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## **Benwood Teachers Prepare for February Writing Exam**

*30 Teachers Will Meet at PEF to Gain Home Stretch Ideas for Boosting 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Skills*

As part of the Benwood Initiative's focus on boosting student achievement in writing through a method known as "Six Traits Writing," PEF has invited all Benwood 5<sup>th</sup> grade language arts teachers to Fifth Grade Writing Night on Thursday, January 14, from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Ruth S. Holmberg Leadership Center on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor at 100 East 10<sup>th</sup> Street.

The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) writing exam will be administered Tuesday, February 2 for 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders across Tennessee. Teachers and students have spent the year focusing on writing skills, and will give writing skills even more emphasis as the test date looms near.

Clara Sale-Davis, PEF's Director of the Benwood Initiative, and Susan Swanson, Director of Urban Education for Hamilton County Schools, will lead the meeting with Carolyn Mashburn, a certified national trainer of Six Traits Writing Skills who has been working with the 16 Benwood elementary schools since the summer.

"These teachers are meeting on their own time because they want to do absolutely everything they can to help their students be successful," says Sale-Davis. "We will be sharing great ideas on important things to focus on during the last 11 days until the test, we'll go over the testing rubric, and we will offer encouragement and support to help these teachers get their students fired up about writing."

The Benwood Initiative began in 2001 with a focus on improving reading and writing skills in eight urban elementary schools. Highly successful, this partnership between Hamilton County schools, the Public Education Foundation and the Benwood Foundation expanded in 2007 to include eight additional schools from all areas of Hamilton County. The initiative continues to focus on literacy, but has expanded to include a focus on math and on moving students to "advanced" status in their learning.

**About PEF**

Since 1988, the Public Education Foundation has provided expertise, leadership and financial support for a wide range of programs and reforms in the areas of curriculum and instruction, professional development and school leadership. This work represents an investment of more than \$60 million in the academic success of Hamilton County's public school students.

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