

# The Slate



A publication of the Metropolitan Nashville Education Association

Volume 25, Issue 7

November 18, 2009

## Are you being evaluated?



In the month of December each year, non-tenured teachers begin to hear things from their supervisors like "if I had to make the decision to re-elect you right now, I probably would not." Teachers who hear those ominous words should take heed. Your principal is giving you a wake up call.

By the end of the first semester, all teachers undergoing the "Comprehensive Assessment" of the *Tennessee Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth* should have had at least one observation. The three observations (two announced and one unannounced) should be spaced. If not, the evaluation model is not being properly implemented. While the "Comprehensive Assessment" is a fairly cumbersome instrument, it is designed to help teachers grow professionally. The evaluator is supposed to meet with the teacher shortly after each observation and give feedback for improvement. If this does not happen, the teacher is left with no input on areas of strength and areas to strengthen.

Non-tenured teachers must be particularly vigilant and getting feedback. If one's evaluator fails to indicate areas to strengthen before the next observation, the teacher is unlikely to show improvement. MNEA members should call MNEA for assistance. Early intervention is always the best recourse for non-tenured teachers needing to show professional growth.

## 18/10/10 morphed to 15/10/10

A committee was convened on November 2, 2009, to discuss the controversial "18-10-10" elementary grading policy. The committee consisted of approximately 20 individuals, including teachers, principals and others. Two of the participants were named by MNEA.

After much discussion, the committee finally agreed to reduce the number of grades required per subject at the elementary level to 15 per subject. The text of the committee's recommendation can be found in its entirety at [www.mnea.com/15.htm](http://www.mnea.com/15.htm). MNEA has yet to receive word from Greg Patterson or others in authority as to whether the recommendations will be adopted.

## Are you planning on retiring?

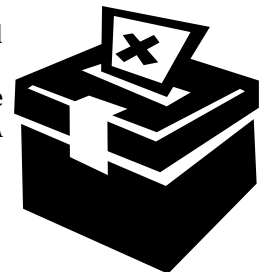
Starting this year, the rate of compensation for unused sick leave at retirement will increase. However, there are a few stipulations that must be met in order to receive the higher rates. (1) The increased amounts are only applicable to time earned in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, subject to the first-in-first-out rule. (2) The employee must notify Human Resources of one's intent to retire by **January 15**. (3) The employee must work until the end of the school year. (4) The established reductions for years of service and age will apply.

The increased rates are:

- \$75 for the 51st through 100th days of accrued sick leave
- \$100 for all accrued sick leave above 100.

## Elections scheduled

Due to involuntary transfers and resignations, the MNEA Nominations and Elections Committee has call for a special election to fill vacancies on the MNEA Executive Board and the MNEA Nominations and Elections Committee. The Committee announced the vacancies listed below and a timetable for elections at the October Representative Assembly.



### EXECUTIVE BOARD VACANCIES

District 1 Director (Hunters Lane Cluster)  
District 2 Director (Hillwood Cluster)  
District 7 Director (Hillsboro Cluster)

### NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS VACANCIES

District 7 (Hillsboro Cluster)  
District 9 (McGavock Cluster)  
District 10 (Stratford Cluster)  
District 12 (Cane Ridge Cluster)

Qualifying petitions ([www.mnea.com/petition.pdf](http://www.mnea.com/petition.pdf)) are due November 19, 2009, at 4:30 p.m. Nominations from the Representative Assembly will be accepted on November 19, 2009. The election period for contested elections shall be November 30 through December 11, 2009.

## Know *your* contract!

### Article IV 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 daily planning period which shall be free of student responsibilities except for emergencies. This duty free period shall be used for the purpose of collaboration, preparation, grading papers, contacting parents, or other items connected with professional duties as determined by the teacher. No more than one planning period per week shall be required for activities other than those listed above.

An elementary planning period should be a minimum of 60 minutes. (2009)

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)

## IEP process is a collaboration

Often general education teachers, IEP team chairs, students, and parents find themselves at odds over individualized education programs. Unfortunately, all too often general education teachers have students with IEPs included on their class rosters without their knowledge. Obviously, the result is a breakdown of communication.

General education teachers are included in the IEP team meeting in order to give input and understand the content of the IEP. The IEP team leader shares the responsibility of implementing the IEP with the child's general education teachers and should help them understand the IEP. All school personnel are expected to work together to implement the IEP from design through implementation. The best course of action for all teachers is to read each child's IEP and implement it to the best of one's ability.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### November 2009

- 16**    **Pre-K Teacher Follow-up Meeting**  
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 15-21** **American Education Week**
- 19**    **MNEA Representative Assembly/  
Petition Deadline in MNEA Special Election**  
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 23**    **Professional Council**  
4:00 p.m. at Central Office

### December 2009

- 8**      **403(b) Retirement Analysis**  
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 14**    **Professional Council**  
4:00 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters

### January 2010

- 12**    **403(b) Retirement Analysis**  
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 14**    **MNEA Executive Board Meeting**  
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 21**    **MNEA Representative Assembly**  
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 25**    **Professional Council**  
4:00 p.m. at Central Office

### February 2010

- 9**      **403(b) Retirement Analysis**  
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 11**    **MNEA Executive Board Meeting**  
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 18**    **MNEA Representative Assembly**  
4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters
- 22**    **Professional Council**  
4:00 p.m. at MNEA

*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.

531 Fairground Court  
Nashville, TN 37211

Phone: (615) 726-1499 ♦ FAX: (615) 726-2501  
Email: [mymnea@comcast.net](mailto:mymnea@comcast.net) ♦ Homepage: [www.mnea.com](http://www.mnea.com)  
Online Community: [mnea.groupsites.com](http://mnea.groupsites.com)

Erick Huth, President/Editor-In-Chief  
Stephen Henry, Vice President  
Kenneth Martin, Treasurer  
Nancy Holland, Secretary

UniServ Coordinators: Forestine Cole, Ralph Smith, Gloria Towner  
MNEA Staff: Kristen Case, Teresa Hayes and Helen Conlee McMackin

## When am I evaluated?

In June of 2007, the Tennessee General Assembly and the governor enacted a new accountability law which in part changed the teacher evaluation process and added "teacher assessments." Currently, all teachers must be evaluated once every five years with an assessment every other year. The law stipulates teacher assessments must include documentation of areas of strength and areas to strengthen.



When the law was passed, MNPS decided that Nashville's teachers would be assessed using the Appraisal Record from the Comprehensive Assessment of the Tennessee Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth. That document is available in pdf and Word on the TDOE website (<http://www.state.tn.us/education/frameval>).

Please note that MNPS is not using any of the suggested assessments on the Tennessee Department of Education website. Principals have recently been reminded to use the Appraisal Record for all teacher assessments.

Remember a principal may choose to evaluate a teacher at anytime using the Comprehensive Assessment. The chart below is the MNPS schedule of teacher evaluations and assessments.

YEAR	Evaluation	Assessment	Off	Assessment	Off
08-09	S-V	L-R	G-K	A-F	W-Z
09-10	W-Z	S-V	L-R	G-K	A-F
10-11	A-F	W-Z	S-V	L-R	G-K
11-12	G-K	A-F	W-Z	S-V	L-R
12-13	L-R	G-K	A-F	W-Z	S-V
13-14	S-V	L-R	G-K	A-F	W-Z
14-15	W-Z	S-V	L-R	G-K	A-F
15-16	A-F	W-Z	S-V	L-R	G-K
16-17	G-K	A-F	W-Z	S-V	L-R

## Deducting MNEA dues

Since MNPS converted to the Metro Government payroll system (EBS), the Board has stopped providing a printout to MNEA members showing their dues deductions at the end of the tax year. In order to have an official record of dues deductions, members are advised to retain **their December 22 check stub** ("pay advice"). That pay advice shows the MNEA dues deductions for the preceding 12 months.

The total dues deducted during the tax year represent partial dues payments for two separate membership years (the last part of 2008-2009 and the start of 2009-2010). Thus, the amount will not be equal to annual dues for either year. In most cases, the total dues deducted for the 2009 tax year should be \$570.16. Individual amounts may vary based upon when you joined, whether you had a pay period with no pay, and other variables.



If you lose that particular stub, the school secretary can print out a duplicate. However, he or she must remember to scroll to the second page of the pay advice screen before printing or the dues amount will not show on the printed page.

## MNEA Address Change Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Home email address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

School/Work site \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form to MNEA, Route 3, email information to [helenmcmackin@comcast.net](mailto:helenmcmackin@comcast.net) or fax to 615.726.2501.

## Let's hear from Erick!

The pressures facing Nashville's teachers are building day by day. We are getting constant complaints that teachers are having their planning time commandeered by principals and others chasing elusive Adequate Yearly Progress. Teachers are told they have to grade writing assessments on their planning time, during instructional time, and even on their own time at home. Other teachers are being told to hold one kind of a meeting one day a week during their planning, another type a different day, and so on. Often, individuals complain that they are required to document meetings for their principal.



My experience has been that most teachers believe they are professionals and want to be treated as such. Being a professional brings with it a certain sense of self-direction. Real professionals are given a task or mission to accomplish and then left to complete their work without interruption. Unfortunately, teaching is the most micromanaged profession in our country. There is always someone with a set of rules or a schedule of meetings ready to tell us what to do and when to do it—even when to go the restroom.

In reality, few people actually believe teachers are professionals. If they did, they would let us do our jobs and not set out to fill every moment of our working days and then some. The deprofessionalization of teaching is becoming more evident as we find some districts moving to prepared scripts for lessons. Fortunately, we're not quite there in MNPS.

The problem we have today in Nashville is that too many people think we just need to get teachers to work harder to achieve AYP. As the pressure builds, we find more teachers complaining of serious ailments, some teachers reacting badly to tense situations, and tempers flaring all across the district. How can we change all this?

First, remember the Tennessee School Improvement Planning Process is a collaborative process. Teachers and other stakeholders have a seat at the table. The SIP is not supposed to be something crafted in a dark room by a few hand-picked co-conspirators. The SIP belongs to the entire school family. Teachers should make sure their voices are heard in order to include strategies that they believe will work—not just a series of meetings to eat up planning time.

Next, make sure you are not trying to do more than is humanly possible. Sometimes micromanagers ask us to do the impossible. If you are feeling stressed out, seek the assistance of MNEA. We can help or find you assistance. Remember to always stay calm. Do not resign in haste. Take time to think things out before committing to a life-changing event like quitting your job! Let's work smarter—not harder!



## MNPS calendar revised

7/19	Assistant principals report
8/2	New student registration week
8/9	Teacher in-service day
8/10	Teacher in-service day
8/11	Teacher in-service day
8/12	<b>All students report for half day</b>
8/13	Teacher in-service day
	<b>Students do not report</b>
8/16	First full day grades 1-12
	half day for PK and K
9/6	<b>Labor Day Holiday</b>
9/15	Progress reports issued
10/14	End of first quarter
10/15	<b>Planning/Records day</b>
	<b>Students do not report</b>
10/18-10/19	<b>Professional Development for teachers</b>
	<b>Students do not report</b>
10/20-10/22	<b>Fall Break</b>
	<b>Students do not report</b>
11/2	<b>Parent Conference Day</b>
	<b>Students do not report</b>
11/17	Progress reports issued
11/24-11/26	<b>Thanksgiving Holidays</b>
12/15	<b>Half day for exams: grades 9-12</b>
12/16	<b>Half day for all grades</b>
	<b>End of second quarter and first semester</b>
12/17	<b>Planning/Records day</b>
	<b>Students do not report</b>
12/20-12/31	<b>Winter Holidays</b>
1/3	<b>Professional development day</b>
	<b>Students do not report</b>
1/4	<b>Students report for spring semester</b>
1/17	<b>MLK Holiday</b>
2/9	Progress reports issued
2/11	<b>Parent Conference Day</b>
	<b>Students do not report</b>
2/21	<b>Professional development day</b>
	<b>Students do not report</b>
3/10	<b>End of third quarter</b>
3/11	<b>Planning/Records day</b>
	<b>Students do not report</b>
3/14-3/18	<b>Spring Break</b>
3/21	<b>Fourth quarter begins</b>
4/11-4/15	<b>TCAP Testing</b>
4/20	Progress reports issued
4/22	<b>Spring Holiday (Good Friday)</b>
5/25	<b>Half day for exams: grades 9-12</b>
5/26	<b>Half day for all grades</b>
	<b>End of 4th quarter</b>
	<b>End of 2nd semester</b>
	<b>End of 2010-11 school year</b>
5/27	Teacher in-service day
5/30	<b>Memorial Day Holiday for 11/12 month employees</b>
6/3	<b>Last day for assistant principals</b>



The Board of Education approved the School Calendar for 2010-2011 at its October 27 meeting. Next year's calendar is substantially similar to this year's. However, MNEA was successful at eliminating the half-day parent-teacher conferences to meet the needs of teachers and students, particularly at the elementary level. The fall parent teacher conference day will be moved to Federal Election Day in November. There are *only four days built in for snow* as a result of the parent-teacher conference day expansion. The first report card will be issued before the parent-teacher conference day.