

2024-2025 NEA RESOLUTIONS

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A. SERVE AS THE NATIONAL VOICE FOR EDUCATION

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION

A-1. Public Education

The National Education Association believes that continued success of the United States as a participatory democracy and as a world leader is dependent upon a shared national, state, community, and individual commitment to excellence in public education.

The Association also believes that public education is the cornerstone of our social, economic, and political structure and is of utmost significance in the development of our moral, ethical, spiritual, and cultural values. The Association further believes that excellence in public education requires that students achieve mastery of learning so that they have the ability to use what has been taught and have command of subjects sufficient for problem solving, decision making, and further educational growth. The Association supports high standards for teaching and learning in which students become active participants in the mastery process.

Therefore, each state must maintain a system of public education that prepares its citizens to—

- a. Communicate proficiently in English
- b. Reason mathematically
- c. Use critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem-solving skills
- d. Exercise attitudes of good citizenship, societal productivity, and global awareness
- e. Care for the environment
- f. Appreciate the aesthetic and moral qualities of life
- g. Formulate values that lead to continual growth and self-fulfillment
- h. Recognize, value, and support cultural, social, political, and religious differences
- i. Practice sound physical and mental health habits
- j. Continue to gain and employ new skills and knowledge through practical/vocational and fine/performing art experiences
- k. Use a variety of technologies ethically and effectively. (1969, 2024)

A-2. Educational Opportunity for All

The National Education Association believes that a free public education suited to the needs of the individual is the right of all and must be guaranteed by state constitutions and the United States Constitution. Public educational opportunities for all must be preserved and strengthened. Access to, and opportunities for, postsecondary education should be widely available, and no qualified person should be denied such opportunities because of financial considerations.

The Association also believes that all schools must be accredited under uniform standards established by the appropriate agencies in collaboration with the Association and its affiliates, and that the accreditation process must provide sufficient flexibility to enable individual schools to achieve educational excellence and respond to the needs of their students and community. The development of a periodic review of locally established programs should involve community members, parents/guardians, students, teachers, and education support professionals. (1969, 2024)

A-3. Shared Responsibility for Support of Public Education

The National Education Association recognizes its responsibility to promote an understanding of the history and continuing importance of public education and to support public education and public education employees. The Association encourages wide community and parental participation in achieving and maintaining educational excellence. The Association believes that school boards and other stakeholders also have a responsibility to promote public understanding of the importance of public schools.

The Association also believes that public education should be publicly and democratically controlled, without undue influence in decision making on the part of any private interests, including, but not limited to, business concerns and philanthropic organizations. (1969, 2017)

A-4. Collaborative Partnerships

The National Education Association believes that families, schools, communities, and other willing partners at the local, state, and national levels are fundamentally and positively interconnected.

The Association also believes that building and sustaining collaborative partnerships among families, schools, communities, and willing partners is integral to ensuring a great public school for every student. Critical strategies for effective partnerships should include—

- a. Agreeing on core values
- b. Using data to set priorities and focus strategies
- c. Providing relevant training to facilitate ongoing partnerships
- d. Using targeted outreach to focus on areas of mutual concern
- e. Building one-to-one relationships between families and educators that are linked to learning
- f. Setting, communicating, and supporting high and rigorous expectations
- g. Addressing cultural differences
- h. Ensuring safe and racially just schools
- i. Connecting students, parents/guardians, and educators to the community. (2012, 2022)

A-5. Parental Involvement

The National Education Association believes that a community engaged in the life of its public schools is paramount to the future of public education. Parents/guardians who are active participants in the education of their children increase the likelihood of the achievement of educational excellence. In coordination with other stakeholders, parents/guardians must set high expectations for student behavior and academic success and provide the encouragement and support for all students to achieve their full potential.

The Association also believes that laws which circumvent authentic parent/guardian and community involvement are detrimental to the partnership between parents/guardians and educators.

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

The Association believes that parents/guardians should be encouraged to visit their children's schools and communicate with their children's teachers and other education employees with whom the children have daily contact. In addition, schools should communicate with parents/guardians in their native language. The Association also believes that parents/guardians, students, community members, teachers, other education employees, and school board members should promote the collaborative successes between the school and the community. (2001, 2024)

A-6. School Boards

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

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

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

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

The Association believes that school boards should adopt policies that promote racial and social justice and ensure the separation of church and state. (1980, 2024)

A-7. Business Support for Public Education

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

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

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

A-8. American Education Week

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

A-9. U.S. Department of Education

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

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

A-10. Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The National Education Association recognizes that Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) continue to play a vital role in helping Americans in their efforts toward building a truly pluralistic society.

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

The Association urges its affiliates to be in the forefront of all efforts that seek to support, maintain, and promote these invaluable institutions, their programs, and their full participation in the mainstream of education. The Association believes that HBCUs should receive equitable state and federal funding relative to their non-HBCU counterparts including additional financial support for infrastructure, student services, and academic programs which have been impacted by discriminatory funding disparities. The Association also believes that closing, downgrading, or merging HBCUs is not in the best interest of the educational community.

The Association further believes that HBCUs should be recognized for their successes in bringing Black educators into the profession. The Association acknowledges the commitments of HBCUs to instill in their graduates cultural awareness, cultural competency, and culturally responsive education, and believes that these commitments should be emulated by all educator preparation programs. (1980, 2024)

A-11. Use of Closed Public School Buildings

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

A-12. School Accountability

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

The Association further believes that a school accountability system must—

- a. Promote educational excellence
- b. Ensure the alignment of standards, assessments, and curricula
- c. Balance its focus on school context, process, and student performance
- d. Set high standards for student learning, levels of support by each stakeholder, and clearly defined goals for the school as a unit
- e. Provide for the development and implementation of a valid methodology for use as an assessment tool to determine the required funding necessary to enable all students to achieve educational excellence
- f. Provide professional development for all education employees prior to implementation of the system
- g. Use multiple assessment tools that are universally designed and sources of data that are meaningful, relevant, valid, and reliable
- h. Include necessary accommodations and modifications to maximize the success of all students
- i. Include measures to improve school accountability
- j. Identify how the school as a unit achieves its goals
- k. Identify and address the internal and external factors that impact student learning and development
- l. Provide for the timely dissemination of assessment results to all stakeholders
- m. Be applied in a fair and equitable manner
- n. Include periodic evaluation and modification of the system
- o. Provide for the development of a school improvement plan
- p. Include a formal appeals process for every school that is being targeted with academic sanctions or any other form of takeover
- q. Include provisions to keep students and educators safe in times of crises. (1971, 2021)

A-13. Appointments by the President of the United States

The National Education Association believes that the need for quality education demands that criteria for presidential appointments in the field of education shall include a commitment to public education and significant contributions to the education community. Education employees should both have input in the selection of candidates and be included as candidates for such appointments. (1970, 2024)

FINANCING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

A-14. Financial Support of Public Education

The National Education Association believes that every state should ensure its students a quality education by providing the funding needed to enable all students to achieve educational excellence. Such an education requires adequate and equitable funding from public tax sources for schools to obtain the

resources (e.g., personnel, programs, materials, buildings, and technology) to meet the needs of all students. The Association also believes that—

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

The Association opposes providing any public revenues to preK through 12 schools for sectarian instruction. The Association also opposes providing such revenues to sectarian and nonsectarian preK through 12 private schools or to nonpublic school students in preK through 12 education, unless such

revenues are used for educational services that are not available in public schools to which students have reasonable access. (1997, 2021)

A-15. Federal Financial Support for Education

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

The federal government should—

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

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

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

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

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

A-16. School Trust Lands

The National Education Association believes in providing support to states with school trust lands to ensure that they are an important source of funding for public education. The Association supports providing such states with the assistance and guidance necessary to ensure the trust lands and permanent funds generate the maximum revenue possible for public education consistent with the sustainable use of those lands by current and future generations.

The Association also believes that, to maximize educational dollars available to states and ensure a quality education system, revenue from trust lands should be used to supplement, not supplant, revenue for general fund education budgets. (2008)

A-17. Funding of Continuing Education

The National Education Association believes that continuing education must be affordable and not burden participants with unsustainable and oppressive debt.

The Association supports educational funding models and programming that reduce the financial burden to the learner. Promotion and access to financial aid educational resources addressing predatory lending practices, as well as loan forgiveness requirements and repayments, should occur before the financial burden is incurred by the participant. Any additional training and programming that is required for education employment should also not incur a financial burden. (2022)

A-18. Financial Support for Postsecondary Education

The National Education Association supports the maintenance and expansion of funding for postsecondary education, including programs of institutional and scholar support, research grants, support for historically Black and developing institutions, and student financial assistance to assure access and choice for all qualified students—regardless of personal financial means—who wish to pursue postsecondary education. The Association believes that student need and enrollment should be criteria for funding postsecondary education. The Association also believes that need-based student financial assistance should be available only through fully accredited postsecondary education institutions and governmental agencies. (1986, 2015)

A-19. Loan Forgiveness

The National Education Association supports public service loan forgiveness programs. Loan forgiveness should be based upon successful completion of years of service, and not be dependent upon specific loan types, location of employment, or repayment plans. Loan repayment and forgiveness criteria, as well as information on predatory lending practices, should be provided to all aspiring and practicing public servants prior to incurring educationally-related debt. (2022)

A-20. Higher Education Research and Study Grants

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

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

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

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

A-21. Public Education/National Defense

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

A-22. Federal Impact Aid

The National Education Association believes that appropriate funding must be provided for students in school districts impacted by federal policies, lands, activities, and installations to ensure a quality education. The Association believes that a permanent solution to the financial problems of severely impacted school districts must be developed. (1970, 2024)

A-23. Educational/Economic Stability of States

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

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

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

A-24. Tax Reform

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

- a. Increase tax fairness and raise revenue necessary to finance quality public education and other public services
- b. Establish policies that shift the tax burden from the less affluent
- c. Prevent excessive reliance on any single tax
- d. Reflect the findings of comprehensive studies of the total individual and corporate tax burden
- e. Assure a tax burden distribution that reflects the ability to pay and that safeguards family well-being
- f. Assure that statewide uniformity in property tax effort be required
- g. Provide funding for public education that ensures adequacy and equity of resources
- h. Not be used to place arbitrary maximum limits on any state or local government's ability to spend or tax, particularly since such limits have a negative impact on the full funding of schools
- i. Establish tax laws that prevent harm to education employees and educational needs
- j. Attract expatriated business and investment to return to benefit our American economy
- k. Encourage penalties to corporations that move their interests abroad to avoid tax liabilities
- l. Provide for public funding of national political campaigns to enable greater equity in access to the political process
- m. Restructure the alternative minimum tax (AMT) by indexing it to inflation at the AMT's original level. (1978, 2024)

A-25. Privatization and Subcontracting Programs[†]

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

The Association opposes any privatization or subcontracting arrangement that—

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

A-26. Voucher Plans and Tuition Tax Credits

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

[†] See *NEA Handbook* for the Policy Statement on Privatization and Subcontracting adopted by the 2000 Representative Assembly, which sets forth the Association's full position dealing with this subject.

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

The Association also believes that any private school or agency that receives public funding through voucher plans, tax credits, or other funding/financial arrangements must be subject to all accountability measures and regulations required of public schools. The Association believes tax-exempt status should be denied to those institutions whose policies and/or practices prevent the integration of the institutions. (1970, 2014)

A-27. Educational Bureaucracy

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

A-28. For-Profit Schools[†]

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

A-29. Funding for Extracurricular Programs

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

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

A-30. Local Education Foundations

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

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

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

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

[†] See *NEA Handbook* for the Policy Statement on Privatization and Subcontracting adopted by the 2000 Representative Assembly, which sets forth the Association's full position dealing with this subject.

QUALITY EDUCATION

A-31. School Improvement Process

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

- a. Involve all school staff as active partners in the development of the plan
- b. Provide the additional funding, resources, and assistance necessary to accomplish the plan
- c. Identify the responsibilities of each stakeholder—students, education employees, parents/guardians, community members, government, policymakers, social agencies, and taxpayers—in the implementation of the plan
- d. Provide time for planning, implementation, and reassessment
- e. Be consistent with education employees’ rights and responsibilities as set forth in laws, contracts, policies, and/or local agreement processes. (1971, 2014)

A-32. Improving and Maintaining Educational Facilities

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

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

The Association further believes that preventive maintenance in all facilities is equally important in achieving this goal.

The Association believes that all students deserve classrooms that are contained in a permanent physical plant and that such classrooms should be appropriately equipped for optimal teaching and learning. The Association also believes that temporary or portable structures such as trailers are inherently inadequate substitutes for permanent structures. (1969, 2009)

A-33. Charter School Accountability[†]

The National Education Association acknowledges the value set forth in the original conception of charter schools as innovators within local public school districts, provided such charter schools are authorized by and held accountable to local democratically elected school boards or their equivalent, and meet certain basic procedural and substantive safeguards that apply to public schools. These basic safeguards protect schools in our communities as well as our nation’s commitment to a free public education system that is accessible to all.

The Association believes that the competitive market model of charter schools promising school improvement simply by way of introducing competition into local school systems is a failure, and that basic accountability to the community is the only way to ensure options that are high quality and demonstrate sustainable student growth. The Association also believes that handing over the education of our students to privately managed, largely unaccountable charter schools that do not answer to locally elected school boards or their equivalent jeopardizes student success, undermines the public education system, and harms our students and educators, particularly in communities of color.

The Association further believes that all educators deserve the right to a collective voice through bargaining and representation, and that an organized workforce is a better guardian of quality standards for students and educators alike. Educators in public charters therefore must be allowed to organize and fully participate in the union.

The Association supports both communities organizing for quality public education and educators working together to improve and hold accountable charter schools while supporting state and local efforts to preserve public school funding and services by eliminating such funding and services from unaccountable privately managed charters that do not comply with those basic safeguards and standards. (1993, 2017)

[†] See *NEA Handbook* for the Policy Statement on Charter Schools adopted by the 2017 Representative Assembly, which sets forth the Association’s full position dealing with this subject.

A-34. Takeover of Public Schools or Public School Districts

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

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

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

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

A-35. Federally or State-Mandated Choice/Parental Option Plans

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

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

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

A-36. School Restructuring

The National Education Association believes that prior to consideration of school restructuring efforts, the school must have had access to adequate resources to implement school improvement plans. All school restructuring plans must employ an open democratic process that meaningfully involves local associations and other stakeholders in all decision making. Such efforts must—

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

The Association also believes that education services in restructured schools should continue to be provided by public entities and public employees. (2006, 2012)

A-37. District Consolidation/Deconsolidation

The National 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 employees in the new district(s) should be treated equitably with no reduction in the salary, benefits, protections, bargaining rights, or due process rights of the employees. Employees of these public school districts should remain bargaining unit members of local, state, and national affiliates. (2008)

A-38. Mass Media Use in Media Utilization

The National Education Association believes that the creative and innovative use of mass media can further the goals of public education. It is essential that educators have the right to record or access mass media content and use it to enhance educational outcomes.

The Association also believes that publicly funded mass media institutions should provide communication services for education. The Association further believes that its affiliates should be involved in the content development of each of these resources. (1981, 2024)

A-39. Community Education

The National Education Association believes that the relationship between schools and the community that surrounds them is significant to the success of students and educators. Community education programs are comprehensive and coordinated plans allowing local schools and communities to form partnerships in the education process by providing educational, recreational, social, and cultural services for all people in the community. Therefore, school staff should form partnerships with community leaders to provide these services for the communities they serve. The Association urges state affiliates to become involved in the promotion, expansion, and implementation of community education programs and partnerships in their states. (1977, 2021)

A-40. Rural Education

The National Education Association supports a strong rural educational system; such a system should address rural needs and incorporate local arts, culture, and economics. The Association believes in equitable educational programs, services, and funding for rural schools that reflect the specific range of conditions in rural areas. The Association also believes that the strength of a rural educational system should not be dependent upon geographical location, population density, or consolidation of rural schools. (1976, 2022)

A-41. Urban Development

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

A-42. U.S. Federal Schools

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

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

B. ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS

LIFELONG LEARNING

B-1. Early Childhood Education†

The National Education Association champions early childhood education programs in the public schools for children from birth through age eight. The Association also supports a high-quality program of transition from home and/or preschool to the public kindergarten or first grade. This transition should include communication and cooperation among parents/guardians, the preschool staff, and the public school staff. The Association believes that such programs should be held in facilities that are appropriate

* See *NEA Handbook* for the Policy Statement on Kindergarten and Prekindergarten adopted by the 2003 Representative Assembly, which sets forth the Association's full position dealing with this subject.

to the developmental needs of these children. The Association also believes that early childhood education programs should include a full continuum of services for parents/guardians and children, including child care, child development, special education, bilingual education programs or English language acquisition and development programs, appropriate bias-free screening devices, and developmentally appropriate and diversity-based curricula which create fair and respectful treatment of all students and a learning environment free from the effects of implicit or explicit bias. Early childhood education programs also must be sensitive to and meet the physical, social, mental, and emotional health and nutritional needs of children.

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

The Association recognizes the value of quality early childhood education programs in preparing young children to enter school ready to learn. High quality early childhood programs should be staffed by teachers, administrators, and education support professionals who possess a deep understanding of child development and specialized training in early childhood education. To provide the quality of early education and care necessary to prepare children for success in school, the Association recommends that—

- a. All teachers working in publicly funded preschool programs hold a bachelor's degree in child development and/or early childhood education
- b. All instructional assistants working in publicly funded preschool programs hold an Associate's degree in child development or early childhood education
- c. Lead teachers in private child care centers hold a minimum of an Associate's degree in child development or early childhood education
- d. All teaching assistants in private child care centers hold a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) or a state-issued certificate that meets or exceeds CDA requirements
- e. School districts implement implicit bias, diversity, equity, cultural competence, and other racial justice training for all educators (including administrators) and regularly evaluate progress and outcomes in applying racial equity tools to decision-making and practices.

States should develop incentives and supports to enable teachers and education support professionals currently working in early childhood programs to obtain the recommended credentials without compromising the quality of education and care that children receive and without substantially increasing the cost of care to parents.

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

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

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

The Association advocates the establishment of fully funded early childhood special education programs. These programs and necessary services should be readily accessible for children with disabilities and staffed by certified/licensed teachers, qualified support staff, and therapists. (1975, 2022)

B-2. Middle School and Junior High School Programs

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

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

The Association believes in developmentally appropriate and diversity-based curricula which create fair, respectful treatment of all students and a learning environment that addresses cultural competence, utilizes restorative practices and techniques, and is free from the effects of implicit or explicit bias.

The Association also encourages the development of guidance and counseling programs that stimulate parental and community involvement, and promote health services. (1976, 2021)

B-3. High School Diploma/Equivalency

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

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

The Association believes that any state or district plan to use equivalency testing as the basis for qualification for a high school diploma should be developed cooperatively by classroom teachers, certified/licensed specialized instructional support personnel, administrators, and governing boards. (1976, 2024)

B-4. Dropout Prevention

The National Education Association believes high school graduation must be a federal, state, and local priority.

The Association also believes that education systems should collaborate with parents/guardians and the broader community. Together, they should provide intervention, social/emotional and legal support, academic assistance, retention counseling, and career programs to ensure that preK through 12 students remain in school through the completion of high school graduation requirements. The Association further believes that school counselors, social workers, nurses, psychologists, and other professionals who support the social-emotional and mental health of students are essential to dropout prevention. Education systems should conduct regular school climate assessments to determine the level of support in place to address students' needs.

The Association believes that student pregnancy impacts the educational, social, and economic lives of young people, as well as their health. Therefore, any dropout prevention efforts should also provide resources and supports for pregnant students and students who give birth, including, but not limited to, social-emotional support, new parent counseling, lactation support, guidance of navigating or accessing medical treatment, clean and comfortable lactation spaces, support with child care, and support in finding and accessing other community resources. These students should also have access to extended learning, flexible hours, hybrid learning, and other continuing education options.

The Association also believes that the disaggregation of graduation rate and exclusionary discipline data is essential to identify and to implement appropriate interventions for highly-impacted groups and individuals. The Association further believes that, in order to maximize graduation rates across demographics, educators should strive to minimize the use of exclusionary discipline practices and eliminate its disproportionate application. (2008, 2023)

B-5. Expanding Student Graduation and Promotion Options

The National Education Association believes that public high schools should employ multiple graduation and promotion options and create partnerships with colleges, alternative schools, and vocational, career and technical programs. These options also serve as valid indicators of readiness for postsecondary opportunities. (2008, 2017)

B-6. Postsecondary Opportunities

The National Education Association believes that all students should be prepared for, and have equitable access to, all postsecondary opportunities. The Association also believes that recruitment efforts

for postsecondary opportunities should be equitably implemented, in collaboration with schools, so that no individual or community is disparately targeted or excluded based on their race, age, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, ability, ethnicity, immigration status, or religion. (2022)

B-7. Higher Education

The National Education Association supports higher education from fully accredited institutions as an essential part of the education process. Higher education is postsecondary education that provides college credit and/or certification/licensure. The Association believes that postsecondary education serves an invaluable function for intellectual development, research and scholarship, career preparation, and preparation for life.

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

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

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

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

The Association urges the nation’s colleges and universities to develop, in cooperation with the Association, a uniform formula to evaluate credit hours. (1980, 2021)

B-8. Adult Education

The National Education Association supports adult education programs that provide lifelong educational and career opportunities. Adult education is the practice of educating adults through non-college credit classes. The Association recognizes the importance of high school completion, English language acquisition, parenting education, career training, and other adult education programs that provide students with an opportunity to become productive, effective, racially just, culturally competent, and responsible parents, citizens, and community members.

The Association believes that to have access to adult education programs, adult education students with minor children should have child care available at their educational sites during class time. (2006, 2022)

B-9. Critical Thinking

The National Education Association believes that critical thinking is an essential part of a well-rounded education. The Association also believes that educators play a vital role in teaching critical thinking skills through developmentally appropriate practices. The Association further believes that developmentally appropriate practices enable students to—

- a. Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information
- b. Determine the importance and relevance of arguments and ideas
- c. Identify erroneous, biased, or fallacious reasoning and logic
- d. Distinguish fact from opinion
- e. Identify propaganda
- f. Evaluate reliability and validity of sources in all types of media
- g. Consider historical and contextual content
- h. Recognize argumentative styles and methods. (2019, 2023)

B-10. Independent Reading Skills

The National Education Association believes that it is critical that students become skillful and proficient readers to succeed in school and life. Research-based literacy instruction and interventions, especially in the early years, are essential for learning in all content areas and for achieving high standards. Students at all levels should have access to diverse independent reading choices through school libraries in their buildings that are staffed by certified school library teachers. Teachers at all levels should be encouraged to use certified school library teachers' expertise to address the diverse needs of students.

The Association also believes that the acquisition of home languages is the foundation for reading skills development. Emerging literacy skills begin with the interaction and communication between children and adults. An increased number of words spoken to a child during language development increases future reading proficiency. The Association further believes that schools and communities should work together in raising awareness of the link between language development and reading skills acquisition.

The Association believes that teachers' efforts to value and promote reading should be supported by parents/guardians, school library media specialists, other education employees, and communities. (1998, 2024)

B-11. Effective Communication

The National Education Association believes it is critical that students and educators become effective communicators in school and in life through all forms of expression. Communication instruction is essential for learning in all content areas and for achieving high standards. Access to needed supports such as assistive technology and alternative and augmentative communication devices, as well as supports provided by appropriately-licensed and certificated professional personnel, is necessary to enable all students in becoming effective communicators. The Association also believes that students must be culturally competent to be effective communicators.

The Association further believes that students' and educators' efforts to value and promote effective communication should be supported by parents/guardians, administrators, other education employees, and communities. (2009, 2023)

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

B-12. Class Size

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

Optimal class sizes must be based on the needs of students, grade level, subject area content, and physical facilities. The Association also believes in proportionately lower class sizes in programs for students with exceptional needs. The Association further believes that networking and advocacy with stakeholder groups can assist in the adoption of new policies that ensure workload assignments are made to provide the maximum benefit to exceptional students. The Association believes in working together with state and local affiliates to identify caseload issues and promote workload-based systems that advance best practices. To further this goal, the Association also believes that state departments of education should, on a yearly basis, collect and report class size data that reflect the class size experienced by most students. (1982, 2021)

B-13. Diversity

The National Education Association believes that a diverse, equitable, and just society enriches all individuals. Similarities and differences among race, ethnicity, color, national origin, language, geographic location, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical and mental ability, size, occupation, and marital, parental, or economic status form the fabric of a society. Education should foster a vibrant, pluralistic, and intrinsically equitable and just society that authentically reflects diverse populations and cultural perspectives.

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

The Association encourages affiliates and members to become part of programs and observances that may include cultural and heritage celebrations and/or history months. (1995, 2022)

B-14. Racial Diversity Within Student Populations

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

The Association further believes that, to achieve or maintain racial diversity, it may be necessary for elementary/secondary schools, colleges, and universities to take race into account in making decisions as to student admissions, assignments, and/or transfers. (1999, 2015)

B-15. Racism, Sexism, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression Discrimination

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

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

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

The Association encourages its affiliates to develop and implement training programs on these matters. (1996, 2024)

B-16. American Indian/Alaska Native Education

The National Education Association recognizes that the complex and diverse needs of American Indian/Alaska Native children require the direct involvement of parents/guardians, Native educators,

tribal leaders, and other Native groups in developing programs that preserve the rich heritage of their cultures.

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

The Association also believes in racial equity principles at all levels of policymaking and efforts that provide for—

- a. Involvement and control of the education of American Indian/Alaska Native students by their parents/guardians, communities, and educators
- b. Opportunities for higher education for all American Indian/Alaska Native students through direct governmental assistance in graduate and undergraduate programs
- c. Involvement of American Indians/Alaska Natives in lobbying efforts for federal programs
- d. Protection and maintenance of the integrity of American Indian/Alaska Native families and their tribal cultures so that, if children have to be removed from their home, placement should be determined by their tribe
- e. Recognition of American Indian/Alaska Native educators as role models
- f. The identification and removal of barriers for American Indians/Alaska Natives seeking certification and employment as educators
- g. Involvement of American Indians/Alaska Natives in professional development programs dealing with cultural pluralism and Native values
- h. American Indian/Alaska Native involvement in developing multicultural learning centers at higher education institutions
- i. English proficiency programs that are designed to meet the language needs of American Indian/Alaska Native students
- j. Instruction in treaty rights and traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering practices by American Indians/Alaska Natives
- k. Assistance to affiliates in meeting the educational needs of American Indian/Alaska Native students
- l. Coordination with American Indian/Alaska Native organizations and concerned agencies that promote the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of American Indian/Alaska Native peoples
- m. Dissemination of information and programs that include the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of American Indians/Alaska Natives
- n. Control of Native lands by American Indians/Alaska Natives
- o. Protection of undergraduate and graduate ethnic studies programs at universities and community colleges, and course offerings at the high school level.
- p. Preservation of the Native languages of the indigenous people of the Americas, inclusive of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native People of Central and South America.
- q. Prevention of disproportionate referral of American Indian/Alaska Native students into the criminal justice system for violations of school discipline policies. (1976, 2022)

B-17. Hispanic Education

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

The Association believes in racial equity principles at all levels of policymaking and efforts that provide for—

- a. Programs establishing appropriate educational opportunities for Hispanic students
- b. Grants and scholarships for higher education (including Hispanic Serving Institutions – HSIs) that will facilitate the recruitment, entry, and retention of Hispanics
- c. Recognition of Hispanic educators as role models
- d. Hiring, promotion, and retention of Hispanic educators, who are key to advancing bilingualism, biliteracy, and strong ties in Hispanic communities, to all levels of the education profession

- e. Recruitment, training, employment, and retention of bilingual, bicultural, and culturally competent teachers, counselors, and other professional and support staff to meet the needs of Hispanic students
- f. English proficiency programs that are designed to meet the language and cultural needs of Hispanic students
- g. Dissemination of information and programs that include the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of Hispanics
- h. Assistance to affiliates in meeting the educational needs of Hispanic students
- i. English proficiency programs that are designed to meet the needs of Hispanic students
- j. Involvement of Hispanics in lobbying efforts for federal programs
- k. Involvement of Hispanic educators in developing educational materials used in classroom instruction
- l. Coordination with Hispanic organizations and concerned agencies that promote the values, language, culture, and history of Hispanics
- m. Involvement of Hispanics in professional development programs dealing with cultural pluralism and Hispanic values
- n. Opposition to the resegregation of the public schools through overrepresentation in special education programs and underrepresentation in gifted programs
- o. Opposition to the resegregation of the public schools through overrepresentation and/or underrepresentation in charter schools
- p. Programs that address the alarming dropout rates of male students and the disproportionate teen pregnancy rate of Hispanic female students and encourage continuing education
- q. Protection of undergraduate and graduate ethnic studies programs at universities and community colleges, and course offerings at the high school level
- r. Prevention of disproportionate referral of Hispanic students into the criminal justice system for violations of school discipline policies.

The responsibility for developing and implementing programs for Hispanic children should be realized by state and local agencies, regardless of the availability of federal funds. (1972, 2024)

B-18. Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Education

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

The Association believes in racial equity principles at all levels of policymaking and efforts that provide for the—

- a. Preservice and continuing education of teachers
- b. Development of curriculum and instructional materials and programs, including English proficiency programs that are designed to meet the language needs of Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander students
- c. Education of Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander adult refugees
- d. Dissemination of programs and information that include the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islanders peoples
- e. Recognition of Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander educators as role models
- f. Protection of undergraduate and graduate ethnic studies programs at universities and community colleges, and course offerings at the high school level
- g. Preservation of Native Hawaiian languages
- h. Recognition and acknowledgement of the vast range of cultures, languages, and histories encompassed in the Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander peoples
- i. Inclusivity and representation of Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander peoples
- j. Prevention of disproportionate referral of Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander students into the criminal justice system for violations of school discipline policies.

The Association encourages opportunities to preserve, promote, and perpetuate Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander heritage and culture. (1979, 2022)

B-19. Micronesian Education

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

The Association believes in racial equity principles at all levels of policymaking and efforts that provide for—

- a. Programs establishing appropriate educational opportunities for Micronesian students
- b. Development of curriculum and instructional materials and programs, including English proficiency programs that are designed to meet the language needs of Micronesian students
- c. Development of relationship-building and culturally cohesive frameworks designed to meet the needs of Micronesians in the school, home, and work environment
- d. The recruitment, training, and employment of Micronesian island educators as role models, bilingual teachers, counselors, and other professional and support staff to meet the needs of Micronesian students
- e. Involvement of Micronesian educators in developing educational materials for classroom instruction, as well as the dissemination of information and programs that include the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of Micronesians
- f. Assistance to affiliates in meeting the educational needs of Micronesian students
- g. Opportunities for higher education for all Micronesian students through direct and indirect governmental assistance in graduate and undergraduate programs
- h. Protection of undergraduate and graduate ethnic studies programs at universities and community colleges, and course offerings at the high school level
- i. Prevention of disproportionate referral of Micronesian students into the criminal justice system for violations of school discipline policies.

The Association encourages opportunities to preserve, promote, and perpetuate Micronesian heritage and culture. (2008, 2022)

B-20. Black American Education

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

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

The Association further believes in racial equity principles at all levels of policymaking and efforts that provide for—

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

- k. Dissemination of information and programs that include the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of Black Americans
- l. Protection of undergraduate and graduate ethnic studies programs at universities and community colleges, and course offerings at the high school level
- m. Prevention of disproportionate referral of Black students and their parents/guardians into the criminal justice system for violations of school discipline and truancy policies. (1981, 2022)

B-21. Discriminatory Academic Tracking

The National Education Association believes that the use of discriminatory academic tracking based on socioeconomic status, ethnicity, English language proficiency, race, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or special needs must be eliminated in all public school settings. The Association urges its affiliates to oppose these practices. (1988, 2021)

B-22. Equal Opportunities for Women and Ethnic Minorities Through Mathematics and Science Education

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

The Association supports the development and maintenance of gender-free and culturally unbiased mathematics and science programs. The Association encourages the recruitment of females and ethnic minorities to enroll and participate actively in mathematics and science courses and/or to become professionals in those fields. (1992, 2017)

B-23. Education of Left-Handed Students

The National Education Association believes that the needs of left-handed students should be met and that appropriate governing agencies should provide materials and instruments necessary for left-handed students.

The Association recommends that education employees receive professional development as appropriate that present strategies for handwriting instruction to left-handed students. (1979, 2017)

B-24. Education of Students with Color Vision Deficiencies

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

The Association strongly recommends that education employees working with students with color vision deficiencies receive preservice preparation and staff development that sensitize staff to students' needs. (2004, 2017)

B-25. Student Peer Mentoring Programs

The National Education Association supports student peer mentoring programs that provide the opportunity for academic and social support for all students. The Association believes that student peer mentoring programs should be supervised by appropriate staff. Such programs should be student-based and ongoing. (2004, 2017)

B-26. Adult-to-Youth Mentoring Programs

The National Education Association believes that all children and youth should be provided the opportunity to participate in personalized adult-to-youth mentor programs, as needed, that ensure a beneficial relationship with at least one adult mentor. The Association also believes that such mentor programs should support the youth's academic success and overall well-being and should seek to recruit mentors who reflect the diverse identities of the youth they serve. (2022)

B-27. Education of Refugee and Undocumented Children and Children of Undocumented Immigrants

The National Education Association believes that, regardless of the immigration status of students or their parents, every student has the right to a free public education, including multilingual services and primary language instruction, in an environment free from harassment. The Association also believes that all parents should have equal access to all services provided by the school system regardless of their immigration status. The Association opposes Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations on school property. The Association supports access to higher education for undocumented students and access to financial aid and in-state tuition to state colleges and universities in the states where they reside. The Association further believes that neither educational systems nor their employees are responsible for the determination and enforcement of legal residency status.

The Association believes that students who have resided in the United States for at least five years at the time of high school graduation should not be held responsible for decisions they were not legally able to make but rather should be granted legal residency status, and allowed to apply for U.S. citizenship, and that legalization not be used as an incentive for or be dependent on military service. (1980, 2019)

B-28. Education of Migrants

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

The Association advocates the implementation of multilingual/multicultural and remedial instructional programs that address the individual instructional needs of migrant students in the United States, regardless of the availability of federal and state funds to support such programs. (1975, 2023)

B-29. Communication Between Educators and Non-English Speaking Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers

The National Education Association believes that meaningful communication between educators and parents, guardians, and caregivers who lack English language proficiency is necessary to assist in their children's development and the family's integration into United States society. Such communication is especially important when communicating educational plans for students with special needs.

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

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

B-30. Equity for Incarcerated Persons

The National Education Association believes that incarcerated persons, regardless of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, ethnicity, immigration status, occupation, and religion are entitled to equal access to medical and mental health services as well as educational, recreational, and rehabilitative programs within all correctional systems.

The Association also believes that when a student is incarcerated and has been identified as having a disability by standards of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or a 504 plan, the plans for the student should be implemented during the duration of the incarceration. (1990, 2022)

SPECIFIC PROGRAMS FOR INDIVIDUALS

B-31. Education of Gifted, Talented, and Creative Students

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

The Association further believes that all students and their families, parents, guardians, and caregivers should be informed of their rights to have access to and testing for gifted education, alternative education options, and specialized programs. The Association acknowledges that historically marginalized groups

are underrepresented in gifted and specialized education programs, and urges public school districts to have an inclusive approach to gifted education.

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

The Association urges its affiliates to promote the development and implementation of services and support for gifted children and their educators. (1980, 2022)

B-32. Educational Programs in Support of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Non-Binary, and Questioning Students

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

- a. Acknowledgement of the significant contributions of diverse LGBTQ+ persons in American and world history and culture
- b. Involvement of educators knowledgeable in LGBTQ+ issues in the development of educational materials that integrate factual information about the history, social movements, and current events of LGBTQ+ people
- c. Developmentally appropriate local, state, and national resources. (2015, 2024)

B-33. Alternative Programs for At-Risk and/or Students With Special Needs

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

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

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

The Association also believes that these rights include the rights of students to receive all services and accommodations listed on their IEPs and 504 Plans. Additionally, specially designed instruction and related services must be provided in the identified goal areas regardless of placement to those who are protected under the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Americans with Disabilities Act must be preserved.

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

The Association supports affiliate efforts that advocate for teachers seeking additional certification and the recruitment of teachers with certifications supporting at-risk youth.

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

The Association encourages its state affiliates to seek legislation that would require any person offering services to remediate, correct, or ameliorate reading, speech, language, behavioral, emotional, or

learning disabilities, or related problems to be licensed under regulations of each state's department of public instruction or other appropriate agency. (1977, 2024)

B-34. Educational Programs for English Language Learners

The National Education Association believes that English Language Learners (ELLs) must have programs available to them that address their unique needs and that provide equal opportunity to all students, regardless of their primary language or limited first language education. Programs for ELLs should emphasize English proficiency while concurrently providing meaningful instruction in all other curriculum areas. Designated English language instruction should build toward proficiency and include skill areas such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. In planning a comprehensive program for ELLs, age, academic needs, individual differences in language acquisition abilities, environmental factors, and best teaching practices must be considered.

The Association also believes that ELLs should be placed in bilingual education programs to receive instruction in their native language from qualified teachers until such time as English proficiency is achieved. If no bilingual programs are available, these students should be taught in language acquisition and development programs designed to meet their specific needs. Students should be in classes that are limited in size. Methods such as weighted formulas should be used. Additional staffing, modified scheduling, and/or curriculum designed to accommodate the demands of each ELL should be provided in order to meet state and local educational expectations. Students should not be enrolled in special education classes solely because of linguistic difference. A student's English proficiency should be taken into account and they should be tested in their primary language when possible to determine whether special education placement is necessary.

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

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

The Association values bilingual and multilingual competence and supports programs that assist individuals in attaining and maintaining proficiency in their native languages before and after they acquire proficiency in English. Schools should provide a pathway for students to apply for and obtain the Seal of Biliteracy. (1981, 2022)

B-35. Education of Speakers of Nonstandard English

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

The Association further believes that, in all cases, the students' linguistic and/or cultural backgrounds must be respected within the school setting. Students who speak nonstandard English must not be enrolled in special education classes solely because of linguistic differences. (1997, 2017)

B-36. Education for All Students with Disabilities

The National Education Association supports a free, appropriate public education for all students with disabilities in a least restrictive environment, which is determined by maximum teacher and parent/guardian involvement. There must be a full continuum of placement options and services/delivery

models available to students with disabilities. In order to implement federal special education legislation effectively, the Association recognizes that—

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

- u. Adequate release time or funded additional time must be made available so that teachers can carry out the increased demands placed upon them by federal special education legislation, including the development and administration of alternate forms of assessment.
- v. Collective bargaining and other means should be used to minimize the potentially severe impact on staff that results from the implementation of special education legislation.
- w. Benefits for staff working with students with disabilities must be negotiated through collective bargaining agreements and must be honored.
- x. Full funding must be provided by local, state, and federal governments.
- y. Students are better served if the person working with them is prepared to accommodate their needs. Substitute employees should be made aware that the assignment offered is a program for students with disabilities.
- z. Collaboration and communication between educators, students, and families is essential to ensure success for students with disabilities. (1978, 2023)

B-37. Educational Programs for Adolescent Parents

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

The Association recommends programs for these students that include—

- a. Flexible scheduling and attendance policies
- b. Extended learning opportunities and continuing education options leading to student graduation
- c. Access to hybrid, virtual, and homebound instruction
- d. Appropriate guidance in continuing/alternative education programs and productive employment
- e. Career development skills
- f. Development of self-esteem
- g. Promotion of sound health practices regarding nutrition, substance abuse, exercise, family planning, and parenting skills
- h. On-site preschool and child care services
- i. Free transportation. (1987, 2023)

B-38. Homebound Instruction

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

B-39. Youth and Adult Training Programs

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

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

B-40. Education Through Service Learning and Community Service

The National Education Association believes that learning through voluntary community service should be encouraged as an integral part of a student's education. Participation by students in community service and service learning programs may be required for high school graduation or made available for

elective credit. The Association also believes that school districts should work with community groups to provide students with the opportunity to participate in such programs.

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

B-41. Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps

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

B-42. Driver Education

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

CURRICULUM CONTENT

B-43. Culturally Responsive Education

The National Education Association believes that culturally responsive education is critical to building equitable and inclusive school curricula. The Association also believes that culturally responsive education recognizes and embraces cultural differences to create a more just learning environment. The Association further believes that culturally responsive education promotes recognition of individual and group differences and similarities in order to reduce all forms of prejudice and discrimination to develop self-esteem as well as respect for others. Such education includes the past and present contributions of historically underrepresented or marginalized people.

Culturally responsive education seeks to develop a whole school environment that is inclusive of cultural considerations (e.g., curriculum, instructional materials, learning and testing, respect for cultural differences, etc.). The development of a culturally responsive environment is ever-evolving and ongoing. A culturally competent pedagogy connects students' cultures, languages, and life experiences with the school curriculum. Leveraging a student's knowledge and experiences from their families and communities helps them to access and connect with the curriculum and develop their academic skills. (1981, 2023)

B-44. Global Citizenship Education

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

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

The Association further believes that the goal of appreciation for, respect of, and harmony within our global society depends on a national commitment to strengthening the capability of the educational system to teach students about global citizenship. (1995, 2022)

B-45. Multiple World Language Education

The National Education Association believes that the acquisition of multiple world languages is a vital part of the educational experience and that those who leave school speaking more than one language will be more competitive in the global marketplace. The Association also believes that the cumulative hours of exposure to the target language during a student's educational career is the most important

determinant leading to fluency and proficiency in a second language. Students should have the opportunity to acquire age-appropriate world language skills from an integrated curriculum throughout the preK through higher education experience.

The Association further believes that educational software may be used to improve or enhance the effectiveness of teacher instruction as a supplementary resource and must not be used to supplant teacher instruction.

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

The Association recognizes the need for teacher preparation programs for world language teachers and supports teacher and student exchange programs. (1981, 2012)

B-46. Arts Education

The National Education Association believes that artistic expression is essential to an individual's intellectual, aesthetic, and emotional development. The Association also believes that visual and performing arts transcend cultural barriers, foster multicultural understanding, and enhance critical thinking skills. The Association therefore believes that preK through 12 curricula must include a balanced, comprehensive, and sequential program of visual and performing arts instruction for all students. The arts are defined as visual art, music, drama, dance, and media arts. These students must be taught by teachers licensed in arts in a facility or room designed and equipped for that purpose. Resources must be provided to maintain and upgrade materials and provide for emerging technologies.

The Association urges its state affiliates to become involved in the promotion, expansion, and implementation of an academic visual and performing arts program in curricula and as a requirement for high school graduation. The Association also urges its state affiliates to advocate for equal access to high-quality visual and performing arts programs, regardless of geographic location. (1980, 2015)

B-47. Journalism Education

The National Education Association believes that freedom of speech and press are fundamental principles in our democratic society granted by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, and these freedoms provide all people, including students, with the right to engage in robust and uninhibited discussion of issues in various student media.

The Association encourages schools to include a comprehensive journalism curriculum that fosters unbiased freedom of the press by educating a new generation of journalists and includes opportunities for student-created media and publications. (2008, 2022)

B-48. Vocational, Career, and Technical Education

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

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

The Association also believes that adequate resources must be provided for educators to maintain, enhance, and expand quality vocational, career, and technical education programs; to procure up-to-date equipment and materials for those programs; and to prepare students for a highly technical work environment. The Association further believes that the involvement of education employees, private sector employment and training program personnel, and the labor and business communities is essential to the development of quality vocational, career, and technical education programs. The Association believes such resources should be substantially increased, not merely redistributed among states or other federal initiatives.

The Association supports vocational, career, and technical courses as an option for all students. The Association also believes that placement into vocational, career, and technical programs should be voluntary. (1976, 2010)

B-49. Career and Technical Student Organizations

The National Education Association believes that career and technical student organizations are integral components of quality vocational, career, and technical education programs. Career and technical student organizations provide students opportunities for leadership development, career preparation, and community involvement. Active participation in a career and technical student organization at the local, state, and national levels encourages students to prepare for the adult roles of wage earner, community leader, and family member. (2001, 2017)

B-50. School-to-Work/Career Education

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

The Association also believes that educational programs for all students should offer a variety of exploratory career experiences that are developmentally appropriate. In addition, these programs should enhance self-esteem and assure equal opportunity for career development and equal access to vocational, career, and technical program admissions; college admissions; and university admissions. (1976, 2023)

B-51. Family and Consumer Sciences Education

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

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

- a. Follow national standards as set forth by the appropriate professional organizations
- b. Be developmentally appropriate
- c. Be cooperative in nature and culturally responsive. (2005, 2023)

B-52. Physical Education

The National Education Association believes that physical activity and exercise are essential for good health and must be encouraged during the developmental years of students. The Association also believes that a comprehensive program of physical education should be provided daily in grades preK through adult in or on facilities designed for that purpose. Physical education programs and curricula should follow national standards as set forth by the appropriate professional organizations; should be developmentally appropriate, sequential, cooperative in nature, and culturally responsive and gender inclusive; and should—

- a. Emphasize physical activity, fitness, exercise, and good health; skills of sports, games, dance, and basic movement; and related concepts and knowledge
- b. Assess students, including physical fitness testing, as a culmination of preparatory activities, and develop a fitness plan that is tracked for progress

- c. Include instruction in basic lifesaving techniques
- d. Provide for the special needs of students with low fitness, physical disabilities, or learning disabilities
- e. Be taught by teachers licensed in physical education
- f. Be taught with the same student/teacher ratio as other grade-level class sizes and be provided the same amount of planning time
- g. Provide staff training on policies and procedures that address issues of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. (1991, 2022)

B-53. Family Life Education

The National Education Association recognizes the myriad family structures in society and the impact of these family structures and other close personal relationships on the quality of individual lives and upon society. The Association also recognizes the importance of education in the maintenance and promotion of stable, functional, healthy families and the emotional, physical, and mental health of people within these families.

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

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

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

B-54. Health Education

The National Education Association believes that, to promote health and wellbeing, all students preK through adult should have access to health curricula. Licensed and certified professional personnel should develop, implement, and coordinate health curricula.

The Association also believes that health education programs in the schools should provide a planned, sequential health education curricula for preK through adult education that—

- a. Promotes sound nutrition and that includes education concerning the health risks associated with obesity and eating disorders
- b. Integrates various health topics (such as drug abuse, violence, safety issues, universal precautions, sex education, HIV education, and the dangers of performance-enhancing dietary herbal supplements)
- c. Enables students to develop the essential knowledge and skills to maintain personal, family, and community health. (2016)

B-55. Sex Education

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

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

The Association also believes that to facilitate the realization of human potential, it is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information and knowledge about sexuality and encourages affiliates and members to support appropriately established sex education programs. Such programs should include information on—

- a. Sexual abstinence, birth control, family planning, prenatal care, parenting skills, the effects of substance abuse during pregnancy, and the issues associated with pre-teen and teenage pregnancy
- b. Diversity of culture and diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity
- c. Sexually transmitted infections including HIV and HPV, incest, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and homophobia
- d. Age-appropriate, medically accurate information including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, and questioning (LGBTQ+) issues. This should include but not be limited to information on sexuality, sexual orientation, and gender expression
- e. Sexual violence and affirmative consent, being defined as sexual activity deemed consensual if both parties clearly declare their willingness to participate through a voluntary, conscious, and affirmative agreement. (1969, 2024)

B-56. HIV/AIDS Education

The National Education Association believes that educational institutions should establish comprehensive human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) education programs as an integral part of the school curriculum. HIV/AIDS education must include education about all means of transmission, including unprotected sex and unsanitary methods of tattooing, body piercing, and intravenous drug use. Information on prevention options must include abstinence and medically accepted protective devices. Instruction in decision-making skills to assist students in correlating health information and personal behavior is essential.

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

B-57. Science Education

The National Education Association believes that the content in science education must be based on scientific theory that incorporates empirically collected evidence, scientific methodology, and other accepted scientific processes. This entire process leads toward scientific consensus. The Association also believes that content and curriculum must be based on the National Science Education Standards of the National Research Council (NRC) and/or the Benchmarks for Science Literacy of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). (2005, 2017)

B-58. Social Studies Education

The National Education Association believes that teaching social studies is an integral part of a student's education. Social studies include courses and content that study the functions of human society, its institutions, and societal structures. These include history, geography, economics, political science, anthropology, archaeology, psychology, and sociology.

When designing or adopting social studies curriculum, the Association believes the following should always influence decisions:

- a. Up-to-date, accurate, and unbiased information
- b. Intentional inclusion of material that accurately portrays historically marginalized and underrepresented groups
- c. Contain a diverse representation of cultures
- d. Personal accounts and other primary sources with supplemental materials that are drawn from representative samples
- e. Inclusive curriculum, especially selections that allow students to see positive depictions and contributions of underrepresented individuals
- f. World maps that depict up-to-date national boundaries and names of countries
- g. Historical maps made available and presented in context. (2024)

B-59. Agriculture Education

The National Education Association believes that students deserve the opportunity to learn about agriculture, which serves as one of the pillars of most modern societies and economies.

The Association also believes that students should be provided with agriculture education, hands-on experiences, and career and technical education programs. The Association further believes that these should support economic and workforce development, agricultural innovation, and environmental sustainability.

The Association believes that every student should have access to scientifically accurate agriculture programs delivered by qualified educators and free from bias and misinformation. The Association supports the development of direct training and certification pathways for new and current educators who want to become certified in agriculture education. (2024)

B-60. Environmental Education

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

- a. The concept of the interdependence of humanity and nature
- b. An awareness of the effects of past, present, and future population growth patterns on world civilization, human survival, and the environment
- c. The protection of endangered, threatened, and rare species
- d. The protection of the Earth's finite resources
- e. Solutions to environmental problems such as nonrenewable resource depletion, pollution, global warming, ozone depletion, and acid precipitation and deposition
- f. The use of reusable and recyclable products and discourage the use of disposable products
- g. An understanding of energy, alternative energy sources, and energy conservation
- h. The use of disposal methods that do not contaminate the environment
- i. The recognition of and participation in such activities as Earth Day, Arbor Day, and Energy Education Day
- j. The understanding of the value of the world's ecosystems and of sustainable practices
- k. The integration of outdoor education into preK through 12 curricula. Outdoor education should include a component that occurs in the outdoor environment
- l. Student preparation for careers in the green jobs sector.

The Association also believes that it should model in its policies and practices the environmental concepts and education programs it supports. The Association also urges its affiliates to model and support environmental programs in school systems and educational institutions and supports legislation and local policies that ensure a safe and healthy environment. (1973, 2013)

B-61. Metric System

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

B-62. Accurate United States and World Maps

The National Education Association believes that all visual representations using maps of the United States should depict all fifty states, territories, and protectorates in their correct geographic location and relative size. The Association also believes that maps of the world should accurately depict national boundaries and names of countries. (1995, 2022)

B-63. Democracy and Citizenship Education

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

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

- a. The dignity and worth of the individual
- b. Due process of law

- c. Rule of the majority tempered by respect for minority rights
- d. Individual responsibility
- e. Equal justice under the law
- f. Civil liberties as guarantors of individual rights
- g. One-person—one-vote
- h. Voting rights protections
- i. Active citizen participation in all aspects of public affairs
- j. Freedom of religion, speech, the press, petition, and assembly
- k. Right to protest and address grievances with the government
- l. Separation of church and state.

The Association encourages educators, lawyers, court personnel, and others to work together to develop appropriate materials, including information about the justice system and constitutional issues, in order to teach students to be responsible citizens. (1984, 2022)

B-64. Education on Peace and International Understanding

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

The Association also believes that educational materials should include activities dealing with peaceful resolution of conflict, the effects of nuclear weaponry and other weapons of mass destruction, strategies for disarmament, methods to achieve peace, historical examples of fact finding and reconciliation processes, and consideration of current situations where such processes could be of value. Such curricular materials should also cover major contributing factors to conflict, such as economic disparity, demographic variables, unequal political power and resource distribution, and the impacts of colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism. (1982, 2022)

B-65. Genocide

The National Education Association deplors any act of genocide, which is the deliberate and systematic eradication of members of any group based on culture, ethnicity, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Acts of genocide must be acknowledged and taught in order to provide insight into how such inhumanity develops, prevent its occurrence, and preclude its recurrence. (1993, 2021)

B-66. The Holocaust

The National Education Association believes that the historical events of the Holocaust must be taught to provide insight into how atrocities of this magnitude develop. The Association also believes that Holocaust education promotes human rights, prevents future genocides, and reduces doubt that these horrifying events occurred. (1981, 2019)

B-67. Labor Movement Education

The National Education Association believes that the struggles of workers of all ages in establishing unions and the influence of the labor movement on the growth of the United States should be an integral part of the curriculum in our schools.

The Association urges educators, curriculum committees, and authors to include material that accurately presents the important contributions to our country's history and growth that have been provided by the unions involved in the labor movement and the individuals who led that movement. (1988, 2022)

TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

B-68. Technology in the Educational Process†

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

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

The Association also believes that—

- a. Education employees must have access to necessary technology for managing and advancing instruction. Such technology must be compatible with and on at least the same level as technology in general use outside education. Further, education employees should be provided training, encouragement, time, and resources to experiment with and to research applications of technology in order to integrate technology into all curricula as a regular part of the instructional day.
- b. Education employees, including representatives of the local affiliate, must be involved in all aspects of technology utilization, including planning, materials selection, implementation, and evaluation. Additional preparation time and ongoing technological support must be granted to teachers using technology to enrich their instruction. Further, classroom teachers, higher education faculty, and library/media specialists must have collaborative planning time.
- c. Teacher preparation in instructional technology, including the development of effective materials, and appropriate instructional strategies must be included in college and university programs.
- d. Ongoing professional development must be provided for education employees in the use, integration, and applications of technologies to enhance instruction.
- e. Instructional technology should be used to support instruction and must be directed by a certified/licensed teacher.
- f. Instructional technology should be used to improve the learning opportunities for students, the quality of instruction, and/or the effectiveness of education employees, rather than to reduce positions, hours, or compensation.
- g. The evaluation of education employees in any technological program should be conducted openly, be tailored to the medium, and meet the requirements of the local collective bargaining agreement or evaluation policy.
- h. The impact of technology and digital learning on education employees should be subject to local collective bargaining agreements.
- i. Education employees' participation in digital learning must be mutually established in employer policies, locally negotiated agreements, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment for education employees.
- j. Education employees should own the copyright to materials that they create in the course of their employment. (1981, 2017)

B-69. Fair and Equitable Access to Technology

The National Education Association believes students must have access to and instruction in technology, and encourages the responsible use of technology. Further, students should have access to the internet as well as equity in training, funding, and participation to ensure their technological literacy.

The Association also believes equity and freedom of access to information unimpeded by geographic, economic, social, or cultural constraints is essential.

The Association further believes that internet access and activities should be developmentally appropriate and monitored and should foster critical use. Any documentation material produced as a result of internet access should be properly cited and comply with copyright laws. (2015, 2021)

* See *NEA Handbook* for Policy Statement on Digital Learning adopted by the 2013 Representative Assembly, which sets forth the Association's full position dealing with this subject.

B-70. Internet Access

The National Education Association believes that every school classroom, office, teacher workroom, and library/media center should have affordable, high-speed, seamless, and equal access to the internet. The Association also believes that in order for all students to access their education, which may at times be virtual, internet access must be available, affordable, reliable, and sufficient.

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

The Association believes that an AUP that requires the signatures of parents/guardians and students must be in place before allowing student access. (1993, 2021)

B-71. Artificial Intelligence

The National Education Association believes that the development and expanding use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies will continue to impact students, educators, public education, and the greater community. The Association also believes that the use of AI in public education should align with the following principles:

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

The Association further believes that AI tools should not be used to replace educators nor their professional judgment (2023, 2024)

B-72. Communication Using Social Media and Technology

The National Education Association believes that guidelines for the use of social media and technology for communications related to school activities should be collaboratively developed by school employees and employers. Communication between education employees and parents/students should be limited to district-sanctioned means of communication. Such guidelines should promote professionalism, safety, respect for privacy, intellectual integrity, and a positive learning environment. (2006, 2012)

B-73. Digital Learning†

The National Education Association believes that quality digital learning can create or extend learning opportunities but cannot replace traditional education which allows for regular face-to-face interaction among students, peers, and instructors.

The Association also believes that students who participate in developmentally appropriate digital learning should receive the preparation and support necessary to enable them to function effectively in an online environment, which at a minimum should include—

- a. Supervision and instruction provided by fully qualified, certified, and/or licensed educators
- b. Appropriate services, equipment, technical support, libraries, and laboratories
- c. Accurate course descriptions and clear expectations prior to enrollment
- d. Reasonable student to instructor ratios that allow for individualized interaction with instructors
- e. Opportunities for appropriate student-to-student interaction

* See *NEA Handbook* for Policy Statement on Digital Learning adopted by the 2013 Representative Assembly, which sets forth the Association's full position dealing with this subject.

- f. Curriculum approved courses comparable to similar courses delivered by traditional means and approved by the state education agency
- g. Courses that are transferable from school to school or for graduation requirements.

The Association further believes that virtual learning should be a viable option for public school students and staff who thrive in that environment or are under extenuating circumstances. Virtual learning should be designed and utilized strategically and in the best interest of students and staff.

The Association believes that state and local education authorities should support virtual learning by providing appropriate funding, training, planning time, devices, infrastructure, and technology support for students and staff as defined by best practices. (1997, 2021)

LEARNING ISSUES NOT RELATED TO SPECIFIC DISCIPLINES

B-74. Standards for Student Learning

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

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

- a. Students, parents/guardians, education employees, community members, and governmental officials are involved and share the accountability
- b. Education employees are afforded release time and/or compensation in order to have opportunities to work with colleagues on a regular basis throughout the school year on how to teach and assess student proficiency in the standards
- c. Full funding and resources are provided
- d. Curriculum includes, but is not limited to, required standards. Standards are introduced into the curriculum at a rate that allows education employees opportunities to adapt their practice, work with each other, and pilot the work in a concerted fashion
- e. Appropriate attention is given to students' progress toward attaining the standards and to their needs and developmental levels
- f. Age appropriate placement, when used, includes appropriate interventions designed to support meaningful, challenging, and developmentally appropriate learning for each student
- g. Professional development is provided for all education employees to help align their practices to the standards
- h. Education employees participate in the review and refinement of standards and assessments
- i. Achievement gaps are eliminated. (1997, 2008)

B-75. Individual Learning, Growth, and Development

The National Education Association believes that learners grow and develop at different rates and in different ways. Individual learning progresses in a highly complex manner that includes periods of rapid growth and periods of intellectual consolidation.

The Association also believes that individuals learn best in caring, challenging, and inclusive environments that support and engage each learner. Individual students require learning opportunities that are differentiated and responsive to their needs, interests, and learning styles.

The Association further believes in the use of developmentally appropriate instructional practices. Grade level labels do not accurately define our students. Such labels misinterpret student learning as primarily linear, sequential, and easily standardized. (2008, 2009)

B-76. Social-Emotional Learning

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

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

The Association supports the utilization of evidence-based instructional methods and adequate staffing of specialized instructional support personnel (school counselors, social workers, mental health workers, nurses, and/or psychologists) to provide services, including peer support, designed to develop and promote healthy social and emotional skills in all students for their lifelong learning process. (2015, 2021)

B-77. Assessment of Student Learning

The National Education Association supports ongoing comprehensive assessment of student learning, competency, and growth. A student's level of performance is best assessed authentically, including through extended curricular activities and opportunities, directly linked to the learning experiences developed and delivered by educators.

The Association believes that the primary purposes of assessment of learning both inside and outside the classroom are to—

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

The Association also believes that no one measure should be used to determine a student's performance or be decisive in making high-stakes decisions such as grade promotion or retention, course enrollment, or graduation. Educators should utilize a variety of measures to accurately assess student learning, competency, and growth. All methods of assessment shall provide the necessary accommodations, modifications, and exemptions, and be free of cultural, racial, and gender biases.

The Association further believes that educators, especially classroom teachers, must be involved in the development of assessment systems and are best qualified to determine the criteria for assessing students as well as disseminating and contextualizing results. Instruments used to communicate student progress must be timely, accurate, meaningful to students, parents/guardians, and other stakeholders, and communicated in a language and format that is accessible and easy to understand.

The Association believes that the type and the amount of homework assigned should be determined by the classroom teacher and be appropriate to a student's developmental level. (1981, 2023)

B-78. Standardized Testing of Students

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

□ See *NEA Handbook* for the Policy Statement on Teacher Evaluation and Accountability adopted by the 2011 Representative Assembly, which sets forth the Association's full position dealing with this subject.

The Association further 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. Constituents must determine high priority standards. These standards must be clearly and thoroughly described so that the knowledge and skills students need to demonstrate are evident.
- c. Valid results of assessment of high-priority standards must be reported standard-by-standard for each student, school, and district.
- d. The breadth of the curriculum must be monitored to ensure that attention is given to all standards and subject areas, including those that are not assessed.
- e. Progress should be continually monitored to ensure that assessments are appropriate for the purposes for which they are intended.
- f. Students with special needs and/or limited English proficiency should have appropriate alternative options to standardized testing to measure individual progress and proficiencies.
- g. English language learners (ELLs) should be able to demonstrate an advanced understanding and application of academic language proficiencies in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English prior to being required to take high stakes assessments.

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

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, educators, administrators, schools, and school districts should not be penalized for parents/guardians exercising their legal rights to exempt their children from standardized tests and/or assessments. The Association believes that states should be encouraged to make test items public after they are no longer used. (1978, 2023)

B-79. Student Assessment Programs in Higher Education

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

- a. Be designed institutionally rather than by the state

- b. Be planned, designed, implemented, and evaluated by faculty
- c. Be implemented in accordance with collective bargaining contracts where such contracts exist
- d. Be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the cultural, economic, and linguistic diversity among students
- e. Provide tests appropriate for students with identified learning disabilities
- f. Provide faculty with information to improve individual student learning styles and aptitude.

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

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

The Association strongly opposes—

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

B-80. Classroom and School Awards

The National Education Association believes that student recognition fosters a positive school culture in which students feel seen and valued. It also contributes to strong relationships among students, families, faculty, and the community. The Association also believes that using student-centered processes focused on equity, community, and leadership prepare students to be global citizens and contributing members of society. The Association further believes that equitably promoting and celebrating student successes creates inclusive learning environments. (2022)

B-81. Conflict Resolution Education

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

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

B-82. School Library Media Programs

The National Education Association believes that all students must have a comprehensive school library media program within their educational settings. This program should include a full-time certified/licensed school library media specialist, also known as a school librarian or teacher-librarian, and qualified education support professionals in every school; professionally curated print, nonprint, and electronic resources to supplement and complement curricular, personal, and leisure needs; relevant technology; and instruction in library research and critical information literacy. School library materials should represent a diversity of ideas and should accurately reflect but not be limited to the population served. The Association also believes that school library media specialists have the expertise and knowledge to select media for their communities. The Association further believes that school library media programs are negatively impacted if media specialists do not have substitutes during their absence.

The Association encourages increased funding for school library media programs from federal, state, and local governments as well as other sources such as public and/or private partnerships. (1980, 2024)

B-83. Media

The National Education Association believes that the media has a significant effect on the education of the public. The Association also believes that the media has an obligation to provide full, constructive, balanced, and accurate presentations to the public. The Association further believes that the concentration

of media ownership within a limited number of individuals or corporate entities is not conducive to the presentation of divergent views and opinions.

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

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

B-84. Communication Between Hearing and Deaf/Hard of Hearing People

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

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

The Association also believes that children who are deaf or hard of hearing should have the legal right to certified American Sign Language instructors and interpreters/transliterators when appropriate to prevent linguistic deprivation.

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

The Association believes that educational sign language interpreters/transliterators must be qualified professionals who are licensed, state credentialed, or nationally certified. (1974, 2016)

B-85. Classroom Use of Animals

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

The Association urges that educators encourage compassion and respect for all living things. (1989, 2018)

B-86. Student Attendance

The National Education Association believes that consistent student attendance in school is vital to academic success. The Association supports the ongoing efforts of schools and educators to minimize tardiness, truancy, and other attendance issues. (2013, 2017)

B-87. Transfer of Student Records

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

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

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

B-88. Home Schooling

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

persons who are licensed by the appropriate state education licensure agency, and a curriculum approved by the state department of education should be used.

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

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

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

HEALTH, WELFARE, SAFETY

C-1. Health Care for All Children

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

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

The Association further believes legislation should be adopted to maintain and expand comprehensive health care for all children. (1990, 2015)

C-2. Vaccinations

The National Education Association believes that vaccines are essential medical tools in preventing infectious diseases and must be pervasive to effectively protect society. The Association also believes that students should be vaccinated, whenever possible and appropriate, prior to enrollment in public school.

The Association further believes that vaccination guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention should be followed by educators, parents/guardians, and students. The Association believes that state legislatures should establish clear guidelines for waivers that minimize the numbers of unvaccinated students to those necessary due to documented medical conditions. Evidence-based vaccination campaigns are integral in maintaining student and community health. (2015, 2021)

C-3. Communicable Disease Prevention

The National Education Association believes that, for all employees, school districts and educational institutions, working in collaboration with school nurses and local health authorities, should initiate professional development about communicable diseases and their prevention. This information should be disseminated to all students, parents/guardians, and staff as appropriate. (2010, 2016)

C-4. Nutrition

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

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

The Association believes school food service programs must be nutritionally sound, appealing, and affordable. Portions and/or serving sizes should be appropriate for various age groups within a school. A choice of nutritious beverages and plant-based foods should be available. The Association also supports nutrition programs that are regulated by uniform standards, readily accessible, medically correct for students and employees who have special, documented dietary needs, and are supported by public funds. The Association also believes that no student shall be denied the opportunity of a school meal or be publicly identified or stigmatized for needing free or reduced lunch or the inability to pay a school meal debt.

The Association further believes that any changes in the way public funds are allocated for school food service programs must maintain quality and appropriate levels of service as well as support additional funding, given projected increases in population and need. The Association supports fundraising efforts, sponsorships, and mascots promoting healthy food guidelines. (1990, 2018)

C-5. Adequate Rest

The National Education Association believes that overall health and performance are best achieved with adequate rest on a regular basis. The Association supports school schedules that follow research-based recommendations regarding the sleep patterns of age groups. The Association further supports programs within the education framework that promote understanding of the importance of adequate rest. (2011)

C-6. Physical Activity and Recess

The National Education Association believes that regular physical activity provides an active form of learning that encourages a healthy lifestyle and promotes physical, mental, and emotional wellness. This physical activity should be provided through physical education classes, recess, and movement activities scheduled throughout the day.

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

The Association further believes that withholding recess as a form of discipline is counterproductive to healthy child development and restorative justice practices. (2010, 2021)

C-7. Learning Through Play

The National Education Association believes that ample time for student-driven, unstructured play must be included among the essential learning experiences in the education of our students. Beyond physical activity, these experiences include imaginative play, creative/constructive play, and games with rules. Student engagement in undirected, freely chosen activities is an essential component of healthy human development as well as a necessity for social/emotional, physical, and cognitive growth of children.

The Association also believes that play increases student abilities in the areas of critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, executive functioning, communication skills, empathy, and self-regulation.

The Association further believes that a lack of ample time for undirected, self-chosen play/activities contributes to mental health problems such as rising rates of stress, anxiety, depression, and child suicide, and therefore should be treated as an important provision in the scheduling of student time.

The Association believes that ample amounts of time for play and/or freely chosen activities are necessary for healthy development and should be provided during the school day. (2016)

C-8. Comprehensive School Health, Social, and Psychological Programs and Services

The National Education Association believes that to promote health and wellbeing every student, preK through higher education, should have direct and confidential access to comprehensive health, social, and psychological programs and services. Such programs and services can be effective with ongoing communication and coordinated partnerships between social, school, home, and community resources.

The Association also believes that all health, social, and psychological services must be provided only by the 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 believes that, to provide effective physical and mental health services in the school setting, the following are essential:

- a. School counseling programs providing a focus on academic, career, and social/emotional development so students achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society; school counselors spending at least 80 percent of their time providing direct services to students, with a maximum counselor/student ratio of 1:250

- b. Health services, provided by a licensed school nurse, promoting the health of students through prevention, case finding, early intervention, and remediation of specific health problems, with a nurse-to-student ratio at each site that is at least one school nurse to every 750 students, with adjustments to safely accommodate students with special health needs and chronic illness
- c. School psychological services promoting the mental health of students through prevention, identification, early intervention, and remediation of specific mental health issues that interfere with the learning process and providing crisis intervention of traumatic events and mental health counseling, with a psychologist-to-student ratio of at least one to every 500–700 students, adjusting to adequately accommodate students with serious emotional disabilities
- d. School social work services providing crisis intervention, individual and group counseling, behavior management, and coordination with student families and community resources, with a maximum social worker/student ratio of 1:250
- e. Other specialized clinicians who identify, diagnose, and accommodate learning disabilities and other conditions adversely affecting the ability to learn and succeed in a school setting
- f. Family-planning counseling and access to birth control methods with instruction in their use, if deemed appropriate by local choice
- g. Consistent access to free menstrual products including, but not limited to, pads and tampons
- h. A healthful psychological climate and a safe physical environment at the building, classroom, and individual levels.

The Association urges its affiliates to support legislation to provide comprehensive care to all children and supports community, state, and national efforts to coordinate these services. (1969, 2023)

C-9. Student Mental Health and Wellness

The National Education Association believes that mental, emotional, and environmental pressures can significantly impact students’ mental/physical health and success, potentially resulting in drug and alcohol use/abuse, violence, vandalism, school dropouts, self-injuring behaviors, suicide among children and youth, etc. Often students have not been equipped with the necessary skills needed to meet the challenges of these pressures (i.e., resiliency training). Additionally, disciplining students for their actions without a program in place to discuss reasons, stressors, or provide stress management strategies only further exacerbates the issues and behaviors.

The Association therefore believes that school districts and local affiliates should provide ongoing professional development for education employees and training/guidance for parents/guardians to help and support students.

The Association also believes that schools must work collaboratively with the community, local, state, and national agencies to ensure that these children and young adults beginning at preK have full access to comprehensive identification processes, interventions, and services that support their physical and psychological well-being. (1980, 2021)

C-10. Complex Trauma

The National Education Association believes that complex trauma impacts the brain development of children. Complex trauma causes systemic and individualized educational barriers that interfere with children’s emotional and physical health and impedes access to education.

The Association recognizes the risks of secondary trauma faced by those who support these children and that they themselves may need support.

The Association understands that trauma crosses all segments of society and is often compounded by the effects of poverty, institutional racism, and other adverse childhood experiences.

The Association also believes that school districts should provide education employees with complex trauma professional development and trauma-informed programs that address the effects of trauma. When educators are aware of the impact of toxic stress on student neurological development, behavior, and learning, they become trauma-skilled educators better capable of assessing and responding to the needs of students. Promoting professional development in restorative practices and asset-based discipline ensures safe working and learning environments. (2016, 2021)

C-11. Suicide Prevention Programs

The National Education Association believes that evidence-based suicide prevention programs must be developed and implemented. The Association urges its affiliates to ensure that these programs are an integral part of the school program. These programs must be developed in consultation with the school community, school-employed mental health professionals, and suicide prevention experts. The programs must address, at a minimum, guidelines for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. (1989, 2018)

C-12. Student Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression

The National Education Association believes that all persons, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, should be afforded equal opportunity and guaranteed a safe and inclusive environment within the public education system. The Association also believes a safe and inclusive environment ensures that all transgender students have access to the bathroom or locker room of their choice and protects them from breaches of confidentiality. The Association further believes that gender-neutral options should be available. The Association believes that LGBTQ+ students have the right to privacy and confidentiality regarding their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Further, educators must respect these students and their choice of whether or not to reveal their orientation, identity, or expression. The Association also believes that laws or policies should not require educators to violate a student's right to privacy or confidentiality.

The Association also believes that, for students who are struggling with their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, every school district and educational institution should provide counseling services and programs—staffed by trained personnel—that deal with high suicide and dropout rates and the high incidence of teen prostitution. The Association further believes that therapies designed to alter a student's orientation or identity are harmful to the emotional development of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, and questioning (LGBTQ+) students. Therefore, students should have access to gender-affirming health care. (1988, 2024)

C-13. Safe Schools and Communities

The National Education Association believes that a safe school climate is the right of all students and school employees. The Association also believes that communities must develop policies and practices that promote safe schools. 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. Students and education employees must be safe from physical, verbal, and psychological violence, and all forms of harassment. Plans and procedures regarding discipline and/or harassment must include due process and services to help reduce future incidents.

The Association believes that all staff must be trained in conflict resolution strategies, trauma-informed practices, and restorative practices to help students in the promotion of safe schools. The Association also believes that plans and procedures must be consistently enforced, visible, and easily accessible for the safe and orderly conduct of school activities and events.

The Association further believes that school security personnel must be properly trained to respond to confrontational and violent situations. In addition, all staff should be provided with appropriate, ongoing training on how to create, promote, and maintain a safe school climate. The Association believes that training qualified school mental health professionals, law enforcement officers, and other personnel in restorative justice practices will also foster a safe school community. The Association also believes that school districts should assess and provide appropriate levels of campus monitor/student ratios based on their respective student enrollments and needs.

The Association further believes that all school buildings should have controlled access. School design should incorporate technologies which facilitate safety. Additional safety measures should be implemented when school facilities are used for public events. Schools should not be open for classes when the building is used as a polling location.

The Association believes behavior that does not match the expectations for school safety is often a result of trauma, adverse conditions, or the absence of conflict resolution, anger management, and problem-solving skills. Therefore, students must be taught strategies and skills, including conflict resolution, that develop respect, self-discipline, and self-control. Students must learn to distinguish between their own rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of others. Appropriate

services and placement within education programs and/or with state and/or community agencies must be provided for students who disrupt the learning environment or who are dangerous to other students, education employees, and themselves.

The Association also believes that appropriate school behavior begins and is reinforced in the home. Programs that provide assistance and training in child development, effective parenting skills, and strategies for dealing with disruptive students must be available for parents/guardians. Schools can be instrumental in identifying and recommending strategies that can assist parents/guardians. (1994, 2022)

C-14. School Emergency Plans

The National Education Association believes in the safety of all students and staff. The Association also believes that schools, school districts, and school transportation systems must have written plans that delineate procedures that include, but are not limited to, emergencies, lockdowns, violence, evacuations, and weather-related conditions. Plans must include rapid reaction criteria, timely communication to school staff, and procedures coordinated with on-campus, community, and other appropriate first responders. Emergency plans for each school site must be developed by school personnel and parents/guardians in partnership with the community. The Association further believes that for these plans to be effective they must be practiced and updated on a regular and consistent basis. Adequate training of all school staff is vital to the success of any school emergency plan. Plans must include stress management/counseling strategies as follow-up care for students and staff when appropriate. (2007, 2023)

C-15. Discipline

The National Education Association believes that a safe and nurturing environment in which students are treated with dignity is the right of every student. Effective disciplinary procedures enhance high expectations for quality instruction and learning.

The Association promotes study, development, and funding for a variety of effective discipline procedures. The Association also believes that governing boards, in conjunction with local affiliates, parents/guardians, students, education employees, community members, and other stakeholders, should develop proactive policies, procedures, standards, and professional development opportunities that provide the necessary administrative support to education employees in the development and maintenance of a positive, safe school environment. The Association further believes that corporal punishment, or the threat of it, has no place in public education.

The Association believes that policies promoting educational processes which emphasize prevention, effective interventions, and rehabilitation will decrease the use of out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, in-school arrests, and the practice that is commonly called the “school-to-prison pipeline” that can lead to future incarcerations. The Association acknowledges the disparate and disproportionate consequences of such negative disciplinary practices for racially and ethnically diverse students, in particular Black and Latin(o/a/x) students, and believes that district and administrative policies should promote restorative justice practices and positive behavioral choices. The Association supports collaborative efforts of school personnel and law enforcement in the use of fair and effective discipline practices. Collaborative efforts are also essential whenever school-based arrests are necessary.

The Association encourages implementation and funding of programs to provide continued nondiscriminatory educational opportunities for those students who are removed from their educational setting for disciplinary reasons following due process. (1975, 2021)

C-16. Substance Abuse

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

The Association supports—

- a. Standardization of drug laws, including the sale and distribution of drugs
- b. Prohibition of the production, sale, and distribution of drug paraphernalia
- c. Improvement of drug prevention and rehabilitation programs
- d. Mandated drug rehabilitation programs for any violation or conviction, whether civil or criminal, resulting from the possession or use of a controlled substance
- e. Research on the genetic and neurological damage done to children through parental substance abuse and the impact on student learning and behavior

- f. Appropriate educational experiences to educate students about the serious consequences of participating in any aspect of the illegal drug trade
- g. Testing and regulation of performance-enhancing dietary herbal supplements.

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

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

The Association further supports strict enforcement of laws governing the sale of tobacco and vaping products and believes that federal legislation should be established to create a uniform age of 18 for purchase, possession, or use of tobacco products. (1972, 2017)

C-17. Opioid and Narcotic Addiction and Abuse

The National Education Association believes that local, state, and national governments should develop, establish, and implement policies to protect students and communities from opioid and narcotic addiction and abuse. These policies should include voluntary training for educators to recognize and support individuals affected and, in emergency situations, administer antagonist medications (such as Narcan) with civil and criminal immunity. (2019)

C-18. Tobacco/Vaping Products

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

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

The Association further believes that all places of public accommodation should be smoke-free and that taxes on tobacco and vaping products should be increased. (1994, 2016)

C-19. Drug or Alcohol Testing of Students

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

The Association also believes that schools must immediately notify parents/guardians of students suspected of abusing drugs, alcohol, and/or performance-enhancing dietary herbal supplements and must provide information about support services. (1987, 2017)

C-20. Advertising of Alcoholic Beverages and/or Tobacco Products

The National Education Association believes that all forms of advertising of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and/or vaping products should be eliminated. The Association also believes that individual performers and organizers of concerts and sporting events should refrain from advertising and/or endorsing alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and/or vaping products. (1990, 2017)

FAMILY, SCHOOL, COMMUNITY WELFARE

C-21. Community and School Violence

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

The Association also believes that children who are victims of or bystanders to violence must receive the appropriate counseling and support from school and community resources. (2001, 2021)

C-22. Family/Domestic Violence

The National Education Association condemns any form of family/domestic violence and the tolerance thereof and believes the cycle of violence has a detrimental effect on students' well-being.

School districts and communities should provide preventive training and educational programs for education employees, students, and parents/guardians. The Association supports adequate funding and staffing of existing family services and the creation of additional support systems and shelters.

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

C-23. Extremist Groups

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

C-24. Reduction of Gang-Related Crime

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

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

The Association also believes that resources are critical to help educators and students combat gang violence in our schools and communities. The Association further believes that federal, state, and local governments, including but not limited to business and law enforcement agencies, should develop and implement education and youth employment programs in helping to reduce illegal activities by gangs. (1988, 2019)

C-25. Juvenile Offenders

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

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

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

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

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

C-26. Family Stability for Children

The National Education Association believes that it is in the best interest of all children to live in a secure and stable family environment. Every effort should be made to provide a family with the supportive services it needs to allow it to stay together and care for the child in a safe, nonabusive, and nurturing environment.

The Association also believes that legal adoption through certified state, national, and international agencies can provide a secure and stable family environment.

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

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

In consideration of these roles, the placement of children should be determined by a number of qualitative and quantitative standards that are measurable and that do not discriminate based on either parent's gender.

If a child's immediate family and/or extended family is unable to provide care, the Association also believes that the child may need temporary foster care while, at the same time, efforts are made to work with the family toward reunification with the child. Additionally, efforts should be made to keep siblings together or, if doing so is not possible, to allow siblings to maintain a family bond through safe and protected consistent visitation.

The Association further believes that parents who place children in foster care must be accountable for their efforts to rehabilitate themselves and indicate, through their actions, that they are working toward the return of the child to the home.

The Association believes that, if it becomes clear that a family is not able to make a home for a child and is unable to resume parenting, efforts should be made for the legal release of the child for adoption. (1984, 2024)

C-27. Dependent Children of Military Personnel

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

C-28. Standards for Family/Domestic Crisis Care

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

The Association advocates for—

- a. Services that include protection, counseling, therapy, and academic, social, and emotional monitoring for these children and families
- b. Adequate financial support
- c. Screening and training of potential foster families and shelter personnel
- d. Immediate temporary foster care for children who are being abused, neglected, or exploited
- e. Continued training, supervision, and evaluation of foster families and shelter personnel
- f. Appropriate initial and ongoing communications of pertinent information between social service agencies and education employees
- g. Mandated counseling for persons committing physical and/or psychological violence. (1992, 2022)

C-29. Child Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

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

The Association urges its affiliates to—

- a. Seek clear legal definitions of what constitutes child abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- b. Encourage the development of programs that stress the identification of, reporting procedures for, legal responsibilities for, and techniques for dealing with abused, neglected, and exploited children
- c. Cooperate with community organizations to increase public awareness and understanding of the prevalence as well as the causes, prevention, and treatment of child abuse, including neglect, exploitation, incest, and physical abuse
- d. Encourage the development and use of materials to increase student awareness of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- e. Require education employees to report to appropriate authorities instances of suspected child abuse, neglect, and exploitation while providing those employees with immunity from legal action

- f. Encourage development of legislatively funded provisions for dealing with the abusive child, adult, or institution as well as processes, protective options, and coping provisions for the abused, neglected, and exploited child
- g. Encourage enactment of legislation for protection of children from parents/guardians who demonstrate neglect by leaving them unattended/unsupervised
- h. Encourage positive action from the marketing and media professions in eliminating exploitation, commercialization, and glamorization of physical, emotional, and sexual child abuse
- i. Protect children from exploitation via multimedia and electronic devices. (1974, 2015)

C-30. Out-of-Home Placement of Children and Youth

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

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

The Association also believes that once a child or youth is removed from a home by social services or the juvenile justice system—

- a. The child or youth should remain enrolled in their school of origin to promote positive school continuity unless it is not in the child’s best interest pursuant to federal law.
- b. Copies of all comprehensive school records, which may include but not be limited to discipline history and current special needs plans, shall be transferred to the child or youth’s current educational placement in a timely manner as prescribed by law.
- c. Children and youth shall be allowed to maintain a copy of their personal and educational file, which must include but not be limited to a birth certificate, a social security card, current special needs plans, transcripts, a medical card, and immunization records.
- d. Each child or youth shall be allowed to maintain a valid state identification card. (1992, 2022)

C-31. Protection of Infants with Disabilities

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

C-32. Prevention of Child Abduction

The National Education Association believes that all children should be protected from abduction. Programs to prevent abduction should be provided to education employees, students, parents/guardians, and the community. School districts should have policies and procedures for the prevention of abduction. The Association also believes that the voluntary fingerprinting of children should be conducted in a nonthreatening environment and that completed fingerprint cards should be given to the parent/guardian. (1984, 2000)

C-33. Missing Children

The National Education Association believes that all available means must be utilized to locate missing children. The Association also believes that local and state affiliates should work cooperatively with local programs and/or authorities to raise the public’s consciousness about the missing-children crisis. (1981, 2000)

C-34. Effect of Poverty on Children and Youth

The National Education Association believes that poverty affects a child’s ability to develop necessary academic and life skills. Society must provide high quality educational opportunities for all

children. The Association also believes that local, state, and federal governments must provide adequate and equitable resources, including transportation as needed, and funding to support educational programs for students affected by poverty.

The Association further believes that the basic right to a living wage for parents/guardians would ease the effects of poverty on our students, families, and communities. The Association supports efforts to compensate workers in a manner that meets their basic needs.

The Association believes that all education professionals play a crucial role in providing high quality educational experiences. For educators to empower students to experience optimal results, social programs that alleviate poverty in our communities must accompany educational programs. (1988, 2021)

C-35. Effect of Housing Instability and Homelessness on Children and Youth

The National Education Association believes that housing instability and homelessness create a deleterious impact on our students, their families, and the community. The Association also believes these conditions create educational challenges that interfere with the ability of children and youth to access education and to progress academically. Housing instability and homelessness can limit access to services such as education, housing, jobs, health care, and other human service agencies.

The Association further believes that schools need to work collaboratively with students; families; the community; local, state, and federal agencies; and higher education to create opportunities to enhance student success. Such opportunities should include, but not be limited to, extracurricular activities, a collaborative transition plan into higher education, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) support, grant and scholarship information, and local programs and resources.

The Association believes that society has the responsibility to lessen and eliminate the effects of housing instability and homelessness by assisting children and youth to develop necessary life skills, to learn new concepts, and to function successfully in diverse settings. (2007, 2022)

C-36. Child Care

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

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

C-37. Programs Before and After School

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

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

C-38. Youth Camp Safety

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

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

C-39. School Facilities: Design, Construction, and Function

The National Education Association believes that school facilities must be conducive to teaching and learning. The physical environment must allow for a variety of needs, including the number of students, physical characteristics of students, changes in teaching methods, specialized resources for teaching and learning, 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, adaptable to persons with disabilities, and adequately sized for instructional needs.

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

The Association believes that stable and sufficient funding must be provided for the design, construction, adequate and ongoing maintenance, and operation of the school facility. (1992, 2019)

C-40. Environmentally Safe Schools

The National Education Association believes that the health and safety of students, staff, family, and the community is paramount to the education of students. Therefore, the 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.

The Association also believes that all students should have access to clean drinking water and clean air. 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. School districts should also develop and maintain health and safety protocols that follow Centers for Disease Control guidelines to protect students and education employees during national health crises.

The Association further 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 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 (HVAC) systems. The Association 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.

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

The Association also 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 further believes that pesticide use should be minimized and, if used, advance notice given of location and date of application.

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

The Association believes that school districts must post SDS and OSHA standards. Students and/or their parents/guardians, education employees, and the public should be notified of actual and potential hazards affecting the health and welfare of students and educators. All stakeholders should be involved in developing a plan for corrective action. When localized metrics from public health departments deem large public gatherings unsafe, no student or education employee should be forced to enter an unsafe facility. The Association also believes in the development and enforcement of health and safety standards specifically for children. (1989, 2022)

C-41. School Transportation

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

The Association strongly believes that all school bus personnel who are utilized to transport students should be publicly employed.

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

The Association further believes that rules, regulations, and procedures must be developed, enforced, and continually reviewed and revised to ensure safe and orderly transportation of students. In addition to an annual bus inspection, the proper agencies should also conduct random bus inspections. Buses that

transport students, especially preschool-aged students and/or students with disabilities, should be equipped appropriately. (1977, 2006)

STUDENT RIGHTS/CONCERNS

C-42. Student Rights and Responsibilities

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

The Association also believes that randomly searching students without reasonable suspicion is a violation of their Constitutional freedoms and is detrimental to school safety, restorative justice, student morale, instructional time, and nurturing learning environments.

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

The Association believes that in order to protect the safety of students it is necessary to protect the confidentiality of student information and data. The Association opposes the collection and dissemination of student data by any external organization, company, or institution without the express written consent of the student and/or parent/guardian.

The Association also believes that student rights must be safeguarded when students are involved in commercial premium campaigns and fundraising activities. (1969, 2021)

C-43. Optimizing Students' Time To Learn

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

The Association also believes that—

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

C-44. Media, Games, Products, and Children

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

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

The Association encourages the producers of games and toys to make explicit to consumers, prior to purchase, the nature of a product's content through specific labeling. The Association also believes that

regulations restricting the purchase of games and toys based on age appropriateness should be developed and enforced. The Association deplors exposing children as consumer-test groups to violent interactive games and products in order for manufacturers to determine how to increase or refine the violent content for the express purpose of increasing sales.

The Association further believes that, through media literacy education, education employees, parents/guardians, and children must become critical users of mass media, the internet, and other products accessible to children. The Association also encourages its affiliates to establish media study committees to monitor media activities and promote positive educational programming. (1969, 2015)

C-45. Student Use of Electronic Social Media

The National Education Association recognizes the popularity and accessibility of electronic social media, including personal websites, blogs, text messages and social networking sites. The Association believes that students should be informed of the possible dangers of posting personal information electronically. Students should be encouraged to report incidents of cyberbullying and other inappropriate communications received using electronic social media. (2010)

C-46. Extracurricular Participation

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

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

The Association further believes that there should be fair and equitable eligibility requirements for student participation and student progress should be monitored frequently. (1984, 2023)

C-47. Gender Equity in Athletic Programs

The National Education Association believes that at all educational levels students must have equal opportunity to participate in athletic programs. Athletic programs should be inclusive of all gender identities and void of discrimination towards transgender and gender expansive students.

The Association urges that athletic funds for facilities, equipment, and remuneration of staff follow the requirements of Title IX. The Association also believes that all gender identities should be able to participate in a safe and inclusive environment. (1974, 2024)

D. PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE AMONG EDUCATORS

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION

D-1. The Teaching Profession

The National Education Association believes that the teaching profession is a cornerstone of society.

The goal of the profession must be to provide the highest quality of education to all students. Therefore, the profession must be composed of individuals meeting the highest standards which are established, maintained, and governed by 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 leadership roles and must have the time, resources, and decision-making authority to provide the highest quality of learning for each student.

A quality teacher—

- a. Designs and facilitates instruction that incorporates the students' developmental levels, skills, and interests with content knowledge
- b. Develops collaborative relationships and partners with colleagues, students, families, and communities focused on meaningful and deep learning
- c. Provides leadership and advocacy for students, quality education, and the education profession
- d. Demonstrates in-depth content and professional knowledge

- e. Participates in ongoing professional learning as an individual and within the professional learning community
- f. Utilizes multiple and varied forms of assessments and student data to inform instruction, assess student learning, and drive school improvement efforts
- g. Establishes environments conducive to effective teaching and learning
- h. Integrates cultural competence and an understanding of the diversity of students and communities into teaching practice to enhance student learning
- i. Utilizes professional practices that recognize education as vital to strengthening our society and building respect for the worth, dignity and equality of every individual
- j. Strives to overcome the internal and external barriers that impact student learning
- k. Recognizes and appreciates the need for diversity and therefore encourages advancement of underrepresented groups into and within the education profession. (1998, 2021)

D-2. Education Support Professional Excellence

The National Education Association believes that education support professionals (ESPs) are integral to the foundation of school communities and must be treated with the respect, recognition, and value due all professionals. The Association also believes that ESPs deserve fair compensation and appropriate professional development.

Across the comprehensive range of their contributions, quality ESPs—

- a. Develop collaborative relationships and partner with educators, students, families, and communities
- b. Provide leadership and advocacy for students, quality education, and their professions
- c. Participate in ongoing professional development as individuals and within the professional learning community
- d. Process and maintain student records and other vital, confidential information
- e. Establish environments conducive to working and learning by maintaining accessible, clean, operational, and safe schools and facilities
- f. Ensure optimal indoor air quality that aligns with or exceeds state regulations and federal standards
- g. Prepare nutritious and safe meals and ensure that school districts are in compliance with state regulations and federal standards, including free and reduced meal programs
- h. Improve and protect student health and welfare by providing first aid, monitoring immunizations, conducting health screenings, and assisting sick, injured, or impaired students
- i. Educate and empower students to independently maintain good health
- j. Provide direct services and support to students and their families to promote student learning and well-being
- k. Participate in the design and implementation of school safety and security policies and crisis prevention, preparedness, and response plans
- l. Repair, maintain, and operate machinery and equipment essential to the safe, efficient operation of schools and facilities
- m. Maintain high standards for technology, communications, and networks in schools and facilities
- n. Transport students safely to and from schools and school-related events. (2022)

D-3. Teacher Preparation Programs: Recruitment and Promotion of the Field

The National Education Association believes that strong programs of teacher recruitment are necessary to maintain and enhance the teaching profession. The Association and its state and local affiliates should promote and support the establishment of organizations involving all people interested in the field of education as a profession and encourage members to serve as advisers. Such programs should emphasize the recruitment of candidates from underrepresented groups, and should also include a policy of affirmative recruitment. Further, programs should encourage incoming teachers to engage in the work of the Association. Preteaching programs and recruitment efforts should be developed at high schools and community/junior colleges in conjunction with institutions of higher education with teacher preparation programs. These efforts should include career transition support and the active participation of practicing preK through adult education teachers in safe and appropriate educational settings.

The Association also believes that individuals interested in teaching as a career should attend institutions accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Counselors and advisers should inform aspiring educators of the advantages of attending CAEP-accredited institutions. Federally financed loan and grant programs should be established to encourage and support aspiring educators to become professional educators. Grants should be secured from both public and private sources to assist aspiring educators planning to pursue a career in education. (1990, 2022)

D-4. Teacher Preparation for Education Support Professionals

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

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

The Association encourages licensed colleagues to act as a support system for such programs. (1999, 2017)

D-5. Teacher Preparation Programs: Admissions

The National Education Association believes that requirements for admission into teacher preparation programs must be based upon standards established and maintained by the profession. These requirements must be rigorous yet flexible enough to allow admittance to those who demonstrate potential for effective practice. The requirements and the selection process must be nondiscriminatory. The requirements and process must recognize and appreciate the need for diversity in the education profession and, therefore, include a policy of affirmative recruitment.

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

The Association urges appropriate state agencies to monitor projected needs by certification areas and to inform teacher preparation institutions of those needs on a continuing basis. Teacher preparation institutions should counsel and prepare prospective teachers in numbers consistent with projected needs. (1970, 2021)

D-6. Teacher Preparation Programs: Affiliate Participation

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

D-7. Teacher Preparation Programs: Content and Evaluation

The National Education Association believes that teacher preparation programs must—

- a. Involve all stakeholders in the design, implementation, evaluation, and improvement of teacher preparation programs. These stakeholders include licensed preK through adult education teachers and teacher educators who are practicing in their field of expertise and demonstrate practical knowledge of schools and classroom teaching as well as students preparing to teach
- b. Include tests, reports, student teaching, portfolio reviews, and other measures of performance designed to assess progress in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary for effective teaching
- c. Require courses in the liberal arts, subject or grade-level specialty, reading, methodologies for the instruction of students with limited English proficiency, and professional studies that include learning theories, curriculum design, classroom management, behavior management, discipline, student assessment, school accountability, school law, and teaching techniques
- d. Include instructional content and experience that address our multicultural, multi-ethnic diversity, recognize the contributions of ethnic and other minorities, and provide strategies and techniques for teaching and interacting with culturally diverse students

- e. Include instructional content and experiences that address how economic and/or housing status affect a child's readiness and ability to learn and function in a school setting and that provide specific techniques for teachers who teach children of poverty
- f. Engage students in identifying and addressing internal and external biases
- g. Include instructional content and experience in research and information skills, group processes, shared decision making, strategic planning, the dynamics of intergroup communications, peace and conflict resolution, human growth and development, the changing role of the family, exceptional behaviors, and human relations
- h. Include training and instruction in diversity, equity, biases, social and racial justice, culturally-responsive practices, trauma-informed practices, and anti-bullying techniques
- i. Provide a variety of field experiences, including the appropriate use of technology for managing and advancing instruction, throughout the preparation program, culminating in clinical practice
- j. Include accurate instructional content on the evolution of professional teacher organizations and the advances in the areas of job contracts, salary schedules, benefit programs, and working conditions
- k. Include instruction and practical experiences in the processes, strategies, realities, responsibilities, and challenges of shared decision making, problem-solving, and strategic planning
- l. Include instruction in educational programs of all special education areas recognized by federal law
- m. Provide access to professional and preprofessional organizations related to the education profession and areas of certification
- n. Provide teacher candidates with resources and practice opportunities to prepare for performance assessments for licensure/certification
- o. Promote involvement in an NEA Aspiring Educator Program local chapter to increase opportunities for community outreach, professional development, racial and social justice advocacy, and political action
- p. Be evaluated by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and funded at a level that ensures accreditation is achieved and maintained
- q. Use multiple measures to determine teacher readiness, with evidence and feedback from program faculty and cooperating teachers. (1970, 2024)

D-8. Teacher Preparation Programs: Clinical Practice

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

The Association also believes that clinical practice should include a compensated supervised student teaching experience/internship and a post-hiring residency of one year for a prospective teacher to achieve full licensure. Clinical practice provides formal support, instruction, and guidance by a faculty member in a teacher preparation program and by an experienced, licensed preK through 12 teacher in the same field of practice.

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

- a. Comprehensive understanding of the central concepts and structure of the disciplines that they teach
- b. Knowledge of and ability to provide differentiated learning opportunities that support the intellectual, social, physical, and personal development of individual students
- c. A variety of instructional strategies that encourage students to develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving techniques, positive social interaction, and active engagement in learning
- d. Ability to plan instructional strategies based upon knowledge of the subject matter, the students, the community, and the curriculum goals
- e. Effective use of formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, physical, and personal development of individual students
- f. Use of active inquiry and collaboration between and among colleagues
- g. Racial, social, and cultural awareness of their students as individuals and of their experiences regarding bullying, trauma, and equity.

The Association believes that clinical practice experiences provide opportunities to establish essential relationships with other education employees, parents/guardians, and agencies in the community to support students' learning and well-being. (1998, 2024)

D-9. Hiring Policies and Practices for Teaching Positions

The National Education Association believes that nondiscriminatory hiring policies and practices that actively recruit a highly qualified, diverse teaching staff provide the highest quality of education for students. The recruitment and retention of a teaching staff that is representative of cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity is essential to reducing the impact of white supremacy culture and to working toward a truly just and fully integrated society.

The Association also believes that candidates for teaching positions must have completed a teacher education program meeting the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) standards and be licensed in the field of the specific teaching assignment. Selection criteria for all teaching positions must be based on the needs of the students and faculty, the goals of the school district, and the philosophy of the school.

The Association further believes that teachers must have an active role in the development of selection criteria, job descriptions, and interview instruments, and must participate in the interview and selection process. (1999, 2021)

D-10. Teacher Induction

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

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

The Association encourages its affiliates to be involved in the development of standards for teacher induction and in the design and implementation of the process. (1999, 2014)

D-11. Mentor Programs

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

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

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

D-12. Educator Career Paths

The National Education Association believes that an educator's primary responsibility is student learning and that leadership by educators is essential to serving the needs of students, schools, and the education profession. The development of well-designed career paths can promote and nurture effective instruction. Career paths should—

- a. Be developed through collective bargaining or in nonbargaining jurisdictions be developed collaboratively by Association members and local boards
- b. Be adequately funded and sustainable
- c. Be voluntary
- d. Be fair and equitable with transparent criteria, based on professional standards
- e. Include compensation that recognizes additional responsibilities, knowledge, and/or skills
- f. Include ongoing professional development
- g. Allow educators to move between paths without penalty and support these transitions with programs, resources, and funding wherever possible
- h. Contain a comprehensive evaluation system that includes an appeal procedure
- i. Contain a plan that addresses the need for diversity and advancement for underrepresented groups. (2012, 2021)

D-13. Peer Assistance Programs and Peer Assistance and Review Programs

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

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

- a. Be developed through collective bargaining or through a joint association/school district agreement in nonbargaining states
- b. Be governed by a board composed of an equal number or a majority of representatives appointed by the local affiliate
- c. Be supported by stable and sustainable funding
- d. Acknowledge that the school district makes the final decision to retain or seek nonrenewal or termination, but that recommendations forwarded by the joint governing body are routinely accepted and acted upon by the district
- e. Ensure that only teachers who are deemed by their peers to be highly skilled practitioners are selected for the role of consulting teacher, that the consulting teacher’s area of expertise is the same as or closely related to that of the participating teacher, and that the consulting teacher is chosen by the program governing bodies
- f. Seek consulting teachers who reflect the diverse population of the teaching staff
- g. Provide that consulting teachers are properly compensated and provided adequate time to fulfill their responsibilities
- h. Provide that consulting teachers receive extensive and ongoing training in mentoring/coaching skills, district initiatives and resources, and current education instructional methods
- i. Establish guidelines for the referral of teachers as well as safeguards to prevent unwarranted referrals and to allow participating teachers the selection and/or approval of their assignment to a consulting teacher
- j. Establish and convey to all consulting and participating teachers clear rules on allowable uses of documents, products, and communications arising from the program
- k. Require extensive documentation based on ongoing assessments of each participant
- l. Require that rigorous and extensive assistance be provided over an appropriate period of time to help the participating teacher attain the requisite standard of proficiency before any effort is made to counsel the participating teacher into alternative career choices either within or outside the education profession or a recommendation to initiate nonrenewal or termination proceedings is issued
- m. Ensure due process protection and duty of fair representation procedures
- n. Guarantee that participating teachers, consulting teachers, and teachers who sit on governing bodies do not lose their Association membership or bargaining unit status by virtue of their participation in the program. (1997, 2012)

D-14. Administrator Preparation

The National Education Association believes that administrators are integral to a safe, supportive, and instructionally excellent learning community. Administrator preparation programs should recruit individuals meeting the highest standards with at least five years of full-time educational experience and a student-centered educational philosophy. Such programs should emphasize the recruitment of candidates from underrepresented groups. Programs should include educationally significant clinical experience and should prepare leaders to—

- Collaboratively steward a shared vision
- Use data effectively to promote sustainable school improvement
- Efficiently manage resources
- Develop capacity for distributed leadership and equitable leadership
- Build and maintain family and community partnerships
- Act with integrity and fairness
- Promote racial and social justice
- Advocate for schools, students, families, and caregivers
- Understand the moral and ethical consequences of decisions in the school community
- Foster a collaborative school culture
- Promote practices and programs that are focused on diversity, equity, cultural responsiveness, bullying prevention techniques, social and racial justice, the recognition of and mitigation of biases, and trauma-informed pedagogy
- Understand the stages of additional language acquisition and their implications for instructional strategies and assessment.

These programs should meet standards established, governed, and maintained by members of the profession. (1985, 2024)

APPROPRIATE STAFFING

D-15. Supervision of Extracurricular Activities

The National Education Association believes that extracurricular activities are an important part of the public school experience. Education institutions should adopt policies, standards, and guidelines for the staffing and hiring of qualified extracurricular personnel, providing them with ongoing training. Qualified education employees must be given the opportunity of first acceptance of paid positions. (1994, 2014)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

D-16. Professional Development for Education Professionals

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

- a. Be based upon clearly articulated goals reached by consensus of the school community
- b. Be designed, directed by, and differentiated to meet the needs of affected professionals at each site
- c. Be accessible
- d. Support education professionals in meeting the needs of students
- e. Be incorporated into and aligned with (not added to) professional work expectations
- f. Be standards-referenced and incorporate effective practice, relevant data, and current research
- g. Be supported by adequate resources
- h. Be career-long, rigorous, and sustained
- i. Stimulate intellectual development and leadership capacity
- j. Balance individual priorities with the needs of the school and the district
- k. Be modified in response to feedback from ongoing assessments and participants' evaluations
- l. Preserve regular planning time for teachers

m. Provide—

- training and ongoing support for the implementation of new and expanded programs/skills
- training and ongoing support in the development of new and revised curricula and instructional strategies
- time during the regular work day and work year for inquiry, research, reflection, and collaboration
- time for individual and collaborative study of student data to improve student learning
- opportunities for mentoring/peer coaching with colleagues on an ongoing basis
- a depth of subject matter knowledge and a greater understanding of the impact of culture, gender, and learning styles
- opportunities to assume new roles and career paths, including leadership positions
- flexibility for collaboration of community partners with a variety of resources such as university-school partnerships, professional development schools, exchange programs, professional development resource centers, and cultural and business resources
- opportunities for training by licensed health professionals in basic emergency lifesaving techniques, including CPR, AEDs, epinephrine injections, opioid antagonist medications (such as Narcan), and seizure management
- training and ongoing support for the use of technology as an instructional tool
- An understanding of the stages of additional language acquisition and their implications for instructional strategies and assessment (1976, 2024).

D-17. Professional Development for Education Support Professionals

The National Education Association believes that continuous professional development is required for education support professionals to achieve and maintain the highest standards of professional practice in order to meet the needs of the whole student. Professional development and continuing education serve as catalysts to recruit, retain, and promote qualified education support professionals. Professional development for education support professionals should be fully funded and participants must be fully compensated to attend the trainings.

Professional development should—

- a. Be offered to both full-time and part-time education support professionals
- b. Be designed, directed, and differentiated to meet the needs of affected professionals at each site
- c. Be accessible
- d. Ensure that education support professionals have a decisive voice at every stage of the planning, implementation, evaluation, and modification
- e. Be ongoing throughout the school year and made available by both the states and school districts or through community partners such as community colleges, cultural institutions, and business resources
- f. Be offered during regular work hours (on designated school or district professional development days) or compensated when offered outside of regular work hours
- g. Be incorporated into and aligned with (not added to) professional work expectations
- h. Support education support professionals in meeting the needs of the whole student
- i. Be standards-referenced and incorporate effective practices, relevant data, and current research
- j. Be supported by adequate resources
- k. Be relevant
- l. Stimulate intellectual development and leadership capacity
- m. Balance individual career goals with the needs of the school and district
- n. Provide—
 - Training and ongoing support for the use of technology
 - Opportunities to assume new roles and career paths, including leadership positions
 - Opportunities for training by licensed health professionals in basic emergency lifesaving techniques, including CPR, AEDS, epinephrine injections, opioid antagonist medications (such as Narcan), and seizure management. (1998, 2023)

D-18. Professional Development Resource Services

The National Education Association believes that professional development resource services provide an opportunity for education employees to share resources, experiences, and ideas for professional growth. The Association also believes that these services should be established, funded, and accessible to all education employees. The Association further believes that members from local affiliates should actively participate in the development and implementation of these services. (1982, 2016)

COMPETENCY

D-19. Professional Development in Behavior Management, Discipline, Order, and Safety

The National Education Association believes that behavior management, discipline, order, and safety in schools and school districts are essential to ensure student and educator success. The Association also believes that all education employees, including those not typically involved in direct instruction, must be provided continual, relevant, and accessible professional development in trauma-informed practices, behavior management, progressive discipline, conflict resolution, restorative practices, bullying prevention techniques, safety plans and emergency procedures, emergency lifesaving techniques, and crisis management. The Association further believes that all materials and practices should promote safe and just schools at every level of education, and all training materials and programs should be regularly evaluated for progress and outcomes in applying racial justice and equity tools and practices. (1994, 2023)

D-20. Neurological Disorder Awareness

The National Education Association believes in establishing programs that foster educator understanding in response to neurological disorders and symptoms affecting student learning. Qualified health professionals should be cooperatively involved in these programs. (1987, 2019)

D-21. Teacher Exchange Programs

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

D-22. Education Employee Evaluation[¶]

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

Effective evaluation procedures supported by professional development programs will enable all education employees to be informed in their areas of specialization. Such procedures, with sufficient resources, can help ensure job competency, identify professional growth goals, and provide options for achieving these goals.

The Association also believes that evaluations of teachers must be comprehensive, based on multiple indicators providing teachers with timely feedback and support to enhance their practice. Components of effective evaluation must include indicators of teacher practice, teacher contribution and growth, and contribution to student learning, growth, and development. High quality, developmentally appropriate teacher-selected assessments that provide valid, reliable, timely, and relevant information regarding student learning, growth, and/or development may be used as an indicator for quality, formative evaluation. Standardized tests, even if deemed valid and reliable, must not be used to support any employment action against a teacher and may not be used to determine any part of an educator's evaluation.

Following an evaluation, a teacher should be provided with clear notice of any areas of suggested growth and an improvement plan should be developed by the teacher, local association, and employer.

[¶] See *NEA Handbook* for the Policy Statement on Teacher Evaluation and Accountability adopted by the 2011 Representative Assembly, which sets forth the Association's full position dealing with this subject.

After completing the improvement plan, the teacher should then be formally reevaluated. If dismissal proceedings based on an unsatisfactory evaluation rating are warranted, the teacher must be guaranteed the right to procedural and substantive due process. Such proceedings must be implemented by administrators/evaluators who are properly trained and held accountable for appropriate and fair evaluation systems. An administrator must complete evaluations in accordance with the timeframe prescribed by laws, contracts, agreements, and memoranda of understanding. An administrator's failure to complete an evaluation must not negatively impact an education employee.

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

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

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

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

By participating in an evaluation process, education employees shall not waive their right to due process in any subsequent contractual or legal proceeding. (1969, 2022)

D-23. Competency Testing of Licensed Teachers

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

D-24. Evaluation and Promotion in Higher Education

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

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

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

D-25. Promote the Retention of Experienced Education Professionals

The National Education Association believes that experienced education professionals are valuable resources in the promotion of educational excellence. Experienced education professionals should be encouraged to remain in or return to the education profession through strategies consistent with Association policies, including enhanced salaries, benefits, professional compensation for additional duties beyond the established school day/year, a supportive and respectful work environment, a reasonable workload, a secure pension, and retirement packages that reward extended years of service. (2001, 2017)

E. GAIN RECOGNITION OF THE BASIC IMPORTANCE OF THE EDUCATOR IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

E-1. Instructional Excellence

The National Education Association believes that to achieve and maintain instructional excellence there must be continual improvement in the education process. The Association also believes that educators' expertise is critical in evaluating the needs of individual students when addressing state standards. The Association further believes that teachers have the primary responsibility for instructional excellence and must have the primary authority to recommend improvements in instruction through a democratic decision-making process. The Association believes all education employees should support high standards for instructional excellence and contribute to the continual improvement of education. The Association also believes that no single program can meet the needs of every student. Mandated programs, such as scripted learning programs and pacing charts, restrict the ability of teachers to make decisions for appropriate, meaningful instruction in their classrooms. The Association recommends that education employees collaborate in the research, development, and field testing of new instructional methods and materials. (1969, 2018)

E-2. Educator-Led Schools

The National Education Association believes that educator leadership is a means to fulfilling the promise of public education. Sharing leadership more fully would concentrate a broader range of expertise and skill in leadership, while also distributing responsibility for student success more equitably among those who educate our children. In addition, shared leadership can create a more democratic school environment in which there is broad engagement in problem solving and decision making, engaging the Association in student-centered educational quality and helping to prepare a new generation of school leaders.

Careful planning, comprehensive training, and full funding are key components of any successful educator-led school model. A collaborative model of democratic leadership—educator-led, educator-voice, stakeholder-led, union-led, or other configuration—should be selected. This selection should be based on the school's purpose with the active involvement of the site's employees and of the local/state affiliate.

Local collective bargaining agreements and other negotiated contracts are essential and should not be dismissed or abandoned. Engaging with the Association in developing a model that respects the contract is essential.

Development of a comprehensive professional development plan—including organizational development and leadership skills—is essential for the successful transition to an educator-led school.

Equitable funding and adequate support are keys to the success of democratic model schools. Educators and their associations must demand these supports and resources as essential to the development of school models that will support and improve student learning. (2014)

E-3. Time To Teach

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

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

The Association recognizes that accountability requires reporting on the uses of funding derived from federal, state, and local education programs. The Association further believes, however, that in order for

the classroom educator to spend adequate time on instructional duties, the paperwork burden on the practitioner must be reduced and held to an absolute minimum.

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

E-4. Selection and Challenges of Materials and Teaching Techniques

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

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

Materials in all subject areas should—

- a. Include strategies that encourage student interaction
- b. Be developmentally appropriate
- c. Include appropriate accommodations and modifications for students with special needs
- d. Be free from stereotypes and avoid biases
- e. Support multicultural education and cultural competence
- f. Address divergent points of view
- g. Contain sufficient activities to teach the concepts
- h. Provide for the evaluation of higher level thinking
- i. Be historically and factually accurate
- j. Be inclusive of all ethnic groups
- k. Be inclusive of the LGBTQ+ community.

Instructional materials and equipment must be provided in sufficient variety and quantity to serve all students. (1969, 2023)

E-5. Development of Curriculum

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

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

- a. Inclusion of lifelong learning skills
- b. Student academic standards
- c. Alignment of curriculum with standards
- d. Unwarranted duplication of content
- e. Prevention of content gaps and biases
- f. Content overload
- g. Developmentally appropriate content
- h. Appropriate accommodations and modifications for students with special needs
- i. Integration of disciplines
- j. Cultural competency and responsiveness.

The Association further believes that educators must have an active role in the establishment of procedures for the planning, development, implementation, monitoring, and refinement of curricula. To that end, professional time and training must be provided. (2003, 2021)

E-6. Development of Materials

The National Education Association believes that public school teachers and postsecondary faculty should be involved in the development and field testing of all educational materials offered for adoption or purchase by public school districts and educational institutions. Materials in all subject areas should—

- a. Include strategies that encourage student interaction
- b. Be developmentally appropriate
- c. Include appropriate accommodations and modifications for students with special needs
- d. Be free from stereotypes and biases
- e. Address divergent points of view
- f. Address cultural competency and responsiveness
- g. Contain sufficient activities to teach the concepts
- h. Provide for the evaluation of higher level thinking skills.

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

Where school districts and educational institutions involve teachers and faculty in the development of any educational materials, participation should be voluntary and compensated. (1984, 2022)

E-7. Cultural Diversity in Instructional Materials

The National Education Association believes that educational materials and activities should accurately portray the influences and contributions of ethnic and other minorities, women, and world religions. A diverse group of educators must be involved in selecting educational materials and in preparing educators for their use.

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

The Association acknowledges that many contemporary texts related to these groups do not portray realistically their importance and could convey a negative self-concept to students in these groups.

The Association also believes that educators and governing boards should adopt and use textbooks and other educational materials in all subject areas that accurately portray the contributions of ethnic and other minorities, women, and world religions. (1969, 2021)

E-8. Academic and Professional Freedom

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

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

The Association further believes that legislation and regulations that mandate or permit the teaching of religious doctrines and/or groups that promote anti-public education agendas violate both student and teacher rights. The Association urges its affiliates to seek repeal of these mandates where they exist. (2002, 2009)

E-9. Professional Discretion in the Classroom

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

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

The Association believes that, while programs focusing on scripted learning and pacing charts can serve as frames of reference, it is still incumbent on the classroom teacher to evaluate the efficacy of all instructional programs and classroom assessments and to modify them when necessary in order to address the needs and facilitate the success of each student. Educational materials and resources should not replace or serve as a substitute for the teacher in the delivery of instruction. (2006, 2016)

E-10. Intellectual Property and Access to Copyrighted Materials

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

The Association also believes that students should own the copyright to materials they create in the course of their studies and additionally, in the case of graduate students, to materials they create while working as teaching or research assistants. (1969, 2017)

E-11. Education Support Professionals in the Learning Environment

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

The Association also believes that the retention of education support professionals must be encouraged and is vital to keeping strong and effective public schools. (1990, 2014)

E-12. Impact of Federal and State Legislative Mandates

The National Education Association believes that federal and state mandates regarding school programs should be broad guidelines and be fully funded without basing funding on student achievement and/or educator evaluation. The mandates and their evaluations should be established and assessed in collaboration with the Association and its state and local affiliates, and focus on the effect they have on students, education employees, school programs, and finances. (1979, 2016)

F. PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF EDUCATION AND OTHER PUBLIC EMPLOYEES AND ADVANCE THEIR INTERESTS AND WELFARE, AND PROMOTE, SUPPORT AND DEFEND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' RIGHT TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

PAY EQUITY/COMPARABLE WORTH

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

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

[†] See *NEA Handbook* for the Policy Statement on Affirmative Action adopted by the 1997 Representative Assembly, which sets forth the Association's full position dealing with this subject.

Affirmative action plans and procedures that encourage active recruitment and employment of ethnic minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and persons in underrepresented education categories should be developed and implemented in accordance with Association policy. Affirmative action plans and procedures that encourage active recruitment and employment of men in underrepresented education categories should also be developed and implemented. It may be necessary therefore to give preference to men in recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion policies to overcome past discrimination. (1969, 2022)

F-2. Pay Equity/Comparable Worth

The National Education Association believes that all workers should be paid on the basis of the requirements, skills, and worth of their jobs using nondiscriminatory practices.

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

The Association encourages efforts by education employees and others of the work force to gain salary levels appropriate to the skill, value, responsibility, and requirements of their jobs. (1982, 2015)

F-3. Tax Deductions for Professional Expenses

The National Education Association believes expenses incurred for professional development must be considered as necessary and ordinary and must be uniformly deductible, as an adjustment, from gross income in the computation of federal, state, and local income taxes. Deductible expenses should include, but not be limited to, expenses incurred relating to sabbatical leaves; educational travel for maintenance and improvement of skills; an in-home office; education-related auto use; and, purchasing of teaching supplements and professional supplies, materials, and equipment. (1969, 2015)

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROCESS

F-4. Collective Bargaining Rights

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

The Association also believes that the democratic selection of a collective bargaining representative to speak with one voice, representing all employees in the bargaining unit, is the foundation of effective collective bargaining. Democratic exclusive representation amplifies the voice of employees, promotes solidarity, and provides employees with the strongest footing for securing redress of their common concerns. Therefore, the Association unequivocally opposes attempts to dismantle or weaken the democratic exclusive representation of employees. (1980, 2019)

F-5. Collective Bargaining and Grievance Procedures

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

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

The Association further believes that local affiliates should determine the bargaining approach most appropriate for them. The Association also supports a local’s decision to use an interest-based process as an option from a wide range of models for collective bargaining and/or dispute resolution.

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

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

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

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

F-6. Strikes

The National Education Association believes that the right of all educators to strike should be recognized and denounces the practice of keeping schools open during a strike.

The Association believes that when a picket line is established by the authorized bargaining unit, crossing it, whether physically or electronically, is strikebreaking and jeopardizes the welfare of education employees and the educational process.

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

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

Appropriate educator preparation institutions should be notified that a strike is being conducted and urged not to cooperate in emergency licensing or placement practices that constitute strikebreaking. The Association condemns denial of credits to students working in the school for credit as part of an educator preparation or credential program who have honored a work stoppage. 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 also condemns the use of ex parte injunction, jailing, setting of excessive bail, fines, firing of members, cessation or suspension of visa sponsorship, community service in lieu of other penalties, decertification of an organization as the bargaining agent, loss of association rights, and revocation or suspension of tenure, licensure, and retirement benefits in school work stoppages. Any strike settlement and return-to-work agreement must be written collaboratively and without punitive provisions.

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

The Association also urges its affiliates to establish practices and procedures to supply financial and emotional support as well as external and internal publicity for any local engaged in a strike. The Association is committed to supporting affiliates in the event of a strike or work action. (1969, 2024)

BARGAINING ISSUES

F-7. Basic Contract Standards

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

- a. A grievance procedure that terminates with final and binding arbitration

- b. Just cause for any disciplinary action with guaranteed due process through final and binding arbitration and continuation of all employee rights, including full compensation and job security
- c. A seniority list that is updated, published, and distributed annually
- d. Layoff and recall based only on seniority as bargaining unit members, licensure/certification, and, to the extent legally permissible, affirmative action[†]
- e. Employer-paid benefits, including but not limited to comprehensive health, life, dental, vision, and income protection insurance and employee assistance programs, that fully cover bargaining unit members, domestic partners, and their families
- f. Membership in the association or the payment of a fair-share fee as a condition of employment
- g. Required posting of all vacant or newly created positions along with the right of bargaining unit members to apply for these positions
- h. Unassigned preparation, planning, and travel time as applicable for all members of the bargaining unit
- i. Specified class size, caseload, teaching assignment, and job description
- j. A duty-free lunch period of not less than 30 minutes for all members of the bargaining unit
- k. Nondiscriminatory, fair, and equitable treatment of bargaining unit members
- l. Contractually defined procedures for evaluation and promotion
- m. Release time for Association business with full pay and benefits
- n. Parental/child rearing leave for employees to provide care for natural or adopted children
- o. Contractually defined procedures for ensuring education employee decision making in curriculum design and related instructional management and reporting systems
- p. Time during the regular work day and work year for education employees to plan, engage in professional development, work on curriculum and assessment, evaluate and document student progress, mentor and be mentored, and provide professional leadership
- q. Salary schedules that are equitable, regardless of the age level of the students being taught, and are based upon preparation, professional growth, and length of service, and that exclude any form of merit pay except in institutions of higher education where it has been bargained
- r. Placement and advancement on the salary schedule based on qualifications and number of years of experience in the profession
- s. Extracurricular and extra-duty assignments filled on a voluntary basis and compensated at no less than the employee's regular rate of pay
- t. Protection from being required to participate in community service
- u. Retirement benefits based on all income derived from school employment
- v. Clearly defined bargaining unit membership
- w. A guaranteed safe and healthy working environment, including a secured/lockable storage space for personal belongings
- x. The school calendar
- y. Protection from unilateral changes in terms or conditions of employment
- z. Provisions to define class loads, student contact hours, and contract hours for instructors who are involved in distance education, and to guarantee that technology and distance education are used to supplement, not supplant, employees
- aa. Insurance against loss of personal items located on school property in the event of a natural disaster. (1989, 2021)

F-8. Salaries and Other Compensation

The National Education Association believes that salary and other compensation structures for education employees are matters for collective bargaining. The Association also believes that any proposed or legislated salary and other compensation structure should not bypass or undermine the bargaining process or negotiated agreements. The Association further believes that, in nonbargaining

* See *NEA Handbook* for the Policy Statement on Affirmative Action adopted by the 1997 Representative Assembly, which sets forth the Association's full position dealing with this subject.

jurisdictions, salary schedules should be incorporated into legislation, employer policy, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment for education employees.

The Association believes that salary schedules should—

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Association further believes that, if school districts consolidate or separate, education employees should not lose their tenure or have their salary, benefits, or seniority reduced. (1969, 2019)

F-9. Additional/Enhanced Compensation Models

The National Education Association believes that the single salary schedule is the most transparent and equitable system for compensating education employees. The development of any additional/enhanced compensation system must include authentic representation and agreement from all stakeholders, especially those who will be directly affected by the plan. The design of such a system must be accomplished through the collective bargaining process; or in nonbargaining jurisdictions should be incorporated into legislation, employer policy, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment for education employees using input from all affected stakeholders. In nonbargaining units, the plan should be agreed to by a 75 percent vote of the membership.

The Association also believes that the goals of any additional compensation model should be to—

- a. Increase student learning opportunities
- b. Increase salaries and fairly compensate all education employees
- c. Contribute to improved professional practice, collaboration, and mentoring

- d. Promote quality staff development and training
- e. Attract and retain high-quality education employees
- f. Increase support for public education.

The Association further believes that any additional compensation model should—

- a. Be fully funded without reprioritizing existing resources
- b. Be funded in a sustainable manner
- c. Be based on best practice research
- d. Clearly define how one qualifies for the additional compensation
- e. Be accessible, on a voluntary basis, to all education employees
- f. Be maintained with the right to due process
- g. Relate to the school's educational objectives
- h. Provide leadership opportunities for members of all employee groups
- i. Be open to compensation for the acquisition of additional knowledge and skills
- j. Be determined at the local level with involvement of those who will be directly affected.

The Association believes that additional/enhanced compensation models should not diminish the professional status of those education employees who do not receive the additional compensation or in any way suggest that such education employees are not qualified for the positions that they hold.

The Association also believes that compensation conditioned on student attendance and/or outcomes (such as test scores) would be inappropriate. Test scores may provide valuable information to teachers and schools that can be used to inform curriculum and instructional decisions.

The Association supports regular employee evaluations to provide information for professional growth, although the highly subjective nature of evaluations makes them inappropriate for additional/enhanced compensation decisions. (2001, 2011)

F-10. School Cancellation Policies and Compensation

The National Education Association believes the compensation of education employees should not be impacted by students' non-attendance days and/or digital instructional days due to unforeseen circumstances which limit an employee's days or hours. (2017)

F-11. Benefits

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

- a. Comprehensive insurance programs
 - 1. Health
 - 2. Dental
 - 3. Vision
 - 4. Hearing
 - 5. Life
 - 6. Legal
 - 7. Workers' compensation
 - 8. Long-term physical and mental disability
 - 9. Prescription drug
- b. Paid leaves
 - 1. Physical/mental health leave with unlimited accumulation
 - 2. Personal leave with unlimited accumulation
 - 3. Bereavement leave
 - 4. Parental leave, including adoption
 - 5. Family leave
 - 6. Dependent care leave
 - 7. Sabbatical leave
 - 8. Professional leave
 - 9. Association leave
 - 10. Religious leave

- 11. Vacation time
- 12. Jury duty
- c. Additional remuneration
 - 1. Severance pay
 - 2. Tuition reimbursement
 - 3. Retirement compensation
 - 4. Unemployment compensation
 - 5. Benefit extension for laid-off employees
 - 6. Early retirement incentives
- d. Personal assistance
 - 1. Personal assault protection, and in the event of assault, counseling services and leave that is not subject to sick or personal leave
 - 2. Employee assistance program
 - 3. Reimbursement for damages to or loss of personal property at work site
 - 4. Child care and pre-school education
 - 5. An opportunity to participate in a cafeteria-type plan or plan authorized by Section 125 of the U.S. Federal Tax Code

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

The Association believes that paid parental leave without fear of reprisal is essential for the welfare of children. Such leave establishes strong family ties and ensures proper health and well-being of all family members.

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

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

The Association believes that, if school districts consolidate, regionalize, share services, or separate, education employees should not lose their tenure or have their salary, benefits, or seniority reduced. (1969, 2024)

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

The National Education Association recognizes the contributions of educators who work with students in school settings other than the traditional preK–12 schools. The Association believes that these education professionals have the right to collective bargaining processes that are comparable to their preK–12 counterparts. The Association also believes that these employees are entitled to equitable contract language that offers the same rights and protections as education employees within traditional preK–12 school settings. (2007, 2014)

F-13. Faculty Reward Structures in Higher Education

The National Education Association believes that the reward structure for an institution of higher education should reflect the mission of the institution. An institution whose mission is teaching undergraduate students should reward good teaching. An institution whose mission is community outreach should reward service. An institution whose mission is basic or applied research should reward good research. The proper balance between teaching, service, and research is contingent upon faculty and administration agreement on the institutional mission of the particular campus and should be codified within the collective bargaining process, where available, or through faculty governance. (1995, 2015)

F-14. Contingent Faculty and Professional Staff Protection

The National Education Association actively supports creating new full-time faculty positions within colleges, universities, and community colleges, and, in doing so, giving priority to contingent faculty seeking full-time positions. Contingent faculty and professional staff are valuable and, in many cases, necessary to the programs of colleges and universities. Therefore, they should be treated no differently than full-time, tenure-track, or permanent faculty or professional staff for purposes of employment conditions, including eligibility to bargain collectively. However, the excessive use of academic

appointments on contingent, temporary, non-tenure track, and/or multiple-year contracts may undermine academic and intellectual freedom, opportunity for tenure, and participation in the governance structure. Institutions fail to fulfill their responsibility to provide adequate working conditions and educational support when contingent faculty have no office space or allowance for office hours and are forced to teach at multiple campuses, thereby undermining educational quality.

Equitable treatment of contingent faculty and professional staff must include—

- Salary and benefits proportionate (pro rata pay and benefits) to their work, including course preparation time, office hours, committee assignments and involvement in shared governance
- Equal treatment with tenure system faculty regarding issues of resource allocation, including office space, access to phone and computer equipment, library facilities, secretarial support, fee waivers, and required professional development
- Conversion from contingent positions to full-time tenure positions in programs that need or will benefit from more full-time positions due to growth, reassignment, or retirement. Contingent faculty who have demonstrated competence in the institution through positive evaluations should be offered the opportunity to convert into full-time tenure-track faculty. Additionally, those seeking tenure-track positions should have the opportunity to present their qualifications in a fair and unbiased way for new positions. Institutions in collaboration with exclusive representation or appropriate governance procedures must develop and implement an appropriate evaluation system for contingent faculty to assure consideration for such positions.

The Association believes that equitable policies and practices must be in place so that contingent faculty are treated as institutionally supported professionals and can better serve students as an integral and valued part of these institutions of higher education. (2008, 2009)

F-15. Graduate Assistant Protection

The National Education Association believes that graduate assistants employed within higher education institutions are valued employees deserving equitable treatment. Graduate assistants should be entitled to similar rights and access to resources that faculty receive, including but not limited to—

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

The Association further believes that overreliance on graduate assistants in response to government under-funding and other fiscal crises is detrimental to the institution, the employees, and the students. Therefore, equitable policies and practices must be in place so graduate assistants can function as professionals in institutions of higher education and continue to successfully proceed toward completion of their graduate and postgraduate degrees. (2010)

F-16. Economic Welfare

The National Education Association supports programs promoting social and economic justice and continues to support programs that decrease unemployment for the American people. (1979, 2015)

F-17. Constitutional and Civil Rights—Employment Protection

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

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, 2016)

F-18. Continuing Employment and Fair Dismissal Practices

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

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

The Association further believes that any nonrenewal, revocation, or significant change to the licensure of an education employee should only follow procedural and substantive due process and not be impacted by nonrenewal or termination of specific employment. (1969, 2010)

F-19. Reduction in Force

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

The Association also believes that local affiliates should—

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

It must be recognized that the reduction of staff and/or nonreplacement of retiring and resigning educators are both forms of reduction in force. (1975, 2024)

F-20. Mandated Training/Retraining

The National Education Association believes that when a federal, state, or district mandate requires an education employee to meet new standards of employability and/or to be retrained, it is the responsibility of the mandating agency to provide release time for training, to compensate the employee at the employee's hourly rate of pay, and to provide for the cost of tuition, textbooks, and travel. (1988, 2005)

F-21. Bargaining Protection for Education Employees

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

* See *NEA Handbook* for the Policy Statement on Affirmative Action adopted by the 1997 Representative Assembly, which sets forth the Association's full position dealing with this subject.

Violations of these laws and other assaults or violence against education employees should be documented through a jointly established procedure. The data collected at the district level should be used for review, analysis, and any needed action. This data must be accessible to the local association.

The Association believes that education institutions should have an appropriate documented process to report assaults and threats of violence against education employees to the district level in a timely manner. Education institutions shall maintain records of this data.

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

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

The Association 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, 2024)

F-22. Personnel Policies and Procedures

The National Education Association believes that personnel policies and procedures should be written and developed cooperatively by the exclusive representative of the bargaining unit (which is often the local affiliate) and their local boards of education or appropriate governing bodies. The Association also believes in a cooperative review for improvement of the personnel policies and procedures. Where it exists, improvements will be made through the negotiation/problem-solving process between the exclusive representative of the bargaining unit and the employer. (1969, 2024)

F-23. Site-Based Decision Making

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

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

F-24. Faculty-Staff Governance in Higher Education

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

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

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

The Association further believes that collective bargaining provides an additional method of institutional governance. Faculty and staff should determine policies and procedures to govern salary structure, pay increases, benefit programs, calendar, and working conditions. (1994, 2006)

F-25. Job Sharing

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

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

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

F-26. Intern Programs

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

F-27. Student Workers in Educational Institutions

The National Education Association recognizes the importance of providing employment opportunities for students in educational institutions. The Association supports the hiring of permanent education employees as opposed to reducing their number through employment of students. (1992, 2014)

F-28. Education Support Professionals in the Classroom

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

The Association believes that the employment of education support professionals should not be a rationale for increasing class size. (1969, 2015)

F-29. Summer School Alternative Calendars, Extended School Day/Year, and Year-Round Schools

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

PROTECTION OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES

F-30. Education Employees Injured on the Job

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

The Association encourages its affiliates to protect the rights of injured members and provide access to information regarding employment-related injuries. (2000, 2016)

F-31. Unemployment/Disability Compensation

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

F-32. Subcontracting/Contracting Out

The National Education Association believes that public school employees should perform public school services. When public schools are unable to provide services, subcontracting/contracting out arrangements should not—

- a. Transfer or displace education employees
- b. Replace full-time positions with temporary, part-time, or volunteer workers
- c. Replace services that are, or could feasibly be, provided by public education employees
- d. Abrogate previously contracted benefits, reduce compensation, deny benefits, and/or reduce or eliminate accumulated retirement experience and benefits
- e. Be implemented without agreement from the affected affiliate.

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

- a. Information collected will not be released to boards of education in a form other than a statement of qualification but be kept by the investigating state or national agency
- b. Every employee or potential employee has a right to due process and access to records
- c. Clear, specific, observable, and objective evidence of rehabilitation for past offenses is included
- d. Any fee for background checks shall not be borne by the employee or potential employee. (1977, 2016)

F-33. Confidentiality of Employee Records

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

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

The Association also believes that any ancillary records (as required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act or HIPAA), such as medical and legal records, with which the educational institution may come in contact, are to be treated as privileged information and must also remain confidential.

The Association further believes that it is the duty of the educational institution to inform employees of these rights and to enforce these rights. (1975, 2015)

F-34. Right to Privacy for Education Employees

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

- a. Freedom from audio or video surveillance without the prior written permission of the individual
- b. Freedom from harassment by individuals, organizations, or businesses due to unauthorized release or sale of employee records

- c. Protection from exploitation via phone and electronic media
- d. Computer access in a private and secure setting
- e. Security of computer files, passwords, and user codes from inappropriate or unauthorized access
- f. Authority to refuse a polygraph, lie detector, or other invasive method of evidence collection.

The Association also believes that fingerprinting is acceptable only for the purpose of a pre-employment or pre-licensure check for criminal records that are pertinent to education employment. The Association opposes fingerprinting as a condition of continued employment or licensure. The Association further believes that all costs of fingerprinting must be borne by the employer or licensing agency. (1999, 2016)

F-35. Privileged Communications

The National Education Association believes that communications between all education employees and students must be legally privileged with the exception of items covered under HIPAA laws and/or state reporting laws. The Association also believes that communication between administrators and other education employees must be kept private without the consent of the affected employee. The Association urges its affiliates to aid in seeking legislation that provides this privilege and protects both education employees and students. (1974, 2015)

F-36. Protection of Education Employee Advocates

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

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

The Association believes that school board policies should allow the provision of release time without loss of pay for those who are fulfilling leadership responsibilities, attending meetings, appearing in court in their roles as advocates, or participating in other Association activities. The Association also believes affiliates should be allowed uncensored and unencumbered use of school property for conducting Association business. (1976, 2015)

F-37. Protection of Education and Other Public Employees from Age Harassment

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

- a. Establish strong policies that empower education employees to make their own decisions regarding continued employment and retirement
- b. Develop and maintain educational programs to help individuals recognize, understand, prevent, and combat age harassment
- c. Develop, maintain, and publicize a grievance procedure that encourages the reporting of incidents of age harassment, resolves complaints promptly, and protects the rights of all parties. (1989, 2017)

F-38. Protection of Education and Other Public Employees from Disability Harassment

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

- a. Establish strong policies that ensure compliance with all provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and provide all necessary accommodation for full participation in all employment responsibilities
- b. Develop and maintain educational programs to help individuals recognize, understand, prevent, and combat disability harassment

- c. Develop, maintain, and publicize a grievance procedure that encourages the reporting of incidents of disability harassment, resolves complaints promptly, and protects the rights of all parties
- d. Provide information regarding services available to protect individuals whose employers are not in compliance with ADA. (2005, 2017)

F-39. Protection of Education and Other Public Employees from Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sexual Orientation Harassment

The National Education Association believes that education and other public employees, including transgender and transitioning individuals, should be protected from all forms of harassment on the basis of gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

The Association encourages its affiliates to work with school districts and higher education institutions to:

- a. Establish procedures and educational programs to address and prevent such harassment.
- b. Develop, maintain, and publicize a grievance procedure that encourages the reporting of incidents of such harassment, resolves complaints promptly, and protects the rights of all parties. (2021)

F-40. Protection of Education and Other Public Employees from Student Violence

The National Education Association believes that education and other public employees should be protected from student violence. The Association also believes that schools and communities must develop policies and practices that promote safe working environments. These policies and practices should include procedures to report incidents of student violence, resolve complaints promptly, maintain records of these complaints, and protect the rights of all parties. (2024)

F-41. Protection of Education and Other Public Employees from Workplace Bullying

The National Education Association believes that all employees should be protected from workplace bullying. Bullying creates an unhealthy and unprofessional power imbalance between bully and target. The Association encourages its affiliates to work with school districts and institutions of higher education to discipline any education employee, student, parent, guardian, or volunteer who engages in any form of workplace bullying.

Workplace bullying can include, but is not limited to—

- a. Systematic aggressive communication
- b. Manipulation of work assignments
- c. Repeated, health-harming mistreatment
- d. Verbal abuse
- e. Conduct which is threatening, humiliating, degrading, intimidating, or sabotaging
- f. Abuse via social media and/or the internet
- g. Retaliation. (2011, 2022)

F-42. Employee Rights Pending Court Action

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

F-43. Allegations Against Education Employees

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

Any such allegation should be investigated and resolved immediately without name disclosure.

Counseling from an outside community agency should be provided for any accused education employee without presumption of guilt. Employees found innocent should have access to additional counseling.

The Association also believes in due process for all education employees. False or unfounded accusations should be expunged from all records. Job status and all rights and benefits to education

employees acquitted of child abuse charges should be restored. Consequences should be limited to individuals found guilty.

All members should be knowledgeable of current practices in dealing with such allegations. (1989, 2015)

F-44. Health Examinations

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

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

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

The Association further believes that the cost of any required physical or mental diagnostic procedure should be incurred by the agency that requires such procedure and that education employees should be guaranteed the right to select their own physician. (1977, 2022)

F-45. Drug or Alcohol Testing

The National Education Association believes in a drug- and alcohol-free workplace. However, the Association believes that mandatory and/or random drug or alcohol testing of employees and job applicants is an unwarranted and unconstitutional invasion of privacy and opposes such testing. (1987, 2017)

F-46. HIV/AIDS Testing of Education Employees

The National Education Association believes that education employees or education employment applicants should not face mandatory/involuntary human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) testing. The Association also affirms that the current ban on blood donations from individuals solely based on a history of same-gender sexual activity should be lifted. (1987, 2022)

F-47. Employees with HIV/AIDS

The National Education Association believes that education employees shall not be fired, non-renewed, suspended (with or without pay), transferred, or subjected to any other adverse employment action solely because they have tested positive for the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) antibody or have been diagnosed as having HIV/AIDS. (1987, 2017)

F-48. Hepatitis Vaccinations

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

F-49. Health Care Issues Awareness

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

F-50. Color Vision Deficient Employees

The National Education Association believes that the needs of all employees, including color vision deficient employees, must be met. All educational materials that use color coding for referencing information should be accompanied by alternative methods of identifying these items of information such as numbering or labeling the names of each color. (2004, 2022)

F-51. Stress Management, Self-Care, and Wellness Programs

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

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

The Association also supports employee assistance programs (EAPs) as a voluntary resource that would assist education employees who are experiencing significant professional or personal problems by providing confidential, professional counseling leading to improved health and job effectiveness. (1979, 2022)

F-52. Trauma-Informed Care for Educators

The National Education Association believes that every educator should have access to trauma-informed care through their work/professional environment.

The Association also believes that trauma-informed care should acknowledge—

- a. The presence of trauma
- b. The different types of trauma including school, personal, and community events
- c. The effects of trauma as it affects the educator
- d. That trauma-informed care needs to be individualized. (2023)

F-53. Workplace Accommodations for Lactating Employees

The National Education Association believes that all workplaces must provide lactating employees with safe, clean, comfortable, appropriate, and private facilities to express breast milk. The Association also believes that employers must work with such employees to provide reasonable accommodations within their workday to express breast milk, and that no employee should face discrimination or retaliation for requesting such accommodations. (2021, 2023)

F-54. Medication and Medical Services in Schools

The National Education Association believes that procedures should be established for students who must use prescribed medication or who need other medical services during school hours. The Association also believes that education employees must be notified of students with life-threatening illnesses/conditions. Education employees must be trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of imminent life-threatening conditions. The Association further believes established procedures should provide that—

- a. Only licensed medical personnel, properly trained by the district, are required to administer such medication or perform such medical services
- b. A physician's written verification of the student's need for medication or services is required
- c. A parent or guardian must provide written permission for the administration of non-emergency medication or medical services
- d. The initial dosage of medication is not given in the school except in life-threatening situations; initial dosage is the first dosage administered from the prescription
- e. Each medication given is recorded on a medication log that includes date, time, and signature of the person giving the medication
- f. Medication is delivered in and dispensed from a container properly labeled with the name and strength of medication, name of patient, name of physician, date of the original prescription, and directions for use
- g. Proper storage for the medication is available
- h. A plan is in place to address medical concerns when licensed medical personnel are unavailable.

The Association believes that education employees who are not licensed medical personnel should be protected from all liability if they are required to administer medication or perform medical services. The Association also believes that such education employees should have the right to refuse to administer medication or perform medical services without fear of repercussion. (1977, 2018)

F-55. School Nurses

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

The Association believes that professional development programs should be available to all licensed/certified school nurses to augment their skills in delivering health care services and in caring for students with disabilities. (1980, 2024)

F-56. Education Employee Liability

The National Education Association believes that educational institutions should—

- a. Hold harmless and provide legal liability protection for education employees when following district directives and adhering to procedures regarding student interactions, interventions, violent situations, emergencies, or when their duties include physical assistance to students
- b. Pay all costs—including attorneys’ fees, expenses, and damages—incurred by employees and other agents in defending any civil action arising out of acts or omissions occurring during the performance of their duties
- c. Reimburse employees and other agents for all costs incurred in defending any criminal action arising out of acts or omissions occurring during the performance of their duties, provided that said action terminates in favor of the accused.

The Association recommends that educational institutions attempt to secure appropriate insurance to provide the aforesaid payment and reimbursement. (1976, 2019)

F-57. Protection of Individuals in Clinical Practice Programs

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

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

The Association encourages its affiliates to work with school districts and other appropriate bodies to formulate standards for clinical practice programs. Supervising or cooperating teachers in a clinical practice program should have reduced teaching loads and be given a minimum established compensation. Acceptance of student teachers, interns, or residents by preK through 12 classroom practitioners should be voluntary.

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

F-58. Transportation Liability Insurance

The National Education Association believes public education institutions should provide and incur the expense of transportation liability insurance for education employees who are requested or required to transport students by private vehicle for any school-related function. (1978, 2015)

F-59. Part-Time or Temporary Education Employees

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

The Association also believes that part-time education employees should be employed only when an educational program requires specialized training or expertise not available among full-time education employees and when the need for such training and expertise warrants less than full-time employment.

The Association further believes that part-time education employees should receive the same salary and benefits as full-time education employees at least prorated according to workload. Part-time education employees should have the same opportunities to participate in collective bargaining, training, service on committees, and setting the academic direction of the educational institution.

The Association deplors the practice of employing part-time or temporary employees for the purpose of reducing institutional budgets, reducing the number of full-time education employee positions, or avoiding the maintenance of an increase in the number of tenure-track positions. (1976, 2017)

F-60. Volunteers in Public Schools

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

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

The Association deplors the practice of using volunteer workers for the purposes of reducing instructional budgets or the number of full- or part-time education employee positions within a local school system. (1998, 2000)

F-61. Substitute Teachers

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

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

- a. Meet the same standards as other licensed teachers within the state
- b. Receive professional compensation and benefits
- c. Receive appropriate and ongoing professional development
- d. Be provided with materials and information appropriate to the position in which they are substituting, including any special needs of the students
- e. Be entitled to representation and support by local, state, and national affiliates in collective bargaining
- f. Be provided classroom and/or office keys in order to allow the “lock down” of a room in the event of an emergency.

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

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

The Association believes that school districts must provide full compensation for licensed teachers who substitute for personnel on extended leave. (1975, 2018)

F-62. Substitute Education Support Professionals

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

The Association supports the right of substitute employees to organize for collective bargaining purposes. The Association also supports the practice of providing schedule pay plus benefits for education

support professionals substituting for permanent education support professionals on extended leave. (1992, 2017)

F-63. Education Employees and Active Duty Service

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

The Association also believes that the federal government, upon calling an educator to active duty, should supplement employee compensation so families do not experience a loss of revenue or benefits. (1975, 2005)

F-64. Employment in Federal Schools

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

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

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

F-65. Education in Correctional and Rehabilitation Agencies

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

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

RETIREMENT/SOCIAL SECURITY

F-66. Defined Benefit Retirement Plans

The National Education Association believes that retirement security for education employees can be assured only by participation in a defined benefit retirement plan from a state or local retirement system. Such plans must be funded in a manner that guarantees their adequate long-term stability.

The Association also believes that defined contribution plans are appropriate only when they supplement defined benefit retirement plans. (1969, 2018)

F-67. Funding of Retirement Plans

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

- a. When actuarial liabilities exceed actuarial assets, the state and/or employer must make the necessary additional contributions to amortize the unfunded liability in no more than 30 years.
- b. When actuarial assets exceed actuarial liabilities, the state and/or employer should not reduce the rate of contributions below the normal cost of the plan.
- c. Employee contributions, if any, should be made on a pre-tax basis and be a percentage of total salary not to exceed the amount contributed by employers. The employer may pay part or all of the employee contribution.
- d. Credit for all wages and salary must be included in all retirement benefit calculations.
- e. Charter schools should be required to participate in the relevant state and local retirement system(s). (1969, 2024)

F-68. Participation into Retirement Systems

The National Education Association believes that contributions to retirement plans should minimally include—

- a. Full vesting in no more than five years
- b. An initial benefit constituting a replacement income of 50 percent of the single highest year's salary from all sources after 20 years of creditable service and 75 percent after 30 years of creditable service; this benefit calculation equates to a basic benefit formula multiplier of two-and-a-half percent for all creditable years of service
- c. Benefits based upon unisex mortality tables
- d. Automatic pre-funded full cost-of-living pension increases for retirees and beneficiaries
- e. Normal retirement eligibility, including health benefits, with 25 creditable years of service or at age 55 if fully vested.

The Association also believes that—

- a. Contributions made by both employees and employers to the pension plan should be tax deferred and not subject to federal or state income taxes
- b. Benefits paid should not be offset due to eligibility in multiple retirement programs
- c. Contributions from both employees and employers should be remitted in a timely fashion in accordance with state statutes
- d. Districts and charter schools should make biannual summary reports of retirement contribution remittances. (1969, 2018)

F-69. Characteristics of Retirement Plans

The National Education Association believes that all qualified retirement plans should contain a nondiscrimination clause and that retirement benefit plans should minimally include—

- a. No provisions in core plans to reduce benefits because of the existence of any annuity or retirement benefit source including Social Security; supplemental retirement plans designed to provide a leveling benefit must assure a level lifetime replacement income that significantly augments existing benefits for all members over time
- b. Benefits that comply with nondiscriminatory Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules and regulations
- c. Joint survivor benefits that are equally available for spouses and domestic partners; joint survivor benefits for any other person that are available based upon IRS guidelines
- d. Disability or death benefits that are equally available for spouses, dependents, and domestic partners
- e. Provisions that define a full year of creditable service based upon working 80 percent or more of the contract year or 80 percent or more of the hours constituting a full year; partial year credit that is earned on a pro-rated basis for any service less than the minimum required to obtain a full year of creditable service
- f. Provisions for the option of allowing unused sick leave and other end-of-service payments to be used for retirement credit
- g. Provisions permitting the purchase of service credit earned while a member of another retirement system including any other public school district, Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools or while in the Peace Corps, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), or military service
- h. Provisions permitting the purchase of service credit for sabbatical leaves, maternity/paternity/adoption leaves, and all leave provided by the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) where credit is not automatically given, and any other approved leaves of absence; members affected by any forced leave provisions or separation of service provisions that are unlawful under current law should be permitted to purchase service credit for those periods of leave or separations at any time prior to retirement at the lowest plan rate
- i. Investments based upon environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles
- j. Decarbonization of investment portfolios by moving toward a net-zero target
- k. Provisions for, upon termination of employment, the portability to other qualified pension plans for the full actuarial value of retirement credits earned

- l. Disability retirement for a service-connected disability available to education employees from the first day of employment; non-service connected disability retirement shall be available for fully vested members; the benefit formula for disability retirement should yield benefits comparable to normal retirement benefits
- m. Provisions for any tax-sheltered annuity and deferred compensation plans that have actuarial tables that do not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, or national origin
- n. Provisions for health benefits for retirees, their spouses, domestic partners, and dependents that include a fully-paid comprehensive health insurance plan regardless of Medicare eligibility; these benefits should be at least equal to those offered to full-time employees; those eligible for Medicare should be covered by a fully-paid comprehensive Medicare supplement insurance benefit that along with Medicare equals the benefits provided to full-time employees. (1969, 2024)

F-70. Investment of Retirement System Assets and Protection of Earned Benefits

The National Education Association believes that retirement system assets can be invested in any type of investment that plays an appropriate role in achieving risk and return objectives reasonably suited to the retirement program. In the investment and management of retirement systems assets, and in a manner consistent with their fiduciary responsibilities and all applicable federal, state, and local statutes, trustees should, among other circumstances, consider—

- a. General economic conditions
- b. The possible effect of inflation or deflation
- c. The role that each investment or course of action plays within the overall portfolio of the retirement program
- d. The expected total return from income and appreciation of capital
- e. Needs for liquidity, regularity of income, and preservation or appreciation of capital
- f. The adequacy of funding for defined benefit plans based on reasonable actuarial factors
- g. Protection of the long-term employment interests and opportunities of participants in the plan
- h. Encouraging investments in corporations whose policies or expenditures of funds do not undermine child welfare and/or public education, when those investments provide equivalent benefits to retirement system members.

The Association also 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 include misuse of assets, manipulation of pension assumptions, arbitrary and deleterious investment restrictions, failure to appropriate required funds to the system, and failure to place employee contributions in trust. These practices reduce the financial soundness of the system and jeopardize the security of education employee retirement benefits. Retirement systems can best be protected by the passage of state constitutional protections against any diminution of plan assets that is not in the sole interest of plan participants and beneficiaries or, absent such constitutional safeguards, by at least the passage of federal and/or state legislation that provides for protections against any diminution of plan assets that is not in the sole interest of plan participants and beneficiaries.

The Association further believes that a retirement system should be exempt from federal regulations when its plan is in compliance with standards prescribed by federal, state, and local statutes. (1976, 2018)

F-71. Diversity in Asset Managers

The National Education Association believes that asset managers should reflect the diversity of the membership whose assets they service. (2021)

F-72. Predatory Financial Instruments

The National Education Association believes that all educators have the right to the full financial benefits they are due. The Association opposes all predatory financial instruments that negatively impact the level of those benefits to their rightful possessors or their beneficiaries, and should work to ensure that its members are aware of companies or industries that use such practices. (2019)

F-73. Boards of Trustees

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

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

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

The Association believes that boards of trustees should—

- a. Consist of Active and Retired members who are all elected by and from their plan's respective memberships; the total number of active and retired member trustees should constitute a majority of the board. Additionally, the Association believes that the composition of pension boards should reflect the diversity of the members they serve
- b. Administer the plan with the highest level of fiscal integrity for the exclusive benefit of the beneficiaries of the system
- c. Have the duty and authority to oversee the administration of both benefits and investments
- d. Subject to their fiduciary responsibilities, have all the powers necessary to ensure their independence from the plan sponsor, including the power to obtain by employment or contract the services necessary to exercise the trustees' powers and perform the trustees' duties, including actuarial, auditing, custodial, investment, and legal services
- e. Undertake periodic independent actuarial reviews and audits
- f. Distribute an annual financial statement to all members
- g. Ensure that counseling, education, and services are available to all active and retired members
- h. Recognize that they should identify and participate in appropriate educational programs and initiatives in order to acquire and maintain skills and expertise; these educational programs should be internally funded and managed exclusively by the board of trustees
- i. Protect the systems' stability by opposing any actions that impair or jeopardize the guaranteed rights of plan participants' benefits. (1976, 2021)

F-74. Social Security

The National Education Association believes that Social Security is a social contract between the U.S. government and its citizens that must never be breached. The Association also believes that Social Security benefits should be guaranteed for all participants regardless of age, gender, or marital status. To better ensure retirement security, Social Security benefits should not be integrated with other retirement benefits.

The Association further believes that Social Security is a critical social insurance program and therefore initiatives should be undertaken that ensure its long-term solvency. These measures should guarantee at least the current level of promised benefits that provide inflation-adjusted retirement benefits for retirees, family survivors of deceased workers, and disabled workers and their families.

The Association opposes—

- a. Any proposal to privatize Social Security

- b. Provisions and regulations that deprive public employees of Social Security benefits
- c. Mandatory coverage of public employees under Social Security for employee groups that have declined coverage
- d. The present practice of taking back earned benefits from Social Security permitted through the Government Pension Offset (GPO)/Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) even if benefits are already being paid.

The Association supports the availability of voluntary Social Security coverage to eligible school employee groups, where initiated by those groups, in states and localities in which public employees are not covered by Social Security. (1977, 2015)

F-75. Medicare

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

The Association also believes that benefits to recipients and payments to medical providers should be equitable and fair throughout the nation.

The Association further believes that initiatives should be undertaken to ensure the long-term solvency of the Medicare system and to guarantee a level of health benefits that provides and ensures high quality, affordable, and comprehensive health care for all Medicare-eligible individuals. (1999, 2009)

G. SECURE PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS, CERTIFICATION, LICENSURE

G-1. State Professional Standards Boards

The National Education Association believes that the profession must govern itself. The Association also believes that each state should have a professional standards board, composed of a majority of practicing public school teachers. The Association further believes that professional standards boards at all levels should include a broad representation of groups that are licensed and should reflect the diversity of their constituencies.

Professional standards boards should have exclusive authority to license and to determine criteria for how a national certificate will be recognized for professional educators. Further, these boards should have the exclusive authority to establish the standards regarding licensure, including procedures for suspension and revocation. The Association opposes legislation that compromises the authority of state standards boards and urges the elimination of state statutes that conflict with this authority. The Association further believes that these boards must apply Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) standards as a minimum for granting, denying, or withdrawing the approval of teacher preparation programs. (1969, 2022)

G-2. National Board Certification

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

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

The Association also supports the periodic evaluation of such certification procedures to ascertain whether cultural, economic, gender, racial, age, or other biases are perpetuated by the requirements for certification. (1987, 2017)

G-3. Licensure

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

- High academic performance
- Extensive clinical practice and field experience
- Demonstrated knowledge of subject matter
- Demonstrated knowledge of pedagogy, child development, and learning acquisition
- Demonstrated understanding of culturally responsive practices and teaching.

Teacher licensure programs, including alternative routes, must be equal in rigor and focus, and based upon quality teaching standards in order to prepare candidates for the initial teaching license. The Association believes that all states should offer appropriate preK licensure.

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

Multiple measures should be used to determine teaching readiness with evidence and feedback from university faculty and cooperating teachers as key factors.

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

The Association asserts that a teaching license should signify that an individual entering the teaching profession is competent to teach. A teaching license must be recognized as the primary requirement for employment in every preK, elementary, secondary, and adult education public and private school.

The Association further asserts that:

- Licenses should only be issued if an individual possesses the entry-level knowledge and skills required for teaching
- Emergency licenses should not be issued
- Assignments outside the teacher's area of licensure should only be permitted with appropriate concurrent retraining supported by the local district.

The Association urges the elimination of state statutes/regulations that require teachers to renew their licenses. Where such renewal continues to be required, it should be based on continued growth and professional development. Standardized literacy and basic skills tests to determine competency should not be used.

Any nonrenewal, revocation, or significant change to the licensure of an education employee should follow procedural and substantive due process. Licensure should not be impacted solely by a nonrenewal or termination of specific employment.

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

The Association also supports the periodic evaluation of licensure procedures to ensure that cultural, economic, gender, racial, and age biases are not perpetuated by the requirements for licensure. (1985, 2022)

G-4. Other National Professional Certifications

The National Education Association supports voluntary national certification for all educators from professional organizations that establish appropriate assessment and qualification standards. (2010, 2019)

ACCREDITATION

G-5. Accreditation in Higher Education

The National Education Association supports strong regional, state, national, and discipline-based accrediting bodies that promote and encourage faculty participation in the accrediting process. The Association believes that programs, faculties, administrations, and facilities should be reviewed to determine their ability to enhance learning opportunities for students. The Association also believes that accrediting agencies should not impose standardized curricula, assessment models, or pedagogical

methods on institutions of higher education but rather should base accreditation on standards as applied to the institutional mission statement. (1995, 1998)

G-6. Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Institutions

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

The Association also believes that CAEP and its governing boards must include representatives of all levels of the teaching profession as well as aspiring educators. (1969, 2000)

H. UNITE EDUCATION EMPLOYEES FOR EFFECTIVE CITIZENSHIP

CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS

H-1. U.S. Constitution

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

H-2. The Education Employee as a Citizen

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

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

The Association also believes that educators should have the opportunity to actively participate in the American political process. The Association supports districts allowing leaves of absence to both campaign full-time and serve in public office. (1969, 2017)

H-3. The Right To Vote

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

The Association recognizes the right to vote as a constitutional right guaranteed to all eligible citizens. The Association supports the continued maintenance of the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the nonpartisan drawing of district lines to ensure fair and competitive elections.

The Association also supports voting and absentee provisions that are accessible, simplified, accurate, reliable, and verifiable for all elections; election administrations that provide for open, fair, secure, and publicly verifiable ballot counting; and the recognition of Election Day as a national holiday.

The Association opposes all actions that encourage or result in voter disenfranchisement. The Association supports reinstatement of voting rights following release from prison and/or completion of probation.

The Association supports voter education programs and uniform registration requirements, including automatic voter, online, and same-day registration, without restrictive residency provisions or restrictive identification requirements. (1971, 2021)

H-4. The Role of the Press in a Democracy

The National Education Association believes that a strong and independent press is vital for a fully functioning democracy. Limits on access to information, threats to individual journalists or news outlets, and coercion by elected officials or businesses cannot be tolerated. The Association also believes that misinformation and disinformation pose as great a threat to democracy as the lack of a free press. The Association further believes that open information laws must be vigorously enforced and that First Amendment rights of the press must be zealously protected. (2017, 2022)

H-5. Participation in Professional Associations

The National Education Association believes that education employees have the right and responsibility to fully participate in professional associations. District policy must equitably provide release time without loss of pay or harassment. (1986, 2015)

H-6. Member Involvement in Community Organizations

The National Education Association encourages its members to become involved in community organizations and to influence those organizations to address issues of common concern to their local, state, and national education associations. (1992, 2015)

H-7. The Right To Know

The National Education Association believes that open meeting and public disclosure laws are essential to permit the monitoring of governmental actions. Government recordings and documents must be available in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost to all citizens equally. (1972, 2017)

H-8. Economic Fairness in a Democracy

The National Education Association believes that basic economic fairness is vital for a fully functioning democracy. The Association also believes that measures such as progressive taxation, estate taxes, a higher minimum wage, affordable higher education, and a strong social safety net are appropriate tools to reduce extreme income inequality and improve economic fairness. (2016)

H-9. National Health Care Policy

The National Education Association believes that affordable, comprehensive health care, including prescription drug coverage, is a human right.

The Association supports the adoption of a single-payer health care plan in the United States, its territories, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Until a single-payer health care plan is adopted, Congress should make no cuts in Medicare/Medicaid funding or benefit levels. (1978, 2023)

H-10. Statehood for the District of Columbia

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

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

CITIZENSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

H-11. Environmental Responsibility

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

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

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

The Association further believes that it is the collective duty of the organization and its members to be leaders in practicing environmental responsibility. (1990, 2023)

H-12. Energy Programs

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

The Association supports ensuring the energy-efficient operation of public schools and encourages the use of new energy sources and energy-efficient design in school renovation and construction. The Association also supports efforts that develop energy conservation awareness and school building energy audit programs. The Association further supports programs that investigate energy efficiency recommendations and research. (1977, 2017)

H-13. Historic Preservation

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

While the Association believes in historic preservation, the Association believes monuments that celebrate the Confederacy and other forms of white supremacy should be removed. (1990, 2021)

I. PROMOTE AND PROTECT HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS

INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS

I-1. Peace and International Relations

The National Education Association recognizes the interdependence of all people. The Association believes in the ideals of peace, freedom, and human dignity based upon respect for the individual and cultural diversity.

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

The Association urges all nations to develop treaties and disarmament agreements that reduce the possibility of war, provide for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and guarantee the rights of nations to exist within safe and secure borders, free from the threat of pre-emptive attacks. The Association also believes that such treaties and agreements should prevent the placement of weapons in outer space.

The Association supports the principles stated in the United Nations (UN) Charter and believes that the UN furthers world peace and promotes the rights of all people by preventing war, racism, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. The Association further believes that Education International contributes to peace and international relations by promoting dialogue among the world's education employees. (1973, 2024)

I-2. International Court of Justice

The National Education Association believes that all people, including lawmakers themselves, are subject to the rule of law and recognizes that the International Court of Justice is one instrument to resolve international disputes peacefully in order to help end the impunity of human rights violators, provide for the rule of law, and hold accountable those who commit the gravest human rights crimes, including apartheid, genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

The Association urges participation by the United States in deliberations before the court and adherence to its rulings. (1986, 2024)

I-3. International Criminal Court

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

The Association also believes that all countries, including the United States, should be State Parties to the International Criminal Court. (2005, 2022)

I-4. Covert Operations and Counterintelligence Activities

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

The Association also believes that all such activities should be conducted under the jurisdiction of all three branches of the federal government and that individuals/agencies must be held accountable when they work outside of the specific directives issued for a given operation. (1989, 2014)

I-5. Nuclear Freeze/Cessation

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

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

I-6. Nuclear Facilities, Radioactive/Chemical Pollutants, and Waste Incineration

The National Education Association believes that strict monitoring of nuclear facilities and radioactive/chemical pollutants and waste incineration should be required. The Association urges the development and implementation of new technologies for the safe transport and recycling of all wastes.

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

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

The Association believes that education employees must be involved in the development and dissemination of emergency plans in the case of accidents that could result in environmental and/or health hazards. (1989, 2009)

I-7. Global Environmental Restoration

The National Education Association believes that when pollution occurs the responsible entities must be accountable for an expeditious, complete cleanup and restoration of the environment and ecosystems. In addition, the Association supports international efforts to reduce the levels of toxic metals, chemicals, and plastics in the food chain. (1990, 2019)

I-8. World Hunger

The National Education Association believes that worldwide attention needs to be focused on food security. The Association supports continued relief to those in need as well as education concerning world hunger and its effects so that they may develop the capacity and the commitment to resolve these problems. (1975, 2016)

I-9. Sustainability

The National Education Association believes that sustainability requires assessing entire systems and recognizing how they must operate in order to preserve the natural systems that support our life on earth.

The Association also believes that sustainability is related to the quality of life in a community and whether the economic, social, and environmental systems that make up a community are providing a healthy, productive, and meaningful life for all community residents, present and future.

The Association further believes that establishing, tracking, and managing sustainability goals will ensure continuous progress toward sustainability, and that sustainable practices are cost-effective, provide a workforce that understands sustainability, build stronger communities, support local economies, protect student and staff health, support academic success, prepare today's students to be wise leaders tomorrow, and protect our ecosystems. (2008, 2015)

I-10. Global Climate Change

The National Education Association recognizes the scientific consensus that global climate change is largely caused by human activity, resulting in significant, measureable damage to the earth and its inhabitants.

The Association believes that humans must take immediate steps to change activities that contribute to global climate change.

The Association supports the continued development and implementation of environmentally sound practices that abate global climate change and its effects in partnership with the global community. (2007, 2017)

I-11. International Consumer Protection

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

The Association opposes the coercing of other nations to accept U.S. products that do not meet those nations' consumer, health, and safety standards and practices. (1990, 2014)

HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS

I-12. Human Rights

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

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

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

The Association urges countries—including the United States—to provide a safe haven for greater numbers of refugees who have fled devastation in their native countries during times of increased conflict, and condemns the stereotyping of refugee groups.

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

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

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

The Association further condemns the practice of capital punishment. The practice of capital punishment in the United States and elsewhere impacts individuals disproportionately on the basis of social class, race, ethnicity, ability, and gender. The Association supports ongoing efforts to ban the practice of capital punishment.

The Association opposes any federal, state, or local law; executive order or presidential signing statement; and/or amendment to the U.S. Constitution that curtails or infringes on basic human rights. The Association also opposes harsh sentencing measures, such as mandatory minimums and other local, state, and national laws which have contributed to mass incarceration. The Association also opposes torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment of persons in the custody or under the physical control of the U.S. government, regardless of nationality or physical location. (1977, 2021)

I-13. Civil Rights

The National Education Association is committed to the achievement of a totally integrated society free from racial and social biases and disparities. The Association calls for statutes and practices that create a country free from barriers of race, color, national origin, religion, philosophical beliefs, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, size, veteran status, marital status, and economic status that prevent some individuals, adult or juvenile, from exercising rights enjoyed by others, including liberties decreed in common law, the Constitution, and statutes of the United States. Civil order and obedience to the law must be ensured without abridgment of human and civil rights. All individuals must be assured a speedy and fair judicial process, including the right to habeas corpus, 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 believes that any federal, state, or local law; executive order or presidential signing statement; or amendment to the U.S. or state constitutions or interpretation thereof that curtails basic civil rights is detrimental to a free and democratic society. Therefore, the Association believes that racial and social equity principles should be implemented at all levels of policymaking. (1969, 2023)

I-14. Human and Civil Rights of Children and Youth

The National Education Association believes that the human and civil rights of children and youth must be protected and opposes the exploitation of children and youth under any circumstances. The Association opposes early and forced marriage, forced pregnancy, and forced child bearing of and by children and youth. The Association recognizes these harmful practices as violations of human rights and calls for strengthened efforts to prevent and eliminate them.

The Association also believes that all children possess a fundamental civil right of access to a system of high quality public education grounded in the principles of adequacy and equity. The Association supports the rights of youth to safely access education and other human services during conditions of war, occupation, natural disaster, and civil strife.

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

Children and youth in detention centers must be provided educational programs that include any special education services per a student's individualized education program (IEP) or a student's 504 plan to enable a student to become a contributing member of society. Educators in such centers must receive appropriate and ongoing professional development to provide instruction in life skills and learning skills.

The Association further believes that adolescent neurological development needs to be considered when the sentencing of juveniles is being determined. Therefore, the Association opposes the imposition of the death penalty, life imprisonment without parole, and prolonged solitary confinement for individuals

whose offenses were committed prior to age 18. The Association condemns the practice of placing children and youth in trouble in abusive environments, and opposes the placement of children and youth who are not charged with any offense in facilities with persons who are charged with criminal offenses. The Association believes that there must be separate facilities for the detention and for the incarceration of children and youth and supports the development of alternatives to supplement the use of such facilities. (1988, 2023)

I-15. Private Prisons

The National Education Association believes that profiting from incarceration is in direct conflict with the objective to rehabilitate those who have committed crimes. Additionally, private prison practices such as maintaining high occupancy rates and unsafe staff-to-inmate ratios, lobbying for harsh sentences, and providing inadequate services undermine restorative justice practices and disproportionately affect people of color. These practices elevate incidents of racial bias and racial disparity. Therefore, the Association believes that incarcerated individuals should be held in publicly operated institutions. (2018, 2021)

I-16. Human Relations in the School

The National Education Association believes that improved human relations are essential to the school environment. The Association, in order to improve human relations, calls for—

- a. School recruitment and staffing policies that will ensure selection of culturally diverse educators
- b. Appropriate classroom and other student-related activities, particularly those that are responsive to the cultural diversity and historical backgrounds of our society
- c. Schools and classrooms that implement trainings and strategies addressing implicit bias, equity, diversity, racial justice, and restorative justice
- d. Ongoing development of continuing education programs to educate school and community personnel
- e. Reduction of the ratio of students to certified/licensed staff. This reduction should be to the level teachers determine to be essential to enhance and improve learning
- f. Development of ways to improve police relations with student and community groups through the joint efforts of school, community, and law enforcement agencies
- g. Joint discussions to promote understanding of human and civil rights and responsibilities of all constituents within our global society
- h. Development, training, and implementation of curricula that teach staff and students about positive human relations. (1972, 2021)

I-17. Displaced Workers

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

The Association opposes the use of public funds or tax incentives to encourage the movement of U.S. companies to other countries at the expense of U.S. union labor. (1992, 2019)

I-18. The Right To Organize

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

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

Association supports the rights of workers to unionize by signing cards and the establishment of penalties for violating the rights of workers to unionize.

The Association also believes that members have the right to have payroll deduction of both Association membership dues and voluntary political contributions. (1982, 2013)

I-19. Use of Union-Made Products and Services

The National Education Association recognizes the historical role of organized labor in its struggle for economic and social justice. The Association advocates the use of union-made products and services. The Association should refrain from promoting businesses that demonstrate anti-union practices. The Association supports the use of informational campaigns, boycotts, or picket lines. (1991, 2024)

RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

I-20. Freedom of Creative Expression

The National Education Association supports freedom of creative expression and therefore deplores any efforts by governments to suppress, directly or indirectly, such expression. The Association also supports the freedom of publicly funded agencies to exercise judgment in the awarding of grants to individuals and organizations. (1990, 2016)

I-21. Right to Privacy

The National Education Association believes that every individual has a right to privacy. The Association continues to be concerned about the indiscriminate surveillance of citizens or groups. The Association condemns the use of information gathered and stored and the exchange of such information, including but not limited to: library patron, medical, email, social media, location, contacts, and financial records, without explicit release from the person or persons involved.

The Association also believes that rights to privacy and confidentiality must be guaranteed through federal and state legislation. (1970, 2019)

I-22. Freedom of Religion

The National Education Association believes that freedom of religion is a fundamental human right as is freedom from religion. The Association also believes that choice of religion, including no religion, is an intensely personal decision, individuals have the right to practice their religion, and no person should use religious beliefs as a basis for discrimination. Instruction in religious doctrines and practices is best provided within a family setting and/or by religious institutions.

The Association further believes that schools should teach the rights and responsibilities associated with the freedom of and from religion, the religious heritage and diversity of the United States, respect for the beliefs of others, and the historical and cultural influences of various world religions.

The Association believes that local school boards should adopt policies that govern religious activities on school property. Such policies must respect the separation of church and state; govern voluntary, student-led meetings with adult supervision before or after regular school hours; treat all religions, or choice of none, on an equal basis; and protect the rights of students and education employees.

The Association also believes that the constitutional provisions on the establishment of and the free exercise of religion in the First Amendment require that there be no sectarian practices in the public school program. The Association opposes the imposition of sectarian practices in the public school program and urges its affiliates to do the same.

The Association also opposes any federal legislation or mandate that would require school districts to schedule a moment of silence. The Association particularly opposes a moment of silence as a condition for receiving federal funds. (1995, 2019)

I-23. Marriage Equality

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

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

The Association further believes that these factors should never be used to deny any individual or couple the full rights of marriage equality. (2015, 2021)

I-24. Fair Housing

The National Education Association believes that all citizens should be free to reside in the communities of their choice. The Association supports policies and programs that provide adequate and accessible housing for all. The Association supports the elimination of discriminatory housing practices, such as redlining, that perpetuate racial bias, discriminate against certain ethnic groups, and prevent generational wealth in marginalized communities. (1969, 2021)

I-25. Comprehensive Health Care

The National Education Association believes that access to comprehensive health care is a human right. Comprehensive health care includes, but is not limited to, reproductive health care, gender-affirming care, and emergency care. Health care should not be denied on the grounds of race, color, national origin, immigration status, political beliefs, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, size, marital status, or economic condition. (2023, 2024)

I-26. Family Planning

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

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

The Association further believes in the implementation of community-operated, school-based family planning clinics that will provide intensive counseling by trained personnel.

The Association believes that continued funding of these facilities at both the federal and state levels is necessary to provide access to care for people who cannot afford, or travel to, private facilities.

The Association supports state affiliates' efforts to codify rights to full reproductive freedom. (1985, 2023)

I-27. Governmental Support for Public Welfare

The National Education Association recognizes egregious disparities in economic opportunities. Therefore, the Association believes that conditions that cause reliance on public welfare must be alleviated. The Association also believes that all governmental agencies must work together to provide assistance in education, housing, child care, health care, transportation, and job training/placement. Furthermore, assistance must continue during the transition from welfare to work.

The Association further believes that no current employee should be displaced nor position abolished as a result of government efforts to move individuals from welfare to work. (1971, 2021)

I-28. Immigration

The National Education Association supports efforts to improve the immigration process, including the provision of due process, equal protection, and access to status without regard to ethnicity, religion, or national origin. The Association also supports policies that protect the integrity of the family unit and deplores the hardships and trauma imposed on families when family members, especially spouses and partners, parents, guardians, or caretakers, are detained and/or deported for immigration status offenses and thereby separated from their children, many of whom are U.S. citizens. The Association supports equal access to educational opportunities for immigrants. The Association believes that English, adult education, GED, and citizenship classes should be available in sufficient numbers to ensure that immigrants can comply with all federal mandates for permanent residence and/or citizenship. The Association also believes that the federal government is responsible for the enforcement of immigration policy.

The Association recognizes that historically there have been many economic and/or political circumstances that have compelled people to come to the U.S. The Association opposes any immigration

policy that denies human and/or civil rights or educational opportunities to immigrants and their children, hinders workers' abilities to organize, imposes excessive fees and fines on those seeking legalization, or criminalizes individuals or groups who support or assist them. The Association also opposes any policy that makes legalization or naturalization dependent upon military service and/or service in a combat zone. The Association condemns such policies as inhumane and discriminatory.

The Association further believes that federal decisions regarding the status of accompanied and unaccompanied immigrant children must always be made in the best interests of the child. Children who qualify for international protection must have their educational needs met while being given the time and resources, including court-appointed counsel, to have their cases fairly heard. The Association believes that children should not be separated from their parents/guardians. Therefore, the best placement for these children is in a family setting and not in detention facilities. (1984, 2017)

I-29. Migrant Workers

The National Education Association is concerned with the plight of migrant workers. The Association is committed to the right of migrant workers to be fully represented in collective bargaining by the organization of their choice. (1985, 2015)

PROTECTION FROM VIOLENT ACTS

I-30. Victims of Crime

The National Education Association believes that victims of crime should be treated with dignity and compassion, without the fear of intimidation. Victims and their families should be notified of and have the right to be present/represented at all hearings and legal proceedings involving the defendant/perpetrator.

The Association also believes that it is a violation of the victims' right to privacy to release the names of the victims. The Association further believes that victims and their families must be made aware of and have free access to necessary services/programs. These services/programs must be funded by the appropriate government agencies. (1987, 2008)

I-31. Bullying

The National Education Association believes that the school environment/work site 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 can affect the entire school community and work sites.

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. Include activities to help all students, staff, and community members feel understood, respected, valued, and included by cultivating greater awareness and appreciation of our cultural similarities and differences in order to prevent bullying
- d. Provide training for all school employees in bullying prevention and intervention
- e. Encourage school boards to establish written policies designed to ensure the elimination of bullying, harassment, and intimidation of students and staff by other students and staff
- f. Provide professional development materials and resources.

These programs should be reviewed, revised, and updated to reflect changing needs. (2004, 2013)

I-32. Traffic Safety

The National Education Association believes that traffic deaths and injuries must be reduced. The Association supports—

- a. Enactment and enforcement of effective and equitable legislation regulating driving while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or other mind-altering substances
- b. Appropriate educational experiences for students regarding the effects of driving while under the influence
- c. Recognized community and school groups in their efforts to reduce death and injury from accidents caused by drivers under the influence
- d. Legislation requiring mandatory restraint of all passengers in motor vehicles, excluding school buses. The legislation should require the use of seat belts for adults and minor children and approved car seats for infants and young children
- e. Legislation requiring the use of helmets for bicycle and motorcycle riders
- f. Continued research and the development of safety features and passive restraint systems for passengers in school buses and for the inclusion of those features shown to be effective
- g. Legislation mandating no texting on cell phones while driving. (1982, 2010)

I-33. Gun-Free Schools and the Regulation of Deadly Weapons

The National Education Association believes that all students and education employees must be allowed to learn and work in an environment free of unauthorized guns and other deadly weapons. Severe penalties should be enacted and strenuously enforced for criminal actions involving guns and other deadly weapons, especially in school settings, and for those who profit from the illegal sale, importation, and distribution of these weapons. The Association also believes that individuals who bring guns or deadly weapons to school should be excluded from school and school grounds until completion of a mandatory prescribed intervention.

The Association further believes that arming education employees as a preventative measure against armed intruders creates an unsafe environment, placing students and school personnel at greater risk. Our communities, schools, and students are safer when common sense gun regulations are in place. Therefore, the Association supports banning assault weapons, limiting the capacity of ammunition magazines, requiring background checks and a waiting period for all gun purchases, creating a national database of gun sales, and preventing people with mental illness and/or a documented history of violence from purchasing firearms. The Association believes that minors must not be allowed to buy, own, or sell firearms.

The Association also believes that scientific and medical research on the causes and prevention of firearm violence should be extensive and ongoing and that gun owners should participate in educational programs that stress responsible ownership, including safe use and storage of guns. (1982, 2019)

I-34. Violence Against Females Worldwide

The National Education Association condemns domestic and other violence against females, as well as the tolerance of such violence, and believes that all nations must establish and enforce measures to curtail and prevent actions, policies, and practices that inflict pain, suffering, or death. (1993, 2015)

I-35. Gender-Based Violence Worldwide

The National Education Association condemns gender-based violence worldwide and the tolerance of such violence. The Association believes that all nations must establish and enforce measures to curtail and prevent actions, policies, and practices that inflict pain, suffering, or death based on gender identity or expression. (2019)

I-36. Sexual Assault

The National Education Association believes that all members of society should be protected from sexual assault. The Association also believes that it is a violation of the victims' right to privacy to release the names of the victims or to have their past sexual history admitted as evidence in assault cases or media coverage. The Association supports fair and equitable treatment by health, hospital, and law enforcement agencies for sexual assault victims. The Association further believes that access to necessary services/programs must be made available to victims and their families. These services must be funded by appropriate government agencies.

The Association believes that states should develop a systematic process for gathering evidence when such assaults occur and supports the use of DNA testing as a means to identify perpetrators of sexual

assault. The Association also believes in the importance of counseling and rehabilitation for the assailant, and the protection of privacy and due process rights for both the victim and the alleged assailant. (1981, 2017)

I-37. Human Trafficking and Child Marriage

The National Education Association is committed to the abolition of all forms of human trafficking. Human trafficking is the acquisition, transportation, recruitment, and harboring of persons by means of threat, force, fraud, or coercion and for the purpose of exploitation as defined by the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons. The Association opposes the forced marriage of children, which is a form of human trafficking. The Association recognizes child marriage and human trafficking as violations of human rights and calls for strengthened efforts to prevent and eliminate these harmful practices. (2010, 2019)

OBSERVANCES

I-38. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

The National Education Association believes that Martin Luther King, Jr. Day should be a holiday in every U.S. state, territory, and protectorate. The Association recognizes the significance of the observance to emphasize our need for racial healing, justice, and equality through nonviolence. (1969, 2017)

I-39. César Chávez Day

The National Education Association believes that César Chávez Day should be a state holiday in every state to focus on the importance of labor organizing and promoting equitable human relations. The Association encourages the observance of this day to promote reflection and action for social justice. (2008, 2009)

I-40. Indigenous Peoples' Day

The National Education Association believes that the history of colonization needs to be recognized and acknowledged in every state. To do so, the Association believes that the name of the current holiday known as “Columbus Day” should be renamed and recognized as “Indigenous Peoples’ Day” in recognition of early indigenous peoples before colonization by European settlers. (2019)

I-41. Veterans Day

The National Education Association believes that all people of this nation should honor and memorialize the sacrifices and heroic acts of all who have served in the Armed Forces. Veterans Day should be maintained as a legal holiday. Students should be taught the importance and magnitude of the sacrifices made by veterans in the protection of the United States during war and peace. Affiliates and school systems should plan observances to promote the celebration of veterans’ courage, patriotism, and sacrifice for every member of society. (2001, 2021)

I-42. Observance of Juneteenth

The National Education Association believes that Juneteenth should be a holiday in every U.S. state, territory, and protectorate. The Association encourages the promotion and celebration of this day to commemorate the fulfillment of the Emancipation Proclamation and the freedom of enslaved men, women, and children in the United States on June 19, 1865. (2022)

I-43. Observances Celebrating Women

The National Education Association believes in the importance of celebrating women as heroines for both their broad and specific contributions to society. The Association also believes that these celebrations must recognize the intersectionality, challenges, and triumphs of women who identify as Native People and Asian, Black, Latin(o/a/x), Middle Eastern and North African, Multiracial, and Pacific Islander people. The Association further believes that these celebrations must also recognize the intersectionality, challenges, and triumphs of women who are transgender and non-binary. (2022)

RIGHTS OF SPECIFIC GROUPS

I-44. Self-Determination of Indigenous People

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

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

I-45. Protection of Senior Citizens

The National Education Association believes that physical, mental, and economic abuse of senior citizens in any form is deplorable.

The Association also believes in the development of legislation and consumer education to eliminate the use of unethical techniques, scare tactics, and misrepresentation to divest senior citizens of their financial resources. The Association further believes that its affiliates should join in political action to bring about such legislative and administrative reform at the state and national levels. (1978, 2015)

I-46. Protection of People Living with HIV, AIDS, and Hepatitis

The National Education Association believes that people living with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), and/or hepatitis should be ensured fair and equitable treatment allowing equal access to education, employment, living conditions, and all rights guaranteed by law.

The Association also believes in maintaining the public health by encouraging people to be tested and seek treatment for lifelong conditions impacting an individual's health such as, but not limited to HIV, AIDS and/or hepatitis.

The Association further believes that blood donation policies should utilize modern, science-based guidelines that focus on the risk factors associated with HIV transmission instead of the gender of a person's sexual partners.

The Association believes that HIV/AIDS criminalization laws should be made current with the modern understanding of HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and transmission. HIV/AIDS should be treated no differently than other serious communicable diseases, thereby removing the discrimination and stigma surrounding these health conditions. (1994, 2019)

I-47. Disabilities Awareness

The National Education Association believes that the human and civil rights of individuals with visible and nonvisible disabilities must be protected. The Association also believes that ableist language and practices are harmful and must be eliminated. The chosen identifiers of individuals with disabilities must be respected. The Association encourages its affiliates to educate their own members, law enforcement, emergency responders, and the public-at-large to bring about an awareness of disability issues. (1999, 2024)

I-48. Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

The National Education Association believes that all buildings should be in compliance with the accessibility standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Association also believes that employees with disabilities are entitled to medically necessary and reasonable accommodations necessary to perform the essential duties of their jobs. The Association further believes that events and proceedings should be structured to be able to provide medically necessary and reasonable accommodations. (1988, 2024)

I-49. Protection of Persons with Cognitive Disabilities

The National Education Association believes that the human and civil rights of individuals with cognitive disabilities must be protected.

The Association also believes that individuals with cognitive disabilities who have committed criminal offenses should receive all diagnostic and/or psychological services that meet their needs and

guarantee their right not to be abused while incarcerated. The Association further believes that individuals with cognitive disabilities should not be subjected to capital punishment. (1989, 2015)

I-50. Care and Protection of Persons with Mental Health Disorders

The National Education Association believes that it is society's responsibility to provide quality care for persons who have mental health disorders. Such persons should have access, as needed, to diagnosis, primary hospital care, outpatient services, necessary medication, social services, and housing in the least restrictive environment. Financial assistance for such care should be based upon the ability of the individual to pay.

The Association also believes that individuals with mental disabilities who have committed criminal offenses should receive all diagnostic and/or psychological services that meet their needs and guarantee their right not to be abused while incarcerated.

The Association further believes that individuals with mental disorders should not be subject to capital punishment. (1986, 2015)

I-51. Care and Protection of Military Veterans

The National Education Association believes that many veterans of military conflicts are suffering physical, social, and psychological problems due to their involvement in combat and related military activities. The Association also believes that all military personnel and veterans should have comprehensive and timely access to appropriate and necessary medical care. The Association supports federal and state increases in benefits and programs, including retirement benefits, for these military veterans and their dependents to meet their needs. (1981, 2017)

OPPOSITION TO ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

I-52. Elimination of Discrimination

The National Education Association is committed to the elimination of discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity, economic status, religion, disability, medical history, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, and all other forms of discrimination. The Association believes that sanctions are both justified and necessary against governments, organizations, businesses, and/or groups that utilize or support discriminatory practices. The Association believes that any code, policy, or system of discrimination and exploitation in the workplace and in schools must be eliminated. The Association also believes that nondiscriminatory cultural expression is a human right. The Association further believes that it is important to eliminate discrimination against individuals wearing natural hairstyles such as braids, twists, cornrows, and locs.

The Association believes that in order to gain a more complete understanding of discriminatory oppression, intersectionality must be recognized and addressed within leadership, schools, and communities in order to advance the Association's social justice work. Intersectionality is the understanding of how a person's identities combine and compound to create unique discriminatory experiences.

Honest and open conversation is a precursor to change. The Association encourages its members and all other members of the educational community to engage in necessary conversations in order to examine assumptions, prejudices, discriminatory practices, and their effects. (1976, 2023)

I-53. Institutional Discrimination

The National Education Association believes that the fabric of our society is strengthened when the contributions from all of its diverse members are encouraged and embraced. The Association recognizes that institutional and public policies and practices sometimes discriminate against certain groups in society and perpetuate stereotypes and biases about these groups. Therefore, the Association encourages its affiliates, in collaboration with community organizations, to increase public awareness about racially unjust legislation, policies, practices, and biases and to actively work to eliminate them. (1998, 2021)

I-54. Discrimination by Organizations

The National Education Association believes that organizations, including the Association and its affiliates, are strengthened by offering membership, providing leadership opportunities, and ensuring full and effective participation on a nondiscriminatory basis.

The Association shall use the facilities of and/or participate in programs sponsored only by organizations and/or their auxiliaries that do not deny membership to certain segments of our society on a discriminatory basis when such denials are not related to the stated purposes of the organization. The Association encourages its affiliates to do the same.

The Association also believes that its members now holding membership in such organizations should work actively from within for the total elimination of such exclusionary clauses. (1974, 2022)

I-55. White Supremacy Culture

The National Education Association believes that, in order to achieve racial and social justice, educators must acknowledge the existence of white supremacy culture as a primary root cause of institutional racism, structural racism, and white privilege. Educators must also work to prohibit institutionally racist systems and policies that have governed our society and kept Native People, Asian, Black, Latin(o/a/x), Middle Eastern and North African, Multiracial, and Pacific Islander people* from full participation in American life. Additionally, the Association believes that the norms, standards, and organizational structures manifested in white supremacy culture perpetually exploit and oppress people of color and serve as detriments to racial justice. Further, the invisible racial benefits of white privilege, which are automatically conferred irrespective of wealth, gender, and other factors, severely limit opportunities for people of color and impede full achievement of racial and social justice. The Association believes that, to aid in the efforts to eradicate hate caused by prejudice, stereotypes, and biases, school districts must provide training in cultural competence, implicit bias, restorative practices and techniques, and racial justice. Therefore, the Association will actively advocate for social and educational strategies fostering the eradication of institutional racism and white privilege perpetuated by white supremacy culture. (2018, 2024)

I-56. Racial Justice

The National Education Association believes in the necessity of racial healing to strengthen our society as a whole. To this end, the United States must make a transformative investment in the physical and mental health and economic opportunities of Native People, Asian, Black, Latin(o/a/x), Middle Eastern and North African, Multiracial, and Pacific Islander people*, and their communities. Racial justice in education and throughout the United States will be realized when we ensure systematic fair treatment resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for people of all races. The Association acknowledges that both historical and current practices have systematically advantaged and privileged people of White European ancestry while disadvantaging and denying rights, opportunities, and equality for people of color. Implemented through both policies and laws, these biased practices have been manifested in the conditions our students and educators face in their schools and communities.

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

The Association encourages its affiliates to educate members about the ways race privileges certain people. The Association also encourages its affiliates to work with family and student partners to develop, initiate, and promote programs that will lead us to repair, heal, organize, and advocate to achieve racial justice so that every student and educator may fulfill their full potential. (2017, 2024)

* This language usage acknowledges the Report and Recommendations of the Racial Equity Language Review Stakeholder Group adopted by the NEA Board of Directors in May 2020. Native People are named first, distinctly, recognized as the first people of this land with sovereign national and tribal status, and named together with Asian, Black inclusive of African American, Latin(o/a/x) inclusive of Hispanic and Chican(o/a/x), Middle Eastern and North African, Multiracial, and Pacific Islander people.

I-57. Hate-Motivated Violence

The National Education Association believes that acts or threats of hate-motivated violence, including, but not limited to, physical and verbal violence against individuals or groups because of their race, color, national origin, political beliefs, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, size, marital status, or economic condition are deplorable. The Association also believes that federal, state, and local governments and community groups must oppose and eliminate hate-motivated violence and that current events and/or economic conditions should not diminish such opposition.

The Association recognizes the danger of White supremacist groups and all media sources that promote hateful speech and actions, and the continuation of institutional racism. The Association also recognizes the danger of any group that marginalizes anyone based on race, color, national origin, political beliefs, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, size, marital status, or economic condition. Therefore, educators must take a significant role in countering the effects of such speech, actions, and racism on our students, families, and communities.

The Association further recognizes the persistence of non-race-based hate-motivated violence in the United States. The elevated levels of hate-motivated violence in the form of antisemitism, anti-Islamic and anti-Sikh sentiment, and anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment must be recognized and addressed by schools and communities to further foster a vibrant, pluralistic, and intrinsically equitable and just society. (1991, 2023)

I-58. Civility in Public Discourse

The National Education Association believes that American institutions in both the public and private sectors should foster a culture that promotes universal respect for all people and that strongly discourages demeaning characterizations of people in relation to their race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, political affiliation, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, size, or disability. (2008, 2021)

I-59. Respect for Individual Names and Pronouns

The National Education Association believes that an individual's name and pronouns are of utmost importance. Therefore, all educators must treat students and fellow educators with respect and dignity. The Association acknowledges that students and educators experience discrimination from the effects of mispronunciations, misgendering, misrepresentations, incorrect documentations in systems of record, or the usage of deadnames. Regardless of intent, the long-lasting negative impact on the individual, classroom, and work environment is deleterious in nature and detrimental to teaching and learning. Therefore, the Association believes student and educator names and pronouns should be treated with respect and dignity by making efforts to understand and implement proper pronunciation, punctuation, stylization, individual preference, cultural norms, context and times of usage, and a true understanding of the discrimination experienced when these aspects of a person's name and pronouns are disregarded. (2021)

I-60. Linguistic Diversity

The National Education Association believes that, although English is the language of political and economic communication in the United States, efforts to legislate English as the official language disregard cultural pluralism; deprive those in need of education, social services, and employment; and must be challenged.

The Association recognizes the importance of an individual's native language and culture and the need to promote and preserve them through instruction, public service announcements, and all other forms of communication. The Association also believes that people should be able to speak in their native tongue free from harassment and bias. (1987, 2021)

I-61. Use of Prejudicial Terms and Symbols

The National Education Association believes prejudice is deplorable and the use of names, symbols, caricatures, emblems, logos, and mascots that promote prejudice should be discontinued. (1992, 2015)

I-62. Right of Redress for Descendants of Slaves

The National Education Association believes that slavery, forced servitude, and/or the ownership of a human being are gross violations of human rights and unacceptable in a civilized society.

The Association also believes that the history of slavery in the United States was a grievous crime against humankind that has contributed to a continuance of over 400 years of economic injustices, terror, state-sponsored terrorism, and institutional and systemic racism—including, but not limited to, convict leasing; unjust imprisonment; Jim Crow segregation, lynching and torture of Black citizens, and destruction of Black communities and towns; redlining; exclusion of the access to benefits of the New Deal and GI Bill; the ripping apart of families; mass incarceration; police brutality and murder; militarization and over-policing of Black communities; denial of equal and equitable access to education; the school-to-prison pipeline; criminalization of Black students in school; denial of economic opportunity; denial of full economic participation; and denial of democratic participation.

The Association further believes that the descendants of enslaved Africans in the U.S. have the right to redress for the crimes against humanity committed by the United States through full repair and reparations for building the economic engine of the West that resulted in generational wealth accrual by White Americans off the theft of that labor, while at the same time being denied full economic participation or benefits of that labor, and for the gross injustices inflicted upon their ancestors. (2008, 2021)

I-63. Educational Reparations

The National Education Association believes that, in order to achieve racial and social justice for descendants of formerly enslaved peoples, educational reparations must be made. Educational reparations are defined as measures, including legislation, financial supports, educational opportunities and corrective funding formulas that seek to redress violations of Black people's human rights by providing a range of material and symbolic benefits to individuals, families, and communities that have been negatively impacted by the influence of racialized education policies. Educational reparations must be adequate, effective, prompt, and should be proportional to the scale of the violations and the harm suffered.

The Association further believes that those educational reparations must be made to overcome years of white supremacy laws and education policies such as redlining, inadequate and unequal school funding, tracking of students, and the school-to-prison pipeline. Reparations may include:

- a. Grant programs to fill in gaps in state education funding
- b. Addressing the lack of equitable funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)
- c. Addressing disproportionate identification of African American/Black special education students
- d. Addressing insufficient funding for African American/Black students with exceptionalities
- e. Grant programs to encourage more African American/Black descendants to enter the field of education
- f. Legislation to eliminate property-tax-based education funding models
- g. Equity-focused reviews of school discipline policies
- h. Bias-free inclusive curricula that include the Black Diaspora
- i. Student loan forgiveness
- j. Support for technical degrees and colleges
- k. Free public higher and further education for descendants. (2024)

I-64. Deprivation of Human Rights of Indigenous People

The National Education Association believes that it is deplorable for government entities to allow, sanction, or participate in the slaughter and displacement of indigenous people, including any practice that violates treaties, forcibly relocates, and/or forces compulsory out-of-home placements regarding life and education.

The Association also believes that any attempt to deprive a group from life, land, resources, or culture is immoral.

The Association further believes that formal apologies are long overdue to the indigenous people of the United States and its territories and protectorates. (2009, 2010)

I-65. Repatriation of American Indian/Alaska Native Remains

The National Education Association believes in the dignity of the dead and encourages laws to prevent the robbing of graves.

The Association also believes that the remains of thousands of American Indians/Alaska Natives in storage throughout the United States should be returned for interment to the tribes and/or areas from which they were taken. The Association further believes that American Indian/Alaska Native sacred items in museum collections should be returned to the tribes of their origin. (1989, 2008)

I-66. Violence Against and Exploitation of Asians/Pacific Islanders

The National Education Association opposes the expression of covert and overt sentiments, threats, and incidents of racially motivated physical and/or verbal violence toward Asians/Pacific Islanders. The Association believes that community-based educational programs should be developed by local school systems in conjunction with Asian/Pacific Islander groups to eliminate this violence. The Association supports clear and consistent law enforcement to protect the civil and human rights of the victims of such violence.

The Association also opposes the exploitation of women as mail-order brides. (1984, 1999)

I-67. Internment/Containment Policies Based on Race, Ethnicity, and/or National Origin

The National Education Association recognizes that restrictive and/or punitive action based on race or national origin is a violation of constitutional guarantees and is repugnant to the American ideals of life, liberty, and property.

The Association condemns the practice of internment/containment of racially identifiable segments of our newly immigrated and current populations. (1982, 2017)

I-68. Inclusive Medical Studies

The National Education Association believes that women and members of racial minority groups must be included in the samples of all medical studies, surveys, and research purporting to yield results applicable to all segments of a population. (1991)

I-69. Sexual Harassment

The National Education Association recognizes that sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination or abuse.

The Association believes that students and education employees should be protected from sexual harassment, which is a form of sex discrimination. The Association encourages its affiliates to work with local school districts and institutions of higher education to—

- a. Establish strong policies defining and prohibiting sexual harassment
- b. Develop educational programs designed to help people recognize, understand, prevent, combat, and eliminate sexual harassment
- c. Develop and publicize a grievance procedure that encourages the reporting of incidents of sexual harassment, resolves complaints promptly, and protects the rights of all parties
- d. Form and train support groups to assist in the counseling of targets of alleged sexual harassment. (1988, 2016)

I-70. Equal Opportunity for Women

The National Education Association believes that all persons, regardless of gender, must have equal opportunity for employment, promotion, compensation (including equal pay for comparable worth), and leadership in all activities.

The Association supports an amendment to the U.S. Constitution (such as the Equal Rights Amendment) that guarantees that equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state because of gender. The Association urges its affiliates to support ratification of such an amendment. The Association also supports the enactment and full funding of the Women's Educational Equity Act.

The Association also believes that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission must have cease-and-desist authority to act in all cases of discrimination based on race, creed, color, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and gender.

The Association further believes that governing boards and education associations must eliminate discriminatory practices against women in employment, promotion, and compensation. Personnel policies must include family leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, leave for adoption of a child, child-care leave, and professional leave that encourages women to participate in professional growth experiences and to prepare for administrative and executive positions.

The Association believes that local, state, and national agencies should consider research specifically related to women and their health problems and concerns.

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

The Association further believes in the establishment of women's education committees in local and state affiliates as a vehicle for implementation of equal opportunity for women.

The Association believes that sexism and sex discrimination must be eliminated and endorses the use of nonsexist language.

The Association also believes that any restriction to reproductive freedom is a form of sex discrimination. (1969, 2023)

I-71. Personal Relationships in Higher Education

The National Education Association recognizes that in institutions of higher education adult students and education employees may establish personal relationships. However, such relationships should be voluntary and not be used to coerce or influence others for personal advantage. Thus, the Association believes that sexual relationships between a faculty member and a student currently enrolled in the faculty member's course, or under the supervision or direction of any higher education employee, are unprofessional. The Association encourages its affiliates in institutions of higher education to seek the establishment of strong policies declaring such relationships unprofessional. (1989, 1998)

I-72. Businesses Owned by Minorities and/or Women

The National Education Association believes that businesses owned by minorities and/or women should be encouraged. The Association also believes that the federal government should initiate and continue policies that encourage businesses owned by minorities and/or women. (1989, 2004)

INTEGRATION AND DESEGREGATION

I-73. Integration in the Public Schools

The National Education Association believes that it is imperative that full integration of the nation's schools be effected.

The Association recognizes that acceptable integration plans will include affirmative action programs and a variety of devices, such as geographic realignment, pairing of schools, grade pairing, and satellite and magnet schools. Some arrangements may require busing of students in order to comply with established guidelines adhering to the letter and spirit of the law.

The Association urges its affiliates to encourage school boards to study and consider seriously the negative impact on minority students when schools located in minority neighborhoods are targeted for closing.

The Association will assist its affiliates to ensure that education employees, parents/guardians, and students are involved in the development of plans designed to achieve integration. The Association also believes that state and federal agencies should provide funds necessary to implement integration programs, including funds for student transportation. The Association also urges participation in citizen advisory committees—consisting of members designated by the local education association, parents, and representatives of community organizations, business, clergy, and media—that reflect the ethnic makeup of the community in developing, implementing, and evaluating student desegregation plans.

The Association further believes that integrated schools must provide students with equal access to all curricular and extracurricular programs and to technological equipment and knowledge.

The Association opposes any attempts to delay or impede implementation of desegregation orders and will, therefore, resist all efforts to resegment integrated schools. The Association also opposes any governmental attempts to resegment public schools through any means, including vouchers, charters, and other school-choice initiatives.

The Association will continue to oppose vigorously the systematic displacement or demotion of minority, especially Black, educators to achieve integration. The Association further opposes actions of boards of education to finance integration plans through reduction of school staff. In addition, the Association will oppose the capricious reassignment and displacement of Hispanic educators because of desegregation and bilingual programs. (1969, 2004)

I-74. Ethnic-Minority Educators

The National Education Association believes that ethnic-minority educators are essential to the operation of schools, thus encouraging local and state affiliates, Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), and appropriate governmental bodies and agencies to work to achieve and maintain ethnic diversity in all categories of educational employment. (1979, 2015)

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

STRONG EFFECTIVE ASSOCIATIONS/AFFILIATES

J-1. Strong Professional Associations

The National Education Association believes that an independent and professional organization is vital to its members and affiliates. This independence must be safeguarded in any alignments with other organizations.

The Association also believes that the unified effort of a professional organization promotes the interests of its members and advances a strong, healthy educational environment. (1974, 2004)

J-2. Supporting Locals in Jeopardy

The National Education Association believes that assistance should be afforded to those affiliates that exist within concentrated territories of competing organizations. The Association encourages its affiliates to initiate and support programs that will strengthen and enhance the local organizational structure and promote membership growth within the Association. Continuous communications, including face-to-face contact, and cooperation of local, state, and national bodies are keys to the success of the local affiliates in building solid professional organizations.

The Association also believes that assistance should be given to those local affiliates that have been targeted for takeover by competing organizations and/or the object of “association busting.”

Members of affiliated locals that are not the bargaining agent must be provided an effective means of processing grievances. (1976, 2015)

MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION

J-3. Membership Participation in the Association

The National Education Association believes that every member has the right to equitable access and the obligation to participate fully in the Association. Participation should be free from fear, intimidation, retribution, marginalization, or any forms of bullying and harassment.

The Association also believes that early-career members should be encouraged to participate in and pursue appropriate leadership opportunities at the local, state, and national levels of the union. The Association further believes that affiliates should encourage early-career members to seek election to become seated delegates at the annual Representative Assembly.

The Association believes that school policies should provide release time without loss of pay to those who are fulfilling leadership responsibilities, attending meetings, or participating in other Association activities.

The Association also believes that all members have the right to receive union communications at their work sites from their local, state, and national associations.

The Association supports and encourages, whenever possible, policies and practices such as affordable child care services so that members with children may have improved opportunities to participate in Association activities. Members should also support public education by sending their children to public preK through post-secondary educational institutions. (1969, 2021)

J-4. Minority Participation in the Association

The National Education Association believes that at every phase of governance and on all decision-making levels of the Association there should be minority participation at least proportionate to the identified ethnic-minority population of that geographic level.

Ethnic minorities should be included as candidates for positions at all levels. The Association should promote minority participation in program development and should employ minorities and women in staff positions consistent with Association affirmative action policies.

The Association also believes that its affiliates should maintain a commitment to organizational policies and programs that promote the training and involvement of minorities at all levels of the organization.

The Association further believes that there is a need for systematic evaluation of minority participation at all levels. (1972, 1996)

J-5. Aspiring Educator Member Participation

The National Education Association believes that eligible students should have the opportunity to join the Association. The Association also believes that students should be encouraged to participate in the Association at the local, state, and national levels. Preprofessional and leadership training should be priorities.

The Association further believes that its members should promote membership in the NEA Aspiring Educator Program to all eligible students, including student teachers in members' classrooms, and provide opportunities for community outreach, professional development, racial and social justice advocacy, and political action. The Association believes that advisors of NEA Aspiring Educator chapters should be members of the Association.

The Association believes that state affiliates should facilitate the establishment of chapters in all higher education institutions that offer teacher preparation programs.

The Association also believes that local and state affiliates should collaborate with student programs in order to facilitate the transition from student to professional membership status within the Association so that Aspiring Educator members become involved in the activities and leadership pathways of the professional Association and its affiliates. (1991, 2024)

J-6. Retired Member Participation

The National Education Association believes that Retired members are a valuable asset and should be active participants within the Association at the local, state, and national levels.

The expertise of Retired members should be utilized in all areas of the Association.

The Association also believes that its members should promote membership in the Retired Program to all eligible members. (1976, 2013)

J-7. Promotion of Education as a Career Choice

The National Education Association supports the establishment of student organizations whose goal is to promote the field of public education as a lifelong profession that is vital and essential to every community. The Association believes that its state and local affiliates should support these student organizations and their efforts to build partnerships with government, business, and community stakeholders to advance the profession. (1980, 2022)

GLOBAL EDUCATION PROFESSION

J-8. Universal Education Employee Rights

The National Education Association supports the efforts of all associations of education employees in the world to secure basic rights for their members. The Association commends those education employees and students around the world who champion academic freedom and campaign against illiteracy, especially when their activities must be conducted under oppressive and often life-threatening conditions.

The Association stands ready to help all associations of education employees obtain their basic rights as listed in the NEA resolutions.

The Association condemns all governments for their roles in any acts of injustice against education employees and their organizations and, thus, the children and youth of those countries. The Association urges the U.S. government to refrain from supporting any governments that suppress academic freedom and literacy.

The Association also urges the U.S. government to refrain from any plan for overt or covert action that would destabilize or overthrow any government or would adversely affect a government's successful campaign to improve literacy, equal education support, health care, and living and working conditions. (1981, 1995)

J-9. Organizations of Other Nations

The National Education Association believes that a strong international community of education employees is necessary to promote international understanding and to defend the interests of education employees in all countries. The Association actively supports Education International and will continue to cooperate with professional education organizations of other nations. (1969, 1995)