

# 2011 NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION RESOLUTIONS

## Private Schools

### A-11. Use of Closed Public School Buildings

The National Education Association believes that closed public school buildings that have been deemed safe can be used effectively for public preschool, day care, job training, and adult education centers. The Association also believes that closed public school buildings should be sold or leased only to those organizations that do not provide direct educational services to students and/or are not in direct competition with public schools. (1982, 2000)

### A-25. Voucher Plans and Tuition Tax Credits

The National Education Association believes that voucher plans, tuition tax credits, or other funding/financial arrangements that use tax monies to subsidize pre-K through 12 private school education can undermine public education; reduce the support needed to adequately fund public education; cause racial, economic, and social segregation of students; and threaten the constitutional separation of church and state that has been a cornerstone of American democracy.

The Association opposes voucher plans, tuition tax credits, or other such funding arrangements that pay for students to attend sectarian schools. The Association also opposes any such arrangements that pay for students to attend nonsectarian pre-K through 12 private schools in order to obtain educational services that are available to them in public schools to which they have reasonable access.

The Association also believes that any private school or agency that receives public funding through voucher plans, tax credits, or other funding/financial arrangements must be subject to all accountability measures and regulations required of public schools. (1970, 2003)

## Parental Choice

### A-34. Federally or State-Mandated Choice/Parental Option Plans

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

The Association also believes that local districts, in partnership with state and federal governments, must provide a quality education for every student by securing sufficient funding to maintain and enhance excellence in each local public school district.

The Association supports alternative programs for specific purposes in the public schools. (1989, 2001)

### B-1. Early Childhood Education+

The National Education Association supports early childhood education programs in the public schools for children from birth through age eight. The Association also supports a high-quality program of transition from home and/or preschool to the public kindergarten or first grade. This transition should include communication and cooperation among parents/guardians, the preschool staff, and the public school staff. The Association believes that such programs should be held in facilities that are appropriate to the developmental needs of these children. The Association also believes that early childhood education programs should include a full continuum of services for parents/guardians and children, including child-care, child development, developmentally appropriate and diversity-based curricula, special education, and appropriate bias-free screening devices. Early childhood education programs also must be sensitive to and meet the physical, social, mental, and emotional health and nutritional needs of children....

The Association believes that federal legislation should be enacted to assist in organizing the implementation of fully funded early childhood education programs offered through the public schools. These programs must be available to all children on an equal basis and should include mandatory

kindergarten with compulsory attendance.

The Association supports regulations requiring children starting kindergarten to have reached age five at the beginning of a kindergarten program.

## **B-12. Diversity**

The National Education Association believes that a diverse society enriches all individuals.

Similarities and differences among race, ethnicity, color, national origin, language, geographic location, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, physical ability, size, occupation, and marital, parental, or economic status form the fabric of a society.

The Association also believes that education should foster the values of appreciation and acceptance of the various qualities that pertain to people as individuals and as members of diverse populations.

The Association further believes in the importance of observances, programs, and curricula that accurately portray and recognize the roles, contributions, cultures, and history of these diverse groups and individuals.

The Association encourages affiliates and members to become part of programs and observances that may include cultural and heritage celebrations and/or history months. (1995, 2002)

## **B-14. Racism, Sexism, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identification Discrimination**

The National Education Association believes in the equality of all individuals. Discrimination and stereotyping based on such factors as race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, ethnicity, immigration status, occupation, and religion must be eliminated.

The Association also believes that these factors should not affect the legal rights and obligations of the partners in a legally recognized domestic partnership, civil union, or marriage in regard to matters involving the other partner, such as medical decisions, taxes, inheritance, adoption, and immigration.

The Association further believes that plans, activities, and programs for education employees, students, parents/guardians, and the community should be developed to identify and eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in all educational settings. Such plans, activities, and programs must—

- a. Increase respect, understanding, acceptance, and sensitivity toward individuals and groups in a diverse society composed of such groups as American Indians/Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders, Blacks, Hispanics, women, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender persons, and people with disabilities
- b. Eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in curricula, textbooks, resource and instructional materials, activities, etc.
- c. Foster the dissemination and use of nondiscriminatory and nonstereotypical language, resources, practices, and activities
- d. Eliminate institutional discrimination
- e. Integrate an accurate portrayal of the roles and contributions of all groups throughout history across curricula, particularly groups that have been underrepresented historically
- f. Identify how prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination have limited the roles and contributions of individuals and groups, and how these limitations have challenged and continue to challenge our society
- g. Eliminate subtle practices that favor the education of one student over another on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, ethnicity, or religion
- h. Encourage all members of the educational community to examine assumptions and prejudices, including, but not limited to, racism, sexism, and homophobia, that might limit the opportunities and growth of students and education employees
- i. Offer positive and diverse role models in our society, including the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of diverse education employees in our public schools
- j. Coordinate with organizations and concerned agencies that promote the contributions, heritage, culture, history, and special health and care needs of diverse population groups
- k. Promote a safe and inclusive environment for all.

The Association encourages its affiliates to develop and implement training programs on these matters. (1996, 2006)

### **B-48. Family Life Education**

The National Education Association recognizes the myriad family structures in society and the impact of these family structures and other close personal relationships on the quality of individual lives and upon society. The Association also recognizes the importance of education in the maintenance and promotion of stable, functional, healthy families and the emotional, physical, and mental health of people within these families.

The Association believes that programs should be established for both students and parents/guardians and supported at all educational levels to promote—

- a. The development of self-esteem and positive self-concept in individuals of all ages in various family roles
- b. Learning and practicing positive interpersonal communication skills and conflict resolution
- c. Education in human growth and development
- d. Positive parenting techniques that include strategies to deal effectively with violent behavior
- e. An understanding of societal issues and problems related to children, spouses, parents/guardians, domestic partners, older generation family members, and other family members.

The Association also believes that education in these areas must be presented as part of an antibiased, culturally sensitive program. (1994, 2001)

### **B-51. Sex Education**

The National Education Association believes that the developing child's sexuality is continually and inevitably influenced by daily contacts, including experiences in the school environment. The Association recognizes that sensitive sex education can be a positive force in promoting physical, mental, emotional, and social health and that the public school must assume an increasingly important role in providing the instruction. **Teachers and health professionals must be qualified to teach in this area and must be legally protected from censorship and lawsuits.**

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

The Association also believes that to facilitate the realization of human potential, it is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information and knowledge about sexuality and encourages affiliates and members to support appropriately established sex education programs. Such programs should include information on—

- a. Sexual abstinence, birth control, family planning, prenatal care, parenting skills, the effects of substance abuse during pregnancy, and the issues associated with pre-teen and teenage pregnancy
- b. Diversity of culture and diversity of sexual orientation and gender identification
- c. Sexually transmitted diseases, incest, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and homophobia. (1969, 2008)

### **B-82. Home Schooling**

The National Education Association believes that home schooling programs based on parental choice cannot provide the student with a comprehensive education experience. When home schooling occurs, students enrolled must meet all state curricular requirements, including the taking and passing of assessments to ensure adequate academic progress. Home schooling should be limited to the children of the immediate family, with all expenses being borne by the parents/guardians. Instruction should be by persons who are licensed by the appropriate state education licensure agency, and a curriculum approved by the state department of education should be used.

The Association also believes that home-schooled students should not participate in any extracurricular activities in the public schools.

The Association further believes that local public school systems should have the authority to

determine grade placement and/or credits earned toward graduation for students entering or re-entering the public school setting from a home school setting. (1988, 2006)

### **C-16. Extremist Groups**

The National Education Association condemns the philosophy and practices of extremist groups and their efforts to recruit young people and urges active opposition to all such movements that are inimical (*unfriendly, hostile, adverse, hurtful, prejudicial*) to the ideals of the Association. (1980, 1993)

### **C-25. Comprehensive School Health, Social, and Psychological Programs and Services.....**

f. If deemed appropriate by local choice, family-planning counseling and access to birth control methods with instruction in their use

### **E-10. Academic and Professional Freedom**

The National Education Association believes that academic freedom is essential to the teaching profession. Academic freedom includes the rights of teachers and learners to explore and discuss divergent points of view. Controversial issues should be a part of the instructional program when, in the judgment of the professional staff, the issues are appropriate to the curriculum and to the maturity level of the student. A teacher shall not be fired, transferred, reassigned, removed from his or her position, or disciplined for refusing to suppress the free expression rights of students.

The Association also believes that professional freedom is essential to the teaching profession. Professional freedom includes the teachers' right to evaluate, criticize, and/or advocate their personal point of view concerning the policies and programs of the schools. Furthermore, teachers must be free to depart from mandated scripted learning programs, pacing charts, and classroom assessments without prejudice or punishment. Teachers also have the right to assist colleagues when their academic or professional freedoms are violated.

The Association further believes that legislation and regulations that mandate or permit the teaching of religious doctrines and/or groups that promote antipublic education agendas violate both student and teacher rights. The Association urges its affiliates to seek repeal of these mandates where they exist. (2002, 2009)

### **F-5. Collective Bargaining Rights**

The National Education Association believes that the attainment and exercise of collective bargaining rights are essential to the promotion of education employee and student needs in society. The Association demands that these rights be advocated where they are now abridged or denied and strengthened where they are now secured. (1980, 1993)

### **I-17. Family Planning**

The National Education Association supports family planning, including the right to reproductive freedom.

The Association urges the government to give high priority to making available all methods of family planning to women and men unable to take advantage of private facilities.

The Association also urges the implementation of community-operated, school-based family planning clinics that will provide intensive counseling by trained personnel. (1985, 1986)

### **I-33. Freedom of Religion**

The National Education Association believes that freedom of religion is a fundamental human right. The Association also believes that choice of religion is an intensely personal decision. Instruction in religious doctrines and practices is best provided within a family setting and/or by religious institutions. The Association further believes that schools should teach the rights and responsibilities associated

with the freedom of religion, the religious heritage and diversity of the United States, respect for the beliefs of others, and the historical and cultural influences of various world religions.

The Association believes that local school boards should adopt policies that govern religious activities on school property. Such policies must respect the separation of church and state; govern voluntary, student-led meetings with adult supervision before or after normal school hours; treat all religions on an equal basis; and protect the rights of students and education employees.

The Association also believes that the constitutional provisions on the establishment of and the free exercise of religion in the First Amendment require that there be no sectarian practices in the public school program. The Association opposes the imposition of sectarian practices in the public school program and urges its affiliates to do the same.

The Association also opposes any federal legislation or mandate that would require school districts to schedule a moment of silence. The Association particularly opposes a moment of silence as a condition for receiving federal funds. (1995, 2008)

For the full NEA 2011 -2012 resolutions follow this link: <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/resolutions-2011-2012.pdf>