

# The Slate



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## Training for standards

Tennessee is in the process of converting from the existing curriculum standards to a system based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) standards. As a result the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) is mandating all teachers be trained in the new Tennessee curriculum standards for next year. To that end, the Curriculum and Instruction Division of MNPS has embarked upon a two-part training module to deliver the standards. Principals, assistant principals, and others have already been trained in "Phase 1," and many teachers will be trained before the end of the school year.

MNEA is in the process of trying to work out the details on how training can be delivered this summer using "swap" days scheduled later in the year. Unfortunately, a confusing Q & A document on standards was released to principals without MNEA involvement. Concerns include the idea of providing "required" training at the voluntary workshop rate and any number of logistical issues contained in the Q & A document and other communications.

The new English, Math, and Science Curriculum Standards are currently available at [www.tn.gov/education/ci/standards\\_2009-2010.html](http://www.tn.gov/education/ci/standards_2009-2010.html). TDOE is also in the process of developing its Electronic Learning Center, which contains numerous curriculum resources for teachers. The Electronic Learning Center can be located at [www.tnlec.org](http://www.tnlec.org).



As professionals, teachers may be well advised to become familiar with the new Tennessee Curriculum Standards in advance of the training this summer since there are many skills in the old curriculum which are taught at a different grade level under the new NAEP-based standards. Many educators in the state are concerned the conversion will create gaps in learning. Take some time and look at the new standards to assess what skills your students might be lacking next year.

## Creswell students wowed the crowd!

On March 2, MNEA and TEA moved the annual kickoff celebration of NEA's Read Across America to Creswell Arts Magnet School, where elementary students from Bellshire, Glendale, Lakeview, and Una enjoyed scenes from *Seussical the Musical* and other activities. Creswell students performed under the direction of Stephen Henry (MNEA Vice President).



Mayor Karl Dean, School Board Chair David Fox, TEA President Earl Wiman, MNEA President Erick Huth, and School Board Member Joann Brannon participated in the program and several other dignitaries were in attendance including School Board Member Karen Johnson and Councilman Duane Dominy. The program was repeated for students from surrounding counties later in the day.

## Elect your association representative

It is time to elect an Association Representative from each school or group to serve for the 2009-2010 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.*

## Know your contract

### Article III, Section E. Teacher Initiated Transfers



1. Not later than April 1, the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources shall have posted in the office of each school a list of the known vacancies by location and certification for the ensuing school year. Such a list shall include all vacancies in positions of administration, counselors, teachers of exceptional children, other special teaching areas, as well as regular teaching assignments. A copy of the current transfer form will be attached to each list of vacancies. The building principal shall call special attention to vacancies in the local school so that consideration may be given to teachers in that local school for filling such vacancies. The Association recognizes that some vacancies will be in doubt, because programs and budgets will be subject to change.

2. Before achieving tenure status, teachers shall be eligible for transfer only between their first and second year of service to MNPS. Exceptions for voluntary transfers at other times may be made for extenuating circumstances as approved by the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. (2005)

3. Any teacher receiving Board-paid training in Paideia, Montessori, or International Baccalureate (IB) methods, must remain in said program for three (3) years before applying for a voluntary transfer. This transfer limitation only applies to those teachers voluntarily transferred in a Paideia, Montessori, or IB program after July 1, 2005. Exceptions may be made for extenuating circumstances as approved by the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. Other specialty training that may limit voluntary transfers can only be added to this subsection by the mutual consent of the Association and the Board. (2005)

4. Teachers who desire a transfer shall obtain from the principal or the Human Resources Department a set of Request for Transfer forms and send one (1) copy of the request to the Human Resources Department, 2601 Bransford Avenue, by April 15 of each year. Transfer requests may include, but not be limited to, the posted vacancies.

5. If a teacher does not wish to be considered for vacancies which occur in the summer, the teacher must cancel the request for transfer in writing. All requests for transfer on file in office of the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources shall be destroyed on October 31 of each school year. Teachers desiring transfers for the following school year shall renew their transfer request on the appropriate forms. Nothing in this article shall prevent any teacher from requesting, or prevent the Director of Schools and his/her staff from initiating a transfer at any time.

6. Teachers and administrators who are to be transferred shall be notified in writing as soon as practicable and, under normal circumstances, not later than July 1 of each year. If a transfer is requested but not granted, the teacher may request a conference in the Human Resources Department to discuss the reason(s) the transfer request was not granted. After the conference, upon request of the teacher involved, the Human Resources Department shall provide a written statement concerning the denial of the request for transfer.

7. In evaluating a request for transfer, consideration shall be given to training, experience, race, gender, age, special qualifications and length of service, and in addition the convenience and wishes of the individual teacher including distance traveled to post of duty. If more than one teacher has applied for the same position, be it an administrative or classroom position, the teacher best qualified for that position shall be appointed.

8. A current register of vacancies in all certificated positions shall be readily accessible to teachers in the Human Resources Office.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### April

- 6** MNEA Executive Board Meeting  
4:30 PM at MNEA Headquarters
- 10** Spring Holiday (Good Friday)  
Teachers do not report
- 13** Ballots Due for MNEA Secretary Election  
5:00 PM at MNEA Headquarters
- 16** MNEA Representative Assembly  
4:30 PM at MNEA Headquarters
- 20** Professional Council  
4:00 PM at MNEA Headquarters

### MAY

- 1-2** TEA Representative Assembly  
Nashville Convention Center
- 5** MNEA National Teacher Day Banquet  
6:00 PM at Martin Center
- 7** MNEA Executive Board Meeting  
4:30 PM at MNEA Headquarters
- 14** MNEA Representative Assembly  
4:30 PM at MNEA Headquarters
- 19-21** Exams (half-day for grade 9-12)
- 21** Last Day for Students (half-day)
- 22** Last Day for Teachers

### June

- 8-11** TEA Political Academy  
Paris Landing State Park
- 12-13** TEA Summer Leadership Academy  
Embassy Suites Hotel, Cool Springs
- 26-29** NCUEA Summer Conference  
San Diego, CA

### July

- 1-6** NEA Representative Assembly  
San Diego, CA

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## Delegates to NEA and TEA elected!

The MNEA Nominations and Elections Committee has certified the election results for delegates to the National Education Association and the Tennessee Education Association Representative Assemblies. Most candidates running in the TEA race were elected but several were selected as alternates. All TEA delegate candidates will be notified of their status by email and/or school mail. State delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly are Stephen Henry (Creswell), Theresa Wagner (Gra-Mar), Pamela Sexton (Cain Ridge), and Susie Clark Carter (Una).

The following MNEA members were elected as local delegates to NEA: Nancy Holland (Murrell Special Education), Iris Dismukes (Kennedy), Dorcel Benson (Cumberland), Yvonne Jackson (Hunters Lane), Sandra Hargrove (John Early), Ida Barnes (Kirkpatrick), Trevor Holt (Brick Church), Jane Walling (Central Office), Chris Prosser (Wright), Barbara Gilliam (Brick Church), Jeanette Lambert (Pearl-Cohn), Vernon Porter (Johnson), Christopher Glenn (Park Avenue), Johnetta Mooreland (Kennedy), Mary Mangum (Inglewood), Rochelle Babb (Amqui), Thelma Jarrett (Apollo), Jeanine Lipscomb (Amqui), and Johnnie Brown (Speech). All names are listed above according to the number of votes received. Erick Huth (MNEA President), Kenny Martin (McGavock), and Carol Elmore (Park Avenue) were previously elected to serve as a local delegate to the National Education Association Representative Assembly.

## MNEA CollectiveX site is growing

MNEA's online community is growing steadily each week. We have over 200 current member subscribers. Discussion topics ranging from GradeSpeed® to our new Director of Schools to 403(b) plans have been introduced and discussed in recent weeks. In addition to the discussions, the site provides a shared group calendar, shared file and photo areas, shared links, and other tools which facilitate networking and communication among members.



Membership in our online community is limited to MNEA members. Email invitations were sent out around the end of January. If you still have your invitation, you can use it to directly subscribe to the "groupsite." If you did not receive an invitation or if you have already declined the original invitation you can still go to <http://mnea.collectivex.com> and submit a request to join.

## Using your 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 your email 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 via the system will not be protected under any law and should in no way be construed as private.

## National Teacher Day is coming

*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, scholarship recipients, and award winners. Please send the names and schools of members who have retired or are planning to retire to MNEA, Route 3. You may also fax (726-2501), email ([kristen\\_case@comcast.net](mailto: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 5, 2009, at Martin Professional Development Center.

## National Teacher Day

**Tuesday, May 5, 2009**

*"Great Teachers Make Great Public Schools"*

## Let's hear from Erick...

Tenure for public school teachers is often blamed as a cause for poor quality teaching by those who have little understanding of education and the historical political influences faced by public sector employees. Tenure in Tennessee's public schools is not the same as academic tenure granted to professors. Our system of tenure is merely a guarantee of due process. Prior to the achievement of tenure, public school teachers in our state had no guarantee of a continuing contract.



As in past years, there are bills in the legislature to eliminate and or curtail tenure. One even ties tenure to TVAAS gains. The obvious problem with the TVAAS approach is only a fraction of the teachers in our state have any TVAAS scores to assess. Another problem is the TVAAS methodology, which is supposed to measure an individual teacher's impact on students, actually uses current performance of one's past students to readjust previous scores. This fact seems strange if not contradictory to many teachers and even some statisticians.

Another popular plan among public school detractors, including the superintendent of Washington, DC public schools, is for the district to buy tenure back from teachers. The idea is good teachers won't be afraid to sell their tenure rights because they have no need for due process. However, selling a property right for a one-time payout may not be a great plan if one winds up jobless in a year or two.

Tenure was created to provide a certain level of stability in the lives of professional educators where none had existed. Before the institutionalization of tenure, teachers in Tennessee and elsewhere were subjected to annual (if not constant) threats of having their livelihoods taken away for any reason. Often, teachers would find themselves without a job to provide a space for the superintendent's niece, to help the school board chair's sister move back to town, to make the mayor's cousin a high school football coach, to create a vacancy for a politically-connected powerbroker's daughter at a particular school, or for any similar situation.

Such examples still exist today in parts of our state, where teaching jobs are scarce and highly sought after. In such districts, boards of education resist the granting of tenure forcing many teachers to switch districts at the conclusion of their three-year probationary period. The routine of teaching for three years and moving is then repeated and some teachers may teach for a dozen or more years before they stumble across tenure. These teachers are not denied tenure because they are bad teachers. They are denied tenure to keep positions open for the politically connected. Without tenure, this cycle could move to a classroom near you because every new teacher or the teacher who sold the right to due process would be on a year-to-year contract for an entire career. If you can imagine losing your job the first time you disagree with the decision of an administrator, you will have a good idea of what tenure prevents!



## Healthcare designed just for you!

Vanderbilt board certified family nurse practitioners provide same day appointments for acute illness and minor injuries and certain other services including women's health, annual physicals, sports physicals, immunizations, management of chronic illnesses, and health risk assessments. High Quality Care is provided by board certified family nurse practitioners affiliated with Vanderbilt School of Nursing. A physician is available for consultation with nurse practitioners at all times.

The Centers provide high value a low cost. Since the Centers are funded by the Teacher Medical Plan, certificated employees and dependents covered by the plan will have no out-of-pocket expense (copays, coinsurance, or deductibles). Support staff and other Metro employees will have to pay their regular copays, co-insurance, and deductibles.

### Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who may use the Centers?

A: All employees of MNPS and Metro along with their dependents— MNPS and Metro retirees and dependents covered under the MNPS or Metro retiree health plans.



Q: Where are the Centers? When are they open?

A: Temporary Locations are **Madison School** (Monday-Friday, 7:00am - 3:00pm; 300 Old Hickory Blvd, between I-65 and Gallatin Rd.); **Two Rivers Middle** (Monday-Friday, 7:30am - 5:30pm; 2991 McGavock Pike, toward Opryland Hotel from McGavock High); **Brookmeade Elementary** (Monday-Friday, 7:30am - 4:00pm; 1015 Davidson Drive, just off the I-40 Charlotte Pike Exit). MNPS Central Office (2601 Bransford Avenue) and Mt. View Elementary School (3820 Murfreesboro Road) will be opening soon!

Q: Can MNPS employees not covered under the MNPS Teacher or other Metro health plans use the clinics?

A: Yes! Other insurance carriers will be billed.

Q: Are you like drug store clinics?

A: NO! The Centers care for chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, elevated cholesterol as well as minor illnesses and injuries. MNPS Employee and Family Healthcare Centers can be your primary healthcare provider if you choose.

Q: What happens if I need a specialist?

A: The Center will refer you to an appropriate specialist at the facility of your choice, or we can expedite a referral to Vanderbilt Medical Group.

Q: What happens if I need to speak to a provider after hours?

A: A Nurse Practitioner is on call 24 hours a day/seven days a week.

Q: Can the Centers perform my annual physical or my child's physical or sports physical?

A: Yes, the Centers provide excellent comprehensive preventive care and physical exams for patients of all ages.

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