



LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

A Publication of the
IEA Government Relations Department
and the
Illinois Political Action Committee
for Education

2011-2012

IEA LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

A publication

of the

Illinois Education Association-NEA

and the

Illinois Political Action Committee for Education

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2011-2012 IEA LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Approved by IEA Representative Assembly, March 12, 2011

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

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

- 8 1. Employee Rights (line 16)
- 9 2. Retirement Benefits (line 342)
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LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

of the

Illinois Education Association-NEA

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

Education Employee Rights and Protections

Introduction

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

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

Maintain Existing Rights

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

Waivers/Modifications of State Mandates

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

- 1. Collective Bargaining
- 2. Tenure

- 42 3. Seniority
- 43 4. Certification
- 44 5. Special Education
- 45 6. Staff and Program Reductions.

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

50 **Replacement Personnel**

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

52 **Part-time Faculty and Staff**

53 The Association supports legislation to allow part-time faculty and staff at higher education
54 institutions to organize for purposes of collective bargaining. All rights and privileges
55 afforded to full-time faculty and staff should also be provided for part-time faculty and staff on a
56 proportional basis.

57 **Political Rights**

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

62 **Site-based Programs**

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

66 **Civil Rights**

67 The guarantee of protection of the health, safety, civil liberties, and property of education employees
68 is a basic right of all in the provision of public education. To this end, the Association shall seek
69 legislation to prevent the abrogation of these rights. Fingerprinting of school employees is
70 acceptable only for the purpose of a pre-employment or pre-licensure check for criminal records that
71 are pertinent to education employment. Fingerprinting must not be a condition of continued
72 employment or continuing certification. Costs of fingerprinting shall be the sole responsibility of the
73 employer or licensing agency. Further, all replacement personnel who work during a strike must

74 meet the same standards of employment as other employees.

75 **Safe Learning Environment**

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

- 78 • Initiatives to combat and to eliminate bullying, intimidation, violence, weapons, sexual
79 harassment, drugs, and gang activity in schools, on all school property, and at school
80 events;
- 81 • the establishment and implementation of a well-publicized, strictly and uniformly
82 enforced discipline code to provide an orderly learning environment in each school
83 district. This code must be established and implemented by education personnel
84 and parents from the district;
- 85 • appropriate procedures to assure the safety of education personnel making visits to
86 students' homes;
- 87 • the establishment and implementation of well-publicized, strictly and uniformly
88 enforced transportation safety procedures in each school district's disciplinary code.
89 These procedures must be established and implemented by education personnel and
90 parents from the district;
- 91 • immediate removal from the classroom of violent and/or disruptive students, both
92 general and exceptional, and placement of those students in an alternative and/or
93 modified public school setting, supervised by specially-trained staff, and removal from
94 the classroom of any students undergoing the process of expulsion from school
95 unless such exceptional student is under a stay put provision;
- 96 • a ban on the sale to the public of military and auto loading firearms with a capacity of
97 firing 10 rounds or more from a single clip. In addition, the Association supports
98 legislation to ban the manufacture and sale of look-alike guns;
- 99 • significant penalties for criminal actions involving the use of guns or other weapons;
- 100 • restrictions, including a mandatory waiting period to allow background checks for
101 felony convictions or mental illness, on the manufacture, distribution, and/or sale of
102 handguns in order to assure a safer school environment;
- 103 • a strict enforcement of truancy related laws and procedures;
- 104 • protection for all education employees and students regarding the use and/or abuse
105 of communication technology, including but not limited to email, cell phones,
106 video/audio recording devices and the internet;
- 107 • development and maintenance of a system operated at the state level for education

108 employee professionals to report alleged violations of federal and state rules and
109 regulations and designed to protect education employee professionals from retaliation
110 and adverse working conditions as a result of this reporting of alleged violations;
111 • prohibition on the use of schools as polling places when students are in attendance;
112 • workplaces free from intimidation by administrators.

113 Further, the Association supports changes to Illinois insurance law which will waive the mandated 3-day
114 waiting period under workers compensation for any school employee needing medical attention due to
115 injury which may be work related.

116 **Education Employee Welfare**

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

120 **School Dissolution or Reconfiguration**

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

123 **Instruction and Professional Development**

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

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

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

130 **Department of Children and Family Services**

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

135 **Green Schools**

136 The Association supports legislation that requires and provides funding for school
137 construction and remodeling of existing buildings based on a “green schools” concept. This
138 includes, but is not limited to, methods and processes that make creative use of recycled or
139 renewable materials, conserve water, use abundant daylight, and are energy efficient. The

140 Association also promotes solar or other renewable energy sources, non-toxic building
141 materials, and environmentally safe cleaning products.

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

145 **School Environmental Standards**

146 To guarantee the protection of all education employees, the Association will seek to ensure that
147 education facilities are safe from all environmental and chemical hazards. Education employees
148 have the right to be promptly notified of, and protected from effects of “sick buildings.” In addition, air
149 quality, protection from outside and inside noise interference, and temperature regulation must be in
150 accordance with state and federal standards.

151 **Transfer Policies**

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

155 **Health Care Coverage**

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

- 161 • achieve the efficient purchase of comprehensive health care insurance benefits for
162 our members while simultaneously increasing salary levels;
- 163 • resist any diminution of our members’ collective bargaining rights, including the right
164 to participate in the administration of the local’s health insurance benefits program;
- 165 • maintain comprehensive, affordable, and reliable health care insurance benefits for
166 certified retirees;
- 167 • establish comprehensive, affordable, and reliable health care insurance benefits for
168 non-certified retirees;
- 169 • establish prudent governmental oversight and regulations over self-funded
170 insurance operations which provide benefits to our members; and/or
171 • support the continuation of any local school district health insurance operation in the

172 provision of comprehensive benefits to its own active and retired employees.

173 *Due Process Rights*

174 **Introduction**

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

179 **Teacher Tenure**

180 The Association supports tenure at all educational levels, including Pre-K through 12, community
181 colleges, and universities. Tenure has contributed substantially to the maintenance of
182 education excellence in Illinois above those states which afford no orderly dismissal process. The
183 Association supports the previous state statute, which provided tenure after two years for
184 veteran teachers and after two or three years for new teachers. In the event that tenure is not
185 granted, teachers should be provided with written reasons for denial. If the probationary period for
186 obtaining tenure remains at four years, for probationary teachers up to two years of progress toward
187 tenure should be portable to another school district. In addition, the probationary period for tenured
188 teachers transferring to another school district should be two years. A non-tenured teacher
189 returning from family/maternity leave to his/her same district shall not forfeit accumulated
190 time earned toward acquiring tenure. All procedures and notification timelines for non-
191 renewal should include written, substantiated reason(s). If the reason for non-renewal is
192 remediable and prior to the non-renewal, a school district should be required to inform the teacher
193 (and, where appropriate, that teacher's mentor) of the concern, identify what modifications are
194 required to remedy the concern, provide an adequate period in which to remedy the concern, and
195 regularly monitor the progress of the remediation plan so as to advise the teacher (and mentor) of its
196 status.

197 **Rights for All Education Employees**

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

204 **Portability of Sick Leave**

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

207 **Sick Leave for Purposes of Adoption**

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

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

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

215 *Education Staffing*

216 **Introduction**

217 Because of changing pupil population patterns and budgetary restraints, school districts and
218 higher education institutions are reorganizing both the certificated and non-certificated staff.
219 This reorganization has created abuses in the assignment of paraprofessionals and/or the
220 assignment of part-time faculty to fill full-time teaching positions. The Association shall pursue the right
221 of due process for full-time personnel who have been reduced to part-time status and shall explore other
222 legislative remedies to prohibit abuses, along with advocating that all full-time equivalent positions be
223 filled by full-time or job-shared personnel. The Association supports the hiring of appropriately
224 certified staff for all positions that require certification.

225 **Higher Education Courses**

226 Community college or university courses available to high school students should not be used to
227 reduce K-12 staff. K-12 staff should not be hired part-time to replace community college or
228 university staff.

229 **Unemployment Benefits for Contingent Academic Workers**

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

233 **Local Education Agencies**

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

235 **Career and Technical Education Programs**

236 While recognizing the merits of establishing and aggressively recruiting for cooperative career
237 and technical education programs with private business, the Association supports the present
238 certification procedures for instructors in such programs.

239 **Subcontracting**

240 The Association opposes the subcontracting of services provided by all education employees
241 (pre-K, K-12 and higher education). The Association supports direct and complete cost
242 comparisons between current services and any proposed outsourcing. The Association
243 opposes any reimbursement structures which provide a financial incentive to a district to
244 outsource services.

245 **School Bus Drivers and Vehicles**

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

249 **Qualified Health Care Professionals**

250 The Association supports having only Type 73 certified school nurses or qualified RNs/LPNs working
251 under the direct guidance of a certified school nurse to administer medication and provide health care
252 and/or medical procedures to students.

253 All education employees should be protected from civil liability regarding administration of
254 medication.

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

260 Furthermore, the Association supports training during institute days that will cover how school
261 districts want to respond to children with medical emergencies. Such training should be
262 provided by certified school nurses.

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

266 The Association supports legislation that reflects appropriate students-to-nurse ratios as established by
267 Healthy People 2010 and the National Association of School Nurses.

268 **Special Education and Related Services Professionals**

269 Special Education services, including those listed under “related services” on a student’s
270 Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan such as, but not limited to, speech/language therapy,
271 occupational therapy, physical therapy, and school nursing, etc. should be provided by properly
272 certificated/licensed staff employed by the school district, co-operative, joint agreement or other
273 education entity.

274 *Employee Compensation*

275 **Introduction**

276 In order to attract and retain education employees, the Association urges significantly increased
277 statewide salaries and wages, salary increments, and fringe benefit levels for all education employees.
278 This compensation should be per diem according to their experience, education attainment, and
279 responsibility, regardless of the type and/or location of education institution or the gender of the
280 employee. At a minimum, the Association supports a \$40,000 starting salary for all pre-K-12
281 teachers.

282 **ESP Benefits**

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

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

290 The Association supports ESPs’ eligibility for unemployment compensation benefits.

291 **Arbitrary and Capricious Manipulation**

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

296 **School Calendar**

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

300 **Self-funded Insurance Programs**

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

303 **Tax Sheltered Annuity Deductions**

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

306 **Enhanced Compensation Programs**

307 The Association is categorically opposed to any state mandated compensation systems that would
308 require the use of student performance data and/or employee evaluation data. Furthermore, the
309 Association is opposed to additional pay for shortage areas (such as math and science) and/or “hard
310 to staff” schools unless bargained with the appropriate employee organization. The Association also
311 opposes school funding programs that provide incentives or tie increased funding to compensation
312 programs that include the use of standardized test scores or are based solely on employee
313 evaluation data. The Association may support enhanced compensation provided the following
314 occurs:

- 315 1. The compensation must be in addition to competitive salaries;
- 316 2. The opportunity for career development for all employees will be provided;
- 317 3. The program shall be developed and bargained with the appropriate employee
318 organization(s) and provide for local adaptation and implementation that clearly
319 delineates responsibilities;
- 320 4. The program shall be designed to promote cooperation, equity, and harmony in the
321 workplace;
- 322 5. The selection process shall be free from arbitrary or capricious political whim;
- 323 6. The program shall include appropriate peer assistance and peer review;
- 324 7. The program shall provide the necessary resources;
- 325 8. The program shall be evaluated using a wide range of assessments which
326 may include measures of student learning.

327 **Standards and Benefits**

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

332 **Equal Rights**

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

336 **Anti-Discrimination**

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

342 **RETIREMENT BENEFITS**

343 *Retirement Systems*

344 **Retirement Funding**

345 The Association believes that governing bodies of education systems and the state must accept
346 their respective obligations to bring the Illinois Teachers' Retirement System, the State
347 Universities Retirement System, and the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund to a funding
348 level consistent with actuarial soundness. Additionally, at no time shall the funds of the Systems
349 be subject to borrowing, investment restrictions, or mandates which would infringe on the systems'
350 fiduciary responsibilities. The Association strongly supports legislation which will prevent
351 any default in the State's statutory responsibility to the Systems. Statutorily mandated
352 funding shall not be at the expense of needed benefits but predicated on correcting past under
353 funding on the part of the State of Illinois. The IEA-NEA also opposes any legislation to change the
354 power of our elected trustees to manage our retirement contributions by transferring investment
355 authority from TRS, IMRF, and SURS trust funds to any other state agency, board, or similar body.
356 The Association supports the funding for the state retirement systems by appropriations
357 independent of the state's education budget. Further, the State must continue to pay down
358 the unfunded pension liability at a rate no less than that set forth in the 1995 funding plan.

359 **Pension Obligation Bonds**

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

363 **Maintenance and Improvement of Benefits**

364 The Association opposes any diminution of current locally bargained retirement incentives or
365 any limit on the future ability to bargain such incentives. While the Association does not
366 absolutely oppose any changes to the laws governing retirement benefits, any attempts to
367 decrease retirement benefits should be opposed to the greatest extent practicable. In
368 addition, the Association believes that continued improvement in the benefit structures of the
369 several retirement systems to which its members are participants is absolutely essential. Such
370 benefits should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 371 1. the removal of all consequences of Public Act 94-0004 (6% limitation);
- 372 2. the removal of all consequences of Public Act 96-0889 (two-tier);
- 373 3. service credit for all unused and uncompensated accumulated sick leave from
374 education employers;
- 375 4. credit earned in any state for maternity/paternity, public education service, military
376 service (including pre-teaching military service), and alternate military service
377 through conscientious objector status;
- 378 5. credit for up to five years of private or parochial education service, in any state
379 accredited school, for a person who had at least a bachelor's degree at the
380 time, provided there is no actuarial cost to the appropriate retirement system;
- 381 6. realistic adjustment for inflation;
- 382 7. post-retirement increases based on current pensions for annuitants and
383 survivors;
- 384 8. early-out option and incentive retirement programs;
- 385 9. computing benefits on a flat formula which reduces the number of years of
386 service necessary for members to receive maximum benefits;
- 387 10. the ability to retire after 30 years of service without penalty;
- 388 11. an increase in the maximum benefit;
- 389 12. improved survivor benefit payments;
- 390 13. increase percentage of disability benefit;
- 391 14. opposition to any attempt to implement a defined contribution program for
392 any education employees except if it is optional and offered in combination with

- 393 a defined benefit program;
- 394 15. equity of annuitant health insurance with respect to premiums and benefits
- 395 among the retirement systems of education employees and all other Illinois state
- 396 retirement systems;
- 397 16. service credit, consistent with contractual appointment, in all retirement
- 398 systems for work beginning on the first day of employment;
- 399 17. service credit should be portable between retirement systems without any
- 400 minimum accumulation of service;
- 401 18. maintenance of the number of days allowed for post-retirement education
- 402 employee work at 120 days;
- 403 19. recognition of domestic partners as recipients of spousal benefits;
- 404 20. access to an unlimited choice of tax-sheltered plans;
- 405 21. service credit and retirement contributions must be maintained during times of furlough.

406 **Post-Retirement Pilot Program**

407 In order to address the problem of teacher shortages, the Association supports a pilot program that

408 would allow the hiring of retired teachers. This program should include the following conditions:

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

416 **Retiree Health Benefit Programs**

417 Retiree health benefit programs must ensure improved, immediate, long-term, and state-funded health

418 care, particularly for those not qualified for free Medicare. Illinois Municipal Retirement System

419 annuitants and their dependents must be ensured affordable health care. Affordable health

420 benefits must be available to all TRS, SURS, IMRF education annuitants and their survivors. As a part

421 of the health care benefits program, access to Internal Revenue Service Section 125 plans should

422 be available to all education retirees.

423 **Taxation of Retirement Income**

424 The Association is opposed to any state taxation of retirement income unless all retirement income

425 is subject to the same taxation and the revenue generated from this taxation is directed to the state

426 retirement systems. Additionally, the Association opposes the state using these funds when
427 calculating its annual required pension contribution. The Association would oppose this taxation
428 unless it is on retirement income in excess of the social security wage index.

429 **Governance of Retirement Systems**

430 Retirement systems affecting education employees should be governed by a majority of the
431 active and retired members of those systems. Public school employees elected as trustees
432 of retirement boards should be allowed release time to fulfill their fiduciary obligations as
433 members of those boards.

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

436 When a vacancy occurs on a retirement board, that vacancy should be filled through a
437 statewide election by the corresponding active or retired members of the system. Upon
438 retirement from active service, any trustee elected by the active members to the Board of TRS
439 should be allowed to complete his/her term of office. The state superintendent of education should
440 not have an ex-officio position on the TRS Board of Trustees. The TRS Board shall elect its
441 president from among its board members. No trustee positions shall be designated to a
442 specific interest group through legislation.

443 **Social Security**

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

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

450 **Medicare Participation**

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

453 **SCHOOL FINANCE**

454 *School Funding*

455 **Public Education Funding**

456 The Association reaffirms its commitment to the ideal of a sound and free public education for all. It further

457 affirms its opposition to the encroachment on already inadequate public funds by nonpublic schools. The
458 Association believes that such funding, whether direct or indirect, violates not only Article X, Section 3, of
459 the Illinois Constitution, but the first amendment of the United States Constitution as well. Where public
460 funds are used to benefit nonpublic schools, including home schools, the minimum statutory and
461 regulatory requirements must be the same for those schools as they are for public schools.

462 **Primary Funding Obligation**

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

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

468 **Progressive Taxation**

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

472 **Voucher and Tuition Tax Credit Plans**

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

475 **51% Amendment**

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

478 **Federal Funding**

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

481 **State Funding Plan**

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

489 districts or from one program to subsidize another program.

490 The Association advocates for tax policy legislation that makes Illinois economically
491 competitive by:

- 492 1. treating all income groups fairly;
- 493 2. supporting statewide economic development; and
- 494 3. providing fair education funding.

495 **Funding Priorities**

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

- 498 • General State Aid, including an increase in the poverty grant formula;
- 499 • Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Block Grant;
- 500 • Mandated categorical programs such as special education and transportation; and
- 501 • Early Childhood Block grants.

502 **Funding of Education Mandates**

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

506 **Local Financial Autonomy**

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

508 **State Funded Scholarships/Financial Aid**

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

511 **Community College Funding**

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

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

516 **Incentives for Unit Districts**

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

522 **Capital Outlay and Debt Service**

523 The present program of state support of capital outlay and debt service should be increased
524 realistically to meet school needs. Capital outlay expenditures should be totally separated from
525 current operating expenditures to eliminate the practice of diverting current revenue, inclusive
526 of state aid, from instructional to non-instructional purposes. Schools must be required to meet
527 standards for safety and adequacy.

528 **Tobacco/Lottery/Riverboat Revenues**

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

531 **Limitation of Education Revenues**

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

540 **Special Education Funding**

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

- 542 1. basing the state's Special Education Personnel grant on the cost of special
543 education employees;
- 544 2. increasing local school districts' tax-levying authority for special education.

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

548 **Driver’s Education Funding**

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

551 **School Budgets**

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

- 554 1. Operating Fund
- 555 2. Required Expenditure Fund
- 556 3. Site, Construction, and Capital Improvement Fund.

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

559 **Improved State and Local Tax Systems**

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

- 562 1. a shift toward non-property tax sources;
- 563 2. the equitable replacement of lost local revenues because of the erosion of
564 the property tax base;
- 565 3. providing for reassessment by a state agency when assessment is poorly done
566 by local assessors and charging the local unit for this service;
- 567 4. speeding tax machinery and forwarding tax money to taxing bodies as it is collected,
568 maintaining equality of education opportunity through equitable distribution of
569 state tax dollars to local school districts;
- 570 5. establishing the opportunity for impact fees to compensate local school districts
571 in areas affected by rapid growth;
- 572 6. stopping the practice of local governments which abate or divert corporate taxes
573 as incentives for business, corporate or personal development which otherwise
574 would go to school districts;
- 575 7. strengthening the Comptroller’s ability to collect “uncollected” revenues owed
576 the state; and
- 577 8. establishing a 30-day period to allow citizens to file a petition for local
578 referendum for approval of a proposed tax increment financing (TIF) district. The
579 Association supports permanent and adequate increases in state revenues for education.

580 New revenues generated from these increases should be used to reduce reliance on
581 property taxes as the primary source of funding for education.

582 **School District Consolidation**

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

- 586 1. provide a full range of high quality education and extracurricular programs;
- 587 2. maintain a full complement of professional staff to deliver optimal education
588 services;
- 589 3. meet the program and staff needs of special and vocational students;
- 590 4. maximize community involvement in school governance;
- 591 5. operate on an economically efficient basis;
- 592 6. be supported by a strong local tax base.

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

596 **Administrative Consolidation**

597 In all counties except Cook, a referendum should be held to determine if public school districts wish to
598 be consolidated for administrative functions on a county basis. A school district which crosses
599 county boundaries shall, through district referendum, decide in which county referendum its district
600 shall be a participant. In Cook County, the referendum and the consolidation of administrative
601 services should be held at the township level. A school district which crosses township boundaries
602 shall, through district referendum, decide in which township referendum its district shall be a
603 participant.

604 **PROVISIONS FOR QUALITY EDUCATION**

605 *Education Opportunity*

606 **Introduction**

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

610 **Legislative Mandates**

611 The Association will strive to maintain and enhance all legislated mandates, including those in all

612 areas of special education.

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

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

- 616 • The number that is used to determine the existence of an identified subgroup
617 shall be increased. Further, if students in a subgroup fail to meet AYP but achieve “safe
618 harbor”, the school or district should not be placed “In Status”.
- 619 • Tests selected to assess English Language Learner (ELL) students shall
620 appropriately measure achievement, and shall take into account the language
621 proficiency levels of these students.
- 622 • All special education students who are assessed for ESEA/NCLB purposes will
623 be tested at appropriate educational levels as dictated by their Individual Education Plan
624 (IEP).
- 625 • Test results should be reported to school districts within the same school year that
626 students are tested.
- 627 • Test results should reflect a comparison of each student’s progress from year to
628 year.
- 629 • IEP based assessments for the purpose of complying with ESEA should not consist of
630 cumbersome, unpaid extra work for teachers.

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

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

- 635 • The State Board of Education should conduct a pilot study to determine if there exists a
636 statistical correlation between mobility and truancy of students and their test scores.
- 637 • The State Board of Education shall follow the school district grade level configuration
638 (i.e., elementary pre-K-4, pre-K-5, pre-K-6, pre-K-8; middle school 5-8, 6-8, 7-8, 7-9; high
639 school) when determining requirements for teachers to be Highly Qualified.
- 640 • The State Board of Education shall lobby the United States Department of Education to
641 approve Highly Qualified requirements which would allow special education teachers
642 who have primary responsibility for teaching two or more related core academic subject areas
643 to combine points attributable to those related subjects.
- 644 • Where the current certification system is in conflict with the ESEA definition of “Highly

645 Qualified”, the ISBE shall develop and implement a process to identify and assist education
646 employees who are not considered “Highly Qualified” as defined by ESEA. There should be
647 no cost to the employee to attain this status.

- 648 • The State Board of Education shall assess the validity of the ACT test component as a
649 measurement device, and if necessary, replace the ACT with a more appropriate
650 instrument.

651 **Educational Reforms**

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

658 **Response to Intervention (Rtl)**

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

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

- 668 • extensive and ongoing Professional Development for all education professionals
669 and other stakeholders;
- 670 • allocation of resources in direct proportion to student needs;
- 671 • appropriate resources for educational employees-to effectively implement
672 interventions.

673 Further the Association supports legislation that requires the involvement of education
674 employees in the planning, implementation, documentation and evaluation of Rtl in all school
675 districts.

676 Further the state shall not exceed the requirements of the federal mandate, and if the state cannot provide

677 adequate funding, then the Rtl mandate should be held in abeyance until adequate funds can be
678 provided.

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

681 **Paraeducators**

682 The Association recommends legislation that will establish a licensing/certification process for
683 paraeducators that will differentiate levels of classification based on education training and job roles
684 and responsibilities. The ISBE shall develop and implement a process, at no cost to the
685 paraeducator, to attain "Highly Qualified" status.

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

689 **Certification, Evaluation, and Recertification of Administrators**

690 The Association supports legislation that:

- 691 1. Requires four years of successful teaching experience and achievement of
692 continued contractual service (tenure) prior to administrative certification;
- 693 2. Requires the State Board of Education to maintain and fund a new administrator
694 mentoring program;
- 695 3. Provides continuing professional development for renewal of an administrative
696 certificate;
- 697 4. Requires the State Board of Education to establish a master administrator designation
698 program;
- 699 5. Requires each school district to establish an administrator evaluation plan with Association
700 participation in its development; and
- 701 6. Establishes a task force to review the Illinois Administrators' Academy and recommend
702 revisions to the program.

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

704 The Association supports the input of certified teachers and other stakeholders in the
705 decisions regarding quality curricula, facilities, supplies, programs, and learning conditions
706 which prepare students to succeed in a global society. However, the Association opposes
707 the mandating of a statewide curriculum.

708 **Special Education Services**

709 The Association supports the continuing existence, funding, and use of a complete continuum of services
710 for students and youth with disabilities. Such a continuum includes, but is not limited to:

- 711 1. the general education classroom,
- 712 2. consultation model,
- 713 3. collaboration,
- 714 4. resource pullout,
- 715 5. resource room up to one-half day,
- 716 6. self-contained classroom,
- 717 7. special education public day school,
- 718 8. private school,
- 719 9. homebound instruction/hospital school,
- 720 10. residential placement.

721 The placement of students within this continuum should be made only through multi- disciplinary
722 conferences which include all appropriate staff. Students in special education should be placed in
723 general education classes only if the placement will enhance the education of those students and if
724 the placement is consistent with an appropriate education for all students in the classroom. Service
725 delivery models such as mainstreaming or Regular Education Initiative, and educational philosophies
726 such as inclusion must not be implemented as a cost-saving measure. As students with more
727 extensive needs, including the gifted, are educated in public schools, more funds must be available to
728 provide the services and education personnel necessary to meet their needs. In addition, adequate
729 joint planning time within the school day must be provided in order to meet these needs. All
730 education services provided to a student with disabilities must be provided by appropriately
731 certified/licensed professionals and paraeducators. The Association supports legislation
732 that would require additional staff on buses as required by students' IEPs. The Association
733 opposes any reduction in current special education certification requirements, elimination of special
734 education programs, and overloads in class size/case loads.

735 The Association supports legislation which maintains civil rights protections and the
736 compliance of special education cooperatives and school districts with rules and regulations
737 for the operation and delivery of services for special education at the state and local level,
738 and programs and services which are presently not funded at the local level. The Association
739 supports the Illinois Rules and Regulations for Special Education (2007-2008 and 2008-2009),
740 specifically the retention of language in Administrative Code 226 relating to class size
741 provisions in both general and special education classes, caseload, and other pertinent
742 language which is not currently federally mandated.

743 **Specialized Programs**

744 The Association supports legislation that requires school districts to provide specialized
745 programs, including, but not be limited to, art, physical education, and music, and that appropriately
746 certified specialists be assigned to these areas. Students should not be removed from
747 such programs to participate in tutorial classes deemed necessary in the effort to make AYP.
748 Those specialists assigned to self-contained special education classes shall have approved
749 special education training and certification. Further, all students shall be given an opportunity to
750 explore a variety of elective education experiences without diminishing the quality of
751 existing programs.

752 **English Language Learners (ELL)**

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

756 **Career and Technical Education**

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

761 **Special Education Teachers**

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

767 **Education Opportunity**

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

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

777 **Early Literacy**

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

780 **Libraries**

781 The Association supports legislation to ensure the availability of public libraries and the
782 inclusion of all Illinois residents in a public library district. Further, the Association supports
783 legislation to ensure that certified school librarians staff school libraries.

784 **Programs of Developmental Concerns**

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

789 **Transplant Awareness Education**

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

793 **TB Testing and Other Vaccinations**

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

797 **Classroom Environment**

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

804 **Driver Education**

805 The Association supports legislation that facilitates the use of technology and innovative
806 techniques to deliver safe, efficient and effective learner outcomes for Driver Education. The

807 Association opposes any subcontracting of Driver Education training to any entity that does not
808 meet the same certification requirements placed on school districts.

809 The Association supports legislation that creates state standards for Driver Education
810 modeled after those created by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
811 2009.

812 **Student Health and Wellness**

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

814 The Association also believes that it is important for Pre-K through 12th grade students to experience
815 a daily program of structured physical activity provided by a certified physical education teacher.

816 The Association supports improved mental health services and funding for mental health
817 services for Illinois' students and for Association members and their families.

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

819 **Corporal Punishment**

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

821 **School Buses**

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

826 **Academic Freedom**

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

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

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

833 **Immigration Legislation**

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

837 **Community Involvement**

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

842 **Social Justice**

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

845 **Charter Schools**

846 The Association supports public charter school programs provided the following conditions
847 are met:

- 848 1. They target at-risk students;
- 849 2. They result from grassroots designs of parents, teachers, school employees,
850 and the community seeking to improve education opportunities;
- 851 3. Teachers in such schools must meet the certification requirements as set forth
852 by the State Certification Board;
- 853 4. They require compliance with state-mandated testing, safety, and other pertinent
854 state requirements which regularly assess student performance and well-being;
- 855 5. Each local school board shall grant, for a period of up to 5 years, a leave of absence to
856 those teachers who accept employment with a charter school. At the end of
857 the authorized leave of absence, the teacher must be allowed to return to the
858 school district in a comparable position or be allowed to resign;
- 859 6. The contractual continued service status, seniority, and retirement benefits of a
860 teacher of the district who is granted a leave of absence to accept employment
861 with a charter school shall not be affected by that leave of absence.

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

865 **Partnership Schools**

866 The Association supports public partnership school programs provided the following
867 conditions are met:

- 868 1. They are available to all public schools.
- 869 2. They focus on pupil performance.
- 870 3. They require local decision making by all the major stakeholders through
871 consensus.

- 872 4. They are subject to all federal and state discrimination laws and all health and
873 safety requirements; and
- 874 5. They provide for the opportunity for waivers/modifications from School Code,
875 School Regulations, Board Policies, and the Collective Bargaining
876 Agreement(s), provided the request does not conflict with the governing
877 documents of the Illinois Education Association.

878 **Choice Programs**

879 The Association opposes state-imposed parental option plans (“choice”) in education programs. A
880 local “choice” plan is acceptable only if it has been bargained and promotes equal education
881 opportunities for all students.

882 **Home Schooling**

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

892 **Minimum School Calendar**

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

897 **Early Childhood Education**

898 The Association urges the legislature to establish an early childhood education program beginning at
899 birth. This program shall be provided by appropriately certificated and licensed education
900 employees. The design and structure of early childhood programs should be determined by the
901 developmental needs of the children in those programs. Early childhood programs should provide
902 all children with meaningful education and developmental opportunities based on developmentally
903 appropriate practices. Early childhood programs should be provided with services and funding equal
904 to those provided to children in grades first through eighth.

905 **Mandatory Kindergarten**

906 Kindergarten should be a mandatory program with additional funding provided for school
907 districts offering the option of a full-day program for all kindergarten students. The
908 Association further advocates a realistic mandatory minimum age requirement. Kindergarten
909 attendance should be mandatory before entrance into the first grade for resident students. In
910 addition, school districts should provide a transitional/developmental class for students
911 who have completed preschool but are not ready for kindergarten and also for students
912 who have completed kindergarten but are not ready for first grade. Funding for
913 kindergarten programs should be equal to that provided for children in grades first through
914 eighth.

915 **Programs for Adults**

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

919 **Technology Programs**

920 The State should award technological grants to facilitate the use of technology in instruction.

921 **Distance Learning**

922 Technological advances in areas such as telecommunications should not be used to reduce the
923 number of education personnel. The impact of technology, telecommunications, and distance
924 education on education employees should be subject to local collective bargaining agreements.

925 **Education Cooperatives**

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

928 *Education Assessment*

929 **Student Assessment**

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

933 **Assessment of Students with IEPs**

934 The Association believes that students with individual education plans (IEPs) should participate in
935 assessment programs that are appropriate and applicable to their special education programs, including
936 out of grade level assessment instruments.

937 **Assessment Methods**

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

944 **Statewide Assessment Program**

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

950 **Retention of Students**

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

954 *Professional Standards*

955 **Introduction**

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

959 **Autonomous Certification Board**

960 The Association recommends legislation to assign the responsibility for the approval of teacher
961 training programs, certification and recertification of teachers, and the hearing of complaints of
962 practitioners to an autonomous board composed of certified teachers. This Teacher Certification
963 Board should be entitled to the same exemptions in the Open Meetings Act as other deliberative
964 bodies that deal with confidential matters.

965 **Special Education Certification**

966 The Association recommends a certification program in special education that maintains categorical
967 certification in special education in at least the following areas:

- 968 • Early Childhood,
969 • Blind/Visually Impaired,
970 • Deaf/Hard of Hearing,

- 971 • Speech and Language,
- 972 • Learning Disabilities,
- 973 • Behavior/Emotional Disorders,
- 974 • Mental and Physical Disabilities,
- 975 • Traumatic Brain Injury,
- 976 • Autism.

977 **National Certification Programs**

978 The Association supports the adoption of more rigorous standards in teacher training
979 programs, such as those standards adopted by the National Council for Accreditation of
980 Teacher Education (NCATE) and the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).
981 Furthermore, the Association supports the preservation and enhancement of the legislatively
982 funded incentive program for those teachers pursuing NBPTS certification. In addition, the
983 Association supports the creation of a legislatively funded incentive program for educational
984 professionals in other specialty areas who have attained national certification.

985 **Teacher Education Programs**

986 The Association supports the testing of students in teacher education programs in order to be certified.
987 Individuals who teach courses which count toward high school graduation shall be certificated
988 under Article 21 of the Illinois School Code. The Association also supports the creation of teacher
989 education scholarships to attract students of promise, with emphasis on minority students, to the career of
990 teaching. The Association further supports legislation that would provide reduced tuition for students while
991 student teaching and/or interning in a teacher education program. In addition, the Association recognizes
992 the need to attract to the profession students of both genders. The Association supports
993 legislation to require students in teacher education programs to obtain liability insurance.

994 **Placement of Student Teachers**

995 The Association believes that student teachers should be placed only with tenured teachers
996 who have a standard or advanced (master) teacher certificate.

997 **Teacher Certification**

998 The State's teacher certification system must assure that new teachers have the
999 knowledge and skills to be effective educators. It must provide an induction period and mentoring
1000 for their professional development. Certification requirements must encourage career-
1001 long professional growth, skill development, and learning. To ensure a highly qualified
1002 teacher in every classroom, the association recommends that the Illinois teacher certification
1003 system be maintained and administered by the State Teacher Certification Board and contain the
1004 following levels:

- 1005 1. Initial teaching certification--issued after successful completion of training at
1006 an NCATE accredited college or university. Standards for granting the initial
1007 certificate should be consistent with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment
1008 and Support Consortium's (INTASC) principles.
- 1009 2. Standard teaching certification--granted after a three year induction period.
1010 Certificates, based on standards developed by the Illinois State Teacher
1011 Certification Board, consistent with the National Board for Professional Teaching
1012 Standards' (NBPTS) and INTASC's principles, should be renewable after five years.
1013 The issuance of teacher certification must be separate from the granting of
1014 continued contractual employment. Certification would be granted by the
1015 State Board of Certification, administered by the Illinois State Board of Education,
1016 but reflect local needs, development, and input.
- 1017 3. Advanced certification shall be voluntary, renewable every ten years, and shall provide
1018 opportunities for classroom teachers to become model and mentor teachers, teacher
1019 educators, and instructional and curriculum leaders. It could include, as one option, a
1020 NBPTS certification.

1021 **Teacher Recertification**

1022 The Association supports a fair, reasonable, and workable recertification program for teachers.
1023 When changes are made, enough time must be provided for those changes to be implemented
1024 fairly. Any state recertification program must be maintained and administered by the State
1025 Teacher Certification Board and include:

- 1026 • Reasonable expectations;
- 1027 • Adequate funding;
- 1028 • Teacher control;
- 1029 • Association involvement;
- 1030 • A reduction in paperwork;
- 1031 • Proper training of all involved in the recertification process;
- 1032 • Continued efforts to streamline the recertification process.

1033 **Staff Development**

1034 In order to aid all school personnel in pursuit of professional skill development, the Association supports
1035 increased state funding for staff development and educational scholarships. Additionally, such
1036 professional/staff development should be modeled after the standards developed by the National Staff
1037 Development Council. Such professional skill development must include informal education experience
1038 as well as formal education experience.

1039 **Teacher Evaluation**

1040 The evaluation procedure of teachers must include their input to encourage and promote positive growth in
1041 the teaching profession. Competency testing of teachers is an over-simplification of the pursuit of
1042 education excellence. Teaching is a multi-faceted profession that requires many skills that cannot be
1043 measured by tests.

1044 The Association is opposed to the use of assessments as the primary criterion of performance evaluations.
1045 Any evaluation tool should acknowledge that mobility rates, poverty, and other external features have
1046 an impact on individual student learning. The association supports an accountability system
1047 that acknowledges the progress made by individual students and educators.

1048 The Association supports the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, but opposes the
1049 misuse of its certification as a means of creating a multi-tiered salary system for educators.

1050 State law should be enhanced to require an evaluation procedure be part of each negotiated agreement
1051 which includes a provision protecting the rights of consulting teachers.

1052 **Peer Assistance, Coaching, Induction, and Mentoring Programs**

1053 The Association supports peer assistance, coaching, induction, and peer mentoring programs developed
1054 by districts through collective bargaining with local associations. In addition, the Association supports
1055 state funding of peer assistance, coaching, induction and mentoring programs that meet state
1056 guidelines for movement from initial to standard certification. Further, the Association urges
1057 continued support of a state funded grant program which would allow teachers who are
1058 determined to be highly qualified to teach in high-need schools without any loss of pay, tenure,
1059 or benefits. Upon return to the previous district, the employee's pay, tenure, and benefits shall
1060 have accrued.

1061 **School Board Member Training Program**

1062 The Association supports a training program for all school board members. Such a program
1063 should be developed in conjunction with the State Board of Education, and recognized
1064 education institutions and associations.

1065 **ELECTORAL PROCESS**

1066 **Introduction**

1067 The Association believes in the democratic representation of all citizens. Therefore, the Association
1068 urges legislation that will guarantee all education employees eligibility for service in any governmental
1069 office, such as education governing boards or county offices. The Association supports an unbiased

1070 redistricting process. The Association supports the adoption of voting methods that ensure
1071 confidence in the democratic process and valid election outcomes.

1072 **Governing Boards and State Superintendent Responsiveness**

1073 The Association supports legislation to make the State Board of Education and its superintendent
1074 (or any successor entity), and the governing boards of community colleges and universities
1075 more responsive to those most directly associated with the education process. All governing
1076 boards shall consist of no fewer than one representative from students, faculty, and non-certified
1077 staff.

1078 **Regional Superintendents of Schools**

1079 Since the Regional Superintendent of Schools plays an integral role in teacher certification and training
1080 and the maintaining of professional standards, the Association urges legislation that will allow
1081 any certified education personnel to serve in this capacity. Any reorganization of services currently
1082 provided by the Regional Office of Education should include leadership by (an) official(s) elected by the
1083 voters of that region. Additionally, the members of the Regional Office of Education Advisory Boards
1084 shall continue to include education employees nominated by the local bargaining representatives to
1085 the appropriate regional superintendent for election by bargaining unit members.

1086 **Recall Process**

1087 The Association believes that the electoral process for all education governing boards should include a
1088 method of recall when citizens no longer feel that a board member is responsive and accountable to the
1089 constituents.

1090 **Initiative Process**

1091 The Association supports the representative form of government which vests legislative powers
1092 solely with the legislature. To that end, the Association opposes the initiative process.

1093 **Process to Elect Judges**

1094 The Association continues to support the current system of election of judges and members of the
1095 Illinois General Assembly.

1096 Approved by the IEA Representative Assembly March 12, 2011.