

# TEACHER LINKS



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## Tennessee's New Education Commissioner

Dr. Jerry W. Hale, Director of Schools

On March 2, Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam announced the appointment of Kevin Huffman as Tennessee's Commissioner of Education. Huffman currently serves as Teach for America's Executive Vice President of Public Affairs. He will assume his role with the state department beginning this month.

In a March 3 press release, Governor Haslam stated, "I put a special effort into finding the right fit for Education Commissioner. Kevin combines the experience of having been a bilingual first and second grade teacher to helping oversee a national organization with 1,400 full-time employees and a budget of \$212 million. With the First to the Top legislation and the Race to the Top awards, we as a state have an opportunity to hold ourselves to a higher standard, and Kevin is the person to make that a reality."

Teach for America, founded in 1990, recruits recent college graduates to work in high-need classrooms and become advocates for education reform. Huffman is the first Teach for America alumnus to be named a chief state school officer. Tennessee employs over 250 Teach for America members.

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Prior to his work for Teach for American, Huffman was an attorney with Hogan & Hartson in Washington, D.C., from 1998-2000, where he was involved in education law. And, from 1992-1995, he was a bilingual first and second grade teacher in Houston, Texas.

And, in 2009, Huffman won the *Washington Post's* "America's Next Great Pundit" competition for op-ed writing. Go to <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/01/AR2010010101416.htm> to read his column titled, "The Keys to a Successful Education System."

## The Key to Improved Teaching and Learning

By Bobby Cox, Assistant Director for Teaching and Learning

*(The following is an excerpt from an article written by Rick DuFour)*

Wonderful news has emerged for those seeking to improve student achievement. Two different comprehensive syntheses of research on the factors impacting student learning have come to the same conclusion: the most important variable in the achievement of students is the quality of instruction they receive on a daily basis (Marzano, 2003; Hattie, 2009). To ensure students learn at higher levels, simply improve teaching. The question remains, "How?" The challenge is particularly daunting in the traditional K-12 culture which regards each school as a series of independent kingdoms (classrooms) staffed by relatively autonomous subcontractors (teachers) who are responsible only for what happens inside their individual classrooms. In this culture of isolation, the individual teacher becomes the focus of improvement.

School districts typically create elaborate teacher supervision plans in the hope that superiors can evaluate subordinates into better performance.

Teachers are provided financial incentives to pursue random graduate courses at varied colleges and universities or to attend a myriad of disconnected workshops. Districts have continued with these traditional strategies despite compelling evidence that they have little impact on the quality of teaching.

To read this article in its entirety, please go to: [http://www.allthingsplc.info/pdf/articles/the\\_key\\_to\\_improved\\_teaching\\_and\\_learning.pdf](http://www.allthingsplc.info/pdf/articles/the_key_to_improved_teaching_and_learning.pdf)

## First to the Top State Goals for Student Performance

By Bonnie Collier, Professional and Community Development

The state has set four goals for student performance. Following the release of our 2009-2010 report card data, the state department set a 2014-15 target for each goal. We had to establish a growth trajectory for our system beginning with our baseline 2009-10 data through the 2014-15 school year. (The NCLB goal of 100% is not the final target.) Below are the state goals, the indicator, and our benchmarks for proficiency.

Goal	Indicator	2009-10 Baseline	2010-11 Benchmark	2011-12 Benchmark	2012-13 Benchmark	2013-14 Benchmark	2014-15 Target
Increase early grades reading proficiency	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade proficiency - % proficient TCAP English/language arts	34.1	38.1	42.1	46.1	50.1	54.1
Increase middle grades math proficiency	7 <sup>th</sup> grade proficiency - % proficient TCAP mathematics	26.4	31.0	35.6	40.2	44.8	49.4
Increase high school graduation	Longitudinal cohort graduation rate	84.4	85.76	87.12	88.48	89.84	91.2
Increase postsecondary access and success	% recent high school graduate who enroll in postsecondary ed	<i>Not being measured at this time</i>					
	% recent high school graduates who complete one year postsecondary ed	<i>Not being measured at this time</i>					

Other indicators, such as early grades math, adolescent literacy, algebra II proficiency, English II proficiency, ACT, and AP/dual enrollment may be added in the coming months. There are many challenges ahead, but by working together in our PLC's, using the data we have, and lifting each other up with encouragement and care, I'm confident our system will continue to make gains and progress toward our goals. Thank you for your hard work and efforts on behalf of our students

## Summer Lunch Program

By Jean Wix

During the school year, many children receive free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch through the School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs. What happens when school lets out? Kids are still hungry.

Hunger is one of the most severe roadblocks to the learning process. Lack of nutrition during the summer months may set up a cycle for poor performance once school begins again. Hunger also may make children more prone to illness and other health issues. The Summer Food Service Program is designed to fill that nutrition gap and make sure children can get the nutritious meals they need.

The Warren County School Nutrition Department is offering free Breakfast and Lunch this summer to all children 18 years old and under. Dates, location, and times for serving will be determined.



For more information contact: Jean Wix at 931-668-4022 x 246 or Renee Griffith at 931-668-4022 x 248.

## Technology Teacher Links

By Katrina Haley, Director of Technology



Big Deal Book  
Newsletter March 1, 2011



Big Deal Book  
Newsletter March 15, 2011

Click here to view Big Deal Newsletters for - and -

### Teachers:

As the end of year approaches, please remember to check your grades for the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester and the final grading period within Powerschool before signing off on them. These are the terms that will be effected if the grade setup is not correct. Remember that you can override a semester or final grade. If you need further help, please email me and I will be glad to assist you.

Also before you leave for the summer, make sure that all technology equipment is turned off and unplugged if not connected to a surge protector. Please do not unplug servers, network switches or cables however. If you have questions concerning this, please let me know.

### CONGRATULATIONS TO WEST ELEMENTARY ARCHERY TEAM



West Elementary Archery Team placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Sequatchie Valley Archery Tournament on Saturday, March 12. Individual Briley Austin picked up a 4<sup>th</sup> place award in the girls category. Way to go Archers!

# Applied Behavior Analysis

By Linda Wilson



Warren County special educators, Kristen Kell, Aimee Bielling, Betty Ann Hathcock, Teri Myers, Jill Moore, Derek Kennamer, Juliana Chavez, Keri Wood, Laura Evans, Sandee Weitzel, Angel Warden, Stephanie Davis, Misti Hillis, Teela Mason, and Tina Milligan participated in a unified and standard approach to learning about and implementing Applied Behavior Analysis in our district. The department has purchased training DVDs that include Board Certified Behavior Analysts explaining and demonstrating the use of ABA to teach students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. ABA treatment strategies are particularly useful in teaching behaviors to children on the autistic spectrum who may not otherwise "pick up" these behaviors spontaneously through imitation, or as a result of traditional modes of instruction. ABA strategies can be learned and applied with accuracy by parents, teachers, instructional assistants, and other professionals and family members. Our staff also reports learning about data collection, behavior modification techniques, and improved instructional strategies as a result of this training. A special thank you is due to March Rehse and Shannon Jacobs for facilitating this training event.

## Attention all Second Grade Teachers

Here are some websites that may serve as a great resource for our reading series.

[www.mswinston.com/trifolds.html](http://www.mswinston.com/trifolds.html)

[www.secondgradelockerroom.com/Treasures%20Resources.htm](http://www.secondgradelockerroom.com/Treasures%20Resources.htm)

## For Your Information!

## STATE OF TENNESSEE



DAVID H. LILLARD, JR.  
STATE TREASURER

TREASURY DEPARTMENT  
STATE CAPITOL  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0225

March 10, 2011

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to share with our local government friends some news from my office that greatly benefit employers, members and retirees of the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS). Over the next few years, the Treasury Department will transition to a computer system we refer to as the Concord project. We are confident that Concord will greatly improve our operations and capabilities in the service we provide to our participants and will provide a great benefit to the State of Tennessee and its taxpayers.

The Concord project will consolidate all TCRS operations into one state-of-the-art computer system. Currently, our department uses multiple computer systems originally placed in place in the 1980s which have become outdated and operate much less efficiently. Deloitte Consulting, LLP has been selected to develop the Concord system.

The Concord project will be implemented in phases. The first phase is expected to take place in December of this year. The first phase will include intradepartmental document imaging. We will communicate with you as we move to a new phase and outline the impact it will have on improving our services to employers, members and retirees.

Local government employer involvement and participation are critical to the success of the Concord project. It is the number one priority of the Treasury Department to operate at the highest level of efficiency, accuracy and accountability and we are dedicated to making this transition as smooth as possible for you, our partners. This letter is one of many you will receive as the Concord project is being implemented. We will also provide more detailed information via e-mail, telephone calls, training sessions and product demonstrations. If you have any questions about this project, please feel free to contact us at [Treasury.Concord@tn.gov](mailto:Treasury.Concord@tn.gov) or visit our web page at [www.tn.gov/treasury/tcrs/Concord.html](http://www.tn.gov/treasury/tcrs/Concord.html). I look forward to working with you on this exciting TCRS endeavor!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David H. Lillard, Jr.".

David H. Lillard, Jr.  
Tennessee State Treasurer

## AND SO IT BEGINS...

Dianna M. Zadeh, Director of ESOL & Testing

Major testing times are quickly approaching. April 12<sup>th</sup> starts the window for grades 3-8 testing with achievement (including ELSA - the simplified achievement for ELLs, and the MAAS - modified achievement for Special Education). On Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup>, Reading and Language Arts will be given followed by Math, Science, and Social Studies (the State requires this schedule). The following Monday and Tuesday are still test days for finishing up special testing groups and make-ups. Please remember to maintain test security by keeping educational related items covered in common areas and in testing rooms. Also be careful not to make announcements and interrupt those rooms as they continue testing - this means maintaining "quiet" in halls and neighboring rooms. Remember any discussion of test content is a violation of test security and could result in loss of teacher license and your job - this happens every year.... In one case, a teacher was overheard discussing the test in a restaurant....Don't risk your teacher license and job...give it and forget it!

Then starting the first week of May, we have Alg.I, Eng.II and Biology followed by the rest of the End of Course exams (Alg.II, English I, U.S. History). These scores count into students' grades making them doubly important. May 10<sup>th</sup> we will be field testing English III which will be fully operational next year. Please look online to the high school calendar for more specific dates. Please be aware of all of these dates when planning school activities and encourage community activity planners to do the same. *A good night's rest and appropriate nutrition are key 'ingredients' to boost scores ☺*

Also, an announcement... the 2012 SE TESOL will be held in Nashville (Oct 2012) . The preconference will be on SE & ELLs. For the conference itself, two of the key speakers will be Asher and Krashen who are the two of the great 'creators' of ESL pedagogy.

Congratulations to two of our ESL staff (Sharon Hargrove and Kim Henegar) for their presentation being chosen to represent TNTESOL at the 10 state SE TESOL in Virginia this fall. Nancy McNeal (and me ☺ ) are past TNTESOL session winners .... (There were only 3 chosen from about 70 sessions more than half of which had requested to be evaluated for the chance to be chosen to represent TNTESOL at the regional). There are two 'evaluators' who sit in the sessions as participants - so it is very competitive. So kudos to Sharon and Kim.

Principals' Meeting  
3/18/11

- Donnie Caldwell
  - Energy savings programs
  - Plant management organizational chart
  - Phillip Crowe, Energy Manager
- Sherry Trotman
  - All federal programs orders need to be in to Mary
- Linda Wilson
  - Letters sent to parents of students with developmental delays; invitation to pizza supper on Tuesday after spring break; part of a grant with Walmart
  - March 30 – 10 SpEd teachers will participate in training on transition outcomes
  - Hickory Creek and High School preschool programs – training for state certification
- Katrina Haley
  - Beginning in July – access to video conferencing at each school (through ENA)
  - Information on new device that makes a dry erase board interactive
  - Scheduling
  - Parent portal emails – working on it
  - Parents are going to be able to put their own contact information in for School Messenger (not PowerSchool) Katrina will send information on this for handbooks.
- David Bates
  - Mowing contracts started
- David Sneed
  - Handout: FEMA – what to do in the event of an earthquake
  - Fire/tornado drill documentation looks good.
  - Be sure and fill out accident reports completely
- Bobby Cox
  - Video conferencing can be used for PLC collaboration
  - PLC Institute this summer – would like for all principals, assistant principals, and instructional coordinators to attend
- Robin Phillips
  - New policy on cyberbullying; be sure and list building level contact information for reporting bullying (should try and have at least two in the building)
  - Policy on attorneys interviewing teachers
  - Police-initiated interrogation procedures
- Bonnie Collier
  - PLC summer institute names
  - School PD plans due April 1
  - Tentative agendas for systemwide days: July 28 and August 2
- Dr. Jerry Hale
  - Fuel surcharge for field trips will have to be added if fuel reaches 3.80/gallon (It is 3.66 now.)
  - ARRA funding is ending this year.
  - New 2011-12 calendar

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“Educate Every Child  
 Every Day.”



*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

[www.warrenschools.com](http://www.warrenschools.com)

## March 2011

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
		TCAP Test Window				
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	TCAP Test Window				Good Friday- No School	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	10:00 am Principal's Meeting			6:00 School Board Meeting		