

MSTA Policy

MSTA Resolutions

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

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

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

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

General Policy of the Association

A. Improve Public Support for Public Education:

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

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

A.1. Financial Responsibility for the Program: MSTA believes in equal educational opportunities for each citizen of Maryland. The major responsibility for financing the total program of educational experience lies with the State of Maryland. All funding must come from dedicated revenue.

MSTA also believes that to provide the education employees with the necessary tools to cope with the increasing level of undesirable student behavior and unsafe disruptive environments in our schools, the State of Maryland should provide whatever funds are necessary to ensure

staff support, professional development, education, materials, supplies, equipment, special schools, and other facilities to remediate these problems.

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

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

MSTA also believes the federal government must continue to provide assistance to each state for the support of public education, including aid to federally impacted areas without assuming any control of educational policies and urges continued support by the Congress of the United States for expanded federal participation in the financing of elementary and secondary programs.

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

A.2. Financial Access to State Colleges, Universities and Technical Training Centers: MSTA believes every qualified student who graduates from an accredited Maryland high school should be guaranteed financial access to state colleges, universities, and technical training centers. (88, 89, 94)

A.3. Tax Limitation Proposals: MSTA believes that as long as public schools do not have the taxing authority and are funded by state and local revenues, tax limitation proposals present a serious threat to adequate school funding. (88, 04)

A.4. Taxation of Federal Properties and Installations: MSTA believes the federal government should pay state and local governments a fee equal to the applicable state and local tax rates for such property and installations to the appropriate political subdivisions. (89, 06)

A.5. Legislative Policy of the Association: MSTA believes that an integral part of the success of its legislative program will require active participation by all education employees in the political life of their communities on the local, state, and national levels. Whether this political activity is non-partisan, bipartisan, or partisan, guided by the provisions of the Maryland Fair Election Practices Act, the Association must present a united front and inform all members of the facts, statements, records, and platforms concerning candidates for public office.

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

A.6. Legislation and Educational Decisions: MSTA believes the extraordinary regulatory authority legally delegated to the appointed State Board of Education to determine policies relating to the program of instruction has the potential for serious abuse of power and top-down decision making.

MSTA also believes the legislature must ensure that (1) basic protections of each child's rights to sound educational practices and programs, and (2) public education employees' rights to share in curricular and instructional decision-making, are carefully monitored.

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

A.7. Parental Accountability: MSTA believes parents have the initial and sustaining responsibility to provide for the development of moral, ethical, and spiritual values in their children, along with health training and a positive attitude toward learning.

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

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

A.8. Career and Technology Education: MSTA believes career and technology education provides students with important skills and career opportunities so they may become productive members of our society. Therefore, program opportunities must be increased and adequately funded to ensure proper implementation. (94, 04)

A.9. Political Participation: MSTA believes public education programs are significantly influenced by the decisions of elected or appointed officials. MSTA also believes education employees have the responsibility to: directly influence the course of society by working for the improvement of their communities through active political participation; influence decisions at all levels of government that affect schools, youth, and the teaching profession; support those candidates who demonstrate a broad understanding of community improvement at all levels; and encourage and assist potential voters, particularly those newly enfranchised, to register and become politically active citizens. (91, 94, 96, 05, 07)

A.10. Elected Boards of Education: MSTA believes in replacing appointed boards of education with boards elected by the jurisdictions they serve. MSTA also believes these elected school boards should have full taxing authority in order to meet the educational needs of the children of the community. MSTA further believes boards of education must be responsive to the concerns of the citizens they represent and must be held accountable for their actions. MSTA believes members of local boards of education should enroll their children in public schools. (94, 98, 04, 07)

A.11. Composition of School Boards and Accessibility to School Board Meetings: MSTA believes that school boards must be representative of the population within the school district.

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

A.12. Board of Education Evaluation: MSTA believes it is necessary for all educational institutions to be held accountable in meeting the educational challenges of today.

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

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

A.13. Student Attendance: MSTA believes in full enforcement of mandatory school attendance laws. MSTA also believes that students and parents should be held legally accountable for adhering to these laws. (88, 89, 91, 04)

A.14. Community Relations: MSTA believes positive community relations are a continuing obligation of the profession and in the best interest of the education of children. MSTA also believes local associations should maintain an ongoing internal and external public relations program and provide a two-way communications network with its members and the public. (94, 04)

A.15. Coalitions: MSTA believes in developing coalitions with public sector and community organizations which share goals similar to those of the United Education Profession. (94, 96)

A.16. Teacher Involvement in the PTAs: MSTA believes in the stated goals of the Maryland Congress of Parents and Teachers and urges local affiliates and PTAs to establish effective communications between teachers and the communities they serve.

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

A.17. Extremism and the Schools: MSTA believes that the nationwide attack on the public schools and the teaching profession by extremist groups and the efforts of these groups to recruit young people in our schools should be condemned. MSTA also believes that our affiliates and members should actively oppose organizations whose objectives are antithetical to the basic philosophy of our public educational system. (87, 89, 90, 98, 06)

A.18. Effective Communication and the Mass Media: MSTA believes that orderly communication and interaction between professional educators and the community is necessary for the best interest of the education of each child.

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

A.19. Media Services: MSTA believes that all forms of media, including film, television, music, computer, and print media, play an important role in the education of the public.

MSTA also believes that all media forms should be easily accessible to all. Visual media should include closed

captioning for the deaf/hearing impaired and read-along captions on children’s commercial and educational programs.

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

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

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

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

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

A.20. Quality Television Programming for Children:

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

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

A.21. Legal Holidays: MSTA believes that the following days in each and every year shall be regarded as legal holidays and shall be duly observed as such, and no business, governmental, or educational institutions shall be in operation on these six days, except those institutions designated by law as emergency: the third Monday in January, known as “Martin Luther King, Jr.’s, Birthday Observance”; the third Monday in February, known as “President’s Day”; the last Monday in May, known as “Memorial Day”; the fourth day of July, called “Independence Day”; the first Monday in September, known as “Labor Day”; and November 11th, known as “Veterans’ Day.” All state association buildings, with the exception of the Annapolis office if necessary, should be closed on the national holiday designated for Martin Luther King, Jr. observance. We urge all local affiliates to close their offices for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. (88, 89, 91, 05, 06)

B. Professional Excellence for School Programs and Personnel: MSTA believes that its members, along with administrators and the community, should take every opportunity to make positive changes in their schools. (96, 97)

B.1. The Opportunity to Learn: MSTA believes that each child must be guaranteed the opportunity for a free public school education in a safe, non-disruptive environment. This concept should be interpreted as justification for considering programs or placements other than regular school settings for those children with chronic disruptive behaviors. MSTA also believes that, in order to maintain a safe learning environment, it is the responsibility of educators to effect immediate, temporary removal of such students from their classes. Upon such removal, a thorough investigation must be made using all available resources.

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

MSTA believes that boards of education must be held responsible for providing quality educational support systems for students who have been removed from the school.

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

MSTA further believes that in order to provide education employees of Maryland with the necessary tools to cope with the increasing level of disruptive student behavior in our schools, MSTA should seek whatever funds are necessary to provide staff support, inservice education, materials, supplies, equipment, special schools, and other facilities which will reduce or solve these problems. (94, 96, 06)

B.2. The Elimination of Discrimination and Sexism in Curriculum and Program: MSTA believes in the concept of the equality of women and men.

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

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

B.3. Mainstreaming and Inclusion: MSTA believes that Federal Public Law 101-476 (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act Section 504 and state laws ensure all children with disabilities will be educated in the least restrictive environment. Therefore, MSTA also believes in making every effort to provide positive learning experiences and appropriate placements for all students. MSTA further believes in the inclusion of students with disabilities when the following considerations are met:

- a. The inclusion model provides a favorable learning experience for each student;
- b. Students are prepared for their roles in the inclusion model by appropriate transition experiences and guidance;
- c. Discipline policies and practices used by local education agencies consider the special needs of each individual child;
- d. All educators participating in the inclusion model have equal input in decisions concerning the included student;
- e. Educators are prepared for these roles through system-provided inservice training with college and/or MSDE credit or by local Boards of Education inservice programs;
- f. Appropriate instructional materials and supportive services, such as hiring of qualified paraprofessional personnel or using student personnel services, are provided for the educator and the child with special needs;
- g. Modifications should be made in all class sizes, scheduling, and curriculum design to accommodate the shifting demands the inclusion program creates;
- h. There is a systematic evaluation and reporting of program developments;
- i. Adequate additional funding and resources are provided exclusively for the implementation of the inclusion model; and
- j. The use of trained instructional assistants/ paraprofessionals, co-teachers, and special education teachers is extended to all special areas as well as academic areas. (90, 91, 93, 94, 96, 98, 05)

B.4. Continuance of Quality Education for All Students: Public Law 101-476 (IDEA) mandates that “to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children are educated with children who are not handicapped.” Section 504 and state laws extend services to the needs of all students.

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

B.5. Supplementary Programs for Students: MSTA believes educational programs must be developed and improved to meet the needs of all students regardless of abilities.

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

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

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

B.6. Program of Instruction: MSTA believes that people serve the community best when the educational program meets their needs and that this can be best achieved through state support for programs which will provide appropriate, differentiated instruction for all students regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, creed, disabilities, sexual orientation, or intellectual capability.

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

MSTA further believes that improvement of a free kindergarten program (which implements the recommendations of the State Board of Education in Guidelines for Early Childhood Education of

September 1972, Maryland School Bulletin, Vol. XLVIII, Number 4) should be continued in all the counties as part of the public school system.

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

MSTA also believes in the improvement of education by greater emphasis on and expansion of:

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

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

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

B.7. Teacher Rights and Responsibilities: MSTA believes that extensive representation of teachers is imperative when developing and implementing programs in their disciplines. MSTA also believes the following are specific rights and appropriate responsibilities of teachers.

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

This includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Selecting appropriate methodology;
 - b. Selecting and utilizing materials of instruction;
 - c. Providing a safe and conducive learning environment;
 - d. Evaluating individual performance; and
 - e. Providing non-teaching time during the school day for the sole purpose of developing, evaluating, revising, and planning for the implementation of the specific learning objectives.
3. Consulting with appropriate personnel and/or parents regarding the delivery of educational services;
 4. Referring students requiring unique or specialized educational services to appropriate personnel and/or programs;
 5. Developing and making decisions with administration, regarding programs, goals, and objectives. Factors to be considered include, but are not limited to:
 - a. The validity of programs, goals, and objectives;
 - b. The adequacy of resources available; and
 - c. The ability to assess accurately the achievement of programs, goals, and objectives. (88, 89, 90, 91, 96, 97, 05)

B.8. Instructional Staffing and Class Size: MSTA believes all children deserve an opportunity to learn with consideration given to each child’s learning style and that children learn best in learning environments that allow the teacher to provide for individualization of the instructional program and quick attention to each child’s problems and needs.

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

MSTA believes that the curriculum and methods of instruction for each grade, subject, and special education area are unique. Special consideration must be given to these unique characteristics in determining workable

teacher loads and teacher-pupil ratios. Site-based teams must be consulted to determine acceptable class sizes and teacher loads for their respective areas of competence.

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

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

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

B.9. Accountability in Education: MSTA believes that parents, education employees, and the business community working collaboratively share the responsibility in educational decision making. Education employees should be accountable only to the degree that they share responsibility in educational decision making. The guarantee that each child has an opportunity to learn is the responsibility of the entire public school community including legislators, other governmental officials, local school boards, administrators, other education employees, parents, students, and taxpayers.

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

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

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

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

B.10. Retention and Promotion Policies: MSTA believes that decisions regarding promotion and retention of students should be based primarily upon the judgment of educational teams, consisting of teachers, administrators, other school personnel, and parents. However, the assigning of a student report card grade rests solely with the teachers.

Further, MSTA believes that all educators, parents, and school board members should actively seek to end the abuse of social promotion of students or grade-level advancement based primarily on age and that a process for developing and augmenting alternative programs should be provided for those students who are not eligible for promotion. (95, 96, 05)

B.11. Truth in Testing: MSTA believes that intelligence, aptitude, and achievement tests have historically been used to differentiate and discriminate rather than to measure performance and have, therefore, prevented equal educational opportunities for all students, particularly minorities, students with disabilities, lower socioeconomic groups, and women. MSTA also believes that research on the structure of the intellect identifies multiple and varied mental operations and advances the significant premise that these operations can be taught, and that intelligence is dynamic rather than fixed. MSTA opposes the use of such test results as the sole factor to determine placement or promotion. (87, 91, 93, 05)

B.12. Functional Test Scores: MSTA believes the Maryland State Department of Education functional test scores do not indicate the strengths or weaknesses of school systems, individual schools, or teachers and should not be used as an assessment instrument by the State Board. (90, 94)

B.13. Professional Responsibility and Student Records: MSTA believes that teachers should give careful consideration to the preparation and use of student records. (91, 94, 99)

B.14. Maryland Assessment Program: In the event that valid and reliable test scores can be obtained, MSTA believes that the appropriate uses of test results will include the following:

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

B.15. Standardized Test Scores for College Admission: MSTA believes that standardized test scores should not be used as the only determining factor for college admission. Also, we believe that the use of standardized tests should be closely examined in an effort to reduce the possibility of discrimination against minority students. (89, 96)

B.16. School Counseling Services: MSTA believes that guidance and counseling services should be integrated into the entire educational system, beginning at the pre-kindergarten level. Guidance and counseling services should be provided, in a manner that establishes counselor/student ratios which allow ample time for meaningful assistance to students, thereby enabling said students to realize their full potential in all areas of growth and achievement. (88, 93)

B.17. Home-Schooling: MSTA believes that the current Maryland State Board of Education Bylaw is inadequate to ensure quality instruction, instructor qualification, monitoring, evaluation, and approval of time-based instruction. Public school funds should not be used for the purpose of instructional materials, equipment, and related goods necessary for home schooling. For any voluntary home instruction program to be considered an adequate substitute for school, the parents or guardians would have to establish the following:

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

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

B.18. Student Teaching Programs: MSTA believes that realistic practice teaching can be the most important phase in the preparation of new teachers. This should be done under the guidance of professional educators who possess demonstrated effectiveness and broad experience in the classroom. MSTA, therefore, recommends the following guidelines within four crucial areas for concern:

- a. Selection and Responsibilities of Cooperating Teachers

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

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

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

The student teacher should be provided with varied experiences at all levels of accepted teacher responsibility,

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

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

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

- c. Recommendation for Statewide Standards

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

- d. Liability and Responsibility of Student Teachers

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

B.19. Teacher Education Programs: MSTA believes that teacher education programs should meet high standards in preparing pre-service teachers, as well as in assisting practicing teachers in expanding their professional

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

B.20. Recruitment and Retention of Teachers and Other Education Employees: MSTA believes that more emphasis should be placed on the recruitment and retention of certificated and support staff. We further believe teacher certification requirements should not be diminished as a method of overcoming teacher shortages.

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

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

B.21. Professional Status of Teachers: MSTA believes that high professional standards must be maintained to provide the best possible education for each child in Maryland.

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

B.22. Teacher Mentoring Programs: MSTA believes that teacher mentoring programs are an essential component of teacher retention.

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

MSTA further believes that only qualified teachers with classroom experience should supervise mentoring programs. MSTA opposes the use of mentor-generated evaluations and feedback as justification for the dismissal of mentees. (01, 05)

B.23. Released Time for Inservice: MSTA believes that local associations should seek to obtain provisions in their negotiated agreements providing for local school systems to devote sufficient time during the school year for staff participation in the study of proposed changes in curricula, the inclusion of model staff organization, educational technology, public concerns about education, parent conferences, and related issues and activities. (88, 90, 93, 94, 96, 04, 05, 07)

B.24. Teacher Expectations/Student Achievement: MSTA recognizes the implications of research findings that there is a direct and positive correlation between teacher expectations and student achievement. As a consequence of these findings we believe that teachers must continue to strengthen their efforts to develop and demonstrate expectations that each student can achieve academically and to cultivate individual talents. In support of this belief, teachers' skills in establishing and relaying such expectations should be enhanced by expanding teacher education/in-service programs to include, but not be limited to, information on the changing role and composition of the family, the dynamics of intergroup communications, and direct training in the relationship between teacher expectations and student achievement.

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

B.25. Education Employee Evaluation: MSTA believes that successful job performance can be broadly identified and that employers and employees need to agree upon objective criteria to foster a climate of cooperation in an evaluation process that allows for stylistic variations of the employee and the evaluator.

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

MSTA further believes that the evaluation process must be included in negotiated agreements and be subject to the grievance procedure. (96, 97, 04)

B.26. Competency-Based Certification: MSTA believes that certification and renewal of certification in Maryland should be revised to bring Maryland teaching licensure into conformity with best practice and recent research on preparation for the teaching profession. To accomplish this goal, MSTA endorses the report of the Task Force on Certification to the State Board of Education. In the implementation of the Task Force's report, MSTA recommends the use of the portfolio model developed by the Office of Laboratory Experiences of the University of Maryland at College Park. Further, MSTA opposes the use of employee evaluations in the certificate renewal process unless the evaluation(s) are done in conformity with MSTA Resolutions B.25 and C.1.

MSTA opposes requiring certified, experienced teachers to take Praxis or similar exams as a requirement for continued employment or re-certification.

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

B.27. Placement Outside Field of Certification: MSTA opposes the placement of teachers out of their field of certification. MSTA believes local affiliates should take measures through collective bargaining and community organizing activities to heighten the knowledge of community leaders and parents about the disadvantages of involuntary utilization of teachers in out-of-field positions.

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

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

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

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

In the event of out-of-field placement, MSTA further believes the following conditions must be met:

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

B.28. Assignment of Excessive and/or Extraneous Duties: MSTA believes the assignment of any non-instructional duty impinges on the ability of teachers to perform their most vital professional functions. MSTA also believes the teachers' professional work day shall be dedicated to lesson planning, delivery of instruction and evaluation of assessments of student learning. MSTA further believes that the delegation of any new initiative, program or task must be evaluated in terms of its effect on the individual teacher's ability to organize and deliver instruction, and assess its effectiveness.

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

B.29. School-Based Teams: MSTA believes that teams of school-based educators should be established through a system of elections that are open only to association members of the staff, by grade, subject area, or assignment as appropriate, for the purpose of determining appropriate policy, instructional, and organizational decisions, consistent with the operative collective bargaining agreements, for the improvement of the education of the children in the school. (92)

B.30. Association Involvement in Instruction and Professional Development: MSTA believes that teachers (through their local, state, and national associations) should be involved as professionals in all steps of the decision-making process related to curriculum, instruction, and professional development. MSTA also believes that local jurisdictions should encourage the implementation of programs that empower teachers in the educational decision-making process. (89, 96, 04, 07)

B.31. Association Involvement in Professional Development for Education Employees: MSTA believes that support staff should be involved in all steps of the decision-making process related to each classification's job responsibilities and professional development. MSTA also endorses and promotes activities and professional development that will ensure such involvement. (96, 05, 07)

B.32. Healthroom Personnel: MSTA believes that every school in the state should be provided with a full-time, registered professional nurse certified in school health and paraprofessional certified health personnel as determined by local needs based on an analysis of the school health program.

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

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

B.33. Ethics of the Education Profession: MSTA believes that certain social relationships between education employees and students are inappropriate. MSTA also believes that an education employee who has a sexual relationship with a student is not only acting unprofessionally and unethically, but illegally and immorally. (93, 96, 03, 04)

B.34. Black History and Culture Curriculum: MSTA supports the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Commission of African-American History project to infuse black history and culture into the curriculum of Maryland schools throughout the school year, and urges its local affiliates to become involved in the project promotion and implementation. (91, 94, 95)

B.35. Career Skills: MSTA believes that each student graduating from a secondary school in the State of Maryland must have adequate career skills to make each a more productive citizen as set forth by the Maryland State Department of Education.

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

B.36. Technology in the Educational Process: MSTA believes that technology, wisely used, can provide new opportunities for developing skills and expanding knowledge.

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

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

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

B.37. Theory of Evolution: MSTA believes that the content in science education must be based on empirical evidence derived from the scientific method.

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

B.38. Fine and Practical Arts Education: MSTA believes that fine and practical arts programs should be an integral part of this nation's elementary and secondary (K-12) school curricula.

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

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

B.39. Foreign Language Education: MSTA 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. MSTA 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, and that students should have the opportunity to acquire age-appropriate foreign language skills from an integrated curriculum throughout the pre-K-12 experience.

MSTA further believes in the maintenance of current programs and the continued development of foreign language instruction.

MSTA believes that, to improve training and to enhance the instructional program, teacher preparation programs and local jurisdictions should encourage all foreign language teachers to participate in teacher exchange programs in the target culture.

MSTA also believes that, in view of various college entrance requirements, careful consideration should be given to requiring foreign language studies for students preparing to enter college. (93, 04, 08)

B.40. Health Education: MSTA believes that health education throughout the state should be continued and strengthened in both quality and quantity.

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

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

B.41. Physical Education: MSTA believes that physical fitness is an integral element of a student's education, benefiting physical and mental health, lifelong wellness and the student's ability to learn.

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

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

B.42. Nutrition Education Program: MSTA believes nutrition education can establish a solid foundation for lifetime nutritional practices and should be continued and expanded in all grades pre-K-12.

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

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

B.43. Programs for English Language Learners: MSTA believes that ESOL programs should have as their goal functional proficiency in English and that students should not be released until they demonstrate an ability to be successful in an all-English program.

MSTA also believes that fully qualified teachers should teach English for Speakers of Other Languages classes with the assistance of qualified ESOL/ELL tutors. (96, 04, 06)

B.44. Publicly Funded Pre-school and Kindergarten: MSTA believes early childhood education programs should be in the public schools for children from birth through age eight. MSTA also believes universal access to adequate and equitable publicly funded pre-school and kindergarten programs would foster improved learning outcomes for children. MSTA further believes such programs must be research-based, subject to strict regulation, and staffed by licensed specialists in Early Childhood Development. MSTA believes that early childhood education programs should maintain small group size with appropriate staff/child ratios for each age level. MSTA also

believes pre-school and kindergarten curricula and pedagogy must be age appropriate, developmentally sequenced, and adapted to meet the needs of each child. (NEW 06)

B.45. School Libraries in the Educational Process:

MSTA believes that school libraries are an integral part of this nation’s elementary and secondary (K-12) schools in order to be used by staff and students for research.

MSTA also believes that local affiliates should promote the implementation and expansion of school libraries in their local systems.

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

MSTA believes school libraries should be used only for flexible scheduling. (NEW 06, 07)

B.46. Communication Between the Hearing and the Hearing Impaired:

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

B.47. Scholastic Publications: MSTA believes that student publications such as the school newspaper, yearbook, and literary magazine, when functioning under the sponsorship of a teacher-adviser, are an invaluable educational tool and a necessary part of school life and should be accorded basic rights of freedom of the press. (96, 07)

B.48. Educational Use of Copyright Materials: MSTA believes it is essential that teachers have the right to use copyrighted materials and off-air recordings on a sufficiently delayed basis to meet the needs of effective teaching. MSTA also believes that broadcast schedules are a major hindrance to in-school use of such programs, that home-viewing assignments are not practical, and that teachers need the flexibility of recording off the air so that programs can be previewed before being used in the classroom and incorporated into classroom situations at those times when students are most ready to learn.

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

MSTA believes that maximum access to teaching materials is of vital concern to every teacher and that the public interest requires that the copyright law include an expanded “not-for-profit” clause coupled with a fair use provision.

MSTA also believes that this would guarantee teachers and educational institutions use of copyrighted materials, recognizing a limited right to copy and record such materials for non-profit educational purposes, including educational broadcasting and technology. This law should permit the use of audio and video copies of commercial programming for classroom purposes. (88, 91, 93, 99, 03, 07, 08)

C. Economic and Professional Security

for All Members: MSTA believes in:

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

C.1. Tenure: MSTA believes changes are called for in existing Maryland law or State Board of Education regulations to provide non-tenured and provisional teachers the right to notice, statement of charges, fair hearing, and appeal procedure before dismissal or non-renewal of contract for good and just cause. MSTA also believes teachers should participate in the development of local policies for the fair appraisal of teacher competency as set forth in guidelines promulgated by the State Board of Education.

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

MSTA also continues to oppose any attempt to increase the two-year pre-tenure probationary period. (88, 93, 96, 02, 04, 05)

C.2. Retirement: MSTA believes that to enhance recruitment efforts and improve retention rates, all education employees deserve a guaranteed adequate income upon retirement.

MSTA also believes that Defined Benefit Plans best accomplish this goal. MSTA opposes any attempt to change to a Defined Contribution Plan.

MSTA further believes that legislation should be passed to make such changes in the Pension System that protect the interests of members. MSTA believes that all local affiliate retirement committees must provide all education employees with the most current information on retirement benefits. MSTA must assist local affiliates in providing counseling for those approaching retirement. (87, 89, 91, 94, 02, 03, 04, 06)

C.3. Social Security: MSTA believes the Association must fight any withdrawal from the Social Security System for Maryland education employees, if proposed by the employer, unless there can be a guarantee of matching funds from the employer for any subsequent system.

MSTA supports Congressional legislation to declare Social Security as a tax-sheltered annuity.

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

C.4. Collective Bargaining: MSTA believes that the attainment and exercise of collective bargaining rights are essential to address the needs of education employees. MSTA seeks legislation to include all education employees in collective bargaining and to ensure the integrity of negotiated agreements. MSTA supports efforts by each affiliate to secure through negotiations a strong grievance procedure that includes binding arbitration as a constructive mechanism for resolving disputes [Education Article, Section 6-408(a) (2) and Section 6-510(a) (2)].

MSTA commits itself to all measures which bring the benefits of collective bargaining to school employees who do not yet enjoy them. MSTA further believes education employees should have the right to withhold services when no valid group contract exists, a group contract has been violated, or working conditions not specified in the group contract have been unilaterally changed while a contract is in force. MSTA opposes legislation which would impose definitions of the bargaining unit that would fragment or remove the bargaining rights of education employees. (88, 89, 96, 02, 04)

C.5. Workload: MSTA believes that the workload of the teacher is within the scope of negotiations.

MSTA also believes that class size is a fundamental working condition for teachers, whether daily in a single class in an elementary scenario, or in a number of classes daily at the secondary level.

MSTA further believes that the number and type of preparations are factors in determining teacher workload. MSTA believes that these matters are also appropriate for consideration in the negotiation process.

MSTA also believes that broad guidelines established by knowledgeable groups within the profession should be utilized in developing negotiations proposals regarding teacher workload, class size, and similar topics. (91, 04, 06)

C.6. Local Association Collective Bargaining Legislation: MSTA believes all local association collective bargaining legislation should be submitted to MSTA for review prior to the filing of a bill. MSTA also believes the local association should consult with MSTA prior to the introduction of or concurrence with any amendments to the bill. Each association is encouraged to forward copies of local bills to the presidents of other local associations. (88, 07)

C.7. Privatization: MSTA believes programs or practices such as, but not limited to, privatization, performance contracting, tax credits for tuition to private and parochial schools, voucher plans, funding formulas that have the same effect as vouchers, planned program budgeting systems, and evaluations by private for-profit groups must be eliminated as detrimental to public education.

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

C.8. Reductions in Force: MSTA believes local associations should negotiate contractual provisions that include procedural safeguards for all education employees concerning the manner in which reductions in force are implemented. All staff reduction policies should be in accordance with the provisions of the Singleton Decision:

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

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

C.9. Strike Prohibitions and Penalties: MSTA believes that withholding one’s labor is a basic right, whether in the public or private sector. Because restrictive laws presently exist in education in the State of Maryland, MSTA believes we should use all avenues available to us including, but not limited to, coalitions with all affected labor groups to overturn the current State Negotiations Laws, Sections 6-410 and 6-513, which prohibit strikes with the penalty of loss of collective bargaining and representation for two years and loss of dues check-off for one year. (88, 96, 02, 07)

C.10. Unemployment: MSTA supports efforts to alleviate the effects of unemployment and supports appropriate legislation that encourages the creation of jobs. We support efforts, including those of other labor organizations and community groups, to protect the unemployed. (90, 02)

C.11. Higher Education Faculties: MSTA supports the higher education faculties of Maryland in their struggle to retain tenure, the right to due process, and the right of collective bargaining. (02)

C.12. Student Medication: MSTA believes that students who must be assisted in using medication during school hours should be assisted by qualified medical personnel. MSTA also believes the Association and its affiliates must work for the assignment of medical professionals to each school and outdoor education center and for action that will assure that only qualified medical personnel administer medication. (90, 99, 02, 04, 07)

C.13. Liability: MSTA believes that state legislation should limit school employees’ liability for negligence resulting in injury or death caused by medication administered by school employees in the course of their duties. (02, 04)

C.14. Basic Benefits: MSTA believes that school systems must provide basic paid benefits including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Insurance
 - 1. Comprehensive health insurance
 - 2. Dental insurance
 - 3. Optical insurance
 - 4. Hearing (Auditory) insurance
 - 5. Prescription insurance
 - 6. Worker’s Compensation

- 7. Long-term physical and mental disability
- 8. Bridge coverage of health insurance for retirees
- 9. Life insurance
- 10. Legal liability insurance
- b. Paid Leave
 - 1. Sick leave with unlimited accumulation (personal, family, and dependent care)
 - 2. Personal leave with unlimited accumulation
 - 3. Bereavement leave
 - 4. Maternity/paternity leave, including adoption
 - 5. Sabbatical leave
 - 6. Professional leave
 - 7. Association leave
 - 8. Religious leave
 - 9. Civil leave
- c. Additional Remuneration
 - 1. Severance pay
 - 2. Retirement compensation
 - 3. Tuition reimbursement
 - 4. Benefit extension for laid-off employees
- d. Personal Assistance
 - 1. Personal assault protection
 - 2. Day care for young children and/or dependent elders

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

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

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

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

MSTA believes Boards of Education must negotiate retirement benefits with the employee organization for active employees upon their retirement. (88, 89, 90, 91, 94, 97, 00, 01, 02, 03, 04)

C.15. Mental Health Parity in Medical Benefits:

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

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

C.16. Salary and other Compensation: MSTA believes that local affiliates can best promote the economic welfare of all education employees through the collective bargaining process. MSTA also believes that any proposed legislated compensation initiative should be in conformance with locally negotiated agreements and the Maryland Professional Negotiations Act.

MSTA further believes that compensation initiatives must:

- a. Provide for entry-level salaries and career earnings comparable to those of other professions and occupations with similar preparation and responsibilities and be structured to provide compensation levels that encourage classroom teachers to remain in the classroom and support personnel in the educational setting;
- b. Be based on preparation, academic degrees, experience, professional growth, responsibilities, and full length of service;
- c. Elevate compensation for teachers and other education employees to a level competitive with those in other professions;
- d. Assure that initial placement and advancement on the salary schedule are nondiscriminatory;
- e. Broaden the knowledge and skills of educators to meet today's higher standards and the demands of an ever-changing student learning environment and stimulate career-long professional development; and

- f. Support certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

MSTA believes that the increasing number of schools identified for comprehensive needs or focused needs (formerly school improvement, corrective action or restructuring), makes it imperative that there be clearly and contractually defined compensation rates for educators assigned to those schools. Education employees should be compensated at their regular per diem rates as a minimum for hours/days worked beyond the contractual number of days for ten-month employees.

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

C.17. Twelve-month Employment: MSTA believes that local affiliates should negotiate the terms and conditions for eleven-month and twelve-month employment. (04, 08)

C.18. Position Reclassification: MSTA believes that collective bargaining agreements between education employees, including part-time and temporary, and their employers should reflect the following contractual concepts:

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

C.19. Standardization of Teaching Credit: MSTA believes that existing barriers to teacher mobility have forced many valuable and experienced teachers to leave the profession altogether and that this exodus contributes to the current teacher shortage.

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

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

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

D.1. Fair Share Fee: MSTA believes in a fair share representation fee being deducted from each employee's salary by local boards of education, reflecting expenses of activities related to responsibilities as exclusive representative for all unit members, and that such deduction should be secured for the United Education Profession by appropriate negotiated, legislative, or judicial action. The Representative Assembly declares that the statewide achievement of a fair share fee remains a priority. (89, 91, 95, 97)

D.2. Released Time for Local Association Presidents: MSTA believes it is essential to have the elected president free from school duties to carry out the responsibilities of his or her office for the association.

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

D.3. Attendance at MSTA Convention: MSTA believes all local Boards of Education should encourage the professional participation and opportunities provided

by the MSTA convention by allowing professional leave for members desiring to attend. (87, 95, 96, 97)

D.4. MSTA Hiring Policies: MSTA believes in the active recruitment and hiring of minority staff and encourages its affiliates to do the same.

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

D.5. Professional Unity: MSTA believes the problems of public education require a united effort by all education employees.

Some boards of education have divided staff members into two units in violation of Subtitle 4 of Title 6 of the Education Article for the purpose of negotiations.

MSTA opposes this unilateral effort on the part of boards of education. MSTA believes that units should be divided when, and only when, it occurs after the majority of unit members involved have voted to support such action. (88, 91, 94, 08)

D.6. MSTA Fund for Children and Public Education: MSTA believes educational policy decisions are political decisions. MSTA also believes that local affiliates should arrange for political contributions to the MSTA Fund for Children and Public Education through payroll deduction. (87, 88, 91, 99, 08)

D.7. Local Association Crisis Funds: MSTA believes locals should establish and/or strengthen crisis funds in their own budgets. (97)

D.8. Gender Correct Language: MSTA believes in the use of gender correct language. MSTA also believes local associations should adopt similar gender correct language practices. (88, 91, 95, 97, 08)

D.9. Minority Participation in the Association: MSTA believes that in every phase of governance and on all decision making levels of MSTA, there should be minority participation at least proportionate to the identified ethnic minority population of the geographic area. Ethnic minority members and women should be encouraged to seek elective and appointive positions at all levels.

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

E. Leadership in Solving Social Problems Affecting Education: MSTA believes education has a special role in improving the quality of life in our democratic society, which places on the organized teaching profession the responsibility for the following:

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

E.1. Decorum of Public Figures: MSTA believes that celebrities, political leaders, entertainers and other public figures have an ethical, cultural, and patriotic obligation to model respect for all people in their actions and statements, and to be mindful of the influence their behavior has on others, particularly impressionable youth.

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

E.2. Education as a Civil Right of Children: MSTA believes all children possess a fundamental civil right to have access to a high-quality system of public education, grounded on the principles of adequacy and equity. (NEW 07, 08)

E.3. Enforcement of Substance Abuse Laws: MSTA believes in drug-free schools and supports the strict enforcement of laws regarding individuals found to be in possession of, or under the influence of, drugs, alcohol, and other substances on school property and during school-sponsored activities. (87, 97, 06)

E.4. Economic Action by Education Employees: MSTA believes education employees should use their power as consumers to persuade the business and professional community and the government to adhere to principles of social and economic fairness. MSTA also believes that the economic burden of effective government should be equitably distributed and that the economic burden should not be shifted to government employees in the form of inadequate compensation. (99, 00)

E.5. Family/Domestic Violence: MSTA believes local education agencies (LEA's) must provide violence prevention training and educational programs for staff and students because of the detrimental effects that violence has on students' well-being. MSTA also believes in an increase in funding and staffing of existing family services and urges creation of additional support systems and shelters. MSTA further believes social services and the criminal justice system should continue to intervene actively in the cycle of family/domestic violence. (95, 96, 97, 98, 04, 08)

E.6. Sexual Assault and/or Battery: MSTA believes in efforts that will prevent and protect members of our society from becoming victims of sexual assault and/or battery. MSTA also believes these should include programs to promote awareness that even acquaintances may be potential assailants.

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

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

E.7. Family/Domestic Crisis Care: MSTA believes in a full range of assistance, from interventions to shelters, for families experiencing domestic violence and advocates the following:

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

E.8. Appointment of Women and Minorities to the Judiciary: MSTA believes that the Governor of Maryland and the President of the United States should recruit women and minority candidates for appointment to state and federal judicial vacancies at all levels. (88, 97, 04)

E.9. National Comprehensive Health Insurance: MSTA believes that affordable, comprehensive health care is the right of every resident. (89, 96)

E.10. Support for an Equal Rights Amendment: MSTA believes in the introduction and passage of an equal rights amendment to the United States Constitution. (88, 91, 98, 04)

E.11. Recycling Programs: MSTA believes in recycling programs for the purpose of conserving energy and protecting America’s dwindling natural resources. (04, 08)

F. Human and Civil Rights: To protect the human and civil rights of education employees, MSTA will:

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

F.1. Legal Protection of Education Employees: MSTA believes that education employees should access legal system supports that address any physical or emotional harm suffered while performing their duties. MSTA also believes education employees, including, advisors/sponsors/coaches, must not be held liable for violence or adversely evaluated because of the actions of others that were beyond the employee’s control. (95, 98, 99, 07)

F.2. Protection from Workplace Violence: MSTA believes that every educational employee should be guaranteed the right to a safe workplace. MSTA also believes that school officials must take clear, concise, consistent, and swift action against individuals, including students, who commit a crime, such as assault and/or battery, against education employees. (95, 96, 97, 99, 00, 07)

F.3. Legal and Civil Rights of Education Employees: MSTA believes that guaranteeing the constitutional and civil rights of education employees is of the utmost importance. MSTA also believes that the rights, pay and benefits of education employees against whom legal charges have been brought should be protected. MSTA further believes that the Association should continue to inform its members of their legal rights. (87, 89, 94, 96, 97, 99, 04)

F.4. Women’s Rights: MSTA believes that all persons should be given equal opportunity for employment, promotion, compensation, and leadership in all activities. MSTA also believes that local boards, administrators, and education associations should strive to eliminate de jure and de facto

discriminatory practices against women and to adopt policies that ensure women equitable appointment or selection for administrative, supervisory, and staff positions.

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

F.5. Speaking Before Legislative Bodies/Government Agencies: MSTA believes in the right of education employees to testify before legislative bodies or government agencies without any restrictions imposed by boards of education and/or administrative staffs. (88, 90, 94, 97, 99, 00, 04)

F.6. Speaking to the Media: MSTA believes in the right of education employees to express their opinions and concerns to the media without any restrictions imposed by boards of education and/or administrative staffs. (04)

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

F.7. Human Relations in the Schools: MSTA believes that positive human relations are essential to the school environment and, toward this end, we support:

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

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

F.8. Integration of Education Personnel in the Maryland Public Schools: MSTA believes that the ideals of human justice, individual liberty, and democracy demand continued integration of education personnel in our schools, colleges, universities, and technical training centers.

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

1. Establish an active recruitment program in all colleges and universities in the state to seek qualified minority personnel;
2. Establish student-teacher programs at all colleges and universities that are now classified as historically black colleges or universities;
3. Establish a program for advancement that would actively seek to promote minority educators to administrative and supervisory positions;
4. Establish a policy that would prevent ethnic minority educators from being assigned only to those schools with a predominance of the ethnic minority; and
5. Utilize the registry of certificated minority personnel for administrative and supervisory positions as provided by the Maryland State Department of Education.

MSTA further believes the State Board of Education should amend COMAR 13A.07.05.01 (Policy on Ethnic and Cultural Minorities), in jurisdictions with substantial minority populations, to require local boards of education to develop and implement plans and procedures that encourage the attainment of staffing that is reflective of the ethnic and cultural richness and diversity of the people of Maryland.

MSTA believes in bringing together all groups concerned with providing opportunities for fair and equitable employment, assignment, and promotion for all educators.

MSTA also believes each local association should establish a committee on human rights in education to work cooperatively with local, state, and national organizations in the interest of protecting the human rights of all citizens. (87, 88, 90, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 00, 08)

F.9. Human Rights Day: MSTA believes that the attention of the people of Maryland should be focused on the importance of human rights. MSTA also believes that when school systems and professional education organizations plan appropriate activities in observance of the state and federal holiday commemorating the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. they help develop the capacity and the commitment to teach our students culturally relevant history. MSTA further believes that Martin Luther

King, Jr. Day should remain a state and federal holiday to promote good will among all people. (88, 91, 07)

F.10. Fair Housing: MSTA believes that fair housing practices should be broadened and strengthened to assure each citizen an equal opportunity to reside in a neighborhood of his or her choice. (91, 97, 00)

F.11. Religious Freedom: MSTA believes that the interests of public education and religion are best served when each is independent of, and separate from, the other. MSTA also believes that laws requiring educators to lead or participate in prayer in schools impose an inappropriate duty upon teachers and constitute a religious test for their employment.

MSTA further believes that local school boards should adopt policies that ensure the separation of church and state and that treat all religions on an equal basis. MSTA believes that students should be taught to respect religion of others and the cultural influences in the United States that have resulted from various religions.

MSTA believes leadership should, in conjunction with NEA, seek to obtain such wording in amendments to the U.S. Constitution that would neither require nor prohibit teachers' and students' participation in religious activities. (99, 07, 08)

F.12. Age of Majority: MSTA believes that education employees must re-evaluate traditional patterns for dealing with adult students, because students who are eighteen years of age, married, or parents are adults according to Maryland law. (94, 99)

F.13. Student Responsibilities and Rights: MSTA believes that education employees should be appointed to all committees established by local boards of education for the implementation and evaluation of documents dealing with student rights and responsibilities; we also urge full compliance with the criteria set forth in such documents. (91, 93, 94, 99, 08)

F.14. Opposition to Residency Requirements: MSTA believes that individuals should not be denied employment opportunities for state or local educational employment on the basis of residency. (88, 07)

F.15. Affirmative Action: MSTA believes that overcoming the persistence of racial and gender discrimination throughout all segments of American society can only be accomplished through affirmative action efforts. MSTA also believes that all levels of the United Education Profession (UEP) and government should take appropriate actions to preserve the continuation of affirmative action, to redress the grievances of minorities and women. MSTA further believes the adoption of compensatory hiring practices by school boards helps

schools to attain and maintain levels of minority employment as set forth in MST A policy. (91, 95, 96, 04, 07, 08)

F.16. Title IX: MST A believes that its members and local affiliates should monitor compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 at the school and system level and take those actions necessary to enforce compliance in all educational programs, both current and proposed. (88, 04, 05)

F.17. Discrimination: MST A believes that every individual must be protected from all forms of discrimination based on race, size, religion, age, disabilities, gender, and sexual orientation. (94, 95, 96, 07)

F.18. Invasion of Privacy: MST A believes that all education employees should have the right to privacy. MST A also believes that these rights must be guaranteed through the grievance process and/or legal action. (88, 91, 96, 07)

F.19. Drug and Alcohol Testing: MST A believes that mandatory drug and alcohol testing of employees constitutes an unwarranted invasion of privacy and is in violation of the Fourth Amendment proscription against unreasonable search and seizure, as well as other well-established constitutional safeguards and protections. MST A also believes that such testing of an employee should only be permitted when probable cause exists that the specific employee’s job performance has been impaired as a result of alcohol or drug use. (88, 91, 94, 04)

F.20. Student Records: MST A believes there should be a uniform national policy requiring student records be forwarded within three school days following the receipt of a request from the receiving district. MST A also believes that proper documentation should be a requirement for students transferring from another school district, including when a student is seeking a transfer as a consequence of a suspension or expulsion from the previous school. (97, 99, 01, 03, 04, 08)

F.21. Stress Counseling: MST A believes school systems should develop and provide confidential counseling services, funded by the state or by local jurisdictions, to aid education employees in dealing with stress and its consequences. (88, 91, 94, 07)

F.22. Education of Refugee, Illegal Alien, Migrant, and Homeless Children: MST A believes refugee, illegal alien, migrant, and homeless children are entitled to equal educational opportunities and appropriate programs for their families. (88, 94, 95, 03)

F.23. Racist Activity in the Schools: MST A believes that racist organizations which promote hate have no place in our society. Therefore, they should not be evident in public schools or the communities which they serve. MST A also believes that educators have a duty to exercise leadership in

their classrooms, schools and communities to counter hateful, racist ideologies. MST A commits itself to work cooperatively with other unions and community groups in helping all people unite in the struggle against racism. MST A notes that the Southern Poverty Law Center has developed excellent “Teaching Tolerance” curriculum materials for use in schools and believes that school systems should make available these and/or similar materials for use with students in combating ethnic prejudice and violence. (88, 91, 94, 95, 97, 99, 07)

F.24. Gun-Free Schools: MST A believes that all students and education employees must be allowed to learn and work in an education environment free of unauthorized guns and other deadly weapons. MST A also believes severe penalties should be imposed and strenuously enforced against violators. (03, 08)

F.25. Victims of Crime: MST A believes that school employees who are victims of crime should be treated with dignity and compassion, without the fear of intimidation. MST A also believes that victims and/or their families should be notified of, and have the right to, be present/represented at all hearings and legal proceedings involving the defendant/perpetrator, even in juvenile cases. MST A further believes that it is a violation of the victims’ right to privacy to release the names of the victims. MST A believes that victims and their families must be made aware of, and have free access to, necessary services/programs and that services/programs must be funded by the appropriate government agencies. (NEW 07)

F.26. Freedom to Teach: MST A believes that freedom to learn and freedom to teach are essential to sound education and are vital components of the integrity of the total educational process. MST A also believes that teachers and students must be protected from any attempts to abridge or destroy academic freedom, teaching techniques, or teaching styles, recognizing that teachers are responsible for providing students the opportunity to investigate different facets and sides of all controversial topics and materials introduced or presented. (90, 91, 07)

F.27. Education Employees as Participating Citizens: MST A believes that every education employee is entitled to the same opportunities as other citizens to exercise political rights and responsibilities, participate actively in partisan politics, and serve in public office if he or she so desires.

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

F.28. Communicable Diseases: MST A believes that all decisions about public school students and employees who are or may be infected with, or who may be capable

of transmitting, a communicable disease should be made on a case-by-case basis by a team established for this purpose. Members of this team should include the student or employee, the physician of the student or employee, the parent or guardian of the student, public health personnel and appropriate education employees, including the school nurse, all education employees who have contact with the student, and a representative from MSTA.

The Association also believes that each school system should adopt guidelines developed in cooperation with local associations to strike a balance between the right of a disease victim or carrier to an education or continued employment, and the right of other students and school employees to be free from risk of exposure to a disease. These guidelines should protect the legitimate privacy rights of students and school employees and provide appropriate guarantees for those individuals excluded from the school setting. All such guidelines should be based on the latest medical information and should be revised as new information becomes available.

In the particular case of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), MSTA further believes the Maryland State Board of Education should adopt the guidelines developed by the National Education Association. (88, 91, 95, 01, 04)

F.29. The Exploitation of Student-Athletes: MSTA opposes the exploitation of student-athletes (K-12) for economic or personal gain. Specifically, the Association condemns such practices as (1) retaining students for physical development, (2) encouraging radical diets, (3) administering drugs, “pain killers” and herbal performance enhancers, (4) playing students with injuries, (5) changing student residence for the purpose of athletic advantage, (6) manipulating student grades, and (7) recruiting students from outside school boundaries. (88, 90, 95, 97, 03)

F.30. Youth Pregnancy: MSTA believes that students should experience age-appropriate education on sexuality from preschool through high school. MSTA also believes that counseling services to help young people handle stress and peer pressure about sexual activity should be provided to ensure a healthy school and community environment.

The Association further believes that the prevention of student pregnancy should include the following efforts:

1. Build youth self-esteem;
2. Provide positive role models to students;

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

F.31. Mental Health Stigma: MSTA believes that the stigma created by stereotypes surrounding those who suffer from mental illness adversely affects our students, our members and society in general.

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

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

F.32. Naming of Public Structures: MSTA believes that individuals chosen for the commemorative naming of publicly funded schools, institutions, and memorials should be those whose lives have demonstrated the highest degree of respect for and dedication to freedom, liberty, and human and civil rights for all people. (95, 03)

F.33. The Physical Facilities of the School: MSTA believes that there should be, erected and maintained, a sufficient number of school buildings to adequately house the school population without the use of double sessions and/or portable classrooms.

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

MSTA further believes local affiliates should consider the implementation of voluntary twelve-month employment for education employees as an option to assure the best possible education for each child in Maryland and to use the school facilities to the greatest possible advantage.

MSTA believes all buildings should be temperature-controlled.

MSTA believes that all educational facilities must have good indoor air quality, be smoke free, and safe from environmental and chemical hazards. To this end we urge local school boards of education to sponsor smoking cessation programs for the benefit of employees and conduct periodic testing in all educational facilities for the presence of air and waterborne agents that may be detrimental to the health of students or education employees.

MSTA believes all buildings should be in compliance with federal standards of accessibility. (87, 91, 94, 96, 02, 04)

F.34. Portable Modular Classrooms: MSTA believes that all classes should be held in classrooms that are contained in a permanent physical plant, and that such classrooms should meet all appropriate requirements established by the Annotated Code of Maryland, and be technologically equipped for optimum teaching and learning. MSTA also believes that portable structures – such as trailers - are inherently inadequate substitutes for permanent structures and, therefore, are deleterious to the learning environment in any school community. MSTA further believes reliance on portables should be temporary and of short duration. Such structures need to be contiguous to the primary physical plant and students should be offered protection from the elements when passing between the school building and the portable classroom. MSTA believes that portables must be furnished with the same amenities as regular classrooms as well as immediate access to potable water. (NEW 08)

*Final Resolutions MSTA 2008 RA
10/18/08*