



# **Adopted Resolutions**

As adopted by the Missouri State Teachers Association 103rd Assembly of Delegates

**November 16, 2023**



**The Missouri State Teachers Association advocates  
for and empowers public educators so they can teach.**

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## A. FREE PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Missouri State Teachers Association believes all students deserve equal access to a free public education. All students are of equal and great individual worth. We believe that the continuation of our free nation and its strength and well-being depend on our free public schools. These schools contribute significantly to the national unity, common purpose, equality of opportunity and the perpetuation of democracy, and should be nurtured by all our citizens.

### A-1: Equality of Opportunity

MSTA supports:

1. Diversity and inclusion within the schools and community

### A-2: Local Control

MSTA supports:

1. Local control of public education by the district board of education
2. The autonomy of the local school district to adopt curriculum, assessments and programs to meet educational goals
3. Local school districts setting standards regarding class rank and honor system that reflect a student's true standing in relation to his or her peers
4. Local districts maintaining local standards for student promotion
5. Each school district developing a written policy for transfer and assignment of students within a district and to any other school district
6. Local districts adopting a policy on gender expression and identity
7. Local school districts developing, approving, and disseminating a local policy that prioritizes the health and safety of students and employees with input from school personnel and the community. The policy must describe the health and safety measures the district will take to mitigate and respond to public health threats, including what actions the school district will take in response to a confirmed contagious disease in the district

### A-3: Education of Exceptional Children

MSTA supports:

1. Continued attention be given to the needs of individual students
2. Simplification and clarification of the identification process of exceptional students to ensure every child is appropriately identified
3. Staff being adequately trained to meet the educational needs of exceptional children
4. Alternative educational programs
5. Appropriate limits on the pupil/teacher ratios
6. Continued operation of Missouri's State Schools for students with severe disabilities
7. Educators having authority to maintain a classroom environment that encourages learning, including students with special needs being required to accept the rights and responsibilities of class participation
8. Streamlining the due process procedures to discourage litigation and encourage a fair, non-adversarial resolution of differences between the parents of special needs students and school officials

9. Regulations for child advocacy groups in the state of Missouri
10. Trained professional and support staff in the classroom, as needed, to facilitate learning for all students in mainstreaming and inclusion programs
11. Board policies stating that if a parent attends a meeting with a legal representative and or advocate, the meeting should be rescheduled until all parties involved have appropriate representation

### A-4: Federal Influence in Education

MSTA supports:

1. The U. S. Department of Education seeking input and staffing from a broad educational representation
2. The federal implementation of an accountability system that gives credit for progress and or proficiency
3. Allowing states flexibility in which to design accountability systems that go beyond scores on statewide assessments including local assessments, teacher-designed classroom assessments, portfolios, graduation/dropout rate, in-grade retention, percent of students taking the AP classes/exams, and college-enrollment rates
4. Alternate appropriate assessments for students with disabilities and for English Language Learner (ELL) students
5. Interventions for those students who are not proficient
6. Existing funding and future increases in federal dollars be delivered directly to the local school district whenever possible and should be focused on distributing federal dollars back to the classroom
7. Redefining IDEA classifications to provide accommodations for students who have an IQ score of 71 to 85 and commensurate achievement scores

MSTA opposes:

1. Federal supersession over state and local responsibility for public education, including assessments that set standards and drive curriculum
2. Governmental regulations that are "one size fits all" lunches which put calorie restrictions on meals served in schools
3. Mandatory federal classification of schools or districts

### A-5: Kindergarten

MSTA supports:

1. Mandating kindergarten attendance and the lowering of the minimum age for mandatory school attendance from age 7 to age 6
2. Leaving the length of the kindergarten school day to the discretion of the local school district
3. The cut-off date of age 5 by July 1 for entrance into kindergarten

### A-6: Student Assessment

MSTA supports:

1. A quality, nationally norm testing program that is valid and reliable to address state and federal requirements
2. Multiple criteria in evaluating a schools' performance
3. Instruction that teaches critical thinking and decision making founded on basic facts
4. A testing system that assesses the achievement and the total educational development of children

5. A limit of two required state assessments at any one grade level
6. Allowing students with special needs taking the Missouri Assessment Program based on ability level rather than grade level
7. Local school district efforts to hold students accountable for their performance on state standardized tests
8. Authentic assessment of all students using multiple evaluation tools
9. Ensuring that state accountability systems are fair and accurate measures for all students' progress and achievement
10. Requiring a local/statewide placement exam be administered by local school district personnel to home schooled students prior to their enrolling in public schools to determine appropriate academic placement
11. All statewide tests be scored by active Missouri K-12 educators using Missouri-generated scoring guides
12. A maximum of 5 state assessments to be given at the high school level
13. State end of course assessments being given only for Algebra I, Communication Arts I and II, Biology and American Government
14. Limiting testing to once a year for students that are classified to take the MAP-A

**MSTA opposes:**

1. Performance events being administered prior to the fourth grade
2. Local districts releasing individual teachers' names in reporting statewide test results
3. Including Missouri Assessment Program scores of students with an IQ of 70 and below in MSIP evaluation data
4. Including Missouri Assessment Program scores of students with an IQ of 70 and below in the "Level Not Determined" percentage
5. Grade span assessments being used for accreditation purposes
6. State assessment of immigrant students who have been in a United States public school less than one year
7. State assessment of students before completing courses that are aligned with the assessment
8. ACT testing for students who qualify as Intellectually Disabled or are required to take the MAP-A
9. Statewide student assessments and punitive measures against school districts, educators, and funding during any pandemic or long-term closure

**A-7: School Report Card:**

**MSTA opposes:**

1. Publication and use of a school report card as the only method of comparing public schools
2. Assigning letter grades to schools

**A-8: Unaccredited Schools**

**MSTA supports:**

1. Providing intensive support and monitoring for students in unaccredited school districts

**MSTA opposes:**

1. The transfer of students from unaccredited school districts

**A-9: School Board Training**

**MSTA supports:**

1. Requiring all members of the local school board to receive ongoing training
2. Local boards being allowed to select from a variety of delivery formats and vendors

**A-10: Choice, Vouchers and Tuition Tax Credits**

**MSTA supports:**

1. Intra-district choice approved by the local school district

**MSTA opposes:**

1. Legislative actions involving the concept of inter-district choice and open enrollment
2. Legislation that would give tax credits for scholarships, tuition or vouchers to private schools or voucher plans that would divert public funds to pay for private school tuition

**A-11: Student Services**

**MSTA supports:**

1. Services of a certificated school counselor following the Missouri Comprehensive School Counseling Program be provided for all students on a frequent and regular basis with a student to counselor ratio of no more than 250:1
2. The work of professionally trained school social workers as a member of a student services team
3. Requiring school health services be provided by the professional school nurse
4. Employment of registered professional nurses to direct the health services of each school district and recommends the district employs registered professional school nurses at ratios recommended by the National Association of School Nurses
5. Legislation requiring medically invasive procedures to be performed only by professional registered nurses in accordance with the Missouri Nursing Practice Act
6. A full-time certified library/media specialist per attendance center to provide library-specific program
7. Providing flexible access to information in a variety of formats for all students at all levels by adequately staffing and funding library/media programs
8. Schools providing the services of a fully staffed and adequately funded technology programs for all students
9. Helping students who have experienced adverse childhood events by incorporating trauma-informed initiatives in the classroom as well as partnering with local licensed and/or accredited behavioral agencies
10. Providing student programs which appropriately support students in the aftermath of student suicide, in suicide prevention, and identification/awareness of the signs of suicide

**A-12: Access to Communication**

**MSTA supports:**

1. Internet access for each classroom
2. Distance-learning opportunities for students approved and supported by the local school district
3. Expanding high speed internet access

**MSTA opposes:**

1. Restricting communication between school employees and students

**A-13: Early Childhood Education**

MSTA supports:

1. Early childhood education, parenting programs and family literacy programs
2. Full funding for Parents as Teachers

**A-14: Recess for Young Children**

MSTA supports:

1. A minimum of 30 minutes per day for recess for grades K-5 in addition to a physical-education class

**A-15: School Curriculum**

MSTA supports:

1. Fine arts, practical arts, physical education and career education, taught by teachers certified in those areas, as being an essential component to the comprehensive school curriculum
2. Development of model curriculum guides
3. A minimum of 50 minutes weekly of instruction in music, library, art and physical education in all elementary schools

MSTA opposes:

1. Statewide and federal curriculum mandates

**A-16: Safe Schools**

MSTA supports:

1. Solutions to the problem of violence in schools, including alternative placement programs for students removed from the classroom due to behavioral concerns and efforts in providing funding for alternative programs in addition to the school foundation formula
2. Requiring all students be held responsible and accountable for maintaining a safe school environment
3. School districts adopting policies that protect staff from false and/or malicious allegations by ensuring proper due processes are followed
4. School boards adopting policies which include appropriate consequences for student and/or staff who initiates false allegations
5. Requiring all threats of violence and other intimidating statements to be investigated by school officials and be subject to strong disciplinary action
6. Allowing reasonable measures for search and seizure of property when there is knowledge of or suspicion of violent intent
7. Disclosing information of or suspicion of violence to all members of the school community
8. Cooperation with law-enforcement officials in dealing with violence or threats of violence
9. Criminal charges being filed against anyone who threatens any acts of violence or carries an unauthorized weapon on school property or to a school function
10. The local school board identifying those objects considered weapons and those activities considered violent in nature
11. Suspension or expulsion for acts of violence, felony sexual offenses or weapon possession
12. Requiring records of student discipline relating to acts of violence and possession of weapons be shared with school employees directly involved in the instruction of the student, including transfer of such records to a receiving school

13. Use of background checks of criminal records and substantiated child abuse and neglect reports for school volunteers
14. Local, state and federal efforts to provide schools with the technology needed to keep Internet sites that provide instruction in illegal acts out of classrooms
15. Only authorizing schools resource officers or district-authorized school personnel to carry firearms on school grounds

MSTA opposes:

1. Punitive measures as a result of the data collection and reporting for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the State Board of Education regarding the use of seclusion and restraint in Missouri public school districts

**A-17: Parental Involvement**

MSTA supports:

1. Increased involvement and responsibility by parents for their children's attendance, academic performance, and behavior in public schools until completion of the academic program as outlined by the local school-district policy
2. Communication that increases parental involvement and accountability in their children's education; however, parental involvement in evaluation, assessment and curriculum should be through the local board of education

**A-18: Disciplinary Policies**

MSTA supports:

1. Local control of disciplinary policies
2. Clear and consistently applied discipline policies for student behavior that prioritize safe and productive learning environments for all students and education employees
3. A policy when a parent/guardian, in a district choosing to use corporal punishment, determines its use would not be in the best interest of the child, the parent/guardian may make a written request that identifies discipline alternatives specified in the district's discipline policy that the parent/guardian will support

**A-19: Public Charter Schools**

MSTA supports:

1. Establishment of public charter schools, provided the charters are granted by the local school board within an existing accredited Missouri public school district and provided the charter encourages the best Missouri educators to participate by requiring at least the same certification and compensation standards of other public schools in the district, as well as making certain that tenure status are not reduced or lost as a result of teaching in the public charter school
2. Charter schools participating fully in the MSIP review of the school district
3. Consideration of whether a charter school population should be representative of the overall district population
4. Public elementary and secondary schools using the existing opportunities to seek waivers from state regulations usually associated with the charter school concept



5. Requiring public charter schools to continue Public School Retirement System contributions for employees/teachers transferring to charter schools resulting in no loss of membership credit while employed by the charter school
6. Ensuring that public funds are not used when charter schools fail and have to close
7. Requiring all members of a public charter school board be residents of the district in which the charter school serves

#### **A-20: Open Meetings and Communication**

MSTA supports:

1. Access to notification of public school board meetings when technology is used to conduct meetings outside of the normal meeting cycle
2. Requiring full public disclosure of all information regarding open-meeting agenda items that have been provided to the board prior to the meeting
3. Personal financial penalties for failure to provide proper notification of any retreat or social event that the majority of any public board attends where public business is discussed
4. Reducing vendor and special-interest expenditures used to gain preferred access or influence with a public board
5. Public school boards adopting policies requiring their board agendas to include descriptions of items for closed session and to specify the section of the Sunshine Law that makes each item appropriate for closed session

#### **A-21: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)**

MSTA supports:

1. DESE being held accountable for utilizing teacher input in the development of all statewide assessment tests and the cut-point scores to determine proficiency
2. Professional development moneys being a line item in the state budget
3. Funding of the Regional Professional Development Centers and other programs that have a direct impact on students
4. External evaluation of DESE-administered professional development and student achievement programs
5. Adding some practicing educators to the State Board of Education (SBOE) and limiting the length of term for all members
6. The SBOE appointing the Commissioner of Education
7. Maintaining a quality training program for those individuals involved in the MSIP evaluation process to ensure more consistency in reviews from district to district
8. Restricting the power of the SBOE to lapse or close school districts
9. DESE providing additional released items and more detailed item analysis of results for state required assessments
10. Learning standards being in place for at least seven years
11. Senate confirmation of all SBOE appointees before they may vote to employ or terminate the Commissioner of Education
12. A public comment period at all SBOE meetings

MSTA opposes:

1. DESE selling publications and charging fees for conferences and other services in excess of costs
2. RPDCs profiting from charging speakers' fees and/or mileage expenses

## **B. SOURCES OF SCHOOL REVENUE**

The Missouri State Teachers Association is dedicated to funding public schools so that adequacy and equity become a reality for all students.

#### **B-1: State Support of Education**

MSTA supports:

1. Members of the Missouri General Assembly to recognizing public education as its top priority
2. Increasing state appropriations for K-12 education
3. Fully funding of the foundation formula
4. Prioritizing the use of increased general revenue to go first toward the school foundation formula program and second to categorical programs
5. Continuous state funding to increase salaries for all public education professionals
6. Requiring a minimum appropriation annually from the General Assembly of thirty-three and one-third percent (33-1/3%) of general revenue for public elementary and secondary education
7. State funding for school districts for the renovation and construction of essential school facilities
8. Funding for the increased cost to any local districts of any state-mandated assessment
9. Adequate federal and state funding and support for employment and training for school district staff in order to fulfill the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
10. Increase funding for gifted education
11. A 10 percent surcharge on all political advertisements in Missouri (newspaper, radio, television, etc.) to fund the foundation formula

MSTA opposes:

1. Action of the governor during the fiscal year that would delay regular payments to local districts or that would reduce the total amount of money allocated to the foundation formula
2. Limitations or restrictions of state expenditures
3. The diversion of funds currently used for the support of public education
4. Public funds for virtual education without oversight of a local education authority

#### **B-2: School Finance and Data**

MSTA supports:

1. Requiring school districts to adopt budgets that include components of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education State Model Budget and parallels the Annual Secretary of the Board Report
2. Rules and regulations that encourage school districts to share personnel
3. Allowing school districts more flexibility in the financing of capital projects provided that the percentage of district revenues currently expended in the incidental and teachers' funds are not decreased

4. Maintaining current per-pupil expenditure by a school district unless there is a change in school funding
5. Local levy deduction in the state-aid formula be capped at no more than \$2.75

### **B-3: Local Support for Education**

MSTA supports:

1. Equalized property assessments throughout Missouri be maintained in a uniform manner
2. A certificate of value be filed following the sale of each parcel of real property
3. Allowing counties in Missouri to collect and distribute local real-estate taxes semi-annually
4. A two-year reassessment cycle

### **B-4: Voting School Levies and Bonds**

MSTA supports:

1. Constitutional changes that would authorize the passage of all school levies and bond issues by a simple majority

### **B-5: School Elections**

MSTA supports:

1. Current number of annual school election dates
2. A school district annexation law that is student centered

### **B-6: Federal Support of Public Education**

MSTA supports:

1. Full funding for Every Student Succeeds Act
2. Distributing federal funds used in workforce-development education for classroom training and vocational education
3. Using federal funds for capital improvements of state schools operating for handicapped students and for vocational schools
4. Federal assistance to bring the nation's schools up to modern standards by providing energy-efficient buildings
5. Federal and state funding and support for employment and training of school district staff to fulfill the requirements of the IDEA

MSTA opposes:

1. State restrictions or limitations placed on any federal relief funding for public education that go beyond federal rule or law

### **B-7: Tuition Tax Credits**

MSTA opposes:

1. Federal tuition tax credits for private and parochial education

### **B-8: Tax-Relief Incentives**

MSTA supports:

1. Ensuring tax-relief incentives will not be granted unless approved by the affected school districts
2. Creating a percentage limit established for each school district that reflects the combined use of tax-increment financing, enterprise zones, tax abatement or any other revenue-related decisions that will adversely impact the tax base of the school district

### **B-9: State Tax Credits**

MSTA supports:

1. Accountability and control of state tax credits

## **C. EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS, PRACTICES AND STANDARDS**

The Missouri State Teachers Association believes that the criteria for evaluating educators for employment, retention, payment or promotion are professional training, competence, successful experience and ethical practice.

### **C-1: Professional Negotiations**

MSTA supports:

1. Local boards of education adopting a policy that outlines a process for input and feedback from school employees at all levels regarding salary, working conditions, employment benefit issues, personnel policies and appropriate student-related issues
2. Written agreements and written statements of unresolved issues
3. Establishing a timeline to review unresolved issues
4. Representation by one or more organizations
5. Communications between the bargaining unit and all staff members
6. Input from all staff in a bargaining unit
7. Ratification process that involves all staff members

MSTA opposes:

1. Strikes, blue flu and other tactics that could interrupt the instruction of students
2. Membership in any organization being a condition of employment or continued employment
3. Any fee for representation be required of an employee

### **C-2: Written Personnel Policies**

MSTA supports:

1. Personnel policies being cooperatively written, developed and revised by local MSTAs/CTAs and board of education
2. Current board personnel policies being available in each school building
3. Local board adopting a regular program of in-service for employees to review board policies
4. Written policies in compliance with all state and federal laws
5. Allowing unused sick leave to accumulate without limit
6. Paying teachers departing from the district for each day of unused sick leave
7. Providing grievance procedures with defined steps to appeal the application or interpretation of board policies, board regulations and employment agreements
8. Written policy for transferring teachers and non-certificated personnel within the school district
9. Allowing staff to have self-chosen, professional representation in meetings related to personnel issues
10. Districts adopting policies that allow for release time and appropriate accommodations for breastfeeding/pumping. Each building should be proactive in identifying an appropriate location and plan for a schedule that supports nursing mothers

MSTA opposes:

1. Employment discrimination based on age, disability, race, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or any other status, condition, or characteristic protected by applicable law
2. Random drug-testing of all employees
3. Policies that limit responsible use of personal technology by school staff after school hours

### **C-3: Professional Salaries**

MSTA supports:

1. Competitive, equitable salaries for all staff
2. Salary schedules be increased annually
3. District administrators' salaries and benefit packages being tied to beginning teachers' salaries and benefit packages
4. Minimum statewide salary schedule phase-in up to (1) \$45,000 as a minimum starting salary for five years or less experience; (2) \$50,000 minimum salary for teachers with a master's degree or equivalent hours and six to 10 years' experience, or a bachelor's degree with six to 19 years' experience; (3) \$55,000 minimum salary for teachers with a master's degree or equivalent hours with 11 to 19 years' experience, or a bachelor's degree and 20 or more years' experience; (4) \$60,000 minimum salary for teachers with a master's degree or equivalent hours and 20 years of experience; and (5) \$65,000 minimum salary for teachers with a master's degree or equivalent hours and 25 or more years' experience
5. Annual equitable salary increments for additional years of service and additional education experience
6. Recognition of teachers' actual years of experience for salary schedule advancement and placement
7. Teachers in all state schools be covered by a developed salary schedule
8. Contract modifications any time before the service of the contract has been fulfilled if the modification of contract includes additional salary distributed through the school-district salary schedule
9. Advancement on the salary schedule to teachers pursuing additional certification
10. Local school districts providing monetary stipends for academic-competition sponsors
11. Districts clearly outlining in writing the years of service counted, and education credits accepted, as well as the placement on the salary schedule for new employees prior to any contract offering

MSTA opposes:

1. Local school boards penalizing teachers who wish to break a contract that was signed prior to the board of education's passage of a decreased benefits package
2. Merit pay including use of standardized test scores or any other subjective criteria as a method to determine future salary increases

### **C-4: Career Ladder**

MSTA supports:

1. Continuous state funding of the program
2. Increasing award amounts without increasing costs to participating districts
3. Plans being developed by the local school board
4. Mentoring, tutoring and peer coaching as Career Ladder activities
5. Monitoring and supervision of a Career Ladder plan be done by the local Career Ladder Committee

MSTA opposes:

1. Career Ladder funds being tied to student performance

### **C-5: Security of Position**

MSTA supports:

1. Districts waiving one year toward tenure for probationary teachers having prior service with that

district as they must for probationary teachers having prior service outside that district

2. Statutes that enable principals to earn tenure as teachers in public elementary and secondary schools
3. Teachers gaining tenure following three years of continuous service in local school districts
4. Providing each new employee with information regarding evaluation criteria, performance expectations and teacher options following formal evaluation
5. Tenured teachers in lapsed or dissolved districts receiving employment as a tenured teacher in the district that has annexed territory of the lapsed or dissolved district if a vacancy exists for which they are qualified
6. Due process rights for staff with extra duty contracts
7. Providing teachers with a written 30-day notice of any issues that if not corrected may result in termination charges
8. Delaying any potential employment action until all action on any criminal charges has been completed
9. Tenure rights for certified pre-K teachers employed by public schools
10. Use of an independent hearing officer to conduct termination hearings
11. Tenure rights for certified teachers employed in a multi-district cooperative regardless of which district is sponsoring the cooperative

MSTA opposes:

1. Action that would endanger the due-process rights of teachers as guaranteed under the Tenure Act
2. Undefined liquidated damage clauses in teacher contracts

### **C-6: Children's Division**

MSTA supports:

1. Written notification 60 days following an unsubstantiated report notification from the director of the Children's Division that his or her name has been deleted from the record
2. Enforcement of stiff penalties for Children's Division workers who do not effectively investigate teacher complaints and Children's Division workers who reveal the names of school personnel who have notified the hot-line regarding a family
3. Allowing school administrators input along with children's services and law enforcement in the decision to immediately remove a child from an unsafe home while an in-depth investigation can be completed

### **C-7: Fringe Benefits**

MSTA supports:

1. Plans being approved by the majority of the employees to be covered when boards of education pay the premiums of health, dental, vision, accident and life insurance for school employees
2. Tax-sheltered annuities be provided where desired and that all eligible employees who wish to participate in a 403(b) plan should be offered a variety of vendors from which to choose
3. Salaries, working conditions, retirement and fringe benefits for teachers in state agencies to be comparable to those for teachers with similar training and duties in public school districts



4. Providing optional health-insurance coverage for political subdivisions through a statewide health-insurance plan that would include coverage for both active and retired persons at the same rate
5. Limiting the amount charged to a teacher who has exhausted the allotted sick-leave days to the actual cost of the substitute teacher
6. Required annual open enrollment period for school district health insurance that guarantees employees and dependents coverage
7. Requiring school districts to provide a full year of paid health insurance and other fringe benefits

MSTA opposes:

1. Efforts by the federal or state government to consider the treatment of fringe benefits as income for tax purposes
2. Restricting employee payroll deductions

### **C-8: Teaching Assignments**

MSTA supports:

1. Maximum pupil/teacher ratio being 25:1 for grades 7 through 12, 20:1 for grades 4 through 6, and 15:1 for grades K through 3 for virtual/distance learning as well as in-person instruction
2. Caseload not exceeding 150 pupils for grades 7 through 12, including virtual and distance learning students
3. Local school districts exercising equitable pupil/teacher ratios in employment of instructors in health/physical education, music, fine arts, library/media and computer teaching specialists
4. Providing teachers a minimum 50-minute, uninterrupted time period for planning during the instructional time of the defined school day
5. Including pre-K planning time in the Missouri School Improvement Program guidelines
6. Setting guidelines for the number of classes taught per day
7. School districts providing all teachers a lunch period of not less than 30 consecutive minutes without assigned responsibility
8. Guidelines for educators with multi-building assignments within a district so there is written confirmation of which administrator is their supervisor

MSTA opposes:

1. Pupil/teacher ratios that include administrators, support and auxiliary personnel
2. Travel time being included as part of planning time

### **C-9: Retirement-General**

MSTA supports:

1. Public School Retirement System (PSRS) being a defined-benefit retirement plan
2. Members of all teacher retirement systems in Missouri having comparable benefits
3. An earnings limit instead of a limit on the number of hours a retiree may work while receiving PSRS and Public Education Employee Retirement System (PEERS) retirement benefits
4. A selection process for choosing members of the PSRS Board of Trustees through open elections from the membership
5. The election of the trustees by a majority of PSRS and PEERS members who cast votes

6. Reviewing the actuarial assumptions used to predict the cost of benefit improvements by the PSRS Board of Trustees
7. PSRS Board of Trustees evaluating the purchase of retirement credit
8. Restricting retirees that choose a Partial Lump Sum Option from returning to full-time employment under PSRS until the length of their lump sum has lapsed
9. Requiring retirement system membership for certificated employees of all virtual education providers that serve public school students

MSTA opposes:

1. Forcing school district employees to choose between a defined-benefit or a defined-contribution plan
2. Attempts to consolidate PSRS and PEERS with any other state or federal public-employee retirement system
3. Consolidation of PSRS/PEERS funds with other state retirement systems for investment purposes

### **C-10: Retirement and Social Security**

MSTA supports:

1. All full-time certificated employees be included in PSRS and exempt from Social Security

MSTA opposes:

1. Any effort by the state or federal government to group the teachers' retirement system funds with Social Security funds
2. The Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)
3. The Social Security Government Pension Offset (GPO)

### **C-11: Retirement-Benefit Improvements**

MSTA supports:

1. Only actuarially sound benefit improvements
2. Increasing benefits for members drawing disability retirement, if actuarially sound
3. Increasing the formula factor to 1.7 for the PEERS, if actuarially sound
4. A \$5,000 death benefit for all PEERS retirees, if actuarially sound
5. Changing the PEERS first COLA payment to the third January after retirement, if actuarially sound
6. A 20 percent cap on salary increases during the final average salary period
7. Allowing the PSRS Board of Trustees establishing COLAs that would keep the current contribution rate from increasing
8. Reinstating of the 2.55 factor for 31 or more years of service, if actuarially sound

MSTA opposes:

1. Establishing a contribution rate higher than 15 percent for teachers
2. Establishing a different benefit structure for new members of PSRS provided the current contribution rate is 15 percent or less

### **C-12: School Calendar**

MSTA supports:

1. A school calendar being made by a local school board with input from teachers and other school employees

2. Attendance at teachers' meeting and conventions be counted as part of the school year and that teachers be paid to attend these meetings
3. Including parent-teacher conferences in the contract year
4. Allowing school districts to get DESE approval to use alternate methods of instruction on days where circumstances prevent a school from being in session

#### **C-13: Women and Minorities in Administration**

MSTA supports:

1. Promoting qualified women and minorities into administrative positions in all education fields

#### **C-14: Professional Liability**

MSTA supports:

1. Establishing immunity from liability for school employees for incidents within the scope of their duties as outlined in local board policy or for acts involving an exercise of judgment or discretion on the part of professional employees

## **D. TEACHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

The Missouri State Teachers Association believes educators should have a broad general education, depth of preparation in special areas, mastery of the knowledge and skills necessary to perform duties, enthusiasm for continued learning and in-service education, and an understanding of professional ethics and responsibilities.

The MSTA believes members of our profession should cooperate with teacher education institutions in providing a variety of professional laboratory experiences for prospective educators.

The MSTA believes students with desirable personal traits, social understandings and high scholastic abilities should be encouraged to enter the teaching profession.

#### **D-1: Teacher Preparation and Certification**

MSTA supports:

1. Issuing teacher certificates only to those demonstrating proficiency in academic and professional teaching skills
2. Student-teaching practicum experiences being a part of initial teacher-certification requirements
3. Teacher preparation assessments be separated by subject area and that persons not passing a section retake only that section, at a prorated cost
4. Granting provisional certification for pre-service teachers who satisfactorily complete all criteria for certification except a final exit exam
5. Streamlining the multiple criteria which may include a certification test, grade-point average, student-teaching evaluation, Performance-Based Teacher Evaluation or portfolio, in determining certification
6. Determining lines of responsibility for the student-teaching program to include the qualifications for supervisors and cooperating teachers
7. Financial support for the cooperating teachers
8. College-level instructors having classroom experience that mirrors the level for which they are teaching/supervising prospective teachers
9. Ten years of certified educational experience should be required before an initial administrator certificate is issued
10. Teacher education standards that stress professional basics
11. Certification programs that include strategies to meet the needs of all students
12. Certification programs providing coursework and training in classroom and behavior management
13. All teacher education programs developing a plan to recruit and prepare substitute teachers
14. Local districts developing a plan for recruiting and retaining substitute teachers
15. Retention of the life teaching certificates
16. Issuing certificates at broader grade levels with encouragement to complete endorsements in specialty areas
17. The State Board of Education as the sole issuer of teaching certificates
18. The State Board of Education revoking a license to teach for proper cause
19. Background checks of criminal records for prospective

teachers before initial certification and certification renewal

20. Requiring school administrators and school board members to notify proper authorities when a sexual offender of children resigns from a school district
21. Due-process rights in the certificate-revocation process
22. Limits on the cost and scope of assessments for pre-service teachers to obtain certification
23. Reinstatement of certification of endorsement for driver education
24. Innovative strategies to recruit and certificate substitute teachers, provided that applicants complete a robust program that prepares candidates to deliver instruction to students and includes all health and safety screening required of school staff

MSTA opposes:

1. An independent standards board
2. Elimination of DESE Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP) certification

#### **D-2: Professional Teacher Recruitment**

MSTA supports:

1. Local CTAs organizing and supporting FTA chapters
2. Requiring that local FTA advisers be members of MSTA
3. All teacher-education institutions recruiting an adviser or advisers and sponsor Student-MSTA chapters
4. Local school districts developing a plan for recruiting and retaining teachers within their district
5. Postsecondary loan forgiveness for educators who teach in Missouri for five years or more after graduation
6. Local school districts developing a plan to identify and encourage students who want to pursue a career in teaching and return to their home district to teach

#### **D-3: Advanced Professional Certification**

MSTA supports:

1. Teachers choosing advanced degrees, National Board Certification or other rigorous national certifications as a professional option
2. Local school districts providing support to candidates for advanced degrees, National Board Certification or other rigorous national certifications
3. Local school districts providing financial incentives for teachers who have successfully completed advanced degrees, National Board Certification or other rigorous national certifications

#### **D-4: Professional Development**

MSTA supports:

1. Ongoing professional development for each educator
2. Funding of professional-development opportunities for educators
3. Allowing paid professional release time to attend professional meetings
4. Establishing clear, research-based standards for teacher mentoring that are based upon locally established Performance-Based Teacher Evaluation (PBTE) teaching standards
5. Providing professional development, release time and compensation for mentors to beginning teachers, beginning principals and beginning superintendents

6. Mentoring and evaluation as required for professional development
7. Professional Development Committees making decisions on how all professional development moneys should be utilized
8. Teacher training opportunities that include strategies to recognize and meet the needs of all students to include impairments that fall outside of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual
9. Establishing Standards for Beginning Teacher Assistance programs
10. Offering professional development for trauma-informed initiatives

#### **D-5: Performance-Based Evaluation**

MSTA supports:

1. A locally developed system of monitoring teacher performance and accountability in the classroom for the purpose of improving instruction
2. Using certificated administrators and supervisors, allowing the option for the teacher to request a certificated administrator from another building within the district to ensure objectivity and preclude any personal prejudice, as long as they are professionally trained to implement the PBTE as a tool with which to help teachers improve instruction
3. Requiring local district teacher involvement in reviewing and developing PBTE systems
4. Evaluators having specific training in methods and techniques of administering a performance-based evaluation instrument
5. Establishing a systematic performance-based evaluation for support staff in non-certificated positions
6. Establishing clear, research-based standards for teacher performance improvement plans based on local Performance-Based Teacher Evaluations (PBTE) criteria
7. Requiring districts to establish a process that allows teachers to include comments on an evaluation

MSTA opposes:

1. Any plan that would use student grades, student class performance or student performance on standardized tests as the single criteria to measure the merit of the teacher
2. Releasing the results of individual teachers and principal evaluations to any state or federal agency

