



LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD COMPLETE THE SURVEY

MNEA announced at the February Representative Assembly that the MNEA Negotiations Committee would place the 2008 Bargaining Survey on the MNEA web site. The committee has developed a survey to assess teacher attitudes about working conditions in Metro Schools. To complete the survey go to www.mnea.com and click on the 2008 Bargaining Survey link.

NEA DELEGATE ELECTION

The MNEA Nominations and Elections Committee has certified the election results for the NEA and TEA delegate elections. All candidates running in the TEA race were elected because there were fewer candidates than positions available. State delegates to the NEA are Erick Huth, Stephen Henry (Creswell), Pamela Sexton (East), and Theresa Wagner (Gra-Mar). The following MNEA members were elected as local delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly Jamye Merritt (Hunters Lane), Yvonne Jackson (Hunters Lane), Dorcel Benson (Cumberland), Trevor Holt (Brick Church), Iris Dismukes (Kennedy), Nancy Holland (Bellevue), Jane Walling (Napier), Sandra Hargrove (John Early), Kenneth Martin (McGavock High), Ida Barnes (Shwab), Chris Glenn (Park Avenue), Tim Green (Gra-Mar), Barbara Gilliam (Brick Church), Deborah McDonald (Alex Green), Rochelle Babb (Amqui), Jeanette Lambert (Pearl-Cohn), Randy Shear (Amqui), Rob Miller (Antioch), Vanessa White (Alex Green), and Amissa Green (Buena Vista). All names are listed according to the number of votes received. Diane Jarrell (Litton) was elected last spring to serve as a local delegate to NEA.



NEA'S READ ACROSS AMERICA

MNEA and TEA celebrated NEA's Read Across America at the Adventure Science Center on March 3, 2008. The event featured a special appearance by Lisa Hartman Black and Clint Black. Lisa Hartman Black, her daughter Lilly, Bill Purcell (Dean of the College of Public Service and Urban Affairs at TSU), and other dignitaries read to students from Goodlettsville, Hermitage, and Kirkpatrick Elementary Schools. Each student received a Cat-in-the-Hat hat and a Dr. Seuss book from TEA and a backpack from the Adventure Science Center. MNEA appreciates the support of TEA and the Adventure Science Center.

Other Activities:

MNEA members Celia Conley and Deanna McMillan, who sponsor Glenciff Ladies of Excellence Club (GLOE Club) at Glenciff High School, organized an event at



GLOE Club Member, Ariel Johnson, reading at Glenciff Elementary

The GLOE Club read

to five 2nd grade classrooms during our "Read Across America Week" in honor of the birthday of Dr. Seuss.

The Information Center of Hunters Lane High School invited the Language Arts teachers to give a student a postcard recommending a book to promote "Read Across America Day" the library staff printed 300 postcards, which had spaces for the student's name, the book's title, the author's name, and the teacher's reasons for recommending the book.

At Whitsitt Elementary students were encouraged to participate in Read Across America Week, March 3-7 through planned activities each day: Monday—Pajama Day (guest readers); Tuesday—Hat Day (CCA readers); Wednesday—Wacky Wednesday (clothes can be mixed-up, backwards, etc.); Thursday—Wear a shirt they can read (ex. Nike, McDonald's, etc.); Friday—Favorite Sports Team/College Shirt Day.

KNOW YOUR CONTRACT

The paragraph below indicates that teacher supervision at athletic events is voluntary.



Article VI: Teacher Workday, Responsibilities and Duties, A. Teacher Responsibilities and Non-Instructional Duties.

The teacher shall be directly responsible to the principal. In general, the functions of the teacher are twofold: (a) to direct the growth and development of the children and (b) to assist the principal in the conduct and management of the school. In applying the above Board Policy to athletic events, volunteering teachers (the term "teachers" here does not include principals, assistant principals or program assistants) shall exercise general supervision of pupils enrolled in the school where the teacher is a member of the faculty. All teachers shall be admitted without charge to regular season athletic contests involving their schools, both at home and away. During tournament play, any principal who assigns definite duties and responsibilities to a member of his/her faculty at the tournament site shall provide a ticket of admission for that particular session. (1999)

MNPS Email

Please note that, while MNEA has a contractual right to use the MNPS mail systems, there are certain things teachers should not send via mnps.org email. Please use personal email when communicating with MNEA unless you do not mind if anyone else is granted access to the message. MNPS email is subject to inspection by members of the public under the Tennessee Open Records Act. If you would rather not have a message printed in the newspaper, then mnps.org is not the vehicle by which the message should be transmitted. Teachers should become accustomed to maintaining separate personal email addresses for privacy and peace of mind. Federal law will protect the release of student specific information and teachers' health information transmitted via mnps.org, but personal information you transmit to others via the system are not protected under any law or the contract.



UPCOMING EVENTS



March

- 27** MNEA Representative Assembly
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 28-29** TEA Johnella Martin Minority Affairs Conference
Embassy Suites Hotel, Cool Springs

April

- 4-5** TEA Spring Symposium
Park Vista Hotel, Gatlinburg, TN
- 10** MNEA Executive Board
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 15** Praxis II Workshop
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 17** MNEA Representative Assembly
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters

May

- 6** National Teacher Day Banquet
Celebrating Retirees and MNEA Awardees
7:00 p.m. location to be determined
- 8** MNEA Executive Board
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 9-10** TEA Representative Assembly
Nashville Convention Center
- 15** MNEA Representative Assembly
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 20-22** High School Exams
- 22** Last Day of School
- 23** Last Work Day for Teachers

June

- 12-13** TEA Summer Leadership Academy
Embassy Suites Hotel, Cool Springs
- 16-19** TEA Political Academy
Paris Landing State Park
- 26-29** NCUEA Summer Conference

July

- 1-6** NEA Representative Assembly
Washington, DC Convention Center

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ELECTING ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES

It is time to elect an Association Representative from each school or group to serve for the 2008-2009 school year. MNEA needs active local school leaders to carry out the work of our organization and to help teachers with their concerns. It is important for members to get involved in MNEA committees and in other leadership roles. The following is an excerpt from the *MNEA Bylaws* regarding AR elections:

ARTICLE VII - Representative Assembly, Section 5. *During the month of April, prior to the April Representative Assembly, each faculty shall elect by secret ballot the number of association representatives and alternates to which it is entitled. Nominations for these positions shall be open.*

NATIONAL TEACHER DAY BANQUET SET FOR MAY 6

ARE YOU PLANNING TO RETIRE BEFORE NEXT SCHOOL YEAR? DO YOU KNOW TEACHERS IN YOUR BUILDING WHO HAVE RETIRED SINCE LAST MAY?

MNEA is working on plans for this year's National Teacher Day Banquet to pay tribute to our retirees and other award winners. Please send the names and schools of those members who have retired or are planning to retire to MNEA, Route 3. You may also fax (726-2501), email (kristen_case@comcast.net) or call MNEA (726-1499) with the information.

The Internal Relations Committee is preparing for a great night of fun, food and fellowship to honor our teachers who have contributed so much to the future of Nashville's children and present special awards. The festivities are planned for May 6, 2008. The actual date will depend upon room availability.

**National Teacher Day
Tuesday, May 6, 2008**

Great Teachers Make Great Public Schools

MNEA BLACK HISTORY FORUM

On Saturday, February 16, 2008, the Metropolitan Nashville Education Association Black History Forum was held at the Tennessee Education Association. The theme for the event was "**What's Going On?**" The event was a huge success according to the parents, students, educators and representatives from throughout the community in attendance.

The special guest was motivational speaker ReGina Etter. Entertainment was provided by the East Literature Magnet Harambe Dancers and East Literature Choir "Rising Legacy" under the direction of Maxine Jones. Other guests included School Board member George Thompson, Metropolitan Council members Sandra Moore, Walter Hunt, Vivian Wilhoite, and Pam Murray.

The highly charged panel discussions were moderated by WQQK-92Q radio personality Connie Donell. Panelists included: Dr. Bobby Lovett, Orlanders Majors, Kennetha Sawyers, Matthew Lewis, Trehone Coleman and Dr. Myra Oglesby-Pitts. One of the highlights of the event was the recognition of past minority presidents of MNEA who were all in attendance: Gloria Towner (1979-80), Gwendolyn Vincent (1985-86), Linda Roland (1988-89), Dorcel Benson (1990-91), Juanita Lockert (1995-97), Faye Stewart (1999-01) and Dr. Jamye Merritt (2005-07).

MNEA leadership would like to extend special thanks to our vendors, Ameriplan, Arbonne, ABL Realty, Essence Day Spa, Creations for Occasions and AIKebulan and the members of the MNEA Minority Affairs Committee for a job well done.

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PROBABLE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE MEMBER FAMILY

FROM THE PRESIDENT....

Recently, I had the opportunity to participate in the first conference of the National Center for Performance Incentives (NCPI) here in Nashville. NCPI is the federally-funded experiment involving incentives for middle school mathematics teachers in MNPS. Numerous papers, which are available in draft form at <http://www.performanceincentives.org/conference/papers.asp>, were presented at the conference. Generally, most found little if any positive results from paying teachers for performance. In fact, many results reported as positive were not found to be statistically significant. Cheating, however, represents one disturbing trend noted in the discussion. Even a study in rural parts of Kenya, involving the awarding of bicycles and other physical prizes, found that the temptation to use less than scrupulous means when administering assessments was too great for some to resist.



Additionally, I have read some research out of the United Kingdom suggesting that the overreliance on standardized test scores has significantly narrowed the curriculum. Many researchers in the fields of creative and critical thinking are concerned we are teaching students to regurgitate known facts and not teaching children to think for themselves. If educators fail to teach children to think, some argue our society will crumble because we will have no means by which to develop new solutions to problems or to discover new technologies.

In recent years, the numbers of teachers who have found themselves accused of giving answers on assessments has increased. Basing the worth of a teacher on the test results of students is very disturbing to me. However, I still believe teaching is an honorable profession and teachers should be treated as professionals. Thus, it is important for teachers to make sure assessments are conducted in an honest and ethical manner.

We cannot let unreasonable accountability schemes deviate us from our ethical standards. We must all resist the temptations to make ourselves look better on paper at the expense of our morals. Fortunately, the vast majority of teachers are nothing like the image our detractors would like to portray of us. Keep up the good work!



DIFFERENTIATED PAY

As a result of Tennessee's new accountability law (Public Chapter 376), MNEA and the Board are required to negotiate a differentiated pay plan designed to "address additional pay for teaching subjects or teaching in schools for which LEAs have difficulty hiring and retaining highly qualified teachers." In February, the subcommittee assigned the task of developing the plan met and crafted out an agreement.

Unfortunately, the plan was not well-received by certain politicians, including school board chair Marsha Warden. Somehow, she and others misconstrued the language of the act to indicate that the differentiated pay plan should have a pay for performance component. While pay for performance would certainly fall within the scope of the law and the Tennessee Board of Education guidelines on differentiated pay, there is by no means a mandate to include such pay. However, the current national political environment and to a lesser extent sentiment within the Tennessee Department of Education does seem to favor pay for test results.

As a result of the confusion and disagreement, it looks like MNEA and the Board will have to go back to the drawing board to hammer out a new agreement. The clock is ticking, however, because Public Chapter 376 mandates an agreement must be in place for next school year. Stay tuned for details!

Tennessee Agricultural Museum's Historic Rural Life Festival

The Historic Rural Life Festival, held in May of each year, promotes the history of agriculture by featuring traditional crafts, farm animals, demonstrations and shade tree activities. Attracting around 6000 school children and adults with such activities as sheep sheering, butter churning, cow milking, storytelling, horse shows and gardening, this popular festival encourages students to notice the changes that electricity and modern conveniences brought to the farm. Activities are scheduled from 9:00 to noon each day on May 7 through 9. Admission is \$2. For more information or for scheduling call 837-5197.



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