

TEACHER LINKS



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First to the Top: Annual Evaluation of ALL Teachers

Dr. Jerry W. Hale, Director of Schools

Beginning with the 2011-12 school year, Tennessee's First to the Top Act requires **annual** evaluation of **all** teachers and principals. Personnel decisions, including promotion, retention, tenure, and compensation, must be based in part on these evaluations. A 15-member advisory committee, the Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee (TEAC), will recommend the new evaluation framework to the State Board of Education in November, 2010.

On September 7, 2010, TEAC made their initial recommendations to the State Board. A brief explanation of their recommendations is as follows:

- Annual evaluations will differentiate performance into five effectiveness groups: significantly above expectations, above expectations, at expectations, below expectations, significantly below expectations.
- Fifty percent (50%) of the evaluation criteria will be based on student achievement data, including 35% based on student growth as measured by TVAAS (or another comparable measure of student growth, if TVAAS data is unavailable), and 15% based on other measures of student achievement.

Fifty percent (50%) of the evaluation criteria will be based on the educator's summative rating against a qualitative appraisal instrument, as determined through observations, surveys, or other methods. A more detailed summary of these recommendations may be found at http://www.tn.gov/firsttothetop/docs/Initial_TEAC_Eval_Policy_Recommendations.pdf.

TEAC will also recommend multiple observations each year. Apprentice teachers will be

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observed 6 times per year for a minimum of 90 minutes. All other teachers will be observed 4 times per year for a minimum of 60 minutes. Of all the required observations, at least half must be unannounced.

Evaluation field tests are being conducted this year. Of the 135 schools that applied to be included as a part of the field test schools, 50 were selected. Administrators and teachers at these 50 schools will field test the evaluation program this year. During the summer of 2011, administrators across the state will be trained in using the new model. Full implementation will begin with the 2011-12 school year.

You may access the meeting minutes of the TEAC at the website link mentioned above. And, as always, please call me if you have questions or would like additional clarification.



Make Time for Collaboration

By Bobby Cox, Assistant Director of Teaching & Learning

The consensus is clear: One of the critical conditions for the development of collaborative cultures is *designated and protected time* for teachers to meet and collaborate during the regular school day. As Raywid says, “Collaborative time for teachers to undertake and sustain school improvement may be more important than equipment, facilities, or even staff development.” Principals often ask, “How will we find the time to collaborate?” The answer is that we won’t *find* the time. The reality is that we already *have* the time, and if principals want more time for teachers to collaborate, they must *make* time by changing the daily schedule and routine of their school.

Long ago, principals acknowledged that there is never enough time to do everything we want to accomplish, but as Kruse observed, “Principals forge the conditions that give rise to the growth of professional learning communities in schools.” Principals can create more collaborative cultures by changing the structure of the day and by making collaboration a priority. Watts and Castle have identified five strategies principals can use to make more time for collaboration:

1. Free up time

Creating more time for teachers to collaborate can be accomplished by “freeing up” some of the teachers’ time spent on routine duties. The existing daily schedule does not change; instead, teachers are temporarily relieved from regular duties to collaborate on special projects or at designated times during the school year. To accomplish this, another teacher, administrator, instructional aide or even a volunteer covers a teacher’s classroom.

The benefit of this strategy is that it does not disrupt the existing routines of a school. The disadvantages, however, are that this approach is typically only a temporary solution and is not systematic or schoolwide. Freeing up time in this manner does little to ensure a long-term commitment to creating a more collaborative culture in a school.

2. Purchase time

A second strategy for making time available is simply to purchase more time for collaboration. Schools often release teachers through substitutes or pay for summer writing projects. Some schools have found success by paying teachers to attend Saturday work sessions. One caution is that this approach removes teachers from the classroom and, universally, teachers feel guilty about being away from their students.

Further, while some teachers welcome an opportunity to work together in the summer or on a Saturday, many others have busy personal schedules and other commitments that conflict with Saturday or summer work schedules.

In these tough economic times, purchasing time can be a fiscal challenge, but purchasing time for collaboration can work so long as there are funds to support the practice. This strategy is often used for ad hoc committees, one-time events or specific projects, but it does not promote long-term solutions to the challenge of providing more time for collaboration.

3. Restructure or reschedule time

It can be complicated to reschedule or restructure time, but doing so yields lasting changes that are more comprehensive and systematic. Common strategies for this approach involve banking time or scheduling late arrival or early release days that alter the traditional calendar, school day and/or teaching schedule. Restructured or rescheduled time has some obvious advantages over purchasing time, but there are problems nonetheless. The disadvantage of this approach is that students are typically not on campus or in session during the restructured or rescheduled time, which conflicts with community expectations that students be in school. Thus, creating time for teachers to work together while students are not on campus creates a public relations problem for the building principal. Communicating with the community about the rationale for such a change is an additional burden that must be considered when using this time-making strategy.

4. Make better use of existing time

In an effort to identify ways to better use time, some schools are conducting time studies and asking teachers to track how they use the time that already exists in their school day. For example, making better use of time allows faculty meetings to shift from forums for long and exhausting verbal memos to more opportunities for real and reflective collaboration among teachers. As teachers move through the various stages of PLC implementation, the use of time shifts. Teachers find they need *less* time learning about the work and *more* time working on the work.

This approach to making more time for collaboration can have a lasting impact on the culture of a school. As teachers examine the current reality of the way time is used, they confront a host of issues related to

Continued from page 2

the school's mission, vision, values, and goals. How time is used in school says a lot about a school's purpose and priorities.

5. Schedule common planning time

Common planning time is designated and protected time for teachers to work with their colleagues. The idea of planning time is not new, but the creation of common planning time typically requires changes to the daily schedule. Schools can arrange schedules in three ways: according to tradition (adult centered), to facilitate instruction (teaching centered), or to facilitate collaboration (learning centered). The question for principals is "Why is the schedule the way it is?" In some schools, the schedule has not changed in years. Further examination may show that unchanging schedules are based on unspoken norms such as the most senior teacher gets the last hour free or the teacher with the longest morning commute always has first period open in case he or she encounters traffic delays. These schedules are organized around adult convenience and almost never generate more time for collaboration.

Likewise, schedules can be arranged in ways that facilitate the delivery of instruction. For example, an art teacher may demand that all the first-grade classrooms be scheduled consecutively or that PE classes be scheduled back-to-back so the equipment and materials do not have to be exchanged between periods. A schedule organized in this way places a high priority on the logistics of teaching and does little to promote more time for meaningful collaboration.

Alternately, a schedule may be designed such that all teachers from the same class, course, or grade level are available to meet at the same time. Common planning time, as a strategy to create more time for teachers, works best when teachers from the same grade level or department meet with the clear intention to use the planning time for collaboration. In these schools, time for collaboration – in direct support of student learning - is the most important consideration when building a schedule.

Nearly 30 years ago Schlecty observed, "The one commodity teachers and administrators say they do not have enough of, even more than money, is time: time to teach, time to converse, time to think, time to plan, time to talk, even time to go to the restroom or have a cup of coffee. Time is indeed precious in school." Schlecty (1990) In a professional learning community, a teacher's role shifts from working in isolation to working in collaboration with others. As a teacher's role changes, so must the way the teacher uses time. There is no closet in which schools store extra time or secret desk drawer holding a stash of reflective moments. Simply put, because we are never going to *find* more time, if we want to ensure that teachers work in teams we have to *make* time for collaboration.

This article was copied from the [TEPSA Newsletter](#), "Best Practices" by Tom W. Many, Ed.D.

CONGRATULATIONS TO

TINA BOIVIN

**WARREN COUNTY SCIENCE
EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR**



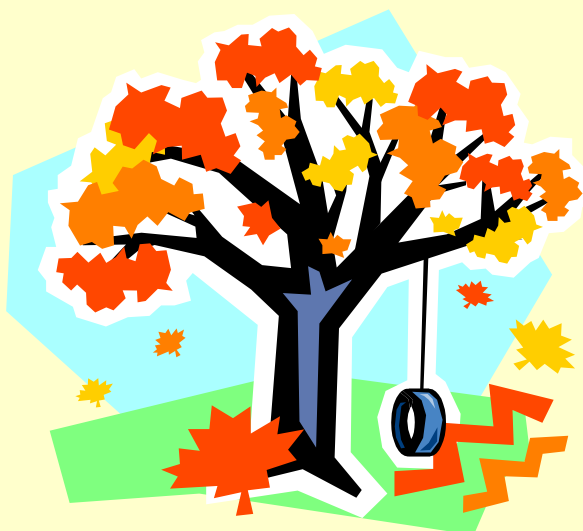
Tennessee Department of Education – Electronic Learning Center PD

By Bonnie Collier

The Tennessee Department of Education is partnering with the Instructional Technology Support Center at MTSU to offer a new series of *Tennessee Electronic Learning Center Presents* broadcasts and webcasts for 2010-2011. This year's series will feature Tennessee teachers working together to implement effective teaching practice into all Tennessee classrooms. Nine instructional strategies will be presented and modeled by classroom teachers. These research-based strategies have been shown to improve student achievement across all content areas and grade levels.

Seven Effective Practice programs will be presented on Tuesdays from 3:30-4:30 p.m. throughout the year. Detailed information about participation options, online registration, and a complete list of scheduled programs can be found on the registration website at: <http://itsc3.fsa.mtsu.edu/elcpresents>. Please note that webcasting participants do NOT have to register in advance.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PRESENTER</u>	<u>AUDIENCE</u>
October 12, 2010	3:30-4:30 p.m.	Summarizing and Notetaking	Tennessee Classroom Teachers	Teachers and instructional leaders in all content areas, grades K-12
November 2, 2010	3:30-4:30 p.m.	Experiential Learning in STEM	Billy Hix, Terry Sue Fanning, and Tennessee Classroom Teachers	Teachers and instructional leaders in all content areas, grades K-12
November 9, 2010	3:30-4:30 p.m.	Nonlinguistic Representation; Similarities and Differences	Tennessee Classroom Teachers	Teachers and instructional leaders in all content areas, grades K-12
February 1, 2011	3:30-4:30 p.m.	Creating Mathematical Experiences for Your Students with the Mathematician's Notebook	Tammy Jones, Education, Technology and Mathematics Consultant	Teachers and instructional leaders in all content areas, especially math, grades K-12
February 8, 2011	3:30-4:30 p.m.	Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback; Effort and Recognition; Homework and Practice	Tennessee Classroom Teachers	Teachers and instructional leaders in all content areas, grades K-12
March 15, 2011	3:30-4:30 p.m.	Cues, Questions, and Advanced Organizers	Tennessee Classroom Teachers	Teachers and instructional leaders in all content areas, grades K-12



Happy
Fall
Y'all!

Attaching Documents to Assignments for Download to Parent Portal

By Katrina Haley

PowerTeacher has the ability to include links within comments associated with assignments. This feature enables teachers to include links to documents such as handouts which can be downloaded from ParentPortal. The ability to download documents allows students who missed a class to download handouts, practice tests, etc. These instructions explain how to store documents “in the cloud” on Google docs, and link them to assignments in PowerTeacher.

I. Save Your Document to a PDF File

While in Microsoft Word 2007:

1. Click on the Office Button in the upper left
2. Move the mouse down to Save As, and then select PDF.
3. Select Save as type: PDF and Optimize for: Standard, and then click Publish.

II. Upload Your Document to Google docs

1. Go to your school email, click Documents.
2. Click Upload in the upper left.
3. Click Select Files to Upload and navigate to your document.
4. Click Start Upload.
5. When the upload is finished, click Back to Google docs.
6. Check the box next to your document.
7. Click SHARE and then “Get the link to share”
8. Check Allow anyone with the link to view.
9. Click once on the link to highlight it, and then hit Ctrl-C on the keyboard.
10. Click Save & Close.

Note: If you store many documents to Google docs, it will help to organize them into folders. For example, you could create folders for classes and for chapters within each class.

III. Create a Link to the Document in PowerTeacher

1. In the Scoresheet page of PowerTeacher, create a new assignment or open an existing assignment by clicking the arrow icon
2. In the Description box, start typing any text you want before the link.
3. Click the +link icon
4. Click in the box next to URL, and then hit Ctrl-V on the keyboard. (You will see a long string of letters and numbers, which is the link to your document. This link will not be viewed by parents.)
5. In the box next to the words Link Text, type the text that you want to be linked to your document.
6. Click OK.
7. In the description box, type any remaining text.
8. Click Save.
9. When parents view the assignment in ParentPortal, they will see only the linked word, not the computer code.



Truancy 101

By Jane Allison

William Purkey says, "School should be the most inviting place in town." Obviously this is not the case in Warren County. EIS indicates that during the 2009 – 2010 school term, 3,347 Warren County students were truant. These students had five or more days of unexcused absences from school.

WCHS had the largest number of truants followed by West, Eastside, Centertown, Hickory Creek, Morrison and Irving College respectively. Schools with the fewest truants were Bobby Ray (29%), WCMS (29%), and Dibrell (23%).

This report should serve as a wake-up call to all educators, parents, and to the community. Our students need to be in school.

What can we do as educators?

1. Contact students who are absent. (The personal contact from a caring teacher can work miracles.)
2. Welcome students when they return to school and let them know that they were missed. Don't harp on them. Help them "catch-up."
3. Get to know your students. This makes it easier to know how to engage a student, and engaged students are less likely to be truant.
4. If you know of circumstances in a student's life that makes attendance difficult, contact a school counselor. The counselor has access to numerous resources.
5. Never, ever tell a parent or student that the student doesn't have to come to school or indicate in any way that absence is acceptable. Never say, "We won't be doing anything anyway." This applies to early sign-outs as well as pep rally days, school days at the end of the year, etc.
6. Set a good example.

The district uses a system which automatically calls the home of each student who is absent. Attendance clerks at each school carefully monitor attendance. Whenever a student has accumulated five unexcused absences, a letter is sent to the parent. The school counselor is notified by the clerk of students who have attendance issues. The counselor and the school family services coordinators intervene. A hearing must be held if the student is SPED. If the interventions do not produce results and unexcused absences continue, court action is pursued.

Juvenile Court hears truancy cases. Over the past years, the court has generally assigned six (6) hours of public service work for each unexcused absence and assessed a \$50 fine for each unexcused absence. In some instances, the parent has been required to attend school with the student, attend parenting classes, or perform public service. In some rare cases, the parent has been placed in jail and a student has been taken into custody. Shaye Ashford and Barry Dishman, Youth Service officers, and Juvenile Judge Larry Ross are diligent in their efforts to keep students in school.

Truancy is serious. It doesn't just start in high school. Many times a student begins with numerous tardies and early check-outs before progressing to unexcused absences and truancy. Dropouts are usually truants.

In a time of heightened accountability, we focus on numbers...attendance rate, test scores, graduation rate, etc. While this is necessary, we need to realize that education is more. Purkey says, "Education is an imaginative act of hope." He also says, "The revolution is underway because growing numbers of people realize that education is about inviting every single person who enters a school to realize his or her relatively boundless potential in all areas of worthwhile human endeavor. It is concerned with more than grades, attendance, and academic achievement. It is concerned with the process of becoming a decent and productive human being."

What: Professional Development: Book Discussion
 When: November 9, 2010
 3:15-5:00
 Where: WCHS Library
 Book: Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird"



**Principals' Meeting
9/24/2010**

Bobby Cox

- Report card information
- ThinkGate tests are being worked on; will deliver on Monday (elementary)
- Learning Meeting - Oct. 21 at WCMS
- Visual Thesaurus until February
- Grant from Children's Services through State Department - Use for consumable supplies and instructional; must be spent by Nov. 15

Dianna Zadeh

- TCAP achievement reports here
- Password packets for principal and testing coordinators
- Achievement reports and discs in testing room
- TC's – achievement and ELSA and MAUSS orders by Oct. 19
- Constructed Response Assessment – every school in state will be doing it with grades 3 and 7 (no make ups for this) – Nov. 8, 9, 10 – each test is 45 minutes

Rob Tate – EPSON - Interactive Projector = Interactive Classroom

Sherry Trotman

- Title I Conference in Gatlinburg
- Explanation of non-title federal money for checks received
- Extended Contract – any questions, call Sherry
- Emergency Response Plans

Jane Allison

- Handout - EIS number of truanancies from last year
- ATLAS is ready to start again (\$40,000 in grant this year)
- Some schools received book bags, food, and toiletry supplies (from Homeless Education)

Tracy Risinger

- Career Resource Box for school counselors with 8th grade
- My College Option surveys in boxes - mail surveys back by Oct. 1

Donnie Caldwell

- Fire Marshal inspection updates

Linda Wilson

- Sept. 13 – Lori Nixon from state department was here; spoke with sped department about portfolios and MAAS; will do an afterschool “catch-up” for those who were unable to attend

Jean Wix

- 3682 free applications 410 reduced – 4092 total
- 30 day grace period that students can receive meals based on prior year's eligibility; 30 days is now expired
- October 11-15 – National School Lunch Week – we will celebrate the week before since we are on fall break that week. Theme - “What's on your Tray?” theme

Robin Phillips

- Tennessee Attorney General's ruling regarding field trips – cannot require students to pay for transportation or admission/tickets; can request, but cannot require if during the school day; this applies to all students; can send home a note asking for a contribution for helping with cost of trip.
- Internet protection filter and usage – do not use override unless legitimate situation; if we don't comply, we could lose funding; will be archiving computer use
- Facebook – is a public forum; do not identify students by name or situation; That is against the law. Cannot talk about grades, discipline, etc. (even if posting with a parent). Do not discuss other educators, as well. This includes ALL staff.

Bonnie Collier

- Please email me your stockpile day agenda by next Friday, October 1.
- Standards Training – October 1, 8:00-3:00 at Motlow
- Lexile Training – comments from LEAD conference
- Power of ICU – Danny Hill
- Please give me names of PE teachers who will be going to BEECH on October 8.
- County-wide Spelling Bee -next meeting, Sept. 29 at 3:30, conference room 3
- Employee Appreciation (Utrust) – Please email me any pictures of things you do at your school for featured employees.

Dr. Jerry Hale

- Nepotism policy BHB – 5th paragraph of policy has been changed (only applies to extracurricular activities)
- Bonus money – don't know yet if certificated employees will receive the state bonus



**WCMS Intramural Day
for students with
100% homework
completion!
Way to Go!**



What is eWellness?

By Shannon Railling

It is an eight week program designed to help individuals improve their health status and have the support of friends on a team. Team members will log points for diet, water consumption, and physical activity. The program was developed by UT and the goal is to improve (and hopefully retain!) good health habits. Participants can keep track of their numbers on paper logs kept at their desk, in their purse, or wherever is convenient! Then they will enter the week's totals into the Warren County Schools eWellness site online at <http://tnshapesup.tennessee.edu>

The program was developed to be positive and provide support, accountability and rewards for accomplishing healthy living goals. The program consists of short-term (eight-week) phases so that awards and recognition can be provided frequently. But healthy living is a lifetime effort; so, soon after a phase ends and recognition of teams has occurred, a new phase soon starts and the cycle is repeated.

The phase system is very much like the college experience; you enroll for a semester, complete the requirements, receive your award and then enroll again for another semester. Unlike college, you never graduate and there are no grades, but there is an opportunity for a celebration at the end of each phase. If a participant has life circumstances that prevented them meeting the objectives in a particular phase, there is an opportunity for a fresh start. No one ever "fails." This concept was named "forgiveness." The assumption is that healthy living requires frequent recommitment.

The first phase of the program kicked off on September 19th and will end on November 13th. The schools participating this phase are Bobby Ray Elementary, Centertown Elementary, Central Office, Hickory Creek Elementary, Morrison Elementary, and West Elementary. If your school is not participating during this first phase you will have another chance in January. Sign up information for the second phase will be sent to your school nurse in December. Schools will compete with each other; with each school having 1 team (with as few or as many participants that sign up each phase). The focus is not on losing weight, but on the everyday factors that affect our weight, blood pressure, and overall wellness- a healthy diet including fruits and vegetables, staying hydrated with lots of water, and fitting physical activity into your daily routine. Awards will be given to individuals for meeting the "Striving for Good Health" level and the "Individual Healthy Lifestyle" level. Awards will also be given to the school with the most minutes logged of physical activity, and the school with the most logged servings of fruits and vegetables. There will even be a "TOPS" Award for the male and female who complete their logs for 8 weeks and have the most total points. If you are interested in participating, or want more information, please contact Shannon Railling at srailling@k12tn.net or let your school nurse know. All you will need at each school is a team leader and team members who are motivated to live a healthy lifestyle!



Alternative Testing

By Linda Wilson

Representatives from fifteen school systems came to Warren County on September 13th to attend a workshop on alternative assessment. During the workshop, Ms. Lori Nixon, Assessment Specialist with the State Department of Education, updated participants on both portfolio and MAAS tests.

The MAAS (Modified Academic Achievement Standards Assessment) is designed to assess students with disabilities who have standards-based IEPs. The test is noteworthy in that it has a 2% cap on the number of proficient and advanced scores that may be counted toward AYP.

The 2009-10 School Year was the first year that Tennessee administered the MAAS and state-wide results were disappointing. Despite its somewhat simplified format (shorter reading content, three answer options), Tennessee's students with disabilities did not do score well on the test, as did Warren County's students, and the state did not see substantial improvement in achievement for students selected for MAAS. Ms. Nixon acknowledged that the state had advised systems to highly limit student participation and not to exceed the cap. For the upcoming school year, however, and based on last year's performance, she recommended exceeding the 2% limit. She advised systems to include almost all students with a disability who are not eligible for portfolio assessment and who are predicted by the IEP Team to not achieve on-grade level proficiency if assessed on the general TCAP assessment.

For Warren County, scores of special education students on the portfolio assessment last school year were excellent. All students scored as advanced and proficient and the special education teachers who prepared those portfolios deserve much recognition for their hard work. Portfolio assessment remains limited to 1% of students, however, and is designed for those with only the most significant cognitive disabilities.

A flow chart for student participation in alternative assessment, along with eligibility criteria, is available from the special education teachers at all of Warren County's schools. An important job of each student's IEP Team will be the appropriate selection of his or her assessment and all teachers are urged to ask questions and be a part of the determination of which type of standardized state testing each student will take.

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"Educate Every Child
 Every Day."



We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

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October 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8 Last Day of 1 st 9 weeks	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Fall Break						
17	18	19	20	21 Parent/Teacher Conf. (elem. and Middle) Report Cards	22	23
24	25 Principal's Meeting	26	27	28 Parent/Teacher Conf. (High School) School Board Meeting	29	30
31 Halloween!						