

# DeSoto DCAE

# EDUCATOR

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## LOCAL MEMBERS PART OF TEF

David Odom, Corey Nichols, and Emily Ashworth were chosen to represent DCAE as members of the GREAT (Grassroots Educational Action Team) for TEF. TEF stands for taxes, economic development, and funding for public schools. The whole concept of TEF is to level the playing field for everyone when it comes to taxes. Currently, as citizens, we are not taxed equally. Many times, large companies move into certain areas, and they are given tax exemptions as an incentive to come to the area. As a result, school districts do not receive the necessary funding that they need.

These three DCAE members received training in Jackson on Thursday, September 18 and Friday, September 19 at the Cabot Lodge. On Saturday, September 20, David Odom presented a TEF presentation to the Fall RA at the Mississippi Department of Education. Since then, Odom has conducted two other TEF presentations at Coldwater and Batesville. In addition, we held a Town Hall Meeting at the Central Office on Thursday, October 16.

If anyone is interested in having Odom present this information to some group, contact him by email at [david.odom@desotocountyschools.org](mailto:david.odom@desotocountyschools.org). The GREAT Team would like to encourage everyone to talk about TEF to other educators, community leaders, and elected officials. TEF is an important issue that we must address in order to make our schools GREAT.



Ashworth, Nichols, and Odom act as facilitators at the Town Hall Meeting held in Hernando in October.



Emily Ashworth, Sarah Thomas, Renee Lawson, Angie Colson, Cheri Kamler, and Joyce Helmick (Corey Nichols and David Odom attended but are not pictured.) attended the fall representative assembly at the State Department of Education in Jackson, Mississippi on September 20.

## DCAE INVOLVED AT STATE LEVEL

MAE recently named committees for the 2008-2009 year. Several DeSoto County members took positions on committees with some serving in leadership positions. Sarah Thomas, one of our most active retired members, took a position on the MAE Budget Committee. Elisa Goss and Renee Lawson both serve on the MAE Constitution Committee with Lawson serving as Vice-Chair of that committee. Cheri Kamler will serve on the Credentials Committee while Angie Colston claims a spot on the Elections Committee. Corey Nichols and David Odom are serving on the MAE Legislative Committee. Joyce Helmick will serve on the committee for professional development.

MAE Elections Committee approved Joyce Helmick to serve on the MAE Board of Directors for the Northwest Region. Helmick took the three-year term in September. She has attended one board meeting already and has participated in two conference calls relating to election issues. Helmick stated, "I am committed to learning everything I can about what MAE does to support teachers of our state."

## LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

Hazel's Restaurant in Olive Branch once again hosted the annual DCAE Legislative breakfast. A total of twenty-six professionals interested in education in DeSoto County attended the annual event: 18 members, 3 guests, 3 legislators, our local uniserv staffer, and 1 really great superintendent of education. President Joyce Helmick welcomed the group and outlined the 2008 Legislative Agenda. She then invited the legislators and Mr. Kuykendall to give their comments and suggestions. Rep. Ted Mahall spoke to the necessity of continuing support of MAEP funds and his support of all legislation to improve education. Rep. Forrest Hamilton addressed the group as an Olive Branch resident, businessman, and father (as well as the husband of a former educator). He listed several areas of interest including MAEP and classroom funds. His enthusiasm toward education gave members a new insight into what we have as educational support in the state lawmaking body. Rep. Wanda Jennings spoke to her influence and "dog fights" resulting from her endeavor to support legislation relating to educational issues. She reminded us that through her and other DeSoto county legislators' efforts, DeSoto County is now receiving funds promised to every child in a classroom in Mississippi. Superintendent Milton Kuykendall gave the group some statistics about graduates and dropouts in DeSoto County. Statistics show that this system ranks among the highest in percentage of graduates and the dropout rate is among the lowest nationally. He gave a glowing report of the testing results and technology improvement in the schools. Kuykendall and the legislators emphasized to members how important staying involved in the decision-making processes by contacting legislators is to DeSoto County Schools as well as all schools in the state.



Guests at the breakfast were (from left to right) Representative Ted Mahall, Superintendent Milton Kuykendall, Wanda Jennings, Forrest Hamilton, and Jan Hamilton.

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Contact Renee Lawson  
([renee.lawson@desotocountyschools.org](mailto:renee.lawson@desotocountyschools.org))



Members who attended the breakfast were (back row) Norma Washington, Amy Koonce, David Odom, Debbie Moore, Cheri Kamler, Deanna Woods, (middle row) Barbara Haffercamp, Angie Colson, Jo Cox, Sarah Thomas, Bill Cox, Pat Jeppe, Melonie Goolsby, (front row) Joyce Helmick, Janis Risley, Sharon Mullins, and Renee Lawson. Emily Ashworth attended but is not pictured.

## JOYCE'S CORNER



Happy Holidays!!! I don't know about you but I am the stuffed turkey after my Thanksgiving!!! Hope you all had a wonderful time and your Christmas holiday will be the same. Now down to business. As I was doing some shopping over the holiday weekend, I began to cut out coupons and look for discounts for the items on my shopping list. Those who know me know that I am not much of a shopper so hitting those bargain days is always a plus. The thing that came to me is the NEA Benefits package I receive as a member of MAE and NEA. I really can save a lot of money by using some of the discounts offered. I thought about David Odom who loves Target and "stacks" the coupons with his NEA discounts. I thought about our members who have saved hundreds on car insurance. I thought about the hundreds of dollars that can be saved by using hotel and other travel discounts this holiday time. Some people are saying they can not join MAE because of the cost. I say, "How can you not with all the savings?"

So look into the benefits before you make a decision and if you are already a member, get on that web site and discover more savings for you and your family.

**HAPPY**  **Holidays**