

MEA Action Line



Memphis Education Association

126 Flicker Street • Memphis, TN 38104

Volume XXXI, No. 5, November 2009

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IMPORTANT DATES

- Nov. 3
MEA Board of Directors, 4:00pm
- Nov. 10
MEA Representative Assembly, 3:00pm

Happy Thanksgiving!

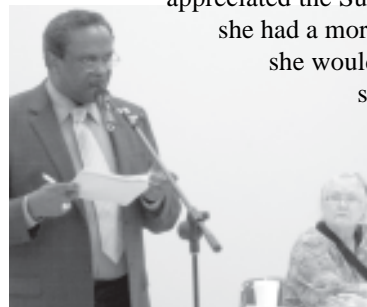


Dr. Kriner Cash speaks to ARs!

MCS Superintendent K. Cash spoke to MEA Association Representatives (ARs) on October 21 at the MEA building. The Superintendent, along with Deputy Superintendent Irving Hamer was at MEA to listen to teachers' concerns and to answer questions. The session lasted nearly 3 hours and covered a variety of topics from discipline and academics to insurance and low teacher morale. Deputy Superintendent Hamer has met several times with MEA ARs beginning last school year.



However, this is the first time Superintendent Cash has spoken directly to ARs. MEA President Stephanie Fitzgerald believes the meeting was helpful. "These discussions need to take place. Teachers are frustrated and often feel no one is listening to them!" One Association Representative stated she



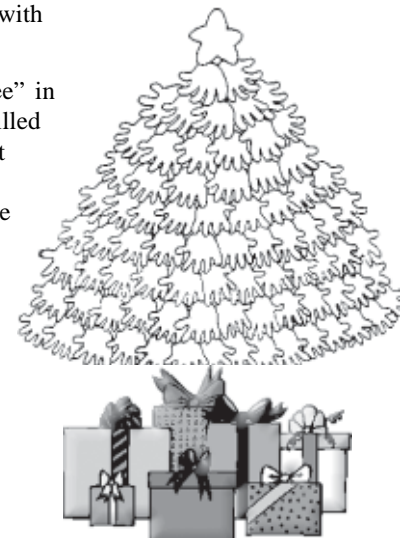
appreciated the Superintendent speaking to the ARs and said that she had a more favorable impression of him than she thought she would. Another was optimistic about the superintendent's remarks but is withholding judgment to see if there will be follow through. However, one AR told the superintendent this meeting and these conversations should have taken place a year ago. More meetings with Deputy Superintendent Hamer and possibly Superintendent Cash have already been scheduled through the spring.

MEA/Porter Leath Apples are ready!

For the seventh year in a row MEA has partnered with Porter-Leath Children's Center to provide holiday gifts for the children they serve during the holiday season. Last year, we helped brighten the holidays for over 150 children associated with Porter-Leath. Porter-Leath takes great care to ensure that every donation is used appropriately for a family or child with genuine needs.

Again this holiday season, MEA has an "Apple Tree" in the lobby of the MEA building (126 Flicker Street) filled with paper apples with a child's name and list of gift suggestions. We are encouraging our members to come by and "pick an apple" from the tree, purchase one or more items, and return them unwrapped to MEA by Monday, December 14. The gifts will then be delivered to Porter-Leath for distribution to the children they serve.

Please help MEA support Porter-Leath and the children of Memphis. Many schools and teachers have used the MEA/Porter-Leath Apple Tree as a class or school wide project to encourage humanitarian efforts. Thank you again for sharing in making this a wonderful holiday season for those less fortunate. If you have any questions or need additional information, please call MEA at 454-0966, ext. 11.





MEA

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A Message From The President . . .



Stephanie Fitzgerald

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing this feeling the chill of winter approaching. I know that many of us have worked so hard that by the time Thanksgiving break comes, we will collapse in relief. I want you to know that your hard work has NOT been in vain, even if you haven't seen the results yet!

We are still in litigation to get the funds that the City of Memphis owes Memphis City Schools but that will eventually be settled, and there will be, hopefully, adequate funds to run the system and reward its dedicated employees. Dr. Cash has stated his intention of paying the step raises when bargaining is completed, and perhaps more. Your bargaining team is working overtime trying to settle the contract and make gains for our members, so please show them your appreciation and support, because they deserve it!

Dr. Cash learned a lot from all of the ARs at his meeting with them on October 21st, and it is my feeling that he really heard what some of you were telling him. Dr. Hamer has already been directed to put together a work group on the block schedule problems. They were both unaware that there are still locations without enough books and materials, and pledged to address that immediately. If you are teaching without the texts or other materials you are supposed to have, please let them know, by email, immediately.

Now, I have some questions I need your answers to:

1. If a new evaluation system is adopted, would you prefer:
 - A. One designed to fit Memphis City Schools, with teachers and principals having major input
 - B. One designed by the State of Tennessee, to be suitable all over the State
2. Would you, if you were a probationary teacher up for tenure, rather have it awarded by:
 - A. A review board with three teachers, a principal, and another administrator
 - B. Your building principal only, whether he/she likes you or not
3. If you feel that you are an exceptionally effective teacher, would you prefer:
 - A. To be able to apply for a position as a master teacher
 - B. To stay on the same pay scale that we have now
4. If you have no desire to participate in the "Master Teacher" process, would you prefer:
 - A. To be allowed to stay on the present pay scale, with degree lanes and steps
 - B. To be forced to participate in the proposed new pay scale
5. Do you feel that a teacher who has had a problem identified on his/her latest evaluation:
 - A. Should have a chance to get specific "professional development" for that problem
 - B. Should have to sink or swim, based on his/her own ability to correct the problem
6. When you receive a poor evaluation, but some of it was good:
 - A. You should be able to grieve your evaluation

See President, continued on pg. 7



MEA Action Line is published by the Memphis Education Association

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|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| MEA - An affiliate of: | 126 Flicker Street | Publisher: Ken Foster |
| Tennessee Education Association | Memphis, TN 38104 | Editor: Tom Marchand |
| 800-342-8367 www.teateachers.org | Tel: 901-454-0966 | Assistant Editor: Ann Peace |
| National Education Association | Fax: 901-454-9979 | Website: www.gomea.com |
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A Message From The Executive Director . . .

There is certainly much misinformation circulating about the TEI...what it is...and what it does.

I believe that teachers and teacher unions support and have always supported the idea of "Effective Teachers." Can anyone be against supporting effective teachers?

Of course, the big problem is how to identify effective teachers. Up until now, that determination has been made by one person, usually the principal.

Is there anyone who believes the current teacher evaluation instrument is any good? Teachers don't trust it, and often principals do not know how to properly use it. It does not provide immediate, useful feedback to the teacher, and it usually is one person's opinion.

The Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM) will attempt to identify effective teaching. The school district, with or without the Gates grant, is moving forward with the TEM. A group of teachers (identified by MEA), principals, and a couple of central office officials are setting out to build a new teacher evaluation process for all teachers. (Please see the page 5 for the teachers who are serving on this team.) They have a difficult task ahead of them. At this time, the proposed evaluation instrument input includes: observations (not only by principals, but also by district representatives and peers); student gains scores, if allowed by law and if applicable; pedagogical and content knowledge; and input from stakeholders, students, parents, and peers. I stated "at this time" because this is evolving. As the team moves forward, it may become evident that one, two, or perhaps all of these indicators are not useful in identifying effective teachers. The team has set aside two years to get input from teachers and to test prototypes and theories. As you can see, they are not rushing into this. They want to get an evaluation that is trusted and supported by teachers and is useful for them to improve. They believe there will be trial and error; but that is what good research

is often about. And because of MEA's input, or rather insistence, this "initiative" will not be done in a hasty manner and all aspects will be communicated to teachers.

The second item that is moving forward is the concept of Tenure Review Boards. The Tenure Review Boards will only apply to Pre-Tenure Teachers; they will not have anything to do with teachers who have tenure, and there is no attempt at the school district level to do away with tenure. The Board cannot remove tenure because it is governed by state law.

Every year some probationary teachers are non-re-elected. By state law, there is no recourse for these teachers. We have had an informal agreement for MCS Labor Relations to review those probationary teachers who come to MEA for assistance. While this agreement is better than what is available in some other school districts, it certainly is not an "appeal" process. Teachers at present do not have the opportunity to have someone "hear their case." We have heard many stories from teachers about personality conflicts, no classroom visits, etc. These stories are enough for us to understand that some teachers, who have been labeled as "problems", really have not been treated fairly from the start. As one current tenured teacher recently related, during his final evaluation before he gained tenure, the principal looked at him and reminded him that she had the power to do whatever she wanted when it came to marking him for tenure or not and that there was nothing he could do about it. That is exactly the reason for the Tenure Review Board. Again, a team of teachers recommended by MEA, principals, and central office personnel will be working on a

Did you know?



H1N1

NEA Has Resources To Fight It!

The National Education Association's Health Information Network (NEA-HIN) provides information on ways teachers and support professionals can combat the H1N1 virus. NEA's HIN is working with local, state, and national health organizations and the federal government to bring educators and schools the latest information about H1N1.

What is the biggest obstacle to meeting the challenges that H1N1 presents? What should you do about staff and students who exhibit symptoms while they are at school? To find the answers to these and other important questions, go to the Health Information Network's website at neahin.org/h1n1. You will find updates from the Centers for Disease Control, the Department of Education, information about vaccines, tips for cleaning and sanitizing schools, and much more.

This is another way your Association is working for you!

procedure for Probationary Teachers to have a fair hearing. The tenure review board will consist of five persons, three of whom will be teachers. The Probationary Teacher will have an opportunity to make his/her case for tenure. This is a huge step forward and a distinct advantage for the teacher.

The team that is in place will be working to propose a process, put it in place, smooth out problems, and get it up and running for the entire district, possibly as early as next year. If you have an interest in serving on a Regional Board, there will be a way for you to volunteer.

Again, so everyone understands and there is no confusion, neither of these

See Executive Director, continued on pg. 7

October RA Next RA: Nov 10 @ 3:15pm



Schools NOT In Attendance Schools In Attendance

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| A Maceo Walker Administration | Kingsbury CTC | AB Hill El. | Gordon El. | Ral-Bart. Mdws. El. |
| American Way Mid. | Kingsbury Mid. | Adolescent Parenting | Graceland El. | Ral-Egypt High |
| Bellevue Jr. | Macon Acad. | Airways Mid. | Gradenvie El. | Ral-Egypt Mid. |
| Berclair El. | Messick CTC | Alyc El. | Grandview Heights | Richland El. |
| Caldwell El. | Mitchell High | Alton El. | Graves El. | Ridgeway High |
| Carnes El. | Northside Acad. | Avon-Lenox | Hamilton El. | Ridgeway Mid. |
| Charjean El. | Northside Alt. | Balmoral-Ridgeway | Hamilton High | River City High |
| Corning El. | Northside High | Bethel Grove El. | Hamilton Mid. | Riverview Mid. |
| Coro Lake El. | Northwest Prep. | Bond Bldg. | Hanley El. | Riverwood El. |
| Denver El. | Oakhaven Acad. | Brewster El. | Hawkins Mill El. | Robert R. Church |
| Double Tree El. | Oakhaven El. | Brookmeade El. | Hickory Ridge El. | Ross El. |
| Driver Ed. | Oakhaven High | Brownsville Rd | Hickory Ridge Mid. | Sea Isle El. |
| Fairley El. | Pupil Serv. Ctr. | Bruce El. | Hillcrest High | Shady Grove El. |
| Georgian Hills El. | Ridgeway ELC | BT Washington | Hollywood Acad. | Shannon El. |
| Germanshire El. | Rozelle El. | Carver High | Holmes Rd. El. | Sharpe El. |
| Goodlett El. | Scenic Hills El. | Central High | Humes Middle | Sheffield El. |
| Grizzlies Acad. | Sheffield CTC | Cherokee El. | Ida B Wells Acad. | Sheffield High |
| Guthrie El. | Southwest CTC | Chickasaw Mid. | Idlewild El. | Shelby Oaks El. |
| Hamilton Acad. | Stafford Acad. | Coleman El. | Jackson El. | Sherwood El. |
| Havenview Middle | Title I Offices | Colonial Hearing Ctr. | Job Corps Acad. | Sherwood Mid. |
| HF Price Middle Cllg. | TLA | Colonial Mid. | JP Freeman | Shrine |
| Homebound | Vollentine El. | Colonial Vision Ctr. | Kate Bond El. | Snowden |
| Humes Acad. | White Station Mid. | Cordova El. | Keystone El. | South Park El. |
| Idlewild Lrng. Ctr. | Winchester El. | Cordova High | Kingsbury El. | South Side Hlth. Acad. |
| Kansas CTC | Winridge El. | Cordova Middle | Kingsbury High | South Side Mid. |
| | | Corry Middle | Kirby High | Spring Hill El. |
| | | Craigmont High | Kirby Middle | Springdale El. |
| | | Craigmont Mid. | Klondike El. | Treadwell El. |
| | | Cromwell El. | Knight Road El. | Treadwell Mid/High |
| | | Crump El. | Lakeview El. | Trezevant CTC |
| | | Cummings El. | Lanier Mid. | Trezevant High |
| | | Cypress Middle | LaRose El. | Truancy Assmnt. Ctr. |
| | | Delano El. | Lester | Vance Middle |
| | | Douglass El. | Levi El. | Wells Station El. |
| | | Douglass High | Lincoln El. | Westhaven Acad. |
| | | Downtown El. | Lucie Campbell El. | Westhaven El. |
| | | Dunbar El. | Magnolia El. | Westside El. |
| | | East CTC | Manassas High | Westside Mid. |
| | | East High | Manor Lake El. | Westwood El. |
| | | Egypt El. | Melrose High | Westwood High |
| | | Evans El. | Middle Cllg. High | White Station El. |
| | | Fairley High | Newberry El. | White Station High |
| | | Fairview Mid. | Norris El. | White's Chapel El. |
| | | Florida-Kansas | Oak Forest El. | Whitehaven El. |
| | | Ford Road El. | Oakhaven Mid. | Whitehaven High |
| | | Fox Meadows El. | Oakshire El. | Whitney El. |
| | | Frayser El. | Orleans El. | Willow Oaks El. |
| | | Frayser Mid/High | Overton High | Wooddale High |
| | | Geeter Mid. | Peabody El. | Wooddale Middle |
| | | Georgia Avenue El. | Raineshaven El. | |
| | | Georgian Hills Middle | Raineswood RTC | |
| | | Getwell El. | | |

On Tuesday, October 13, there were 154 school locations represented at the MEA Representative Assembly. These ARs received up-to-date information on several important issues that impact our members. A bargaining update was provided as well as information on upcoming workshops and activities of the Association.

Ms. Dorisene Dean, Sherwood Middle, was presented with the MEA/American Fidelity Award for being the top recruiter for the month.



Please check the list to see if your school was represented. If it was, thank your AR for attending. If your school was not represented, please encourage your AR to attend these important monthly meetings. The next one will be Tuesday, November 10 at 3:15pm.

2009

MEA Holiday Card Contest

**Mark your
calendars**

Each year MEA conducts a Holiday Card contest to obtain student generated artwork for our official holiday greeting card. The student whose design is chosen for the official MEA holiday card (Grand Prize Winner) will receive a \$150 cash award. Winners in each of the grade-designated categories will receive a \$75 cash award. Additionally, each winner's teacher will receive \$75.00 and each winning student's school will receive \$75.00. Each student who submits an entry will receive a certificate of recognition.

The MEA official holiday card is sent to MEA members, the business community and elected officials.

We would like to invite all students in the Memphis City Schools to design a Holiday card for a chance to win a cash award. Students will have the opportunity to be one of the 6 category winners or our grand prize winner!

Deadline for the Holiday Card contest is November 10 by 5:00pm!

**Mark your
calendars**

Bargaining still going strong!

2009

The MEA bargaining team has met several times with the Board of Education during October. We have signed off on several additional items this month. However, the issue of School Day as well as compensation has not yet been resolved. We have also had several hours of discussion on the issue of Transfers.

MEA continues to work hard on attempting to negotiate a new Agreement. We will provide updates to your building ARs as progress is made.



2009

Evaluation Process Studied

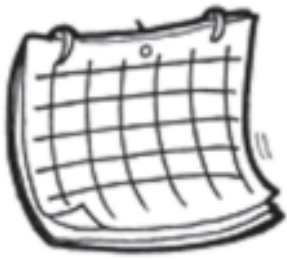
**Mark your
calendars**

In October, a committee was formed to review the current evaluation process and prepare to create a new teacher evaluation procedure. MEA was asked to recommend several teachers to serve on the committee. The teachers are: Stephanie Fitzgerald, MEA President (Chairperson of the committee); Margaret Box, Cordova Elem.; Tina Crawford, Magnolia Elem.; Angela Brookins, Humes Middle; Stephen Glover, Hillcrest High; LaVerne Dickerson, Westhaven Success Acad.; Tommy Sharpe, Fairley High; Kim Halyak, Carver High; Roy Shears, Hamilton High. The Board appointed several principals, assistant principals and other administrators.



The group met for a day long review of the process for evaluations and ways to make improvements. They have set a time line of two years to receive input, propose and test a new evaluation model, train teachers and principals on the new model and finally have the new evaluation procedure ready for general use. The new evaluation model will cover classroom teachers as well as specialty teachers.

MEA will keep you posted of developments of the work of this important committee.



Contract Corner!

Even though MEA and the Board of Education are currently in negotiations for a new contract, current contract language still applies.

Article 9, Section A: *“The evaluation procedure is designed to improve instruction, to facilitate communication between the professional employee and his/her immediate supervisor, and to promote high standards of excellence for teachers, school leadership and support staff that uphold the mission of the Memphis City Schools.”*

Section C, part 1 states: *“All professional employees shall be informed of their evaluator(s), the general criteria, the administrative procedures and the instruments concerning professional evaluation.”*

Section C, part 7 states: *“The professional employee and the evaluator shall sign the evaluation form. The signature of the professional employee does not indicate approval of the evaluation but only that the professional employee has reviewed and received a copy of the evaluation at the meeting.”*

We have had reports that some teachers have not been able to get a copy of their evaluation. MEA advises everyone to request a copy of their evaluation and to **NOT SIGN** the evaluation if a copy is not provided.

Section D states: *“The evaluation summative report for tenured teachers rated unsatisfactory will be completed by March 15. All others will be completed by May 15. The principal is responsible for the final evaluation decision.”*

This language requires teachers who have received a negative evaluation to be notified early enough to allow them to make recommended changes or to take advantage of the voluntary transfer process. It also clearly specifies who is responsible for the evaluation summative report.

If you have questions or concerns about your evaluation, contact MEA immediately at 454-0966. We are here for you!

TEA Susan B Anthony Award

The Tennessee Education Association Status of Women in Education Committee is pleased to announce that it is again sponsoring the Susan B. Anthony Award for leadership in women’s issues.

To be eligible for this award, an individual must have demonstrated leadership in one or more of the following areas: Achievement of equal educational opportunity; Improvement of the economic situation of female teachers; Development of programs to assist women of different races in forming work coalitions and sharing resources; promotion of the passage of legislation designed to eliminate sex role stereotyping in schools, the curriculum and the nation; Publication of research concerning women in education; promotion of awareness of women’s issues; Serves as a role model and/or mentor for women and/or girls.

If you know someone who deserves this award, please submit her name and contact information to Terri Jones, MEA UniServ Director, at MEA Rt. 1 by Friday, December 4. For more information, contact Terri at 454-0966, ext. 24.

Tenure Review Board Team Meets

MEA and the Board of Education have set out the process for gaining tenure. It will not only be more rigorous but more fair. The current process put the determination of tenure in the hands of one person. The teacher attempting to gain tenure will now have an open process and will also have an appeal process.

MEA was asked to recommend several teachers to serve on the team. The teachers are: Jesse Jeff, Delano Elem. (committee chairperson); Debra Myers, Corning Elem.; Jeffrey Chipman, Bellevue Middle; Jolie Madihalli, Ross Elem.; Mary Bowers, Kirby Middle; Demarious Danovi, Ridgeway High; Lola Bolden, Havenview Middle; Tammy Lipscomb, Alcy Elementary; Kathryn Baxter, Southside Health Academy; Allyson Chick, Richland Elem.; Wesceta Fletcher, Craigmont Middle; Freda Boskey, East High; Stephanie Fitzgerald, MEA president. They will be working this fall to test a new prototype for gaining tenure this spring. Additionally, the team plans to integrate the new Teacher Effectiveness Measure when it is in place.

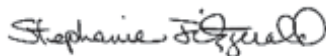
We will keep you informed of the progress of this important team.

President, from page 2

- B. You should NOT be able to grieve your evaluation
- 7. You should be able to be a “Master Teacher”:
 - A. No matter what grade or subject you teach
 - B. Only if you teach a “core” course with TVAAS scores
- 8. You would like the opportunity to receive extra pay:
 - A. And are willing to do some extra or different work to get it
 - B. Only if you don’t have to do anything else
- 9. You believe that:
 - A. An excellent teacher is vital to the academic success of a student
 - B. How well a student performs is more about his/her family situation
- 10. In your opinion:
 - A. There is nothing wrong with a highly effective teacher being paid more than a principal
 - B. No teacher should ever be paid more than a principal

If you answered “A” to most of these questions, you should be delighted if and when Memphis City Schools receives a Teacher Effectiveness Grant from the Gates Foundation. If you answered “B” to most of the questions, then I understand that you may still have questions about the grant. All I ask is that you not prevent those teachers who are interested and willing to be involved from participating, and that you simply choose to remain on the current pay scale. In the meantime, please let me know if you have any questions or comments about the potential grant, this article, or anything else. The phone number is 454-0966. My email is sdfmea@isdn.net or www.gomea.net. Interestingly enough, some of my loudest critics never do me the favor of sharing their issue with me one on one, but must always perform only when a crowd is present. Please do not be like those few. I think that most of you know I value your opinion, so please share it with me.

Hang in there, champions!



Stephanie Fitzgerald, President

Executive Director, from page 3

items is dependent on the “Gates Grant.” The district is moving forward right now with the Teacher Effectiveness Measure and the Tenure Review Boards.

For far too long, the only way for a teacher to make more money was to leave the classroom.

What the TEI (the grant) would do is create a new salary schedule and use the TEM to determine teacher pay. The current teacher salary schedule will remain in place. So, current teachers may remain on that schedule, or those who have an interest can “opt” to be on the new schedule.

That new schedule has not yet been created. It must be negotiated with MEA. In the proposal, it was suggested that the top of the schedule (with extra duties) would be \$90,000 plus. We know some teachers will not be interested in moving to this new salary schedule; but we also know there are many of you out there who are very interested. Without the TEI, teachers will never see this kind of money put on the table.

As your union, we are looking to the future. The political atmosphere in this state and country is moving toward teacher effectiveness. Shouldn’t we be ahead of the game and try to influence the outcome, instead of having the state or district do it for us?

This is an overview. Several of your colleagues will be working on these two projects. Make sure you ask them questions. If the two teams send out surveys, make sure your voice is heard.

As Winston Churchill said, “We have nothing to fear, but fear itself.” With teachers finally having real input to both of these issues, there is little to fear.



Don't be a turkey! Sign Up Today! . . . you should be a part of your Professional Organization.

JOIN MEA TODAY!



Dues vary for teachers, administrators, full-time ESPs, part-time ESPs, and substitutes. For more information, see your Association Representative or call Ann Peace, MEA Membership Coordinator, 454-0966, ext. 20.



**MEMPHIS
EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION**

126 Flicker Street Memphis, TN 38104

Social Security Number

(Area Code) Home Phone

Name: Last First Initial

School Building/Location

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Subject _____

Grade _____ DOB _____

E-Mail _____

Male Female Race/Ethnicity: _____

Teacher Supervisor Mental Health Specialist

Principal Asst. Principal Other

| Association | Membership Code | Annual Payment |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| NEA | | |
| TEA | | |
| MEA | | |
| TOTAL | | |

Method of Payment: Payroll Deduction

I hereby authorize the local Board of Education or other employer to deduct from my paycheck annual dues for the United Education Profession and political action contributions as indicated. Continuing members authorization will continue until revoked in writing to the local education association president and the business office of my employer. In the event of separation prior to final payment, I direct the remaining balance to be deducted from my last paycheck. I agree to hold the Board of Education or my employer harmless for these deductions. A local's negotiated contract provisions and bylaws will prevail over any conflicting provision of this form.

The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education (NEA FCPE) collects voluntary contributions from Association members and uses those contributions for political purposes, including, but not limited to, making contributions to and expenditures on behalf of friends of education who are candidates for federal office. The local and state association political action committee performs similarly with local and state elections. Contributions to NEAFCPE and state and local PACE are voluntary; making a contribution is neither a condition of employment nor membership in the Association, and members have the right to refuse to contribute without suffering any reprisal. A member may contribute nothing at all, without it affecting his or her membership status, rights, or benefits in NEA or any of its affiliates. 4% of TEA dues are to support candidates who support public education. Funds will be used or other purposes upon request. The funds used for political support are not tax deductible.

Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

Dues payments are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

Member's Signature

Date

Association Representative