

DeSoto

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Tim's Two Cents



Hello Everyone,

I hope that your semester is going well. I have been getting more and more frustrated. Did you know that Mississippi government employees are under attack? There is currently a commission appointed by the governor to investigate the PERS system. The governor believes that the PERS system is wasting the state's money. The commission is looking into cost-saving measures.

Our retirement system is a defined benefit program which means we are guaranteed certain benefits. There has been a movement across the country to change defined benefit programs to programs that are more market based. In other words there would be no guaranteed benefits; you would be at the mercy of the investment market when you retire. This would affect all Mississippi government employees. The commission will release its findings the second week of November. This is unfortunately after the election, by design. The commission's job is to make a recommendation to the legislature. We cannot influence the commission, but we must work to influence the legislature to protect our defined benefit system.

I hope that you are now asking "what can I do?" First of all, **VOTE!!!** Write to the candidates and legislators to tell them that you want PERS to remain a defined benefit program. Remind them that for every dollar of investment in PERS there is a five dollar growth in the economy. Our organization will be distributing petitions to be signed and sent to our legislators. We want all school employees to sign these. If you know a teacher or other school employee who is not registered to vote, get them registered. (To vote in November you must be registered by October 8.)* This is a great time for action. Our action will make others take notice. Invite nonmembers to join DCAE — remember there is strength in numbers. Thank you for helping to make our association great.

TIM

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MAE AT FOREFRONT WITH NEW TEACHER EVALUATION

The Mississippi Department of Education recently introduced a draft for the statewide teacher evaluation system. MDE is piloting the program in some areas of the state this year. MDE released the draft to MAE Representative Assembly delegates.

For years teachers all over the state have expressed concern over evaluation systems that are biased and too easily manipulated to fit the whims of administrators either positively or negatively.

Dr. Daphne Buckley from MDE and Cecily McNair of the Mississippi Teacher Center spoke to the assembly while releasing the information. They explained the process and asked for feedback.

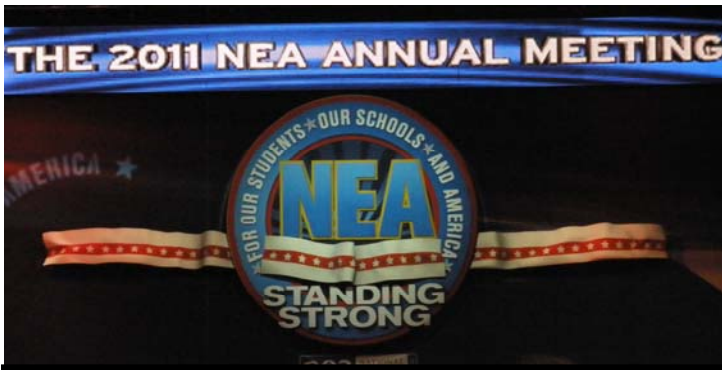
One of the major concerns of members of the assembly, as well as a concern by teachers from all over the state, is the question of training for administrators who are using the instrument. Dr. Buckley assured the concerned teachers that administrators will be fully trained.

The instrument has shades of the old MTAI used several years ago. However, MDE developed the instrument with the help of teachers and administrators who feel that this time the state may well be on the right track for evaluating teachers to help them improve as well as show the methods of effective teaching.

MDE invited MAE to be a part of the planning process for this evaluation. MAE staff has been persistent in helping the state department with a fair and equitable system. So when asking what MAE can do for you, you have your answer.

Joyce Helmick
MAE Vice President

iEducate iVote



2011 Chicago NEA RA

Hot dogs piled high, a world's fair celebration site, and legendary architecture are what the typical tourist to the city of Chicago would list as the highlights of a trip, but not for the group of DCAE members that hit the windy city. Instead, we have stories to share of standing strong with thousands of other educators, listening to great speakers, and being a part of the change in education.

Melonie Goolsby, Joyce Helmick, Renee Lawson, and Connie Mah were the members representing the great state of Mississippi from DeSoto County. We were greeted with a crowd-pleasing speech by NEA President Dennis Van Roekel sharing with us the importance of power in numbers. He electrified the crowd with the fact that if we stand as one we can certainly stand strong and speak out for our profession, the future of education, and most importantly the children in classrooms across America. Shortly after, business was underway where we were a part of making decisions for our membership and electing leadership. We listened carefully and made decisions based on the important issues of our local.

As a delegation, we voted to support President Barack Obama in the 2012 election. We were also inspired by the "Wisconsin 14" who showed us that taking a stand and sticking to what you believe in can make a difference in the lives of others. The week was wrapped up with an exciting visit from Vice-President Joe Biden. The lines of thousands did not discourage or dampen our enthusiasm. We were excited to hear about the direction that our administration is going in and to know that we do have friends of education in the White House.

Melonie Goolsby



Delegates to the 2011 Fall Representative Assembly representing DCAE were Renee Lawson, Melonie Goolsby, Connie Mah, MAE Vice President Joyce Helmick, Barbara Potts-Szoke, and Tim Gardner.

Join Us!

Wednesday, November 2

4:30 p.m.

Memphis Pizza Cafe



Mississippi delegates from DeSoto County, Connie Mah and Melonie Goolsby, take a break from the NEA RA action to pose for a picture.

Interested in politics? The MAE Legislative Training is coming up Tuesday, October 18, in Batesville at Western Sizzlin, 6:00 p.m. This training prepares us to sit down with our legislators in November and have conversations about their views on education. Terry Lynn Hamm, MAE's Lobbyist will be with us and will have more updates on the PERS Study.

Don't forget American Education Week November 14 - 18! This year will be the 90th annual event sponsored by NEA spotlighting the importance of providing every child in America with a quality public education and the need for everyone to do his or her part in making public schools great. Go to nea.org.