

RESOLUTION NO. 28

**SUPPORT FOR EARLY INTERVENTION AND EQUALIZATION
OF OPPORTUNITIES BY, FOR, AND WITH PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES**

Submitted by: IFT Executive Board

- 1 **WHEREAS**, *Our Nation's Children at Risk: A State-by-State Report on Early Intervention* found
2 that of the 540,688 students ages 0-3 in Illinois in 2011, on average, fewer than 20 percent
3 of them (approximately 108,137) are properly screened to identify their special need; and
4
- 5 **WHEREAS**, in 2011, 70,289 Illinois kids under the age of three were at risk of developmental
6 delays or disabilities that will hinder them when they start school, yet only about half of these
7 students are currently receiving early intervention services through Part C of Individuals with
8 Disabilities Education Act, resulting in many never reaching their full potential or attaining
9 similar educational outcomes as non-developmentally delayed peers; and
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- 11 **WHEREAS**, Illinois' allocation for early intervention funding has remained flat from 2012 to 2013
12 at \$160 million; and
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- 14 **WHEREAS**, it is harder than ever for families to access care because essential programs to
15 treat young students with disabilities are chronically underfunded and in danger of being
16 scaled back even further; and
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- 18 **WHEREAS**, Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) members, based on career experience, have
19 expressed strong concerns about abuses and potential inequities arising from allowing
20 flexibility and/or eliminating statewide protections for class size/caseloads limitations, as
21 they serve an increasingly diverse population of special education students through different
22 service delivery models; and
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- 24 **WHEREAS**, the promises of statewide Response to Intervention processes have been
25 compromised by lack of adequate statewide training, support, resources, and funding for
26 equitable implementation across Illinois' schools, impacting IFT members' abilities to provide
27 all necessary early interventions and instructional supports to all of their students; and
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- 29 **WHEREAS**, persons with disabilities, even as adults, remain the most marginalized segment of
30 society, often discriminated against through exploitation and violence and excluded from
31 mainstream activities, including participation in political and public life, education, and
32 employment; and
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- 34 **WHEREAS**, about 8 in 10 working-age Americans with disabilities do not hold a job, and of
35 those who are actively looking, about 13 percent remain unemployed, compared with 7
36 percent of the broader work force (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012); therefore be it
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- 38 **RESOLVED, that the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) recognizes the profound social,**
39 **cultural and economic disadvantages and exclusion experienced by many persons**
40 **with cognitive or physical disabilities and support proactive measures towards**
41 **altering the perception of disability and ensuring that societies recognize that all**
42 **people must have the opportunity to reach their full potential; and be it further**
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- 44 **RESOLVED, that the IFT will promote early intervention and identification of disabilities,**
45 **especially for students, by advocating for increased state funding for early**
46 **intervention programs, including effective implementation supports for Response to**
47 **Intervention, and urge the American Federation of Teachers to advocate for full**
48 **funding for Part C of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and be it further**
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- 50 **RESOLVED, that the IFT supports programs and legislation that enable young students**
51 **with disabilities or developmental delays the opportunity to achieve similar**
52 **educational possibilities as their nondisabled peers, or enhance their development so**
53 **they can better learn and grow; and be it further**
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- 55 **RESOLVED, that the IFT advocates for the Illinois State Board of Education to maintain**
56 **and enhance the long standing state protections for class size/case load and age**
57 **requirements; and be it further**
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- 59 **RESOLVED, that the IFT supports a collaborative effort with K-12 schools, public**
60 **colleges, universities, and organizations of persons with disabilities, to engage in**
61 **cooperative arrangements aimed at removing barriers for persons with disabilities by**
62 **providing adequate resources and access to appropriate assistive devices, which**
63 **help to ensure full inclusion and participation in the classroom and workplace; and be**
64 **it finally**
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- 66 **RESOLVED, that the IFT will advocate on behalf of our members with disabilities by**
67 **developing model contract language to allow local unions to address issues of**
68 **discrimination and equalization of opportunity in the workplace, which includes**
69 **reasonable accommodations to address the needs of persons with disabilities.**