

2019 VEA RESOLUTIONS

As adopted by the 2019 VEA Delegate Assembly
March 30, 2019



Teaching. Learning. Leading.

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Abbreviations Key

ADM	Average Daily Membership
ESL	English as Second Language
ESP	Education Support Professionals
D.C.	District of Columbia
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
PR&R	Professional Rights & Responsibilities
RIF	Reduction-in-Force
SOQ	Standards of Quality
SVEA	Student Virginia Education Association
SVEA-PAC	Student VEA Political Action Committee
VEA	Virginia Education Association
VRS	Virginia Retirement System

A. ORGANIZATIONAL UNITY

A-1. Public Education

The Virginia Education Association (VEA) is a strong, independent, united educator organization and is the voice of public education in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Through its affiliates, the VEA is committed to quality public education for all Virginia students. (82, 00, 10)

A-2. All-inclusive Membership

The VEA believes in maintaining an all-inclusive membership policy which is open to active and retired public school and public charter school employees, including principals, supervisors, education support professionals (ESPs), substitute teachers, and professional educators serving in other administrative capacities. (76, 89, 95, 08, 14)

A-3. Student Virginia Education Association (SVEA)

The VEA believes that the SVEA should be involved in all levels of the Association. Local affiliates, districts, and UniServ units should actively support, provide training, and strengthen existing chapters, and they should take steps to initiate chapters in colleges where SVEA chapters do not exist. (78, 90, 04, 09)

A-4. VEA Policies, Rules and Resolutions

The VEA believes that it is the responsibility of local affiliates to avail themselves of every opportunity to participate in the development of the policies, goals, and resolutions of the VEA. (78)

A-5. Association Resources

The VEA believes it is responsible for providing training and services to meet the diverse needs of all affiliates, UniServ units, and individual members. Affiliates and members are encouraged to utilize the resources of their local, state, and national organizations. (76, 93, 99, 04)

A-6. Association Representatives

The VEA believes that the role of Association Representatives is crucial to the exchange of pertinent information with members on a regular basis. This role should include participating in training, representing the membership, completing membership drives, maintaining membership, conducting Association elections, polls, and surveys, and serving as a liaison between the local Association and building membership. (76, 93, 95, 08, 09)

A-7. UniServ Funding

The VEA believes that the UniServ program is vital to the delivery of Association services. The VEA shall maintain a viable UniServ program supported by adequate funding. (82, 86)

A-8. Professional Leave

The VEA believes that education employees have the right and responsibility to participate fully in their professional Association; therefore, affiliates should take measures to ensure that local school systems provide professional leave and substitutes for Association officers and designated members to conduct Association business at the local, state, and national levels. (80, 92, 02, 03, 05, 07, 08)

A-9. Release Time

The VEA believes that personnel policies and practices in school divisions must guarantee that education employees be provided extended release time to conduct Association business at the local, state, and national levels. (03, 08)

A-10. Minority Participation

The VEA believes that diversity is a strength, and that participation at all levels should reflect the makeup of the union as a whole. (77, 18, 19)

A-11. Local Goals and Objectives

The VEA believes that its affiliates should develop program goals and objectives which reflect the major goal areas of the Association and should conduct periodic self-evaluations with assistance from the VEA. (76, 77)

A-12. Payroll Deduction

The VEA believes that continuous payroll deduction of Association dues should be provided by local school boards or similarly designated bodies. The VEA shall assist affiliates in establishing and maintaining such deductions. (80, 04)

A-13. Local Proposals

The VEA believes that its affiliates should form committees to develop proposals for improving instructional programs, personnel policies, benefits, compensation, and salaries for presentation to local school boards or similarly designated bodies. Actions of such boards or designated bodies should be carefully monitored throughout the decision-making process. (76, 93, 04, 08)

A-14. Competing Organizations

The VEA believes that, when there is a choice of organizations to organize and/or represent public school employees, VEA affiliates should be the strongest advocates for them. (81, 93, 01, 04, 05, 18)

A-15. Use of School Facilities or Resources

The VEA believes that its affiliates should advocate personnel policies which authorize Association use of school facilities or resources that enable communication. (85, 99, 00, 08, 14)

A-16. Leadership Training

The VEA believes that local Associations should identify and train potential leaders, with assistance from VEA/NEA as needed. (90, 08, 10)

A-17. VEA Support of American Organized Labor

The VEA believes in and supports American Labor Unions. The Association further believes that all products and materials used in the course of Association business, including those bearing the VEA name and/or logo, should be "American made and union made" whenever feasible. (06, 10, 18)

A-18. Respect

The VEA believes that each individual member should be treated with respect in all activities, discussions, and publications. (17)

B. PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND ECONOMIC WELFARE

B-1. State Teacher Contract

The VEA believes that a copy of the state teacher's contract should be provided by the Commonwealth and maintained in the library/media center of every public school and on the staff section of the school division website. (00, 15)

B-2. Collective Bargaining

The VEA believes that all public education employees have the right to organize in order to achieve improvement in their economic welfare, and believes that collective bargaining should be restored for all education employees.

The VEA also believes that employee compensation, benefits, and working conditions, as well as the profession's quality and status, will improve through collective bargaining. This is achieved when:

- a. Members understand the components of local master contract agreements and the collective bargaining process;
- b. Officers and members are aware of the history of the NEA/VEA and the parallel development of the American labor movement; including the contributions of women, immigrants, and minority groups;

- c. The affiliates and local school boards or similarly designated bodies work together toward bargaining in good faith;
- d. Statutory penalties are established for noncompliance with collective bargaining agreements.

The VEA further believes that when normal procedures fail to resolve an impasse, assistance should be provided to affiliates. (76, 91, 97, 00, 07, 10, 11, 16, 19)

B-3. Budgets

The VEA believes that its affiliates should continually monitor and analyze both the local government's and school board's budgets to promote the economic welfare of the education systems. (79, 93)

B-4. Salaries

The VEA believes that all educators should be paid a professional salary. Furthermore, the best way to attract qualified persons to all teaching disciplines is through a salary schedule that includes:

- a. An experience index ratio;
- b. Recognition of advanced education;
- c. Recognition of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification;
- d. Equal percentage increase for all personnel;
- e. Career service or longevity steps;
- f. Automatic cost-of-living adjustments at least comparable to the annual rate of inflation;
- g. Extra-duty supplements adjusted proportionately with salary increments;
- h. One pay scale, regardless of grade or subject taught;
- i. Salaries that allow the educators to live with dignity in the locality in which they work.

The VEA believes that the state should support local efforts to improve salaries by increasing the funding formula to 69 instructional personnel positions per 1,000 students. The VEA should continue to lobby and take vigorous proactive measures with state legislators, local school boards, local governments, and the public until all educators receive salaries equivalent to those of the ten states with the highest average teachers' salaries. (76, 93, 95, 98, 99, 08, 10, 14)

B-5. Retirement

The VEA believes that the benefits of the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) should be a defined-benefits program, and these benefits should not be altered, capped, or cut without the consent of active and retired education employees. The VEA further believes that state and local retirement systems and programs should include:

- a. Full benefits after 25 years of service;
- b. Buy-in provision for leave while holding elected Association office;
- c. Level-cost funding;
- d. Employer's payment of employees' share of group life insurance;
- e. Cost-of-living adjustments in retirement benefits at least comparable to the annual rate of inflation;
- f. Equitable education employee representation on retirement board;
- g. Tax-free benefits;
- h. Investment policies with maximum return and sound financing procedure;
- i. Transfer or purchase provisions for previous out-of-state service credit;
- j. Adequate survivor benefits with an expansion of the definition of beneficiary for death in service;
- k. Military service credit, up to five years;
- l. Buy-in provision for accredited private school service, up to five years;
- m. Nondiscriminatory policies;
- n. Optional participation in the VRS for part-time education employees;
- o. Monetary credit awarded at the per-diem pay for all unused sick leave;
- p. Payment of health insurance premium contributions on parity with all other state retirees, with equitable contributions for ESP employees;
- q. Establishment and protection of health insurance rights for early retirees;

- r. VRS retirement counseling scheduled after public school hours;
- s. Buy-in provision for forced maternity leave.

The VEA believes that when the employee contribution to the VRS is paid by the employer, it should be based on total compensation credited to the employee account only and made retroactive to the date such practice began. These contributions shall be used in computing the final average salary of a retiree.

The VEA believes that when the employee contribution to VRS is paid by the employer, it should not be used to satisfy any mandates for increased salaries. (73, 94, 95, 97, 98, 99, 06, 08, 10, 16)

B-6. Insurance

The VEA believes that all education employees and their spouses, domestic partners, and/or dependents have the right to affordable, comprehensive healthcare and liability insurance. The VEA further believes any medical or benefit programs should be subject to annual review by education employees and should include:

- a. Unemployment compensation;
- b. Workers compensation for all job-related illness;
- c. 100-percent state funded group life insurance;
- d. State-funded health insurance programs for education employees and their spouses, domestic partners, and/or dependents, and continuation of paid health insurance for retirees, their spouses, domestic partners, and/or dependents. Furthermore, the health insurance credit for education retirees must always be at least equal to that of the health insurance credit granted state retirees;
- e. Malpractice and tort insurance;
- f. Establishment and protection of health insurance rights for early retirees, those on leave, and those transferring to other school divisions;
- g. Group life insurance at least three times the annual salary;
- h. Dental, vision, and hearing insurance;
- i. Elective programs such as long-term disability insurance and tax-deferred annuities;
- j. Mental health treatment and benefits on parity with medical treatments and benefits.

The VEA believes that all education employees should receive notification of policy changes prior to the effective date. (72, 81, 95, 96, 07, 08, 10, 16, 18)

B-7. Alternative Insurance Programs

The VEA believes that self-insurance programs should be carefully scrutinized and be subject to annual review by education employees. The VEA further believes that:

- a. Any plan adopted should have the same acceptance, rights, and services as a traditional insurance plan,
- b. The governing body of the plan should include Association-appointed members. (88, 08)

B-8. Benefits

The VEA believes that, in addition to retirement and insurance benefits, a comprehensive program for employees should include at least the following:

- a. Unlimited accumulation of sick and personal leave days;
- b. Per-diem reimbursement or credit for unused leave;
- c. Compensated professional, personal, and sabbatical leaves;
- d. Payroll deduction;
- e. Full tuition reimbursement including fees, textbooks, and materials;
- f. Adequate assault protection, including legal assistance;
- g. Severance benefits;
- h. Tax shelter benefits;
- i. Short- and long-term disability policies;
- j. Child care centers;
- k. Coverage for loss or damage of personal property under a property insurance policy;
- l. Voluntary flexible scheduling and job sharing plans;
- m. Voluntary sick leave bank;
- n. Stress management and grief counseling programs.

1 The VEA further believes that education employees and their spouses, domestic partners, and/or
2 dependents should have equal access to all benefits applicable to them. (87, 93, 95, 96, 97, 00, 03, 04, 07,
3 08)

4 5 **B-9. School Finance**

6 The VEA believes that adequate funding is necessary to provide quality education in the
7 Commonwealth. In order to accomplish adequate funding, the following must be implemented:

- 8 a. A diversity of revenue sources, including income taxes, property taxes, sales taxes, business
9 and professional taxes, lottery, pari-mutuel betting, user fees, and other taxes;
- 10 b. Adequate salaries through increased incentives to localities to meet or exceed salary
11 mandates and/or recommendations from the General Assembly;
- 12 c. Tax changes necessary to achieve full funding of all mandated state standards;
- 13 d. Opposition to tax expenditure limitations;
- 14 e. A state requirement that each political jurisdiction maintains or increases its current
15 percentage level of funding for public schools;
- 16 f. Legislation by the General Assembly to prevent local governing bodies from reducing
17 disbursements of local education funds when extra monies are granted to localities for
18 education purposes;
- 19 g. Legislation by the General Assembly to prohibit local school boards from reducing salary
20 or benefits during the course of a fiscal year;
- 21 h. Legislation by the General Assembly to implement the funding recommendations of the Joint
22 Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) Report on Elementary and Secondary
23 School Funding on a timely basis. (73, 93, 99, 04, 07, 18)

24 25 **B-10. Employee Rights**

26 The VEA believes that protection and enforcement of members' employment rights are essential
27 and should be provided through the Professional Rights and Responsibilities Commission's (PR&R) rules
28 and regulations. (78, 95)

29 30 **B-11. Unsubstantiated Reports**

31 The VEA believes that unsubstantiated and/or anonymous reports of inappropriate behavior of
32 school personnel should not deny due process and civil rights. The VEA also believes that employees are
33 entitled to full compensation until due process has been exhausted.

34 Further, the VEA believes that there should be consequences for anyone making unsubstantiated
35 and/or false accusations against education employees. (95, 07, 14)

36 37 **B-12. Grievance Procedure**

38 The VEA believes that the use of the state grievance procedure is a positive method of conflict
39 resolution, and decisions of grievance panels should be binding. The VEA further believes that all
40 education personnel should have access to the state grievance procedure and encourages its members
41 to use the procedure when necessary. (82, 91, 95, 06)

42 43 **B-13. Job Descriptions for Instructional and Support Personnel**

44 The VEA believes that teachers and ESPs should have accurate and complete job descriptions
45 which include and define:

- 46 a. Employees' contract time, specifying instructional and non-instructional time;
- 47 b. Unencumbered lunch;
- 48 c. Unencumbered daily planning time for teachers during the instructional day;
- 49 d. Individual work assignments/duties;
- 50 e. The time of employees' legal responsibility for students;
- 51 f. Other rights and responsibilities. (83, 92, 95, 98, 08)

52 53 **B-14. Personnel Policies**

54 The VEA believes that personnel policies and practices in school divisions and institutions of
55 higher education in Virginia must guarantee that no person be employed, retained, paid, dismissed,
56 suspended, demoted, transferred, or retired because of race, color, national origin, religious beliefs,
57 residence, disability, physical appearance, political activities, professional association activities, age, cost

of compensation, marital status, family relationship, gender, or sexual orientation or gender identification.

The VEA strongly opposes any attempts to subvert employee rights and believes that local school boards should adhere to established personnel policies at all times, including times of fiscal distress. (76, 90, 03, 09, 14)

B-15. Affirmative Action

The VEA believes in the development and implementation of affirmative action plans that encourage the employment of underrepresented credentialed persons. The VEA believes that it may be necessary to give preference to those persons in recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion policies to overcome past discrimination.

Further, the VEA believes in the importance of gender parity and minority representation in all education positions. (76, 90, 01, 03)

B-16. Continuing Contract and Transfer Rights

The VEA believes that all teachers should be employed under the continuing contract law which guarantees full procedural and employment rights.

The VEA believes that teachers should be allowed salary credit for all years of teaching experience when transferring from one school system to another. Length of experience should not be used as a factor for non-employment.

The VEA also believes that teachers who have attained continuing contract status should serve no more than one year of probation when transferring to another school system.

The VEA believes that employees should be notified of their intra-system transfers at least 30 days before the effective date of the transfer.

Further, the VEA believes that intra-system transfer policies must be fair and consistent, and that the Association should be fully involved in their development. (79, 93, 96, 07)

B-17. Extra Duties

The VEA believes that the wording "...other duties as assigned" in the State Teacher's Contract and Education Employee job descriptions is ambiguous and leads to abuse by local school systems. The VEA believes that "other duties" should be explicitly specified either as "contract hour duties" or "non-contract hour duties." The VEA further believes that all "non-contract hour duties" should be compensated.

Staff members required to cover additional classes other than their own regular assignment, should be provided additional compensation.

Furthermore, educators should be compensated for sponsoring or supervising extracurricular or co-curricular activities, and assembling or scoring any mandated tests that require time beyond the regular school day. These assignments must be voluntary and open to all qualified public educators; compensation should be clearly stated in the written contract. (80, 81, 09, 15)

B-18. Reduction-in-Force

The VEA opposes reduction-in-force (RIF) in any circumstances where:

- a. Pupil-classroom-teacher ratios exceed VEA standards;
- b. The lack of alternative programs results in a high dropout rate;
- c. Needs of special students are not being met;
- d. Administrative staffing ratios exceed usual accrediting standards.

The VEA believes that evaluation should be a positive process for the improvement of quality in the education profession and should not be used as criteria for reduction-in-force.

The VEA encourages its affiliates to develop and secure RIF policies to cover layoffs caused by the elimination of subjects or positions resulting from a decrease in school population or the elimination of special programs or budget reductions. Criteria should include seniority, objectivity, nondiscrimination, uniformity of application, and affirmative action. Should RIF become necessary, the number of administrators should be reduced at least in proportion to the number of other employees. Staff should be recalled in reverse order in which they were laid off. Neighboring districts are encouraged to establish regional procedures to provide priority hiring of laid-off employees. The VEA strongly believes that local school boards should adhere to previously established RIF policies and opposes any attempts to subvert these policies.

The VEA opposes any effort to exempt education employees from layoffs or reassignments because they are coaches or sponsors of extracurricular activities. The quality of instructional programs must remain the priority.

The VEA opposes the use of cost of compensation as a determiner for individuals selected for RIF.

The VEA further encourages its affiliates to work cooperatively with local governing boards, central office staff, and community leaders to assist in rehiring, relocating, or providing alternative career training for laid-off education employees. (80, 92, 95, 05, 14)

B-19. Leave Policies

The VEA believes that fair and consistent leave policies should address the multifaceted nature of personal, professional, religious, organizational, and civic needs. Such policies should be provided to all employees. (79, 90, 95, 96, 04)

B-20. Performance-based Compensation

The VEA believes in excellence in teacher performance and improved compensation for all education professionals. The VEA further believes that pay schedules based solely on student performance are inappropriate because of the complexity of the teaching-learning process.

The VEA further believes that any deliberations, discussions, studies, or pilots of alternative compensation initiatives should fully involve the Association. (78, 82, 95, 97, 10)

B-21. Professional Growth Reimbursement

The VEA believes that full reimbursement should be provided for professional growth activities. Employees should be involved in establishing policies on funding and disbursement of such monies. (79, 91, 97)

B-22. Education Support Professionals

The VEA believes that ESPs should be employed under a continuing contract which guarantees full procedural and employment rights. They should be compensated at a level which provides no less than a living wage. Their compensation package should reflect:

- a. A base salary;
- b. Automatic cost-of-living increases at least comparable to the annual rate of inflation;
- c. Extra-duty supplements;
- d. Additional compensation for assignments outside contractual duties;
- e. Career service supplements;
- f. Salary supplements for job-related, college-level class work;
- g. All benefits provided licensed school employees, including professional leave;
- h. Credit for prior service;
- i. Salaries that allow ESPs to live with dignity in the locality in which they work. (83, 93, 95, 97, 98, 06, 07, 08, 09, 14)

B-23. Additional Revenue and Taxes

The VEA believes that studies to determine sources of additional revenue at the local level for securing adequate support for education should be conducted by the VEA and local affiliates. Studies may include:

- a. New housing and commercial starts;
- b. Net sales receipts;
- c. New sources of local revenue;
- d. Monies turned back to general funds from the school budget;
- e. Federal and state anticipated funds;
- f. Block grant monies;
- g. Local taxing methods.

Affiliates should partner with school boards and local taxing authorities to assure maximum funding for the public schools.

1 The VEA believes that Virginia's tax system must be fair, adequate, and efficient and must be
2 modernized for today's economy.

- 3 a. The VEA believes that alternative revenue sources should be utilized to meet the needs of
4 public education and to narrow the gap in Virginia's funding disparities. These alternative
5 revenue sources include, but are not limited to: sales tax options, personal income and
6 corporate tax options, and tax on tobacco products.
- 7 b. The VEA believes that localities should be granted the authority to utilize additional revenue
8 sources other than property taxes, including the dedication of a portion of the state's annual
9 individual income tax collections for return to Virginia's localities, for the purpose of
10 broadening their revenue base and reducing their dependence on real property taxation.
- 11 c. The VEA believes that counties should be granted equal taxing authority with cities and
12 towns including, but not limited to, the cigarette tax, the admissions tax, the transient
13 occupancy tax, and meals tax.
- 14 d. The VEA believes that localities should be empowered to impose impact fees to
15 facilitate orderly, rational growth including adequate public school facilities. (73, 78, 04,
16 08, 14)

17 18 **B-24. Part-time Teachers**

19 The VEA believes that when full-time teachers in a subject area are available, the school system
20 should hire no more than one part-time teacher unless there is a direct request from teachers desiring
21 job-sharing positions. Part-time teachers desiring full-time employment should be given every
22 consideration before additional part-time teachers are hired.

23 The VEA further believes that part-time teachers who are equally qualified professionals are
24 entitled to equal pro-rated benefits and employment consideration. (82, 90, 95)
25

26 **B-25. Support for Employees**

27 The VEA believes that school personnel should be supported by their employer in pursuing legal
28 and other remedies when they are victims of employment-related physical or verbal abuse, bullying, sexual
29 and other harassment, theft, or vandalism. (83, 95, 15)
30

31 **B-26. Censorship**

32 The VEA believes that it is essential for the school to be free of censorship to ensure academic
33 freedom for teachers and students.

34 The Association urges its affiliates to secure the adoption of policies and procedures that provide
35 for the orderly and expedient reconsideration of instructional materials and techniques when requests for
36 such reconsideration are received. (73, 82, 95)
37

38 **B-27. Free Speech**

39 The VEA believes that all education employees, as individuals, have the right to express their
40 personal viewpoints in public without fear of censorship, intimidation, or reprisal.

41 The VEA further believes that all education employees have the right to speak in languages other
42 than English at their worksites. (90, 02, 12)
43

44 **B-28. Privacy Rights**

45 The VEA believes that education employees have the right to conveniently store and lock
46 personal items and professional instructional materials within the employee's work station or in a location
47 convenient to the employee. These materials should not be searched or seized without prior notification or
48 due process. (81, 82, 95, 98, 09)
49

50 **B-29. Electronic Monitoring**

51 The VEA believes that the recording, or electronic surveillance, and transmission of the work of
52 any education employee without that person's permission must be prohibited. Use of information obtained
53 by any electronic surveillance must have the education employee's written permission. (89, 93, 97, 08, 09)
54
55
56
57

B-30. Intellectual Property Rights

The VEA believes that educational personnel have the right to exclusive ownership of all work and concepts developed in the course of individual planning or generated away from school district property.

VEA further believes that policies which expropriate the research and products of educational personnel must be opposed. (04)

B-31. Application and Referral Service

The VEA believes that the Virginia Department of Education should establish a central computerized application and referral service accessible to education employees and local school divisions. (85, 95, 08)

B-32. Summer School Compensation

The VEA believes that summer school employees should be fairly compensated, based on experience, in the following manner:

- a. Compensation should be consistent with their per-diem salaries and benefits;
- b. Employees should be provided with and compensated for instructional planning time, including time before, during and after the summer school session;
- c. Employees should be compensated in a timely manner at the conclusion of summer school. (15)

B-33. Compensation for Professional Development

The VEA believes that school employees should receive compensation for participation in and implementation of professional development that occurs outside the contracted day, week, and/or school year. This compensation should include:

- a. Pro-rated compensation consistent with per-diem salaries;
- b. Compensation for preparation time and any other expenses;
- c. Compensation for travel. (99)

B-34. Privatizing/Subcontracting

The VEA believes that subcontracting and privatization undermine and diminish the quality of public education and should be opposed.

The Association further believes that school districts should not enter into subcontracting agreements which transfer education employees or which abrogate previously contracted benefits, reduce compensation, deny benefits, and/or reduce or eliminate accumulating retirement experience and benefits. (89, 94, 04, 07)

B-35. Tuition Discounts

The VEA believes that the Commonwealth of Virginia should provide tuition discounts for public school employees and their dependents attending state-supported institutions of higher education. (92, 07)

B-36. Delivery of Medical and/or Health-Related Procedures

The VEA believes that at no time should a non-health-related school employee's job be in jeopardy for refusing to perform medical and/or health-related procedures. (94, 04)

B-37. Affordable Housing for Education Employees

The VEA believes that communities benefit when education employees are able to live in the jurisdictions in which they work. The VEA further believes that local affiliates should support efforts to make affordable local housing possible for education employees, including both home ownership and rental housing. (05, 08)

B-38. Employee Assistance Programs

The VEA believes comprehensive Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) should be offered. These may include, but are not limited to, support and counseling for finances, substance abuse, elder care, child care, stress management, and grief. These services must be confidential and should be offered without cost to school division employees and their families. (18)

C. POLITICAL ACTION AND LEGISLATIVE OBJECTIVES

C-1. Political Involvement

The VEA believes that all citizens should exercise their political rights. The Association's political activities shall promote public education. The VEA believes that:

- a. Members should register to vote, exercise that right, and seek a full and fair counting of voting results.
- b. Members should become actively involved in the political party of their choice.
- c. Members should actively lobby their representatives at all governmental levels to inform them of education needs.
- d. All public school employees should be afforded necessary leaves of absence to participate in the political process.
- e. Members should be encouraged to seek public office at all levels.
- f. State and local officials should place education employees in advisory and administrative roles.
- g. Affiliates should have active legislative committees.
- h. School personnel should be encouraged to serve as election officials on Election Day.
- i. All schools should be closed on the November Election Day for both students and school employees.
- j. Political rights of all citizens should be safeguarded against any coercion.
- k. Education personnel elected to any public office that does not allow concurrent employment with a school system should be allowed to return at the conclusion of that term of office without loss of annual increments, tenure, retirement, or seniority rights.
- l. Early "no excuse" voting by all education employees should be allowed. (76, 93, 95, 98, 01, 04, 07, 08, 09)

C-2. Political Action

The VEA affirms that the Virginia Education Association Fund for Children and Public Education (VEA Fund) is the political arm of the VEA. The VEA encourages the formation of local or multi-local PACs, Virginia Education Association-Retired, and a Student Virginia Education Association Political Action Committee (SVEA-PAC).

Furthermore, the VEA supports fundraising for political action and believes that regional political action and lobbying workshops should be provided annually. The VEA also believes that in all elections education employees, as well as the public, should be informed of candidates' positions on education and other pertinent issues. (76, 79, 95, 97, 98, 08, 18)

C-3. Equitable Funding for the Students of Virginia

The VEA believes that elementary and secondary school programs should be funded fully and equitably to meet the unique needs and interests of a diverse student population. The VEA further believes that:

- a. Higher education should be affordable and available to all students;
- b. Federal funding for public education must be increased and federal impact aid programs (including Title I) must be maintained;
- c. Federal, state, and local governments should provide funds sufficient to make available pre-kindergarten programs for all three- and four-year-old children;
- d. The Standards of Quality should be fully funded by the General Assembly. In addition, fair and accurate statistical indicators should be employed to determine formula-driven local funding allocations that provide adequate and equitable funding for public schools. (81, 94, 95, 01, 14)

C-4. Provision of Cost Free Resources for Students

The VEA believes that all students in public education should be provided access to appropriate technology, free of charge, for the purpose of accessing textbooks and completing curriculum requirements. (14)

C-5. Student Employment Practices

The VEA believes that state and federal legislation should ensure fair wages for students who are

employed and should protect those students from any employment conditions which would impair the educational process. (81, 82)

C-6. U. S. Department of Education

The VEA believes that a federal Department of Education is necessary and supports its retention as a cabinet-level position. The Secretary of Education should be an advocate of public education with a history of professional service in public education. (81, 91)

C-7. The Virginia Department of Education

The VEA believes that all decisions regarding the Virginia Department of Education programs should include input from professional educators affected by those programs. The VEA further believes that the appointees to this department should be advocates of public education with histories of professional service in public education. (91, 99)

C-8. The Virginia State Board of Education

The VEA believes that appointees to the State Board of Education should be advocates of public education with histories of professional service in public education. (99, 14)

C-9. The Secretary of Education

The VEA believes that the Commonwealth's Secretary of Education and all appointed staff should be advocates of public education with a history of professional service in public education. (99, 14)

C-10. Environmental Concerns

The VEA believes that federal, state, and local governments have a responsibility to guarantee a hazard-free school environment. The VEA further believes that each school facility should have plans to cover emergencies which endanger the safety or welfare of students and employees.

The VEA believes that it is essential to have federal and state legislation, funding, and enforcement which will ensure continued efforts to deal with environmental concerns, including:

- a. The discovery, encapsulation, and ultimate removal of asbestos;
- b. The labeling and containment of hazardous chemicals;
- c. The continued monitoring of air, water, noise, and toxic materials which pollute our environment;
- d. The mining and milling of radioactive substances;
- e. The identification and timely control of radon;
- f. The use and spraying of insecticides in an occupied school environment;
- g. The reduction, re-use, and recycling of all appropriate materials;
- h. The timely public disclosure of documented environmental hazards in an occupied school environment;
- i. The identification and timely removal and control of mold.
- j. The negative impacts from hydraulic fracturing in any local school jurisdiction.
- k. The maintenance or replacement of dilapidated, out-of-date schools not able to be brought up to code. (81, 93, 96, 00, 04, 12, 18)

C-11. Standardized Tests

The VEA believes that all standardized tests used in Virginia public schools must be bias-free, reliable, valid, and reflect only state-defined curriculum frameworks.

The VEA believes that Standards of Learning (SOL) test results should be available in a timely manner.

The VEA believes that all Standards of Learning (SOL) test questions should be released concurrently with the test results.

The VEA further believes that the progress of beginning English language learners in reading should be assessed with other state approved procedures and instruments until they reach a level of proficiency that can be measured on a grade-level SOL test of reading. (99, 04, 07, 14)

C-12. School Closings to Conserve Energy

The VEA believes that school closings or shutting down HVAC systems should not be used as a means of conserving energy or budgetary savings. (80, 18)

C-13. Collective Bargaining

The VEA believes that legislation should be passed at both the national and state levels guaranteeing collective bargaining for public employees. (79, 91, 99, 06)

C-14. César Chávez Day

The VEA believes that César Chávez Day should be a national day of observance to focus on the importance of labor organizing and promoting equitable human relations. The Association encourages the observance of this day to promote reflection and action for social justice. (10)

C-15. D. C. Voting Representation

The VEA believes that the District of Columbia should immediately be given full voting congressional representation. (79, 08)

C-16. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

The VEA believes that the day designated to observe the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., should be declared a school holiday for all education employees throughout the state in order to commemorate the unique contributions Dr. King made to our country. (78, 93, 97, 98, 03, 08)

C-17. Open Process of Government

The VEA believes in and supports a strong Freedom of Information Act. The VEA further believes that the governmental process should be open to all citizens. The VEA opposes inaccessible or illegally closed meetings of any appointed or elected governmental body. (77, 93, 04, 17)

C-18. Voter Registration

The VEA believes that voter registration opportunities should be expanded to meet the needs of all citizens.

The VEA further believes that students of eligible age should be encouraged to register to vote and be provided school time and assistance for such registration. (77, 91)

C-19. Redistricting

The VEA believes government serves best when voters choose their representatives, not when their representatives choose them. VEA therefore supports a transparent, nonpartisan redistricting process for the determination of congressional, state house, and state senate districts. (14, 15)

C-20. Selection of Education Officials

The VEA and its local affiliates, as the representative bodies for public school education employees, believe that they should be directly involved in the selection of education officials at all levels. (82, 93, 04, 07, 08)

C-21. School Boards

The VEA believes that school boards should be elected and should have full fiscal autonomy. The VEA further believes that local affiliates should be actively involved in the recruitment and election of public education candidates.

In the absence of an elected school board, the VEA believes that its local affiliates should be actively involved in the selection of school board members.

Further, the VEA believes that every effort should be made to ensure that candidates for school boards reflect the diversity of the population within the school district. (78, 97, 99, 04, 07)

C-22. Nepotism and Cronyism in Public Education

The VEA opposes nepotism and cronyism. (80, 93)

C-23. Five Day School Week

The VEA believes that the regular school week should be five days, Monday through Friday, and the educator work week should be the same. (80, 97)

C-24. Local Taxation Authority

The VEA believes that local governing bodies, including school boards, should have the option of imposing special taxes for education funding. (80, 97)

C-25. Funding of Professional Salaries

The VEA believes that the General Assembly should provide incentives and earmarked funding to bring Virginia's average teacher salary to rank among the salaries of the ten states with the highest average teacher salaries. (80, 97, 01)

C-26. Employee Rights

The VEA believes that school employees should, at a minimum, be afforded the same rights enjoyed by other Virginia public employees and by private and federal employees. The VEA further believes that federal and state officials or agencies should not restrict existing employee rights or prevent consideration of new employee rights at the state and local levels. (79, 91, 04, 06, 08)

C-27. School Nurse Certification

The VEA believes that school nurses must be licensed by the Virginia Board of Nurses as professional health care providers.

Furthermore, the VEA believes that there should be at least one full-time registered nurse at each school site. (73, 91, 12)

C-28. Civil Rights Protection

The VEA believes any local, state, or federal law, executive order, or amendment to the U.S. or State constitutions that curtails basic civil rights should be opposed. (05, 17)

C-29. Public Funds for Public Education

The VEA believes that public funds should not be used in any form to support non-public elementary and secondary education. Programs and practices such as tuition tax credits, voucher systems, and performance contracting are detrimental to public education and must not be employed.

The VEA also believes that institutions established to avoid integration should not have tax-exempt status. (78, 93)

C-30. Cooperation for Public Education

The VEA believes that working relationships with other organizations and agencies with which the VEA shares common goals should be established and strengthened. (79, 91, 09)

C-31. Planning for Education Needs

The VEA believes that teachers and support professionals should participate in the planning of all capital outlay projects. The VEA further believes that local planning commissions must address education needs before approving proposed development plans. (76, 94)

C-32. Minimum Attendance Requirement

The VEA believes that failure of a school district to meet the minimum attendance requirement due to circumstances beyond local control should not lead to loss of state funds or to reductions in employee salaries. (78, 95)

C-33. Literary Fund

The VEA believes that Literary Fund monies should be used exclusively for school capital outlay projects in localities. (90, 94)

C-34. Developing and Funding School Board Budgets

The VEA believes that "financial plans," as opposed to "budgets," and the use of month-to-month appropriations to finance schools are inappropriate methods of fiscal planning and should be prohibited.

The VEA believes that procedures to ensure that budgets are approved and funds appropriated for school purposes on a timely basis should be enforced.

The VEA believes that all school districts should be funded annually under budgets approved no

1 later than April 15 of the previous fiscal year. The VEA opposes recommendations of governing bodies
2 which impose expenditure limitations on proposed school board budgets.

3 The VEA believes that school employees and/or their representatives should play an active role in
4 the development of the annual school board budget.

5 The VEA further believes that school closings should not be used as a means of addressing
6 budgetary shortfalls. (76, 92, 04, 05)

7 8 **C-35. Student Transportation**

9 The VEA believes free, safe transportation should be provided for all public school students living
10 beyond reasonable and safe walking distances from their schools.

11 The VEA further believes that an adult assistant should be assigned to each bus in addition to
12 a driver. (76, 97, 98, 00)

13 14 **C-36. Unencumbered Lunch**

15 The VEA believes that the General Assembly should require and fully fund an unencumbered
16 lunch period of no fewer than 30 consecutive minutes each teaching day of the contract year for all public
17 school employees. (82, 98, 99)

18 19 **C-37. Unencumbered Planning Time**

20 The VEA believes that the General Assembly should require and fully fund a daily unencumbered
21 planning time of no fewer than 45 consecutive minutes within the student day for all teachers. (72, 91)

22 23 **C-38. Substance Abuse**

24 The VEA believes that there is a continued need to address the problems of alcohol and drug
25 abuse, as well as laws governing the purchase of tobacco products. The VEA supports stronger
26 legislation restricting the sale of illegal drug paraphernalia.

27 The VEA supports strict enforcement of the current drinking age and the impaired-driving laws.
28 (80, 93, 97, 17)

29 30 **C-39. School Calendars**

31 The VEA believes that school calendars should be a matter of local option for local school boards
32 and that Association members should play an active role in the development of the school calendar.
33 (86, 92, 09, 17)

34 35 **C-40. Polygraph Testing**

36 The VEA believes that polygraph testing should not be used in employment-related situations.
37 (89, 93)

38 39 **C-41. School Security**

40 The VEA believes it is the responsibility of federal, state, and local authorities to guarantee
41 the safety and security of students and staff while under the charge of the school. Measures taken should
42 include:

- 43 a. Adequate building security to exclude unauthorized visitors;
- 44 b. The ability to communicate electronically with the school's office from all areas of the school
45 premises;
- 46 c. Legislation to prohibit access to assault weapons or the purchase of separate parts of
47 assault weapons;
- 48 d. Legislation to prohibit handguns;
- 49 e. Severe penalties for possession of firearms and other weapons on school property;
- 50 f. Penalties for verbal or physical abuse of school personnel;
- 51 g. Legislation to make school employees performing duties "special class," thereby increasing
52 the penalties for crimes committed against them;
- 53 h. The use of trained professionals other than school personnel in addressing bombs, bomb
54 threats, and other dangerous situations;
- 55 i. The establishment of standards for the training and licensure of school security personnel;
- 56 j. Legislation to protect school employees from disciplinary action or prosecution for actions

- 1 taken in self-defense or from intervention in student altercations;
2 k. The involvement of teachers, security personnel, and other school employees in the
3 development and implementation of school safety plans;
4 l. Legislation to require the disclosure of information to receiving schools and education
5 employees of a student's involvement with weapons, alcohol, illicit drugs, or assaults. (89, 94,
6 97, 98, 00, 08, 16, 17)
7

8 **C-42. Employment Costs**

9 The VEA believes that school systems that require health screening, fingerprinting, and criminal
10 record checks of prospective, current, or substitute employees should bear the cost of such screening.

11 The VEA further believes any licensure fees should be paid by the employer. (94, 97, 99, 09)
12
13

14 **D. PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE**

15

16 **D-1. Principles of Professional Practice for the Teaching Profession**

17 The Virginia Education Association believes that the following principles of professional
18 practice define the knowledge, skills, and dispositions a professional teacher should possess.

19 A professional teacher

- 20 a. Designs and facilitates instruction that incorporates the students' developmental level,
21 skills, and interests with content knowledge;
22 b. Develops collaborative relationships and partners with colleagues, families, and
23 communities focused on meaningful and deep learning;
24 c. Provides leadership and advocacy for students, quality education, and the education
25 profession;
26 d. Demonstrates in-depth content and professional knowledge;
27 e. Participates in ongoing professional learning as an individual and within the professional
28 learning community;
29 f. Utilizes multiple and varied forms of assessments and student data to inform instruction,
30 assess student learning, and drive school improvement efforts;
31 g. Establishes environments conducive to effective teaching and learning;
32 h. Integrates cultural competence and an understanding of the diversity of students and
33 communities into teaching practice to enhance student learning;
34 i. Our society and building respect for the worth, dignity, and equality of every individual;
35 j. Strives to overcome the internal and external barriers that impact student learning. (09)
36

37 **D-2. Teacher Preparation**

38 The VEA believes that pre-service teacher education programs should emphasize classroom
39 practice and field-based experiences including classroom management techniques, practices compliant
40 with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and strategies to address students with special
41 needs. The VEA supports the concept of clinical faculty programs with appropriate remuneration. The
42 VEA advocates improved criteria for the selection and training of cooperating teachers who supervise
43 student teachers and interns. (82, 93, 99)
44

45 **D-3. Historically Black Colleges and Universities**

46 The VEA believes that historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU) have played a vital role in
47 helping America build a truly pluralistic society. The programs of historically Black colleges and
48 universities should continue to be reviewed and expanded so that they will maintain diverse and quality
49 faculties and student bodies. The VEA believes in maintaining and promoting these invaluable institutions,
50 their programs, and their full participation in the mainstream of education. The Association believes that
51 closing, downgrading, or merging historically Black colleges and universities would not be in the best
52 interest of the education community. (96, 97, 98, 04)
53
54

D-4. Teacher Licensure

The VEA believes that the Association should be actively involved in establishing standards and in evaluating teacher education institutions. The entrance requirements into the schools of education should be equal to or higher than those of other professions. An ongoing evaluation system of education students should be instituted to determine qualifications for entry into the profession.

The VEA opposes reducing teacher licensure requirements, allowing non-licensed persons to teach, or having teachers teach out of their endorsements.

The VEA believes that license renewal credit should be given for a variety of professional activities, including academic courses, regardless of major field of licensure.

The VEA believes that the implementation of the license renewal program should be closely monitored.

The VEA believes that teachers should be afforded an opportunity through licensure regulations to voluntarily delete areas of endorsement in which they have not taught during the previous 10-year period.

The VEA believes any fees required for licensure or changes to an individual's license should be paid by the employer.

The VEA believes that teachers seeking an additional endorsement or renewal of their teaching licenses should be notified of the status of their applications within 60 working days by the Department of Education. (78, 93, 96, 97, 98, 00, 09)

D-5. Employee Evaluation

The VEA believes that evaluation should be a positive process for the improvement of quality in the education profession. Necessary to this process are:

- a. Employee input on policies and procedures;
- b. Evaluators trained in the evaluation process and experienced in classroom instruction;
- c. Mutually agreed upon goals;
- d. Objective standards of measurement;
- e. Representative observations of performance;
- f. Written statements of strengths, progress, and deficiencies;
- g. Written time line for correcting deficiencies mutually developed by the evaluator and the teacher, indicating a realistic length of time for remediation;
- h. Documentation of support provided by the school division to improve weakness;
- i. Employee access to all items in personnel files;
- j. Uniform application of procedure within a system;
- k. Timely consultations after formal or informal visits;
- l. Opportunity for written response by the employee before formal evaluation is placed in a personnel file;
- m. Annual examination of procedures by a committee which includes teachers.
- n. An unbiased appeals process with an evidentiary hearing under oath.

By participating in an evaluation process, an education employee shall not waive his or her right to due process in any subsequent contractual or legal proceeding. (82, 93, 98, 08)

D-6. Use of Video Recording for Evaluation

The VEA believes that the use of video recording is a useful tool for self-evaluation and analysis of teaching techniques and should be used only by the teacher for that purpose. Recordings should not be used by administrators or evaluation observers in informal or formal situations. These recordings should be the sole possession of the teacher and should be copied only with the consent of the teacher. (89, 98, 08)

D-7. Leave

The VEA believes that all local school divisions should provide professional leave, paid substitutes, and license renewal credit for members attending district, general, and departmental meetings, inter- and intra-school visitations, or local, state, and national professional development meetings. Professional leave should be provided for educators serving on evaluation teams. (79, 92, 98)

D-8. Instructional Assistants

The VEA believes the contribution of instructional assistants is vital to the educational system. Therefore, the VEA recommends the following:

- a. Using input from both teachers and instructional assistants, local school divisions should develop specific criteria for employment, training, and meaningful ongoing professional development;
- b. An orientation and training workshop should be completed prior to employment;
- c. Employment of instructional assistants should not result in the elimination of teaching positions or an increase in pupil-teacher ratio;
- d. Preschool programs, special education, English as a second language (ESL) classes, kindergartens, and elementary combination classes should be provided with full-time instructional assistants;
- e. Instructional assistants assigned to specific teachers/classrooms should not be used in other capacities nor be used as full-day substitutes;
- f. Substitutes should be provided for all instructional assistants;
- g. Instructional assistants should have written job descriptions which state that they shall not plan or carry out instructional duties without direct teacher supervision;
- h. The evaluation process should be based upon the job description and shall be conducted by a trained evaluator with input from the teacher;
- i. Duties of the instructional assistant should not supplant the duties of the licensed teacher;
- j. Full-time instructional assistants should be placed on continuing contract with professional starting salaries and competitive experience scales;
- k. Local school divisions should provide training to assist teachers in the best use of instructional assistants. (79, 91, 97, 04, 10)

D-9. Substitutes

The VEA believes that the State Board of Education should set policies and standards for substitute teachers and that local Associations and school boards should jointly develop recruitment and training programs for substitute teachers. In addition, local school boards should compensate substitutes for this training.

The VEA believes the State Board of Education should require local school boards to hire substitutes when teacher assistants, specialists such as physical education teachers, art teachers, music teachers, library media specialists, and special education teachers are absent. These substitutes should be fully qualified.

The VEA believes that retired teachers hired to substitute should be paid on a basis commensurate with their pre-retirement years of experience.

Any substitute teacher hired by a school system for a major portion of the school year should be fully licensed in the content area, and placed under contract at the appropriate step. (76, 77, 98, 99, 01, 16)

D-10. Volunteer Programs

The VEA believes in the value of volunteers within the public schools. Each division should work cooperatively with teachers to develop a volunteer program, train the volunteers, and coordinate their use within the school system.

The VEA further believes that the volunteer program should incorporate appropriate security protocols. (87, 98, 12)

D-11. Professional Standards Board

The VEA believes that the establishment and maintenance of high and rigorous standards for classroom teachers in Virginia can best be achieved by a Professional Standards Board for teachers.

The VEA further believes that this board must be independent of the State Board of Education and fully accountable to the General Assembly. (81, 93, 97, 99)

D-12. National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

The VEA believes in the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards and its national certification programs.

1 The VEA believes that the Department of Education and local school boards should support
2 teachers engaging in this process by providing time, money, and other resources. The VEA believes that
3 significant recognition should be provided for teachers who achieve national certification. (96, 97)
4

5 **D-13. Study Commission Composition**

6 The VEA believes that VEA members should serve in a full participating and voting position on all
7 advisory committees, panels, task forces, and/or special commissions examining education in Virginia.
8 (87, 04)
9

10 **D-14. Special Education Advisory Committee**

11 The VEA believes that the Virginia Board of Education should appoint one practicing special
12 education teacher and one practicing general education teacher to serve on the State Special Education
13 Advisory Committee.

14 These appointees should be recommended by the VEA Board of Directors (80, 00, 02)
15

16 **D-15. Administrative Licensure**

17 The VEA believes that, as a part of the requirements for licensure as an elementary or secondary
18 principal and/or instructional supervisor, a person should have a minimum of five years successful
19 teaching experience at the level for which licensure is sought. The VEA also believes that any person
20 seeking the position of superintendent should have a minimum of five years successful teaching
21 experience.

22 The VEA further believes that any person who engages in administrative, supervisory, evaluative
23 duties, or in full-time curriculum development activities, should be required to spend at least one complete
24 semester in the classroom every five years in order to maintain endorsement in administration and
25 supervision. The individual shall assume all duties and responsibilities of a teacher during this time. Such
26 requirements should be incorporated in the licensure regulations. (83, 93, 98)
27

28 **D-16. Evaluations by Employees**

29 The VEA believes that employees should participate in the evaluation of their school
30 administrators and school programs. (82, 91, 97, 98)
31

32 **D-17. School Evaluation**

33 The VEA believes that additional staff and time during the school day should be provided for
34 school employees so that school accreditation processes do not interrupt the instructional program.

35 The VEA believes that the Virginia Department of Education should fully fund employees who
36 serve on evaluation teams at the department's request and that an honorarium should be paid to all
37 members of the team.

38 The VEA believes that Association members should be included on Virginia Department of
39 Education visiting committees for both teacher education programs and public schools. (76, 89, 99)
40

41 **D-18. Class Size**

42 The VEA believes that small class size has a positive impact on student success; consequently,
43 the VEA calls for:

- 44 a. Average Daily Membership (ADM) figures based on each teacher's current class
45 membership figures;
- 46 b. Published pupil-teacher ratios computed on the basis of classroom teachers only, excluding
47 resource personnel;
- 48 c. Maximums of 15 students in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and grade 1; 17 students in
49 grades 2 and 3; 21 students in grades 4-12; and 18 students in English classes in middle
50 and high school; with no more than 105 students assigned to departmentalized teachers
51 including physical education and performing arts;
- 52 d. Maximum of 15 students in all below-average/below-grade level classes in elementary,
53 middle, and high school;
- 54 e. Maximum of 10 students in all ESL classes;
- 55 f. Maximum of 20 students in a space with minimum floor area of 45 square feet per student in
56 lab sciences, studio arts, and practical arts;

- g. Limits on the number of students in a special education class, whether or not an assistant is present, determined by a weighted formula, reducing class size maximum when multi-disabled, cross-categorical, and/or severely disabled students are placed in a classroom;
- h. Resource/itinerant teacher maximum caseloads determined by using a weighted formula that considers the number of students and the severity of their handicapping conditions, distance traveled and/or travel time, and/or the number of schools being served;
- i. A weighted formula which would reduce the actual class size where disabled and exceptional students are placed with non-disabled students;
- j. Maximum caseloads of 250 students for guidance counselors;
- k. Sufficient specialized personnel to provide differentiated staffing in schools to meet instructional needs in art, music, drama, physical education, and diagnostic prescriptive teaching of all students;
- l. Sufficient specialized personnel to provide differentiated minimum staffing in elementary school library/media centers equivalent to staffing patterns in middle and secondary schools as provided in the Standards for Accrediting Schools in Virginia;
- m. Provision of space in schools to meet instructional needs of all students in art, music, physical education, drama, band, and other specialized disciplines. (76, 93, 95, 99, 00, 04, 05, 10)

D-19. Kindergarten

The VEA believes that there should be fully funded full-day kindergarten programs with compulsory attendance. Local school divisions should implement the guidelines for kindergarten instruction established by the Virginia Department of Education and provide each kindergarten teacher with a copy of the guidelines.

The VEA believes that the kindergarten entrance age should be no less than five years as of September 1. Local superintendents and school boards should comply with the intent of the state law regarding the kindergarten entrance age.

The VEA further believes that kindergarten make-up days should not overlap where half-day kindergartens exist, nor should Saturdays or a longer school year be used. (76, 86, 04, 12)

D-20. Professional Development

The VEA believes that meaningful professional development can be a significant factor in school improvement. In order for professional development to be effective, it must serve the purpose of improving instruction and increasing student achievement, and it must include:

- a. Teacher involvement in planning, development, delivery, and evaluation;
- b. Full funding for implementation and reimbursement for recertification mandates;
- c. A variety of delivery models for different levels and different learning styles;
- d. Time provided during the school day or school contract for learning, practice, collaboration, and reflection;
- e. Alignment with school district objectives and local school needs.
- f. Culturally responsive practices that promote bias-free instruction. (99, 19)

D-21. Instructional Materials

The VEA believes that the principles of academic freedom and the expertise of educators should be the major factors in curriculum development and materials adoption. Therefore:

- a. The censorship of media and other instructional materials has no place in the educational environment;
- b. The State Board of Education should allocate funds to provide free textbooks and/or supplementary instructional materials for all students;
- c. Adequate funds should be provided for materials, including funds for the visual and performing arts and physical education; such funds should not be reallocated at the building level for other programs;
- d. Committees to evaluate and recommend instructional materials for use in public schools should be composed of a majority of classroom teachers at the appropriate level; these committees should operate on a continuing basis to upgrade materials lists;

- e. Local school administrators should ask for and accept recommendations from local VEA affiliates for committee appointments;
- f. Multi-cultural materials should be provided and should be integrated throughout the curriculum;
- g. Textbooks and supplementary materials should be historically and factually accurate when covering the topics of slavery and institutional racism as violations of human and civil rights.
- h. Media usage should be developmentally appropriate and constructive; indiscriminate viewing should be discouraged;
- i. Elementary and secondary programs should meet the unique needs and interests of rural and urban students;
- j. Instructional and standardized testing material should be reviewed to assure that it respects and recognizes cultural diversity and gender, racial, and cultural equity;
- k. Instructional materials, whether in print or digital form, should be used appropriately and in accordance with current copyright laws. (73, 93, 96, 04, 08, 10, 14, 18)

D-22. Color Vision Deficiency

The VEA believes that the needs of all students and staff who are color-vision deficient must be met. All educational materials that use color-coding for referencing information should be accompanied by an alternate method of identifying these items of information, such as numbering or labeling the names of each color. (06)

D-23. Teacher Curriculum Input

The VEA strongly believes that active teacher participation in curriculum decisions on the state and local levels is necessary to the educational program. (86, 92, 03)

D-24. State-Mandated Programs

The VEA believes that general curriculum competencies serve as guides for basic learning. Such competencies should be developed with teacher input based on sound educational principles, rather than on the content of standardized tests.

The VEA believes in broad, intellectually demanding learning objectives that:

- a. Are designated for age groups rather than specific grade levels;
- b. Challenge students to acquire knowledge of content and process skills for learning and working in the 21st century;
- c. Are based on extensive research of how students learn.

The VEA believes that state-mandated programs are valid only when classroom teachers are involved in the planning, design, development, implementation, and assessment of such programs.

The VEA believes that state-mandated programs should be supported by state funding to cover staffing, resources, and training.

The VEA believes exceptions should be made when implementing state-mandated programs for students with academically handicapping conditions. Grade-to-grade promotion should not be contingent upon any standardized tests of such programs in curricula which are not designed as testing programs. (84, 93, 96, 99, 03, 04)

D-25. Cultural Diversity in the Virginia Standards of Learning

The VEA believes the Virginia Standards of Learning should reflect the cultural diversity of the nation and Commonwealth by including contributions of individuals of all ethnic and racial heritages.

The VEA supports the inclusion of content in the Virginia Standards of Learning that reflects all facets of the community, celebrates contributions made by all racial and ethnic groups to the development of the larger American culture, and includes concepts and information that are relevant to the lives of all learners. (05)

D-26. School Programs

The VEA believes that school programs should include employee-impact statements. These statements should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a. Resources and personnel necessary to implement them;
- b. Professional development training;

- c. Workload and additional compensation;
- d. Priority within the curriculum;
- e. Written report requirements.

The VEA further believes that before new programs are initiated, a thorough analysis must be made of the additional teacher planning and instructional time that will be required to implement the program. (79, 87, 97, 00, 07)

D-27. Time to Teach and Prepare

The VEA believes that all teachers should have daily, unencumbered planning time within the schedule of the students' school week. Furthermore, teachers should not be required to act as substitutes during their planning time.

The VEA believes that teachers should have a half-day of planning immediately prior to the parent-teacher conference day.

The VEA believes that time to teach is critically important but should not cause the reduction or elimination of cultural and enrichment activities.

The VEA believes that paperwork and classroom interruptions should be kept to a minimum. (79, 87, 97, 00, 04)

D-28. Time to Learn

The VEA believes study halls and early dismissal of students should not be used indiscriminately.

The VEA believes that hours of student employment should be limited so that they are not detrimental to academic performance.

The VEA believes that excessive student absences from school, excused or unexcused, have adverse effects on program continuity and student achievement. The VEA believes that the general public should be educated about Virginia's Compulsory Attendance Law and the problems created by truancy. (79, 87, 97, 00, 04)

D-29. Extension or Restructuring of the School Day or School Year

The VEA believes that the extension of the school day or school year is a local option but should not be implemented until the present instructional day is used to its full potential.

The VEA believes that, if the Commonwealth of Virginia or a local school district should decide to change to an extended school day or year, all education personnel should be paid accordingly for their services.

The VEA believes that all teachers should be required to teach no more than five classes per day or the equivalent thereof. It further believes that a proportionate supplement should be paid if more than five classes or the equivalent thereof are taught.

The VEA believes that any restructuring of the school day or school year in order to provide students with more educational and/or elective opportunities must have significant teacher input. Consideration must be given to:

- a. Principles of child development;
- b. Adequate compensation for all education employees involved;
- c. Ample instructional funding;
- d. Enhancement and revitalization of the elective program;
- e. Maintaining or reducing class load;
- f. Maintaining or reducing student-teacher ratio;
- g. Scheduling needs of itinerant teachers;
- h. Providing climate-controlled environment;
- i. Providing unencumbered lunch and planning time. (84, 94, 95, 97, 08, 10)

D-30. Safe and Orderly School/Communities

The VEA believes that all education staff, students, parents/guardians, communities, and community agencies must work cooperatively to establish safe and orderly schools. Students and education staff must be safe from physical, verbal, psychological violence, and all forms of harassment.

The VEA believes that education staff must have access to training to enable them to recognize and respond to critical instances of physical, emotional, and verbal harassment, abuse, or violence. Students should be aware of strategies and skills that develop respect, self-discipline, and self-control.

Appropriate services and/or placement options must be available for students who disrupt the learning environment or pose a danger to themselves or others.

The VEA further believes that appropriate school behavior begins and is reinforced in the home. Schools can be instrumental in identifying programs and recommending strategies that can assist parents/guardians. (02, 08)

D-31. Conflict Resolution Education

The VEA believes that proven conflict resolution strategies, materials, and activities should be adopted and used by school districts, education employees, students, parents/guardians, and the school community to encourage non-violent resolution of interpersonal and societal conflicts. (05, 08)

D-32. Discipline

The VEA believes that a safe and orderly environment, in which students are treated with dignity, will provide them with a positive learning experience. Effective disciplinary procedures enhance high expectations and quality instruction, thereby promoting self-control and responsible behavior in students while ensuring the right of all students to due process and an orderly learning environment. It is incumbent upon school boards and administrators to support teachers in this pursuit.

The VEA believes in the study, development, and funding of a variety of effective discipline procedures, as well as alternative programs for severely disruptive students. Disciplinary procedures should incorporate culturally responsive and restorative justice practices and be free of implicit bias.

The VEA further believes that it is incumbent upon parents/guardians to stress to their children the need for self-control both at home and in school. School systems should assist in educating parents/guardians about the need to cooperate fully with teachers.

The VEA also believes that corporal punishment should not be used as a means of disciplining students. The Association condemns the misuse of disciplinary action. (82, 93, 95, 96, 98, 03, 19)

D-33. High School Diploma/Equivalency

The VEA believes that every student should earn a high school diploma or its equivalent.

The Association believes that, in some instances, the use of high school equivalency tests is acceptable when the best interests of students are served, but that the misuse of equivalency testing can have a negative impact on secondary education.

The Association further believes that using equivalency testing as the basis for qualification for a high school diploma should be developed cooperatively by classroom teachers, administrators, and governing boards. (96, 03)

D-34. Student Testing

The VEA believes that testing programs are useful when integrated with assessment information specific to local programs. They should be chosen by local school boards and used as part of a variety of assessment techniques. The VEA further believes that:

- a. Appropriate accommodations and/or modifications in test administration should be provided for students with disabilities;
- b. Appropriate alternate assessments should be provided for students with disabilities who cannot, in accordance with their Individualized Education Programs, participate in state- or district-wide assessments;
- c. Grade-to-grade promotion or graduation should not be contingent upon any one testing program;
- d. Local school divisions should review testing programs frequently to ensure that they are bias-free, reliable, and valid, and to eliminate excessive testing and the use of out-of-date tests;
- e. Diagnostic testing should begin no later than the initial two weeks of school and post-testing no earlier than the final three weeks of school except in individual cases;
- f. Test settings and group size should be chosen to maximize student results;
- g. Test results should be used as one diagnostic tool to determine an individual student's strengths and needs;
- h. Student test scores should not be used to evaluate, compare or rank teachers, schools, or divisions;

- i. Assessments should match the developmental levels or English language proficiency of the student. (80, 92, 95, 98, 99, 00, 04, 09)

D-35. Educator Accountability

The VEA believes that educators can be held accountable for educational excellence only to the degree that they share responsibility in the educational decision-making process and to the degree that other parties who share this responsibility, such as legislators, state and local boards of education, institutions of higher education, parents, students, and taxpayers, are also held accountable.

The VEA believes that teachers and principals should be involved in the site-based decision-making process in order to improve school environment and student achievement through developing a positive climate and appropriate instructional policies.

The VEA encourages school systems, appropriate social service organizations, and community participants to establish a forum in order to discuss ways of improving the accountability process.

The VEA believes that no single test, such as the PRAXIS, is capable of assessing all the talents teachers should possess.

The VEA believes that student test scores should not be used to label individual teachers, schools and/or school divisions, to evaluate or dismiss school employees, nor to formulate pay structures. (80, 89, 96, 00, 04, 10)

D-36. Decision-making Role of Education Employees

The VEA believes each work site should have an elected committee to advise the administration of local concerns and to participate in the decision-making process. Representation on such committees should reflect the gender and ethnic diversity of the site. (88, 93, 08)

D-37. School-based Accountability

The VEA believes that the focus of school-based accountability should be school improvement. School-based accountability should focus on the entire school, not on individual teachers. School-based accountability measures should be sensitive to students with special needs, environmental factors that affect learning, and the changing demographics of a school. (96, 97)

D-38. Guidance Counselors

The VEA believes full-time licensed elementary guidance counselors should be provided at each elementary school. The VEA further believes that all counselors should have access to students without state or locally mandated restrictions. (82, 89, 97)

D-39. Education Support Professionals (ESP)

The VEA believes that ESPs share the same community of interest as other professional staff. Emphasis must be placed upon securing, training, and retaining the most capable ESPs. (94, 98, 08)

D-40. Library/Media Specialist

The VEA believes that a comprehensive library/media program must be provided for each school. The VEA further believes that every school library/media center should have full-time library/media specialists and support staff appropriate to the needs of the student population. (91, 98, 99)

D-41. Health Related Services for Students

The VEA believes:

- a. All students should have immediate access to the emergency medical services of a licensed professional registered school nurse;
- b. Students requiring nursing and/or health procedures must have their medical needs met by licensed professional registered school nurses;
- c. A licensed professional registered school nurse should be provided for each school building on a full-time basis.

The VEA further believes that when a licensed health care worker is absent, the same level of professional health care be provided by a licensed health care substitute. (74, 82, 94, 97, 98, 00, 04)

D-42. Academic Eligibility

The VEA strongly believes that the purpose of the school is to provide each student with a quality education. The VEA believes that five subjects or their equivalent must be taken and passed by participants in any extracurricular activity sponsored by the Virginia High School League. (84)

D-43. Reading

The VEA believes in quality early intervention programs for the development of reading skills for primary students. In addition, the VEA believes in the development of good reading habits for all students and in the early diagnosis and remediation of problems in reading. (76, 92, 97, 04)

D-44. Health and Physical Education

The VEA believes that quality, daily health, and physical education programs should be provided for all students in kindergarten through 12th grade and that these programs should be taught by licensed health and physical education teachers. (84, 94, 97, 09)

D-45. Electives

The VEA believes that a well-rounded education should be provided for all students. State requirements should not deny any student the right to pursue an elective subject during the regular school day. (84, 91)

D-46. Fine Arts and Practical Arts

The VEA believes that the fine arts transcend cultural barriers, foster multicultural understanding, and enhance critical thinking skills. The VEA believes that the study of fine and practical arts should be provided at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and that a licensed teacher should be provided at all schools. Adequate instructional funds should be provided for these programs. (84, 92, 10)

D-47. Modern/Classical Languages

The VEA believes that the study of modern and classical languages should be provided at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and that a licensed teacher should be provided at all levels. Adequate instructional funds should be provided for these programs. (80, 93)

D-48. First Language Proficiency

The VEA believes that the first language of non-native English speakers is a valuable resource. Retention and enhanced proficiency of that language should be encouraged. Therefore, community and parental initiatives to teach such languages should be supported. (07)

D-49. Multicultural Education

The VEA believes that education is a way of gaining an awareness of the cultural diversity of the world in which we live. All students should be encouraged to develop pride in their own cultural legacy and develop an appreciation of the common humanity shared by all peoples of the earth.

The VEA believes that the goal of multicultural education is the recognition of diversity, development of self-esteem, respect for others, and an appreciation of our interdependency in sharing the world's limited resources.

The VEA believes that education professionals should be encouraged to develop and teach strategies to combat all forms of cultural discrimination including anti-Semitism, apartheid, genocide, slavery, and other manifestations of racism and intolerance.

The VEA believes that school boards should provide professional development opportunities that promote the development of teaching strategies which address cultural, religious, and social differences.

The VEA believes that, in order to enhance multicultural education, professionals should be encouraged to develop and teach strategies to foster peace, international cooperation, non-violence, and conflict resolution. (87, 94, 97, 99, 02, 10)

D-50. Racism in Education

The VEA believes that racism is incompatible with quality education. The Association further believes that racism and racial discrimination must be eliminated. The Association endorses the use of non-racist language, resources, practices, and activities in all schools. The VEA believes that educational professionals should be encouraged to develop and teach strategies to combat all forms of racism. (96)

D-51. Civic Education

The VEA believes that democratic ideals should be a part of the total education process. The Association further believes that the following concepts should be an integral part of the curriculum within the public schools:

- a. The dignity and worth of the individual;
- b. Due process of law;
- c. Rule of the majority tempered by respect for minority rights;
- d. Individual responsibility;
- e. Equal justice under the law;
- f. Civil liberties as guarantors of individual rights;
- g. One-person-one-vote;
- h. Active citizen participation in public affairs. (95)

D-52. Decision-making Skills

The VEA believes that learning to make sound judgments is an essential aspect of education. Therefore, the VEA believes that instruction in critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making skills should be part of the total curriculum for grades pre-K through 12. (86, 91, 98)

D-53. Parenting Skills for Students

The VEA believes that all local school boards should provide a course incorporating parenting skills, stress management, and child development at either the intermediate/middle school or high school level. The VEA believes that such a course will enable students to prepare themselves for more successful parenting. (86, 92)

D-54. Family Life

The VEA believes that courses in family life education, including critical issues in sex education, should be offered. Local advisory committees composed of parents, administrators, and teachers should develop and review these courses. School boards should provide legal protection from censorship and other similar actions for teachers of these classes. (78, 92)

D-55. Career Exploration and Decision-making Programs

The VEA believes that a goal of public education is to provide opportunities for all individuals, preschool through adulthood, to become effective, productive citizens. To achieve this goal, the career exploration and decision-making concept must be interwoven into the total curriculum and include programs in awareness and early exploration to aid students in career course selection.

The VEA believes that career exploration and decision-making programs should assure equal opportunity for career development and offer a variety of exploratory experiences provided by positive and diverse role models. The VEA urges local school boards to provide professional development experiences and released time for teachers for curriculum development in this area. Furthermore, local school boards should cooperate with industry and agencies in full support of career exploration and decision-making programs. (80, 90, 04, 06)

D-56. Career and Technical Education

The VEA believes that preparation of students for vocations and productive jobs should be a basic goal of education. Educational programs which will assure equal opportunity for occupational growth should be developed for all students. A continuing comprehensive program for training, retraining, advancement, and promotion should be provided for all students who have completed minimal state attendance requirements.

The VEA believes career and technical education is a major component of education. To be effective, career and technical education should be preceded by career exploration and decision-making programs. Exploratory courses should be incorporated into existing career and technical education curricula. New courses for pre-high school students should be created and taught by career and technical education staff. (80, 90, 98, 04)

D-57. Innovative Instructional Technology

The VEA believes that the use of advanced technology is essential to the complete education of

students. It is imperative that teachers play an integral role in the planning, development, and implementation of new educational technology options and/or alternatives. To support technology instruction, there must be adequate access during the school day for teachers and students, training and maintenance, repair, upgrading, and hook-ups which provide utilization of the full potential of the technology for all personnel and students. (83, 94, 97)

D-58. Student Peer Mentoring Program

The VEA believes student peer mentoring programs provide incoming students with the opportunity to make a smooth transition to new schools. The Association believes that student peer mentoring programs should be supervised by appropriate staff and/or administration. Such programs should be student-based and ongoing. (05)

D-59. Suicide Prevention

The VEA believes that each school system should implement a suicide prevention program. (85, 86, 02, 04)

D-60. Students at Risk

The VEA believes that there should be collaboration among family, school, community, and business agencies to identify conditions which may cause students to become at-risk. These conditions include those which lead to dropping out, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, physical and emotional abuse, and sexual abuse.

The VEA believes that sufficient resources and programs should be provided as alternatives to social promotion in order to allow for proper placement of students.

The VEA further believes that school districts should become aware of how the conditions of latchkey children and the disadvantaged may adversely affect their ability to succeed in school.

The VEA also believes that school districts must develop and maintain alternative programs at the elementary, intermediate, and secondary levels to meet the needs of at-risk students. Teachers must have a major role in developing, implementing, evaluating, and maintaining these programs and must be compensated. (88, 94, 97, 98, 04)

D-61. Student Sexual Orientation or Gender Identification

The VEA believes that school personnel and students need to become sensitive to and aware of how bias based on a student's real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identification may affect the student's ability to learn, to cope, to interact with others, and to remain in school. Every school should have at least one staff member trained to respond to students requesting help on these issues. The VEA further believes that bias based on a student's real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identification is a factor in placing students at risk. (94, 98, 02, 03, 04)

D-62. Homeless Children

The VEA believes that school districts must implement and maintain programs to guarantee equal educational opportunities for homeless children. (89)

D-63. Education for Children with Special Needs

The VEA believes that full learning opportunities must be available for all students, including a free, appropriate public education for all students with disabilities in a Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. sections 1400-1485).

Therefore, the VEA supports an education system which includes:

- a. Appropriate instructional materials for both students with disabilities and students without disabilities;
- b. Regular and special education teachers and administrators who share equally in its planning, scheduling, and implementation;
- c. Staff prepared for these roles through professional development;
- d. Adequate funding and resources;
- e. Assurance that staff reduction does not result from placement of students with disabilities in regular classes;
- f. Assurance that reduction in student population in a self-contained classroom does not result in indiscriminately combining classes of different levels;

- g. Training for newly licensed teachers with emphasis on the mandates of IDEA;
- h. Student placement based on individual needs rather than space availability and test scores only;
- i. Career and technical education opportunities for all students with disabilities;
- j. A barrier-free environment for all students with disabilities;
- k. Limits on the number of special education students who can be mainstreamed into a regular classroom;
- l. Adequate personnel to ensure successful implementation of the LRE requirement.

The VEA further believes that the State Board of Education should develop programs with diagnostic, remedial, and counseling services for students who:

- a. Need more basic instruction than the regular program, but do not qualify for special education services;
- b. Are unable to benefit from the regular school program because of social or emotional difficulties which affect their learning and/or the learning of classmates;
- c. Are academically unsuccessful because needs are not being met by existing programs including, but not limited to, students with Attention Deficit Disorder;
- d. Speak English as a second language;
- e. Are gifted, talented, and creative;
- f. Are at risk.

The VEA believes that schools with a population of 40 percent or more Limited English Proficient students should have at least one English as a Second Language interpreter position.

Furthermore, the VEA supports an education system which includes;

- a. Appropriate instructional materials, adequate staffing, modified scheduling, and/or curriculum designed to accommodate the special needs of English Language Learners;
- b. Assurance that English Language Learners are not enrolled in special education classes solely due to linguistic differences;
- c. Limits on the number of English Language Learners placed in bilingual classes;
- d. Student placement based on level of English language proficiency rather than space availability and test scores only.

The VEA also believes that the selection of students for gifted and talented programs should not be based solely on academic and behavioral excellence nor be limited by a quota system.

The VEA further believes that the above listed programs and methods should not be at the expense of the regular programs. (76, 93, 95, 99, 03, 04, 11)

D-64. Mandated Special Education Committees

The VEA believes that the Special Education Eligibility Committee and the Child Study Committee are valuable tools for identification of students with special needs. The VEA further believes that these two committees have different purposes and federal regulations must be followed in performing the stated duties of each. (89)

D-65. Peer Support

The VEA believes that professional peer support systems such as mentor programs must be utilized solely for the development of professional expertise. These systems must be independent of any administrative evaluation. Documentation must be kept confidential and should not become part of the personnel record.

The VEA believes that the planning, implementation, and evaluation of such programs must be cooperatively developed and maintained by the school district and the local affiliate.

All aspects of these systems must be left to the discretion of the participants of each program, and participation must be voluntary. The state or local authority has the obligation to provide defense and indemnity to participants in these programs. (95)

D-66. Minority and Male Teacher Shortage

The VEA believes that cooperative efforts should be undertaken to alleviate the minority and male teacher shortage in public schools. These efforts should include the areas of recruitment, hiring, training, and retention. (88, 90)

D-67. School Restructuring

The VEA believes that teachers should be included in the planning, development, and implementation of any restructuring of schools. (89, 92)

D-68. School Choice

The VEA believes that federally or state-mandated parental option or choice plans compromise the Association's commitment to free, equitable, universal, and quality public education for every student. Therefore, the VEA opposes such federally or state-mandated choice or parental option plans.

The Association continues to support alternative programs in the public schools for specific purposes. (90, 94, 04)

D-69. Charter and Public School Options

The VEA believes that when concepts such as charter schools and other public school options are proposed, such changes have the greatest potential for success when they are initiated and nurtured at the local level. The local school board should be the only entity that can grant or renew charter applications.

The Association further believes that plans must not negatively impact the regular public school program and must be qualitatively different from what is available in mainstream public schools and not just an avenue for parental choice. These plans must include adequate safeguards covering contract and employment provisions for all employees, voluntary participation, health and safety standards for all students and employees, non-discrimination and equal educational opportunity, staffing by licensed professional staff, and financial responsibility. Programs must be adequately funded, must include start-up monies, must not divert funds from the regular public school programs, and must contain appropriate procedures for regular periodic assessment and evaluation.

VEA believes that public funds should not be used to fund charter schools operated by for-profit corporations.

Programs must have components to meet the needs of all students, including at-risk students and students with special needs, as well as high-achieving students. (94, 95,10,12,13)

D-70. State Mandated Remediation

The VEA believes that the state must fully fund all mandated remediation. (90, 93, 98, 03)

D-71. Evaluation of Students

The VEA believes that the evaluation of students is the responsibility of the teacher. System-wide grading and assessment policies should permit and support the teacher's professional judgment. Course grades should not be changed without the written consent of the teacher. (91, 97)

D-72. Beginning Teacher Induction

The VEA believes that beginning teachers face unique challenges that should be supported by:

- a. Competent, caring, and qualified mentors who are professionally compensated;
- b. Teaching assignments in their area of preparation;
- c. Paid, pre-service orientation to the school philosophy, community expectations, and the school system's policies and procedures;
- d. Full access to curricula, teaching materials, and supplies;
- e. Minimal non-teaching or additional school responsibilities;
- f. Adequate classroom space within the school building;
- g. Released time for observation and consultation;
- h. Favorable consideration for optimal planning time, including common planning time with a mentor during the student day. (99, 01)

D-73. Teacher Recruitment and Retention

The VEA believes that strong recruitment programs should seek out committed and qualified people to join the teaching profession, including those presently under-represented in this profession.

The VEA further believes that alternative licensure should, at a minimum, involve the study of human growth and development, instructional strategies, assessment, classroom management, curriculum and content knowledge, and strategies to address students with special needs, as well as a year-long internship in the classroom.

The VEA believes that professional starting salaries and competitive experience scales, rather than bonuses and/or differentiated pay, are needed to attract and retain superior candidates.

The VEA further believes that teacher retention depends upon meaningful decision-making power and respect being accorded the classroom teacher. (00, 01)

D-74. Firearms On Campus

The VEA believes that the only personnel that should be carrying live firearms on a school site/facility should be law enforcement personnel. (18)

E. HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

E-1. Comprehensive Health Care

The VEA believes that affordable, comprehensive health care is a right of everyone and supports the adoption of a health care plan for all residents of the United States.

The Association believes that closing the health care coverage gap is critical to the overall well-being of all members of the school community. Therefore, the Association supports efforts to provide comprehensive benefits that control costs while assuring quality care, that emphasize prevention of health problems, and that are financed by means which establish equity in the funding of such a system. (95, 98, 15)

E-2. Political and Civil Rights

The VEA believes that an educator's political and civil rights should not be denied or abridged. (84, 86, 95)

E-3. Human Rights

The VEA believes in actively and publicly promoting human and civil rights in Virginia and throughout the world. (85, 86)

E-4. Right to Privacy and Confidentiality

The VEA believes that the right to privacy and confidentiality must be guaranteed. The Association condemns the use and exchange of individually identifiable information without the explicit consent of the person or persons involved. (05, 08)

E-5. Discrimination

The VEA believes that all persons should be guaranteed equal opportunity within the public education system.

The Association opposes discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religious beliefs, residence, disability, physical appearance, political activities, professional association activities, age, marital status, family relationship, gender, or sexual orientation or gender identification, or of any other kind.

The Association further believes that every school should have staff members trained to respond to requests for help on any of these issues or to assist in crisis situations.

The Association further believes in the right of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals to be referred to by their name, gender, and pronoun of preference, and to have access to gender neutral facilities. (96, 99, 02, 03, 04, 06, 08, 13, 15, 16)

E-6. White Supremacy Culture

The VEA believes that, in order to achieve racial and social justice, educators must acknowledge the existence of White supremacy culture as a primary root cause of institutional racism, structural racism, and White privilege. Additionally, the VEA believes that the norms, standards, and organizational structures manifested in White supremacy culture perpetually exploit and oppress people of color and serve as detriments to racial justice. Further, the invisible racial benefits of White privilege, which are automatically conferred irrespective of wealth, gender, and other factors, severely limit opportunities for people of color and impede full achievement of racial and social justice. Therefore, the VEA will actively advocate for social and educational strategies fostering the eradication of institutional racism and White privilege perpetuated by White supremacy culture. (19)

E-7. Right of Redress for Descendants of Slavery

The VEA recognizes slavery, forced servitude, and the ownership of a human being as gross violations of human rights and unacceptable in a civilized society. These violations have contributed to the continuance of institutional racism.

The VEA believes the descendants of those subjected to slavery/racism/discrimination in the U.S. have the right to seek redress.

The VEA supports actions, legislation, and programs which lead to the conscientious alleviation of the inequities caused by these atrocities and injustices. (10)

E-8. Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The VEA believes that the slaughter or displacement of indigenous peoples is a gross injustice and a violation of basic civil rights. Offensive procedures include, but are not limited to, any practice that violates treaties, forcibly relocates indigenous peoples, or forces compulsory out-of-home placements, even if the stated purpose is for educational or other beneficial purposes.

The VEA further believes that the descendants of those subjected to the deprivation of human rights of indigenous peoples in the United States have the right to seek redress.

The VEA supports actions, legislation, and programs which lead to the conscientious alleviation of the inequities caused by these atrocities and injustices. (10)

E-9. Sexual Harassment and Bullying

The VEA believes that sexual harassment and bullying are forms of discrimination and abuse. The Association further believes that school personnel and students should be protected from sexual harassment and bullying. The VEA believes that the school environment must be free from all forms of sexual harassment and bullying.

The Association encourages each school to:

- a. Establish and enforce strong policies prohibiting sexual harassment and bullying;
- b. Develop and implement educational programs to help school personnel and students understand, recognize, oppose, and prevent sexual harassment and bullying;
- c. Provide effective training in recognizing, understanding, opposing, and preventing sexual harassment and bullying;
- d. Provide effective updated professional materials and resources on the prevention of sexual harassment and bullying.
- e. Provide information about and encourage staff support to student-led efforts to raise awareness of sexual harassment, bullying, and related issues. (10, 15, 16)

E-10. Contractual Rights

The VEA believes that the right of citizens to enter into contracts should not be denied on the basis of the gender identification of the parties entering therein. (05, 14)

E-11. Marriage Equality

The VEA believes that marriage equality as a right under law shall not be denied or abridged by the U.S. or any state. (15)

E-12. Discrimination and Tax-exempt Status

The VEA believes tax-exempt status should be denied to those institutions whose policies or practices prevent the integration of the institutions. (99)

E-13. School Employee/Student Relationships

The VEA believes that school employees should maintain a professional relationship with students free from sexual coercion, innuendo, and/or action. (07)

E-14. Right to Public Education in an Integrated School System

The VEA believes that every child has the right to a quality public education in an integrated school system.

The VEA also believes that public school busing continues to be one effective means of achieving an integrated school system. (82, 83, 09)

E-15. Immigration Reform Proposals

The VEA believes that fair immigration reform proposals should create pathways to citizenship and opportunities to learn English and to pursue education.

The VEA believes efforts should be made to improve the immigration process and support policies that protect children and the integrity of the family unit, regardless of documented status, and uphold human and civil rights. (07, 08, 15, 18)

E-16. Education of Refugee Children and Children of Undocumented Immigrants

The VEA believes that every student has the right to a free public education in an environment free from harassment regardless of the immigration status of their parents. (96)

E-17. Responsibility to Students

The VEA believes that the primary responsibilities of school systems and education employees are to educate students and promote their welfare. (76, 92, 96, 06, 08,10)

E-18. Cultural Sensitivity

The VEA believes that schools should not engage in or condone any practices such as "slave auctions" which are demeaning to any segment of society. (96)

E-19. Support for the Equal Rights Amendment

The VEA believes that equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the U.S. or by any state on the basis of gender. (82, 06)

E-20. Hate-Motivated Violence

The VEA deplores incidents of hate-motivated physical and verbal attacks against individuals or groups. The VEA further condemns the philosophy and practices of extremist groups and their efforts to recruit young people. (92, 99)

E-21. Substance Abuse Programs

The VEA believes that students and education employees have a right to an education environment that is free from the psychological and physiological effects of substance abuse. The VEA believes it is the responsibility of school systems to initiate or improve education programs dealing with substance abuse.

The VEA believes that school districts should adopt policies which include identification and reporting procedures as well as appropriate interventions for dealing with the suspected illegal use of drugs by students. (80, 89, 97, 06, 08)

E-22. Substance Abuse Rehabilitation

The VEA believes that school employees should be able to voluntarily and confidentially avail themselves of substance abuse and rehabilitation programs without the threat of disciplinary actions up to and including termination. (88, 07, 14)

E-23. Drug Testing

The VEA opposes the indiscriminate alcohol or drug testing of education employees. (87, 91, 08)

E-24. Environmental Protection Education and Practice

The VEA believes that it is the responsibility of the school system to include environmental protection education at all levels.

The VEA further believes that school systems should practice reduction, re-use, and recycling of all appropriate materials. (91, 98, 06, 09)

E-25. Healthful and Nutritional Food, Snacks, and Drinks

The VEA believes that healthful eating behaviors can have a positive life-long effect on student well-being; therefore, the VEA supports the availability of only nutritional food and drink during the instructional day.

The VEA further believes there is a need for school systems to develop education programs that support proper nutritional habits and the benefits of exercise. (05, 08)

E-26. Nuclear and Chemical Hazards

The VEA believes society has a responsibility to protect present and future generations from the harmful effects of nuclear weapons, the production of other nuclear materials, and the transportation, storage, and disposal of nuclear wastes.

The VEA believes society has a responsibility to protect present and future generations from the harmful effects of industrial pollutants and the production, transportation, storage, and elimination of hazardous substances and wastes.

The VEA believes there is an urgent need to develop education programs dealing with nuclear and chemical hazards. In addition, education employees should help to develop evacuation plans and procedures which all school personnel should be trained to implement.

The VEA further believes the people of a state should make the final determination as to whether or not toxic or nuclear waste processing sites or the transportation of nuclear waste shall be within their state boundaries. Other states directly affected environmentally by processing sites should be included in the final determination. (10)

E-27. Carbon Footprint

The VEA believes in researching, developing, and putting into use alternative energy sources. The VEA further believes that the construction of all new facilities should follow environmentally friendly building practices for energy and material conservation. (09)

E-28. Potential Health Hazards

The VEA believes that all students and school employees should be afforded a safe and healthy environment in which to learn and work. All instruction areas should comply with federal Environmental Protection Agency guidelines for indoor air quality. The VEA believes school systems should adopt guidelines to handle, in a timely fashion, cases of active communicable diseases.

The VEA believes that the Virginia Department of Education is obligated to provide school employees with accurate and current information regarding potential health hazards. Students' and employees' rights and privacies shall not be abridged. (86, 90, 96, 97, 17)

E-29. Bloodborne Pathogens Policy

VEA believes school districts should adopt bloodborne pathogen policies that include training, respect for privacy rights, and non-discrimination practices. (17)

E-30. Discipline

The VEA believes that consistent discipline policies which respect and safeguard the physical and psychological rights of students and education employees should be established and followed in each school division in a non-discriminatory manner. Disciplinary procedures should incorporate culturally responsive and restorative justice practices and be free of implicit bias. (82, 04, 06, 08, 19)

E-31. Students' Responsibilities and Rights

The VEA believes that students have responsibilities and rights and should be encouraged to accept responsibility for their actions and to exercise their rights. Students' viewpoints, as well as written policies on the responsibilities and rights of both students and education employees, should be considered in dealing with student disciplinary issues. (76, 82, 04, 05, 08, 09)

E-32. Academic Freedom

The VEA believes that academic freedom is essential to the teaching profession. Academic freedom includes the rights of education employees and students to explore and discuss divergent points of view. Government at all levels should take the necessary steps to ensure academic freedom. (81, 82, 07, 10)

E-33. Child Abuse and Neglect

The VEA believes that all children should be protected from abuse or neglect and that

education employees are in a position to observe, recognize, and report abuse which has been inflicted upon children. The VEA believes in:

- a. Informing membership of rights and responsibilities regarding suspected cases of abused or neglected children;
- b. Cooperating with community organizations to increase public awareness and understanding of child abuse or neglect and promoting the prevention of such abuse or neglect;
- c. Encouraging local school divisions to develop professional development programs and train personnel to recognize and report cases of abuse or neglect in accordance with state law;
- d. Encouraging the development of courses for school personnel and parents to better meet the needs of abused and neglected children and those living in violent homes;
- e. Ensuring that the names of individuals charged with child abuse not be placed on the Child Protective Services Central Registry unless the individuals named have been prosecuted and found guilty;
- f. Informing members as to what constitutes child abuse;
- g. Encouraging the development of a program on abuse counseling. Such a program should focus on the abuser, the child, the parent/guardian, and community resources;
- h. Informing membership of the danger of internet use that aids child predators or promotes child pornography and exploitation;
- i. Teaching students internet safety. (77, 90, 99, 01, 07, 08)

E-34. Missing Children

The VEA believes that all available means must be used to locate missing children and supports the voluntary finger-printing, photographing, or videotaping of children, provided that a parent or guardian is present during the process or provides written permission.

The VEA further believes that unexplained or suspicious absences or student behaviors, which might indicate that a child has been abducted, should be investigated.

The VEA supports the state call-back law, which requires parent notification of student absences. The implementation of this law should not be a duty of classroom teachers. (77, 90, 96, 04)

E-35. Human Relations Training

The VEA believes that institutions of higher education, local Associations, and local school boards should offer staff development in human relations and interpersonal communications to improve the school environment, to promote universal respect, and to better meet the needs of all students and education employees. (78, 82, 96, 97, 04, 05, 07, 08, 09)

E-36. Irrelevant Identification

The VEA believes the State Board of Education should prohibit provisions for racial, sexual, or any other irrelevant identifications of students completing competency and standardized test forms. (82, 05)

E-37. Biased Curricula

The VEA believes all curricula should be free of bias. Furthermore, the VEA believes in the use of nondiscriminatory language, resources, practices, and activities in all schools. The VEA believes that education professionals should be encouraged to develop and teach strategies to combat all forms of bias. (82, 91, 03, 04)

E-38. Religious Freedom

The VEA believes in religious freedom for all education employees and students and supports reasonable accommodations with respect to their religious freedom. (82, 08, 17)

E-39. Separation of Church and State

The VEA believes in the constitutional principle of separation of church and state and believes that religious instruction is the responsibility of the home and the religious institutions. The VEA opposes the use of tax funds for such instruction.

1 The VEA opposes the imposition of government mandated school prayer and other sectarian
2 practices in the public school program, including the busing of students off school grounds for the purpose
3 of religious education, and it urges its affiliates to do the same. (95, 05, 14)
4

5 **E-40. World Hunger Relief**

6 The VEA believes that food security positively correlates with academic success and supports
7 continued relief for those in need as well as education concerning world hunger and its effects.

8 The VEA further believes that governments or groups should not prohibit or inhibit the distribution
9 of food and lifesaving medical attention. (87, 17)
10

11 **E-41. Institutional Discrimination**

12 The VEA believes that the fabric of our society is strengthened when the contributions of all its
13 diverse members are encouraged and embraced. The VEA recognizes that institutional and public policies
14 and practices sometimes discriminate against segments of the population. The VEA encourages its
15 affiliates, in concert with community organizations, to educate the public to bring about an awareness of
16 such policies and practices and to actively work to eliminate discrimination. (17)
17

18 **E-42. Human Trafficking**

19 The VEA believes that all forms of human trafficking should be abolished. (18)
20

21 **E-43. Prevention of Nuclear, Biological, or Chemical Threats**

22 The VEA believes that world leaders have the responsibility to prevent nuclear, biological, and
23 chemical threats for the safety of the planet and all people. (18)
24
25
26
27

28 *Adopted by the VEA Delegate Assembly*
29 *March 30, 2019*
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