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Special Insert
**Where We Stand:
TEA Legislative Proposals**

It's time for a
Fair. Strong. Simple.
Evaluation System

TEA has a strong agenda for the upcoming legislative session, ready to fight for Tennessee public schools and the people who work in them. There is a lot at stake for education in this session, and TEA is the only organization that can effectively stand up for schools.

Currently in Tennessee schools, many award-winning teachers are told they are not measuring up. Arbitrary numbers threaten careers dedicated to children. "Meets expectations" is a failing grade. Too little support is given to those with negative outcomes. The morale of hard-working teachers is plummeting and their anger is rising.

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We Won't Let Outsiders Control Our Destiny

It's a new year and there are many interesting changes in Tennessee, in Nashville, and at TEA.

TEA members have always enjoyed the services of an exceptional staff, and we are fortunate to have some of the best education professionals in the state working for us. The most recent additions to our staff are no exception. New faces in TEA management include



Duran Williams as assistant executive director for advocacy, Steve McCloud in legal services, and Jim Wrye in government relations. Their work is being overseen by Mitchell Johnson, serving as interim executive director. Mitchell has been employed by TEA for many years in a variety of roles and is well prepared to lead our organization.

In addition to our other duties, many of us at TEA are now turning our attention to the legislative session. As the 108th Tennessee General Assembly convenes this month in Nashville, education "reform" is still on the agenda. TEA stands ready, as always, to advocate for great public schools, our students and our members. Yet the challenges we face this year often involve groups that are foreign to us, and in many cases, new to Tennessee.

Among more than 1,200 lobbyists registered with the Tennessee Ethics Commission, approximately 280 are listed with a focus on

StudentsFirst and National Federation for Children spent more than \$250,000 in 2012 state elections.

education. Eight TEA staff members are registered lobbyists this year and the Tennessee Retired Teachers Association (TRTA) will have two registered lobbyists on Capitol Hill. What is particularly interesting is that of the 280 individuals who

list education as a lobbying issue, less than half work for employers in Tennessee.

Who employs them? Why do outside companies invest resources to impact education laws in our state? About 25 education lobbyists work for companies that offer some form of online education. K12 Inc, which runs the "virtual school" from Union County, leads the group. These companies clearly have an interest in diverting public education funds into their coffers.

Another eight lobbyists work for two groups promoting charter schools. Companies that manage charter schools in other states want to bring their business to Tennessee. And they want our laws to make their work easier.

Let's not overlook the pro-voucher groups. StudentsFirst, based in California, has seven registered lobbyists in Tennessee, while the National Federation for Children in Washington, DC, employs five. One report indicates that, between them, these two groups spent more than \$250,000 in the 2012 state elections. To them, "school choice" means draining taxpayer dollars from public schools to private entities.

Many of the "reform" efforts we're up against originate in special interest groups with no real commitment to Tennessee's children or its citizens. As public school educators, we must be the voice of true reform. TEA members are dedicated to Tennessee students and their future. We cannot allow outsiders to influence or control our destiny.

TEA Letter to 108th General Assembly



In December, TEA Government Relations sent a letter to every member of the 108th General Assembly, which read:

"Like you, Tennesseans know that schools are an important part of what makes our state prosperous now and in the future. Our schools are good and important institutions doing a good job, worthy of support and care.

A recent federal report showed Tennessee schools

"A recent federal report showed Tennessee schools rank in the top 10 nationally for graduation rates."

rank in the top 10 nationally for graduation rates. For the past 10 years, Tennessee has led the nation in graduation gains, due to the hard work of teachers

and students, along with common sense improvements in practices and the right kind of investments. The high graduation ranking is even more remarkable considering that Tennessee ranks 42nd in the nation on per-student spending and near that rank in child poverty. It is fair to say that Tennessee schools do more with the resources provided them than any other state.

Yet the state conversation on education doesn't highlight the great work and importance of public schools. Just the opposite.

The so-called reformers and education experts from out-of-state seem intent on tearing down and blowing up our great system of public schools. These folks cannot and will not celebrate the good work and success of Tennessee schools because it won't suit their abstract theories and unproven programs.

You know the great work schools are doing in your district. The hundreds of dedicated teachers, administrators, and support professionals of the Tennessee Education Association in your area have had enough of the trashing of our great public schools. As an elected official you may have too, and I look forward to talking with you about how we can build on our successes."



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TEA Stands for Fair, Strong, Simple Evaluation

Teachers can't be punished for students they don't teach

Continued from page 1

Welcome to Tennessee schools in the age of an evaluation system damaging the morale and lowering the self-worth of one of the most critical resources of our state—its teachers.

As the 108th General Assembly gets underway, the number one issue for TEA and its members is the fundamentally flawed evaluation. Across the state, members have been meeting with their local legislators to voice their justifiable frustration. TEA has been at the state capitol since early January, talking to lawmakers and legislative leaders on making major changes.

TEA will fight to make sure the evaluation system is fair, clear, and helps improve teaching and learning. It is impossible to make the case that the current evaluation system is any of those things. The majority of Tennessee's teachers are evaluated on students they never see or teach. For those teachers who have students taking standardized tests, scores are run through TVAAS, a formula that few in education understand and whose reliability is questionable. The heavy reliance on test scores also penalizes teachers who work with high numbers of at-risk students. What's worse, after a teacher is given a failing grade there is often little or no guidance, and no plan for improvement.

"It is clear there are fundamental flaws in the teacher evaluation system. We want to see deep changes so that it's fair, clear, and designed to support teachers' efforts to improve instruction for all students," said TEA President Gera Summerford. "We know in many cases good teachers are being demoralized by this. We know data generated by the system is often not relevant to individual classrooms. This is unacceptable when dedicated teachers' careers are threatened."

A major poll of 450 teachers conducted by TEA in October showed tremendous opposition to the current evaluation system. The poll showed 61 percent of teachers disapproved of the system, with only 28 percent in favor.

The opposition was highest for secondary

teachers, with 70 percent opposed while only 24 percent were in favor. It is important to note teachers are not opposed to evaluation of their work. Instead, the flaws in the current system cast doubt the evaluation does even remotely what Tennessee officials say it does.

In a Senate Education Committee hearing on January 22, Education Commissioner Kevin Huffman admitted the system needed to be changed, but he referred to any changes he wanted as "tweaks." On one slide in Huffman's presentation, TVAAS data ranks more than a quarter of all Tennessee teachers as failing.

"It's an outrageous misrepresentation of the true picture of teachers' success in Tennessee," said Jim Wrye, TEA government relations chief. "It is not lost on TEA that the number of failing teachers is the same percentage as the number of Tennessee children living in poverty."

TEA knows the evaluation needs fundamental change, and is talking with lawmakers about an

overhaul that teachers, parents, and the public see as fair, clear, and set up to improve teaching and learning. "Addressing the flaws of TVAAS, making sure teachers are evaluated on their own students and aren't punished for working with at-risk students is our priority," Wrye said.

One fundamental change being proposed by TEA is a pre- and post-test system that ensures teachers are evaluated only on their own students, and only on those students who are consistently present to receive instruction. Another proposed change is to allow schools and teachers the choice of using TVAAS or actual student test scores in their evaluations.

Rep. Harry Brooks of Knoxville, who chairs the House Education Committee, has promised a hearing on evaluation and knows it will be a big issue going forward.

TEA lobbyists have met with the staff of Senate Education Committee Chair Sen. Dolores Gresham and look forward to working with her on addressing the issues.

"We need to stop driving good teachers from the classroom with a flawed evaluation system," Summerford said. "Our goal is an evaluation system that will help, not hurt, our efforts to move Tennessee education forward."



TEA Sets Legislative Priorities

Tennessee's Teachers tackle evaluation, salaries and other crucial issues

The 108th General Assembly Convenes

The 108th General Assembly convened in January with committee appointments and the election of constitution officers, including the Treasurer, David Lilliard, who may have some changes in TCRS planned for the session (see below). The two committees educators are most concerned with, Education and Finance, were also formed and chairs appointed.

The House Education Committee is chaired by a former teacher and local school board member, Rep. Harry Brooks of Knox County.

Vice Chair is career educator and longtime McMinn County Director of Schools, Dr. John Forgety.

The Senate Education Committee is chaired by Sen. Dolores Gresham.

She was recently quoted as saying Tennessee education is "a system that is not working." With Tennessee in the top 10 for graduation rates while in the bottom 10 for funding, TEA members are asking what exactly is not working.

Critical Issues Emerge in Session

Changing Evaluation System to Fair, Strong and Simple

TEA polling shows that teachers and administrators are very unhappy with the evaluation system. You have every right to be! It is an evaluation system where you are judged on things outside of your control, where "meets expectations" is a failing grade, and where some are guaranteed to lose no matter how hard they work. The current system is clearly driving highly qualified and exceptional teachers out of the profession and generating misery for hard-working educators across the state.

There is need of a complete overhaul, and TEA is working with legislators to do just that. Look for more in the next issues of *teach* and the *Legislative Update*.

Advocating for a Pay Raise

During the worst throes of the recession from 2009 to 2012, Tennessee educators did not receive

a pay raise due to revenue shortfalls. All the while, teachers dug into their own pockets to purchase classroom supplies as funds dried up. To add to the difficulty, inflation over those four years was 9 percent, cutting away at the stagnant paychecks.

While the General Assembly provided a 2.5 percent pay raise last year, it left educators far from whole. Now that the state economy has rebounded somewhat and revenue has improved, as basic fairness TEA will be advocating for a 6.5 percent pay

raise to make up for the losses of recession years. The goal is to bring salaries back to where they were.

Opposing a Statewide Charter Authorizer and Vouchers

No matter where you teach, these are two issues that could hurt

you and your school. As seen in Florida and other states, charters and vouchers, once unleashed, can hurt every rural, suburban and urban system in the state. Everyone has a stake in seeing these two bills do not pass. A state authorizer could put a charter in any county or community, against the wishes of a local school system. Vouchers simply take money away from schools for dubious purposes.

Research and data are crucial in this fight. National record shows that charters and vouchers do far worse than public schools, and certainly will not come close to the exemplary record of maximizing investment like Tennessee schools. If

we have limited funds in Tennessee, shouldn't we use them where they produce the best results?

The largest charter study from Stanford found that while 17 percent of charters did better than public schools, 37 percent did far worse, and the rest saw no difference. Charters are one step forward, two steps back. Vouchers are even worse, with one of the nation's largest voucher programs in Washington, D.C., sending half of the checks to places with no oversight and little-to-no education benefit. They waste taxpayer dollars while Tennessee schools stretch every penny to get kids to graduation.

Protecting the Salary Schedule

Word is that abolishing the salary schedule will be back in the legislature this year. Such a bill – coupled with class size changes – was defeated last year. TEA will fight this terrible proposal, ensuring teachers who have worked hard and improved their teaching practice by getting advanced degrees receive the pay promised to them.

Preventing Fundamental Changes at TCRS

A proposal to fundamentally alter TCRS for new hires is being floated by state treasurer David Lilliard, who is eager to switch it from a dependable defined benefit plan. Teachers, including new ones, already take a risk by making less in salary for the amount of education than other professions. They can do so over a long career because the risk of retirement is lessened by a guaranteed defined benefit. If you put risk into retirement, it is another reason for teachers to leave the classroom and make more elsewhere. TEA opposes changing the defined

Pay Raise to Make Teachers Whole From Losses Sustained During Economic Recession

TEA is talking to legislators about increasing the minimum salary schedule to make sure teachers recover from losses in recent years.

During the worst throes of the recession between 2009 and 2011, Tennessee's teachers did not receive a pay raise due to revenue shortfalls caused by the economic downturn.

At the same time, teachers dug into their own pockets to purchase classroom supplies as funds dried up. To add to the difficulty, inflation over those years was more than 10 percent, cutting away at stagnant paychecks.

While the General Assembly provided a 2.5 percent increase in the minimum salary schedule last year and a 1.6 percent increase the year before, some of that raise was gobbled up by insurance premium increases and lessened by the fact that many teachers make more than the minimum indicated in the state salary schedule. The increases left Tennessee's teachers far from whole.

Now that the state economy has rebounded and revenue has improved, TEA

will advocate for minimum salary increases in the next budget years to make up for the losses of recession years. At a minimum, TEA estimates teacher salaries must increase by 6.5 percent.

Our goal is to bring salaries back to where they were before the recession as a matter of simple basic fairness at the state level, and to make sure that local governments pitch in as well.

YEAR	INFLATION	MINIMUM SALARY SCHEDULE INCREASES PROVIDED BY LEGISLATURE
2008-09	3.80%	0.00%
2009-10	0.10%	0.00%
2010-11	1.60%	0.00%
2011-12	3.20%	1.60%
2012-13	1.80%	2.50%

benefit retirement plan for teachers.

There are also important concerns about whether a change for new hires will negatively affect those currently in the TCRS system. There are other ways to improve the long-term outlook of TCRS for K-12 employees without fundamentally undermining their retirement. TEA is ready to work with the state treasurer and the Legislature to maintain a defined benefit plan for the next generation of teachers in order to keep them in productive careers.

School Safety

"Arming teachers" has been a hot topic in the press ever since the tragedy in Newtown, Conn. TEA members have been at the forefront of this conversation in Tennessee.

As Rep. Joe Carr announced plans to introduce legislation allowing school districts to decide whether teachers should carry concealed weapons on campus, Robertson Co. EA member Larry Proffitt, told News Channel 2 in Nashville that he was not a fan of such proposals.

"What happens if a teacher has a heart attack and has a loaded weapon on their side? What happens

when it's in the desk?" Proffitt said. "I don't think putting a gun in any teacher's hand is going to solve any type of problem."

Proffitt said he didn't like Carr's idea because a teacher's first thought should always be about his or her students. Echoing the position of many of his colleagues, Proffitt suggested that many other scenarios could make a weapon a danger to students.

Greenbrier's High School Principal, Dr. Katie Osborne, supported Proffitt's position, saying that communication coupled with emergency preparedness and school resource officers is an effective strategy.

"Notwithstanding the Sandy Hook tragedy, schools are still among the safest places children can be," read the TEA statement released shortly after the Newton tragedy. "As caring adults, we can and must do all we can to ensure all children have safe learning environments. At the same time, we should not rush to take extreme action without careful study of what actually improves school safety."

While there is a lot of seemingly crazy rhetoric on arming teachers, the bill proposed by Sen. Frank Nicely of Knoxville seems a sensible step in

improving school security by building on the effort of School Resource Officers. Nicely recognizes that about half of Tennessee's schools already have a resource officer, and some schools and school districts can't afford full-time law enforcement officers for security. His bill would allow retired law enforcement or military officers to volunteer for the job, or designate one person in a school to be trained. Schools will still be able to deny anyone the ability to be armed on their premises.

Republicans Back TEA Bills

The General Assembly has Republican supermajorities in both the House and Senate. It is important to have majority support for bills TEA would like to see passed. Among these are changes to the evaluation system, limits to investigations during suspensions, "meets expectations" as a passing grade, and basic fairness for ESPs by requiring notice 15 days ahead of the school starting date for non-renewals.

One TEA bill is the "Assaulted Teacher Support Act," a bill sponsored by Nicely and freshman Republican Rep. Andrew Farmer. Unfortunately, teachers are assaulted in Tennessee schools far too often. Some must take a lot of time to recover from the attack. Some school systems force teachers to take sick leave and sometimes unpaid leave to recover. The "Assaulted Teacher Support Act" would ensure sick leave is not exhausted in cases of assault, and that unpaid leave is not forced on educators. Being assaulted on the job is terrible enough; compounding that suffering by hurting educators financially is unacceptable.

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Brooks, Kevin (R-24)	103 WMB	741-1350	rep.kevin.brooks@capitol.tn.gov
Coley, Jim (R-97)	207 WMB	741-8201	rep.jim.coley@capitol.tn.gov
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DeBerry, Lois M. (D-91)	33 LP	741-3830	rep.lois.deberry@capitol.tn.gov
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White, Mark (R-83)	110 WMB	741-4415	rep.mark.white@capitol.tn.gov
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Dickerson, Steven (R-20)	310 WMB	741-6679	sen.steven.dickerson@capitol.tn.gov
Gardenhire, Todd (R-10)	11A LP	741-6682	sen.todd.gardenhire@capitol.tn.gov
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Tate, Reginald (D-33)	320 WMB	741-2509	sen.reginald.tate@capitol.tn.gov



Rutherford EA President-Elect Emily Mitchell (standing) addresses legislators at TEA Legislative Forum in January.

Legislative Contact Team Members Connect Educators, Lawmakers on Issues

When an issue emerges in the Tennessee Legislature that could impact teaching and learning in our state, an advance team of Tennessee’s teachers, education support professionals and administrators connect with legislators and their colleagues in schools and local associations to promote the best interests of the teaching profession and students.

As TEA lobbyists and governance leaders work tirelessly to advocate on behalf of teachers in the legislature, they rely on TEA’s legislative contact team (LCT) members, who make sure that lawmakers hear directly from educators in their districts. In its fourth year of operation, the LCT program ensures that every Tennessee legislator receives consistent feedback from Tennessee’s teachers.

At the beginning of the legislative session each year, TEA staff host regional meetings to update LCT members about key legislation and potential challenges facing public education.

Minutes after Governor Bill Haslam announced his proposal last year to raise the average class size and repeal the minimum state salary schedule, LCT members were in touch with their colleagues in schools, who in turn flooded the state Capitol with calls and

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emails, expressing their concerns. Once legislators saw the possibility that every classroom could be maxed out at the state maximum level and heard about research highlighting the positive impact of lower class size on student learning, Haslam’s proposal was withdrawn.

Similar battles will be fought this year around school vouchers, charters, teacher retirement, guns in schools and other proposed bills.

LCT members—TEA’s citizen lobbyists—stand ready to keep their colleagues abreast of the political realities in the Tennessee Legislature with text messages, emails, phone calls and face-to-face meetings.

In the words of Jefferson County teacher Lisa Henry, “If politicians are getting into education, educators must get into politics.” It is for this reason that TEA created its Legislative Contact Team.

TEA encourages all educators to get involved in the legislative process. Elected officials make decisions every day that directly affect your classroom and your school.

To get involved with LCT or other TEA legislative efforts, please visit the *Issues & Advocacy* section of the TEA website, www.teateachers.org.

TEA Scholarships Can Help With Rising Tuition Costs

Are you or someone you know wondering how to afford the rising cost of college tuition in these challenging economic times?

TEA offers up to eight Don Sahli-Kathy Woodall scholarships of \$500 or \$1,000 each year for students attending or planning to attend a Tennessee college and major in education. The application process is simple and straightforward, requiring little more than a short essay on why the applicant wants to be a teacher. Scholarship winners are selected on the basis of academic excellence, demonstrated leadership abilities, economic need and—for all but the graduate scholarship—demonstrated interest in becoming a teacher.

Scholarships are offered each year in the following categories: Student Tennessee Education Association, Sons and Daughters of a TEA Member, Future Teachers of America, Minority Student, and Graduate Student. The application deadline for all scholarships, except the Graduate Student scholarship, is **March 1**. The deadline for the Graduate scholarship is **June 1**.

More information about the available scholarships, the legacy of Don Sahli and Kathy Woodall, and application forms for the scholarships are available on the TEA website at www.teateachers.org. From the home page, click on *Scholarships and Awards*.

Contributions to the Don Sahli-Kathy Woodall Scholarship Fund of the Tennessee Education Association are invited from TEA members, friends and local affiliates. Every contribution to the fund helps grow a Tennessee teacher.



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Tips For Teacher Activists

1. The most effective lobbyist is one who is well informed, honest, frank, and knowledgeable about the issues to be considered.
2. Know your legislator, his/her district, and the nature of his/her constituents.
3. Get down to business quickly. Don’t take up too much time. Legislators are busy people and may come to look upon you as a nuisance if you prolong the visit unnecessarily.
4. Each argument presented for your case should be accompanied by data and rationale to support your position.
5. Don’t bluff or hedge if you don’t know the answer to a particular question. Offer to get back in touch with the legislator as soon as possible with the requested information.
6. Persuasion is the key, but persuasion must be tempered by common sense and friendliness. Don’t threaten.
7. The important thing is to convey to the legislator a genuine interest on the part of teachers in seeing that his/her decisions are the right decisions for public education and your students.
8. Remember, legislators are not educators by profession. Start where they are, not where you are. Make your concern come alive by showing the impact on real people, and by giving examples to which the legislator can relate.
9. Basic human relations skills are important to lobbying. If you find yourself



TEA members and TEA President Gera Summerford, top right, witness an assault on public education in Legislative Plaza in 2011.

in disagreement with your legislator, a calm, reasonable attitude and well-prepared rationale will do more to change his/her mind than an irate lobbyist. You can disagree without being disagreeable.

10. Don’t belittle those who disagree with your issue or proposal; the next time around they may be on your side.

11. Don’t accept the standard noncommittal lines, such as: “I share your

concern,” or “I’ll take a hard look at the issue.”

12. Don’t give up if you lose the first time. Continue to keep the legislator informed about the impact of an issue.

13. Don’t beg. Remember, you represent a proud and important profession. You should make no apologies for doing so.

14. Remember to say “thank you” when he/she helps you or honors a commitment.

Stay on Top of Legislative Session - Connect With Your Legislators Today

The 108th General Assembly is now in session, and it’s about to make important decisions affecting teacher salaries, evaluation and pension. Education support professionals will also see bills affecting their working conditions at Tennessee schools. If you have not already done so, now is the time to introduce yourself to your legislators. Let them know what issues are important to you. Tell them how their actions in Nashville affect you and your students. All legislators can be contacted by phone at **1.800.449.8366**, follow the prompts to direct a call to your personal legislator.

In addition, all legislators can be reached by email. The address is the legislator’s title and name followed by the capitol address:
sen.john.doe@capitol.tn.gov
rep.john.doe@capitol.tn.gov

You can also send emails to legislators by going to the *Legislative Action Center* of the TEA website, www.teateachers.org.

General Subcommittee of House Education			
Member (Party & District)	Office	Phone Area Code (615)	E-Mail Address
White, Mark (R-83), Chair	110 WMB	741-4415	rep.mark.white@capitol.tn.gov
Brooks, Harry (R-19)	117 WMB	741-6879	rep.harry.brooks@capitol.tn.gov
DeBerry, John J., Jr. (D-90)	26 LP	741-2239	rep.john.deberry@capitol.tn.gov
Forgety, John (R-23)	109 WMB	741-1725	rep.john.forgety@capitol.tn.gov
Kane, Roger (R-89)	202A WMB	741-2010	rep.roger.kane@capitol.tn.gov
Love, Harold (D-58)	35 LP	741-3831	rep.harold.love@capitol.tn.gov
Moody, Debra (R-81)	108 WMB	741-3774	rep.debra.moody@capitol.tn.gov
Pitts, Joe (D-67)	32 LP	741-2043	rep.joe.pitts@capitol.tn.gov
White, Dawn (R-37)	205 WMB	741-6849	rep.dawn.white@capitol.tn.gov

New Government Relations Manager at TEA

With the retirement of longtime TEA chief lobbyist Jerry Winters in mid-December, his successor, Jim Wrye, began work at TEA on December 1.

Wrye has two decades of experience in education. Prior to coming to TEA, he was communications director for the Alabama Education Association, working on legislative issues, public opinion, and building the strength of membership at AEA, which is widely considered a principal political power in

Alabama. Wrye was involved in AEA's fight to stop charter schools and the destruction of the teacher retirement system.

"I am delighted to come to work and fight for the members of TEA and the great public schools of this state," said Wrye. "There are so many great things going on in our public schools, yet the state conversation is about proposals to blow them

up, such as charters, vouchers and virtual schools. It is time elected officials recognize the amazing record of success in Tennessee schools and invest in it, rather than look for ways to waste taxpayer money like charters and vouchers that have a much worse record."

Wrye has told legislators about a recent federal report showing Tennessee ranks in the top 10 for graduation rates, while getting bottom-10 funding per student and overcoming obstacles of high child poverty. It is fair to say that Tennessee schools do more with the resources provided than any other state.

"I've told legislators that for TEA today, it's not about R or D; it's about whether you have an E behind your name," said Wrye. "Politics and education is about the future, not the past. And Tennessee's hard-working educators stand ready to work with anyone who will stand up for schools."

Wrye will work side-by-side with Winters, who signed on to represent the Tennessee Retired Teachers Association on Capitol Hill.

Assisting Wrye in his lobbying efforts on the hill are TEA President Gera Summerford, TEA Government Relations Coordinator Antoinette Lee, Manager of Legal Services Steve McCloud, Assistant Executive Directors Terrance Gibson, Carol Schmoock and Duran Williams, and Instruction and Professional Development Coordinator Susan Dalton.



Jim Wrye

What Florida Can Teach Us About Charter Schools

The Tennessee Legislature is about to begin a fight over charter schools, spurred by the blessing of Governor Bill Haslam. The law could closely resemble the decade-old charter law in Florida, not a surprise as key Sunshine State political figures and for-profit charter entities have influenced Tennessee charter backers.

It helps to review the charter outcomes in Florida to gain clues to what could happen in Tennessee if a state charter authorizer bill passed the Legislature and became law.

One of Florida's largest and most respected newspapers, the *Miami Herald*, ran a series of investigative reports on charter schools last year, titled "Cashing in on Kids."

Reporters found disturbing outcomes. Results were not what charter proponents had promised when the law was first passed, raising significant questions on what the real goals of charter schools are.

Charters, driven by for-profit companies, serve fewer poor and minority students, enroll a larger share of the academically gifted, admit few special-needs students, and take funds away from existing schools, all while concern keeps growing about the lack of accountability and financial conflicts of interest.

"They were supposed to help public schools improve and give parents choices – not steal limited resources from those struggling public schools. Charters started as nonprofit endeavors mostly to help inner-city students succeed. They have evolved into money-making suburban enterprises with for-profit management companies lobbying their way up the Tallahassee food chain to keep expanding – even at the expense of public schools that are making great gains in student learning. Talk about bait and switch," wrote the *Herald* in an editorial published after the conclusion of

"Cashing In On Kids."

Herald reporters found abundant data and examples on some of the worst fears of charter opponents.

Foremost, charters do not serve at-risk children, as many Tennessee proponents say is their motivation.

The *Herald* found overall in the metropolitan area of South Florida, the number of poor children enrolled in charter schools is disproportionately low compared to traditional public schools. It is an advantage for the charter schools because poverty correlates with poor academic performance – the less poor children you serve, the fewer problems you're likely to

have with student achievement. Poorer children also require more resources.

Charter schools also enroll a smaller share of black students than traditional public schools, according to federal data. In South

Florida, one-third of children in public schools are black, compared to one-fifth of children in charter schools.

The series found a myriad of reasons why charters under serve poor and minority children, including where for-profit companies locate facilities coupled with the fact they do not provide transportation. Also, patterns of advertisements and recruitment do not reach poor and minority students.

Reporters noted that the lotteries which are supposed to govern admissions are seldom monitored, even with millions of dollars in taxpayer money on the line.

"In 2009, Miami-Dade school district researchers looking at enrollment patterns found that the Mater and Doral Academies, two popular charter school networks managed by the same company, had admitted a disproportionately high percentage of advanced students," the *Herald* reported.

Charter schools admit few special needs children, though they accept taxpayer dollars and are obligated by anti-discrimination laws. Again, special needs children cost more, therefore

Florida's largest for-profit charter company, Academica, steered more than \$250,000 in campaign donations to lawmakers and political committees.



providing a reason for profit-seeking companies to avoid enrolling them.

The most disturbing reporting was on the conduct and motivations of the for-profit companies that operate the lion's share of charter schools.

As some lawmakers in Tennessee will undoubtedly suggest, the Florida law grants charters only to non-profit boards. Yet the Florida law is designed to allow and encourage those boards to contract with for-profit companies to control the school. Similar provisions are likely to appear in the Tennessee charter bill, and some "education reform" proponents in the Legislature have been unabashed in saying they want to promote for-profit companies over the years.

Herald reporters highlighted one story of a popular principal being fired by a private charter company. When the oversight board tried to overturn the decision, the company cited that it, not the board, had ultimate power in deciding how the school was run and the principal was dismissed.

Some board members were found to have conflicted relationships with the for-profit companies. The Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, the research arm of the Florida Legislature, foresaw the hazards of the charter law. When the law was first passed, the agency issued a report concerned with unseemly expenditures and "business transactions between charter schools and its administrators, board members, and related family members that frequently caused potential conflicts of interest." In 2008, the agency reported the auditor general found irregularities and instances of board members receiving personal gains.

Herald stories chronicled how public money disappears inside these opaque charter enterprises, and what is then done with the profits.

The newspaper reported that Florida's largest for-profit charter company, Academica, jetted its principals to an exclusive Bahamas resort for poolside champagne flutes and an evening gambling in a

casino. Academica also hired Florida legislators to work for the company, steering more than \$250,000 in campaign donations to lawmakers and political committees while the Legislature relaxed rules limiting the size of charter school networks.

It was no surprise to Tallahassee observers when last year the Florida Legislature approved \$55 million for construction and upgrades of 350 charter schools, while approximately 3,000 public schools got nothing.

None of this would matter if charter schools could demonstrate they were better than public schools. However, the data does not bear that out. On average, children in charter schools in Florida perform about the same as their counterparts in traditional public schools on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Tests.

What is clear from the Florida experience is that charters tend to increase segregation by race and class and do not confine themselves to at-risk areas or children in need. Instead, they expand in places where schools are recognized as successful, create financial and ethical problems in governance and implementation, and cherry-pick academically successful students while denying access to students with special needs.

If that is what Tennessee charter proponents want for our education system, they should be up front about it. If they don't, charter proponents and policymakers should take a long hard look at Florida as a cautionary tale.

TEA Members Run for NEA RA State Delegate Positions

Nominations announced for NEA's highest decision-making body

Biographical information and photographs submitted by candidates for state delegate positions to the National Education Association's Representative Assembly in *Atlanta, Ga., July 1-6, 2013*, are published in this three-page section. All candidates will be listed on ballots which local association presidents will receive by March 1.

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 district delegates based on 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. Information about clustering for supervisors/administrators and small local

associations was printed in the November 2012 issue of *teach*.

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.

The National Education Association Representative Assembly (RA) is NEA's highest decision-making body. With over 9,000 delegates, it is also the world's largest democratic, deliberative body.

The RA convenes every July during the Annual Meeting. While the first two days are devoted to discussions, conferences, and exhibits, the highlight is the Representative Assembly itself. During this important event, delegates debate issues that impact American public education, elect NEA officers, and set policy for the 3.2 million-member Association.

In conjunction with the Annual Meeting, NEA also hosts several pre-RA events, including the Joint Conference on the Concerns of Minorities and Women. Participants explore societal trends, the latest education research, current reform, best practices, and other critical issues affecting students and employees. We invite you to come and lend your voice to the conversation.

CATEGORY I District 1



Leisa Lusk — Special Education teacher at David Crockett High School in Washington Co. Building Rep. for Washington Co. EA. Former WCEA vice president and president. Member of WCEA bargaining team. Chief spokesperson for WCEA bargaining team, grievance

team committee chair, representative at TEA and NEA assemblies, current and past member of the TEA board of directors, legislative contact team member. Previously taught in Sevier Co.



Karen Anderson — Elementary teacher at Lake Ridge School in Johnson City. Currently serving on NEA Women's Issues Comm. and TEA NEA Concerns Committee. Previously served on TEA BOD and several committees. Membership Chair and PACE Comm. member for JCEA.

Attended various state and national academies, conferences and RAs. Taught early childhood education courses at East Tennessee State University and Middle Tennessee State University. "It is my honor to continue representing TN at the NEA RA."



Anna L. Booher — Currently TEA FCPE Council member and Membership Committee; served 1 term on TEA Board; 3 time Bristol EA president; TEA Distinguished Educator; 2 time Rotary Teacher of the Year; attended 13 NEA RAs; has served on 8 different TEA committees numerous times over 37 years; locally, is involved in numerous association activities, including FCPE chairperson

and Executive Committee; high school teacher in the Bristol City school district; holds graduate degree; Career Ladder III; ADK; DKG.



Joe Crabtree — Sixth-grade mathematics and science teacher at Indian Trail Intermediate School in Johnson City. Currently serving on the state level as a member of the TEA FCPE Executive Council and the TEA Instruction and Professional Development Commission. Locally serving

as president of the Johnson City Education Association, chair of the JPACE Committee. "I feel extremely honored to serve as a voice for the teachers of Johnson City and Tennessee at the state and national levels!"

LaDawn Hudgins*

Vicky Jones*

District 2



Gera Summerford — Math teacher on leave from Gatlinburg-Pittman High School and has been teaching in Sevier County since 1982. She began her teaching career in Texas after receiving a B.A. in Mathematics and German from Baylor University; she has since earned

a master's degree in mathematics from the University of Tennessee and an EdS degree from Lincoln Memorial University. Gera has long been an advocate for teachers and chief negotiator for Sevier County EA. TEA President since June 2010.

Lauren McCarty*

District 3

Karen Starr — Morgan Co. native, received her bachelor of science degree in elementary



education, grades 1-8, from Tennessee Technological University. She has earned a master's degree and Ed.S. degree in curriculum and instruction from Tennessee Technological University. An active member since she began teaching in 1991, Karen has served several years

as her building representative and attended numerous TEA conferences to represent her local association.

District 4



Tanya Coats — Instructional Coach (CIF); Green Magnet Math & Science Academy; KCEA treasurer, KCEA Executive Board Member, Member of TEA Board of Directors for East Tennessee; KCEA committee member of the following: Minority Affairs, Public Relations,

Elections, Human Resource; Green Magnet's SWS Leadership Team, Coaches Network. Serves as one of TEA Minority Affairs chairs. "As a former chair of TEA's Administrative Task Force Committee, I have learned that representing everyone is important."



Paula Hancock — Sixth-grade mathematics teacher, Karns Middle School; TEA Board of Directors, East Tennessee Black Classroom Teacher; KCEA Executive Board Minority at Large representative; KCEA Association Representative;

KCEA Minority Affairs Committee; TEA Resolutions Committee; TEA Representative Assembly; NEA Representative Assembly.

Evelyn Gill*



Anthony Hancock — Special Education Teacher, Comprehensive Development Classroom (CDC), Bearden Middle School. Knox Co. EA: Minority Affairs Leadership committee, Association Representative. TEA: State Resolutions

Member, Southeast Regional Minority Leadership Training Committee, Minority Affairs Leadership committee, New Teachers Training Committee, State Delegate – RA Assembly; NEA Resolutions Committee.



Karen Peterman — Knox County classroom teacher with 28 years of experience. BS, BA, MS (+45 hrs). KCEA Executive Board, 2005 TEA Distinguished Classroom Teacher. Former local president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, newsletter editor, chief

negotiator and TUEAC president. Served on TEA's IPD Commission, Resolutions, Status of Women, and NEA Concerns Committees 17 TEA & 15 NEA Representative Assemblies. "I hope that you will allow me to represent you at this important national meeting."



Joan Washington — Behavior coach at Beaumont Magnet Honors Academy. Knox County—26 years of service at the end of 2013. Member: KCEA Executive Board, Minority Affairs, TEA, NEA. Committees: Teacher Evaluation Advisory and

TUEAC. Served on Mentoring Team, Project Grad Cooperative Management Consistency Discipline Coach, Treasurer of Oak Ridge Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. Member: Children of God Ministries. "I would like to serve as your 2013 NEA RA State Delegate."

District 5



Diane Lillard — Kindergarten teacher at Waterville Elementary. She is a graduate of Lee University with a B.S. in Early Childhood Elementary Education and 29 years experience. She is currently serving on the NEA Board of Directors. Local association

experience: Bradley County EA president, treasurer, executive board, chief negotiator, membership chair, newsletter editor, communications chair, PR&R chair, AEW coordinator, Research chair, Read Across America coordinator. State Experience: TEA ION, Communications, Membership, Member Benefits, IPD Commission, Insurance, Professional Negotiations.



Sandra C. Griffin — More than 35 years in education, reading teacher for sixth through eighth grades. Personal motto: "Don't let anyone extinguish your flame for achieving greatness." B.S. Clark-Atlanta University; M.Ed. Trevecca

University; Doctor of Bible Ministry, Covington Theological Seminary. Member of TEA-NEA, HCEA Board of Directors, district negotiation team, H-Pace, TEA-Legislative Contact, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Phi Delta Kappa Sorority, Daughters of Isis, PHA, Member of Warren Chapel AMEC. Married to Rev. A.C. Griffin, Jr. Mother of Tanacha L. Griffin and A.C. Griffin III.



Bryan Massengale — Band director at Rhea Central Elementary School, band director in Rhea County since 1984. Rhea-Dayton EA. B.S. degree in music education, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1980; M.S. degree in Administration

& Supervision, UT-Knoxville, 1993; Ed. S. in Educational Leadership, Tennessee Tech University. RDEA president, past president, newsletter editor, chief negotiator; NEA: past NEA Today local editor advisory board; attended 13 previous NEA Representative Assemblies.



Michael Plumley — Media Specialist at Waterville Community Elementary School in Bradley County. I have been a member of the Association for all of my professional career of 36 years. I have served my local in several areas of leadership including

AR, secretary, treasurer, president-elect, member of the executive board, negotiations team, membership chair. I have served TEA on many state committees including Professional Negotiations, Communications, Member Benefits, ESP, IPD Commission, TEA Resolutions, and currently on ION Committee.

Deborah Taylor — Algebra I educator at East Ridge High School, more than 25 years in Hamilton County schools; TEA committees—Minority Affairs



and Status of Women; TEA/NEA Representative Assemblies; served as HCEA AR and alternate. Tennessee State University (B.S.), Trevecca (M.Ed.), Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Phi Delta Kappa Sorority, DOI, PHA. "Serving as your 2013 NEA Delegate at the RA would be an honor."

District 6



Tommy Scott Price — Math teacher at Coffee County Central High School since 1996. Current and past President of the Coffee Co. EA. Served as local delegate to TEA/TEA RA for several years. Recently appointed chairman of the PECCA Special

Question Committee for Coffee County Schools. B.A. in secondary education mathematics, 1993. M.Ed., MTSU, 2007. Taught at Hamilton Co. Schools between 1993 and 1995.



Beth Brown — English teacher of 12 years, Grundy Co. High School. GCEA association representative, president-elect, president, chief negotiator, grievance chair, collective bargaining chair. TEA Board of Directors, 2009-12, TEA board liaison

to IPD Commission, Executive Committee, Budget Committee, TEA Educator Advocacy Committee.

District 7 Allen Nichols*



Barbara Fisher — Lebanon Special School District, 32 years; B.A. education, M.A. administration/supervision, +45, TSU; Lebanon EA Executive Board advisory; TEA Executive Board; past Status of Women chair; TEA RA 23 years; NEA RA 18 years; Retired Teachers Legislative

Committee; Minority Affairs advisory; Phi Delta Kappa Executive Board; Delta Sigma Theta; Kappa Omicron Phi; "I will continue to represent the vision, ideals and commitment of the NEA."

District 8 Kawanda Braxton*



Kenneth Martin — Currently serves as the TEA Black Classroom Teacher from Middle Tennessee on the TEA Board of Directors and as a member of the MNEA Executive Board. Martin, an exceptional education teacher at Martin Luther King

Magnet School, has served MNEA as Treasurer, Parliamentarian, Association Representative, Negotiations Team Member, TEA delegate,

NEA delegate, organizer for NEA Target of Opportunities Campaign, and committee chair (Constitution, Bylaws, Standing Rules; Minority Affairs; Budget; and Special Education).



Theresa L. Wagner — Professional: Adapted Physical Education Teacher in Louisiana (1986-98); Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools Physical Education Teacher (1998-present). MNEA: Chair Human Relations Committee (2007-08; 2010-11); Executive

Board Director (2007-present); Chair Membership Committee (2008-10); Delegate to TEA Representative Assembly (2006-11); Groupsite & Facebook Social Media Administrator (2009-present). TEA: Legislative Editing Committee (2006-08); Status of Women in Education Committee (2008-10); Membership Committee (2010-present); TUEAC President (2010-present); TEA Delegate to NEA Annual Meeting (2008-11). NEA: Human and Civil Rights Division/GLBT Cadre trainer (2007-present).



Earl Wiman — NEA Executive Committee, Teacher on special assignment, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools; past TEA president, vice president, executive committee member, TPACE Committee member and board member; holds undergraduate, graduate and

postgraduate degrees; has attended numerous NEA RAs and served on the NEA Resolutions Committee; chaired state committees, involved in numerous local association activities, Metropolitan Nashville EA Executive Committee.



Stephen Henry — MNEA: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, Board-District Director, Executive Committee, Chief Negotiator; Committee Chair-Budget & Finance, Public Relations, Bylaws, Human Relations; PACE Council,

Martin Human Relations Award, TEA: Board of Directors, TEA-FCPE Council, Committees-NEA Concerns, Executive, Negotiations, Credentials, Human Relations, Communications, Chair-ION & Human Relations; "I Can Do It" Trainer, Johnson Human Relations Award, TUEAC, NEA: Board of Directors & Executive Committee-Official Observer, Committees-SOGI, Equity & Ethnic Harmony; NEA-FCPE Council, HCR Division-National Trainer, NCUEA.



Erick Huth — Vice president of the Metropolitan Nashville Education Association and serves as a trustee for the Metro Teacher Retirement Plan, the Insurance Trust, and Sick Leave Bank. Formerly: NCUEA Parliamentarian and Regional Director,

MNEA president, chief bargaining spokesperson and chair of multiple MNEA committees, TEA Board member, T-PACE Council member, TUEAC president, trustee/executive committee member

of the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System, TEA committee chair (Internal Organizational Needs, Advocacy, Retirement and Insurance Committees).



Jeannine Renfro — Jeannine Renfro has been a teacher in Metro Nashville Public schools for 14 years. She is currently serving as District 4 director, Metro Nashville Education Association Executive Board. She serves at MNEA as association representative, chair of the

Scholarship/Communications Committees. Renfro has attended TEA Bargaining Conference, NCUEA Fall Conference, Quality Schools Summit, TEA-RA and NEA-RA. "I would consider it an honor to serve and represent TEA District 9 at the 2013 NEA Representative Assembly."

District 10 Christine Denton*



Guy Stanley — Speech/psychology teacher (43), Greenbrier HS, Robertson County; RCEA: president (7), vice president, PACE chair; TEA: Board of Directors, Professional Negotiations, Communications, Legislative Editing, NEA Concerns Committee, Design Team: TEA

RA (26); NEA RA (17); NEA: Board, Congressional Concerns Committee, Read Across America Advisory Committee; co-chair, NEA Southeast Regional Planning Committee; Tennessee High School Speech and Drama League Hall of Fame. "Stand up for Stanley and he will stand up for you."



Jane Ligon — Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper at Bransford Elementary, Robertson County. RCEA – 1st Vice President, Chair of the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee and member of the Education Support Professional Committee; TEA – TUEAC treasurer

and member of Retirement Committee; NEA – Secretary of National Council of Education Support Professionals, member of Advisory Committee on Membership, Ethnic Minority Affairs and Status of Women Caucus. Former member, TEA and NEA Board of Directors, delegate to the TEA and NEA Representative Assembly for numerous years.

District 11 Wendy Bowers*

Melanie Buchanan*

District 12 Suzie May*

Clinton Smith*

Continued on page 13

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NEA Rep. Assembly 2013 Delegate Nominees

District 13



Ernestine King — Currently serving on the TEA Board of Directors; Shelby County Education Association, Status of Women in Leadership Committee co-chair and TUEAC vice president. Credentials include A.S., B.S., Med, Ed.S. She has served as State Board of Education Committee chair, on State Special Education Task Committee, Minority Affairs Committee, IPD Commission, Human Relations Committee, State Contact Committee, TEA's Special Education Ad Hoc Committee, and Legislative Editing Committee. Ernestine attends leadership conferences and TUEAC Fall and Spring Symposium.



Dicie Smith — Has worked 27 years for Shelby County Schools. Served on various committees, held various leadership positions and attended many workshops and conferences on the local, state, and national levels. Attended several TEA/NEA Representative Assemblies. Currently a resource co-teacher—5th and 8th grades (LA/Math), represent District 7 (SC-PACE), ethnic minority director-at-large (NCUEA), a member of the Legislative Contact Team, SCEA, TEA, NEA Board of Directors. "I am committed to advocating for you, our students and public education."



Sammy Jobe — President of the Shelby County Education Association. Health/physical education teacher, boys' basketball coach (17 years) Collierville Middle School. BSEd - University of Memphis, MSED Administration and Supervision - Trevecca Nazarene University. 45 hours post graduate studies-elementary certification. SCEA Board of Directors-8 years; Nashville Capitol Hill lobbying - 13 years; Building AR-11 years; election committee co-chairman; liaison SCEA newsletter; Educator Benefits; TEA Board of Directors; fifteen TEA RAs; 5 TEA Leadership Academies; TEA membership committee-2 years.

Sylvia Noel *

LoMay Richmond — Active in TEA since the beginning of my teaching career. On the state level, I have served on several committees and panels - New Teacher, Special Education- Ad Hoc, IPD Commission, Legislative Editing (chair 2010 & 2011), and New Teacher Survive and Thrive Panel. I am a part of the "I Can Do It!" state trainers. Currently serving as building representative. "It's very important to advocate for members as well as keeping them informed."

District 14

LaVerne Dickerson — Currently serving third year on the TEA Board of Directors; member of the Memphis Education Association; locally fifth grade teacher at Westhaven Success Academy; Memphis Education Association Bargaining Chair; have chaired Minority Affairs, IPD, Read



Across America; state level - currently Minority Affairs chairman; have attended TEA RAs for approximately 10 years; recently won a 3600 Award for going above and beyond teaching expectations; 36-year veteran teacher.



Sarah-Kennedy Harper — Proud teacher of Memphis City Schools in West Tennessee. Currently serving her second term on the TEA board of directors. Having taught for 15 years, she has been a delegate to the TEA RA a number of years. "I know now that teaching is what I was born to do and a teacher is who I am. It's in my blood."

District 15

Tom Emens *

CATEGORY 2

Barbara Gray — Assistant principal and teacher at Shelby County Schools since 1972; currently: TEA vice-president, chairs NEA Concerns and TEA budget committees; Shelby County EA;



president, vice-president, administrator (2), on Minority Affairs, Constitution and Bylaws committees, Member Benefits, SC-PACE, Membership committees, building representative; TEA positions: West TN administrator; chair, State Board Contact Committee; Executive Committee (3), ION, Membership Chair, Communication, Technology, Administrative Task Force, Credential committees. I would like to represent you at 2013 NEA RA.

Charles Green *

Johnny Henry *

Julie Hopkins *

Margaret Thompson — I have represented administrators from middle Tennessee on the TEA Board for the past three years. I have taught school for more than 30 years. I have been an administrator for seven years in Robertson Co., all the while being a member of Robertson Co. EA. Throughout my years of Association membership, I have worked on numerous committees, as well as recruited membership. During my tenure on the Board, I have attended four NEA RAs.

* — no photo or bio at press time.

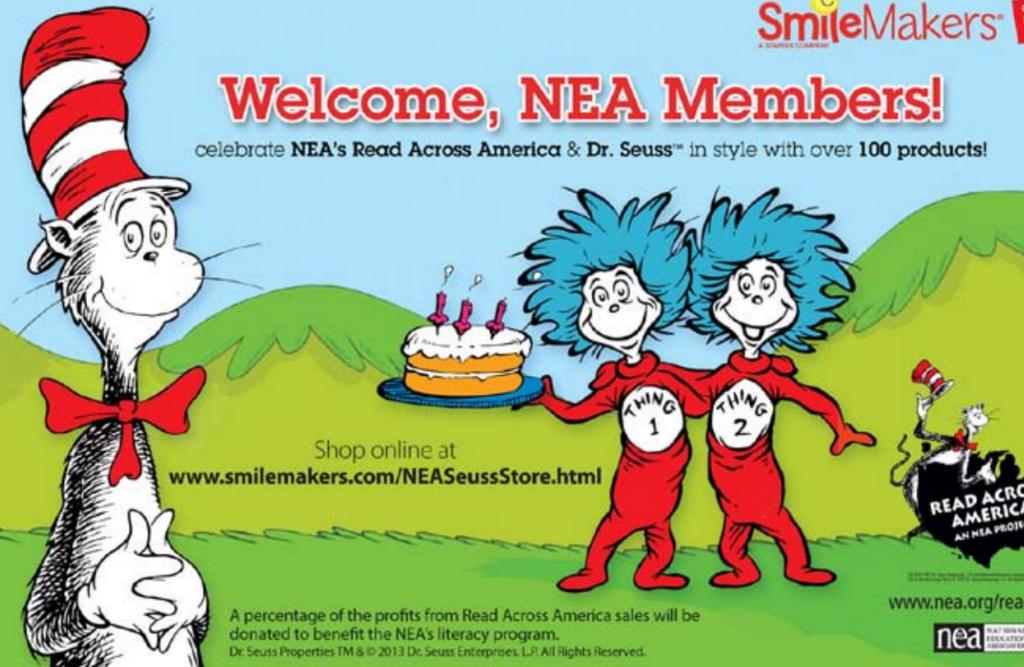


The 2013 NEA RA will be held July 1-6 in Atlanta, Ga.



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Upcoming Conferences

- February 23 New Teacher Conference, TEA building
- March 8 Administrator Task Force Conference, TEA building
- March 21-22 FTA Convention, Nashville
- March 22-23 STEA Convention, Nashville
- March 22-23 Minority Affairs Conference, Cool Springs
- April 5-6 TEA Spring Symposium, Gatlinburg
- April 20 Tennessee Urban Education Associations Conference, TEA building
- April 27 ESP Conference, TEA building



Visit www.teateachers.org/conferences or scan this code for registration details.

Teachers Urged to Take Anonymous Survey

Research from across the country has shown that positive teaching and learning conditions are essential for student success and teacher retention. This is why Tennessee has committed to administering the TELL (Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning) Survey as part of its *Race to the Top* work. This biennial survey, first administered in 2011, provides all educators in Tennessee the opportunity to share valuable feedback about conditions at their schools around the allocation of time, facilities and resources, student learning, community engagement, empowerment, school leadership, professional development, and mentoring. This survey provides leaders across the state with valuable longitudinal data about working conditions and their change over time.

The anonymous survey will be available online at www.telltennessee.org for every educator to access from **February 18, 2013**, until **March 15, 2013**. Completion of the survey should take no more than 20 to 30 minutes.

Your voice is important to ensuring you have the support you need to educate our students.



Huntingdon Teacher Aims High With 'Rocket Day'

TEA Space Week grants help boost STEM instruction across the state

This spring, third-graders at Huntingdon Primary School will launch rockets.

Thanks to their teacher, Jana Luther, students are currently exploring the solar system and space travel and learning about the various components of the solar system. Later this spring, with a little help from experienced faculty, they will tackle the rocket-building project, building as much of the rocket themselves as possible. The rocket launch is scheduled for April or early May, weather permitting, says Luther, a longtime member of Huntingdon Teachers Association in Carroll County.

Luther is one of seven TEA members who applied for and won a Tennessee Space Week learning grant last year. Conducted in partnership with the Tennessee Space Grant Consortium and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the grants help foster local associations' commitment to academic excellence, especially in the crucial fields of science, technology, engineering and math, commonly known as STEM.

This year, a total of \$6,000 in grant funding is helping teachers from Memphis and Fayetteville, as well as Bledsoe, Giles, Rutherford and Benton Counties, as they celebrate Tennessee Space Week between January 27 and February 2. Many projects continue until the end of the school year.

"First, my students will learn about the history of the solar system and how it has been explored—from observations, tools such as telescopes, satellites launched by rockets, manned and unmanned spacecraft," Luther says. "Building rockets in small groups will engage their creativity in science, reading, crafts and technology."

As part of Luther's "Rocket Day" project, each rocket built by students will carry their names, team logos and special decorations. Luther plans to evaluate her students' progress through observations and questioning as the unit progresses. A formal evaluation will follow the rocket launch, after Luther's students complete a writing and illustration assignment summarizing their experiences.

Equally challenging and inspiring projects are underway across the state, with students conducting energy conversion experiments, operating programmable tracing robots and setting up space camps.

"I'm thrilled that we can launch rockets this year," Luther says. "My students are excited, we're having fun and learning lots of new material. Of course, I hope this will inspire them to become scientists and astronauts when they grow up."

Ready for launch: 2012-13 Space Week grant winners

1. Jana Luther	Huntingdon Primary	Huntingdon EA	Rocket Day
2. Missy Lock, Monica Edwards, Rhonda Young	Richland Elementary	Giles County EA	Space Travel: Engineering Minds
3. Stacey Hicks, Sabrina Burkett, Betty Hartley, Donna Sampson, LaBriska Blow, Heidi Evans, Renee Cooper	Camden Elementary	Benton County EA	First Grade Space Camp
4. Jessica Moran	Ralph Askins	Fayetteville EA	To Space and Beyond
5. Carol Hawkins, Cory Brandsford, Cathy Hyatt, Darise Dennis, Ali Clark, Jan Merriman	Christiana Middle	Rutherford County EA	Hot Air Balloon Launch
6. Jeanne E. Ellis	Bledsoe County High	Bledsoe County EA	Space Week Project
7. Christina Clapsadle	White Station Middle	Memphis EA	Mission to Mars – Robotic Explorations

More than 96% of TEA Dues Qualifies For IRS Tax Deduction

The portion of TEA dues expended for government relations activities for 2011/2012 is 3.82 percent.

TEA members can deduct 96.18 percent of their dues for IRS income tax purposes.

TEA provides a pass-through procedure whereby members contribute to TEA-FCPE (Tennessee Education Association Fund for Children and Public Education).

The amount of TEA-FCPE pass-through for the current year is \$4.41 per active member and \$2.21 per ESP staff member.

Members who do not desire to participate may divert these funds to other government relations activities — such as promotion of the TEA legislative program and lobbying — by completing and mailing the accompanying form, postmarked no later than April 10, 2013.

I request that the portion of my dues eligible to be passed through to TEA-FCPE be used in other TEA Government Relations activities.

Name (please print)

Address

City State ZIP

Social Security Number

School System

Signature

Active Member

Education Support Professional

Student Member

Mail to: Tennessee Education Association, 801 Second Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37201-1099. (This form must be postmarked or received no later than April 10, 2013.)

Grab Your Hat and Read with the Cat

March 1, 2013

You're never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read with a child.

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"LIFE'S MOST PERSISTENT AND URGENT QUESTION IS- WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR OTHERS?" - MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.



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Tennessee Education Association
801 Second Avenue N., Nashville, TN 37201-1099
(615) 242-8392, (800) 342-8367, FAX (615) 259-4581

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Classroom Tips for Black History Month

As we celebrate Black History Month in schools across Tennessee and the nation in February, www.teateachers.org offers new links and resources for your classroom. You can call TEA Communications staff at **1.800.342.8367** for help and advice on localized resources.

A wealth of materials is available at National Civil Rights Museum, www.civilrightsmuseum.org, with content covering the history of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s in America and its modern applications throughout the world.

The African-American Biographical Database, <http://aabd.chadwyck.com>, is the largest electronic collection of biographical information on African Americans.

Sponsored by the Library of Congress, the African American Mosaic available at <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/>

[african/intro.html](#) is a good starting point for students of African-American history.

Other resources include the African-American Odyssey; the Quest for Full Citizenship (an online exhibit sponsored by the Library of Congress showcasing more than 240 artifacts of African-American history, from slavery to civil rights; as well as the African American Journey, a compilation of PBS sites which focus on the African-American experience (www.pbs.org/aajourney). Scan the QR code on the right to access more classroom resources.



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