



2005

Adopted

Resolutions

**As Adopted by the
Missouri State Teachers Association
Assembly of Delegates
November 3, 2005**

Our Mission

The Missouri State Teachers Association is an all-inclusive, independent education association that impacts the direction and quality of education for Missouri students.

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A. FREE PUBLIC EDUCATION

Introduction: Moral, ethical and spiritual values have been from the first an indispensable and significant part of the program of the American public schools. The Missouri State Teachers Association shall continue to employ every means possible to instill high moral principles in our children and youth and join with the home, the church and all other constructive community agencies for this purpose.

- **A05-1: Equality of Opportunity**

1 The MSTA recognizes that experiences should be provided that would be conducive
2 to understanding human differences and that would develop a respect for the unique
3 value of each human being. Educators and boards of education, working together with
4 community leaders, have a mandate to provide a positive influence and strong leadership
5 affecting integration and the social and educational advantages that accompany it.

6 The MSTA urges an increased understanding, appreciation and celebration of the
7 racial and cultural diversity within the schools and the community.

- **A05-2: Local Control**

1 The MSTA believes that the responsibility and authority for the control of public
2 education should be at the community and school district level, and the concept of “local
3 control” must play an integral role in the educational process.

4 The MSTA supports legislation and judicial decisions that provide for and encourage
5 local control of school districts.

6 The MSTA supports legislation that would allow school districts to maintain local
7 standards for student promotion.

8 The MSTA urges the General Assembly to direct local school districts to set standards
9 regarding class rank and honor systems that reflect a student’s true standing in relation to
10 his or her peers.

11 The MSTA supports allowing boards of education to offer transportation for parochial
12 students to their schools. It would be up to the local school board to determine a fee to
13 ensure that no taxpayer money is used for parochial students.

- **A05-3: Academic Freedom**

1 The MSTA believes academic freedom is inherent in and essential to the teaching
2 profession. To be free to learn, students must have teachers who are free to teach the
3 curriculum as defined by the local school district. Therefore, the MSTA strongly opposes
4 all statewide and federal curriculum mandates. The MSTA supports the development of
5 model curriculum guides.

- **A05-4: Education of Exceptional Children**

1 The MSTA reaffirms its recommendation that continued attention be given to the
2 needs of the individual student.

3 The MSTA recognizes the differences among students and the need to help each
4 individual to develop his or her full potential. Attention should be given to fulfilling the
5 needs of those who are gifted (academically talented and/or creative); who are at-risk; or

6 who may have developmental, physical, social, emotional or other disabilities that
7 necessitate special teaching techniques, including alternative educational programs. We
8 urge strict adherence to limits on the teacher/pupil ratios to better facilitate the education
9 of these students. We further encourage additional funding for these special programs
10 over and beyond the foundation program.

11 The MSTA believes adequate funding and support must be provided by the federal
12 and state governments to employ and train public school district staff to fulfill the
13 requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The federal
14 government must live up to its stated promise of providing 40 percent of the cost of
15 educating public school special-needs students.

16 The MSTA believes that in order to be accountable for student performance,
17 educators must have the authority to maintain a classroom environment that encourages
18 learning. The MSTA believes all students are entitled to a safe educational environment
19 free from disruptions caused by any student, including students with special needs.
20 Furthermore, students with special needs must be required to accept the rights and
21 responsibilities of class participation.

22 The MSTA believes the identification process of students should be simplified and
23 clarified to ensure that every child with an educational disability is appropriately identified
24 under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

25 The MSTA recognizes that due-process procedures must be streamlined to discourage
26 litigation and encourage a fair, non-adversarial resolution of differences between the
27 parents of students with special needs and school officials. The MSTA supports legislation
28 that would regulate child advocacy groups in the state of Missouri.

29 The MSTA believes mainstreaming and/or inclusion of students into the regular
30 classroom requires trained professional staff and support staff present in the classroom as
31 needed to facilitate learning for all students.

32 The MSTA encourages local boards of education to adopt policies for dealing with
33 students with critical health problems, including acquired immunodeficiency syndrome,
34 that are consistent with guidelines established by the National Centers for Disease
35 Control.

36 The MSTA supports the use of "teacher advocates," whose responsibilities would
37 include providing support to regular and special-education teachers as needed at all
38 meetings at which a "parent advocate" or other consultant to the parents is present.

39 The MSTA encourages local school boards to adopt policies stating that if a parent
40 attends a meeting with a legal representative, the meeting should be rescheduled until all
41 parties involved have appropriate legal representation.

- **A05-5: Public Education**

1 The MSTA shall actively support legislation that is consistent with the constitutional
2 provisions respecting the establishment of religion and the separation of church and state.
3 The MSTA supports judicial review of the constitutionality of such legislation and opposes
4 any action that would undermine the public school system.

- **A05-6: Federal Influence in Education**

1 The MSTA urges the U.S. Secretary of Education to recognize the various
2 educational organizations and to seek input and staffing from a broad educational
3 representation in this nation.

4 The MSTA opposes federal intervention, including No Child Left Behind, into state
5 and local responsibility for public education, including assessments that set standards and
6 drive curriculum.

7 The MSTA believes federal influence in education should be focused on distributing
8 federal dollars back to the classroom where they can be put to their maximum use in
9 assisting the needs of the diverse constituencies they serve. The MSTA recommends that
10 existing funding and future increases in federal dollars be delivered directly to the local
11 school district whenever possible.

12 The MSTA opposes state and/or federal mandates that would require school districts
13 to use Internet filtering in order to receive funding.

- **A05-7: Kindergarten**

1 The MSTA urges the support of legislation to mandate kindergarten attendance and to
2 lower the minimum age for mandatory school attendance from age seven to age six in
3 the State of Missouri, leaving length of the kindergarten school day to the discretion of
4 the individual school district.

5 The MSTA strongly supports the cut-off date of age five by July 1 for entrance into
6 kindergarten, with no provision allowed for early entrance testing, including in Kansas
7 City and St. Louis.

- **A05-8: Reform**

1 The MSTA demands the elimination of the current Missouri Assessment Program.

2 The MSTA supports a quality, nationally normed testing program that is valid and
3 reliable to address state and federal requirements.

4 The MSTA demands that the State Board of Education set the level of proficiency at
5 grade level for the federal No Child Left Behind mandate.

6 The MSTA urges the State Board of Education to adopt a singly-aligned set of
7 achievement level cut scores for all statewide tests that fulfill both the Missouri School
8 Improvement Plan and federal No Child Left Behind requirements.

9 The MSTA supports the Missouri General Assembly setting the level of proficiency at
10 grade level for the federal No Child Left Behind mandate.

11 The MSTA supports sound programs and improvement of educational opportunities
12 for Missouri students. The MSTA supports instruction that teaches critical thinking and
13 decision-making founded on basic facts that leads to a testing system that assesses the
14 achievement and the total educational development of children. The MSTA recognizes
15 that the State Board of Education can set educational goals, but believes the autonomy of
16 local school districts' curriculum, assessments and programs to meet these goals must be
17 maintained.

18 The MSTA opposes rote instruction if the sole purpose is to pass mandated tests that
19 assess only factual knowledge and if the results are used to measure the educational
20 effectiveness of a nation, state, local district or individual (student or teacher). The MSTA
21 opposes the forced implementation of Outcome-Based Education. The MSTA supports

22 student accountability in a statewide graduation requirement only if multiple criteria
23 including, but not limited to, attendance, grade-point average and assessment results are
24 combined to meet the requirement.

25 The MSTA encourages the elimination of local testing for the grades that are subject
26 to the Missouri Assessment Program test.

27 The MSTA supports having a limit of two required state assessments at any one grade
28 level. The MSTA opposes performance events being administered prior to the fourth
29 grade.

30 The MSTA supports legislation to exclude from the Missouri School Improvement Plan
31 evaluation data the Missouri Assessment Program scores of students with an IQ of 70 and
32 below. The students should not be included in the "Level Not Determined" percentage.

33 The MSTA supports legislation to exclude from the Missouri School Improvement Plan
34 evaluation data the Missouri Assessment Program scores of English Language Learners
35 who have been in Missouri for three years or less. These students should not be included
36 in the "Level Not Determined" percentage.

37 The MSTA supports legislation to promote alternative assessments generated in local
38 districts for English Language Learners who have not acquired sufficient English to
39 participate in state and local assessments. Furthermore, English Language Learners should
40 be allowed to take the Missouri Assessment Program tests based on instructional level
41 rather than grade level until they are exited from the English Language Learning
42 program.

43 The MSTA supports allowing oral reading or paraphrasing of the Communication Arts
44 portion of the Missouri Assessment Program test for English Language Learners.

45 The MSTA supports legislation to promote alternative assessments generated in local
46 districts for students with disabilities who are unable to participate in state and local
47 assessments. Furthermore, students with special needs should be allowed to take the
48 Missouri Assessment Program tests based on ability level rather than grade level. The
49 MSTA, with the support of the local IEP team, supports allowing oral reading or
50 paraphrasing of the Communication Arts portion of the Missouri Assessment Program test.

51 The MSTA urges the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to continue
52 to work to improve the Missouri Assessment Program test as a valid assessment of what
53 students know and can do. In the event the Missouri Assessment Program is not
54 eliminated, the MSTA urges that all tests be scored by educators using Missouri-
55 generated scoring guides.

56 The MSTA opposes local districts releasing individual teachers' names in reporting
57 Missouri Assessment Program test results.

58 The MSTA recommends that local school districts not require Missouri Assessment
59 Program scores as criteria for enrollment in dual credit classes.

60 The MSTA supports allowing teachers maximum flexibility to assess learning.

61 The MSTA supports incorporating student accountability along with district-level
62 accountability for assessments used for purposes of determining a school's academic
63 strengths or deficiencies.

64 The MSTA supports local school districts in their efforts to hold students accountable
65 for their performance on state standardized tests.

66 The MSTA supports the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in
67 ensuring cooperative accountability among students, parents, community and school
68 districts as equal partners.

69 The MSTA urges the State Board of Education to provide additional diagnostic
70 information in the Missouri Assessment Program reports to assist teachers in clearly
71 identifying specific content and process standards for improvement and instruction.

72 The MSTA urges the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to maintain
73 a quality training program for those individuals involved in the Missouri School
74 Improvement Program evaluation process to ensure more consistency in reviews from
75 district to district.

76 The MSTA fully supports the concept of authentic assessment of all students, using
77 multiple evaluative tools including, but not limited to, portfolios, projects, course and
78 classroom grades, Missouri Assessment Program scores, American College Test scores,
79 and the results of other standardized and teacher-made assessment instruments. The
80 MSTA further urges the use of all forms of authentic assessment in evaluating schools'
81 performance through the Missouri School Improvement Program process. In addition, the
82 MSTA urges that if annual comparisons of performance improvement are to be made,
83 annual assessments of all students need to be recorded.

- **A05-9: School Report Card**

1 The MSTA strongly opposes the publication and use of a "school report card" as the
2 only method of comparing public schools.

- **A05-10: School Assignments**

1 The MSTA recommends that each school district develop a written policy for transfer
2 and assignment of students within a district and to any other school district.

- **A05-11: Missouri Academic Competition**

1 The MSTA recommends that interscholastic academic competition of all types be
2 encouraged in Missouri schools by having the Missouri State High School Activities
3 Association continue to sponsor district and state competitions for students in a variety of
4 disciplines and to promote and coordinate the creation of activities to stimulate the
5 academic achievement of students.

6 The MSTA urges officials who schedule academic and/or athletic competition
7 activities to remain aware of the amount of time students are out of class and to attempt to
8 keep those times to a minimum.

9 The MSTA strongly supports local school districts providing monetary stipends for
10 academic-competition sponsors.

- **A05-12: Service Learning**

1 The MSTA supports the concept of voluntary community service learning in
2 elementary, secondary and higher education.

- **A05-13: Drug Education**

1 The MSTA encourages public schools to have substance-abuse awareness programs
2 emphasizing the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

- **A05-14: School Board Training**

1 The MSTA supports legislation that will require *all* members of the local school board
2 to receive training in such areas as school law, finance and other programs of the school.
3 This training should be ongoing and based on competencies set forth by the State Board
4 of Education. Local boards should be allowed to select from a variety of delivery formats
5 and vendors offering school-board training programs that include these competencies.

- **A05-15: “No Pass-No Drive”**

1 The MSTA opposes legislation involving the concept of “No Pass-No Drive” as a
2 means of addressing the at-risk school population.

- **A05-16: Choice, Vouchers and Tuition Tax Credits**

1 The MSTA opposes legislative actions involving the concept of “inter-district choice” in
2 Missouri’s public schools. The MSTA supports intra-district choice approved by the local
3 school district. Furthermore, the MSTA opposes legislation that would give tax credits for
4 scholarships, tuition or vouchers to private schools or voucher plans that would divert
5 public funds to pay for private school tuition.

- **A05-17: Home Schooling**

1 The MSTA recommends that parents who elect to educate their children at home be
2 required to provide for their children an education at least equivalent in standards to a
3 public school education, and that said program be monitored by the state Department of
4 Elementary and Secondary Education.

5 The MSTA urges the General Assembly to pass legislation requiring that a
6 local/statewide placement exam be administered by local school-district personnel to
7 home-schooled students prior to their enrolling in public schools in order to determine
8 appropriate academic placement.

9 The MSTA strongly urges the General Assembly to support legislation to more
10 stringently regulate the education standards for individuals providing home-school
11 instruction and student academic requirements in home-schooling situations. The MSTA
12 further urges the General Assembly to support legislation providing penalties for parents
13 or guardians who violate mandatory attendance or home-schooling requirements and
14 providing for the enforcement of those penalties.

- **A05-18: Counseling Services**

1 The MSTA recognizes the importance of elementary counseling services in providing
2 preventive and developmental programs for children as well as assisting teachers,
3 administrators and parents in meeting the special needs of elementary school students.
4 The MSTA urges that the services of a certificated school counselor be provided for all
5 students on a frequent and regular basis in Missouri’s elementary schools. The MSTA
6 further recommends that legislation be introduced with appropriate funding provided to
7 lower the student-counselor ratio from its present overload and to ensure the presence of
8 a full-time counselor in each building.

9 The MSTA urges the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to require
10 secondary schools to relieve school counselors of registrar responsibilities.

- **A05-19: School Social Work Services**

1 The MSTA affirms that the pupil services team approach is integral to the education
2 process. The MSTA recognizes the importance of school social workers in Missouri as
3 members of pupil services, along with school counselors, school psychologists and other
4 qualified professional personnel.

- **A05-20: Health Services**

1 The MSTA supports legislation requiring that school health services for public school
2 students be provided by the professional school nurse and funded in addition to existing
3 educational services. The MSTA supports the employment of registered professional
4 nurses to direct the health services of each school district and recommends that the district
5 employ registered professional school nurses at ratios recommended by the National
6 Association of School Nurses to meet the special health-care needs of students.

7 The MSTA strongly supports legislation requiring that medically invasive procedures
8 such as injectable medications, catheterization and tube feeding be performed only by
9 registered professional nurses in accordance with the Missouri Nursing Practice Act.

- **A05-21: Access to Communication**

1 The MSTA recommends that, in order to further initiate the advances of technology
2 and communication, every classroom in Missouri be provided access to the Internet and a
3 telephone.

4 The MSTA supports school districts providing distance-learning opportunities for
5 students and opposes virtual schools that direct state money to private providers.

- **A05-22: Library/Media and Computer Services**

1 The MSTA urges all public schools to provide the services of at least one full-time
2 library/media specialist per attendance center and to provide flexible access to
3 information in a variety of formats for all students at all levels by adequately staffing and
4 funding library/media programs. The MSTA encourages the Department of Elementary
5 and Secondary Education to continue to employ a full-time library/media supervisor to
6 coordinate library services statewide.

7 The MSTA further urges all public schools to provide the services of a fully staffed
8 and adequately funded computer-education program for all students and encourages the
9 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to employ a full-time, certificated
10 computer supervisor to coordinate computer services statewide.

- **A05-23: Fine Arts Education**

1 The MSTA recognizes the important role that fine arts education plays in the
2 development of creativity, higher-order thinking skills, diverse learning styles, teaching
3 strategies, self-esteem, literacy and cross-cultural understanding, and in encouraging
4 additional involvement and interest for students at-risk; therefore, the MSTA supports the
5 fine arts as basic to the core educational curriculum.

6 The MSTA urges school districts to provide fine-arts teachers with an environment that
7 is safe, spacious, adequate and conducive to teaching fine arts. Fine-arts students should
8 have the equipment and technology available to them to stimulate learning at a high
9 level.

10 The MSTA supports increased funding for the Missouri Fine Arts Academy.
11 The MSTA opposes the change in the Missouri School Improvement Program
12 standard requiring fine-arts educators to teach up to a maximum of 750 students per
13 week.

- **A05-24: Early Childhood Education**

1 The MSTA opposes legislation that would make it more difficult for a child to qualify
2 for early childhood special-education services.

3 The MSTA supports the action of the state legislature that places more emphasis on
4 early childhood education, parenting programs and family literacy. The MSTA strongly
5 urges that early childhood education, parenting programs and family literacy currently
6 mandated be fully funded by additional state moneys, above and beyond the foundation
7 formula.

8 The MSTA supports funding from current revenue sources for one-half day, quality
9 public school preschool-education programs, including transportation, for 3- and 4-year-
10 old children in families eligible for free- and reduced-price lunch who are not currently
11 being served in a program for developmentally delayed 3- and 4-year-olds.

- **A05-25: Recess for Young Children**

1 The MSTA strongly urges local school districts to allow a minimum of 15 minutes per
2 day for recess for grades K-5 in addition to physical-education class.

- **A05-26: Commitment to Education**

1 The MSTA, continuing to emphasize its belief in the legislative process to address the
2 needs of the state, including funding to more adequately provide for public education,
3 encourages legislative activities at a time and in a manner appropriate to show our
4 commitment to the grass-roots effort.

5 The MSTA strongly affirms the democratic legislative process as the proper, legitimate
6 and constitutional avenue through which the people of Missouri express their will.

- **A05-27: Educational Environment**

1 The MSTA urges school districts to provide all teachers and students with an
2 environment that is safe, spacious, adequate and conducive to instruction of all children.
3 Students should have the equipment and technology available to them to stimulate
4 learning at a high level.

- **A05-28: Physical Education**

1 The MSTA recognizes that educating the whole child through physical education,
2 with more emphasis on health and lifestyle changes, is vital to the child physically,
3 mentally and socially. We urge quality daily physical education with maximum teacher-
4 pupil ratios equivalent to those recommended for classroom teachers in grades K-12.
5 Physical education should not take the place of recess.

6 The MSTA encourages school districts to adhere to state recommendations on contact
7 time for students in physical education.

- **A05-29: Practical Arts Education**

1 The MSTA recognizes that practical arts education has an increasingly important role
2 in providing training, technical skills and experiences to meet the career needs of the

3 professional, vocational and non-traditional, four-year college-bound student. Therefore,
4 the MSTA supports the practical arts as basic to the core educational curriculum.

5 The MSTA urges the State Board of Education and the Department of Elementary and
6 Secondary Education to explore and find ways that students can receive embedded
7 credit.

8 The MSTA supports legislation to allow graduates of A+ Schools programs to apply
9 their tuition privileges to a nearby public four-year institution when the distance to a
10 vocational school or community college is substantial. The MSTA encourages the
11 Coordinating Board of Higher Education and the Department of Elementary and
12 Secondary Education to reach consensus on a reasonable solution.

• **A05-30: Safe Schools**

1 The MSTA supports legislation dealing with solutions to the problem of violence in
2 schools. Any long-term solution must require the involvement of the community, parents
3 and law officials. The MSTA supports legislation that would provide alternative-placement
4 programs for students removed from the classroom due to behavioral concerns.
5 Furthermore, the MSTA supports efforts in providing funding for alternative programs in
6 addition to the school foundation formula.

7 The MSTA supports legislation requiring all students, including those with special
8 needs, to be held responsible and accountable for maintaining a safe school
9 environment.

10 The MSTA supports legislation and local school-board policy that addresses student
11 safety.

12 The MSTA supports legislation and local school-board policy that (1) require all
13 threats of violence and other intimidating statements be investigated by school officials
14 and be subject to strong disciplinary action, (2) allow reasonable measures for search and
15 seizure of property when there is knowledge of or suspicion of violent intent, (3)
16 encourage all members of the school community to disclose information of or suspicion of
17 violence, and (4) encourage cooperation with law-enforcement officials in dealing with
18 violence or threats of violence.

19 The MSTA supports criminal charges being filed against anyone who carries a
20 weapon on school property or to a school function.

21 The local board of education should identify those objects considered weapons and
22 those activities considered violent in nature.

23 The MSTA supports legislation providing suspension or expulsion for acts of violence,
24 felony sexual offenses or weapon possession to be effective in all public school districts
25 in Missouri.

26 The MSTA recognizes the importance of confidentiality of student records. With this
27 idea established, the MSTA supports legislation that requires records of student discipline
28 relating to acts of violence and possession of weapons be shared with school employees
29 directly involved in the instruction of the student, including transfer of such records to a
30 receiving school.

31 The MSTA supports the use of background checks of criminal records and
32 substantiated child abuse and neglect reports for school volunteers.

33 The MSTA strongly supports local, state and federal efforts to provide schools with the
34 technology needed to keep Internet sites that provide instruction in illegal acts out of
35 classrooms.

- **A05-31: Parental Involvement**

1 The MSTA supports legislation to stimulate increased involvement and responsibility
2 by parents for their children’s attendance and performance in public schools until
3 completion of the academic program as outlined by the local school-district policy.

4 The MSTA supports communication that increases parental involvement and
5 accountability in their children’s education; however, parental involvement in evaluation,
6 assessment and curriculum should be through the local board of education.

- **A05-32: Disciplinary Policies**

1 The MSTA supports legislation that would maintain local control of disciplinary
2 policies. The MSTA supports legislation that allows the local school district to choose its
3 discipline policy options. If a parent/guardian in a district choosing to use corporal
4 punishment determines its use would not be in the best interest of the child, the
5 parent/guardian may make a written request that identifies discipline alternatives
6 specified in the district’s discipline policy that the parent/guardian will support.

- **A05-33: Public Charter Schools**

1 The MSTA supports establishment of public charter schools, provided the charters are
2 granted by the local school board within an existing accredited Missouri public school
3 district and provided the charter encourages the best Missouri educators to participate by
4 requiring at least the same certification and compensation standards of other public
5 schools in the district, as well as making certain that tenure status and retirement benefits
6 are not reduced or lost as a result of teaching in the public charter school.

7 The MSTA encourages charter schools to participate fully in the Missouri School
8 Improvement Program review of the school district.

9 Furthermore, the MSTA supports the establishment of public charter schools provided
10 the General Assembly considers the components that will be used to evaluate the success
11 of charters and requires these components in ALL charters. The MSTA also supports an
12 evaluation of the impact on students attending charter schools as compared to similar
13 students attending other schools in the district.

14 The MSTA encourages careful consideration of funding for charter schools and
15 whether they should be required to seek outside revenue sources; consideration of
16 whether a charter-school population should be representative of the overall district
17 population with regard to race, gender, ability, special-education needs and similar
18 factors; and consideration of accumulating data on charters that were rejected, of capital
19 needs, etc., to be used in future policy decisions regarding charters.

20 The MSTA encourages public elementary and secondary schools to use the existing
21 opportunities to seek waivers from state regulations usually associated with the charter-
22 school concept.

23 The MSTA supports legislation requiring public charter schools to continue Public
24 School Retirement System contributions for employees/teachers transferring to charter
25 schools, resulting in no loss of membership credit while employed by the charter school.
26 The MSTA supports all Missouri retirement systems adopting common administrative rules
27 for members employed by public charter schools.

- **A05-34: School Completion Rates**

1 The MSTA urges the General Assembly to enact legislation to require accurate and
2 consistent accounting of school completion rates.

• **A05-35: Open Meetings and Communication**

1 The MSTA supports legislation to improve the public's access to notification of
2 meetings when technology is used to conduct meetings outside of the normal meeting
3 cycle.

4 The MSTA supports requiring full public disclosure at each meeting of all information
5 regarding open-meeting agenda items that have been provided to the board prior to the
6 meeting, with the assumption that preliminary information will influence decision making.

7 The MSTA supports legislation to place a personal financial penalty for failure to
8 provide proper notification, with the goal of making certain that public access is
9 encouraged at any retreat or social event that the majority of any public board attends
10 where public business is discussed.

11 The MSTA supports legislation to reduce vendor and special-interest expenditures
12 used to gain preferred access or influence with a public board.

13 The MSTA encourages public boards to adopt policies requiring their board agendas
14 to include descriptions of items for closed session and to specify the section of the
15 Sunshine Law that makes each item appropriate for closed session.

• **A05-36: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

1 The MSTA strongly urges the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to
2 be held accountable for utilizing teacher input in the development of all Missouri
3 Assessment Program tests, in particular establishing the cut-point scores for determining
4 proficiency. The MSTA strongly urges the State Board of Education to oversee the
5 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to ensure that the department
6 follows the intent of state statutes.

7 The MSTA believes professional development moneys should be a line item in the
8 state budget and that money be pro-rated in the same way as categoricals in the state
9 budget.

10 The MSTA supports the continuation and full funding of the Regional Professional
11 Development Centers, the STARR teacher program and other programs that have a direct
12 impact on students.

13 The MSTA urges the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to refrain
14 from using grants and contractual agreements with other organizations created through
15 the state's 1 percent professional-development moneys to subvert legislative intent relative
16 to professional-development activities.

17 The MSTA supports a rigorous original research evaluation by external experts of all
18 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education-based professional development
19 and student achievement programs, including the Missouri Assessment Program, state 1
20 percent money grant programs, Regional Professional Development Centers and similar
21 initiatives for the purposes of assuring their effectiveness and efficiency in reaching their
22 legislative intents. Evaluation reports should be shared with the State Board of Education,
23 the offices of all statewide elected officials and the General Assembly, and be funded
24 using current appropriations for these programs.

25 The MSTA urges the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to stop
26 selling publications and charging fees for conferences and other services in excess of
27 costs.

28 The MSTA supports making the Missouri School Improvement Program less taxing on
29 teachers' time.

30 The MSTA supports alternative methods of selecting members of the State Board of
31 Education to ensure accountability and responsiveness to Missouri education by adding
32 some practicing educators on the State Board of Education and limiting the length of
33 terms for all members.

34 The MSTA supports the State Board of Education appointing the commissioner of
35 education.

B. SOURCES OF SCHOOL REVENUE

The Missouri State Teachers Association reaffirms that the continuation of our free nation and its strength and well-being depend on our free public schools. These schools contribute significantly to the national unity, common purpose, equality of opportunity and the perpetuation of democracy, and should be nurtured by all our citizens.

• B05-1: State Support of Education

1 The MSTA recognizes that the Constitution of Missouri places the responsibility for
2 establishing and maintaining free public schools upon the General Assembly. The MSTA
3 actively supports legislation to increase state appropriations to an amount that would
4 provide funding at least equal to or above the national average expenditure per pupil.

5 The MSTA calls upon the State Board of Education to request and the members of the
6 General Assembly to continue to appropriate sufficient funding to fully fund the
7 foundation formula.

8 The MSTA supports prioritizing the use of increased general revenue to go first
9 toward the school foundation formula program and second to categorical programs.

10 The MSTA supports increasing the amount of revenue that hold-harmless school
11 districts receive from the state as long as it does not negatively impact the revenue for
12 other school districts.

13 The MSTA strongly opposes any action of the governor during the fiscal year that
14 would delay regular payments to local school districts or that would reduce the total
15 amount of money allocated to the foundation formula by the General Assembly.

16 The MSTA supports funding of summer programs at the current level for those districts
17 that coordinate and operate their own programs without private enterprise. The MSTA
18 encourages the legislature to notify districts of any change in funding for programs by
19 April 1 of the year affected.

20 The MSTA urges the General Assembly to fully fund programs that deal with at-risk
21 students.

22 The MSTA urges passage of legislation that would allow voters to repeal the
23 "Hancock Amendment" and opposes any similar limitations or restrictions.

24 The MSTA will seek to improve funding for public education by requiring a minimum
25 appropriation annually from the General Assembly of thirty-three and one-third percent
26 (33-1/3%) of general revenue, excluding funds appropriated for purposes of
27 desegregation for public elementary and secondary education.

28 The MSTA supports legislation that establishes state funding for school districts for the
29 renovation and construction of essential school facilities.

30 The MSTA requests that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
31 secure adequate funding for additional services, materials, instructional time and
32 programs necessitated by the adoption of the Missouri School Improvement Program.

33 The MSTA supports additional state appropriations to fund the increased cost to local
34 districts of any state-mandated assessment. In addition, any increased cost to include
35 diagnostic information in the Missouri Assessment Program reports should become a state
36 appropriation.

37 The MSTA opposes the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
38 requesting school districts to pay any part of a state-mandated requirement, including
39 testing.

40 The MSTA strongly opposes any legislative action that culminates in the diversion of
41 funds currently used for the support of public education. The MSTA urges the members of
42 the Missouri General Assembly to recognize public education as its top priority and
43 provide financial support through the appropriation process in keeping with that priority.
44 In addition, the MSTA supports using Missouri's rate of growth in general revenue as the
45 minimum standard for increasing appropriations for public schools.

46 The MSTA supports legislation to revise the fiscal year of political subdivisions and the
47 collection and administration of local taxes.

48 The MSTA supports the use of a valid school district tax-exempt letter for promotional
49 fund-raising activities that occur within a school district.

50 The MSTA supports postsecondary loan forgiveness for educators who teach in
51 Missouri for five years or more after graduation.

52 The MSTA supports legislation to restrict the power of the State Board of Education to
53 lapse or close school districts.

54 The MSTA supports restoring funding for the High School Math and Science Institute.

- **B05-2: School Finance and Data**

1 The MSTA supports legislation requiring school districts to adopt budgets organized in
2 a format that includes components of the Department of Elementary and Secondary
3 Education State Model Budget and parallels the Annual Secretary of the Board Report.

4 The MSTA supports legislation to assist local school districts in improving the accuracy
5 of their revenue projections for budgeting purposes.

6 The MSTA supports legislation to monitor local district audit standards of the teachers
7 fund that would include a random cross check between actual compensation and
8 contributions to the Public School Retirement System/Public Education Employee
9 Retirement System as well as a comparison between the district's total compensation
10 obligation and Public School Retirement System/Public Education Employee Retirement
11 System total contributions.

12 The MSTA supports legislation and rules and regulations that encourage school
13 districts to share personnel.

14 The MSTA supports granting a school district authority to borrow between operating
15 funds as long as the balance is repaid prior to June 29 and does not affect the balance
16 requirements outlined in the salary-compliance ratio.

17 The MSTA supports legislation requiring a capital-projects acquisition schedule to be
18 submitted with the annual budget.

19 The MSTA encourages the State Tax Commission to investigate ways to lessen the
20 negative impact on school-district budgets while business personal-property taxes are
21 being appealed.

22 The MSTA supports legislation to allow a district to levy as much as the first 18 cents
23 of any operating-levy increase in excess of the minimum tax rate in the capital-projects
24 fund and receive state aid match for this capital-projects fund tax rate while continuing to
25 make transfers to pay for "grandfathered" lease-purchases.

26 The MSTA strongly recommends the cessation of all future compliance waivers
27 pending the completion and implementation of stringent guidelines for the State Board of
28 Education to follow when considering any requests for a compliance waiver. All
29 compliance waiver requests must include, as a portion of the documentation, evidence of
30 communication to the employees of the district, which shall include written justification for
31 the approval or denial of the request. Furthermore, all previously issued waivers should
32 be re-evaluated to conform to the new guidelines.

33 The MSTA strongly supports strict enforcement of the requirements of the salary-
34 compliance program.

35 The MSTA urges the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to: (1)
36 simultaneously inform the superintendent, president of the board of education and local
37 presidents of statewide teacher associations if the district does not meet the requirements
38 of the salary-compliance program; and (2) make public a list of school districts in violation
39 of the requirements of the salary-compliance program.

40 The MSTA supports legislation allowing school districts more flexibility in the financing
41 of capital projects, especially those districts that have reached bonding capacity, provided
42 that the percentage of district revenues currently expended in the incidental and
43 teachers' funds are not decreased.

44 The MSTA supports no loss of current per-pupil expenditure by a school district if
45 there is a change in school funding.

- **B05-3: Adequate and Equitable Funding**

1 The MSTA believes all students are of equal worth and great individual worth.

2 The MSTA believes all students deserve equal access to a free and adequately
3 funded public education.

4 The MSTA believes all students deserve equal access to a free and equally funded
5 public education.

6 The MSTA believes with an ever-increasing, mobile population, education should be
7 a common interest for all Missourians.

8 The MSTA supports legislation that would increase the portion of state revenue
9 dedicated to funding Missouri public schools so that adequacy and equity in funding
10 becomes a reality for all students.

- **B05-4: Desegregation**

1 The MSTA recommends that as new educational programs are instituted, full funding
2 should be guaranteed in addition to current educational moneys. When the
3 implementation of any court-ordered desegregation plan requires the use of state
4 moneys, such moneys should be provided in addition to current education moneys. If full
5 funding for mandated education programs or court-ordered plans require new state
6 moneys, the MSTA will support tax reform and increases to raise such revenue.

7 The MSTA supports legislation granting the ability to locally generate alternative
8 revenue to secure financial stability for the Kansas City and St. Louis school districts to aid
9 in the settlement of court-ordered desegregation, provided that the alternative revenue
10 sources do not decrease revenue in other Missouri school districts.

11 The MSTA recommends that the General Assembly continue to distribute to the public
12 schools any additional revenues made available as a result of the settlement of the
13 Kansas City and St. Louis desegregation cases as long as any such appropriation does not
14 replace increases available from general-revenue funds.

- **B05-5: Higher Education**

1 The MSTA is aware of the need for and supports the effort to secure adequate
2 funding for all public institutions of higher education.

3 The MSTA supports legislation to provide equality of opportunity for Missouri's
4 underprivileged college students to attend a Missouri public institution of higher education
5 through a tuition-assistance plan.

6 The MSTA strongly urges the General Assembly to continue and to adequately fund
7 the A+ Schools program to meet commitments to Missouri high school students.

- **B05-6: Local Support for Education**

1 The MSTA urges that equalized property assessments throughout Missouri be
2 maintained in a uniform manner as established by law. The MSTA opposes any plan that
3 would lengthen the time between property reassessments. Recognizing that costs of
4 assessment maintenance will create financial stress on many individuals and groups, the
5 MSTA strongly urges that the financial impact be equally borne by all citizens.

6 The MSTA supports legislation requiring that a certificate of value be filed following
7 the sale of each parcel of real property.

8 The MSTA supports legislation to allow counties in Missouri to collect and distribute
9 local real-estate taxes semi-annually, subject to authorization by voters in the affected
10 counties.

11 The MSTA supports the repeal of statutes that prohibit any charter city or other local
12 political subdivision from pursuing approval for surcharges or fees from developers.

- **B05-7: Voting Current School Levies and Bonds**

1 The MSTA urges the support of constitutional changes that would authorize the
2 passage of all school levies and bond issues by a simple majority.

- **B05-8: School Elections**

1 The MSTA opposes legislation seeking to reduce the number of annual school
2 election dates.

• **B05-9: Federal Support of Public Education**

1 The MSTA urges the federal government to appropriate full funding for the No Child
2 Left Behind Act.

3 The MSTA urges that individual states and local districts be given more discretion in
4 developing the guidelines for the use of federal support.

5 The MSTA recommends that should funding for federal programs be distributed
6 through block grants, local school districts receive these funds directly from the federal
7 government whenever possible. The MSTA urges the U.S. Congress, through the
8 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, to continue the distribution of
9 federal funds used in workforce-development education for classroom training and
10 vocational education.

11 The MSTA encourages additional federal funds to be provided so each public school
12 student is afforded an equal opportunity to participate in remedial basic-skills services
13 regardless of socioeconomic status.

14 The MSTA recommends that the continued use of federal funds for capital
15 improvements of state schools operating for handicapped students and for vocational
16 schools. The MSTA further urges public school districts and special school districts that are
17 political subdivisions of the state be provided increased federal funds to alleviate critical
18 needs.

19 The MSTA recommends more federal assistance to bring the nation's schools up to
20 modern standards by providing energy-efficient buildings in which students can learn.

• **B05-10: Tuition Tax Credits**

1 The MSTA opposes any proposed federal tuition tax credits for private and parochial
2 education tuition, which diminish the general revenue otherwise available for funding
3 public education and other essential state and federal services.

• **B05-11: Tax-Relief Incentives**

1 The MSTA supports legislation to ensure tax-relief incentives will not be granted
2 unless approved by the affected school districts if the incentives, regardless of the taxing
3 authority, will impact school district revenues.

4 The MSTA supports the creation of a percentage limit established for each school
5 district that reflects the combined use of tax-increment financing, enterprise zones, tax
6 abatement or any other revenue-related decisions that will adversely impact the tax base
7 of the school district.

C. EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS, PRACTICES AND STANDARDS

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

Local MSTA/CTAs, in conjunction with local boards of education, must secure and enforce personnel policies and practices ensuring non-discrimination. Such a policy must ensure that no person would be denied employment, retention, payment or promotion because of age, gender, race, national origin, religious affiliation, political affiliation or

professional activities, nor would the above-listed conditions be used as grounds for dismissal.

- **C05-1: Professional Negotiations**

1 The MSTA supports local boards of education adopting a policy that outlines a
2 process for input and feedback from school employees at all levels regarding salary,
3 salary compliance, working conditions, employment benefit issues, personnel policies and
4 appropriate student-related issues. The process should result in written statements of
5 consensus and written statements of unresolved issues. A time line to review unresolved
6 issues should be established.

7 Such policies should require local board policy to provide for representation by
8 organizations, and at no time shall an exclusive representative be selected that excludes
9 an employee organization or individual employee from the input process. In addition,
10 such legislation should stipulate that at no time shall membership in any organization be
11 a condition of employment or continued employment, nor may any fee for representation
12 be required of an employee.

13 The MSTA strongly opposes strikes, blue flu and other tactics that could interrupt the
14 instruction of students.

- **C05-2: Written Personnel Policies**

1 The MSTA insists that personnel policies be cooperatively written, developed and
2 revised by local MSTA/CTAs and boards of education, and that they be binding on both
3 parties. We further insist that copies of all current board personnel policies be available in
4 each school building be updated on a regular cycle, and that local boards adopt a
5 regular program of in-service for employees to review board policies that affect them.

6 The MSTA recommends that written policies providing for severance pay, reduction in
7 force, sick leave, personal leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, military leave, service-
8 in-public-office leave, sabbatical leave and professional-meetings leave be adopted by
9 the boards of education and reviewed annually to ensure compliance with all state and
10 federal laws.

11 The MSTA supports legislation that requires school districts that find they must have a
12 reduction in force to be held responsible for unemployment benefits for any contracted
13 teachers who are affected.

14 The MSTA recommends that unused sick leave be allowed to accumulate without limit
15 in order that teachers can better meet health emergencies. The MSTA also recommends
16 that teachers upon departure from the district, either through resignation or retirement, be
17 paid for each day of unused sick leave. If the departure is caused by death, the payment
18 should be made to the teacher's estate.

19 The MSTA urges local school districts and local MSTA/CTAs to establish carefully
20 developed grievance procedures that provide definite steps to appeal the application or
21 interpretation of board policies.

22 The MSTA supports providing professional development, release time and
23 compensation for mentors to beginning teachers, beginning principals and beginning
24 superintendents.

25 The MSTA encourages Missouri teachers to seek and strive for continuous
26 improvements in teaching effectiveness. In addition, the MSTA supports mentoring and
27 evaluation as required in the Excellence in Education Act for professional development.

28 The MSTA recommends that each district develop a written policy for transfer of
29 teachers and non-certificated personnel within the school district.

30 The MSTA encourages local school districts to establish a systematic performance-
31 based evaluation for support staff in non-certificated positions.

32 The MSTA strongly supports a drug-free school environment but opposes random
33 drug testing of all employees (teachers and staff).

• **C05-3: Professional Salaries**

1 The MSTA recommends that salaries for public school teachers compare favorably
2 with incomes in other professions and occupations requiring comparable preparation. The
3 MSTA recognizes that educators' salaries are a major factor in the struggle to recruit and
4 retain educators. In addition, the MSTA, recognizing the vital importance of support staff
5 to our profession and the educational process, urges school districts to offer a competitive,
6 equitable salary for support staff.

7 The MSTA recommends that salary schedules be adjusted annually to reflect changes
8 in the cost-of-living index, and that salaries for supervisors and administrators should be
9 related to the teachers' salary schedule by appropriate ratios. The MSTA recommends
10 that districts tie administrators' salaries to teachers' salaries. The MSTA strongly
11 recommends that if salaries for returning teachers are frozen, then salaries for returning
12 administrators should also be frozen.

13 The MSTA strongly supports a minimum statewide salary schedule funded by the
14 state of Missouri. The MSTA supports a phase-in up to (1) \$35,000 as a minimum starting
15 salary for five years or less experience; (2) \$40,000 minimum salary for teachers with a
16 master's degree or equivalent hours and six to ten years experience, or a bachelor's
17 degree with six to 19 years experience; (3) \$45,000 minimum salary for teachers with a
18 master's degree or equivalent hours with 11 to 19 years experience, or a bachelor's
19 degree and 20 or more years experience; (4) \$50,000 minimum salary for teachers with
20 a master's degree or equivalent hours and 20 years of experience; and (5) \$55,000
21 minimum salary for teachers with a master's degree or equivalent hours and 25 or more
22 years experience. The MSTA strongly supports an automatic increase provision.

23 The MSTA encourages local school districts to include annual equitable salary
24 increments for additional years of service and additional educational experience. The
25 MSTA supports the recognition of teachers' actual years of experience for salary
26 schedule advancement when additional academic hours are earned. Recognizing that
27 many districts across the state currently exceed the above-stated minimums, the MSTA
28 encourages those districts to continue to provide salaries that are consistently above the
29 minimum recommendations.

30 The MSTA urges the passage of legislation to enable teachers in the state schools for
31 the severely handicapped, the state schools for the deaf and the state school for the blind
32 to be covered by a developed salary schedule.

33 The MSTA recommends that when the average salary in the school district equals the
34 national averages, additional increments be added to award meritorious teachers as
35 determined by objective criteria such as additional education, responsibilities and
36 school/community involvement. The MSTA strongly opposes any plan that would use
37 student grades, student class performance or student performance on standardized tests
38 as the single criteria to measure the merit of the teacher.

39 The MSTA supports legislation requiring school districts to accept all creditable years
40 of teaching experience when being placed on the salary schedule, including creditable
41 years taught out of state, for teachers transferring from one district to another or being re-
42 employed in a school district.

43 The MSTA supports legislation allowing contract modification, pending availability of
44 revenue, any time before the service of the contract has been fulfilled if the modification
45 of contract includes additional salary distributed through the school-district salary
46 schedule. A reasonable extension of service could be acceptable.

47 The MSTA urges school districts to allow advancement on the salary schedule to
48 teachers pursuing additional certification.

49 The MSTA urges the passage of an act that would prohibit local school boards from
50 penalizing teachers who wish to break a contract that was signed prior to the board of
51 education's passage of a decreased benefits package.

- **C05-4: Career Ladder**

1 The MSTA urges periodic review of Career Ladder funding levels to determine if
2 COLA increases should occur.

3 The MSTA supports forward funding of the Career Ladder program so teachers will
4 know the level of funding prior to starting work on a Career Ladder Plan.

5 The MSTA strongly recommends that the Missouri General Assembly continue full
6 funding of Career Ladder.

7 The MSTA supports legislation requiring the payment of the state's Career Ladder
8 program be made by June 30 to ensure that teachers will receive payment in the fiscal
9 year in which they participated in Career Ladder. The MSTA believes if any Career
10 Ladder plan is adopted, it should be done by the local school board and not mandated
11 by the state. The MSTA believes any Career Ladder plan for teachers should be designed
12 to reward effective teaching performance only as a supplement to the regular salary
13 schedule.

14 The MSTA supports the inclusion of mentoring, tutoring and peer coaching as Career
15 Ladder activities that can be accomplished during regular contract hours when the Career
16 Ladder teacher is not assigned to direct student instruction. The MSTA supports a
17 statewide rule that once a Career Ladder plan is approved by the state, monitoring and
18 supervision of that plan be done by the local Career Ladder committee and not by the
19 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education personnel.

20 The MSTA supports, with local board approval, allowing teachers who are attempting
21 to meet the requirements of National Board Certification to count these hours as the only
22 activity to meet Career Ladder standards.

23 The MSTA supports placement of teachers on Stage III of Career Ladder upon
24 successful completion of National Board Certification or any other rigorous national
25 certifications as approved by the State Board of Education.

26 The MSTA strongly opposes tying Career Ladder moneys to student performance.

- **C05-5: Security of Position**

1 The MSTA strongly opposes any action that would endanger the due-process rights of
2 teachers as guaranteed under the Tenure Act.

3 The MSTA urges the Missouri General Assembly to enact legislation requiring school
4 districts to waive one year toward tenure for probationary teachers having prior service
5 with that district as they must for probationary teachers having prior service outside that
6 district.

7 The MSTA supports existing statutes that enable principals to earn tenure as teachers
8 in public elementary and secondary schools in Missouri.

9 The MSTA supports legislation to enable teachers and administrators, except
10 superintendents and assistant superintendents, to gain tenure following three years of
11 continuous service in local school districts.

12 The MSTA strongly opposes legislation that would require the use of any
13 standardized test of students to measure teacher competency as a basis for employment
14 or re-employment of a teacher or for financing or classification of the public schools. The
15 MSTA opposes legislation to promote any use of merit pay, including the use of
16 standardized test scores or other subjective criteria as a measurement of teacher
17 performance or as a method to determine future salary increases.

18 The MSTA encourages all districts to provide each new employee with information
19 regarding evaluation criteria, performance expectations and teacher options following
20 formal evaluation. Evaluation procedures for ancillary staff should reflect elements
21 specific to the professional therapeutic objectives, as well as considering diagnostic,
22 program-planning and implementation procedures. Termination procedures should also be
23 made a part of an official employee information package to be distributed with new
24 employee contracts. When an evaluation reflects levels below performance expectation,
25 the staff member should have the option to request observation/evaluation by a mutually
26 agreed upon third party.

27 The MSTA supports tenured teachers in lapsed or dissolved districts receiving
28 employment as a tenured teacher in the district that has annexed territory of the lapsed or
29 dissolved district if a vacancy exists for which they are qualified.

- **C05-6: Children's Division**

1 The MSTA recommends that if an unsubstantiated report results from a child-abuse or
2 neglect investigation, 60 days following notification of the report findings, the reported
3 individual shall receive written notification from the director of the Children's Division that
4 his or her name has been deleted from the record.

5 The MSTA calls upon the members of the General Assembly to provide for and see
6 to the enforcement of stiff penalties for Children's Division workers who do not effectively
7 investigate teacher complaints and Children's Division workers who reveal the names of
8 school personnel who have hot-lined families. The General Assembly should outline clear
9 and concise ways for school districts to report such incidents.

- **C05-7: Fringe Benefits**

1 The MSTA recommends that when boards of education pay the premiums of health,
2 dental, vision, accident and life insurance for school employees, the plans should be
3 approved by the majority of the employees to be covered.

4 The MSTA supports legislation that would set a minimum period of one calendar year
5 for insurance companies to tabulate group-loss experience upon which premium rates
6 could be based and annually divulge such findings to the groups they insure.

7 The MSTA recommends that opportunities for tax-sheltered annuities be provided
8 where desired and that all eligible employees who wish to participate in a 403(b) plan
9 should be offered a variety of vendors from which to choose.

10 The MSTA opposes any efforts by the federal or state government to consider the
11 treatment of fringe benefits as income for tax purposes.

12 The MSTA recommends that salaries, working conditions, retirement and fringe
13 benefits for teachers in state agencies be comparable to those for teachers with similar
14 training and duties in public school districts.

15 The MSTA supports legislation providing optional health-insurance coverage for
16 political subdivisions through a statewide health-insurance plan that would include
17 coverage for both active and retired persons at the same rate and with the same
18 coverage (allowing for Medicare) applying to both the active and retired group members.
19 Such a plan must further provide for a waiver from pre-existing conditions as a cause for
20 refusing coverage and exclude an attempt to provide health-insurance coverage in
21 concert with the Public School Retirement System of Missouri.

• C05-8: Teaching Assignments

1 The MSTA affirms that the effectiveness of educational programs is dependent on an
2 adequate ratio of professional staff members to pupils. The MSTA strongly recommends
3 that legislation be introduced, with appropriate funding, to ensure that the maximum
4 pupil/teacher ratio be reduced to 25:1 for grades 7 through 12, 20:1 for grades 4
5 through 6, and 15:1 for grades K through 3. Until these standards are achieved for
6 grades 7 through 12, total student caseload should not exceed 150. When special-needs
7 students are placed in the regular classroom, the class size should be reduced further. In
8 determining the ratio, administrators, supporting and auxiliary personnel should not be
9 counted.

10 The MSTA urges local school districts to exercise equitable pupil/teacher ratios in
11 employment of instructors in health/physical education, music and art.

12 The MSTA urges local school districts to provide for teachers (pre-K to 12) a minimum
13 50-minute, uninterrupted time period for planning during the instructional time of the
14 defined school day, with a limit on non-instructional tasks for teachers. The MSTA
15 supports including pre-K planning time in the Missouri School Improvement Program
16 guidelines. The MSTA believes any block of time less than 15 minutes should not be
17 counted as planning time under the Missouri School Improvement Program guidelines.

18 The MSTA recommends that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
19 or the General Assembly set guidelines for accreditation requirements that would limit the
20 number of classes taught per day to six in a seven-period day and to limit the number of
21 subject-matter preparations to a maximum of five per day in grades 7 through 12. The
22 MSTA urges local school boards to continue the employment of certificated staff to
23 reduce the pupil/teacher ratio, to restore worthwhile programs and to initiate needed new
24 programs.

25 The MSTA recommends that school districts provide all teachers a lunch period of not
26 less than 30 consecutive minutes without assigned responsibility.

27 The MSTA encourages the local Board of Education to limit the amount charged to a
28 teacher who has exhausted the allotted sick-leave days to the actual cost of the substitute
29 teacher.

30 The MSTA strongly urges local school districts to set guidelines for educators with
31 multi-building assignments within a district so there is written confirmation of which
32 administrator is their supervisor. Procedures for evaluations, extra duties, obtaining
33 substitutes and travel time should be directed by one supervisor.

34 The MSTA encourages local school districts to provide additional compensation for
35 required planning and preparation outside of a normal contracted time necessary to
36 implement intensive student-achievement programs to meet federal and state mandates.

37 The MSTA supports a review of all clauses in teacher contracts.

- **C05-9: Retirement – General**

1 The MSTA recommends that legislation be introduced to enable members of all
2 teacher retirement systems in Missouri to have comparable benefits.

3 The MSTA believes the present selection process for choosing members of the Public
4 School Retirement System Board of Trustees through open elections from the membership
5 should be maintained. The MSTA supports election of the trustees by a majority of Public
6 School Retirement System members who cast votes. The MSTA strongly urges the
7 legislators to continue to allow all Public School Retirement System members and all
8 Public Education Employee Retirement System members to vote on all elected trustee
9 positions.

10 The MSTA supports portability and buy-backs to the Missouri Public School Retirement
11 System for teachers in the Kansas City and St. Louis City Public School Retirement
12 Systems as long as they are cost-neutral to the Public School Retirement System. The
13 MSTA urges the Public School Retirement System Board of Trustees to be proactive in
14 considering a program within the Public School Retirement System for certificated
15 members who participate fully in Social Security for a significant portion of their career.

16 The MSTA encourages the Public School Retirement System Board of Trustees to
17 review the actuarial assumptions used to predict the cost of benefit improvements with
18 special consideration for use of actual experience data regarding COLA costs and “25
19 and Out” options.

20 The MSTA supports legislation to allow survivors the same buy-back privileges that
21 would have been offered to the member to improve benefit options.

22 The MSTA supports a more accurate definition of full-time employment in the Public
23 School Retirement System rather than the “20 hours or more” definitions currently used.
24 The MSTA supports legislation to allow certificated educators employed less than 20
25 hours per week, but more than 13 hours per week, options to purchase credit in the
26 Public Education Employee Retirement System on a pro rata basis with the option to
27 transfer that credit into the Public School Retirement System to establish vesting and future
28 benefits.

29 The MSTA supports the purchase of retirement credit for a sabbatical used for
30 professional development, including course work, professional exchanges, internships,
31 business partnerships and other professional-growth experiences. The MSTA supports the
32 purchase of retirement credit for a leave used for the care of an immediate family
33 member during a terminal illness.

34 The MSTA strongly urges the Public School Retirement System Board of Trustees to
35 instruct staff to use the reciprocity legislation recently enacted to actively pursue any
36 agreement that would reduce the cost of out-of-state credit purchases.

37 The MSTA supports a defined-contribution plan only when it serves as a supplement
38 to our defined-benefit plan, enabling voluntary flexibility and choices to school-district
39 employees in building retirement income. The MSTA opposes legislation that would force
40 school district employees to choose between a defined-benefit or a defined-contribution
41 plan.

42 The MSTA opposes any attempts to consolidate the Public School Retirement System
43 of Missouri or the Public Education Employee Retirement System of Missouri with any
44 other state or federal public-employee retirement system.

45 The MSTA seeks legislation to reduce to two the number of St. Louis City Board of
46 Education members serving on the Public School Retirement System of the City of St.
47 Louis Board of Trustees. The MSTA also recommends that one additional active, certified
48 teacher and one certified, retired teacher be elected to the system's Board of Trustees.
49 Furthermore, the MSTA supports legislation to allow all members of the Public School
50 Retirement System of the City of St. Louis, both active and retired, to vote on all
51 retirement-board candidates.

52 The MSTA supports legislation changing the Public School Retirement System
53 regulations regarding the designation of beneficiaries by members who divorce after they
54 have retired and are receiving a benefit from the retirement system.

- **C05-10: Retirement and Social Security**

1 The MSTA strongly protests and opposes any efforts by the state or federal
2 government to group the teachers' retirement-system funds with Social Security funds.
3 Further, the MSTA is opposed to mandatory Social Security withholdings in lieu of, or in
4 addition to, the current retirement system. If the federal government starts any action to
5 bring teachers under Social Security, the Assembly of Delegates instructs our executive
6 director, Executive Board and all MSTA staff to oppose this action.

7 The MSTA strongly opposes the plans that have deprived, or any plans that would
8 deprive, teachers of their earned benefits accrued by participation in the Social Security
9 system, including any they could be entitled to through a spouse.

10 The MSTA strongly supports the elimination or modification of the Social Security
11 offset provision that reduces or eliminates a Social Security spouse or survivor benefit
12 from a husband or wife whose work was covered by Social Security.

13 The MSTA strongly opposes the Social Security "windfall" benefits law that can
14 reduce an accrued Social Security benefit.

15 The MSTA protests the formula that results in benefit reduction and shall continue
16 dialogue with the appropriate federal officials about why this situation exists. The
17 Assembly of Delegates directs the MSTA staff to ask all members of the Missouri
18 delegation in the U.S. Congress to write a bill allowing teachers and other public
19 employees to receive full Social Security payments as opposed to the Federal Reduction
20 Act passed in the 1990s.

- **C05-11: Retirement – Benefit Improvements**

1 The MSTA supports a graduated multiplier above 2.5 for educators who teach more
2 than 30 years, if actuarially sound.

3 The MSTA supports legislation to make permanent the "25 and Out" retirement
4 option using graduated multiplying factors and other retirement options, if actuarially
5 sound.

6 The MSTA supports legislation to ensure that the survivors of retirees get all benefit
7 improvements retirees receive including COLAs and "catch ups." The MSTA supports
8 providing surviving spouses and beneficiaries of retirees who died prior to the
9 implementation of the supplemental "catch up" benefits and new retirement benefit
10 minimums established in 1995 and 1996 with the same benefits that the member would
11 have received if still living.

12 The MSTA supports a "catch up" increase for retired Public School Retirement System
13 members, if actuarially sound.

14 The MSTA supports legislation to increase benefits for members drawing disability
15 retirement, if actuarially sound.

16 The MSTA supports an increase in the formula factor to 1.7 for the Public Education
17 Employee Retirement System, if actuarially sound.

18 The MSTA supports a \$5,000 death benefit for all Public Education Employee
19 Retirement System retirees.

20 The MSTA supports changing the Public Education Employee Retirement System's first
21 COLA payment to the third January after retirement, if actuarially sound.

• C05-12: School Calendar

1 The MSTA recommends that the school calendar be made by the local school district.
2 The MSTA recommends legislation providing that the school year consist of a minimum of
3 174 days or 1,044 hours of pupil attendance. If days are added to the school year,
4 teachers' salaries must be adjusted accordingly, including cost-of-living increases.
5 Consideration must be given to the health and well-being of students in buildings not
6 equipped for summer heat and to the mandatory continuing education for teachers who
7 must meet certification requirements. Additional funding for costs incurred if days are
8 added by the state above the current minimum of 174 days must be provided by the
9 state.

10 The MSTA recommends that attendance at teachers' meetings and conventions be
11 counted as part of the school year and that teachers be paid to attend these meetings.
12 The MSTA encourages the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to
13 enforce this action.

14 The MSTA urges local school districts to include parent-teacher conferences in the
15 contract year.

16 The MSTA recommends that legislation be introduced to allow local control of the
17 starting day of school.

18 The MSTA encourages statewide action that would change Daughters to Work Day
19 and similar programs to summer activities, which would not adversely affect school
20 attendance and state aid.

• C05-13: Women and Minorities in Administration

1 The MSTA calls for and supports promoting qualified women and minorities into
2 administrative positions in all educational fields.

• **C05-14: Professional Communication**

1 The MSTA believes teachers, administrators and boards of education have the
2 common goal of providing the highest quality educational opportunity possible for each
3 student. To help attain this goal, the MSTA urges the enactment of legislation that will
4 ensure school districts adopt policies to facilitate effective communication among these
5 groups. The policy shall address communications between the local school board and
6 school-district teachers and include the following issues: 1. the participation of teachers in
7 the development of school policies; 2. procedures for establishing meetings between
8 school board representatives and individual teachers and/or groups of teachers; and
9 3. the distribution of the policy to the teachers. The Department of Elementary and
10 Secondary Education shall have the responsibility to note in writing whether a school
11 district has a written policy of communication with teachers.

• **C05-15: Professional Liability**

1 The MSTA supports legislation to establish immunity from liability for school
2 employees for incidents within the scope of their duties as outlined in local board policy
3 or for acts involving an exercise of judgment or discretion on the part of professional
4 employees.

D. TEACHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

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

The MSTA believes that members of the profession and school districts should cooperate with teacher education institutions in providing a variety of professional laboratory experiences for prospective teachers, including student teaching.

The MSTA believes that teacher education institutions should be selective in the admission of students and retain those of high quality. Students with desirable personal traits, social understandings and high scholastic abilities should be encouraged to enter teaching as a profession.

• **D05-1: Teacher Preparation**

1 The MSTA urges the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to issue
2 teaching certificates only to those individuals who have demonstrated proficiency in
3 academic and professional teaching skills. This proficiency should be determined by
4 instruments developed by a cross-section of active educators. The instruments shall have
5 been administered periodically during the individual's college career.

6 The MSTA strongly supports student teaching-practicum experiences being a part of
7 initial teacher-certification requirements.

8 The MSTA urges that Praxis grades be separated by subject area and that persons not
9 passing a section retake only that section, at a prorated cost.

10 The MSTA urges that Praxis grades be sent prior to the next test-registration deadline.

11 The MSTA opposes the use of the Praxis, or any other test, as the sole criterion used
12 in determining certification.

13 The MSTA opposes the practice of institutions of higher education withholding
14 graduation from teacher candidates who have not successfully completed the Praxis. The
15 MSTA supports granting provisional certification for pre-service teachers who satisfactorily
16 complete all criteria for certification except a final exit exam.

17 The MSTA strongly urges the State Board of Education and the Department of
18 Elementary and Secondary Education to use multiple criteria, which may include a
19 certification test, grade-point average, student-teaching evaluation or Performance-Based
20 Teacher Evaluation, and portfolio, in determining certification.

21 The MSTA supports broad-based certificates, with specific endorsements that are
22 earned through competency-based course work or professional development. The MSTA
23 encourages the Missouri Advisory Council of Certification for Educators to adopt
24 recommendations on broad-based certification.

25 The MSTA believes preparation and training of educators by teacher-training
26 institutions is essential, and recommends that higher-education institutions and local school
27 districts cooperatively determine lines of responsibility for the student-teaching program to
28 include the qualifications for supervisors and cooperating teachers and the provision for
29 the financial support for the cooperating teachers.

30 The MSTA believes, due to the need for fully qualified master teachers of education
31 at the college level, that such teachers, in addition to academic credentials, should have
32 at least five years of classroom experience teaching at the level for which they are
33 teaching or supervising prospective teachers (experience at elementary if
34 teaching/supervising prospective elementary teachers, experience at middle-school level
35 if teaching/supervising prospective middle-school teachers, etc.). The MSTA strongly
36 recommends that such college teachers renew that classroom experience at least every
37 10 years.

38 The MSTA supports teacher-preparation standards that stress professional basics,
39 including school law, mentoring for the beginning teacher, professional-development
40 committee requirements involving the beginning teacher and ongoing certification
41 requirements for the beginning teacher.

42 The MSTA supports certification programs for regular education K-12 teachers that
43 would require all current subject-area courses to include strategies to meet the needs of
44 all students.

45 The MSTA urges strong education and recruitment practices for counselors by the
46 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and also recommends that the
47 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education not use tax dollars to attract only
48 counselors. The MSTA encourages those individuals who decide to become counselors to
49 seek their advanced degrees without the influence of tuition reimbursement.

50 The MSTA recognizes the shortages of substitute teachers and encourages all
51 teacher-education institutions to develop a program designed to recruit and prepare
52 substitute teachers.

53 The MSTA encourages local school districts to develop a plan for recruiting and
54 retaining substitute teachers.

55 The MSTA encourages the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to
56 investigate ways to dissolve all or part of student loans incurred in becoming a certificated
57 teacher.

• **D05-2: Teacher Certification**

1 The MSTA supports the retention of the life teaching certificates currently held by
2 Missouri educators.

3 The MSTA supports issuing certificates at broader grade levels, such as K-8, 6-12 and
4 K-12, with encouragement to complete endorsements in specialty areas such as middle
5 school and early-childhood education.

6 The MSTA supports quality teachers receiving Missouri certification and the
7 elimination of unnecessary requirements. The MSTA supports the State Board of
8 Education issuing a provisional certificate to any candidate who has successfully
9 completed the required course work and student-teaching requirements, thereby granting
10 a two-year provisional certificate to students who have passed all requisites for
11 certification except the final exit exam. The MSTA urges colleges and universities to
12 provide support to teachers while they are trying to meet the requirements for full
13 certification.

14 The MSTA urges the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to include
15 administrators, counselors and librarians in comparable renewal certification requirements
16 as other educators.

17 The MSTA urges the State Board of Education to oppose the Department of
18 Elementary and Secondary Education's recommendations regarding raising the cut scores
19 on entry-level assessments for education professionals without reasonable justification.
20 These assessments include: Praxis, School Superintendent Assessment (SSA) and School
21 Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA).

22 The MSTA urges the State Board of Education and the Department of Elementary and
23 Secondary Education to respond in writing on actions taken concerning all
24 recommendations proposed by the Missouri Advisory Council of Certification for
25 Educators.

26 The MSTA strongly urges that the Missouri Advisory Council of Certification for
27 Educators continue as it is presently constituted, and that any effort to dilute the influence
28 of the MSTA on the recommendations of the council be strongly resisted.

29 The MSTA urges the General Assembly to authorize a bipartisan fact-finding
30 commission to investigate current trends in teacher supply and demand. The MSTA urges
31 such an investigation to include at a minimum an examination of problems associated
32 with initial and renewal certification of educators, comparisons of educator salaries with
33 those of other professionals, and identification of the proper role of the Department of
34 Elementary and Secondary Education.

35 The MSTA supports the establishment of a Certification Hearing Council comprised of
36 one Missouri Advisory Council of Certification for Educators member from each of the K-
37 12 education associations to hear and act on certification-issuance appeals made by a
38 candidate or school district within 30 days of denial or review by the Division of
39 Certification at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. This Certification
40 Hearing Council will have the authority to grant issuance of certification after careful
41 review of each case. The State Board of Education will remain the final level of appeal if

42 the candidate or school district is unsatisfied with the Certification Hearing Council's
43 decision.

• **D05-3: Certificate Revocation**

1 The MSTA recognizes the authority granted to the State Board of Education to issue
2 teaching certificates and for proper cause to revoke a license to teach. The MSTA urges
3 the State Board of Education to exercise its authority for revocation with caution and to
4 refrain from revoking a license when court action is pending until the court has made a
5 decision regarding the guilt or innocence of the individual as charged.

6 The MSTA supports state-funded background checks of criminal records for
7 prospective teachers before initial certification and certification renewal will be granted,
8 with consideration given for the type, frequency and dates of any felony convictions.

9 The MSTA supports legislation that would require school administrators and school
10 board members to notify proper authorities when a suspected sexual abuser of children
11 resigns from a school district.

12 The MSTA strongly supports due-process rights in the certificate-revocation process,
13 with each situation reviewed on a case-by-case basis only after a conviction, plea bargain
14 or suspended sentence has occurred.

• **D05-4: Professional Teacher Recruitment**

1 The MSTA encourages local CTAs to organize and support Future Teachers of
2 America chapters. The MSTA requires that the local Future Teachers of America adviser
3 be a member of the MSTA.

4 The MSTA encourages all teacher-education institutions to recruit an adviser or
5 advisers and sponsor Student-MSTA chapters.

6 The MSTA encourages local school districts to develop a plan for recruiting and
7 retaining teachers within their district.

• **D05-5: Advanced Professional Certification**

1 The MSTA supports a member's choice to voluntarily pursue advanced degrees,
2 National Board Certification or other rigorous national certifications as a professional
3 option.

4 The MSTA encourages local school districts to provide support to candidates for
5 advanced degrees, National Board Certification or other rigorous national certifications.

6 The MSTA supports local school districts providing financial incentives for teachers
7 who have successfully completed advanced degrees, National Board Certification or
8 other rigorous national certifications.

• **D05-6: State Standards Board**

1 The MSTA strongly believes the certification of educators is a state responsibility.

2 The MSTA recognizes the Missouri Advisory Council of Certification for Educators as
3 the professional-standards board for Missouri educators. Therefore, the MSTA believes
4 the state of Missouri does not need an autonomous, independent standards board for
5 licensure.

6 The MSTA supports the bylaws of the Missouri Advisory Council of Certification for
7 Educators, which states the Council will make recommendations directly to the State Board
8 of Education regarding standards for program approval in Missouri teacher-training
9 institutions and the criteria for all licenses and certificates required of educators in
10 Missouri public schools. The MSTA supports the concept of those recommendations being
11 directed to the State Board of Education and that the commissioner of education shall
12 advise the Council of the disposition of all recommendations made by the Council. The
13 MSTA supports expanding the role of the Missouri Advisory Council of Certification for
14 Educators to serve as an advisory body that meets directly with the commissioner of
15 education on educational issues. The MSTA further supports the State Board of Education,
16 the appointed body representing public interest, retaining the final decision-making
17 authority.

18 The MSTA strongly recommends that the State Board of Education respond to the
19 Missouri Advisory Council of Certification for Educators in a reasonable time frame with
20 written suggestions for improvement, need for additional information, reasons for
21 rejections or other appropriate requests. The State Board of Education should outline a
22 reasonable time frame in which the Missouri Advisory Council of Certification for
23 Educators will have to report back to the State Board of Education with a response and, if
24 appropriate, a new recommendation.

• **D05-7: Professional Development**

1 The MSTA recognizes the importance of ongoing professional development for each
2 educator and supports the continued funding of professional-development opportunities
3 for educators by the Missouri General Assembly.

4 The MSTA urges the State Board of Education to establish consistent goals for a
5 uniform delivery system at Regional Professional Development Centers, to conduct annual
6 assessments of the professional-development activities, and to prohibit the delivery
7 systems from turning professional development into a for-profit enterprise.

8 The MSTA supports legislation to redirect to school districts the 1 percent of state aid
9 moneys that is currently managed by the State Board of Education and the Department of
10 Elementary and Secondary Education, to be distributed on a per-pupil basis for
11 dissemination and use by educators for the professional-development activities of their
12 choice.

13 The MSTA supports local district policies that allow paid professional release time to
14 attend professional meetings.

• **D05-8: Performance-Based Evaluation**

1 The MSTA supports a system of monitoring teacher performance and accountability in
2 the classroom for the purpose of improving instruction.

3 The MSTA supports the use of certificated administrators and supervisors employed
4 by the local school district who are professionally trained to properly implement the
5 Performance-Based Teacher Evaluation as it was originally intended, as a tool with which
6 to help teachers improve instruction.

7 The MSTA strongly encourages legislation that requires local district teacher
8 involvement in reviewing and developing Performance-Based Teacher Evaluation systems
9 for their district.

10 The MSTA recommends that each MSTA/CTA work cooperatively with the local
11 board of education to devise and implement a performance-based evaluation instrument
12 for all school personnel. It is recommended that board evaluation policies be developed
13 that assures adequate assistance to beginning teachers, allows sufficient time to correct
14 deficiencies, and ensures constitutional due process for all probationary and tenured staff
15 members.

16 The MSTA strongly recommends that evaluators have specific training in methods and
17 techniques of administering a performance-based evaluation instrument. It is further
18 recommended that teachers be given in-service training in interpreting and implementing
19 the performance-based evaluation instrument selected for use by their local board.