



NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS Announces 2007-2008 Vacancies

Vaughn Hales, NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS Committee Chair, announces the following vacancies on behalf of the committee.

For a full two-year term: **President**

For one-year terms (eligible for two consecutive terms): **Vice-President, Secretary and Finance Officer**

For three-year terms (eligible for two consecutive terms):

District 3 Director: Representing Baxter, Chadwell, East, Glenn EO, Gra-Mar, Kirkpatrick, Litton, Lockeland, Maplewood, Meigs, Ross, Warner

District 6 Director: Representing Bass, Brookmeade, Charlotte, Cockrill, Cohn, Hearing, Hillwood, Homebound, ML King, McCann, Middle College, Park Avenue, Pearl-Cohn, Psychology, Randalls, Robertson, Social Work, Sylvan Park, Vaught, Vision, Waverly-Belmont, Westmeade

District 9 Director: Representing Margaret Allen, Dodson, Donelson, Hermitage, Hickman, Jackson, McGavock Elem. & High, Ruby Major, Pennington, Speech, Stanford, Tulip Grove, Two Rivers

Other vacancies without limits on succession:

Two-year terms: **Nominations and Elections Committee Districts 2, 4, 6, 8, and Insurance Trust**

Three-year term: **Administrative Retirement Committee.**

February 9: deadline for all candidate petitions
February 15: floor nominations at the Representative Assembly; TEA/NEA Delegate nominations forms due 5:00 p.m.

KUDOS AND GARLANDS

Sonya Hayes, Two Rivers Middle School, is author of the newly published book, "STUCK IN THE MIDDLE." This book addresses social issues in a comical narrative way about the ups and downs of being in a middle school. It's guaranteed to keep you on the edge and can be appreciated at any level—students, parents, teachers and adults. You may visit her website at www.sonyahayes.com for more information.

Christian Sawyer, a History teacher at **Hillsboro High School**, was named the 2006 National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Tennessee Outstanding Social Studies Teacher of the Year. Christian is an active member of MNEA who serves on the MNEA and TEA Human Relations Committees.

May Werthan Shayne Elementary School AR, Kathy Smith accepted the MNEA American Education Week Celebration and Participation, First Place Award. A check in the amount of \$125.00 and certificate was presented to Ms. Smith at the December Representative Assembly.

MNEA **President Jamye Merritt** gave a special salute to MNPS principals during an awards recognition dinner sponsored by the Urban League, Nashville Chapter in December. In her comments and tribute, Dr. Merritt thanked principals for their dedication and hard work at their schools.

Stratford High School Science Teacher, **Jennifer L. Berry-Rickert**, visited Japan last fall on the Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program fellowship. Ms. Berry-Rickert was among 200 educators participating and was selected from a national pool of nearly 2300 applicants.

Councilman John Summers introduced Resolution No. RS2006-1679 at the December Metro Council meeting. This resolution requests the Metropolitan Board of Education to limit salary increases for the Director of Schools and senior staff to the same percentage increase teachers receive. MNEA RA voted to send a special letter of appreciation to Councilman Summers and other council supporters.

Strategic Planning Starts

On January 24, 25, and 26, 2007, MNEA Vice President Erick Huth represented MNEA on the MNPS Strategic Planning Committee Retreat at Henry Horton State Park. The group was a diverse selection of individuals within the community though heavily weighted toward business interests. Several other certificated employees in the group were also MNEA members. While the group agreed not to release details of the draft plan until after the administration shared the plan with the Board of Education, Dr. Garcia assured all in attendance that relevant information would be posted on the www.mnps.org shortly thereafter. Erick reported that, even though the length and intensity of the meetings were physically exhausting, the process was refreshing. He reported, "The individuals gathered had vision and children on their minds and in their hearts."

Garcia Administration takes the axe to PALS Program

On January 30, 2007, Dr. Garcia shared the first draft of the 2007-2008 Budget with the Board of Education. Proposed cuts included the elimination of 40 teaching positions, including the PALS mentors. MNEA leaders have long suspected that the collaborative nature of the program did not mesh with the current administration's autocratic leadership style. Additionally, 100 custodial positions will be cut from our schools. MNEA is in the process of determining whether the disastrous "Vocabulary Initiative" is still budgeted although in the past the administration has indicated that the question was irrelevant since the vocabulary notebooks were paid for with federal funds.

LOCAL SCHOOL HANDBOOK CHECKUP

Does your local school handbook violate MNPS School Board Policies or MNEA Educational Agreement?



If you are concerned that some policies in your local school handbook are questionable or unclear, you may wish to have them reviewed. You may send your inquiries to MNEA, Route 3 or mymnea@comcast.net.

TEACHER DRESS CODE

MNEA continues to receive numerous calls about teacher dress code. There is no dress code for teachers! There is no language in the contract that references teacher attire.



A few local school Faculty Handbooks may have guidelines that describe appropriate attire for employees in the school. It is generally accepted that educational employees should dress professionally, yet appropriately. Teachers are expected to dress in a manner appropriate to their assignment.

For example, it may be logical for a kindergarten teacher to dress differently from a school principal or a physical education teacher to dress differently from a history teacher. However, any guidelines that are established at the school may not necessarily stand up to scrutiny. Some educators complain that their principal allows certain attire for some employees but not for others. Any such guidelines related to attire must be enforced equitably and are subject to the grievance process.

Just remember, if you are written-up or reprimanded for "inappropriate attire", call your TEA UniServ Director at 726-1499.

Nashville Sounds Summer Job Opportunities

Get an early start if interested and contact Christy West at 242-4371 ext. 165.



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TEA & NEA DELEGATE NOMINATION FORMS

MNEA will elect delegates to both the TEA and NEA Representative Assemblies during the February 26 - March 8 election period. DELEGATE NOMINATIONS must be submitted to the MNEA office by 5:00 p.m. on February 15, 2007. All members of MNEA are encouraged to submit a nomination form.

It is through the Representative Assemblies that policies for both TEA and NEA are established. The TEA Representative Assembly will be held May 11-12, 2007, at the Nashville Convention Center. MNEA is eligible for approximately 130 delegates.

The NEA Representative Assembly will be held June 30 - July 5, 2007, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. MNEA will have **approximately** 22 delegates, 4 of which are already filled by the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Finance Officer. Those 4 people were elected as delegates in the MNEA general election. Eighteen (18) MNEA member delegates need to be elected - 17 classroom and 1 supervisor/administrator.

TEA DELEGATE NOMINATION FORM

Nashville Convention Center
Representative Assembly - May 11-12, 2007

Name of Nominee _____ School _____

Home Address _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ School Phone _____

Position: Teacher _____ Admin/Supervisory _____ Race: Black _____ White _____ Other _____

If elected, I agree to attend the meetings of the TEA Representative Assembly.

Signature of Nominee: _____

RETURN TO MNEA-ROUTE 3 BY 5:00 PM, FEBRUARY 15, 2007

NEA DELEGATE NOMINATION FORM

Philadelphia, PA
Representative Assembly - June 30 - July 5, 2007

Name of Nominee _____ School _____

Home Address _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ School Phone _____

Position: Teacher _____ Admin/Supervisory _____ Race: Black _____ White _____ Other _____

If elected, I agree to attend the meetings of the NEA Representative Assembly.

Signature of Nominee: _____ Social Security # _____

RETURN TO MNEA-ROUTE 3 BY 5:00 PM, FEBRUARY 15, 2007

THE BALANCED CALENDAR

On Dec. 19, 2006 the Metropolitan Nashville Board of Public Education adopted a traditional calendar for the 2008-2009 school year. This was the second time that the Board voted against the Balanced Calendar. In 2005, the Board conducted research on the benefits of a balanced calendar and a system-wide survey via the internet and paper ballots. The research committee concluded that there was no definitive data which showed that student achievement improved with the balanced calendar. The survey results indicated that a majority of those surveyed favored the balanced calendar, however, the Board voted for a traditional calendar for 2007-2008. In November, the board used the new call-out telephone system to survey employees and parents on the balanced calendar. The results of this survey showed that teachers were for the balanced calendar, school support employees were adamantly against the proposal and the parent vote showed a slight margin for the balanced calendar.

MNEA surveyed members in 2005 and the results showed that teachers favored the balanced calendar over the traditional calendar. The Board telephone survey to teachers in November reaffirmed that teachers favor moving from a traditional calendar to the balanced calendar. Given the survey results of 2006, many teachers assumed that the balanced calendar would be passed by the school board. However, MNEA leaders, who have worked with board members on several issues over the last few years, knew that a positive vote for changing the calendar was not assured.

President Merritt and other leaders worked behind the scenes talking to all the stakeholders on this issue. When it became clear that the groups could not resolve their differences, President Merritt addressed the Board at the December 18 meeting and acknowledged that while teachers were in strong support of the balanced calendar, support employees could not support the change. Parents remained split and most board members had strong reservations about changing the calendar at this time in spite of their survey results. President Merritt therefore, indicated that the community was not united in adopting a balanced calendar at this time and that "the idea should be sidelined until there is more evidence of its value to students and more acceptance of it in the community."

As MNEA members, we must not let controversial issues like these divide us. There are forces in our community intent on destroying the strength of MNEA. Our power is in uniting to combat entities who seek to destroy public education and silence the voices of educators who advocate for great public schools for every student. Will we succeed in every struggle? No. But we succeed in a lot of them and those we don't initially often become successful after persevering. Our profession benefits when we remain united win, lose or draw.

MNEA is working for you every day even when it may not be obvious. The leadership of MNEA meets regularly with local, state and national decision makers in order to solve small problems before they become greater issues.

UPCOMING EVENTS

February is Black History Month

February 12—Crisis Response Team
Training
4:30-6:30 P.M. at MNEA

February 13—Financial Peace; 4:30-6:30 P.M.
at MNEA

February 13—School Board Meeting
5:00 P.M.

Quote of the Week

"Treat a child as though he already is the person he's capable of becoming."

-Haim Ginott



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