

## Read Across America is a Success!

TEA and MNEA joined in NEA's National Read Across America Celebration on Dr. Seuss' birthday, Thursday, March 2, 2006.

The kick-off celebration was held at the Country Music Hall of Fame. Our special guests were students from Gateway, Caldwell, Hattie Cotton and Whitsitt Elementary Schools. Students, teachers and parents arrived by bus and were greeted and escorted by STEA members from Tennessee State University, TEA and MNEA Staff as they walked down a balloon laden hallway. Inside the Music Theatre they were met by "Cat in the Hat" played by Bernard Lafayette (Caldwell), MNEA President Jamye Merritt and TEA President Judy Beasley. President Merritt lead them in taking the Pledge to Read. They were given their own Cat in the Hat hat, and an educational packet (compliments of TEA), including a new book, as they joined with the Whitsitt Elementary School Honors' Choir, lead by Hillary Parks, Music Teacher.



Special surprise entertainment included Ventriloquist Crystal Miller and Country Music Artist Jimmy Wayne.

The students joined in as our VIP readers read with them. These included Metro Fire Department members, including Fire Chief Kim Lawson, Lieutenant George Russell and others, Metro Council members Brenda Gilmore and Ronnie Greer. Greg Patterson, Flo Kidd, MNPS Elementary and Middle School Directors were also in attendance.

Upon departure, students and teachers had the opportunity to walk through the C-SPAN Bus and receive special educational treats. VIP's departed to read in various schools. Nothing is more magical than the gift of reading. We thank all who made this years celebration a success. Special thanks to MNEA Public Relations Committee and Chair, Peggy Stanfield.



## Education Committees “Irked” by TSBA Audit Findings TEA Targeted by Dubious Teacher Liability Insurance

A joint meeting of the Senate and House Education Committees held a four-hour hearing on Monday, February 13, to hear testimony relative to a Comptroller's audit of the Tennessee School Boards Association (TSBA) and the Tennessee School Board-Risk Management Trust. The investigative audit – which has received considerable statewide media attention – focuses on irresponsible spending and allegations of illegal activities. The Nashville Tennessean reported the next day that the lawmakers were “irked” by the loose oversight reflected in the findings of the audit.

While the legislative probe covered a wide-range of questionable activities, TEA is particularly concerned about the Risk Management Trust's marketing -- in 2002 and 2003 -- of a teacher liability insurance policy which was of very questionable value, and might have been offered illegally to employees of school boards who were not members of the TSBA Trust. In talking with the education committees, the auditor for the comptroller's office stated that officers affiliated with TSBA and the trust admitted that the “policies” were promoted to discourage membership in the Tennessee Education Association. When the auditors questioned the program manager for the trust regarding the marketing of the policies, the official said selling the policies was like “selling air”! The policies were also promoted in a July 18, 2002 letter to educators from then Governor Don Sundquist. At that time, Sundquist was not happy with TEA due to the Associations' questioning of his charter school proposals.

**A lesson to be learned from this is that educators need to be very suspect of attempts to sell them liability “protection” when the motive is obviously to discourage membership in their professional association.** TEA's legal services includes outstanding professional liability insurance plus much more! Members, and potential members, should not be fooled into thinking any governmental body, or alternative organization, can protect them legally as well as TEA can -- and does!

### Look for Pay-Option Form

Teachers wishing to change your payroll option should be on the look-out for MNPS 12 MONTH PAY OPTION FORM. This plan option is in effect for one (1) contract year. Even if you wish to withdraw from the 12-month plan, you need to make this known also.

This form needs to be in payroll by the end of July 2006.

For participants choosing this option, check issue dates will be the same as that for 12 month employees. However, participants enrolled in this option will not receive “5 day” checks issued at the end of the first two weeks of school or the advance 10 day vacation check issued prior to Winter Break. Your earnings will begin on the first work date and be paid over 26 bi-weekly pay periods. You will receive the same annual gross pay, but will reduce the net pay amount per pay period compared to regular 10 month pay.

### MNEA “Continuing Member” Drop Window

According to MNEA By-Laws Article IV, Section 2. *Cancellation of continuing members dues must be submitted in writing between April 1 and May 31 for the following year.*

*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.

531 Fairground Court  
Nashville, TN 37211  
Phone: (615) 726-1499  
FAX: (615) 726-2501

Jamye Merritt, President  
Erick Huth, Vice President  
Ida Barnes, Finance Officer  
Nancy Holland, Secretary  
UniServ Coordinators: Forestine Cole, Ralph Smith, Gloria Towner  
MNEA Staff: Cathey Bartlett, Anna Ruth Day,  
Jan Hardy, Teresa Hayes

## NEA's Reg Weaver Elected Vice President of Largest Global Union Federation

WASHINGTON —Reg Weaver, president of the National Education Association, has been elected vice president of the world's largest organization of education employees. Education International represents 29 million teachers, higher education faculty and education support professionals in 166 countries, and is the voice of education workers worldwide.

"This is an honor for me and for all the members of NEA," Weaver said. "It's a recognition of our members' tireless advocacy for great public schools for every child. A quality public education is a right of every student, in every country, and if we work together at the local, regional and international levels, we can defend that right."

## Voucher Bills Hit Tennessee General Assembly!

### TEA Views As Direct Attack on Public Education

Voucher proposals are no longer a Washington, D. C., or state of Florida phenomenon. At least two voucher proposals have been filed in the 2006 legislature. The bills do not actually use the word "voucher" – the drain of funding is cloaked in the language of student "scholarships" for private and parochial schools. The bills pending are **SB 2662** by Sen. Diane Black (R-Gallatin)/**HB 2675** by Rep. Jerome Cochran (R-Johnson City) and **SB 3536** by Sen. Diane Black/**HB 2687** by Rep. Stacy Campfield (R-Knoxville). **TEA will strongly oppose these bills!**

### Quote of the week

*"We need to support our teachers with competitive pay, with the materials they need to teach, with safe classrooms."*

—Gov. Phil Bredesen

## Know Your Contract



### ARTICLE VI

## TEACHER WORKDAY, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

### C. TEACHER WORKDAY

All teachers shall be present at their respective schools a minimum of seven and one-half (7 1/2) hours each school day.

### D. ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

The Board recognizes that teachers employed by the Metropolitan Public School System are members of a profession. The Board further recognizes that, as such, payment of services is not based upon the time the teacher arrives or departs from his/her school or location. The decision as to the arrival and departure time of teachers and accounting of such shall be a matter of discussion and planning by the Faculty Advisory Committee and the building principal. However, the final decision rests with the principal. It is understood that problems of chronic lateness shall be handled professionally between the educator and his/her immediate supervisor.

*2005-06 Educational Agreement*

## Negotiations Table Talk

Below is the exact quote made by Dr. June Keel, MNPS Chief Negotiator, taken from the January 31, 2006 negotiations tape regarding MNEA's proposal #18 about teachers bus duty and ballgame responsibilities off the clock and without compensation.



*"Teachers are not required to stay for late busses; they are not required to work ballgames. This is a responsibility of the administration."*



Enjoy Spring Break!

## TED MARTIN HUMAN RELATIONS AWARD

Stephen Henry, Chair Human Relations Committee

In 1964 the teachers Education Council became formally known as the Metropolitan Nashville Education Association. The first and only African-American male educator to serve as President of MNEA has been Theodore "Ted" R. Martin. Ted served as President from 1970-1971 and died of Alzheimer's disease in 1985.

Ted always maintained a special interest in improving the relationship among all educators and improving working conditions for school teachers. He was recognized by the association for this commitment with the Human Relations Award being named in his honor.



The Human Relations Committee is accepting nominees for the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Ted Martin Human Relations Award. The deadline for receipt of application materials (Nomination Form and Scrapbook) is Friday, April 7, 2006. For more information call 726-1499.

## Considering Retirement?

Teachers who notify the Human Resources Department no later than March 15 of their plans to retire upon the completion of their current fiscal year assignment shall receive a five-hundred-dollar (\$500) early notification incentive. This incentive was negotiated by MNEA in 1994.

Members who notify MNEA of your plans to retire will be our honored guest at the 2006 MNEA Retired Teacher Banquet. Tribute will be paid to you for your years of service with a special souvenir gift from your association, certificates from the Office of the Mayor, a free banquet meal for you, reserved seating and/or reserved table(s) for your guests. Submit your name as an MNEA retiree by calling 726-1499.



## From the President

I thought this would be a good time to share with members of the United Education Profession a portion from the "Code of Ethics of the Tennessee Education Association, Adopted by the TEA Representative Assembly, April 1978."

I am sharing this for two (2) reasons (1) Because there seems to be a general public perception questioning the professional ethics of educators and (2) Many of you may have not reviewed this part of the Code of Ethics in some time. This month I will share:

### PRINCIPLE I COMMITMENT TO THE STUDENT

The educator strives to help each student realize his or her potential as a worthy and effective member of society. The educator therefore works to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the student, the educator —

1. Shall not unreasonably restrain the student from independent action in the pursuit of learning.
2. Shall not unreasonably deny the student access to varying points of view.
3. Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter relevant to the student's progress.
4. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.
5. Shall not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement.
6. Shall not on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, family, social or cultural background, or sexual orientation unfairly:
  - a. Exclude any student from participation in any program;
  - b. Deny benefits to any student;
  - c. Grant any advantage to any student.
7. Shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.
8. Shall not disclose information about students obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

Jamye