

BUILDING RELIABLE, GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- WHEREAS:** Labor unions are founded on the principle of protecting the common interests of workers, demanding fairer wages, safer conditions, and better job security; and
- WHEREAS:** The American Federation of Teachers mission statement affirms a commitment to economic opportunity, high-quality public education, and healthcare; and
- WHEREAS:** Historically, having a small population of adjunct, contingent, and non-tenured professionals has allowed institutions of higher learning some flexibility, and an ability to increase course offerings paired with professional experiences useful to many of their students entering the workforce; and
- WHEREAS:** Research shows that across all institutions of higher learning that population has only increased, with 40% of work available in 2016 Part Time in nature, accounting for more than 50% of instructional work for non-R1 or R2 ranked institutions; and
- WHEREAS:** The continued rise of adjunct, contingent, and non-tenured positions in higher ed represents an epidemic of short term work with poor job security benefiting employers disproportionately to the workers, resulting in precipitously decreased access to reliable, good paying work and health insurance; and
- WHEREAS:** Marginal gains in Full Time non-tenure track work do not adequately address the needs of workers to have access to stable work, with access to health care, and other benefits of gainful employment; and
- WHEREAS:** The decline of reliable work and benefits results in a more stressed workforce affecting the learning conditions of our students, threatens goals of shared governance, and destabilizes all of higher education; and
- WHEREAS:** The declining access to Full Time, Tenure-Track, or other gainful employment for teaching professionals is a concern which exists beyond a single institution, affecting almost all institutions of higher learning; and
- WHEREAS:** Correcting this problem in Higher Education must be a joint effort taken by affected locals, the State Federation, and AFT National; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**
- RESOLVED:** That the AFT Michigan Administrative Board will develop a working group connecting across the Higher Education Constituent Committees charged with collecting data across institutions regarding their workforce, developing bargaining language that could be adopted by willing locals, and operating as a space Members can gather to strategize and plan across locals with a focus on building and protecting reliable, fulltime, and gainful employment in higher education, providing quarterly reports of activity to the Administrative Board, with findings and recommendations by April 2023; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: That this working group will help develop a state-wide platform driven by member input regarding the needs of the Membership in Higher Education addressing their needs for insurance, access to safer conditions, pay parity across work categories, and better job security, to be released by August 2023 and advocated for publicly by AFT Michigan; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: AFT Michigan shall dedicate time, energy, and financial resources in its legislative agenda to find allies, strategies, and legal methods to hold institutions of Higher Education accountable to higher standards for numbers of tenured, tenure track, full time professionals at all institutions of higher education, and protecting employment levels and responsibilities for professionals currently employed full time, making such recommendations subject to the approval of the AFT Michigan Administrative Board; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**

RESOLVED: That the American Federation of Teachers in Michigan stands with all professionals in higher education, having a dedicated goal of raising the standards of working conditions, access to gainful, reliable employment, and insurance.

Submitted by:

EMU Federation of Teachers #9102

Association of Adjunct Faculty at MCC #6533

UM Lecturers' Employee Organization #6244

WSU AFT-AAUP #6075

WSU Union of Part-Time Faculty #477

Revised and recommended for adoption by the Legislation & Resolutions Committee

Approved by the 77th AFT Michigan Convention (May 21, 2022)

Resolution #2

**AFT Michigan
77th Convention
May 21, 2022**

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS AND EXPANDING ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE

WHEREAS: There is a critical need to expand access to mental health care across Michigan; and

WHEREAS: Senate Bill 191 would add Physician Assistants, Certified Nurse Practitioners, and Clinical Nurse Specialists to the Mental Health Code and allow them to refer patients for evaluation by a psychiatrist; and

WHEREAS: SB 191 is supported by a long list of bipartisan co-sponsors; and

WHEREAS: This bill passed the Michigan Senate in 2021 and is in the House Health Policy Committee; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan supports legislation that improves health care access and Physician Assistant practice; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan will work with state legislators to move SB 191 forward to a vote in the Michigan House of Representatives.

Submitted by:

Jill Hasen, United Physician Assistants of Michigan Medicine #5297

Revised and recommended for adoption by the Legislation & Resolutions Committee
Approved by the 77th AFT Michigan Convention (May 21, 2022)

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF BLACK FARMERS

- WHEREAS:** Since 1920 the number of black owned farms has dramatically decreased from over one million to forty-nine thousand (49,000), taking black food production in this country from 15% to food production to 1.4%, one hundred years later; and
- WHEREAS:** Long-standing discriminatory policies at the USDA and documented difficulties receiving business loans have created insurmountable obstacles to black owned farms and farmers; and
- WHEREAS:** In 2020 the USDA approved farm loans for 37% of black applicants and 71% of white applicants, providing further evidence of discrimination in accessing loans, support and resources for black farmers; and
- WHEREAS:** Disadvantaged farmers were identified in Pres. Joe Biden's 2021 law entitled the American Rescue Plan to receive 4 billion dollars in debt forgiveness to rectify decades of unfair treatment by the USDA; and
- WHEREAS:** Many black farmers are facing foreclosure due to a lack of access to adequate funding; and
- WHEREAS:** Class action lawsuits have stalled federal assistance to disadvantaged farmers claiming these funds are discriminatory to white farmers, meanwhile black farmers that are otherwise approved for debt forgiveness are struggling to fund crops and equipment; and
- WHEREAS:** This stalling tactic to divert funds away from black farmers and eliminate competition is an injury to all Americans as the threat to lose part of our history with the threat of losing black farmers and causes an undue burden on food production as the cost of food rises at an alarming rate in this country; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**
- RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan acknowledges this denial of aid to black farmers as a continuation of systemic racism and oppression for black farmers across the country; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan stands in solidarity with black farmers and the National Black Farmers Association. and join them in calling for an immediate end of this filibuster style class action lawsuit; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**
- RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan will publicly support black farmers in their attempt to secure overdue funding and debt forgiveness.

Submitted by:

Lakia Wilson-Lumpkins, Detroit Federation of Teachers #231

Jason Posey, Detroit Federation of Teachers #231

Marcus Walton, Detroit Federation of Teachers #231
Crystal Lee, Detroit Federation of Teachers #231
Robin Jennings, Detroit Federation of Teachers #231

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TEACHER AND SCHOOL STAFF SHORTAGE

WHEREAS: In the United States and the State of Michigan public Schools have reached a serious shortage of teachers and school support staff resulting from escalating teacher turnover and staff exiting the profession at alarming rates; and

WHEREAS: Teacher turnover is nearly double that of other occupations, reaching 30% of teachers leaving their profession within five years compared to 16% of engineers and 19% of nurses and lawyers; and

WHEREAS: While stressors related to the Pandemic have exacerbated this problem, this crisis has been looming over the profession for several years. Political brawling over issues like teaching honest history, punitive testing and evaluation practices, restrictions to professional autonomy and unreasonable documentation expectations have been pushing educators out of the public schools for years now; and

WHEREAS: These issues compound many of the traditional issues that cause teachers to change districts or leave the profession all together. Poor compensation, a lack of professional respect, inadequate practical preparation to enter the classroom, a lack of support for new teachers, a sense of isolation at all levels of the profession and a real fear for one's own physical safety in many environments across education are all cited by teachers as reasons they chose to leave education; and

WHEREAS: The shortage of educational staff is a general issue, there is an even more pronounced problem with the diversity of the workforce. Educators in math, Science and CTE groups are severely lacking. People of color and diverse ethnicity are very under represented across the country. Nearly 80% of educators are non-hispanic whites, fewer than 10% are black, less than one third are male, LGBTQ representation is small and is threatened in many states across the nation. All these statistics serve a student body that is now less than 47% white; and

WHEREAS: Teachers and paraprofessionals are the most important in-school factors in determining success in a child's education, the country and state have done little to recruit, train or retain enough staff to meet the needs of all students. These shortages are affecting non affluent districts and students in impoverished areas more substantially than in affluent suburban areas. This has led to, and will continue to diminish efforts to provide an equitable education for these children; and

WHEREAS: The shortage problem can be reduced to three primary categories that need to be addressed.

1. Recruitment, preparation and support in the early years of practice.
2. Working conditions including voice, evaluation, career advancement and safety.
3. Compensation and professional respect; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

- RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan will promote realistic and relevant teacher preparation programs focusing on paid teacher apprenticeship programs promoting partnerships between teacher preparation institutes and schools in need of staff; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan will work to promote the increased diversification of the education workforce by focusing recruitment and funding in areas of need and in “grow your own” programs for students and non-teaching staff who wish to advance to certified teaching status; and **NOT THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan will work with legislators at the state and federal levels to create and fund robust and timely debt forgiveness programs especially for candidates that work in hard to staff districts and job categories; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan will work to support bargaining and develop programs to advance teaming opportunities and mentoring programs to support new teachers and experienced staff in need of assistance. The union will develop bargaining strategies that allow for smaller class sizes, more planning time, better opportunities for teacher collaboration and peer observation amongst all staff; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan will actively work at the federal, state and local levels to reduce the amount of paperwork all staff are required to do that does not directly contribute to the day-to-day work responsibilities of the educator. Data collection and reports should not interfere with the teacher’s ability to do their job. Investment in technology that can generate the data necessary should become a priority; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan will work with the state to reduce students’ assessments that are not formative. Districts should embrace more authentic classroom assessments that better reflect what students know and are able to do. The current “test and punish” models are inefficient, burdensome, punitive and often unfairly label students in a harmful way; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan will continue to advocate for an expansion of teacher voice in schools through collective bargaining and union led professional development opportunities; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan will aggressively promote the integration of the Community Schools model as a means of addressing the wrap-around needs of students and staff. The pandemic has made these needs even more pronounced than ever before. Failure of communities to meet the social emotional needs of children have led to an increase in trauma related behaviors and it has led to an unsafe environment for students and staff to work and learn in. The best way to address these issues is to front-load the solutions by providing school based programs that provide the assistance needed for improved student and staff well-being; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan will work with legislators to find ways to reduce the cost of Health care to districts and staff. Co-op programs, individual contribution reductions with a goal of having affordable health care that do not exclude low wage employees from being able to participate in employer provided programs; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan will develop innovative ways to build advancement opportunities into education professions and give all employees a chance to grow and advance. It is important not to lower the standards of the profession as more pathways to entering it are created. The union must develop expanded opportunities to become an educator while it continues to strengthen the professional reputation and standards of all educators. It is imperative that educators work to make this a more attractive profession to attract, recruit and retain candidates and thus regain the respect it deserves in a political environment that does not wish to do so; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan will promote the concept that every worker in our schools should have a living wage. Tangible compensation including fair wages and attractive affordable benefits are critical to maintaining a viable workforce. Salaries must be responsive to cost of living increases and need to have minimum wage provisions and minimum hour provisions to protect benefit eligibility.

Submitted by:
Lincoln Stocks, Eastpointe Federation of Educators Local 698

Revised and recommended for adoption by the Legislation & Resolutions Committee
Approved by the 77th AFT Michigan Convention (May 21, 2022)

**BUILDING A SUPPORT STAFF TO TEACHER CAREER LADDER
TO STRENGTHEN OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES**

WHEREAS: Michigan is facing a worsening teacher shortage and struggling to develop teachers reflective of our diverse student population; and

WHEREAS: Support staff including paraprofessionals, teaching assistants, interpreters, aides, bus drivers, and other school-related personnel, work with students every day in schools across our state and creating pathways for them to attain teacher certification can help build and develop Michigan's teaching force; and

WHEREAS: Support staff are instrumental in our school communities and should be supported and given opportunities for career advancement that include financial and professional support; and

WHEREAS: Barriers to certification, including certification preparation and ongoing support, disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) educators who are underrepresented as teachers in our classrooms statewide; and

WHEREAS: By building career ladders that support and fund a certification and development pipeline for school support staff we can both increase the number of BIPOC educators in classrooms and help districts stabilize their workforce; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan will create a platform focused on strategies for addressing the teacher shortage, particularly highlighting the importance of career development opportunities for support staff; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: AFT Michigan will support cross-constituency collaboration focused on collecting information and assessing proposed legislation and policies, existing pathways programs, and initiatives to support career development; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: AFT Michigan will work with K-12 locals to get career development and funding language in local collective bargaining agreements; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: AFT Michigan will support and build out a mentorship program to provide community and resources for support staff navigating career ladder programs and opportunities; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**

RESOLVED: AFT Michigan will prioritize legislation that provides funding and structures for support staff seeking to move along the career ladder and become teachers.

Submitted by:

Donna Jackson, Detroit Federation of Paraprofessionals #2350

Jeff Whittle, Macomb ISD Federation of Paraprofessionals #6216
Lakia Wilson-Lumpkins, Detroit Federation of Teachers #231
Lincoln Stocks, Eastpointe Federation of Educators #698

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**WALTER BERGMAN HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD
STUDENT ADVOCACY CENTER OF MICHIGAN**

WHEREAS: The Student Advocacy Center of Michigan (SAC) is a statewide organization working collaboratively with underserved students, and their families, to stay in school, realize their rights to a quality public education, grow and experience success; and

WHEREAS: Founded in 1975, SAC believes that every child is worthy of a quality education, a robust public education is a human right and essential to a thriving democracy, and that students' voices are essential in all endeavors. They work towards a vision of "every student in school, supported and engaged" through individual cases, community work, and system-wide change; and

WHEREAS: SAC has created a robust Know Your Rights resource hub to help students and families navigate the education system focused on school discipline, special education, homelessness, immigrant and English language learners, pregnant and parenting teens, foster care, and GED and alternatives. SAC's Statewide Helpline is available for caregivers, school staff, caseworkers, and other professionals to reach out for no-cost support and education advocacy advice, making support and advocacy accessible for many; and

WHEREAS: To support educators in this work, SAC has created tools like their "[School Discipline Bias Mental Checklist and Reframe](#)" to help educators examine their own practices and implement change at the classroom level. Along with opportunities for training, development, and partnership for districts, educators; and

WHEREAS: Student Advocacy Center's [Rethink Discipline Toolkit](#) helps districts and educators understand and engage in rethinking discipline through revisions of school codes, student interventions, and adhering to the [7 factors outlined in Michigan's Rethink Discipline laws](#) that went into effect in 2017; and

WHEREAS: SAC has worked with educators at Wayne RESA to develop a [Lesser Intervention Checklist](#) for educators to plan and document their interventions with students; and
NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY

RESOLVED: AFT Michigan thanks and honors the Student Advocacy Center of Michigan as the 2022 recipient of the Walter Bergman Human Rights Award.

Submitted and recommended for adoption by the Human Rights Committee
Approved by the 77th AFT Michigan Convention (May 21, 2022)

**CREATING A “CRADLE THROUGH COLLEGE PIPELINE”
THAT HELPS ALL STUDENTS SUCCEED**

WHEREAS: Black, Indigenous, and other students of color have historically been marginalized, pushed out, and harmed by policing and the punitive systems within public education; and,

WHEREAS: Black students are disproportionately impacted by punitive practices including behavioral interventions, dress codes, suspensions and expulsions, and police presence on campuses; and

WHEREAS: The consequences students face because of biased and unjust systems are far reaching and impact not only their educational outcomes, but their life trajectories as well; and

WHEREAS: Without equitable policies and fully funded wraparound supports and resources in place many educators feel overwhelmed by the increasing care tasks and wraparound responsibilities put on them in addition to daily instruction for students; and

WHEREAS: As educators who interact daily with students in PreK-12 classrooms and higher education campuses across Michigan, we should play a role in disrupting and dismantling the policies, structures, and day-to-day interactions that lead to the criminalization of students and replacing it with a “cradle through college” pipeline that maximizes successful outcomes for all children and communities; and

WHEREAS: Resources and programs which include bridge programs for incoming students, prison education partnerships, and support for first-generation college students on campuses are often insufficiently funded and result in Black, Indigenous, and other students of color feeling unsupported and leading to lower college graduation rates; and

WHEREAS: We need changes at multiple levels--from individual members learning about and interrupting their biases, to school districts, colleges and universities changing policies, to state government changing legislation; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan will develop training and learning opportunities for members in all constituencies to examine their pedagogical practices as they relate to creating humanizing and empowering environments for students, communities, and institutions; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan will support locals in partnering with administration and justice organizations, such as the [Student Advocacy Center of Michigan](#), to identify issues and advocate for more equitable processes and policies; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: AFT Michigan will advocate for education programs to prepare pre-service educators with responsive, justice-centered mindsets and practices that support students and communities across Michigan; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan encourages locals to engage with administration about discipline, security and policing practices on their campuses.

Submitted by:

Lakia Wilson-Lumpkins, Detroit Federation of Teachers #231

Terrence Martin, Detroit Federation of Teachers #231

Marcus Walton, Detroit Federation of Teachers #231

Lincoln Stocks, Eastpointe Federation of Educators # 698

Jeff Whittle, Macomb ISD Federation of Paraprofessionals # 6216

Donna Jackson, Detroit Federation of Paraprofessionals #2350

Megan Hohensee, Warren Woods Paraprofessionals #4706

Jodi Monday, Association of Adjunct Faculty at MCC #6533

Kerri Barnett, WCCC P&AA #4467

Daric Thorne, EMU Federation of Teachers #9102

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**LANGUAGE IN USE WITH, FOR, AND ABOUT UNION MEMBERS,
REGARDING GENDER AND SEXUAL IDENTITY**

GENDER INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

- WHEREAS:** Given the history of long-lasting and continued climates of hostility toward gender and sexual minorities and AFT's commitment to diversity and equality; and
- WHEREAS:** There are members of the union whose identities do not fall within the male/female gender binary (e.g., genderfluid, non-binary, genderqueer, Two Spirit, agender, et cetera); and
- WHEREAS:** The current common usage of gendered terminology within union spaces (e.g., ladies and gentlemen, union brothers and sisters, men and women, he/she, et cetera) reflects a tacit enforcement of the artificial gender binary; and
- WHEREAS:** The union as an institution exists for the greater good of the entirety of its constituency and should reflect and protect the identities of all members of the union; and
- WHEREAS:** Usage of language which enforces a male/female binary is unnecessarily exclusive of union members who do not identify with those categories and can unintentionally reinforce gender stereotypes; such language can be easily changed to become universally inclusive; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**
- RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan will officially and formally adopt a policy of including non-gendered terminology when addressing the union body (e.g., brothers, sisters, and siblings; folks) in emails, press releases, and other methods of communication; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**
- RESOLVED:** Where it applies, AFT Michigan will recommend using gender neutral nouns and pronouns in contract language.

Submitted by:

James R. McQuaid, WSU Graduate Employees Organizing Committee #6123

Meredith Kahn, UM Lecturers' Employee Organization #6244

Debra Bondy, Detroit Federation of Teachers #231

Sara Van Wormer, Macomb CC Faculty Organization #6526

Kate Birdsall, MSU Union of Nontenure-Track Faculty #1855

Lori Chapman, Macomb CC Faculty Organization #6526

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GREEN SCHOOLS FOR SAFE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

WHEREAS: Climate change is a crisis affecting communities here in Michigan and all over the world, with particularly devastating impacts on frontline communities of color; and

WHEREAS: After decades of underfunding, disinvestment and deferred maintenance, many buildings of our nation's public schools and colleges are crumbling. More than 50% of our public school buildings in the U.S. are at least 50 years old and need major renovations to deal with issues like leaking roofs, broken air-conditioning, outdated HVAC systems, mold or mildew issues, and poor air quality; and

WHEREAS: Too many of these buildings are unhealthy and unsafe for students and staff, creating health impacts with immediate and long-term effects; and

WHEREAS: Outdated school facilities are also major polluters. Nationwide, public schools burn as much carbon as 18 coal-fired power plants and use approximately \$8 billion in energy every year. Decarbonizing schools is key to meeting our climate targets and addressing climate change; and

WHEREAS: Green and sustainable schools create a healthy environment that is conducive to learning while saving energy resources and money. Studies show a strong positive relationship between overall building conditions and student achievement. They can also save money -- schools and colleges currently spend more money every year on energy and utility costs exceeding the combined cost of supplies and books; and

WHEREAS: Green schools focus on improvements in site selection, use of daylight, indoor air quality, thermal comfort, acoustics and classroom design—all of which have an important impact on the ability of students to learn, teachers to teach, and staff to do their jobs; and

WHEREAS: With billions of federal dollars available, school districts are in a position to make generational investments in building a carbon-free future by providing safe & healthy buildings for teaching and learning; and

WHEREAS: By coupling investments with union training provisions and strong labor and equity standards, school decarbonization could create millions of good-paying union careers that help reverse the racial wage gap and economic inequality; and

WHEREAS: If we focus on prioritizing renovating and rebuilding schools in frontline communities of color, we can also help advance racial justice and ensure the benefits of our climate investments flow to under-resourced communities; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED: Therefore, be it resolved that AFT Michigan will work with locals and other partners to build coalitions and create programs advancing green schools, colleges, and universities across our state; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan calls on all Michigan schools, colleges and universities to ensure all of their buildings and facilities are carbon-free and healthy, including:

- Clean air and water for students and staff,
- Upgraded HVAC, lighting, insulation, and windows to save money and energy,
- Solar panels and other alternative energy generation,
- Electric buses and other vehicles, and
- Green stormwater management to reduce flooding and protect our rivers and lakes.
- Asbestos abatement; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**

RESOLVED: That the State of Michigan and federal government should allocate funding to achieve these goals, ensure accountability and oversight of commitments by our educational institutions.

Submitted by:

David Hecker, AFT Michigan #8020

Terrence Martin, Detroit Federation of Teachers #231

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