

MSEA
Resolutions

2025-2026



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MSEA Resolutions

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)

A. To Promote Equitable, Quality Public Education in Maryland

MSEA believes that in order to provide an equitable, quality public education, the promotion and protection of the health and welfare of the whole child and staff must be ensured by:

- developing public awareness of the significance of education for all individuals;
- advocating for health and safe environments for students and staff;
- establishing effective procedures for working with students and staff who have experienced trauma;
- working with appropriate stakeholders to develop programs to achieve these goals; and
- working with appropriate groups to protect students and staff. (94, 96, 97, 08, 17, 18, 21, 23)
- all children possess the fundamental civil right to have access to an equitable, high-quality system of public education, grounded in the principles of every child having opportunity and equity. (New 07, 08)

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

- publicity and public relations programs that recruit personnel meeting the high standards endorsed by MSEA;
- intensive recruitment of minorities into the education profession to increase the percentage of minority educators;
- new approaches to salary scales based on recruiting and retaining only personnel eligible for the Standard Professional License or better; the salary must be made competitive enough to attract and retain an adequate supply of fully licensed teachers;
- most effective approaches to the training, recruitment, and retention of teachers for the marginalized student;
- 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;
- development of pay scales competitive with industry and government pay scales for educational support staff;
- development of programs for the purpose of retraining teachers in fields of declining enrollment for fields with increasing enrollment;
- new approaches to professional growth, training, and licensure, which will help more teachers to be successful and satisfied in their profession;
- 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;
- particular attention and assistance to improve the student-teacher program and the in-service training of beginning teachers; and
- 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, 18, 24)

A.1. Mass and Social Media Communications

MSEA believes that equitable, inclusive communication and interaction between professional educators and the community at large is in the best interests of educating each child. Engaging in the use of media to influence and support public education is essential to maintaining public education.

MSEA also believes in the right of education employees to express perspectives across media platforms without reprisals or restrictions imposed by boards of education and/or administrative staff ensuring robust representation of marginalized voices while protecting individual privacy.

MSEA believes that educators should follow established protocols with parents and stakeholders regarding the use of social and mass media.

MSEA further believes that any public communications should respect and protect the right to privacy of all students, their families and other education employees.

MSEA encourages the development of policies and practices that promote critical media literacy for all students. (87, 88, 91, 94, 95, 97, 99, 04, 07, 10, 11, 22, 23, 25)

A.2. Media Services

MSEA believes that all forms of media, including film, television, music, digital technology, social and print media, play an important role in education.

MSEA also believes that all media forms should be easily accessible to all. Visual media should include, but is not limited to:

- closed captioning for individuals with hearing impairments
- audio descriptions for individuals with visual impairments
- read-along captions on children's commercial and educational programs
- multiple language options where possible.

MSEA believes that electronic media, including technological platforms, in the educational process:

- improves learning opportunities for all students,
- supports diverse learning styles,
- enhances instructional quality,
- increases educational effectiveness, and
- reduces systemic educational inequities.

MSEA also believes that every school classroom, office, teacher workroom, and library/media center should have cost-effective, high-speed, seamless, and equitable internet access that supports diverse technological needs.

MSEA believes that cable television services should be provided to public education at no cost to local school systems, professional associations, and public service groups. MSEA also believes that cable television franchises should allocate services without financial burden to educational and community organizations.

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, 21, 22, 23, 25)

A.3. Recruitment and Retention of Teachers and Other Education Employees

MSEA believes in the recruitment and retention of a diverse, highly qualified educator workforce that reflects the communities we serve. MSEA also believes in maintaining rigorous certification/licensure standards while creating inclusive pathways to education professions that:

- recruit educators from historically marginalized populations,
- support multilingual and culturally diverse candidates,
- provide equitable professional development opportunities, and
- ensure certification/licensure requirements do not inadvertently create barriers for educators.

MSEA opposes diminishing certification/licensure standards and should advocate for comprehensive, inclusive approaches to addressing educator shortages that preserve educational quality and promote diversity. (25)

A.4. 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)

A.5. 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 conduct political action programs that result in members being recognized as an effective political force in the state;
- to prioritize the importance of building diverse coalitions, elevating marginalized voices, and promoting civic engagement;
- to work for a balanced partnership of local, state, and federal governments in providing equitable and sustainable financial support for public education; and
- to work with other groups seeking the enactment of legislative priorities affecting public education and public employees. (New 21, 25)

A.6. Elected Boards of Education

MSEA believes in elected local boards of education with boards elected by the jurisdictions they serve. MSEA also believes elected school boards should have full taxing authority in order to provide adequate and equitable funding to meet the educational needs of the children of the community. MSEA further believes boards of education must be transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs and perspectives of the entire community they serve. MSEA believes members of local boards of education should enroll their children in public schools. (94, 98, 04, 07, 17, 25)

A.7. Board of Education Accountability

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

A.8. Political Participation

MSEA believes that public education programs are significantly influenced by the decisions of elected or appointed officials at all levels of government. MSEA also believes that educators have a vital role to play in shaping the future of our communities through active civic engagement and political participation. MSEA further believes that education employees:

- should have the ability to influence decisions at all levels of government that affect schools, youth, and the teaching profession;
- should support candidates who demonstrate a commitment to equity and inclusion in education and who prioritize the needs of all students;
- should support those candidates who demonstrate a broad understanding of community improvement at all levels; and
- should encourage and assist potential voters, particularly those newly enfranchised, to register and become politically active citizens.

MSEA also believes that the governing bodies and working committees of the local parent/educator associations should include significant educator representation to develop mutually beneficial programs to address the unique needs of all students. (88, 91, 94, 96, 04, 05, 07, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25)

A.9. 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, equitable educational practices and programs and public education employees' rights to share in curricular and instructional decision-making. Inclusion of an elected MSEA educator to the state board of education is necessary to this process.

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 oversight clearly demands legislative intervention. (87, 91, 92, 94, 96, 06, 11, 23, 25)

A.10. Speaking Before Legislative Bodies/Government Agencies

MSEA believes in the right of educators to testify before legislative bodies or government agencies without reprisals or restrictions. (88, 90, 94, 97, 99, 00, 04, 10, 18, 19, 23)

A.11. Creating Safe, Equitable, and Supportive Learning Environments

MSEA believes that all students and staff have the right to learn and work in safe, equitable, and supportive school environments that are free from harm, discrimination, and the threat of violence.

MSEA also believes that all efforts should be made to eliminate punitive discipline or educational practices that contribute to the school to prison pipeline. The State of Maryland and local jurisdictions should fund training, support, personnel, and resources necessary to create school environments where educators can carry out their work and where students can learn free from harm or discrimination.

MSEA further believes that statewide definitions and standards should be established delineating the specific roles and responsibilities of all personnel charged with maintaining a safe and orderly environment within school communities for the purposes of continuity of services to and the equitable treatment of students and staff.

MSEA believes that statewide standards for the training in a variety of restorative approaches including, but not limited to, de-escalation strategies, implicit bias, and trauma informed practices of all security personnel and all district staff are paramount to ensuring that all students, especially historically marginalized students, learn in a safe, healthy, and supportive environment.

MSEA also believes law enforcement should not be involved in implementing the school's student code of conduct. MSEA further believes that student behaviors should be handled within the school setting by qualified school personnel, utilizing evidence-based practices as described above that prioritize student well-being and support student success. (New 21, 23, 25)

A.12. Promoting Positive Learning Climate

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

- school recruitment and staffing policies that ensure culturally diverse educators who are sensitive to the needs of children;
- programs that guarantee each student an opportunity to learn in a safe environment without disruption;
- voluntary collaborative programs among education employees, parents, and community members that meet the needs of each student;
- a low ratio of students to teachers;
- continued research and development of ways to identify and change behavior detrimental to the school environment; and
- elimination of instructional materials containing stereotypes or implicit bias. (23)

A.13. College and Career Readiness

MSEA believes that each student graduating from a secondary school in the State of Maryland must do so with adequate college preparation and/or 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 career and technological training. (94, 95, 96, 98, 03, 06, 07, 19)

A.14. Financial Access to State Colleges, Universities and Technical Training Centers

MSEA believes every 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, 23, 25)

A.15. Home-Schooling

MSEA believes that for homeschooling to ensure quality instruction, homeschooling should require appropriate instructor licensure, monitoring, evaluation, and approval of time-based instruction to provide an adequate instructional program.

MSEA also believes that public school funds should not be used for the purchase of instructional materials, equipment, and related goods necessary for homeschooling. For any voluntary home instruction program to be considered an adequate substitute for school, the parents or guardians would have to establish the following:

- that they are licensed to instruct the child;
- that the child is receiving instruction comparable to that which they would receive in school; and
- that the facilities, time, and manner of instruction are also comparable.

MSEA further 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, 21, 24, 25)

A.16. Providing Sign Language for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

MSEA believes that all federal and state laws regarding provision of sign language services to the deaf and hard of hearing community must be followed in all educational settings.

MSEA also believes that Educational Sign Language Interpreters/Translators should be qualified professionals who are licensed, state credentialed, or nationally certified. (23)

A.17. Mental Health Stigma

MSEA believes that stigma surrounding mental health creates significant barriers to accessing care and negatively impacts the well-being of students, educators, and the broader community.

MSEA also believes that mental health conditions should be treated with the same respect and dignity as treatment for physical health conditions and that opportunities for employment, retention, promotion, and leadership positions should

not be denied solely on the basis of treatment for and/or stigma surrounding mental illness.

MSEA believes in the establishment of partnerships between school communities and appropriate advocacy organizations to break down mental health stigma and stereotyping. (New 08, 19, 25)

A.18. Financial Responsibility for the Program

MSEA believes in equal educational opportunities for each citizen of Maryland. the state of Maryland has the primary responsibility for funding public education. All funding must come from dedicated revenue.

MSEA also believes the state should significantly increase funding for public education to support and improve local programs. All State funds should be distributed equitably.

MSEA further believes that public funding for education at all levels should be to support public schools. Public funding to K-12 non-public schools should cease (except for federal school lunch and milk programs). Until such funding is discontinued, these funds should be controlled by public education agencies and be granted only to tuition-free schools that meet all standards required of public schools.

MSEA 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. The Congress of the United States should continue expanded federal participation in the financing of elementary and secondary programs.

MSEA also believes new programming or revisions to existing programming 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 displace local funding. (94, 97, 04, 05, 07, 10, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25)

A.19. 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 also believes early childhood development program curriculum and kindergarten curriculum should be incorporated into each other for scaffolding seamlessly.

MSEA further believes such programs must be research-based, subject to strict regulation, and staffed by licensed specialists in Early Childhood Development. MSEA also believes that early childhood education programs should maintain small group size with appropriate staff/child ratios for each age level. MSEA further 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, 21, 25)

A.20. Tax Limitation Proposals

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

A.21. 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.22. 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)

MSEA also 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, 19)

A.23. 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 to meet the needs of aspiring educators based on the changing educational best practices. 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.

MSEA encourages partnerships with HBCU's to develop and support programming designed to build greater diversity in the education professions.

MSEA also supports programs within systems that model and encourage students to enter teacher preparation programs after graduation from high school. (94, 99, 01, 21, 23, 25)

A.24. 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.25. Building Equitable and Inclusive Community Partnerships

MSEA believes that strong, equitable, and inclusive partnerships with community organizations are essential for the success of public education. This includes developing and maintaining strong communication and work partnerships in order to build coalitions that benefit students, teachers and the communities in which they live and work.

MSEA also believes that parent-teacher associations, along with other community partners, must maintain open and transparent communication with each other and the public to achieve shared educational and legislative goals.

MSEA supports working collaboratively with community partners to build broad-based coalitions that advocate for equitable and inclusive education for all students. (23, 25)

B. To Establish, Promote, and Protect the Health and Welfare of the Whole Child and Staff

MSEA believes that in order to provide an equitable quality public education, the promotion and protection of the health and welfare of the whole child and staff must be ensured by:

- developing public awareness of the significance of education for all individuals;
- advocating for healthy and safe environments for students and staff
- establishing effective training that includes strategies for working with students and staff who have experienced trauma;
- working with appropriate stakeholders to develop programs to achieve these goals within agreed upon timelines; and
- working with appropriate groups to protect students and staff. (94, 96, 97, 08, 17, 18, 21, 23, 25)

B.1. 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)

B.2. Weapons

MSEA believes that all students and education employees must be allowed to learn and work in an educational environment free of unauthorized weapons. MSEA also believes severe penalties should be imposed and strenuously enforced against violators. MSEA further believes that gun owners should be required to participate in educational programs and be held accountable for responsible ownership of weapons, including but not limited to, safe use and storage. (03, 08, 09, 14, 21, 23, 24, 25)

B.3. Victims of Crime

MSEA believes that students and education 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, 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 students and education employees 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. (88, 91, 95, 01, 04, 09, 13, 16, 19, 23)

B.4. Excellence for School Programs and Personnel

MSEA believes that educators, students, elected leadership, and the greater school community, should take every opportunity to make positive changes in their schools.

MSEA also believes that these changes should reflect expectations of high academic and socially responsible performances by all that are engaged in working within our school systems. (96, 97, 23)

B.5. Parental Accountability

MSEA believes parents have the initial and sustaining primary responsibility to provide for the development of moral, ethical, and/or spiritual values in their children, along with healthy life practices and a positive attitude toward learning which includes equity and inclusion for all.

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

MSEA further believes local affiliates should work with parent groups to determine, and improve upon, those skills for which parents should be more appropriately held accountable. (06, 07, 10, 13, 17, 22, 25)

B.6. Protection from Workplace Violence

MSEA believes that every education employee should be guaranteed the right to a safe workplace. MSEA also believes that stringent, preventative protocols should exist at every worksite to ensure the safety of all staff and students. MSEA further believes that school officials must take clear, concise, consistent, and swift action against individuals, including students, who commit a crime, including, but not limited to, assault and/or battery. (95, 96, 97, 99, 00, 07, 21, 25)

B.7. Ethics of the Education Profession

MSEA believes in the power of building positive relationships between educators and their students. MSEA also believes that any relationship outside of a professionally accepted standard is unethical and potentially unlawful. (93, 96, 03, 04, 21, 23)

B.8. 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 also believes that all buildings on educational facilities that are used by students and/or staff should be temperature controlled.

MSEA believes that all educational facilities must have good indoor air quality, be smoke free, and safe from environmental and chemical hazards. MSEA believes in conducting 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. (23)

MSEA also 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).

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

MSEA believes in recycling programs for the purpose of conserving energy and protecting America's dwindling natural resources. (87, 91, 94, 96, 02, 04, 08, 09, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19)

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

B.9. 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.

MSEA further believes that all transitional areas between portable modular classrooms and the main facility should be monitored with security cameras to maintain a secure and safe perimeter for all students and staff. Portable modular classrooms should be able to maintain constant voice communication with the main office in normal and emergency situations.

MSEA believes that portable modular classrooms should be maintained to code and regularly monitored, repaired, and replaced. The continued use of these portable modular structures should be based on current and projected enrollment and development within the existing school boundaries. (New 08, 13, 23)

B.10. Student Records

MSEA believes that COMAR regulations should provide for an effective process of the transfer of student records. This process must protect the rights of students and should facilitate the continuity of their education.

MSEA believes that the school must receive information that indicates:

- Educational plans, goals, specialized programs, and/or services
- Assessment data
- Attendance and cumulative records
- Immunizations and health needs
- Legal stipulations/restrictions
- History of disciplinary incidents and violence-related behavior.

MSEA believes that staff should have access to relevant information in order to provide necessary support and instruction to the student.

MSEA further believes that staff should respect the privacy rights of students when preparing and using student records, especially regarding immigration status, and should be given the full protection of state and local laws. (97, 99, 01, 03, 04, 08, 17, 23)

B.11. Education of Refugees, Undocumented Persons, Migrants, and Homeless Children

MSEA believes refugees, undocumented persons, migrants, and homeless children are entitled to equal educational opportunities and appropriate programs for their families. MSEA also believes that there should be a uniform statewide policy protecting the privacy rights of students regarding immigration status. (88, 94, 95, 03, 09, 17)

B.12. 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 exceptionalities 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:

- the inclusion model provides a favorable learning experience;
- students are prepared by appropriate transition experiences and guidance;
- discipline policies and practices used by local education agencies consider the special needs of each individual child;
- all educators participating in the inclusion model have equal input in decisions concerning the included student;
- 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;
- 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 to meet the child's needs;
- modifications should be made in all class sizes, scheduling, and curriculum design to accommodate the shifting demands the inclusion program creates;
- 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);
- there is a systematic evaluation and reporting of program developments;
- adequate additional funding and resources are provided exclusively for the implementation of the inclusion model;
- use of a trained instructional assistants/paraprofessionals, co-teachers, and special education teachers is extended to all special areas, as well as academic areas.
- 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.13. 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 the school educational team: teachers, administrators, other school personnel, and guardians. 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, 18)

B.14. Neurodiversity-Affirming Education

MSEA believes that neurodiversity-affirming education represents best practice for supporting all students.

MSEA also believes that approaching teaching and learning through a neurodiversity-affirming lens is consistent with trauma-informed practice, fostering dignity, safety, and equitable access to education.

MSEA further believes in implementing policies that reduce stigma, foster inclusive school communities, and ensure ongoing professional learning for all staff on educational and social emotional strategies that affirm neurodivergent identities. (new 25)

B.15. 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 should actively negotiate and lobby for the training and hiring of professionals to meet the needs of these students. (91, 93, 95, 97, 01, 05, 21)

B.16 The Opportunity to Learn

MSEA believes that each student 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 students 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. When conditions for classroom order have been restored, then the student should be returned to class.

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 student conduct and to monitor all policies bearing on each student's opportunity to learn. These task forces should dismantle or eliminate inequitable policies and practices that deprive students of a free public school education or that disproportionately harm our marginalized students.

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, 18, 22)

B.17. Age of Majority

MSEA believes that education employees should be provided with protocols for dealing with students that are emancipated, eighteen years of age, married, parents and have adult responsibilities according to Maryland law. (94, 99, 11, 14, 19, 23)

B.18. 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 support, academic assistance, and career programs to ensure that students pre-K through grade 12 remain in school through the successful 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, students identifying as LGBTQ+, habitual truants, those with academic failure, and those in special education. (New 09, 18, 21)

B.19. Restorative Justice Practices

MSEA believes that evidence-based restorative justice practices help to create a positive, safe, equitable, and healthy school environment and culture. MSEA also believes that such restorative justice practices build and improve relationships that foster strong school communities and eradicate the school to prison and school to deportation pipelines. (New 19, 21, 22, 23)

B.20. Addressing Student Discipline

MSEA believes 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 student behavior and restore productive instructional environments. (New 10, 24)

B.21. Bullying in the Public Schools

MSEA believes that bullying behaviors are detrimental in our schools and educational community. The Association also believes that teacher preparation and staff development should include comprehensive and consistent training on recognizing bullying behaviors, intervening on behalf of the victims, and restorative practices, when appropriate. The Association further believes that all school systems should provide definitions of what constitutes bullying behaviors in their administrative procedures and should include reporting processes, intervention strategies, and disciplinary consequences in local school policy. (New 12, 15, 22, 24, 25)

B.22. School Counseling and Mental Health 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.

MSEA believes that all efforts should be made to improve the health, safety, and support services available in schools with a goal of meeting or exceeding adequate coverage ratios for school psychologists, school counselors, social workers, nurses, and other student support personnel that are aligned to standards determined by the applicable state and/or national professional associations. (88, 93, 11, 21)

B.23. Mental Wellness Services

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.

MSEA also believes that such services should be permanently available to system employees at all times. (88, 91, 94, 07, 19, 21)

B.24. Family/Domestic Violence

MSEA believes local education agencies (LEAs) must provide violence prevention training and educational programs for staff and students. MSEA also believes an increase in funding and staffing of existing family services is needed and urges the creation of additional support systems and shelters. MSEA further believes social

services and the criminal justice system should continue to intervene actively to interrupt the cycle of family/domestic violence. (95, 96, 97, 98, 04, 08, 17, 18)

B.25. 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:

- services that include immediate protection, counseling, and therapy;
- adequate financial support;
- immediate temporary foster care for children who are victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation;
- screening and training of potential foster families and shelter personnel; and
- continued training, supervision, and evaluation of foster families and shelter personnel. (95, 96, 98, 99, 08)

B.26. Enforcement of Substance Abuse Laws

MSEA believes in “drug-free school zones” at all times, including school sponsored events. MSEA also supports mandated drug rehabilitation programs for any violation or conviction, whether civil or criminal, resulting from the possession or use of a controlled substance. MSEA further believes in fair and appropriate penalties for illegal production, distribution, and sale. These penalties should be uniformly enforced. (87, 97, 06, 11, 21, 23)

B.27. The Exploitation of K-12 Student-Athletes

MSEA believes that student athletes (K-12) under the supervision of their local program administrators, coaches and trainers should not be exploited for economic or personal gain, by not requiring or encouraging students to:

- be retained for physical development
- be encouraged to use radical diets
- be administered drugs, “painkillers” and herbal performance enhancers
- play with injuries
- change student residence for the purpose of athletic advantage
- have student grades manipulated to maintain eligibility
- be recruited from outside the student’s home school boundaries
- participate in any practice or activity for performance to the detriment of the health and welfare of the child

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, 23)

B.28. 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:

- Recognition of the importance of self-respect;
- Instruction on the consequences of sexual behaviors;
- Recognition that rewarding relationships between young people need not include sex;
- Acknowledgement of effective contraceptive and disease prevention measures; and
- Instruction on what is abusive sexual behavior and how to report it to the appropriate authorities. (New 11, 16, 22)

B.29. Sexual Assault and/or Battery

MSEA believes in educational efforts that will prevent and protect members of our society from becoming victims of sexual assault and/or battery.

MSEA also believes these efforts should include programs to promote awareness that even acquaintances may commit acts of sexual assault and/or battery.

B.30. Communicable Diseases

MSEA 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 also believes decisions about persons who are or may be infected with a communicable disease should be based on the recommendation of appropriate agencies or an expert team established for this purpose. MSEA further believes that the members of this team should include, but not be limited to, the person/s involved, treating physicians, parents/guardians of involved students as well as other public health personnel.

School districts should also develop and maintain health and safety protocols that follow Centers for Disease Control guidelines to protect students and education employees during national health crises.

MSEA believes these guidelines should protect the privacy rights of students and school employees while providing appropriate guarantees for those individuals excluded from the school setting. (23)

B.31. Youth Pregnancy

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

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

- Emphasize the link between staying in school and their future;
- Provide health education and human development courses that cover both physical and emotional well-being of students;
- Instruct students on the responsibilities of parenting, child development, and rearing; and
- 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, 24)

B.32. 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, 21)

B.33. 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 licensed health personnel as determined by local needs based on an analysis of the school health program. MSEA also believes that school based health services are best provided by health professionals and should not be the responsibility of site based educational or administrative support staff.

MSEA further 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 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, 23)

B.34. Gender Affirming Care

MSEA believes that trans and non-binary gender identities are normal variations of human identity and expression, and that forgoing gender-affirming care can have health consequences, both mental and physical.

MSEA also believes that medical care belongs within the purview of the patient-physician relationship. It is harmful to limit gender affirming care options for families and physicians when making decisions for pediatric patients.

MSEA further believes that gender care services should be covered by insurance companies and that insurance plans should not discriminate against individuals regardless of their gender history.

C. To Achieve Excellence in Educational Standards

MSEA believes that the freedom to learn and the freedom to teach are integral to achieving excellence in educational standards. The freedom to learn and the freedom to teach are fundamental to the integrity of the total educational process and must be protected from any attempt to abridge them or to curtail the autonomy of each. (23, 24)

C.1. Freedom to Teach

MSEA believes that the freedom to teach empowers educators to select instructional techniques that appeal to various learning styles. MSEA further believes that educators are responsible for presenting materials that provide students with multiple perspectives on all sides of controversial topics. (90, 91, 07, 14, 23, 24)

C.2. Accountability in Education

MSEA believes that parents, education employees, and the community at large working collaboratively share the responsibility in educational decision making. Educational 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 further 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 also believes that 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.

MSEA further believes that systems of accountability disproportionately emphasize cognitive (skill-oriented) goals. MSEA also believes affective (value-oriented) goals

contribute 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. (91, 93, 94, 96, 03, 05, 24, 25)

C.3. Program of Instruction

MSEA believes that the community is best served with a comprehensive educational program that meets the diversity of needs. 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, English language proficiency, sexual orientation, or intellectual capability.

MSEA also believes that curricula are 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 to the teacher.

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 equitable access to developmentally appropriate, fully funded, public pre-K and kindergarten programs.

MSEA also believes in the inclusion of career and technical education (CTE) in all educational endeavors and disciplines to develop an appreciation for the dignity of work and to develop salable skills.

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

- vocational/technical education (including the full implementation of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968);
- programs for special education (including implementation of all federal and state aid to support them);
- library media programs (including the employment in every subdivision of at least one full-time professionally library-certificated media supervisor);
- distance learning development and utilization throughout the state as a means of enriching local educational programs; and
- instruction in the development and responsible use of electronic media.

MSEA believes that education in human growth and development of the individual is an integral part of the school curriculum adapted for 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. MSEA further believes that 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, 21, 22, 24, 25)

C.4. Standardized Test Scores for College Admission

MSEA 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. MSEA also believes that a student's performance on standardized tests should not be the sole determinant for college admission. (89, 96, 09, 23)

C.5. Technology in the Educational Process

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

MSEA also believes in the creative and innovative use of media 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 prior to the expected implementation of that technology.

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, 17, 24, 25)

C.6. 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 children into narrow roles and limit career choices. This should include programs that increase educators' knowledge and awareness of the different patterns of behavior, curricula offerings, expectations, rewards, and disciplinary actions presently administered to students according to their race, ethnicity, disability, gender, identity and expression, sexual orientation, and social backgrounds.

MSEA further believes that it is the responsibility of the entire educational community, including MSEA, as well as 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, 18, 21, 22, 24)

C.7. Truth in Testing

MSEA believes that research on the structure of the intellect identifies multiple and varied cognitive operations and advances the significant premise that these operations can be taught, and that intelligence is dynamic rather than fixed.

MSEA also 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 opposes the use of such test results as the sole factor to determine placement or promotion. (87, 91, 93, 05, 24)

C.8. 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:

- provisions to inform teachers at the building level, in a timely manner, regarding the ability of students to apply knowledge and skills;
- the basis for future school improvement efforts when generated locally by teachers and combined with other information;
- provision of data on school and student performance relative to the areas tested; and
- acquisition of information to assist schools in need of ideas, resources, and strategies to improve their ability to meet the educational needs of students.
- and that a review of any state mandated testing program be evaluated to determine if the program is accurately and consistently measuring clear performance objectives as curricula may be revised or replaced between testing windows. (92, 93, 02, 05, 12, 25)

C.9. Black History and Respective Restorative Culture Curriculum

MSEA believes in the deliberate and intentional infusion of Black history and culture into the curriculum of Maryland schools throughout the school year. MSEA also believes its local affiliates should be involved in the promotion and implementation of Black history and culture curriculum. (91, 94, 95, 19, 23, 24)

C.10. Programs for English Language Learners

MSEA believes that English language development 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 English language development programs should be made available to students beginning in early childhood programs.

MSEA further believes that only fully qualified teachers should teach English language development classes with the assistance of qualified tutors. (96, 04, 06, 13, 16, 22)

C.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, the schools should receive statistical credit. (New 09)

C.12. Retention and Promotion Policies

MSEA believes that decisions regarding promotion and retention of students should be based upon the judgment of educational teams, consisting of teachers, administrators, other school personnel, and parents. Student report card grades should rest solely within the professional discretion of the teachers of record.

MSEA also believes that educators, administrators, school board members, and parents should actively seek to end social promotion of students or grade-level advancement based primarily on age. A process of alternative instructional programs, as well as credit recovery, should be provided for those students who are not prepared for promotion. Any practice or policy intended to address the issues noted in this section should be closely monitored by the school districts in order to ensure compliance and accountability are maintained.

MSEA further believes that special education students' needs may vary from traditional grade level expectations. School teams may need to consider retention/promotion based on individualized goals. (95, 96, 05, 16, 19, 25)

C.13. Student Attendance

MSEA believes that consistent school attendance is essential for student success. MSEA also believes that parents and guardians should be held legally accountable for adhering to mandatory attendance laws and the consequences for violating them. (88, 89, 91, 04, 09, 25)

C.14. State Test Scores

MSEA believes the Maryland State Department of Education test scores do not accurately indicate the strengths and 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, 17)

C.15. Educational Use of Copyright Materials

MSEA believes it is essential that teachers have the right to use copyrighted materials and off-air recordings to meet the needs of effective teaching. MSEA also believes that teachers need the flexibility of utilizing this technology in classroom situations at those times when students are most ready to learn.

MSEA further 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, 25)

C.16. Scholastic Publications

MSEA believes that student publications including but not limited to the school newspaper, yearbook, and literary magazine, podcasts, web pages and vlogs when functioning under the sponsorship of a teacher-adviser, are invaluable educational tools, part of school life and should be accorded basic rights of freedom of the press. (96, 07, 25)

C.17. Quality Media Programming for Children

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

MSEA also believes that the quantity of high-quality media programming for children should be increased. (90, 94, 06, 08, 18)

C.18. 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 to the highest possible standard for school libraries/media centers.

MSEA believes school libraries/media centers should be used for flexible scheduling. (New 06, 07, 15, 16, 24, 25)

C.19. Literacy Programs

MSEA believes that there is a strong correlation between structured literacy programs and the reading needs AND PROFICIENCY of most students. MSEA also believes in the use of scientifically aligned reading instruction that is aligned with instructional best practices. (New 23)

C.20. Multicultural Education

MSEA believes that multicultural educational curricula are essential to developing student awareness, appreciation, and respect of the history, diversity, and lifestyle differences of groups of all people. MSEA also believes that curricula should be inclusive of different backgrounds to ensure that students see themselves represented and celebrated in the curricula. MSEA further believes that multicultural education should be infused in all aspects of learning throughout the education of all students.

MSEA further believes students are entitled to curricula, programs, and experiential opportunities that are factually accurate, inclusive of diversity and uphold the dignity of all.

MSEA believes that the instructional curriculum and schedule should provide deliberate opportunities for students to explore and share their cultural identities in a safe space, as well as to learn about others cultural identities. (New 19, 21, 23, 24)

C.21. Instructional Staffing and Class Size

MSEA believes all students deserve an opportunity to learn with consideration given to each student's learning style and that students learn best in learning environments that allow the teacher to provide for individualization of the instructional program and quick attention to each student'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 for both in person and distance learning programs, 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 student'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, and other non-school-based educators, 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:

- the utilization of the staff;
- the grouping of students for instruction and school-related activities; and
- the scheduling of time and space. (95, 96, 97, 98, 05, 21, 23, 24)

C.22. 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. Career and technology program opportunities must be increased and adequately funded to ensure proper implementation. (94, 04, 10, 22)

C.23. 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, including but not limited to staffing, materials and instructional space as needed. (91, 04, 07, 15, 25)

C.24. Nutrition Education Program

MSEA believes nutrition education can establish a solid foundation for lifetime nutritional practices and should be continued and expanded in all grade's 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 in Maryland should adjust their daily menus to provide minimum amounts of fat, salt, sugar, and low-nutrient starches. (91, 94, 99, 00, 06, 07)

C.25. Health Education

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

MSEA also believes health education should be taught in each of the grades, pre-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 classroom teachers required to teach health. health curricula should reflect age-appropriate, research-based standards that support students' overall well-being. (92, 04, 06, 25)

C.26. 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. physical education should be taught by certified/licensed specialists to provide students with the safest optimal instruction in this subject.

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, 25)

C.27. Science Education

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 Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). (03, 05, 06, 19)

C.28. 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 is the most important factor leading to increased proficiency in more than one language, 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, 23)

D. To Advance Organizational Unity Among Educators

MSEA believes the challenges of public education require a united effort by all education employees to achieve the goals of the association.

This will require MSEA to:

- incorporate diverse voices and representation in developing programs that honor the connections between the local associations and the state association in building that community voice;
- develop, with local associations, programs designed to make those associations more effective; and
- establish leadership development programs to improve the skills of all members. (94, 97, 19 23, 25)

D.1. Professional Unity

MSEA believes that bargaining units should be merged or divided when the majority of unit members involved have voted to support such action. (88, 91, 94, 08, 16, 18, 23, 25)

D.2. 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 they so desire.

MSEA also believes local associations should pursue contractual language 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 their professional status. (91, 93, 97, 07, 21, 25)

D.3. Member Association Rights

MSEA believes that all education employees should be informed of all national and state association member services and benefits.

MSEA also believes that all programs and activities for association members should be designed to meet their needs. (23, 24, 25)

D.4. Local Association Crisis Funds

MSEA believes locals should establish and/or strengthen crisis funds in their local budgets. (97, 25)

D.5. 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 as defined by NEA 3.1.g population of the geographic area. Ethnic minority members should be encouraged to seek elective and appointive positions at all levels.

MSEA also believes the association should promote minority participation in MSEA program development and should employ minorities and women in staff positions consistent with Association Affirmative Action policies.

MSEA further believes that its affiliates should maintain a commitment to organizational policies and programs that promote the training and involvement of minorities at all levels of the organization. MSEA further believes that there is a need for systematic evaluation of minority participation at all levels. (23, 25)

D.6. Union Engagement

MSEA believes that union members should not be subject to retaliation of any kind for exercising their right to be engaged in union activity. (New 21)

D.7. Attendance at MSEA Convention

MSEA believes all local boards of education should provide professional leave for educational employees wishing to participate in the opportunities for professional growth provided by MSEA at the annual convention. (87, 95, 96, 97, 11, 25)

D.8. 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.9. Collective Bargaining

MSEA believes that the democratic selection of a collective bargaining representative to speak with one voice, representing all employees in the bargaining unit, is the foundation of effective collective bargaining. MSEA also believes that the attainment and exercise of collective bargaining rights are essential to address the needs of all education employees. MSEA further believes that collective bargaining ensures the integrity of negotiated agreements and 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, 23)

D.10. Tenure

MSEA believes non-tenured and provisional teachers should be provided 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.

MSEA further believes if such guidelines are used as part of the licensure 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 professional standards and teacher education board (PSTEB).

MSEA strongly opposes any increase to the pre-tenure probationary period. (88, 93, 96, 02, 04, 05, 09, 11, 14, 21, 23, 25)

D.11. Contractual Rights of 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, 23, 25)

D.12. 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 are 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.

MSEA further believes many proposed programs or practices are detrimental to public education, including, 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,
- evaluations by private for-profit groups,
- allowing public funds to be used for religious education or other religious purposes or that otherwise weakens the wall of separation between church and state,
- placing the economic security of public education employees at risk, without regard to individual job performance, so that the services in question can be performed by private sector employees,
- replacing services that are, or could feasibly be, provided by the public schools, and
- having the purpose or effect of causing or maintaining racial segregation in the public schools.

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, 21, 23, 25)

D.13. Strike Prohibitions and Penalties

MSEA believes that the ability to withhold one's labor is a basic right of all workers, whether in the public or private sector. MSEA also believes in using all lawful means, including, but not limited to, building coalitions with other affected labor groups to advocate for changes to Maryland state law to permit public employees the right to strike. MSEA further asserts that both binding arbitration and the right to strike are essential components of a fair and effective collective bargaining process. (88, 96, 02, 07, 09, 22, 25)

D.14. Legal Protection of Education Employees

MSEA believes that education employees should make use of all legal and institutional remedies in order to find redress for any physical harm, emotional harm, or other losses 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, 18, 21)

D.15. 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. (89, 91, 95, 97, 13, 25)

D.16. Liability

MSEA believes that state legislation should limit school employees' liability for negligence resulting in injury or death caused by medication, first aid, or emergency medical assistance administered by school employees in the course of their duties. (02, 04, 22)

D.17. 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)

D.18. Invasion of Privacy

MSEA believes every individual has 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, 23)

D.19. 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
 10. Family medical leave (FMLA)
- 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 and opposes 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, 22, 25)

D.20. Release 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 their office for the association.

MSEA also believes that its Board of Directors should seek and provide various forms of financial assistance to accomplish release time for local association presidents. (87, 88, 97, 05, 18, 23)

D.21. 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 other medical benefits. (New 08, 25)

D.22. 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 should have a right to access such benefits without fear of reprisal. (New 14, 25)

D.23. Social Security

MSEA 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, 18)

D.24. Workload

MSEA believes that education professionals should be encouraged to remain in or return to the education profession through strategies consistent with Association policies, including enhanced salaries, benefits, professional compensation for additional duties beyond the established school day/year, a supportive and respectful work environment, a reasonable workload, a secure pension, and retirement packages that reward extended years of service.

MSEA also believes that part-time education employees should receive at least prorated salary and benefits based on their workload comparable to full-time education employees.

MSEA further believes that the workload of the education employee is within the scope of negotiations.

MSEA believes that class size is a fundamental working condition for teachers. This encompasses, but is not limited to, elementary, secondary, virtual, hybrid, and in person instructional models.

MSEA also 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 further believes that non-instructional duties impede educator performance, as well as student achievement, and contribute to high rates of teacher turnover. (18, 21, 23, 25)

D.25. 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 based on fair and objective non-discriminatory standards. Criteria should include seniority, uniformity of application, and affirmative action. (23, 25)

D.26. 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)

D.27. MSEA Hiring Policies

MSEA believes in the active recruitment and hiring of minority staff and encourages its affiliates to do the same. (23)

D.28. Substitute Teachers

MSEA believes in the importance of employing professional educators to fulfill the critical role of substitute teachers.

MSEA also believes that substitute teachers perform a vital function in the maintenance and continuity of daily education.

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

MSEA opposes the practice of replacing absent teachers by dispersing students to other classrooms. MSEA also opposes the use of individuals such as education support professionals, part-time employees, or employees hired through private agencies to cover classes.

MSEA also opposes requiring teachers to substitute during their preparation time, or in place of their regular teaching assignment. MSEA believes that school districts must provide full compensation for licensed teachers who substitute for personnel on extended leave. (23)

D.29. Extended Year and Twelve-Month Employment Contracts

MSEA believes that local affiliates should negotiate the terms and conditions for extended year and twelve-month employment contracts. (04, 08, 22)

D.30. 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:

- 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;
- be based on preparation, academic degrees, experience, professional growth, responsibilities, and full length of service;
- elevate compensation for education employees to a level competitive with those in comparable professions;
- assure that initial placement and advancement on the salary schedule are nondiscriminatory;
- 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
- 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)

D.31. 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.

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, 22)

D.32. Competency-Based Licensure

MSEA believes that licensure and renewal of a teaching license in Maryland should conform with best practice and recent research on preparation for the teaching profession. Further, MSEA opposes the use of employee evaluations in the license renewal process unless the evaluation(s) are done in conformity with MSEA Resolutions on Education Employee Evaluation.

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

The Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board must be aggressive in securing teacher input on proposed changes in licensing requirements and teacher education programs before taking action. (91, 94, 03, 08, 10, 19, 21, 25)

D.33. Placement Outside Field of Licensure

MSEA opposes the placement of teachers out of their field of licensure. 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 licensure 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 licensed staff, and that teachers should only be placed out-of-field under the following circumstances:

- The teacher and the local school system believe they are competent to teach in that subject area;
- There is a demonstrable need; and
- There is no fully licensed 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 licensed teacher.

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

- The teacher is provided with extra planning time and assistance;
- The teacher is not formally evaluated for their performance in the out-of-field placement;
- The local system continues to make every effort to find a licensed teacher;
- The efforts of the local system to find a licensed teacher are documented; and
- The teachers are provided with adequate time and funds to attain the full licensure necessary in the out-of-field area. (91, 93, 03, 04, 07, 21)

D.34. Education Support Professional Working out of Classification

MSEA believes that when education support professionals are placed in positions outside of their assigned position that:

- There is a demonstrable need;
- They should be compensated for the time working out of their assigned position; and
- They should be properly trained to perform the duties of the temporary position. (New 21)

D.35. 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:

- 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;
- nondiscriminatory, fair, and equitable treatment of bargaining unit members;
- protection from unilateral changes in terms or conditions of employment;
- 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;
- 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
- 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)

D.36. Retirement

MSEA believes that in order for school districts to enhance recruitment efforts, to improve retention rates, and to create a high-quality public education system, education employees must be provided a guaranteed adequate income throughout 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 fully fund the pension system to provide a guaranteed adequate income to education employees throughout retirement. The state has the obligation to fund accrued actuarial liabilities.

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, 21, 22)

D.37. Economic and Professional Security for All Members

MSEA believes in:

- effective collective bargaining for all public employees;
- negotiated agreements, which improve salaries and wages, benefits, and working conditions;
- strict implementation and funding of all negotiated agreements; and
- full protection of the legal rights of all members. (94, 96, 03, 21)

D.38. 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)

E. To Advance Professional Excellence and Growth

MSEA believes that high professional standards must be maintained to provide excellence in the best possible education for each child in Maryland. MSEA also believes in cultivating professional growth to engage students better and nurture justice by providing training, tools, and support for members to excel in the profession. MSEA further believes all members should have equal access to and equity in all learning and growth opportunities. (23)

E.1. Teacher Expectations/Student Achievement

MSEA recognizes the implications of research findings that indicate a direct and positive correlation between teacher expectations and student achievement. Therefore, MSEA believes that educators must continue to strengthen their efforts to develop and demonstrate expectations that each student can achieve academically and to cultivate individual talents. MSEA also believes that educators skills in establishing and relaying such expectations should be enhanced by expanding educator 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 educator expectations and student achievement.

MSEA further 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, 21)

E.2. Professional Status of Educators

MSEA believes that only those educators who meet the established licensure requirements should be employed. Educators should participate in developing and implementing in-service training and other planned professional growth programs. To supplement and extend in-service programs for educators, local associations should negotiate professional leave and reimbursement of expenses during such leave. (88, 89, 94, 97, 98, 00, 23, 24)

E.3. 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 educational institutions should:

- establish an active recruitment program in all colleges and universities in the state to seek qualified minority personnel;

- establish educator preparation programs at all colleges and universities that are now classified as Historically Black Colleges or Universities;
- establish a program for advancement that would actively seek to promote minority educators to administrative and supervisory positions;
- establish a policy that would prevent ethnic minority educators from being assigned only to those schools with a predominance of ethnic minority populations; and
- utilize the registry of licensure minority personnel for administrative and supervisory positions 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 to create 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 to protect all human rights.

MSEA further believes that legislation should deny tax-exempt status to those institutions whose policies or practices prevent the racial integration of those institutions. (87, 88, 90, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 00, 08, 09, 11, 14, 16, 18, 19, 24)

E.4. Educator Rights and Responsibilities

MSEA believes the following are specific rights and appropriate responsibilities of educators:

- identifying the educational needs of students within the limits of the educator's license; and
- developing plans to meet the educational needs of students by working within existing guidelines, programs, goals, and objectives of the local education agency and the state.

To identify and meet students' needs, educator rights and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- non-teaching time during the day to develop, evaluate, revise, and plan the implementation of learning objectives.
- non-teaching time to consult with appropriate personnel or parents/guardians regarding the delivery of educational services.
- developing and making decisions with administration, regarding programs, goals, and objectives.

Factors to be considered include, but are not limited to:

- selecting appropriate methodology,
- selecting and utilizing materials of instruction,
- providing a safe and conducive learning environment, and
- evaluating individual performance.

Referring students requiring unique or specialized educational services to appropriate personnel and/or programs requires

- assessing the validity of programs, goals, and objectives;
- assessing the adequacy of resources available; and
- assessing the ability to assess accurately the achievement of programs, goals, and objectives. (88, 89, 90, 91, 96, 97, 05, 15, 24)

E.5. 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 experience in content or grade level experience equal to the mentee position should supervise mentoring programs. MSEA believes using mentor-generated evaluations and feedback to justify the dismissal of mentees is inappropriate and should not be used. (01, 05, 10, 21, 24)

E.6. Association Involvement in Instruction and Professional Development

MSEA believes that educators (through their local, state, and national associations) should be involved as professionals in all steps of the decision-making process related to curriculum and instruction. MSEA also believes that educators should be involved in the design and implementation of instruction and professional development. MSEA further believes that local jurisdictions should design and implement numerous and diverse opportunities that empower educators in the educational decision-making. (89, 96, 04, 07, 19, 23, 24)

E.7. Association Involvement in Professional Development for Education Employees

MSEA believes that support staff must be involved in all steps of the decision-making process related to professional development based on job classifications and responsibilities for the professional development to be relevant. MSEA also endorses and promotes activities and professional development that will support such involvement. (96, 05, 07, 23, 25)

E.8. Release 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 compensated 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. Time for consideration of changes should not include time allotted during regularly scheduled staff meetings, team planning or other regular meeting/planning schedules. (88, 90, 93, 94, 96, 04, 05, 07, 22, 23, 24)

E.9. Representation on Leadership Teams

MSEA believes that leadership teams, including those tasked with decision-making, should have dedicated positions for association member representation. The number of positions should be proportionate to the number of association members at the work location. The representatives(s) should be established through a system of elections that are only open to association members at the work location. These positions should be established through collective bargaining agreements. (92, 21)

E.10. 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 workday 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 educators' duties must be accomplished only through negotiation with consideration of the consequences for an effective instructional program. (New 06, 19)

E.11. Student Teaching, Practicums, and Internship Programs

MSEA believes that realistic practice teaching can be the most important phase in preparing new educators. Related programs should be administered under the guidance of professional educators with demonstrated effectiveness and broad experience. MSEA, therefore, recommends the following guidelines:

a. Selection and Responsibilities of Cooperating Educators:

Professional educators who choose to serve as cooperating educators should have a minimum of four years of experience in the same field and must be above average in their duties as evaluated by their local systems. Sufficient time during the school day, and apart from any other student responsibility, must be available for conference and planning between the aspiring educator and the cooperating educator. The cooperating educator should evaluate the practice of the aspiring educator at the end of the period of assignment period, in accordance with the program requirements. In an unsatisfactory professional relationship, the cooperating educator should have the right to discontinue working with the aspiring educator. To ensure maximum utilization of professional talents, no cooperating educator should be responsible for more than two aspiring educators during any school year.

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

A clear understanding of the roles and expectations of the cooperating educator and the supervising college professor should be developed through meaningful conferences, especially prior to and during all phases of practice assignments. Further, college methods courses should include participating educators in the college program's instruction, demonstration, and discussion phases.

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

Competent cooperating educators who guide aspiring educators should receive adequate remuneration per semester from the college or university with whom the contract is in force.

The evaluation of the aspiring educator by the cooperating educator should be included in the evaluation of the aspiring educator by the college professor and be reflected in any grades assigned by the college professor. Aspiring educators 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 teaching, practicum and internship programs should be developed and adhered to by the colleges, universities, and professional education associations involved in teacher preparation. There should be equity and uniformity in the design and implementation of such standards.

These standards should include length of practice experience, prerequisite courses, minimum evaluation forms, etc. Licensure should be granted only to those involved in supervised practice 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 Aspiring Educators

Aspiring educators must be included in those areas of liability and responsibility usually related to professional educators. Aspiring educators interacting with students in schools should assume these responsibilities and be protected from liabilities not otherwise associated with our professional duties. In this regard, legal counsel should draw up guidelines for state bylaws or statutes, which reflect our concerns for practice teachers. (91, 92, 96, 03, 05, 11, 23, 24)

F. To Promote and Protect Human and Civil Rights

MSEA believes that there should not be any infringement upon the civil rights of any student or educator. MSEA also believes that the reduction in civil rights that infringes upon a student's right to obtain a free and appropriate education is abhorrent.

MSEA further believes in the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), and belonging in all educational settings. MSEA believes that comprehensive DEI

initiatives, inclusive curriculum, and diverse staffing are essential to ensuring welcoming, respectful, and culturally responsive learning and working environments for all. MSEA also believes that advancing DEI principles strengthens the sense of belonging in Maryland's public schools and improves educational outcomes for all students. (23, 25)

F.1. Student Voice

MSEA believes that for schools to be safe, just, and equitable, all students should be empowered and heard. Students' needs, lived experiences, and voices must be our central focus, especially those that have been historically exploited, ignored, or silenced.

MSEA also believes that students must be invested in their own success and understand that their actions and voices are critical in shaping and driving the decisions that affect their school communities and help create inclusive, bias-free, and thriving school climates.

MSEA further believes that student voice should be included in decision-making processes with limitations for the governance of their educational institutions. (23, 24)

F.2. Student Member of the Board

MSEA believes that student participation in a school board's deliberative process should be encouraged, and that student input in the voting process should be advisory only. Wherever a school board includes student members, they should be excluded from participating in discussions, receiving information, and voting on issues dealing with education employees and items contained in negotiated agreements. (23)

F.3. Legal and Civil Rights of Education Employees

MSEA believes that due process as guaranteed by the Constitution and civil rights of all education employees to be important. 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, 21)

F.4. Digital Rights and Data Privacy

MSEA believes that students and education employees have the right to digital privacy, data protection, and equitable access to educational technology. MSEA also believes in the responsible and ethical use of technology in education to advance fairness and safeguard individual dignity. MSEA further believes that technology should be used to promote inclusive, respectful, and equitable outcomes for all individuals. (New 25)

F.5. Rights in Higher Education and Post Secondary Programs

MSEA supports access to postsecondary programs for all qualified students without regard to age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, race, military registration status, or ability to pay.

MSEA further believes in campus-based engagement that promotes equity, social justice, and the free exchange of ideas.

MSEA believes in academic freedom, inclusive learning environments, and civil liberties of faculty, staff, and students in higher education. MSEA also believes in curricula that reflect diverse voices and experiences. (02, 12, 23, 25)

F.6. School District Hiring Practices

MSEA strongly believes that all education employees shall be entitled to

- hiring and promotional practices that are equitable and based on competency and expertise.
- uniformity and high-quality programs to enforce each member's contractual, statutory, and constitutional rights (14, 23).

F.7. Environmental Justice and Safe Learning

MSEA believes that every student and educator has the right to a healthy, safe, and sustainable learning and working environment. MSEA also believes in policies that address environmental racism and strengthen climate resilience in school facilities. MSEA further believes that environmental justice is required for educational equity and community well-being. (New 25)

F.8. Affirmative Action

MSEA believes that overcoming racial and gender discrimination throughout all segments of American society can only be accomplished through affirmative action efforts.

MSEA also believes that overcoming discriminatory practices in regard to race, religion, gender, and country of origin can only be accomplished through explicit recruitment efforts.

MSEA also believes the adoption of compensatory hiring practices by school districts helps schools to attain and maintain levels of minority and gender employment.

MSEA further believes that affirmative action in the workplace is essential to ensure representation that is equitable and commensurate with MSEA policy and the census population of the State of Maryland.

MSEA believes that there should not be any infringement upon the civil rights of any student or educator. MSEA also believes that the reduction in civil rights that infringes upon a student's right to obtain a free and appropriate education is abhorrent. (88, 90, 91, 95, 96, 97, 04, 07, 08, 11, 16, 23, 24)

F.9. Human Relations in the Schools

MSEA believes all education employees should demonstrate inclusivity and acceptance in their relations with colleagues, students, parents, and community

members, thus providing the respect and dignity to which each human being is entitled.

MSEA believes these human relations principles must be upheld in all education settings, including higher education institutions. MSEA also believes that fostering mutual respect, civil discourse, and inclusive practices are essential to academic and community well-being. MSEA further believes that schools should serve as welcoming and inclusive environments for immigrant and refugee students, educators, and families, offering access to education, support services, and community engagement regardless of documentation status. (94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 01, 08, 18, 19, 21, 22, 25)

F.10. Equitable Accountability

MSEA believes that restorative practices, culturally responsive approaches, and inclusive policies that promote belonging and engagement is a human and civil right. MSEA also believes in the universal use of restorative practices to ensure equitable accountability for all students. (New 25)

F.11. Discrimination

MSEA believes that every individual must be protected from all forms of discrimination and stereotyping and all forms of identity-based harassment. MSEA also believes in continual promotion and protection of educational environments that actively affirm the dignity, safety, and full participation of all individuals. MSEA further believes in fostering trust and opportunity for immigrant communities through policies that ensure their full inclusion and protection within the school environment. (94, 95, 96, 07, 09, 25)

F.12. Indigenous Sovereignty and Culturally Sustaining Education

MSEA believes that the histories, languages, and cultures of indigenous peoples must be fully respected and represented in Maryland's public education system. MSEA also believes in partnerships with tribal nations, and the inclusion of indigenous perspectives in curricula. MSEA further believes that culturally sustaining practices that affirm the identity and contributions of indigenous students and educators. (New 25)

F.13. Gender Neutral Language

MSEA believes state and local associations should adopt gender neutral language practices. (88, 91, 95, 97, 08, 18)

F.14. Minority Participation in the Association

MSEA 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, 19, 23)

F.15. Historically Black Colleges and Universities

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)

F.16. Women's Rights

MSEA believes that all persons should have equal opportunities 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 an equal rights amendment to the United States Constitution should be introduced and ratified.

MSEA 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, 98, 04, 07, 14, 17, 18)

F.17. 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)

F.18. 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.19. 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 the religious beliefs of others and the cultural influences in the United States that have resulted from various religions.

MSEA also believes that these principles apply to non-believers and all faith practices. (99, 07, 08, 09, 10, 17, 19, 21)

F.20. Reproductive and Gender Affirming Healthcare

MSEA believes that bodily autonomy, reproductive freedom, and access to gender-affirming healthcare are essential to human dignity, well-being, and educational opportunity. MSEA also believes in policies that ensure access to comprehensive, inclusive, and medically accurate health education. MSEA further believes in the right to contraception, abortion services, and gender-affirming care for students and educators alike. (New 25)

F.21. 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.22. National Comprehensive Health Insurance

MSEA believes that affordable, comprehensive, universal health care is the right of every person. (89, 96, 21, 24)

F.23. 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 their choice. (91, 97, 00, 19)

F.24. Pursuit of Nonviolence

MSEA condemns violence, including the endorsement, tolerance, or expression of hate, or support for actions, inaction, or practices that inflict harm, pain, suffering, mutilation, or death.

MSEA believes human dignity and nonviolent solutions in the pursuit of peace and justice should always be sought.

MSEA also believes that in rare and extreme circumstances, the use of force may be necessary as a last resort in legitimate self-defense, in the defense of others, or in the struggle against oppression and injustice. (88, 91, 94, 95, 97, 99, 07, 09, 14, 16, 21, 25)

F.25. Extremism and the Schools

MSEA believes that attacks on public schools and the teaching profession by extremist groups should be condemned. MSEA further believes that the recruitment of young people in our schools by extremist groups should be prohibited. 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, 22)

F.26. 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 the actions necessary to enforce compliance in all educational programs, both current and proposed. (88, 04, 05, 22)

F.27. 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 nineteenth of June, known as "Juneteenth", the fourth day of July, known as "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. MSEA urges all local affiliates to close their offices for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. (88, 89, 91, 05, 06, 11, 23, 24)

F.28. 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.29. 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.

MSEA also believes that reviewing existing names on publicly funded schools, institutions and memorials should be encouraged in order to apply current standards for naming policy and practice. (95, 03, 19)

F.30. Decorum of Public Figures

MSEA believes that public figures have an ethical, and cultural obligation to model respect for all people through their actions and statements.

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 identity and expression, sexual orientation, size, or disabilities. (New 07, 17, 21, 23)

F.31. Economic Action by Education Employees

MSEA believes education employees should use their economic 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 cost of government should be equitably distributed and that the economic cost should not be shifted to government employees in the form of inadequate compensation. (99, 00, 18, 21)