



•April 2009•

New Standards Training this Spring

The Department of Education has announced two professional development initiatives to prepare educators in the new content standards and build upon their standards training from previous years.

Content Specialty Institutes will be held for Reading, Language Arts, Science and Math in May. In June, the Summer Standards Trainings will resume statewide.

The Content Speciality Institutes will be broadcast via satellite at select sites across the state and available via live Web streaming to any computer with high speed Internet access. The purpose of these sessions is to demonstrate content knowledge and effective practices for the new standards for content area teachers and administrators.

The dates are:

- Reading, May 11
- Lang. Arts, May 12
- Math, May 13
- Science, May 14

These institutes are being held in conjunction with the Instructional Technology Support Center of MTSU.

The Summer Standards Training participants again may choose from strands in K-12 Language Arts, Math or Science. New this year are strands in K-12 reading and 9-12 Physical Science.

The dates are:

- Memphis, Knoxville, Montgomery, June 2-4
- Lexington, Granger, McMinn, June 9-11
- Nashville, Cookeville, June 16-18
- Hamilton, June 22-24
- Dyersburg, Blountville, June 23-25

For more information on standards training, please visit our Electronic Learning Center at www.TNelc.org.



•April 2009•

Insurance Committees Approve \$50 per-month tobacco surcharge

Recently, the State, Local Education and Local Government Insurance Committees have approved a plan which will put in place a \$50 per-month tobacco surcharge and quitter's refund for all plan members, including teachers and school personnel who buy in to the plan, who use tobacco. This surcharge will be implemented Jan. 1, 2010.

This effort is intended to encourage plan members to take appropriate steps toward giving up the use of tobacco products, while providing them with a variety of resources and cessation options.

The surcharge will apply to all active employees, retirees and covered spouses and will be collected through payroll deduction in the same manner as current insurance premiums. Anyone who wants to avoid paying the surcharge will need to quit using tobacco products by July 1, 2009.

Members who make the decision to give up tobacco after the program's implementation will be eligible for a Quitter's Refund. Of the more than one dozen states with active tobacco surcharge



programs, Tennessee is the only state where a refund will be available to members who successfully kick the habit. Members who still use tobacco have access to a variety of resources to safely and effectively quit using tobacco, which will be paid for using surcharge funds. All plan members will be given full access to a variety of cessation options.

Members now have immediate access to FREE tobacco cessation counseling through the Tennessee Department of Health Tobacco Quitline by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visiting <http://health.state.tn.us/tobaccoquitline.htm>.

Additional information is also available at <http://www.state.tn.us/finance/ins/ins.html>.



●April 2009●

Department of Education Announces Recovery Act Funding

Funding for Students with Disabilities

Governor Phil Bredesen and Commissioner of Education Dr. Timothy Webb announced in early April the first round of funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for Individuals with Disabilities. These allocations represent approximately half of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funding that will be available to school districts.

The ARRA dollars represents significant funding for programs that help ensure children with disabilities, including children age 3-5, are provided services that meet their needs. Possible uses of these funds could include professional training for special education teachers, data collection to improve teaching and learning, and improving student achievement.

The remaining portion of ARRA IDEA funds will be awarded by September 30, 2009.

For a complete list of allocations, visit http://tn.gov/education/doc/ARRA_IDEA_Allocations.pdf.

Funding for At-Risk Students

The second round of Recovery funds was announced April 9 as school districts learned the amount of Title I dollars they would receive through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). These allocations represent the entire Title I funding that will be available for districts to improve teaching and learning for students most at risk of failing to meet state and academic achievement standards.

The ARRA Title I dollars represent significant funding for schools that have high concentrations of students from families that live in poverty in order to help improve teaching and learning. Possible uses of these funds could include extended day and year programs, establishing intense year-long teacher training for Title I schools or provide intense parent training.

A complete list of allocations by district can be found on the Department of Education's Recovery site at <http://tn.gov/education/recovery.shtml>.

For more information on Tennessee's Recovery Act Funding, please visit www.tn.gov/education/recovery.shtml.



●April 2009●

Commissioner Webb Welcomes Sesame Street's Elmo to Nashville



Tennessee Education Commissioner Timothy Webb joined Sesame Street's Elmo, along with partners from Nashville Public Television and the Public Broadcasting Service, to launch the PBS KIDS Raising Readers initiative throughout the state.

“Developing a child’s reading ability is the best investment we can make,” Commissioner Webb said. “Reading skills give children a head-start as they begin

school and as they continue into college. Programs like Raising Readers complement our efforts already underway with Gov. Bredesen’s Books from Birth and Voluntary Pre-K initiatives.”

Raising Readers is a new literacy initiative to help kids in Tennessee, and all over the country, become better readers. The program utilizes research-based, entertaining content to help meet the urgent literacy needs of kids, age 2-8, especially those from low income families.

The program is part of the Ready To Learn initiative, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, in partnership with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, PBS and the Ready To Learn Partnership.

For more information, please visit www.readytolearnreading.org.



●April 2009●

Schools Get Help Providing Fruits, Veggies

The United States Department of Agriculture has made \$1.4 million available to Tennessee school districts for the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program this year.

These funds can be used to purchase, prepare and distribute fresh fruits and veggies at no charge to students 8th grade and below.

“Tennessee schools already do an outstanding job of improving the health of students with school lunch, breakfast and after-school snack programs,” Education Commissioner Timothy Webb said. “The Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program will only help support those ongoing efforts.”



The grants, made available July 1, allow schools to provide approved fruits and vegetables to students during the school day. For example fruits and vegetables must be fresh, not canned, frozen, or vacuum packed.

Each elementary school in Tennessee with a 50 percent or greater economically disadvantaged population will be eligible to apply, including schools

that are currently participating. Those schools with the greatest percentage economically disadvantaged students will receive the highest level of consideration for funding.

