



NEGOTIATIONS OPENS UP AGAIN!!

MNEA and School Board Team Head Back to the Table

MNEA President, Jamye Merritt, wrote a letter on October 12, 2006 to School Board Chair Marsha Warden stating MNEA's willingness to return to the table to reopen discussion of the proposed bonus plan. MNEA Chief Negotiator and Vice President Erick Huth has contacted the Board's spokesperson and both sides met on October 17, 2006.

MNEA members, be on the alert to receive more information about this important issue. As always, we will provide periodic updates to your Association Representative, to Executive Board Directors, in the *SLATE* and on the MNEA website at www.mnea.com to keep you informed.

MNEA Members Voted NO..First Time Around

MNEA conducted a ratification election on the tentative Memorandum of Agreement relative to the "Nashville Alliance Award Initiative, 2006-2009."

At 5:00 P.M., October 6, MNEA declared the balloting period closed. A special trip was also made down to the Central office mailroom to pick up any ballots not yet delivered.

The results were 51.3% against the plan and 48.7% for it. Therefore, MNEA elected not to ratify the Memorandum of Agreement.

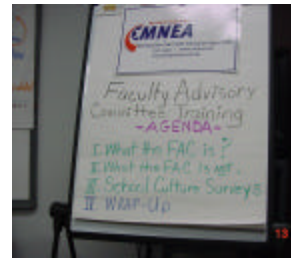
A Memorandum of Agreement is an addendum to the Negotiated contract which clarifies the intent of what is to be implemented. It contains guidelines for planning, operating or implementing the agreement that has been hashed out by the negotiations team or Special Committee. Once voted on, it is added to the contract as an "APPENDIX".

All MNEA members must agree to contract changes even when dealing with language that only pertains to a limited population within the bargaining unit. Such is the case with the Memorandum of Understanding related to the "Nashville Alliance Award Initiative, 2006-2009." Additionally, a separate ratification was specifically called for in the 2006-2007 *Educational Agreement*. Ratification by the entire membership is a classic principle of collective bargaining. State law does not allow individuals or groups of individuals to negotiate their own deals.

There has been much publicity concerning this vote, the MNEA, and the MNEA leadership. However, it is still imperative to know the MNEA is democracy; ruled by the majority. Each member has a choice on whether to cast a ballot and how to vote. We may not all agree, but we will not let anyone or any situation pick us apart one-by-one. **MNEA IS ITS MEMBERS!!**

READY TO SERVE

The 2006 Faculty Advisory Committee trainings were held at MNEA on October 4th and 11th. President Jamye Merritt expressed encouragement for the participation and the level of discussion by attendees on ways to improve the overall operations and relationships in their buildings. If you are interested in an on-site trainings call MNEA at 726-1499.



Elementary District Assessment

At a recent Professional Council meeting, MNEA leaders invited long-time MNEA activist Ann Mullins of Thomas Edison Elementary to discuss the intricacies of completing assessments in the lower grades using EduSoft. Mullins reported that she and her second-grade colleagues each spent about four hours completing the assessments. One suggestion made was that the previous years data be used as a baseline rather than duplicating the previous effort at the start of each year.

Additionally, MNEA reported to the administration that the assessments are not laid out in a manner that facilitates scoring. Numbers on the various documents do not correlate. Mullins suggested to Dr. Sandy Johnson that making the EduSoft bubble sheets correlate better to the assessments would naturally save time for teachers. She also indicated that the assessments could use totals for phonemic awareness and site words rather than requiring teachers to bubble each concept or word not mastered. Dr. Johnson indicated that she was open to receiving teacher feedback on how to improve the assessments and invited Mrs. Mullins to do so in the future. In the end, Mullins did note that she found the reading assessments data useful to her as a second grade teacher but was concerned that the process for compiling the information could be improved.

Welcome New MNEA Board Members

New Executive Board members were recently elected at the September 21st Representative Assembly. These new members were nominated by their district and voted by acclamation to serve a three-year term.

Congratulations to:

Patrick Britt, Gra-Mar Middle—District 3
Sidney Hill, McGavock High—District 9

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American Education Week 2006

November 12–18

Join us **November 12–18, 2006**, to celebrate



American Education Week (AEW). This year's theme, ***Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility***, highlights the importance of bringing together educators, school staff, parents, students, and communities in a unified effort to build great public

schools. The theme also reflects NEA's vision of calling upon America to provide students with quality public schools so that they can grow, prosper, and achieve in the 21st century.

New Resources Available

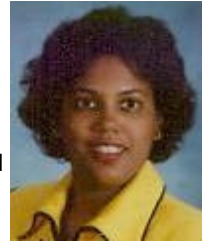
We encourage you to use our online toolkit for activity ideas, templates, and downloadable materials. You can also download 2006 AEW poster art, logos, and AEW Web banner art.

Foreign Language Assessments

Recently Helen McMackin, MNEA Executive Board Member and French teacher at Overton High School, arranged a meeting with Dr. Johnson and other administration officials to discuss this year's plans for the District Foreign Language Assessment. MNEA Vice President Erick Huth, a Spanish teacher at MNPS Middle College, also participated in the meeting. Most of the conversation centered on the fact that the questions on the assessments were not benchmarked against any standards and that benchmarking needs to be completed before the data can be useful to teachers in improving instruction.

Additional conversation centered on the appropriateness of the second year tests in French and Spanish and the testing dates for both levels. The administration admitted that work needed to be done on the tests before they count as the exam grade at the end of the year. The individuals assembled all agreed that most high school students will not perform well on any assessments that does not count in some way. Discussions on the test concerns will continue and the second year question remains unanswered, but the administration has promised to benchmark the assessments in some way before students take the test.

From the President



Dr. Janye Merritt

Recently, there has been a great deal of controversy over the proposed group incentive awards program at Alex Green and Inglewood. The school board chair, Marsha Warden, Dr. Garcia, and a PR types from the Central Office have made repeated demands of MNEA for internal documents. MNEA leaders have been accused of sabotaging the voting. One member even accused me via e-mail of destroying ballots. The balloting process was the same as always: (1) ballots were sent to each Association Representative via school mail on September 26, (2) most Reps should have received them by September 28, (3) a cover letter with instructions was included with the ballots, (4) ballots were due back on October 6 at 5:00 p.m. and (5) the MNEA Nominations and Elections Committee supervised the counting of the all ballots received by the deadline.

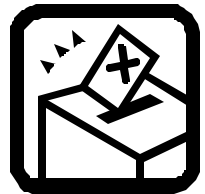
The Nominations and Elections Committee of MNEA could more accurately be described as a "commission" since it is the only "committee" of the organization that the president does not appoint. The nine members of that committee elect their own chair, set rules and procedures for elections and count ballots. Neither vice president nor president had a role in tabulating ratification ballots.

I would encourage every member to be sure to cast votes in the future and take steps to make sure their ballots arrive at the MNEA Office by the deadline. The Nomination & Elections Committee will hold an election for three of the nine positions this spring. Any member of MNEA who works in one of the three prospective vacancies should feel free to run for the position. MNEA, as an affiliate of the NEA, is required to conduct contested election by secret ballot. As a matter of practice, vote totals are not tracked by schools. In the future I trust all members will avail themselves of the democratic process.

Thanks for what you do for our students every day.

EARLY VOTING SCHEDULE OCTOBER 18, 2006 THROUGH NOVEMBER 2, 2006

The Davidson County Election Commission Early Voting Site will be open beginning **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, through THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2006.**



ALL other Early Voting Sites will be open beginning **MONDAY, OCTOBER 23 through THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2006.**

TO FIND YOUR VOTING LOCATION FOR ELECTION DAY, **NOVEMBER 7, 2006**, PLEASE VISIT www.nashville.gov/vote AND CLICK "WHERE I VOTE" BUTTON.

MNEA President Speaks on the Issue

On Tuesday, October 10, 2006, MNEA President, Dr. Jamye Merritt addressed the MNPS Board of Education.

Below is the three minute speech in its entirety:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am here tonight in light of Mrs. Warden's inquiry to us insinuating that somehow MNEA mismanaged the vote on the teacher bonus pay and the inaccurate media coverage it generated.

I want all of us to be clear that the vote was conducted in the same way all official votes of the MNEA membership are conducted. It was a fair and secret ballot vote.

And with today's technology, more information was sent and available to our members than ever before. I don't believe the real issue here was lack of information.

I regret that not every member exercised his or her right to vote, but that's a decision MNEA has no control over.

Nor was the problem MNEA's reluctance to participate in an experimental bonus plan. You, and we, are currently working with Peabody College on a similar idea involving a 10 million dollar federal grant.

So what was it? Two things stand out in my conversations with teachers.

One, teachers don't trust this administration to do what it says it will do. There's a great deal of skepticism out there about the motives and direction of this administration at every step. Couple that with the secrecy about where this money is coming from, who's involved, and what they're after, and you have a "no" vote.

My refusal to release the actual vote count and the schools voting is based on our constitution and bylaws which require a secret ballot vote. I believe that making that information public would compromise our integrity. I also have no doubt that it would result in reprisals against individuals and schools by the administration.

The second, and perhaps more serious concern is, why is our elected school board being ordered around by someone who showed up with a sack full of money? Shouldn't the board and teachers be the ones developing plans to increase student learning and THEN seeking funding for them? Is the school board running the schools, or is the Nashville Alliance now in charge?

With respect, I suggest this board establish a policy on how it will accept and handle private or secret donations.

MNEA hopes that this is not the end of our negotiations around the matter of legitimate diversified pay plans. As we negotiate in the future, MNEA will bring proposals on diversified pay that are built on our members' input and our research. Our goal will always be to give every Metro student a great public school.

To that end, I'd like to propose an idea for the use of the \$400,000 donation. Since the donor's interest was supposedly in raising student test scores, and since it's the students who must do the learning and test taking, and since the teachers at Alex Green and Inglewood can hardly work any harder than they already are:

MNEA suggests that you and the Alliance develop a Student Awards plan and give the money to them.

Thank you for your attention, and on behalf of Metro's teachers, thank you for the service you give to our community.



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