

# 2009-2010 MEA Resolutions

*(As adopted by the 2009 Fall Representative Assembly)*

Resolutions are formal expressions of the intent, beliefs, and positions of the Association. They shall set forth general concepts in clear, concise language; shall be broad in nature; shall state the positions of the Association positively; and shall be consistent with the goals of the Association.

## **A. Education in Michigan**

### **1. Educational opportunity for all**

The Michigan Education Association believes that education should be provided from early childhood through adulthood, be suited to the needs of the individual, be nonsegregated and be offered beyond the traditional school day and school year.

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

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

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

The Association encourages affiliates and members to become part of programs and observances that may include cultural and heritage celebrations and/or history months. (2003)

### **2. Public education**

The Michigan Education Association believes that a free and public education is the foundation of our democratic society.

The Michigan Education Association further believes that solutions to the problems facing public education must preserve and strengthen the priceless heritage of free public educational opportunities for every student. Any movement that would diminish this vital asset will be opposed by the Association.

In support of public education, members of the Association are encouraged to send their children to public schools.

### **3. Home and family**

The Michigan Education Association believes that a stable, supportive home and family environment helps to promote successful student outcomes and behaviors. The Association further believes that a partnership should exist between the family and the school to enable students to reach their full potential.

### **4. Site-based decisionmaking**

The Michigan Education Association believes that decisionmaking authority must be vested with the local school site staff, to include support staff. It is a process of decentralizing the planning and is necessary in the delivery of an effective educational program. The school staff members who are responsible for the instruction and school improvement program at the building level must be actively and legitimately involved in this decisionmaking.

The Association supports site-based decisionmaking as long as parameters are well-defined and negotiated prior to initiation of the program. Such parameters must minimally include:

- a. Mutually agreed-to contract safeguards which assure that site-based decisions will not violate any collective bargaining agreements;
- b. Training of MEA local members and MEA staff;
- c. Compensated time for planning, training and implementation for members, as well as additional resources necessary for successful adoption at the local level;
- d. Process to resolve conflict;
- e. Assurance of Association-approved presence and participation in the program at each site;
- f. Option to discontinue involvement in the program;
- g. Assurance of voluntary participation.

**5. Accreditation for all pre-K-12 schools**

The Michigan Education Association believes that the on-going collaborative process of accreditation is essential for quality education. The Association recognizes that accreditation must include:

- a. The utilization of site based decisionmaking;
- b. The continued training of school staff;
- c. The involvement of the total school staff;
- d. Reasonable timelines for planning and implementation;
- e. Mutually agreed-to contract safeguards which assure that accreditation will not violate collective bargaining agreements.

**6. Standardized testing of students/MEAP**

The Michigan Education Association supports the educational accountability of schools and school districts. To this end, the MEA believes that a host of indicators of student achievement and school performance must be cooperatively developed and used in a way that would preclude a single indicator such as MEAP tests from triggering important school decisions.

The Association further believes that standardized tests and/or assessments should be used only to improve the quality of education and instruction for students. Standardized tests, whether norm-, criterion-, or standards-referenced, can validly assess only a limited range of student learning. Therefore, they should be only an adjunct or supplement to information obtained through school-and classroom-based assessment conducted by teachers for purposes of supporting and strengthening instruction as well as for summarizing and evaluating student learning.

Standardized tests are most useful when designated by the educational professionals closest to the classroom and integrated with assessment information specific to local programs. Affiliates should advocate for, and test designers should employ, a variety of developmentally appropriate assessment techniques that allow necessary accommodations, modifications, and exemptions and are bias-free, reliable, and valid. When a test and/or assessment is mandated at the local, state, or national level, it should be reviewed by a panel of appropriate subject area specialists and teachers to ascertain the relevance of the test to the subject area and be used only to evaluate a program's effectiveness toward meeting local, state, or national standards and/or goals.

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

- a. Standards must be prioritized to support effective curriculum, instruction, professional development, and assessment.
- b. Stakeholders must determine high priority standards. These standards must be clearly and thoroughly described so that the knowledge and skills students need to demonstrate are evident.
- c. Valid results of assessment of high-priority standards must be reported standard-by-standard for each student, school, and district.
- d. The breadth of the curriculum must be monitored to ensure that attention is given to all standards and subject areas, including those that are not assessed.
- e. Progress should be continually monitored to ensure that assessments are appropriate for the purposes for which they are intended.

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

- a. Used as the criterion for the reduction or withholding of any educational funding
- b. Results are used to compare students, teachers, programs, schools, communities, and states
- c. Used as a single criterion for high-stakes decision making
- d. The results lead to sanctions or other punitive actions
- e. Arbitrary standards are required
- f. They do not match the motor skills and/or academic developmental levels or language proficiency of the student
- g. Student scores are used to evaluate teachers or to determine compensation or employment status
- h. Programs are specifically designed to teach to the test
- i. Testing programs or tests limit or supplant instructional time

- j. Every student is required to be tested every year
- k. Students and parents/guardians are not provided with a complete report of the individual student's test results
- l. Time required to administer the test exceeds reasonable and appropriate limits for the age of the student
- m. Test preparation impedes or discourages learning, constrains the curriculum in ways that threaten the quality of teaching and learning for students, or limits and/or curtails future educational opportunities of learners
- n. Scores are used to track students
- o. When used as the sole measure for student and school district success.

The administration of a standardized test and/or assessment includes the responsibility to educate the stakeholders about the purpose of the test, the meaning of the test results, and the accurate interpretation of its conclusions. The Association further believes that students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, schools, and school districts should not be penalized for parents/guardians exercising their legal rights to exempt their children from standardized tests and/or assessments. The Association believes that states should be encouraged to make test items public after they are no longer used. (2003)

**7. Tuition-free community colleges**

The Michigan Education Association believes in tuition-free community colleges and will seek legislation which will provide a tuition-free community college system, which shall be available to every resident of the state of Michigan.

**8. Schools in crisis**

The Michigan Education Association believes that many schools are in crisis. This is evidenced by the physical decay and neglect of many buildings and the continuing loss of vital programs. These schools must be provided with higher than average per pupil financial allocations to increase staff, buildings and instructional material. Massive financial support is required to provide quality education. Organizational patterns must be developed which effectively involve parents, members and students.

The Association urges its officers, leaders and staff to design action programs and seek necessary legislation and financial support to improve schools in crisis.

The MEA believes that if a state takeover occurs of a public school or public school district, current collective bargaining agreements and due process rights must be maintained. Employees of these public schools and/or public school districts shall maintain bargaining unit member status in their local, state and national affiliates. (2007)

**9. Violence in schools**

The Michigan Education Association believes that public school employees and students must be safe from physical, verbal and psychological violence. Procedures must be in place to prevent and eliminate all types of harassment. The Association urges the appropriate agencies, including public safety agencies, school administrators and local, state or national governments to use their resources to prevent violence in schools.

The Association believes that all students and education employees must be allowed to learn and work in an environment free of unauthorized guns and other deadly weapons. Severe penalties should be enacted and strenuously enforced for criminal actions involving guns and other deadly weapons, in the school setting or during other school activities.

The Association also urges the development of programs within the public school setting that promote nonviolence. MEA supports schools utilizing a comprehensive program that equips staff and students to be able to identify aggressive violent behaviors and effectively prevent escalation of an unsafe learning and working environment.

Program should include but not be limited to:

- a. Identification of early warning signs that relate to violence and other troubling behaviors.
- b. Identification of strategies and specific action steps that assist staff in preventing violent outbreaks, intervention strategies to help troubled students and strategies to respond to school violence when and if it occurs.

School programs must focus on strategies that foster safe, productive and caring learning environments such as:

- a. Focus on academic achievement
- b. Involve families in meaningful ways
- c. Develop links to community

- d. Emphasize positive relationships among students and staff
- e. Discuss safety issues openly
- f. Create ways for students to share their concerns
- g. Promote good citizenship and character
- h. Support students in making the transition to adult life and workplace

The Association further believes that public school alternative programs and school settings should be made available to students when all other methods of behavioral intervention have been exhausted. (2001, 2000)

### **10. Bullying**

The Michigan Education Association believes that the school environment must be free from all forms of bullying including, but not limited to, physical and psychological bullying, and cyberbullying. Bullying is the systematic and chronic infliction of physical hurt and/or psychological distress on one or more individuals. The Association recognizes that bullying also includes the entire school community.

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

- A. Establish strong policies prohibiting bullying that include the definition, consequences and procedures for reporting and appeals.
- B. Develop and implement educational programs designed to help students recognize, understand, prevent, oppose and eliminate bullying.
- C. Provide training for all school employees in bullying prevention and intervention.
- D. Provide professional development materials and resources.

These programs should be reviewed, revised and updated to reflect changing needs. (2004, 2008)

### **11. Community violence**

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

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

The Association supports the development and implementation of community action strategies to address violence and its negative effects on our community.

### **12. School facilities: design, construction and function**

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

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

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

**13. Environmentally safe schools**

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

School districts should conduct periodic testing for harmful water and airborne particles/agents that are detrimental to the health of students and education employees and shall report the results publicly. Further, school districts must complete corrective actions to eliminate the problems and report results in a timely manner.

The Association also believes that it is incumbent on local education providers to be forthcoming with information regarding mold infestation and other indoor environmental hazards in school facilities.

The Association further believes in the establishment and enforcement of standards of the occupational safety and health administration (OSHA), including temperature and humidity recommendations, to ensure health and safety. The Association also believes that pesticide use should be minimized and, if used, advance notice given of location and date of application.

The Association supports ongoing training and certification of education employees who work in potentially hazardous situations. This training must include proper handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and instruction on material safety data sheets (MSDS).

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

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

**14. Desegregation in the public schools**

The Michigan Education Association believes that:

- a. All forms of racial segregation and discrimination must be eliminated.
- b. Policies and guidelines for effecting school desegregation must be strengthened and must comply with judicial decisions and civil rights legislation.
- c. All laws of the state and nation should apply equally to all persons without regard to race, gender or geographic location.
- d. Acceptable desegregation plans will include a variety of devices which comply with established guidelines adhering to the letter and the spirit of the law.
- e. Members must have a voice in the decisionmaking process of any desegregation plan, and any plan must not place undue hardships on students or members.
- f. A citizen's advisory committee consisting of members, parents, representatives of community organizations, business, clergy, media and ethnic representatives must be utilized in developing and implementing student desegregation plans.
- g. The systematic displacement or demotion of minority members to achieve integration should be opposed.
- h. Actions of boards of education to finance integration plans through reduction of school staff or programs should be opposed.

**15. Use of American Indian mascots, nicknames and logos**

The Michigan Education Association believes that people of all cultures, races, and religions have a right to be treated with dignity and respect.

The Association believes it is important that all students learn about the cultural aspects of various communities so that they will understand cultural norms, develop tolerance, respect differences, and become good citizens and productive adults.

The Association recognizes that some American Indian tribes, organizations, state and local officials, and private citizens find the use of American Indian mascots, nicknames, logos, and symbols within our public schools to be offensive, and further find that their use has a detrimental effect on the educational achievement of American Indian students.

The Association supports and strongly recommends the elimination of American Indian mascots, nicknames, logos, fight songs, insignias, antics and team descriptors by all Michigan schools.

**16. Underutilization of teachers and support staff**

The Michigan Education Association condemns the underutilization of teachers in the state's schools, which has resulted in unemployment among professional educators and support staff at a time when the need for intensifying public education and reeducation has reached crisis proportions.

**17. Quality education for all**

The Michigan Education Association believes that a fully-funded quality public education program must be offered to all students in Michigan.

The Association believes that a quality public education program should encompass a core curriculum as defined in the MEA Legislative Priorities.

**18. Stress on members**

The Michigan Education Association believes that the dynamics of our society and increased public demands on education have produced adverse and stressful classroom and school conditions. These conditions have led to increased emotional and physical disabilities among members.

The Association urges its local affiliates, in cooperation with local school authorities, to develop stress management programs that will facilitate the recognition, prevention and treatment of stress-related problems.

The Association further urges that the harmful effects of stress on members be recognized, and it demands procedures that will ensure confidentiality and treatment without personal jeopardy.

**19. Higher education governing boards**

The Michigan Education Association supports the election of public boards of control for Michigan's institutions of higher education. The MEA will seek legislation which shall:

- a. Provide for the election of community college governing boards on a one-person/one-vote basis from appropriate political units within community college districts;
- b. Establish procedures to elect boards of control for Michigan's public higher education institutions.

**20. Conflict of interest**

The Michigan Education Association opposes business ventures that result in private financial gain for members of public education governing boards. The Association will seek legislation to prohibit public board members from benefiting financially by providing goods or services to the public institutions they serve.

**21. State Board of Education elections**

The Michigan Education Association believes that the following changes need to be made in the State Board of Education: 1) reduce the terms of the board members; and 2) the elected president of the State Board of Education serve as the chief presiding officer.

**22. Home schooling**

The Michigan Education Association believes that home-school programs cannot provide the child with a comprehensive education experience.

The Association believes that, if parental preference home-school study occurs, students enrolled must meet all state requirements. Instruction should be by persons who are certified by the appropriate state education certification agency, and a curriculum approved by the State Department of Education should be used.

The Association further believes that such home-school programs should be limited to the children of the immediate family, with all 2expenses being borne by the parents.

**23. Nontraditional public school options**

The Michigan Education Association believes that local affiliates must participate fully in the design, authorization, implementation, evaluation and continuation of summer school, alternative calendars, extended school day/year and year-round school programs. Policies governing these programs must take into consideration the impact on the community and be in accordance with the Association's principles for professional salaries and class size. The programs must be staffed by properly certificated/licensed employees. Employment in these programs must be on a voluntary basis. (1975, 2008)

The Association further believes that plans should not negatively impact the regular school program and must include adequate safeguards covering contract and employment provisions for all employees. Programs must be adequately funded, must include start-up monies, must not divert current funds from the regular public school programs and must contain appropriate procedures for regular periodic assessment and evaluation.

**24. *District consolidation/deconsolidation/annexation***

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

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

The Association further believes that if districts undergo consolidation/deconsolidation, all education protections, bargaining rights or due process rights of the employees. Employees of these public school districts should remain bargaining unit members of local, state and national affiliates. (2008)

**25. *Volunteers in public schools***

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

The association also believes that the practice of using volunteers can enhance the educational opportunities for children if the primary purpose is not one of reducing instructional budgets, reducing the number of full- or part-time instructional positions, or reducing the number of full- or part-time educational support professional positions within a local school system.

The association further believes that teachers and support professionals should be involved in the decision-making process regarding the utilization of volunteers within local school systems.

## **B. Professional competence**

### ***The Teaching Profession***

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

**1. *A certificated educator in every professional position***

The Michigan Education Association believes that each educator must have the knowledge and skills necessary to perform his/her duties.

The Association will work to assure that all pre-K-12 professional positions are filled by certificated educators who have completed a state approved teacher education program in an accredited institution of higher education. Further, that special areas and/or specialized positions be filled by certificated personnel explicitly certificated in each area.

The Association will resist all attempts to reduce the quality of education through the practice of using interns, induction year students (or students in any practicum experience of a teacher education program), paraprofessionals, auxiliary personnel or volunteers to supplant professional staff.

The Association will resist any attempts to diminish the quality of learning or services through the elimination of teaching positions or through the revision of school staff management under the guise of improving educational opportunity. The Association believes that any practicum experience of a teacher education program should be utilized solely for the development of professional expertise.

The Association will resist all attempts to require teachers to pass a so-called competency test. Further, the Association will continue to oppose the concept that a single standard test is an adequate measure of the competency of any individual.

## **2. National certification**

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

The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards established appropriate assessment procedures by which individuals demonstrate exemplary practice in pedagogy and in subject matter areas, issues certificates to all individuals who meet NBPTS-established standards, maintains a roster of those who have been certified and encourages reciprocity with state teacher credentialing agencies.

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

Further, the Association encourages locals to support and recognize National Board Certification candidates and National Board Certified teachers through the collective bargaining process. Issues of support, recognition and incentives, as well as equity and equal access to the National Board process, are matters to be considered for collective bargaining. (2002)

## **3. Part-time faculty**

The Association believes that part-time faculty should be employed only when an educational program requires specialized training or expertise not available in the full-time faculty and when the need for such training and expertise does not justify more than half-time employment. Part-time faculty should receive the same salary and fringe benefits as full-time faculty, prorated according to the workload. The Association also believes that part-time faculty should not be employed for the primary purpose of reducing instructional budgets or for the purpose of reducing the number of full-time faculty positions. The Association will seek legislation to limit the number of part-time faculty members employed in Michigan higher education institutions.

## **4. Evaluation and subjective ratings**

The Michigan Education Association believes that it is a major responsibility of employees to participate in the evaluation of the quality of their services. To enable employees to meet this responsibility more effectively, the Association calls for continued research and experimentation to develop means of objective, bias-free evaluation of the performance of all employees, including identification

of the following: a) factors that determine professional competence; b) factors that determine the effectiveness of competent professionals; c) methods of evaluating effective professional service; and d) methods of recognizing effective professional service through self-realization, personal status and salary.

The Association also believes that evaluations should be conducted for the purpose of improvement of performance and quality of instruction offered to pupils, based upon written criteria and following procedures mutually developed by and acceptable to the local association, the administration and the governing board.

The Association insists that the evaluation program must recognize the rights of the employee who is evaluated. These include the right to:

- a. Information upon application for employment, upon employment and when changes are made in the evaluation criteria and procedures of the school district or institution;
- b. Open evaluation without subterfuge and with advance notice of evaluation visits with discussion of the employee's goals and methods;
- c. Consultation in timely fashion after a formal evaluation visit and receipt of and an opportunity to acknowledge in writing any formal evaluation report prior to placement in a personnel file;
- d. Evaluation reports which assess strengths, note progress, indicate remaining deficiencies and suggest specific measures the employee can take to overcome indicated deficiencies;
- e. Participation in a professional development program including such activities as appropriate counseling and supportive services, released time for in-service work and opportunity to observe or seek and give assistance to others in settings other than one's own;
- f. Only one personnel file per employee;
- g. Access to all items in the employee's personnel file (except privileged communications relating to initial employment in the school system or college or university), inspection and review of material prior to placement in the file, opportunity to attach a written response, and access to a procedure to remove inappropriate, unfounded material, obtaining copies of records, explanations and interpretations of such records and a record of past accesses;
- h. Supervision which is constructive provides an opportunity to correct deficiencies takes into account the variety of learning and teaching environmental factors and emphasizes career development.

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

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

The Association believes that competency testing must not be used as a condition of continuing employment or a method for evaluating educators, nor should student achievement test scores be used for purposes such as salary, tenure, retention or promotion.

The Association believes that school employees should evaluate supervisory and administrative personnel and school board members.

## **5. Professional development**

The MEA believes that in order to enhance the upgrading of American education, we must invest in ways to strengthen the capability and accomplishments of education employees throughout their careers. To this end, MEA advocates the following criteria for quality professional development:

- a. Focused on high learning expectations for all students;
- b. Be career long, rigorous and sustained;
- c. Directed towards educators' intellectual development and leadership;
- d. Designed and directed by educators and incorporates the best principles of adult learning;
- e. Research based;
- f. Inclusive of the best use of new technologies;
- g. School based and supportive of the educational needs of students as well as the working conditions of staff members in each building/site;
- h. Helpful to teachers and other school staff as they work to meet the future needs of students who learn in different ways and who come from diverse cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds;
- i. In agreement with:
  - (1) Improvements in student learning,
  - (2) Reports from educators that it makes a positive difference for them and their students,
  - (3) Changes in instructional practices;
- j. Inclusive of practitioner/or staff led intensive planning, adequate resources and alternative approaches (e.g. mentoring/coaching, study groups, collaborations, networks, school improvement planning, curriculum planning, reflective practice, etc.)

Further, the MEA is committed to ensuring that the appropriate professional development opportunities and funds are made available.

Professional development is an important part of the school day for all public school employees. Recognizing this, the MEA supports the concept recommended by the National Staff Development Council, that at least 25 percent of employees' compensated work should be allocated to personal and collegial learning.

Further, the Association supports the granting of state board approved continuing education units (SB-CEUs) upon the completion of professional development offerings for purposes of, but not limited to, certificate renewal. The Association will carefully monitor the approval process for SB-CEUs to ensure high quality training.

The Association believes that quality standards can be accomplished through professional development which enhances leadership and skill building for professional support staff as recommended and provided under the educational Support Personnel Center.

The MEA believes it is a prerogative and responsibility of any professional group to continually improve its knowledge and skills and to govern the process through which this goal is accomplished. Additionally, MEA believes that it is the responsibility of the individual member to take charge of the planning, designing and implementation of his/her own professional development.

MEA supports the concept of the state providing funds for professional development programs to be controlled by policy boards composed of a majority of teachers and educational support professionals.

**6. Professional hours**

The Michigan Education Association believes that school day refers not only to those hours during which an educator is actually teaching, but also applies to those conditions that contribute to the student/teacher relationship. These include a reasonable, carefully defined work load, including time during the regular work day and work year for education employees to plan, to engage in professional development, to work on curriculum and assessment, evaluate and document student progress, to mentor and be mentored and to provide professional leadership. Further, we believe that non-instructional tasks required of a teacher should be eliminated. (2008)

**7. Accreditation of teacher preparation institutions**

The Michigan Education Association believes in the importance of national accreditation for all teacher preparation institutions and supports the concept that a single national nongovernmental agency performs this function.

The national agency must be broadly representative of the teaching profession and must include equitable representation of K-12 teachers in all matters of policy and function.

**8. Teacher education**

The Michigan Education Association believes that teachers and students preparing to teach must be directly involved in evaluating and improving the standards for teacher preparation and certification. The Association insists that teacher involvement is necessary in planning and implementing quality teacher education programs.

The Association also believes that preprofessional practicum experience is an essential phase of teacher preparation. The responsibility for the practicum experience must be shared by the public schools, the institutions that prepare teachers and professional associations.

The Association believes that any practicum experience of a teacher education program should be utilized solely for the development of professional expertise.

The Association urges its affiliates to:

- a. Take immediate steps to evaluate and improve standards for entrance into the teaching profession; support inclusion in master contracts that acceptance of student teachers and other practicum experience students be on a voluntary basis;
- b. Critically assess current college and university programs of teacher education and make specific recommendations for change;
- c. Support inclusion of training in the components of site-based decisionmaking, the dynamics of intergroup communication, cultural pluralism and human relations courses in requirements for certification and the provision for in-service workshops in these areas for experienced teachers and administrators;
- d. Support legislation providing legal status and liability protection for student teachers and other practicum students;
- e. Collaboratively develop guidelines for qualifications and training of cooperating teachers and college coordinators of student teachers and/or practicum experience students (including training in supervision and guidelines on professional experiences in the school setting);
- f. Support inclusion of instruction in school law and in the values, ethics, responsibilities and structure of professional teacher organizations;
- g. Support the teaching of methods courses by teachers currently employed in elementary and secondary schools;
- h. Formulate standards for schools receiving student teachers and other practicum experience students;
- i. Take steps to improve the selection of persons entering the profession through more effective screening of applicants for the preprofessional practicum;
- j. Offer guidance to teacher preparation institutions to prepare teachers in numbers consistent with projected need for teacher positions;
- k. Assure that teachers who are supervising or cooperating teachers in a student teaching program have reduced teaching loads and be given a minimum established compensation;
- l. Support efforts that call for the recruitment, training and employment of minority teachers and counselors;
- m. Assure that any student teaching or practicum experience program operates within the parameters agreed to by the school district and the local association and are included in the master contract;

- n. Assure arrangements with the school district and the teacher preparation institution to provide assistance to its graduates who are first year teachers and/or who are beginning other professional education roles as a part of or extension to their professional education program.

**9. *Paraprofessional and auxiliary personnel***

The Michigan Education Association urges local school systems to provide classroom teachers with a supportive staff to free the teacher from nonteaching duties. The Association also urges its affiliates and local school systems to become involved in the recruitment, orientation and training of paraprofessional and auxiliary personnel.

The Association calls upon its local affiliates to resist efforts by school boards to use the employment of paraprofessional and auxiliary personnel as an excuse to increase class size.

The Association condemns the practice of assigning paraprofessionals who hold teaching certificates to professional assignments without hanging their status on salary schedules commensurate with the new assignment. The Association urges its local affiliates to negotiate for the payment of the appropriate professional salary to paraprofessionals holding teaching certificates during the time they may be assigned professional duties.

**10. *Mentoring and/or Peer Assistance***

The Michigan Education Association supports the concept of mentoring and other programs in which colleagues provide assistance, non-evaluative support and guidance to each other in order to enhance professional practices in an effort to increase effective learning for all students.

MEA further believes it is a prerogative and responsibility of any professional group to continually improve its knowledge and skills through life-long learning and to govern the process through which this goal is accomplished. MEA is committed to ensuring that the appropriate training and funds are available for these purposes. (See also, MEA Resolution on professional development, B-4.)

**11. *Competency-based programs***

The Michigan Education Association believes that competent teachers employ the most appropriate processes known for the promotion of learning. The Association also believes that competency-based programs for pre- and in-service teacher education and teacher evaluation must be based on many factors, some of which the teacher cannot control. It opposes models that prescribe single, limited definitions of competence that reduce the process of teaching to mechanical nonprofessional acts or that seek to measure teacher competence on the basis of student achievement.

**12. *School libraries***

The Michigan Education Association believes that a comprehensive school library media program, including printed and nonprinted resource materials as well as a certified licensed school library media specialist, should be provided for each elementary and secondary school.

The Michigan Education Association believes that school library media programs are negatively impacted if a media specialist does not have a substitute during their absence.

**13. *Internet access***

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

The Association also believes that education employees are essential to the development of an acceptable use policy (AUP) and to the appropriate use of the Internet.

The Association believes that the school district must obtain the permission of parents/guardians/caregivers and students over 18 years of age through signatures on an AUP before allowing students access to the Internet.

The Association believes that it is the responsibility of a school district to provide professional development and training in Internet usage to its employees.

The Association believes that Internet access and activities for students should be age appropriate and should foster critical use. Any documentation material produced as a result of Internet access should be properly cited and comply with copyright laws.

**14. *Distance education***

The Michigan Education Association believes that quality distance education can create or extend learning opportunities not otherwise available to all students.

The Association also believes that, to ensure quality, distance education courses must:

- a. Be at least as rigorous as similar courses delivered by more traditional means;
- b. Meet accreditation standards;
- c. Have content that is relevant, accurate, meets state and local standards, and is subject to the normal processes of collegial decision making;
- d. Meet the objectives and requirements outlined in the official course description;
- e. Have student/faculty ratios that ensure the active engagement of students and high academic achievement;
- f. Have appropriate procedures mutually agreed upon by the instructor and the institution for evaluation and verification that the student is submitting his/her own work;
- g. Have instructors whose qualifications are the same as those of instructors teaching in traditional classes and who are prepared specifically and comprehensively to teach in this environment;
- h. Have on-site instructors assigned to students to monitor and facilitate student success preferably with expertise or training in the subject area;
- i. Be integrated into the mission and consistent with the overall offerings of the institution;
- j. Comply with "fair use" guidelines of the copyright act when creating educational materials;
- k. Be used to enhance instruction rather than to replace education employees.

The Association further believes that the institution offering the courses must provide

- a. Adequate infrastructure;
- b. Appropriate facilities and equipment;
- c. Libraries and laboratories as needed;
- d. Adequate support and technical personnel on or off campus.

The Association believes that the rights of the education employees delivering and monitoring the courses must be protected through the normal process of collegial decision making and, when relevant, collective bargaining. The intellectual property ownership rights of distance education courses and corresponding materials shall be defined and enforced in a manner mutually agreed upon by the distance education instructor and the educational institution to address issues related to the introduction, use, and impact of distance education courses and corresponding materials, as well as the revenue, revision, reuse, and duration of the course and corresponding materials.

The Association also believes that the rights of the student taking the course must be protected. These rights must include, but not be limited to:

- a. Appropriate equipment, technical support, libraries, and laboratories;
- b. Appropriate student services;
- c. Accurate course descriptions and expectations prior to enrollment;
- d. Individualized interaction with their instructor;
- e. Opportunities for appropriate student-to-student interaction.

### **C. Educational programs adapted to individual and social needs**

#### ***1. Physical environment for learning***

The Michigan Education Association believes that the physical environment for learning must keep pace with the number of students and the changes in methods of teaching and of presenting instructional materials. Schools must be safe, healthful and attractive. Instructional space must be flexible. Instructional materials and equipment must be provided in sufficient variety and quantity to serve all students.

The Michigan Education Association believes that an atmosphere of discipline is essential to promoting optimum learning in the school. The Association recognizes the concern for the discipline problem.

The Association believes that local affiliates should negotiate a process whereby administrators, members, parents and students will be involved in identifying disruptive behavior and prescribing, implementing and evaluating procedures that will reduce and correct disruptive behavior, wherever it may occur. It encourages its affiliates to negotiate for services supportive of the member. The Association further believes that it is in the best interest and safety of all students if education employees are immediately informed of students with known serious behavior problems or violence-related potential.

Local affiliates should consider the development of public alternative schools and of programs different from the traditional pattern and should work for community acceptance of varied educational methods.

The Association acknowledges the need for research which will identify effective discipline techniques. This research should serve as the basis for guidelines for publication.

The Association supports student and teacher rights and responsibilities in the education process. It supports legislation that will provide for disciplinary procedures within the education process that not only protect the student's right to a fair hearing but will also provide the classroom teacher with the authority to maintain internal classroom management. The Association will be opposed to the concept of corporal punishment and will support teachers in finding alternative methods. The Association will work for court decisions that will support the teacher's right to have control of the education process of the classroom.

In addition, class size must be adjusted to the particular learning process involved to allow individual attention to each pupil when that is the required mode of instruction. Class size should not exceed fifteen (15) students per certificated classroom teacher.

## **2. *Improvement of instruction***

The Michigan Education Association believes that a prime responsibility of professional associations is to stimulate significant improvements in the quality of instruction. Much of the responsibility to make educational changes should lie with the teachers through their influence and involvement in democratic decisionmaking in and out of the school.

The Michigan Education Association believes that it is a fundamental responsibility of the Association to take a leadership role in the development and implementation of models for the restructuring of state schools.

The Association urges local affiliates to involve members and those affected in the development and implementation of programs for instructional improvement, curriculum development and individualization of instruction relevant to the needs of the student.

The Association recommends that professional educators enter into active collaboration with research and development specialists, both in regional educational laboratories and in industry, to promote and guide the development of technology in the most educationally sound directions.

The Association encourages school systems to establish learning materials centers staffed by professionals.

The Association urges continued and expanded state financial support for regional educational media centers.

The Association further recommends that the profession, in cooperation with other interested groups, establish standards for educational materials and insists that publishers and producers use the services of a competent educational institution or facility to field test, in actual classroom situations, such materials and publish the results of their effectiveness.

The Association believes that if age appropriate placements are utilized, it is the fundamental responsibility of school districts to provide appropriate interventions and supports that are designed to enhance skills and bring students up to grade level.

The Association believes that one of its instructional goals is functional proficiency in English, with emphasis on the development of those basic reading skills essential to the successful pursuit of all other disciplines.

The Association supports implementation of the state law requiring college-degree candidates to complete a college-level course in local, state and national government and will support appropriate legal and legislative actions to guarantee its implementation.

## **3. *Independent reading skills***

The Michigan Education Association believes that it is critical that students become independent readers to succeed in school and life. Reading instruction, especially in the early grades, is essential for learning in all content areas and for achieving high standards. Teachers at all levels should be provided adequate resources and encouraged to use their expertise to address the diverse needs of students.

The association also believes that teachers' efforts to value and promote reading should be supported by parents/guardians, other education employees, and communities.

**4. Accountability**

The Michigan Education Association recognizes that the term accountability as applied to public education is subject to varied interpretations. The Association maintains that educational excellence for each child is the objective of the education system. The Association believes that classroom teachers can be accountable only to the degree that they share responsibility in educational decisionmaking and to the degree that other parties who share this responsibility—legislators, other government officials, school boards, administrators, parents, students and taxpayers—are also held accountable.

The Association will seek the proper base—professionally, legally and legislatively—for educators to achieve optimum and appropriate accountability programs.

The Association believes that there should be no single or statewide accountability system.

The Association believes that specific behavioral objectives should not be used as course objectives or as a basis for determining accountability.

**5. Discriminatory academic tracking**

The Michigan Education Association believes that the use of discriminatory academic tracking based on socioeconomic status, race or gender must be eliminated in all public school settings. The Association urges its locals to oppose these practices.

**6. Student evaluation**

The Michigan Education Association recognizes, as an aspect to academic freedom, the right of classroom teachers to decide upon student evaluation criteria and to assign grades to students. The Association believes that the classroom teacher is the final authority in assigning student grades.

**7. Selection of materials**

The Michigan Education Association believes that teachers who know students are best qualified to make such decisions concerning which school/teaching experiences develop student talents. Teachers must select instructional materials without censorship. Challenges of the choice of instructional materials must be orderly and objective, under procedures mutually adopted by professional associations and school boards.

The Association urges its affiliates to seek the removal of laws and regulations that restrict the selection of a diversity of instructional materials or that limit educators in the selection of such materials.

**8. Cultural diversity in instructional materials**

The Michigan Education Association believes that educational materials should portray our cultural diversity and the contributions of ethnic minority groups. Ethnic minority teachers must be involved in selecting such materials and in preparing teachers for their use.

The Association recognizes that additional instructional materials chosen for classrooms and libraries may rightfully contain a number of points of view to allow students to become familiar with the attitude and recommendations from various segments of the literary world. The Association also acknowledges that many contemporary texts related to ethnic minority groups do not portray a realistic concept of their lifestyles but convey a negative self-concept to the ethnic minority students.

**9. Individual learning, growth and development**

The Michigan Education Association recognizes that there must be increased development and maintenance of alternative programs to meet the needs of all students. The Association recommends early and appropriate identification and provisions of programs for students. Teachers, administrators and education support staff should receive necessary training in diagnostic processes and alternative methods of teaching and learning. (2008)

Programs should emphasize a broad range of activities for responding to students' differing behavioral patterns, interests, needs and learning styles. Teachers in these programs must have a major role in designing the objectives and evaluations and in working with appropriate school and community personnel to execute these objectives and evaluations.

Program requirements should be in accordance with standards prescribed by the State Board of Education.

The Association believes that at-risk students who are assigned to an alternative placement due to discipline issues should be required to exhibit regular attendance and adequate academic and behavioral progress, in accordance with an individual program, prior to their return to a regular educational setting. The Association also believes that the due process rights of students must be protected.

The Association urges its local affiliates to seek adequate planning time, materials and facilities for school personnel in these programs. (2003)

**10. Bilingual-multicultural education**

The Michigan Education Association believes that both bilingual education and English as a second language (ESL) programs are necessary to provide equal educational opportunity to all limited English proficient (LEP) students, regardless of their primary language. The bilingual education program should include as goals: academic proficiency in English; academic proficiency in all subject areas; use of the student's primary language to facilitate learning in subject areas; and delivery of a multicultural curriculum. In those instances in which there are not sufficient numbers of LEP students sharing the same primary language to warrant a bilingual education program, the MEA believes that those LEP students should be provided with English as a second language programs taught by qualified ESL teachers. The ESL program should include as goals both social and academic proficiency in English as well as cross-cultural awareness.

The MEA believes that limited English proficient students should be admitted and allowed to remain in bilingual or ESL programs until they have demonstrated proficiency in English as determined by qualified staff.

The Association commits itself to strengthening present legislation to include increased funding that will provide the necessary funds to prepare teachers and other school personnel through appropriate pre- and in-service programs and to develop and utilize appropriate teaching materials and other resources to enhance LEP student learning.

**11. Environmental education**

The Michigan Education Association is concerned for an improved environment conducive to physical, emotional and intellectual well-being. The Association strongly urges local affiliates and school systems to develop criteria for environmental education for grades pre-K-adult education.

The Association shall actively encourage the initiation and improvement of legislation and appropriations which shall provide education for use, stewardship and preservation of a viable environment and which shall eliminate pollution and promote the preservation of our environment. The Association urges its affiliates to support these endeavors.

The Association urges world leaders to work cooperatively to resolve environmental problems.

**12. Missing children**

The MEA, in its concern for the growing number of children who disappear annually, believes that all available means must be utilized in locating missing children.

The Association further encourages local affiliates to work cooperatively with local programs and authorities to raise the public's consciousness about the missing children crisis.

**13. Athletic program**

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

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

The Association urges that there be equity in season scheduling and length of season of sports activities for males and females.

**14. Student athletes**

The Michigan Education Association urges secondary schools, colleges and universities to accept their educational responsibilities to student athletes. Exploitation of these students for economic gain or prestige is deplorable. Each student athlete should be provided with an opportunity to complete an academic program.

**15. Child-care programs**

The Michigan Education Association urges the enactment of state and federal legislation to assist communities in providing child-care services, including early child development programs, latch-key programs, health services and family counseling. Such programs must provide for involvement of certified educators, trained support professionals and parents at the operational as well as the administrative level.

The Association supports the establishment of standards for child-care facilities and certification standards for professional child-care personnel and seeks their adoption by state agencies.

The Association will seek legislation that would ensure the implementation of early childhood education and latch-key programs through the public school system.

**16. Pupil personnel services**

The Michigan Education Association urges that pupil personnel services, including counseling, social work, health, and psychological services, be increased and established where they do not now exist, particularly in elementary schools. The counselors/student ratio should not exceed 1 to 250. The counseling services should be provided by certified and/or licensed school personnel.

**17. The sensory-impaired student**

The Michigan Education Association recognizes that hearing- and visually impaired children have not been fully integrated into the public schools. The Association urges that comprehensive communications programs be established within the schools for teaching the sensory-impaired. It recommends that the necessary equipment be provided and that such programs be funded at the state level.

The Association further believes that Educational Sign Language Interpreters/Transliterators and instructors of the visually impaired should be qualified professionals who are licensed, state credentialed, or nationally certified. (2003)

**18. Moral and ethical values**

The Michigan Education Association urges that schools make every effort to develop in school-age citizens, through curriculum, programs and activities, a capacity for moral judgment and a sense of responsibility in both the public and the private spheres.

**19. Human relations in the school**

The Michigan Education Association believes that improved human relations are essential to the school environment. To improve human relations in schools, the Association calls for:

- a. School recruitment policies that will ensure culturally diverse certificated and support staffs;
- b. The development of ways to improve police/community and student/police relations through the joint efforts of school, community and law enforcement agencies;
- c. The reduction of the ratio of students to certificated staff to the level teachers determine, in each case, is essential to improved learning;
- d. Further research and development of ways to identify, change and, if necessary, exclude prejudiced personnel who exhibit prejudiced behavior detrimental to the school environment;
- e. Urge the governor to proclaim January 15 as Human Relations Day in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The Association encourages its affiliates and all school systems to plan observances on this date that will promote good will among people.

**20. Truth in testing**

The Michigan Education Association strongly supports the passage of truth-in-testing legislation applicable to group testing that includes a provision for each individual test-taker to receive a post-test copy of all test questions, scores and rationale for correct answers.

All forms of tests should be free from gender and race bias and should elicit responses that reflect critical thinking and application of skills.

**21. Teaching of peace**

The Michigan Education Association affirms its commitment to foster the type of education and good will that safeguards the ideas of peace and freedom and human dignity. It urges its affiliated groups and members to implement its commitment to world peace, founded on genuine respect for and understanding of individual and cultural diversity as it exists among nationalities and races in their respective programs.

The MEA supports the development of proactive as well as ongoing strategies, instructional materials and activities that will encourage nonviolent resolution of interpersonal and societal conflicts.

**22. General media**

The Michigan Education Association recognizes the fact that the media has an effect on the education of the public.

Therefore, the Association believes that the media has an obligation to provide full, constructive and accurate presentations.

The Association recognizes that children are an especially vulnerable audience who must be protected from violence, stereotyping and exploitation. To help children become critical users of the media, the Association encourages advertisers, media professionals and parents to use materials of the highest caliber. These materials should be made available to children with consideration given to the child's age, time of day and type of materials. The Association encourages advertisers and media professionals to use standard grammar and spelling and refrain from the use of profane language.

**23. *Public Broadcasting Services and National Public Radio***

The Michigan Education Association believes that Public Broadcasting Services (PBS Television) and National Public Radio (NPR) can have a positive impact on the educational process. The Association urges its affiliates to become involved in the programming and utilization of PBS and NPR. The Association further urges legislation be enacted for financial support of public broadcasting in Michigan.

**24. *Cable television***

The Michigan Education Association believes that expanding cable television (CATV) technology should provide telecommunications services to education. The Association urges its affiliates to monitor community franchises and to support provisions by municipalities to set aside a percentage of the franchise for school and public access programming.

**25. *Sexism in education***

The Michigan Education Association believes that educational materials and processes must accurately portray the contributions of women both in the past and the present and that women must be involved in the selection of these materials and in preparing teachers in their use.

The Association recognizes that many instructional materials portray women and men in sex-stereotyped roles. The Association urges educators to use those instructional materials that portray the various careers and personal roles as acceptable and attainable for all individuals.

The MEA supports the on-going training of school staff in the use of non-sexist language and behaviors in the educational environment.

The Association further endorses affirmative action plans that establish procedures and timetables for eliminating racism, sexism and sexual discrimination in the curriculum.

The Association urges compliance with Title IX, awareness of gender equity in the curriculum and encouragement of females to enroll in mathematics, science and technology courses.

**26. *Education for migrant workers***

The Michigan Education Association concerns itself with the plight of Michigan's migrant workers involved in a difficult struggle for human dignity and self-respect. The Association is especially concerned about the education of the children of migrant parents who are literally pushed out of schools because of the failure of school systems to provide them with an adequate equal educational opportunity. The MEA is also aware of the need for negotiation and legislation as a means of ensuring better economic security and working conditions for migrant families. (2002)

The MEA, consistent with the National Education Association's program plan for migrant workers, commits itself to securing enactment of state legislation to ensure: 1) the improvement of educational opportunities for migrant children; 2) appropriate programs for migrant families; and 3) negotiation for migrant workers.

Furthermore, the MEA, fully aware of the need to secure guarantees to teachers employed by federal monies, urges its local affiliates to make provisions in their contracts that will guarantee full rights and protection to teachers of migrant children.

**27. *First American education***

The Michigan Education Association recognizes that the complexity and diversity of needs of the American Indian children require the direct involvement of Indian parents, Indian teachers, tribal leaders and other Indian groups in developing adequate and equal educational programs which preserve the rich heritage of Indian culture.

**28. *Education for homeless students***

The Michigan Education Association believes that education must be provided for all children, including those without a permanent legal address.

The Association advocates the right of all students to an education, adequate housing and health care.

The Association recognizes the need for cooperation between school and community groups in meeting the needs of homeless children.

The Association will seek legislation to ensure equal educational opportunities for all children.

**29. *Education for all students with disabilities***

The Michigan Education Association supports the availability of a full continuum of programs and services for students with disabilities.

The Association believes that such programs and services ought to:

- a. Provide favorable learning experiences for both special and general education students;
- b. Include provisions for impacted teachers, support staff and administrators to share equally in planning and implementation;
- c. Guarantee that all impacted teachers and support staff are prepared for these jobs;
- d. Ensure that students with physical disabilities and/or medical needs requiring nursing procedures have their medical needs met by certified/professional school nurses;
- e. Provide appropriate instructional materials, supportive services and pupil personnel services for the teachers, support staff and students with disabilities;
- f. Accommodate modifications in class size, using a weighted formula, scheduling and curriculum design to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are met;
- g. Testing students with special needs should have appropriate alternative options;
- h. Ensure systematic evaluation and reporting of program developments. In addition, placement patterns must be examined periodically to ensure that students with disabilities are placed in appropriate programs, and further, they are not placed disproportionately by gender or ethnicity;
- i. Provide adequate additional funding and resources to fully support students with disabilities.

The Association urges its affiliates to support programs that meet these provisions and oppose programs that do not meet these minimal criteria.

The Association is committed to the delivery of quality education to all students and recognizes that special education students should be placed in the appropriate least restrictive environment (LRE). To ensure the protection of members, local associations must exert every effort to minimize the potentially severe impact on staff through the bargaining process and other means. LRE alternative projects must be carefully and regularly evaluated in order to assure the educational success of students with disabilities as well as their peers in general education.

Further, the Association commits itself to securing legislation and appropriations that will encourage the initiation, continuation and/or improvement of such programs. (2008)

### **30. Career education**

The Michigan Education Association believes that an effective Career Preparation System is vital for preparing our students to compete in the rapidly changing workplace of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Association strongly supports the integration of career preparation for the entire student body, pre-kindergarten through post-secondary education to lifelong learning including special education, regular education, and vocational education within our school system. The Association further believes that school systems should provide professional development opportunities for school employees to add to their knowledge and skills to more effectively prepare their students for the world of work.

### **31. Gifted, talented and creative students**

The Michigan Education Association believes that there must be increased development of fully funded educational programs for the gifted, talented and creative students.

The Association recognizes its responsibility to indicate to educators reliable methods of identifying and teaching these children.

The Association urges local affiliates to encourage such programs and methods to ensure that these special need areas are met.

### **32. Vocational and adult education**

The Michigan Education Association believes that preparation of youth for vocations and productive jobs should be a basic policy of secondary and higher education. Educational programs should be developed for all youth which will assure equal opportunity for occupational development. A continuing comprehensive program for training, retraining, advancement and promotion should be provided for out-of-school youth and adults.

The Association supports vocational and technical education as a major component of preparatory education, preceded by programs of awareness and exploration to aid young people in vocational choices. These exploratory courses should be incorporated into traditionally academic courses.

The Association supports legislation to provide full funding of comprehensive secondary and post-secondary vocational training and adult basic education programs.

**33. Fine arts education**

The Michigan Education Association believes that fine arts programs should be an integral part of this nation's elementary and secondary (pre-K-12) school curricula.

The Association urges its local affiliates to become involved in the promotion, expansion and implementation of a fine arts program in the curriculum of their school systems.

**34. Physical education**

The Michigan Education Association believes that physical education programs should be an integral part of Michigan's elementary and secondary (pre-K-12) school curriculum.

The Association urges its local affiliates to become involved in the promotion, expansion and implementation of a physical education program in the curriculum of their school systems.

**35. Foreign languages**

The Michigan Education Association recognizes the need for continued support of foreign language instruction and encourages educators to urge student participation in such programs.

The Association urges that accrediting agencies continue to require the option of foreign language instruction in their standards.

**36. Life-saving techniques**

The Michigan Education Association advocates training of students and school employees in basic emergency life-saving techniques. The Association urges the inclusion of this training in the school curriculum.

**37. Education for incarcerated persons**

The Michigan Education Association believes that all incarcerated persons should have access to educational, recreational and rehabilitative programs within the penal system.

**D. Comprehensive School Health, Social, and Psychological Programs and Services (2003)**

**I. Service Access**

The Michigan Education Association believes that every child should have direct and confidential access to comprehensive health, social, and psychological programs and services. Such programs and services must be interactive and coordinated within and between school, home, and community settings. School and community efforts must also be integrated to promote the well being of children and youth and to build support for school and community health programs.

The Association also believes that schools should provide—

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

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

- a. A planned, sequential, pre-K through 12 health education curriculum that promotes sound nutrition and that includes education concerning the health risks associated with obesity and eating disorders.
- b. A planned, sequential, pre-K through 12 health education curriculum integrating various health topics (such as drug abuse, the dangers of performance enhancing dietary herbal supplements, violence, safety issues, universal precautions, and HIV education), taught by teachers specifically prepared to teach the subject, that enables students to develop the essential knowledge and skills to maintain personal, family, and community health.
- c. A planned, sequential, pre-K through 12 physical education curriculum.
- d. Worksite health promotion to improve the health status of school staff to set an example for desired student behaviors.

The Association believes that services in the schools should include—

- a. Counseling programs that provide developmental guidance and broad-based interventions and referrals that promote the physical and psychological health of students.

## *MEA Resolutions*

- b. Services that identify, diagnose, and resolve learning disabilities.
- c. Health services provided by a licensed professional school nurse that promote the health of students through prevention, case findings, early intervention, and remediation of specific health problems, that provide first aid and triage of illness and injuries, and that provide health counseling.
- d. A nurse-to-student ratio at each site that is appropriate to provide quality school health care.
- e. Comprehensive school-based, community-funded student health care clinics that provide basic health care services (which may include diagnosis and treatment) to supplement school nurses.
- f. If deemed appropriate by local choice, family-planning counseling and access to birth control methods with instruction in their use.
- g. Coordination with community agencies for support and follow-up activities.

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

The Association urges its affiliates to support legislation to provide comprehensive care to all children and supports community, state, and national efforts to coordinate these services. (2003)

### **2. School nurses**

The Michigan Education Association believes that all students should receive the services of a professional school nurse. It urges affiliates to enroll school nurses in active membership and to seek legislation that provides certification and inclusion in collective bargaining agreements.

The Association also believes that the Office of Comprehensive School Health in the U.S. Department of Education should be responsive to the needs of school nurses. (2003)

### **3. Health and nutrition of students**

The Michigan Education Association recognizes that the total environment, including home, school and community, affects the mental, emotional and physical health of students.

The Michigan Education Association strongly believes that affordable, comprehensive health care is a human right. (Fall 2009)

The Association believes that a wholesome environment is essential for the proper education and growth of students. It urges its affiliates to support programs which would:

- a. Ensure that necessary medical treatment be provided by properly licensed physicians, certified/professional school nurses and other properly licensed health professionals;
- b. Promote educational programs designed to prepare people for the role and responsibilities of family relationships particularly parenting, marriage and understanding and care of the elderly;
- c. Promote educational programs for parents to improve home atmosphere;
- d. Provide special preventive services in the schools to detect impending difficulties early;
- e. Improve educators' understanding of student growth and development to ensure the provision of a climate in the school conducive to good health;
- f. Strengthen and improve the enforcement of child abuse laws;
- g. Provide increased utilization of teachers, pupil personnel, and health service staffs and students in team efforts to resolve the causes of mental, emotional and physical problems of students;
- h. Provide comprehensive school and community health facilities and federal health plans to meet the needs of students and their families;
- i. Demand enforcement of legislation requiring all schools to meet minimum educational, safety and health standards, including required immunizations as defined by the state;

- j. Provide information on harmful additives and preservatives as well as processing procedures which remove nutritive value from foods;
- k. To provide relevant health education programs for staff.

The Association further believes that proper nutrition is essential to child development and student success. The Association believes that proper nutrition must be a part of prenatal care and must continue throughout life. The Association supports programs within the education framework that promote understanding of proper nutrition. (2003)

#### **4. Sex education**

The Michigan Education Association believes that sex education that provides children and youth with information appropriate to their age is basic to healthy, well-adjusted mental attitudes. It also believes that the public school must assume an increasingly important role in providing this instruction and that teachers must be qualified to teach in this area.

The Association urges that courses in sex education be developed with care and that classroom teachers who teach the courses be legally protected from irresponsible censorship.

The Association urges its affiliates and members to support appropriately established sex education programs, including information on venereal disease, birth control and AIDS. (2003)

#### **5. Child abuse**

The Michigan Education Association believes that all children should be protected from all forms of child abuse and that members are in a position to observe and recognize abuse which has been inflicted on children.

The Association and its affiliates recognize that there is a need to heighten public awareness of the impact of child abuse. The Association and its affiliates should:

- a. Cooperate with community organizations to increase public awareness and understanding of child abuse;
- b. Encourage the development and use of materials to increase student awareness of child abuse;
- c. Encourage development of teacher preparation courses and professional development programs that stress the identification of, reporting procedures for and techniques in dealing with abused children;
- d. Encourage the development by affiliates of member awareness programs dealing with the abused child;
- e. Discourage the use of and promote penalties for the depiction and glamorization of child abuse in the media. (2003)

#### **6. Substance abuse**

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

The Association supports—

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

The Association also opposes the illegal use of drugs and substances and believes that severe penalties for illegal production, distribution, and sale should be strictly enforced. (2003)

## 7. *Drugs and alcohol testing of students*

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

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

## **E. Financial support**

### 1. *Basic financial support*

The Michigan Education Association believes that to achieve the Association's commitment to education in Michigan, and to assure fair tax practices for all citizens, public education must be supported from public tax sources in accordance with the following principles:

- a. The state shall assume no less than a fifty-percent (50%) share of basic public pre-K-12 education funding.
- b. The federal government shall assume its fair share of basic public pre-K-12 educational funding.
- c. The state and local share of finance must be derived from a tax system which is balanced and complementary in nature, includes all broad-based taxes, reduces the excessive reliance on property taxes and protects subsistence income.
- d. Restrictive limits must not be imposed on school budgets and long-term borrowing.
- e. The amount of federal, state and local support must be generally predictable for long-range planning and be specifically predictable for year-to-year planning.
- f. Support programs must make adequate provision for research and development and for promoting improvements in educational practice.
- g. Statewide property assessments must be based on uniform standards, rules and definitions by state assessors under civil service.
- h. The Michigan Education Association, through its local affiliates, actively participates on the local level in all phases of district millage and budget decisions.
- i. School districts should be compensated for hardships caused when large areas of their taxable land are taken over by governmental units and used to provide public services by private corporations.  

The Association feels that a fee should be assessed on these services and used to compensate the school district for a loss of tax base and other problems caused by the use of these lands.
- j. The state and the federal government shall fund all mandated and/or categorical programs.
- k. The goal of any reorganization of Michigan public schools as it relates to size, type and number of districts, must be to improve the quality of education for the students. Further, adequate safeguards regarding school employee employment rights must be maintained.

### 2. *State and federal support of public education*

The Michigan Education Association strives for enactment of legislation by state and federal legislators that will appropriate funds aimed at broad support for our state's public schools.

The Association believes that when federal funds are to be used on the local level for specific instructional programs, the recognized bargaining agent must be involved in the development and the approval of such programs prior to implementation. The Association will be involved in the evaluation of any such programs.

### 3. *Voucher plans/public monies for nonpublic education*

The Michigan Education Association opposes any use of public monies for education goods and services, either direct or indirect, for nonpublic schools.

The Association further believes that voucher plans or funding formulas that have the same effect as vouchers could lead to racial, economic and social isolation of students and weaken or destroy the public school system. The Association believes that any legislation designed to establish or implement pre-K through 12 voucher plans is detrimental to the public interest.

**4. Support of higher education**

The Michigan Education Association recognizes the contributions higher education makes to individual growth and to the quality of life in Michigan. The Association will seek legislation to improve levels of state and federal appropriations for higher education in Michigan.

The Association also will seek legislation which shall:

- a. Assure access for all students;
- b. Support funding programs in higher education based on student need and enrollment;
- c. Provide state funding, including differential tuition, to allow community college out-of-district students to enroll in programs not offered in their college districts;
- d. Provide funding for scholarships, grants and enrichment programs for ethnic and racial minorities, senior adults and women in higher education;
- e. Continue to advance equal opportunity rights for women and minority employees in higher education.

**5. Public education employee compensation**

The Michigan Education Association is committed to the continuous improvement of the economic well-being of its members. The Association, therefore, believes that educational employee compensation should be based on clearly defined, objective factors which are fairly and equitably applied to all employees.

The Association believes that compensation policies for educational employees must:

- a. Be developed through the process of collective bargaining;
- b. Permit no discrimination in pay or work assignment based on religion, race, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, number of dependents, or place of residence;
- c. Recognize the knowledge and skills needed to provide service and therefore be based upon preparation, work experience and professional growth;
- d. Provide extra pay for increases in work time. Extra duties shall be on a voluntary basis and shall be accompanied by extra-duty pay;
- e. Provide adjustment for increases in cost of living;
- f. Provide equal pay for work of equal value.

The Association believes such a policy is most fairly and equitably applied through the use of a negotiated salary/wage schedule that:

- a. Provides a starting salary/wage commensurate with the preparation required;
- b. Recognizes the concept of career pay comparable to that provided to employees in other professions who have qualifications and experience similar to those in education;
- c. Provides full credit for previous service by placing new employees on steps appropriate to their experience;
- d. Has structural continuity through the use of an index or percentage guide;
- e. Prevents deterioration in the following ratios: the starting salary/wage compared: to the maximum salary/wage, to experience increments and to preparation differentials.

The Michigan Education Association recognizes that, in the interest of quality education and/or school reform, alternative compensation models may be developed. The Association believes such models must:

- a. Be objective;
- b. Improve the members' compensation package, but not supplant the salary/wage schedule or negotiated benefits;
- c. Be fairly and equitably available to all employees in the system;

- d. Guarantee that any money for new pay plans becomes a permanent addition to the schedule and/or compensation package;
- e. Provides recognition and commensurate pay for those areas of knowledge and skills not currently addressed in salary/wage schedules, such as credit for National Board certification;
- f. Provide funding and opportunities for employees to receive professional development and training.

Notwithstanding the Association's commitment to the improvement of education and increased student learning, MEA opposes any compensation system that includes:

- a. The concept of merit pay;
- b. Pay tied to employee evaluation;
- c. Pay tied to student or employee test scores.

**6. Tax deductions for professional expenses**

The Michigan Education Association believes that educators must continuously develop professionally and that expenses incurred to do so are professional expenses and must be uniformly deductible from gross income in the computation of federal and state income taxes. Included in such deductible expenses are those incurred on sabbatical leave or for educational travel when they satisfy employers' requirements for the maintenance and improvement of teaching skills.

The Association calls upon the Internal Revenue Service and State Tax Office to apply these regulations uniformly and equitably in all its districts.

**7. School employees retirement**

Notwithstanding the fact that the Michigan Education Association is in agreement with federal legislation designed to eliminate compulsory retirement at any specific chronological age, the Association supports a retirement program for members, including:

- a. Adequate funding by the state to ensure actuarial soundness for the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement Fund, including actuarial prefunding of the health, dental, vision and hearing insurance for retirees and eligible dependents;
- b. Full vesting after not more than five (5) years of service;
- c. Automatic cost-of-living benefits;
- d. Voluntary retirement at age fifty-five (55) or after twenty-five (25) years of service, whichever comes first, and further, the benefits shall begin immediately upon retirement and shall not decrease due to lower retirement age after twenty-five (25) years of service;
- e. Public school retiree pension and benefits, including benefits from other states, shall be free of state taxation;
- f. Preretirement counseling;
- g. Members' contributions that are not subject to federal income taxation at the time contributed;
- h. The equitable transfer of retirement benefits among all the states;
- i. Benefit provisions in all systems which do not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, gender or marital status;
- j. Benefits from state and local systems of at least seventy percent (70%) of the average of the highest three (3) years of salary after twenty-five (25) years of service;
- k. The opportunity to purchase retirement service credit for periods of maternity, paternity or child-rearing regardless of time of occurrence (as in the military buy-in);
- l. The factor for determining retirement benefits shall be at least two percent (2%) of the average of the best three (3) years of service;
- m. That accumulated sick leave be counted in the time required and used for retirement credit;
- n. Equal vesting periods for members and surviving spouse benefits;
- o. Provisions for early retirement incentives;
- p. Provisions for major medical, dental, hearing and vision benefits for retiree and eligible dependents.

- q. Opposition to investments in corporations whose policies or expenditures of funds undermine child welfare and/or public education, when other investments provide equivalent benefits to retirement system members.

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

The Association is aware of incursions on retirement system assets by state and municipal governments. Such incursions involve either a misuse of assets or the failure to appropriate required funds to the system. Both practices result in increasing accrued liabilities, which reduces the financial soundness of the system and jeopardizes the security of education employee retirement benefits. The MEA will oppose these incursions and we will use all available means to ensure the financial soundness of the retirement system provided for education employees.

**8. Social Security laws**

The Michigan Education Association supports legislation for reform of the Social Security laws to eliminate discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender or marital status.

**9. Use of tax monies by administrators and school boards**

The Michigan Education Association urges legislation be proposed and enacted which will prohibit the use of tax monies to pay for the establishment of legal defense funds between districts and membership dues in state and national associations for administrators, dues and fees to state and national school board associations, and dues and fees to higher education administrator and college trustee associations.

**10. Extracurricular funding**

The Michigan Education Association believes that at all educational levels, students who wish to participate in extracurricular programs must have equal opportunity to participate in these funded activities.

The Association urges that funds for all extracurricular activities, including funds allocated for facilities, equipment, materials, transportation and remuneration of staff, be equitably allocated between all extracurricular programs.

**11. Medicare/health insurance**

The Michigan Education Association believes in comprehensive health insurance for retirees. The Association also believes that Medicare is an important component of access to a comprehensive health insurance package. The Association further believes that Medicare must be available as a basic universal guaranteed benefit.

## **F. Employment practices and standards**

**1. Written personnel policies**

The Michigan Education Association insists that personnel policies be written and developed cooperatively by local associations and boards of education. Such policies shall seek the most effective methods of utilizing personnel.

The Association further insists on a cooperative review for improvement to be made through the negotiation process and distributed to all personnel.

**2. Nondiscriminatory personnel policies**

The Michigan Education Association believes that personnel policies and practices must guarantee that no person be employed, retained, paid, dismissed, transferred, suspended or demoted because of race, color, national origin, religious beliefs, residence, physical disability, political activities, professional association activity, age, marital status, family relationship, sexual orientation or gender. Multi-ethnic experiences will be provided through the aggressive efforts to attract minority group members to the field of education.

However, it may be necessary to give preference in the hiring, retention, recall and promotion policies to certain racial groups or women to overcome past discrimination.

The Michigan Education Association opposes the requirement of residency within the district by boards of education as a condition of employment.

**3. Privatization (subcontracting/contracting out)**

The Michigan Education Association recognizes that all education employees share the same community of interest. The Association believes that greater emphasis must be placed upon securing and retaining the most capable employees.

The Association further believes that employees should not be displaced by private service providers or by temporary or part-time workers. The Association also believes that boards of education should refrain from the privatization of school employees. The Association further believes that privatization leads to deeper financial woes for districts, and may also lead to increased security risks for students.

The Association also believes that pre-K through higher education schools should not enter into subcontracting agreements that transfer education employees or that abrogate previously contracted benefits, reduce compensation, deny fringe benefits, and/or reduce or eliminate accumulated retirement experience and benefits.

**4. Fair housing**

The Michigan Education Association believes that all citizens should be free to reside in the communities of their choice. Local affiliates should lead in breaking down barriers that limit this freedom.

**5. Drug and alcohol testing**

The Michigan Education Association believes in the concept of a drug- and alcohol-free workplace. However, the Association believes that mandatory drug and alcohol testing of employees and job applicants is an unwarranted and unconstitutional invasion of privacy; therefore, the MEA opposes such testing.

**6. Equal opportunity for women**

The Michigan Education Association insists that all persons, regardless of gender, be given equal opportunity for employment, promotion, compensation and leadership in all activities.

The Association supports the efforts of those who seek equity in pay and conditions of employment. The Association strongly opposes gender-based and job-based wage discrimination and supports active efforts to correct it.

The Association urges governing boards and education associations to eliminate discriminatory practices against women in employment, promotion and compensation. Personnel policies must include maternity leave, child-care leave and professional leave, which encourages women to participate in professional growth experiences and to prepare for administrative and executive positions.

The Association further urges professional associations at all levels to adopt policies that ensure women equal access to elective, appointive and staff positions.

The Association urges the establishment of women's education committees on the state and local association levels as a vehicle for implementation of equal opportunity for women.

The Association believes that sexism and gender discrimination must be eliminated from the curriculum, program offerings, teaching and discipline practices, as well as personal attitudes and actions.

The Association supports the right of women to have freedom of choice to make their own decisions regarding their reproductive health.

The Association supports full funding of programs for displaced homemakers.

**7. Professional negotiation and grievance procedures**

The Michigan Education Association believes that local affiliates and governing boards must negotiate written master contracts. Such contracts shall result from negotiation in good faith between associations and governing boards, through representatives of their choosing, to establish, maintain, protect and improve terms and conditions for professional service and other matters of concern, including a provision for agency shop.

The Association believes that the rights of educational employees under collective bargaining agreements must be maintained and protected. The Association further believes that no mandate, federal or state, or agreements outside the scope of the local collective bargaining agreement should not threaten and/or call for the dismissal of educational employees.

Grievance procedures shall be provided in the master contract with definite steps to appeal the application or interpretation of the contract. Binding arbitration shall be a part of the grievance procedure.

The Association also recommends legislation that seeks statutory penalties for governing boards that do not bargain in good faith or do not comply with negotiated contracts and permit the establishment of multi-unit bargaining.

The rights of shared authority in academic governance enjoyed by faculty members at Michigan's institutions of higher education should not be diminished because of faculty participation in the professional negotiations process. The MEA will support legal and legislative actions to protect these rights of institutional self-governance.

The Association shall work through professional negotiations to:

- a. Provide music, art, library, physical education and counseling services in grades pre-K-12;
- b. Achieve significant increases in time investment and financial support for staff development, which shall be incorporated in local school contractual arrangements and budgets;
- c. Ensure clauses in the master agreements which will include the hiring of fully qualified personnel as defined by the profession;
- d. Provide for, in agreements, the exchange of educators and students between school districts and/or countries through curricular and extracurricular projects which involve personal contact with other ethnic and cultural backgrounds;
- e. Assure that in class-size decisions the following factors be reflected: the nature of the instructional program, staffing arrangements, number of preparations, age, intellectual and emotional maturity, motivation of the student, and the physical facilities;
- f. Review and evaluate at the local level the performance and competence of all members of the profession with respect to certification provided for in the agreement;
- g. Provide local teachers and other school employees with a greater responsibility for determining educational policy, allow teachers to assume the proper responsibility of all professional educators and concomitant with that responsibility share authority to make decisions about the offerings available to students;
- h. Include provisions for the prompt resolution of grievances;
- i. Support tenure as a means of guaranteeing due process and just cause in the dismissal of teachers until such time as statewide legislation mandates teacher dismissal be subject to binding, impartial third-party arbitration;
- j. Recognize advanced credits and make placement on advanced salary schedules at the beginning of each semester;
- k. Include payroll deduction provisions for United Profession dues and other items agreed on by the negotiating parties involved;
- l. Demand adequate released time and realistic funding for all staff involved in student-teacher supervision, other practicum experience supervision, and professional development;
- m. Establish criteria to be utilized should reduction in force (RIF) occur. Criteria should include seniority, objectivity, nondiscrimination, uniformity of application and affirmative action. Contracts should establish recall procedures that provide priority job opportunities on a seniority basis to teachers unemployed because of reductions in force. Neighboring districts are encouraged to establish jointly such procedures on a regional basis that would provide priority hiring of laid-off teachers;
- n. Support the concept of providing flexible employment opportunities to help meet the varying needs of school employees and require that all such flexible employment opportunities be covered by contract language;
- o. Include provisions for in-service and retraining for reassigned school employees;
- p. Recognize continuing education units (CEUs) as a means of advanced salary schedule placement.

#### **8. *Fringe benefits***

The Michigan Education Association believes that to attract and retain competent staff, school systems must provide fringe benefits comparable to those of other professions and occupations requiring similar preparation and responsibility.

- a. Full family medical and dental protection, substantial life insurance coverage and accident and liability coverage are specific examples.
- b. Salary continuation shall be provided in the event of absence of either long or short duration due to illness or accident.
- c. Any member disabled by pregnancy shall be entitled to all contract benefits available to members for other causes and illness.

#### **9. *Members and national service***

The Michigan Education Association believes that members whose careers are interrupted because of being called to active service by the National Guard or the Reserves or who volunteer to fulfill a military obligation should be guaranteed re-employment and other benefits that would accrue if they continue in positions with the school system, such as continued tenure, salary increments and service credit toward retirement.

### **10. Protection of members**

The Michigan Education Association and its affiliates shall work together to insist upon development and enforcement of laws that guarantee the safety of members from physical attacks on their persons or property and that provide reimbursement for loss.

The Association urges that guidelines be developed for action leading to prevention of verbal abuse or harassment of members by any individuals. Members must take the responsibility to call attention to such cases so that appropriate action may be taken.

The Association urges its affiliates to cooperate with juvenile court systems to secure strict enforcement of juvenile law in cases involving disturbances in the public schools.

The Association also believes that education employees must have the right to review and provide documentation to, as well as the right to participate—with association representation—in the student discipline hearing.

The Association further believes that education employees have the right to refuse continued placement of the student in their school related settings when the safety of other students or education employees is in question. (1970, 2008)

### **11. Save-harmless/member liability**

The Michigan Education Association believes that whenever any civil action has been or shall be brought against any person holding any office, position or employment under the jurisdiction of any board of education, including student teachers, for any act or omission arising out of and in the course of the performance of the duties of such office, position, employment or student teaching, the board of education shall defray all costs of defending such action, including reasonable counsel fees and expenses, together with costs of appeal, if any, and shall save-harmless and protect such person from any financial loss resulting therefrom; and said board may arrange for and maintain appropriate insurance to cover all such damages, losses and expenses.

The Association also believes that should any criminal action be instituted against any such person for any such act or omission and should such proceeding be dismissed or result in a final disposition in favor of such person, the board of education shall reimburse that person for the cost of defending such proceeding, including reasonable counsel fees and expenses of the original hearing or trial and all appeals.

### **12. Sexual harassment**

The Michigan Education Association believes that school employees and students should be protected from sexual harassment. The Association encourages its local affiliates to work with local school districts and institutions of higher education to:

- a. Establish strong policies enforcing state and federal statutes prohibiting sexual harassment;
- b. Develop educational programs designed to help people recognize, understand, prevent and combat sexual harassment;
- c. Develop and publicize a grievance procedure that encourages the reporting of incidents of sexual harassment, resolves complaints promptly and protects the rights of all parties.

### **13. Medication and medical services**

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

The Michigan Education Association further believes that in order to ensure the health and well-being of students, as well as to provide safeguards for its members, the following procedures for administration of medication to students while in school should be incorporated in school district policies. The Association urges its affiliates to encourage the implementation of such a policy, or to incorporate these concepts in any existing policy.

Any student who is required to take medication during the school day must comply with school regulations. These regulations must include at least the following:

- a. Written orders from a physician detailing the name of the drug, dosage and time interval medication is to be given;
- b. Written permission from the parent or guardian of the student requesting that the school district comply with the physician's order;
- c. Medication must be brought to school in a container appropriately labeled by pharmacy or physician;
- d. The initial dose of medication shall not be given in the school with the exception of life-threatening situations. Initial dose is the first dose administered from the prescription;
- e. Each medication given must be recorded on a medication log which includes date, time and signature of person giving the medication and witness's initials;
- f. Medication shall be kept in a locked compartment in school;

- g. The person designated to administer medication shall be negotiated by the local affiliate, such that teachers, counselors or support professionals not be required to administer medication and that school nurses not be required to travel for the sole purpose of administering medication.

The Association believes that all public school personnel should be protected from all liability when the adopted procedure of the school district is followed.

Without fear of disciplinary repercussions, the public school personnel have the right to refuse to administer medication and/or medical services for which school personnel feel unqualified or when proper equipment has not been provided. Medical personnel must be provided additional training by the district prior to performing the medical services in question. (2008)

**14. Confidentiality of employee records**

The Michigan Education Association believes that all employee records are privileged information and must remain confidential; and that all federal, state and local laws, regulations and ordinances regarding employee records must be followed. In order to maintain confidentiality, the rights of education employees must include:

- a. A guarantee that only one personnel file exists;
- b. Access to materials in personnel files;
- c. The authority to inspect, review, and obtain copies of such records, explanations and interpretations of such records;
- d. Written notification prior to any placement of materials in the employee's personnel file;
- e. An opportunity to respond to and challenge any materials prior to placement in the personnel file and to purge those that are inaccurate, misleading, distorted or unsubstantiated; and to purge records of disciplinary actions which are more than four years old;
- f. A provision to consent to or deny release of such records, including the right to receive both notice of and copies of released materials.

The Association also believes that any ancillary records, such as medical and legal records, with which the educational institution may come in contact, are to be treated as privileged information and must be maintained in a separate file than the employee personnel file.

The Association further believes that it is the duty of the educational institution to provide written notification to employees of these rights and to abide by these confidentiality rights of employees.

**15. Right to privacy**

The Michigan Education Association is alarmed at the increasing surveillance of individual citizens by private and governmental agencies and school authorities. The cross-filing and interchange by private and governmental agencies of computerized information includes prejudicial reports on citizens, including students and members, descriptions and geographic locations of individuals who petition for redress of grievances and those who are involved in civil rights activities.

The Association is opposed to such practices on the part of governmental and private agencies. It is committed to affect the immediate cessation of such surveillance and destruction of such known data that has previously been collected by these governmental and private agencies.

The Michigan Education Association will work toward securing legislation which assures that the privacy of students and members is adequately protected.

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

- a. Freedom from audio or video surveillance without prior written permission of the individual;
- b. A guarantee that the school district shall not release any information contained within an employee record for any purpose that violates the Freedom of Information Act.
- c. Security of computer files, electronic mail communications, and Internet usage from inappropriate or unauthorized access;
- d. Authority to refuse a polygraph, lie detector, or other invasive method of evidence collection.
- e. The Association further believes that education employees should be free to participate in legal and constitutionally protected activities in private life without fear of workplace reprisal, discipline or termination. (1991, 2008)

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

## **G. Professional autonomy and freedom**

### **1. Professional autonomy**

The Michigan Education Association believes that it has a responsibility for improvement of the teaching profession. The MEA shall seek legislation recognizing teaching as a self-governing profession through a professional practices act which shall:

- a. Include provision for preparation and licensing of teachers and standards of professional conduct; and
- b. Require certification for specialized areas—remedial, special education, guidance and counseling, student-teacher supervision and administration.

### **2. Continuing employment and fair dismissal practices**

The Michigan Education Association believes in maintaining support for tenure as a means of guaranteed due process and just cause in the dismissal of teachers until such time as statewide legislation mandating that teacher dismissal be subject to binding, impartial third-party arbitration can be secured.

### **3. Civil rights**

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

The Association opposes any law, Executive Order, or amendment to the U.S. Constitution that curtails or infringes on basic human rights. (2003)

### **4. Academic/professional freedom**

The Michigan Education Association believes that academic and professional freedom is essential to the profession. Controversial issues should be a part of instructional programs when judgment of the professional staff deems the issues appropriate to the curriculum and to the maturity level of the student. Academic freedom is the right of the learner and the teachers to explore, present and discuss divergent points of view in the quest of knowledge and truth.

Professional freedom includes the school employees' right to evaluate, to criticize and to advocate their personal viewpoints concerning the policies and programs of the schools. The school employee also has the right to assist colleagues when their academic or professional freedom is violated.

## **H. Active participation in public policy-making**

### **1. Professional collaboration**

The Michigan Education Association believes that its members, its local affiliates, and the state organization must actively and collaboratively participate in the development of public policy which affects the profession.

### **2. Public understanding**

The Michigan Education Association believes that local associations must promote public understanding of education and encourage wide public and parental participation in solving education's problems. It also acknowledges the responsibility to publicize adverse educational conditions and to support associations in their attempts to improve conditions in their districts.

The Association urges more effective use of all media for communication between the classroom, the profession and the community.

The Association also believes that there must be a representative, nonpartisan board of education in each school district, which also has a responsibility to promote public understanding of the schools.

**3. *The member as a citizen***

The Michigan Education Association believes that all members have the right and obligation to be informed and politically active citizens. It supports voter education to alert new voters of voting laws and procedures and key political issues. It urges local affiliates to seek written governing board policies to guarantee members their political rights, including registering and voting, participating in party organizations, performing jury duty, discussing political issues publicly, campaigning for candidates, contributing to campaigns of candidates, lobbying, organizing political action groups, and running for and serving in public office. Provisions should be made to enable members to serve in public office without personal loss and without curtailment of annual increments, tenure, retirement or seniority rights.

Major decisions affecting schools and colleges are made by elected officials or their appointees. Therefore, the Association believes that it is the duty and responsibility of members to involve themselves in the selection, election and reelection of qualified, committed candidates who support the established goals that will provide quality education.

The MEA is in support of the concept of public funding for congressional elections.

**4. *Nuclear accident emergency plans***

The Michigan Education Association believes that members must be involved in the development of emergency plans in case of accidents involving nuclear reactors and/or radioactive materials. The Association urges its affiliates to work for cooperation and planning among neighboring school districts, communities and counties.

**5. *Nuclear freeze***

The Michigan Education Association believes that peoples of the world—in their concern for the survival of the planet and humankind—are evolving toward greater and greater collective consciousness and unity in their recognition that nuclear war is the common enemy of all nations and peoples and is not survivable. The Association calls for a halt to the arms race in order to create a world without nuclear weapons.

## **I. Professional associations**

**1. *Strong professional associations***

The Michigan Education Association and its local affiliates must be free to explore all types of organizational alignments with member organizations and other public employees to provide a coordinated program of bargaining and services and to make the profession's influence felt in the community, state and nation. Members must observe and professional associations must enforce the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession. The Association believes that school policies should provide released time without loss of pay for members fulfilling leadership responsibilities in their professional organizations or attending professional meetings.

**2. *Defense of members***

The Michigan Education Association will support members and other educational personnel, as determined by the MEA Board of Directors, whose professional or political status or rights have been menaced or unfairly restricted. Where legal and other restrictions prevent members from exercising these rights, the Association will support efforts to remove such restrictions.

**3. *One member/one vote***

The Association is committed to the concept of one member/one vote and calls upon its affiliates to implement the concept of one member/one vote in their own representative bodies where such implementation does not conflict with the need to guarantee an effective part in the decision-making process to a previously excluded minority group.

**4. *Education in correctional and rehabilitation agencies***

The Michigan Education Association will provide legislative and professional support to its members teaching in federal, state and local correctional and rehabilitation institutions, in hospitals and in other custodial agencies. The Association will assist its members in improving the standards of instruction in these institutions.

**5. *Strikes***

The Michigan Education Association believes that the chances of reaching voluntary agreement in good faith are reduced when one party to the negotiation process possesses the power to use the courts unilaterally against the other party. The MEA recommends several procedures to be used in resolutions of impasse, such as mediation, factfinding and political action. However, the Association realizes that in order to provide quality education, members may have no choice but to resort to a strike for correcting conditions.

The Association urges the state government(s) to enact legislation with impasse resolution provisions up to and including those which would permit school employee affiliates to engage in strikes without incurring civil, criminal or other penalties.

## *MEA Resolutions*

The Association believes that when a member picket line is established by the authorized bargaining unit, crossing it is strikebreaking. It jeopardizes the welfare of members and the educational process. The Association denounces the practice of keeping schools open during a strike. In the event of a strike by employees, extracurricular and cocurricular activities must cease.

The Association denounces the staffing of schools with untrained, unqualified or noncertificated persons at any time. The Association will assist its affiliates in opposing laws or proposals which permit the hiring of noncertificated personnel for teaching positions.

The Association condemns the jailing of members, excessive bail and fines for school work-stoppages. The Association urges the state government to enact statutes guaranteeing members due process of the law when a work-stoppage occurs, including the right to present their case to the state or courts before back-to-work orders are issued.

In the event of a strike at the school of placement, affiliates should work with colleges and universities of both student teachers and students in field placements to ensure that those students honoring the work stoppage will receive credit for previous service and assignments, and be provided an opportunity for a comparable alternative placement in order to complete all remaining preservice requirements. The Association further believes that teacher training institutions should be notified that a strike is being conducted and urged not to cooperate in emergency certification or placement practices that constitute strikebreaking. The Association also urges that teachers refuse to supervise cadet teachers and/or students who are sent to public schools as aides or observers/participants and who are enrolled in any higher education institution whose placement directors cooperate in emergency certification practices designed to keep classrooms open in the event of a strike. (2008)