

**POLICIES REGARDING SEXUAL, ROMANTIC, AMOROUS, AND/OR  
DATING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND LEARNERS**

- WHEREAS:** Institutions of higher education are responsible for the safety and health of their employees, which includes safety from sexual assault, sexual harassment, and identity-based discrimination; and
- WHEREAS:** AFT Michigan has previously resolved that current campus conversations related to improving responses to sexual assault, harassment, and identity-based discrimination are primarily reactive, rather than proactive; and
- WHEREAS:** AFT Michigan has previously resolved that Michigan's institutions of higher education are experiencing a crisis of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and insidious gender, sex, and sexuality based harassment; and
- WHEREAS:** AFT Michigan has previously resolved that current campus reforms related to safety on higher education campuses frequently fail to include the perspectives of graduate student employees who study and work on these campuses; and
- WHEREAS:** Sexual violence and identity-based discrimination impact all learners in higher education, including graduate student employees whose experience is unique, due to their status as both employees and learners under the authority of faculty and instructors; and
- WHEREAS:** Institutions of higher education must commit to policies prohibiting behaviors which adversely impact a person's ability to fully participate in the scholarly, research, educational, patient care, and service missions of institutions of higher education; and
- WHEREAS:** The teacher- and advisory-student relationships lie at the foundation of the educational process, and institutions of higher education are committed to putting students' interests first in assessing the challenges and competing interests that arise when defining safe and constructive relationships; and
- WHEREAS:** As a matter of sound judgment and professional ethics, faculty or instructors have a responsibility to avoid any apparent or actual conflict between their professional responsibilities and personal relationships with students; and
- WHEREAS:** Relationships which can reasonably be described as sexual, romantic, amorous, and/or dating, wherein physical contact is not a required element, are uniquely vulnerable to mistreatment and exploitation, and therefore should be covered by any policy defining safe, constructive, and consensual relationships between faculty or instructors and their learners; and
- WHEREAS:** As the only union representing graduate employees in the state of Michigan, AFT Michigan is ideally positioned to coordinate statewide advocacy efforts in response to sexual assault, harassment, and discrimination on public campuses of higher education; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**
- RESOLVED:** That sexual, romantic, amorous, and/or dating relationships between faculty or instructors in academic or supervisory roles and their learners and/or advisees (current or for 2 years after the end of the advisory or supervisory role) are a violation of authority,

inimical to the educational goals of both parties; that the inherent power disparity and implicit opportunity for mistreatment and exploitation in such relationships makes the consensuality impossible to determine; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

**RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan supports policies that mandate the disclosure and prohibition of such relationships.

Submitted by the Graduate Employees' Organizing Committee, Local 6123 and the Union of Part-Time Faculty, Local 477

Recommended for adoption by the Human Rights Committee

Approved by the 76th AFT Michigan Convention (May 16, 2020)

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**FREE ALL IMMIGRATION DETAINEES TO STOP THE MASS OUTBREAK  
AND SPREAD OF COVID-19 IN DETENTION CENTERS**

- WHEREAS:** Detention centers and jails are sites at high risk of mass spreading of disease and pandemics. They have high concentrations of population in crowded spaces. The tragic and preventable deaths in I.C.E. detention centers at the United States' southern border were the result of close quarters allowing disease to spread rapidly, the lack of medical care, food and water, squalid conditions with no soap, people being forced to drink out of toilets, etc. These conditions predate the COVID-19 outbreak and guarantee the exponential spread of the disease among a population already in poor health and extremely vulnerable. Detainees are not provided with basic soap and water let alone masks or hand sanitizer. To continue to hold immigrants in such dangerous conditions during a global pandemic is tantamount to genocide; and
- WHEREAS:** Federal prisons and many state prisons have banned visitations, including most attorney visits, citing the obvious potential for the spread of the virus among prisoners and staff in close quarters. Rather than denying detainees their rights to visitation and proper legal representation, they must be released from these dangerous and deadly conditions where they are certain to be exposed to the virus through guards and other prison staff, through food coming in, through new inmates, and through those who have already been exposed as of this moment; and
- WHEREAS:** Donald Trump's denial of science, spreading of lies and xenophobia, active blocking of mass testing, and advocacy of unproven treatments has made the U.S. the most ill-prepared of any industrialized country to deal with this crisis, and we certainly have many more positive cases than we know. This makes the release of detainees a matter of life and death of the greatest urgency; and
- WHEREAS:** I.C.E. contracts with Michigan jails to hold immigration detainees. Most such contracts allow for immediate termination in the case of an emergency; and
- WHEREAS:** Every immigration detainee being held in custody on the basis of civil, not criminal, charges is being endangered but poses no threat to our communities; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**
- RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan calls on Governor Whitmer and Michigan's Congressional delegation to do everything within their power to address the detention crisis in the state of Michigan and further to demand that President Trump and the federal government immediately release all civil immigration detainees in I.C.E. custody in Michigan; and **BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan calls on Michigan sheriffs to terminate their contracts to hold ICE detainees in county jails as an efficient way to significantly reduce jail populations without imperiling public safety.

Submitted by Benjamin Royal, Detroit Federation of Teachers Local 231  
Revised and recommended for adoption by the Human Rights Committee  
Approved by the 76th AFT Michigan Convention (May 16, 2020)

**END HIGH STAKES STANDARDIZED TESTING, MANDATORY 3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE RETENTION, PUNITIVE EVALUATIONS, GRADING SCHOOLS, AND MERIT PAY**

- WHEREAS:** AFT Michigan has publicly called to end high-stakes testing as exemplified in RESOLUTION #6 of the 73<sup>rd</sup> AFT Michigan Convention on May 17, 2014; and
- WHEREAS:** Since the 2014 convention, Michigan legislators have ramped up the stakes attached to standardized tests in our state; and
- WHEREAS:** The Michigan School Code as currently written requires that third graders be retained based on test scores, requires that teacher evaluations incorporate test scores as a significant factor, and requires that schools be ranked/graded based on test scores; and
- WHEREAS:** High stakes associated with standardized test results has stifled the ability of educators to provide creative and individualized instruction and has narrowed curriculum offerings at all levels; and
- WHEREAS:** Standardized testing is an incomplete measure of student learning; and
- WHEREAS:** The Michigan School Code includes a merit pay provision that requires teacher compensation to be based in part on test scores; and
- WHEREAS:** None of these requirements have been found to improve the quality of teaching and learning in public schools; and
- WHEREAS:** Retention can harm students' academic motivation, achievement, and general self-esteem. Retention is also correlated to an increased risk of dropping out of school altogether (Sprouse, 2017, p. 55) <sup>1\*</sup>; and
- WHEREAS:** Michigan's teacher evaluation system is subjective and punitive in nature, requiring termination of teachers deemed to be "ineffective" by a combination of subjective determinations from administrators and high-stakes test scores; and
- WHEREAS:** Ranking or grading schools by any criteria generally results in the lower-ranked schools being singled out for punitive measures; and
- WHEREAS:** High-stakes test scores correlate most strongly with privilege, not teaching and learning. M-STEP scores in particular correlate strongly with economic status and race (Sprouse, 2017, p. 55). High-stakes decisions based on these scores inevitably single out poor and minority districts; and
- WHEREAS:** Student performance on standardized tests is influenced by many factors beyond the control of educators and often beyond control of the student; and
- WHEREAS:** AFT Michigan's purpose is "to fight all forms of racism and discrimination in education" (Constitution of AFT Michigan Article II Section 6); and
- WHEREAS:** Basing school grades and teacher evaluations on high-stakes test scores effectively

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<sup>1\*</sup> Sprouse, Michelle L. (2017) "The Consequential Validity of the M-STEP and Third-Grade Retention," *Language Arts Journal of Michigan*: Vol. 32: Iss. 2, Article 10. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.9707/2168-149X.2140>

punishes teachers and students in poor and majority-minority districts; and

**WHEREAS:** A growing list of states including Alaska, Arkansas, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and Washington, D.C. have abandoned the use of high-stakes test scores in teacher evaluations; and

**WHEREAS:** New Mexico eliminated their A-F school grading system last year; and

**WHEREAS:** The national model for merit pay implemented in Newark, New Jersey in 2012 was abandoned as a failure last fall; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

**RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan reaffirms its call to end high-stakes standardized testing; and **BE IT FURTHER**

**RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan supports and encourages teachers and administrators to use multiple measures of student learning to improve instruction and provide opportunities for professional growth; and **BE IT FURTHER**

**RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan opposes the use of standardized test-based and subjective evaluations to punish educators. AFT Michigan especially opposes the use of so-called “value-added measures” of educator “effectiveness;” and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**

**RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan calls on the Michigan Legislature to amend the Revised School Code by removing the third-grade retention requirements, the punitive evaluation requirements, the school grading requirements, and the merit pay requirements and by prohibiting the use of standardized test data for punitive measures at the local level.

Submitted by Benjamin Royal, Detroit Federation of Teachers Local 231

Revised and recommended for approval by the Legislation and Resolutions Committee

Approved by the 76th AFT Michigan Convention (May 16, 2020)

**FIGHT THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND MAKE PUBLIC EDUCATION ACCESSIBLE TO ALL**

- WHEREAS:** The COVID-19 Pandemic has brought an international healthcare emergency to Michigan; and
- WHEREAS:** The spread of COVID-19 has caused hospitals in parts of the state – most significantly in Detroit and southeastern Michigan – to become overburdened with critically ill patients. Many of these hospitals face staffing shortages due to staff taking ill from COVID-19. Staff at these hospitals have also faced shortages of personal protective equipment; and
- WHEREAS:** The pandemic has had a particularly devastating impact on people of color and people living in poverty; and
- WHEREAS:** The COVID-19 Pandemic has prompted Governor Whitmer to suspend in-person instruction statewide for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year; and
- WHEREAS:** The right to a free public education is enshrined in the Michigan Constitution; and
- WHEREAS:** Many educational technology companies have viewed the COVID-19 pandemic as a fortuitous marketing opportunity for themselves and their efforts to further privatize public education. They have consequently made their software available in a broad campaign of “free trials;” and
- WHEREAS:** Many Michigan students have insufficient or no internet access at home to engage in web-mediated activities and interactions with their classmates and teachers; and
- WHEREAS:** Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos has issued guidance on the CARES Act which would divert much needed funding from public schools; and
- WHEREAS:** Food insecurity is a widespread problem in Michigan, with one in six children experiencing hunger. Nearly 750,000 students, or about half all students in Michigan receive at least one free or reduced meal at school every day. This abhorrent lack of food security has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. Schools, educators, and support staff responded to school closure with immediate ability to distribute food to children and families in need; and
- WHEREAS:** Many families already struggled financially prior to this crisis, and even more families are now experiencing additional financial hardship due to widespread joblessness as businesses are closed to prevent further spread of COVID-19; and
- WHEREAS:** There are basic needs to be met to protect and sustain life, many workers deemed essential to critical infrastructure must report to work and risk exposure to the virus. As sectors of the economy reopen, more workers will risk exposure to the virus in the workplace. However, maintaining healthy workplaces and reducing the risk of virus transmission requires investment by employers and the Occupational Health and Safety Administration is currently slow to investigate complaints and conduct random spot checks of workplaces; and
- WHEREAS:** This pandemic is projected to be an ongoing and recurring challenge to healthcare, public education, and everyday life for many months to come; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

- RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan calls on the US Department of Education to rescind the guidance that is counter to the original congressional intent and plain reading of the law; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan calls for every level of federal, state, county, and municipal government to base COVID-19 pandemic response policies on the best available science; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan calls for a rapid expansion of public health funding in the state; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan calls on the state to provide every piece of personal protective equipment that frontline healthcare workers, educators and school support personnel, and other essential workers need, and that protective equipment also be provided to the entire population to use for conducting essential business outside of the home. Public health funds should be allocated for state-funded production and distribution of personal protective equipment; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan calls on the state to develop guidelines for the safe reopening of our economy, our schools, and our institutions of higher education and to only reopen when it is safe to do so. AFT Michigan will present to the Governor, the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity and members of the Michigan Legislature a copy of the AFT Report “A Plan To Safely Reopen America’s Schools and Communities;” and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan calls on the federal government to fully fund the Occupational Health and Safety Administration to inspect and ensure workplaces are safe; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan calls for immediate and ongoing economic relief for laid-off and furloughed workers and for small business owners throughout the duration of the COVID-19 crisis; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan calls for schools to remain closed until mass testing confirms that transmission of COVID-19 has been brought under control; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan further calls for schools to remain closed until COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, isolation options, and treatment are freely available to everyone in Michigan; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan calls for the state to provide internet access and computers for students to access educational resources from their homes until the crisis is resolved. Where possible, municipalities should receive funding to provide WiFi as a public utility. AFT Michigan supports web access as a means for students to interact with teachers and with each other throughout this crisis, not as a means for test-preparation drills and practice, and not as a means for educational technology companies to continue their efforts to privatize public education or permanently move in-person education online; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**
- RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan calls on the Michigan Legislature to repeal Section 7 Article IX of the Michigan Constitution and enact a graduated income tax to ensure wealthy individuals and corporations pay their fair share to provide the full funding of early childhood, K-12,

and higher education, provide for repairs to transportation and water infrastructure, and provide for the funding necessary to fully respond to the crisis presented by COVID-19 to protect the lives and livelihoods of the people of Michigan.

Submitted by Benjamin Royal, Detroit Federation of Teachers Local 231  
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