



OKLAHOMA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

RESOLUTIONS

As approved by the 2018 Delegate Assembly

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Resolutions

OKLAHOMA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
(as approved by OEA Delegate Assembly 2018)

**GOAL AREA I: FULL
PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND
ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR ALL
EDUCATORS**

I-1 Educational Competency

The Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) believes that the measurement of teacher competency should not be based on a standardized test. The OEA further believes that no written or verbal examination measures the quality performance of certified personnel in public institutions of learning.

The OEA opposes the utilization of a national, statewide, or local examination to test certified personnel as a condition for job retention, probationary/career status, promotion, or salary increments. (85,92,98,01,16)

I-2 Evaluation of Educators

The OEA believes that it is a major responsibility of educators to participate in the evaluation of the quality of their services. To enable educators to meet this responsibility more effectively, the OEA calls for continued research and experimentation to develop means of objective evaluation of the performance of all educators including, but not limited to, the identification of:

- A. factors that determine professional competence;
- B. factors that determine the effectiveness of competent professionals;
- C. methods of evaluating effective professional service.

The OEA also believes that teachers and other educational professionals should participate in the evaluation of supervisory and administrative personnel and governing board members.

The OEA further believes that evaluations should be conducted for the purposes of improving the performance and quality of instruction offered to students, based upon written criteria and following procedures mutually developed by and acceptable to the Association, the administration, and the governing board. Under no circumstances does the OEA believe it is appropriate to make teacher certification or recertification dependent upon individual professional performance evaluations.

The OEA believes that the evaluation process must recognize the rights of the educator. These include the right to have:

- A. information concerning the evaluation criteria and procedure of the governing board upon application of employment and when changes are made in the criteria and procedures;
- B. open evaluation without subterfuge and with advance notice of evaluation visits with discussion of the teacher's goals and methods. A standardized observation and evaluation form will be used district wide;

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- C. consultation in a timely manner and an opportunity to respond in writing to any formal evaluation report prior to placement in a personnel file;
 - D. access to all items in his/her personnel file; opportunity to attach a written response; and a procedure to remove inappropriate, derogatory, or unsubstantiated material. All records to be included in the personnel file must be signed by the administrator and educator in accordance with due process of law;
 - E. evaluation reports that assess strengths, note progress, indicate areas for improvement and suggest specific measures for improvement;
 - F. participation in a professional development program, including such activities as appropriate counseling and supportive services, released time for professional development, and opportunity to observe and seek or give assistance to other educators in classroom settings other than one's own;
 - G. supervision that is constructive, provides an opportunity for improvement, takes into account the variety of learning and teaching environmental factors and emphasizes career development of the professional educator;
 - H. a trained evaluator with the skills necessary to make both sound judgments about teaching quality and appropriate recommendations for improvement;

The OEA opposes any plan to rank educators. Recognizing non-school related variables and individual student variables, the OEA further opposes the use of student progress and student assessment tests for purposes of teacher evaluation, advancement on the salary schedule, continuation of employment, achievement of career status, or ranking of schools or school systems. (86,89,90,01,16)

I-3 Teachers as Mentors

The OEA believes that entry-year teacher mentoring is a process that facilitates the transition of new teachers into the profession. The Association also believes that an effective mentoring process is based upon exemplary teaching practices, an understanding of adult and student learning, and a professional environment that supports collaboration and inquiry. The Association further believes that the mentoring process enhances teaching skills and promotes professional development.

The Association, therefore, believes that educators should be involved in the development of standards for teacher mentors and in the design and implementation of the process. (00)

I-4 Peer Assistance Program

The OEA believes that high standards within the teaching profession and continuous improvement in professional practice are cornerstones of the profession. Local associations may conclude that, under certain circumstances, a peer assistance program is an appropriate mechanism for achieving these objectives. The primary purpose of any such program should be to provide "assistance" – to improve professional practice, retain promising

teachers, and build professional knowledge to improve student success.

The Association also believes that peer assistance programs are a means of enhancing the professional expertise of employees. Planning, implementation, and evaluation of such programs must be negotiated or cooperatively developed and maintained by the school district and the local affiliate.

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

The Association further believes that any documentation that results from this process must be confidential and the sole property of the person assisted and must not be included in the participant's personnel file. (99,16)

I-5 Educational Support Professional Evaluation

The OEA advocates performance-based and formative evaluations, in accordance with due process of law, as the appropriate way to assure as well as to assess the competency of educational support professionals in their respective fields.

An effective evaluation procedure supported by well-developed, continuing professional growth programs will enable all educational support professionals to keep abreast of developments in their areas of specialization. Such procedures can also help identify areas for improvement and provide options such as counseling,

training programs, and sufficient resources to help ensure job competency.

The evaluation procedure should be tied to the professional growth program which has been developed and maintained in conjunction with representatives selected by the local association and should include:

- A. clear performance expectations based upon detailed job descriptions;
- B. regular observations of job performance;
- C. consultation in a timely manner to address areas of concern;
- D. a written evaluation report to be provided to the person being evaluated;
- E. opportunity for a written response prior to the placement of the evaluation in the personnel file.

By participating in an evaluation process, an education employee shall not waive his/her right to due process in any subsequent contractual or legal proceeding. (93,16)

I-6 Written Personnel Policies

The OEA urges that personnel policies be written and developed cooperatively by local Associations and boards of education. The OEA further urges a cooperative annual review of improvement of the personnel policies.

I-7 Right to Privacy

The OEA believes that school personnel should be guaranteed rights of privacy equivalent to those afforded students and parents under state and federal legislation. These rights must include:

- A. a guarantee that only one personnel file exists.

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- B. access to materials in personnel files, including a list of all electronic and hard copy records maintained by an educational institution
 - C. the authority to inspect, review, and obtain copies of such records, explanations and interpretations of such records, and a record of past access
 - D. written notification within 10 working days of any placement of materials in the employee's personnel file
 - E. an opportunity to respond to and challenge any materials and purge those that are inaccurate, misleading, and distorted
 - F. a provision to consent to or deny release of such records, including the right to receive copies of released materials
 - G. freedom from audio or video surveillance without prior written permission of the individual
 - H. protection from exploitation via telephone and the Internet
 - I. computer access in a private and secure setting
 - J. security of computer files, passwords, and user codes from inappropriate or unauthorized access. (84,86,00,16)

I-8 Political Responsibility

The OEA recognizes the importance of political action in promoting educational issues. The OEA urges the members of the profession to accept their individual responsibilities of citizenship, to become active in political campaigns, to stay informed about education related legislation, and to educate their communities and elected officials about

needed legislation in the area of education.

Since educators are potentially the most powerful influence upon legislators from their communities and because local financial support and action is essential to make the education profession a visible force in political campaigns, the OEA urges its members to make political contributions through The Fund for Children and Public Education. The purpose of the Fund is to select, finance, and work pro-actively for the education of candidates who support quality education. (96,98,09,16)

I-9 Participation in Professional Associations

The OEA believes that every educator has the right and obligation to participate fully in professional associations. The OEA further believes school policies should provide release time without loss of pay to educators who are fulfilling leadership responsibilities or attending professional meetings. Release time should be equitably provided to all education employees, without harassment and without preference given to educational position. (87,16)

I-10 Payroll Deduction

The OEA believes that members have the right to have payroll deduction of both membership dues and voluntary political contributions. (12)

I-11 Professional Leave

The OEA believes that participating in activities for professional growth and improvement contributes to the success of the overall educational program and to the improvement of the profession. The OEA urges each school district to develop policies which will make it possible for school personnel to be

provided with professional leave for this purpose without loss of pay or other leave time. (87)

I-12 Collective Bargaining

The OEA believes that collective bargaining, as the statutory method of administering employer-employee relations through the establishment of an orderly process of communications between education employees and the school district, is the most effective method to institute change and improvement in the work place.

The OEA affirms that all education employees have the right established by statute to form associations and to engage in the practice and procedure of collective bargaining.

The OEA strongly urges the school personnel in every school system where no collective bargaining agreement exists to obtain statutory recognition.

The OEA believes that an effective collective bargaining agreement is a mutually agreed upon written document that is signed by both the representative of the local affiliate and the local board of education and includes provisions for wages, hours, fringe benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment.

The OEA urges its local affiliates to engage in orderly process of communication with a local school board for wages, hours, fringe benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment.

The OEA urges the members and affiliates to notify the OEA of any alleged violation of the Collective Bargaining Law. Education employees have the right to participate in the collective bargaining process free from discrimination in hiring, tenure, promotion and other conditions of employment. The OEA is committed to protect the rights of

members and affiliates under the Oklahoma Collective Bargaining statute.

The OEA urges that each local affiliate practice and insist on good faith bargaining procedures in all phases of the collective bargaining process and urges its affiliates to seek every avenue of resolution when good faith does not exist.

The OEA believes that the current statute should be strengthened to provide final and binding impasse or the right to strike. (89)

I-13 Extended School Day/Year

The OEA opposes any attempt to lengthen the school day or the school year until the following prior conditions are met:

- A. Oklahoma's average teacher's salary must equal or exceed the regional average;
- B. each education employee whose working day or contract year will be lengthened must be adequately compensated for the additional time. This increased compensation must be in addition to that specified in Section "A" of this resolution.

Until these two conditions have been fully met, the OEA will oppose any effort to lengthen either the school day or the school year. (89,98)

I-14 Fringe Benefits

The OEA believes that to attract and retain competent staff, the State of Oklahoma and individual school systems must provide fringe benefits comparable to those of other professionals and occupations requiring similar preparation and responsibility.

The OEA further believes that retired education employees should receive 100% state paid single premium health insurance coverage. (05)

I-15 Professional Salaries

The OEA maintains that the following factors must be considered in providing salaries that will retain competent education employees, attract individuals of outstanding ability to the profession, and encourage improved competence and performance.

- A. Salaries must be based on preparation and educational experience.
- B. Salaries must be adequate to attract capable educators, as well as to retain experienced educators.
- C. The salary schedule must compare favorably with income in other professions and occupations requiring similar preparation and responsibility.
- D. Placement on the salary schedule must reflect total years' experience as an education employee both in and out of the state.
- E. The salary schedule must include a cost of living index fully funded by the state.
- F. The salary schedule must provide annual increments of not less than 5% of the bachelor's degree minimum that are sufficiently cumulative to double the minimum within ten years.
- G. The salary schedule must provide a range of continuing scheduled salary increases for all education employees and guarantee further increases for additional preparation, including the doctorate degree. It should not, however, be a tiered compensation system that places entry-year employees on a salary and/or benefits schedule that differs from that of career employees.
- H. Legislation governing educators' salaries must be developed that will raise the Oklahoma minimum salary schedule and maintain it within the top 10 percent of the national ranking. Such legislation must not permit discrimination of any kind toward any individual or professional group.
- I. Salary increases should be stated in percentages and/or monthly amounts in media news releases.
- J. The calculation of average classroom teacher salary shall be based only on teachers' salaries and shall not include administrators' salaries, extra duty compensation, retirement, insurance, or other fringe benefits.
- K. The salary schedule must provide a cost of living index and annual increment for every year experience and this be fully funded by the state.
- L. Assure that salary paid for summer employment, continuing education programs, extended contracts, conducting employee training or workshops, and extra duty is not less than the rate for regular pay.
- M. Provide additional compensation for national certification.
- N. Provide at a minimum a living wage for education support professionals.

The OEA urges the Oklahoma legislature to consider these factors and to enact legislation properly addressing compensation for Oklahoma educators. (84,86,87,89,92,98,02,05,16)

I-16 Reduction in Force

The OEA believes that one of its basic responsibilities is job security for employees in education and urges its local associations to bargain in master

contract criteria to be utilized should reduction in force (RIF) occur. Criteria should include seniority, objectivity, nondiscrimination, uniformity of application and affirmative action. Should RIF become necessary, the number of administrators should be reduced at least in proportion to the number of teachers being reduced. Contracts should establish recall procedures that provide priority job opportunities on a seniority basis to all school personnel unemployed because of reductions in force. Neighboring districts are encouraged to establish jointly such procedures on a regional basis that would provide hiring for all RIFed personnel including both certified and support professionals.

Reduction in force includes, but is not limited to, reduction of supportive staff, special staff, administrative staff, and non-replacement of retiring and other resigning personnel.

The OEA urges local associations to bargain RIF policies which exclude performance evaluation from consideration in the RIF process. (84,01)

I-17 Noncontinuing Contracts

The OEA believes that all educators employed in Oklahoma public schools deserve due process protection provided under law and an opportunity to achieve the benefits of career status. The OEA urges the Oklahoma Legislature to adopt legislation that declares “non-continuing” contracts illegal in the state of Oklahoma. (98,16)

I-18 Subcontracting/Contracting Out

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

most capable employees. The Association believes that employees should not be displaced by private service providers or by temporary or part-time workers.

The Association further believes that school districts should not enter into subcontracting agreements that transfer education employees or that abrogate previously contracted benefits, reduce compensation, deny fringe benefits, and/or reduce or eliminate accumulated retirement experience and benefits. (93)

I-19 Educator Stress

The OEA urges that the harmful effects of stress on teachers and other school personnel be recognized. The OEA demands procedures that will ensure confidentiality and treatment without personal/professional jeopardy and/or retaliation.

The OEA further urges local professional development committees to offer stress management programs which facilitate the recognition and prevention of stress related problems. (86,98,01)

I-20 Right to Disseminate Information

The OEA insists that local governing boards and administrations respect the right of Association members to use school property, such as school personnel mail boxes, electronic communications, telephones, and meeting rooms, for communication without interference, censorship, or prior restraint. (05)

I-21 Protection of Individuals in Clinical Practice/Student Teaching Programs

The OEA believes that individuals participating in student teaching programs should be provided with legal status and liability protection by the

appropriate teacher preparation institution and should be encouraged to join the Student Oklahoma Education Association.

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

The Association encourages its and other appropriate bodies to formulate standards for student teaching programs. Supervision or cooperating teachers in a student teaching program should have reduced teaching loads and be given a minimum established compensation. Acceptance of student teachers, interns, or residents by pre-K through 12 classroom practitioners should be voluntary. (00,16)

I-22 Protection of Education Employees

The OEA urges the strengthening and vigorous enforcement of laws which serve as a deterrent to verbal and physical abuse by students or others upon education employees both on and off school premises. In no event shall time lost due to injury caused by such attacks be deducted from the educational employee's available sick leave.

The OEA believes when educational employees are the victims of such attack or theft, they should receive the full support of the employer in pursuing legal and other remedies pursuant to Oklahoma law.

The OEA further believes the local Association has the right to reflect the concerns of the education employee at a student suspension, expulsion or disciplinary hearing resulting from such incidents. (89,16)

I-23 Members Injured on the Job

The OEA believes the legal rights of members injured on the job need to be protected. The OEA encourages its affiliates to assist members injured on the job. Members must have access to information regarding employment related injuries. (16)

I-24 Employee Rights Pending Court Action

The OEA believes when criminal charges or civil lawsuits are filed against an education employee, the right of due process must be guaranteed. If an employee is removed from student contact or suspended from a position due to pending court action, all employment rights of the employee shall remain in force, including full compensation and job security.

The OEA urges local affiliates to negotiate contract provisions covering procedures to be followed until final disposition of the case. (87,16)

I-25 Higher Education

The OEA recognizes the importance of state institutions of higher education:

- A. Salaries - The OEA urges the Oklahoma Legislature to provide adequate funds for support of higher education and for improved salaries that will attract and retain faculties of academic excellence. Salaries will be nondiscriminatory when qualifications are equal

regardless of the type of higher level instruction. Such salaries should equal those paid by similar institutions in this region of the nation.

- B. Evaluation and Promotion - The OEA affirms the importance of teaching in institutions of higher education and that research and publication should not to be the only criteria on which higher education faculty are evaluated and/or promoted.
- C. Retirement - The OEA urges the development of a uniform retirement program for school personnel in all higher education institutions which is comparable to neighboring states.
- D. Teaching Load - The OEA believes that the advisement load, committee assignments, research and service activities of college and universities justify the teaching load as recommended by the appropriate accreditation association.
- E. Collective bargaining - The OEA believes that through collective bargaining orderly procedures may be developed for the identification, discussion, and agreement of matters concerning faculty welfare. The OEA urges each college and university to develop such an agreement.
- F. Representation - The OEA further endorses the recommendation to the Oklahoma State Board of Regents that provisions be

made for at least one faculty member to be included on each board of regents to represent legitimate faculty concerns. Such a representative should be democratically elected by the appropriate faculty senates and be given full voting rights.

- G. Employment and Dismissal - The OEA urges action be initiated to secure compliance by all state institutions of higher education with Department of Education guidelines for affirmative action, fair employment and dismissal. The OEA further believes that if a criminal records check is to occur, it should be made prior to the first employment within the state or upon probable cause. Uniform guidelines should be established which apply to all employees of these institutions. (88,89,16)

I-26 Higher Education Research and Study Grants

The OEA believes that both the governmental and private sectors should provide research and study grants to higher education faculties in all academic areas. Such grants should be awarded on the basis of scholarship and quality research. The dissemination of grants should not be used to influence university decisions and policies.

The OEA believes that the process of study and research grants provided should influence neither undergraduate nor graduate curricula until such time as the research is completed and

systematically integrated into the curricula.

The OEA further believes that academic freedom applies to research and the dissemination of research results. (87,16)

I-27 Organization of Faculties of Higher Education

The OEA urges the faculties of institutions of higher learning of the State of Oklahoma to organize under the auspices of the Oklahoma Education Association.

I-28 Equal Opportunity

The OEA believes that all persons be given equal opportunity for employment, promotion, compensation, including equal pay for comparable worth, and leadership in all activities.

The OEA supports an equal rights amendment to the United States Constitution which guarantees that equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state to any persons.

The OEA also supports the enactment of full funding of the Women's Educational Equity Act.

The OEA urges governing boards and education associations to eliminate any discriminatory practices in employment, promotion and compensation.

The OEA further urges governing boards and education associations of all levels to adopt policies and practices that enable and ensure equal access for all persons to elective, appointive, and staff positions. (84,86,87,95,98,01,16)

I-29 Support Professionals in the Educational Process

The OEA believes education employees are essential to the learning environment. The Association

recognizes educational support professionals promote positive role models which enhance the educational process.

The OEA believes greater emphasis must be placed upon securing and maintaining the most capable educational support staff possible. The OEA further believes that if a criminal records check is to occur, it must be made prior to the first employment within the state or upon probable cause. The OEA recognizes that the salaries and benefits for the non-instructional staff should be competitive with those of similar positions in private industry and business within the geographic area.

The OEA believes support professionals should enroll as members of the OEA. (91,16)

I-30 Health Services in Schools

The OEA recognizes the role school nurses play in maintaining a safe and healthy environment within the schools. The OEA believes a greater emphasis must be placed upon securing and maintaining school nurses at every school site.

The OEA believes all educators must have regular and immediate access to a school nurse or physician in dealing with health problems of students. The OEA urges local associations to work with local administrators to provide a comprehensive school-based health clinic, which involves personnel qualified to offer services and short-range treatment to students and to assist students in arrangements for extended treatment at community based treatment centers.

The clinic will also administer all student medications. Procedures for administering medication must include appropriate records of medication

administered, a physician's written order for prescription medication, written permission of the parent or guardian for administering any medication, delivery of medication in a container properly labeled with the name and strength of medication, name of the patient, directions for use, and proper storage of the medication, and, when appropriate, the name of the physician and the date of the original prescription.

The OEA believes school personnel have the right to refuse without fear of disciplinary repercussion to administer medication and/or medical services for which school personnel feel unqualified or unequipped. (91,93,16)

I-31 Ethnic Minority Participation in Associations

The OEA supports ethnic minority participation at every phase of governance and on all decision-making levels of the united Association.

Ethnic minority members should be encouraged to file as candidates for governance positions, to participate in program development and to apply for staff positions. The OEA should promote minority participation in program development and should employ minorities in staff positions. (83)

I-32 Consideration for Educators with Disabilities

The OEA believes that educators with disabilities have a legitimate and contributory place in public education. The OEA urges that meetings be held at sites which accommodate persons with disabilities. (89,93)

I-33 Teacher Retirement

The OEA believes properly planned and adequately financed state retirement plans are essential to meet the

requirements of the education profession.

- A. The OEA urges the Oklahoma Teacher Retirement System (OTRS) to provide an improved formula for calculating retirement benefits for present and future retirees.
- B. The OEA urges the Oklahoma legislature to allocate adequate revenue to provide full retirement benefits as a defined benefit plan.
- C. The OEA urges the Oklahoma legislature to provide adequate revenue to finance the retirement benefits and the administration of the program as provided by law.
- D. The OEA adamantly opposes any movement to divert monies from the Teacher Retirement System of Oklahoma to any other state fund.
- E. The OEA adamantly opposes any movement to divert individual education employees' contributions and interest from their personal accounts to make the (OTRS) self-supporting.
- F. The OEA adamantly opposes any retirement program which does not equalize benefits for all educational employees according to years of service.
- G. The OEA adamantly opposes the inclusion of Federal Social Security as part of (OTRS). Social Security must be wholly in addition to and

not in place of teacher retirement benefits guaranteed by law. (86,16)

I-34 Retired Members

The OEA believes that its unified retired members have the opportunity to gain information about and to provide input into Association programs and activities through representation in governance at the national, state, and local levels. (89,16)

GOAL AREA II: SECURE PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY

II-1 Secure Professional Autonomy

The OEA believes the profession must govern itself. The OEA also believes that a majority of the commissioners of the Oklahoma Office of Education Quality and Accountability should be practicing public school teachers. The Association further believes that the Office should have the legal responsibility for determining policy and procedures for teacher certification, approval of teacher certification, approval of teacher preparation programs, recognition of national accreditation of preparation programs, and programs designed to improve education. (85,86,98,16)

II-2 Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Institutions

The OEA believes that teacher education programs should be approved at two levels: at the state level through the Oklahoma Office of Education Quality and Accountability and at the national level through the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). The Association

also believes that CAEP and its governing boards must include representatives of all levels of the teaching profession as well as students preparing to teach. (93,98,16)

II-3 National Certification

The Oklahoma Education Association supports voluntary national certification for all education employees from professional organizations that establish appropriate assessment and qualification standards. (03,16)

GOAL AREA III: STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM

III-1 Restructuring the Public Schools in Oklahoma

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that the school as an institution of learning must be willing to adapt to the changing needs and demands of its population. Therefore, the Association supports innovation in public education that improves learning.

The Association supports school restructuring efforts as an ongoing process when the following criteria are present:

- A. research by practitioners before implementation;
- B. teacher involvement in the development of the restructuring plans, during implementation and through evaluation of the plans;
- C. restructuring efforts introduced in an appropriate sequence based on the school site and its particular circumstances;
- D. provisions for adequate, sustaining support that include

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- funding clerical support, technological support, time, and compensation;
 - E. assurance that funds are not diverted from regular public school programs;
 - F. adequate safeguards covering contract and employment provisions for all employees, voluntary participation, and health and safety standards for all students and employees;
 - G. plans including appropriate procedures for regular periodic assessments and evaluations.
- (92,93,98,03,17)

III-2 Programs for Students At-Risk and/or with Disabilities

The Oklahoma Education Association believes there must be increased development and maintenance of alternative programs to meet the needs of students at-risk and/or with disabilities, pre-kindergarten through adult. The Association recommends early and appropriate identification and placement of these students. Teachers, education support professionals and administrators should receive necessary training in diagnostic processes and alternative methods of teaching and learning. Programs should emphasize a broad range of activities for responding to students' differing behavioral patterns, interests, needs, and learning styles. These programs must be evaluated on stated objectives. Teachers in these programs must have a major role in designing the objectives and evaluations and in working with appropriate school and community personnel to execute these objectives and evaluations.

The Association urges its affiliates to seek adequate compensation,

planning time, materials, and facilities for teachers, education support professionals, and counselors in these programs.

The Association supports the efforts of its affiliates to negotiate and advocate for the training of teachers seeking additional certification and for the hiring of an appropriate number of teachers with specialized certifications.

In higher education settings, faculty and education support professionals working with special needs students at-risk and/or with disabilities should receive appropriate resources to accommodate their individual needs.

The Association supports legislation that would require any person offering services that address the individual needs of the learner in reading, speech, language, behavioral, emotional or learning disabilities, and/or related problems to be licensed or certified under regulations of the appropriate agency. The Association further supports legislation that protects school personnel from all liability when following the adopted individualized education program. (98,03,17,18)

III-3 Site-Based Decision Making

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

- A. voluntary participation by local sites;

- B. a district-association structure for processing conflict resolution;
- C. an agreement on the scope of decision making authority available to sites;
- D. constituent representation appropriate to the site and selected by each constituency;
- E. compensated planning and training time for staff and governance bodies as well as additional resources necessary for successful implementation;
- F. compensation and/or released time for participating staff members. (17)

III-4 School Facilities: Design, Construction, and Function

The Oklahoma Education Association recognizes that all school facilities must be well constructed, energy-efficient, aesthetically pleasing, functional, and designed specifically for their intended purposes. The physical environment must allow for a variety of needs, including the growth in the number of students, changes in teaching methods, presentation of instruction, adequate technological infrastructure, and an increased use of school facilities.

The community, parents, teachers, education support professionals, and students must be involved through site-based decision making in designing these facilities. Construction designs should incorporate original art.

Stable and sufficient funding must be provided for the design, construction, maintenance, and operation of the school facility. Funding for custodial, maintenance, and secretarial

staff and resources should be provided in every facility in order to maintain a safe, healthful, attractive, aesthetic, and clean environment for both students and staff. (93,17)

III-5 Safe School Environment

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that all educational facilities must be safe from all environmental, chemical, and physical hazards. The Association urges the establishment and vigorous enforcement of stringent standards equal to or greater than the private sector OSHA standards to ensure these health and safety standards.

The Association supports ongoing standardized training and certification of education employees working with potentially hazardous school equipment and in hazardous facilities. The Association believes that such training must include the proper handling, storage and disposal of hazardous materials and instruction on Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS). Material Safety Data Sheets should be on file in each school building and available to employees upon request.

The Association believes that all educational facilities must provide adequate safe rooms that meet Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) guidelines.

The Association believes that school personnel, students, and their families should be notified of potential hazards and the action plan for corrections. The Association urges that when facilities are altered or repaired these activities do not create additional health hazards. The Association further believes that affected local districts have a responsibility to post immediate

notices of these hazards through the public media. (93,02,17)

III-6 Standards and Curriculum

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that education professionals possess the knowledge, skills, and expertise to make curricular decisions. Therefore, the process of designing standards and curriculum should include educational professionals and all other stakeholders at the site, district, state, and national level.

The Association believes that the education professionals are the experts in making all decisions when implementing the curriculum to reflect the needs of the learner and the community. (17)

III-7 Statewide Accreditation System

The Oklahoma Education Association believes a statewide accreditation system should be developed with significant involvement of stakeholders, with a primary purpose of educational excellence for all students. The system should:

- A. focus on continuous improvement;
- B. contain a balance of indicators of student performance and school processes;
- C. be driven by relevant data and include pertinent information from multiple sources;
- D. contain clearly stated objectives, while giving districts and schools flexibility in determining how to achieve those expectations;
- E. implement an accreditation procedure which would

include a team of practitioners thoroughly trained in the assessment process. Teams would conduct unbiased assessments at all school sites once every four years;

- F. hold each publicly funded school to the same standards;
- G. minimize the required time and paperwork to the greatest extent possible;
- H. provide adequate state resources to support the time and materials necessary to fund the system. (00,17)

III-8 Professional Development/ Teacher Preparation for Education Support Professionals

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that professional development programs should provide equal opportunities for education support professionals to gain and to improve the knowledge and skills important to their position and job performance throughout their professional career. The Association further believes that educational support professionals should have an active role at every stage of planning, implementation, and evaluation of their professional development programs.

The Association believes that affiliates should encourage and act as a support system for those education support professionals pursuing a college degree and/or fulfilling the requirements necessary to become certified classroom teachers. (99,00,17)

III-9 Professional Development and Teacher Preparation

The Oklahoma Education Association recognizes the importance

of preparation and the continuing professional development of educators and believes that the Association has the responsibility for continuing to make recommendations to the Oklahoma Office of Education Quality and Accountability and the State Board of Education relative to teacher preparation and meaningful professional development programs. (85,91,98,02,17)

III-10 Hiring Policies and Practices for Teaching Positions

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that nondiscriminatory hiring policies and practices that actively recruit a highly qualified, diverse teaching staff provide the highest quality of education for students.

The Association also believes candidates for teaching positions must have completed a teacher education program meeting CAEP standards and be certified in the field of the specific teaching assignment. In addition to candidate qualifications, selection criteria for all teaching positions should be based on the needs of the students and faculty, the goals of the school district, and the philosophy of the school.

The Association further believes teachers should have an active role in the development of selection criteria, job descriptions, and interview instruments and should participate in the interview and selection process. (00,02,17,18)

III-11 Certification of Teachers

The Oklahoma Education Association believes teachers are qualified, trained professionals and that state-mandated standards for teacher certification should be broad, general curricular guidelines and should not be

based on student achievement and/or the results of mandated student testing.

The Association believes in establishing and maintaining high standards of certification and supports the limited use of provisional and emergency certification.

The Association believes in working cooperatively with the State Department of Education and the Oklahoma Office of Education Quality and Accountability in the re-evaluation of the types and requirements of teaching certificates.

The Association the Oklahoma State Department of Education should honor the certification credentials previously issued according to the high standards recommended by the Oklahoma Office of Education Quality and Accountability and approved by the Oklahoma State Board of Education.

The Association believes that education employees should be reimbursed by the state for any continuing education that may be required to maintain their existing standard certification or to continue in the assignment for which they hold standard certification.

The Association believes that teachers serving on committees responsible for making recommendations about the certification of entry year teachers should be protected from the costs associated with possible litigation.

The Association believes in national reciprocity of certification standards of educators in the United States. (86,89,90,91,98,02,17)

III-12 Accountability

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that educators can be accountable only to the degree that

they share responsibility in educational decision making providing that all stakeholders at the school, district, state, and national levels share the responsibility and accountability for establishing clear goals, adopting high expectations for student learning, demonstrating multiple methods of student success, and providing adequate and equitable funding and support systems. The Association believes that the goal of an education system is to provide educational excellence for each child. (02,17)

III-13 Positive Discipline

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that discipline is essential in promoting optimum learning. The Association also believes that well defined expectations and effective instruction promote self-control and responsible behavior in students. Boards of Education and local affiliates should develop policies and set standards that would provide the necessary administrative support to school employees for the maintenance of a positive school environment.

The Association further believes its local affiliates should develop guidelines based on research for effective discipline techniques. The Association urges local affiliates to negotiate a process whereby administrators, teachers, other school personnel, parents and students will be involved in identifying disruptive behavior and prescribing, implementing, and evaluating procedures that will reduce and correct disruptive behavior.

The Association supports discipline policies that not only protect the student's rights to a fair hearing, but will also provide the education employee with the authority to maintain internal

and external classroom management. (86,98,02,17)

III-14 Job Sharing

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

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

- A. pro-rated application of the salary schedule with full recognition of years of experience;
 - B. an equitable share of all fringe benefits;
 - C. the right to revert to full-time status;
 - D. no loss of rights gained through years of service;
 - E. proportional credit toward seniority and retirement.
- (90,97,17)

III-15 Student Teaching Programs

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that student teaching providing actual classroom experience is an essential phase of teacher preparation.

The Association recognizes the obligation and privilege of the profession in assisting with the training of teacher candidates as they prepare to enter the teaching profession and

encourages its certified members with at least three years of experience and a minimum of one year in their respective districts to accept student teachers into their classrooms whenever possible.

The Association feels that teacher candidates are in training and should not be expected or required to assume the role of substitute teacher in the classroom of an absent teacher.

The Association opposes any incident or practice that allows the use of student teachers in place of regular substitute teachers and urges local school boards and administrators to fill any classroom vacancy only with qualified substitute teachers. (17)

III-16 Educational Research

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that well designed and executed research on educational issues is essential in the continuing development and implementation of education reform.

The Association, therefore, pledges its support and available resources in the pursuit of such sound educational research. (02,17)

III-17 Education Reform

The Oklahoma Education Association recognizes that the world is ever changing. As a result, the OEA believes that education must also be an ever changing process.

The Association further believes that the OEA should be instrumental in the development and implementation of any education policies and/or reforms in Oklahoma. (02,17)

III-18 Statewide Student Assessment System

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that student

achievement should be determined by an ongoing, comprehensive, and developmentally appropriate student assessment which includes, but is not limited to, results from standardized tests, teacher-made assessment materials, portfolios, group projects, and/or class work.

The Association further believes that an appropriate statewide student assessment system must include the following criteria:

- A. the system should be fair to all students and minimize any biases;
- B. the system should be based on clearly defined standards, which are developed with significant involvement of all stakeholders;
- C. assessment at all levels should be meaningful, valid, and reliable to all stakeholders;
- D. results should be reported to all stakeholders in a timely fashion and in a form that is clear and understandable. These results should be used for developing teaching strategies, diagnoses or remediation;
- E. results should, over time, indicate the academic growth for each student consistent with his or her abilities within a total curricular framework;
- F. a statewide system should be developed and implemented to monitor a student's academic growth from year to year and/or from district to district.

The Oklahoma Education Association further believes that a

statewide student assessment system must be only one of several indicators used for determining school accreditation. Results must not be used to make teacher-to-teacher, student-to-student, or district-to-district comparisons. (00,02,17)

III-19 Time to Teach

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that “time to teach” refers not only to those hours during which an educator is actually teaching but also applies to those conditions that contribute to the student-teacher relationship. These include a reasonable, carefully defined workload which must include the following:

- A. a daily duty-free lunch period of no less than thirty (30) minutes;
- B. a daily time for planning during the regular contract day;
- C. an additional common planning time during the contract day for educators to meet and to confer with other educators;
- D. a time for implementation of federal and state legislative requirements;
- E. and the elimination of the non-instructional tasks required of a teacher.

The Association urges districts to employ additional personnel and/or establish programs that utilize screened and trained parent volunteers in public schools to perform non-teaching duties which allow educators the adequate time to educate all students. (17)

III-20 Class Size

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

Class size maximums must be based on the type of students, grade level, subject area content, and physical facilities. The Association also believes in optimal class sizes in regular programs and a proportionately lower number in programs for students with exceptional needs. Weighted class size formulas should be implemented to reflect the inclusion of exceptional students. The Association further believes in establishing workload maximums for all curricular areas, not to exceed the recommendations of their respective national organizations.

The Association believes that Oklahoma Department of Education should, on a yearly basis, collect and report class size data that reflect the class size experienced by most students. (17)

III-21 Career Education

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

The Association believes that educational programs for all students should be developed that will enhance self-esteem, will assure equal opportunity for career development, and will offer exploratory experiences in a variety of careers.

The Association believes that teachers should be provided professional development experiences and released

time for curriculum development in career education.

The Association urges its affiliates to work cooperatively with business and industry agencies in the development of career education programs. (96,02,17)

III-22 Interactive Distance Learning

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

The Association also believes that courses offered by public schools utilizing live interactive distance learning should be developed and must be instructed by a certified teacher. Receiving sites must have a qualified education employee responsible for classroom management. Training for instructing in interactive distance learning environments is essential.

The Association further believes that class size should be determined by combining the number of students in participating classes at all sites. Class size should conform to district policy of the instructing teacher and should not exceed the limits set by state statute.

The Association also believes that students who take distance education courses should receive the preparation and support necessary to enable them to function effectively in an online environment, which at a minimum should include—

- A. appropriate equipment, technical support, libraries, and laboratories
- B. appropriate services for elementary/secondary students, including on-site education employees to monitor student performance and act as a liaison

to the distance education instructor

- C. accurate course descriptions and clear expectations prior to enrollment
- D. reasonable student to instructor ratios that allow for individualized interaction with instructors
- E. opportunities for appropriate student-to-student interaction
- F. courses that are as rigorous as similar courses delivered by more traditional means
- G. courses that meet accreditation standards.

In addition, the Association believes that interactive distance learning should not be used as a way to reduce the number of teachers employed by individual school districts. (98,02,17)

III-23 Technology in the Educational Process

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

The Association also believes that—

- A. educators in such schools be involved in the initial planning, introduction, and use of such technology;
- B. educators monitor changes in content and format of instruction curriculum coordination;
- C. educators be involved in the decision making as related to changes in the work load and

the responsibilities of educators as a result of the introduction of such technology;

- D. educators be involved in designing appropriate research, graduated integration, and professional development activities related to all aspects of any new instructional technology;
- E. educators be provided with adequate professional development activities that provide training, encouragement, time, and resources to experiment with and to research applications of technology in order to integrate technology into all curricula as a regular part of the instructional day.
- F. continual evaluation of the services by educators to determine its effectiveness and continued application.

(84,02,03,17)

III-24 Public Television

The Oklahoma Education Association believes in the development of audiovisual materials and media for educational purposes. The Association, therefore, encourages its membership to be involved in supporting the efforts, programs and fundraising activities of public radio and television.

(02,17)

III-25 Sex Education

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that, to facilitate the realization of human potential, it is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information about sexuality. The

Association recognizes that sex education can be a positive force in promoting physical, mental, and social health and that the public school must assume an increasingly prominent role in providing this instruction.

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

The Association urges its local affiliates to work cooperatively with their districts in developing, implementing, and updating comprehensive sex education programs which should include, but not be limited to, information on family planning, incest, sexual abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and problems resulting from pre-teen and teenage pregnancies. (02,17)

III-26 Health Education

The Oklahoma Education Association supports the goals and objectives of the National Association of School Nurses, an affiliate of the National Education Association, about issues.

The Association further urges local affiliates to assist in implementing a curriculum which will enable students to make intelligent decisions about personal health. (17)

III-27 Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps programs in the public schools must meet all local and state educational standards and policies, including the

employment of fully certified teaching personnel. Such programs shall be subject to and conform to the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement. Any programs that currently do not meet said conditions should be brought into compliance. (98,17)

III-28 HIV/AIDS Education

The Oklahoma Education Association recommends that educational institutions implement, improve, and update comprehensive age appropriate HIV/AIDS education programs.

The Association also believes that proper implementation of these programs requires education employee training and input. These programs should be presented by properly licensed/trained personnel and should be planned with the input of parents/guardians and other stakeholders. (89,94,02,17)

III-29 Environmental Education

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that the environment must be protected and recognizes the importance of environmental education as a means of conserving our natural resources and preserving an optimum, environmental quality for the future. The Association further acknowledges the responsibility educators have in developing student skills that promote wise and informed decision making.

The Association supports programs that will promote environmental awareness, develop intelligent decision-making processes, foster environmental stewardship, and ensure an optimum, environmental quality for future generations. (92,17)

III-30 Conversion to the Metric System

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that a carefully planned effort to adapt to the International System of Units, “SI Metric System,” is essential to the future of American industrial and technological development.

The Association urges that the SI system be taught at all education levels.

III-31 Exchange Programs

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that education benefits when teachers and students participate in exchange programs that expose participants to various cultural, linguistic, educational, and geographic environments.

The Association encourages its affiliates to cooperate with governing boards to develop voluntary teacher and student exchange programs, within and among states, with schools under the direction of U.S. federal agencies and with schools of foreign countries. (85,02,17)

III-32 Community Education

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that community education encourages schools to provide leadership in solving community problems. The Association believes in community education that:

- A. encourages expanded utilization of school facilities by total community;
- B. encompasses and strengthens adult, vocational, and technical education programs;
- C. increases awareness and heightens public

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- responsiveness to the education system;
 - D. promotes interagency and interpersonal cooperation;
 - E. creates a better learning environment for the community.

The Association urges its local affiliates to become involved in the promotion, expansion, and implementation of such programs in their areas. (02,17)

III-33 Science Education

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that the content in science education must be based on empirical evidence derived from scientific inquiry. The Association also believes that the content and curriculum must be based on the Next Generation Science Standards of the National Research Council (NRC) and/or the Benchmarks for Science Literacy of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). (13,18)

III-34 Vaccinations

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that vaccines are essential medical tools in preventing infectious diseases. The Association acknowledges that vaccines must be pervasive to be effective.

The Association also believes that parents/guardians should follow vaccination guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Association further believes that the state legislature should establish clear guidelines for waivers that minimize the numbers of unvaccinated students to those necessary due to documented medical conditions.

Evidenced-based vaccination campaigns are integral in maintaining student and community health. (17)

III-35 Communicable Disease Prevention

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that, for all employees, school districts and educational institutions, working in collaboration with school nurses and local health authorities, should initiate professional development about communicable diseases and their prevention. This information should be disseminated to all stakeholders by the school district. (17)

III-36 Communication Using Social Media and Technology

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that guidelines for the use of social media and technology for communications related to school activities should be collaboratively developed by school employees and employers. Communication between education employees and parents/students should be limited to district-sanctioned means of communication. Such guidelines should promote professionalism, safety, respect for privacy, intellectual integrity, and a positive learning environment. (17)

III-37 Student Use of Electronic Social Media

The Oklahoma Education Association recognizes the popularity and accessibility of electronic social media, including personal websites, blogs, text messages and social networking sites. The Association believes that students should be informed of the possible dangers of posting personal information

electronically. Students should be encouraged to report incidents of cyberbullying and other inappropriate communications received using electronic social media. (17)

III-38 Charter Schools

The Oklahoma Education Association supports innovation in public education. The Association believes that acceptable charter schools and other nontraditional public school options, which comply with Association criteria, including, but not limited to, collective bargaining efforts and the full participation of the association, can provide educational alternatives for students.

The Association also believes that, when concepts such as charter schools and other nontraditional school options are proposed, affected public education employees should be directly involved in the design, implementation, and governance of these programs.

The Association further believes that plans should not negatively impact the regular public school program and must include adequate safeguards covering contract and employment provisions for all employees, voluntary participation, health and safety standards for all students and employees, nondiscrimination and equal educational opportunity, staffing by licensed education professionals, and financial responsibility.

The Association believes that programs must be adequately funded, must comply with all standards for academic assessment applicable to regular public schools, must include start-up resources, must not divert current funds from the regular public school programs, and must contain appropriate procedures for regular

periodic assessment and evaluation, as well as adequate attendance and record keeping procedures. (18)

III-39 Physical Education

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that physical activity and exercise are essential for good health and must be encouraged during the developmental years of students. The Association also believes that a comprehensive program of physical education should be provided for a minimum of 30 minutes of physical education daily in grades pre-K through adult in or on facilities designed for that purpose.

The Association believes that physical education programs and curricula should follow national and state standards as set forth by the appropriate professional organizations; should be developmentally appropriate, sequential, cooperative in nature, and culturally and gender sensitive. (18)

<p>GOAL AREA IV: ADEQUATE FINANCING FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION</p>

IV-1 Support of Public Education

The OEA believes that the local, state, and federal governments share a responsibility in supporting public education. The OEA also believes that the Governor and the Oklahoma Legislature have a responsibility to make education a top priority and to honor their funding commitment by having the amount of aid generally predictable for long range planning and specifically predictable for year to year planning.

The OEA believes that all students deserve the benefits from a program of quality instruction provided by adequate, properly maintained facilities, sufficient equipment, safe transportation, ample materials and qualified teachers. The OEA further believes that the state government must ensure for students a quality education by providing the funding needed to enable all students to achieve educational excellence. (89,02,16)

IV-2 Tax Reform

The OEA supports tax reform at the local, state, and national levels. The OEA believes tax reform must be designed to:

- A. prevent opportunistic exploitation of any inflationary situation or loss of general revenue;
- B. increase tax fairness and raise revenue necessary to finance public education and public services;
- C. reflect the finding of comprehensive studies of the total individual and corporate tax burden;
- D. assure a tax burden distribution that reflects the ability to pay and that safeguards family subsistence;
- E. assure that statewide uniformity in property tax effort be mandated.
- F. provide funding for public education that ensures adequacy and equity of resources.

The OEA opposes any move to lower the ratio applied to the valuation of public service property. (86,90,02,16)

IV-3 Diversion of Public School Monies

The OEA believes that voucher plans, tuition tax credits, or any funding formulas under which Pre-K through 12 non-public education is subsidized by tax monies undermine public education, reduce support needed to adequately fund public education, and have the potential for racial, economic, and social segregation of children. Therefore, the Association opposes all attempts to establish and/or implement such plans.

The OEA believes its local Associations must inform educators and the public about any legislation that would utilize public dollars for non-public education and to work to defeat such measures. (84,93,97,16)

IV-4 Privatization of Public Schools

The OEA opposes the privatization of public schools and believes that state and local governments must provide their respective school systems with the necessary financial, legal, and technical assistance to prevent attempts by private corporations and/or individuals to establish privately controlled public schools. (93,01,02)

IV-5 Mandated Legislative Programs

The OEA believes that legislatively mandated programs must be fully funded by the mandating body. The OEA further believes that when these programs are no longer fully funded, they should no longer be mandated. (93)

IV-6 Extracurricular Funding

The OEA believes that every public school student must have an opportunity to participate in school sanctioned and funded extracurricular

programs, provided students meet the established academic criteria for eligibility in the student's school district.

The OEA believes that the necessary funds for transportation, facilities, equipment, and remuneration of staff be provided for all school-sanctioned extracurricular activities. The OEA further believes that extracurricular fundraising should not be used as a substitute for district funding of school-sanctioned, extracurricular activities. (84,97,98,02,16)

IV-7 Public School Buildings

The OEA believes that public school buildings which are closed should be sold or leased only to those organizations that are not in direct competition with public schools. (16)

IV-8 Aid to Impacted Areas

The OEA believes that school districts impacted by federal activities and installations must receive the federal funding necessary to maintain a quality education for their students. The OEA opposes the phasing out of any federal aid to impacted school districts and urges the federal government to honor its original financial commitment to these school districts.

The OEA believes the federal government must develop a long-range solution to the financial problems of impacted school districts. (02,16)

GOAL AREA V: AN INDEPENDENT UNITED EDUCATION PROFESSION

V-1 Merger

The OEA believes that any merger on the local or state level should follow specific guidelines as developed by the NEA in order to ensure a national consistency and compliance with the existing philosophy. (99,03,16)

V-2 Supporting Locals in Jeopardy

The OEA believes in providing assistance to affiliates that have been targeted for take-over and/or elimination efforts. The OEA also believes that its affiliates should initiate and support programs that strengthen and enhance the local organizational structure and promote membership growth. The OEA further believes that continuous communications and cooperation of local, state, and national bodies are keys to the success of the local affiliates in building solid professional organizations. (87,03,16)

V-3 Program Specialists/OEA Member Ratio

The OEA is a service organization with the understanding that Program Specialists are the delivery system for those services. The OEA reaffirms the goal to provide a Program Specialist/OEA member ratio consistent with the NEA recommendation. (03)

V-4 Career Type Programs - Student Training Organizations for Future Teachers

The OEA believes its affiliates should promote and support organizations of high school and/or

college students interested in the professional field of education.

The OEA also urges its members to serve as advisors to these organizations. (83,03,16)

GOAL AREA VI: ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF EDUCATION FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS

VI-1 Understanding and Support of Public Education

The Oklahoma Education Association recognizes its responsibility to promote understanding and support of public education and educators. Further, the Association encourages community and parental participation in achieving and maintaining educational excellence.

The Association also recognizes American Education Week as an important positive observance to focus attention on the contributions of public education and education employees. (95,98,18)

VI-2 Community Involvement

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that an engaged community is vital to the future of public education. The Association also believes that a collaborative partnership must be formed among stakeholders to address the interests of the community and to promote success. (18)

VI-3 Volunteers in Public Schools

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that parents and community volunteers play a vital role in preserving quality educational programs in public schools. Volunteers must meet

local school board regulations and state statutes. Training for volunteers should include age appropriate activities and sensitivity to diverse learning environments.

The Association supports the use of volunteers without compromising the number of full or part-time instructional positions, the number of full or part-time education support professionals or instructional budgets.

The Association also believes that educators and education support professionals are vital in the decision-making process to determine the use of volunteers. (99,03,18)

VI-4 Instructional Excellence

The Oklahoma Education Association believes in continuously improving the education process. The Association encourages professional development activities by the state and its local affiliates to assist in this process. The Association encourages local affiliates to collaborate in the process of researching, developing, and implementing instructional methods, materials, and professional development. The Association also believes that instructional methods and materials must be accessible to all learners. (94,98,03,18)

VI-5 Academic Freedom

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that academic and professional freedoms are essential to the teaching profession and that controversial issues should be a part of instructional programs when judgment of the professional staff member deems the issue appropriate to the curriculum and to the maturity level of the student.

Academic freedom is the right of educators and learners to explore,

present, and discuss divergent points of view in the quest for knowledge and truth. Professional freedom includes the educator's right to evaluate, to criticize, and to advocate personal points of view concerning topics of discussion.

The Association further believes that quality teaching depends on the freedom to select materials and techniques without censorship or legislative interference. Challenges on the choice of instructional materials and techniques must be orderly and objective under procedures mutually adopted by local associations and school boards. Affiliates must assist colleagues when their academic or professional freedoms are violated. (86,98,03,18)

VI-6 Mandated Programs

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that any state standards should describe clear expectations for what students should know and be able to demonstrate.

The Association supports legislation that require local school boards to provide competently trained professionals to qualify current personnel in any legislatively mandated program. Further, when a federal, state, or district mandate requires a teacher to receive training, it is the responsibility of the mandating agency to provide released time for training, to compensate the teacher at the teacher's hourly rate of pay, and to provide for the cost of tuition, textbooks, and travel. (03,18)

VI-7 Academic Success

The Oklahoma Education Association believes each student should be encouraged to complete an appropriate academic program and urges all stakeholders to set the successful

completion of an academic program as the first priority for all students.

The Association urges local school districts to establish uniform standards for student participation in extra-curricular activities. (85,87,03,18)

VI-8 School Counseling Services

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

The Association further believes that guidance and counseling services should be provided through a counselor/student ratio that best supports students in realizing their full potential in all areas of growth and achievement. (18)

VI-9 Student Records

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that individual students school records for all students in Oklahoma schools must show fairly and accurately the programs, exact course titles and academic levels of achievement. The Association supports the elimination of statutes which prohibit the recording of this information. (85,03,18)

VI-10 Placement of Students with Disabilities

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

students with disabilities based on individual needs instead of availability. (18)

VI-11 Optimizing Students' Time to Learn

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

The Association further believes that while work experiences enhance a student's learning, excessive or unusual working hours are detrimental to a student's attention span, academic success, and learning. The child labor laws, as structured by the Fair Labor Standards Act, must be monitored, enforced, and strengthened by local, state, and national governing bodies. (18)

VI-12 Early Childhood Education

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that education begins at birth and supports early childhood education.

The Association believes that all early childhood education providers must have adequate facilities, proper supervision, developmentally appropriate programs, and qualified, screened, and trained personnel and that they should be licensed and monitored by the state on a continuous basis in order to maintain an optimum educational environment. (93,03,18)

VI-13 Early Childhood Screening

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that all children can learn and deserve the right to learn in a developmentally appropriate manner.

The Association further believes that developmentally appropriate screening instruments can provide valuable information in making placement or special service decisions.

The Association recommends that early childhood screening instruments be developmentally appropriate and considered as a factor in determining placement of students in the early childhood program. (00,03,18)

VI-14 Educational Programs for English Language Learners

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that English Language Learner (ELL) students must have available to them programs that address their unique needs and that provide equal opportunity to all students regardless of their primary language.

The Association believes that these programs should emphasize, as a primary goal, a functional level of English proficiency in school and society for these ELL students.

The Association also believes that federal and state legislation must provide funds to develop such programs, including those for teacher preparation. (03,18)

VI-15 Education for the Children of Migrant Workers

The Oklahoma Education Association encourages local school districts to work within their local community to ensure that all children of migrant workers have access to public schools.

The Association supports legislation that ensures the necessary funding to provide equal educational opportunities for migrant children. (03,18)

VI-16 Education for Children Who Are Homeless

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

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

The Association recognizes the necessity for cooperation between school and community groups in meeting the needs of children who are homeless. (03,18)

VI-17 Homebound Instruction

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that public schools must meet the diverse educational needs of all students. Homebound students must have programs developed and maintained by state or local education entities. These programs must be implemented, documented, and monitored by licensed education professionals. The curriculum must be approved by the state education agency and be comparable to the classroom instruction. Such approved courses must be transferable as graduation requirements for the participants. (89,18)

VI-18 Discriminatory Academic Tracking

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that the use of discriminatory academic tracking of any kind must be eliminated in all public school settings. The Association urges its local affiliates to oppose these practices. (89,98)

VI-19 Home Schooling

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that home

schooling programs cannot provide the child with a comprehensive educational experience.

The Association believes that if parental preference home schooling occurs, students enrolled must meet all state requirements. Instruction should be by persons licensed by the state education licensure agency. The curriculum and a system for monitoring the academic progress of those students participating in home schooling programs must be approved by the State Department of Education.

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

The Association further believes that such home schooling programs should be limited to the children of the immediate family, with all expenses being borne by the parents. (95,03,18)

VI-20 Student Retention

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that students should be placed at the appropriate grade level based on academic, social, and emotional criteria established by the local school district. The Association believes that an education program should provide for continuous progress of students.

The Association recommends that “red shirting” for athletic retention in the public schools be prohibited and that students be retained only for unsatisfactory achievement of appropriate academic, social, and emotional standards.

The Association believes that students should be promoted after

mastering established standards and providing alternative programs to help all students to learn.

The Association believes that decisions on retention or promotion of a student must include the teacher, the administration, and the parent/guardian. The teacher shall be held harmless. (98,03,18)

VI-21 Exploitation of Students

The Oklahoma Education Association urges and all educational institutions to accept their educational responsibilities in preventing exploitation of students for economic and/or personal gain. (85,92,03,18)

VI-22 Health of Children

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

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

The Association further believes legislation should be adopted to maintain and expand comprehensive health care for all children. (18)

VI-23 Child Abuse

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that all children must be protected from child abuse and that educators and education support personnel have a moral and legal obligation to report any abuse.

The Association supports the strengthening and enforcement of child abuse laws. (86,95,03,18)

VI-24 Prevention of Child Abduction

The OEA believes that all children should be protected from abduction and its consequences. School districts should have policies and procedures for the prevention of abduction.

The Association also believes that the voluntary fingerprinting of children by law enforcement professionals should be conducted in a nonthreatening environment and that completed fingerprint cards should be given to the parent/guardian. (18)

VI-25 Missing Children

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that all available means must be utilized to locate missing children. The Association also believes that local and state affiliates should work cooperatively with local programs and/or authorities to raise the public's consciousness about the missing-children crisis. (18)

VI-26 Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that school districts must meet the needs of pregnant adolescents and adolescent parents. The Association believes that adolescent parents must have equal educational opportunities.

The Association believes that pregnant adolescents and adolescent parents must have every opportunity to complete their education through the assistance of programs, policies, and services that accommodate the diverse needs of these students. (03,18)

VI-27 Student Stress and Anger

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that increasing mental, emotional, and environmental pressures can significantly impact students' health and success, resulting in drug and alcohol abuse, violence, vandalism, school dropouts, self-injuring behaviors, and suicide among children and youth.

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

The Association further believes that schools must work collaboratively with the community, local, state, and national agencies to ensure that these children and young adults receive comprehensive interventions and services that support their physical and psychological well-being, and that these interventions and services should be made available to all children and young adults beginning at Pre-K.

The Association also believes that the exploitation of youth in media creates undue peer pressure and stress to conform to a projected ideal. The Association, therefore, urges the media and its advertisers to exercise care in the manner youth are portrayed and in the subtlety of messages delivered in advertisements. (85,93,03,18)

VI-28 Illegal/Controlled Substances

The Oklahoma Education Association supports efforts that improve drug prevention and rehabilitation programs to address drug,

tobacco, and alcohol abuse among students.

The Association encourages the development of educational programs that alert students and parents to the hazards and consequences of the use of these substances and calls for strengthening school policies prohibiting the possession and use of these substances.

The Association supports the enforcement of laws governing the sale or furnishing of alcoholic beverages and tobacco products to minors.

The Association opposes the use of illegal drugs and supports laws that render severe penalties for their production, distribution, and sale. (87,91,92,03,18)

VI-29 Reduction of Gang-Related Crime

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

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

The Association also believes that federal, state, and local governments, including but not limited to business and law enforcement agencies, should collaborate with local school districts to develop and implement education and youth

employment programs in helping to reduce illegal activities by gangs. (89,95,03,18)

VI-30 Juvenile Offender Education

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

The Association further believes that these children, while in this environment, should be provided with educational programs that will enable them to become contributing members of society. Youthful offenders currently receiving service in community-based treatment facilities should be provided education in alternative settings.

VI-31 Education for Persons Incarcerated

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that it is the right of all incarcerated persons to have access to educational programs through the correctional system. (18)

GOAL AREA VII: HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS
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VII-1 Promote and Protect Human and Civil Rights

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that improved human relations are essential to the school and community environment. The Association urges the elimination of discriminatory statutes and practices that limit the rights of the individual. (85,93,95,98,18)

VII-2 Disabilities Awareness

The Oklahoma Education Association believes in protecting the human and civil rights of students, staff, and community members with disabilities. The Association encourages its affiliates to educate the school and community about disability issues. (00,03,18)

VII-3 English as the Official Language

The Oklahoma Education Association recognizes the importance of an individual's primary language. The Association believes in promoting and preserving primary languages through instruction, public service, and all other forms of communication.

The Association further believes that English is the language of political, social, and economic communication in the United States. The efforts to establish English as the official language deprives non-English language speakers access to education, social services, and employment. (89,18)

VII-4 Historic Preservation

The Oklahoma Education Association believes in the preservation of historically significant lands, structures and cultures for the purpose of education. (89,18)

VII-5 Drug and Alcohol Screening

The OEA opposes mandatory mass screening procedures, which intrude upon personal and civil liberties.

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that drug and alcohol testing of employees and job applicants without probable cause is an unwarranted and unconstitutional invasion of privacy.

The Association urges its affiliates to develop guidelines that protect employee rights. (91,03,18)

VII-6 School Safety

The OEA believes that schools and school activities are environments for learning free from any form of violence, hatred, or persecution.

The Association urges its affiliates to develop guidelines that create safe learning environments. (00,07,13,18)

VII-7 Health and Employment

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that education employees shall not be subjected to any adverse employment action due to a medical condition. (94,18)

VII-8 Extremist Groups

The Oklahoma Education Association believes that education is the means to counteract the philosophies and practices of extremist groups. The Association urges its affiliates and members to actively oppose any movements by extremist groups. (85,18)