

The Slate



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Faculty meetings can kill

Dr. Earl Wiman, former principal and TEA president, has a saying he likes to share with teachers. It goes something like this: "When I die, I hope it's in a faculty meeting because the transition from life to death would be so subtle." Sure, all faculty meetings are not quite that bad, but there is a huge chasm between the value the average teacher places on faculty meetings and that which some administrators do. For years, MNEA has received complaints about excessive faculty meetings, boring ones, pointless meetings, meetings for the sole purpose of having a vendor make a sales pitch, and so on.

Last May, MNEA was successful at negotiating some strong faculty meeting language, which can be found on pages 19 and 20 of the collective bargaining agreement (www.mnea.com/agreements/contract.pdf). Unfortunately, in classic MNPS style, no effort has been made to inform principals of the new language. Here are the key points:



1. By the end of the first week of school, the faculty, in collaboration with the principal and/or department head, shall determine the regular schedule for faculty meetings.
2. Principals shall use sound professional judgment in scheduling and conducting faculty meetings.
3. An agenda shall be provided except in urgent situations.
4. No meeting shall exceed one (1) hour in length.
5. A maximum of four meetings per calendar month may be held.
6. Faculty meetings shall not exceed two (2) hours during a calendar month.
7. Meetings held after the end of the student school day shall start within fifteen (15) minutes after the student dismissal time.
9. Morning meetings shall not be scheduled on Monday or on any day immediately following any holiday.
10. Afternoon meetings shall not be called on Fridays or any day immediately preceding any holiday.
11. No teacher shall be required to attend a vendor presentation not directly related to school matters.

Why didn't I get a BEP check?



Tennessee Code Annotated 49-3-359(a) stipulates that Basic Education Program supply funds are only intended for those providing direct instruction to students. The "BEP" money that psychologists, speech pathologists, social workers, librarians and guidance counselors in MNPS have received is a result of an agreement MNEA reached with the Board in 1993 after taking the concern of the disparity to the bargaining table.

MNPS is separating supply funds for non-qualifying teachers, as defined in the law, from BEP Supply Funds for qualifying teachers to meet requirements set forth in a July 6 memo from Robert Green, Deputy Commissioner of Education. The Tennessee Department of Education issues rulings impacting all school districts in Tennessee. Undoubtedly, there were some districts paying non-qualifying teachers with state funds.

Each certificated employee who previously received local "BEP Supply Funds" who did not receive a check for \$200 on September 25, 2009, will still have access to \$200 for supplies. MNEA's agreement with the Board has not changed. For more information go to www.mnea.com/BEP.htm.

But I'm still a member...

MNEA would like to welcome our new teachers to MNPS, especially those new teachers who were also members of their university Student NEA chapters. One comment we frequently get when recruiting Student NEA members is, "But they told me my membership is good through the year." What they didn't tell you is that the NEA membership year runs September 1 – August 31. If you were a Student NEA member and haven't yet joined MNEA because you believed that your membership was still active, run (don't walk) to your Association Representative and get your application form completed. Or you can call the MNEA office and ask Helen McMackin to send you an application. Don't forget, Student NEA members receive a rebate on the NEA portion of their annual dues by completing the form at www.mnea.com/snearebate.pdf and returning to TEA.

Know *your* contract!

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)

* * *

The following section indicates how arrival and departure times are to be determined at each school and the length of lunch on non-instructional days and the length of such days. The last paragraph makes it clear that parent teacher conference hours are 6.5. A 7.5-hour instructional day less the hour lunch leaves 6.5 hours for parent conferences.

Article VI, Teacher Workday, Responsibilities and Duties, 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.

Non-Instructional Workday

Planning, assessment, inservice, parent-teacher conference and all other non-instructional days shall be seven and one half hours in length including a one-hour duty-free lunch with the right to leave campus for lunch. Any deviation from the schedule shall be mutually agreed upon by the principal and the FAC, but the day may not exceed the seven and a half hour workday. (2006)

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 2009



- 1** Faculty Advisory Committee Organizational Meeting Deadline
- 1** MNEA Executive Board Meeting 4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 3** Educator Housing Seminar 1:00 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 6** MNEA Retirement Workshop 4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 8** MNEA Representative Assembly 4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 23** New Teacher Supply Funds Check Issued
- 26** Professional Council 4:00 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 31** Sick Leave Bank Enrollment Deadline

November 2009

- 5** MNEA Executive Board Meeting 4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 19** MNEA Representative Assembly 4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 23** Professional Council 4:00 p.m. at Central Office

December 2009

- 14** Professional Council 4:00 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters

January 2010

- 14** MNEA Executive Board Meeting 4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 21** MNEA Representative Assembly 4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 25** Professional Council 4:00 p.m. at Central Office

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.

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Tennessee Accountability Chart

Targeted	School Improvement & School Improvement-Improving <i>SI-1</i>	Notice & Notice-Improving <i>SI-2</i>	Probation & Probation-Improving <i>Corrective Action-1</i>	Corrective Action & Corrective Action-Improving <i>Restructuring</i>	Alternative Governance <i>Alternative Governance</i>
After First Year of Not Making Adequate Progress (Beginning of Year 2)	After Second Year of Not Making Adequate Progress (Beginning of Year 3)	After Third Year of Not Making Adequate Progress (Beginning of Year 4)	After Fourth Year of Not Making Adequate Progress (Beginning of Year 5)	After Fifth Year of Not Making Adequate Progress (Beginning of Year 6)	After Sixth Year of Not Making Adequate Progress (Beginning of Year 7)
Notes:	TCA-49-1-602	TCA-49-1-602	TCA-49-1-602	TCA-49-1-602	TCA-49-1-602
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title I and non-Title I schools implement sanctions under TCA 49-1-602 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (State will publicly identify all schools in need of improvement, Title I and non-Title I, that are at risk of being placed on notice. State sanctions do not apply until a school is placed on notice) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint Study of School System (SDE & Comptroller) SDE Approval of state discretionary grants to schools SDE provides technical assistance through outside expert Parent Notification Revision of SIP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDE Approve School System's Allocation of Resources to School SDE Appoint Local Review Committee to Approve & Monitor SIP Parent Notification Performance Contract for Principal Provision of Remediation/Supplemental Services Public School Choice Incorporate Joint Study Findings in SIP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDE Approves School System's Allocation of Financial Resources to School SDE Approves Allocation of Personnel Resources of School SDE Presents Options for School to Plan for Alternative Governance/LEA Develops Plan for Alternative Governance (Contract with IHE, State Takeover, Charter School) Parent Notification Performance Contract for Principals Remediation/Supplemental Services Public School Choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Commissioner assumes any and all powers of governance of the school
NCLB	NCLB	NCLB	NCLB	NCLB	NCLB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only Title I schools implement sanctions under No Child Left Behind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Notification and Dissemination Public School Choice Revise SIP (including 10% of funding used for professional development each year school identified) Plan with Outside Expert Technical Assistance Peer Review of SIP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Notification and Dissemination Public School Choice Supplemental Services Technical Assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Notification and Dissemination Public School Choice Supplemental Services Technical Assistance Implement Corrective Action (at least 1) Replace staff New curriculum Significantly decrease management authority at the school Appoint outside expert Reorganize internal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Notification and Dissemination Public School Choice Supplemental Services Technical Assistance Continue to Implement Corrective Action Prepare a Plan and Make Necessary Arrangements for Alternative Governance (Charter School, Replace Staff, Contract for Private Management, Other Major Restructure) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompt Notification of Affected Teachers & Parents Technical Assistance Implement Alternative Governance Reopen as public charter school Replace all or most of relevant school staff Contract with a private management company State takeover Any other major restructuring

Source: Tennessee Department of Education (<http://tennessee.gov/education/nclb/doc/nclbschoolleaimpr.pdf>)

No child left untested



Teachers and other school personnel often complain about No Child Left Behind, partly because the act is largely unfair, partly because the goals for perfection by 2014 are unattainable, and partly because no one understands it. The basic philosophical underpinning of NCLB is that schools should be given six years to show improvement. If a school does not make Adequate Yearly Progress (improvement under NCLB) it's status progresses along the six-year path to "Alternative Governance" (also known as "Restructuring 2").

The above chart shows the progression under NCLB and Tennessee Law and is copied from the Tennessee Department of Education No Child Left Behind webpage (<http://tennessee.gov/education/nclb/>). Title I and non-Title I schools implement sanctions under Tennessee Code Annotated 49-1-602 and Title I schools are also implement sanctions under NCLB.

Are you considering retirement?

University of MNEA Retirement Workshop

4:30PM

October 6, 2009

MNEA Headquarters

Register at: www.mnea.com/uofmnea

The University of MNEA Retirement Workshop is designed to help you make sure all is in order before and after your retirement date. Participants at various levels of their careers are welcome to attend. Benefits specialists will be on hand to answer your questions, so plan on attending.

A meal will be provided, but you must register for the workshop. Directions are available by clicking the "Directions to MNEA" link in the sidebar at www.mnea.com.

Let's hear from Erick!

I have learned within the past several years that attention to detail is not an attribute most people hold as dearly as I. Often, I catch myself explaining to members why some contract provision was changed or the particulars of an obscure section of Tennessee Code Annotated. Sometimes, I catch myself quickly, but often it takes a comment or non-verbal cue from my audience to force me to cut the details short.



While the overreliance on intricacies may bore most people, ignoring rules, procedures, and laws brings its own share of problems. Let's take the case of the MNPS Rezoning Plan implemented this year. Part of the plan included a provision whereby teachers and other school employees assigned to 10 schools would receive a 5% to 10% incentive to work in those schools. The framers of the proposal, including school board member/attorney Mark North, recognized the compensation of certificated employees would require MNEA agreement, and noted the fact in their plan.

The Rezoning Plan was formally adopted in a contentious 5-to-4 vote of the Board of Education on July 8, 2008. At that meeting, Mr. North reiterated the legal requirement to negotiate the bonuses with MNEA. However, MNPS administration waited until April 2009 to present a proposal on the bonuses to MNEA. During the month of May, MNEA and the administration reached a tentative agreement on the bonus plan. The agreement provided 5% bonuses to all certificated employees at Shwab, Napier, McKissack (Pearl Cohn's ninth grade academy), Wharton, and John Early because certificated staffs would be "fresh started." Fresh starting is the process whereby all positions at a given school are declared vacant and employees assigned to the school must reapply for their jobs if they wish to return. The administration indicated it would be too difficult to fresh start all 10 schools.

Therefore, MNEA agreed to a plan providing 10 days of additional pay to certificated employees at Pearl Cohn (10-12 grade school), Cockrill, Park Avenue, Bass, and Buena Vista by completing additional professional development. The agreement was ratified by the MNEA on June 8, 2009, and the Board of Education on June 9, 2009. However, the administration failed to notify principals at the five schools of the need to develop a professional development plan until the first week in September—

three months after ratification! The impact of that administrative debacle is that no teachers were able to complete any of the required professional development before the school year started.

Dr. Register needs to hold high-level Central Office Administrators accountable for their colossal mismanagement of the Pearl Cohn professional development plan. Ignoring details and allowing institutional inefficiencies to prevail cannot continue in our district. I hate to bore people with details, but ignoring them entirely serves little purpose. Some at Central Office need to take responsibility for following through on agreements reached at the bargaining table. While MNEA has worked with the administration to alleviate some of the problems faced by impacted employees, "Sorry, my bad" is not good enough.

Watch out for scammers

There is a bogus organization conducting a phishing scam of educators you should know about. They call themselves the National Teachers Education Association and are using NEA's address as their contact information. The message identifies itself as coming from the Executive Secretary - Susan Landen.

The message tells recipients that they have been nominated for induction into the National Teachers Hall of Fame - and directs them through a series of internet prompts to find out more - and asking the recipient for more information. There is a National Teachers Hall of Fame in Kansas, and NEA has been a long-time supporter. But this is NOT a Hall of Fame initiative.

NEA has reported the information to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (APWG), <http://www.antiphishing.org>. (The APWG is the global pan-industrial and law enforcement association focused on eliminating the fraud and identity theft that result from phishing, pharming and email spoofing of all types.)

- Forward phishing emails to spam@uce.gov,
- report phishing to reportphishing@antiphishing.org.
- File a complaint at ftc.gov.

NEA also suggests that everyone visit the site - <http://www.onguardonline.gov/topics/phishing.aspx> - to get more information on Phishing Scams and to find out how you can protect yourself.



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