

MSEA Resolutions 2016

Resolutions are formal expressions of opinion, intent, belief, or position of the Association. They set forth general concepts in clear, concise language, are broad in nature, state the positions of the Association positively and without ambiguity, and are consistent with the goals of the Association.

As members of MSEA, representing the organized education profession in this state, we believe in encouraging “the diffusion of knowledge and virtue, the extension of a judicious system of general education, the promotion of literature, the arts, sciences, agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, and the general amelioration of the condition of the People.”

Providing each student with the opportunity to learn is basic to the preservation of our form of government and to the well-being of our society. Therefore, the study, interpretation, and improvement of the educational program will continue to be a primary concern of MSEA.

As a state affiliate of the National Education Association, MSEA supports the resolutions of NEA as our national platform. (95)

General Policy of the Association

A. Improve Public Support for Public Education

Decisions affecting public support for public education are political decisions. The improvement of public support for education will require MSEA to:

- a. conduct a political action program that results in members being recognized as an effective political force in the state;
- b. work for a balanced partnership of local, state, and federal governments in providing financial support for public education;
- c. join with other groups to seek the enactment of legislative priorities affecting public education and public employees.

A. I. Financial Responsibility for the Program

MSEA believes in equal educational opportunities for each citizen of Maryland. The major responsibility for financing the total program of educational experience lies with the State of Maryland. All funding must come from dedicated revenue.

MSEA further believes the state should increase its financial commitment to public education to guarantee support sufficient to bring about improvement of current local programs. All such funds should be distributed on the basis of recognized differences in need.

MSEA believes that public funding for education at all levels should be limited to the support of public schools. Where public funds are presently provided to K-12 non-public schools, these funds should be discontinued (except for federal school lunch and milk programs). Until such funds are discontinued, these funds should be controlled by public education agencies and be limited to tuition-free schools that meet all the standards required of public schools.

MSEA also believes the federal government must continue to provide assistance to each state for the support of public education, including aid to federally impacted areas without assuming any control of educational policies

and urges continued support by the Congress of the United States for expanded federal participation in the financing of elementary and secondary programs.

MSEA further believes new programs mandated by the state legislature, the State Board of Education, or the federal government must include adequate funding for implementation to include materials, staff, and staff development; receipt of such funds must be in addition to, but not cause for reduction of, the level of local funding. (94, 97, 04, 05, 07, 10)

A.2. Financial Access to State Colleges, Universities and Technical Training Centers

MSEA believes every qualified student who graduates from an accredited Maryland high school should be guaranteed financial access to state colleges, universities, and technical training centers. (88, 89, 94)

A.3. Tax Limitation Proposals

MSEA believes that as long as public schools do not have the taxing authority and are funded by state and local revenues, tax limitation proposals present a serious threat to adequate school funding. (88, 04)

A.4. Taxation of Federal Properties and Installations

MSEA believes the federal government should pay state and local governments a fee equal to the applicable state and local tax rates for such property and installations to the appropriate political subdivisions. (89, 06)

A.5. Legislative Policy of the Association

MSEA believes that an integral part of the success of its legislative program will require active participation by all education employees in the political life of their communities on the local, state, and national levels. Whether this political activity is non-partisan, bipartisan, or partisan, guided by the provisions of the Maryland Fair Election Practices Act, the Association must present a united front and inform all members of the facts, statements, records, and platforms concerning candidates for public office.

MSEA also believes it is obligated to guarantee a full voice to all members, affiliated local associations, and departments in determining the program of MSEA. All interested members should be involved through legislative workshops, committee activities, and Representative Assembly meetings. (91, 94, 06, 12)

A.6. Legislation and Educational Decisions

MSEA believes the extraordinary regulatory authority legally delegated to the appointed State Board of Education to determine policies relating to the program of instruction has the potential for serious abuse of power and top-down decision making.

MSEA also believes the legislature must ensure the protection of each child's rights to sound educational practices and programs and public education employees' rights to share in curricular and instructional decision-making.

MSEA further believes that legislators should channel concerns for improvement in the program of instruction to state and local boards of education for proper consideration, rather than to pursue such concerns through the legislative process, except when the public interest clearly demands legislative intervention. (87, 91, 92, 94, 96, 06, 11)

A.7. Parental Accountability

MSEA believes parents have the initial and sustaining primary responsibility to provide for the development of moral, ethical, and spiritual values in their children, along with health training and a positive attitude toward learning.

MSEA also believes effective schools have parental support for instructional and educational goals. Local education agencies (LEAs), in cooperation with local affiliates, should develop sound and effective school/community relations programs that ensure active and meaningful parental involvement.

MSEA further believes it should encourage local affiliates to work with parent groups to determine those skills for which parents, not teachers, should be more appropriately held accountable. (06, 07, 10, 13)

A.8. Career and Technology Education

MSEA believes career and technology education provides students with important skills and career opportunities so they may become productive members of our society. MSEA further believes that placement into career and technology education programs should be voluntary. Program opportunities must be increased and adequately funded to ensure proper implementation. (94, 04, 10)

A.9. Political Participation

MSEA believes public education programs are significantly influenced by the decisions of elected or appointed officials. MSEA also believes education employees have the responsibility to directly influence the course of society by working for the improvement of their communities through active political participation; influencing decisions at all levels of government that affect schools, youth, and the teaching profession; supporting those candidates who demonstrate a broad understanding of community improvement at all levels; and encouraging and assisting potential voters, particularly those newly enfranchised, to register and become politically active citizens. (91, 94, 96, 05, 07)

A.10. Elected Boards of Education

MSEA believes in replacing appointed boards of education with boards elected by the jurisdictions they serve. MSEA also believes these elected school boards should have full taxing authority in order to meet the educational needs of the children of the community. MSEA further believes boards of education must be responsive to the concerns of the citizens they represent and must be held accountable for their actions. MSEA believes members of local boards of education should enroll their children in public schools. (94, 98, 04, 07)

A.11. Composition of School Boards and Accessibility to School Board Meetings

MSEA believes that school boards must be representative of the population within the school district.

MSEA also believes that school board meetings should be held at times and places that allow employee and community involvement in educational decision-making and to guarantee their right to participate. (94, 96, 04)

A.12. Board of Education Evaluation

MSEA believes it is necessary for all educational institutions to be held accountable in meeting the educational challenges of today.

MSEA also believes that serious questions have been raised concerning the capacity of boards of education to determine and effectively meet the educational needs of today's society.

MSEA further believes that the Association, in cooperation with the local associations, should establish and seek funding for a joint community-professional evaluation of local boards of education to consider the role and function of the board, its involvement and responsiveness to local associations and its total program commitments. (94, 04, 08)

A.13. Student Attendance

MSEA believes that school attendance is essential for student success. MSEA also believes in full enforcement of mandatory school attendance laws. MSEA further believes that students and parents should be held legally accountable for adhering to these laws. (88, 89, 91, 04, 09)

A.14. Community Relations

MSEA believes positive community relations are a continuing obligation of the profession and in the best interest of the education of children. MSEA also believes local associations should maintain an ongoing internal and external public relations program and provide a two-way communications network with its members and the public. (94, 04)

A.15. Coalitions

MSEA believes in developing coalitions with the public sector and community organizations that share goals similar to those of the United Education Profession. (94, 96, 11)

A.16. Teacher Involvement in the PTAs

MSEA believes in the stated goals of the Maryland Congress of Parents and Teachers and urges local affiliates and PTAs to establish effective communications between teachers and the communities they serve.

MSEA also believes that the governing bodies and working committees of the local PTAs should include significant teacher representation to develop mutually beneficial programs. (88, 91, 04)

A.17. Extremism and the Schools

MSEA believes that the nationwide attack on the public schools and the teaching profession by extremist groups and the efforts of these groups to recruit young people in our schools should be condemned. MSEA also believes that our affiliates and members should actively oppose organizations whose objectives are antithetical to the basic philosophy of our public educational system. (87, 89, 90, 98, 06)

A.18. Effective Communication and the Mass Media

MSEA believes that orderly communication and interaction between professional educators and the community is in the best interest of educating each child.

MSEA also believes that educators should seek the cooperation of parents and all stakeholders concerned to influence the policies of the mass media and, at the same time, to help each child become an intelligent, critical viewer, listener, and reader. (87, 91, 94, 04, 07, 11)

A.19. Media Services

MSEA believes that all forms of media, including film, television, music, computer, and print media, play an important role in the education of the public.

MSEA also believes that all media forms should be easily accessible to all. Visual media should include closed captioning for the deaf/hearing impaired and read-along captions on children's commercial and educational programs.

MSEA further believes auditory media should be available as needed for the visually impaired.

MSEA believes that electronic media, including computer software, in the educational process improves the learning opportunities for students, improves the quality of instruction, improves the effectiveness of education employees, and reduces educational inequities.

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

MSEA further believes public education should have an opportunity to be served by cable television, provided the franchises granted stipulate that the firms involved provide such services without cost to any local public school systems, professional association, and public service groups.

MSEA believes that action may be necessary to ensure that at least ten percent (10%) of any channels granted in a cable television franchise will be available for use by local public school systems, professional associations, and public service groups without charge. (06)

A.20. Quality Television Programming for Children

MSEA believes that emphasis on violence can offer no positive values to television viewers, particularly children, and that potential negative impact does exist.

MSEA also believes that the quantity of high quality television programming for children should be increased. (90, 94, 06, 08)

A.21. Legal Holidays

MSEA believes that the following days in each and every year should be regarded as legal holidays and be duly observed as such, and no business, governmental, or educational institutions shall be in operation on these six days, except those institutions designated by law as emergency: the third Monday in January, known as “Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Birthday Observance”; the third Monday in February, known as “Presidents’ Day”; the last Monday in May, known as “Memorial Day”; the fourth day of July, called “Independence Day”; the first Monday in September, known as “Labor Day”; and November 11th, known as “Veterans’ Day.” All state association buildings, with the exception of the Annapolis office if necessary, should be closed on the national holiday designated for Martin Luther King, Jr. observance. We urge all local affiliates to close their offices for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. (88, 89, 91, 05, 06, 11)

A.22. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

MSEA recognizes that historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) continue to play a vital role in helping Americans in their efforts toward building a truly pluralistic society.

MSEA believes that the programs of HBCUs should continue to be reviewed and updated so that they maintain diverse and quality faculties and student bodies.

MSEA further believes its affiliates should 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. MSEA believes that closing, downgrading, or merging HBCUs is not in the best interest of the educational community. (16)

B. Professional Excellence for School Programs and Personnel

MSEA believes that its members, along with administrators and the community, should take every opportunity to make positive changes in their schools. (96, 97)

B.1. The Opportunity to Learn

MSEA believes that each child must be guaranteed the opportunity for a free public school education in a safe, non-disruptive environment. This concept should be interpreted as justification for considering the

implementation of supplemental services to prevent disruption of regular learning environments, and/or the institution of alternative programs or placements - other than regular school settings - for those children exhibiting chronic disruptive behaviors. MSEA also believes that, in order to maintain a safe learning environment, it is the responsibility of educators to effect immediate, temporary removal of such students from their classes. Upon such removal, a thorough investigation must be made using all available resources.

MSEA further believes that school principals and/or appropriate school-level teams have the responsibility to recommend permanent removal should the investigation make it clear that available programs and resources are inadequate to ameliorate disruptive behavior. If these procedures are not followed, the teacher may appeal to the next authority level.

MSEA believes that boards of education must provide quality educational support systems for students who have been removed from the school.

MSEA also believes that local associations should seek contractual language creating joint board-association discipline task forces. The purpose of these shall be to develop a code of discipline and to monitor all policies bearing on each student's opportunity to learn.

MSEA further believes that in order to provide education employees of Maryland with the necessary tools to cope with disruptive student behavior in our schools, Local Education Providers (LEP) should allocate the resources necessary to provide staff support, in-service education, materials, supplies, equipment, special schools, and other facilities which will reduce or solve these problems. (94, 96, 06, 15)

B.2. The Elimination of Discrimination and Sexism in Curriculum and Program

MSEA believes in the concept of the equality of all individuals.

MSEA also believes in eliminating factors in education that channel boys and girls into narrow roles and limit career choices. This should include programs that increase educators' consciousness of the different patterns of behavior, curricula offerings, expectations, rewards, and punishments presently administered to students according to their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and social backgrounds.

MSEA further believes that it is the responsibility of the entire educational community, including MSEA, and local, state, and federal governments, to develop policies and practices which would eliminate stereotyping and discrimination or bias for any reason. (96, 98, 05, 06, 10)

B.3. Mainstreaming and Inclusion

MSEA believes that Federal Public Law 101-476 (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act Section 504 and state laws ensure all children with disabilities will be educated in the least restrictive environment. Therefore, MSEA also believes in making every effort to provide positive learning experiences and appropriate placements for all students. MSEA further believes in the inclusion of students with disabilities when the following considerations are met:

- a. The inclusion model provides a favorable learning experience;
- b. Students are prepared by appropriate transition experiences and guidance;
- c. Discipline policies and practices used by local education agencies consider the special needs of each individual child;
- d. All educators participating in the inclusion model have equal input in decisions concerning the included student;
- e. Educators are prepared for these roles through system-provided in-service training with college and/or MSDE credit or by local boards of education in-service programs;

- f. Appropriate instructional materials (i.e. technology) and supportive services, such as hiring of qualified paraprofessional personnel or using student personnel services, are provided for the educator and the child with special needs;
- g. Modifications should be made in all class sizes, scheduling, and curriculum design to accommodate the shifting demands the inclusion program creates;
- h. Educators should be provided with sufficient time during the contractual workday to complete both case management duties (which includes but is not limited to testing, progress monitoring, writing Individualized Education Plans, writing progress reports, etc.), as well as instructional planning with the mainstreamed or inclusion student(s).
- i. There is a systematic evaluation and reporting of program developments;
- j. Adequate additional funding and resources are provided exclusively for the implementation of the inclusion model;
- k. The use of trained instructional assistants/paraprofessionals, co-teachers, and special education teachers is extended to all special areas as well as academic areas.
- l. Administrators and/or their designees are responsible for providing coverage for one-to-one hourly assistants, instructional assistants, special education teachers, and related service providers when such personnel are absent or pulled from providing specialized instruction. ((90, 91, 93, 94, 96, 98, 05, 09, 10, 13, 16)

B.4. Continuance of Quality Education for All Students

Public Law 101-476 (IDEA) mandates that “to the maximum extent appropriate, disabled children are educated with children who are not disabled.” Section 504 and state laws extend services to the needs of all students.

MSEA believes in placement in a least restrictive learning environment, provided all students in the classroom continue to receive quality education. MSEA also believes that decisions about student placement must be made by all parties concerned—teacher(s), parent(s), education employees, and administrators. MSEA further believes that, when warranted, teachers should have the right to document concerns regarding placements for individual students. Such documentation should be made available to the IEP team for its review. (93, 99, 01, 05, 09)

B.5. Supplementary Programs for Students

MSEA believes educational programs must be developed and improved to meet the needs of all students regardless of abilities.

MSEA also believes that such programs should emphasize a broad range of activities for responding to students’ varied needs and that teachers must have a major role in designing these programs and the opportunity to work with other appropriate education employees to supplement the services provided in the classroom.

MSEA further believes that funding for these services and for development of programs at the state and local levels must come from additional monies and not the reallocation of current education funds.

Affiliates are encouraged to negotiate and lobby for the training and hiring of professionals to meet the needs of these students. (91, 93, 95, 97, 01, 05)

B.6. Program of Instruction

MSEA believes that people serve the community best when the educational program meets their needs and that this can be best achieved through state support for programs that will provide appropriate, differentiated instruction for all students regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, creed, disabilities, sexual orientation, or intellectual capability.

MSEA also believes that curricula will be improved by involving classroom teachers in a meaningful way in the development of curricula according to the needs of the pupils they teach. Such involvement should be made possible by providing release time or appropriate compensation.

MSEA further believes that Early Childhood Education is a critical component of closing the achievement gap for all students. MSEA believes that all children should have access to developmentally-appropriate, fully-funded, public pre-K and kindergarten programs.

MSEA also believes in the concept of career education in all educational endeavors and disciplines to develop an appreciation for the dignity of work and to develop a salable skill.

MSEA further believes in the improvement of education by greater emphasis on college and career readiness initiative through the expansion of:

- a. Vocational/Technical Education (including the full implementation of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968);
- b. Programs for Special Education (including implementation of all federal and state aid to support them);
- c. Library Media programs (including the employment in every subdivision of at least one full-time professionally library-certificated media supervisor);
- d. Distance Learning development and utilization throughout the state as a means of enriching local educational programs; and
- e. Instruction in the use of electronic media, including the Internet.

MSEA believes that education in human growth and the development of the individual is an integral part of the school curriculum at the appropriate age and maturity of the student.

MSEA also believes that education employees, boards of education, and parents must be involved in the development and continuing refinement of sex education programs. Procedures should be included to permit parents to have the opportunity of withdrawing their children from such programs. (91, 93, 94, 95, 96, 98, 05, 06, 13, 14)

B.7. Teacher Rights and Responsibilities

MSEA believes it to be imperative that teachers participate in the development and implementation of programs within their disciplines. MSEA also believes the following are specific rights and appropriate responsibilities of teachers.

1. Identifying the educational needs of students within the limits of the teacher's certification;
2. Developing plans to meet the educational needs of students by working within existing guidelines, programs, goals, and objectives of the local education agency and/or the state.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Selecting appropriate methodology;
- b. Selecting and utilizing materials of instruction;
- c. Providing a safe and conducive learning environment;
- d. Evaluating individual performance; and
- e. Providing non-teaching time during the school day for the sole purpose of developing, evaluating, revising, and planning for the implementation of the specific learning objectives.

3. Consulting with appropriate personnel and/or parents regarding the delivery of educational services;

4. Referring students requiring unique or specialized educational services to appropriate personnel and/or programs;
5. Developing and making decisions with administration, regarding programs, goals, and objectives. Factors to be considered include, but are not limited to:
 - a. The validity of programs, goals, and objectives;
 - b. The adequacy of resources available; and
 - c. The ability to assess accurately the achievement of programs, goals, and objectives. (88, 89, 90, 91, 96, 97, 05, 15)

B.8. Instructional Staffing and Class Size

MSEA believes all children deserve an opportunity to learn with consideration given to each child's learning style and that children learn best in learning environments that allow the teacher to provide for individualization of the instructional program and quick attention to each child's problems and needs.

MSEA also believes that, to achieve optimal education outcomes, establishment of instructionally appropriate pupil-teacher ratios is imperative. MSEA further believes that an optimal class size of 15 should be the goal in regular classes and, in programs for students with exceptional needs, a proportionally lower number that complies with the student's IEP. Flexibility is required when determining instructionally appropriate class sizes in order to meet each child's needs.

MSEA believes that the curriculum and methods of instruction for each grade, subject, and special education area are unique. Special consideration must be given to these unique characteristics in determining workable teacher loads and teacher-pupil ratios. Site-based teams must be consulted to determine acceptable class sizes and teacher loads for their respective areas of competence.

MSEA also believes that administrators, librarians, counselors, specialists, etc., should be excluded in calculating pupil-teacher ratios. Their inclusion results in an inaccurate accounting of the actual number of students in the classroom setting. MSEA further believes that the need for constructive class size demands that local associations should be involved in decisions regarding administrative and supervisory positions to make sure such positions are not established at the expense of classroom teacher positions.

MSEA believes that decisions pertaining to the organization of a school are the prerogative and the responsibility of site-based teams consisting of a majority of classroom teachers. The teachers on these teams must represent all instructional specialties affected by the team's decisions. These decisions include:

- a. The utilization of the staff;
- b. The grouping of students for instruction and school-related activities; and
- c. The scheduling of time and space. (95, 96, 97, 98, 05)

B.9. Accountability in Education

MSEA believes that parents, education employees, and the business community working collaboratively share the responsibility in educational decision making. Education employees should be accountable only to the degree that they share responsibility in educational decision making. The guarantee that each child has an opportunity to learn is the responsibility of the entire public school community including legislators, other governmental officials, local school boards, administrators, other education employees, parents, students, and taxpayers.

MSEA also believes individual teachers, local school departments, grade levels, and teaching teams must have final responsibility for defining specific learning objectives for which they are responsible. Individual teachers or teacher committees should develop broad learning objectives after utilizing input from appropriate education employees, the local community, and the school board. Individual teachers should use such input to define specific learning objectives for which they will be accountable.

MSEA further believes that accountability and assessment programs should in no way infringe upon the teaching techniques used by the individual teacher. The development of specific learning objectives at the classroom level should be used to improve communications and promote more favorable relationships among parents, students, and teachers.

MSEA believes that systems of accountability disproportionately emphasize cognitive (skill-oriented) goals. MSEA also believes affective (value-oriented) goals contribute as significantly to the total education and growth of the individual as cognitive goals. Any accountability system must emphasize both the affective and cognitive domains equally before its implementation. MSEA further believes that accountability must rely on multiple measures of assessment and that assessment accountability programs must not limit the breadth and scope of learning to which students are exposed.

The professional judgment of the teacher is the most important aspect to be considered in determining the progress of students toward meeting the educational goals of the school. The achievement of each child should be considered individually. (91, 93, 94, 96, 03, 05)

B.10. Retention and Promotion Policies

MSEA believes that decisions regarding promotion and retention of students should be based primarily upon the judgment of educational teams, consisting of teachers, administrators, other school personnel, and parents. However, the assigning of a student report card grade rests solely with the teachers.

Further, MSEA also believes that all educators, parents, and school board members should actively seek to end the abuse of social promotion of students or grade-level advancement based primarily on age and that a process for developing and augmenting alternative programs should be provided for those students who are not eligible for promotion.

MSEA further believes that the school team should consider the benefits of retention for special education students, as well as having those years used at the end of the student's schooling. (95, 96, 05, 16)

B.11. Graduation Requirements

MSEA believes that the Maryland State Board of Education should recognize that when students fulfill their graduation requirements through MSDE-approved alternative means, schools should receive statistical credit. (New 09)

B.12. Addressing Student Discipline Problems

MSEA believes that to provide education employees with the necessary tools to cope with the increasing level of undesirable student behavior and unsafe disruptive environments in our schools, the State of Maryland should provide whatever funds are necessary to ensure staff support, professional development, education, materials, supplies, equipment, special schools, and other facilities to remediate these problems. (New 10)

B.13. Dropout Prevention

MSEA believes that high school graduation must be a federal, state, and local priority.

MSEA also believes that school systems, working collaboratively with parents/guardians and the broader community, should provide interventions, social/emotional and legal supports, academic assistance and career programs to ensure that students pre-K through grade 12 remain in school through the completion of high school graduation requirements.

MSEA further believes in advocating for all students who are at high risk of dropping out, i.e., low income students, English language learners, the homeless, racial and ethnic minorities, habitual truants, those with academic failure, and those in special education. (New 09)

B.14. Truth in Testing

MSEA believes that intelligence, aptitude, and achievement tests have historically been used to differentiate and discriminate rather than to measure performance and have, therefore, prevented equal educational opportunities for all students, particularly minorities, students with disabilities, lower socioeconomic groups, and women. MSEA also believes that research on the structure of the intellect identifies multiple and varied mental operations and advances the significant premise that these operations can be taught, and that intelligence is dynamic rather than fixed. MSEA opposes the use of such test results as the sole factor to determine placement or promotion. (87, 91, 93, 05)

B.15. State Test Scores

MSEA believes the Maryland State Department of Education test scores do not accurately indicate the weaknesses of instructional programs and, therefore, should not be used by the state board to evaluate school systems, individual schools, or teachers. (90, 94, 09)

B.16. Professional Responsibility and Student Records

MSEA believes that teachers should give careful consideration to the preparation and use of student records. (91, 94, 99)

B.17. Maryland Assessment Program

In the event that valid and reliable test scores can be obtained, MSEA believes that the appropriate uses of test results will include:

- a. provisions to inform teachers at the building level, in a timely manner, regarding the ability of students to apply knowledge and skills;
- b. the basis for future school improvement efforts when generated locally by teachers and combined with other information;
- c. provision of data on school and student performance relative to the areas tested; and
- d. Acquisition of information to assist schools in need of ideas, resources, and strategies to improve their ability to meet the educational needs of students. (92, 93, 02, 05, 12)

B.18. Standardized Test Scores for College Admission

MSEA believes that a student's performance on standardized tests should not be the sole determinant for college admission. MSEA also believes standardized tests should be closely scrutinized for cultural bias in an effort to reduce the possibility of discrimination against minority and/or economically disadvantaged students. (89, 96, 09)

B.19. School Counseling Services

MSEA believes that guidance and counseling services should be integrated into the entire educational system, beginning at the pre-kindergarten level. MSEA also believes that Counseling Comprehensive Developmental Program should be aligned with American School Counseling Association (ASCA) standards to provide adequate and more effective intervention services to all students. MSEA further believes guidance and

counseling services should be provided in a manner that establishes counselor/student ratios which allow ample time for meaningful assistance to students, thereby enabling said students to realize their full potential in all areas of growth and achievement. (88, 93, 11)

B.20. Home-Schooling

MSEA believes that the current Maryland State Board of Education Bylaw is inadequate to ensure quality instruction; instructor qualification, monitoring, and evaluation; and approval of time-based instruction. Public school funds should not be used for the purchase of instructional materials, equipment, and related goods necessary for home schooling. For any voluntary home instruction program to be considered an adequate substitute for school, the parents or guardians would have to establish the following:

- a. That they are certificated to instruct the child;
- b. That the child is receiving instruction comparable to that which he or she would receive in school; and
- c. That the facilities, time, and manner of instruction are also comparable.

MSEA also believes that non-school, home-based, and charter school students should comply with the same state-mandated testing required of public school students. (88, 90, 91, 94, 05, 11, 12)

B.21. Student Teaching Programs

MSEA believes that realistic practice teaching can be the most important phase in the preparation of new teachers. This should be done under the guidance of professional educators who possess demonstrated effectiveness and broad experience in the classroom. MSEA, therefore, recommends the following guidelines within four crucial areas for concern:

- a. Selection and Responsibilities of Cooperating Teachers

Professional educators who choose to serve as cooperating teachers should have taught in the subject or grade area for a minimum of four years and must be above average in the performance of their duties as evaluated by their local systems. Time during the school day apart from any other teaching responsibility must be available for conference and planning between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher. The cooperating teacher should evaluate the practice teacher at the end of the period of assignment, in accordance with the person(s) responsible for the student teacher program. In the event of an unsatisfactory professional relationship, the cooperating teacher should have the right to discontinue working with the student teacher. To ensure maximum utilization of professional talents, no cooperating teacher should be responsible for more than two student teachers during any one school year.

- b. Coordination between Professors, Cooperating Teachers, and the Local Administrative Staff

A clear understanding of the roles and expectations of the cooperating teacher and the supervising college professor should be developed through meaningful conferences, especially prior to and during all phases of practice teacher assignment. Further, college methods courses should include participating classroom teachers in the instructional, demonstration, and discussion phases of the college program.

The student teacher should be provided with varied experiences at all levels of accepted teacher responsibility, including those tasks that may in the future be turned over to instructional assistants/paraprofessionals and clerical staff under the supervision of the classroom teacher. The student teacher should spend more time in the practice school situation. A practice teaching assignment should be contracted for a period of at least one semester and should include all necessary exams, evaluations, and assignment of grades normally encountered during this time.

Competent professional guidance of practice teachers should be recognized by an adequate remuneration per semester to the cooperating teacher by the college or university with whom the contract is in force.

The evaluation of the student teacher by the cooperating teacher should be included in the evaluation of the student teacher by the college professor and be reflected in any grades assigned by the college professor. Student teachers should maintain an average of “C” or a passing average in a pass/fail system in the subject and professional areas of their studies.

c. Recommendation for Statewide Standards

Minimum statewide standards for the student teacher program should be developed and adhered to by the colleges, universities, and professional education associations involved in teacher preparation. These standards should include length of practice teaching time, prerequisite courses, minimum evaluation forms, etc. Certification should be granted only to those who have been involved in student teaching programs that meet these standards and guidelines. MSEA supports the establishment of a State Coordinating Council for Field Experiences in Teacher Education by the State Board of Education to assure the development, implementation, and maintenance of quality field experience statewide.

d. Liability and Responsibility of Student Teachers

Practice teachers must be included in those areas of liability and responsibility that are normally related to professional educators. Practice teachers interacting with students in schools should both assume these responsibilities and be protected from liabilities not otherwise associated with the practice of our professional duties. In this regard, a legal counsel should draw up guidelines for state bylaws or statutes, which reflect our concerns for practice teachers. (91, 92, 96, 03, 05, 11)

B.22. Teacher Education Programs

MSEA believes that teacher education programs should meet high standards in preparing pre-service teachers, as well as in assisting practicing teachers in expanding their professional repertoires. Therefore, institutions should be expected to continue effective programs and to develop new programs. Expectation of program improvement implies that the institutions should be free from unnecessary regulation. This expectation allows the institutions to offer programs which meet the diverse needs of the developing professional, including an open door policy in the public schools of the state of Maryland to enable education students in the colleges and universities to have early classroom experience. MSEA also believes that any professional preparation program should be judged only by the competencies of its graduates as demonstrated in professional practice over significant periods of time. (94, 99, 01)

B.23. Recruitment and Retention of Teachers and Other Education Employees

MSEA believes that more emphasis should be placed on the recruitment and retention of certificated and support staff. MSEA also believes teacher certification requirements should not be diminished as a method of overcoming teacher shortages.

MSEA further believes that all professional associations, school systems, administrators, and colleges should carefully consider the following:

- a. Publicity and public relations programs that recruit personnel meeting the high standards endorsed by MSEA.
- b. Intensive recruitment of minorities into the education profession to increase the percentage of minority educators.

- c. New approaches to salary scales based on recruiting and retaining only personnel eligible for the Standard Professional Certificate or better. The salary must be made attractive enough to provide and retain an adequate supply of fully certificated teachers.
- d. More effective approaches to the training, recruitment, and retention of teachers for the disadvantaged and exceptional child.
- e. Development and enforcement of improved working conditions including adequate planning time each student day in addition to the duty-free lunch period; such planning time should be no less than 15 percent of the student day.
- f. Development of pay scales competitive with industry and government pay scales for educational support staff.
- g. Development of programs for the purpose of retraining teachers in fields of declining enrollment for fields with increasing enrollment.
- h. New approaches to professional growth, training, and certification, which will help more teachers to be successful and satisfied in their profession.
- i. Continuous evaluation and upgrading of teacher education programs at all levels in Maryland colleges and special consideration in employment of competent graduates from these institutions.
- j. Particular attention and assistance to improve the student-teacher program and the inservice training of beginning teachers.
- k. Greater participation by local associations in the development and implementation of specific criteria for granting tenure to new teachers. (89, 91, 96, 00, 05, 10)

B.24. Professional Status of Teachers

MSEA believes that high professional standards must be maintained to provide the best possible education for each child in Maryland.

MSEA also believes that only those teachers who meet the established certification requirements should be employed. Teachers should participate in the development and implementation of in-service training and other planned programs of professional growth. To supplement and extend in-service programs for teachers, local associations should negotiate professional leave and reimbursement of expenses during such leave. (88, 89, 94, 97, 98, 00)

B.25. Teacher Mentoring Programs

MSEA believes that teacher mentoring programs are an essential component of teacher retention.

MSEA also believes that adequate funding and staffing are vital to the success of mentoring programs. Mentoring programs are only successful when the ratio of mentors to mentees is small.

MSEA further believes that only qualified teachers with classroom experience should supervise mentoring programs. MSEA believes the use of mentor-generated evaluations and feedback as justification for the dismissal of mentees is inappropriate and should not be used. (01, 05, 10)

B.26. Released Time for In-service

MSEA believes that local associations should seek to obtain provisions in their negotiated agreements providing for local school systems to devote sufficient time during the school year for staff participation in the study of proposed changes in curricula, the inclusion of model staff organization, educational technology, public concerns about education, parent conferences, and related issues and activities. (88, 90, 93, 94, 96, 04, 05, 07)

B.27. Teacher Expectations/Student Achievement

MSEA recognizes the implications of research findings that indicate there is a direct and positive correlation between teacher expectations and student achievement. As a consequence of the findings, we believe that teachers must continue to strengthen their efforts to develop and demonstrate expectations that each student can achieve academically and to cultivate individual talents. In support of this belief, teachers' skills in establishing and relaying such expectations should be enhanced by expanding teacher education/in-service programs to include, but not be limited to, information on the changing role and composition of the family, the dynamics of intergroup communications, and direct training in the relationship between teacher expectations and student achievement.

MSEA also believes that the Maryland State Board of Education, the local boards of education, and teacher training institutions in the State of Maryland should develop and present effective teaching models which will train current and future teachers in the relationship between teacher expectations and student achievement. (94, 97, 00, 04, 16)

B.28. Education Employee Evaluation

MSEA believes that successful job performance can be broadly identified and that employers and employees need to agree upon objective criteria to foster a climate of cooperation in an evaluation process that allows for stylistic variations of the employee and the evaluator.

MSEA also believes that the proper goal of the evaluation process for education employees is for the improvement of their job performance.

MSEA further believes that the evaluation process and criteria must be subject to collective bargaining, included in negotiated agreements and be subject to the grievance procedure. MSEA opposes efforts by the Maryland State Department of Education to pre-empt local agreements with mandates for educator evaluations. (96, 97, 04, 10)

B.29. Competency-Based Certification

MSEA believes that certification and renewal of certification in Maryland should be revised to bring Maryland teaching licensure into conformity with best practice and recent research on preparation for the teaching profession. To accomplish this goal, MSEA endorses the report of the Task Force on Certification to the State Board of Education. In the implementation of the Task Force's report, MSEA recommends the use of the portfolio model developed by the Office of Laboratory Experiences of the University of Maryland at College Park. Further, MSEA opposes the use of employee evaluations in the certificate renewal process unless the evaluation(s) are done in conformity with MSEA Resolutions B.27 and C.1.

MSEA also believes it is inappropriate to require certified, experienced teachers to take Praxis or similar exams as a requirement for continued employment or re-certification.

The Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board must be aggressive in securing teacher input on proposed changes in certification requirements and teacher education programs before taking action. (91, 94, 03, 08, 10)

B.30. Placement Outside Field of Certification

MSEA opposes the placement of teachers out of their field of certification. MSEA believes local affiliates should take measures through collective bargaining and community organizing activities to heighten the knowledge of community leaders and parents about the disadvantages of involuntary utilization of teachers in out-of-field positions.

MSEA also opposes federal, state, or local mandates that compel local school boards to deem any professionals teaching out of their field of certification as not highly qualified and to disclose such information about individual teachers to the parents of children they are teaching.

MSEA believes that teachers should decline voluntary assignments used by the employer to diminish the work force or to avoid the employer's obligation to employ fully certificated staff, and that teachers should only be placed out-of-field under the following circumstances:

- a. The teacher and the local school system believe he or she is competent to teach in that subject area.
- b. There is a demonstrable need.
- c. There is no fully certificated teacher available.

MSEA also believes that the employer should be required to provide a written statement, at least twice a year, documenting efforts made to secure a certificated teacher.

MSEA further believes that in the event of out-of-field placement, the following conditions must be met:

- a. The teacher is provided with extra planning time and assistance.
- b. The teacher is not formally evaluated for his or her performance in the out-of-field placement.
- c. The local system continues to make every effort to find a certificated teacher.
- d. The efforts of the local system to find a certificated teacher are documented.
- e. The teachers are provided with adequate time and funds to attain full certification necessary in the out-of-field area. (91, 93, 03, 04, 07)

B.31. Assignment of Excessive and/or Extraneous Duties

MSEA believes the assignment of any non-instructional duty impinges on the ability of teachers to perform their most vital professional functions. MSEA also believes the teachers' professional work day shall be dedicated to lesson planning, delivery of instruction, and evaluation of assessments of student learning. MSEA further believes that the delegation of any new initiative, program or task must be evaluated in terms of its effect on the individual teacher's ability to organize and deliver instruction, and assess its effectiveness.

MSEA believes expanding the range and scope of teachers' duties must be accomplished only through negotiation with consideration of the consequences for an effective instructional program. (New 06)

B.32. School-Based Teams

MSEA believes that teams of school-based educators should be established through a system of elections that are open only to association members of the staff, by grade, subject area, or assignment as appropriate, for the purpose of determining appropriate policy, instructional, and organizational decisions, consistent with the operative collective bargaining agreements, for the improvement of the education of the children in the school. (92)

B.33. Association Involvement in Instruction and Professional Development

MSEA believes that teachers (through their local, state, and national associations) should be involved as professionals in all steps of the decision-making process related to curriculum, instruction, and professional development. MSEA also believes that local jurisdictions should encourage the implementation of programs that empower teachers in the educational decision-making process. (89, 96, 04, 07)

B.34. Association Involvement in Professional Development for Education Employees

MSEA believes that support staff should be involved in all steps of the decision-making process related to each classification's job responsibilities and professional development. MSEA also endorses and promotes activities and professional development that will ensure such involvement. (96, 05, 07)

B.35. Health Room Personnel

MSEA believes that every school in the state should be provided with a full-time, registered professional nurse certified in school health and paraprofessional certified health personnel as determined by local needs based on an analysis of the school health program.

MSEA also believes health room personnel should be provided with all necessary standard and emergency medical supplies as determined by the needs of the school population both student and adult.

MSEA further believes supervision should be provided for the nursing and paraprofessional health personnel by a registered nurse qualified through education and experience in school nursing and/or supervision. School health personnel and their supervisors should have specific training for helping students with disabilities adjust to school routines. This service should be fully funded by the State of Maryland in addition to all current state appropriations and formulas. (89, 00, 06)

B.36. Ethics of the Education Profession

MSEA believes that certain social relationships between education employees and students are inappropriate. MSEA also believes that an education employee who has a sexual relationship with a student is not only acting unprofessionally and unethically, but illegally and immorally. (93, 96, 03, 04)

B.37. Black History and Culture Curriculum

MSEA supports the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Commission of African-American History project to infuse black history and culture into the curriculum of Maryland schools throughout the school year, and urges its local affiliates to become involved in the project promotion and implementation. (91, 94, 95)

B.38. Career Skills

MSEA believes that each student graduating from a secondary school in the State of Maryland must have adequate career skills to make each a more productive citizen as set forth by the Maryland State Department of Education.

MSEA also believes that the MSDE should secure all necessary funds for mandated programs and technological training. (94, 95, 96, 98, 03, 06, 07)

B.39. Technology in the Educational Process

MSEA believes that technology, wisely used, can provide new opportunities for developing skills and expanding knowledge.

MSEA also believes in the creative and innovative use of media and audio for improving instruction and for self-evaluation of professional competence.

MSEA further believes that education employees at each site should participate in planning and implementing the appropriate use of instructional technology and in developing the necessary curricula and materials for use with instructional technology.

MSEA believes that the implementation of instructional technology must be accompanied by adequate materials and staff development.

MSEA also believes that adequate security measures must be implemented to protect all aspects of confidential information of both students and education employees. (91, 96, 97, 01, 03, 04, 06, 15)

B.40. Theory of Evolution

MSEA believes that the content in science education must be based on empirical evidence derived from the scientific method.

MSEA also believes that content and curriculum must be based on the National Science Education Standards of the National Research Council (NRC) and/or the Benchmark for Science Literacy of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). (03, 05, 06)

B.41. Fine and Practical Arts Education

MSEA believes that fine and practical arts programs should be an integral part of this nation's elementary and secondary (K-12) school curricula.

MSEA also believes that local affiliates should promote, implement, and expand the fine and practical arts in the curricula of their school systems.

MSEA further believes that local funding authorities should provide adequate financial support for the fine and practical arts. (91, 04, 07, 15)

B.42. World Language Education

MSEA believes that the acquisition of a second language and the maintenance of a child's first language are vital parts of the educational experience and that those who leave school speaking more than one language will be more competitive in the global marketplace. MSEA also believes that the cumulative hours of exposure to the target language during a student's educational career are the most important determinant leading to fluency in two languages, and that students should have the opportunity to acquire age-appropriate world language skills from an integrated curriculum throughout the pre-K-12 experience.

MSEA further believes in the maintenance of current programs and the continued development of world language instruction.

MSEA believes that, to improve training and to enhance the instructional program, teacher preparation programs and local jurisdictions should encourage all world language teachers to participate in teacher exchange programs in a culture where the subject language is spoken.

MSEA also believes that, in view of various college entrance requirements, careful consideration should be given to requiring world language studies for students preparing to enter college or the workforce. (93, 04, 08, 10, 15, 16)

B.43. Health Education

MSEA believes that health education throughout the state should be continued and strengthened in both quality and quantity.

MSEA also believes health education should be taught in each of the grades, K through 12, with adequate time allotted within the student day to present these units.

MSEA further believes training must be provided within the workday for the classroom teachers required to teach new health units. (92, 04, 06)

B.44. Physical Education

MSEA believes that physical fitness is an integral element of a student's education, benefiting physical and mental health, lifelong wellness, and the student's ability to learn.

MSEA also believes that daily physical education in all grades, pre-K-12, is a crucial part of a comprehensive curriculum.

MSEA further believes that funding authorities should provide adequate financial support to ensure daily physical education in all public schools in Maryland. (03, 04, 07)

B.45. Nutrition Education Program

MSEA believes nutrition education can establish a solid foundation for lifetime nutritional practices and should be continued and expanded in all grades pre-K-12.

MSEA also believes foods of low-nutrient density or which do not meet U.S. Dietary Guidelines should not be dispensed or sold to students during school hours.

MSEA further believes that school cafeterias of Maryland should adjust their daily menus to provide minimum amounts of fat, salt, sugar, and low-nutrient starches. (91, 94, 99, 00, 06, 07)

B.46. Programs for English Language Learners

MSEA believes that English as a Second Language programs should have as their goal academic proficiency in English and that students should not be released until they demonstrate an ability to be successful in an English only program or achieve an exit score on the World-Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA).

MSEA also believes that only fully qualified teachers should teach ESL classes with the assistance of qualified ESL/ELL tutors. (96, 04, 06, 13, 16)

B.47. Publicly Funded Pre-school and Kindergarten

MSEA believes early childhood education programs should be in the public schools for children from birth through age eight. MSEA also believes universal access to adequate and equitable publicly funded pre-school and kindergarten programs would foster improved learning outcomes for children.

MSEA further believes such programs must be research-based, subject to strict regulation, and staffed by licensed specialists in Early Childhood Development. MSEA believes that early childhood education programs should maintain small group size with appropriate staff/child ratios for each age level. MSEA also believes pre-school and kindergarten curricula and pedagogy must be age appropriate, developmentally sequenced, and adapted to meet the needs of each child. (New 06)

B.48. School Libraries/Media Centers in the Educational Process

MSEA believes that school libraries/media centers are an integral part of this nation's elementary and secondary (K-12) schools.

MSEA also believes that local affiliates should promote the implementation and expansion of school libraries/media centers in their local systems.

MSEA further believes that each school library/media centers should have at least a full-time certified librarian, a full-time clerical assistant, and necessary funding to maintain a current and quality collection within acceptable standards for school libraries/media centers.

MSEA believes school libraries/media centers should be used only for flexible scheduling. (New 06, 07, 15, 16)

B.49. Communication between the Hearing and the Hearing Impaired

MSEA believes that Educational Sign Language Interpreters/Translators should be qualified professionals who are licensed, state credentialed, or nationally certified.

B.50. Scholastic Publications

MSEA believes that student publications such as the school newspaper, yearbook, and literary magazine, when functioning under the sponsorship of a teacher-adviser, are an invaluable educational tool and a necessary part of school life and should be accorded basic rights of freedom of the press. (96, 07)

B.51. Educational Use of Copyright Materials

MSEA believes it is essential that teachers have the right to use copyrighted materials and off-air recordings on a sufficiently delayed basis to meet the needs of effective teaching. MSEA also believes that broadcast schedules are a major hindrance to in-school use of such programs, that home-viewing assignments are not practical, and that teachers need the flexibility of recording off the air so that programs can be previewed before being used in the classroom and incorporated into classroom situations at those times when students are most ready to learn.

MSEA believes that maximum access to teaching materials is of vital concern to every teacher and that the public interest requires that the copyright law include an expanded “not-for-profit” clause coupled with a fair use provision. MSEA also believes that this would guarantee teachers and educational institutions use of copyrighted materials, recognizing a limited right to copy and record such materials for non-profit educational purposes, including educational broadcasting and technology. (88, 91, 93, 99, 03, 07, 08, 10, 15)

C. Economic and Professional Security for All Members

MSEA believes in:

1. Effective collective bargaining for all public employees;
2. Negotiated agreements, which improve salaries and wages, fringe benefits, and working conditions;
3. Strict implementation and funding of all negotiated agreements; and
4. Full protection of the legal rights of all members. (94, 96, 03)

C.1. Tenure

MSEA believes changes are necessary in existing Maryland law or State Board of Education regulations to provide non-tenured and provisional teachers the right to notice, statement of charges, fair hearing, and appeal procedure before dismissal or non-renewal of contract for good and just cause. MSEA also believes teachers should participate in the development of local policies for the fair appraisal of teacher competency as set forth in guidelines promulgated by the State Board of Education.

MSEA further believes if such guidelines are used as part of the certification process, teachers who have passed their probationary period should be afforded an appeal procedure with final authority vested in the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board. MSEA believes the procedure must include the right to notice, a statement of charges, the right to representation by counsel, and a fair hearing before the PSTEB.

MSEA also opposes any increase to the pre-tenure probationary period. (88, 93, 96, 02, 04, 05, 09, 11, 14)

C.2. Retirement

MSEA believes that to enhance recruitment efforts, improve retention rates, and to create a high quality public education system, it is in the public interest to provide all education employees a guaranteed adequate income upon retirement.

MSEA also believes that defined benefit plans best accomplish this goal. MSEA opposes any attempt to change to a defined contribution plan.

MSEA further believes that legislation should be passed to make such changes in the pension system that protect the interests of education employees. MSEA believes that legislation that shifts pension costs to school districts, charges administrative fees, and creates different categories of pension benefits are not in the interest of education employees. MSEA also believes that education employees' pension contributions should be allocated for the sole purpose of maintaining and enhancing pension benefits. MSEA further believes that the State of Maryland is obligated to fund the pension system sufficiently to provide a guaranteed adequate income to education employees upon retirement. MSEA believes that the Association and local affiliates must provide all education employees with the most current information on retirement benefits. MSEA also believes it must assist local affiliates in providing counseling for those approaching retirement. (87, 89, 91, 94, 02, 03, 04, 06, 09, 11)

C.3. Social Security

MSEA believes the Association must fight any withdrawal from the Social Security System for Maryland education employees, if proposed by the employer, unless there can be a guarantee of matching funds from the employer for any subsequent system.

MSEA also believes that Congress should enact legislation to prevent the double taxation of Social Security contributions.

MSEA opposes proposals to make part or all of the Social Security System a "defined contribution" program. (88, 91, 94, 04, 07, 11)

C.4. Collective Bargaining

MSEA believes that the attainment and exercise of collective bargaining rights are essential to address the needs of all education employees. MSEA also believes that collective bargaining ensures the integrity of negotiated agreements. MSEA further believes that strong grievance procedures should be secured through negotiations that include binding arbitration as a constructive mechanism for resolving disputes.

MSEA believes education employees should have the right to withhold services when no valid group contract exists, a group contract has been violated, or working conditions not specified in the group contract have been unilaterally changed while a contract is in force. MSEA opposes legislation which would impose definitions of the bargaining unit that would fragment or remove the bargaining rights of education employees. (88, 89, 96, 02, 04, 12)

C.5. Workload

MSEA believes that the workload of the education employee is within the scope of negotiations. MSEA also believes that class size is a fundamental working condition for teachers, whether daily in a single class in an elementary scenario, or in a number of classes daily at the secondary level. MSEA further believes the workday for classroom instructors should be appropriately divided among three major components of effective teaching:

organization/planning of lessons, delivery of instruction, and assessing whether learning has taken place. MSEA believes that non-instructional duties impede increased student achievement and contribute to high rates of teacher turnover.

C.6. Local Education Legislation

MSEA believes local Associations with potential education legislation should provide the language to MSEA prior to filing and/or concurrence with any amendments to the bill. MSEA also believes that each Association should forward copies of local bills to the presidents of other local associations. (88, 07, 14)

C.7. Privatization

MSEA believes programs or practices such as, but not limited to, privatization, performance contracting, tuition tax credits to private and parochial schools, voucher plans, funding formulas that have the same effect as vouchers, planned program budgeting systems, and evaluations by private for-profit groups must be eliminated as detrimental to public education.

MSEA also believes its affiliates should ensure through collective bargaining and organizing activities that school systems do not enter into any subcontract that transfers public employees, eliminates accumulated retirement experience and benefits, reduces compensation, denies fringe benefits, or abrogates previously negotiated benefits of public employees. (99, 02, 04)

C.8. Reductions in Force

MSEA believes local associations should negotiate contractual provisions that include procedural safeguards for all education employees concerning the manner in which reductions in force are implemented. MSEA also believes all staff reduction policies should be in accordance with the provisions of the Singleton Decision:

“If there is to be reduction in the number of principals, teachers, teacher-aides, or other professional staff employed by the school district which will result in a dismissal or demotion of any such staff members, the staff members to be dismissed or demoted must be selected on the basis of objective and reasonable non-discriminatory standards from among all of the staff of the school district. In addition if there is any such dismissal or demotion, no staff vacancy may be filled through recruitment of a person of a race, color, or national origin different from that of the individual dismissed or demoted, until each displaced staff member who is qualified has had an opportunity to fill the vacancy and has failed to accept an offer to do so.”*

**Singleton, et al, vs. West Feliciana Parish, et al, and the Jackson Municipal Separate, et al, school districts; U.S. Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit, 419F.2d 1211 (1970). (88, 90, 02, 07, 14)*

C.9. Strike Prohibitions and Penalties

MSEA believes that withholding one’s labor is a basic right, whether in the public or private sector. Because restrictive laws presently exist in education in the State of Maryland, MSEA also believes we should use all avenues available to us including, but not limited to, coalitions with all affected labor groups to overturn the current State Negotiations Laws, Sections 6-410 and 6-513, which prohibit strikes with the penalty of loss of collective bargaining and representation for two years and loss of dues check-off for one year. (88, 96, 02, 07, 09)

C.10. Unemployment

MSEA believes in full employment and appropriate legislation that encourages job creation. MSEA also believes in collaborating with other labor organizations and community groups to provide sufficient unemployment insurance. (90, 02, 09, 12)

C.11. Higher Education Faculties

MSEA believes that the higher education faculties of Maryland should have the right to tenure, due process, and collective bargaining. (02, 12)

C.12. Student Medication

MSEA believes that students who must be assisted in using medication during school hours should be assisted by qualified medical personnel. MSEA also believes the Association and its affiliates must work for the assignment of medical professionals to each school and outdoor education center and for action that will assure that only qualified medical personnel administer medication. (90, 99, 02, 04, 07)

C.13. Liability

MSEA believes that state legislation should limit school employees' liability for negligence resulting in injury or death caused by medication administered by school employees in the course of their duties. (02, 04)

C.14. Basic Benefits

MSEA believes that school systems must provide basic paid benefits including, but not limited to, the following:

a. Insurance

1. Comprehensive health insurance
2. Dental insurance
3. Optical insurance
4. Hearing (Auditory) insurance
5. Prescription insurance
6. Worker's Compensation
7. Long-term physical and mental disability
8. Bridge coverage of health insurance for retirees
9. Life insurance
10. Legal liability insurance

b. Paid Leave

1. Sick leave with unlimited accumulation (personal, family, and dependent care)
2. Personal leave with unlimited accumulation
3. Bereavement leave
4. Maternity/paternity leave, including adoption
5. Sabbatical leave
6. Professional leave
7. Association leave
8. Religious leave
9. Civil leave

c. Additional Remuneration

1. Severance pay, including compensation for accrued leave
2. Retirement compensation
3. Tuition reimbursement
4. Benefit extension for laid-off employees

d. Personal Assistance

1. Personal assault protection
2. Day care for young children and/or dependent elders

MSEA also believes that health insurance is a part of compensation. As such, we adamantly oppose any reduction of benefits, increase in premiums, or other cost shifting.

MSEA further believes that the basic benefits of comprehensive health insurance, life insurance, and long-term disability insurance should be provided for educational staff members on official leave of absence or maternity/paternity leave.

MSEA 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, hearing, and vision programs.

MSEA also believes that school systems must provide fringe benefits (benefits beyond those in the previous paragraphs) to ensure the personal welfare of education employees, their spouses, domestic partners, and/or their dependents.

MSEA further believes boards of education must negotiate retirement benefits with the employee organization for active employees upon their retirement. (88, 89, 90, 91, 94, 97, 00, 01, 02, 03, 04, 16)

C.15. Mental Health Parity in Medical Benefits

MSEA believes that the disparity between physical health and mental health benefits adversely affects our members and society in general.

MSEA also believes that health care providers must work to create mental health benefit plans that are equitable and comparable to medical benefits. (New 08)

C.16. Salary and Other Compensation

MSEA believes that local affiliates can best promote the economic welfare of all education employees through the collective bargaining process. MSEA also believes that any proposed legislative compensation initiative should be in conformance with locally negotiated agreements and the Maryland Professional Negotiations Act. MSEA further believes that compensation initiatives must:

- 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 personnel in the educational setting;
- b. Be based on preparation, academic degrees, experience, professional growth, responsibilities, and full length of service;
- c. Elevate compensation for education employees to a level competitive with those in comparable professions;
- d. Assure that initial placement and advancement on the salary schedule are nondiscriminatory;
- e. Broaden the knowledge and skills of educators to meet today's higher standards and the demands of an ever-changing student learning environment and stimulate career-long professional development; and
- f. Support certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

MSEA believes that the increasing number of schools identified for comprehensive needs or focused needs (formerly school improvement, corrective action or restructuring), makes it imperative that there be clearly and

contractually defined compensation rates for educators assigned to those schools. MSEA also believes education employees should be compensated at their regular per diem rates as a minimum for hours/days worked beyond the contractual number of days for ten-month employees.

MSEA opposes merit pay, or any such plan based on subjective evaluation done by a supervisor, which would undermine the commitment to substantial pay increases for all education employees. MSEA also opposes compensation based on student test scores. (00, 04, 08, 14, 16)

C.17. Twelve-month Employment

MSEA believes that local affiliates should negotiate the terms and conditions for eleven-month and twelve-month employment. (04, 08)

C.18. Position Reclassification

MSEA believes that collective bargaining agreements between education employees, including part-time and temporary, and their employers should reflect the following contractual concepts:

1. Required posting of all vacant or newly created positions along with the right of bargaining unit members to apply for these positions, provided that current employees in reconfigured positions are given the right of first refusal;
2. Nondiscriminatory, fair, and equitable treatment of bargaining unit members;
3. Protection from unilateral changes in terms or conditions of employment;
4. Ensure that salary paid for summer employment, continuing education programs, extended contracts, conducting employee training or workshops, and extra duty is not less than the regular rate of pay as a minimum;
5. Additional compensation initiatives may recognize and reward the additional knowledge and skills that education employees have acquired or may acquire over their careers, provided that such initiatives do not limit the number of education employees who are eligible; and
6. Layoff and recall based only on seniority as bargaining unit members, licensure/certification, and, to the extent legally permissible, the need to ensure staff diversity. (New 08)

C.19. Standardization of Teaching Credit

MSEA believes that existing barriers to teacher mobility have forced many valuable and experienced teachers to leave the profession altogether and that this exodus contributes to the current teacher shortage.

MSEA also believes that local affiliates should negotiate with local boards of education to assure teachers transferring from other jurisdictions be given full credit for former years of teaching experience in all local contracts and regulations. (88, 96, 04)

C.20. School Calendars

MSEA believes that the creation of a school year calendar is the purview of the local Boards of Education. MSEA also believes that calendar decisions should be based solely on the education needs of children and not the profit motives of private enterprise. (New 15)

C.21. Substitute Teachers

MSEA believes that substitute teachers should be represented by a local bargaining unit. (New 15)

D. United Education Profession in Maryland

MSEA believes the achievement of all other goals for this association is dependent on the strength inherent in establishing a united education profession for all education employees. This will require MSEA to:

1. Inform all education employees of the services and benefits available to members;
2. Provide members with programs and activities which involve them in meeting their needs;
3. Develop, with local associations, programs designed to make those organizations more effective; and
4. Establish leadership development procedures to improve the skills of those most actively involved in association programs. (94, 97)

D.1. Fair Share Fee

MSEA believes in a fair share representation fee being deducted from each employee's salary by local boards of education, reflecting expenses of activities related to responsibilities as exclusive representative for all unit members, and that such deduction should be secured for the United Education Profession by appropriate negotiated, legislative, or judicial action. The Representative Assembly declares that the statewide collective bargaining of a fair share fee remains a priority for all local bargaining units. (89, 91, 95, 97, 13)

D.2. Released Time for Local Association Presidents

MSEA believes it is essential to have the elected president free from school duties to carry out the responsibilities of his or her office for the association.

MSEA also believes that its Board of Directors should seek and provide various forms of financial assistance to accomplish the initiation of released time for local association presidents. (87, 88, 97, 05)

D.3. Attendance at MSEA Convention

MSEA believes all local boards of education should provide professional leave for all professional educators wishing to participate in the opportunities for professional growth provided by MSEA at the annual convention. (87, 95, 96, 97, 11)

D.4. MSEA Hiring Policies

MSEA believes in the active recruitment and hiring of minority staff and encourages its affiliates to do the same.

MSEA also believes in an affirmative action program which sets forth plans and procedures at the MSEA professional staff level for the attainment of staffing that reflects proportional representation of minorities and women according to the census population of the State of Maryland. (88, 90, 97, 04)

D.5. Professional Unity

MSEA believes the problems of public education require a united effort by all education employees. MSEA also believes that bargaining units should be divided when, and only when, the majority of unit members involved have voted to support such action. (88, 91, 94, 08, 16)

D.6. MSEA Fund for Children and Public Education

MSEA believes educational policy decisions are political decisions. MSEA also believes that local affiliates should arrange for political contributions to the MSEA Fund for Children and Public Education through payroll deduction. (87, 88, 91, 99, 08)

D.7. Local Association Crisis Funds

MSEA believes locals should establish and/or strengthen crisis funds in their own budgets. (97)

D.8. Gender Correct Language

MSEA believes in the use of gender correct language. MSEA also believes local associations should adopt similar gender correct language practices. (88, 91, 95, 97, 08)

D.9. Minority Participation in the Association

MSEA believes that in every phase of governance and on all decision making levels of MSEA, there should be minority participation at least proportionate to the identified ethnic minority population of the geographic area. Ethnic minority members and women should be encouraged to seek elective and appointive positions at all levels.

MSEA also believes that the systematic evaluation of minority involvement opportunities and participation needs to be conducted annually with its findings presented to the Representative Assembly and made available to all members. MSEA further believes it must actively pursue measures to ensure equitable representation of minorities. (87, 97, 99, 06, 14)

E. Leadership in Solving Social Problems Affecting Education

MSEA believes education has a special role in improving the quality of life in our democratic society, which places on the organized teaching profession the responsibility for the following:

1. Developing public awareness of the significance of the educational process for each person;
2. Establishing effective procedures for working with each student, especially one whose disruptive behavior denies others an opportunity to learn;
3. Working with appropriate agencies to develop programs to end all types of abuse including drugs, alcohol, and tobacco among students; and
4. Working with appropriate groups to protect education employees and students as consumers. (94, 96, 97, 08)

E.1. Education as a Civil Right of Children

MSEA believes all children possess a fundamental civil right to have access to a high-quality system of public education, grounded on the principles of adequacy and equity. (New 07, 08)

E.2. Enforcement of Substance Abuse Laws

MSEA believes in drug-free schools and supports the strict enforcement of laws regarding individuals found to be in possession of, or under the influence of, drugs, alcohol, and other illegal substances on school property and during school-sponsored activities. (87, 97, 06, 11)

E.3. Economic Action by Education Employees

MSEA believes education employees should use their power as consumers to persuade the business and professional community and the government to adhere to principles of social and economic fairness. MSEA also believes that the economic burden of effective government should be equitably distributed and that the economic burden should not be shifted to government employees in the form of inadequate compensation. (99, 00)

E.4. Family/Domestic Violence

MSEA believes local education agencies (LEAs) must provide violence prevention training and educational programs for staff and students because of the detrimental effects that violence has on students' well-being. MSEA also believes in an increase in funding and staffing of existing family services and urges creation of additional support systems and shelters. MSEA further believes social services and the criminal justice system should continue to intervene actively in the cycle of family/domestic violence. (95, 96, 97, 98, 04, 08)

E.5. Sexual Assault and/or Battery

MSEA believes in efforts that will prevent and protect members of our society from becoming victims of sexual assault and/or battery. MSEA also believes these should include programs to promote awareness that even acquaintances may be potential assailants.

MSEA further believes that the state should develop a more comprehensive, sensitive, and uniform process for gathering evidence when such assaults and/or batteries occur. MSEA believes in the fair and equitable treatment of victims by health, hospital, and law enforcement agencies.

MSEA also believes that the admission of a victim's past sexual history as evidence is a violation of the victim's right to privacy. MSEA further believes in the rehabilitation of the assailant and the protection of due process rights for both the victim and the assailant. (87, 88, 91, 96, 97, 99, 04, 08)

E.6. Family/Domestic Crisis Care

MSEA believes in a full range of assistance, from interventions to shelters, for families experiencing domestic violence and advocates the following:

- a. Services that include immediate protection, counseling, and therapy;
- b. Adequate financial support;
- c. Immediate temporary foster care for children who are victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation;
- d. Screening and training of potential foster families and shelter personnel; and
- e. Continued training, supervision, and evaluation of foster families and shelter personnel. (95, 96, 98, 99, 08)

E.7. Bullying in the Public Schools

MSEA believes that bullying behaviors are detrimental to the learning and work environment. The Association also believes that teacher preparation and staff development should include training on both recognizing bullying behaviors and intervening on behalf of the victims. The Association further believes that all school systems should provide definitions of what constitutes bullying behaviors in their administrative procedures and should include disciplinary consequences in local school policy. (New 12, 15)

E.8. National Comprehensive Health Insurance

MSEA believes that affordable, comprehensive health care is the right of every resident. (89, 96)

E.9. Support for an Equal Rights Amendment

MSEA believes in the introduction and passage of an equal rights amendment to the United States Constitution. (88, 91, 98, 04)

E.10. Sustainable Environment

MSEA believes in recycling programs for the purpose of conserving energy and protecting America's dwindling natural resources. (04, 08, 14)

E.11. Paid Family Leave

MSEA believes that paid maternity and paternity leave is essential for the welfare of children and establishing strong family ties. MSEA also believes that paid leave is essential to ensure proper health and well-being of all family members. MSEA further believes that employees have a right to access such benefits without fear of reprisal. (New 14)

E.12. Decorum of Public Figures

MSEA believes that celebrities, political leaders, entertainers and other public figures have an ethical, cultural, and patriotic obligation to model respect for all people in their actions and statements, and to be mindful of the influence their behavior has on others, particularly impressionable youth.

MSEA also believes that American institutions in both the public and private sectors should foster a culture which promotes universal respect for people and which labels as unacceptable demeaning characterizations of people related to their race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, size or disabilities. (New 07)

F. Human and Civil Rights

To protect the human and civil rights of education employees, MSEA should work to:

1. Ensure that there is no infringement upon the civil rights of any educator;
2. Provide uniform and high-quality programs to enforce each member's contractual, statutory, and constitutional rights;
3. Increase minority involvement in all levels of association work;
4. Strengthen program and bargaining proposals of MSEA and its affiliates in the area of affirmative action; and
5. Ensure that all hiring and promotional practices be based on competency and expertise. (14)

F.1. Legal Protection of Education Employees

MSEA believes that education employees should access legal system supports that address any physical or emotional harm suffered while performing their duties. MSEA also believes no education employee should be held liable for violence or be adversely evaluated because of the actions of others that were beyond the employee's control. (95, 98, 99, 07, 11)

F.2. Protection from Workplace Violence

MSEA believes that every education employee should be guaranteed the right to a safe workplace. MSEA also believes that school officials must take clear, concise, consistent, and swift action against individuals, including students, who commit a crime, such as assault and/or battery, against education employees. (95, 96, 97, 99, 00, 07)

F.3. Legal and Civil Rights of Education Employees

MSEA believes it to be of the utmost importance to uphold the constitutional and civil rights of all education employees. MSEA also believes that the rights, pay and benefits of education employees against whom legal charges have been brought should be protected. MSEA further believes that the Association should continue to inform its members of their legal rights. (87, 89, 94, 96, 97, 99, 04, 15)

F.4. Women's Rights

MSEA believes that all persons should be given equal opportunity for employment, promotion, compensation, and leadership in all activities. MSEA also believes that local boards of education, administrators, and education associations should strive to eliminate de jure and de facto discriminatory practices against women and to adopt policies that ensure women equitable appointment or selection for administrative, supervisory, and staff positions.

MSEA further believes that members should be informed of changes in legislation and local, state or federal regulations that seek to diminish, restrict or hamper the rights or position of women. (87, 88, 91, 97, 04, 07, 14)

F.5. Appointment of Women and Minorities to the Judiciary

MSEA believes that the Governor of Maryland and the President of the United States should recruit women and minority candidates for appointment to state and federal judicial vacancies at all levels. (88, 97, 04)

F.6. Speaking Before Legislative Bodies/Government Agencies

MSEA believes in the right of education employees to testify before legislative bodies or government agencies without reprisals or restrictions imposed by boards of education and/or administrative staffs. (88, 90, 94, 97, 99, 00, 04, 10)

F.7. Speaking to the Media

MSEA believes in the right of education employees to express their opinions and concerns to the media without reprisals or restrictions imposed by boards of education and/or administrative staffs.

MSEA also believes education employees, when meeting the media, should protect the right to privacy of all students, education employees, and other parties. (88, 94, 95, 97, 99, 04, 10)

F.8. Human Relations in the Schools

MSEA believes that positive human relations are essential to the school environment and, toward this end, we support:

- a. School recruitment and staffing policies that ensure culturally diverse certificated and support staff who are sensitive to the needs of children;
- b. Programs that guarantee each student an opportunity to learn in a safe, non-disruptive environment;
- c. Improvement of community-police and student-police relations through the joint efforts of school, community, and law enforcement agencies;
- d. Collaborative programs among education employees, parents, and community members that meet the needs of each student;
- e. Reduction of the ratio of students to certificated staff as essential to improved learning;
- f. Further research and development of ways to identify and change prejudicial behavior detrimental to the school environment; and
- g. Elimination of instructional materials that stereotype groups.

MSEA also believes all education employees should demonstrate tolerance and acceptance in their relations with colleagues, students, parents, and other citizens, thus providing the respect and dignity to which each human being is entitled. (94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 01, 08)

F.9. Integration of Education Personnel in the Maryland Public Schools

MSEA believes that the ideals of human justice, individual liberty, and democracy demand continued integration of education personnel in our schools, colleges, universities, and technical training centers.

MSEA also believes the State Board of Education should amend COMAR 13A.07.05.01 (Policy on Ethnic and Cultural Minorities) to require local boards of education to develop and implement plans and procedures that encourage the attainment of staffing that is reflective of the ethnic and cultural richness and diversity of the people of Maryland.

To ensure this integration within the education profession, MSEA further believes all governing bodies of education should:

1. Establish an active recruitment program in all colleges and universities in the state to seek qualified minority personnel;
2. Establish student-teacher programs at all colleges and universities that are now classified as historically black colleges or universities;

3. Establish a program for advancement that would actively seek to promote minority educators to administrative and supervisory positions;
4. Establish a policy that would prevent ethnic minority educators from being assigned only to those schools with a predominance of the ethnic minority populations; and
5. Utilize the registry of certificated minority personnel for administrative and supervisory positions as provided by the Maryland State Department of Education.

MSEA believes in bringing together all groups concerned with providing opportunities for fair and equitable employment, assignment, and promotion for all educators for the purpose of creating a continuous dialog.

MSEA also believes each local association should establish a committee on human rights in education to work cooperatively with local, state, and national organizations in the interest of protecting the human rights of all citizens.

MSEA further believes that legislation should deny tax-exempt status to those institutions whose policies and/or practices prevent the racial integration of those institutions. (87, 88, 90, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 00, 08, 09, 11, 14, 16)

F.10. Human Rights Day

MSEA believes that the attention of the people of Maryland should be focused on the importance of human rights. MSEA also believes that when school systems and professional education organizations plan appropriate activities commemorating the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. they help develop the capacity and the commitment to teach our students culturally relevant history. MSEA further believes that Martin Luther King, Jr. Day should remain a state and federal holiday to promote good will among all people. (88, 91, 07, 16)

F.11. Fair Housing

MSEA believes that fair housing practices should be broadened and strengthened to assure each citizen an equal opportunity to reside in a neighborhood of his or her choice. (91, 97, 00)

F.12. Religious Freedom

MSEA believes that the interests of public education and religion are best served when each is independent of, and separate from, the other. MSEA also believes that laws requiring educators to lead or participate in prayer in schools impose an inappropriate duty upon teachers and constitute a religious test for their employment. MSEA further believes that local school boards should adopt policies that ensure the separation of church and state and that treat all religions on an equal basis.

MSEA believes that students should be taught to respect religion of others and the cultural influences in the United States that have resulted from various religions. (99, 07, 08, 09, 10)

F.13. Age of Majority

MSEA believes that education employees should be provided with protocols for dealing with adult or emancipated students, because students who are eighteen years of age, married, or parents are adults according to Maryland law. (94, 99, 11, 14)

F.14. Student Responsibilities and Rights

MSEA believes that education employees should be appointed to all committees established by local boards of education for the implementation and evaluation of documents dealing with student rights and responsibilities.

MSEA also believes that local boards of education should be in full compliance with the criteria set forth in such documents. (91, 93, 94, 99, 08, 09)

F.15. Opposition to Residency Requirements

MSEA believes that individuals should not be denied employment opportunities for state or local educational employment on the basis of residency. (88, 07)

F.16. Affirmative Action

MSEA believes that overcoming the persistence of racial and gender discrimination throughout all segments of American society can only be accomplished through affirmative action efforts. MSEA also believes that all levels of the United Education Profession (UEP) and government should take appropriate actions to preserve the continuation of affirmative action, to redress the reduced opportunities for minorities and women. MSEA further believes the adoption of compensatory hiring practices by school boards helps schools to attain and maintain levels of minority and gender employment as set forth in MSEA policy. (91, 95, 96, 04, 07, 08, 11, 16)

F.17. Title IX

MSEA believes that its members and local affiliates should monitor compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 at the school and system level and take those actions necessary to enforce compliance in all educational programs, both current and proposed. (88, 04, 05)

F.18. Discrimination

MSEA believes that every individual must be protected from all forms of discrimination and stereotyping based on race, size, religion, ethnicity, immigration status, age, occupation, disabilities, gender, gender identification, and sexual orientation. (94, 95, 96, 07, 09)

F.19. Invasion of Privacy

MSEA believes in the right to privacy. MSEA also believes that all education employee rights must be guaranteed through the grievance process and/or legal action. (88, 91, 96, 07, 09)

F.20. Drug and Alcohol Testing

MSEA believes that drug and alcohol testing without probable cause of employees constitutes an unwarranted invasion of privacy and is in violation of the Fourth Amendment proscription against unreasonable search and seizure. (88, 91, 94, 04, 15)

F.21. Student Records

MSEA believes there should be a uniform national policy requiring student records be forwarded within three school days following the receipt of a request from the receiving district. MSEA also believes that proper documentation should be a requirement for students transferring from another school district, including when a student is seeking a transfer as a consequence of a suspension or expulsion from the previous school. (97, 99, 01, 03, 04, 08)

F.22. Stress Counseling

MSEA believes school systems should develop and provide confidential counseling services, funded by the state or by local jurisdictions, to aid education employees in dealing with stress and its consequences. (88, 91, 94, 07)

F.23. Education of Refugee, Illegal Alien, Migrant, and Homeless Children

MSEA believes refugee, undocumented workers, migrant, and homeless children are entitled to equal educational opportunities and appropriate programs for their families. (88, 94, 95, 03, 09)

F.24. Hate-Related Violence

MSEA believes that hate violence, including, but not limited to, physical and verbal violence against individuals or groups because of the race, color, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, disability, size, marital status, or economic condition is unacceptable. MSEA also believes that organizations promoting hate have no place in our society. Therefore, such biases should not be evident in public schools or the communities they serve. MSEA further believes that education employees have a duty to exercise leadership in classrooms, schools and communities to counter hateful ideologies. MSEA believes in working cooperatively with other unions and community groups in helping all people unite in opposition to ideologies of intolerance. MSEA also believes that school systems should make available materials for use with students in combating ideologies that promulgate the use of violence. (88, 91, 94, 95, 97, 99, 07, 09, 14, 16)

F.25. Gun-Free Schools and Regulation of Deadly Weapons

MSEA believes that all students and education employees must be allowed to learn and work in an education environment free of unauthorized guns and other deadly weapons. MSEA also believes severe penalties should be imposed and strenuously enforced against violators. MSEA further believes that gun owners should participate in educational programs that stress responsible ownership of guns, including safe use and storage of guns.

MSEA believes that education employees should not be compelled to carry, to receive training in, or to use firearms as part of their employment. (03, 08, 09, 14)

F.26. Victims of Crime

MSEA believes that school employees who are victims of crime should be treated with dignity and compassion, without the fear of intimidation. MSEA also believes that victims and/or their families should be notified of, and have the right to, be present/represented at all hearings and legal proceedings involving the defendant/perpetrator, even in juvenile cases. MSEA further believes that it is a violation of the victims' right to privacy to release the names of the victims. MSEA believes that victims and their families must be made aware of, and have free access to, necessary services/programs and that services/programs must be funded by the appropriate government agencies. (New 07)

F.27. Freedom to Teach

MSEA believes that freedom to learn and freedom to teach are essential to sound education and are vital components of the integrity of the total educational process. MSEA also believes that teachers and students must be protected from any attempts to abridge or curtail the academic freedom to select instructional techniques that appeal to various learning styles. MSEA further believes that teachers are responsible for presenting materials that provide students with multiple perspectives on all sides of controversial topics. (90, 91, 07, 14)

F.28. Education Employees as Participating Citizens

MSEA believes that every education employee is entitled to the same opportunities as other citizens to exercise political rights and responsibilities, participate actively in partisan politics, and serve in public office if he or she so desires.

MSEA also believes local associations should maintain written policies providing for the exercise of these rights and guaranteeing that when a leave of absence is requested by an education employee seeking and/or serving in public office, such leave will be granted without prejudice to his or her professional status. (91, 93, 97, 07)

F.29. Communicable Diseases

MSEA believes that, depending on the nature of the threat, all decisions about persons, or employees who are or may be infected with, or who may be capable of transmitting a communicable disease, should be based on the recommendation of the World Health Organization (WHO), Center for Disease Control (CDC), other appropriate agencies, or made on a case-by-case basis by a team established for this purpose. MSEA also believes that the members of this team should include the person affected, as well as the following: the treating physician, parent or guardian of a student, and public health personnel. The team should also include appropriate education employees, including the school nurse, and all education employees who have been in contact with the person.

MSEA further believes that each school system should adopt guidelines developed in cooperation with local associations in order to strike a balance between the rights of all parties involved, the student's right to an education, and an employee's continued employment, versus the right of other students and school employees to be free from risk of exposure to a disease. MSEA believes these guidelines should protect the privacy rights of students and school employees and provide appropriate guarantees for those individuals excluded from the school setting. MSEA also believes all such guidelines should be based on the latest medical information and should be revised as new information becomes available.

MSEA further believes that in the particular case of Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), the Maryland State Board of Education should adopt the guidelines developed by the National Education Association. (88, 91, 95, 01, 04, 09, 13, 16)

F.30. The Exploitation of K-12 Student-Athletes

MSEA believes that student-athletes (K-12) should not be exploited for economic or personal gain. MSEA also believes that such practices as (1) retaining students for physical development, (2) encouraging radical diets, (3) administering drugs, "pain killers" and herbal performance enhancers, (4) playing students with injuries, (5) changing student residence for the purpose of athletic advantage, (6) manipulating student grades, and (7) recruiting students from outside school boundaries should not be condoned. MSEA further believes that all student-athletes (K-12) should be subject to the strictest medical protocols where concussive trauma or significant injury is suspected. (88, 90, 95, 97, 03, 13, 14)

F.31. Marriage Equality

MSEA believes it is in the best interest of a society to permit all marriages, both civil and religious, between two individuals based on commitment, compassion and caring. MSEA also believes a consenting adult has a right to take the vows of marriage with another consenting adult and to assume all of its rights, privileges and responsibilities. (New 11)

F.32. Sex Education

MSEA believes that the developing child's sexuality is continually and inevitably influenced by daily contacts, including experiences in the school environment. MSEA also believes that comprehensive 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 current information. MSEA further believes that counseling services help young people handle stress and peer pressure about sexual activity and should be provided to ensure a healthy school and community environment.

MSEA believes that education as it relates to sex should include the following:

1. Recognition of the importance of self-respect;
2. Instruction on the consequences of various sexual behaviors, including oral sex;
3. Recognition that rewarding relationships between young people need not include sex;

4. Acknowledgement of effective contraceptive and disease prevention measures; and
5. Instruction on what is abusive sexual behavior and how to report it to the appropriate authorities. (New 11, 16)

F.33. Youth Pregnancy

MSEA believes that young parents and expecting parents be encouraged to stay in school. MSEA also believes that it is a role of the public schools to provide education, support, and counseling to help students to become successful parents.

MSEA further believes that the response of public schools to student pregnancy should include the following efforts:

1. Emphasize the link between staying in school and their future;
2. Provide health education and human development courses that cover both physical and emotional well-being of students;
3. Instruct students on the responsibilities of parenting and child development and rearing; and
4. Initiate discussions about services that can be offered by community operated, family planning clinics, including information about abstinence and effective contraceptive measures. (91, 97, 99, 04, 05, 08, 11)

F.34. Mental Health Stigma

MSEA believes that the stigma created by stereotypes surrounding those who suffer from mental illness adversely affects our students, our members and society in general.

MSEA also believes that mental illness should be treated as the equivalent of physical illness and that opportunities for employment, retention, promotion and leadership positions should not be denied solely on the basis of mental health or the stigma surrounding mental illness.

MSEA further believes in establishment of partnerships with appropriate advocacy organizations to break down mental health stigma and stereotyping. (New 08)

F.35. Naming of Public Structures

MSEA believes that individuals chosen for the commemorative naming of publicly funded schools, institutions, and memorials should be those whose lives have demonstrated the highest degree of respect for and dedication to freedom, liberty, and human and civil rights for all people. (95, 03)

F.36. The Physical Facilities of the School

MSEA believes that there should be, constructed and maintained, a sufficient number of school buildings to adequately house the school population without the use of double sessions and/or portable classrooms. MSEA also believes that all schools, worksites and educational facilities should be environmentally safe and easily accessible regardless of disability.

MSEA further believes that austerity programs in school construction and maintenance which ignore a policy of sound, long-term investment are deplorable. MSEA believes that the state has pledged to fund school construction and local jurisdictions should not be expected to meet these costs.

MSEA believes all buildings should be temperature-controlled.

MSEA also believes that all educational facilities must have good indoor air quality, be smoke free, and safe from environmental and chemical hazards. MSEA believes local school boards of education should sponsor smoking cessation programs for the benefit of employees and conduct periodic testing in all educational

facilities for the presence of air and waterborne agents that may be detrimental to the health of students and education employees.

MSEA further believes that all newly constructed schools should be certified at a minimum LEED-Silver level (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a green building rating system established by the U.S. Green Building Council). (87, 91, 94, 96, 02, 04, 09, 13, 15)

MSEA believes that all educational facilities should meet or exceed current health, safety, and building code requirements. (16)

F.37. Portable Modular Classrooms

MSEA believes that all classes should be held in classrooms that are contained in a permanent physical plant, and that such classrooms should meet all appropriate requirements established by the Annotated Code of Maryland, and be technologically equipped for optimum teaching and learning. MSEA also believes that portable structures – such as trailers - are inherently inadequate substitutes for permanent structures and, therefore, are deleterious to the learning environment in any school community. MSEA further believes reliance on portables should be temporary and of short duration. MSEA believes these structures should be contiguous to the primary physical plant and students should be offered protection from the elements when passing between the school building and the portable classroom. MSEA also believes that portables must be furnished with the same amenities as regular classrooms as well as immediate access to potable water. (New 08, 13)

New F. 38. Student Immunizations

MSEA believes that required immunizations are essential to the creation of sustainable and healthy learning environments for students and education employees. The Association also believes admission of non-immunized students to any school by any competent authority presents a potential threat to both students and education employees. (New 15)

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