

TEACH

The teaching and learning journal of the Tennessee Education Association

TEA pushes back on state board attempt to expand power over teacher licenses

Proposed rule changes would jeopardize teacher licenses, limit local control over teacher discipline

TEA has objected to massive changes in the teacher licensure rules proposed by the State Board of



Education, and halted an attempt to quickly pass them in a key legislative committee.

Now the state board is trying to circumvent the law on passing rules by labeling them “emergency” and stating that students’ safety is at stake.

The idea that students were at-risk under current rules is a sham.

The proposed new rules would grant broad new powers to the board for disciplining teachers and suspending licenses, often using vague definitions and relying on terms that vary between school systems.

TEA sees these proposed rules as a power grab and a threat to the teaching profession in Tennessee.

“We have tried to point out

to the board throughout this process that what they are proposing has serious flaws and that the board currently does not have the power to enact and enforce these rules under Tennessee law,” said Steve McCloud, TEA assistant executive director for legal services. “While the board does have a right to revoke a teaching license of a teacher who has been convicted of certain crimes, and to enact rules to suspend, deny or revoke a license of a teacher in default of a student loan, that is the limit of their authority with regard to licensure discipline. In order to expand their power to suspend and revoke licenses and weigh in on what are currently local discipline issues, a law would

State Board
cont. page 8



TEA “SWAT” teams empower members to support colleagues

Association representatives (ARs) in school buildings are often the first line of defense in the hour of need, and now TEA is strengthening its relationship with members with SWAT (Success With Action Together) teams.

UniServ Coordinators in districts across the state are hosting SWAT team trainings with the goal of positioning our Association to develop and strengthen a network of building action teams in each local as the vital link connecting and engaging existing and potential members.

“SWAT teams are designed to empower each building action team member with the knowledge, skills, and practices designed to promote an organizing culture around

SWAT
cont. page 7

Delays in TN Ready scores continue to plague the state

As delays in getting scores and data from TNReady for the 16-17 schoolyear continue, the state’s testing vendor, Minnesota-based Questar, met with TEA officials to provide an update on the status, the challenges the company had in its first year, and what they are working on going forward.

Test scores go through a three step process before being used in the state accountability system. Raw scores are generated and then analyzed by the department to establish scale scores. Scale scores are used by the state board to determine cut scores to set various levels of proficiency. These cut scores are supposed to be voted on by the board by the end of summer.

Once cut scores are adopted, the TNCompass should begin to populate

TVAAS data for educators for the 2016-17 school year. Last year this did not happen until late fall.

Such a delay in data creates problems for teachers applying for tenure,

administrators setting evaluation schedules, performance pay distribution, hiring decisions for non-tenured teachers, and issues such as promotions and transfers.

“So much has been built into test-score data, and when they are delayed or fail it causes great disruption. I think it is time to reevaluate not only the whole



Testing
cont. page 8

Pull-out poster on pages 4 and 5 to hang in your break room!



THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TENNESSEE

Relationships form the foundation of student success

By TEA President Barbara Gray



August looms large for educators. It is a month filled with anticipation, uncertainty, excitement and long, long days.

Over the course of my career as a teacher and now an administrator I have learned an important key to a successful school year is building genuine relationships with students, parents and colleagues. A solid foundation of trust, respect and open communication facilitates student achievement and improves teacher performance.

It is easy to get caught up in all that goes along with the start of a new school year, but it is crucial to be intentional in building relationships with those around you.

Students experience the same anticipation and uncertainty as teachers

when they head back to school. Quickly establishing yourself as someone invested in their personal well-being and whom they can trust allows students to relax and focus on their education. Creating a safe, welcoming environment encourages student participation in

Student achievement is positively impacted when teachers and parents communicate effectively ... and work together as a team.

lessons, increasing engagement and academic achievement.

Building relationships with parents can be a little trickier because you have so much less face-to-face time. In focus groups, teachers and families were asked what they meant by “family engagement.” Families thought that meant we wanted them to come to school and volunteer lots of time, while teachers actually wanted families to work with their children at home.

Student achievement is positively impacted when teachers and parents communicate effectively about a child’s needs and how to support each other’s efforts, and work together as a team. I encourage you to establish open, honest communication with your students’ parents early in the school year and maintain that practice all year.

TEA offers a number of resources to members to facilitate parent engagement. I encourage you to visit www.TEATEACHERS.org/Parents to review the available materials.

Strong relationships with parents and students are important for student success, but building relationships with your colleagues is equally important - for both you and your students.

This is not an easy profession we have chosen. It is a tremendous responsibility to educate children. To do so effectively, while also maintaining your own sanity, you must have a network of coworkers who understand this work, can share best practices and provide encouragement on those tough days.

Even now as a veteran educator, the support, advice and encouragement I receive from my colleagues is invaluable to me. Leaning on and learning from other educators has made me a better teacher and administrator.

As you put the finishing touches on your classroom and prepare for your new group of students, I hope you will take the time to plan how you will build stronger relationships this school year.

ASD has proven state takeover is not the answer

By TEA Executive Director Carolyn Crowder



The state run Achievement School District has plagued Memphis and Nashville for years without delivering any of the significant results it promised. As the state and Hamilton County officials debate how to support priority schools in Chattanooga, a state takeover in any form should not even be on the table.

It makes no sense to continue expanding the ASD when it is already failing in other districts across the state. The state seems to agree, and has floated the idea of a “Partnership Zone” in Chattanooga.

The “Partnership Zone” has some promising features, but is still largely state-driven. The state would hold the controlling stake on the board created to run the Partnership Zone, empowering it to override any local input or decision.

Our students deserve another option other than another state method of school takeover. The children served by the five schools identified for intervention would benefit most from an improvement model developed by the community who knows them best.

It is time to adopt a model that has already proven effective in districts nationwide - transformational community schools.

We have the opportunity to create our own community schools program in Tennessee. Parents and educators know every school and every student has a different set of needs that must be met in order to succeed.

The transformational community schools model will empower Hamilton County communities to identify the issues impeding student achievement and decide together how to best strengthen their public school and improve student performance.

The children served by the five schools identified for intervention would benefit most from an improvement model developed by the community who knows them best.

By following the transformational community schools model, schools across the country are seeing lower absenteeism, less student mobility, increased parent engagement, and student participation in school activities.

As the state-run Achievement School District continues to fail to live up to the promises made to parents, it is important that communities have an additional option for improving school performance.

Schools and communities should have multiple options for school improvement, including options that are locally-driven.

We have a model we know for a fact improves student outcomes. Now we just need a state department willing to let our communities take the lead in strengthening their local public schools.

Teach (USPS 742-450, ISSN 15382907) is published in August, October, Jan/Feb, and March/April by the Tennessee Education Association, 801 Second Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37201-1099. Periodicals postage paid at Nashville, TN, and additional offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to **TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION Teach**, 801 Second Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37201-1099. Periodical postage paid at Nashville, TN, and additional offices. The subscription price of \$3.06 is allocated from annual membership dues of \$258.00 for active members; \$129.00 for associate, education support and staff members; \$16.00 for retired members; and \$10.00 for student members. Member of State Education Association of Communicators (SEAC).

Postmaster: Send address changes to **TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION Teach**, 801 Second Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37201-1099.

MANAGING EDITOR: Amanda Chaney
achaney@teaa.org
ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Jim Wrye
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & PUBLISHER:
Carolyn Crowder
Tennessee Education Association
801 Second Avenue North
Nashville, TN 37201-1099
Telephone: (615) 242-8392,
Toll Free: (800) 342-8367, (800) 342-8262
Fax: (615) 259-4581
Website: www.teateachers.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
PRESIDENT: Barbara Gray* (800) 342-8367
VICE PRESIDENT: Beth Brown* (931) 779-8016
SECRETARY-TREASURER: Carolyn Crowder
(615) 242-8392
DISTRICT 1 LaDawn Hudgins* (423) 384-3585

DISTRICT 2 Michele Bowman (865) 679-6523
DISTRICT 3 Robert Holder (865) 617-1179
DISTRICT 4 Connie Mitchell (865) 609-1702
DISTRICT 5 Jeanette Omarkhai (423) 413-9114
DISTRICT 6 Jennifer Eilender (931) 704-2487
DISTRICT 7 Jim Gifford (615) 430-6233
DISTRICT 8 Fred Riley (615) 876-0009
DISTRICT 9 Stephen Henry (615) 519-5691
DISTRICT 10 Randall Woodard (615) 594-5632
DISTRICT 11 Brandi Adams (731) 439-3476
DISTRICT 12 Janis Carroll (731) 431-2387
DISTRICT 13 Renee Baum (901) 604-2035
DISTRICT 14 Kenyon Cook (901) 605-7080
DISTRICT 15 Neshelda Johnson (901) 857-6042
ADMINISTRATOR EAST Carrie Clabo (865) 603-3791
ADMINISTRATOR MIDDLE Margaret Thompson (615) 649-1514
ADMINISTRATOR WEST Dennis Kimbrough (901) 494-0105
HIGHER EDUCATION Josephine McQuail (931) 520-0449

BLACK CLASSROOM TEACHER EAST Diamond Kelley (423) 510-1400
BLACK CLASSROOM TEACHER MIDDLE
Brenda Munusamy (931) 433-0918
BLACK CLASSROOM TEACHER WEST Tiffany Reed (901) 412-2759
STATE SPECIAL SCHOOLS VACANT
NEW TEACHER Hope Shields (901) 239-1232
ESP Sandra McDurmon (901) 237-2866
TN NEA DIRECTOR Tanya Coats (865) 308-2787
TN NEA DIRECTOR Karen Anderson (423) 741-9682
STEAMEMBER Celeste Randall (615) 335-0217
TN RETIRED Linda McCrary (615) 888-7026
* Executive Committee
AT LARGE RETIRED DIRECTOR ON NEA BOARD
JoAnn Smith-Mashburn (423) 914-2818

TEA HEADQUARTERS STAFF
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Carolyn Crowder; ASST.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS: Terrance Gibson;
Steve McCloud; Jim Wrye; TECHNOLOGY &

BUILDING OPERATIONS MANAGER: Galen Riggs;
COMPTROLLER: David Shipley; UNISERV FIELD
MANAGERS: Karla Carpenter; Leigh Phillips; STAFF
ATTORNEYS: John Allen, Virginia A. McCoy;
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COORDINATOR: Drew
Sutton; COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR: Amanda
Chaney; COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR:
Alexei Smirnov; INSTRUCTIONAL ADVOCACY &
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COORDINATORS:
Rhonda Thompson; William O'Donnell; ADVOCACY
HOTLINE COORDINATORS: Forestine Cole, Gera
Summerford & Cynthia Wood.

UniServ Staff contact information
can be found on page 6.

We are all responsible for member recruitment and retention

By C.J. Manahan, Vice President, Bristol Education Association



One of the biggest hurdles we face as the TEA, and association matters in general, is the recruitment of potential members and the retention of current members. Expanding a local's reach and influence through effective recruiting, and maintaining the same through targeted

retention practices, are of paramount importance. My experience over the last year, specifically in these two areas, has equipped me with some tools that can be effective for anyone working to strengthen their local association.

First, in terms of recruiting, there is simply no more effective tactic than the one-on-one conversation. A current member's personal presence, coupled with direct conversation with a potential member, gives the local the crucial name and face recognition needed in order to build trust. Physical presence and targeted discourse also mirrors a sense of belonging to potential members, which is a natural fit in a school's already collegially-oriented environment. In other words, members who have been reluctant to be recruiters have less to worry about than they think. In fact, a school environment is, in many ways, pre-packaged for them to be effective recruiters. The only real roadblock is a basic amount of preparedness in association matters, benefits, and goals, coupled with a willingness

to share these with potential members. What I have found is that most education professionals really want to be members of their professional organization. In fact, what many are waiting for is just to be introduced to the goals/benefits, or even more simply, for someone to ASK THEM if they would like to be a member! It really can be something that simple!

Secondly, as an aside to the topic of recruitment, one of the most effective times to approach a potential member is when they are first breaking into the profession. New teachers often face the negative issues of feeling vulnerable and/or isolated, especially when they are joining a staff that is laden with seasoned, veteran educators. Having a member speak to them early on about being part of a large and effective professional organization, with a local, state, and national presence can be exactly what is needed to help ameliorate some of these typical new teacher fears. In conjunction with the aforementioned senses of recognition and collegiality, this is a combination that is likely to convince young teachers to join and be active and energetic members of your local.

Finally, retaining current members also creates its own unique set of challenges. Anything from politics to finances can cause members to question the validity of keeping their membership. These circumstances, however, can be fairly easily navigated by doing a relatively small amount of preparation. For example, if politics comes up, be prepared to let them know that TEA has a wide and varying membership in terms of political allegiance. TEA also lobbies for

public education in Nashville and works directly with members of both major parties. I also have taken to invoking Jim Wrye, TEA's lead lobbyist, regularly. One of Jim's quotes, "It's not about 'R,' it's not about 'D,' it's about 'E!'", really resonates with members who bring up political issues. I have used this quote often, and on pretty well every occasion, the response from members was "Oh, huh, I hadn't really thought about it that way before". So, in essence, a potentially divisive issue actually becomes a position of strength for our organization. The key to retention, therefore, is being well enough prepared to have a positive counterpoint to any of a handful of major negative points that members might have.

In conclusion, when it comes to recruitment and retention there are two words/actions that stand above the rest: Presence and Preparedness. If you are willing to regularly talk to members and potential members face-to-face (presence), keeping them up to date with association matters (preparedness), you will very likely accomplish several key aspects all at once. For example, you will simultaneously be providing credibility to your local by showing an active and engaged membership, providing information that is of benefit to all member educators, and modeling your local as a proactive organization that cares about and backs up its members. This proves why there is no substitute for one-on-one conversation. If you want to recruit and retain members, get out there and talk to your colleagues! You and your local, as well as all of us in the TEA/NEA, will be stronger because of your efforts.

Yes, tenure is still a thing. Yes, it is important for your career.

"Does tenure still exist?" might be one of the most frequent questions TEA leaders and staff hear from members all across the state, followed by "Do I really need it?"

The answer to both is, "YES!"

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.

The tenure law was amended in 2011 to change the way teachers become eligible for tenure, but it was not abolished and remains an important part of the teaching profession.

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.

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 director 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-renews 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.

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

TENURE: What is it? How do you get it? Why do you need it?

FAIRNESS

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 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.

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

- 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
- 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 5-49-1-302, 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.

www.TEAteachers.org/Tenure

Visit www.TEAteachers.org/Tenure for more information and a printable tenure flier.

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.

Your local TEA UniServ coordinator can answer any questions you have about tenure.

Member organizing wins Jackson-Madison schools budget increase

It will be a much better year for Jackson-Madison County students, teachers and schools after the Madison Co. Commission approved a 30-cent property tax increase to help fund the 2017-18 budget.

The budget increase, bringing an estimated \$6 million in additional revenue to the \$195 million budget, came after the City of Jackson retained a half of its portion of local option sales tax revenue, or roughly \$6 million.

"We are pleased the city and county have resolved the budget issues prior to the start of the new school year," said TEA UniServ Coordinator Lorrie Butler. "Our schools and educators already do so much with the little funding they have."

TEA Government Relations encourages local associations to work with local governments and county commissions on improving school funding. To explore what you can do in your district, please contact your local UniServ coordinator (See page 6 for contact information).

TEA DELIVERS

than any other professional association

TEA was built by educators like you who understood that there is more to teaching than just showing up in the classroom every day.

For more than 150 years, TEA members have believed in going above and beyond to see their students thrive and to see the profession they love protected for the next generation.



EDUCATION

Earn PDPs at TEA trainings across the state. TEA covers everything from classroom management to teacher evaluations.

ADVOCACY

Elected officials from the statehouse to the local school board impact your classroom. You **MUST** be part of the discussion.

DISCOUNTS

Enjoy the buying power of more than 3 million educators nationwide with NEA's numerous member discounts.

SUPPORT

TEA has a staff person working in every district, and the best legal team to represent you in times of need.

LEADERSHIP

Improve public education in your district by learning the skills to be an effective leader in your school and in your community.

LIABILITY

State and local liability insurance only works if there is no "violation of any board rule or policy." TEA *always* covers you.

www.TEATEACHERS.org/Join

615.242.8392

800.342.8367

THE
MEMBER
YOU



TEA MORE VALUE

Association for educators in Tennessee



JOINING TEA IS AN » INVESTMENT « IN YOUR CAREER.

TEA is one of the largest providers of high-quality professional development trainings in the state.

TEA members statewide form the largest and strongest voice advocating for more time to teach, fair evaluations, salary increases and more.

TEA members have exclusive access to a support system of tens of thousands of educators, and TEA staff who live and work in your district. Teaching is tough - there is no reason to face it alone.

Special membership discounts on everything from vacations to movie tickets to life insurance can easily offset the cost of your membership.

As a member, you have access to the best team of education law experts in the state.

Choose the association that empowers you to change lives and build great public schools.

THE
MEMBERSHIP
NEED



/TennesseeEA



@TEA_teachers



/TEA_teachers

GIVE YOUR WALLET A BREAK...

Stop paying out-of-pocket
for school supplies and
instructional materials.

Win \$2,500 for your
classroom with a
California Casualty
Academic Award.



Enter today at:
EducatorsAcademicAward.com

NEA® Auto and Home Insurance Program

nea Member
Benefits
In partnership with

 California Casualty

No quote or purchase necessary. Some restrictions apply.

See full terms and conditions at www.educatorsacademicaward.com

AH470517

Contact TEA

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

UniServ Coordinators

District 1 — Harry Farthing, P.O. Box 298, Elizabethton, TN 37644; phone: (423)262-8035, fax: (866)379-0949; Assns: Bristol, Carter Co., Elizabethton, Johnson Co., Hancock Co., Hawkins Co., Kingsport, Northeast State Community College, Rogersville, Sullivan Co. **District 2** — Jennifer Gaby, P.O. Box 70, Afton, TN 37616; (423)234-0700, fax: (855)299-0723; Assns: Cocke Co., Greene Co., East Tennessee State University, Greeneville, Hamblen Co., Johnson City, Newport, Unicoi Co., Washington Co. **District 3** — Tina Parlier, P.O. Box 70288, Knoxville, TN 37938-0288, (865)688-1175, fax: (866)518-3104; Assns: Campbell Co., Claiborne Co., Grainger Co., Jefferson Co., Sevier Co., Union Co., Walters

State Community College. **District 4** — Jason White, KCEA, 2411 Magnolia Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37917; (865)522-9793, fax: (865)522-9866; Assns: Knox, Pellissippi State Comm. College, UT-Knoxville, TSD. **District 5** — Tom Hopkins, P.O. Box 5502, Oak Ridge, TN 37831; (615)521-1333, fax: (855)301-8366; Assns: Athens, Alcoa, Anderson Co., Blount Co., Clinton, Etowah, Loudon Co., Maryville, McMinn Co. (except Athens City - see District 7), Monroe Co., Oak Ridge, Polk Co., Sweetwater. **District 6** — Shannon Bain, P.O. Box 3452, Lebanon, TN 37088, phone: (615)547-7769, fax: (844)274-0765; Assns: Cannon Co., Cumberland Co., Cumberland University, DeKalb Co., Lebanon, Putnam Co., Van Buren Co., Warren Co., Wilson Co., White Co., TTU. **District 7** — Theresa Turner, HCEA 4655 Shallowford Road, Chattanooga, TN 37411; (423)485-9535, fax: (423)485-9512; Assns: Athens City, Bradley Co., Chattanooga State Community College, Cleveland, Hamilton Co., UT-Chattanooga. **District 8** — Josh Trent, P.O. Box 451, Livingston, TN 38570, (931)279-9530, fax: (855)299-5674;

Assns: Fentress Co., Lenior City, Loudon Co., Meigs Co., Morgan Co., Oneida, Overton Co., Rhea-Dayton Co., Roane Co., Scott Co., York Institute. **District 9** — Jackie Pope, 2326 Valley Grove Dr., Murfreesboro, TN 37128; phone: (615)898-1060, fax: (855)301-8214, Assns: Bedford Co., Bledsoe Co., Coffee Co., Franklin Co., Grundy Co., Manchester, Marion Co., Moore Co., Motlow State Community College, Sequatchie Co., Tullahoma. **District 10** — Jeff Garrett, P.O. Box 1326, Lebanon, TN 37088-1326; (615)630-2605, fax: (855)320-8755; Assns: Clay Co., Jackson Co., Macon Co., Pickett Co., Robertson Co., Smith Co., Sumner Co., Trousdale Co. **District 11/13** — Antoinette Lee, P.O. Box 1412, Antioch, TN 37013; (615)308-5293, fax: (888)519-7331; Assns: FSSD, Williamson, TN Dept. of Ed. **District 12** — Sue Ogg, P.O. Box 210486, Nashville, TN 37211-0486; (615)856-0503, fax: (855)427-6660 — Assns: Fayetteville City, Giles Co., Lawrence Co., Lincoln Co., Marshall Co., Maury Co., Wayne Co. **District 11/13** — Mary Campbell, Susan Dalton, Metro Nashville, 531 Fairground Court, Nashville, TN

37211; (615)347-6578 (Campbell), (615)476-3161 (Dalton), fax: (855)299-4968 (Campbell), (855)299-5837 (Dalton); Assns: Dept. of Higher Ed., Metropolitan Nashville, TN School For The Blind, MTSU, Murfreesboro City, NSCC, Rutherford, TSU. **District 14** — Maria Uffelman, P.O. Box 99, Cumberland City, TN 37050; phone: (931)827-3333, fax: (855)299-4925; Assns: Austin Peay State University, Clarksville-Montgomery Co., Henry Co., Houston Co., Paris, Stewart Co., Weakley Co., UT-Martin. **District 15** — Tim Greene, P.O. Box 354, Goodlettsville, TN 37070; phone: (615)864-1984, fax: (888)519-4879; Assns: Benton Co., Central, Cheatham Co., Clarksburg, Decatur Co., Dickson Co., Hickman Co., Humphreys Co., Huntingdon, Lewis Co., McKenzie, Perry Co., West Carroll. **District 16** — Lorrie Butler, P.O. Box 387, Henderson, TN 38340; (731)989-4860, fax: (855)299-4591; Assns: Chester Co., Jackson-Madison Co., Jackson State Community College, Hardin Co., Henderson Co., Lexington, McNairy Co., West Tennessee School for the Deaf. **District 17** — Terri Jones, P.O. Box 2140, Cordova, TN

38088; (901)258-3902, fax: (844)270-8083; Assns: Bradford, Crockett Co., Dyer Co., Dyersburg, Dyersburg State Community College, Gibson Co., Hardeman Co., Haywood Co., Humboldt, Lake Co., Lauderdale Co., Milan, Obion Co., Tipton Co., Trenton, Union City. **District 18/19** — Keyth Harrison, Memphis, TN; (901)305-2467, fax: (855)320-8737; — Assns: Bartlett, Collierville, Fayette Co., Germantown-Arlington-Lakeland, Millington, Southwest State Community College, University of Memphis. **District 18/19** — Karla Carpenter, UniServ Field Manager; UniServ Directors: Reginald Fentress, Tom Marchand, 6520 Stage Road, Bartlett, TN 38134; phone/fax (901)379-6939; United Education Association of Shelby County, www.unitedshelby.org.

www.teachers.org
www.nea.org

Don't leave money on the table! Association members are eligible for thousands in grant funding.

Teachers are constantly dipping into their own pockets to fund classroom projects that fall outside of the school budget, but there are other ways to get these projects funded. NEA, TEA and our partner organizations offer a number of grant opportunities exclusively to association members.

"I applied for an athletics grant way back when, just to take a stab at it, and we actually received it to help with our boys' and girls' track team," said coach Kyle Kuusisto at Maxine Smith STEAM Academy in Memphis.

The \$1,000 Thomas R. Brown Athletics grant, made possible through TEA and NEA partner California Casualty Insurance Co., is one of many grants available to TEA members.

"I will continue to apply for grants every year because it's a great way to support what we do in and out of the classroom. No other organization offers this kind of service and support to teachers," Kuusisto said.

The NEA Foundation recently announced another Tennessee educator has been awarded a California Casualty grant. Corderyl Martin, a music educator in Columbia, Tenn., is the recipient of the California Casualty's 2018 grant.

Global Learning Fellowship

"I was stunned and excited to learn that I won the Global Learning Fellowship grant from NEA," said Deborah Bohn, English teacher at Summit High School in Spring Hill. "I look forward to sharing my experience as a fellow in this program and encourage everyone to apply."

Created to help educators close the achievement gap in the global age, the NEA Global Learning Fellowship invites educators from all over the country to study best education practices on an international study during the summer.

"Educators are the key to giving students the skills to thrive in an interconnected world," said TEA

President Barbara Gray. "The NEA Foundation created the Global Learning Fellowship to provide professional development in teaching global competencies and to support educators as they integrate these skills into classroom instruction."

Applications for the 2019 Global Learning Fellowship will launch in fall 2017. Active NEA members who are current K-12 classroom teachers are eligible.

Learning & Leadership Grants

The Learning and Leadership grant provides \$2,000 for individuals and \$5,000 for groups engaged in collegial study. Grants are issued to public school teachers, support professionals and higher-ed faculty and staff to fund participation in high-quality professional

development experiences, such as summer institutes, conferences or action research.

Grants to groups are offered to fund collegial study, including study groups, action research, lesson plan development or mentoring experiences for faculty and staff. Applications are due October 15, February 1 and June 1 and must include partner information for group grant applications.

Student Achievement Grants

Designed to improve academic achievement of students in U.S. public schools and public higher education institutions in all subject areas, \$2,000 and \$5,000 grants should engage students in critical thinking and problem solving that deepen their knowledge of standards-based subject matter. The work should also improve students' habits of inquiry, self-directed learning and critical reflection. Applications are due Oct. 15, Feb. 1 and June 1.

Learn more at nea.org/grants and neafoundation.org.



TEA member Kyle Kuusisto (left) receives grant from California Casualty Insurance and TEA President Barbara Gray.

Knox County educators organize as a force to be reckoned with

After years of waiting for the Knoxville Mayor's office to call back, Knox Co. Education Association is the one the mayor's office is calling to set up monthly meetings.

"It does feel good to be treated with respect," said KCEA President Tanya Coats. "A lot of work has been done over the last several years to help us elect public education-friendly school board members, and, all of the sudden, the mayor's office is calling us, asking to resume monthly meetings."

Following years of confrontation with former Knox Co. Schools Superintendent Jim McIntyre, KCEA is ready to embrace a more constructive approach to working with the superintendent and the school board.

"We knew change was sorely needed, so we had to participate in school board elections, and we flipped several seats," said Sherry Morgan, former KCEA president who now chairs the local's political action efforts. "Teachers really do have the power, we just need to organize, strategize and get it done."

Working with TEA Government Relations was critical in helping KCEA bring change to the school board, and the growing visibility of the local association is attracting new members.

Hosting several social events throughout the year, working with local grass-roots groups such as Students, Parents, Educators Across Knox Co. Public Schools (SPEAK), and increasing the local Legislative Contact Team efforts all have paid dividends in growing the association's profile.

"We are out there, advocating for our members, we're at the table where the decisions are being made," Coats said. "When people see new and experienced teachers of all social and racial backgrounds involved in communities, that builds respect and interest, and we are proud of it."



SWAT from page 1

membership, leadership, advocacy, communication, and instructional issues,"

said TEA President Barbara Gray. "We're proud of our successes including pay raises, insurance and defeating vouchers five years in a row, and we plan to rely on SWAT teams to advance our cause of great public schools for all students."

To C.J. Manahan, history teacher at Vance Middle School and member of the Bristol Tennessee EA, building a SWAT team at his school over the summer was a no-brainer.

Manahan knew ARs are often asked too much,

making them feel helpless with mounting association duties on top of ever-tightening work schedules. Building on his experience as a coach, Manahan used the SWAT team training from this year's TEA Summer Leadership Academy to build a team of trusted contacts who share association responsibilities to the point where nobody feels burdened by them.

"To me, it's about preparedness and presence," Manahan said. "If you've done your homework, it doesn't take a huge amount of effort to find out what your colleagues in the building are interested in. All you have to do is listen."

Once Manahan found out his school's athletic director needed a cross-country coach, he immediately volunteered for the position in return for the athletic director's promise to attend the upcoming SWAT team training and join the fight to improve public education.

In a matter of days, Vance Middle School had a SWAT team in place, and it's already busy planning late summer and fall association activities.

"Like me, you can be a relative novice at this, but you just have to be willing

to put yourself out there," Manahan said. "You have to be present and get along with people, and know a little bit about them."

Mary Campbell, TEA UniServ Coordinator in Nashville, likes to introduce the SWAT concept as a team of assistant ARs — always ready to share the good news and fight if necessary.

"Our power is in our buildings," Campbell said. "When we can organize our school buildings, we can be successful. When something happens and we must act, we must be organized already."

Even so, SWAT teams are not always about fighting. They are also a great way of sharing the work — with no pressure from colleagues or a laundry list of responsibilities to memorize for individual team members.

"Most people want to do something," Campbell said. "A SWAT team takes the burden off one building contact to as many people as possible. SWAT teams can be organized based on what's best for the school building."

Check with your UniServ Coordinator (contact information on page 6) about an upcoming SWAT team training in your district and let them know how you would like to get involved.



TEA's first SWAT Team members are already seeing results as they take what they learned and implement it back home.

State Board overstepping authority with proposed licensure rules

State Board
from page 1

need to be enacted through the General Assembly.”

The board staff had pushed for a vote on these proposed rules at the July meeting of the powerful Government Operations committee, a panel of House and Senate members that must approve all new rules proposed by state agencies. But the board withdrew its proposed rules from the committee when TEA objected and petitioned for a public hearing on the issue.

The next step was to have a frank and informative inquiry on the rules before the board, prior to any re-submission to the legislature. Rather than having a public hearing, the board will now vote at their July 29 meeting on the extraordinary step of passing emergency rules, often seen by legislators as a way to try and get around General Assembly approval.

“It is our hope that when the facts are put before the board in a public hearing they will see what we clearly know to be true—there is no basis in law allowing what they propose to do,” said McCloud. “We will also point out numerous flaws in the proposed rules. A teacher’s license is their most valuable possession, allowing them a livelihood doing what they love to do. Having ambiguous, confusing, and contradictory rules on how a license can be suspended or revoked would be unacceptable for any profession. We certainly won’t allow it for the teaching profession.”

TEA has talked to members of the Government

Operations committee about these proposed rules, and count most members on this committee as supportive of the teaching profession. Senate committee chair Mike Bell (R-Riceville) was the successful sponsor of 2013 TEA legislation overturning the board’s decision to revoke teacher licenses based on TVAAS scores. That legislation passed overwhelmingly, and was a clear rebuke of the board by the General Assembly.

“The General Assembly takes its role seriously as the lawmaking body of our state. It grants powers to state agencies by passing laws, and when a bureaucracy tries to overstep the law I expect lawmakers to step in, and that’s the feedback we’ve gotten from committee members,” said Jim Wrye, TEA’s chief lobbyist. “After this latest rule issue, it is time we rethink the professional regulation of teaching.”

Wrye notes that most professions in Tennessee have standards boards made up mostly of practitioners of their professions.

“Doctors have a medical board of doctors, accountants a board of accountants, and lawyers have the bar. Yet teachers are regulated by an unaccountable appointed board with little or no teaching experience. In light of this latest misguided effort by the State Board of Education, we believe it is time to re-establish a strong professional standards board like they have in other states. It is time to take back our profession,” said Wrye.

Now the focus will shift back to the July 29

meeting of the State Board of Education.

Emergency rules can only go so far—sooner or later they will have to go before the General Assembly.

“One thing the state board has not thought through is what happens when the courts overturn a license suspension by the state board. When a local school board suspends a teacher and it is overturned, the teacher is entitled to back-pay from the system. This occurs frequently with TEA representation. Now it will be the state board who will owe back pay, and they don’t have the funds,” said Wrye.

Recently, the courts have financially hit the state board hard. In 2016, the board denied approval of the longstanding Bethel University educator preparation program, sending it into a tailspin. Earlier this month the courts overturned that decision and reinstated the program, and in the final judgment said all Bethel legal costs would be taxed to the State Board of Education, a potentially huge sum that is not in their budget and will have to be appropriated by the General Assembly.

“Suspending teachers has not been the purview of the state board, that is and should be a local school board issue,” said McCloud. “It is wrong on the law, facts, and bad policy for the state board to start weighing in on discipline issues handled locally. These proposed rules invite misinterpretation and mistakes, and teachers will be treated unfairly. We will continue to fight this overreach.”

New TNReady vendor interested in educator feedback

Testing
from page 1

testing schedule, but how and why we use test data in all

aspects of Tennessee education,” said TEA President Barbara Gray.

Questar officials outlined many of the issues the company faced while implementing the test.

Having enough questions was the first hurdle. Tennessee is supposed to be working to develop its own testing content. Since the decision to switch to TNReady in 2014-15 to follow state standards, the department should have been engaged in developing questions using Tennessee teachers. It is one reason why the state will be able to publish a majority of test questions in any given year under the TEA-backed testing transparency law.

Questar held question-generating sessions with Tennessee teachers last fall, though turnout was spotty for some grades and subjects and, because of time constraints, were only held in Nashville. Questions developed last fall were included in the test, but not counted in student scores because questions must go through an evaluation process after their first use.

Since TNReady failed last year, the state owned few normed questions and had to rely on copyrighted material purchased last year. These questions cannot be published, and the department has indicated it will seek relief from publishing questions under the transparency law.

“Questar did outline their strategy on engaging more Tennessee teachers to create content for our tests, and outlined their process to ensure the questions we generate are fair and measure what we

are supposed to measure,” said Gray. “It is disappointing the department didn’t reach out to us to help spread the information about this opportunity for teachers to be question writers and build a better assessment. We will certainly be asking when and where these opportunities are and letting teachers across the state know.”

Another delay was due to the test being on paper, causing logistical problems for schools and the company alike. Questar stands ready to move to an online assessment, which will help alleviate timeline issues largely caused last year by printing and scanning difficulties. Next year online is mandatory for high school students, and will remain optional for grades 3-8. Unlike the previous testing vendor, there were no problems for the school systems that opted to take assessments online, and Questar officials told TEA that it is ready to handle increases in online usage and will have staff across the state ready to troubleshoot.

In its conversation with TEA, Questar committed to having productive conversations with educators about how best to ensure the test measures what it is supposed to and serves to improve instruction. As Tennessee teachers generate a valid question bank, and questions are being published annually so that parents and teachers can evaluate the assessment system itself, it is possible that confidence will improve for TNReady.

But after years of problems, including possible delays yet again this year, it is a huge task.

“The problem is high-stakes decisions being made with tests,” said Gray. “After years of problems, now is the time to rethink what we are doing.”

Earn PDPs at home with TEA webinars

August 29, 2017

Evaluation Nuts and Bolts

September 19, 2017

Classroom Management

October 24, 2017

Collaborating with Families

November 28, 2017

Teacher Code of Ethics

January 23, 2018

Knowing, Grouping, & Motivating Students

February 27, 2018

Thinking, Questioning, & Problem Solving

March 6, 2018

Test Security & Resources

March 27, 2018

Licensure and Tenure

Email dbonner@tnea.org for more information.

TEA webinars are an exclusive member benefit.

