

The Slate



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MNPS to buy short term disability

The Metropolitan Nashville Professional Employees Insurance Trust issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) some time ago on absence management, short-term disability and long-term disability to replace the existing long-term disability coverage. A vendor has been selected but cannot begin coverage until a few items are smoothed out in the *Educational Agreement*.



First, the short-term disability package is designed to replace the existing sick leave bank, which has traditionally had a challenge maintaining sufficient numbers of days to continue to operate. Second, the absence management feature of the contract will require change to the certification of illness clause in Article VII, Section A, Subsection 5. Currently, employees are required to provide a certification of illness to the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources for illnesses of six or more consecutive days. Under the absence management feature of the short-term disability plan, an employee would be contacted after three consecutive days or 5 absences in a year.

The two changes noted above are so significant that MNEA Leadership cannot agree to the modifications without holding a ratification vote. Once the proposed amendments are drafted, the ratification ballot will be delivered to all MNEA members for action.

The benefits of the new contract are enormous not only to the district but to teachers:

- All certificated employees will have short-term coverage for debilitating illnesses and accidents.
- The current sick leave bank has only about 1,000 members while the short-term disability package will cover over 6,000 lives.
- The Board will be paying the entire cost of the short-term disability coverage.
- Long-term disability, while an option at employee expense, will be very reasonable to purchase and will be coordinated with the short-term coverage to avoid lapses in payments.

Getting year-for-year credit

There seems to be some confusion about the recently negotiated salary plan providing year-for-year salary credit in MNPS. Last week, June Keel indicated she hoped to have all changes made to teachers' salary credit by Thanksgiving. [Please do not misinterpret this "hope" as a guarantee.] The district will be accessing data available via secure server at the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) in an attempt to verify credit of all employees on step 11 or higher. Each impacted employee will receive a communication from Human Resources asking him or her to verify the information MNPS has gathered.

Anyone who knows credit previously reported to the TDOE is incomplete should take steps now to have the credit verified. The form to verify credit is available at <http://www.state.tn.us/education/lic/doc/ed2034a.pdf>. Be sure to have it signed by the appropriate official in your former district or private school. Teachers should send the form via school route delivery to Clara Sales, MNPS Human Resources, Route #1.

Points to remember about salary credit:

- A change in placement on the salary schedule will have no impact on the number of year you must work before you can retire.
- The Tennessee Department of Education already has on file all of your teaching experience at **a public school district in Tennessee.**
- Credit must be for teaching at a public school, accredited institution of higher education, or an accredited private school.
- A change in your placement on the salary schedule has no impact on seniority, layoff or recall.
- Conversion to the new salary credit plan will take time because of the number of manual tasks to be performed.
- As in prior years, MNEA will continue to work with members to correct errors in salary credit.

Know your contract

MNEA has received a number of telephone calls from middle schools this year about being assigned to work football games. The provision below indicates clearly that working at after school athletic events is a voluntary function.



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



September

- 30 Faculty Advisory Committee Training**
Second Session
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters

October

- 9 MNEA Executive Board Meeting**
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 16 MNEA Representative Assembly**
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 20 Professional Council**
4:00 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 21 Know Your Rights**
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 25 Educators Housing Seminar**
9:00 a.m. at MNEA Headquarters

November

- 6 Evaluation Workshop**
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 13 MNEA Executive Board Meeting**
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 17 Professional Council**
4:00 p.m. at Central Office
- 20 MNEA Representative Assembly**
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters

December

- 8 Professional Council**
4:00 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 8 MNEA Executive Board Meeting**
5:00 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 11 MNEA Representative Assembly**
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters

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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MNEA Staff: Kristen Case, Teresa Hayes and Helen Conlee McMackin

MNEA says thanks

MNEA has donated books to the libraries at the following schools in honor of the dedication and service of our association leaders who work there. MNEA will continue to make similar donations throughout the school year.

Amqui Elementary School

Mary Hollingsworth, Association Representative
Randy Shear, Parliamentarian

Bellshire Elementary School

Shelia Smith, Association Representative

Brick Church Middle School

Barbara Gilliam, Association Representative
Trevor Holt, District Director

Buena Vista Elementary EO

Cheryl Williams, Association Representative

Caldwell Elementary EO

Bernard Lafayette, Association Representative

Chadwell Elementary School

Pamela Parrish, Association Representative

I.T. Creswell Arts Magnet School

Janet Smith, Association Representative

Eakin Elementary School

Hillary Strickland, Association Representative

John Early Middle School Paideia

Vickie Bailey, Association Representative

Gateway Elementary School

Angela Roberts, Association Representative

Glendale Elementary School

Paula Pendergrass, Association Representative

Glengarry Elementary School

Toni White, Association Representative

Glenview Elementary School

Erik Green, Association Representative

Goodlettsville Elementary School

Liza Ramage, Association Representative

Goodlettsville Middle School

Alison Rager, Association Representative

Harris-Hillman School

Marilee Dye, Association Representative

Haynes Middle Design Center

Jennifer Lee-Young, Association Representative

Joelton Elementary

Mary Tomlinson, Association Representative

Joelton Middle School

Bill Haley, Association Representative

Jones Elementary Paideia

Deborah McFadden-Weathersby, Association Representative

Madison Special Education

Sandy Stevenson, Association Representative

J.T. Moore Middle School

Brenda Benefield, Association Representative

Napier Elementary EO

Joyce Pitman, Association Representative

Neelys Bend Elementary School

Moreen Muldoon, Association Representative

Neelys Bend Middle School

Enda Wiley, Association Representative

Old Center Elementary School

Patricia Mangin, Association Representative

Stratton Elementary School

Simone Gore, Association Representative

Martha Vaught Middle School

Michael Flushman, Association Representative

West End Middle School

Russell Jones, District Director

Susan Standbrook, Association Representative

HONOR A TEACHER

Your favorite teacher can be remembered for years when you purchase a chair at the Martin Professional Development Center. For a donation of \$50 or more, your teacher's name will be inscribed on a plaque and permanently attached to a Turner Hall auditorium chair.

DONOR NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: (____) _____

I would like to donate _____ chair(s) in honor of:

Teacher Contact Information.

Please let us notify your teacher of this honor by providing:

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: (____) _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

Pick a teacher for me.

I would like to donate _____ chair(s) in honor in memory of the late:

Please make checks payable to:

Nashville Alliance for Public Education
2400 Fairfax Avenue
Nashville, TN 37212

Let's hear from Erick...

The search for a new Director of Schools in Nashville continues to wind forward like a creek in Middle Tennessee after a 50-day drought. Most recently the Board of Education held a study session with its paid consultant Bill Attea of Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates, Inc. At that meeting, Attea attempted to give the Board of Education several options for continuing the search, but the meeting bogged down over a discussion of the "type of superintendent" the Board wanted. Most Board members were reluctant to discuss "types" openly.



Apparently, one of the types was Rudy Crew himself. Crew was recently bought out of his contract in Dade County, Florida (Miami) where he had beaten out Pedro Garcia for the superintendency in 2004. Crew, a former Chancellor of New York City Schools, is often compared to Garcia in terms of his personal style. Back in the spring, the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce sponsored a junket to visit Miami. Several board members and area business leaders participated in the activity and, by all accounts, became intoxicated by Crew's charms.

It is interesting, however, to note the Dade County School Board bought out Crew's contract just a few weeks ago. At \$368,000, Crew's "golden parachute" dwarfed Garcia's "hit the door package" even though Crew's contract allowed for twice the amount.

Corporate executives and boards of directors are coming under great criticism for outlandish executive salary and severance packages. Since tax revenues are on the decline nationwide, the time is right for the Metropolitan Nashville Board of Education to put a halt to executive excesses. The days of \$280,000 golden parachutes must stop.

Nashville needs a director willing serve in order to make a difference in our schools and the community. We do not need another severance package shopper who makes more money to leave than he would to remain superintendent. One could argue lucrative severance packages are not only a means by which to amass personal wealth at public expense but also an incentive to fail as superintendent.

The Board needs to find the public servant type, whose interest is in doing a good job and helping teachers to be successful. Let's reject the personal wealth-building type, the self-aggrandizement type, the my-way-or-the-highway type, and the I-know-you-yokels-are-fools type! After all, we dabbled in those types before, and the Board forked out a huge big golden parachute!

What to do if the unthinkable happens

Even if you everything expected of a reasonable person, there's no guarantee that you won't be the victim of false allegations. If that happens, here are some suggestions about what to do and what not to do:

- First, call MNEA. The UniServ Coordinator (field service staff member) assigned to your school can provide advice and help you obtain legal representation under various Association programs if necessary.
- Don't talk to school administrators or law enforcement officers. Even innocent statements can be misconstrued and misused. The decision whether to meet with these officials and what, if anything, to say to them should be made only after consulting with your MNEA representative. In most circumstances, your representative should accompany you to all meetings.
- Don't sign anything or submit written statements without contacting MNEA. It goes without saying that this will be an enormously stressful time, and you should not make any decision about signing a statement or other documents without first discussing the issue at hand with your representative.
- Don't talk to the media, unless and until you and your representative decide that it is in your best interest to do so.



Did you know?

One of the benefits provided by MNEA is job rights protection under the Kate Frank/DuShane Unified Legal Services Program (ULSP). The ULSP is a jointly sponsored NEA/TEA program that provides appropriate legal assistance to members who are subjected to discipline or discharge by their employer.

Did you also know that NEA provides two other important benefits that may be available to members who are falsely accused? Some cases involving very serious allegations can result in criminal charges being filed against you and may require you to retain a criminal defense attorney.

If the charges arise in the course of your employment and you are fully exonerated, or all the charges are dropped, then the NEA Educators Employment Liability (EEL) Program will reimburse you up to \$35,000 for attorneys' fees.

Be sure to contact TEA before retaining a criminal defense attorney. You also might be sued for damages by the alleged victim and/or the parents. Under the EEL Program, all NEA members are covered for claims up to \$1 million in civil lawsuits against them for damages and attorneys' fees arising out of their employment activities.

The policy kicks in after any insurance available through the school district and is subject to several exclusions. Check with your MNEA field staff representative for additional information about the scope of coverage under the EEL Program.



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