—one-vote
- h. Active citizen participation in all aspects of public affairs
- i. Freedom of religion, speech, the press, petition, and assembly.

The Association encourages teachers, lawyers, court personnel, and others to work together to develop appropriate materials, including information about the justice system and constitutional issues, in order to teach students to be responsible citizens. (1984, 2005)

B-51. Labor Movement Education

The National Education Association believes that the struggles of working men and women to establish unions and the influence of the labor movement on the growth of the United States should be an integral part of the curriculum in our schools.

The Association urges teachers, curriculum committees, and authors to include material that accurately presents the important contributions to our country's history and growth that have been provided by the unions involved in the labor movement and the individuals who led that movement. (1988, 1996)

B-52. Metric System

The National Education Association believes in the adoption of the International System of Units (SI metric system). The Association advocates that the SI system be taught at all educational levels. (1969, 1996)

B-53. Accurate United States and World Maps

The National Education Association believes that all visual representations using maps of the United States should depict all fifty states and Puerto Rico in their correct geographic location and relative size. The Association also believes that maps of the world should accurately depict national boundaries and names of countries. (1995, 2005)

B-54. Driver Education

The National Education Association believes that driver education courses that include both classroom and behind-the-wheel experiences should be part of the education of all students and should be taught by teachers licensed in driver education. (1980, 1998)

B-55. Education on Peace and International Understanding

The National Education Association believes that the United States and the other nations of the world should promote peace and international understanding. Educational strategies for teaching peace and justice issues should include the role of individuals, social movements, international and nongovernmental organizations in the peaceful resolution of conflict, and the use of fact finding and reconciliation processes to help with the healing of wounds caused by conflicts.

The Association also believes that educational materials should include activities dealing with peaceful resolution of conflict, the effects of nuclear weaponry and other weapons of mass destruction, strategies for disarmament, methods to achieve peace, historical examples of fact finding and reconciliation processes, and consideration of current situations where such processes could be of value. Such curricular materials should also cover major contributing factors to conflict, such as economic disparity, demographic variables, unequal political power and resource distribution, and the indebtedness of the developing world. (1982, 2005)

B-56. Genocide

The National Education Association deplors any act of genocide, which is the deliberate and systematic eradication of members of any group based on culture, ethnicity, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, and sexual orientation/gender identification. Acts of genocide must be acknowledged and taught in order to provide insight into how such inhumanity develops, prevent its occurrence, and preclude its recurrence. (1993, 2005)

B-57. The Holocaust

The National Education Association believes that a way to prevent events that have caused great human misery, such as the Holocaust, is to teach all students about the Holocaust not only as an historical

event but also as a means of providing insight into how inhumanity of this magnitude develops. The Holocaust must be taught so that never again can doubt of its occurrence be raised and never again can like action occur. (1981, 1993)

LEARNING ISSUES NOT RELATED TO SPECIFIC DISCIPLINES

B-58. Homework

The National Education Association supports the assignment of homework as one means of reinforcing and furthering classroom instruction and learning.

The Association believes that the type and the amount of homework assigned should be determined by the classroom teacher and be appropriate to a student's developmental level. (1985, 1990)

B-59. Discipline

The National Education Association believes that a safe and orderly environment in which students are treated with dignity will provide them with a positive learning experience. Effective disciplinary procedures enhance high expectations and quality instruction, thereby promoting self-control and responsible behavior in students while ensuring the right of all students to due process and an orderly learning environment.

The Association promotes the study, development, and funding of a variety of effective discipline procedures. The Association also believes that its local affiliates, in conjunction with other stakeholders, should develop guidelines for effective disciplinary techniques. The Association further believes that governing boards, in conjunction with local affiliates, parents/guardians, students, education employees, and community members, should develop policies and standards that provide the necessary administrative support to education employees for the maintenance of a positive, safe school environment.

The Association condemns the misuse of discipline as a means of excluding students from the school setting until other methods of behavioral intervention have been exhausted. This does not preclude the removal of the offender from the school setting to protect other students and education employees. Disruptive students should not be placed in vocational, technical, unified arts, or special education classes solely for the purpose of solving disciplinary problems. The Association believes that corporal punishment should not be used as a means of disciplining students. (1975, 2000)

B-60. Conflict Resolution Education

The National Education Association supports the adoption and use, at all educational levels, of proven conflict resolution strategies, materials, and activities by school districts, education employees, students, parents/guardians, and school security personnel as well as the school community to encourage nonviolent resolution of interpersonal and societal conflicts.

The Association recognizes the importance of students having the appropriate social skills necessary to participate in a democratic society. Programs that teach the skills of positive social interaction should be incorporated into academic programming. (1986, 2007)

B-61. Standards for Student Learning

The National Education Association believes in high standards that describe clear expectations for what students should know and be able to achieve. Throughout the implementation of content and performance standards, all students must be provided the instructional opportunities and learning conditions necessary to attain the standards. The Association supports the development and use of a variety of assessments that are appropriate to the standards. The Association also believes that there should be no financial incentives or consequences linked to the development, adoption, or implementation of national standards.

The Association further believes that state and local affiliates must participate in the planning, development, implementation, and refinement of standards, conditions, and assessments to ensure that—

- a. Students, parents/guardians, education employees, community members, and governmental officials are involved and share the accountability.
- b. Education employees are afforded released time and/or compensation in order to have opportunities to work with colleagues on a regular basis throughout the school year on how to teach and assess student proficiency in the standards.
- c. Full funding and resources are provided.
- d. Curriculum includes, but is not limited to, required standards. Standards are introduced into the curriculum at a rate that allows education employees opportunities to adapt their practice, work with each other, and pilot the work in a concerted fashion.
- e. Appropriate attention is given to each student's progress toward attaining the standards and to his or her needs and developmental level.
- f. Age appropriate placement, when used, includes appropriate interventions and supports designed to enhance skills in order to achieve grade level.
- g. Professional development is provided for all education employees to help align their practices to the standards.
- h. Education employees participate in the review and refinement of standards and assessments.
- i. Achievement gaps are eliminated. (1997, 2007)

B-62. Assessment of Student Learning

The National Education Association supports ongoing comprehensive assessment of student growth. A student's level of performance is best assessed with authentic measures directly linked to the lessons taught and materials used by teachers.

The Association believes that the primary purposes of assessment are to—

- a. Assist students and their parents/guardians in identifying the students' strengths and needs
- b. Encourage students to become lifelong learners
- c. Measure a program's effectiveness, communicate learning expectations, and provide a basis for determining instructional strategies
- d. Develop appropriate learning experiences for students.

The Association also believes that no one measure should be used to determine a student's performance. Teachers should utilize a variety of measures to accurately assess student growth. All methods of assessment shall provide the necessary accommodations, modifications, and exemptions, and be free of cultural, racial, and gender biases.

The Association further believes that classroom teachers must be involved in the development of assessment systems and are best qualified to determine the criteria for assessment of students and dissemination of results. Instruments used to communicate student progress must be accurate and meaningful to students, parents/guardians, and other stakeholders. (1981, 2007)

B-63. Standardized Testing of Students

The National Education Association believes that standardized tests and/or assessments should be used only to improve the quality of education and instruction for students. Standardized tests, whether norm-, criterion-, or standards-referenced, can validly assess only a limited range of student learning. Therefore, they should be only an adjunct or supplement to information obtained through school- and classroom-based assessment conducted by teachers for purposes of supporting and strengthening instruction as well as for summarizing and evaluating student learning. Standardized tests are most useful when designed by the educational professionals closest to the classroom and integrated with assessment information specific to local programs. Affiliates should advocate for, and states and test designers should employ, a variety of developmentally appropriate assessment techniques that allow for universal design, necessary accommodations, modifications, and exemptions and are bias-free, reliable, and valid. When a test and/or assessment is mandated at the local, state, or national level, it should be reviewed by a panel of appropriate subject area specialists and teachers to ascertain the relevance of the test to the subject area and be used only to evaluate a program's effectiveness toward meeting local, state, or national standards and/or goals.

The Association also believes that, in order for standardized achievement tests and/or assessments to support quality education—

- a. Standards must be prioritized to support effective curriculum, instruction, professional development, and assessment.
- b. Stakeholders must determine high priority standards. These standards must be clearly and thoroughly described so that the knowledge and skills students need to demonstrate are evident.
- c. Valid results of assessment of high-priority standards must be reported standard-by-standard for each student, school, and district.
- d. The breadth of the curriculum must be monitored to ensure that attention is given to all standards and subject areas, including those that are not assessed.
- e. Progress should be continually monitored to ensure that assessments are appropriate for the purposes for which they are intended.
- f. Students with special needs and/or limited English proficiency should have appropriate alternative options to standardized testing to measure individual progress and proficiencies.

The Association opposes the use of standardized tests and/or assessments when—

- a. Used as the criterion for the reduction or withholding of any educational funding
- b. Results are used to compare students, teachers, programs, schools, communities, and states
- c. Used as a single criterion for high-stakes decision making, such as graduation requirements or grade promotion
- d. The results lead to sanctions or other punitive actions
- e. Arbitrary standards are required
- f. They do not match the motor skills and/or academic developmental levels or language proficiency of the student
- g. Student scores are used to evaluate teachers or to determine compensation or employment status
- h. Programs are specifically designed to teach to the test
- i. Testing programs or tests limit or supplant instructional time
- j. Every student is required to be tested every year
- k. Students and parents/guardians are not provided with a complete report of the individual student's test results
- l. Time required to administer the test exceeds reasonable and appropriate limits for the age of the student
- m. Test preparation impedes or discourages learning, constrains the curriculum in ways that threaten the quality of teaching and learning for students, or limits and/or curtails future educational opportunities of learners
- n. Scores are used to track students
- o. Students with special needs or limited English proficiency are required to take the same tests as regular education students without modifications and/or accommodations.

The administration of a standardized test and/or assessment includes the responsibility to educate the stakeholders about the purpose of the test, the meaning of the test results, and the accurate interpretation of its conclusions. The Association further believes that students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, schools, and school districts should not be penalized for parents/guardians exercising their legal rights to exempt their children from standardized tests and/or assessments. The Association believes that states should be encouraged to make test items public after they are no longer used. (1978, 2007)

B-64. Student Assessment Programs in Higher Education

The National Education Association believes that student assessment programs in higher education, properly designed and administered, can be crucial tools for diagnosing student and institutional needs, improving instruction and counseling services, and designing long-range plans. The Association also believes that such student assessment programs in higher education should—

- a. Be designed institutionally rather than by the state
- b. Be planned, designed, implemented, and evaluated by faculty
- c. Be implemented in accordance with collective bargaining contracts where such contracts exist
- d. Be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the cultural, economic, and linguistic diversity among students

- e. Provide tests appropriate for students with identified learning disabilities
- f. Provide faculty with information to improve individual student learning styles and aptitude.

The Association supports student assessment programs in higher education only if—

- a. They are accompanied by adequate funding for remedial programs and advisement.
- b. Remedial programs are designed and provided to meet the deficiencies identified through assessment.
- c. Advisement is designed and provided to link the remediation of individual students to the completion of their degrees, certificates, or other appropriate courses of study.

The Association strongly opposes—

- a. The use of student assessment programs to deny access to, or exclude students from, educational opportunities
- b. The use of any single test to deny access to regular credit classes
- c. The use of student assessment programs for the purpose of evaluating faculty, academic programs, or institutions. (1995, 2001)

B-65. School Library Media Programs

The National Education Association believes every student must have a comprehensive school library media program within his or her educational setting. This program should include a certified/licensed school library media specialist and qualified education support professionals; a variety of print, nonprint, and electronic resources to supplement and complement curricular, personal, and leisure needs; relevant technology; and instruction in library research and information skills. The Association believes that school library media programs are negatively impacted if a media specialist does not have a substitute during his or her absence.

The Association encourages increased funding for school library media programs from federal, state, and local governments as well as other sources such as public and/or private partnerships. (1980, 2005)

B-66. Media

The National Education Association believes that the media has a significant effect on the education of the public. The Association also believes that the media has an obligation to provide full, constructive, balanced, and accurate presentations to the public. The Association further believes that the concentration of media ownership within a limited number of individuals or corporate entities is not conducive to the presentation of divergent views and opinions.

The Association supports the media's right to protect information and sources of information from mandated disclosures and search and seizure.

The Association believes that media should be accessible to all. Visual media should include closed captioning for the deaf/hard of hearing and read-along captions on children's commercial and educational programs. (1969, 2004)

B-67. Technology in the Educational Process

The National Education Association believes that technology in the educational process improves learning opportunities for students, quality of instruction, effectiveness of education employees, and provides opportunities to reduce educational inequities.

The Association supports increased federal, state, and local resources, along with public/private partnerships, to fully fund equipment purchases/leases/upgrades, maintenance, technical support, training, evaluation, and staffing to support the full use of technology in public schools, public colleges, and public universities.

The Association also believes that—

- a. Education employees must have access to necessary technology for managing and advancing instruction. Such technology must be compatible with and on at least the same level as technology in general use outside education. Further, education employees should be provided training, encouragement, time, and resources to experiment with and to research applications of

technology in order to integrate technology into all curricula as a regular part of the instructional day.

- b. Education employees, including representatives of the local affiliate, must be involved in all aspects of technology utilization, including planning, materials selection, implementation, and evaluation. Additional preparation time and ongoing technological support must be granted to teachers using technology to enrich their instruction. Further, classroom teachers, higher education faculty, and library/media specialists must have collaborative planning time.
- c. Teacher preparation in instructional technology, including the development of effective materials, and appropriate instructional strategies must be included in college and university programs.
- d. Ongoing professional development must be provided for education employees in the use, integration, and applications of technologies to enhance instruction.
- e. Students must have access to and instruction in technology and the responsible use of technology. Further, there must be equity in training, funding, and participation for all students.
- f. Instructional technology should be used to support instruction and must be directed by a licensed teacher.
- g. Instructional technology should be used to improve the learning opportunities for students, the quality of instruction, and/or the effectiveness of education employees, rather than to reduce positions, hours, or compensation.
- h. The evaluation of education employees in any technological program should be conducted openly, be tailored to the medium, and meet the requirements of the local collective bargaining agreement or evaluation policy.
- i. The impact of technology, telecommunications, and distance education on education employees should be subject to local collective bargaining agreements.
- j. Education employees' participation in distance education must be mutually established in employer policies, locally negotiated agreements, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment for education employees.
- k. Equity and freedom of access to information unimpeded by geographic, economic, social, or cultural constraints is essential.
- l. Education employees should own the copyright to materials that they create in the course of their employment. (1981, 2005)

B-68. Cell Phones and Personal Communication Devices in Schools

The National Education Association believes that schools should develop guidelines for the appropriate use of cell phones and personal communication devices during the school day. Such guidelines should promote respect for privacy, intellectual integrity, and a positive learning environment. (2006)

B-69. Internet Access

The National Education Association believes that every school classroom, office, teacher workroom, and library/media center should have affordable, high-speed, seamless, and equal access to the Internet.

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.

The Association further believes that an AUP that requires the signatures of parents/guardians and students must be in place before allowing student access.

The Association believes that Internet access and activities should be age appropriate and monitored and should foster critical use. Any documentation material produced as a result of Internet access should be properly cited and comply with copyright laws. (1993, 2000)

B-70. Distance Education[†]

The National Education Association believes that quality distance education can create or extend learning opportunities but is not an alternative to traditional education that allows for regular face-to-face interaction among students, peers, and instructors.

The Association opposes arrangements whereby elementary, secondary, and undergraduate students receive all or most of their education through distance education and rarely, if ever, convene in an actual classroom. The Association recognizes that exceptions may be warranted in particular cases.

The Association also believes that students must be able to participate in distance education on an equitable basis without regard to social or economic status.

The Association further believes that the following principles represent a framework to ensure quality distance education:

- a. Distance education courses should be managed to ensure effective student and school participation, provide for regular interaction between students and their instructors and online classmates, and offer opportunities for offline activities.
- b. Teachers who provide distance education at the elementary/secondary school level should be licensed in the subject matter taught and be skilled in learning theories, technologies, and teaching pedagogies appropriate for an online environment. Ongoing professional development is essential to ensure that teachers maintain the skills appropriate for an online environment.
- c. Students who take distance education courses should receive the preparation and support necessary to enable them to function effectively in an online environment, which at a minimum should include—
 1. Appropriate equipment, technical support, libraries, and laboratories
 2. Appropriate services for elementary/secondary students, including on-site education employees to monitor student performance and act as a liaison to the distance education instructor
 3. Accurate course descriptions and clear expectations prior to enrollment
 4. Reasonable student to instructor ratios that allow for individualized interaction with instructors
 5. Opportunities for appropriate student-to-student interaction
 6. Courses that are as rigorous as similar courses delivered by more traditional means
 7. Courses that meet accreditation standards.
- d. Support systems should provide resources to instructors, students, and parents that are comparable to those that would accompany face-to-face courses, as well as any additional support necessary for the online environment.
- e. Multiple mechanisms, including appropriate technological safeguards, should be used on a regular basis to validate and authenticate student work. (1997, 2004)

B-71. Communication Between Hearing and Deaf/Hard of Hearing People

The National Education Association believes that the lack of communications between hearing and the deaf/hard of hearing has detracted from the potential of a broadly distributed group to contribute fully to our total society.

The Association recommends that instruction be given to hearing students, staff, and administrators that will help them understand the unique needs of all deaf/hard of hearing people and will help hearing students, staff, and administrators communicate with deaf/hard of hearing people.

The Association also believes that American Sign Language should be offered as a foreign/world language elective credit at both high school and college levels.

The Association further believes that educational sign language interpreters/transliterators must be qualified professionals who are licensed, state credentialed, or nationally certified. (1974, 2004)

[†] See the *NEA Handbook* for the Policy Statement on Distance Education adopted by the 2002 Representative Assembly.

B-72. Credit-Hour Evaluation

The National Education Association believes that the different methods of assigning credit hours as used by the nation's colleges and universities often cause difficulties in the evaluation of transcripts. The Association therefore urges the nation's colleges and universities to develop, in cooperation with the Association, a uniform formula to evaluate credit hours. (1977, 1986)

B-73. Transfer of Student Records

The National Education Association supports the development of an effective process for the transfer of student records. To expedite the confidential information exchanges between schools when students transfer, the process should follow a national format designed by educational and legal professionals. This process must protect the rights of students and should facilitate the continuity of their education.

The Association believes that school and education employees must receive information that indicates—

- a. Educational plans, goals, specialized programs, and/or services
- b. Assessment data
- c. Attendance and cumulative records
- d. Immunizations and health needs
- e. Legal stipulations/restrictions
- f. History of disciplinary incidents and violence-related behavior. (1980, 2004)

B-74. Classroom Use of Animals

The National Education Association believes that educators at all levels should implement guidelines concerning the humane use of animals in the classroom.

The Association urges that teachers encourage compassion and respect for all living things. (1989)

B-75. Home Schooling

The National Education Association believes that home schooling programs based on parental choice cannot provide the student with a comprehensive education experience. When home schooling occurs, students enrolled must meet all state curricular requirements, including the taking and passing of assessments to ensure adequate academic progress. Home schooling should be limited to the children of the immediate family, with all expenses being borne by the parents/guardians. Instruction should be by persons who are licensed by the appropriate state education licensure agency, and a curriculum approved by the state department of education should be used.

The Association also believes that home-schooled students should not participate in any extracurricular activities in the public schools.

The Association further believes that local public school systems should have the authority to determine grade placement and/or credits earned toward graduation for students entering or re-entering the public school setting from a home school setting. (1988, 2006)

C. PROMOTE THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN AND/OR STUDENTS

HEALTH, WELFARE, SAFETY

C-1. Health Care for All Children

The National Education Association believes that every child should have direct and confidential access to comprehensive health care.

The Association also believes that such health care should be provided by properly licensed physicians and by other properly licensed health professionals.

The Association further believes that legislation should be adopted to provide comprehensive health care to all children. (1990, 1997)

C-2. Nutrition

The National Education Association believes that proper nutrition is essential to child development and student success. The Association also believes that proper nutrition must be a part of prenatal care and must continue throughout life.

The Association supports programs within the education framework that promote understanding of proper nutrition. In addition, the Association advocates efforts to develop uniform symbols that make clear to consumers which food choices promote good nutrition.

The Association further believes school food service programs must be nutritionally sound, appealing, and affordable. A choice of nutritious plant-based foods should be available. The Association also supports nutrition programs that are regulated by uniform standards, readily accessible, and are supported by public funds.

The Association believes that changes in the way public funds are allocated for school food service programs must maintain quality and appropriate levels of service as well as support additional funding, given projected increases in population and need. (1990, 2006)

C-3. Substance Abuse

The National Education Association opposes inhalant abuse and drug abuse, including alcohol and tobacco dependency.

The Association supports—

- a. Standardization of drug laws, including the sale and distribution of drugs
- b. Prohibition of the production, sale, and distribution of drug paraphernalia
- c. Improvement of drug prevention and rehabilitation programs
- d. Mandated drug rehabilitation programs for any violation or conviction, whether civil or criminal, resulting from the possession or use of a controlled substance
- e. Research on the genetic and neurological damage done to children through parental substance abuse and the impact on student learning and behavior
- f. Appropriate educational experiences to educate students about the serious consequences of participating in any aspect of the illegal drug trade
- g. Testing and regulation of performance-enhancing dietary herbal supplements.

The Association also opposes the illegal use of drugs and substances and believes that severe penalties for illegal production, distribution, and sale should be strictly enforced.

The Association also supports strict enforcement of the legal drinking age and the laws governing the sale of alcoholic beverages in each state and supports federal legislation to establish a uniform legal drinking age of 21.

The Association further supports strict enforcement of laws governing the sale of tobacco products and believes that federal legislation should be established to create a uniform age of 18 for purchase, possession, or use of tobacco products. (1972, 2003)

C-4. Tobacco Products

The National Education Association believes that education employees should play a key role in nationwide efforts to educate young people about the dangers of tobacco use and secondhand smoke.

The Association also believes that all governmental promotion of, subsidies for, and involvement in production and distribution of tobacco products should cease.

The Association further believes that all places of public accommodation should be smoke-free and that taxes on tobacco products should be increased. (1994, 2002)

C-5. Family Stability for Children

The National Education Association 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 the supportive services it needs to allow it to stay together and care for the child in a safe, nonabusive and nurturing environment.

In the case of custodial and noncustodial parents, the Association recognizes the vital role both parents can play in the development of their children. The Association encourages the judicial system to recognize the crucial role both parents can play in that development when legally appropriate.

In consideration of these roles, the placement of children should be determined by a number of qualitative and quantitative standards that are both measurable and without regard to either parent's gender.

If a child's immediate family and/or extended family is unable to care for him or her, the Association also believes that 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 Association further believes that parents who place children in foster care must be accountable for their efforts to rehabilitate themselves and indicate, through their actions, that they are working toward the return of the child to the home.

The Association believes that, 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 legal release of the child for adoption. (1984, 2004)

C-6. Dependent Children of Military Personnel

The National Education Association believes that parents serving in the military should have adequate services provided to ensure that their dependent children are cared for and an uninterrupted education is provided in the event of mobilization of the parent(s)/guardian(s). The Association also believes that counseling should be available for military dependents and their guardians before, during, and after the military personnel's deployment overseas. (1991, 2005)

C-7. Child Care

The National Education Association believes that all child care centers should have adequate facilities, proper supervision, appropriate education programs, and qualified, screened, and trained personnel. Child care centers should be examined and monitored on a continuous basis, and additional legislation should be sought as necessary to maintain the highest quality child care.

The Association encourages school districts and educational institutions to establish on-site child care for preschoolers, students, the children of students, and the children of staff members. (1984, 1995)

C-8. Community Violence

The National Education Association believes that children who are exposed to community violence are also its victims. Witnessing violence profoundly affects children's abilities to function at school, develop and maintain emotional stability, and establish healthy relationships.

The Association also believes that children who are bystanders to violence must receive the appropriate counseling and support from school and community resources. (2001)

C-9. Family/Domestic Violence

The National Education Association condemns any form of family/domestic violence and the tolerance thereof and believes the cycle of violence has a detrimental effect on students' well-being. School districts and communities should provide preventive training and educational programs for education employees, students, and parents/guardians. The Association supports adequate funding and staffing of existing family services and the creation of additional support systems and shelters.

The Association believes social services and the criminal justice system should continue to intervene actively in the cycle of family/domestic violence. (1978, 2000)

C-10. Standards for Family/Domestic Crisis Care

The National Education Association supports a full range of assistance from interventions to shelters for families experiencing domestic violence.

The Association advocates—

- a. Services that include protection, counseling, and therapy for these children and families
- b. Adequate financial support
- c. Screening and training of potential foster families and shelter personnel
- d. Immediate temporary foster care for children who are being abused, neglected, or exploited
- e. Continued training, supervision, and evaluation of foster families and shelter personnel
- f. Appropriate ongoing communications of pertinent information between social service agencies and education employees
- g. Mandated counseling for persons committing physical and/or psychological violence. (1992, 1999)

C-11. Child Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

The National Education Association believes that all children should be protected from the psychological and physical aspects of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The Association urges its affiliates to—

- a. Seek clear legal definitions of what constitutes child abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- b. Encourage the development of programs that stress the identification of, reporting procedures for, legal responsibilities for, and techniques for dealing with abused, neglected, and exploited children
- c. Cooperate with community organizations to increase public awareness and understanding of the prevalence as well as the causes, prevention, and treatment of child abuse, including neglect, exploitation, incest, and physical abuse
- d. Encourage the development and use of materials to increase student awareness of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- e. Require education employees to report to appropriate authorities instances of suspected child abuse, neglect, and exploitation while providing those employees with immunity from legal action
- f. Encourage development of legislatively funded provisions for dealing with the abusive child, adult, or institution as well as processes, protective options, and coping provisions for the abused, neglected, and exploited child
- g. Encourage enactment of legislation for protection of children from parents/guardians who demonstrate neglect by leaving them unattended/unsupervised
- h. Encourage positive action from the marketing and media professions in eliminating exploitation, commercialization, and glamorization of physical, emotional, and sexual child abuse. (1974, 2000)

C-12. Out-of-Home Placement of Juveniles

The National Education Association believes that when juveniles are removed from the home by the juvenile justice system either for their own protection or for the commission of a status offense and are placed in the custody of group foster homes or other custodial facilities, the rights of both the juvenile and the community must be protected. These facilities must be licensed, be operated by trained and licensed personnel, meet appropriate health and safety codes, and provide counseling and ancillary services for the juvenile, and be nonprofit.

The impact of facilities on the public schools should be taken into account by licensing agencies and zoning authorities. (1992, 2007)

C-13. Protection of Infants with Disabilities

The National Education Association believes that infants born with mentally and/or physically disabling conditions are entitled to receive medically necessary treatments and services that are appropriate and consistent with the patient's needs and that, in accordance with accepted standards of practice, cannot be withheld without adversely affecting the patient's condition or the quality of the care. These treatments and services should be accompanied by the appropriate rehabilitation and life learning skills. (1985, 2004)

C-14. Child Support Payments

The National Education Association supports efforts of parents and local, state, and federal agencies to establish and enforce adequate child support guidelines and to improve the effectiveness of collecting court-designated child support. (1983, 1993)

C-15. Extremist Groups

The National Education Association condemns the philosophy and practices of extremist groups and their efforts to recruit young people and urges active opposition to all such movements that are inimical to the ideals of the Association. (1980, 1993)

C-16. Telephone and the Internet

The National Education Association believes that children should be protected from exploitation via telephone and the Internet. (1989, 2006)

C-17. School Facilities: Design, Construction, and Function

The National Education Association believes that school facilities must be conducive to teaching and learning. The physical environment must allow for a variety of needs, including the number of students, physical characteristics of students, changes in teaching methods, presentation of instruction, and an increased use of school facilities. The Association also believes that all school facilities must be well constructed, safe, energy-efficient, aesthetically pleasing, accessible, functional, and adaptable to persons with disabilities. The Association supports facility designs that promote healthy indoor air quality through properly designed, installed, and maintained ventilation systems and the use of nontoxic materials. The Association further believes that the use, installation, and maintenance of building materials in school facilities must be appropriate and comply with established local, state, and federal guidelines.

The Association believes that the community, parents/guardians, and education employees must be involved through site-based, shared decision making in designing these facilities. Construction designs should incorporate original art.

The Association also believes that stable and sufficient funding must be provided for the design, construction, adequate and ongoing maintenance, and operation of the school facility. (1992, 2003)

C-18. Environmentally Safe Schools

The National Education Association believes that all educational facilities must have healthy indoor air quality, be smoke-free, and be safe from environmental and chemical hazards.

School districts should conduct periodic testing for harmful water and airborne particles/agents that are detrimental to the health of students and education employees and shall report the results publicly.

The Association also believes in the establishment and enforcement of standards of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to ensure health and safety. The Association further believes that pesticide use should be minimized and, if used, advance notice given of location and date of application.

The Association supports ongoing training and certification of education employees who work in potentially hazardous situations. This training must include proper handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and instruction on Materials Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).

Additional health hazards should not be created when facilities are altered or repaired.

The Association believes that school districts must post MSDS and OSHA standards. Students and/or their parents/guardians, education employees, and the public should be notified of actual and potential hazards. All stakeholders should be involved in developing a plan for corrective action. The Association also believes in the development and enforcement of health and safety standards specifically for children. (1989, 2004)

C-19. Programs Before and After School

The National Education Association believes that all children need adequate and appropriate adult supervision and guidance before and after school hours.

The Association also believes that children who have limited or no adult supervision before or after school need local, state, and/or national programs, developed and staffed by qualified and trained personnel, which include opportunities to participate in study-skill sessions, counseling, and guidance in addition to recreational activities. (1983, 1995)

C-20. Prevention of Child Abduction

The National Education Association believes that all children should be protected from abduction. Programs to prevent abduction should be provided to education employees, students, parents/guardians, and the community. School districts should have policies and procedures for the prevention of abduction. (1984, 2000)

C-21. Missing Children

The National Education Association believes that all available means must be utilized to locate missing children. The Association also believes that local and state affiliates should work cooperatively with local programs and/or authorities to raise the public's consciousness about the missing-children crisis.

The Association further believes that the voluntary fingerprinting of children should be conducted in a nonthreatening environment and that completed fingerprint cards should be given to the parent/guardian. (1981, 2000)

C-22. School Transportation

The National Education Association believes that free transportation should be provided for all public school students residing beyond a reasonable and safe walking distance from their assigned schools, and that local school districts should provide students with transportation for all school-related activities.

All school bus personnel who are utilized to transport students should be publicly employed.

The Association also believes that, if necessary for the safety of the students, paid bus assistants should be provided. Qualified substitute drivers and/or bus assistants must be provided to transport students in the absence of members of the regular transportation staff. When traveling to all school related activities, the group's sponsor or chaperone should not be the group's bus driver.

The Association further believes that rules, regulations, and procedures must be developed, enforced, and continually reviewed and revised to ensure safe and orderly transportation of students. In addition to an annual bus inspection, the proper agencies should also conduct random bus inspections. Buses that transport students, especially preschool-aged students and/or students with disabilities, should be equipped appropriately. (1977, 2006)

C-23. Comprehensive School Health, Social, and Psychological Programs and Services

The National Education Association believes that every child should have direct and confidential access to comprehensive health, social, and psychological programs and services. Such programs and services must be interactive and coordinated within and between school, home, and community settings.

School and community efforts must also be integrated to promote the well-being of children and youth and to build support for school and community health programs.

The Association also believes that schools should provide—

- a. A healthful psychological climate and a safe physical environment
- b. Food services that provide nutritious meals and that help students to select nutritionally appropriate foods.

The Association further believes that programs in the schools should provide—

- a. A planned, sequential health education curriculum for pre-K through adult education that promotes sound nutrition and that includes education concerning the health risks associated with obesity and eating disorders
- b. A planned, sequential health education curriculum for pre-K through adult education that integrates various health topics (such as drug abuse, the dangers of performance-enhancing dietary herbal supplements, violence, safety issues, universal precautions, and HIV education); that is taught by teachers specifically prepared to teach the subject; and that enables students to develop the essential knowledge and skills to maintain personal, family, and community health
- c. A planned, sequential physical education curriculum for pre-K through adult education students
- d. Worksite health promotion to improve the health status of school staff to set an example for desired student behaviors.

The Association believes that services in the schools should include—

- a. Counseling programs that provide developmental guidance and broad-based interventions and referrals that promote the physical and psychological health of students
- b. Services that identify, diagnose, and resolve learning disabilities
- c. Health services provided by a licensed professional school nurse that promote the health of students through prevention, case finding, early intervention, and remediation of specific health problems; that provide first aid and triage of illness and injuries; and that provide health counseling
- d. A nurse-to-student ratio at each site that is at least one school nurse to every 750 students in the school population with adjustments to safely accommodate students with special health needs and chronic illness
- e. Comprehensive school-based, community-funded student health care clinics that provide basic health care services (which may include diagnosis and treatment) to supplement school nurses
- f. If deemed appropriate by local choice, family-planning counseling and access to birth control methods with instruction in their use
- g. Coordination with community agencies for support and follow-up activities.

The Association also believes that all health, social, and psychological services must be provided only by appropriately licensed and certificated professional personnel. The Association further believes that education employees, parents/guardians, students, and personnel from community agencies providing services to students must be involved in the development, implementation, and coordination of these services.

The Association urges its affiliates to support legislation to provide comprehensive care to all children and supports community, state, and national efforts to coordinate these services. (1969, 2007)

C-24. School Guidance and Counseling Programs

The National Education Association believes that guidance and counseling programs should be integrated into the entire education system, pre-K through higher education. Such programs should be provided through a maximum counselor/student ratio of 1:250 by appropriately certified and/or licensed school counselors who have been trained to support students in realizing their full potential in all areas of growth and achievement. School counselors should spend at least 80 percent of their time providing guidance and counseling services to students. (1987, 2004)

C-25. Student Stress and Anger

The National Education Association believes that increasing mental, emotional, and environmental pressures result in drug and alcohol abuse, violence, vandalism, school dropouts, and suicide among children and youth.

The Association also believes stress and anger management programs, including follow-up support, that address the needs of children within both school and community settings, should be provided. Professional development to prepare education employees and training for parents/guardians is necessary to help students deal with stress and anger. (1980, 2002)

C-26. Safe and Orderly School Climates and Communities

The National Education Association believes that a safe and effective school climate is necessary for promoting educational excellence in public schools. The Association also believes that all education employees, parents/guardians, students, school governing boards, and community members and agencies must work cooperatively to establish and maintain safe and orderly school communities. Students and education employees must be safe from physical, verbal, and psychological violence, the threat thereof, and all forms of harassment. There must be procedures to prevent and eliminate all types of harassment that might occur. Plans and procedures regarding discipline and/or harassment must include due process.

The Association further believes that both schools and school districts must have written discipline plans and procedures that are fair, equitable, and consistently enforced as well as procedures for the safe and orderly conduct of school activities and events. The Association believes that school security personnel must be properly trained to interact with students exhibiting violent behavior.

The Association also believes that all school buildings should have controlled access during the school day. Schools and school districts should implement policies and procedures that monitor visitor access, such as check-in and wearing of identification badges.

The Association further believes that students must be taught strategies and skills, including conflict resolution, that develop respect, self-discipline, and self-control. Students must learn to distinguish between their own rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of others. There must be appropriate services and placement within regular education and alternative education programs and/or with state and/or community agencies for students who disrupt the learning environment or who are dangerous to other students, education employees, and themselves.

The Association believes that appropriate school behavior begins and is reinforced in the home. Parents/guardians of children who are disruptive often need support and training in order to reduce inappropriate behavior and increase student learning. Programs that provide assistance and training in child development, effective parenting skills, and strategies for dealing with disruptive students must be available for parents/guardians. Schools can be instrumental in identifying and recommending strategies that can assist parents/guardians. The Association also believes that a safe and effective school has a positive environment in which education employees, students, parents/guardians, and the community care for, communicate with, respect, understand, and trust each other. (1994, 2007)

C-27. School Emergency Plans

The National Education Association believes in the safety of all students and staff. The Association also believes that schools, school districts, and school transportation systems must have written plans that delineate procedures that include, but are not limited to, emergencies, lockdowns, evacuations, and weather-related conditions. Emergency plans for each school site must be developed by school personnel and parents/guardians in partnership with the community. The Association further believes that for these plans to be effective they must be practiced and updated on a regular and consistent basis. Plans must include stress management/counseling strategies as follow-up care for students and staff when appropriate. (2007)

C-28. Student Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification

The National Education Association believes that all persons, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identification, 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 identification, every school district and educational institution should provide counseling services and programs that deal with high suicide and dropout rates and the high incidence of teen prostitution. These services and programs shall be staffed by trained personnel. (1988, 2002)

C-29. Suicide Prevention Programs

The National Education Association believes that suicide prevention programs including prevention, intervention, and postvention must be developed and implemented. The Association urges its affiliates to ensure that these programs are an integral part of the school program. (1989, 1992)

C-30. Youth Camp Safety

The National Education Association believes that all youth camps must provide proper supervision and instruction as well as secure facilities that meet current safety and health standards.

The Association urges its members to support legislation establishing guidelines that require that all camp personnel be qualified and trained for their areas of responsibility. (1976, 1987)

STUDENT RIGHTS/CONCERNS

C-31. Student Rights and Responsibilities

The National Education Association believes that basic student rights include the right to free inquiry and expression; due process; gender equity; freedom of association; freedom of peaceful assembly and petition; participation in the governance of the school, college, and university; freedom from discrimination; freedom from commercial exploitation, including the payment of subminimum wages; and equal educational opportunity.

The Association also believes that each of these rights carries with it a comparable responsibility. Student responsibilities include regular school attendance, conscientious effort in classroom work and assessments, and conformance to school rules and regulations that do not abrogate these rights. Students share with the administration and faculty a responsibility to develop a climate within the school that is conducive to wholesome learning and living. No student has the right to interfere with the education of other students. It is the responsibility of each student to respect the rights of each person involved in the educational process.

The Association further believes in the confidentiality of student information and opposes its dissemination to any organization or institution without the consent of the student and/or parent/guardian.

The Association believes that student rights must be safeguarded when students are involved in commercial premium campaigns and fundraising activities. (1969, 2006)

C-32. Drug and Alcohol Testing of Students

The National Education Association believes that mandatory drug and alcohol testing of students without probable cause is an unwarranted and unconstitutional invasion of privacy and opposes such testing.

The Association also believes that schools must immediately notify parents/guardians of students suspected of abusing drugs, alcohol, and/or performance-enhancing dietary herbal supplements and must provide information about support services. (1987, 2003)

C-33. HIV/AIDS Testing of Students

The National Education Association opposes mandatory/involuntary human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) testing of students. (1987, 1993)

C-34. Optimizing Students' Time To Learn

The National Education Association believes that time to learn is essential in promoting optimum success in the schools.

The Association also believes that—

- a. Student absences from school have adverse effects on program continuity, academic success, learning, and mastery by the student. The Association urges its affiliates to work with school districts, parent groups, other appropriate community groups, and public agencies to develop programs to reduce student absences.
- b. Excessive or unusual working hours are detrimental to a student's attention span, academic success, and learning. The child labor laws, as structured by the Fair Labor Standards Act, must be monitored, enforced, and strengthened by local, state, and national governing bodies. (1979, 2007)

C-35. Media, Games, Products, and Children

The National Education Association believes that children are an especially vulnerable and easily exploited audience who must be protected from exposure to violence, prejudice, sexual content, and stereotyping by mass media, the Internet, and products that are accessible to children.

The Association is committed to working cooperatively with media producers, advertisers, and manufacturers in developing products that protect the interests of children. The Association encourages the producers of mass media to select and use age-appropriate subject matter in their products targeted at children. The Association also encourages all radio and television programming executives, when determining the appropriateness of program subject matter and the development of broadcasting schedules, to consider children's ages. The Association further encourages advertisers and media professionals to use standard grammar and correct spelling and to refrain from the use of stereotypical and/or discriminatory terminology and profanity.

The Association encourages the producers of games and toys to make explicit to consumers, prior to purchase, the nature of a product's content through specific labeling. The Association also believes that regulations restricting the purchase of games and toys based on age appropriateness should be developed and enforced. The Association deplores exposing children as consumer-test groups to violent interactive games and products in order for manufacturers to determine how to increase or refine the violent content for the express purpose of increasing sales.

The Association further believes that, through media literacy education, education employees, parents/guardians, and children must become critical users of mass media, the Internet, and other products accessible to children. The Association also encourages its affiliates to establish media study committees to monitor media activities and promote positive educational programming. The Association further encourages its affiliates to provide means for education employees to assist parents/guardians in the selection of appropriate media, games, and products for their children. (1969, 2003)

C-36. Effect of Poverty on Children and Youth

The National Education Association believes that poverty affects a child's ability to develop necessary academic and life skills. Society must provide high quality educational opportunities for all children. The Association also believes that local, state, and federal governments must provide adequate and equitable resources and funding to support educational programs for students affected by poverty.

The Association further believes that all education professionals play a crucial role in providing high quality educational experiences. For educators to experience optimal results, social programs that alleviate poverty in our communities must accompany educational programs. (1988, 2007)

C-37. Effect of Homelessness on Children and Youth

The National Education Association believes that homelessness creates educational challenges that interfere with the ability of children and youth to access education and to progress academically. 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 success.

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. (2007)

EQUAL ACCESS

C-38. Placement of Students with HIV/AIDS

The National Education Association supports establishing local policy that ensures a free, appropriate public education in a least-restrictive environment for all students infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

The Association believes that the placement of such students in school is a medical decision that should be made on a case-by-case basis by qualified health care professionals.

The Association also believes that students should not be refused admittance to school or subjected to any other adverse action solely because they have tested positive for HIV or have been diagnosed as having AIDS. (1987, 1993)

C-39. Extracurricular Participation

The National Education Association believes that the successful completion of an academic program is the first priority for all students.

The Association also believes that all schools, colleges, universities, and parents/guardians must accept their educational responsibilities to student athletes and participants in other extracurricular activities. These students should not be exploited for economic and/or personal gain.

The Association further believes that there should be fair and equitable eligibility requirements for student participation and student progress should be monitored frequently. (1984, 2000)

C-40. Gender Equity in Athletic Programs

The National Education Association believes that at all educational levels female and male students must have equal opportunity to participate in athletic programs.

The Association urges that athletic funds for facilities, equipment, and remuneration of staff be allocated equally between female and male programs. (1974, 1993)

C-41. Reduction of Gang-Related Crime

The National Education Association believes that families, schools, communities, businesses, and law enforcement agencies have critical roles in reducing gang-related crime. The Association supports collaboration among these groups in an effort to reduce such crime.

The Association also supports educational programs that promote positive self-image and academic success—such as dropout prevention/intervention, before- and after-school programs, and job training—particularly for at-risk students in areas where there is a high degree of gang activity.

The Association also believes that the business community has an important role in reducing illegal activities by gangs. The Association further supports programs that lead to meaningful job opportunities for youths.

The Association further believes that law enforcement agencies should be active participants in education and employment programs to reduce gang-related crimes.

The Association believes that federal, state, and local governments should develop and implement education and youth employment programs in helping to reduce illegal activities by gangs. (1988, 1994)

C-42. Juvenile Offenders

The National Education Association believes that juvenile offenders who are convicted of serious crimes and who are contained in detention centers should be provided a healthy environment conducive to positive social change.

The Association also believes that these juveniles, while in this environment, should be provided with education programs and other support services that will enable them to become contributing members of society. Teachers of these youths must be prepared to provide instruction in life skills and learning skills.

Juvenile offenders who pose a threat to the health and safety of others and who are not placed in these centers should be provided educational services in an appropriate alternative setting rather than the regular public school setting.

The Association supports the placement of juveniles who are not charged with any offense or those who are status offenders in separate facilities from those persons who are charged with criminal offenses.

The Association also supports adequate funding for programs that provide alternatives to incarceration, discourage recidivism, and engage juveniles in positive behavior management activities and community-based rehabilitation that include counseling and community services. (1988, 2004)

C-43. Advertising of Alcoholic Beverages and/or Tobacco Products

The National Education Association believes that all forms of advertising of alcoholic beverages and/or tobacco products should be eliminated. The Association also believes that individual performers and organizers of concerts and sporting events should refrain from advertising and/or endorsing alcoholic beverages and/or tobacco products. (1990, 2002)

D. PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE AMONG EDUCATORS

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION

D-1. The Teaching Profession

The National Education Association believes that the teaching profession is a cornerstone of society. The goal of the profession must be to provide the highest quality of education to all students. To achieve this goal, the profession must be composed of individuals who meet the highest standards. These standards must be established, maintained, and governed by the members of the profession and must apply to recruitment, teacher preparation, induction, professional development, evaluation, practice, and accountability. Members of the teaching profession must assume expanded leadership roles and must have the time, resources, and decision-making authority to provide the highest quality of learning for each student. This goal can be achieved by the profession in partnership with other education employees, parents/guardians, the community, the district, and the state. (1998, 2000)

D-2. Teacher Preparation Programs: Recruitment

The National Education Association believes that strong programs of teacher recruitment are necessary to maintain and enhance the teaching profession. Such programs should emphasize the recruitment of underrepresented candidates and should include a policy of affirmative recruitment. Preteaching programs and recruitment efforts should be developed at high schools and community/junior colleges in conjunction with institutions of higher education with teacher preparation programs. These efforts should include the active participation of practicing pre-K through adult education teachers.

The Association also believes that individuals interested in teaching as a career should attend institutions accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Counselors and advisers should inform students of the advantages of attending NCATE-accredited institutions.

Federally financed loan and grant programs should be established to encourage students to become professional educators. Progressive forgiveness of the loan should be based upon the number of years of professional service.

Grants should be secured from both public and private sources to assist students planning to pursue a career in education. (1990, 2000)

D-3. Teacher Preparation for Education Support Professionals

The National Education Association believes that education support professionals are an integral part of the student's learning process and, therefore, would make excellent candidates for teacher preparation programs.

The Association also believes that affiliates should support the development of programs, resources, and funding to assist those education support professionals who wish to obtain a college degree and fulfill the requirements necessary to become licensed classroom teachers.

The Association encourages licensed colleagues to act as a support system for such programs. (1999)

D-4. Teacher Preparation Programs: Admissions

The National Education Association believes that requirements for admission into teacher preparation programs must be based upon standards established and maintained by the profession. These requirements must be rigorous yet flexible enough to allow admittance to those who demonstrate potential for effective practice. The requirements and the selection process must be nondiscriminatory.

The Association also believes that admission to teacher preparation programs should be based on multiple considerations, such as recommendations of faculty, grade-point average, personal interviews, portfolio reviews, and recommendations of persons in related fields. Standardized achievement test scores must not be the sole basis for admission.

The Association urges appropriate state agencies to monitor projected needs by certification areas and to inform teacher preparation institutions of those needs on a continuing basis. Teacher preparation institutions should counsel and prepare prospective teachers in numbers consistent with projected needs. (1970, 2000)

D-5. Teacher Preparation Programs: Affiliate Participation

The National Education Association believes that its affiliates and members should be involved in teacher education preparation and accreditation at the national, state, and local levels. The Association also believes that its affiliates and licensed educators with teaching experience should participate at the college/university level in the design, implementation, and improvement of teacher education programs. (1970, 2001)

D-6. Teacher Preparation Programs: Content and Evaluation

The National Education Association believes that teacher preparation programs must—

- a. Involve practicing, licensed pre-K through adult education teachers in the design, implementation, evaluation, and systematic change of the program
- b. Involve students preparing to teach in the evaluation and improvement of the program
- c. Involve teacher educators who are licensed and practicing in their field of expertise and who also demonstrate practical knowledge of schools and classroom teaching
- d. Include a policy of affirmative recruitment
- e. Include tests, reports, student teaching, portfolio reviews, and other measures of performance designed to assess progress in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary for effective teaching

- f. Require courses in the liberal arts, subject or grade-level specialty, reading, methodologies for the instruction of students with limited English proficiency, and professional studies that include learning theories, curriculum design, classroom management, behavior management, discipline, student assessment, school accountability, school law, and teaching techniques
- g. Include instruction and field experience in the uses of appropriate technology for managing and advancing instruction
- h. Include instructional content and experience that address our multicultural, multi-ethnic diversity, recognize the contributions of ethnic and other minorities, and provide techniques for teaching culturally diverse students
- i. Include instructional content and experiences that address how economic and/or housing status affect a child's readiness and ability to learn and function in a school setting and that provide specific techniques for teachers who teach children of poverty
- j. Involve students preparing to teach in recognizing biases and acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge to assist them in creating a bias-free environment
- k. Include instructional content and experience in research and information skills, group processes, shared decision making, strategic planning, the dynamics of intergroup communications, peace and conflict resolution, human growth and development, the changing role of the family, exceptional behaviors, and human relations
- l. Include a variety of field experiences throughout the preparation program culminating in clinical practice
- m. Include accurate instructional content on the evolution of professional teacher organizations and the advances in the areas of job contracts, salary schedules, benefit programs, and working conditions
- n. Include instruction and practical experiences in the processes, strategies, realities, responsibilities, and challenges of shared decision making, problem-solving, and strategic planning
- o. Include instructional content in awareness and educational programs of all special education areas recognized by federal law
- p. Provide access to professional and preprofessional organizations related to the education profession and areas of certification
- q. Promote involvement in an NEA Student Program local chapter that provides opportunities for community outreach, professional development, and political action
- r. Be evaluated and accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)
- s. Be funded at a level that ensures that NCATE accreditation is achieved and maintained. (1970, 2007)

D-7. Teacher Preparation Programs: Clinical Practice

The National Education Association believes that clinical practice is essential to provide prospective teachers with the experiences necessary to enter the profession and be prepared to teach. Clinical practice contributes to enhanced student learning by fostering the development of a reflective practitioner.

The Association also believes that clinical practice should include a supervised student teaching experience/internship and a post-hiring residency of one year for a prospective teacher to achieve full licensure. Clinical practice provides formal support, instruction, and guidance by a faculty member in a teacher preparation program and by an experienced, licensed pre-K through adult education teacher in the same field of practice.

The Association further believes that prospective teachers completing clinical practice should demonstrate—

- a. A comprehensive understanding of the central concepts and structure of the disciplines that they teach
- b. A knowledge of how children learn, including how their approaches to learning differ
- c. The ability to provide learning opportunities that support the intellectual, social, physical, and personal development of individual students
- d. A variety of instructional strategies that encourage students to develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving techniques, positive social interaction, and active engagement in learning

- e. The ability to plan instructional strategies based upon knowledge of the subject matter, the students, the community, and the curriculum goals
- f. The effective use of formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, physical, and personal development of individual students
- g. The use of active inquiry and collaboration between and among colleagues.

The Association believes that clinical practice experiences provide opportunities to establish essential relationships with other education employees, parents/guardians, and agencies in the community to support students' learning and well-being. (1998, 2002)

D-8. Hiring Policies and Practices for Teaching Positions

The National Education Association believes that, to provide the highest quality of education to all students, hiring practices must ensure that all teaching positions be filled by highly qualified professionals. The Association also believes that hiring policies and practices must be nondiscriminatory and include provisions for the recruitment of a diverse teaching staff.

The Association further believes that individuals under consideration for teaching positions must have completed a teacher education program meeting NCATE standards and be licensed in the field of the specific teaching assignment. Selection criteria for all teaching positions must be based on the needs of the students and faculty, the goals of the school district, and the philosophy of the school.

The Association believes that classroom teachers must have an active role in the hiring process, including the development of selection criteria, job descriptions, and interview instruments, and must participate in the interview and selection process. (1999)

D-9. Teacher Induction

The National Education Association believes that teacher induction is an integral part of an ongoing systemic approach to examining teaching in relation to student learning. It facilitates the transition of new teachers into the profession, promotes the retention of successful teachers, and provides a system of support for veteran teachers experiencing a change in grade level, type of assignments, job site, or cultural environment. The Association also believes that an effective induction process is based upon exemplary teaching practices, an understanding of adult and student learning, and a professional environment that encourages collaboration and inquiry through formal and informal systems of collegial support.

The Association further believes that the induction process includes critical analysis and cognitive and reflective activities that support the development of exemplary teaching practices and enhances professional development. The induction process for new teachers must be mandatory, be at least one year in duration, and include a mentoring program. The induction process for veteran teachers must be flexible and provide support based upon changes in their professional assignments.

The Association encourages its affiliates to be involved in the development of standards for teacher induction and in the design and implementation of the process. (1999, 2000)

D-10. Mentor Programs

The National Education Association believes that mentor programs are a means of enhancing the professional expertise of employees and retaining quality educators. The Association also believes that the planning, implementation, and evaluation of such programs must be negotiated or cooperatively developed and maintained by the school district and the local affiliate.

The Association further believes that the duties and responsibilities of all parties must be clearly defined and uniformly administered. Mentors must be selected through a defined process with articulated criteria, be properly trained and compensated, and be provided with adequate time to fulfill their responsibilities. The state or local authority has the obligation to provide hold-harmless protection.

The Association believes that any documentation that results from the mentoring process must be confidential and the sole property of the person mentored and must not be included in the participant's personnel file. The Association also believes that any verbal conversations that result from the mentoring process must also remain confidential. (1988, 2004)

D-11. Peer Assistance Programs and Peer Assistance and Review Programs

The National Education Association believes that high standards within the teaching profession and continuous improvement in professional practice are cornerstones of the profession. Some local affiliates may conclude that, under certain circumstances, a peer assistance or a peer assistance and review program is an appropriate mechanism for achieving these objectives.

The primary purpose of any such program should be to provide “assistance”—to improve professional practice, retain promising teachers, and build professional knowledge to improve student success. A local affiliate may, at its option, also decide to include a “review” component in the program—involving the evaluation of performance. If a local affiliate takes either position, the program should—

- a. Be developed through collective bargaining or through a joint association/school district agreement in nonbargaining states
- b. Be governed by a board composed of an equal number or a majority of representatives appointed by the local affiliate
- c. Acknowledge that the school district makes the final decision to retain or seek nonrenewal or termination, but that recommendations forwarded by the joint governing body are routinely accepted and acted upon by the district
- d. Ensure that only teachers who are deemed by their peers to be highly skilled practitioners are selected for the role of consulting teacher, that the consulting teacher’s area of expertise is the same as or closely related to that of the participating teacher, and that the consulting teacher is chosen by the program governing bodies
- 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 and to allow participating teachers the selection and/or approval of their assignment to a consulting teacher
- i. Establish and convey to all consulting and participating teachers 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. Require that rigorous and extensive assistance be provided over an appropriate period of time to help the participating teacher attain the requisite standard of proficiency before any effort is made to counsel the participating teacher into alternative career choices either within or outside the education profession or a recommendation to initiate nonrenewal or termination proceedings 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. (1997, 1999)

D-12. Administrator Preparation

The National Education Association believes that administrators and staff are partners in the total school program. Administrators must maintain valid administrator licensure and have periodic teaching experience. Areas of instructional content and experience should include participatory decision making, interpersonal skills, personnel selection, staff evaluation, curriculum, school management techniques, and cultural diversity training. Prior to credentialing, an administrator shall have served at least five years in a full-time teaching position. (1985, 1994)

APPROPRIATE STAFFING

D-13. Supervision of Extracurricular Activities

The National Education Association believes that extracurricular activities are an important part of the public school experience. Education institutions should adopt policies, standards, and guidelines for staffing extracurricular activities and for hiring personnel who have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform those duties, and for providing staff members with appropriate ongoing training. Qualified education employees must be given the opportunity of first acceptance of paid positions. (1994, 1996)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

D-14. Professional Development for Education Professionals

The National Education Association believes that continuous professional development is required for education professionals to achieve and maintain the highest standards of student learning and professional practice. The Association also believes that professional development should—

- a. Be based upon clearly articulated goals reached by consensus of the school community
- b. Be designed, directed by, and differentiated to meet the needs of affected professionals at each site
- c. Support teachers in meeting the needs of students
- d. Be incorporated into and aligned with (not added to) professional work expectations
- e. Be standards-referenced and incorporate effective practice, relevant data, and current research
- f. Be supported by adequate resources
- g. Be career-long, rigorous, and sustained
- h. Stimulate intellectual development and leadership capacity
- i. Balance individual priorities with the needs of the school and the district
- j. Include an ongoing assessment and evaluation component to determine effectiveness
- k. Respond to, refine, improve, and adjust the professional development according to the feedback provided by the participants
- l. Provide:
 - training and ongoing support for the implementation of new and expanded programs/skills
 - training and ongoing support in the development of new and revised curricula and instructional strategies
 - time during the regular work day and work year for inquiry, research, reflection, and collaboration
 - opportunities for mentoring/peer coaching with colleagues on an ongoing basis
 - a depth of subject matter knowledge and a greater understanding of the impact of culture, gender, and learning styles
 - opportunities to assume new roles, including leadership positions
 - flexibility for the use of a variety of resources such as university-school partnerships, professional development schools, exchange programs, professional development resource centers, and cultural and business resources. (1976, 2007)

D-15. Professional Development for Education Support Professionals

The National Education Association believes that professional development should be required throughout the career of education support professionals. Professional development programs should provide equal opportunities for these employees to gain and improve the knowledge and skills important to their position and job performance. Professional development programs should ensure that appropriate education employees have a decisive voice at every stage of planning, implementation, and evaluation. The Association also believes that professional development and continuing education serve as catalysts to recruit, retain, and promote qualified education support professionals. (1998, 2006)

D-16. Professional Development Resource Centers

The National Education Association believes that state/regional professional development resource centers provide an opportunity for education employees to share resources, experiences, and ideas for professional growth. The Association also believes that these centers should be established, funded, and accessible to all education employees. The Association further believes that members from local affiliates served by a center should comprise a majority of the membership of the professional development resource center policy board. (1982, 1999)

COMPETENCY

D-17. Professional Development in Behavior Management, Discipline, Order, and Safety

The National Education Association believes that behavior management, discipline, order, and safety in schools and school districts are essential to ensure student success. The Association also believes that all education employees must be provided professional development in behavior management, discipline, conflict resolution, safety plans and emergency procedures, emergency lifesaving techniques, and crisis management. (1994, 2000)

D-18. Neurological Disorder Awareness

The National Education Association believes in the establishment of programs that will increase education employee awareness of neurological disorders and symptoms that affect student learning. Qualified health professionals should be cooperatively involved in these programs. (1987, 1999)

D-19. Teacher Exchange Programs

The National Education Association believes that teachers and students benefit when teachers participate in teacher exchange programs. Voluntary teacher exchange programs should be cooperatively established with governing boards to offer such programs within and among the states, schools of federal agencies within and outside the United States, and agencies abroad. (1974, 1997)

D-20. Education Employee Evaluation

The National Education Association believes that formal performance-based evaluations must be augmented by formative evaluation components in order to assure the continuing competency of all education employees in their respective fields.

Effective evaluation procedures supported by professional development programs will enable all education employees to keep abreast of developments in their areas of specialization. Such procedures, with sufficient resources, can help ensure job competency, identify deficiencies in performance, and provide options such as counseling, training programs, a remediation plan, and opportunities to observe peers.

If following such an evaluation and after being given sufficient time, training, and opportunity for improvement, a person is then formally reevaluated and incompetence can be documented, dismissal proceedings with guaranteed due process may be instituted. Such proceedings must be implemented by administrators/evaluators who are properly trained and held accountable for appropriate and fair evaluation systems.

The Association also believes that the use of student achievement measures such as standardized test scores or grades to determine the competency, quality, or effectiveness of any professional educator is inappropriate and is not a valid measure.

The Association further believes that classroom teachers, without fear of discipline or negative evaluation, must be given the discretion to modify the pace of predetermined progress rates, dictated pacing guides, and mandated scripted lesson pacing charts.

The evaluation procedure should be cooperatively developed and maintained in conjunction with representatives selected by the local affiliate and should include—

- a. Clear performance expectations that are specific to the job description
- b. Regular observation of job performance with advance notice and discussion of evaluation visits and a timely consultation after each visit
- c. A written evaluation report to be provided to the person being evaluated
- d. Opportunity for a written response prior to the placement of the evaluation in the personnel file
- e. An employee improvement plan that will not interfere with any earned pay increase or longevity credit
- f. A provision for an alternative evaluator and/or an opportunity for an alternative evaluation report to ensure a fair and unbiased evaluation of the education employee
- g. An unbiased appeals process with an evidentiary hearing under oath.

The Association further believes that procedures for evaluation of administrators should include evaluations by education employees who are directly supervised by them.

By participating in an evaluation process, an education employee shall not waive his or her right to due process in any subsequent contractual or legal proceeding. (1969, 2007)

D-21. Competency Testing of Licensed Teachers

The National Education Association believes that competency testing must not be used as a condition of employment, license retention, evaluation, placement, ranking, or promotion of licensed teachers. (1969, 2000)

D-22. Evaluation and Promotion in Higher Education

The National Education Association affirms the importance of teaching in institutions of higher education and believes that research and publication should not be the only criteria on which higher education faculty are evaluated and/or promoted.

The Association also believes that its higher education members must be allowed to determine through the collective bargaining process the methods by which they are evaluated and promoted.

The Association further believes that in order to maintain high standards throughout higher education, administrators must undergo individual, periodic, and regular evaluation. The evaluation process must include input from a broad spectrum of the college/university community in order to provide a balance of perspective and evaluation effectiveness. (1986, 2006)

D-23. Promote the Retention of Experienced Education Professionals

The National Education Association believes that experienced education professionals are valuable resources in the promotion of educational excellence. The Association also believes that experienced education professionals should be encouraged to remain in, or return to, the education profession. This encouragement should be accomplished through strategies consistent with NEA policy, including, but not limited to, enhanced salaries and benefits, a supportive and respectful work environment, a reasonable workload, a secure pension accompanied by retiree health care benefits, and retirement enhancements that reward extended years of service. These strategies can be achieved through bargaining, legislation, or other means. (2001, 2007)

E. GAIN RECOGNITION OF THE BASIC IMPORTANCE OF THE TEACHER IN THE LEARNING PROCESS AND OTHER EMPLOYEES IN THE EDUCATIONAL EFFORT

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

E-1. Instructional Excellence

The National Education Association believes that to achieve and maintain instructional excellence there must be continual improvement in the education process. The Association also believes that teachers have the primary responsibility for instructional excellence and must have the primary authority to recommend improvements in instruction through a democratic decision-making process. The Association further believes all education employees should support high standards for instructional excellence and contribute to the continual improvement of education. The Association believes that no single program can meet the needs of every student. Mandated programs, such as scripted learning programs and pacing charts, restrict the ability of teachers to make decisions for appropriate, meaningful instruction in their classrooms. The Association recommends that education employees collaborate in the research, development, and field testing of new instructional methods and materials. (1969, 2005)

E-2. Time To Teach

The National Education Association believes that “time to teach” refers not only to those hours during which an educator is actually teaching but also applies to those conditions that contribute to the student-teacher relationship. These include a reasonable, carefully defined work load, a duty-free lunch period, an office in which to work, access to telephones, adequate and appropriate office equipment, access to technology, freedom from interruptions during instructional time, sufficient unencumbered planning time, time to evaluate student progress, time for implementation of federal and state legislative requirements, and elimination of the noninstructional tasks required of a teacher.

The Association also believes that, at all levels and in all disciplines, additional common planning time should be provided during the student day for employees to meet for such purposes as, but not limited to, planning interdisciplinary activities/units, team planning time, and coordinating with special education and with support professionals.

The Association recognizes that accountability requires reporting on the uses of funding derived from federal, state, and local education programs. The Association further believes, however, that in order for the classroom educator to spend adequate time on instructional duties, the paperwork burden on the practitioner must be reduced and held to an absolute minimum.

The Association believes that educators need the freedom and flexibility to schedule time and design programs to meet the needs of students. (1969, 2007)

E-3. Selection and Challenges of Materials and Teaching Techniques

The National Education Association believes that democratic values can best be transmitted in an atmosphere that does not restrain free inquiry and learning. The Association also believes that quality teaching depends on the freedom to select materials and techniques. Teachers and school library media specialists must have the right to select and use materials and techniques without censorship or legislative interference. States, school districts, and educational institutions must include teachers and faculty as full voting members on textbook and curriculum review and adoption committees. Participation must be voluntary and compensated.

The Association deplors prepublishing censorship, book-burning crusades, and attempts to ban books from school library media centers and school curricula. Challenges to the choice of instructional materials and techniques must be orderly and objective, under procedures mutually adopted by professional associations and school governing boards.

Materials in all subject areas should—

- a. Include strategies that encourage student interaction
- b. Be developmentally appropriate

- c. Include appropriate accommodations and modifications for students with special needs
- d. Be free from stereotypes
- e. Address divergent points of view
- f. Contain sufficient activities to teach the concepts
- g. Provide for the evaluation of higher level thinking.

Instructional materials and equipment must be provided in sufficient variety and quantity to serve all students. (1969, 2006)

E-4. Development of Curriculum

The National Education Association believes that to provide the highest quality of education to all students, educators must be the primary voice in the planning, development, implementation, monitoring, and refinement of curricula.

The Association also believes that careful consideration must be given to the curriculum in regards to—

- a. Student academic standards
- b. Alignment of curriculum with standards
- c. Unwarranted duplication of content
- d. Prevention of content gaps
- e. Content overload
- f. Developmentally appropriate content
- g. Appropriate accommodations and modifications for students with special needs.

The Association further believes that educators must have an active role in the establishment of procedures for the planning, development, implementation, monitoring, and refinement of curricula. To that end, professional time and training must be provided. (2003, 2004)

E-5. Development of Materials

The National Education Association believes that public school teachers and postsecondary faculty should be involved in the development and field testing of all educational materials offered for adoption or purchase by public school districts and educational institutions. Materials in all subject areas should include strategies that encourage student interaction, be developmentally appropriate, include appropriate accommodations and modifications for students with special needs, be free of stereotypes, address divergent points of view, contain sufficient activities to teach the concepts, and provide for the evaluation of higher level thinking skills.

The Association also believes that requiring the use of electronic curriculum mapping and lesson planning software via district networks and the Internet should not impose additional time burdens on teachers, and must be accompanied by adequate training and compensation. Adoption of such practices should be a collaborative effort among teachers, administrators, and local boards of education.

Where school districts and educational institutions involve teachers and faculty in the development of any educational materials, participation should be voluntary and compensated. (1984, 2006)

E-6. Cultural Diversity in Instructional Materials and Activities

The National Education Association believes that educational materials and activities should accurately portray cultural diversity and contributions of ethnic-minority groups. Ethnic-minority teachers must be involved in selecting educational materials and in preparing teachers in their use.

The Association recognizes that additional instructional materials chosen for classrooms and libraries may rightfully contain a number of points of view to allow students to become familiar with the attitudes and recommendations from various segments of the literary world.

The Association acknowledges that many contemporary texts related to ethnic-minority groups do not portray realistically their lifestyles but convey a negative self-concept to ethnic-minority students. The Association also believes that educators and governing boards should adopt and use textbooks and other educational materials in all subject areas that accurately portray the contributions of ethnic and other minorities. (1969, 1995)

E-7. Women in Instructional Materials

The National Education Association believes that educational materials should accurately portray the influence, contributions, and historical lifestyles of women in our nation and throughout the world. (1996, 1998)

E-8. Religious Heritage in Instructional Materials

The National Education Association believes that educational materials should accurately portray the influence of religion in our nation and throughout the world. (1988)

E-9. Impact of Federal and State Legislative Mandates

The National Education Association believes that federal and state mandates regarding school programs should be broad, general guidelines, must be fully funded, and must not be based on student achievement. Mandated programs and requirements should be established or eliminated only in conjunction with the Association and its state and local affiliates. Mandates should be assessed at the local, state, and national levels by stakeholders, including the Association and its state and local affiliates, with particular attention to the impact on students, education employees, school programs, and finances. (1979, 2007)

E-10. Academic and Professional Freedom

The National Education Association believes that academic freedom is essential to the teaching profession. Academic freedom includes the rights of teachers and learners to explore and discuss divergent points of view. Controversial issues should be a part of the instructional program when, in the judgment of the professional staff, the issues are appropriate to the curriculum and to the maturity level of the student. A teacher shall not be fired, transferred, or removed from his or her position for refusing to suppress the free expression rights of students.

The Association also believes that professional freedom is essential to the teaching profession. Professional freedom includes the teachers' right to evaluate, criticize, and/or advocate their personal point of view concerning the policies and programs of the schools. Furthermore, teachers must be free to depart from mandated scripted learning programs and pacing charts without prejudice or punishment. Teachers also have the right to assist colleagues when their academic or professional freedoms are violated.

The Association further believes that legislation and regulations that mandate or permit the teaching of religious doctrines and/or groups that promote antipublic education agendas violate both student and teacher rights. The Association urges its affiliates to seek repeal of these mandates where they exist. (2002, 2005)

E-11. Professional Discretion in the Classroom

The National Education Association believes that daily contact with students as well as professional accountability place classroom teachers in the best position to address the educational needs of students.

The Association also believes that teachers are best suited to develop and deliver appropriate instructional programs that are consistent with state curriculum standards. The Association further believes that direct observation of students and analysis of data by the classroom teacher must guide instructional decisions without fear of reprisal.

The Association believes that, while programs focusing on scripted learning and pacing charts can serve as 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. (2006)

E-12. Intellectual Property and Access to Copyrighted Materials

The National Education Association believes that education employees should own the copyright to materials they create in the course of their employment. Ownership rights of education employees who create copyrightable materials should not prevent education employees from making appropriate use of such materials in providing educational services to their students. Employees should have the right to display, reproduce, and distribute copyrighted materials for educational purposes.

The Association also believes that students should own the copyright to materials they create in the course of their studies and, in the case of graduate students, to materials they create while working as teaching or research assistants. (1969, 2006)

E-13. Support Professionals in the Education Process

The National Education Association believes that all education employees are essential to the learning environment. The Association recognizes that education support professionals promote positive role models that enhance the education process.

The Association also believes that the retention of education support professionals must be encouraged and is vital to keeping strong and effective public schools. (1990, 2007)

F. PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES AND ADVANCE THEIR INTERESTS AND WELFARE

PAY EQUITY/COMPARABLE WORTH

F-1. Nondiscriminatory Personnel Policies/Affirmative Action[†]

The National Education Association believes that, except as otherwise provided below, personnel policies and practices must guarantee that no person be employed, retained, paid, dismissed, suspended, demoted, transferred, retired, or harassed because of race, color, national origin, cultural diversity, accent, religious beliefs, residence, physical disability, political activities, professional association activity, age, size, marital status, family relationship, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identification.

Affirmative action plans and procedures that encourage active recruitment and employment of ethnic minorities, women, and persons with disabilities should be developed and implemented in accordance with Association policy. Affirmative action plans and procedures that encourage active recruitment and employment of men in underrepresented education categories should also be developed and implemented. It may be necessary therefore to give preference to men in recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion policies to overcome past discrimination. (1969, 2002)

F-2. Pay Equity/Comparable Worth

The National Education Association believes that all workers should be paid on the basis of the requirements, skills, and worth of their jobs, and that factors such as the gender or race of the individual performing the job should never play a role in determining salary.

The Association supports all efforts to attain accurate and unbiased forms of job evaluation and to raise the pay of those jobs that are presently undervalued. The “market value” means of establishing pay cannot be the final determinant of pay scales since it too frequently reflects the race and sex bias in our society.

The Association encourages efforts by education employees and others of the work force to gain salary levels appropriate to the skill, value, responsibility, and requirements of their jobs. (1982, 1993)

[†] See the *NEA Handbook* for the Policy Statement on Affirmative Action adopted by the 1997 Representative Assembly.

F-3. Uniform Compensation

The National Education Association opposes any attempt to establish tiered compensation systems that place entry-level employees on a salary and/or benefits schedule that differs from that of career employees. (1986)

F-4. Tax Deductions for Professional Expenses

The National Education Association believes that education employees must continue to perform and develop professionally and that expenses incurred to do so are professional and therefore must be considered as necessary and ordinary and must be uniformly deductible, as an adjustment, from gross income in the computation of federal, state, and local income taxes. Deductible expenses should include, but not be limited to, expenses incurred relating to sabbatical leaves; educational travel for maintenance and improvement of skills; an in-home office; education-related auto use; and, purchasing of teaching supplements and professional supplies, materials, and equipment. (1969, 1993)

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROCESS

F-5. Collective Bargaining Rights

The National Education Association believes that the attainment and exercise of collective bargaining rights are essential to the promotion of education employee and student needs in society. The Association demands that these rights be advocated where they are now abridged or denied and strengthened where they are now secured. (1980, 1993)

F-6. Collective Bargaining and Grievance Procedures

The National Education Association believes in the necessity of a public employees' federal collective bargaining law that will not weaken any state or local bargaining laws. The Association demands that federal, state, and local governing bodies bargain collectively with all public employees. The Association supports legislation that would prohibit the negotiating away of any public employee statutory benefit, right, or protection.

The Association also believes that local affiliates and governing boards must negotiate, in good faith, written master contracts. These contracts must include terms and conditions of employment and other matters of concern and include a provision for agency fee.

The Association further believes that local affiliates should determine the bargaining approach most appropriate for them. The Association also supports a local's decision to use an interest-based process as an option from a wide range of models for collective bargaining and/or dispute resolution. Grievance procedures shall be provided in the master contract with definite steps to appeal the application or interpretation of the contract. Binding arbitration shall be a part of the grievance procedure.

The Association believes that binding arbitration and the right to strike must be an integral part of any collective bargaining process.

Coordinated bargaining by Association affiliates on a regional or statewide basis is an important component of collective bargaining.

The Association also believes that state affiliates should seek statutory penalties for governing boards that do not bargain in good faith. Further, state affiliates should seek statutory penalties for governing bodies that seek to rescind negotiated agreements by declarations of bankruptcy or by any other means. (1969, 1998)

F-7. Strikes

The National Education Association denounces the practice of keeping schools open during a strike. The Association believes that when a picket line is established by the authorized bargaining unit, crossing it, whether physically or electronically, is strikebreaking and jeopardizes the welfare of education employees and the educational process.

The Association also believes that the chances of reaching voluntary agreement in good faith are reduced when one party to the negotiation process possesses the power to use the courts unilaterally against the other party.

The Association recommends that several procedures be used in resolution of impasse—such as mediation, fact finding, binding arbitration, political action, and strike—if conditions make it impossible to provide quality education. In the event of a strike by education employees, extracurricular and cocurricular activities must cease.

Appropriate teacher preparation institutions should be notified that a strike is being conducted and urged not to cooperate in emergency licensing or placement practices that constitute strikebreaking. The Association condemns denial of credits to students working in the school for credit as part of a teacher preparation or credential program who have honored a work stoppage.

The Association also condemns the use of ex parte injunction, jailing, setting of excessive bail, fines, firing of members, community service in lieu of other penalties, decertification of an organization as the bargaining agent, loss of association rights, and revocation or suspension of tenure, licensure, and retirement benefits in school work stoppages.

The Association urges enactment and enforcement of statutes guaranteeing the rights of education employees when a work stoppage occurs, including the right to present their case to the state or courts, before back-to-work orders are issued.

The Association also urges its affiliates to establish practices and procedures to supply financial and emotional support as well as external and internal publicity for any local engaged in a strike. (1969, 1999)

BARGAINING ISSUES

F-8. Basic Contract Standards

The National Education Association believes that collective bargaining agreements between education employees, including part-time and temporary, and their employers should contain certain standard contractual concepts. The Association also believes that, in nonbargaining jurisdictions, these concepts should be incorporated into legislation, employer policy, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment for education employees, including part-time and temporary. These concepts include—

- a. A grievance procedure that terminates with final and binding arbitration
- b. Just cause for any disciplinary action with guaranteed due process through final and binding arbitration and continuation of all employee rights, including full compensation and job security
- c. A seniority list that is updated, published, and distributed annually
- d. Layoff and recall based only on seniority as bargaining unit members, licensure/certification, and, to the extent legally permissible, affirmative action[†]
- e. Employer-paid benefits, including but not limited to comprehensive health, life, dental, vision, and income protection insurance and employee assistance programs, that fully cover bargaining unit members, domestic partners, and their families
- f. Membership in the association or the payment of a fair-share fee as a condition of employment
- g. Required posting of all vacant or newly created positions along with the right of bargaining unit members to apply for these positions
- h. Unassigned preparation, planning, and travel time as applicable for all members of the bargaining unit
- i. Specified class size, teaching load, and job description
- j. A duty-free lunch period of not less than 30 minutes for all members of the bargaining unit
- k. Nondiscriminatory, fair, and equitable treatment of bargaining unit members
- l. Contractually defined procedures for evaluation and promotion
- m. Released time for association business with full pay and benefits

[†] See the *NEA Handbook* for the Policy Statement on Affirmative Action adopted by the 1997 Representative Assembly.

- n. Parental/child rearing leave for employees to provide care for natural or adopted children
- o. Contractually defined procedures for ensuring education employee decision making in curriculum design and related instructional management and reporting systems
- p. Time during the regular work day and work year for education employees to plan, to engage in professional development, to work on curriculum and assessment, to mentor and be mentored, and to provide professional leadership
- q. Salary schedules that are equitable, regardless of the age level of the students being taught, and are based upon preparation, professional growth, and length of service, and that exclude any form of merit pay except in institutions of higher education where it has been bargained
- r. Placement and advancement on the salary schedule based on qualifications and number of years of experience in the profession
- s. Extracurricular and extra-duty assignments filled on a voluntary basis and compensated at no less than the employee's regular rate of pay
- t. Protection from being required to participate in community service
- u. Retirement benefits based on all income derived from school employment
- v. Clearly defined bargaining unit membership
- w. A guaranteed safe and healthy working environment, including a secured/lockable storage space for personal belongings
- x. The school calendar
- y. Protection from unilateral changes in terms or conditions of employment
- z. Provisions to define class loads, student contact hours, and contract hours for instructors who are involved in distance education, and to guarantee that technology and distance education are used to supplement, not supplant, employees. (1989, 2007)

F-9. Salaries and Other Compensation

The National Education Association believes that salary and other compensation structures for education employees are matters for collective bargaining. The Association also believes that any proposed or legislated salary and other compensation structure should not bypass or undermine the bargaining process or negotiated agreements. The Association further believes that, in nonbargaining jurisdictions, salary schedules should be incorporated into legislation, employer policy, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment for education employees.

The Association believes that salary schedules should—

- a. Provide for entry-level salaries and career earnings comparable to those of other professions and occupations with similar preparation and responsibilities and be structured to provide compensation levels that encourage classroom teachers to remain in the classroom and support professionals in the educational setting
- b. Be based on preparation, academic degrees, experience, professional growth, responsibilities, and full length of service
- c. Assure that initial placement and advancement on the salary schedule are nondiscriminatory
- d. Provide additional compensation for certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
- e. Provide and maintain structural integrity through the use of an index or percentage guide for experience increments and levels of academic preparation
- f. Assure that salary paid for summer employment, continuing education programs, extended contracts, conducting employee training or workshops, and extra duty is not less than the rate for regular pay
- g. Assure that salaries paid in early childhood, nontraditional, adult, and alternative programs are on par with salaries paid in traditional programs and that any personnel serving lower socioeconomic groups not be paid less than equivalent educational professionals providing similar service to higher socioeconomic groups
- h. Define “salary increase” to mean the exact monetary differential between the existing salary schedule and the proposed salary schedule—exclusive of incremental adjustments—and all basic benefits.

The Association opposes providing additional compensation to attract and/or retain education employees in hard-to-recruit positions.

The Association also believes that local affiliates can best promote the economic welfare of all education employees, regardless of source of funding, by following the salary standards developed at the state and national levels.

The Association further believes that performance pay schedules, such as merit pay or any other system of compensation based on an evaluation of an education employee's performance, are inappropriate.

The Association believes that its affiliates should seek the repeal of laws limiting maximum salaries and benefits for education employees.

The Association also believes that there should be no limit to the number of years of experience an education employee can transfer.

The Association further believes that, if school districts consolidate or separate, education employees should not lose their tenure or have their salary, benefits, or seniority reduced. (1969, 2002)

F-10. Minimum Criteria for Additional Compensation Beyond the Single Salary Schedule

The National Education Association is opposed to the use of merit pay or performance pay compensation systems. The Association believes that any system that provides additional compensation to education employees beyond that provided by the single salary schedule should meet the following minimum criteria:

- a. The design of the system must be accomplished through the collective bargaining process or in nonbargaining jurisdictions it should be incorporated into legislation, employer policy, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment for education employees.
- b. Any additional compensation beyond a single salary schedule must not be based on education employee evaluation, student performance, or attendance.
- c. The criteria that are used to determine whether education employees receive the additional compensation should be clearly stated and subject to objective measurement. The system also should make clear how those criteria relate to the school district's educational objectives.
- d. The system should not directly or indirectly limit the number of education employees who are eligible for the additional compensation. All education employees should be afforded a fair opportunity to meet the requisite standards and should receive the additional compensation if they do. The compensation system may recognize and reward the additional knowledge and skills that education employees have acquired or may acquire over their careers.
- e. Full funding should be available to sustain the system. The allocation of funds to provide the additional compensation should not prevent increases in the basic compensation for all education employees.
- f. The system should not diminish the professional status of those education employees who do not receive the additional compensation or in any way suggest that such education employees are not qualified for the positions that they hold. (2001, 2007)

F-11. Benefits

The National Education Association believes that benefit structures should be subject to collective bargaining or, in nonbargaining jurisdictions, incorporated into legislation, employer policy, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment. The Association also believes that all education employees should be eligible for benefits that include but are not limited to—

- a. Comprehensive insurance programs
 1. Health
 2. Dental
 3. Vision
 4. Hearing
 5. Life
 6. Legal

7. Workers' compensation
8. Long-term physical and mental disability
9. Prescription drug
- b. Paid leaves
 1. Sick leave with unlimited accumulation
 2. Personal leave with unlimited accumulation
 3. Bereavement leave
 4. Parental leave, including adoption
 5. Dependent care leave
 6. Sabbatical leave
 7. Professional leave
 8. Association leave
 9. Religious leave
- c. Additional remuneration
 1. Severance pay
 2. Tuition reimbursement
 3. Retirement compensation
 4. Unemployment compensation
 5. Benefit extension for laid-off employees
- d. Personal assistance
 1. Personal assault protection, and in the event of assault, counseling services and leave that is not subject to sick or personal leave
 2. Employee assistance program
 3. Reimbursement for damages to or loss of personal property at work site
 4. Child care and pre-school education
 5. An opportunity to participate in a cafeteria-type plan or plan authorized by Section 125 of the U.S. Federal Tax Code.

The Association further believes that education employees and their spouses, domestic partners, and/or dependents should have equal access to all benefits applicable to them.

The Association believes that comprehensive insurance programs should be provided for education employees on official leave of absence or parental leave.

The Association also believes that provisions should be made for retirees, their spouses, domestic partners, and/or dependents at their option to continue in the comprehensive health, dental, prescription drug, hearing, and vision programs.

The Association further believes that, if school districts consolidate or separate, education employees should not lose their tenure or have their salary, benefits, or seniority reduced. (1969, 2007)

F-12. Education Professionals Outside the Traditional K–12 Schools

The National Education Association recognizes the contributions of educators who work with students in school settings other than the traditional K–12 schools. The Association believes that these education professionals have the right to collective bargaining processes that are comparable to their K–12 counterparts. The Association also believes that these employees are entitled to equitable contract language that offers the same rights and protections as education employees within traditional K–12 school settings. (2007)

F-13. Faculty Reward Structures in Higher Education

The National Education Association believes that the reward structure for an institution of higher education should reflect the mission of the institution. An institution whose mission is teaching undergraduate students should reward good teaching. An institution whose mission is community outreach should reward service. An institution whose mission is basic or applied research should reward good research. The proper balance between teaching, service, and research is contingent upon faculty and administration agreement on the institutional mission of the particular campus. (1995)

F-14. Economic Welfare

The National Education Association is opposed to imposition of any controls that place public employees in an inferior economic position, the elimination of programs that guarantee social and economic justice for the American people, and any program that increases unemployment. (1979, 1986)

F-15. Constitutional and Civil Rights—Employment Protection

The National Education Association, recognizing the continuing erosion of civil rights, reaffirms its commitment to protect the rights of all education employees. The Association believes that the constitutional rights guaranteed to all citizens shall not be abridged for public education employees. The Association also believes that all levels of government should monitor and enforce fair employment practice laws. The Association and its affiliates, working with federal, state, and local officials and agencies, shall work to promote enactment of and compliance with such laws and seek to include these rights in contractual agreements. (1991, 2006)

F-16. Continuing Employment and Fair Dismissal Practices

The National Education Association believes that security of position must be provided for all education employees through appropriate employment policies, including fair dismissal procedures. The laws and master contracts governing said procedures must afford all education employees, including probationary and substitute employees, procedural and substantive due process.

The Association also believes that state laws must provide for the continuing employment and/or tenure of state and/or local education employees and that federal laws must provide similar protection for education employees in federal schools. (1969, 2006)

F-17. Reduction in Force

The National Education Association believes that one of its basic responsibilities is job security and urges its affiliates to support legislation and/or to negotiate in master contracts criteria to be utilized should reduction in force (RIF) occur. Criteria should include seniority, objectivity, nondiscrimination, uniformity of application, and affirmative action.[†] Should RIF become necessary, the number of administrators, supervisors, and managers should be reduced at least in proportion to the number of other education employees being reduced. Contracts should establish recall procedures in which staff would be recalled in the reverse order in which they were laid off. Neighboring districts are encouraged to establish jointly such procedures that on a regional basis would provide priority hiring of laid-off education employees.

The Association also believes that local affiliates should—

- a. Negotiate reduction in force policies that exclude performance evaluation from consideration in the RIF process
- b. Work cooperatively with governing boards and community leaders to assist in rehiring, relocating, and/or providing alternative career training for laid-off education employees
- c. Condemn the improper use of RIF to eliminate complete areas from comprehensive educational and pupil personnel programs.

It must be recognized that reduction of supportive staff and special staff and nonreplacement of retiring and other resigning teachers are both forms of reduction in force. (1975, 1997)

F-18. Mandated Training/Retraining

The National Education Association believes that when a federal, state, or district mandate requires an education employee to meet new standards of employability and/or to be retrained, it is the responsibility of the mandating agency to provide released time for training, to compensate the employee

[†] See the *NEA Handbook* for the Policy Statement on Affirmative Action adopted by the 1997 Representative Assembly.

at the employee's hourly rate of pay, and to provide for the cost of tuition, textbooks, and travel. (1988, 2005)

F-19. Protection of Education Employees

The National Education Association believes that education employees must be safe in schools and that federal and state legislation protecting all education employees should be enacted. The Association also believes that affiliates, school districts and governing boards, law enforcement agencies, and courts should work cooperatively to ensure the strict enforcement of all laws within public schools and educational institutions.

The Association further believes that all education employees working with a student having a record of violent behavior or severe behavior problems should be immediately informed of the nature, extent, and duration of the student's record of violent acts/disruptive behaviors. Before student placement, these employees should also be provided with teaching strategies that may impact the student's learning style and a plan for behavior management and modification.

The Association believes that when education employees are the victims of physical attack, verbal abuse, theft, vandalism, or harassment due to gender, sexual orientation and gender identification, or other causes, they should receive the full support of their employer in pursuing legal and other remedies, as well as receiving reimbursement for their personal and property loss. Time lost due to injuries from attacks should not be deducted from accumulated sick leave.

The Association also believes that education employees and the local affiliate must have the right to reflect professional concerns at a student suspension or expulsion hearing. (1970, 2002)

F-20. Personnel Policies and Procedures

The National Education Association believes that personnel policies and procedures should be written and developed cooperatively by local affiliates and their local boards of education or appropriate governing bodies. The Association also believes in a cooperative review for improvement of the personnel policies and procedures. Where it exists, improvements will be made through the negotiation process. (1969, 1999)

F-21. Site-Based Decision Making

The National Education Association supports site-based decision-making processes that are based on contractual/formal agreements between districts and local affiliates. The Association believes that the scope of local site-based decision making should be limited only by the contractual/formal agreement. The Association also believes that such agreements must include the following elements:

- a. Voluntary participation by local sites
- b. A district-association structure for processing conflict resolution
- c. An agreement on the scope of decision-making authority available to sites
- d. Decision-making bodies composed of a majority of nonmanagement education employees with all members selected by the constituency represented
- e. Compensated planning and training time for staff and governance bodies as well as additional resources necessary for successful implementation
- f. Compensation and/or released time for participating staff members. (1990, 1999)

F-22. Faculty-Staff Governance in Higher Education

The National Education Association believes that faculty and staff in higher education should participate in the governance of their educational institutions. Higher education faculty should have primary responsibility for determining curricula, methods of instruction, and subject matter; establishing requirements for earning degrees and certificates; reviewing institutional budgets; and making recommendations on financial issues that impact academic programs.

Where appropriate, faculty and staff should participate in the selection and evaluation process and determine the status of colleagues and administrators, especially appointments, reappointments, and tenure.

The Association also believes it is the primary responsibility of faculty and staff, where appropriate, 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 increases, benefit programs, calendar, and working conditions. (1994, 2006)

F-23. Job Sharing

The National Education Association supports the concept of voluntary job sharing as a means of providing a flexible employment opportunity to help meet the varying needs of education employees. The Association believes that there must be fair and equitable distribution of work between both job sharers in terms of the total number of hours of work and the work load.

The Association asserts that job sharing conditions of work must be subject to collective bargaining and that they require the following minimum conditions for successful implementation:

- a. Prorated application of the salary schedule with full recognition of years of experience
- b. An equitable share of all benefits
- c. An agency shop provision
- d. The right to revert to full-time status
- e. No loss of rights gained through tenure/seniority
- f. Equitable credit toward seniority/retirement. (1981, 2006)

F-24. Intern Programs

The National Education Association believes that intern programs should be utilized solely for the development of professional expertise and not as a means of reducing budgets and/or supplanting or reducing the number of education employee positions. The Association also believes that interns who are employed by school districts should be included in local bargaining units. (1977, 1999)

F-25. Student Workers in Educational Institutions

The National Education Association recognizes the importance of providing employment opportunities for students in educational institutions. The Association deplors, however, the practice of employing students that results in the reduction of the number of permanent education employees or positions. (1992, 1998)

F-26. Education Support Professionals in the Classroom

The National Education Association believes that classroom teachers should be provided with support staff to assist in the educational process. The education support professionals should assist the classroom teacher, not displace the teacher, and should have a written job description defining their duties.

The Association opposes the use of education support professionals to increase class size. (1969, 1998)

F-27. Summer School, Alternative Calendars, Extended School Day/Year, and Year-Round Schools

The National Education Association 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. Employment in these programs must be on a voluntary basis.

(1975, 1998)

PROTECTION OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES

F-28. Education Employees Injured on the Job

The National Education Association believes that the legal rights of education employees injured on the job must be protected.

The Association encourages its state affiliates to assist members injured on the job so that those members have access to information regarding employment-related injuries and so that state affiliates may protect the rights of those members. (2000, 2007)

F-29. Unemployment/Disability Compensation

The National Education Association supports the inclusion of education employees in unemployment and disability compensation legislation at the state and federal levels. (1972, 1986)

F-30. Subcontracting/Contracting Out

The National Education Association 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. Abrogate 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 affected affiliate.

Where subcontracting exists, the Association believes that all personnel who are employed through the subcontractor to work in the school district or educational institution must meet the highest standards of accountability. The subcontractor must conduct background checks prior to allowing employees to work in the school district or educational institution and submit validation of its findings to the school district or educational institution and must provide continuing evaluation and supervision of these employees. The Association insists that such criminal background checks must provide that—

- a. Information collected will not be released to boards of education in a form other than a statement of qualification but be kept by the investigating state or national agency
- b. Every employee or potential employee has a right to due process and access to records
- c. Clear, specific, observable, and objective evidence of rehabilitation for past offenses is included
- d. Any fee for background checks shall not be borne by the employee or potential employee. (1977, 2006)

F-31. Confidentiality of Employee Records

The National Education Association believes that all employee records are privileged information and must remain confidential. In order to maintain confidentiality, the rights of education employees must include—

- a. A guarantee that only one personnel file exists
- b. Access to materials in personnel files, including a list of all electronic and hard copy records maintained by an educational institution
- c. The authority to inspect, review, and obtain copies of such records, explanations and interpretations of such records, and a record of past access
- d. Written notification within 10 working days of any placement of materials in the employee's personnel file
- e. An opportunity to respond to and challenge any materials and purge those that are inaccurate, misleading, and distorted

- f. A provision to consent to or deny release of such records, including the right to receive copies of released materials.

The Association also believes that any ancillary records, such as medical and legal records, with which the educational institution may come in contact, are to be treated as privileged information and must also remain confidential.

The Association further believes that it is the duty of the educational institution to inform employees of these rights and to enforce these rights. (1975, 2007)

F-32. Right to Privacy for Education Employees

The National Education Association believes that education employees must be guaranteed the rights of privacy. These rights must include—

- a. Freedom from audio or video surveillance without the prior written permission of the individual
- b. Freedom from harassment by individuals, organizations, or businesses due to unauthorized release or sale of employee records
- c. Protection from exploitation via telephone and the Internet
- d. Security of computer files, passwords, and user codes from inappropriate or unauthorized access
- e. Authority to refuse a polygraph, lie detector, or other invasive method of evidence collection.

The Association also believes that fingerprinting is acceptable only for the purpose of a pre-employment or pre-licensure check for criminal records that are pertinent to education employment. The Association opposes fingerprinting as a condition of continued employment or licensure. The Association further believes that all costs of fingerprinting must be borne by the employer or licensing agency. (1999, 2006)

F-33. Privileged Communications

The National Education Association believes that communications between all education employees and students must be legally privileged. The Association also believes that communication between administrators and other education employees must be kept private without the consent of the affected employee. The Association urges its affiliates to aid in seeking legislation that provides this privilege and protects both education employees and students. (1974, 1996)

F-34. Protection of Education Employee Advocates

The National Education Association believes that education employees have the right to organize and to serve as advocates for education employees, students, and parents/guardians. The Association also believes that every member has the right and obligation to participate in the Association without fear, intimidation, or retribution.

The Association further believes that governing boards, administrators, and public officials must respect education employees and their right to exercise constitutional guarantees and condemns those who attempt to fire, demote, transfer, or give punitive assignments to education employees for their leadership in education employee organizations or for questioning apparent violations of their terms of employment.

The Association believes that school board policies should allow the provision of released time without loss of pay for those who are fulfilling leadership responsibilities, attending meetings, appearing in court in their roles as advocates, or participating in other Association activities. The Association also believes that, for conducting association business, its affiliates should be allowed to use school property without censorship, restraint, or other interference. (1976, 2000)

F-35. Protection of Education Employees from Age Harassment

The National Education Association believes that education employees should be protected from harassment because of age. The Association encourages its affiliates to work with local school districts and institutions of higher education to—

- a. Establish strong policies that grant those at or approaching retirement age freedom in their options to continue education employment or to retire

- b. Develop educational programs to help individuals recognize, understand, prevent, and combat harassment because of age
- c. Develop and publicize a grievance procedure that encourages the reporting of incidents of harassment because of age, resolves complaints promptly, and protects the rights of all parties. (1989, 1997)

F-36. Protection of Education Employees from Harassment Because of a Disability

The National Education Association believes that education employees should be protected from harassment because of a visible/invisible disability. The Association encourages its affiliates to work with school districts and institutions of higher learning to—

- a. Establish strong policies that ensure compliance with all provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and provide all necessary accommodation for full participation in all employment responsibilities
- b. Develop educational programs to help individuals recognize, understand, prevent, and combat harassment because of a disability
- c. Develop and publicize a grievance procedure that encourages the reporting of incidents of harassment because of a disability, resolves complaints promptly, and protects the rights of all parties. (2005)

F-37. Employee Rights Pending Court Action

The National Education Association believes that when criminal charges or civil lawsuits are filed against an education employee, the right of due process must be guaranteed. If an employee is removed from student contact or suspended from a position due to pending court action, all employment rights of the employee shall remain in force, including full compensation and job security. Contract provisions should provide procedures to be followed until final disposition of the case. (1984, 1999)

F-38. Allegations Against Education Employees

The National Education Association believes education employees should be protected from allegations of child abuse made in bad faith.

Any such allegation should be investigated and resolved immediately. The name of the employee should not be publicly revealed until and unless there is a finding of guilt.

Counseling from an outside community agency should be provided for any education employee accused of child abuse, with emphasis upon the fact that such referral does not presume guilt. Additional counseling should be available for the innocent employee after the case is decided.

The Association also believes in procedural and substantive due process for education employees accused of child abuse including a mechanism whereby false or unfounded accusations can be expunged from all records, and supports restoration of job status and all rights and benefits to education employees who are acquitted of child abuse charges. The Association further believes all members should be knowledgeable of current practices in dealing with such allegations. (1989, 1996)

F-39. Health Examinations

The National Education Association opposes the imposition of physical and mental examinations by governing boards for the purpose of harassment of education employees.

Physical and mental examinations of education employees should be required only when there is probable cause. Results of such examinations shall be subject to medical confidentiality, and the education employee shall be informed of all results.

The Association believes that health-related information must not be released without the written consent of the employee. The employee must have the right to examine and, if needed, correct his/her medical records.

The Association also believes that the cost of any required physical or mental diagnostic procedure should be incurred by the agency that requires such procedure and that education employees should be guaranteed the right to select their own physician. (1977, 1995)

F-40. Drug and Alcohol Testing

The National Education Association believes in a drug- and alcohol-free workplace. However, the Association believes that mandatory and/or random drug and alcohol testing of employees and job applicants is an unwarranted and unconstitutional invasion of privacy and opposes such testing. (1987, 1994)

F-41. HIV/AIDS Testing of Education Employees

The National Education Association opposes mandatory/involuntary human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) testing of education employees or education employment applicants. (1987, 1993)

F-42. Employees with HIV/AIDS

The National Education Association believes that education employees shall not be fired, nonrenewed, suspended (with or without pay), transferred, or subjected to any other adverse employment action solely because they have tested positive for the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) antibody or have been diagnosed as having HIV/AIDS. (1987, 1993)

F-43. Hepatitis Vaccinations

The National Education Association believes that governing boards should provide free hepatitis vaccinations to all employees choosing to be or required to be vaccinated. (1995, 2002)

F-44. Health Care Issues Awareness

The National Education Association supports health care issues awareness programs designed to help those coping with catastrophic illnesses. The Association also supports efforts to educate students, education employees, and the general public about such programs and about the benefits of blood, organ, and tissue donation. (1995, 2002)

F-45. Color Vision Deficient Employees

The National Education Association believes that the needs of all employees, including color vision deficient employees, must be met. All educational materials that use color coding for referencing information should be accompanied by an alternate method of identifying these items of information such as numbering or labeling the names of each color. (2004, 2005)

F-46. Stress Management and Wellness Programs

The National Education Association believes that adverse and stressful classroom and school conditions have led to increased emotional and physical disabilities among education employees. The Association supports stress management and wellness programs that facilitate the recognition, prevention, and treatment of stress-related problems. Such programs should ensure confidentiality and treatment without personal jeopardy.

The Association urges that the harmful effects of stress on education employees be recognized and demands procedures that will ensure confidentiality and treatment without personal jeopardy.

The Association also supports employee assistance programs (EAPs) as a voluntary resource that would assist education employees who are experiencing significant professional or personal problems by

providing confidential, professional counseling leading to improved health and job effectiveness. (1979, 1997)

F-47. Medication and Medical Services in Schools

The National Education Association believes that procedures should be established for students who must use prescribed medication or who need other medical services during school hours. The Association also believes established procedures should provide that—

- a. Only licensed medical personnel be required to 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. Written permission of the parent/guardian be required
- d. The initial dosage of medication not be given in the school except in life-threatening situations. Initial dosage is the first dosage administered from the prescription
- e. Each medication given be recorded on a medication log that includes date, time, and signature of the person giving the medication
- f. Medication be delivered in and 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. Proper storage for the medication be available.

The Association further believes that education employees who are not licensed medical personnel should be protected from all liability if they are required to administer medication or perform medical services. The Association believes that such education employees should have the right to refuse to administer medication or perform medical services without fear of repercussion. (1977, 2002)

F-48. School Nurses

The National Education Association urges its affiliates to enroll school nurses in active membership and to seek legislation that provides licensure/certification, inclusion in collective bargaining agreements, and achievement of an appropriate school nurse-to-student ratio. Each site must have at least one school nurse to every 750 students, with appropriate adjustments to safely accommodate students with special health needs and chronic illnesses.

The Association believes that professional development programs should be available to all licensed/certified school nurses to augment their skills in delivering health care services and in dealing with students with disabilities. (1980, 2006)

F-49. Save Harmless/Education Employee Liability

The National Education Association believes that educational institutions should—

- a. Provide legal liability protection for education employees when their duties include physical assistance to students
- b. Pay all costs—including attorneys' fees, expenses, and damages—incurred by employees and other agents in defending any civil action arising out of acts or omissions occurring during the performance of their duties
- c. Reimburse employees and other agents for all costs incurred in defending any criminal action arising out of acts or omissions occurring during the performance of their duties, provided that said action terminates in favor of the accused.

The Association recommends that educational institutions attempt to secure appropriate insurance to provide the aforesaid payment and reimbursement. (1976, 2001)

F-50. Protection of Individuals in Clinical Practice Programs

The National Education Association believes that individuals participating in clinical practice programs should be provided with legal status and liability protection by the appropriate teacher preparation institution.

The Association also believes that higher education institutions and cooperating school districts should supply any and all instructional materials that student teachers would require during their student teaching terms. Students who are implicitly or explicitly discouraged from outside employment during their clinical practice experiences should be provided financial assistance or tuition waivers by the appropriate teacher preparation institution.

The Association encourages its affiliates to work with school districts and other appropriate bodies to formulate standards for clinical practice programs. Supervising or cooperating teachers in a clinical practice program should have reduced teaching loads and be given a minimum established compensation. Acceptance of student teachers, interns, or residents by pre-K through adult education classroom practitioners should be voluntary.

The recommendation of the supervising or cooperating classroom teachers in such a program shall weigh heavily in the final decision regarding readiness to enter the teaching profession. Teacher preparation programs should offer alternative placements for individuals in those programs in the event of a strike or other work stoppage. (1970, 1999)

F-51. Transportation Liability Insurance

The National Education Association urges its affiliates to seek the enactment of state and local legislation that would require school systems and educational institutions to provide and to incur the expense of transportation liability insurance for education employees who are requested or required to transport students by private vehicle for any school-related function. (1978, 1995)

F-52. Part-Time or Temporary Education Employees

The National Education Association believes that the increased use and/or abuse of part-time education employees threatens the academic integrity of the institution.

The Association also believes that part-time education employees should be employed only when an educational program requires specialized training or expertise not available among full-time education employees and when the need for such training and expertise warrants less than full-time employment. The Association further believes that part-time education employees should receive the same salary and benefits as full-time education employees at least prorated according to workload. Part-time education employees should have the same opportunities to participate in collective bargaining, training, service on committees, and setting the academic direction of the educational institution.

The Association deplors the practice of employing part-time or temporary employees for the purpose of reducing institutional budgets, reducing the number of full-time education employee positions, or avoiding the maintenance of an increase in the number of tenure track positions. (1976, 1999)

F-53. Volunteers in Public Schools

The National Education Association believes that parents/guardians and other community volunteers have a valuable role to play 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 and by state statutes. 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 deplors the practice of using volunteer workers for the purposes of reducing instructional budgets or the number of full- or part-time education employee positions within a local school system.

The Association also believes that education employees should be involved in the decision-making process regarding the utilization of volunteers within local school systems. (1998, 2000)

F-54. Substitute Teachers

The National Education Association believes in the importance of employing professional educators to fulfill the critical role of substitute teachers. The Association also believes that substitute teachers perform a vital function in the maintenance and continuity of daily education.

In order to achieve and maintain the highest standards of student learning and professional practice, and to ensure quality instruction in every classroom every day, the Association further believes that substitute teachers must—

- a. Meet the same standards as other licensed teachers within the state
- b. Receive professional compensation and benefits
- c. Receive continuous professional development
- d. Be provided with materials and information appropriate to the position in which they are substituting, including any special needs of the students.
- e. Be entitled to representation and/or support by state and national affiliates in collective bargaining.

The Association condemns the practice of assigning substitute teachers to regular positions for an extended duration of time. Positions created by extended absence should be filled by available licensed teachers who are eligible to be placed on contractual status by the school district.

The Association opposes the practice of replacing absent teachers by dispersing students to other classrooms. The Association also opposes the use of individuals such as education support professionals, part-time employees, or employees hired through private agencies to cover classes. The Association further opposes requiring teachers to substitute during their preparation time, or in place of their regular teaching assignment.

The Association believes that school districts must provide full compensation for licensed teachers who substitute for personnel on extended leave. (1975, 2007)

F-55. Substitute Education Support Professionals

The National Education Association recognizes the importance of substitute education support professionals in the maintenance and continuity of daily operations. The Association believes that an education support substitute must meet the same standards as the employee for whom he/she substitutes.

The Association supports the right of substitute employees to organize for collective bargaining purposes. The Association also supports the practice of providing schedule pay plus basic and fringe benefits for education support professionals substituting for permanent education support professionals on extended leave. (1992)

F-56. Education Employees and Active Duty Service

The National Education Association believes that an education employee whose career is interrupted by a call to active duty service by the National Guard or the reserves should be guaranteed reemployment and all benefits that would accrue if the employee had continued in a position with the school system.

The Association also believes that the federal government, upon calling an educator to active duty, should supplement the service person's compensation so his/her family does not experience a loss of revenue or benefits. (1975, 2005)

F-57. Employment in Federal Schools

The National Education Association believes that the federal schools should adopt employment practices consistent with federal legislation and with the Association's established policies.

The Association also believes that equal rights, benefits, and entitlements should be accorded to all education employees who are employed in federal schools.

The Association urges governing bodies of federal schools to develop policies that ensure a minimum of 120 days notification of military installation and federal school closures. The Association also urges that personnel affected by these closures be provided support by the employer during this transition period. (1971, 1999)

F-58. Education in Correctional and Rehabilitation Agencies

The National Education Association believes that legislative and professional support should be given to members who teach in federal, state, and local correctional and rehabilitation institutions, hospitals, and other custodial agencies. The Association supports improving the standards of instruction in these institutions, which includes providing appropriately certified education professionals to carry out plans for students with individualized education programs (IEPs) or 504 plans.

The Association also believes that the rights of individuals who are protected under the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Americans with Disabilities Act must be preserved. (1973, 2007)

RETIREMENT/SOCIAL SECURITY

F-59. Retirement

The National Education Association believes that the retirement security of all pre-K through 12 members of retirement systems can be assured only by participation in a state or local retirement system with a guaranteed and adequate defined benefit retirement plan. Such plans must be funded in a manner that assures the long-term stability of the plan. For pre-K through 12 members of retirement systems, defined contribution provisions are appropriate only where they supplement adequate defined benefit provisions.

The Association also believes that pension funding should include the following principles:

- a. When actuarial liabilities exceed actuarial assets, the state and/or employer must make the necessary additional contributions to amortize the unfunded liability in no more than 30 years.
- b. When actuarial assets exceed actuarial liabilities, the state and/or employer should not reduce the rate of contributions below the normal cost of the plan.
- c. Employee contributions, if any, should be made on a pre-tax basis and be a percentage of total salary not to exceed the amount contributed by employers. The employer may pay part or all of the employee contribution.
- d. Credit for all wages and salary must be included in all retirement benefit calculations.

The Association further believes retirement benefits should, at a minimum, include:

- a. Full vesting in no more than 5 years
- b. An initial benefit constituting a replacement income of 50 percent of the single highest year's salary from all sources after 20 years of creditable service and 75 percent after 30 years of creditable service; this benefit calculation equates to a basic benefit formula multiplier of 2.5 percent for all creditable years of service
- c. Benefits based upon unisex mortality tables
- d. Automatic pre-funded full cost-of-living pension increases for retirees and beneficiaries
- e. Normal retirement eligibility with 25 creditable years of service or at age 55 if fully vested
- f. No provisions in core plans to reduce benefits because of the existence of any annuity or retirement benefit source including Social Security; supplemental retirement plans designed to provide a leveling benefit must assure a level lifetime replacement income that significantly augments existing benefits of all members over time
- g. Benefits that comply with nondiscriminatory Internal Revenue Service rules and regulations
- h. Joint survivor benefits should be equally available for spouses and domestic partners; joint survivor benefits for any other person should be available based upon IRS guidelines
- i. Disability or death benefits that should be equally available for spouses, dependants, and domestic partners
- j. Provisions that define a full year of creditable service based upon working 80 percent or more of the contract year or 80 percent or more of the hours constituting a full year; partial year credit should be earned on a pro-rated basis for any service less than the minimum required to obtain a full year of creditable service
- k. Provisions for the option of allowing unused sick leave and other end of service payments to be used for retirement credit
- l. Provisions permitting the purchase of service credit earned while a member of another retirement system including any other public school district, Department of Defense Education Activity

(DoDEA) schools or while in the Peace Corps, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), or military service

- m. Provisions permitting the purchase of service credit for sabbatical leaves, maternity/paternity/adoption leaves where credit is not automatically given, and any other approved leaves of absence; members affected by any forced leave provisions or separation of service provisions that are unlawful under current law should be permitted to purchase service credit for those periods of leave or separations at any time prior to retirement at the lowest plan rate
- n. Provisions for, upon termination of employment, the portability to other qualified pension plans of the full actuarial value of retirement credits earned
- o. Disability retirement for a service-connected disability available to education employees from the first day of employment; nonservice connected disability retirement shall be available for fully vested members; the benefit formula for disability retirement should yield benefits comparable to normal retirement benefits
- p. Provisions for any tax-sheltered annuity and deferred compensation plans that have actuarial tables that do not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, or national origin
- q. Provisions for health benefits for retirees, their spouses, domestic partners, and/or dependents that include a fully paid comprehensive health insurance plan regardless of Medicare eligibility; these benefits should be at least equal to those offered to full-time employees; those eligible for Medicare should be covered by a fully paid comprehensive Medicare supplement insurance benefit that along with Medicare equals the benefits provided to full-time employees.

The Association believes boards of trustees should:

- a. Consist of active members who are all elected by and from their plan's active membership and retired members who are all elected by and from their plan's retired membership; the total number of active and retired member trustees should constitute a majority of the board
- b. Administer the plan for the exclusive benefit of the beneficiaries of the system
- c. Have the duty and authority to oversee the administration of both benefits and investments
- d. Subject to their fiduciary responsibilities, have all the powers necessary to ensure their independence from the plan sponsor, including the power to obtain by employment or contract the services necessary to exercise the trustees' powers and perform the trustees' duties, including actuarial, auditing, custodial, investment, and legal services
- e. Undertake periodic independent actuarial reviews and audits
- f. Distribute an annual financial statement to all members
- g. Use actuarial and investment policies with the highest level of fiscal integrity
- h. Ensure that counseling, education, and services are available to all active and retired members
- i. Recognize that, in their role as fiduciaries, they can identify and participate in appropriate educational programs and initiatives in order to acquire/maintain skills and expertise; these educational programs should be internally funded and managed exclusively by the board of trustees
- j. Protect the systems' stability by opposing any actions that impair or jeopardize the guaranteed rights of plan participants' benefits.

The Association also believes:

- a. Contributions made by employees to the pension plan should be federal tax deferred and not subject to FICA taxes
 - b. Contributions made by employers to the pension plan should not be subject to FICA taxes
 - c. Benefits paid should not be subject to any state's income tax
 - d. Benefits paid should not be offset due to eligibility in multiple retirement programs.
- (1969, 2007)

F-60. Investment of Retirement System Assets and Protection of Earned Benefits

The National Education Association believes that retirement system assets can be invested in any type of investment that plays an appropriate role in achieving risk and return objectives reasonably suited to the retirement program. In the investment and management of retirement systems assets, and in a manner

consistent with their fiduciary responsibilities and all applicable federal, state, and local statutes, trustees should, among other circumstances, consider—

- a. General economic conditions
- b. The possible effect of inflation or deflation
- c. The role that each investment or course of action plays within the overall portfolio of the retirement program
- d. The expected total return from income and appreciation of capital
- e. Needs for liquidity, regularity of income, and preservation or appreciation of capital
- f. The adequacy of funding for defined benefit plans based on reasonable actuarial factors
- g. Protection of the long-term employment interests and opportunities of participants in the plan
- h. Opposition to investments in corporations whose policies or expenditures of funds undermine child welfare and/or public education, when other investments provide equivalent benefits to retirement system members.

Boards of trustees charged with the authority to invest and manage the assets of public employee retirement systems should adopt a statement of investment objectives and policies for each retirement program that include—

- a. The desired rate of return on assets overall
- b. The desired rate of return and acceptable levels of risk for each asset class
- c. Asset allocation goals
- d. Guidelines for the delegation of authority
- e. Information on the types of reports to be used to evaluate performance.

The Association also believes that the boards of trustees of education employee retirement systems should make every effort, consistent with their fiduciary obligations, to participate in the decision-making process of corporations in which the systems hold stock by casting stockholder votes that benefit the interests of the participants and beneficiaries of the retirement systems and those of the united education profession and by electing to corporate boards members and/or representatives who support public education. The Association further believes that the boards of trustees of public employee retirement systems should coordinate their voting in companies in which they have a mutual interest.

The Association believes that the assets of retirement systems in which public education employees participate should be managed and invested for the sole and exclusive benefit of the participants and beneficiaries of those systems. Expenditures from a system trust fund should only be made for the benefit of trust beneficiaries and for the reasonable expenses of administering the system. All retirement benefits earned by education employees should, under the law, be payable to such employees. Existing retirement benefits should be maintained or improved. No person participating in a retirement system should be required to accept any reduction in benefits below those in force at any time during the period of membership. The retirement benefits are earned, and therefore, inviolate.

The Association is aware of incursions on retirement system assets by state and municipal governments. Such incursions involve either a misuse of assets or the failure to appropriate required funds to the system. Both practices result in increasing accrued liabilities, which reduces the financial soundness of the system and jeopardizes the security of education employee retirement benefits. Retirement systems can best be protected by the passage of state constitutional protections against any diminution of plan assets that is not in the sole interest of plan participants and beneficiaries or, absent such constitutional safeguards, by at least the passage of federal and/or state legislation that provides for protections against any diminution of plan assets that is not in the sole interest of plan participants and beneficiaries.

The Association also believes that a retirement system should be exempt from federal regulations when its plan is in compliance with minimal standards prescribed by federal, state, and local statutes. (1976, 2002)

F-61. Social Security

The National Education Association believes that Social Security should be available to eligible education employees where desired, but should not be mandated. Contracts with Social Security should provide for supplementary plans rather than integrated or coordinated plans.

The Association also believes Social Security benefits should be guaranteed at no less than the current level. The benefits should continue to guarantee inflation adjusted retirement income as well as continue

to provide guaranteed inflation adjusted survivor benefits for the families of deceased workers and disabled workers and their families.

The Association further believes that Social Security retirement and survivor benefits should be based upon the Social Security program and Social Security taxes. The Association supports the goal of comprehensive health insurance for retirees.

The Association also supports the reform of Social Security laws to eliminate discriminatory offset provisions and discrimination based on sex, marital status, or time of retirement and to reduce the retirement age. The Association further supports reforms to improve the financial security and stability of the Social Security system without the privatization of the system. No benefit promised or no benefit for which money has been collected should be withdrawn without adequate replacement. (1977, 2005)

F-62. Medicare

The National Education Association believes that Medicare is a contract between the United States government and its citizens and that this commitment must not be breached.

The Association also believes that initiatives should be undertaken to ensure the long-term solvency of the Medicare system and to guarantee a level of health benefits that provides and ensures high quality, affordable, and comprehensive health care for all Medicare-eligible individuals. (1999, 2007)

G. SECURE PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS, CERTIFICATION, LICENSURE

G-1. State Professional Standards Boards

The National Education Association believes that the profession must govern itself. The Association also believes that each state should have a professional standards board, composed of a majority of practicing public school teachers.

Professional standards boards should have exclusive authority to license and to determine criteria for how a national certificate will be recognized for professional educators. Further, these boards should have the exclusive authority to establish the standards regarding licensure, including procedures for suspension and revocation. The Association opposes legislation that compromises the authority of state standards boards and urges the elimination of state statutes that conflict with this authority. The Association further believes that these boards must apply National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards as a minimum for granting, denying, or withdrawing the approval of teacher preparation programs. (1969, 2000)

G-2. National Certification

The National Education Association supports voluntary national certification by which the profession grants recognition to an individual who has met qualifications specified by the profession. The Association recognizes that this function is filled by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), which is composed of a majority of practicing public school teachers.

The NBPTS establishes appropriate assessment procedures by which individuals demonstrate exemplary practice in pedagogy and in subject matter areas, issues certificates to all individuals who meet NBPTS-established standards, maintains a roster of those who have been certificated, and encourages reciprocity with state professional standards boards.

The Association also supports the periodic evaluation of such certification procedures to ascertain whether cultural, economic, gender, racial, or age bias is perpetuated by the requirements for certification. (1987, 1998)

G-3. Licensure

The National Education Association advocates rigorous state standards for entry into the teaching profession. As established by professional standards boards, these standards must include each of the following:

- high academic performance
- extensive clinical practice experience
- demonstrated knowledge of subject matter, pedagogy, and child development.

Every candidate, including those entering via alternative routes, should meet every standard prior to being granted a teaching license.

Assessments used to measure teacher skill, knowledge, and instructional competency must be valid and unbiased and should be included as one element of comprehensive assessment for completion of a teacher preparation program as well as for licensure into the profession.

The Association opposes licensure processes that lower or eliminate any of the standards outlined above, including "testing-only" approaches to teacher licensure.

The Association asserts that a teaching license should signify that an individual entering the teaching profession is competent to teach. A teaching license must be recognized as the primary requirement for employment in every primary, secondary, and adult education public and private school. The Association believes that all states should offer appropriate pre-K licensure. No license should be issued unless an individual possesses the entry-level knowledge and skills required for teaching. No emergency licenses should be issued. No assignments should be permitted outside the teacher's area of licensure without appropriate concurrent retraining supported by the local district.

The Association urges the elimination of state statutes/regulations that require teachers to renew their licenses. Where such renewal continues to be required, standardized literacy and basic skills tests to determine competency should not be used.

The Association supports regulations that would put professional educators, the majority of whom are licensed and practicing public school teachers, in state licensing agencies.

The Association also supports the periodic evaluation of licensure procedures to ensure that cultural, economic, gender, racial, and age biases are not perpetuated by the requirements for licensure. (1985, 2007)

ACCREDITATION

G-4. Accreditation in Higher Education

The National Education Association supports strong regional, state, national, and discipline-based accrediting bodies that promote and encourage faculty participation in the accrediting process. The Association believes that programs, faculties, administrations, and facilities should be reviewed to determine their ability to enhance learning opportunities for students. The Association also believes that accrediting agencies should not impose standardized curricula, assessment models, or pedagogical methods on institutions of higher education but rather should base accreditation on standards as applied to the institutional mission statement. (1995, 1998)

G-5. Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Institutions

The National Education Association believes that teacher preparation programs must be approved at two levels: at the state level through an agency such as a professional standards board and at the national level through the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

The Association also believes that NCATE and its governing boards must include representatives of all levels of the teaching profession as well as students preparing to teach. (1969, 2000)

H. UNITE EDUCATION EMPLOYEES FOR EFFECTIVE CITIZENSHIP

CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS

H-1. The Education Employee as a Citizen

The National Education Association believes that every education employee has the right and obligation to be an informed and politically active citizen. The Association also believes that, as private citizens, education employees have the right to express their personal viewpoints in public without fear of censorship or intimidation. The Association supports voter education to alert voters to voting laws and procedures and key political issues. The Association also supports written governing board policies to guarantee education employees their political rights. The Association further believes that local government units should be prevented from restricting the right of education employees to run for any elective office. Provisions should be made to enable education employees to serve in public office without curtailment of annual increments, tenure, retirement, or seniority rights, or to carry out jury duty without personal financial loss.

The Association believes that it is the duty and responsibility of education employees to involve themselves in the selection, election, and reelection of qualified, committed candidates who support goals that will provide quality education. Therefore, the Association urges its members to become politically involved and to support the political action committees of the Association and its affiliates. (1969, 1997)

H-2. The Right To Know

The National Education Association believes that open meeting and public disclosure laws are essential to permit the monitoring of governmental actions. (1972, 1997)

H-3. The Right To Vote

The National Education Association believes that the principle of one-person—one-vote must apply at all levels of government, including the election of the President of the United States.

The Association recognizes the right to vote as a constitutional right guaranteed to all eligible citizens. The Association supports the continued maintenance of the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The Association also supports voting and absentee provisions that are accessible, simplified, accurate, reliable, and verifiable for all elections and further supports election administrations that provide for open, fair, secure, and publicly verifiable ballot counting.

The Association opposes all actions that encourage or result in voter disenfranchisement. The Association supports voter education programs and uniform registration requirements without restrictive residency provisions or restrictive identification requirements. (1971, 2006)

H-4. U.S. Constitutional Convention

The National Education Association believes that the U.S. Constitution safeguards freedoms fundamental to our society. The Association also believes that all proposed changes to the Constitution should be directed through the traditional congressional proposal and state ratification process rather than through the convening of a constitutional convention, which opens the Constitution to the possibility of total revision. (1982, 1997)

H-5. Member Involvement in Community Organizations

The National Education Association encourages its members to become involved in citizen-based community organizations and to influence those organizations to address issues of common concern to their local, state, and national education associations. (1992)

H-6. Participation in Professional Associations

The National Education Association believes that every educational employee has the right and obligation to participate fully in professional associations. Policies adopted by governing boards should provide released time without loss of pay to education employee fulfilling leadership responsibilities or attending professional meetings. Released time should be equitably provided to all education employees, without harassment and without preference given to educational position. (1986, 1997)

H-7. National Health Care Policy

The National Education Association believes that affordable, comprehensive health care, including prescription drug coverage, is the right of every resident.

The Association supports the adoption of a single-payer health care plan for all residents of the United States, its territories, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

The Association will support health care reform measures that move the United States closer to this goal and that achieve universal and comprehensive health care coverage, control costs while assuring quality, emphasize prevention of health care problems, and are financed by means that assure greater equity in the funding of that health care.

The Association also believes that until a single-payer health care plan is adopted, Congress should make no cuts in Medicare/Medicaid benefit levels or in federal funding of the Medicare/ Medicaid program. (1978, 2003)

H-8. Energy Programs

The National Education Association believes that a national energy policy should reflect the efficient use of energy from all sources, provide research to develop new sources of energy, stress rapid development of renewable energy sources, and promote conservation.

The Association supports ensuring the energy-efficient operation of public schools and encourages the use of new energy sources and energy-efficient design in school renovation and construction. The Association also supports efforts that develop energy conservation awareness and school building energy audit programs. The Association further supports programs that investigate energy efficiency recommendations, research, and public health and safety programs for all educational levels in the schools. (1977, 1997)

H-9. Environmental Responsibility

The National Education Association believes that businesses and governmental agencies should be responsible for designing, producing, and using products that are reusable, recyclable, biodegradable, or disposable without contaminating the environment.

The Association encourages its affiliates and members to include these criteria in selection of products for use and to work with school systems and educational institutions in developing purchasing policies using these criteria.

The Association also believes that business and governmental agencies should dispose of waste in a manner that will have the least possible impact on the environment. (1990, 1995)

H-10. Historic Preservation

The National Education Association encourages the preservation of historically significant lands and structures for the purposes of preserving our nation's heritage and maintaining important historic resources for future generations. (1990, 1994)

H-11. Statehood for the District of Columbia

The National Education Association affirms that all citizens of the United States should enjoy the full benefits of citizenship. Accordingly, the Association supports efforts to achieve statehood for the District of Columbia.

The Association believes that the concept of fiscal autonomy is consistent with this position and that the federal payment to the District of Columbia should be based on an established formula. (1969, 1997)

I. PROMOTE AND PROTECT HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS

INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS

I-1. Peace and International Relations

The National Education Association recognizes the interdependence of all people. The Association believes in the ideals of peace, freedom, and human dignity based upon respect for the individual and cultural diversity. The Association urges all nations to develop treaties and disarmament agreements that reduce the possibility of war, provide for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and guarantee the rights of nations to exist within safe and secure borders, free from the threat of pre-emptive attacks. The Association also believes that such treaties and agreements should prevent the placement of weapons in outer space.

The Association supports the principles stated in the United Nations (UN) Charter and believes that the UN furthers world peace and promotes the rights of all people by preventing war, racism, and genocide. The Association further believes that Education International contributes to peace and international relations by promoting dialogue among the world's education employees.

The Association supports the U.S. Institute of Peace, which provides publications, information, programs, training, and research data in developing peacemaking and conflict resolution skills. (1973, 2006)

I-2. International Court of Justice

The National Education Association believes in the concept of the rule of law throughout the world and recognizes that the International Court of Justice is one instrument to resolve international disputes peacefully.

The Association urges participation by the United States in deliberations before the court. (1986, 1997)

I-3. International Criminal Court

The National Education Association believes that the International Criminal Court is critically important as an instrument to help end the impunity of human rights violators, provide for the rule of law, and hold accountable those who commit the gravest human rights crimes, including genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

The Association also believes that the United States should ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and recognize and support its authority and jurisdiction. (2005)

I-4. World Hunger

The National Education Association believes that worldwide attention needs to be focused on hunger and malnutrition. The Association supports continued relief to those in need as well as the education of children, youth, and adults concerning world hunger and its effects so that they may develop the capacity and the commitment to resolve these problems. (1975, 1989)

I-5. Covert Operations and Counterintelligence Activities

The National Education Association believes that U.S. covert operations and counterintelligence activities should be compatible with the basic principles of our democratic society.

The Association also believes that all such activities should be conducted under the jurisdiction of the executive and legislative branches of our government and that individuals must be held accountable when they work outside of the specific directives issued for a given operation. (1989)

I-6. Nuclear Freeze/Cessation

The National Education Association believes that nuclear war is not survivable. The proliferation of weapons technology and the sale and distribution of conventional and nuclear weapons increase the possibility of nuclear war.

The Association also believes the United States and all other nations should adopt a verifiable freeze on the testing, development, production, upgrading, emplacement, sale, distribution, and deployment of nuclear weapons, materials, and all systems designed to deliver nuclear weapons. The Association supports the development of treaties for the cessation of all nuclear weapons testing, providing they contain adequate verification and enforcement provisions. The Association also supports the development of treaties to eliminate the world's nuclear weapons arsenals. (1982, 2000)

I-7. Nuclear Facilities, Radioactive/Chemical Pollutants, and Waste Incineration

The National Education Association believes that strict monitoring of nuclear facilities and radioactive/chemical pollutants and waste incineration should be required. The Association urges the development and implementation of new technologies for the safe transport and recycling of all wastes. The Association also urges regulation of the U.S. Department of Energy by an independent agency to reduce the further radioactive pollution of our environment.

The Association supports programs that would educate the public to the dangers and benefits of nuclear power, recycling of nuclear wastes, problems of nuclear waste disposal, and health risks associated with waste incineration.

The Association also believes that the people of a state should make the final determination as to whether or not toxic and/or nuclear waste processing sites or the transportation of nuclear waste shall be within their state boundaries. Contiguous states directly affected environmentally by processing sites should be included in the final determination. Strict guidelines concerning the construction and operation of waste incinerators should be required. The Association further believes that such facilities should not be constructed within a 10-mile radius of any school facility.

The Association believes that education employees must be involved in the development and dissemination of emergency plans in the case of accidents that potentially could result in environmental or health hazards. (1989, 1997)

I-8. Global Warming

The National Education Association believes that global warming causes significant measurable damage to the earth and its inhabitants.

The Association also believes that humans must take steps to change activities that contribute to global warming.

The Association supports environmentally sound practices that abate global warming and its effects. (2007)

I-9. Global Environmental Restoration

The National Education Association believes that when pollution occurs the responsible entities must be accountable for an expeditious, complete cleanup and restoration of the environment and its ecological systems. In addition, the Association supports international efforts to reduce the levels of toxic metals and chemicals in the food chain. (1990, 2005)

I-10. International Consumer Protection

The National Education Association believes that products sold and/or advertised abroad by U.S.-based companies must at least meet the consumer, health, and safety standards that are required for trade within the United States.

Furthermore, the Association opposes coercing other nations to accept U.S. products that do not meet those nations' consumer, health, and safety standards or practices. (1990)

HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS

I-11. Human Rights

The National Education Association believes that the governments of all nations must respect and protect the basic human and civil rights of every individual, including equal access to education as embodied in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Association condemns any action that limits or prohibits the free and responsible exercise of these rights and believes that all education employees must lead in the effort to prevent any encroachment on basic human and civil rights.

The Association also believes that the U.S. government should withhold all forms of military aid to governments that violate these rights.

The Association further believes that violence is abhorrent. The Association also condemns violence, as well as the tolerance of violence, and believes that all nations must pass and enforce measures to curtail and prevent actions and practices that inflict pain, suffering, mutilation, or death, and offer asylum to those threatened by such actions.

The Association expresses concern that the utilization of trade sanctions on food and medical supplies by any nation of the world to achieve political objectives fails to adequately consider the possible humanitarian impact of those policies on the civilian populations of the affected nations, particularly the young, the elderly, and the poor.

The Association deplors the holding of hostages, all forms of torture, and the taking of human life in the name of making a political statement. The Association believes that it is the responsibility of all governments to discourage such actions by individuals or groups of individuals. The Association supports an international judicial system that would hold accountable those who violate human rights.

The Association calls upon all nations to release all education employees and students who are being held without charge and to refrain from the use of coercion and arbitrary detention to punish the people of a specific area of their territories.

The Association further condemns the practice of capital punishment in nations without judicial safeguards such as the presumption of innocence and/or the right to counsel.

The Association also expresses concern that the practice of capital punishment in the United States impacts individuals disproportionately on the basis of social class, race, ethnicity, and gender. The Association supports ongoing efforts to review the practice of capital punishment for inequities based on these and other factors.

The Association opposes any federal, state, or local law; executive order or presidential signing statement; and/or amendment to the U.S. Constitution that curtails or infringes on basic human rights. (1977, 2007)

I-12. Civil Rights

The National Education Association is committed to the achievement of a totally integrated society. The Association calls upon Americans to eliminate—by statute and practice—barriers of race, color, national origin, religion, philosophical beliefs, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, disability, size, marital status, and economic status that prevent some individuals, adult or juvenile, from exercising rights enjoyed by others, including liberties decreed in common law, the Constitution, and statutes of the United States. Civil order and obedience to the law must be ensured without abridgment of human and civil rights. All individuals must be assured a speedy and fair judicial process with free legal counsel for those in need. To be effective citizens, individuals must be trained and aided in developing strategies and expertise that will enable them to operate effectively in a democratic society.

The Association opposes any federal, state, or local law; executive order or presidential signing statement; and/or amendment to the U.S. or state constitutions that curtail basic civil rights. (1969, 2007)

I-13. Human and Civil Rights of Children and Youth

The National Education Association believes that the human and civil rights of children and youth must be protected and opposes the exploitation of children and youth under any circumstances. The Association also believes that all children possess a fundamental civil right of access to a system of high quality public education grounded in the principles of adequacy and equity.

The Association condemns the use of children and youth by organizations, governments, and political/military movements to advance their political objectives. The Association also condemns governments that subject young people to physical or mental abuse, violence, and unwarranted detention or incarceration. The Association supports the rights of youth to safely access education and other human services during conditions of war, occupation, and civil strife. The Association opposes the impressment or acceptance of minors into the service of the armed forces of any government or into the service of revolutionary forces under any circumstances. The Association also supports programs and other efforts to prevent and alleviate the effects of such trauma upon children and youth.

The Association further believes that children and youth in detention centers must be provided educational programs that include any special education services per a student's individualized education program (IEP) or a student's 504 plan to enable a student to become a contributing member of society. Teachers in such centers must be prepared to provide instruction in life skills and learning skills.

The Association also opposes the imposition of the death penalty or life imprisonment without parole on individuals whose offenses were committed prior to age 18. The Association further condemns the practice of placing children and youth in trouble in abusive environments. The Association further opposes the placement of children and youth who are not charged with any offense in facilities with persons who are charged with criminal offenses. The Association believes that there must be separate facilities for the detention and for the incarceration of children and youth and supports the development of alternatives to supplement the use of such facilities. (1988, 2007)

I-14. Self Determination of Indigenous Peoples

The National Education Association recognizes that American Indians and Alaska Natives are sovereign nations with the rights of self-determination and supports Native Hawaiians in reclaiming their rights of self-determination and sovereignty.

The Association also recognizes that sovereignty includes the right to provide for culturally appropriate education of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. (2007)

I-15. Family Planning

The National Education Association supports family planning, including the right to reproductive freedom.

The Association urges the government to give high priority to making available all methods of family planning to women and men unable to take advantage of private facilities.

The Association also urges the implementation of community-operated, school-based family planning clinics that will provide intensive counseling by trained personnel. (1985, 1986)

I-16. The Right To Organize

The National Education Association believes that all people have the right to organize in order to achieve an improvement of their living conditions through their own free and independent unions and organizations. The Association urges that this right be advocated where it is now abused or denied and strengthened where it is now secured.

The Association deplors anti-union activities by business interests, school districts, and government agencies, including efforts that attempt to destroy and undermine labor unions and organizations, penalize members for union involvement, and deprive workers of their right to organize and bargain. (1982, 1993)

I-17. Displaced Workers

The National Education Association believes that entities that close, move, sell, downsize, or reorganize their facilities have an obligation to provide displaced employees with a variety of retraining and support programs. These entities shall assist their employees with placement in jobs having comparable pay and benefits and shall maintain existing union contracts.

The Association opposes the use of public funds to encourage the movement of U.S. companies to other countries at the expense of U.S. union labor. (1992, 1993)

I-18. Use of Union-Made Products and Services

The National Education Association recognizes the historical role of organized labor in its struggle for economic and social justice. The Association advocates the use of union-made products and services. The Association supports the use of appropriately established boycotts and picket lines. (1991, 1994)

I-19. Migrant Workers

The National Education Association is concerned with the plight of migrant workers. The Association supports the efforts of migrant workers to be represented in collective bargaining by the organization of their choice. (1985)

I-20. Immigration

The National Education Association supports efforts to improve the immigration process, including the provision of due process, political asylum, and timely legalization without regard to national origin. The Association also supports policies that protect the integrity of the family unit. The Association believes that English and citizenship classes should be available in sufficient numbers to ensure that immigrating individuals can comply with all federal mandates for permanent residence and/or citizenship.

The Association opposes any immigration policy that denies human and/or civil rights or educational opportunities to immigrants and their children regardless of their immigration status, hinders workers' abilities to organize, imposes excessive fees and fines on those seeking legalization, or criminalizes individuals or groups who support or assist immigrants regardless of their status. The Association also opposes any policy that makes legalization or naturalization dependent upon military service and/or service in a combat zone. The Association condemns such policies as inhumane and discriminatory. (1984, 2007)

I-21. Housing and Health Care for All

The National Education Association believes that all members of our society have the right to adequate housing and health care. The Association supports programs to provide adequate housing and health care for the homeless and others in need of assistance. (1989, 1997)

I-22. Fair Housing

The National Education Association believes that all citizens should be free to reside in the communities of their choice. The Association supports the elimination of the discriminatory practice of redlining. (1969, 1997)

I-23. Invasion of Privacy

The National Education Association believes that every individual has a right to privacy. The Association continues to be concerned about the indiscriminate surveillance of citizens or groups by private and public agencies or individuals, especially the posting of addresses, phone numbers, and/or travel routes of individuals on Internet Web sites. The Association condemns the use of information

gathered and stored and the exchange of such information, including library patron, medical, e-mail, and credit card records, without explicit release from the person or persons involved.

The Association also believes that rights to privacy and confidentiality must be guaranteed through federal and state legislation. (1970, 2004)

I-24. Freedom of Creative Expression

The National Education Association supports freedom of expression in the creative arts and therefore deplores any efforts by governments to suppress, directly or indirectly, such expression. The Association also supports the freedom of publicly funded agencies to exercise judgment in the awarding of grants to individuals and organizations. (1990)

I-25. Violence Against Women and Girls Worldwide

The National Education Association condemns domestic and other violence against women and girls, as well as the tolerance of such violence, and believes that all nations should pass and enforce measures to curtail and prevent actions, policies, and practices that inflict pain, suffering, or death. (1993, 1997)

I-26. Sexual Assault

The National Education Association believes that all members of society should be protected from becoming victims of sexual assault. The Association also believes that it is a violation of the victims' right to privacy to release the names of the victims or to have their past sexual history admitted as evidence in assault cases. The Association supports fair and equitable treatment by health, hospital, and law enforcement agencies for sexual assault victims. The Association further believes that access to necessary services/programs must be made available to victims and their families. These services must be funded by appropriate government agencies.

The Association believes that states should develop a systematic process for gathering evidence when such assaults occur and supports the use of DNA testing as a means to identify perpetrators of sexual assault. The Association also believes in the importance of counseling and rehabilitation for the assailant, and the protection of privacy and due process rights for both the victim and the alleged assailant. (1981, 2005)

I-27. Human Relations in the School

The National Education Association believes that improved human relations is essential to the school environment. To improve human relations in all schools, the Association calls for—

- a. School recruitment and staffing policies that will ensure culturally diverse education employees
- b. Appropriate classroom and other student-related activities, particularly those that are responsive to the cultural diversity and historical backgrounds of our society
- c. Further development of continuing education programs to educate school and community personnel
- d. Reduction of the ratio of students to licensed staff. This reduction should be to the level teachers determine to be essential to improved learning
- e. Development of ways to improve community-police and student-police relations through the joint efforts of school, community, and law enforcement agencies
- f. Joint discussions to promote understanding of human and civil rights and responsibilities in all segments of society
- g. Development and implementation of curricula that teach students about positive human relations.

(1972, 1999)

I-28. Bullying

The National Education Association believes the school environment must be free from all forms of bullying. Bullying is the systematic and chronic infliction of physical hurt and/or psychological distress

on one or more individuals. The Association recognizes that bullying in schools is not limited to students, but can include members of the entire school community.

The Association encourages its affiliates to work with local school districts and institutions of higher education to develop comprehensive schoolwide programs including all stakeholders to address 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 recognize, understand, prevent, oppose, and eliminate bullying
- c. Provide training for all school employees in bullying prevention and intervention
- d. Provide professional development materials and resources.

These programs should be reviewed, revised, and updated to reflect changing needs. (2004)

I-29. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

The National Education Association believes that Martin Luther King, Jr. Day should be a state holiday in every state to focus on the importance of human relations. The Association encourages the observance of this day to promote good will among all people. (1969, 2001)

I-30. Freedom of Religion

The National Education Association believes that freedom of religion is a fundamental human right. The Association also believes that choice of religion is an intensely personal decision. Instruction in religious doctrines and practices is best provided within a family setting and/or by religious institutions.

The Association further 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 various world religions.

The Association believes that local school boards should adopt policies that govern religious activities on school property. Such policies must respect the separation of church and state; govern voluntary, student-led meetings with adult supervision before or after normal school hours; treat all religions on an equal basis; and protect the rights of students and education employees.

The Association also believes that the constitutional provisions on the establishment of and the free exercise of religion in the First Amendment require that there be no sectarian practices in the public school program. The Association opposes the imposition of sectarian practices in the public school program and urges its affiliates to do the same.

The Association also opposes any federal legislation or mandate that would require school districts to schedule a moment of silence. The Association particularly opposes a moment of silence as a condition for receiving federal funds. (1995, 1999)

I-31. Gun-Free Schools and the Regulation of Deadly Weapons

The National Education Association 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, and for those who profit from the illegal sale, importation, and distribution of these weapons. The Association also believes that individuals who bring guns or deadly weapons to school should be excluded from school and school grounds until undergoing mandatory prescribed intervention.

The Association further believes that strict prescriptive regulations are necessary for the manufacture, importation, distribution, sale and resale of handguns and ammunition magazines. The possession by the private sector of automatic weapons and military-style semiautomatic assault weapons should be illegal, except for historical and collection purposes, which must be strictly regulated. A mandatory background check and a mandatory waiting period should occur prior to the sale of all firearms. The Association believes that minors shall not be allowed to buy, own, or sell firearms.

The Association also believes that gun owners should participate in educational programs that stress responsible ownership, including safe use and storage of guns. (1982, 2003)

I-32. Victims of a Crime

The National Education Association believes that victims of a crime should be treated with dignity and compassion, without the fear of intimidation. Victims and their families should be notified of and have the right to be present/represented at all hearings and legal proceedings involving the defendant/perpetrator.

The Association also believes that it is a violation of the victims' right to privacy to release the names of the victims. The Association further believes that victims and their families must be made aware of and have free access to necessary services/programs. These services/programs must be funded by the appropriate government agencies. (1987, 2001)

I-33. Military Veterans

The National Education Association believes that many veterans of military conflicts are suffering physical, social, and psychological problems because of their involvement in combat and related military activities. The Association supports federal and state increases in benefits and programs, including retirement benefits, for these military veterans to meet their needs. (1981, 1997)

I-34. Veterans Day

The National Education Association believes that children and people of this nation should honor and memorialize the sacrifices and heroic acts of the 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 sacrifices made by service men and women in the protection of the United States during war and peace. Affiliates and school systems should plan observances to promote the celebration of veterans' courage, patriotism, and sacrifice for every member of society. (2001)

I-35. Traffic Safety

The National Education Association believes that traffic deaths and injuries must be reduced. The Association supports—

- a. Enactment and enforcement of effective and equitable legislation regulating driving while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or other mind-altering substances
- b. Appropriate educational experiences for students regarding the effects of driving while under the influence
- c. Recognized community and school groups in their efforts to reduce death and injury from accidents caused by drivers under the influence
- d. Legislation requiring mandatory restraint of all passengers in motor vehicles, excluding school buses. The legislation should require the use of seat belts for adults and minor children and approved car seats for infants and young children
- e. Legislation requiring the use of helmets for bicycle and motorcycle riders
- f. Continued research and the development of safety features and passive restraint systems for passengers in school buses and for the inclusion of those features shown to be effective. (1982, 1999)

I-36. Federal and State Support for Public Welfare

The National Education Association believes that conditions that cause reliance on public welfare must be alleviated. The Association also believes that the federal and state governments must work together to provide assistance in education, housing, child care, health care, transportation, and job training/placement. Furthermore, assistance must continue during the transition from welfare to work.

The Association further believes that no current employee should be displaced nor position abolished as a result of government efforts to move individuals from welfare to work. (1971, 1999)

RIGHTS OF SPECIFIC GROUPS

I-37. Protection of Senior Citizens

The National Education Association condemns the physical, mental, and economic abuse of senior citizens.

The Association also condemns those policies and practices that result in poor medical care; physical, mental, and economic abuse; excessive pharmaceutical charges; inadequate dietary programs; deteriorating living quarters; and untrained staff for patients and residents of nursing and retirement homes.

The Association supports legislation and consumer education to eliminate the use of unethical techniques, scare tactics, and misrepresentation to divest senior citizens of their financial resources.

The Association believes that its affiliates should join in political action to bring about legislative and administrative reform at the state and national levels. (1978, 1997)

I-38. People Living with HIV/AIDS

The National Education Association believes that people living with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) should be ensured fair and equitable treatment allowing equal access to education, employment, living conditions, and all rights guaranteed by law. (1994)

I-39. Disabilities Awareness

The National Education Association believes that the human and civil rights of students, education employees, and community members with disabilities must be protected. The Association encourages its affiliates to educate their own members and the public at large to bring about an awareness of disability issues. (1999, 2001)

I-40. Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

The National Education Association believes that all buildings should be in compliance with the accessibility standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act. (1988, 1997)

I-41. Protection of Persons with Mental Disabilities

The National Education Association believes that the human and civil rights of individuals with mental disabilities must be protected.

The Association also believes that individuals with mental disabilities who have committed criminal offenses should receive all diagnostic and/or psychological services that meet their needs and guarantee their right not to be abused while incarcerated. The Association further believes that individuals with mental disabilities should not be subjected to capital punishment. (1989, 1997)

I-42. Care of the Mentally Ill

The National Education Association believes that it is society's responsibility to provide quality care for individuals suffering from debilitating mental illness.

Such persons should have access, as needed, to primary hospital care, outpatient services, necessary medication, social services, and housing in the least restrictive environment.

Financial assistance for such care should be based upon the ability of the individual to pay. (1986)

OPPOSITION TO ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

I-43. Elimination of Discrimination

The National Education Association is committed to the elimination of discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity, economic status, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, and all other forms of discrimination.

The Association believes that honest and open conversation is a precursor to change. The Association encourages its members and all other members of the educational community to engage in courageous conversations in order to examine assumptions, prejudices, discriminatory practices, and their effects.

The Association condemns any code or system of discrimination and exploitation. The Association also believes that sanctions are both justified and necessary against governments, organizations, businesses, and/or groups that utilize or support discriminatory practices. (1976, 2005)

I-44. Discrimination by Organizations

The National Education Association believes that organizations are strengthened by offering membership on a nondiscriminatory basis.

The Association shall not participate in programs sponsored by any organization and/or its auxiliary that deny membership to certain segments of our society on a discriminatory basis when such denials are not related to the stated purposes of the organization, nor shall the Association utilize the facilities of such organizations.

The Association urges its affiliates and members not presently holding membership in such organizations to discontinue any involvement with such organizations and urges that its members not participate in, provide programs to, or join organizations utilizing exclusionary membership.

The Association also urges its members now holding membership in such organizations to work actively from within for the total elimination of such exclusionary clauses. (1974, 1998)

I-45. Institutional Discrimination

The National Education Association believes that the fabric of our society is strengthened when the contributions of all its diverse members are encouraged and embraced. The Association recognizes that institutional and public policies and practices sometimes discriminate against some segments of the population.

The Association deplores those social, institutional, and governmental actions and policies that engender discriminatory practices. 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. (1998, 1999)

I-46. Use of Prejudicial Terms and Symbols

The National Education Association deplores prejudice based on race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identification, gender, age, disability, size, marital status, or economic status and rejects the use of names, symbols, caricatures, emblems, logos, and mascots that promote such prejudice. (1992, 2002)

I-47. Hate-Motivated Violence

The National Education Association believes that hate-motivated violence, including, but not limited to, physical and verbal violence against individuals or groups because of their race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, disability, size, marital status, or economic condition is deplorable. The Association also believes that the threat or promotion of such violence is equally deplorable. The Association further believes that federal, state, and local governments and community groups must oppose and eliminate hate-motivated violence and that current events and/or economic conditions should not diminish such opposition. (1991, 2002)

I-48. Violence Against and Exploitation of Asians/Pacific Islanders

The National Education Association opposes the expression of covert and overt sentiments, threats, and incidents of racially motivated physical and/or verbal violence toward Asians/Pacific Islanders. The Association believes that community-based educational programs should be developed by local school systems in conjunction with Asian/Pacific Islander groups to eliminate this violence. The Association supports clear and consistent law enforcement to protect the civil and human rights of the victims of such violence.

The Association also opposes the exploitation of women as mail-order brides. (1984, 1999)

I-49. Internment/Containment Policies

The National Education Association recognizes that restrictive and/or punitive action based on race or national origin is a violation of constitutional guarantees and is repugnant to the American ideals of life, liberty, and property.

The Association condemns the practice of internment/containment of racially identifiable segments of our newly immigrated and current populations. (1982, 1998)

I-50. Reparation of Native American Remains

The National Education Association believes in the dignity of the dead and encourages laws to prevent the robbing of graves.

The Association also believes that the remains of thousands of Native Americans in storage throughout the United States should be returned for interment to the tribes and/or areas from which they were taken. The Association further believes that American Indian sacred items in museum collections should be returned to the tribes of their origin. (1989, 1998)

I-51. Linguistic Diversity

The National Education Association believes that, although English is the 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; and must be challenged.

The Association recognizes the importance of an individual's native language and culture and the need to promote and preserve them through instruction, public service announcements, and all other forms of communication. (1987, 2004)

I-52. Inclusive Medical Studies

The National Education Association believes that women and members of racial 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. (1991)

I-53. Sexual Harassment

The National Education Association recognizes that sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination or abuse.

The Association believes that students and education employees should be protected from sexual harassment. The Association encourages its affiliates to work with local school districts and institutions of higher education to—

- a. Establish strong policies defining and prohibiting sexual harassment
- b. Develop educational programs designed to help people recognize, understand, prevent, combat, and eliminate sexual harassment
- c. Develop and publicize a grievance procedure that encourages the reporting of incidents of sexual harassment, resolves complaints promptly, and protects the rights of all parties

- d. Form and train support groups to assist in the counseling of targets of alleged sexual harassment. (1988, 1999)

I-54. Equal Opportunity for Women

The National Education Association believes that all persons, regardless of gender, must have equal opportunity for employment, promotion, compensation (including equal pay for comparable worth), and leadership in all activities.

The Association supports an amendment to the U.S. Constitution (such as the Equal Rights Amendment) that guarantees that equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state because of gender. The Association urges its affiliates to support ratification of such an amendment. The Association also supports the enactment and full funding of the Women's Educational Equity Act.

The Association also believes that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission must have cease-and-desist authority to act in all cases of discrimination based on race, creed, color, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identification, and gender.

The Association further believes that governing boards and education associations must eliminate discriminatory practices against women in employment, promotion, and compensation. Personnel policies must include family leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, leave for adoption of a child, child-care leave, and professional leave that encourages women to participate in professional growth experiences and to prepare for administrative and executive positions.

The Association believes that national, state, and local agencies should consider research specifically related to women and their health problems and concerns.

The Association also believes that professional associations at all levels should adopt policies that ensure women equal access to elective, appointive, and staff positions.

The Association further believes in the establishment of women's education committees in local and state affiliates as a vehicle for implementation of equal opportunity for women.

The Association believes that sexism and sex discrimination must be eliminated and endorses the use of nonsexist language. (1969, 2002)

I-55. Personal Relationships in Higher Education

The National Education Association recognizes that in institutions of higher education adult students and education employees may establish personal relationships. However, such relationships should be voluntary and not be used to coerce or influence others for personal advantage. Thus, the Association believes that sexual relationships between a faculty member and a student currently enrolled in the faculty member's course, or under the supervision or direction of any higher education employee, are unprofessional. The Association encourages its affiliates in institutions of higher education to seek the establishment of strong policies declaring such relationships unprofessional. (1989, 1998)

I-56. Businesses Owned by Minorities and/or Women

The National Education Association believes that businesses owned by minorities and/or women should be encouraged. The Association also believes that the federal government should initiate and continue policies that encourage businesses owned by minorities and/or women. (1989, 2004)

INTEGRATION AND DESEGREGATION

I-57. Integration in the Public Schools

The National Education Association believes that it is imperative that full integration of the nation's schools be effected.

The Association recognizes that acceptable integration plans will include affirmative action programs and a variety of devices, such as geographic realignment, pairing of schools, grade pairing, and satellite

and magnet schools. Some arrangements may require busing of students in order to comply with established guidelines adhering to the letter and spirit of the law.

The Association urges its affiliates to encourage school boards to study and consider seriously the negative impact on minority students when schools located in minority neighborhoods are targeted for closing.

The Association will assist its affiliates to ensure that education employees, parents/guardians, and students are involved in the development of plans designed to achieve integration. The Association also believes that state and federal agencies should provide funds necessary to implement integration programs, including funds for student transportation. The Association also urges participation in citizen advisory committees—consisting of members designated by the local education association, parents, and representatives of community organizations, business, clergy, and media—that reflect the ethnic makeup of the community in developing, implementing, and evaluating student desegregation plans.

The Association further believes that integrated schools must provide students with equal access to all curricular and extracurricular programs and to technological equipment and knowledge.

The Association opposes any attempts to delay or impede implementation of desegregation orders and will, therefore, resist all efforts to resegregate integrated schools. The Association also opposes any governmental attempts to resegregate public schools through any means, including vouchers, charters, and other school-choice initiatives.

The Association will continue to oppose vigorously the systematic displacement or demotion of minority, especially Black, teachers and administrators to achieve integration. The Association further opposes actions of boards of education to finance integration plans through reduction of school staff. In addition, the Association will oppose the capricious reassignment and displacement of Hispanic teachers and administrators because of desegregation and bilingual programs. (1969, 2004)

I-58. Ethnic-Minority Educators

The National Education Association believes that multiracial teaching staffs are essential to the operation of schools. The Association deplors the current trend of diminishing numbers of ethnic-minority educators.

The Association urges local and state affiliates and appropriate governing bodies and agencies to work to achieve and maintain ethnic diversity in all categories of educational employment. The Association also urges Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools to actively recruit and hire ethnic-minority educators.

The Association also believes that, whenever possible and/or appropriate, elders and/or community leaders of a particular culture should be invited to share their skills and knowledge as instructors of a culturally appropriate curriculum. (1979, 2006)

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

STRONG EFFECTIVE ASSOCIATIONS/AFFILIATES

J-1. Strong Professional Associations

The National Education Association believes that an independent and professional organization is vital to its members and affiliates. This independence must be safeguarded in any alignments with other organizations.

The Association also believes that the unified effort of a professional organization promotes the interests of its members and advances a strong, healthy educational environment. (1974, 2004)

J-2. Supporting Locals in Jeopardy

The National Education Association believes that assistance should be afforded to those affiliates that exist within concentrated territories of competing organizations. The Association encourages its affiliates to initiate and support programs that will strengthen and enhance the local organizational structure and promote membership growth within the Association. Continuous communications and cooperation of local, state, and national bodies are keys to the success of the local affiliates in building solid professional organizations.

The Association also believes that assistance should be given to those local affiliates that have been—

- a. Targeted for take-over efforts
- b. Taken over by competing organizations
- c. The object of “association busting.”

Members of affiliated locals that are not the bargaining agent must be provided an effective means of processing grievances. (1976, 1999)

MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION

J-3. Membership Participation in the Association

The National Education Association believes that every member has the right and obligation to participate fully in the Association. The opportunity to participate in the Association must be afforded every member without fear, intimidation, or retribution.

The Association also believes that school policies should provide released time without loss of pay to those who are fulfilling leadership responsibilities, attending meetings, or participating in other Association activities. (1969, 1994)

J-4. Minority Participation in the Association

The National Education Association believes that at every phase of governance and on all decision-making levels of the Association there should be minority participation at least proportionate to the identified ethnic-minority population of that geographic level.

Ethnic minorities should be included as candidates for positions at all levels. The Association should promote minority participation in program development and should employ minorities and women in staff positions consistent with Association affirmative action policies.

The Association also believes that its affiliates should maintain a commitment to organizational policies and programs that promote the training and involvement of minorities at all levels of the organization.

The Association further believes that there is a need for systematic evaluation of minority participation at all levels. (1972, 1996)

J-5. Student Member Participation

The National Education Association believes that eligible students should have the opportunity to join the Association. The Association also believes that students should be encouraged to participate in the Association at the local, state, and national levels. Preprofessional and leadership training should be priorities.

The Association further believes that its members should promote membership in the NEA Student Program to all eligible students, including student teachers in members’ classrooms, and provide opportunities for community outreach, professional development, and political action. The Association believes that advisors of NEA Student chapters should be members of the Association.

The Association believes that state affiliates should facilitate the establishment of student chapters in all higher education institutions that offer teacher preparation programs.

The Association also believes that local and state affiliates should collaborate with student programs in order to facilitate the transition from student to professional membership status within the Association so that Student members become involved in the activities and leadership pathways of the professional Association and its affiliates. (1991, 2006)

J-6. Retired Member Participation

The National Education Association believes that retired members should be active participants within the Association at the national, state, and local levels.

Retired members should be involved in areas such as political action, legislative lobbying, member training, crisis assistance, development and maintenance of educational excellence, welfare and safety of children, public relations, and retirement issues.

The Association also believes that its members should promote membership in the Retired Program to all eligible members. (1976, 2002)

J-7. Promotion of Teaching as a Career Choice

The National Education Association supports the establishment of organizations involving students interested in the field of education as a profession. The Association believes that its state and local affiliates should promote the establishment of such organizations at all age levels and encourage its members to serve as advisers.

The Association also believes that state and local affiliates should strive to build cooperative relationships and partnerships with government, business, and community leaders to promote the field of education as a profession and as a vital role in every community. (1980, 2006)

GLOBAL EDUCATION PROFESSION

J-8. Universal Education Employee Rights

The National Education Association supports the efforts of all associations of education employees in the world to secure basic rights for their members. The Association commends those education employees and students around the world who champion academic freedom and campaign against illiteracy, especially when their activities must be conducted under oppressive and often life-threatening conditions. The Association stands ready to help all associations of education employees obtain their basic rights as listed in the NEA resolutions.

The Association condemns all governments for their roles in any acts of injustice against education employees and their organizations and, thus, the children and youth of those countries. The Association urges the U.S. government to refrain from supporting any governments that suppress academic freedom and literacy.

The Association also urges the U.S. government to refrain from any plan for overt or covert action that would destabilize or overthrow any government or would adversely affect a government's successful campaign to improve literacy, equal education support, health care, and living and working conditions. (1981, 1995)

J-9. Organizations of Other Nations

The National Education Association believes that a strong international community of education employees is necessary to promote international understanding and to defend the interests of education employees in all countries. The Association actively supports the Education International and will continue to cooperate with professional education organizations of other nations. (1969, 1995)

