

## MAYOR'S TEACHER TOWN HALL MEETING

Mayor Karl Dean has agreed to meet with teachers in a hall meeting at MNEA Headquarters on May 15 following the MNEA Representative Assembly. The meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. All of Nashville's teachers are invited to attend. This is a chance for teachers to talk directly to the mayor. Directions to MNEA are available at [www.mnea.com/MNEADirections.htm](http://www.mnea.com/MNEADirections.htm).



Mayor Karl Dean

**Mark your calendar now!**

### Mayor's Teacher Town Hall Meeting

MNEA Headquarters,  
531 Fairground Court  
6:00 p.m.

**Thursday, May 15, 2008**

## TERMS OF MNEA OFFICE

At the April 17 Representative Assembly, delegates unanimously adopted a bylaw change allowing for two-consecutive terms for the president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary of MNEA. Additionally, the amendment requires officers to run separately as delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly. MNEA officer terms now mirror the model provided by the *TEA Constitution and Bylaws*. While the change went into effect immediately, it will only impact elections not currently completed. The four officers elected to serve from July 15, 2008, to July 14, 2009, will be eligible to run for one more term in their respective offices. Another amendment was also adopted unanimously changing the title "Finance Officer" to "Treasurer."

## MNEF AND JOHNELLA H. MARTIN SCHOLARSHIPS

On Monday, April 17, 2008, the MNEA Scholarship committee interviewed four finalists for the 2008-2009 Metropolitan Nashville Education Foundation (MNEF) and Johnella H. Martin Scholarships. This year's recipients are Brittney Hummer from Antioch High School and Lauren Stump from Martin Luther King. Annual scholarships in the amount of \$1,500.00 per semester are awarded to promising graduates of Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools intending to become public school teachers. Additional information about the MNEF and Johnella H. Martin Scholarships can be found on the MNEF homepage <http://www.nashville.gov/mayor/>



## PALS APPLICATION

The Peer Assistance, Leadership, and Support Program (PALS) Application is currently available on the MNEA website ([www.mnea.com](http://www.mnea.com)). **Applications are due in the MNPS Human Resources Department by 3:00 p.m. on May 2, 2008.** Only complete application packets will be considered. Candidate interviews are tentatively scheduled for June 4, 2008. Applicants who are granted an interview will be informed by May 9, 2008. Qualifications\* include but are not limited to:

1. A minimum of ten years of teaching experience,
2. Tenure in MNPS,
3. A valid Tennessee Teaching Certificate,
4. A valid Tennessee Driver's License,
5. Ability to work successfully and cooperatively with students, staff and other professionals in a multicultural, diverse environment, and
6. Effective communication skills.

\*See application packet for exact details.

## KNOW YOUR CONTRACT

### Article III: Employment Conditions, Section F. ADMINISTRATIVE TRANSFERS, Sub-division 4



When transfers are made necessary because of reduction in enrollment or program changes, the principal will consider the program needs of the school and determine where reductions can best be made. The school principal and Human Resources Office shall request volunteers. Seniority shall be the determining factor in involuntary transfer. However, exceptions to seniority may be made if necessitated by any of the following criteria: (2005)

- Certification
- Consideration of diversity within the school
- School's instructional program needs
- Other specialized training
- Extra-curricular assignment needs

When all other considerations are equal, the teacher with the least length of service *within a building* shall be transferred first. (2000)

## NATIONAL TEACHER DAY BANQUET SET FOR MAY 6

### MNEA National Teacher Day Banquet

*Millennium Maxwell House Hotel*  
2025 Rosa L. Parks Boulevard  
7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 6, 2008

The MNEA will be honoring MNEA members retiring from MNPS and 2008 MNEA Award Winners at our National Teacher Day Banquet on Tuesday, May 6, 2008, at the Millennium Maxwell House Hotel, 2025 Rosa L. Parks Boulevard, Nashville, TN 37228. The event begins at 7:00 p.m. Each retiring MNEA member will be the guest of MNEA. Additional attendees are welcome at the cost of \$40.00 each. **The deadline for reservations is Thursday, May 1, 2008.**

Anyone may attend the banquet with the retiree at a cost of \$40. Payment should be made to the MNEA Headquarters, Route 3. Please note that groups of more than ten cannot be seated at one table because of hotel policy. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact Forestine Cole at 726-1499 or [fcole@tea.nea.org](mailto:fcole@tea.nea.org).

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### May

- 1** Reservation Deadline for 2008 MNEA National Teacher Day Banquet  
5:00 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 2** PALS Application Due in Human Relations  
3:00 p.m. at 2601 Bransford Avenue
- 6** National Teacher Day Banquet  
Celebrating Retirees and MNEA Awardees  
7:00 p.m. at the Millennium Maxwell House Hotel
- 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
- 15** Teacher Town Hall Meeting with Mayor Dean  
6:00 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 20-22** High School Exams
- 22** Last Day of School for Students
- 23** Last Work Day for Teachers

### June

- 2** NEA Delegate Briefing  
2:00 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 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
- TBA** New Teacher Orientation
- TBA** MNEA Association Representative Orientation  
MNEA Headquarters

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Stephen Henry, Vice President  
Kenneth Martin, Finance Officer  
Diane Jarrell, Secretary

UniServ Coordinators: Forestine Cole, Ralph Smith, Gloria Towner  
MNEA Staff: Kristen Case, Teresa Hayes and Helen Conlee McMackin

## TEA ANNUAL MEETING

On May 9 and 10, teachers from across the state will gather at the Nashville Convention Center to conduct the business at the annual Tennessee Education Association Representative Assembly. Delegates to the convention will adopt the TEA 2008-2009 operating budget, establish the legislative priorities of TEA for the next two years, and elect officers and other TEA officials. MNEA is proud to have two candidates running this year. MNEA Vice President Stephen Henry is running for a vacancy on the NEA Board of Directors and Association Representative Suzie Clark-Carter (Una) is running for the New Classroom Teacher Position on the TEA Board of Directors. Both candidates would appreciate the support and encouragement of other MNEA members, but especially need MNEA's elected delegates to vote on Saturday, May 10 between 7:30 a.m. and 9:15 a.m. at the Nashville Convention Center.



Suzie Clark-Carter

## TESTING IN MNPS

Teachers, guidance counselors, principals and other administrators in MNPS have been concerned about a change in state testing guidelines forcing TCAP testing into a standard five-day period across the district. Dorcé Benson, MNEA member and TEA State Board of Education Contact Team member, asked Tennessee Board of Education Member Carolyn Pearre why the state was mandating the change.

Ms. Pearre supplied a totally unanticipated response. According to Pearre, the state did not mandate the change this year. Rather, Metro was merely failing to follow the established testing guidelines. In other words, the practice in MNPS allowing schools to set their own test dates within the three week period did not comply with State Rules and Regulations. According to Deborah Malone the Associate Director of the Administrative Services Assessment, Evaluation and Research Division at the Tennessee Department of Education, "The State has provided systems a three week window in which to schedule testing over a five day period to allow for variances in system schedules."

For test security reasons, test dates are supposed to be standardized across districts—not set by individual schools. Some observers are concerned the former MNPS practice may have inadvertently lowered some students' TCAP scores because of subtests not being administered in the correct sequence.

## MNEA-PACE DUES

A portion (\$3.78 in 2007-2008) of MNEA dues funds the Metropolitan Nashville Education Association Political Action Committee for Education (MNEA-PACE). Members are welcome to make additional contributions in any amount up to \$5,000. MNEA-PACE funds are used for contributions and/or other assistance to recommended candidates in local elections, increasing membership involvement in political activities, MNEA-PACE Council meetings, interviews and recommendation meetings, training of members for lobbying/other political activities, administrative costs, and other miscellaneous expenses.

Members, who object to such uses of their money may opt-out by having their money directed to the MNEF Scholarship Fund. In order to do so for 2007-2008, complete the form below and return it to MNEA before May 31, 2008.

### Redirection of MNEA-PACE Dues

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School/Work Site: \_\_\_\_\_


TEA Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_


By signing this form I am requesting that my 2008-2009 MNEA-PACE Dues be redirected to the MNEF Scholarship Fund.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature


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## FROM THE PRESIDENT....

Over the past month I have received a few calls about MNPS attempting to eliminate Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Tennessee as the teacher medical plan administrator or abolish the teacher medical plan altogether. Neither is true. First, MNPS is obligated by state law to provide medical coverage for teachers. Since Metro has a local medical plan separate from the state's "Local Education Plan" (LEP), Tennessee law requires our program to be "equal to or superior to the Local Education Plan." As a practical matter, MNPS is not likely to suggest anytime soon that we convert to the LEP because our plan is tremendously more cost effective. In addition, there is no question that the benefits of our plan are far superior to the LEP.



The Metropolitan Professional Employees' Insurance Trust oversees the medical insurance plan and certain other benefit packages for Nashville's teachers. The Trust is comprised of three elected teacher representatives (Dorcél Benson, Bill Moody, and Erick Huth), one elected retired teacher (Jean Litterer), three Board Members (Karen Johnson, Jo Ann Brannon, and David Fox), and the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources (June Keel). Members of the trust actually control the plan design. Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Tennessee (BCBST) is merely a third-party administrator which processes claims submitted to our self-funded plan. Medical premiums (paid by the Board and teachers) go into a trust fund which pays the claims and the BCBST administrative fees.

Metro's procurement guidelines limit the length of vendor contracts to a maximum of five years. The most commonly used term of any Metro contract is three years with the possibility of two one-year extensions. The administrative services agreement (ASA) with BCBST of Tennessee was set to expire on December 31, 2007. Last summer, Metro Purchasing issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a target implementation of January 1, 2008. However, because of a challenge to the bidding process, the Insurance Trust was not able to award a bid and elected to extend the BCBST contract for an additional year on an emergency basis. The result is that the BCBST ASA is set to expire on December 31, 2008. The Insurance Trust is statutorily required to rebid the BCBST contract.

Teachers in MNPS are very used to Blue Cross because of the long-standing relationship with BCBST. In fact, BCBST has been the third party administrator of our teacher medical plan since 1978. I feel certain that there are individuals working as teachers in MNPS whose parents were covered by our plan and have never had any other insurance their entire lives. A 30-year relationship with an insurance company is remarkable to say the least. However, Blue Cross must compete in a sealed bid process with its competitors to maintain our business.

My personal experience on the Metropolitan Nashville Professional Employees' Insurance Trust is that the goal of the plan is to provide the best possible level of care at the most reasonable price while allowing a high level of choice when seeking a healthcare provider. Our plan design is driven by the Insurance Trust and not the third party claims payer (BCBST). Nashville's teachers pay less than non-certificated school employees for better coverage and less than most teachers across the state for far superior coverage. We should be proud of the hard work of the Insurance Trust, MNEA, and the Board of Education for maintaining a high quality medical plan at a reasonable cost in the current healthcare environment.

## MNEA ELECTIONS

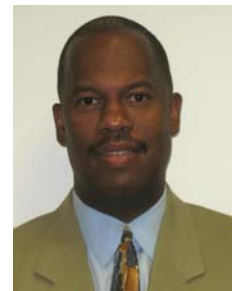


**Stephen Henry**

On Friday, April 11 ballots were due in the MNEA Spring Elections. MNEA Vice President Stephen Henry and Treasurer Kenny Martin were reelected. Carol Elmore (photo not available) was elected to her first term as MNEA Secretary.

At the time of the election the term of office for MNEA vice president, treasurer, and secretary was one year. Consequently, these three officers shall serve from July 15, 2008, through July 14, 2009. See

"Terms of MNEA Office" on page 1 for details on terms of MNEA office beginning after July 14, 2009.



**Kenny Martin**



More details and up-to-date information at [www.mnea.com](http://www.mnea.com)