Tenure is its core about basic fairness. Teaching is often a challenging profession, and having a fair and orderly process for issues that may arise helps teachers be the best professionals they can be. Yet there is great confusion statewide among educators, administrators and local school boards on the status of teacher tenure in Tennessee.

"Tenure still very much exists in Tennessee," said Virginia McCoy, TEA staff attorney. "While the law was amended in 2011 to change the way teachers become eligible for tenure, it was not abolished and remains an important part of the teaching profession."

What is tenure?

Many teachers, and certainly the general public, are uncertain of what exactly having tenure means. Tenure is designed to ensure due process on discipline or dismissal, protecting a teacher for failing a star athlete or providing a hearing on questionable claims made by an unreasonable parent. Tenured teachers enjoy continuing employment, and are not at risk for non-renewal — they can only be dismissed for cause.

"It is not a 'guaranteed job for life,' as some opponents say. It simply provides a process to make sure dedicated veteran teachers are treated fairly and won't be dismissed for unjust or unfounded reasons, both tenured and non-tenured teachers can be dismissed for cause," McCoy said.

State missing opportunities in draft ESSA plan

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law in late 2015. The new federal education law replaces No Child Left Behind and makes changes to accountability and other features of national education policy. One key element of ESSA is the flexibility given to states to develop their own methods of meeting accountability goals. The Tennessee Department of Education has developed a draft plan in response to ESSA and is in the final stages of receiving feedback. Here are some key takeaways.

A-F School Grading

One feature of the state’s plan is in direct response to the General Assembly requiring an A-F grade be assigned to each school in the state. The state’s plan includes a number of components in each school’s letter grade, such as growth scores and student proficiency levels. As the plan has been unveiled to educators, teachers and district leaders have expressed significant concerns. Some legislators are pushing for a delay in the implementation of this plan or even a revision to the approach. TEA does not believe an A-F grading scale for individual schools is helpful and, in fact, could be harmful.

Testing

The state’s draft plan includes a recommendation to reduce testing time in social studies and science, and to modify the math and ELA tests. Additionally, there is discussion of reducing the testing faced by 11th graders who take both EOCs and ACT by allowing the ACT to
Mindfulness eases stress, helps students and teachers focus in classrooms

By TEA President Barbara Gray

Do you know how many thoughts run through our minds every day? Neuroscientists believe the average person has 60 to 80 THOUSAND thoughts per day. When I heard this number recently in a professional development session at TEA New Teacher Retreat, it stopped me in my tracks. It is no wonder we often feel overwhelmed and stressed.

The session was on practicing mindfulness as a classroom management technique and a tool to reduce stress in your life. The instructor, an educator from New Jersey, emphasized the difference between being mindful and having a full mind. We live in a time where we are bombarded with a constant stream of information and pulled in so many different directions. I know I am not alone in feeling overwhelmed some days.

So what exactly is mindfulness? Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present in the moment, aware of where we are and what we’re doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what’s going on around us. It is the ability to tune out the things we are worried about and the many things on our to-do list. It is ignoring your phone and emails and social media in exchange for being focused and present.

And it is so much harder than I thought it would be!

For being such a simple concept, it takes practice and intentionality. I would encourage you to start practicing mindfulness in two ways: in your personal life and with your students in the classroom. We can all benefit from greater focus and reduced stress in our lives, but mindfulness can also be tremendously helpful for our students.

High-stakes tests, homework, extra-curricular activities, part-time jobs and issues at home make for very busy and pressure-packed lives for our students.

There is a lot of recent research about the positive impact of mindfulness practices on our brains. According to neuroscientists, “research indicates that brain training involving mindfulness practices can strengthen areas of the brain responsible for attention, emotional control, and problem solving… There is even emerging evidence that mindfulness-based brain training produces permanent structural changes in the brain.”

There are many books and resources available on mindfulness, both for personal practice and on how to incorporate it into your classroom. It can take as little as one to two minutes of mindful practice exercises to make a real difference for your students.

NEA has already started a mindfulness group on EdCommunities, www.mymnea360.org/login, where you can connect with other teachers who are trying this practice in their classrooms all across the country.

If you are already practicing mindfulness with your students, or plan to start, I would love to hear about your experience. Please email your feedback to me at bgrey@tea.org.

Support networks are key to success and sanity for educators

By TEA Executive Director CarolynCrowder

A student’s ability to succeed is closely tied to the strength of their support network. Their networks include everyone from teachers like you, to parents, neighbors and other family members.

As educators, we know how important a support network is - so why aren’t we more intentional about building our own personal support networks?

It is comfortable and relatively easy to form relationships with your colleagues in your school and your community, but I want to encourage you to also look outside of that bubble. Some of the most important professional relationships I have were formed at association events with educators who taught in different counties, and even different states.

I can remember attending conferences as an association member in Oklahoma and feeling like the best part of the event was lunch – not because of the food, but because of the time spent talking with other educators who were experiencing the same things as me.

As an active association member, then leader, and now staff member, my support network has grown and become very diverse. I have formed lifelong connections at association events. It has been invaluable to me to have a group of people who understand and relate to where I am in my professional life.

TEA hosts a number of conferences, workshops and other events all across the state that provide the perfect opportunity for you to connect with other educators who share your passion for teaching and for advocating for public education.

Just last week we had a group of 40 early career educators in Nashville for a New Teacher Retreat. Many of those attendees are now connected through NEAs EdCommunities and other social media platforms.

This weekend many TEA members will be heading to the TEA Organizing Summit. While most of the relationships formed at conferences happen on their own, TEA staff has intentionally planned opportunities for attendees to connect with those who share the same passion.

The back page of this publication highlights all of the other events coming up in the next few months. Check out that list and pick one or more! – to attend this year.

You can even earn professional development points while you network and build relationships at the Minority Affairs Conference and Spring Symposium.

Be intentional in 2017 about building a network of passionate educators statewide who can share classroom resources, encourage you and, when needed, commiserate with you on the many challenges of this profession we have chosen. I promise it will be worth the time you invest in forming these relationships.
Thoughtful planning, reflection help you finish the school year strong
By Erika Martin, Hamilton Co. EA member

The second semester is well underway, which means your year is halfway through. Time flies when you’re making a difference! My favorite thing about the start of the new year and new semester is that it provides a sense of renewal and new opportunities. This is a perfect time to reflect on your first semester - what worked, what didn’t - and make plans to finish the school year strong.

Introduce a new rule or classroom procedure
Often teachers feel that if a procedure or classroom rule isn’t succeeding there isn’t much that can be done. I haven’t found this to be the case in my classroom. Teachers have a lot of power in their classrooms, and one of the greatest powers is the power to CHANGE!

If students just can’t seem to remember to clean their desks, institute a “Desk Monitor” for the new year.
If students always argue about how to line up, have them line up in number order or reverse number order to switch it up.

Reflect on what has been accomplished so far
The new year usually brings our focus to new goals and resolutions, but there is value in reflecting on what has already been accomplished. This is important with adults as well as children. This means that reflecting on your teaching career and goals can be beneficial to you as well. Take a moment and write about what you and your students have accomplished so far. This could be done individually or completed as a class.

Focus on goal setting
There are many resources and activities on Pinterest, Teachers Pay Teachers and more that provide some structure to goal setting, especially tying in the New Year theme. If you want to start the year in August with student goals but the back-to-school commotion got in the way of my plans. Now, instead of waiting for a new school year to start in August, my students spent some time in January setting goals to finish the year strong.

Goal setting tips
Don’t just tell your students what the class goals are, involve them in the process of creating the goals. I have found this really motivates my students to work toward our stated goals. Make sure to display the goals or have them easily accessible to keep them top of mind for you and your students.

In my classroom, I like to track progress, not just completion to help encourage my students to keep working hard. Don’t forget to do some reflecting and goal setting for yourself. As teachers we tend to get wrapped up in our students needs and lesson plans, make sure you are giving yourself the opportunity for thoughtful personal goal setting, too.

Member Voices

Deadline this week to give feedback on state ESSA plan

The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) released their draft of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan last month and is now seeking your opinion on the state’s version of a federal law that will raise education standards. ESSA replaced the universally despised No Child Left Behind law, giving states an opportunity to shape their own education law.

“The state says they will use your comments to shape a Tennessee-specific ESSA plan,” said Bill O’Donnell, TEA Instructional Advocacy coordinator. “The deadline to submit your feedback is Tuesday, Jan. 31. Please make time to share your opinion as we seek to end excessive testing, unfair evaluations, test-based accountability and school takeovers. This is our opportunity to shape the future education law in Tennessee.”

Educators are the experts and policy makers need to hear your voices about what has not worked and what does work when it comes to improving public education. Let your voice be heard so that we can impact what new policies should look like under ESSA.

Key ESSA dates
January 31: ESSA draft plan public comment period ends.
April 3: TDOE ESSA final plan deadline
School year 2017-18: Federal funding will be distributed to school districts using ESSA funding formulas; Tennessee will use the revised accountability/intervention systems; Tennessee will identify schools for comprehensive support and intervention.

Be sure to read the front page story on TEA’s overview of the state plan. Then go online now to give your feedback at http://tn.gov/education/section/essa.

School districts speak out against A-F school grading

Lincoln County has joined the growing chorus of voices opposed to the A-F school grading system passed by the legislature in 2016 and opposed by TEA.

According to the resolution adopted by the Lincoln County School Board, “the letter grading system may be grossly misleading to the public and will oversimplify the link between poverty and low test scores, thus stigmatizing low-performing schools that receive Fs, as well as the students who attend them.”

The Lincoln Co. school board went on to say that “there is more than enough data available about all aspects of schools that any attempt to combine this multitude of data into one score through an arbitrary formula will do nothing more than pick winners and losers based on the formula.”

Earlier this month, Collierville’s School Board joined the opposition to the letter grading system, voting to lobby against the new state accountability system. Officials in Germantown and Millington have also expressed concerns.

Come to CIVICATION

Join the fight to:
Reduce high-stakes testing
Improve teacher evaluation
Increase teacher salaries
Defeat privatization attacks

Head to Nashville the Tuesday of your Spring Break!
R.S.V.P. to mpoindexter@tnea.org

Erika Martin, far right, recently attended TEA’s New Teacher Retreat with her colleagues from Orchard Knob Elementary.
TEA’s analysis of the state’s Every Student Succeeds Act implementation plan

Serve as the math and ELA EOC. We will monitor proposals that help reduce testing time and encourage alternative approaches (such as the ACT) that reduce the number of tests students take.

There is limited information in the state plan about assessment audits, innovative assessments and actual testing time. These are three things that need to be addressed.

Improving Low-Performing Schools

ESSA grants both states and districts greater flexibility in approaches to improve the lowest-performing schools. The state plan acknowledges the role district-led Innovation Zones have played in improving school performance. The plan also references the state-run Achievement School District (ASD) as a significant lever of change. While Innovation Zones have shown significant promise as school improvement models, there are real concerns about the ASD’s ability to achieve meaningful results. TEA supports proven, district-led initiatives to drive school improvement.

Differentiated Pay

The state envisions continuing the use of differentiated pay initiatives to both recruit new teachers and encourage existing teachers to take on new responsibilities. TEA also has concerns about using standardized test data to award performance pay. Rather, TEA supports a model of collaboration between local teachers and their school districts in developing appropriate alternative compensation models.

TVAAS

The state’s plan endorses the continued use of TVAAS for teacher and school accountability and for performance pay initiatives. This is problematic due to the inherent flaws of TVAAS. Using TVAAS in the current environment is simply unacceptable given the failure of TNReady last year. We simply don’t have sufficient data available. TEA will continue to express our concerns about the use of TVAAS as the ESSA plan moves forward.

ESSA is a great opportunity for states to take an innovative approach. TEA is encouraged by some of what we’ve seen of the state plan. Where there are concerns, we’ll be communicating directly with the Department of Education to make improvements.

This is the first in a series of articles analyzing the state plan and sharing TEA’s assessment of it with members. Watch future issues of TEACH and The Advocate for more on ESSA implementation.

State ESSA plan from page 1

Resources available for Read Across Tennessee

The theme for Read Across Tennessee 2017 is “Dig into books!” featuring Ruffy the Reading Dog. The annual celebration falls on March 2, Dr. Seuss’ birthday. TEA drew a picture of a Tennessee dog as Seuss would have, complete with a state-shaped dog tag.

TEA has created coloring sheets, bookmarks and other classroom materials to make the celebration a special one. Read Across Tennessee materials include a poster found in the this issue of TEACH (and available online to download), and other materials easily downloaded. Additional posters, bookmarks and classroom supplies can be ordered from TEA, just contact your local UniServ coordinator.

A TRUE CHANCE FOR CHANGE

Thorough standards review process

Emphasis on post-secondary education and career readiness

Increased focus on early literacy

Thoughtful approach to accountability metrics, but still room for improvement

No significant reduction in high-stakes assessments

Continues to heavily rely on struggling ASD

Lacks transparency in how stakeholder feedback was incorporated
The NEA Representative Assembly is NEA's highest decision-making body. With more than 9,000 delegates, it is also the largest democratic body in the world. The NEA convention convenes every July to deliberate and adopt policies that impact American public education. NEA NEA Representative Assembly delegates adopt the highest NEA policy to support the education of every student, in every classroom, every year.

Members are encouraged to vote in the locally conducted election to determine who will represent them at the NEA RA. For Category 1, NEA members will vote for two delegates. Below is a list of which in the district in which they teach. Category 1 includes candidates who are classroom teachers, education support professionals or persons who serve in other non-supervisory positions. In Category 2, NEA members may vote for any three of the candidates. This category includes members who are supervisors, administrators or retired NEA life members.

Any NEA-retired life, education support or active member not affiliated with a local association who wishes to vote in the election may receive a ballot by writing or calling TEA, 801 Second Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37201-1099, (615) 242-8392 or (800) 342-8367.

**TEA members seek NEA RA state delegate seats, opportunity to set national priorities**

The NEA Representative Assembly is NEA’s highest decision-making body. With more than 9,000 delegates, it is also the world’s largest democratic, deliberative body. The NEA convenes every July for delegates to deliberate and adopt policies that impact American public education, elect NEA officers, and set policy for the 3.2 million member association. This is where Tennessee educators can voice their opinions on where our national affiliate should focus its time and resources for our national affiliate.

Biographical information and photographs submitted by candidates for state delegate positions to the National Education Association’s Representative Assembly in Boston, Mass., June 30 - July 5, 2017, are published in this two-page section. All candidates will be listed on ballots which local association presidents will circulate by May 17.

Members are encouraged to vote in the locally conducted election to determine who will represent them at the NEA RA. For Category 1, NEA members will vote for two delegates. Below is a list of which in the district in which they teach. Category 1 includes candidates who are classroom teachers, education support professionals or persons who serve in other non-supervisory positions. In Category 2, NEA members may vote for any three of the candidates. This category includes members who are supervisors, administrators or retired NEA life members.

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**CATEGORY I**

**District 1**

Karen Anderson*
Joe Crabtree*

LaDawn Hudgins – WCBA President, 2012 - 2015, WCBA Vice President 2010 - 2012, AR 10 yrs, TEA-RA 12 yrs, TEA State Delegate of NEA RA for 10 yrs. WCBA President 2015 - 2016, MCUL 2015-2016. 2015 - 2016, IPD Committee Member. 2014 - 2015, Membership Committee. The NEA Representative Assembly is NEA’s highest deliberative body. It is also the world’s largest democratic, deliberative body. The NEA convenes every July for delegates to deliberate and adopt policies that impact American public education, elect NEA officers, and set policy for the 3.2 million member association. This is where Tennessee educators can voice their opinions on where our national affiliate should focus its time and resources for our national affiliate.

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**District 6**

Beth Brown - English teacher, 15 years, Grandy County High School; GCEA Association Representative, President-Elect, President, Chief Negotiator, Grievance Chairperson, Membership Chairperson, Collaborative Conferencing Chairperson; TEA: TEA Board (2009, 2012, 2016- Present); TEA Vice President; Board Liaison to IPD Commission, Executive Committee, Budget Committee, Delegate Advocacy/Organizing Committee, Districts’ 9, 10, 11; Delegate to the NEA RA. Has attended NEA events including NEA-SP Leadership Conference, NEA Representative Assembly, NEA National Leadership Summit, and NEA Early Career Educators Conference.

**Jane Legre**

**Benita Townsend**

**Randall Woodard**

**District 11**

**District 12**

Raelee Burke – Kindergarten teacher for four years, Raelee has served on the TEA Membership and New Teacher committees.
Did you... into a book!

Read Across Tennessee
As we prepare to observe and honor Black History Month in February, there is a wealth of resources to help teachers integrate Black History Month curriculum into lesson plans, covering a variety of subjects and multiple grade levels.

“There are numerous resources available in Tennessee and beyond to help your students learn about the rich cultural history and contributions of African Americans,” said TEA President Barbara Gray. “If you have a specific need, please contact us at TEA and we’ll help you find what you need for your class.”

Community Partners

“Where possible, we encourage teachers to seek out community partners, like museums or historically black colleges and universities, to enhance your lesson plans and enrich the student experience,” Gray said.

Fisk University, Tennessee State University and Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Knoxville College, Lane College in Jackson, and LeMoyne-Owen College in Memphis would be excellent partners in planning your Black History Month curriculum and commemoration. Another resource is the National Civil Rights Museum (www.civilrightsmuseum.org) at the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis, the place where the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was gunned down on April 4, 1968, a week after striking with Memphis sanitation workers.

“Dr. King’s dream, his nonviolent resistance in the name of equality for all has brought so much positive change, but a lot of work remains to be done,” Gray said. “It’s up to us as teachers to tell Dr. King’s story and the countless stories of selfless citizens who suffered and died for equality.”

Lesson Plans

Among lesson plans available at www.nea.org/tools/lessons/black-history-month.htm, you can find sections on African American scientists and inventors, the African American migration experience and many other topics grouped by grades K-12.

Make lesson plans now for Black History Month

Minority Affairs Conference moves to Cool Springs

The Johnnna Martin/TEA Statewide Minority Affairs Conference is the highlight of the year for many members. The conference is designed to provide an opportunity for TEA ethnic minority members to receive pertinent information and training to assist them in their profession and community outreach, will take place in Franklin-Cool Springs March 24-25.

“Sessions and panels are designed to provide the latest instruction and professional development techniques to enhance your teaching and administrative skills,” said Forestone Cole, TEA Hotline coordinator and MAC staff liaison. “The sessions will focus on bridging student achievement gaps, the need to increase diversity and cultural competence in the teaching workforce, and securing adequate and equitable resources for public education.”

Members will also learn about the benefits of engaging in the local, state and National Education Association.

“Historically, educators have been on the forefront battling the challenges facing ethnic minority students in Tennessee, including the need for adequate funding for schools serving minority and disadvantaged students,” Cole said. “There is a lot we can do to push for proper funding, and we hope to move the needle on funding this year.”

Members and non-members can register online now at www.TEAteachers.org/MAC.

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Contact TEA

Tennessee Education Association
801 Second Avenue N., Nashville, TN 37201-1099
800.823.6757 www.nea.org

Univisors Coordinator

District 1 — Tonya Furlong, P.O. Box 218, Maryville, TN 37802-0218, (865)522-9866, Anniston Area Chamber of Commerce, Anniston, Co.

District 2 — Jennifer Guidry, P.O. Box 73, TN 37381-0073, (931)384-1175, Anniston Area Chamber of Commerce, Anniston, Co.


District 4 — Tina Parlier, P.O. Box 25, Johnson City, TN 37602-0025, (865)432-1953, Assn. friedric. Co., University of Tennessee, Greeneville, Hamblen Co.

District 5 — Jennifer Guidry, P.O. Box 73, TN 37381-0073, (931)384-1175, Anniston Area Chamber of Commerce, Anniston, Co.

District 6 — Thelma Williams, P.O. Box 70, Afton, TN 37013, (931)547-7769, Assn. friedric. Co., University of Tennessee, Greeneville, Hamblen Co.

District 7 — Theresa Williams, P.O. Box 70, Afton, TN 37013, (931)547-7769, Assn. friedric. Co., University of Tennessee, Greeneville, Hamblen Co.

District 8 — Sherry Read, P.O. Box 22, Tennessee Valley Association, Athens, TN 37303, (423)234-0700, Assn. friedric. Co., University of Tennessee, Greeneville, Hamblen Co.


District 10 — Sue Wainwright, P.O. Box 354, Goodlettsville, TN 37070; phone: (615)827-3900, Assn. friedric. Co., University of Tennessee, Greeneville, Hamblen Co.


District 12 — Jennifer Guidry, P.O. Box 73, TN 37381-0073, (931)384-1175, Anniston Area Chamber of Commerce, Anniston, Co.

District 13 — Malinda Kindrick, P.O. Box 354, Goodlettsville, TN 37070; phone: (615)827-3900, Assn. friedric. Co., University of Tennessee, Greeneville, Hamblen Co.

District 14 — Tonya Furlong, P.O. Box 218, Maryville, TN 37802-0218, (865)522-9866, Anniston Area Chamber of Commerce, Anniston, Co.


District 16 — Leslie Butler, P.O. Box 465, Henderson, TN 37075-0465, (931)243-0800, Assn. friedric. Co., University of Tennessee, Greeneville, Hamblen Co.

District 17 — Carol Miller, P.O. Box 22, Tennessee Valley Association, Athens, TN 37303, (423)234-0700, Assn. friedric. Co., University of Tennessee, Greeneville, Hamblen Co.

District 18 — Susan Slagle, P.O. Box 22, Tennessee Valley Association, Athens, TN 37303, (423)234-0700, Assn. friedric. Co., University of Tennessee, Greeneville, Hamblen Co.


District 20 — Jodi Dobbins, P.O. Box 354, Goodlettsville, TN 37070; phone: (615)827-3900, Assn. friedric. Co., University of Tennessee, Greeneville, Hamblen Co.
Don’t miss out on educator tax deductions

TEA knows every dollar counts in your family budget. That is why when tax time rolls around, it is important that you know the many tax deductions you qualify for as a professional educator.

First, **TEA members can deduct 93 percent of your association dues for the 2016 tax year.** The nondeductible portion of TEA dues is 7 percent related to certain lobbying and political activities, so you can deduct $250.53 for active full-time teachers and $125.26 for full-time education support professionals as miscellaneous itemized deductions.

Teachers may also deduct up to $250 for classroom supplies purchased in 2016. This is a particularly advantageous deduction because it is an above-the-line deduction on line 23 on Form 1040, which means you don’t have to itemize to take it and it reduces your overall adjusted gross income. Other situations faced by educators preparing their taxes include:

**Income from outside work**

If there is no additional withholding on outside work, you want to be sure to avoid a penalty for under-withholding—i.e., when your overall tax liability exceeds the amount of tax you had withheld by certain margins. The outside income should be reported on your federal tax return.

**Other unreimbursed employment expenses**

You can deduct expenses for classroom supplies beyond the $250 amount as unreimbursed employment expenses, which are defined as expenses that help you conduct your job even if they are not required. However, these deductions are subject to a 2 percent limit on itemized deductions—this means you can only deduct the amount that exceeds 2 percent of your adjusted gross income on Schedule A line 21.

**Lifetime Learning Credits**

If you take courses that you pay for yourself, whether or not they are required for certification, you may qualify for the American Opportunities Credit or the Lifetime Learning Credit, see Form 8863 for more details.

Be sure to work with a tax advisor or reliable tax software that clearly addresses your situation, especially if you are in the higher income brackets. And keeping receipts or a careful log is critical for the classroom supplies deduction and other tax benefits.

Wherever you are in life, we’ve got what you need.

At NEA Member Benefits, we have member-only resources and product solutions to enrich every aspect of your personal and professional life. Whether it’s saving on everyday items, getting ready for a career change or buying a home—we’re here to help.

Check out all the exclusive resources and special offers we’ve created just for you.
TEA UniServ uniquely qualified to support TN educators

Nearly two CENTURIES of combined experience make TEA field staff an unstoppable force

While you may not be familiar with the term “UniServ,” you undoubtedly have seen some of the faces below in your school or have benefited from their knowledge and expertise. TEA UniServ coordinators are the association’s field staff who live and work in your district. As former educators and association members, this group has a deep understanding of what it is like to be a public school educator. These are the people you want in your corner.

**District 1 - Harry Farthing**

I taught and coached for nearly 12 years in Elizabethton. I now have almost 12 years of experience serving you as a TEA UniServ.

**District 2 - Jennifer Gaby**

I taught for 15 years in Greene County at Chuckey Doak High School. I was an active association leader before becoming a TEA UniServ in 2010.

**District 3 - Tina Parlier**

I spent 15 years teaching in Elizabethton before joining the TEA staff. I have been working as a UniServ coordinator for six years now.

**District 4 - Duran Williams**

I served as teacher, assistant principal, principal and coach for 20 years at Cosby School. This is my 10th year with TEA.

**District 5 - Jason White**

As a former Georgia teacher and a current public school parent, students and educators are my passion. I have worked for TEA for six years.

**District 6 - Shannon Bain**

Award-winning high school English teacher, organizer, and passionate advocate for public education. Educators: I’ve got your back!

**District 7 - Theresa Turner**

After 12 years in the classroom, I worked with other state affiliates for 19 years before joining the TEA staff in 2010. I grew up in Marshall County.

**District 8 - Josh Trent**

Before joining staff, I taught for 13 years and have been a local AR, Vice President, and President. I am here to answer any questions or concerns.

**District 9 - Jackie Pope**

I have dedicated my entire professional career to public education, as an educator, local and state leader and a union activist.

**District 10 - Jeff Garrett**

I have had the privilege to work as an educator, local association activist and leader, and now as a TEA UniServ coordinator.

**District 11 - Antonioette Lee**

I am a former educator and association leader. I have worked with TEA for more than 10 years - first as a lobbyist and now as your UniServ.

**District 12 - Sue Ogg**

I have worked with TEA for more than 10 years. I love my advocacy work with teachers in my district.

**District 13 - Mary Campbell**

I taught criminal justice at Ravenwood HS, and worked as a prosecutor. I left teaching to advocate full time for teachers and public education.

**District 14 - Maria Uffelman**

As a former English teacher I identify with the fight for this important profession. The best part of my job is helping members.

**District 15 - Cheryl Richardson**

I was an educator in Cheatham County for 23 years, including serving as principal of Cheatham County Central High School.

**District 16 - Lorrie Butler**

I believe public education is the bedrock of our democracy. I taught middle school for 10 years before beginning my work with TEA 16 years ago.

**District 17 - Terri Jones**

I am a Tipton Co. native and taught in Memphis. I have been working with the association as a UniServ coordinator since 2007.

**District 18 - Zandra Foster**

I come from a family of teachers, and previously taught in the classroom. I love my work as an advocate for educators and public education.

**District 19 - Tom Marchand**

I taught for 18 years and served as a local association leader for much of that time. I have worked with the association for almost 18 years.
Field staff uniquely qualified to support TN educators

Tear out this page, fill in the information for your school and hang it in the break room.
Local associations, TEA staff advocate for members’ rights

State law provides that a district may dismiss any teacher for the following reasons: incompetence, inefficiency, insubordination, neglect of duty or improper conduct.

How do you get tenure?

Under the amended law, teachers become eligible for tenure after completing a probationary period of five school years or not less than 45 months within the last seven-year period; received summative evaluations of 4s and 5s during the last two years of the probationary period; and has been reemployed by the district after the probationary period.

Once eligible, state law requires that the director of schools either recommends the teacher for tenure to the local board or non-renew the teacher. If a teacher is recommended for tenure, the board must vote to either grant or deny tenure. It is important to understand that if tenure is not granted, the teacher cannot be continued in employment in that district.

"TEA legal and field staff are hearing more and more reports of this process not being followed. Some school districts have stopped recommending teachers for tenure altogether, even though they meet all of the criteria," McCoy said.

This is the first year many teachers are becoming eligible for tenure after the law changed in 2011. This transition, coupled with the delay of summative scores from the 2015-16 school year, has created the perfect storm for confusion at all levels.

"Our number one priority is that TEA members are treated fairly. In partnership with TEA UniServ staff and our local affiliates, our legal team is working hard to ensure school districts are following state law and moving forward with recommending eligible teachers for tenure status," McCoy said.

Why do you need tenure?

Teachers in Shelby County Schools experienced first-hand the significance of tenure when the district began the process of displacing teachers regardless of tenure status. While tenure doesn't protect an ineffective teacher from losing her job, it is there to protect the good teachers from being unfairly dismissed — or "excessed," as Shelby County called it.

TEA Legal won a recent federal court case against excessing and is continuing to advocate for members statewide.

"My advice to our members is to work with your local association leaders and TEA UniServ coordinator to have your district to follow the state tenure law and recommend eligible teachers for tenure," McCoy said.

Any teacher who meets all of the following requirements, is eligible for tenure:

- Has completed a probationary period of five (5) school years or not less than forty-five (45) months within the last seven-year period, the last two (2) years being employed in a regular teaching position rather than an interim teaching position;
- Has received evaluations demonstrating an overall performance effectiveness level of "above expectations" or "significantly above expectations" as provided in the evaluation guidelines adopted by the state board of education pursuant to § 49-1-302, during the last two (2) years of probationary period; provided, however, that a teacher who has met all other requirements for tenure eligibility but has not acquired an official evaluation score during the last one (1) or two (2) years of the probationary period due to an approved extended leave; transfer to another school or position within the school district; or invalidated data due to a successful local level evaluation grievance pursuant to 49-1-302(d)(2)(A) may utilize the most recent two (2) years of available evaluation scores achieved during the probationary period to meet the provisions of this subdivision (4); and
- Is reemployed by the director of schools for service after the probationary period.

Has a degree from an approved four-year college or any career and technical teacher who has the equivalent amount of training established and licensed by the state board of education.

Holds a valid teacher license, issued by the state board of education, based on training covering the subjects or grades taught;

Earn PDPs at Spring Symposium

The 21st Annual TEA Spring Teaching & Learning Symposium will focus on new learning opportunities, professional growth and good fellowship March 31 through April 1 in Chattanooga.

"By the end of March, everyone needs a little break, which is why our Spring Symposium has been such a success over the years, brining members from all over the state to learn and relax away from their school districts," said Carolyn Crowder, TEA executive director.

This year's keynote speakers Donna Porter and D.J. Batiste will share an inspiring message about the crucial role teachers can play in their students' lives. Kicked out of Head Start as a child, Batiste was no stranger to juvenile detention and at one point led a large violent gang in Mississippi. Alternating between suspensions and getting in trouble with the law throughout high school, Batiste was introduced to conscious discipline by Porter, his favorite teacher.

Batiste now leads and teaches from a different point of view and, in turn, inspires hundreds around the country with the message of connection instead of correction.

Other sessions will include ELL strategies and awareness, word-sharing in mathematics, beginning and elementary literacy, optimizing teacher leadership and performance, easy STEM labs, a session on TCRS, as well as an in-depth look into conscious discipline.

Event information: www.TEAteachers.org “Events” tab

CALENDAR of EVENTS

February

2/3-4 - Organizing Summit (Franklin)
2/7 - Webinar: Knowing, Grouping and Motivating Students (6-7 p.m. CST)

March

3/7-4/11 - Civication (Every Tuesday)
3/14 - Webinar: Classroom Management (6-7 p.m. CST)
3/24-25 - Minority Aff airs Conference (Franklin)
3/31-4/1 - Spring Symposium (Chattanooga)

April

4/7-8 - Student TEA Convention (Murfreesboro)
4/22 - Education Support Professional Conference