

MEA Action Line



**Memphis
Education
Association**

126 Flicker Street • Memphis, TN 38104

Volume XXXIII, No. 3, September 2011

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IMPORTANT DATES

Sept. 17

I Can Do It Workshop (see below), 8:00am

Sept. 27

Memphis T+ Network Event, 4:30pm
(See page 5 for more details)

Oct. 4

MEA Board of Directors, 4:00pm

Oct. 11

MEA Representative Assembly, 3:15pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, September 17

I Can Do It Workshop
8:00am - 3:00pm
@ MEAAuditorium

This workshop is especially designed for new teachers or those who simply want updated information.

Participation is limited, so call
MEA to register today!

Evaluation System Challenging Teachers

The new state mandated system for evaluating teachers is being implemented with mixed reviews. Many teachers have indicated they are glad the new system now incorporates other sources of information and inputs instead of just having the principal as the only factor in determining the outcome of the evaluation. Others, however, have expressed serious concerns with the way test scores will be used to “prove” student achievement and with stakeholder input.

The new system, the Teacher Effectiveness Measure, has certainly raised the stakes and the potential outcomes of teacher evaluations. There are some teachers who believe it is an effort by MCS to move senior teachers out. While others welcome the change from the old system. Clearly, there is a critical



emphasis placed on student achievement as measured by test scores. For those teachers who do not teach in a subject or grade that is tested, the overall school wide scores will be used to measure them. Many of those teachers do not believe it is fair to gauge their effectiveness as a teacher on the test results of other teacher's students.

The Board has stated they realize there will be challenges ahead for teachers in this new era of accountability. Additionally, they have acknowledged there will be a period of trial and error. We'll see how the “errors” are dealt with and how they might impact teachers.

MEA is working for you!

My Favorite Educator Golden Apple Award

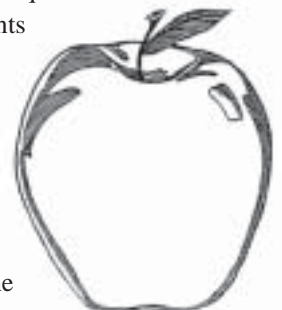
In recognition of American Education Week, MCS has joined with MEA in sponsoring the My Favorite Educator Golden Apple Awards. The awards will be presented on Monday, November 14 at the Cannon Center. This year, there will be 38 categories of recipients. Five nominees in each category will be invited to the award ceremonies and a winner in each category will be announced at the Cannon Center.

The purpose of this activity is to highlight some of the unique qualities that make public school educators special and to give students an opportunity to improve their writing skills! Student's creativity, sincerity and originality will be considered.

Entries must be submitted to MEA by Friday, October 7 at 5:00pm and become the property of the Memphis Education Association.

The nomination form, rules and rubric are being sent to each Association Representative, principal and are available on the MEA website.

Good Luck and we look forward to seeing you at the Cannon Center on Nov. 14!





MEA

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A Message From The President . . .



Keith Williams
President

The 2011-12 school term presents numerous challenges for educators! More than 90 educators find themselves in a status of abeyance or as the administration properly terms it, "Teacher on assignment." These co-workers have been displaced and remain in this current status; it is the expectation that all teachers will be in their own classrooms by the end of this month. The district has displaced these co-workers because of its new managed staffing placement, the increased teacher student ratio and the number of Memphis City Schools entering the state Achievement School District. Please know that your association is diligently monitoring this situation and was proud to announce the return all 46 of the previously laid-off English and Social Studies teachers to the district. This issue, bar none, is the greatest threat to our current contract and this association is well positioned to ensure that our colleagues are not thrown under the bus; they deserve better, and they will have teaching position in this district!

The new teacher evaluation system is yet another huge challenge for teachers this school term. Teachers in Memphis City will undergo this process starting after September 19, 2011; any observation of a teacher prior to this date will not be considered as one of the 4 or 6 required observations. All teachers will receive 2 hours of required training on the Impact Model, which is the Memphis City Schools approved teacher evaluation model. All teachers are encouraged to gain as much insight on the expectations of this evaluation model as possible; teachers are encourage to maintain a record of all dates, time and materials related to their individual observations and evaluation. Since the state law does make certain parts of the evaluation process grievable, it is imperative that these records are maintained for accuracy. Remember that your growth plan is to be developed in concert with your principal after the initial observation; this plan should include not more than 2 areas you wish to strengthen and 2 areas the principal might recommend for strengthening. Once this plan is created with specificity, professional development, etc. we expect that the teachers evaluation score should reflect the growth plan's accomplishments.

On August 8, 2011, Federal Judge Hardy Mays of the United States District Court for the Western District of Tennessee presented a Memorandum of Understanding proposing a settlement in the Memphis City/ Shelby County School merger. It is intended to memorialize the parties' tentative agreement. The agreement in effect combines both current school boards, allows the county commission to establish a new 7 seat county wide school districts and appoint a new school board commissioners for each of the 7 new county wide districts; this will create a new 23 member school board effective October 1, 2011. The sixteen members from Memphis and Shelby County Boards shall serve until September 1, 2013. The remaining seven members who will be appointed by the Shelby County Commission shall be subject to election at the regularly scheduled county-wide election in August 2012 and shall serve staggered terms as determined by the County Commission. The twenty-three member school board will be responsible for adopting a transition plan, making all transition decisions, operating the two separate school systems, and providing information to the Commissioner of Education. The chairs of the existing Shelby County Board of Education and the Memphis City Board of Education shall appoint five members each to the transition planning

See President, pg. 6



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A Message From The Executive Director . . .

There has been much written and discussed the last several years about teachers. Even in Memphis we have had discussions about voluntary transfers, surplussing, direct placement, new hires, Teach for America, Memphis Teacher Residency, Memphis Teaching Fellows, etc. We have had actions at the state level attacking teachers, TEA, collective bargaining, teacher rights, and ultimately the teaching profession.

And I believe that is exactly the intent. These legislators want to go back to the good old days, when teachers didn't dare speak up, when they took what the board and administration gave them, and were happy with it. They knew their place.

Part of the problem is we have educators among us who also believe we should come to the table hat in hand, and we should be happy with the scraps. Anyone who supported the elimination of collective bargaining believes you are second class citizens and should not have any say in your profession.

Without collective bargaining, the Board and Administration don't have to listen or act on anything you say. Look at the Collaborative Conferencing language. The Board has complete control and autonomy. Senators like Kelsey and Gresham try to tell you that this makes the process available to all. The fact is, it was before! This process allows the Board to ignore teachers and their issues, and if they say otherwise, they are lying to you.

Professional Educators of Tennessee (PET) supported the elimination of collective bargaining. Let me quote you some information from the PET website about collective bargaining. *"This bill will abolish the teacher union's ability to negotiate terms and conditions of professional service with local boards of education. Teachers and school boards will no longer have to go through a 'middle man' to determine what is best for both groups, and students will benefit from this as well."*

In fact, before the elimination of collective bargaining, there were 45 systems in Tennessee that did not negotiate contracts. And to my knowledge, not one of

them made it possible for a teacher to go in and negotiate an individual contract.

Again from their website: *"Student achievement generally is not as high in negotiating systems as in those which do not negotiate."* That is a direct attack on those of us who work in urban systems, such as Memphis, Metro Nashville and Hamilton County.

They must not understand the problems in urban districts. Further, while this statement on the surface may look to be accurate, if you look at states that collectively bargain such as Massachusetts and Connecticut, their student test scores are considerable higher than non-bargaining states such as Texas and Mississippi.

One more partial quote starts with "Studies by TSBA (Tennessee School Board Association)"... This only shows that PET would rather take information from their bosses than find it out themselves. This should tell you all you need to know about PET. They are more than willing to let the school board dictate teacher working conditions and salary in the new law, which they supported. Doesn't there need to be some action or response to educator concerns?

If you examine the Tenure Bill, you will see that it was meant to intimidate teachers and keep them from ever feeling appreciated and protected. With the new law, public school teachers have no protection. They could teach for 8, 9, 15 or 25 years, but could lose tenure and be returned to probationary status with just two years of below satisfactory evaluations.

Again, PET and other sycophant groups supported the changes, and here they are quoted: "We agree that lengthening the probation period for tenure from 3 to 5 years seems reasonable on the surface. We hope the legislature

Announcing:

MEA to Launch New Website!

MEA is proud to announce the launch of the new MEA website this fall. It will feature an improved, easy to use format and updated design.

The new website culminates the work of our technology committee that includes an upgrade of the MEA building's technology.

MEA is working to meet the needs of our members!

will revisit this issue on a regular basis and monitor the effects of this bill..." PET says they "hope" it will be done.

This is buying a pig in a poke. The current legislature and its leaders have no intent in making changes. They do not see the teaching professional as valuable. They want new, young teachers who will give the district 2, 3 or 4 years and then move on. They think because that's the way it is in the business community, it should work in education as well.

With the current Tennessee legislature and governor, you can expect continued attacks on both the retirement system and teacher health insurance. The move to allow the speaker of the house and senate to appoint teacher representatives to TCRS, instead of teachers, is the first salvo in the attack on TCRS. Now that they have the authority, they will appoint yes-men to recreate the teacher retirement system the way they want it, which will be favorable to the state, but certainly not to teachers who want to make teaching a career.

I urge you to join with us to turn back this assault on teachers and the profession. The only way we can do this is by standing together. There will be tough

See Executive Director, pg. 7

2010 - 2011 Service Units @ Memphis Education Association

Marilyn Baker, UniServ Director, Service Unit 1

A Maceo Walker Middle	Denver El.	Lakeview El.	Orleans El.	Springdale El.
American Way Middle	Double Tree El.	Lanier Middle	Raleigh Egypt High	TLA
Airways Annex	Florida-Kansas El.	LaRose El.	Raleigh-Egypt Middle	Treadwell El.
Airways Middle	Grandview Heights El.	Lucie E. Campbell El.	Robert R. Church El.	Treadwell Middle
Bethel Grove El.	Hillcrest High	Magnolia El.	Scenic Hills El.	Trezevant CTC
BT Washington High	Homebound	Manor Lake El.	Sheffield CTC	Trezevant High
Bruce El.	Jackson El.	Melrose High	Sherwood El.	Whitehaven El.
Chimneyrock El.	Kate Bond El.	Middle College High	Southeast Prep. Acad.	Whitehaven High
Cordova High	Keystone El.	Mitchell Road High	Southside Health Acad.	Winchester El.
Coro Lake El.	Kingsbury High	Newberry El.	Southside Middle	Winridge El.
Cummings El.	Kingsbury Middle	Oakshire El.	Southwest CTC	

Herman Sawyer, UniServ Director, Service Unit 2

Bellevue Middle	Corry Middle	Georgian Hills El.	Lincoln El.	Shelby Oaks El.
Brookmeade El.	Cromwell El.	Georgian Hills Middle	Manassas High	Sherwood Middle
Caldwell/Guthrie El.	Cypress Middle	Getwell El.	Oak Forest El.	Snowden School
Carnes El.	Delano El.	Goodlett El.	Peabody El.	Vollentine El.
Central High	Dunbar El.	Gordon El.	Riverview El.	Westside El.
Charjean El.	Fox Meadows El.	Graves El.	Riverview Middle	Westside Middle
Chickasaw Middle	Frayser El.	Hawkins Mill El.	Rozelle El.	White's Chapel El.
Cordova El.	Frayser High	Idlewild El.	Shannon El.	
Cordova Middle	Gardenview El.	Idlewild Learning Ctr.	Sheffield El.	
Corning El.	Geeter Middle	Levi El.	Sheffield High	

Tom Marchand, UniServ Director, Service Unit 3

Administration	Colonial Vision Ctr.	Georgia Ave El.	Pupil Service Ctr.	White Station High
Berclair El.	Craigmont High	Grahamwood El.	Ral-Bart Meadows El.	White Station Middle
Bond Building	Craigmont Middle	Hanley El.	Richland El.	Whitney El.
Brewster El.	Douglass El.	Hickory Ridge Middle	Ridgeway High	Willow Oaks El.
Brownsville Road El.	Douglass High	Hollywood Success Acad.	Ridgeway Middle	Wooddale High
Carver High	Downtown El.	Knight Road El.	Ridgeway Pre-K	Wooddale Middle
Center for Drug Free	East High	Lester School	Riverwood El.	
Cherokee El.	Egypt El.	Messick CTC	Ross El.	
Coleman El.	Evans El.	Northeast Prep Acad.	Truancy Assess Ctr	
Colonial Hearing Ctr.	Fairview Middle	Overton High	White Station El.	

Terri Jones, UniServ Director, Service Unit 4

A.B. Hill El.	Ford Road El.	Humes Academy	Norris El.	Sharpe El.
Alcy El.	Germanshire El.	Humes Middle	Northside High	Southwest Prep Acad.
Alton El.	Graceland El.	Ida B. Wells Acad.	Northside Success Acad.	Spring Hill El.
American Way Middle	Hamilton El.	John P. Freeman Middle	Northwest Prep Acad.	Vance Middle
Balmoral-Ridgeway El.	Hamilton High	Kate Bond Middle	Oakhaven El.	Wells Station El.
Colonial Middle	Hamilton Middle	Kingsbury CTC	Oakhaven High	Westhaven El.
Crump El.	Hamilton Success Acad.	Kingsbury El.	Oakhaven Middle	Westhaven Success Acad.
Driver Education Ctr.	Havenview Middle	Kirby High	Oakhaven Success Acad.	Westwood El.
Fairley El.	Hickory Ridge El.	Kirby Middle	Raineshaven El.	Westwood High
Fairley High	Hollis Price Mid. Col. High	Klondike El.	Shady Grove El.	

Susanne Jackson, UniServ Director, Service Unit 5 & all ESPs

ESP's at ALL schools that have ESP positions

Avon-Lenox School	Raineswood Center	Shrine School El.
Holmes Road El.	Sea Isle El.	South Park El.



Memphis T+ Network Event

Interactive discussion series with expert speakers and professional networking reception with results-oriented peers

Conversation with the Commissioner:
How Can We Better Develop and Retain
Effective Teachers?

Featuring **Kevin Huffman**, TN Commissioner of Education

Tuesday, September 27, 2011

Registration begins at 4:30pm

Program 5:00-7:00pm

Fogelman Conference Center

330 Innovation Drive

(off Central Avenue on the University of Memphis campus)

Available parking in the Innovation Drive Garage

Refreshments will be served.

*Event RSVP and additional information available at:
www.teachplus.org*

SPEAK UP!



Know Your Contract! Article 19, General, section E Is There a Dress Code?

Is there a dress code? This is a question that many teachers have asked MEA since school has started. Please be advised: **there is no dress code for teachers!** However, there is language in the contract that references teacher attire.

Article 19, General, section E states, "The parties agree that professional dress; within the confines of specific job expectations is a current expectation of all professional employees." Clearly, teachers are expected to dress in a manner appropriate to their assignment.

However, this is the **ONLY** language in the Agreement that references teacher attire.

A principal may have guidelines that describe inappropriate attire for employees in the school. However, those guidelines may not necessarily stand up to scrutiny. Additionally, some teachers complain that their principal allows certain attire for some teachers, but not for others. Any such guidelines must be enforced equitably.

As you can see, the contract language does not make any reference to various attire that can be "banned" from the

school system. Yet, MEA has received reports of some principals declaring that "no denim" or "no blue jeans" can be worn or that teachers cannot wear tennis shoes, etc. We are handling these situations on a case by case basis.

Just Remember, if you are reprimanded for inappropriate attire, call your MEA UniServ Director for assistance! We are here to help!

**MEA
is working for YOU!**

President, from pg. 2

commission, and each existing chair shall serve as an ex officio member of the commission. On September 1, 2013, the term of the 16 members of the Shelby County Board of Education who formerly served on the Memphis and Shelby County Boards will expire. The Memphis and Shelby County school systems will remain separate school systems until they are combined at the start of the school year in 2013.

In spite of all the changes with the new teacher evaluation system, boards of education, transitional teams, and the impending merger, we must remain committed to and focused on the students that we are currently teaching; do the very best jobs that you can possible do this year and in the process have some fun with your students.

This too shall pass!

President

Class Size Limits Still In Effect

We are still getting calls with questions about class size limits. There has been no change in these restrictions and limits. The current class size limits are:

Grade	Average	Maximum
K-3 & Voc. Ed.	20	25
4-6	25	30
7-12	30	35

These limits are in grade groups. For example: in all classes, kindergarten through third grade, any class can have up to 25 students (maximum). However, the average of all K-3 classes **MUST** be 20. So, for every class that has 25 students, there must be classes that have fewer than 20 in order for the over all average to remain at 20. We have had reports that some classes are already over crowded.

Please make sure these situations are reported to MEA!

If you have questions concerning class size limits, call your MEA UniServ Director.

Drop Dues Notice

The procedure to revoke dues deductions of a member and terminate membership is set forth in the current Agreement between Memphis City Schools and MEA. Article 6, Deduction of Dues, Section F, reads: Authorizations shall be continuing except that during the period April 1 through April 30 of any year, a member may revoke such authorization by providing written notice during said period to the Association and the Payroll Section of the Board of the member's desire to terminate the dues deduction. Such revocation shall be effective July 1 of the year of revocation.

Is Your School Healthy?

Is there a problem with your room? Is there an unusual smell in the hall? Is there something strange growing on the ceiling tile? These could indicate a health concern! Do you know who you should report this to for action? The MCS Department of Risk Management handles Environmental Health and Safety concerns. Often the problem can be corrected by your building engineer, so you should discuss these problems with the SBE first. If the problem is one of health or an immediate safety issue, it should be reported to Risk Management. Risk Management will investigate. If necessary Risk Management will perform tests and work on a solution. You can contact the Risk Management office at 416-5515, or the Safety Officer – Eric Thomas at 416-5647 or the Risk Management Coordinator – Joyce Davis Woods at 416-1482.

Executive Director, from pg. 3

times ahead, and I believe it will get worse before it gets better, but the only way to begin to turn this tide is to join with us and help elect legislators who understand education and the art of teaching.

We do not need legislators who tell us, “I know how it is in a classroom because my aunt, cousin, brother, mother, sister is/ was a teacher.” So what? They are disrespecting them as well! They want to pat teachers on the head, tell them how much they like and respect teachers, and then do all they can to take away teacher rights.

Now is the time to join MEA. Together we will work on improving our working conditions and benefits no matter how difficult it is.


Executive Director

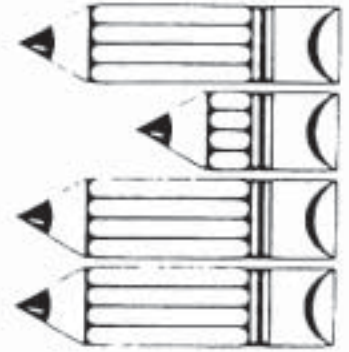
Association Representatives Receive Training!

MEA hosted their annual AR training in August at the Fogelman Center on the U of M campus. Association Reps heard presentations on several topics including Member Benefits and Building Level Organizing. ARs are provided training each year to help them become more knowledgeable and better able to represent the members in their buildings.

As we all know, the political landscape has changed tremendously this year and many of those changes directly impact educators and their classrooms. Part of the AR training covered those political changes and how to best respond to them. Additionally, the MEA Board of Directors discussed their role in leading the Association during the current transitional period of the Memphis City School system.



Don't Delay. 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 Telisha Starnes, 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 Fund) collects voluntary contributions from Association members which are used for political purposes, including, but not limited to, making contributions to and expenditures on behalf of friends of public education who are candidates for federal office. The local and state association political action committee performs similarly with local and state elections. Only US citizens or lawful permanent residents may contribute to the NEA Fund. Contributions to the NEA Fund and state and local FCPE 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 more or less than the suggested amount, or may contribute nothing at all, without it affecting his or her membership status, rights, or benefits in NEA or any of its affiliates. Contributions to the NEA Fund, or to state and local FCPE, are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer for each individual whose contributions aggregate in excess of \$200 in a calendar year.

0.0382 of TEA dues are to support Government Relations activities. The funds used for political support are not tax deductible and will be used for other purposes upon request.

Dues payments (or a portion) may be deductible as a miscellaneous itemized deduction.

Federal law prohibits The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education from receiving donations from persons other than members of NEA and its affiliates, and their immediate families. All donations from persons other than members of NEA and its affiliates, and their immediate families, will be returned forthwith.

Member's Signature

Date

Association Representative