



TEACHER PAY

Educational Accountability. In June of last year, the Tennessee General Assembly and Governor Bredesen approved a new educational accountability law called "Public Chapter 376." The Act contains numerous accountability structures including the requirement that all local education agencies (LEAs) develop a differentiated pay plan for teachers. In districts where bargaining rights have been established, the LEA must bargain the differentiated pay provision. In remaining districts, the LEA is required by guidelines established by the Tennessee State Board of Education to use a meet and confer process with the education association.

Traditional Single Salary Schedule. All public school teachers in Tennessee (and over 90% nationwide) are paid from a "single salary schedule" also known as a "uniform salary schedule," which pays teachers based on years of experience and educational degrees or credits earned. The uniform salary schedule was conceptualized in the 1930s and advanced by the National Education Association in an effort to address the inherent inequality of the prevailing method of teacher pay. At that time, performance pay tended to compensate men better than women, Caucasians better than minorities, high school teachers better than elementary school teachers and married Caucasian males the most.

Differentiated Pay. Any compensation that teachers receive which establishes a difference in the pay of individual teachers (other than for years of experience or education) is generally referred to as "differentiated pay." In Tennessee, Public Chapter 376 narrows the scope of the term to incentives, salary or bonuses associated with attracting or retaining highly qualified teachers to schools or disciplines that are identified as hard to fill by the LEA. Given the



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READ ACROSS AMERICA

Dr. Seuss' 104th birthday will fall on a Sunday this year. Read Across America is set for March 3, 2008. This year, as in years past, MNEA will be working with TEA on a Read Across America kick-off at the Adventure Science Center (a change from our previous announcement). Every year the children who are invited to attend have a great time. In years past, TEA has provided students in attendance with their own Cat-in-the-Hat hat, and an educational packet, including a Dr. Seuss book.

The National Education Association, which started the event with the assistance of several state affiliates, has a website dedicated to resources for Read Across America (www.nea.org/readacross). Students all across the district can share in the celebration at their respective schools. Check it out and have fun with reading!



MNEF SCHOLARSHIPS

The Metropolitan Nashville Education Foundation, the charitable arm of MNEA, awards scholarships each year to outstanding high school seniors interested in pursuing a career in public education. Scholarships are awarded to graduates of MNPS in amounts of up to \$3,000 (\$1,500 per semester).

MNEF invites students at your school to participate in our scholarship program. Students should fill out the application form online at <http://www.mnea.com/mnef/application.doc>, print, date and sign it before returning it to MNEF. Applicants retain a copy of all materials before sending them to MNEF. Completed applications including all requested information must be submitted to the MNEA Headquarters by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 4, 2008. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

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Tennessee definition, it is safe to refer to such pay as “market-based pay,” which involves paying teachers based on the economic theory of supply and demand.

Conclusion. In the ultimate analysis, Public Chapter 376 does not leave open the question whether school districts will implement a differentiated pay plan or whether unions will negotiate such plans. The law requires the implementation of a plan by the 2008-2009 school year. Thus, MNEA is currently negotiating differentiated pay with the Board of Education using the subcommittee process that was bargained a few years ago to deal with all differentiated pay efforts. The real problem with Public Chapter 376 is that the law provides no additional funding for differentiated pay beyond the funding formula in BEP 2.0. MNEA hopes to reach agreement with the Board in time to have the plan included in the final draft of the Budget submitted to the mayor. Failure to agree would not be in the interest of either party to the *Educational Agreement*.

CLIMATE SURVEYS

Periodically the Association is contacted by representatives of the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC), a member and/or sometimes administrators seeking assistance because of building level relationship issues. It is at this point that options are discussed for improving the climate within a building. The first step generally involves a meeting with the FAC to discuss the concerns. The FAC determines if a Climate Survey is needed or merely a conference with all concerned parties. MNEA prefers that a vote of all certificated staff determine whether or not a climate survey should be conducted.

A Central Office administrator may be present on the date the survey is actually administered. The responses are tabulated and given back to all certificated members of the staff. It is at this point that the faculty and local administration must be honest and respond to those areas of strength and those that need strengthening if change is going to take place. The Association, as always, is available to assist with the processing or the results.

The bottom line is that a climate survey is a useful tool for administrators to hear from their faculty

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UPCOMING EVENTS



February

- 23** **TEA New Teacher Conference**
All day at TEA Headquarters
- 28** **Ready to Retire Workshop**
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters

March

- 3** **Read Across America**
- 13** **MNEA Executive Board**
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 27** **MNEA Representative Assembly**
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters

April

- 4-5** **TEA Spring Symposium**
Park Vista Hotel, Gatlinburg, TN
- 10** **MNEA Executive Board**
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 17** **MNEA Representative Assembly**
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters

May

- 6** **National Teacher Day Banquet**
Celebrating Retirees and MNEA Awardees
7:00 p.m. location to be determined
- 8** **MNEA Executive Board**
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 9-10** **TEA Representative Assembly**
Nashville Convention Center
- 15** **MNEA Representative Assembly**
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters

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KNOW YOUR CONTRACT

ARTICLE IV: TEACHING CONDITIONS

A. PLANNING TIME FOR TEACHERS

The Board and Association agree that there should be greater utilization of the local school staff and more flexible scheduling which would enable individual school administrators to provide planning time and duty-free lunch periods for teachers because of the importance of planning in promoting effective teaching.



1. All teachers shall have a planning period which shall be free of student responsibilities except for emergencies. This duty-free period shall be used for the purpose of preparation, grading papers, contacting parents or other items connected with the professional duties of the classroom teacher. Elementary principals and teachers shall plan cooperatively to ensure that an individual teacher's planning time is comparable to an average secondary planning period. (2003)

2. Any teacher covering a class because the system is unable to provide a substitute for another teacher shall be paid the highest substitute rate available, exclusive of the substitute bonus. Such additional compensation shall be prorated for the time period or percentage of the class that each teacher covers. When a class is split among several teachers, the substitute rate will be divided evenly among all teachers receiving students. (2003)

3. Starting with 2005-2006 school year, the Board will provide one (1) Code 10 Leave Day per semester to each special teacher who has an active Individualized Education Program (IEP) caseload. Each Code 10 day shall be used for the purpose of preparing and implementing IEP's. (2005)

B. FACULTY MEETING

Principals shall use sound professional judgment in scheduling and conducting faculty meetings.

Reasonable notice and an agenda shall be provided except in urgent situations. No teacher shall be required to attend a vendor presentation not directly related to school matters. Any concerns about the frequency and length of meetings shall be discussed with the FAC and then directed to the appropriate Tier Director. (2006)

NON-TENURED TEACHERS

The Tennessee Tenure Law does not really work in concert with the Tennessee Framework for Teacher Evaluation. The Tenure Law indicates that teachers who are not granted tenure or rehired during the probationary period need not be informed of any reason for the evaluator's decision. As a matter of fact, Human Resources generally follows the advice of the Tennessee School Boards Association, which suggests that districts instruct administrators not to give reasons for a decision not to grant tenure or re-hire a pre-tenured employee.

It's important to remember a few things about the Tennessee Framework for Evaluation. The process is designed to help teachers grow as professionals. Observations and feedback are not intended to be punishments but a method by which the teacher and his/her evaluator can find ways to improve. Teachers who have not achieved tenure in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools must be notified by April 15 of each year whether they will be rehired for the subsequent school year. Non-tenured teachers are to be observed three times with one of those being an unannounced observation. Tenured teachers need only be observed twice during the observation year and neither must be announced. However, the evaluator may observe more frequently. If you have not been observed at least once and do not have tenure, please call the MNEA for guidance.



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Surveys...

where faculty members are uncomfortable, for whatever reason, speaking directly to the principal. It can help to answer the question "Is the building too hot, too cold or just right". It is not a pure evaluation of the principal although the concerns often relate directly to current leadership. We must remember that administrators who are experiencing levels of discontent may be making efforts to be a good **manager** instead of a **leader** in the building.

"Managers are people who do things right, while leaders are people who do the right thing."

FROM THE PRESIDENT....

I have received numerous comments on the stockpiling of days since February 14 when MNPS was the only school district not out for inclement weather and teachers found icy streets on the way to school and snow started falling. Many teachers have very passionate feelings about snow days and the stockpiling of instructional time for snow day forgiveness.



It is very important to remember that before the 1997-1998 school year all teachers had a seven-and-one-half-hour workday—just as they do today. The only difference is that elementary students were in school for the state minimum of six and one half hours and elementary teacher planning time was scheduled before and after school.

In 1997-1998, the elementary instructional day was increased to seven hours, allowing the possibility of stockpiling 30 minutes per day to be used for snow day forgiveness and planning days. The middle and high school instructional day was already seven hours (thirty minutes above the state minimum). However, the teacher workday remained the same seven and one half hours that it had been.

The end result is that no one has been required to work any more time. So, if we were to do away with the banking of time, the result would be that we would lose all of our planning days and we would have to make up every snow day. Thus, there would be nothing to gain.

Teachers should stop thinking in terms of “putting in extra time for snow” because the only “extra time” teachers put in are the work hours of elementary art, music and physical education teachers. Surely, we do not want to eliminate those positions and return to scheduling elementary planning before and after the school day.

It is true that students put in “extra time” because the instructional day is seven hours long. Elementary specialist positions allow for the incorporation of planning time within the instructional day, which in turn provided the opportunity to have planning days and the forgiveness of snow days. The five snow days built into the calendar are “forgiven” because of the length of the instructional day—not the length of the teacher workday.

MNEA SPRING ELECTIONS

February 21: At the MNEA Representative Assembly, the Nominations and Elections Committee will call for candidate nominations from the RA floor for MNEA offices. MNEA candidate campaign begins following the Assembly.

February 22: DEADLINE: MNEA candidate profiles for *SLATE* publication due by 5:00 p.m. at the MNEA Headquarters ([Electronic profiles are preferred.](#)) TEA and NEA delegate ballots mailed.

February 25-March 6: TEA and NEA delegate election period.

March 6: MNEA candidate election *SLATE* mailed.

DEADLINE: TEA and NEA delegate ballots due in MNEA Headquarters by 5:00 p.m. TEA and NEA delegate ballots counted starting at 5:00 p.m. at the MNEA Headquarters.

March 27: At the MNEA Representative Assembly, the Nominations and Elections Committee will announce TEA and NEA delegates and supervise MNEA candidate speeches.

March 28: MNEA candidate ballots mailed.

March 28-April 11: MNEA officer election period.

April 11: DEADLINE: MNEA candidate ballots due at the MNEA Headquarters by 5:00 p.m.

April 17: DEADLINE for electing MNEA Association Representatives for the 2008-2009 school year.

April 18: DEADLINE: MNEA candidate campaign materials and expenditure reports due in MNEA Headquarters by 5:00 p.m.



RETIREMENT NOTIFICATION

According to Article VIII, Section D, Subdivision 3 of the *Educational Agreement*, “teachers who notify the Human Resources Department no later than **March 15** of their plans to retire upon the completion of their current fiscal year assignment shall receive a five-hundred-dollar (\$500) early notification incentive.” [Emphasis added.]



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