New Negotiations Team Appointed

In the last newsletter we asked for interested members to apply for the negotiations team. The TRUE Executive Board approved the appointment of a new Negotiations Team. The new members are: Head Negotiator Eric Marfull (Foothill High School), Aaron Chan (Hillsdale Charter School), Michelle Dice-Hodgdon (Hillsdale Charter School), Sharon Riechelt (Orchard Elementary School) and Kristi Thiem (FC Joyce Elementary). Negotiations with the District started on January 26, 2009. They also negotiated on January 28 and 30 and February 10 and 19. In addition to negotiating our contract, Sharon Riechelt and Aaron Chan of the TRUE team will negotiate the calendar for next year.

Political Action Committee - PAC

By Joyce Childs, PAC Chair

The TRUE PAC committee attended a Political Action Academy Training on February 5-8 at Jackson Rancheria. Five members of the TRUE PAC attended: Joyce Childs, PAC Chair, Wendy Gallimore, Organizing Chair, Kerry Asbury, PAC Treasurer, and PAC members Julieanne Neal and Lisa Gant.

The weekend’s events were set around an election simulation. Workshops for this simulation were Campaign Planning and Strategy, Organizing for Politics, Targeting and Voter Contact. The key focus was to “Get Out The Vote” to support your candidates. A presentation was given by CTA pollster Heidi Von Szelski, she shared results of various polls from the past 15 years. These polls targeted likely voters for School Board races and looked at the attitudes, concerns and opinions of voters toward teachers and public education, voters do trust teachers.

The TRUE PAC meets monthly and we need you to join us. All of the current TRUSD Board members are up for reelection this November. Come and join the process to help ensure the best Twin Rivers’ Board possible. The next PAC meeting will be at 4:00 PM on March 17 at the Lion’s Gate Lounge located in McClellan Park. For more information contact the PAC Chair, Joyce Childs, at 715-8244.

New Executive Board Members

By Julieanne Neal, Elections Chair

Due to resignations on the Executive Board, we now have three new members. They are: Karah Tovar, Specialty Group Director-at-Large, John Ennis, High School Vice President, Kristi Thiem, Grades 4-6 Director-at-Large and Julieanne Neal was elected to a two year term as a K-3 Director-at-Large.

Help Us Build

Continue to send to us information about activities that are happening at your schools, births, special events, death of a TRUE member, questions and any important information you can give us to add to our newsletter.

E-mail any information you want to contribute to: annblowmurray@earthlink.net The next deadline to submit information for the newsletter will be March 13, 2009.
**President’s Message**

February 18, 2009

As I sit thinking about the words of wisdom I am to impart to the members, I am perplexed as to how to make this short. The most pressing issue of today would be the impending layoffs. I am marginally encouraged with the signing of President Obama’s stimulus package; however I’m told the district isn’t considering these dollars at this time for possible relief. As the state finishes up we should have a better idea as to the financial status of the district. I am also impressed with the President’s comment “the unions are not the problem, they are the answer”. We will not allow one more layoff than the district can prove is necessary. It is the opinion of this president that number is zero. We must remember the burden of proof falls on the district. It is unfortunate the district has been dealt a poor hand, or has it? How many times have the teachers been required to get results without adequate resources and then been told there are no excuses. A member has e-mailed me with the statement: “I asked if this job offer would be for a long teaching life and was told “This district does not lay off teachers”. Oops doesn’t pay the mortgage.

In regards to the 5-day work reduction and everyone sharing the burden: The last time I worked percentages, X divided by 180 is a larger percentage than X divided by 330 or whatever number the district office employee’s work. How is this sharing the burden equally? We must not be hasty in our decisions until we have toughly researched our options. We need an offer from the district that makes sense for all; the teachers must not always be asked to shoulder the burden.

Negotiations seem to be progressing. The team has negotiated several articles and tentatively agreed (TA’d) Articles: 12 (charter / Alternative Schools), 13 (Member Safety), 18 (Catastrophic Leave), 19 (Twin Rivers Employee Relations Council), and 20 (Summer School). The Team will be meeting with the district again on February 19 and 26, 2009.

At the NEA Regional Conference I attended this month, information was shared that the President’s Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, has been scheduled to meet with our teacher representative from NEA every 6 (six) weeks. The significance of the meetings is that under the Bush administration, NEA was never asked for input. The quote I am reminded of is “if you are not invited to the table, you are most likely on the menu”. Their primary conversations will be based around No Child Left Behind (NCLB). President Obama has admitted it is seriously flawed and is challenging his staff to fix it with input from teachers. The changes unfortunately won’t be realized for about a year, but they are coming.

In conclusion, I would ask of our members to be proactive with comments to the School Board members and other district officials. Please vent with friends, but when talking with those you believe can make a difference, respectfully state the issues and problems, and if possible, offer suggestions as to how to resolve them. And always remember: united we stand, divided we fall.

With Your Support,
David Berry

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**Reduction in Force Notices (RIF)**

RIF’s, layoff notices, will be coming soon. If you get a layoff notice, e-mail the TRUE office immediately: true.office@yahoo.com. There are very short and strict timelines that begin to run from the date any teacher receives a RIF notice. It is vital that you contact TRUE without delay so that we can provide you with lawyer assistance to get through the process.

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**Gone But Not Forgotten**

Janet Watts, a Speech Pathologist for many years in the former Rio Linda District, passed away on January 30, 2009 after combating a year-long illness. Her loving husband Leonard, daughter Jennifer, son Matthew and grandson Nolan are left to remember her thoughtful and giving nature. Services were held February 7, 2009 at St. Mel’s Church. She was a loving wife, mother, grandmother and friend. She will be missed by all who knew and loved her.
Meet Your TRUE Officers:

David Berry, TRUE President

I grew up in Chico, CA and graduated from California State University, Chico in 1976 with a degree in Residential Design and Construction. My first teaching assignment was as a woodworking instructor at El Camino High School in Sacramento; I taught woodworking, ROP cabinetmaking and ROP construction for 10 years. In 1987 I resigned from teaching and opened a commercial cabinet and fixture business. In 1993 I returned to teaching and was hired to teach woodworking at Highlands High School, it was 2000 when I came to Rio Linda Senior High School as a mechanical drawing instructor. Since then the drafting program has evolved into a visual communication program with an emphasis on architecture. I currently teach architectural drawing, art and architecture and architectural design. I enjoy the students, the school and my program and hope to be at Rio Linda until I retire. As to union involvement, in the Grant Teachers Association I was a Site Rep and later Vice-President of the Executive Board for two terms. With TRUE I’ve been Vice-President, one of the negotiators, and now President.

Ann Murray, TRUE Vice President for Elementary

I have had a variety of experiences throughout my teaching career. My first teaching job was teaching high school History in inner city Indianapolis, Indiana. I left Indiana for the sunny weather and tall palm trees of Los Angeles. I taught high school in the infamous south central Los Angeles area. This is the area that you hear being sung and rapped about on hip hop music. After one year I moved down to an elementary school in the same area. I taught at three different elementary schools in Los Angeles before I moved to the Sacramento area and was hired by the then Rio Linda Union School District in 1989. I was always very active in the teachers’ unions in every district I have worked in. I have been a Site Rep, a member of two Executive Boards, an organizing member and now a Vice President for TRUE. I have been a union activist since I was a young child. I remember going to grass roots union meetings with my mom and dad as they each formed unions for their non-union jobs. I did listen even though I was small and I remember that the message that was being sent during each and every meeting was “United We Stand, Divided We Fall”.

Election Committee News

By Julieanne Neal, Elections Chair

As always the Elections Committee has been working tirelessly to stay on top of all the different elections.

We just concluded taking nominations for a CTA State Council seat. CTA State Council representatives attend four Capital Service Center meetings and four State Council meetings each year. They are responsible for sharing member concerns with the council and reporting back to TRUE as needed. Timelines were sent to each site, and voting will take place from February 25th to March 5th at all sites. Please be sure to cast your ballot.

We are also preparing to run two elections for the National Education Association Representative Assembly (NEA-RA). CTA has sent out Scantron ballots for the State NEA-RA delegate seats. TRUE has eleven local NEA-RA delegate seats to fill. The NEA-RA meeting will take place in San Diego this summer June 30 to July 6. You must be able to attend and participate at the RA in San Diego for the entire six days. A timeline with detailed information and declaration of candidacy forms will be sent out soon. Please consider running.

I would also like to invite members to join the Elections Committee. Many hands make light work, and we could use your help. If you are interested, please send your name, phone number and e-mail information to Jen at the TRUE office: JenSmith@trueassociation.org

Buttons, Buttons, Buttons

The district is making a lot of fuss over the “I Am Working Without A Contract” buttons and some of our members at several schools have been told that they cannot wear them during school hours in their classrooms and around the school. Yes, it is OK to wear your blue buttons on school grounds at anytime. They are not political buttons, they are bargaining buttons. According to PERB Decision No.1727, teachers have the legal right to wear bargaining buttons at school. You can read more about it on the TRUE website: www.trueassociation.org. So, wear those buttons proudly!!!
By Lisa Gant

As TRUE’s contact person for QEIA (Quality Education Investment Act) schools, I attended the GTC’s Pre-Conference for Program Improvement Schools and GTC workshop Quality Education Investment Act SB1133. Because of limited participation in the QEIA workshop I was able to talk directly to issues affecting our district and received some good information. I am currently planning a QEIA training. I particularly enjoyed the Are You Ready for RtI? RtI (Response to Intervention) came out of the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act). RtI is a process that a school site may implement as a way to help decrease special education referrals by using targeted interventions at the classroom level to close individual student learning gaps. It is a way to implement small groups and get the maximum effect by targeting specific skill sets. RtI is a delivery system, not a program. My school site, North Avenue, had already begun to implement RtI, in some classes. I also thought that the Reading Comprehension Strategies That Get Results workshop was great. It reaffirmed that the comprehension component my site is delivering to our students is on target and researched-based. The workshop stressed the importance of directly and implicitly teaching comprehension skills and strategies.

I received some great information and made some good connections at the conference, and I would go again.

I recommend that next year our members submit a conference scholarship form and attend this conference (this form, along with a conference schedule will be available on the TRUE website.)

QEIA: What is it and Who gets it?

You may have seen or heard the acronym QEIA, but what is it and who gets it? The Quality Education Investment Act SB 1133, QEIA, is a settlement of the lawsuit CTA filed against the state to compel payment in full of Prop. 98’s minimum funding guarantee. These funds are intended to improve the quality of academic instruction and academic achievement in schools with high poverty students and complex educational needs. The funding is to be paid out over a 7 year period (2007/08-2013/14), and is currently in year 2. In California, 488 schools were selected from an application process to receive funds. In Twin Rivers, 5 schools were selected to receive these special, protected funds: Fairbanks represented by Jack Kraemer, Harmon Johnson represented by Vicki Day, Hagginwood represented by Sara Rikalo, Oakdale represented by Amy Kraft, and North Avenue represented by myself.

I am currently planning a QEIA training with CTA trainer Jane Robb for March 10, 2009 at North Avenue Elementary. This will be for all the schools except Harmon Johnson (they received the training last year).

What’s Happening In Our Schools

By Maria Elena Gallegos

Keema High School just finished testing students for the CAHSEE. This was the first time they had 91 percent participation. Keema is an independent study high school and due to space restrictions students generally test offsite. This year, by being creative with space the decision was made to test onsite. The new approach was extremely successful. Kudos for Keema High School!!!!!

Meet and Greet TRUSD Board Members

Our Organizing Committee has arranged for chat and chew, informal sessions to meet and greet the TRUSD School Board members. The first one was held at Foothill Oaks on February 11. Alecia Chasten and Linda Fowler attended along with many teachers from around the District. The second one was on February 18 at Regency Park, with the attendance of Board members Linda Fowler and Cortez Quinn. The last session will be held on February 25 at Castori.

Calendar of Events:

March 03 ........TRUSD Board of Trustees Meeting - 6:30 pm, at Vineland
March 10 ......TRUE Executive Board Meeting 4:00 pm, at TRUE Office
March 20 ......TRUSD Board of Trustees Meeting 3:30 pm to 8:30 pm, at Vineland
March 31 ......TRUSD Board of Trustees Meeting (check the TRUSD website for time and place)