

School Board Makes \$570 Million Budget Request

Tuesday night, May 3, the Board of Education voted to submit a budget request of 570 million dollars to the Mayor and Council. The budget will now go through a series of hearings and votes before becoming final July 1.

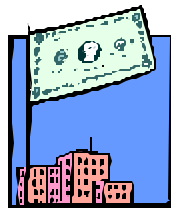


The Board request is approximately \$56 million more than 04-05 funding and slightly less than what was called for in the MGT Audit, an independent study of school system needs. The proposed budget restores cuts made last year such as the drastic reduction in per pupil supply money and adds on additional positions with special emphasis on middle schools and ninth grade.

A 3% pay raise for teachers and support staff is included as well as money for increased staff development opportunities and additional classroom aides. For complete budget details go to the MNPS homepage. We are also developing a budget information section at www.mnea.com. It is extremely important that you contact your Council person and give your input on this budget. Writing a letter, e-mailing, attending a meeting, or making a phone call makes a huge difference. Check with your Association Rep. for detailed information.

To contact your Council person, go to www.nashville.gov and click on Metro Council at the top of the screen. Then click on Member Roster on the index to the left.

Important School Budget Events



- May 11** School Board meets with Council Budget and Finance Committee 3:30 at Council Chambers
- May 12** Board presents Budget to Mayor at Metro City Hall
- May 24** Mayor Purcell's State of Metro Address at Convention Center 7:30 a.m.
- End of May/June** Council considers Budget
- July 1** Final Approved Budget goes into effect

Negotiations Update

MNEA Negotiations will meet again with the Board team on May 19 and try to hammer out the 05-06 contract.

Agreement was recently reached on teacher initiated transfer language, job related injury and summer school pay.



Adjustments to the Administrator pay scale proved to still be the major sticking point at the May 4 session. MNEA is attempting to correct flaws in the schedule that was implemented last year that led to some administrators being passed by those with less experience.

Know Your Contract



ARTICLE II

ASSOCIATION AND TEACHER RIGHTS

E. GRADING PROCEDURES

Approved procedures for the evaluation of student progress and the reporting of such shall be made available to principals for distribution to teachers. If the approved procedures provide for optional reporting forms, the local school principal and faculty, working cooperatively with the administration, shall be allowed to select those they find most appropriate.

Teachers shall have the right and responsibility to determine grades and student promotions. An administrative change in a teacher's decision on grade or promotion shall not be made without prior consultation with the teacher. A teacher may request that the decision of the principal or the results of the consultation be reviewed by the appropriate assistant superintendent or designee.

Grades shall be recorded on official school records including report cards and permanent student records in the manner prescribed by the central administration. Teachers may use percentage and/or letter grades for individual record keeping in grade books. If the teacher's individual method of record keeping varies from the method prescribed for the official recording, an explanation or key shall be filed with the building principal before the first grading period and shall also be affixed to the front page of the grade book.

2004-2005 Educational Agreement

The Slate is published during the school year by the Metropolitan Nashville Education Association, an affiliate of the Tennessee

Education Association and the National Education Association.

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From the President



I suppose there's not a school district in the United States where the teachers, principals, board members and superintendent are always in agreement. I'm also supposing these people share one goal – making sure children get a great education – but probably many different views on how to make that happen.

I've never hidden the fact that I occasionally disagree with the Board and Administration here in Nashville. While I respect their efforts on behalf of education, their path is not always the path I would take. If you've been a teacher in any district for any amount of time, you've most likely had similar experiences.

In the next six to eight weeks, there will be much public debate about the proposed 2005-2006 budget for Metro Nashville Public Schools. There will be many opinions about the level of funding needed and considerable speculation about the impact of funding on student achievement. We'll hear proponents and opponents offering up both truths and half-truths as they attempt to sway public opinion.

As this is occurring, it's important for teachers, principals, board members and the superintendent to put aside differences of opinion and focus on one goal: obtaining the funding we need to give Nashville's children a better education. It's vital for us to show the community – particularly our elected officials – that in this effort, we speak with unity. Our voice needs to be strong and clear, sending a most powerful message that educating children is the most important thing a community does.

Teachers and parents should be the torchbearers and champions of the call for improved funding. In the next few weeks, I hope you'll emphasize to friends and family the value of adequate funding. Tell them about what we need – you know it better than anyone – and why the proposed budget is so important to the city of Nashville.

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PALS Celebrate!

One of MNEA and MNPS's most successful collaborations has been the Peer Assistance, Leadership and Support (PALS) program, conceived by MNEA and funded by MNPS. Begun in 1995 to aid new teachers in their development, MNEA started the program which was recognized by the Board as a worthwhile investment. Cited as one of the system's wisest investment, PALS has improved the process of working through the difficulties of being a new teacher. Funding has not always been available for the entire cadre, which has stretched the mentors to get around to all of those needing help. Negotiations call for the full team of eleven members this year, depending on finances.



The PALS Panel has selected new members to serve next year. They met on May 2 to honor those who have served and welcome those who will be joining the team. Pictured here are PALS (left to right) **Kathleen Mance, Julie Hopkins, Michelle Lepley, Joan Woods, Melinda Culver, Mickie Agee, Madonna Stepbach,** and **Mark Mason** with Professional Development Director **Lenna Allen**, School Board members George Thompson and Kathleen Harkey, Executive Tier Director **Dr. Greg Patterson**, with President **Ralph Smith** and President-elect **Dr. Jamye Merritt**. Special recognition was given to Lepley, Woods and Culver, whose terms of service have now been completed. Announcement of new PALS will be made public shortly.

2005-2006 Association Reps

It's time to elect your Association Representatives for next year.

It is very important that your school be represented at the AR training this August. There are several new procedures that every AR will need to know.

Please call the MNEA office, 726-1499 with the name of your AR, or send the form to MNEA, Route 3, by May 12th.

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Tell them good intentions aren't enough; we need proper funding to do what Nashville expects us to do. Tell them we're not looking for luxuries, but essentials; the proper tools to help us give children a better education.

Just keep focused on the good things in the budget and what it means to you, your students, your school and your community. You can bet that's what I will be doing.

Ralph Smith

August Praxis Workshop Announced

TEA has announced an August 27 workshop titled "A Day in the Praxis II Specialty Content Areas."

Your Association Rep has been provided with registration information.

NEA Delegate Briefing

NEA Delegates need to attend a briefing at the MNEA building May 12 at 6:00 p.m.

Dates to Remember

- May 9 Professional Council
- May 10 MNEA Retirement Banquet 7:00
- May 11 Special Education Committee
- May 12 Final Rep Assembly of the year
- May 16 Membership Committee
- May 17 MNEA-PACE Dinner with Metro Council

TSU Participating In Tom Joyner Foundation Scholarships

The May issue of *neatoday* (p. 42) notes that seven colleges are participating in the Tom Joyner Foundation's effort to help teachers become fully licensed. Tennessee State University is among the group. With \$700,000 to offer, financial support is available for specified courses, books, or preparation for the state teacher licensure examination. Go to www.nea.org/joyner and fill out the short questionnaire to determine if you are eligible, or get more information in *neatoday*.

First State Lawsuit Filed Against NCLB

In the first such effort by a state, Connecticut announced on April 5 that it will file a lawsuit against the US Dept. of Education for imposing millions of dollars in unfunded mandates under the No Child Left Behind law. The state would have to spend \$8 million of its own money for testing when it already has a successful 20-year history of alternate-grade testing. Other states are being sought to join the legal action. Our affiliates in the Connecticut Education Association played an instrumental role in helping the Attorney General to file the suit.

TEA Sees Win in Home School Sports Postponement

A bill in the state legislature allowing home-schooled students who have no affiliation with a school to play on its teams or other extracurricular activities has been referred to a study committee, effectively killing it for this session. A subcommittee will be formed to try to work out a solution which might be acceptable to the home-school association and the TSSAA. Numerous difficulties in supervising students who are not a part of a school arise in this mixture. TEA has opposed the proposal.

Nashville Sounds Teacher Appreciation Day

Baseball fans are invited to Greer Stadium Sunday, May 15 to watch the *Sounds* defeat the *Las Vegas 51's*.

- * Teachers, principals and School staff presenting a school ID will receive up to four free reserved seat tickets for the game.
- * Teachers will be entered into drawings for various door prizes including gift certificates to restaurants, bed & breakfast, movie tickets and more!
- * Gates open at 1 p.m. Game starts at 2 p.m.

What Can't We Buy Thru NEA?

Everyone knows that our membership in NEA/TEA/MNEA is not to join a buyers' discount plan! Our purpose is much more than that. A serendipity of our 2,700,000 members nationwide, however, is the ability to fill our needs for insurance, credit cards, loans, savings plans, magazines, and on and on... Now, we have learned that the cellular phone companies want to tap into our group by offering unbelievable bargains! Members may gather free equipment and even get enough rebates to put money in their pockets from companies like Cingular, Nextel, Verizon, and T-Mobile. We don't sell any of these, so our only recommendation to you is to go online at www.neamb.com and shop to see what meets your needs. All of these companies have current offers on this site. Comparison shopping doesn't cost—it should save you some dollars. If you find a deal that is better than you can get on your own, take it! That's the strength of the group buying power. We only exist for your good. We're not in the phone business,



but if we can help teachers save more than their dues cost, who wouldn't want to be a member? That's just good business.



More details and up-to-date information at www.mnea.com