The first two months of negotiations were frustrating as our TRUE proposal was not countered and we spent most of our time in discussions about the history of the four districts and what we expected to accomplish in this process. With the help of a consultant, we were able to agree on a negotiation style and the process finally began. We were in agreement in late March to concentrate on “essential articles” that needed to be put into place for the first day of school. The calendar year had already been agreed to through a committee approach. Our priority was to develop a strong salary schedule and Twin Rivers’ major concern was the instructional day.

After two months of negotiations we agreed on several salary schedules, coaching stipends, department head stipends, department head language, other stipends, hourly wages, placement of all positions on salary schedules and the work day and work year for various groups. A Presidential Side Letter (authorized by our Bylaws) was agreed to and signed to put the “essential articles” into effect. We have to accept the blame for not understanding the desires of the elementary teachers. As a response to the problems of the elementary work day, Joyce Childs was added to the Negotiations Team. She did a tremendous job decreasing the instructional time to 330 minutes, but to many this still isn’t good enough. We have added language that may eventually lead to an improved elementary preparation in year two.

The Benefits Committee first selected CVT as the provider for our benefit packages but their rates were too high and there was no cash in lieu option. We were able as a Union to switch to CalPERS. While some are not happy with their rates either, they were lower than CVT and more options were available. For some TRUE members the District contributions are an improvement, but for Rio Linda teachers they were not. The cash in lieu option is a debate that seems to have divided us, but we were able to continue cash in lieu payments through December. The Negotiations Team agreed to contingency language that places unrestricted funds from the state budget to reopen benefit negotiations. Later this winter we will have to decide how to divide that money between the “caps” and cash in lieu.

Everybody is aware of the slumping economy and the problems it has created. We entertained much hope for this contract based on unification money expected from the state. Over nine million dollars never materialized and it forces us to pick and choose what to push for and what can wait for future years. Obviously when this happens, the membership will be upset. However, it is the reality of what we are facing financially. As of last week, we have exceeded our allotment of money in terms of the Education Code amount (55%) guaranteed to certificated employees. I’m anticipating that our classified employees will receive more in benefits on the District contribution through mediation. However, they have not negotiated their salary and anything gained on benefits will take away from salary.

As of October 23, we have tentatively agreed to all articles with the following exceptions: District Rights, Discipline, Work Day/Work Year, Leaves and language for Pre-K and Adult Education. It would be realistic to expect completion within a few weeks, with a membership vote sometime in late November or December. I have been asked by many members about a ratification vote. My advice is to look at the whole contract and determine if it works for you.

Paul Le Francois
TRUE Head Negotiator
President’s Message

We, the TRUE Association, are over 1630 members strong. I have been charged with the task of getting what seems to be a run-away train back on track.

My first order of business is to create a working communications system. Our website: www.trueassociation.org is updated daily, we now have a newsletter that will be distributed monthly, and our first General Membership Meeting (a social function) will take place November 19th at the Grant High School. We will send out flyers to all schools with more details about the General Membership Meeting; the information will also be posted on our TRUE website.

Sometime in the near future we will be testing an on-line survey program, “Survey Monkey”, to get instant and secure feedback about different issues from all our members, via the Internet. If you are not familiarized with this type of surveys, you can find more information at: www.SurveyMonkey.com.

Let us not forget the TRUE Site Delegates or Site Reps available at each campus and school site. Make sure you know who they are and stay in touch with them. They receive from our office our official communications and other materials for distribution at your site. They can assist you when needed and they can convey your concerns to the TRUE Executive Board. If you don’t know the names of the Site Delegates at your school, you can find them on the TRUE website.

A Side Letter with the Twin Rivers District was signed in July, causing “unintended repercussions” for many of our K-6 members. The Negotiations Team has been working diligently with the support of the Organizing Committee to correct the unfortunate effects of the Side Letter. Some movement has been made, but we are not there yet. As one Association, we must work together to understand and support all of our fellow members, be they at Elementary or Secondary levels. We are one and must stand as one.

David Berry
TRUE President

Stay Informed!
Visit our website: www.trueassociation.org

The 11th/12th Month Pay Check
by Ann Murray

I visited the TRUSD Payroll Office and spoke with Kathi Johnston, Payroll Specialist, about our members’ concerns in reference to deductions/withholdings to their 11th/12th month paycheck. Kathi’s response follows:

The Federal Government says that no money can be withheld (taken out) of the 12th check if you have deferred payment. July would be the 12th check, so that one will be a net check, with no deductions.

North Sac and Grant were already doing their payrolls this way.

If a member doesn’t want to have “deferred payment” he/she can request to Payroll to have it changed to “non-deferred”. Be aware that educators listed as non-deferred will receive their last check on June 3rd and won’t get another check until August 31st.

SCOE (Sacramento County Office of Education) cuts the checks, so one would have to check with them to know more details of where and how the deferred money is held.
Can a member not attend an after school meeting and still get paid?
Teachers will be paid their salary for working their workday.

Who will help families with grade school children on late start Wednesdays when parents have to be at work by 8:00 am?
Each principal at each elementary school is to have a plan in place to accommodate these families. You should talk with the principal to learn the plan for your individual site. This plan should be in effect for the school year.

Why did the negotiating teams need to negotiate over summer?
The negotiation process began on Feb. 26, 2008 in hopes of completing the process before the start of the school year. Contract negotiation is a long process when there is a contract in place. Our negotiators had to start from scratch using the best of the four contracts as a base. The Districts’ view of the best differed from our view of the best. Negotiating continued over summer to guarantee salaries for the start of the school year.

Are prep and late-start Wednesdays still open for negotiations?
Everything is negotiable if both parties agree. Prep time has been negotiated at nearly every session and is a priority for our negotiators.

Is there a timeline for a contract? If the contract is not completed, will we fall back to our old contracts?
No timeline is set to complete the contract. Contracts can take a long time. Until a contract is ratified, we will work according to the Side Letter where it applies. All other articles will be decided by your contract of origin until ratification. If a new contract is not ratified, the Side Letter stays; if ratified the Side Letter goes away and is replaced by language in the new contract.

What can we do to show our displeasure with the District?
Attend the Board meetings. Bring the parents. In a professional manner share your concerns with the School Board. Above all, support the Negotiating Team.

Clarify the 15-minute provision on the Presidential Side Letter.
Not everyone will be responsible for a yard duty after school. If you have a duty scheduled (bus or front of school) you will need to stay to complete it.

Why did anyone have to be Y-rated? We all deserve some kind of raise instead of teaching another year at the same salary?
Twin Rivers wanted all schedules to be “squared”. We were pushing to add money to Y-rated areas, but they would not get off the squared schedule. It is also important to note that the four salary schedules (of the four different Districts) were all over the place and this was a daunting task.

Why were all the big decisions being made over summer without the benefit of the members being able to have input? Elementary lost out.
If the salary schedule had not been set early, many of our members would be working for extremely sub-standard wages, new teachers could not have been hired, and class sizes would be larger. Members will vote to ratify the contract when it is complete.

Do we have to attend meetings after the 7 hour 10 minute day?
All meetings and trainings should be scheduled during the late start Wednesdays.

Does elementary get paid for the first two Wednesdays when we didn’t have late start Wednesdays?
Yes. You are paid your regular salary.

Why do we [elementary] get treated differently than middle school and high school?
Because we are different. Elementary has a different workday configuration from high school and junior high. There are also differences in the Education Code.

Have you recently checked the data on Y-rated? There seems to be much more than twenty-seven Y-rated teachers.
We are currently exploring the use of a “monkey survey” to send out to our members and learn the exact number or Y-rated teachers.

The Rio Linda salary used to have a stipulation that you move schools in order to receive longevity bonuses. Now I see that the new Twin Rivers salary schedule appears to have a unit amount stipulation also. People in category A, B, & C have no longevity, while people in D, E, & F do. Shouldn’t longevity be just years taught in the district?
Teachers are not required to move schools to get longevity bonus. Teachers need to move to the D, E, & F columns to get longevity.

Why haven’t we received a new pay scale? When will we receive one?
Please look in the TRUE or TRUSD websites. The salary schedules are posted on both in the Side Letter.

Why were there longevity changes on the columns?
Longevity was not consistent in the four Districts and when everything was blended, this seemed a logical step to take.
Ann Murray and I met with Tom Janis on two occasions (Sept. 26 and Oct. 16) to ask him questions brought to us by the members. At the first meeting we asked him several questions. He responded to some of them that same day, and at the second meeting he shared with us the answers to the other questions that he needed to research:

1.) We asked him why the District rushed to complete the reorganization.

He stated that it was because of the wording on the ballot. He also reminded us of the ENIC problem and stated that if Grant remained in control any longer they would have done even more damage.

2.) About units: We wanted the policy to be clearly shared with all teachers with regards to the approval and pre-approval process. We asked him to look into units that were not accepted.

At our second meeting he clarified the two cases where units were denied. The District also sent out a notice to all educators clarifying the procedure for units.

3.) We asked him for the District’s position on the work day.

Tom shared with us the details from negotiations (Side Letter), as well as the District’s views on the professional work day. The District feels that we should work a professional work day, and that it would include adjunct duties. He did state that he would talk with Principals to inform them of the proper time to have meetings and trainings. Tom also stated that the Negotiations Teams were in the process of developing a “pay” list to clarify what after-school duties will be paid.

At our second meeting he informed us that the discussion with the Principals had taken place, and that staff meetings and trainings should take place on Wednesday mornings. Tom was made aware of Principals that still insist on after-school meetings, and he will be reiterating with them the proper time to have meetings. Principals have been informed that grade level meetings can and should take place during late start Wednesday.

4.) Our next question was about the need to negotiate during summer when teachers would not have a communication system available.

Tom stated that negotiations took place over summer because of time constraints, that is was not done to sneak something past the teachers. He said that the teachers came to the table with unreal expectations, and that the plan first brought to the table would bankrupt the district. Negotiations started on Feb. 26, 2008. It has taken a long time to blend the contracts together in a way that balances the needs of the teachers with the needs of the administration.

5.) The Kindergarten work day schedule variances were also discussed.

Tom said that he would look into this. At our second meeting he provided us with a copy of a suggested K day to help the Principals make the full day schedule more uniform.

6.) Carry-over sick days were discussed as well.

Tom stated that sick days were still there. He said that the catastrophic leave banks were also there, and that the negotiations teams would work to combine the plans. At our second meeting he stated that the exact number of sick days available each year was still under negotiations and those employees without carry over sick days are still able to take a sick day this year. He is still unsure of when the District will report the number of days available to each employee.

5.) The last question asked was in regards to the 403 B plans.

Tom called in Rob Ball to answer this question. Rob reported that Great American will offer the 457 plan to cover all the 403 B plans. All previous insurers for previous 403 B plans will be put under the Great American umbrella. Great American will oversee all these plans. The IRS has established new rules for 403 B’s effective January 1, 2009, so the District has already taken that into account. You can still continue to use the same companies you have contributed to before, but Great America will be the administrator of all the plan. If members need more clarification about this matter, Ann Murray will be glad to do so; she can be reached by e-mail at: annblowmurray@earthlink.net.
Announcement of Special Election of
the Vice President for High Schools & Adult Ed.
and a Director-at-Large for Specialty Groups

One position for Vice-President for High Schools and Adult Education and one position for Director-at-Large for Specialty Groups on the Twin Rivers United Educators (TRUE) Executive Board are now open for nomination. According to the TRUE Bylaws, a Special Election must be held to fill their unexpired terms which end on May 31, 2008.

For each office, TRUE members can nominate any TRUE member, including her or himself, who are:
- for the Vice-President position: any classroom teacher of High School and Adult Ed. levels,
- for the Director-at-Large position: any educator of the Specialty Groups (counselors, speech therapists, psychologists, librarians, nurses and other educators with no classroom assignments).

NOMINATIONS:

Anyone wishing to run for office must file a Declaration of Candidacy form so that it is received at the T.R.U.E. Office at 3318 Howard Street, Suite 10, McClellan, CA 95652, no later than 6 PM on Friday, November 14, 2008. Declaration of Candidacy forms can be downloaded directly from the “Home” page of the TRUE website: www.trueassociation.org. Forms will also be made available through the TRUE Office in person, or by sending an e-mail request to: true.office@yahoo.com. A candidate statement of no more than 50 words may be submitted along with the Declaration of Candidacy. Candidate statements that are received will be published with the ballots.

The winners will be elected by majority of votes.

SPECIAL ELECTION TIMELINE:

Oct. 30, 2008: Announcement of Special Election of the Vice-President for High School & Adult Ed. and one Director-at-Large for Specialty Groups.

Nov. 14, 2008: Declarations of candidacy due by 6 PM at the TRUE Office, 3318 Howard Street, Suite 10, McClellan, CA 95652

Nov. 14, 2008: Acknowledgement of declarations of candidacy.

Dec. 01, 2008: Starts distribution of ballots and other voting material to all schools.

Dec. 03-11, 2008: Voting takes place at all sites.

Dec. 11, 2008: Ballots and voter list are due by 6 PM at the latest at the TRUE Office, 3318 Howard Street, Suite 10, McClellan, CA 95652. Post-marked date not accepted.

Dec. 12, 2008: TRUE Elections Committee counts ballots at the TRUE Office at 4:00 PM

Dec. 15, 2008: Announcement of results. If a run-off election is needed, the timeline will be included in the announcement of results.

January 08, 2009: Due date to present a challenge to the election. Challenge must be in writing and received at the TRUE office by 5 pm at the latest. Post-marked date not accepted.
Dear Colleagues,

As your new President, I want to let you know how important it is that we support our TRUE Negotiations and Organizing teams. If we are going to get the best contract possible, we need to be working together. We are asking you to help in a few simple ways:

1. Wear blue on Tuesdays. (You don’t need to buy the official union shirt if you don’t want to, but wear any blue you can.)

2. Write a personal postcard to each one of the seven TRUSD Board members telling them about your personal concerns and how this unification has changed your work environment. (Please have them at the TRUE offices by 11/14.) I would recommend calling a meeting, sitting down all together as a staff, and writing your seven postcards all in one shot. One person collects them and brings them in. We need to write heaps of postcards to make an impact with the Board.

3. Attend the TRUSD School Board meeting on Nov. 18th at Castori Elementary. (1801 South St., 7:00 PM) As a union, our power comes from working together. That solidarity is what will make us successful.

David Berry
TRUE President

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**T-Shirt Order Form**

**SUPPORT OUR CAUSE AND SHOW SOLIDARITY IN TWIN RIVERS**

Order your t-shirt to wear in support of our teachers and staff. Get the word out and look oh so stylish on the “wear blue days”.

The t-shirts are light blue with the “Listen” logo on the front:

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Cash or Check (payable to "Just 4 You T-Shirts") and drop in district mail to Wendy Gallimore at Allison Elementary or bring to the TRUE Office. We will deliver your shirts upon receipt.

Name ________________________________
School Site __________________________
Phone Number _________________________  Shirt Size ____________________