

Web Version

Assistant district attorney discusses mandatory reporting of child abuse

Guest article by Assistant District Attorney Stacy Miller, JD

In the past, the law allowed school districts to have a policy that required all teachers to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to a designated person within the school and then that person would make the report to the CPS hotline. The current law (Tenn. Code Ann. §37-1-403) requires that the individual who suspects abuse must make the report. Schools are still allowed to develop a policy or protocol to track such reports, but they must allow the actual person who suspects the abuse to report that abuse.

Tennessee Code Annotated §37-1-403 requires all persons to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. "Any person who has knowledge of or is called upon to render aid to any child who is suffering from or has sustained any wound, injury, disability, or physical or mental condition, shall report such harm immediately if the harm is of such a nature as to reasonably indicated that it has been caused by brutality abuse, or neglect or that, on basis of available information, reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect."

In Tennessee, the child abuse hotline number is: 1-877-237-0004. The Tennessee Child Abuse Hotline is a call center accepting all reports of suspected child abuse and neglect for the state of Tennessee.

Tennessee Child Abuse Hotline is open 365 days a year, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.



Stacy Miller, Assistant D.A.

What happens if you fail to report the suspected abuse or neglect?

It is a crime in Tennessee if a person knowingly fails to make a report pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated §37-1-403. Tennessee Code Annotated §37-1-412 (a) states any person who knowingly fails to make a report of suspected child abuse commits a class A misdemeanor.

Is my information confidential?

Tennessee laws protect persons who report abuse or neglect. Tennessee Code Annotated §37-1-410 provides immunity from civil and criminal liability. Reporters do have the right to remain anonymous. Department of Children's Services child abuse records are not public records and will remain confidential. Only those with a "right to know" will have access to those records.

What information is important when I make a report? What questions will I be asked?

- Child(ren) names, ages, address, phone numbers, race, and school/daycare information
- Parent(s), Legal Guardian(s), or caretakers information
- Other household members information
- Nature of the harm or specific incident(s) that precipitated the report
- Specific allegation(s), date(s) and descriptions(s) of the injuries or dangers
- Identities of alleged perpetrator(s) and their relationships to the victim
- Witnesses to the incident(s) and how to reach those witnesses
- Details of any physical evidence available
- Perpetrator's current access to the child
- Present condition of the child (alone, in need of medical attention, etc.)
- The location of the child and directions to that location
- Any statements from the child
- Parent's or perpetrator's explanation of the alleged child victim's condition or the incident
- Parent's current emotional, physical or mental state, especially feelings about the child and reactions to the report
- How the reporter came to know the information and the reporter's thoughts about the likelihood of further harm to the child

Will I be notified of what happened to my report?

The reporter can elect to receive an email notification or choose to receive a notification letter letting them know whether or not their report has been assigned for investigation or assessment by the Tennessee Department of the Children's Services. In order to receive this letter the intake case manager will gather your contact information, including your name, mailing address, e-mail address and phone number.

What if I am not sure if it is abuse or neglect?

The law specifically requires that any person who suspects abuse should make the referral. Let the Department of Children's Services make the decision as to whether or not the case should be assigned to an investigator. Reporting is mandatory, so please report any case of suspected abuse to DCS. Child protection is the number one goal and DCS cannot investigate until a referral is called in, so please make that report if you are concerned that a child may be suffering some type of abuse, neglect or harm.

Survey says voters prefer charter reforms

MNEA issues press release citing Center for Public Democracy poll

Last week MNEA issued the press release below to highlight issues related to unabated charter expansion and voter support for reforms.

Nashville teachers say survey shows local voters overwhelmingly favor charter reforms

NASHVILLE, TN - Metropolitan Nashville Education Association (MNEA) Leaders say a recent survey of local voters shows that Tennesseans overwhelmingly favor reforms for local charter schools to protect students and taxpayers.

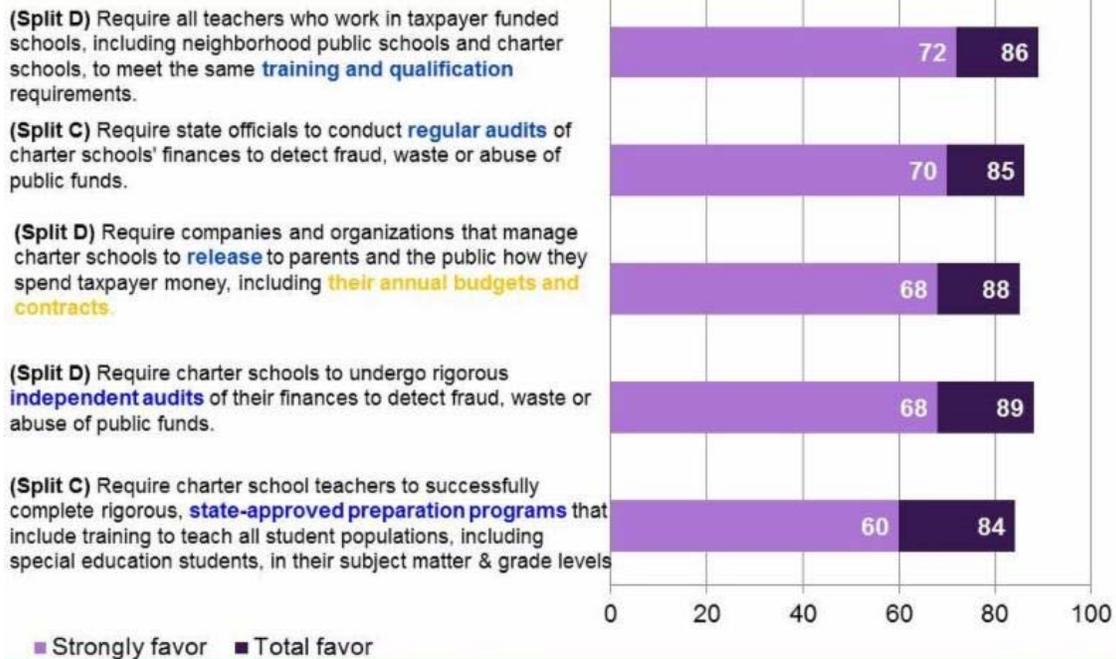
Voters overwhelmingly rejected charter expansion as a priority, the survey found. Instead, voters favored charter reforms to strengthen:

- Transparency and accountability
- Teacher training and qualifications
- Anti-fraud measures
- Equity policies for high-need students

"It's clear our communities support quality public schools, not an expansion of charter schools," said Stephen Henry, MNEA President. "We need to make sure ALL Nashville schools are held to the same accountability and transparency standards that taxpayers expect."

The survey also found voters rated the need for more parental involvement and the reduction of excessive student testing as bigger priorities than expanding charters.

Overwhelming Support for Training Requirements, Audits, and Transparency



GBA Strategies – Charter School Tennessee Survey Findings

Figure 1

"We need community leaders who will stand up for the strong public schools our kids deserve," said Erick Huth, MNEA Vice President. "This includes our new director of schools and our next mayor."

The poll was conducted in January among 500 registered voters by GBA Strategies, a research firm based in Washington, D.C. It was funded, in part, by the Center for Popular Democracy, a national organization dedicated to social justice issues.

Take action on charter school reform!

Sign our schools Nashville deserves petition online

Districts and charter schools should work together to ensure a coordinated approach to serving all children. It is the duty of the School Board to ensure strategic growth and expansion of its schools to better serve students and the community while protecting taxpayers.

That's why we're asking educators to speak up and ask the School Board to support independent accountability and transparency standards for all of Nashville's public schools as recommended by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform. When it comes to protecting students and taxpayers, school governance should be representative and transparent. [Sign the petition now.](#)

It's up to us to stand up for our students and public schools. [Please sign the petition](#) and ask your family and friends to join us in fighting for the schools ALL of our students deserve.

MNEA - Leading the profession with a student-centered agenda

by Cory Wofford, NEA Organizational Specialist

The future of education will belong to the educator who believes that he is responsible for, and will work for, the preservation and innovation of their profession. Policy experts who have never spent time in classroom, politicians driven by interests that are designed to understand education - none of it can do what needs to be done. There are plenty of reasons to be angry. The evaluation process is unfair and does not measure the work of educators, public school resources are dwindling, and educators are spending too much time testing and not enough time teaching.

On average, teachers in the Nashville school district are spending sometimes 60 percent of instruction time on test preparation and test-taking. The Metro Nashville Education Association (MNEA), the Tennessee Education Association (TEA), and the National Education Association (NEA) are taking a proactive approach by acting as a convener of educators who want to work within and outside the Association to co-create solutions designed to shape the future of education, improve student learning, achieve educational equity, enhance professional practice and the quality of professionals, advance successful solutions. The campaign is called the Time to Teach Campaign. The goal is simple: reduce the overuse of standardized tests on students and teachers.

Since spring 2014, the NEA has been supporting MNEA staff and leaders to execute a campaign that engages Metro Nashville educators in collecting data about the impact of testing on students and grow the power of the Association to take the lead. Every educator has an opportunity to get involved. Here are three simple ways you can help:

1. Go to <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/it-is-time-to-end-tennessees-over-reliance-on-test-scores> and sign our petition;
2. Take the Time to Teach survey and schedule a 10-minute presentation at your worksite; to obtain copies of the survey and schedule a meeting call MNEA at 615-726-1499;
3. Join the movement and volunteer to lead your profession by clicking on Join MNEA today!
4. Host an event in your community during the month of April by logging on to: https://actionnetwork.org/event_campaigns/april-wave-of-action-events

Much of the attention and focus on testing is a result of a national movement that was initiated by local associations like the Metro Nashville Education Association. Our students are depending on us. Our communities are depending on us.

- * Public Demonstrates Support for Public Education
- * Empowered Educators Shape Learning for All Students
- * Collaboratively Developed School Plans
- * Professional Practices Define Policies at Every Level
- * Best Practices and Strategies Implemented Nationwide
- * ALL Students Thrive and Succeed

Homework Hotline wins 2015 TEA Friend of Education Award

MNEA nominate Homework Hotline in the organization category

Homework Hotline, a simple idea to help students in Nashville's public schools who needed additional help completing and understanding assignments, was launched 25 years ago by local business leaders, community volunteers, teachers, and the Metropolitan Nashville Education Association. These visionaries believed additional tutoring from Nashville's expert teachers would be the most effective solution to help kids baffled by their homework assignments. They were right.



Since that time, Homework Hotline has grown and expanded beyond MNPS and has provided more than 489,139 sessions of free, one-on-one tutoring in math, science, language arts, social studies, and reading. The sessions are provided by phone in six languages to K-12 students in 31 public school systems throughout Middle Tennessee.

Homework Hotline has done so much more than its name implies. For its ongoing work, Homework Hotline was awarded the 2014 MNEA Friend of Education Award. In turn, MNEA nominated the Hotline for the 2015 TEA Friend of Education Award. Homework Hotline will receive the award at TEA's Representative Assembly in May in recognition for its immeasurable impact on public education in Tennessee, but more importantly, its impact on students.

Congratulations, Homework Hotline!

MNEA and other community stakeholders send letter school board

Coalition outlines plan for "community input" into director search

A coalition of community organizations drafted a letter patterned after one sent to the school board during the last search for a permanent MNPS director of school. This time around, additional partners were added to mix. The following groups participated in sending the letter to the board of education:

1. Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship
2. Metropolitan Nashville Education Association
3. Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce Nashville
4. Black Chamber of Commerce
5. Nashville Area Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
6. Nashville Organized for Action & Hope
7. Service Employees International Union
8. Stand For Children
9. Steelworkers Union
10. Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition
11. Urban Housing Solutions
12. Urban League of Middle Tennessee

March 10, 2015

Metropolitan Board of Education
2601 Bransford Ave
Nashville, TN 37204

Dear Chairwoman Gentry and members of the Metropolitan Board of Education:

We believe identifying and selecting the next director of schools is the most important decision you will undertake during your term. Like the members of your board, we represent a wide range of diverse views, perspectives and constituencies; but our organizations are united in our belief that public participation in the director of schools search should be extensive, inclusive, authentic and continuous. We appreciate your stated commitment to engaging the community in this important work. Since the public participation role has yet to be defined, we have given this issue much thought and suggest that the following components should be reflected in the search process.

- Parent survey. Metro Schools has made strides in recent years in its ability and willingness to survey MNPS families. Parents should be surveyed to solicit their views regarding the future of Metro Schools and its next director.
- Stakeholder meetings. The search firm and board members should schedule multiple stakeholder conversations across the city to receive input regarding the desired qualities, experience and

abilities of the next director of schools.

- 3. Real engagement opportunities with the finalists. We suggest each finalist participate in a structured, but accessible, community forum, with the opportunity to respond to questions as part of the final stage of the search.
- Community involvement should be ongoing. A community advisory task force could be appointed to assist and advise the search firm and board in developing and promoting public participation during the search. This group should represent the full diversity of our community and stakeholder groups.

We recognize and respect that the decision to select the next director of schools rests solely with the school board. We also believe that Metro Schools and the new director cannot be successful without the active support and partnership of the community. We look forward to discussing our proposals with you.

MNEA awards deadline coming next week

Submit your nominations by April 15, 2015

MNEA's annual awards deadline is April 15, 2015. For information on our award categories and submission criteria, visit our award page at [this link](#) .

NEA wants to tell your story

Help capture the power behind real life stories!

No one can tell your story better than you. In this ongoing national battle to preserve and protect public education, your story plays a vital role. To collect and dispatch those stories, NEA has set up the following issue specific websites. Until we steer the public conversation back to what is rational and important, you and your students (and your children) will continue to be negatively impacted. You have a story to tell...tell it.

For testing reduction campaigns - www.nea.org/testingstory

For degrees not debt campaigns - www.nea.org/dndstory

For association/union stories - www.nea.org/unionstory

For political campaigns - www.nea.org/legislativestory

For other issues/campaigns - www.nea.org/tellyourstory

MNEA elections conclude

Complete results available online at <http://vote.mnea.com>

The MNEA election period concluded at 11:59 p.m. on Easter Day. Results of key races are:

MNEA Officers (2015-2017)

- Erick Huth, MNEA President
- Theresa Wagner, MNEA Vice President
- Rosemary Wade, Treasurer
- Nancy Holland, Secretary

MNEA Executive Board Members (2015-2018)

- Kathleen Gant, District 1 Director--Hunters Lane Cluster
- Jeannine Renfro, District 4 Director--Glenclyff Cluster
- Cyndy Bradfield, District 7 Director--Hillsboro Cluster
- Sheila Garcia, District 10 Director--Stratford Clusters

MNEA Nominations and Elections Commission

- Marlow Brant, At-large Member (2015-2018)
- Nancy Holland, At-large Member (2015-2018)
- Jane Walling, At-large Member (2015-2017, unexpired term)

TEA Offices (2015-2018)

- Stephen Henry, District 9 Member of the TEA Board of Directors
- Nancy Holland, District 9 Member of the TEA Fund for Children and Public Education

Teacher Representative on the Metropolitan Nashville Profession Employees Insurance Trust (2015-2018)

- Stephen Henry, Trustee

2015 MNEA Delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly

- Claudia Davidson
- Stephen Henry
- Erick Huth
- Nancy Holland
- Kenny Martin
- Jennifer Navarre
- Jeannine Renfro
- Jerri Simon
- Carrol Trusty
- Theresa Wagner
- Jane Walling
- Earl Wiman

2015 MNEA Alternates to the NEA Representative Assembly

- Candra Clarriette, First Alternate
- Augodelia Coleman, Second Alternate
- Laura Leonard, Third Alternate

State NEA delegate results are pending because of the Tennessee School for the Blind Education Association returns are not yet available. MNEA-PACE Council election will be posted soon at <http://vote.mnea.com>.

MNEA honors NBCTs

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards executive vice president greets Nashville's National Board Certified Teachers at reception in their honor

On Tuesday, March 31, MNEA hosted a reception to honor the district's National Board Certified Teachers. For the past three years, MNEA has partnered with MNPS and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) to provide candidate support for teachers seeking national board certification. Peggy Brookins, NBCT; Stephen Henry, MNEA President; and Dr. Jesse Register, MNPS Director of Schools made brief remarks.

Erick Huth, MNEA Vice President and Susan Dalton, TEA UniServ were instrumental to the success of this initiative. In addition to the teachers being honored, the following dignitaries were present: Dr. Jesse Register, MNPS Director of Schools; Jill Speering and Anna Shepherd, MNPS Board Members; Susan Thompson, MNPS Chief Human Capital Officer; Dr. Jay Steele, MNPS Chief Academic Officer; Dr. Vanessa Garcia, MNPS Executive Elementary Officer; Councilman Lonnell Matthews; Barbara Gray, TEA President; Beth Brown, TEA Vice President; Dr. Earl Wiman, NEA Executive Committee, Stephen Henry, MNEA President; and Dr. Erick Huth, MNEA Vice President.

MNEA is seeking delegates!

Nomination form open still open for TEA Delegate nominations

Submit your [TEA delegate nomination](#) online using [the nomination form](#) available at the MNEA home page (www.mnea.com). Please have your NEA member ID number and your MNPS employee ID number available for use as your electronic signature. 2015 marks the 150th anniversary of the Tennessee Education Association and the annual Representative



Assembly will be held at a new venue this year--the Embassy Suites Hotel in Cool Springs on May 15 and 16, 2015. MNEA is looking to fill approximately 75 delegate (2 administrators and 73 teachers or support employees) slots for this year's TEA Assembly. Submit you name using [this nomination form](#) .

Save your December 19 paycheck stub!

Dues paid for the current tax year are reflected in the year-to-date column.

MNEA advises members to keep all of their paycheck stubs. In order to have an official record of dues deductions, members are advised to retain their December 19 check stub. That stub will show the MNEA dues deductions for the preceding 12 months.

The total amount for the tax year represents partial dues payments for two separate membership years (the last part of 2013-2014 and the start of 2014-2015). Thus, the amount will not be equal to annual dues for either year. In most cases, the total dues deducted for the 2014 tax year should be \$627.08 of which **\$587.45 is tax deductible**. Individual amounts may vary based upon several factors but all full-time active members paid **\$587.45** in dues eligible for itemized tax deductions for calendar year 2014.

Check out our upcoming events

Our calendar of events is posted online at www.mnea.com/calendar.html.

April 9, 2015

MNEA Representative Assembly

4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters

April 9, 2015

TEA Delegate Briefing

Following the MNEA Representative Assembly

May 7, 2015

MNEA Executive Board

4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters

May 15, 2015

MNEA Representative Assembly

4:30 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters

May 16 and 17, 2015

TEA Representative Assembly

Embassy Suites in Cool Springs

June 9, 2015

NEA Delegate Briefing

2:00 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters

June 9, 2015

MNEA Executive Board

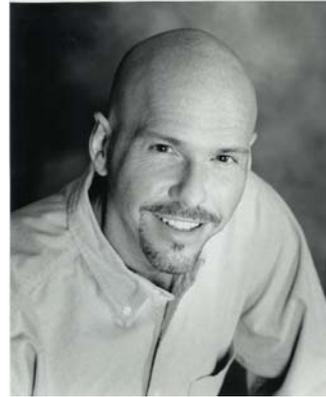
3:15 p.m. at MNEA Headquarters

Let's hear from Stephen!

First, do no harm!

Doctors, lawyers, journalists, teachers, and, as I learned recently from National Public Radio, even architects have a code of ethics. A physician's Hippocratic Oath, an implicit pledge to "do no harm," is perhaps the oldest.

What is a teacher's professional responsibility in 2015 as it relates to doing no harm. The recent verdicts in Atlanta's testing scandal show us one extreme. The current era of testing madness and pressure to produce student achievement results (on paper) are a result of the 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and its fancy new name, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). ESEA was due for reauthorization in 2008, but was not reauthorized.



For 13 years, the Act has been responsible for systematic attacks on our profession, the dismantling of public education, and leaving behind America's children and communities. Why and how did we let this happen? Why and how have we allowed it to continue? What are we willing to do to take control of our profession and protect America's children from the malpractice of educational reforms that make millions for some and impoverish others?

Cheating on tests is harmful...but isn't silently watching the administrative bullying of a colleague? Or silently watching the legislative hijacking of your profession? Or silently allowing charter and voucher schemes to rob you, your students and our schools of precious resources? Or silently allow your passion to teach to be suffocated by laws, policies and practices? Or silently allowing your students to be subjected to test after test, while depriving them of the things they need most? Their ability to dream, to love learning and experience the special gift of a caring teacher.

Doing no harm in 2015 means doing something...what will you do?

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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