



RESOLUTIONS

2011

DSEA RESOLUTIONS 2011

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HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS

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DSEA RESOLUTIONS

FOREWORD

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

A. SERVE AS THE STATE VOICE FOR EDUCATION.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION

A-1 Public Education

The Delaware State Education Association believes that the priceless heritage of free public educational opportunities for every American must be preserved and strengthened. Members of the Association are encouraged to show their support of public education by sending their children to public schools.

Free public schools are the cornerstone of our social, economic, and political structure and are of utmost significance in the development of our moral, ethical, spiritual, and cultural values. Consequently, the survival of democracy requires that every state maintain a system of free public education that prepares its citizens to:

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

The Association urges its affiliates to intensify efforts to maintain and strengthen, through the use of licensed teachers, comprehensive programs of education that aspire to these goals. (1992, 2001)

A-2 Educational Opportunity for All

The Delaware State Education Association recognizes that education is a lifelong process and that public schools serve a constituency that embraces all age groups. The Association believes that each student has the right to a free public education which should be suited to the needs of the individual. This education should be non-segregated, unbiased, offered beyond the traditional school day and school year, required through the secondary school, offered at public expense, controlled by local and state boards of education, and guaranteed by the state constitutions and Constitution of the United States. Access to and opportunities for postsecondary education should be widely available, and no qualified student should be denied such opportunities because of financial considerations.

The Association also believes that all schools must be accredited under uniform standards established by the appropriate agencies in collaboration with the Association and its local 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 periodic review of locally established programs should involve community members, parents/guardians, students, teachers, and educational support professionals. The Association further believes that individuals, at their expense, should be free to choose, to supplement, or to substitute education in privately supported, non-segregated, nonpublic schools, which must be accredited under Delaware standards.

The Association believes that individuals, at their expense, should be free to choose, to supplement, or to substitute education in privately supported, non-segregated, nonpublic schools which must be accredited under Delaware standards. The Association also

believes public and nonpublic schools should be accredited under uniform standards established by the appropriate agency in collaboration with DSEA and its affiliates.

The Association believes tax-exempt status should be denied to those institutions whose policies and/or practices prevent the integration of the institutions. (1992, 2007)

A-3 Community Partnerships

The Delaware State Education Association believes that a strong partnership between all education employees, parents, guardians, and the entire community is needed to support and defend quality public education and to provide the financial and human resources needed to operate Delaware's public schools.

Decentralization of decision-making, coupled with the emphasis on shared decision-making at both the district and school level, which is now law, requires community involvement.

We need to work collaboratively to build understanding and involvement for our common bond - our children, our students.

Some examples of partnership building could be to encourage parents/guardians and other community members to share their expertise through a volunteer program; to visit our classrooms and to encourage businesses to financially support educational programs developed collaboratively. (1997)

A-4 Parental Involvement

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

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

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

The Association also believes that parents/guardians should be encouraged to visit their children's schools and communicate with their children's teachers and other education employees with whom the children have daily contact. The Association further believes that parents/guardians, students, community members, teachers, other education employees, and school board members should promote the successes of the collaboration between the school and the community. (2002, 2008)

A-5 American Education Week

The Delaware State Education Association believes that American Education Week is an important observance during which positive attention should be focused on the contribution of public education and education employees. (2007)

A-6 Excellence in Education

The Delaware State Education Association believes that continued success of the United States as a participatory democracy and as a world leader is dependent upon a shared national, state, community, and individual commitment to excellence in education. The Association also believes that mastery is a standard of excellence achieved when students demonstrate the ability to use what has been taught and have command of subjects sufficient for problem solving, decision making, and further educational growth. To that end, the Association reaffirms its support of high standards for teaching and learning in which the student becomes an active participant in the mastery process.

The Association believes that sufficient resources and program alternatives should be provided for the proper placement of each student so that social promotions/administrative assignments can be prevented or minimized. (1992, 1998)

A-7 Business Support for Public Education

The Delaware State Education Association believes that the business community should play a cooperative role with the Association in the support of public education. The Association supports and encourages members' active participation as equal partners in promoting, planning, implementing, and evaluating school-community-business partnerships.

The Association urges local affiliates to develop strong coalitions with the business community to advocate adequate and stable tax funding for public education. In addition, the Association welcomes supplementary activities such as cooperative programs, resource assistance, release of employees for parent teacher conferences, and the donation of specialized equipment from the business community.

The Association urges its state and local affiliates to engage in efforts to prevent the use of programs in the public schools that involve the marketing of and/or the promoting of products that exploit students and/or institutions.

The Association further urges the business community to develop premiums for the attainment of a high school diploma. Examples of such premiums could be: recognition of the attainment of a high school diploma through pay differentiation; courtesy cards; shopping discounts; certificates of achievement; college scholarships, and tuition for technical courses; and a one-time first job bonus for having a high school diploma.

The Association also believes that the use of programs that involve the marketing of and/or the promoting of products that exploit students and/or institutions should be prevented. (1984, 2008)

A-8 School Boards

The Delaware State 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 also believes that the composition of school boards must be representative of the population within the school district, including minority groups; that board members must be elected by the voters in the school district; and that board members must be elected from representative districts. The Association opposes federal, state, and local takeovers of public schools, public school districts and their governing boards. The Association also believes that the closing of schools by school boards to avoid legislative corrective action is not in the best interest of students, parents, or school employees.

The Association believes that student participation in a school board's deliberative process should be encouraged; however, student input in the voting process should be advisory only. Wherever a school board includes student members, the Association also believes that the student members 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 believes that school board meetings should be held at times and places that would allow education employees, local affiliates, and the community to be involved in educational decision-making and guarantee their right to participate. Provisions should be made for open discussion that guarantees the local affiliate input prior to a vote on any agenda item and guarantees the local affiliate the right to place items on the agenda and the right to speak to any item on the agenda.

Finally, the Association believes that legislation is needed that provides for the ability of local citizens to vote for the recall of local school board members. (1982, 2008)

A-9 Use of Closed Public School Buildings

The Delaware State Education Association believes that closed public school buildings that have been deemed safe 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, 2001)

A-10 School Accountability and Improvement

The Delaware State Education Association supports an effective and fair school accountability system that promotes high levels of student achievement and ensures 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 standards for student achievement, establishing multiple measures 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. Provide professional development for all education employees prior to implementation of the system,
- e. Set high standards for student learning, levels of support by each stakeholder, and clearly defined goals for the school as a unit,
- f. 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,
- g. Use multiple assessment tools and sources of data that are valid and reliable,
- h. Include necessary accommodations and modifications to maximize the success of all students,
- i. Include measures to promote student accountability,
- j. Identify how the school as a unit achieves its goals,
- k. Identify the quality, quantity, and impact of support provided by each stakeholder,
- l. Identify and address the internal and external factors that impact student learning and achievement,
- m. Provide for the timely dissemination of results to all stakeholders,
- n. Be applied in a fair and equitable manner,
- o. Include periodic evaluation and modification of the system, and
- p. Provide for the development of a school improvement plan.
- q. Include a formal appeals process for every school that is being targeted with academic sanctions or any other form of takeover.

The Association also believes that the school improvement process must, as 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, and
- e. Be consistent with education employees' rights and responsibilities as set forth in laws, contracts, policies, and/or other local agreement processes. (2005)

FINANCING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

A-11 Basic Financial Support of Public Education

The Delaware State Education Association believes that every state should ensure its students a quality education by providing the funding needed for 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 the student.
- 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. Property re-assessment should take place on a regular basis in order to ensure this balance.
- g. School districts should not have to rely on referenda to raise funds for their schools.
- h. 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.
- i. Programs, where appropriate, must be provided for children needing early psychological diagnosis and treatment or therapeutic intervention and must be funded by the State.
- j. Funds must be provided for programs to alleviate race, gender, and sexual orientation discrimination and to eliminate portrayal of race, gender, and sexual orientation stereotypes in the public schools.
- k. Public funds shall not be expended for any materials used to promote race, gender, or sexual orientation stereotypes and/or bias.
- l. Public funds shall not be expended in institutions where either specific programs or the institution has been found guilty of discrimination.
- m. Funding should be greater for students facing social and economic challenges, as well as for students facing education challenges, (which may include but not be limited to Special Education, English Language Learners and Gift and Talented).
- n. 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 for all students.
- o. 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.
- p. Full-day, every day kindergarten programs should be fully funded.
- q. Federal, state, and as appropriate, local governments should provide funds sufficient to make pre-kindergarten available for all three and four-year-old children.
- r. State and federal mandates affecting public education programs must be accompanied by adequate and equitable funding.
- s. 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.
- t. Funding for specialists, such as counselors and nurses, should be separate from staffing of teachers in a building in order to maintain recommended ratios for each specialty without impacting class size.

The Association and its affiliates oppose the use of public revenues for private, parochial, or other nonpublic pre-K through 12 schools, unless such revenues are used for educational services that are not available in public schools. (2001, 2009)

A-12 Federal Financial Support for Education

The Delaware State 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, and
- 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.

Therefore, federal funding formulas should reflect the most current, 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. Funding should be greater for students facing social, economic, and/or education challenges, which may include but not be limited to Special Education, English Language and Learners and Gifted and Talented.

The Association believes that federal monies budgeted for pre-K through 12 education must be equitably and adequately expended for public education at the pre-K through 12 level. The Association opposes any federal legislation, laws, or regulations that provide funds, goods, or services to sectarian schools. The Association also opposes providing such funds, goods, or services to nonsectarian private schools or nonpublic school students in pre-K through 12 education, unless those funds, goods, or services are used for educational services that are not available in public schools. The Association condemns and deplors federal policies and programs that serve to undermine America's historical commitment to free public education. (2007)

A-13 Tax Reform

The Delaware State Education Association supports tax reform and encourages forums and conferences that will plan and propose reforms at the local, state, and national levels. The Association believes that tax reform must be completed promptly and rationally. Tax reform should:

- a. Increase tax fairness and raise revenue necessary to finance quality public education and other public services
- b. Prevent excessive reliance on property tax or any other single tax
- c. Reflect the findings of comprehensive studies of the total individual and corporate tax burden
- d. Assure a tax burden distribution that reflects the ability to pay and that safeguards family subsistence
- e. Assure that statewide uniformity in property tax effort be required
- f. Provide for increased local and state funding of public education
- g. Eliminate tax laws and rulings that are harmful to education employees and educational needs. (1982, 1995)

A-14 Privatization and Subcontracting Programs

The Delaware State 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. (1995, 2001)

A-15 Voucher Plans and Tuition Tax Credits

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

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

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 required of public schools. (1982, 2003)

A-16 Deleterious Programs

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

The Association believes that proposals that would allow or foster the employment of unlicensed or uncertified educators or a weakening of collective bargaining protections would also be detrimental to the health and well-being of the public schools and should be defeated. (1995, 2001)

A-17 For-Profit Schools

The Delaware State 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. The Association therefore opposes education for profit. (2001)

A-18 Extracurricular Funding

The Delaware State Education Association believes that every student must have an opportunity to participate in school-sanctioned and school-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 non-athletic extracurricular activities. The Association believes that extracurricular fundraising is not an acceptable substitute for district funding of extracurricular activities. (1996)

A-19 Local Education Foundations

The Delaware State 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 believes that all contributions to LEFs should be transparent; the best way to ensure transparency is for local school boards to vote to accept all contributions from LEFs and to note the specific purpose of the funds, if any, from the LEF.

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 non-bargaining 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 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 believes that education employees included in LEF grant programs must be protected from reproach by school and/or community members. (2007,2008)

QUALITY EDUCATION

A-20 Educational Bureaucracy

The Delaware State 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. (2008)

A-21 Improving and Maintaining Educational Facilities

The Delaware State Education Association believes that all staff and students deserve an optimum physical learning environment. The 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 further believes that preventive maintenance of all facilities is equally important in achieving this goal.

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 believes that all educational facilities must be safe from the hazards of radon and urges its affiliates to seek and support legislation that requires:

- a. Testing of public school facilities for radon,
- b. Evaluation of current radon testing procedures to determine which procedures are truly effective,
- c. Immediate corrective action in those schools where radon exceeds safe levels, and
- d. Notification of education employees, students, and their families when radon is found. (1990, 2008)

A-22 Charter and Nontraditional Public School Options

The Delaware State Education Association supports innovation in public education. The Association believes that when concepts such as charter schools and other nontraditional school options are proposed, all affected education employees must be directly involved in the design, implementation, and governance of these programs with broad-based community input.

The Association believes that charter school legislation should be modified to:

- a. Establish the Department of Education, and no other entity, as the sole authorizer/re-authorizer/revoker/overseer of charter schools.
- b. Require consideration of the following criteria for new charter approvals of:
 - i. Demographic data
 - ii. Effect on enrollment and finances of the three most affected school districts (and vocational school if applicant charter is a secondary school); and
 - iii. Existing programs/services in existing school district relative to the proposed charter programs/services
- c. Provide for an annual affirmative vote by the State Board of Education to accept applications for that year.
- d. Address conduit bond funding requests by charter schools as follows:
 - i. Charter school must have completed its first charter period with no probation and have the charter renewed.
 - ii. Charter school must obtain Certificate of Necessity for Conduit Bond Funding from the Department of Education, which must include comments from the Superintendents from the three most affected school districts,
 - iii. Charter school must obtain approval through financial analysis done by Office of Management and Budget, and
 - iv. All conduit bond financing for charter schools must be accomplished through State of Delaware or its designated agencies.
- e. Add new language governing the conversion of NCLB restructured schools to charter schools
- f. Call for additional transparency to the charter school process by providing more information regarding charter applications, reviews and financial analyses on the DOE website.

The Association further believes that plans should not negatively impact the local public school program and must include adequate safeguards covering contract and employment provisions for all employees, voluntary participation, health and safety standards for all students and employees, nondiscrimination and equal educational opportunity, staffing by licensed professional staff, financial responsibility, and compliance with the same education accountability provisions applicable to traditional public schools. Programs must be adequately funded, must include start-up monies, must not divert current funds from the local public school programs, and must contain appropriate procedures for regular periodic assessment and evaluation as well as adequate attendance and record keeping procedures. (1995, 2008)

A-23 Choice

The Delaware State Education Association supports alternative programs for specific purposes in the public schools. The Association cannot support any school selection plan that does not guarantee free, equitable, and quality public education for each student. Therefore, any choice plan must be designed so as to provide genuine programmatic choices based on needs of students. Further, the plan must guarantee that no school will be adversely affected, and the plan must not create student populations which are racially, culturally, or economically identifiable. (1990, 1995)

A-24 Takeover of Public Schools or Public School Districts

The Delaware State 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 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. (2007)

A-25 School Restructuring

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

- a. Adhere to collectively bargained labor agreements
- b. Comply with all appropriate school board policies
- c. Provide the funding necessary to implement and sustain the restructuring
- d. Weigh the consequences of restructuring on all students, education employees, the entire school system, and the community. (2007)

A-26 District Consolidation/Deconsolidation

The Delaware State 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. (2009)

B. ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF EDUCATION FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS.

LIFE LONG LEARNING

B-1 Early Childhood Education

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

The Association further believes that early childhood education programs should maintain small group size with appropriate staff/child ratios for each age. 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, that 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 believes that full-day, every-day kindergarten programs should be fully funded by the state.

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

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

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

The Association advocates the establishment of fully funded early childhood special education programs. These programs and necessary services should be readily accessible for children with disabilities and staffed by certified/licensed teachers, qualified support staff, and therapists. (1996, 2008)

B-2 Reading Skills

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

The Association also believes that teachers' efforts to value and promote reading should be supported by parents/guardians, librarians, media specialists, other education employees, and communities. (1999, 2004)

B-3 Middle School and Junior High School Programs

The Delaware State 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 foster positive self-esteem. The Association also encourages the development of guidance and counseling programs that stimulate parental and community involvement, and promotes health services. (2011)

B-4 High School Diploma/Equivalency

The Delaware State Education Association supports the concepts of a high school education for all and believes that every student should earn a high school diploma or its equivalent. The diploma should be awarded based on student achievement of high standards.

The Association also believes in the value of academic preparation, school attendance, and social interaction for meeting the requirements of high school graduation. The Association is concerned about the misuse of high school equivalency testing and its negative impact on secondary education.

The Association recognizes, however, that in some instances the use of high school equivalency tests is acceptable when the best interests of the students are served.

The Association further believes that any state or district plan to use equivalency testing as the basis for qualification for a high school diploma should be developed cooperatively by classroom teachers, administrators, and governing boards. The plan should include provisions for recommendations from the local school faculty. Recommendations should be based, as a minimum, upon ability, achievement record, and maturation level in addition to the age of the student.

The Delaware State Education Association believes that all high school graduates should be well prepared to either enter the work force or to go on to higher education. A state recommended rigorous high school curriculum should serve as a model for school districts. Students should achieve functional proficiency in English; compute effectively; use critical and creative thinking as well as problem solving skills; exercise attitudes of good citizenship, societal productivity, and global awareness; care for the environment and formulate values that lead to continual growth and self-fulfillment. (1992, 2008)

The Association further believes that the disaggregation of graduation rate data is essential to identify and to target for appropriate interventions highly impacted groups for high school completion. (2009, 2011)

B- 5 Dropout Prevention

The Delaware State Education Association believes high school graduation/completion 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, and career programs to ensure that pre-K through 12 students remain in school through the completion of high school graduation/completion requirements.

B - 6 Expanding Student Graduation and Promotion Options

The Delaware State Education Association believes that public high schools should expand graduation and promotion options for students and create partnerships with colleges, alternative schools, and vocational, career and technical programs.

The Association also believes that states and local school districts should employ multiple options in determining graduation and promotion requirements.

The Association further believes that these options serve as valid indicators of readiness for postsecondary opportunities. (2009)

B-7 Worker Literacy

The Delaware State Education Association believes that public schools should be involved as an equal partner with business to create an atmosphere which provides support and assistance for those employees unable to read and write. In addition, DSEA welcomes support from civic and service groups to encourage employers to develop literacy awareness programs among their employees. The Association urges businesses to recognize the attainment of a high school diploma through pay differentiation. (1993)

B-8 Life-Long Learning

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

The Association encourages public and private support and funding for the creation and expansion of life-long learning programs. The Association will also encourage both active and retired members to offer their expertise to assist in such programs. (1993, 2008)

B- 9 Funding of Higher Education

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

The Association supports the maintenance and expansion of funding for higher education, including programs of institutional and scholar support, research grants, support for the historically Black and developing institutions.

The Association also supports access to postsecondary programs for all qualified students without regard to age, gender, sexual orientation, 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. (1992, 2001)

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

B -10 Class Size

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

The Association also believes in an optimum class size of fifteen students in regular programs, kindergarten programs, and a proportionately lower number in programs for students with exceptional needs and English Language Learners. Class size maximums must be based on the type of students, subject area content, physical facilities, and other criteria. Once established, school districts should not be allowed to petition for a waiver on class size. Weighted class size formulas should be implemented to reflect the inclusion of exceptional students and English Language Learners. The Department of Education should collect and report class size data that reflect the class size experienced by most students. (2002, 2006)

B-11 Diversity

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

The Association also believes that education should foster acceptance and appreciation for recognizing and valuing the qualities that pertain to people as individuals or members of diverse populations.

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

The Association encourages affiliates and members to become part of programs and observances that may include cultural and heritage celebrations and/or history months. (1996, 2008)

B-12 Racial Diversity Within Student Populations

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

The Association further believes that, to achieve or maintain racial diversity, it may be necessary for elementary/secondary schools, colleges, and universities to take race into account in making decisions as to student admissions, assignments, and/or transfers. (2008)

B-13 Discriminatory Academic Tracking

The Delaware State Education Association believes that the use of discriminatory academic tracking based on economic status, ethnicity, race, or gender must be eliminated in all public school settings. The Association urges its affiliates to oppose these practices. (2008)

B-14 Student Assistance and Mentoring Programs

The Delaware State Education Association supports student assistance programs that provide incoming students the opportunity to make a smooth transition to new schools. The Association also supports student mentoring programs that provide academic assistance. The Association believes that student assistance and mentoring programs should be supervised by appropriate staff and/or administration. Such programs should be student-based and ongoing. (2005)

B-15 Education of Refugee Children and Children of Undocumented Immigrants

The Delaware State Education Association believes that, regardless of the immigration status of students or their parents/guardians, every student has the right to a free public education in an environment free from harassment. The Association also believes that the determination of legal residency status is the responsibility of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, not of educational systems or their employees.

The Association is concerned that inadequate funding is jeopardizing quality education in school districts impacted by refugee children and children of undocumented immigrants. The Association believes that such impacted school districts must receive federal and state assistance to provide education facilities, personnel, special programs, and instructional materials. (1998, 2002)

B- 16 Communication Between Educators and Non-English Speaking Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers

The Delaware State 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. (2008)

SPECIFIC PROGRAMS FOR INDIVIDUALS

B -17 Alternative Programs for At-Risk and/or Special Needs Students

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

Programs should include appropriate monitoring of student progress and emphasize a broad range of activities for responding to students' differing behavioral patterns, interests, needs, and learning styles. These programs must be evaluated on stated objectives. 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 students who are assigned to an alternative placement due to discipline issues should be required to exhibit regular attendance and adequate academic and behavioral progress in accordance with an individual program prior to their return to a regular educational setting.

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

The Association urges its affiliates to seek adequate compensation, planning time, materials, and facilities for teachers and counselors in these programs.

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

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

The Association supports 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. (1982, 2008)

B-18 Gifted, Talented, and Creative Students

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

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

The Association urges its affiliates to promote the development and implementation of such services to gifted students and support for all educators working with this special needs population. (1995, 2008)

B-19 Educational Programs for English Language Learners

The Delaware State Education Association believes that English Language Learners (ELLs) must have programs available to them that address their unique needs and that provide equal opportunity to all students, regardless of their primary language. Programs for ELL students should emphasize English proficiency while concurrently providing meaningful instruction in all other curriculum areas. In planning a comprehensive program for ELL's, age, academic needs, individual differences in language acquisition abilities, environmental factors, and best teaching practices must be considered.

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

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

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

The Association values bilingual and multilingual competence and supports programs that assist individuals in attaining and maintaining proficiency in their native language before and after they acquire proficiency in English. (2008)

B-20 Education for All Students with Disabilities

The Delaware State Education Association supports a free, appropriate public education for all students with disabilities in a least restrictive environment, which is determined by maximum teacher and parent/guardian involvement.

There must be a full continuum of placement options and services/delivery models available to students with disabilities. In order to implement federal special education legislation effectively, the Association recognizes that:

- a. A fully accessible educational environment, using appropriate instructional materials, support services, and pupil personnel services, must match the learning needs of both students with and students without disabilities.
- b. Student placement must be based on individual needs rather than on available space, funding, or local philosophy of a school district. Student placements must be examined on a regular basis to ensure appropriateness whereby all needed services and support will be provided and should not be made disproportionately by ethnicity or gender. Necessary building/staff modifications must be provided to facilitate such placements.
- c. General and special education teachers, pupil personnel and related service providers, and education support professionals who work with the student, and administrators, parents/guardians, and the student, as appropriate, should have input in the development of the individualized education program (IEP) and must have access to the IEP.
- d. General and special education teachers; pupil personnel and related service providers; education support professionals; and administrators, parents/guardians, and students, as appropriate, must share in implementing the IEP. Prior to implementation, all necessary educational materials, professional development, and supportive services must be provided.
- e. Students with physical disabilities and/or medical needs requiring nursing procedures must have their medical needs met by certified/professional school nurses.
- f. All impacted staff members must have an appeal procedure regarding the implementation of the IEP, especially in terms of student placement. The procedure must include the right to have the dissenting opinion recorded and attached to the IEP.
- g. Suspension and expulsion policies and practices used by local education agencies must be applied consistently to both students with and students without disabilities where misconduct is shown to be unrelated to either the disabling condition or to improper placement.
- h. A plan recognizing individual differences must be used in a systematic evaluation and reporting of program development.
- i. Limitations must be made in class size, case loads, and/or work load of teachers, nurses, speech and language specialists, and other designated instructional service specialists, using methods such as weighted formulas, modified scheduling, and/or curriculum design to accommodate the demands of each IEP.
- j. All teachers who serve students with disabilities must have scheduled access to resource personnel, instructional assistants, paraprofessionals, co-teachers, and special education teachers.
- k. The student's IEP should not be used as criteria for the evaluation of education employees.
- l. Communications must be maintained among all involved parties.
- m. Staff must not be reduced.
- n. All staff must be adequately prepared for their roles through appropriate licensing and ongoing professional development programs.
- o. Incentives for participation in professional development activities should, as mandated by law, be made available for education employees.
- p. Education employees, as mandated by law, must be appointed to local and state advisory bodies on special education.
- q. Education employees must be allowed to take part in the U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services on-site visits to states. Education employees should be invited to these meetings.
- r. Local associations and education employees must be recruited, trained, and involved in monitoring school system compliance with federal special education legislation.
- s. Adequate released time or funded additional time must be made available so that teachers can carry out the increased demands placed upon them by federal special education legislation.
- t. Collective bargaining and other means should be used to minimize the potentially severe impact on staff that results from the implementation of special education legislation.
- u. Benefits for staff working with students with disabilities must be negotiated through collective bargaining agreements and must be honored.
- v. Full funding must be provided by local, state, and federal governments.
- w. Students are better served if the person working with them is prepared to deal with their needs. Substitute employees should be made aware that the assignment offered is a special needs program.(1994, 2008)

B- 21 Homebound Instruction

The Delaware State 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. (2008)

B-22 Education Through Service Learning and Community Service

The Delaware State 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. (2008)

CURRICULUM CONTENT

B-23 Multicultural Education

The Delaware State Education Association believes that multiculturalism is the process of valuing differences and incorporating these differences into behavior toward the goal of achieving the common good. Multicultural education is a way of helping students perceive the cultural diversity of U.S. citizenry so that they may develop pride in their own cultural legacy and awaken to the ideals embodied in the cultures of their neighbors.

The Association believes the goal of multicultural education is the recognition of individual and group differences and similarities in developing self-esteem as well as respect for others in order to reduce racism, ethnic prejudice, and discrimination.

The Association further believes that multicultural education encompasses at least three things: an idea or concept, an educational reform movement, and a process. As an idea or concept, multicultural education assumes that all students can learn. As an educational reform movement, multicultural education seeks to develop an entire school environment that is inclusive of cultural considerations (e.g., curriculum, instructional materials, learning and testing, respect for cultural differences, etc.). As a process, the development of a multicultural school environment is ever evolving and ongoing. (1992, 2008)

B-24 Global Education

The Delaware State Education Association believes that global education increases respect for and awareness of the earth and its people.

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.

The Association further believes that the goal of appreciation of and harmony with our global neighbors depends on a national commitment to strengthening the capability of the educational system to teach American children about the world. (2001, 2008)

B-25 World Language Education

The Delaware State Education Association believes that the acquisition of a second language 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 in a second language. Students should have the opportunity to acquire age-appropriate foreign/world language skills from an integrated curriculum throughout the pre-kindergarten – higher education experience.

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

The Association recognizes the need for teacher preparation programs for foreign/world language teachers and supports teacher and student exchange programs. (2005, 2008)

B-26 School-to-Work/Career Education.

The Delaware State Education Association believes that a goal of public education is to provide all individuals, preschool through adulthood, opportunities to become effective, responsible, productive citizens. To achieve this goal, career education must be interwoven into the total educational system and should include programs in gender-free career awareness and exploration to aid students in career

course selection. These programs should be combined with cooperative efforts on the part of educators and leaders from labor, business, and the community to provide school-to-work experiences that meet rigorous academic standards and are accorded the same level of accreditation as other education programs.

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

B-27 Vocational, Career, and Technical Education

The Delaware State 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. (2008, 2011)

B- 28 Fine Arts Education

The Delaware State Education Association believes that artistic expression is basic to an individual's intellectual, aesthetic, and emotional development. The Association also believes that fine arts transcend cultural barriers, foster multicultural understanding, and enhance critical thinking skills. The Association therefore believes that every elementary and secondary school curriculum must include a balanced, comprehensive, and sequential program of fine arts instruction for all students taught by a licensed specialist in a facility or room designed and equipped for that purpose. Resources must be provided to maintain and upgrade materials and provide for emerging technologies. The Association urges its local affiliates to become involved in the promotion, expansion, and implementation of an academic fine arts program in curricula. (2002, 2008)

B- 29 Physical Education

The Delaware State Education Association believes that physical activity and exercise are essential for good health and must be encouraged during the developmental years of students. The Association also believes that a comprehensive program of physical education should be provided daily in grades pre-K through 12 in or on facilities designed for that purpose. Physical education programs and curricula should follow national standards as set forth by the appropriate professional organizations; should be developmentally appropriate, sequential, cooperative in nature, and culturally sensitive; and should—

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

- c. Provide for the special needs of students with low fitness, physical disabilities, or learning disabilities
- d. Be taught by teachers licensed and certificated in physical education
- e. Be taught with the same student/teacher ratio as other grade-level class sizes *and be provided the same amount of planning time.* (2002, 2005, 2011)

B-30 Family Life Education

The Delaware State Education Association recognizes the importance of education in the maintenance and promotion of functional, healthy families and the emotional, physical, and mental health of people within these families. The Association further recognizes the impact of families and other close personal relationships on the quality of individual lives and upon society.

The Association recommends that programs be established 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
- e. An understanding of societal issues and problems related to children, spouses, parents/guardians, and other family members.

The Association believes that education in these areas must be presented as part of an anti-biased, culturally diverse program.

The Association also urges the implementation of community-operated, school-based family planning clinics that will provide intensive counseling by trained personnel. (1995, 2008)]

B - 31 Environmental Education

The Delaware State Education Association believes that the environment must be protected. The Association believes that the establishment and maintenance of wilderness areas, recreational areas, refuge areas, and designated local green areas are valuable projects. 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 such problems as 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.
- k. *The integration of outdoor education into pre-K through 12 curricula.*

The Association also believes that legislation and local policies that ensure a safe and healthy environment should be supported. (2002, 2011)

B - 32 AIDS/HIV Education

The Delaware State Education Association believes that educational institutions should establish comprehensive AIDS/HIV education programs as an integral part of the school curriculum. AIDS/HIV education must include education about all means of transmission, including unprotected sex, unsanitary methods of tattooing, body piercing, and intravenous (IV) 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 educational employee training and input. The Association further believes that these programs should be presented by properly licensed/trained personnel and should be planned with the input of parents/guardians and other community representatives. (1988, 2008)

B - 33 Lifesaving Techniques

The Delaware State Education Association believes that education employees and students should be trained in basic emergency lifesaving techniques. Such training should be included in both school curriculum and staff development. The Association also believes that education employees should be provided the opportunity for training in CPR and the proper use of *defibrillators automated external defibrillators (AEDs)* by licensed/trained personnel. (2008, 2011)

B-34 Journalism Education

The Delaware State 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 student media. (2009)

LEARNING ISSUES NOT RELATED TO SPECIFIC DISCIPLINES

B- 35 Individual Learning, Growth, and Development

The Delaware State 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 human beings 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. (2009)

B - 36 Homework

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

The Association believes that the type and the amount of homework assigned should be determined by the classroom teacher and be appropriate to a student's development level. (1987, 2008)

B - 37 Discipline

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

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

The Association also believes that all education employees must be provided professional development in behavior management, discipline, conflict resolution, safety plans and emergency procedures, emergency lifesaving techniques, and crisis management.

The Association condemns the misuse of discipline as a means of excluding students from the school setting until other methods of behavioral intervention have been exhausted. This does not preclude the removal of the offender from the school setting to protect other students and education employees. Disruptive students should not be placed in vocational, technical, unified arts, or special education classes solely for the purpose of solving disciplinary problems. The Association believes that corporal punishment should not be used as a means of disciplining students. (1996, 2008)

B - 38 Conflict Resolution Education

The Delaware State Education Association believes that every child should have the opportunity to grow up in a world at peace. To this end, the DSEA urges local school districts, the Department of Education, local affiliates, and concerned community groups to work together to select or develop and teach appropriate classroom curriculum that helps students learn to resolve conflicts without violence.

The Association supports the use of proven conflict-resolution strategies, instructional materials, and activities in the curriculum, for classroom procedures, on the playground, and at school-sponsored extracurricular activities to encourage non-violent resolution of interpersonal and societal conflicts.

The Association encourages the development of programs to train education employees in methods of nonviolent conflict resolution. In addition, the Association recommends the use of conflict resolution processes to resolve disputes and disagreements between and among all education employees so that they can model these process.

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. (1995, 2008)

B- 39 Standards for Student Learning

The Delaware State Education Association believes in high standards that describe clear expectations for what students should know and be able to do. Throughout the implementation of content and performance standards, all students, including those in non-traditional settings which includes but is not limited to homebound, adult high schools, charter schools, alternative schools, and distance learning, must be provided the instructional opportunities and learning conditions necessary to attain the standards. The Association supports the development and use of assessment systems that are appropriate to the standards. These assessment systems should be regularly reviewed to assure validity and usefulness.

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

- a. Students, parents/guardians, education employees, community members, and governmental officials are involved and share the accountability
- b. Education employees are afforded released time and/or compensation in order to have opportunities to work with colleagues on a regular basis throughout the school year on how to teach and assess student proficiency in the standards
- c. Full funding and resources are provided
- d. Curriculum includes, but is not limited to, required standards. Standards are introduced into the curriculum at a rate that allows education employees opportunities to adapt their practice, work with each other, and pilot the work in a concerted fashion
- e. Appropriate attention is given to each student's progress toward attaining the standards and to his or her needs and developmental level
- f. Professional development is provided for all education employees to help align their practices to the standards
- g. Education employees participate in the review and refinement of standards and assessments. (1999, 2001)

B – 40 Assessment of Student Learning

The Delaware State Education Association supports ongoing comprehensive assessment of student growth. A student's level of performance is best assessed with authentic measures directly linked to the lessons teachers teach and the materials teachers use and should include pre and post assessments.

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

- a. Assist students and their parents/guardians/caregivers in identifying the student's strengths and needs
- b. Encourage students to become lifelong learners

- c. Measure a program's effectiveness, communicate learning expectations, and provide a basis for determining instructional strategies
- d. Develop appropriate learning experiences for students.

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

The Association further believes that classroom teachers must be involved in the development of assessment systems and are best qualified to determine the criteria for assessment of students and dissemination of results. Instruments used to communicate student progress must be accurate and understandable to students, parents/guardians, and other stakeholders. Assessment results should provide educators with the data necessary to make the appropriate changes to instructional strategies. (2000, 2008)

B-41 Standardized Testing of Students

The Delaware State Education Association believes that standardized tests and alternate assessments, should only be used 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 and alternate assessments are most useful when designed and/or selected by educational professionals closest to the classroom and integrated with assessment information specific to local programs. Affiliates should advocate for and test designers should employ a variety of developmentally appropriate assessment techniques that allow for universal design, necessary accommodations, modifications, and exemptions and are bias-free, reliable, and valid. When a test or alternate assessment is mandated at the local, state, or the 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 programs toward meeting local, state or national standards and/or goals.

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

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

The Association opposes the use of standardized tests or alternate assessments when:

- a. Used as the criterion for the reduction or withholding of any educational funding
- b. Results are used inappropriately to compare students, teachers, programs, schools, communities, and states
- c. Used as a single criterion for high-stakes decision making such as graduation requirements or grade promotion
- d. They do not match the motor skills and/or academic developmental levels or language proficiency of the student
- e. Student scores are used to evaluate teachers or to determine compensation or employment status
- f. Programs are specifically designed to teach to the test or alternate assessment.
- g. Testing programs, tests, or alternate assessments limit or supplant instructional time.
- h. Every student is required to be tested every year.
- i. Time required to administer the test exceeds reasonable and appropriate limits for the age of the student.
- j. The results lead to sanctions or other punitive actions.
- k. Arbitrary standards are required.

- l. Students and parents/guardians are not provided with a complete report of the individual student's test results.
- 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 appropriate modifications and/or accommodations.

The administration of a standardized test or alternate assessment includes the responsibility to educate the stakeholders in the purpose of the administration, the meaning of results, and the accurate interpretation of conclusions. The Association further believes that students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, schools, and school districts should not be penalized for parents/guardians exercising their legal rights to exempt their children from standardized tests and/or assessments. The Association believes that states should be encouraged to make test items public after they are no longer used. (2001, 2008, 2011)

B- 42 School Libraries/Media Programs

The Delaware State Education Association believes every student must have a comprehensive library/media program within his or her educational setting. This program should include printed and non-printed resource materials, instruction in library research and information skills, necessary technology, certificated librarians/media specialists, and education support personnel.

The Association encourages increased funding for library/media programs from federal, state, and local governments as well as other sources such as public/private partnerships. (1994, 2005)

B - 43 Technology in the Education Process

The Delaware State Education Association recognizes the advancement and application of instructional technology and high-technology devices and materials that provide new opportunities for developing skills, furthering research, and expanding knowledge in our society. Maintenance, technical support, training, evaluation, and staffing, as well as equipment purchases, must be fully funded.

The Delaware State Education Association believes in the importance of security on state and district computers, servers, and network drives. The Association also believes that all passwords assigned to state and district employees remain confidential and that files in the aforementioned devices will be only accessible to the individual who created them and administrative personnel. Confidential student information should only be accessed by authorized personnel. (2006)

The Association believes that:

- a. All education employees must be afforded the opportunity to explore the potential of emerging technology.
- b. Education employees should have access to necessary technology for managing and advancing instruction. Further, they should be provided encouragement, time, and resources to experiment with and to research applications of technology in order to integrate technology into the curriculum.
- c. Ongoing professional development should be provided for education employees in the use of technologies and applications, the development of effective materials, and appropriate instructional strategies.
- d. Education employees, including representatives of the local affiliate, must be involved in all aspects of technology utilization, including planning, materials selection, implementation, and evaluation. Individuals who teach classes over interactive telecommunication networks should be given sufficient time to prepare for their classes. Additional preparation time should be granted to teachers using technology to enrich their regular programs. Further, classroom teachers and library/media specialists must have collaborative planning time to develop programs.
- e. All materials should become the sole property of the individual who develops them. No individual or group, other than the developer, should be permitted to copyright such materials.
- f. Teacher preparation in instructional technology must begin in college and university programs and extend through continuing opportunities for professional development.
- g. Students must become aware of the social and economic impact of technology and must be provided with access to and instruction in the use of such technology. Further, technological education programs must provide equity in training, funding, and participation for all students regardless of age, race, gender, socioeconomic level, or geographic location.
- h. All students and staff must have an understanding of copyright law and the responsible use of technological materials.
- i. Effective use of technology requires a certified teacher in every classroom. Instructional technology should be used to support instruction, but no reduction of positions, hours, or compensation should occur as a direct or indirect result of any technological programs.

- j. The evaluation of education employees in any technological program should be conducted openly and meet the requirements of the local collective bargaining agreement or evaluation policy.
- k. The impact of technology, telecommunications, and distance learning on education employees should be subject to local collective bargaining agreements.
 - 1. Equity and freedom of access to information unimpeded by geographic, economic, social, or cultural is essential. (1998, 2005)

B- 44 Internet Access

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

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

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

The Association believes that Internet access and activities should be age appropriate and monitored and should foster critical use. Any documentation material produced as a result of Internet access should be properly cited and comply with copyright laws. (1995, 2001)

B- 45 Distance Learning

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

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

- a. Be at least as rigorous as similar courses delivered by more traditional means
- b. Meet accreditation standards
- c. Have content that is relevant, accurate, meets state and local standards, and is subject to the normal processes of collegial decision making
- d. Meet the objectives and requirements outlined in the official course description
- e. Have student/faculty ratios that ensure the active engagement of students and high academic achievement
- f. Have appropriate procedures mutually agreed upon by the instructor and the institution for evaluation and verification that the student is submitting his/her own work
- g. Have instructors whose qualifications are the same as those of instructors teaching in traditional classes and who are prepared specifically and comprehensively to teach in this environment
- h. Be integrated into the mission and consistent with the overall offerings of the institution
- i. Provide fair use exemptions for participants' access to copyrighted materials for educational purposes.

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

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

The Association believes that the rights of the education employees delivering and monitoring the courses must be protected through the normal process of collegial decision making and, when relevant, collective bargaining.

These rights should include, but not be limited to:

- a. Determining the appropriateness of the introduction of distance education into a school setting and the uses and impact of such education
- b. The intellectual property rights of instructors
- c. Revenue received from distance learning courses
- d. Revisions to, reuse of, and duration of such courses.

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

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

In addition, the Association believes that interactive distance learning should not be used to reduce the number of teachers employed by individual school districts. (1998, 2001)

B- 46 Communication Between Hearing and Deaf/Hard of Hearing People

The Delaware State 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 that will help them understand the unique needs of all deaf/hard of hearing students and will help hearing students communicate with deaf/hard of hearing students.

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

The Association further believes that Educational Sign Language Interpreters/Transliterators must be qualified professionals who are licensed, state credentialed, or nationally certified. (2004)

B- 47 Transfer of Student Records

The Delaware State 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.

The Association believes that the education employees who receive students with known serious behavior problems or violence-related potential shall be immediately informed of the violence potential of those students. (1998, 2008)

B- 48 Home Schooling

The Delaware State Education Association believes that home schooling programs based on parental choice cannot provide the student with a comprehensive education experience.

The Association believes that if home schooling occurs, students enrolled must meet all state requirements including the taking and passing of assessments to ensure adequate academic progress. Instruction should be by persons who are licensed by the appropriate state education licensure agency, and a curriculum approved by the state department of public education should be used.

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

The Association 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.

The Association further believes that such home schooling programs should be limited to the children of the immediate family, with all expenses being borne by the parents/guardians. (1995, 2008)

B- 49 Equipment and Materials

The Delaware State Education Association believes that every education employee should have access to up-to-date materials, equipment and supplies to allow them to better assist student learning. Instructional materials and equipment must be provided in sufficient quantity to serve all students and must be adaptive, accessible, appropriate and bias-free.

The Association believes that:

- a. Education staff should have access to efficient copying facilities that are maintained and supplied.
- b. School laboratories for the physical and life sciences, vocational studies and technology courses must be furnished with state of the art equipment.
- c. School districts should work cooperatively with business and industry to determine which equipment and skills students need to meet entry-level job requirements.
- d. Computers should be available in every classroom for instructional purposes and professional use. (1992, 2006)

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

HEALTH WELFARE AND SAFETY

C-1 Nutrition

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

The Association supports programs within the education framework that promote understanding of proper nutrition

The Association believes school food service programs must be nutritionally sound, appealing, and affordable. The Association also supports nutrition programs that are regulated by uniform standards, readily accessible, and are supported by public funds.

The Association further believes that changes in the way public funds are allocated for school lunch programs must maintain appropriate levels of service as well as support additional funding, given projected increases in population and need. (1990, 1997)

C-2 Substance Abuse

The Delaware State Education Association is concerned about the problems that underlie psychological and physiological drug and inhalant dependency by both young people and adults, including alcohol and tobacco. The Association calls for new, more positive ways of understanding and coping with these problems. The Association further recognizes the need for improved programs about drugs.

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

The Delaware State Education Association supports drug-free school zones. The Association encourages its local affiliates to work with parent and school groups to develop a "school watch" program that allows for volunteers to monitor school grounds and areas near schools in order to enforce drug-free school zones.

The Association 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 supports strict enforcement of laws governing the sale of tobacco products and believes that federal legislation should be established to create a uniform age of 18 for purchase, possession, or use of tobacco products. (1992, 2008)

C-3 Tobacco Products

The Delaware State Education Association believes that educators should play a key role in nationwide efforts to educate young people about the dangers of tobacco use and second-hand smoke.

The Association also believes that all governmental promotion of, subsidies for, and involvement in production and distribution of tobacco products should cease. All advertising of tobacco products beyond packaging should be banned.

The Association further believes that all places of public accommodation should be smoke-free and that taxes on tobacco products should be increased. (1995, 2008)

C-4 Family Stability for Children

The Delaware State 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, non-abusive, and nurturing environment.

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

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

If a child's immediate family and/or extended family is unable to care for him or her, the Association believes that the child may need temporary foster care while, at the same time, efforts are made to work with the family toward reunification with the child.

The Association also believes that parents/guardians 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 further believes that, if it becomes clear that a family is not able to make a safe, stable home for a child and is unable to resume parenting, efforts should be made to for the legal release of the child for adoption. (1984, 2005)

C-5 Dependent Children of Military Personnel

The Delaware State 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. (2007)

C-6 Child Care Centers

The Delaware State 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. (1996, 2011)

C-7 Family/Domestic Violence

The DSEA recognizes the vicious cyclical effects of family/domestic violence, which contribute to family disintegration, social maladjustment, impaired workplace performance, and the overall erosion of society and its institutions. The Association further recognizes the detrimental effects that this violence has on students' well-being and urges preventive training and educational programs for staff, students, and parents. The Association supports adequate funding and staffing of existing family services and the creation of additional support systems and shelters. The Association encourages social services and the criminal justice system to continue to intervene actively in the cycle of family/domestic violence. (1996, 2001)

C-8 Child Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

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

The Association supports efforts to:

- a. Seek clear legal definitions of what constitutes child abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- b. Encourage the development of educator preparation courses and employee awareness programs which 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, neglect, and 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 personnel to report to appropriate authorities instances of suspected child abuse, neglect, and exploitation while providing education personnel 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. (1994, 2008)

C-9 Out of Home Placement of Juveniles

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

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

The Association further believes that the school and educators who receive students with known serious behavior problems or violence-related potential shall be immediately informed of the violence potential of those students. (1995)

C-10 Protection of Infants with Disabilities

The Delaware State 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. (2005)

C-11 School Facilities: Design, Construction, and Function

The Delaware State Education Association believes that school facilities must be conducive to teaching and learning. The physical environment must allow for a variety of needs, including the number of students, physical characteristics of students, changes in teaching methods, presentation of instruction, and an increased use of school facilities. The Association also believes

that all school facilities must be well constructed, safe, energy-efficient, aesthetically pleasing, accessible, functional, and adaptable to persons with disabilities.

The Association supports facility designs that promote healthy indoor air quality through properly designed and maintained ventilation systems and the use of non-toxic materials. The Association further believes that any building materials in school facilities should be only be used in appropriate areas and must be properly maintained according to established federal, state, or local guidelines. The Association recognizes the need for installing and maintaining appropriate floor coverings within school facilities.

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 including, but not limited to, student, community and professional work.

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. (2003)

C-12 Environmentally Safe Schools

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

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

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

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

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

The Association believes that school districts must post MSDS and OSHA standards. Students and/or their parents/guardians, education employees, and the public should be notified of actual and potential hazards. All stakeholders should be involved in developing a plan for corrective action. The Association also believes in the development and enforcement of health and safety standards specifically for children. (2003, 2006)

C-13 Staph Infection Prevention

The National Education Association believes that, for all employees each school year, school districts and educational institutions should initiate professional development about staph infections and their prevention. This information should also be included in any preseason orientation for students participating in athletic programs and for secondary students participating in physical education classes. The program should work in collaboration with school nurses and local health authorities. (2011)

C-14 Programs Before and After School

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

The Association recognizes that some children have limited or no adult supervision before and after school and urges that local, state, and/or national programs, provided by qualified and trained personnel, be developed to assist these children.

The Association believes that such programs should include opportunities to participate in study-skill sessions, counseling, and guidance in addition to recreational activities. (1992)

C-15 School Transportation

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

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

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

The Association further believes in safe and orderly transportation of students. Rules, regulations, and procedures must be developed, enforced, and continually reviewed and revised to ensure it. 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.

The Association believes that the state of Delaware and local school districts should provide first aid and CPR courses for school transportation drivers and monitors and that the state should mandate that all school transportation personnel take a state-provided defensive driving course. The Association further believes that all school transportation vehicles should be required to have back-up beepers and that lift vehicles for the physically challenged should be equipped with a blanket and a slide in case of accident. (1994, 2008)

C-16 Traffic Safety

The Delaware State 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. (2008)

C-17 Comprehensive School Health, Social, and Psychological Programs and Services

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

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

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

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

The Association believes that services in the schools should include—

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

The Association also believes that all health, social, and psychological services must be provided only by appropriately licensed and certificated professional personnel. The Association further believes that education employees, parents/guardians, students, and personnel from community agencies providing services to students must be involved in the development, implementation, and coordination of these services. The Association urges its affiliates to support legislation to provide comprehensive care to all children and supports community, state, and national efforts to coordinate these services. (1993, 2002, 2011)

C-18 School Counseling Programs

The Delaware State Education Association believes that guidance and counseling programs should be integrated into the entire education system, beginning at the pre-kindergarten level.

Guidance and counseling programs should be provided through a maximum counselor/student ratio of 1:250 by appropriately licensed and certificated school counselors who have been trained to support students in realizing their full potential in all areas of growth and achievement. School counselors should receive the support necessary to allow them to spend at least 80 percent of their time providing guidance and counseling services to students. (1994, 2007)

C-19 Student Stress and Anger

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

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

The Association supports legislation to establish these programs and publicity about their availability. (1994, 2008)

C-20 Recess

The Delaware State Education Association believes that supervised recess is a valuable tool; an active form of learning that unites the body, mind, and spirit; and promotes a healthy lifestyle. The Association also believes that recess allows a student to develop interpersonal and problem-solving skills. The Association further believes that recess is not a substitute for a comprehensive physical education program. (2011)

C-21 School Emergency Plans

The Delaware State Education Association believes in the safety of all students and staff. The Association also believes that schools, school districts, and school transportation systems must have written plans that delineate procedures that include, but are not limited to, emergencies, lockdowns, evacuations, and weather-related conditions. Emergency plans for each school site must be developed by school personnel and parents/guardians in partnership with the community. The Association further

believes that for these plans to be effective they must be practiced and updated on a regular and consistent basis. Plans must include stress management/counseling strategies as follow-up care for students and staff when appropriate. (2008)

C-22 Student Sexual Orientation

The Delaware State Education Association recognizes the importance of raising the awareness and increasing the sensitivity of staff, students, parents/guardians, and the community to sexual orientation in our society. Therefore, the Association supports the development of positive plans that lead to effective ongoing training programs for education employees for the purpose of identifying and eliminating sexual orientation stereotyping in the educational setting. (1989, 1995)

C-23 Suicide Prevention Programs

The Delaware State Education Association believes that the increasing rate of child and adolescent suicide is a national tragedy. The Association further believes that suicide prevention programs should be an integral and ongoing part of the total school program.

The Association urges its affiliates to ensure that such programs, which should include prevention, intervention, and post-vention, are established and implemented within their districts. (1990)

STUDENT RIGHTS/CONCERNS

C- 24 Student Rights and Responsibilities

The Delaware State Education Association believes that basic student rights include the right to free inquiry and expression; due process; gender equity; freedom of association; freedom of peaceful assembly and petition; participate in the governance of the school; freedom from discrimination; freedom from commercial exploitation, including the payment of sub-minimum wage; and equal educational opportunity.

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

The Association further believes in the confidentiality of student information and opposes its dissemination to any organization or institution without the consent of the student and/or parent/guardian. The Association believes that student rights must be safeguarded when students are involved in commercial premium campaigns and fundraising activities. (1981, 2001)

C-25 Drug and Alcohol Testing of Students

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

The Association further believes that schools must immediately notify parents/guardians of students suspected of abusing drugs and alcohol and/or performance-enhancing dietary herbal supplements and provide information about support services. (1998, 2004)

C-26 AIDS/HIV Testing of Students

The Delaware State Education Association opposes mandatory/involuntary acquired immunodeficiency syndrome/human immunodeficiency virus (AIDS/HIV) testing of students. (1987, 1989)

C- 27 Optimizing Time to Learn

The Delaware State Education Association believes that time to learn is essential in promoting optimum achievement in the schools.

The Association believes that:

- a. Student absences from school have adverse effects on program continuity, academic achievement, 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 achievement 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. (1992, 2008)

C-28 Education for Homeless Children and Youth

The Delaware State Education Association believes that education must be provided for all children and youth, including those without a permanent legal address. The Association advocates the right of all students, including those without permanent legal addresses, to an education, adequate housing, and health care.

The Association recognizes the need for cooperation between school and community groups in meeting the needs of homeless children and youth. The Association supports legislation to ensure equal educational opportunities for all children and youth. (1990, 2001)

C-29 Student Use of Electronic Social Media

The Delaware State 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. (2011)

C-30 Review of Commercialism in the Classroom

The Delaware State Education Association opposes programs for mandatory student use which include commercials and/or prominently displayed company logos. Services such as Channel One should be decided upon by the local school districts. (1996)

EQUAL ACCESS

C-31 Placement of Students with AIDS/HIV

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

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

The Association further believes that students should not be refused admittance to school or subjected to any other adverse action solely because they have tested positive for HIV or have been diagnosed as having AIDS. (1987, 2008)

C-32 Extracurricular Participation

The Delaware State Education Association believes that K-12 schools, colleges, universities, and parents/guardians should accept their educational responsibilities to student athletes and participants of other extracurricular activities. Exploitation of these students for economic and/or personal gain is deplorable.

The successful completion of an academic program is the first priority for all students. The Association further believes in the adoption of fair and reasonable eligibility requirements for student participation in athletics and other extracurricular activities. To promote the continuance of academic success, student progress should be monitored frequently. (1989, 2000)

C-33 Juvenile Offenders

The Delaware State 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. (2005)

C-34 Neurological Disorder Awareness

The Delaware State Education Association believes in increasing education employee awareness of neurological disorders and their symptoms that hinder student learning capabilities. Qualified health professionals should be cooperatively involved in this process. (1987, 1997)

D. PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE AMONG EDUCATORS.

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION

D-1 The Teaching Profession

The Delaware State Education Association believes that the teaching profession is a cornerstone of society. The goal of the profession must be to provide the highest quality of education to all students. To achieve this goal, the profession must be composed of individuals who meet the highest standards. These standards must be established, maintained, and governed by the members of the profession and must apply to recruitment, teacher preparation, induction, professional development, evaluation, practice, and accountability. Members of the teaching profession must assume expanded leadership roles and must have the time, resources, and decision-making authority to provide the highest quality of learning for each student. This goal can be achieved by the profession in partnership with other education employees, parents/guardians, the community, the district, and the state. (1999)

D-2 Teacher Preparation Programs: Recruitment

The Delaware State Education Association supports a strong program of teacher recruitment with special emphasis on recruitment of underrepresented candidates. Pre-teaching programs and recruitment efforts should be developed at high schools and community/junior colleges in conjunction with institutions of higher education with teacher preparation programs. These efforts should include the active participation of practicing pre-K through 12 teachers.

The Association encourages individuals interested in teaching as a career to attend institutions accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The Association believes that high school counselors and advisers should inform students of the advantages to students who attend NCATE-accredited institutions.

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

The Association further believes in the encouragement and development of grants from both public and private sectors for students planning to pursue a career in education.

The Association believes that educational support personnel are an integral part of the student's learning process and, therefore, would make excellent candidates for teacher preparation programs. The Association also believes that affiliates should support the development of programs, resources, and funding to assist those educational support personnel who wish to obtain a college degree and fulfill the requirements necessary to become licensed classroom teachers.

The Association encourages licensed colleagues to act as a support system for such programs. (2000)

D-3 Teacher Preparation Programs: Admissions

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

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

The Association believes that appropriate state agencies should monitor projected needs by certification areas and 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. (1995, 2001)

D-4 Teacher Preparation Programs: Content and Evaluation

The Delaware State Education Association believes that a teacher preparation program, traditional or non-traditional, must be equitably funded and must:

- a. Involve practicing, licensed pre-K through adult education teachers in the design, implementation, evaluation, and systematic change of the program
- b. Involve students preparing to teach in the evaluation and improvement of the program
- c. Involve teacher educators who are licensed and practicing in their field of expertise and who also demonstrate practical knowledge of schools and classroom teaching
- d. Include a policy of affirmative recruitment
- e. Include tests, reports, student teaching, portfolio reviews, and other measures of performance designed to assess progress in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary for effective teaching
- f. Require courses in the liberal arts, subject or grade-level specialty, reading, methodologies for the instruction of the limited English proficiency student, and professional studies that include learning theories, curriculum design, classroom management, discipline, student assessment, school accountability and teaching techniques
- g. Include instruction and field experience in the uses of appropriate technology for managing and advancing instruction
- h. Include instructional content and experience that address our multicultural, multiethnic diversity, recognize the contributions of ethnics and other minorities, and provide techniques for teaching culturally diverse students
- i. Include instructional content and experiences that address how economic and/or housing status affect a child's readiness and ability to learn and function in a school setting and that provide specific techniques for teachers who teach children of poverty
- j. Involve students preparing to teach in recognizing biases and acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge to assist them in creating a bias-free environment
- k. Include instructional content and experience in research and information skills, group processes, shared decision-making, strategic planning, the dynamics of inter-group communications, peace and conflict resolution, human growth and development, the changing role of the family, exceptional behaviors, and human relations
- l. Include a variety of field experiences throughout the preparation program culminating in a practicum
- m. Include accurate instructional content on the evolution of professional teacher organizations and the advances in the areas of job contracts, salary schedules, benefit programs, and working conditions
- n. Include instruction and practical experience in the processes, strategies, realities, responsibilities, and challenges of shared decision-making, problem-solving, and strategic planning
- o. Include instructional content in awareness of and educational programs for all special education areas recognized by federal law
- p. Provide access to professional and pre-professional organizations related to the education profession and areas of certification.
- q. Promote involvement in an NEA-Student Program local chapter that provides opportunities for community outreach, professional development, and political action.
- r. Be evaluated and accredited by the Delaware Professional Standards Board and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)
- s. Be funded at a level that ensures that NCATE accreditation is achieved and maintained.

These requirements could be accomplished through taking traditional coursework or through a restructured teacher education program specially designed for nontraditional route candidates. A nontraditional route program should be designed with the full involvement of practicing teachers, the Association, administrators, teacher educators and the state professional standards board. The instruction should, however, be conducted in conjunction with a state-approved college or university teacher education program. The amount of coursework and amount of time spent with students before the candidate enters the classroom would be decided by those developing the program. (1995, 2008)

D-5 Teacher Preparation Programs: Student Teaching

The Delaware State Education Association believes that student teachers should be provided with legal status and liability protection.

The Association believes that higher education institutions and cooperating school systems should supply any and all instructional materials that student teachers would require during their student teaching terms. Further, the Association believes that tuition waivers should be granted for the term during which the students are practice teaching if the institution implicitly and/or explicitly discourages students from outside employment during that time.

The Association supports formulation of standards for school systems that receive student teachers, including guidelines for cooperating teachers and college coordination of student teachers. Supervising or cooperating teachers in a student teacher program should have reduced teaching loads and be given a minimum established compensation. 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.

The Association further believes that teacher preparation programs should offer alternative placements for student teachers assigned to a school in the event of a strike or other work stoppage in order to meet the requirements for a teaching license.

The Association believes that the acceptance of student teachers should be on a voluntary basis. (1995)

D-6 Teacher Induction

The Delaware State Education Association believes that teacher induction is a process that facilitates the transition of new teachers into the profession. 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 supports collaboration and inquiry.

The Association further believes that the induction process enhances teaching skills and promotes professional development. The Association should be involved in the development of standards for teacher induction and in the design and implementation of the process. (2000)

D-7 Mentor Programs

The Delaware State Education Association believes that mentor programs are means of enhancing the professional expertise of employees. The Association believes that the planning, implementation, and evaluation of such programs must be negotiated and cooperatively developed and maintained by the school district and the local affiliate.

The Association further believes 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 also believes that the program must be fully funded by either the state or the local authority.

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. (1989, 2005)

D-8 Peer Assistance Programs and Peer Assistance and Review Programs

The Delaware State Education Association believes that high standards within the teaching profession and continuous improvement in professional practices 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
- b. Be governed by a joint association-school district board with at least half of its members appointed by the local affiliate
- c. Acknowledge that the school district makes the final decision to retain or initiate non-renewal or termination proceedings, but that recommendations forwarded by the joint governing board are routinely accepted and acted upon by the district
- d. Ensure that only teachers who are deemed by their peers to be highly skilled practitioners are selected for the role of consulting teacher, that the consulting teacher’s area of expertise is the same as or closely related to that of the participating teacher, and that the consulting teacher is chosen by the joint governing board with the approval of the participating teacher
- e. Seek consulting teachers who reflect the diverse population of the teaching staff
- f. Provide that consulting teachers are properly compensated and provided adequate time to fulfill their responsibilities
- g. Provide that consulting teachers receive extensive and ongoing training in mentoring/coaching skills, district initiatives and resources, and current education instructional methods
- h. Establish guidelines for the referral of teachers as well as safeguards to prevent unwarranted referrals and to allow participating teachers the selection and/or approval of their assignment to a consulting teacher
- i. Establish and convey to all consulting and participating teachers clear rules on allowable uses of documents, products, and communications arising from the program
- j. Require extensive documentation based on ongoing assessments of each participating teacher
- k. Require that rigorous and extensive assistance be provided over an appropriate period of time to help the participating teacher attain the requisite standard of proficiency before any effort is made to counsel the participating teacher into alternative career choices either within or outside the education profession or a recommendation to initiate non-renewal or termination proceedings is issued
- l. Ensure due process protection and duty of fair representation
- m. Guarantee that participating teachers, consulting teachers, and teachers who sit on the governing board do not lose their Association membership or bargaining unit status by virtue of their participation in the program. (1998, 1999)

D-9 Administrator Training and Evaluation

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

The Association further believes that procedures for evaluation of administrators should include evaluation by the school employees under their direct supervision.

The Association believes that evaluation instruments for all administrators should be developed and standardized at the state level with input from effected personnel. (1989, 1994)

APPROPRIATE STAFFING

D-10 Supervision of Extracurricular Activities

The Delaware State Education Association believes that extracurricular activities are an important part of the public school experience. Education institutions should adopt policies, standards, and guidelines for staffing extracurricular activities and for hiring personnel who have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform those duties, and for providing education employees

with appropriate ongoing training. Qualified education employees must be given the opportunity of first acceptance of paid positions. (1994, 1997)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

D-11 Professional Development

The Delaware State Education believes that continuous professional development is required for all education employees 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 and directed by and differentiated to meet the needs of affected professionals at each site
- c. Assist education employees in meeting the needs of students
- d. Be incorporated into and aligned with (not added to) professional work expectations
- e. Provide training for the implementation of new and expanded programs
- f. Provide training for the development of new and revised curriculum.
- g. Provide time during the regular work day and work year for inquiry, research, reflection, and collaboration
- h. Provide opportunities for mentoring with colleagues
- i. Be standards referenced and incorporate the best principles of adult teaching and learning
- j. Be career long, rigorous, and sustained
- k. Stimulate intellectual development and leadership capacity
- l. Balance individual priorities with the needs of the school and the district
- m. Provide a depth of subject matter knowledge and a greater understanding of learning styles
- n. Provide opportunities to apply new learnings and changes in practice
- o. Provide opportunities to assume new roles, including leadership positions
- p. Include an ongoing assessment and evaluation component to determine effectiveness
- q. Provide flexibility for the use of a variety of resources such as university-school partnerships, professional development schools, exchange programs, professional development resource centers, and cultural, association and business resources

The Association supports a variety of approaches to professional development, including required and voluntary development programs, and the concept of Teacher Centers and other professional development resource centers governed by education employees representing their bargaining units and/or local professional organizations. The Association also recognizes the professional development value of participating in the process to attain performance- or assessment-based national certifications that are based on standards of practice established by the educators eligible for the certification.

The Association further believes that professional development programs should provide equal opportunities for all education employees to gain the knowledge and skills important to their position, to the improvement of their programs, and to their job performance. Appropriate technology must be available to all education employees to assure access to information and ideas. Local professional development and grant programs should assure that appropriate education employees have a decisive voice through Association representation at every stage of planning, implementation, and evaluation. (1998, 2008)

D-12 Professional Development for School Nurses

The Delaware State Education Association believes that all students should receive the immediate services of a licensed professional school nurse. School nurses are valued members of our Association.

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. The Association further urges special programs for those school nurses who deal with students with special needs. (1994, 2002)

D-13 Professional Development for Education Professionals

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

- a. Be based upon clearly articulated goals reached by consensus of the school community
- b. Be designed, directed by, and differentiated to meet the needs of affected professionals at each site

- c. Support education professionals in meeting the needs of students
- d. Be incorporated into and aligned with (not added to) professional work expectations
- e. Be standards-referenced and incorporate effective practice, relevant data, and current research
- f. Be supported by adequate resources
- g. Be career-long, rigorous, and sustained
- h. Stimulate intellectual development and leadership capacity
- i. Balance individual priorities with the needs of the school and the district
- j. Include an ongoing assessment and evaluation component to determine effectiveness
- k. Respond to, refine, improve, and adjust the professional development according to the feedback provided by the participants
- l. Not usurp 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
 - opportunities for mentoring/peer coaching with colleagues on an ongoing basis
 - a depth of subject matter knowledge and a greater understanding of the impact of culture, gender, and learning styles
 - opportunities to assume new roles, including leadership positions
 - flexibility for the use of a variety of resources such as university-school partnerships, professional development schools, exchange programs, professional development resource centers, and cultural and business resources
 - training and ongoing support for the use of technology as an instructional tool. (1998, 2008, 2011)

D-14 Tuition-Free Summer School for Teachers and Paraprofessionals

The Delaware State Education Association believes that the State of Delaware must offer teachers and paraprofessionals the opportunity to attend the summer session of the University of Delaware and the Delaware State University at no cost.

DSEA further urges the University of Delaware and Delaware State University to develop alternative formats, locations, and schedules to enable Delaware's teachers and paraprofessionals to take full advantage of summer sessions. The University must provide the necessary courses for certification and extend the number of offerings. The University of Delaware and the Delaware State University should also establish a communication system for receiving input from teachers and paraprofessionals on what courses and programs are offered. (1982, 2002)

D-15 Professional Research

The Delaware State Education Association believes that school employees should be supported in conducting research projects at the work site in an effort to determine the most effective means of delivering an effective educational program.

- a. This research should be conducted according to standard procedures for scientific research.
- b. The district or the state should establish parameters for doing research. The appropriate DSEA affiliate should be involved in establishing these parameters.
- c. Research might be related to graduate programs.
- d. Participation in research projects should be voluntary.
- e. The research should be announced by the employer and recognized by the state and/or district or school during its process.
- f. The results should be formally recorded.
- g. A vehicle should exist so that findings would be shared among other school employees.
- h. The work should receive either financial compensation, compensatory time, credit for in-service, or credit for other professional activities such as PIP or certification requirements. (1992)

D-16 Participation in Professional Associations

The Delaware State Education Association believes that every education employee has the right and obligation to participate fully in professional associations. The Association further believes that policies adopted by governing boards should provide released time without loss of pay to education employees who are fulfilling leadership responsibilities or attending professional meetings. Released time should be equitably provided. (1996, 1998)

COMPETENCY

D-17 Teacher Exchange Programs

The Delaware State 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. (1989, 1998)

D-18 Evaluation

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

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

- a. Information concerning the evaluation criteria and procedures of the governing board upon application for employment and when charges are made in the criteria and procedures
- b. Open evaluation without subterfuge and with advance notice of evaluation visits with discussion of the teacher's goals and methods
- c. Consultation in timely fashion after a formal evaluation visit and receipt of and opportunity to respond substantively in writing to any formal evaluation report prior to placement in a personnel file
- d. Evaluation reports that assess strengths, note progress, indicate remaining deficiencies and suggest specific measures the teacher can take to overcome indicated deficiencies
- 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 at the request of the education employee
- g. An unbiased appeals process with an evidentiary hearing under oath
- h. Access to and review of all items in personnel records; opportunity to attach a written response; and access to a procedure to remove inappropriate, derogatory, or substantiated material. Anecdotal records to be included must be reduced to writing within 30 days of the incident documented. Statutory guarantees should assure these rights.
- i. Supervision that is constructive, provides an opportunity to correct deficiencies, takes into account the variety of learning and teaching environmental factors, and emphasizes career development of the professional educator
- j. Guaranteed due process for dismissal proceedings, if, after being given sufficient time and opportunity for improvement, a teacher is re-evaluated and found to be incompetent.

The Association opposes any plan to rank teachers on the basis of competency. The Association also believes that examinations such as the National Teacher Examination and PRAXIS series must not be used as a condition of employment, evaluation, certification, placement, or promotion of practicing, licensed teachers. The Association is convinced that no test in existence is satisfactory for such usage.

It opposes models that prescribe single, limited definitions of competence; that reduce the process of teaching to mechanical non-professional acts.

The Association further opposes the use of pupil progress and student assessment tests for purposes of teacher evaluation, or determining compensation or employment status. (1996, 2001)

D-19 A Licensed Educator in Every Professional Position

The Delaware State Education Association believes that, to provide the highest quality of education to all students, hiring practices must ensure that all teaching positions be filled by highly qualified professionals. Teachers and paraprofessionals in positions that render them qualified as opposed to highly qualified should have the resources of their school district at their disposal and should have the supervising administrator help them in preparing a plan to help them reach the status of Highly Qualified. The Association also believes that hiring policies and practices must be nondiscriminatory and include provisions for the recruitment of a diverse teaching staff.

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

The Association believes that classroom teachers must have an active role in the hiring process, including the development of selection criteria, job descriptions, and interview instruments, and must participate in the interview and selection process. (2006, 2008)

D-20 Promote the Retention of Experienced Education Professionals

The Delaware State Education Association believes that experienced education professionals are valuable resources in the promotion of educational excellence. The Association also believes that experienced education professionals should be encouraged to remain in, or return to, the education profession. This encouragement should be accomplished through strategies consistent with NEA policy, including, but not limited to, enhanced salaries and benefits, a supportive and respectful work environment, a reasonable workload, a secure pension accompanied by retiree health care benefits, and retirement enhancements that reward extended years of service. These strategies can be achieved through bargaining, legislation, or other means. (2009)

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

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

E-1 Instructional Excellence

The Delaware State Education Association believes that to achieve and maintain instructional excellence there must be continual improvement in the education process. The Association also believes that teachers have the primary responsibility for instructional excellence and must have the primary authority to recommend improvements in instruction through a democratic decision-making process. The Association believes that no single program can meet the needs of every student. Teachers who use different techniques should not be forced to change their styles for the sake of uniformity.

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, 2008)

E-2 Time to Teach

The Delaware State 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, including a duty-free lunch period, an office in which to work, access to telephones and technology, adequate and appropriate office equipment, freedom from interruptions during instructional time, unencumbered planning time, time to evaluate student progress, time for implementation of federal state legislative requirements, and elimination of the non-instructional 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 program. The Association 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 teachers need the freedom and flexibility to schedule time and design programs to meet the needs of students.

Class size and the number of instructional periods taught each day must be adjusted to the particular learning process involved to allow individual attention to each pupil when that is the required mode of instruction. Class size should not exceed 15 students per certificated classroom teacher. (1981, 1995)

E-3 Selection and Challenges of Materials and Teaching Techniques

Materials in all subject areas should include strategies that encourage student interaction, be developmentally appropriate, include appropriate accommodations and modifications for students with special needs, be free of stereotypes, address divergent points of view, contain sufficient activities, to teach the concepts, and provide for the evaluation of higher level thinking. The Delaware State 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 deplures pre-publishing censorship, book-burning crusades, and attempts to ban books from school library media centers and school curricula. Challenges to the choice of instructional materials and techniques must be orderly and objective, under procedures mutually adopted by professional associations and school governing boards.

Materials in all subject areas should:

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

Instructional materials and equipment must be provided in sufficient variety and quantity to serve all students. (1996, 2007, 2011)

E-4 Development of Curricula

The Delaware State 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 believes that careful consideration must be given to the curricula in regards to:

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

The Association further believes that educators must have an active role in the establishment of procedures for the planning, development, implementation, monitoring, and refinement of curricula. To that end, professional time and training must be provided. (2003, 2005)

E-5 Development of Materials

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

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

Where school districts and educational institutions involve teachers and faculty in the development of any educational materials, participation should be voluntary and compensated. (2008)

E-6 Cultural Diversity in Instructional Materials and Activities

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

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

The Association acknowledges that many contemporary texts related to ethnic-minority groups do not portray realistically their lifestyles, but convey a negative self-concept to ethnic-minority students. The Association believes that educators and boards of education should adopt and use textbooks and other educational materials in all subject areas that accurately portray the contributions of ethnic and other minorities. (1992)

E-7 Religious Heritage in Educational Materials

The Delaware State Education Association believes that educational materials should accurately portray the influence of religion in our nation and throughout the world. (1989)

E-8 Impact of State Legislative Mandates

The Delaware State Education Association believes that state mandates regarding school programs should be broad, general guidelines, must be fully funded, and must not be based on student achievement. Mandated programs and requirements should be established or eliminated only in conjunction with the Association and its local affiliates. These mandates should be assessed by affiliates and local stakeholders with particular attention to their impact upon students, education employees, school programs, and finances. (1979, 2008)

E-9 Academic and Professional Freedom

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

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

The Association further believes that legislation and regulations that mandate or permit the teaching of religious doctrines and/or groups that promote anti-public education agendas violate both student and teacher rights. The Association urges its affiliates to seek repeal of these mandates where they exist. (2007)

E-10 Professional Discretion in the Classroom

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

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

The Association believes that, while programs focusing on scripted learning and pacing charts can serve as frames of reference, it is still incumbent on the classroom teacher to evaluate the efficacy of all instructional programs and to modify them when necessary in order to address the needs and facilitate the success of each student. (2008)

E-11 Intellectual Property and Access to Copyrighted Materials

The Delaware State 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. (2008)

E-12 Support Professionals in the Education Process

The Delaware State Education Association believes that all education employees are essential to the learning environment. The Association recognizes that educational support personnel promote positive role models that enhance the education process.

The Association also believes that the retention of education support professionals must be encouraged and is vital to keeping strong and effective public schools. (1992, 2008)

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

PAY EQUITY/COMPARATIVE WORTH

F-1 Nondiscriminatory Personnel Policies/Affirmative Action

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

Affirmative action plans and procedures that encourage active recruitment and employment of ethnic minorities, women, and persons with disabilities should be developed and implemented in accordance with Association policy. Affirmative action plans and procedures that encourage active recruitment and employment of men in underrepresented education categories should also be developed and implemented. It may be necessary therefore to give preference to men in recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion policies to overcome past discrimination. (2008)

F-2 Tax Deductions for Professional Expenses

The Delaware State Education Association believes that education employees must continue to perform and develop professionally and that expenses incurred to do so are professional and therefore must be considered as necessary and ordinary and must be uniformly deductible, as an adjustment, from gross income in the computation of federal, state, and local income taxes. Deductible expenses should include, but not be limited to, expenses incurred relating to sabbatical leaves; educational travel for maintenance and improvement of skills; an in-home office; education-related auto use; and, purchasing of teaching supplements and professional supplies, materials, and equipment. (2008)

BARGAINING ISSUES

F-3 Basic Contract Standards

The Delaware State Education Association believes that collective bargaining agreements between education employees, including part-time and temporary, and their employers should contain certain standards contractual concepts. Therefore, the Association urges its affiliates to negotiate agreements that 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 fringe benefits, including but not limited to comprehensive health, life, dental, vision, and income protection insurance and employee assistance programs, that fully cover bargaining unit members, domestic partners, and their families
- f. Membership in the association or the payment of a fair-share fee as a condition of employment
- g. Required posting of all vacant or newly created positions along with the right of bargaining unit members to apply for these positions
- h. Unassigned preparation, planning and travel time as applicable for all members of the bargaining unit
- i. Specified class size, teaching load, and job description
- j. A duty-free lunch period of not less than 30 minutes for all members of the bargaining unit
- k. Nondiscriminatory, fair, and equitable treatment of bargaining unit members
- l. Contractually defined procedures for evaluation and promotion
- m. Released time for association business with full pay and fringe 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, to engage in professional development, to work on curriculum and assessment, to mentor and be mentored, and to provide professional leadership.
- q. Salary schedules that are equitable, regardless of the age level of the students being taught, and are based upon preparation, professional growth, and length of service and excluding any form of merit pay except in institutions of higher education where it has been bargained.
- r. Extracurricular and extra-duty assignments filled on a voluntary basis and compensated at no less than the employee's regular rate of pay
- s. Protection from being required to participate in community service
- t. Retirement benefits based on all income derived from school employment, including extracurricular and extra-duty pay
- u. Clearly defined bargaining unit membership
- v. Placement on the salary schedule based on qualifications and number of years of experience in the profession
- w. A guaranteed safe and healthy working environment, including a secure/ 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 learning, and to guarantee that technology and distance learning are not used to supplant employees (1996, 2008)

F-4 Salaries and Other Compensation

The Delaware State Education Association believes that educators must play a major role in developing and determining compensation structures through collective bargaining and/or shared decision-making. The Association and its affiliates will closely monitor proposed or legislated salary and other compensation structures and will strongly oppose those that bypass or undermine the bargaining process or negotiated agreements.

The Association insists that salary schedules should:

- a. Be based on preparation, academic degrees, experience, professional growth, responsibilities and full length of service,
- b. Assure that initial placement and advancement on the salary schedule are nondiscriminatory,
- c. Provide additional compensation for national certifications,
- d. Provide and maintain structural integrity through the use of an index or percentage guide for experience increments and levels of academic preparation
- e. 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,
- f. Provide for entry-level salaries and career earnings comparable to those of other professions and occupations with similar preparation and responsibilities,
- g. Be structured to provide compensation levels that encourage classroom teachers to remain in the classroom and support personnel in the educational setting, and
- h. Assure that salaries paid in early childhood, non-traditional programs, adult and alternative programs are on par with salaries paid in traditional programs.

The Association believes that any system that provides additional compensation to education employees beyond that provided by the single salary schedule should be based on criteria that are clearly stated, subject to objective measurement, and related to the school district's educational objectives. Any such system should award the specified additional compensation to all employees who meet the requisite standards. The Association further believes that merit pay schedules based on education employees' evaluations or student performance are inappropriate because they are limited opportunities based on subjective assessments and, therefore, do not provide incentives for the entire profession.

Extra duties performed by education employees should be on a voluntary basis and should be accompanied by equitable extra-duty pay. The Association urges an end to limiting maximum salaries and other compensation for education employees.

The Association believes that part-time education employees should receive the same salary and other compensation as full-time education employees prorated according to the workload.

The Association 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. (1989, 2008)

F-5 Minimum Criteria for Additional Compensation beyond the Single Salary Schedule

The Delaware State Education Association is opposed to the use of merit pay compensation systems based on subjective criteria. The Association recognizes that there are many other compensation models available. However, the Association believes that any system that provides additional compensation to education employees beyond that provided by the single salary schedule should meet the following minimum criteria:

- a. The design of the system must be accomplished through the collective bargaining process and supported by members.
- b. Any additional compensation beyond a single salary schedule must not be based on education employee evaluation, or attendance.
- c. The criteria that are used to determine whether education employees receive the additional compensation should be clearly stated and subject to objective measurement. If student performance is included as a criteria, multiple measures of student growth should be included. The system also should make clear how those criteria relate to the school district's educational objectives.
- d. The system should not directly or indirectly limit the number of education employees who are eligible for the additional compensation. All education employees should be afforded a fair opportunity to meet the requisite standards and should receive the additional compensation if they do. The compensation system may recognize and reward the additional knowledge and skills that education employees have acquired or may acquire over their careers.
- e. Full funding must be available to sustain the system. The allocation of funds to provide the additional compensation should not prevent increases in the basic compensation for all education employees.
- f. The system should not diminish the professional status of those education employees who do not receive the additional compensation or in any way suggest that such education employees are not qualified for the positions that they hold. In no case should a teacher's basic salary be reduced under the system. (2006, 2008)

F-6 Benefits

The Delaware State Education Association 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 drugs
- b. Paid leaves
 1. Sick leave with unlimited accumulation

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

The Association also believes that comprehensive health insurance, life insurance, and long-term disability insurance should be provided for education employees on official leave of absence or parental leave.

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 further believes that, if school districts consolidate or separate, education employees should not lose their tenure or have their salary, benefits, or seniority reduced.

The Association believes that part-time education employees should receive the same benefits as full-time education employees prorated according to the workload.

The Association further believes that provisions should be made for retirees and their spouses, at their option, to continue in the comprehensive health, dental, and vision care program of the school district, educational system, or institution.

The Association believes that any member who goes out on leave should be returned to their original position upon completion of such leave.

The Association further believes that, if school districts consolidate, regionalize, share services, or separate, education employees should not lose their tenure or have their salaries, benefits, or seniority reduced. (1989, 2008, 2011)

F-7 Education Professionals Outside the Local pre-K–12 Schools

The Delaware State Education Association recognizes the contributions of educators who work with students in school settings other than the local pre-K–12 schools. The Association believes that these education professionals have the right to collective bargaining processes that are comparable to their pre-K–12 counterparts. The Association also believes that these employees are entitled to equitable contract language that offers the same rights and protections as education employees within local K–12 school settings. (2008)

F-8 Mandated Training/Retraining

The Delaware State Education Association believes that when a federal, state, or district mandate requires an education employee to meet new standards of employability and/or to be retrained, it is the responsibility of the mandating agency to provide released time for training, to compensate the employee at the employee's hourly rate of pay, and to provide for the cost of tuition, textbooks, and travel. (2008)

F-9 Protection of Education Employees

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

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

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

The Association believes that education employees and the local affiliate must have the right to reflect professional concerns at a student suspension or expulsion hearing. (1996, 2008)

F-10 Personnel Policies and Procedures

The Delaware State Education Association believes that personnel policies and procedures should be written and developed cooperatively by local affiliates and their local boards of education or appropriate governing bodies. The Association also believes in a cooperative review for improvement of the personnel policies and procedures. Improvements will be made through the negotiation process. (2008)

F-11 Shared Decision-making

The Delaware State Education Association supports shared decision-making processes that are based on contractual/formal agreements between districts and local affiliates. The Association believes that the scope of local shared decision-making should be limited only by the contractual/formal agreement. The Association further 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. Constituent representation appropriate to the site and selected by each constituency
- e. Compensated planning and training time for staff and governance bodies as well as additional resources necessary for successful implementation
- f. Compensation and/or released time for participating education employees. (1989, 2008)

F-12 Support Staff

The Delaware State Education Association believes that local school systems should provide classroom teachers with the most capable support staff to assist in the educational process. The Association also believes its affiliates and local school systems should become involved in the selection, orientation, and training of education support personnel. The Association believes that school districts must provide appropriate professional development for education support personnel.

The Association calls upon its local affiliates to resist efforts by school boards to use the employment of education support personnel as an excuse to increase class size. The Association insists that education support personnel have written job descriptions that define their duties and that these employees be used only for assistance to classroom teachers.

The Association further believes that salary, benefits, and working conditions for support staff should be competitive with those of similar positions in private industry and business in Delaware.

The Association recognizes that the support staff share the interests and concerns of the professional staff and should be encouraged to organize and become full-fledged members of the Association.

The Association opposes the use of education support professionals to increase class size. (1995, 2008)

F-13 Summer School, Extended School Year, and Year-round Schools

The Delaware State Education Association believes that local affiliates must participate fully in the design, authorization, implementation, evaluation and continuation of summer school, the extended school day/year, and year-round schools and other alternative calendars and schedules. 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 fully qualified, certificated employees. Employment in these programs must be on a voluntary basis. (1999, 2002)

PROTECTION OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES

F-14 Subcontracting/Contracting Out

The Delaware State Education Association believes that public school services should be performed by public education employees. The Association opposes any attempts to diminish the quality of learning or services through the elimination of teaching positions, through the subcontracting of teaching and support services, through involuntary assignment out of field, or through the revision of education employee management under the guise of improving educational opportunity. The Association opposes, in public school districts and educational institutions, subcontracting/contracting out arrangements that:

- a. Transfer or displace education employees
- b. Replace full-time positions with temporary, part-time or volunteer workers
- c. Replace services that are, or could feasibly be, provided by public education employees
- d. Abrogate previously contracted benefits, reduce compensation, deny benefits, and/or reduce or eliminate accumulated retirement experience and benefits
- e. Have not been agreed to by the affected affiliate.

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

- a. Information collected will not be released to boards of education in a form other than a statement of qualification but be kept by the investigating state or national agency
- b. Every employee or potential employee has a right to due process and access to records
- c. Clear, specific, observable, and objective evidence of rehabilitation for past offenses is included
- d. Any fee for background checks shall not be borne by the employee or potential employee. (2008)

F-15 Right to Privacy

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

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

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

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

- a. Freedom from audio or video surveillance without the prior written permission of the individual

- b. Freedom from harassment by individuals, organizations, or businesses due to unauthorized release or sale of employee records
- c. Protection from exploitation via telephone and the Internet
- d. Security of computer files, passwords, and user codes from inappropriate or unauthorized access
- e. Authority to refuse a polygraph, lie detector, or other invasive method of evidence collection.

The Association also believes that fingerprinting is acceptable only for the purpose of a pre-employment or pre-licensure check for criminal records that are pertinent to education employment. The Association opposes fingerprinting as a condition of continued employment or licensure. The Association further believes that all costs of fingerprinting must be borne by the employer or licensing agency. (2000, 2008)

F-16 Protection Against Age Harassment

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

- a. Establish strong policies that grant those at or approaching retirement age freedom in their options to continue education employment or to retire
- b. Develop educational programs designed to help individuals recognize, understand, prevent, and combat harassment because of age
- c. Develop and publicize a grievance procedure that encourages the reporting of incidents of harassment because of age, resolves complaints promptly, and protects the rights of all parties. (1991)

F-17 Allegations Against Education Employees

The Delaware State Education Association supports enactment of state legislation, local ordinances, and school board policy that would protect education employees from allegations of child abuse made in bad faith.

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

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

The Association also urges its affiliates to encourage enactment of federal, state, and local legislation that would assure due process for education employees accused of child abuse, provide a mechanism whereby false or unfounded accusations can be expunged from all records, and support restoration of job status and all rights and benefits to education employees who are acquitted of child abuse charges. The Association further urges its affiliates to educate its members as to current practices in dealing with such allegations. (1996)

F-18 Health Examinations

The Delaware State Education Association opposes the imposition of physical and mental examination by local school authorities for the purpose of harassment of school employees.

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

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

The Association believes that the costs of any required physical or mental diagnostic procedure should be incurred by the federal, state, or local agency that requires such procedure and that school employees should be guaranteed the right to select their own physician. (1989)

F-19 Drug and Alcohol Testing

The Delaware State Education Association believes in a drug- and alcohol-free workplace. However, the Association believes that mandatory and/or random drug and alcohol testing of employees and job applicants is an unwarranted and unconstitutional invasion of privacy and opposes such testing. (2008)

F- 20 AIDS/HIV Testing of Education Employees

The Delaware State Education Association opposes mandatory/involuntary human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) testing of school employees or school employment applicants. (1987, 1988)

F-21 Employees with AIDS/HIV

The Delaware State 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, 1994)

F-22 Hepatitis Vaccination

The Delaware State Education Association believes that governing boards should provide free hepatitis vaccinations to all employees choosing to be or required to be vaccinated. (1996)

F-23 Stress on Education Employees

The Delaware State Education Association believes that the dynamics of our society and increased public demands on education have produced adverse and stressful school environments. The conditions have led to increased emotional and physical disabilities among education employees which may be displayed in many forms including burn-out, absenteeism, alcoholism, and mental illness.

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

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

The Association further urges that local affiliates bargain for long-term disability insurance that includes mental disability as well as physical disability.

The Association 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.

The Association recognizes the debilitating effects that stress is having on education employee's effectiveness and the quality of the school environment. The Association urges all those involved in education to become aware of the multiple causes of this problem, such as:

- a. Stressful environments
- b. Lack of promotion
- c. Lack of rewards and recognition
- d. Negative, unsupportive public opinion
- e. Escalating demands on already overburdened education employees

DSEA calls for all forces in education to join together to work toward alleviating the conditions that cause stress. Local boards are urged to grant education employees released time and leaves of absence to allow them the opportunity to recharge their energies in some other environment. (1979, 1996)

F-24 Medication and Medical Services in Schools

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

- a. Only medical personnel be required to administer such medication or perform such medical services
- b. A physician's written verification of the student's need for medication or services be required
- c. Written permission of the parent/guardian be required
- d. The initial dosage of medication not be given in the school except in life-threatening situations. Initial dosage is the first dosage administered from the prescription
- e. Each medication given be recorded on a medication log that includes date, time, and signature of the person giving the medication
- f. Medication be delivered in and dispensed from a container properly labeled with the name and strength of medication, name of patient, name of physician, date of the original prescription, and directions for use
- g. Proper storage for the medication be available.

The Association also 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 further believes that such education employees should have the right to refuse to administer medication or perform medical services without fear of repercussion.

Medical personnel must be provided additional training by the district prior to performing the medical services in question. (1998, 2000)

F-25 Part-Time or Temporary Educational Employees

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

The Association also believes that part-time education employees should be employed only when an educational program requires specialized training or expertise not available among full-time education employees and when the need for such training and expertise warrants less than full-time employment.

The Association further believes that part-time education employees should receive the same salary and benefits as full-time education employees at least prorated according to workload. Part-time education employees should have the same opportunities to participate in collective bargaining, training, service on committees, and setting the academic direction of the educational institution.

The Association opposes 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. (2008)

F-26 Volunteers in Public Schools

The Delaware State 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.

The Association opposes the practice of using volunteer workers for the purposes of reducing instructional budgets, reducing the number of full- or part-time instructional positions, or reducing the number of full- or part-time educational support personnel positions within a local school system.

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. (1999, 2008)

F-27 Substitute Teachers

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

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

- a. Meet the same standards as other licensed teachers within the state
- b. Receive professional compensation and benefits
- c. Receive continuous professional development
- d. Be provided with materials and information appropriate to the position in which they are substituting, including any special needs of the students

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 educational support personnel, part-time employees, or employees hired through private agencies to cover classes. The Association further opposes requiring teachers to substitute during their preparation time.

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

The Association also opposes the practice of requiring paraprofessionals, part-time employees, or licensed staff to replace absent teachers. (2001, 2008)

F-28 Substitute Educational Support Personnel

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

The Association supports the right of substitute employees to organize for collective bargaining purposes. The Association also supports the practice of providing schedule pay plus basic and fringe benefits for educational support personnel substituting for permanent educational support personnel on extended leave. (2001, 2008)

F-29 Educators and Active Duty Service

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

The Association also believes that the federal government, upon calling an educator to active duty, should supplement the service person's compensation so his/her family does not experience a loss of revenue or benefits. (1992, 2008)

F-30 Education Reform Initiatives

The Delaware State Education Association believes in the development of education reform initiatives that advocate high student standards, appropriate assessments, and meaningful staff development, and that are based on successful practice and current educational research.

The Association supports those initiatives that include strong teacher participation, strong support professional participation, where appropriate, comprehensive staff development, informed community support, and ongoing evaluation. (1994, 2008)

F-31 Sabbatical Leaves

The Delaware State Education Association urges the state of Delaware to fund sabbatical leaves to at least one-half a teacher's full salary and to continue improving incentive pay for inservice education.

The Association also urges local boards of education to add local monetary incentives to sabbatical leaves and in-service education. (1982)

F-32 Use of Family and Medical Leave Act

DSEA supports educators using the Family and Medical Leave Act (“FMLA”) to fulfill their responsibilities as parents. The FMLA allows parents unpaid leave from work to care for their children after birth or placement for adoption or foster care. It also allows parents unpaid leave to care for their son or daughter who has a serious health problem. DSEA believes that educators who use FMLA to care for their children should be returned to their previous position upon their return from leave. (2008)

RETIREMENT/SOCIAL SECURITY

F-33 Retirement

The Delaware State Education Association shall provide leadership in retirement issues and believes that state and local retirement systems and programs should include—

- a. Autonomous boards of trustees, the majority of which are elected by and from the membership
- b. Actuarial and investment policies that produce sound financing
- c. Guarantees that assets of the retirement system are used for the sole benefit of the beneficiaries of the system. Any other proposal to use assets of a retirement system should be adopted only if it is determined that it will have no negative actuarial impact on the system.
- d. Annual independent review and audit
- e. Immediate and full vesting after not more than five years of service
- f. Provisions for employee contributions to be a percentage of total compensation, not to exceed the amount contributed by employers. The employer may pay part or all of the employee contribution
- g. Provisions permitting the purchase of credit earned while a member of another retirement system
- h. Provisions permitting the purchase of credit for sabbatical leaves, maternity/paternity adoption leaves, and any other approved leaves of absences
- i. Normal retirement of at least 50 percent of the highest single year's rate of salary after 20 years of creditable service or at age 55 if fully vested, where actuarially sound, and with destacking provisions; voluntary retirement under these provisions
- j. Disability retirement for a service-connected disability available to school employees from the first day of employment. Nonservice-connected disability retirement shall be available after five years of service. The benefit formula for disability retirement should yield benefits comparable to those of normal retirement
- k. Automatic cost-of-living increases to maintain purchasing power for retirees and beneficiaries
- l. A program to provide those who have been employed in two or more states, in Overseas Dependents Schools, or in other government schools with benefits substantially the same as they would have received if they had retired after a career in one state. Affiliates are urged to support statutes and legislation or any program providing portability coverage
- m. Full funding and equitable administration in the granting of retirement credit for military or Peace Corps service or provision for purchasing up to five years of retirement credit for military or Peace Corps service
- n. Nondiscrimination on the basis of gender or marital status
- o. Retirement credit for unused sick leave
- p. All compensation, including extra-duty pay, in computing retirement benefits
- q. Benefits not reduced by other sources of income, including Social Security benefits
- r. Pre-retirement counseling
- s. School employees' contributions and benefits that are not subject to federal income taxation
- t. Nondiscriminatory Internal Revenue Service rules and regulations
- u. An annual financial statement distributed to all members
- v. Tax-sheltered annuity and deferred compensation plans with a broad choice of programs available to all members. These plans should have actuarial tables that do not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, or national origin
- w. Provisions to purchase pension credit for any previous Department of Defense teaching service
- x. Fully paid comprehensive health insurance, including reimbursement for Medicare Part B premiums, for retired education employees, their spouses, domestic partners, and/or dependents
- y. Benefits that are free from double taxation or source taxation by states for retirees living outside of the state where the benefits were earned

- z. All retirement benefits for spouses be equally available for domestic partners
- aa. Benefit formulas that provide full-year credit for each school year worked and provide that credit regardless of the number of hours worked per day.
- bb. The removal of the temporary requirement for part-time employment for retired teachers, and earning ceiling from retired teachers (2001, 2008)

G. SECURE PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS, CERTIFICATION, LICENSURE

G-1 Professional Standards and Practices Board

The Delaware State Education Association believes that professional educators should govern their own profession. DSEA further believes that an autonomous professional standards and practices board should be established to set standards for those entering or in practice in the education profession in Delaware. The board should be comprised of a majority of practicing public school teachers. *The Association further believes that all state professional standards boards should include a broad representation of groups that are licensed.* DSEA should have the right to appoint all teachers on the board. DSEA's strong leadership position on the Delaware Professional Standards Board must be maintained.

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 supports the elimination of state statutes that conflict with this authority. The Association further believes that these boards should apply National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards as a minimum for granting, denying, or withdrawing the approval of teacher preparation programs. (2000, 2008, 2011)

G-2 National Standards Board Certification

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

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards establishes appropriate assessment procedures by which individuals may demonstrate competence in pedagogy and in subject matter areas, issues permanent certificates to all individuals who meet the criteria as established by the NBPTS and maintains a roster of those who have been certificated.

The Association supports the periodic evaluation of members' access to such certification and a review to ascertain whether cultural, economic, gender, racial, or age bias is perpetuated by the requirements for certification. (1992, 2008)

G-3 Teacher Licensure

The Delaware State Education Association advocates rigorous quality teaching standards such as those found in the NEA Principles of Professional Practice for entry into the teaching profession. As established by professional standards boards, these quality teaching standards must include each of the following:

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

For every candidate, including those entering via alternative routes, teacher licensure programs must be equal in rigor and focus and be based upon these quality teaching standards in order to prepare candidates for the initial teaching license.

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

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

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

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 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. (2004, 2005, 2011)

G-4 Teacher Certification

The Delaware State Education Association believes that there must be a certificate created and certification requirements developed for each teaching assignment and that the Association must be involved in the development of all new certification requirements.

Once developed, but prior to implementation of new certification requirements, courses necessary for new certification must be made readily available within the state and sufficient time must be given to allow current practitioners to meet these requirements.

The Association agrees that it is necessary and appropriate for professional personnel to keep current in their professions through inservice courses and additional course work after entering teaching; however, the Association maintains that teachers are competent to determine their own needs and must be permitted to determine the types of course work they will take to meet any certification requirements. (1982, 2008)

G-5 Other National Professional Certifications

The Delaware State Education Association supports voluntary national certification for all education employees from professional organizations that establish appropriate assessment and qualification standards. (2011)

H. PROMOTE AND PROTECT HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS

HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS

H-1 Civil Rights

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

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

The Association deplors those social, institutional, and governmental actions and policies that engender discriminatory practices. The Association encourages its affiliates in concert with community organizations, to educate DSEA members and the public to bring about an awareness of such policies and practices, and to actively work to eliminate them.

H-2 Human and Civil Rights of Children and Youth

The Delaware State 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 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.

The Association also believes that children and youth in detention centers must be provided educational programs that will enable them to become contributing members of society. Teachers in such centers must be prepared to provide instruction in life skills and learning skills.

The Association also opposes the imposition of the death penalty or life imprisonment without parole on individuals whose offenses were committed prior to age 18. The Association further condemns the practice of placing children and youth in trouble in abusive environments. The Association further opposes the placement of children and youth who are not charged with any offense in facilities with persons who are charged with criminal offenses. The Association further 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. (2004)

H-3 Self Determination of Indigenous Peoples

The Delaware State Education Association recognizes that American Indians and other American Natives are autonomous peoples with the rights of self- determination, and supports them in reclaiming those rights of self- determination and sovereignty.

The Association also recognizes that autonomy includes the right to recommend methods and materials that provide culturally appropriate education for American Indians and other American Natives to those who are responsible for educating the children of the State. (2008)

H-4 Housing and Health Care for All

The Delaware State Education Association believes that all members of our society have the right to adequate housing and health care and should be free to reside in the communities of their choice,

The Association encourages its affiliates, in conjunction with local school/community groups, to seek and support legislation, policies, and programs to provide adequate housing and health care for the homeless. (1990, 2008)

H-5 Invasion of Privacy

The Delaware State Education Association believes that every individual has a right to privacy. The Association continues to be concerned about the indiscriminate surveillance of citizens or groups by private and public agencies or individuals, especially the posting of addresses, phone numbers, and/or travel routes of individuals on Internet Web sites. The Association condemns the use of information gathered and stored and the exchange of such information, including library patron, medical, e-mail, and credit card records, without explicit release from the person or persons involved.

The Association also believes that rights to privacy and confidentiality must be guaranteed through federal and state legislation. (2005)

H-6 Sexual Assault

The Delaware State Education Association believes that all members of society should be protected from becoming victims of sexual assault. The Association also believes that it is a violation of the victims' right to privacy to release the names of the victims or to have their past sexual history admitted as evidence in assault cases. The Association supports fair and equitable treatment by health, hospital, and law enforcement agencies for sexual assault victims. The Association further believes

that access to necessary services/programs must be made available to victims and their families. These services must be funded by appropriate government agencies.

The Association believes that states should develop a systematic process for gathering evidence when such assaults occur and supports the use of DNA testing as a means to identify perpetrators of sexual assault. The Association also believes in the importance of counseling and rehabilitation for the assailant, and the protection of due process rights for both the victim and the alleged assailant. (2005)

H-7 Human Relations in the School

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

- a. School recruitment policies that will ensure culturally diverse school employees
- b. Appropriate classroom and other student-related activities
- c. Further development of continuing education programs to educate school and community personnel
- d. Reduction of the ratio of student to licensed staff. This reduction should be to the level teachers determine to be essential to improved learning
- e. Development of ways to improve community-police and student-police relations through the joint efforts of school, community, and law enforcement agencies
- f. Joint discussions to promote understanding of human and civil rights and responsibilities in all segments of society
- g. Student-related activities that are responsive to the cultural diversity and historical backgrounds of our society. (1989)

H-8 Bullying

The Delaware State Education Association believes the school environment must be free from all forms of bullying. Bullying is the systemic and chronic infliction of physical hurt and/or psychological distress on one or more individuals. The Association recognizes that bullying in schools is not limited to students, but can include members of the entire school community.

The Association encourages its affiliates to work with local school districts and institutions of higher education to develop comprehensive school-wide programs including all stakeholders to address bullying. Such programs should—

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

These programs should be reviewed, revised, and updated to reflect changing needs. (2005, 2006)

H-9 Freedom of Religion

The Delaware State Education Association believes that freedom of religion is a fundamental human right. The Association also believes that choice of religion is an intensely personal decision. Instruction in religious doctrines and practices is best provided within a family setting and/or by religious institutions.

The Association further believes that schools should teach the rights and responsibilities associated with the freedom of religion, the religious heritage and diversity of the United States, respect for the religion of others, and the historical and cultural influences of various world religions.

The Association believes that local school boards should adopt policies that govern religious activities on school property. Such policies must respect the separation of church and state; govern voluntary, student-led meetings with adult supervision before or after normal school hours; treat all religions on an equal basis; and protect the rights of students and education employees.

The Association also believes that the constitutional provisions on the establishment of and the free exercise of religion in the First Amendment require that there be no sectarian practices in the public school program. The Association opposes the imposition of sectarian practices in the public school program and urges its affiliates to do the same.

The Association also opposes any federal legislation or mandate that would require school districts to schedule a moment of silence. The Association particularly opposes a moment of silence as a condition for receiving federal funds. (2008)

H-10 Control of Guns and Other Deadly Weapons

The Delaware State 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 believes that individuals who bring guns or deadly weapons to school should be excluded from school and school grounds until undergoing mandatory prescribed intervention.

The Delaware State Education Association believes that stricter legislation is needed to control guns and other deadly weapons. The Association supports legislation that provides for prescriptive controls on the manufacture, importation, distribution, sale, and resale of handguns and ammunition magazines.

The Association further believes that the sale and possession by the private sector of fully and semi-automatic paramilitary weapons, should be illegal.

The Association believes that 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 and distributions of these weapons.

The Association believes that owners of weapons are responsible for the security and appropriate use of these weapons. It therefore urges support for legislation which would make owners responsible for the consequences of use of weapons not securely and appropriately stored. The Association also believes that gun owners should participate in educational programs that stress responsible ownership, including safe use and storage of guns. (1993, 2004)

H-11 Victims of a Crime

The Delaware State Education Association believes that victims of a crime should be treated with dignity and compassion, without the fear of intimidation. Victims and their families should be notified of and have the right to be present/represented at all hearings and legal proceedings involving the defendant/perpetrator.

The Association also believes that 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, 1996)

OPPOSITION TO ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

H-12 Elimination of Discrimination

The Delaware State Education Association is committed to the elimination of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, and all other forms of discrimination. The Association deplores those social, institutional, and governmental actions and policies that engender discriminatory practices. The Association encourages its affiliates in concert with community organizations, to educate DSEA members and the public to bring about an awareness of such policies and practices, and to actively work to eliminate them. (1997, 2004)

H-13 Hate-Motivated Violence

The Association believes that hate-motivated violence, including, but not limited to, physical and verbal violence against individuals or groups because of their race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, size, marital status, or economic condition is deplorable. The Association also believes that the threat or promotion of such violence is equally deplorable. The Association further believes that federal, state, and local governments and community groups must oppose and eliminate hate-motivated violence and that current events and/or economic conditions should not diminish such opposition. (2000, 2008)

H-14 Sexual Harassment

The Delaware State Education Association believes that sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination or abuse.

The Association further believes that classroom teachers, faculty, staff, and students should be protected from sexual harassment. The Association encourages its affiliates to work with local school districts and institutions of higher education to:

- a. Establish strong policies defining and prohibiting sexual harassment
- b. Develop educational programs designed to help people recognize, understand, prevent, combat and eliminate sexual harassment
- c. Develop and publicize a grievance procedure that encourages the reporting of incidents of sexual harassment, resolves complaints promptly, and protects the rights of all parties
- d. Encourage the formation and training of staff/student support groups to assist in the counseling of targets of alleged sexual harassment. (1999, 2008)

INTEGRATION AND DESEGREGATION

H-15 Integration in the Public Schools

The Delaware State 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 assure 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 re-segregate integrated schools. The Association also opposes any governmental attempts to re-segregate public schools through any means, including vouchers, non-instrumentality charters, and other school-choice initiatives.

The Association will continue to oppose vigorously the systematic displacement or demotion of minority, especially Black, teachers and administrators to achieve integration. The Association further opposes actions of boards of education to finance integration plans through reduction of school staff. In addition, the Association will oppose the capricious reassignment and displacement of Hispanic teachers and administrators because of desegregation and bilingual programs. (2004, 2005)

H-16 Ethnic-Minority Educators

The Delaware State Education Association believes that multiracial teaching staffs are essential to the operation of schools.

The Association urges local and state affiliates and appropriate governing bodies and agencies to work to achieve and maintain ethnic diversity in all categories of educational employment.

The Association also believes that, whenever possible and/or appropriate, elders and/or community leaders of a particular culture should be invited to share their skills and knowledge as instructors of a culturally appropriate curriculum. (2007)

I. OBTAIN FOR ITS MEMBERS THE BENEFITS OF AN INDEPENDENT, UNITED EDUCATION PROFESSION.

STRONG EFFECTIVE ASSOCIATIONS/AFFILIATES

I-1 Strong Professional Associations

The Delaware State Education Association believes that an independent professional association is vital to its membership and locals. This independence must be safeguarded in any alignments with other organizations. The Association urges its locals to initiate and support programs that will strengthen and enhance the local organizational structure and promote membership involvement and growth within the Association. (1994)

I-2 The Right To Organize

The Delaware State 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 deplores 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. (2008)

MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION

I-3 Membership Participation in the Association

The Delaware State Education Association believes that every member has the right and obligation to participate fully in the Association. The opportunity to participate in the Association must be afforded every member without fear, intimidation, or retribution.

The Association also believes that school policies should provide released time without loss of pay to those who are fulfilling leadership responsibilities, attending meetings, or participating in other Association activities. (2000)

I-4 Minority Participation in the Association

The Delaware State 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. (2008)

I-5 Student Member Participation

The Delaware State 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. Pre-professional and leadership training should be priorities.

The Association further believes that its members should promote membership in the NEA Student Program to all eligible students, including student teachers in members' classrooms, and provide opportunities for community outreach, professional development, and political action. The Association believes that advisors of NEA Student chapters should be members of the Association.

The Association believes that state affiliates should facilitate the establishment of student chapters in all higher education institutions that offer teacher preparation programs.

The Association also believes that local and state affiliates should collaborate with student programs in order to facilitate the transition from student to professional membership status within the Association so that student members become involved in the activities and leadership pathways of the professional Association and its affiliates. (2003, 2007)

I-6 Retired Member Participation

The Delaware State Education Association believes that retired members should be active participants within the Association at the national, state, and local levels.

Retired members should be involved in areas such as political action, legislative lobbying, member training, crisis assistance, development and maintenance of educational excellence, welfare and safety of children, public relations, and retirement issues.

The Association also believes that its members should promote membership in the Retired Program to all eligible members. (2000, 2007)

I-7 Promotion of Teaching as a Career Choice

The Delaware State Education Association supports the establishment of organizations involving students interested in the field of education as a profession. The Association believes that its local affiliates should promote the establishment of such organizations at all age levels and encourage its members to serve as advisers.

The Association also believes that state and local affiliates should strive to build cooperative relationships and partnerships with government, business, and community leaders to promote the field of education as a profession and as a vital role in every community.

The Association also believes that loan forgiveness is a meaningful mechanism to help recruit and retain new educators. (2007, 2008)