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LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

IEA LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

A publication

of the

Illinois Education Association-NEA

and the

Illinois Political Action Committee for Education



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2017-2018 IEA LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Approved by IEA Representative Assembly, April 1, 2017

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1 The IEA is dedicated to the continued improvement of education. To this end, we have
2 formulated a Legislative Platform to implement our philosophy in the General Assembly.

3 This platform addresses collective bargaining rights, improved taxation, retirement benefits,
4 nonpublic school funding, educational employees' rights and equal rights, and more. Taken as a
5 whole, these goals form a statement of legislative principle aimed at enhancing public
6 education for elementary and secondary school teachers, education support professionals,
7 and higher education personnel through enhanced:

- 8 1. Employee Rights (line 16)
- 9 2. Retirement Benefits (line 419)
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LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

of the

Illinois Education Association-NEA

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

Education Employee Rights and Protections

Introduction

The Association will continue to utilize governmental processes to protect the rights of all education employees to organize, to bargain collectively, and to carry out other union activities necessary to protect and promote their private and professional lives. The Association will strongly oppose any attempts to restrict or restrain the rights of full or part-time education employees in this regard. In addition, the Association supports legislation designed to protect education employees from frivolous lawsuits.

Additionally, the Association opposes the public disclosure of records included in an education employee's personnel file, the disclosure of which would be objectionable to a reasonable person, compromise the purpose for which the information was included in the personnel file, or involve information which is personal in nature or which at most minimally bears on the employee's public employment duties. The Association does not oppose, however, the disclosure of this information to the employee's exclusive bargaining representative for the purpose of meeting its legal responsibilities.

Maintain Existing Rights

The Association shall seek to maintain and expand existing collective bargaining legislation to provide a comprehensive legal framework to protect the rights of all interested parties. This legislation must continue to include procedures for the resolution of differences and the right to strike.

Waivers/Modifications of State Mandates

The Association will continue to oppose waivers or modifications of state mandates in the following areas:

1. Collective Bargaining
2. Tenure
3. Seniority

- 42 4. Licensure
- 43 5. Special Education
- 44 6. Staff and Program Reductions

45 The Association's position on other waivers/modifications will be determined based on the
46 projected impact on students, the curriculum, or working conditions unless they have been approved
47 by the local bargaining representative(s), provided the request does not conflict with the
48 governing documents of the Illinois Education Association.

49 **Replacement Personnel**

50 The Association shall work to prevent the hiring of any replacement personnel during a strike.

51 **Part-time Faculty and Staff**

52 The Association supports legislation to allow part-time faculty and staff at higher education
53 institutions to organize for purposes of collective bargaining. All rights and privileges
54 afforded to full-time faculty and staff should also be provided for part-time faculty and staff on a
55 proportional basis. The Association opposes any reduction of hours of part-time educational
56 professionals made by public or private educational institutions to avoid paying for benefits
57 mandated by the Affordable Care Act.

58 **Political Rights**

59 The right of education employees to engage in political activity must be guaranteed and free of
60 restrictions. In addition, the Association supports statutory protection for the employees' right to
61 present their views before their local governing board. The Association will work to maintain these
62 rights and to encourage their usage.

63 **Site-based Programs**

64 The Association supports locally bargained agreements that allow each building site to
65 manage itself and its programs, provided such management does not interfere with
66 legislative mandates.

67 **Civil Rights**

68 The guarantee of protection of the health, safety, civil liberties, and property of education employees
69 is a basic right of all in the provision of public education. To this end, the Association shall seek
70 legislation to prevent the abrogation of these rights. Fingerprinting of school employees is
71 acceptable only for the purpose of a pre-employment or pre-licensure check for criminal records that

72 are pertinent to education employment. Fingerprinting must not be a condition of continued
73 employment or continuing licensure. Costs of fingerprinting shall be the sole responsibility of the
74 employer or licensing agency. Further, all replacement personnel who work during a strike must
75 meet the same standards of employment as other employees.

76

77 **Intellectual Property and Copyright**

78 All issues relating to copyright ownership of materials created by education employees
79 should be resolved through collective bargaining or other process of bilateral decision-
80 making between the employer and the affiliate. The ownership rights of education
81 employees who create copyrightable materials should not prevent education employees
82 from making appropriate use of such materials in providing education services to their
83 students.

84

85 **Communication**

86 The Association supports educational employees' First Amendment rights to free speech.
87 The Association supports joint local union and employer committees to create social
88 networking policies including but not limited to classroom Facebook pages, Twitter accounts,
89 blogs, etc.

90 **Safe Learning Environment**

91 Employees and students have a right to a safe and orderly environment free from weapons, drugs,
92 sexual harassment, and bodily harm. The Association supports:

- 93 • Initiatives to combat and to eliminate bullying, intimidation, violence, weapons, sexual
94 harassment, drugs, and gang activity in schools, on all school property, and at school
95 events.
- 96 • The establishment and implementation of a well-publicized, strictly and uniformly
97 enforced discipline code to provide an orderly learning environment in each school
98 district. This code must be established and implemented by education personnel and
99 parents from the district.
- 100 • Appropriate procedures to assure the safety of education personnel making visits to
101 students' homes.
- 102 • The establishment and implementation of well-publicized, strictly and uniformly enforced
103 transportation safety procedures in each school district's disciplinary code. These
104 procedures must be established and implemented by education personnel and parents

- 105 from the district.
- 106 • Immediate removal from the classroom of violent and/or disruptive students, both general
 - 107 and exceptional, and placement of those students in an alternative and/or modified public
 - 108 school setting, supervised by specially-trained staff, and removal from the classroom of
 - 109 any students undergoing the process of expulsion from school unless such exceptional
 - 110 student is under a stay put provision.
 - 111 • A ban on the sale to the public of military and auto loading firearms with a capacity of
 - 112 firing 10 rounds or more from a single clip. In addition, the Association supports
 - 113 legislation to ban the manufacture and sale of look-alike guns.
 - 114 • Significant penalties for criminal actions involving the use of guns or other weapons.00
 - 115 • Restrictions, including a mandatory waiting period to allow background checks for felony
 - 116 convictions or mental illness, on the manufacture, distribution, and/or sale of handguns
 - 117 in order to assure a safer school environment.
 - 118 • A strict enforcement of truancy related laws and procedures.
 - 119 • Protection for all education employees and students regarding the use and/or abuse of
 - 120 communication technology, including but not limited to email, cell phones, video/audio
 - 121 recording devices and the internet.
 - 122 • Development and maintenance of a system operated at the state level for education
 - 123 employee professionals to report alleged violations of federal and state rules and regulations
 - 124 and designed to protect education employee professionals from retaliation and adverse
 - 125 working conditions as a result of this reporting of alleged violations.
 - 126 • Prohibition on the use of schools as polling places when students are in attendance;
 - 127 • Workplaces free from intimidation by administrators.

128 **School Gun Violence Prevention**

129

130 The Association supports policies that ensure all employees and students are routinely trained

131 on how to respond to a code red. A code red shall be described as a scenario whereby an

132 armed intruder is on or near school grounds threatening the safety of those around them.

133

134 The Association supports the following mandatory standard practice procedures for Code Red

135 incidents:

- 136 • Lockdown and evacuation drills are to be conducted at least once a year with
137 students, staff members and outside police and emergency response agencies and
138 should be followed by a debriefing involving staff and outside agencies.
- 139
- 140 • Parents are to be informed of specific dates and times of drills.
- 141
- 142 • A current crisis plan containing lockdown and evacuation guidelines is to be made
143 readily available to all substitutes working in the building.
- 144
- 145 • A vault or other secure location is to be designated as the command center.
- 146
- 147 • Parents and guardians should be directed to a safe designated area until the building
148 is secure and their presence does not constitute a safety risk.
- 149
- 150 • All media representatives should be directed to an off-site area.
- 151
- 152 • A plan should be in place for the purpose of notifying emergency personnel of
153 persons needing medical help or to indicate that no immediate attention is required.

154

155 The Association supports that an effective School Gun Violence Prevention Plan requires
156 school-specific planning and coordination based on local conditions. The Association promotes
157 the development of options for action, including counseling. These plans should be developed
158 with stakeholders throughout the community.

159 All school districts should have developed:

- 160 • Threat Assessment System (TAS)
- 161 • Threat Assessment Team (TAT)
- 162 • Violence Prevention Program
- 163 • Effective, valued and trusted communication
- 164 • Full support and training of stakeholders (school board members, administrators,
165 parents, students, community members, emergency response personnel and law
166 enforcement)

167

168 The Association further supports providing training to better recognize drug abuse, violent
169 behavior and mental illness as it pertains to school gun violence.

170

171 **Education Employee Welfare**

172 The Association shall seek to enhance education employee welfare by working toward the elimination of
173 poor working conditions, threats of violence, sexual harassment, and job harassment consistent with
174 the anti-discrimination clause in this document.

175 **School Dissolution or Reconfiguration**

176 When a school, school district, or cooperative is dissolved or reconfigured, all affected education
177 employees must have their collective bargaining rights preserved.

178 **Instruction and Professional Development**

179 All education employees shall have the opportunity for professional development. The Association
180 supports the “banking of days” for professional development.

181 **Bargaining the Impact of Educational Initiatives, Programs and Philosophies**

182 The impact of mainstreaming, Regular Education Initiative (REI), Response to Intervention (Rtl), inclusion
183 and other programmatic decisions based on an educational initiative or philosophy is a mandatory subject
184 of bargaining since these decisions impact the working conditions of education personnel.

185 **Department of Children and Family Services**

186 The Association will work to create the uniform administration of Department of Children and Family
187 Services (DCFS) procedures throughout the state to ensure the rights and protection of all
188 education employees and to ensure that charges resulting from DCFS investigations will be adjudicated
189 within a reasonable period of time.

190 **Green Schools**

191 The Association supports legislation that requires and provides funding for school
192 construction and remodeling of existing buildings based on a “green schools” concept. This
193 includes, but is not limited to, methods and processes that make creative use of recycled or
194 renewable materials, conserve water, use abundant daylight, and are energy efficient. The
195 Association also promotes solar or other renewable energy sources, non-toxic building
196 materials, and environmentally safe cleaning products.

197 Further, the Association supports policies that require recycling and waste reduction of
198 materials (i.e., paper, plastic, aluminum, paint, batteries, cardboard, ink/toner cartridges, and
199 food waste.)

200

201 **School Environmental Standards**

202 To guarantee the protection of all education employees, the Association will seek to ensure that
203 education facilities are safe from all environmental and chemical hazards. Education employees
204 have the right to be promptly notified of, and protected from effects of “sick buildings.” In addition, air
205 quality, protection from outside and inside noise interference, and temperature regulation must be in
206 accordance with state and federal standards. When a facility is found to have poor air quality,
207 corrective action must take place to ensure a safe environment.

208 **Transfer Policies**

209 The Association opposes the establishment and implementation of arbitrary, capricious, and
210 harassing discipline and transfer policies that deny education employees the right to practice their
211 profession.

212 **Health Care Coverage**

213 All education employees, active, contingent, retired or disabled, will have the opportunity for
214 affordable comprehensive insurance coverage, which includes a universal health care plan, including
215 dental and vision coverage. In addition, the Association supports mental health benefits equal to
216 the benefit levels of other medical coverage. In order to achieve a long-term solution to the health
217 care crisis, the Association shall strive to:

- 218 • Achieve the efficient purchase of comprehensive health care insurance benefits for our
219 members while simultaneously increasing salary levels.
 - 220 • Resist any diminution of our members’ collective bargaining rights, including the right to
221 participate in the administration of the local’s health insurance benefits program.
 - 222 • Maintain comprehensive, affordable, and reliable health care insurance benefits for
223 certified retirees.
 - 224 • Establish comprehensive, affordable, and reliable health care insurance benefits for non-
225 certified retirees.
 - 226 • Establish prudent governmental oversight and regulations over self-funded insurance
227 operations which provide benefits to our members.
 - 228 • Support the continuation of any local school district health insurance operation in the provision
229 of comprehensive benefits to its own active and retired employees.
- 230

231 *Due Process Rights*

232 **Introduction**

233 To safeguard the quality of education, all education employees, including part-time employees, will be
234 protected through a due process system, including just cause, against arbitrary and capricious
235 discipline, remediation, and dismissals. In cases of alleged improper behavior, all employees are to be
236 assumed innocent until proven guilty.

237 **Teacher Tenure**

238 The Association supports tenure at all educational levels, including Pre-K-12, community colleges,
239 and universities. Tenure has contributed substantially to the maintenance of education
240 excellence in Illinois above those states which afford no orderly dismissal process. The
241 Association supports the previous state statute, which provided tenure after two years for
242 veteran teachers and after two or three years for new teachers. In the event that tenure is not
243 granted, teachers should be provided with written reasons for denial. If the probationary period for
244 obtaining tenure remains at four years, for probationary teachers up to two years of progress toward
245 tenure should be portable to another school district. In addition, the probationary period for tenured
246 teachers transferring to another school district should be two years. A non-tenured teacher
247 returning from family/maternity leave to his/her same district shall not forfeit accumulated
248 time earned toward acquiring tenure. All procedures and notification timelines for non-
249 renewal should include written, substantiated reason(s). If the reason for non-renewal is
250 remediable and prior to the non-renewal, a school district should be required to inform the teacher
251 (and, where appropriate, that teacher's mentor) of the concern, identify what modifications are
252 required to remedy the concern, provide an adequate period in which to remedy the concern, and
253 regularly monitor the progress of the remediation plan so as to advise the teacher (and mentor) of its
254 status.

255 **Rights for All Education Employees**

256 The temptation of boards of education and governing boards of higher education institutions
257 experiencing financial difficulties to arbitrarily replace qualified and dedicated school
258 employees clearly focuses the need for the continuation of due process, affirmative action, orderly
259 reduction in force, and seniority legislation for all teachers, including higher education faculty, and the
260 expansion of those rights to all education employees. Education personnel facing termination of
261 their extra-curricular activities should also be protected by the due process system.

262 **Portability of Sick Leave**

263 When transferring to another district, education employees should have portability of accumulated
264 sick leave when they obtain employment in that district.

265 **Sick Leave for Purposes of Adoption**

266 The Association supports legislation that permits the use of sick leave, similar to pregnancy leave,
267 when an education employee adopts a child.

268

269 **Definition of Immediate Family Regarding Sick Leave**

270 The Association supports changes to the Illinois School Code which will redefine the term
271 “immediate family” (sick leave 105 ILCS 5/24-6) to read as follows...close relatives by birth, adoption
272 or marriage including, but not limited to, siblings, parents, children, grandparents and grandchildren,
273 in-laws, financial dependents, and/or members of the immediate household.

274 *Education Staffing*

275 **Introduction**

276 Because of changing pupil population patterns and budgetary restraints, school districts and
277 higher education institutions are reorganizing both the licensed and non-licensed staff. This
278 reorganization has created abuses in the assignment of paraprofessionals and/or the
279 assignment of part-time faculty to fill full-time teaching positions. The Association shall pursue the right
280 of due process for full-time personnel who have been reduced to part-time status and shall explore other
281 legislative remedies to prohibit abuses, along with advocating that all full-time equivalent positions be
282 filled by full-time or job-shared personnel. The Association supports the hiring of appropriately
283 licensed staff for all positions that require licensure.

284 **Higher Education Courses**

285 Community college or university courses available to high school students should not be used to
286 reduce pre-K-12 staff. Pre-K-12 staff should not be hired part-time to replace community
287 college or university staff.

288 **Unemployment Benefits for Contingent Academic Workers**

289 In order to provide unemployment benefits for contingent academic workers, the Association
290 supports legislation in which “reasonable assurance” excludes assignments based on
291 enrollment, funding, or program changes.

292 **Local Education Agencies**

293 Guidelines should exist for the formation and dissolution of local education agencies.

294 **Career and Technical Education Programs**

295 While recognizing the merits of establishing and aggressively recruiting for cooperative career
296 and technical education programs with private business, the Association supports the present licensure
297 procedures for instructors in such programs.

298 **Subcontracting**

299 The Association opposes the subcontracting of services provided by all education employees (pre-K-
300 12 and higher education). The Association supports direct and complete cost comparisons

301 between current services and any proposed outsourcing. The Association opposes any
302 reimbursement structures which provide a financial incentive to a district to outsource services.

303 **School Bus Drivers and Vehicles**

304 The Association supports the sole use of State Certified and/or other qualified education employees
305 and vehicles for the transportation of all students for scholastic, curricular, extra-curricular, and/or
306 athletic events.

307 **Qualified Health Care Professionals**

308 The Association supports having only licensed school nurses or qualified RNs/LPNs working under the
309 direct guidance of a licensed school nurse to administer medication and provide health care and/or
310 medical procedures to students. IEA supports certification by the National Board for Certification of
311 School Nurses.

312

313 A Baccalaureate degree shall be the minimum education level for a Registered Professional Nurse (RN)
314 responsible to gather information for a health history to be used for the medical review for Special
315 Education programming. Only a licensed school nurse, however, will be able to recommend any
316 educational modifications, interventions or accommodations for the student based on the results of the
317 medical review.

318 All education employees should be protected from civil liability regarding administration of
319 medication.

320 Understanding that life-threatening situations may require non-medical personnel to administer
321 medication, the Association supports training for all education employees in the recognition of
322 such imminent life-threatening conditions and how to properly administer first aid and/or
323 medication in such situations. All education employees should be protected from all liability in
324 emergency/life-threatening situations.

325 Furthermore, the Association supports training during institute days that will cover how school
326 districts want to respond to children with medical emergencies. Such training should be
327 provided by licensed school nurses.

328 In order to discuss in detail the needs of students and how to best respond to these needs and
329 to also obtain input from experts in the field, the Association supports the creation of a state task
330 force to look at all school health issues (asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, food allergies, etc.).

331 The Association supports legislation that reflects appropriate school nurse case loads as established by
332 Healthy People 2020 and the National Association of School Nurses.

333 **Special Education and Related Services Professionals**

334 Special Education services, including those listed under “related services” on a student’s
335 Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan such as, but not limited to, speech/language therapy,
336 occupational therapy, physical therapy, school nursing, school psychological and social work
337 therapeutic services, and hearing and vision therapy should be provided by properly licensed staff
338 employed by the school district, co-operative, joint agreement or other education entity.

339

340 *Employee Compensation*

341 **Introduction**

342 In order to attract and retain education employees, the Association urges significantly increased
343 statewide salaries and wages, salary increments, and fringe benefit levels for all education employees.
344 This compensation should be per diem according to their experience, education attainment, and
345 responsibility, regardless of the type and/or location of education institution or the gender of the
346 employee. At a minimum, the Association supports a \$40,000 starting salary for all pre-K-12
347 teachers. The Association recognizes the importance of compensation systems being
348 bargained locally. The Association urges all of the parties to any Collective Bargaining
349 Agreement to create salary systems that recognize all of the aspects of work on our schools.

350

351 **ESP Benefits**

352 Education support professionals shall enjoy the benefits of all wage and hour standards afforded
353 similar employees in private employment. The Association supports a “living wage” as starting pay for
354 all education support professionals. ESP compensation information shall be added to Illinois State
355 Board of Education reporting forms.

356 The Association supports legislation that would allow ESPs to accumulate a minimum of 240 days of
357 sick leave in compliance with IMRF requirements for service credit. School districts should be required
358 to maintain records of all accumulated sick leave of ESPs, regardless of any breaks in service.

359 Further, the Association supports full-time ESPs’ eligibility for Family Medical Leave Act
360 benefits or any similar state level benefits.

361

362 **Workers' Compensation**

363 The Association supports changes to Illinois insurance law which will waive the mandated 3-day
364 waiting period under workers compensation for any school employee needing medical attention due to
365 injury which may be work related. The Association opposes legislation allowing for employer "opt-out"
366 provisions to the Illinois Workers' Compensation Act.

367 **Arbitrary and Capricious Manipulation**

368 The Association shall seek for all education employees, legislation prohibiting the arbitrary and
369 capricious manipulation of salary schedules, hourly wages, indices, and other fringe benefits. Payment
370 of salaries, deductions from salaries, and retirement annuities shall be issued in a timely and accurate
371 manner.

372 **School Calendar**

373 Any state increase in the length of the school calendar and/or day must be accompanied by a
374 commensurate increase in the level of state and local funding in order to cover the cost of increased
375 salaries, instructional materials, and all other operating expenses.

376 **Self-funded Insurance Programs**

377 The Association supports legislation requiring self-funded insurance programs to comply with
378 state standards.

379 **Tax Sheltered Annuity Deductions**

380 The Association supports legislation requiring school districts to send in tax sheltered annuity monies
381 in a timely manner upon their deduction.

382 **Enhanced Compensation Programs**

383 The Association is categorically opposed to any state mandated compensation systems that would
384 require the use of student performance data and/or employee evaluation data. Furthermore, the
385 Association is opposed to additional pay for shortage areas (such as math and science) and/or "hard
386 to staff" schools unless bargained with the appropriate employee organization. The Association also
387 opposes school funding programs that provide incentives or tie increased funding to compensation
388 programs that include the use of standardized test scores or are based solely on employee
389 evaluation data. The Association may support enhanced compensation provided the following
390 occurs:

- 391 1. The compensation must be in addition to competitive salaries.
- 392 2. The opportunity for career development for all employees will be provided.

- 393 3. The program shall be developed and bargained with the appropriate employee
394 organization(s) and provide for local adaptation and implementation that clearly delineates
395 responsibilities.
- 396 4. The program shall be designed to promote cooperation, equity, and harmony in the
397 workplace.
- 398 5. The selection process shall be free from arbitrary or capricious political whim.
- 399 6. The program shall include appropriate peer assistance and peer review.
- 400 7. The program shall provide the necessary resources.
- 401 8. The program shall be evaluated using a wide range of assessments which may
402 include measures of student learning.

403 **Standards and Benefits**

404 The Association firmly believes that all rights and privileges previously won and presently enjoyed
405 either through past practice or statute should be preserved as minimum standards. The Association
406 will oppose any attempt to diminish these rights. The Association advocates the expansion of
407 standards and benefits beyond existing minimums.

408 **Equal Rights**

409 The Association supports a United States Constitutional Amendment which will guarantee equal
410 rights for all citizens. All members of the Association deserve the same legal protection, regardless
411 of their gender.

412 **Anti-Discrimination**

413 The Association encourages the rapid development and implementation of affirmative action
414 throughout the state. The Association supports legislation to enforce and strengthen state
415 and federal anti-discrimination laws, including those relating to ethnic heritage, race, color, national
416 origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, disability, size, marital status,
417 infertility, and economic status.

418

419 **RETIREMENT BENEFITS**

420 *Retirement Systems*

421 **Retirement Funding**

422 The Association believes that governing bodies of education systems and the state must accept

423 their respective obligations to bring the Illinois Teachers' Retirement System, the State
424 Universities Retirement System, and the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund to a funding
425 level consistent with actuarial soundness. Additionally, at no time shall the funds of the Systems
426 be subject to borrowing, investment restrictions, or mandates which would infringe on the systems'
427 fiduciary responsibilities. The Association strongly supports legislation which will prevent
428 any default in the State's statutory responsibility to the Systems. Statutorily mandated
429 funding shall not be at the expense of needed benefits but predicated on correcting past under
430 funding on the part of the State of Illinois. The IEA-NEA also opposes any legislation to change the
431 power of our elected trustees to manage our retirement contributions by transferring investment
432 authority from TRS, IMRF, and SURS trust funds to any other state agency, board, or similar body.
433 The Association supports the funding for the state retirement systems by dedicated
434 appropriations independent of the state's education budget. Further, the State must
435 continue to pay down the unfunded pension liability.

436 **Pension Obligation Bonds**

437 Pension Obligation Bonds may be supported if there is a reasonable plan that amortizes the
438 debt service of the bonds while at the same time allowing for forward progress in Retirement
439 System funding on an annual basis.

440

441 **Maintenance and Improvement of Benefits**

442 The Association opposes any diminution of current locally bargained retirement incentives or
443 any limit on the future ability to bargain such incentives. The Association also remains
444 opposed to any unconstitutional changes to the laws governing retirement benefits that
445 diminish or impair current members' benefits. However, the Association supports any
446 proposal that otherwise creates fair, practical, and constitutional solutions which sustain
447 the long-term viability of the pension systems. In addition, the Association believes that
448 continued improvement in the benefit structures of the several retirement systems to which its
449 members are participants is absolutely essential. Such benefits should include, but not be limited
450 to, the following:

451

- 452 1. The removal of all consequences of Public Act 94-0004 (6% limitation).
- 453 2. The removal of all consequences of Public Act 96-0889 (two-tier).
- 454 3. Service credit for all unused and uncompensated accumulated sick leave from
455 education employers.
- 456 4. Credit earned in any state for maternity/paternity, public education service, military
457 service (including pre-teaching military service), and alternate military service

- 458 through conscientious objector status.
- 459 5. Credit for up to five years of private or parochial education service, in any state
460 accredited school, for a person who had at least a bachelor's degree at the
461 time, provided there is no actuarial cost to the appropriate retirement system.
- 462 6. Realistic adjustment for inflation.
- 463 7. Post-retirement increases based on current pensions for annuitants and
464 survivors.
- 465 8. Early-out option and incentive retirement programs.
- 466 9. Computing benefits on a flat formula which reduces the number of years of
467 service necessary for members to receive maximum benefits.
- 468 10. The ability to retire after 30 years of service without penalty.
- 469 11. An increase in the maximum benefit.
- 470 12. Improved survivor benefit payments.
- 471 13. Increase percentage of disability benefit.
- 472 14. Opposition to any attempt to implement a defined contribution program for
473 any education employees except if it is optional and offered in combination with
474 a defined benefit program.
- 475 15. Equity of annuitant health insurance with respect to premiums and benefits
476 among the retirement systems of education employees and all other Illinois state
477 retirement systems.
- 478 16. Service credit, consistent with contractual appointment, in all retirement
479 systems for work beginning on the first day of employment.
- 480 17. Service credit should be portable between retirement systems without any
481 minimum accumulation of service.
- 482 18. Maintenance of the number of days allowed for post-retirement education
483 employee work at 120 days.
- 484 19. Recognition of domestic partners as recipients of spousal benefits.
- 485 20. Access to an unlimited choice of tax-sheltered plans including the State of Illinois
486 Deferred Compensation Plan (457b) and/or the creation of a Deferred Compensation
487 Plan to be administered by TRS or IMRF.
- 488 21. Service credit and retirement contributions must be maintained during times of furlough.

489 **Post-Retirement Pilot Program**

490 In order to address the problem of teacher shortages, the Association supports a pilot program that
491 would allow the hiring of retired teachers. This program should include the following conditions:
492

- 493 1. The open positions are considered to be in a shortage area as determined by the
494 Regional Superintendent of Schools.
495 2. There is no loss of retirement benefits for the retirees.
496 3. All rights and benefits, including health insurance, are provided to the retirees
497 consistent with the local collective bargaining agreement.
498 4. A reasonable waiting period between initial retirement and return to service is met.
499 5. A sunset provision not to exceed 5 years.

500 **Retiree Health Benefit Programs**

501 Retiree health benefit programs must ensure accessible, improved, immediate, long-term, and state-
502 funded health care, particularly for those not qualified for free Medicare. Illinois Municipal Retirement
503 Fund annuitants and their dependents must be ensured affordable health care. Affordable health
504 benefits must be available to all TRS, SURS, IMRF education annuitants and their survivors. As a part
505 of the health care benefits program, access to Internal Revenue Service Section 125 plans must be
506 available to all education retirees.

507 **Taxation of Retirement Income**

508 The Association supports state taxation of retirement provided it is subject to the following conditions:

- 509 • All retirement income, public and private, is subject to the same taxation.
510 • The revenue generated from this taxation is dedicated to the state retirement systems.
511 • Taxation shall only be applicable to that portion of retirement income in excess of 150%
512 of the state median income.

513 Additionally, the Association opposes the state using these funds when calculating its annual
514 required pension contribution.

515 **Governance of Retirement Systems**

516 Retirement systems affecting education employees should be governed by a majority of the
517 active and retired members of those systems. Public school employees elected as trustees
518 of retirement boards should be allowed release time to fulfill their fiduciary obligations as
519 members of those boards.
520

521 The Association opposes onerous reporting requirements for non-compensated work by
522 TRS and SURS trustees.

523 When a vacancy occurs on a retirement board, that vacancy should be filled through a
524 statewide election by the corresponding active or retired members of the system. Upon
525 retirement from active service, any trustee elected by the active members to the Board of TRS
526 should be allowed to complete his/her term of office. The state superintendent of education should

527 not have an ex-officio position on the TRS Board of Trustees. The TRS Board shall elect its
528 president from among its board members. No trustee positions shall be designated to a
529 specific interest group through legislation.

530 **Social Security**

531 Unless Social Security benefits exceed those available under the several state systems and members of
532 TRS and SURS are afforded the right of referendum, the Association shall continue its opposition to the
533 inclusion of these members in the federal system.

534 Further, the Association supports the repeal of the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall
535 Elimination Provision (WEP) which penalizes some public employees by cutting or taking away
536 completely Social Security benefits they or their spouse have earned.

537 **Medicare Participation**

538 The Association supports legislation that would allow all TRS and SURS members who are not currently
539 contributing for Medicare coverage the option of individual participation.

540 **SCHOOL FINANCE**

541 *School Funding*

542 **Public Education Funding**

543 The Association reaffirms its commitment to the ideal of a sound and free public education for all. It further
544 affirms its opposition to the encroachment on already inadequate public funds by nonpublic schools. The
545 Association believes that such funding, whether direct or indirect, violates not only Article X, Section 3, of
546 the Illinois Constitution, but the first amendment of the United States Constitution as well. Where public
547 funds are used to benefit nonpublic schools, including home schools, the minimum statutory and
548 regulatory requirements must be the same for those schools as they are for public schools.

549 **Primary Funding Obligation**

550 The Association calls upon the State Board of Education, the Board of Higher Education, the Governor,
551 and the General Assembly to increase the level of financial support for all levels of public
552 education (pre-K-12 and higher education) by causing the state to meet its primary funding
553 obligation and local districts to maintain minimally a base tax effort.

554 Any new state revenue dedicated to education should include funds for higher education.

555 **Progressive Taxation**

556 Education should be supported by a progressive tax collection and distribution system that
557 guarantees equal revenues per pupil (foundation base) among schools regardless of district
558 organization.

559 **Voucher and Tuition Tax Credit Plans**

560 The Association opposes tuition tax credits for students who attend private or parochial schools and
561 all voucher plans, both of which erode the state's support for public education.

562 **51% Amendment**

563 The Association supports an Amendment to the State Constitution which requires that the state fund
564 education at a level greater than one-half of the aggregate cost of education programs.

565 **Federal Funding**

566 Any reduction in federal funding to existing programs should be offset by a corresponding increase
567 from the state.

568 **State Funding Plan**

569 All of Illinois' students deserve the same access to learning opportunities, level of commitment, and
570 economic support. School funding should be based on a per-pupil amount equal to that of
571 the wealthiest districts in the state. Additionally, district-by-district variations in state funding
572 should be based on district wealth, tax effort, student population, accurate Title I weighting, and other
573 factors that might otherwise restrict equal access to free and appropriate education. All categorical
574 grant funding and education reform mandates should be funded at 100% of established levels. To
575 achieve these goals, money should not be taken from one district in order to subsidize other
576 districts or from one program to subsidize another program.

577 The Association advocates for tax policy legislation that makes Illinois economically
578 competitive by:

- 579 1. Treating all income groups fairly.
580 2. Supporting statewide economic development.
581 3. Providing fair education funding.

582 **Funding Priorities**

583 When state revenues are declining, the Association supports the following priorities for funding state
584 education programs:

- 585 1. General State Aid, including an increase in the poverty grant formula.
586 2. Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Block Grant.
587 3. Mandated categorical programs such as special education and transportation.
588 4. Early Childhood Block grants.

589 **Funding of Education Mandates**

590 A goal of the Association should be full funding of existing and all future mandates. Their elimination
591 is not an acceptable alternative to the provision of adequate funding for elementary and
592 secondary schools as well as institutions of higher education.

593 **Local Financial Autonomy**

594 The Association opposes a “one size fits all” mandate regarding operating expenses at the district level.

595 **State Funded Scholarships/Financial Aid**

596 The Association supports full funding of state scholarship programs, including but not limited to,
597 the Monetary Award Program (MAP) and General Assembly scholarships.

598 **Community College Funding**

599 The Association supports community college funding at a ratio of 1/3 from tuition, 1/3
600 from state funding and 1/3 from property taxes.

601 Tax levels for community colleges should be raised to the minimum level required
602 according to the statute that allowed the formation of new community college districts.

603 **Performance Funding – Higher Education**

604 The Association supports Performance Funding programs in higher education only when the State
605 maintains sufficient base level funding for higher education institutions. Further, Performance
606 Funding programs should only provide financial bonus incentives and should not result in the
607 reduction of funding or penalties.

608 **Incentives for Unit Districts**

609 The Association supports state formula features that work to achieve equity among school districts
610 by creating financial incentives for unit districts. Unit districts should have at least the same
611 taxing authority as separate elementary and high school districts. State formula features should
612 protect schools from inflation and other economic conditions beyond their control. Furthermore, school
613 districts that choose to consolidate should not be penalized under ESEA mandates for AYP.

614 **Capital Outlay and Debt Service**

615 The present program of state support of capital outlay and debt service should be increased
616 realistically to meet school needs. Capital outlay expenditures should be totally separated from
617 current operating expenditures to eliminate the practice of diverting current revenue, inclusive
618 of state aid, from instructional to non-instructional purposes. Schools must be required to meet

619 standards for safety and adequacy.

620 **Tobacco/Lottery/Riverboat Revenues**

621 Funds received from tobacco sales or legalized gaming should not replace general revenue funds
622 but should supplement that revenue.

623 **Limitation of Education Revenues**

624 The Association opposes any arbitrary restraints in increasing any revenue source or limiting
625 expenditures in any way. The Association is also opposed to any property tax caps, freezes, or
626 rollbacks until adequate state funding is guaranteed by a formula indexed to the economic growth of
627 the state. Local districts, including community college districts, should be authorized to levy taxes as
628 needed to meet rising fixed costs such as those for energy/utilities, life/safety programs, insurance,
629 retirement, and transportation. Local tax efforts exceeding minimum requirements should not be
630 restricted, inhibited, or penalized. School districts should be exempt from paying state and local
631 utility taxes.

632 **Special Education Funding**

633 The Association believes that funding for special education should be increased by:

- 634 1. Basing the state's Special Education Personnel grant on the cost of special
635 education employees.
- 636 2. Increasing local school districts' tax-levying authority for special education.

637 The Association further believes the state student reimbursement rate for students placed in public
638 alternative settings should be equal or higher to that of students placed in a private facility. Current
639 reimbursement rates should not be reduced to achieve this parity.

640 **Driver's Education Funding**

641 The Association supports increased state funding for driver education programs provided by
642 public school districts.

643 **School Budgets**

644 The Association supports more understandable school budgets by reducing the number of funds to
645 three:

- 646 1. Operating Fund.
- 647 2. Required Expenditure Fund.
- 648 3. Site, Construction, and Capital Improvement Fund.

649 The Association supports flexibility in the internal transfer between funds at the local level in order to
650 facilitate efficient and maximum use of allocated funding.

651 **Improved State and Local Tax Systems**

652 The Association urges that public funding of education through tax dollars be improved by the
653 following:

- 654 1. A shift toward non-property tax sources.
- 655 2. The equitable replacement of lost local revenues because of the erosion of
656 the property tax base.
- 657 3. Providing for reassessment by a state agency when assessment is poorly done
658 by local assessors and charging the local unit for this service.
- 659 4. Speeding tax machinery and forwarding tax money to taxing bodies as it is collected,
660 maintaining equality of education opportunity through equitable distribution of
661 state tax dollars to local school districts.
- 662 5. Establishing the opportunity for impact fees to compensate local school districts
663 in areas affected by rapid growth.
- 664 6. Stopping the practice of local governments which abate or divert corporate taxes
665 as incentives for business, corporate or personal development which otherwise
666 would go to school districts.
- 667 7. Strengthening the comptroller's ability to collect "uncollected" revenues owed
668 the state.
- 669 8. Establishing a 30-day period to allow citizens to file a petition for local
670 referendum for approval of a proposed tax increment financing (TIF) district. The
671 Association supports permanent and adequate increases in state revenues for education.
672 New revenues generated from these increases should be used to reduce reliance on
673 property taxes as the primary source of funding for education.
- 674 9. The levy of a Financial Transaction Tax to the trading of contracts on the various
675 Chicago exchanges.
- 676 10. The establishment of a state or community bank similar to the Bank of North
677 Dakota.

678 **School District Consolidation**

679 The Association supports the consolidation of school districts in order to enhance educational
680 opportunity. The Association calls on the General Assembly to adopt legislation that enables the
681 districts to:

- 682 1. Provide a full range of high quality education and extracurricular programs.
683 2. Maintain a full complement of professional staff to deliver optimal education
684 services.
685 3. Meet the program and staff needs of special and vocational students.
686 4. Maximize community involvement in school governance.
687 5. Operate on an economically efficient basis.
688 6. Be supported by a strong local tax base.

689 Such plans shall allow both state and local participation and shall guarantee job security and no
690 reduction in salaries and benefits to existing education employees. In addition, the Association
691 supports incentives for school consolidation as addressed in the Illinois School Code.

692 **Administrative Consolidation**

693
694 In all counties except Cook, a referendum should be held to determine if public school districts wish to
695 be consolidated for administrative functions on a county basis. A school district which crosses
696 county boundaries shall, through district referendum, decide in which county referendum its district
697 shall be a participant. In Cook County, the referendum and the consolidation of administrative
698 services should be held at the township level. A school district which crosses township boundaries
699 shall, through district referendum, decide in which township referendum its district shall be a
700 participant.

701
702

703 **PROVISIONS FOR QUALITY EDUCATION**

704 *Education Opportunity*

705 **Introduction**

706 The Association will continue to strive for education excellence. Only through the achievement of
707 optimum rather than minimum standards can the diverse needs of all students be met and full
708 education opportunity be provided through legislation.

709 **Legislative Mandates**

710 The Association will strive to maintain and enhance all legislated mandates, including those in all
711 areas of special education.

712

713 **Elementary and Secondary Education/No Child Left Behind Act**

714 In order to appropriately respond to the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)/
715 No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the Association supports the following state legislative actions:

- 716 • The number that is used to determine the existence of an identified subgroup
717 shall be increased. Further, if students in a subgroup fail to meet AYP but achieve “safe
718 harbor”, the school or district should not be placed “In Status”.
- 719 • Tests selected to assess English Language Learner (ELL) students shall
720 appropriately measure achievement, and shall take into account the language
721 proficiency levels of these students.
- 722 • All special education students who are assessed for ESEA/NCLB purposes will
723 be tested at appropriate educational levels as dictated by their Individual Education Plan
724 (IEP).
- 725 • Test results should be reported to school districts within the same school year that
726 students are tested.
- 727 • Test results should reflect a comparison of each student’s progress from year to
728 year.
- 729 • IEP based assessments for the purpose of complying with ESEA should not consist of
730 cumbersome, unpaid extra work for teachers.

731 However, the Association opposes legislative actions that punish teachers and force them to
732 “teach to the test” rather than providing the tools, resources and professional development they
733 need to prepare students.

734 Further, the State Board of Education (ISBE) should take the following actions:

- 735 • The State Board of Education should conduct a pilot study to determine if there exists a
736 statistical correlation between mobility and truancy of students and their test scores.
- 737 • The State Board of Education shall follow the school district grade level configuration
738 (i.e., elementary pre-K-4, pre-K-5, pre-K-6, pre-K-8; middle school 5-8, 6-8, 7-8, 7-9; high
739 school) when determining requirements for teachers to be Highly Qualified.
- 740 • The State Board of Education shall lobby the United States Department of Education to
741 approve Highly Qualified requirements which would allow special education teachers
742 who have primary responsibility for teaching two or more related core academic subject areas
743 to combine points attributable to those related subjects.
- 744 • Where the current licensing system is in conflict with the ESEA definition of “Highly
745 Qualified”, the ISBE shall develop and implement a process to identify and assist education
746 employees who are not considered “Highly Qualified” as defined by ESEA. There should be

747 no cost to the employee to attain this status.
748 • The State Board of Education shall assess the validity of the Partnership for Assessment of
749 Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) as a measurement device, and if necessary,
750 replace the PARCC with a more appropriate instrument.

751 **Educational Reforms**

752 The association supports educational reforms that have a reliable, sustainable funding stream
753 attached and are consistent with the mission and vision of the association. The funding stream
754 must provide sufficient resources to enable educational employees to be successful in
755 implementing the reforms. In addition, the association supports educational reforms that hold all
756 stakeholders, including but not limited to parents, students, educational employees, the
757 community, and elected or appointed policy makers accountable for student outcomes.

758 **Response to Intervention (Rtl)**

759 Response to Intervention is a tiered approach to the early identification and support of
760 students with learning and behavior needs. Rtl should not be used as a means to avoid
761 needed special education services. The Rtl process begins with high-quality instruction and
762 screening of all the children in the general education classroom. These services are often
763 provided by a variety of personnel, including regular classroom teachers, special educators,
764 paraeducators and specialists. Students are closely monitored to assess both their rate of
765 learning and level of performance.

766 The Association supports legislation to provide funding by the Illinois State Board of Education
767 for the implementation of Rtl in order to provide:

- 768 • Extensive and ongoing Professional Development for all education professionals
769 and other stakeholders.
- 770 • Allocation of resources in direct proportion to student needs.
- 771 • Appropriate resources for educational employees-to effectively implement
772 interventions.

773 Further the Association supports legislation that requires the involvement of education
774 employees in the planning, implementation, documentation and evaluation of Rtl in all school
775 districts.

776 Further the state shall not exceed the requirements of the federal mandate, and if the state cannot provide
777 adequate funding, then the Rtl mandate should be held in abeyance until adequate funds can be
778 provided.

779 The impact of Response to Intervention is a mandatory subject of bargaining since these decisions
780 impact the working conditions of education personnel.

781 **Paraeducators**

782 The Association recommends legislation that will establish a licensing process for paraeducators
783 that will differentiate levels of classification based on education training and job roles and
784 responsibilities. The ISBE shall develop and implement a process, at no cost to the paraeducator, to
785 attain “Highly Qualified” status.

786 The Association believes that the state should provide funding for on-going professional development
787 for paraeducators, as well as mentoring opportunities for new paraeducators, to assure quality and
788 effectiveness in the classroom.

789 **Licensure, Evaluation, and Relicensure of Administrators**

790 The Association supports legislation that:

- 791 1. Requires four years of successful teaching experience or experience as a school
792 support personnel as defined in Article 21B of the School Code prior to
793 administrative licensure.
- 794 2. Requires the State Board of Education to maintain and fund a new administrator
795 mentoring program.
- 796 3. Provides continuing professional development for renewal of an administrative
797 license.
- 798 4. Requires the State Board of Education to establish a master administrator designation
799 program.
- 800 5. Requires each school district to establish an administrator evaluation plan with
801 Association participation in its development.
- 802 6. Establishes a task force to review the Illinois Administrators’ Academy and recommend
803 revisions to the program.

804 **Facilities, Supplies, Programs, and Learning Conditions**

805 The Association supports the input of licensed teachers and other stakeholders in the
806 decisions regarding quality curricula, facilities, supplies, programs, learning conditions, and
807 delivery methods which prepare students to succeed in a global society. However, the
808 Association opposes the mandating of a statewide curriculum.

809 **Special Education Services**

810 The Association supports the continuing existence, funding, and use of a complete continuum of services

811 for students and youth with disabilities. Such a continuum includes, but is not limited to:

- 812 1. The general education classroom;
- 813 2. Consultation model;
- 814 3. Collaboration;
- 815 4. Resource pullout;
- 816 5. Resource room up to one-half day;
- 817 6. Self-contained classroom;
- 818 7. Special education public day school;
- 819 8. Private school;
- 820 9. Homebound instruction/hospital school; and
- 821 10. Residential placement.

822 The placement of students within this continuum should be made only through multi- disciplinary
823 conferences which include all appropriate staff. Students in special education should be placed in
824 general education classes only if the placement will enhance the education of those students and if
825 the placement is consistent with an appropriate education for all students in the classroom. Service
826 delivery models such as mainstreaming or Regular Education Initiative, and educational philosophies
827 such as inclusion must not be implemented as a cost-saving measure. As students with more
828 extensive needs, including the gifted, are educated in public schools, more funds must be available to
829 provide the services and education personnel necessary to meet their needs. In addition, adequate
830 joint planning time within the school day must be provided in order to meet these needs. All
831 education services provided to a student with disabilities must be provided by appropriately
832 certified/licensed professionals and paraeducators. The Association opposes the use of
833 subcontracted digital learning technologies for the provision of special education and related
834 services when it violates established procedural safeguards and is contrary to best
835 practices, or ineffectively supports and/or adversely affects student progress. The
836 Association supports legislation that would require additional staff on buses as required by
837 students' IEPs. The Association opposes any reduction in current special education licensure
838 requirements, elimination of special education programs, and overloads in class size/case loads.

839 The Association supports legislation which maintains civil rights protections and the
840 compliance of special education cooperatives and school districts with rules and regulations
841 for the operation and delivery of services for special education at the state and local level,
842 and programs and services which are presently not funded at the local level. The Association
843 supports the Illinois Rules and Regulations for Special Education (2007-2008 and 2008-2009),
844 specifically the retention of language in Administrative Code 226 relating to class size
845 provisions in both general and special education classes, caseload, and other pertinent

846 language which is not currently federally mandated.

847 **Specialized Programs**

848 The Association supports legislation that requires school districts to provide specialized
849 programs, including, but not be limited to, art, physical education, and music, and that appropriately
850 certified specialists be assigned to these areas. Students should not be removed from
851 such programs to participate in tutorial classes deemed necessary in the effort to make AYP.
852 Those specialists assigned to self-contained special education classes shall have approved
853 special education training and licensure. Further, all students shall be given an opportunity to
854 explore a variety of elective education experiences without diminishing the quality of
855 existing programs.

856 **English Language Learners (ELL)**

857 The Association supports legislation that focuses on the development and implementation of
858 effective, evidence-based or research-based ELL programs. The Association supports appropriate
859 identification of ELL students with special needs.

860 **Career and Technical Education**

861 The Association supports full funding of career and technical education. The Association
862 recommends the removal of the ISBE “2,000 hour work rule” requirement placed on all potential
863 CTE educators who have graduated from an accredited college or university.
864

865 **Special Education Teachers**

866 Having an LBS-1 Limited teaching license, as a result of the Corey H. settlement, shall not be an
867 acceptable basis for determining whether or not a special education teacher is “highly qualified” as
868 required by ESEA. School districts shall not issue letters to parents stating that these teachers
869 are not highly qualified. Therefore, the State Board of Education should immediately reissue to
870 those teachers with LBS-1 Limited an LBS-1 Unlimited teaching license.

871 **Education Opportunity**

872 To pursue dual high school/college credit in a non-vocational area of study high school
873 students are required to complete the high school core curriculum in that subject area as
874 established by the Illinois State Board of Education and are to be screened prior to
875 registration. The Association supports an assigned mentoring and/or collaborative
876 relationship between a high school faculty member teaching a dual credit course and a
877 college/university faculty member in the same discipline to assure that course requirements
878 are being met for both high school and college/university credit. The Association opposes

879 the elimination or reduction of any positions in public schools or higher education facilities by
880 the offering of such courses.

881 **Early Literacy**

882 To facilitate teaching and learning for all at-risk students, the Association supports legislation that
883 focuses on early literacy programs.

884 **Libraries**

885 The Association supports legislation to ensure the availability of public libraries and the
886 inclusion of all Illinois residents in a public library district. Further, the Association supports
887 legislation to ensure that every school has an adequate library which will support and enhance
888 school-wide academic programs. Additionally, school libraries shall be staffed by a state licensed
889 librarian with appropriate endorsements.

890 **Programs of Developmental Concerns**

891 The Association supports counseling and other programs which address all developmental
892 concerns--emotional, social, behavioral, and learning difficulties--from Pre-K to the conclusion of all
893 state-mandated education programs. Size of caseloads assigned to professionals in the
894 above mentioned disciplines should be based on the diverse needs of the entire school population.

895 **Transplant Awareness Education**

896 Recognizing the need to help promote Donor Awareness, the Association supports
897 legislation that provides opportunities for high schools to obtain information and formulate
898 programs that encourage family discussion on this topic.

899 **TB Testing and Other Vaccinations**

900 The Association will work to create a healthful environment for all students by requiring that
901 tuberculosis testing, hepatitis vaccinations, and other appropriate vaccinations be included
902 in mandatory health/physical examinations.

903 **Classroom Environment**

904 Optimal class sizes/loads, appropriate teaching materials, sensitivity to student discipline
905 problems, and a full complement of professional staff services (including truancy prevention
906 programs that create an environment conducive to superior teaching and learning) are necessary in
907 meeting the state's mandate to provide high quality education. Flexible scheduling by local school
908 districts should be allowed to accommodate extremes in weather and/or in classroom temperatures
909 without forfeiting attendance days.

910

911 **Digital Learning Environment**

912 The use of supplemental, remedial, or course recovery online instruction impacts the hours,
913 wages, and working conditions of all educational employees and therefore should be subject to
914 local bargaining agreement.

915
916 **Driver Education**

917 The Association supports legislation that facilitates the use of technology and innovative
918 techniques to deliver safe, efficient and effective learner outcomes for Driver Education. The
919 Association opposes any subcontracting of Driver Education training to any entity that does not
920 meet the same licensure requirements placed on school districts.

921 The Association supports legislation that creates state standards for Driver Education
922 modeled after those created by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
923 2009.

924 **Student Health and Wellness**

925 The Association supports healthy choices in school vending machines and school meal programs.
926

927 The Association also believes that it is important for pre-K-12 students to experience a daily program
928 of structured physical activity provided by a licensed physical education teacher.
929

930 The Association supports improved mental health services and funding for mental health
931 services for Illinois' students and for Association members and their families.
932

933 The Association supports legislation which funds health/wellness programs for students.

934 **Corporal Punishment**

935 The Association believes that corporal punishment should not be used as a means of disciplining students.

936 **School Buses**

937 The Association supports legislation to set maximum seating capacities for school buses. School buses
938 should be equipped with adjustable drivers' seat, easily accessible first-aid kits, and monitoring for
939 security and safety. The Association supports the use of seat belts on school buses with a
940 maximum capacity of 36 passengers or fewer.

941 **Academic Freedom**

942 The Association supports legislation that favors academic freedom and the expression of ideas in the
943 public schools. Further, the Association opposes any attempt to censor and/or restrict materials, activities,
944 and/or teaching methods.

945 The Association opposes any legislation that would require school districts to schedule a moment of
946 silence.

947 The Association opposes any legislation that infringes upon the separation of church and state.

948 **Immigration Legislation**

949 The Association opposes legislation that denies human and civil rights or educational
950 opportunities to immigrants and their children. Further we oppose legislation that would
951 mandate education employees to report alleged immigration violations.

952 **Community Involvement**

953 Education programs should include the cooperative involvement of all stakeholders
954 including, but not limited to, education employees, parents, students, and community members,
955 while recognizing each participant's area of expertise. The Association supports voluntary
956 community service programs.

957 **Social Justice**

958 The Association supports social justice legislation that promotes the educational well-
959 being of all children and families.

960 **Charter Schools**

961 The Association supports public charter school programs provided the following conditions
962 are met:

- 963 1. They serve students who are at-risk. Students who are at-risk are defined as
964 students who, because of physical, emotional, socioeconomic, or cultural factors are
965 less likely to succeed in a conventional educational environment.
- 966 2. They result from grassroots designs of parents, teachers and school employees,
967 and the community seeking to improve education opportunities.
- 968 3. Teachers and paraeducators in such schools must meet the licensure
969 requirements as set forth by the ISEPLB. Teachers and paraeducators in such
970 schools must be evaluated in accordance with Illinois state law.
- 971 4. They require compliance with federal and state-mandated testing, safety,
972 discrimination and other pertinent federal and state requirements which regularly
973 assess student performance and well-being.
- 974 5. Their curriculum must comply with the State of Illinois Learning Standards.
- 975 6. They must publish Illinois school report cards with all the information required of
976 public schools available to the public and in the same format.
- 977 7. They must publish their budgets and Annual Financial Reports so that they are
978 open to public inspection in the same way as public schools.
- 979 8. Students of charter schools may not be dropped because of academic performance
980 and minor behavioral infractions e.g. tardies, cut class, etc.

- 981 9. Students and parents who decide to leave the charter school take the state funding
982 for the student back to the home school district.
- 983 10. State funded per pupil monies may not be used for advertising purposes other than
984 information brochures sent directly to the families in the district/s where the charter
985 school resides.
- 986 11. The governing board of a charter may not contract out the administration and policy
987 decisions to a for-profit entity.
- 988 12. Each local school board shall grant, for a period of up to 5 years, a leave of
989 absence to those teachers who accept employment with a charter school. At the
990 end of the authorized leave of absence, the teacher must be allowed to return to
991 the school district in a comparable position or be allowed to resign.
- 992 13. The contractual continued service status, seniority, and retirement benefits of a
993 teacher of the district who is granted a leave of absence to accept employment with
994 a charter school shall not be affected by that leave of absence.

995
996 The local school board shall have the final authority regarding the establishment of a
997 charter school. Until such authority is granted to local school boards, the state shall incur
998 all costs of an appeal and any resulting costs of establishing and operating that charter
999 school.

1000
1001 The Association supports a moratorium on the creation of all new charter schools throughout
1002 the state until charter schools are held to the same accountability and transparency standards
1003 as regular public schools. These standards include student progress and achievement,
1004 enrollment selection, budget, and the funding and influence of corporate and private interests
1005 and entities.

1006 **Virtual Charter Schools**

1007 The Association opposes Virtual Charter Schools that are privately owned and/or operated. The
1008 Association opposes the use of public funds for privately owned and/or operated Virtual Charter
1009 Schools. The Association believes that Virtual Charter Schools cannot meet the same conditions
1010 set for Public Charter Schools in this Platform.

1011 **Partnership Schools**

1012 The Association supports public partnership school programs provided the following
1013 conditions are met:

- 1014 1. They are available to all public schools.
- 1015 2. They focus on pupil performance.
- 1016 3. They require local decision making by all the major stakeholders through
- 1017 consensus.
- 1018 4. Teachers and paraeducators in such schools must meet the licensure
- 1019 requirements as set forth by the ISEPLB.
- 1020 5. Teachers and paraeducators in such schools must be evaluated in accordance with
- 1021 Illinois State law.
- 1022 6. They require compliance with federal and state-mandated testing, safety,
- 1023 discrimination and other pertinent federal and state requirements which regularly
- 1024 assess student performance and well-being.
- 1025 7. Their curriculum must comply with the State of Illinois Learning Standards.
- 1026 8. They must publish Illinois school report cards with all the information required of
- 1027 public schools available to the public and in the same format.
- 1028 9. They must publish their budgets and Annual Financial Reports so that they are
- 1029 open to public inspection in the same way as public schools.
- 1030 10. Students of partnership schools may not be dropped because of academic
- 1031 performance and minor behavioral infractions e.g. tardies, cut class, etc.
- 1032 11. Students and parents who decide to leave the partnership school take the state
- 1033 funding for the student back to the home school.
- 1034 12. State funded per pupil monies may not be used for advertising purposes other than
- 1035 information brochures sent directly to the families in the district/s where the
- 1036 partnership school resides.
- 1037 13. The governing board of a partnership school may not contract out the
- 1038 administration and policy decisions to a for-profit entity.
- 1039
- 1040 14. They provide for the opportunity for waivers/modifications from School Code,
- 1041 School Regulations, Board Policies, and the Collective Bargaining
- 1042 Agreement(s), provided the request does not conflict with the governing
- 1043 documents of the Illinois Education Association.

1044 **Choice Programs**

1045 The Association opposes state-imposed parental option plans (“choice”) in education programs. A

1046 local “choice” plan is acceptable only if it has been bargained and promotes equal education

1047 opportunities for all students.

1048 **Home Schooling**

1049 The Association opposes home schooling programs because such programs lack state oversight
1050 and cannot provide students with comprehensive education experiences. When home
1051 schooling occurs, those students must meet all state requirements. Home school programs
1052 must include parental registration with the Regional Office of Education and those individuals
1053 providing instruction must be qualified having passed a course or courses in education approved by
1054 the ISBE and must utilize a curriculum approved by the ISBE. The local public school system
1055 should have the authority to determine grade placement and/or credits earned toward
1056 graduation for students entering or re-entering the public school system from a home
1057 school setting.

1058 **Minimum School Calendar**

1059 The Association supports a mandatory minimum school calendar for state recognition and
1060 certification of public school districts. Any state-mandated year-round school program or
1061 lengthening of the school year must be locally bargained, adequately funded, and based on
1062 supportive research.

1063

1064 **Early Childhood Education**

1065 The Association urges the legislature to establish an early childhood education program beginning at
1066 birth. This program shall be provided by appropriately licensed education employees. The design
1067 and structure of early childhood programs should be determined by the developmental needs of the
1068 children in those programs. Early childhood programs should provide all children with meaningful
1069 education and developmental opportunities based on developmentally appropriate practices.
1070 Assessment tools selected to measure early childhood student progress and growth shall be
1071 developmentally appropriate as defined by the National Association of the Education of Young
1072 Children and supported by research. Early childhood programs should be provided with services
1073 and funding equal to those provided to children in grades first through eighth.

1074 **Mandatory Kindergarten**

1075 Kindergarten should be a mandatory program with additional funding provided for school
1076 districts offering the option of a full-day program for all kindergarten students. The
1077 Association further advocates a realistic mandatory minimum age requirement. Kindergarten
1078 attendance should be mandatory before entrance into the first grade for resident students. In
1079 addition, school districts should provide a transitional/developmental class for students
1080 who have completed preschool but are not ready for kindergarten and also for students

1081 who have completed kindergarten but are not ready for first grade. Funding for
1082 kindergarten programs should be equal to that provided for children in grades first through
1083 eighth.

1084 **Programs for Adults**

1085 The Association believes that free public education opportunity also should be extended to those
1086 students who have not yet completed their secondary education and to adults to provide minimum skills,
1087 retraining, and lifelong learning opportunities.

1088 **Technology Programs**

1089 The State should award non-competitive technological grants to facilitate the development and use of
1090 technology in instruction.

1091 **Digital Learning**

1092 Technological advances in areas such as telecommunications should not be used to reduce the
1093 number of education personnel. The impact of technology, telecommunications, digital
1094 education on education employees; and the need for related quality professional development should be
1095 subject to local collective bargaining agreements.

1096

1097 Digital learning should:

- 1098 • Ensure equality to meet the needs of every student.
- 1099 • Support and enhance educator professionalism.
- 1100 • Enhance and enrich student learning.
- 1101 • Promote high quality digital learning through blended or hybrid instruction.

1102 **Education Cooperatives**

1103 The Association supports legislation which will remedy deficiencies in existing law governing career and
1104 technical education and special education cooperatives.

1105 *Education Assessment*

1106 **Student Assessment**

1107 The Association recognizes the need for the continuous assessment of students' academic
1108 achievement. For the process to be effective, those trained in the process of education
1109 assessment must take part in selecting and utilizing the methods and materials.

1110 **Assessment of Students with IEPs**

1111 The Association believes that students with individual education plans (IEPs) should participate in
1112 assessment programs that are appropriate and applicable to their special education programs, including

1113 out of grade level assessment instruments.

1114 **Assessment Methods**

1115 The Association believes that all testing programs have limitations. Therefore, a wide range of
1116 assessment methods should be established by local teachers and administrators with the
1117 involvement of parents, boards of education, teacher education institutions, regulatory and
1118 supervisory agencies, and others involved in the education community. The Association believes that
1119 any assessment program should follow the individual student to reflect each student's growth.
1120 The Association, however, strongly opposes excessive testing of students.

1121 **Statewide Assessment Program**

1122 The Association calls upon the General Assembly to adopt the federal ESEA testing requirement and
1123 eliminate the statewide assessment program. The Association supports the reduction of
1124 documentary paperwork required for any assessment of students. Private, parochial, charter,
1125 alternative and home school students must be required to take all state-mandated tests. Resulting test
1126 scores should be filed with the corresponding Regional Office of Education.

1127 **Retention of Students**

1128 The Association shall encourage and support legislation that will provide for the retention of
1129 students upon faculty recommendation. The Association opposes the use of proficiency
1130 examinations in high school as a substitute for credit toward graduation.

1131 **Exclusions from and Limitations on Standardized Assessments**

1132 The IEA supports the right of a parent or guardian to exclude his or her child from any or all
1133 parts of state and district-level standardized tests, provided the State or school districts are not
1134 financially or otherwise penalized if such students are excluded, and supports the right of
1135 educators, without suffering from adverse actions regarding their employment or licensure, to:

1136

- 1137 • discuss the impact of standardized testing with parents and/or guardians,
- 1138 • discuss the state and district-level standardized tests with parents or guardians
1139 and may inform parents or guardians of their ability to exclude his or her child
1140 from state and/or district-level standardized tests,
- 1141 • provide a parent or guardian with his or her opinion on whether or not a student
1142 would benefit from exclusion from a state and/or district-level standardized test
1143 and that no adverse action or discipline will be taken against a school district
1144 employee who engages in such a discussion,

1145

1146 The IEA furthermore supports:

1147

- 1148 • a school and its employees not being negatively impacted due to a student not
1149 taking a state and/or district-level standardized test, such as by ensuring that
1150 students who are opted out of standardized tests by a parent or guardian are

1151 excluded from performance calculations for state and local accountability
1152 measures and from employee evaluations,
1153 • reducing the volume of standardized tests that students must take and to reduce
1154 the time educators and students spend on meaningless test preparation drills,
1155 • reasonable time being spent on standardized-assessments and assessment
1156 preparation drills,
1157 • the Governor, General Assembly and ISBE working with educators and other
1158 stakeholders to reexamine public school accountability systems throughout the
1159 state, and to develop a system based on multiple forms of assessment that do
1160 not require extensive standardized testing, more accurately reflects the broad
1161 range of student learning, and is used to support students and improve schools.

1162 *Professional Standards*

1163 **Introduction**

1164 Education needs of education employees are changing as the world of the education profession
1165 becomes more complex. Teachers and Education Support Professionals, as professionals, have the
1166 responsibility to establish, maintain, and enforce high standards for the education profession.

1167 **Autonomous Licensure Board**

1168 The Association recommends legislation to assign the responsibility for the approval of teacher
1169 preparation programs, licensure and relicensure of teachers, and the hearing of complaints of
1170 practitioners to an autonomous board composed of licensed teachers. This Teacher Licensure
1171 Board should be entitled to the same exemptions in the Open Meetings Act as other deliberative
1172 bodies that deal with confidential matters. The Association shall have the right to name its
1173 members to the Illinois State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board (SEPLB).

1174 **Special Education Licensure**

1175 The Association recommends a licensure program in special education that maintains categorical
1176 endorsements in special education in at least the following areas:

- 1177 • Early Childhood;
- 1178 • Blind/Visually Impaired;
- 1179 • Deaf/Hard of Hearing;
- 1180 • Speech and Language;
- 1181 • Learning Disabilities;
- 1182 • Behavior/Emotional Disorders;
- 1183 • Mental and Physical Disabilities;
- 1184 • Traumatic Brain Injury; and
- 1185 • Autism.

1186

1187 **National Certification Programs**

1188 The Association supports the adoption of rigorous standards in teacher training programs, such
1189 as those standards adopted by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and
1190 the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Furthermore, the Association
1191 supports the preservation and enhancement of the legislatively funded incentive program for
1192 those teachers pursuing NBPTS certification. In addition, the Association supports the creation
1193 of a legislatively funded incentive program for educational professionals in other specialty areas
1194 who have attained national certification.

1195 **Teacher Education Programs**

1196 The Association supports the testing of students in teacher education programs in order to be licensed.
1197 Individuals who teach courses which count toward high school graduation shall be licensed
1198 under Article 21 of the Illinois School Code. The Association supports programs that attract minorities into
1199 teaching. The Association also supports the creation of teacher education scholarships to attract
1200 minority students to the career of teaching. The Association further supports legislation that would provide
1201 reduced tuition for students while student teaching and/or interning in a teacher education program. In
1202 addition, the Association recognizes the need to attract to the profession students of both genders.
1203 The Association supports legislation to require students in teacher education programs to obtain
1204 liability insurance.

1205 **Placement of Student Teachers**

1206 The Association believes that student teachers should be placed only with tenured teachers
1207 who have a standard or advanced (master) teacher license.

1208 **Teacher Licensure**

1209 The State's teacher licensure system must assure that new teachers have the knowledge
1210 and skills to be effective educators. It must provide an induction period and mentoring for their
1211 professional development. Licensure requirements must encourage career-long
1212 professional growth, skill development, and learning. To ensure a highly qualified
1213 teacher in every classroom, the association recommends that the Illinois teacher licensure
1214 system be maintained and administered by the SEPLB and contain the following levels:

- 1215 1. Initial teaching licensure--issued after successful completion of training at a
1216 CAEP accredited college or university. Standards for granting the initial
1217 license should be consistent with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and
1218 Support Consortium's (INTASC) principles. The responsibility for the
1219 evaluation of Illinois candidates for initial teaching licensure should rest with the

- 1220 accredited college or university where the student has received training.
- 1221 2. Standard teaching licensure--granted after a three year induction period.
- 1222 Licenses, based on standards developed by the SEPLB, consistent with the
- 1223 National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and INTASC's
- 1224 principles, should be renewable after five years. The issuance of teacher licensure
- 1225 must be separate from the granting of continued contractual employment.
- 1226 Licensure would be granted by the State Board of Licensure, administered by
- 1227 the Illinois State Board of Education, but reflect local needs, development, and input.
- 1228 3. Advanced licensure shall be voluntary, renewable every ten years, and shall provide
- 1229 opportunities for classroom teachers to become model and mentor teachers, teacher
- 1230 educators, and instructional and curriculum leaders. It could include, as one option, a
- 1231 NBPTS licensure.

1232 **Teacher Relicensure**

1233 The Association supports a fair, reasonable, and workable relicensure program for teachers.

1234 When changes are made, enough time must be provided for those changes to be implemented

1235 fairly. Any state relicensure program must be maintained and administered by SEPLB and

1236 include:

- 1237 • Reasonable expectations;
- 1238 • Adequate funding;
- 1239 • Teacher control;
- 1240 • Association involvement;
- 1241 • A reduction in paperwork;
- 1242 • Proper training of all involved in the relicensure process; and
- 1243 • Continued efforts to streamline the relicensure process.

1244 **Staff Development**

1245 In order to aid all school personnel in pursuit of professional skill development, the Association supports

1246 increased state funding for staff development and educational scholarships. Additionally, such

1247 professional/staff development should be modeled after the standards developed by Learning Forward.

1248 Such professional skill development must include informal education experience as well as formal

1249 education experience.

1250

1251 **Teacher Evaluation**

1252 The evaluation procedure of teachers must include their input to encourage and promote positive growth in
1253 the teaching profession. Because teaching is a multi-faceted profession that requires many skills that
1254 cannot be measured by tests, the Association opposes statewide competency testing of teachers.

1255 The Association is opposed to the use of student assessments in educator performance evaluations, if such
1256 assessments 1) are the primary criterion used, 2) are not mutually agreed to by the school district and the
1257 local association, its representatives or individual educators (if provided for in a state performance evaluation
1258 model), 3) are not part of the implementation of a research based teacher evaluation system and 4) create
1259 an undue burden on educators. Any evaluation tool should acknowledge that mobility rates, poverty,
1260 and other external features have an impact on individual student learning. The association
1261 supports an accountability system that acknowledges the progress made by individual students
1262 and educators.

1263 The Association supports the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, but opposes the
1264 misuse of its licensure as a means of creating a multi-tiered salary system for educators.

1265

1266 State law should be enhanced to require an evaluation procedure be part of each negotiated agreement
1267 which includes a provision protecting the rights of consulting teachers.

1268 **Peer Assistance, Coaching, Induction, and Mentoring Programs**

1269 The Association supports peer assistance, coaching, induction, and peer mentoring programs developed
1270 by districts through collective bargaining with local associations. In addition, the Association supports
1271 state funding of peer assistance, coaching, induction and mentoring programs that meet state
1272 guidelines for movement from initial to standard licensure. Further, the Association urges
1273 continued support of a state funded grant program which would allow teachers who are
1274 determined to be highly qualified to teach in high-need schools without any loss of pay, tenure,
1275 or benefits. Upon return to the previous district, the employee's pay, tenure, and benefits shall
1276 have accrued.

1277 **School Board Member Training Program**

1278 The Association supports a training program for all school board members. Such a program
1279 should be developed in conjunction with the State Board of Education, and recognized
1280 education institutions and associations.

1281

1282

1283 **College Trustees Training Program**

1284 The Association supports a training program for all college trustees. Such a program should
1285 be developed in conjunction with the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community
1286 College Board and recognized higher education institutions and associations.

1287
1288 **School Board Member Qualifications**

1289 The Association supports requiring members of Boards of Education to undergo the same
1290 background checks as District Employees.

1291
1292 **School Board Member Oath of Office**

1293 The Association supports the changing of the School Board Member's Oath of Office to
1294 reference the need for high quality education balanced with taxpayers' interests.

1295 **ELECTORAL PROCESS**

1296 **Introduction**

1297 The Association believes in the democratic representation of all citizens. Therefore, the Association
1298 urges legislation that will guarantee all education employees eligibility for service in any governmental
1299 office, such as education governing boards or county offices. The Association supports an unbiased
1300 redistricting process. The Association supports the adoption of voting methods that ensure
1301 confidence in the democratic process and valid election outcomes.

1302 **Governing Boards and State Superintendent Responsiveness**

1303 The Association supports legislation to make the State Board of Education and its superintendent
1304 (or any successor entity), and the governing boards of community colleges and universities
1305 more responsive to those most directly associated with the education process. All governing
1306 boards shall consist of no fewer than one representative from students, faculty, and non-licensed
1307 staff.

1308 **Regional Superintendents of Schools**

1309 Since the Regional Superintendent of Schools plays an integral role in teacher licensure and training
1310 and the maintaining of professional standards, the Association urges legislation that will allow
1311 any certified education personnel to serve in this capacity. Any reorganization of services currently
1312 provided by the Regional Office of Education should include leadership by (an) official(s) elected by the
1313 voters of that region. Additionally, the members of the Regional Office of Education Advisory Boards
1314 shall continue to include education employees nominated by the local bargaining representatives to
1315 the appropriate regional superintendent for election by bargaining unit members.

1316 **Recall Process**

1317 The Association believes that the electoral process for all education governing boards should include a
1318 method of recall when citizens no longer feel that a board member is responsive and accountable to the
1319 constituents.

1320 **Initiative Process**

1321 The Association supports the representative form of government which vests legislative powers
1322 solely with the legislature. To that end, the Association opposes the initiative process.

1323

1324 **Voting Rights**

1325 The Association supports having our State and Consolidated/Municipal election days designated as
1326 State Holidays.

1327 **Process to Elect Judges**

1328 The Association continues to support the current system of election of judges and members of the
1329 Illinois General Assembly.

1330 **Approved by the IEA Representative Assembly, April 1, 2017**