TRUE General Membership Meeting

Twin Rivers United Educators has had its’ first General Membership Meeting for the 2009-10 school year. This year the meeting was held on September 15th at the Holiday Inn on Date Avenue in Sacramento. During the opening social hour the members were serenaded by Rio Linda High School’s Rio NYN vocal jazz ensemble. This group is nationally recognized. They will perform at the World Music Festival in Beijing later this year. It was a treat to have this amazing professional youth chorus entertain our members.

Gail Mendes, the Executive Secretary/Treasurer of CTA was the keynote speaker. She shared that she was pleased to be at the local level. Ms. Mendes told the audience that CTA was focusing on active organizing this year. She encouraged TRUE to reach out to its members to become more actively involved with organizing. It will take teachers telling parents, friends and their own family members the circumstances of our present education conditions in order to enact the necessary changes that our students need to be successful.

CTA’s research has found that California’s share of the “Race to the Top” funds will amount to .83 cents per student and the governor has the option of skimming half right off the top. Ms. Mendes also shared that Mr. Dean Vogel, CTA’s Vice President is in close contact with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Secretary

(Continued on page 4)
The month of September can be a difficult one for educators. The “honeymoon” with students is over, the realization that educators are asked to do more each year sets in, and that we are working in an increasingly stressful environment.

The TRUE Union currently faces several immediate challenges. We have a handful of schools without Site Reps. There are seven Site Rep meetings scheduled this year. Individuals need to step up.

Next, it was evident to me in the Joint Contract Training/Workshop, that we need to work on our contract. There were a half a dozen questions that could not be answered by either side. In addition, the absence of 40% of the Principals at that Training makes it clear that employee relations still have a ways to go.

The Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank is up and running. As established in Article 18 of our new Contract, the administration of this Bank will be done by a Committee whose members will be selected by the TRUE Association. We are searching for TRUE members interested in being part of the Catastrophic Leave Bank Committee and you can sign up as a Committee member by sending me an e-mail to: true.office@yahoo.com.

Enrollment in the Catastrophic Leave Bank (signing up for contributions) ends October 1st. I would ask each of our members with permanent status to donate one day a year to the Bank. Keep in mind that only contributors to the Bank will be allowed to withdraw from it in case of need. You can e-mail the TRUE office (true.office@yahoo.com) to request a contribution form, or you can download it from the TRUE website.

Lastly, I must say that sometimes in my old age I get cranky, but philosophical. I don’t believe we have an identifiable culture of education in the Twin Rivers District. Many people believe it will take 3-5 years to establish a culture of good practices. I am not patient, but can wait. However, when I read about a Superintendent’s “Certificated Representative Council”, I conclude two ideas: number one, that this relates to the superintendent’s evaluation with the School Board, and we want nothing to do with it. Number two, that this is a re-tread of an idea that really does nothing to enhance employee relations, but serves to prevent “surprises”. I think the District Administration occasionally needs a “surprise” or two to keep them sharp and focused.

John Ennis
TRUE President

Twin Rivers Schools and Classes Are Making Great Strides

Congratulations to our Super Growth Schools and classrooms!

Frontier Elementary will become our District’s 2nd National Blue Ribbon Award Recipient, the only school in Sacramento to receive this prestigious award this year.

Oakdale Elementary has grown a whopping 152 points in API in just two years. They now boast an 828 API.

Congratulations to John McBeth’s 3rd grade class at Del Paso Elementary and to Marci Dixon’s 3rd grade class at Dry Creek Elementary. Both classes achieved 100% proficiency in math. Both classes included students that were basic and below basic the previous year.

Noralto +12 (ELA) +16 Math +55 (API) Rio Linda Jr. +11 (ELA) +17 Math +48 (API)
Fairbanks +13(ELA) + 11 Math +45 (API) Regency Park +6 (ELA) +10 Math +47 (API)
Sierra View +12 (ELA) + 16 Math +49 (API)
NEA To Spend $6 Million Increasing Teacher Effectiveness In High-Needs Schools.

Education Week (9/17, Sawchuk) reports, "The National Education Association plans to put $6 million over six years into 'comprehensive strategies and policies to increase teacher effectiveness in high-needs schools.' The money will be used to support "four strategies outlined in" a report by Barnett Berry, president of the Hillsborough, N.C.-based Center for Teaching Quality. "Among Berry's major recommendations, states and districts should focus on comprehensive initiatives to lure teachers to hard-to-staff schools and ensure that they grow in effectiveness while there." The NEA "will survey teachers in high-needs schools to understand the working conditions they need to be successful and review policies that seem to get in the way of those working conditions." It also "promises support for the national-board-certification process and to encourage incentive-pay systems to offer at least $10,000 for such teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools." Furthermore, the NEA "pledges to support state and local affiliates who are legitimate partners in pursuit of innovative incentive and compensation programs, through funding streams such as the [Teacher Incentive Fund] grant program."

California, Wisconsin Lawmakers Seek To Lift Ban On Linking Test Scores, Teacher Evaluations.

The AP (9/10, Bauer) reports that California, Wisconsin and Nevada "may find themselves left at the starting line in the competition for more than $4 billion in education stimulus funding if they don't amend laws that prevent student test results from being tied to teacher evaluations." The states "each have laws that ban tying test scores to teacher reviews." But while "California and Wisconsin lawmakers are scrambling to lift the ban, Nevada may not be able to remove its restriction in time for the money because its Legislature won't be back in session until 2011." The AP notes that teachers unions, including the NEA, "have long opposed linking test scores with evaluations and teacher pay because they believe it's unfair to judge a teacher's performance on a single test." Moreover, "they...note the tests can be flawed, don't test every subject, and that many students learn from more than one teacher."

Testing Interferes With Science Education, MIT Professor Writes.

In a letter to the Boston Globe (9/10), Jonathan King, a professor of molecular biology at MIT, writes, "Certainly all our students need a sound scientific education if they are to understand the world around them and the effects of technology on their lives ("Science MCAS stymies many," Page A1, Sept. 3)." Yet, Massachusetts' current policy "focuses on chasing an arbitrary score on a standardized science test," King argues, and that "derails efforts to engage students in the processes and prospects of science and technology." According to King, "scientific achievement is not standardized," and "the natural world is diverse," therefore, "productive human inquiry takes many forms." He concludes, "We need to set aside high-stakes exams and give all students access to inquiry-based, hands-on science experiences instead of scripted, shallow test prep."

Teacher-Run School Opens In Denver, Colorado.

CNN (9/9, Patterson) reported on kindergarten teacher Kim Ursetta, who, 18 months ago, shared her idea of "a union-sponsored public school led by teachers, not a principal," in "a meeting in the office of" Denver, CO, school superintendent Michael Bennet. "Three weeks ago, Ursetta's dream became a reality, as Mathematics and Science Leadership Academy opened its doors to 142 kindergartners and first- and second-grade students in Denver's mostly low-income, largely Hispanic Athmar Park neighborhood." According to Ursetta, a "lack of teacher flexibility ranks among the top barriers blocking the nation's children from receiving the best education possible." More specifically, "Ursetta said she and her colleagues weren't allowed to change the order of their lessons." At the Leadership Academy, teachers "follow school board-approved curriculum and standards," but they "can easily rearrange lessons to 'make better sense for the kids,'" Ursetta said.
Duncan has indicated that they are willing to make some changes in policy to work with California educators. Remember Do Not Mask the Cuts!!!

The TRUE E-board officers and David Oshige, primary contact staff from CTA, gave short reports on the process of combining the four previous associations. This action usually takes 18 months and Twin Rivers United Educators has accomplished it in 6 months. Rick Mau, TRUE Treasurer, reported on combining the four financial funds and creating an accounting system to insure spending in each funding area.

Kristin Finney, TRUE Vice President, talked about teacher driven change. Joyce Childs, TRUE, Secretary, spoke about getting more members involved in organizing and introduced Karen Mix the new Organizing Chair.

John Ennis, TRUE President, shared that we still have 49 permanent teachers and all of the 91 temporary teachers still without teaching positions. He gave details regarding the Catastrophic Leave bank committee. He informed the group that the association is looking for members to join this committee. Please contact the TRUE office if you are interested.

Later there was an open mike session where members shared their concerns regarding working conditions. There were many concerns; some examples were: class sizes and the lack of materials being provided by the district.

Karen Mix reported that organizing is planning a board forum in early October at North Avenue Elementary. She encouraged members to attend.

Thank-you to all the members who came out to join us after their long work day. We need your presence.

Joyce Childs
TRUE Executive Board Secretary

UPCOMING CTA CONFERENCES

- Region 2 Leadership Conference - Reno, Nevada, Oct. 9 – 11, 2009
- Good Teaching Conference North - Burlingame, Jan. 22 – 24, 2010
- Urban Issues Conference - San Jose, Feb. 26 – 28, 2010
- Summer Institute - UCLA, August 1 -6, 2010

All conference participants who attend any conference or event at TRUE’s expense must write a report for the newsletter or make a presentation at the Delegate Assembly. Handouts need to be attached to the report or presentation.

If you are interested in going to any of these conferences, please notify the TRUE Office (true.office@yahoo.com).
### TRUE Elementary Site Delegates (Site Reps)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary School</th>
<th>Site Delegates</th>
<th>Del Paso Elementary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aero Haven Elementary</td>
<td>Tom Bothwell</td>
<td>Lorraine McBeth &amp; Irma Herrera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castori Elementary</td>
<td>Barbara Banholzer &amp; Karen Maxwell</td>
<td>David Evans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dry Creek Elementary</td>
<td>Azikiwe Ayo</td>
<td>Marilee Marsh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frontier Elementary &amp; Charter (K-8)</td>
<td>Nancy Nazoki &amp; Cara Downey</td>
<td>Dan Hirschfield</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hillsdale Elementary &amp; Eastside Charter (K-8)</td>
<td>Aaron Chan</td>
<td>Kerry Shelton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kohler Elementary</td>
<td>- VACANT -</td>
<td>Cathy Mapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morey Ave ECDE</td>
<td>Jeanie Stockton</td>
<td>Lisa Gant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwood Elementary</td>
<td>Jackie Leymaster &amp; Janet Kouzel</td>
<td>Diana Franklin-Schultz &amp; Jacquelyn Howard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pioneer Elementary</td>
<td>Gwen Malnassy &amp; Carol Daulton</td>
<td>Mary Chilcote &amp; Joan Mayhew</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rio Linda Elementary</td>
<td>Ben Crago-Schneider</td>
<td>Barbara Moses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strauch Elementary</td>
<td>Shirley Chambers &amp; Lindsay Hester</td>
<td>Ann Murray &amp; Judy Crowe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Westside Elementary &amp; Charter (K-8)</td>
<td>- VACANT -</td>
<td>Kent Kohler</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Woodridge Elementary</td>
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### TRUE Secondary Site Delegates (Site Reps)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary School</th>
<th>Site Delegates</th>
<th>Site Delegates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foothill Farms Junior High School</td>
<td>Denise Retter &amp; Karolee Smiley</td>
<td>Catherine Roller &amp; Dave Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant High School (West Campus)</td>
<td>Robert Wadman, Carol Wheeler, Diana Perkins &amp; Kathleen White</td>
<td>Tony Arreguin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keema High School</td>
<td>Maria Elena Gallegos</td>
<td>Miles P. Richmond - VACANT -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLK Jr., Tech. Academy - VACANT -</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pacific Career &amp; Tech High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Linda High School</td>
<td>Richard Halter, Lucinda Halter &amp; John Kreutzer</td>
<td>Kate Purrington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smythe Academy (7-8 Campus)</td>
<td>Danielle Williamson</td>
<td>Winona Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vista Nueva High School and Nova Community Day School</td>
<td>Brian Bartholomew</td>
<td>Norm Zack</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### TRUE NEWS

September 2009
TRUE TEAM:

EXECUTIVE BOARD:
Officers:
President................. John Ennis - true.office@yahoo.com
Vice-President........... Kristin Finney - pazgirl@yahoo.com
Secretary.................... Joyce Childs - joyandmic@sbcglobal.com
Treasurer.................... Rick Mau - RickMau@trueassociation.org

Directors-at-Large:
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For 4-6...................... --vacant seat--
For 7-8...................... Paul Le Francois - lefrancois1@earthlink.net
For 9-12..................... Chuck Denonn - cdenonn@peoplepc.com
Nona Boyd - nonahob@hotmail.com

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--vacant seat--

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ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
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POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC)
Committee Chair........ Lisa Gant - lisasring@sbcglobal.net
Committee Treasurer..... Kerri Asbury

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John Ennis  Paul Le Francois  Chuck Denonn  Mark Hales
Kristin Finney  Laura Bingham  Kristi Thiem  Bob Wadman

TRUE NEWS
Senior Editor.................... Ann Murray
Associate Editor.................. Julieanne Neal
Editing Assistant............... Evelyn Alvarado

Calendar of Events:
Oct. 06........... TRUSD School Board Meeting.
Oct. 9-11........ CTA Leadership Conference at Reno
Oct. 13........... TRUE Executive Board Meeting
Oct. 9-11........ CTA GLBT Conference at Palm Springs
Oct. 27........... TRUE Site Delegate Assembly
Oct. 24........... TRUSD School Board Workshop.
Oct. 26........... Furlough Day
Nov. 3............ TRUSD School Board Meeting
Nov. 10......... TRUE Executive Board Meeting
Nov. 11.......... Veteran’s Day
Nov. 17.......... TRUSD School Board Meeting
Nov. 23-27..... Thanksgiving Holiday

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Teachers of the Year Honored

Anna Ampania and Reginald Harris were among fifteen Sacramento County teachers honored at the 2010 Teacher of the Year banquet. District representatives, families, and friends joined with the honorees at the Sacramento Hilton to fete their outstanding contributions to the education of the students of Twin Rivers USD. Executive Board Directors, Chuck Denonn and Juliane Neal represented all TRUE members in honoring two of our best. A former student introduced each of the fifteen honorees.

A second grader at Woodridge Elementary School bravely extolled the virtues of Anna Ampania, his former first grade teacher. He said: “she was always patient with me and other students.” Then he read a poem that showed how she helped her students learn. Mrs. Ampania followed her student’s introduction with thanks to those who helped put her on the path to success. She stated: “I am working in the district in which I grew up. I was inspired by teachers who believed in me.” She commented further: “The impact that they [her former teachers] had on me is now having an impact on my students.”

A recent graduate from Grant High School introduced Reggie Harris, his former coach and physical education teacher. The student commented on how Coach Harris helped him to work with other people, to accept and encourage others. Mr. Harris said that the banquet was “the most extraordinary thing to happen to him during his career, except for winning the state football championship.” In his brief, but effective motivational comments, he addressed the vital importance of school to every young person in his community. He placed the school second only to the family in importance. He called for teachers to educate children for the life they will face, to believe in children, to motivate them for academic success and to be a model of passion.

Depending on the size of the district, each school district in Sacramento County nominates either one or two teachers as nominees for the Sacramento County Teacher of the Year. Each candidate must complete an application including an extensive biography. Candidates answer, in writing, questions ranging from personal philosophy of teaching to an understanding of current educational issues.

Individual districts throughout the year honor the district Teachers of the Year. The Sacramento Kings, in partnership with Intel Folsom and the Sacramento County Office of Education, will honor our 2010 Teachers of the Year at center court during the halftime of the Sacramento Kings games with the Phoenix Suns on Friday, February 5, 2010. The Sacramento River Cats will host the honorees at a game in May, 2010.

What is Happening at Your School?

We need your help. Our reporters cannot be everywhere so, we need you to tell us what is going on around Twin Rivers. We want to report in this newsletter each month the wonderful accomplishments and activities that our teachers are participating in at your school. Please send us dates of upcoming events so we can include them in our Calendar of Events. You can also write about an event that has taken place at your school such as math night, science night, ice cream social, a field trip, sports event and many more. You can send an article of 250 words or less, attach photos if you have them, to annblowmurray@earthlink.net.

Teacher Humor

I explained to my seventh graders that a metaphor compares two unlike objects that have similar characteristics. Thinking about the fact that I am always punctual. I wrote on the overhead, “I am a clock.” I asked my class why I would draw this comparison. One of my students piped up, “Because you get ticked off!”

Submit your funny teacher stories to annblowmurray@earthlink.net
CTA’s Capital Service Center Council held a fall kick off dinner on September 3, at the Dante Club in Sacramento. CTA members from around northern California attended the dinner and heard the latest from CTA regarding educational funding at the state and federal levels. Dean Vogel, CTA’s Vice President, was the featured guest speaker and he shared some of the details about his meeting, earlier that day with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

Vice President Vogel expressed the need to Secretary Duncan for educators and the current administration to work together in order to create a better educational system for all students. Presently, educators and the governor of California are at odds and the conflict is not what either side wants for our students. Mr. Vogel was very clear that CTA was not willing to see proposed changes in our current standards and evaluation systems. The cost of the administration’s desired changes would eat up most of the possible funding from the Race to the Top funds. The California changes would really be a “race to the bottom.”

Mr. Vogel felt that Secretary Duncan had a better understanding of the California educator’s point of view after their meeting. Now we are in a wait-and-see-mode because, Secretary Duncan has changed his mind, not in educators favor, in the past after discussions with educational leaders.

Joyce Childs
TRUE Executive Board Secretary

Crossover Units Grievance Settlement

The District and the TRUE Association resolved the grievance concerning column adjustments based on units of credit submitted in accordance with the carryover contracts or the District’s memorandum on the units issue. To qualify for back payment, the member must have submitted the units for credit by the dates contained in the carryover contracts. The approval rules in effect at the predecessor district govern the acceptance of units submitted for courses taken prior to July 1, 2008. All units completed after July 2008 beyond the Bachelor’s degree must be college level classes at an accredited college approved by the District.

Credit may be granted for District-sponsored or District-approved courses which were completed outside the school day for which the member was not compensated by the District. Units completed by January 1, 2009, with written verification in a form acceptable to the District received by February 1, 2009 will be retroactively credited to the member’s salary schedule effective February 1, 2009. Members should receive back pay to cover the change in compensation effected by the credit of units. Members who believe that they have not been properly compensated based on salary column adjustments should contact the Contract Enforcement Committee for assistance in filing a claim for the amount they were underpaid.

(Contract Enforcement Committee information on page 6)

Chuck Denonn
Contract Enforcement Chair