The California Teachers Association declared a state of emergency for school funding. The week of May 9-13 was declared a Week of Action. The goal of this week of action was to put pressure on the legislature to pass tax extensions to prevent deeper cuts to schools, colleges and other essential public services. TRUE, TRUSD and CSEA, worked together and attended activities during the entire week. The cuts that have already been made have resulted in increased class sizes, the elimination of instructional days, decreased staff, and reduction in programs including counseling and athletics.

A week of lobbying and community outreach was capped on Friday by five regional rallies—in Sacramento, San Francisco, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, and San Diego—that brought together 15,000 teachers and education supporters. Pictured above are our TRUE Members Chuck Denonn, Julieanne Neal and Maria Gallegos heading the May 9th march around the Capitol. CTA members told their stories of how more than $20 billion worth of budget cuts have decimated their local schools, ballooned class sizes, and eliminated counselors, nurses, and other vital services to their students.

While lawmakers can pass a budget on a simple majority vote, state law requires them to achieve a “super-majority” margin to enact or extend revenues. During last week’s State of Emergency Mobilization in the Capitol, CTA members sought to help round up the four Republican votes – two in the state Assembly and two in the state Senate – that would provide the two-thirds majority.
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

May 12, 2011

On May 6, 2011 TRUE received the Administrative Law Judge’s 32 page Decision. During the layoff hearing 22 members had their layoffs rescinded. We went from 142 laid-off members to 120. The Judge’s ruling found the District made minor procedural errors and interpreted the Ed. Code incorrectly, and four more layoffs were rescinded. That got us to 116 layoffs.

At the May 10, 2011 School Board meeting, in which The Board finalized layoffs, the Human Resources Superintendent, Patty Smart, told TRUE that the District would be able to rescind about 65 more layoffs soon. This was unexpected, but very welcomed. Sadly, this would still leave a total of 55 laid-off people going into the summer.

The week of May 9 -13 was the “State of Emergency” week of action. TRUE was represented well by many members who participated in demonstrations, rallies and lobbying. The Governor’s May revised budget is due the week of May 16th and our impact will be measured from May 16th to the final approved budget.

A quick reminder about the end of the school year: for students the year ends on June 2nd, which is a student minimum day. The last day for educators is June 3rd; no meetings should be scheduled on that day. Clean your room and check out.

I hope everyone has a restful summer vacation. We hope that the next school year will be an improvement from the year we just experienced.

John Ennis
TRUE President

Congratulations on Your Retirement, Chuck!

Twin Rivers United Educators Association would like to congratulate Chuck Denonn on his upcoming retirement after twenty years of service as a teacher and as a strong union advocate. Chuck has been an association leader since the days of the Grant Teachers’ Association (GTA). After the districts merged, his vast knowledge and past experience with GTA made the transition very easy over to TRUE. His contributions to both Associations included being an Executive Board member in different positions, Grievance Committee Chair, State Council Representative, NEA Representative, School Site Representative and the Phone-Banking Extraordinaire.

The TRUE membership would like to thank Chuck for his outstanding service and dedication to our Association. We wish you happy sailing as you embark on the next chapter in your life.
Attending CTA’s State of Emergency Week of Action was encouraging, educating and overwhelming. Many teachers had the opportunity to speak with legislators or their staff directly. It was critical that legislators heard classroom teachers’ stories on how budget cuts have affected them and how continued cuts will further impact their classroom and students. One legislator let us know that hearing from classroom teachers has had an impact.

On the last day of the Week of Action, I had the opportunity to support and greet the teachers who were arrested as they were released from jail. Many can look at this action as a “stunt” by these teachers to get attention but when you spoke to these educators and heard why they took this stand, it was not a stunt. California is in a State of Emergency and many do not see this situation as critical. It is. These teachers’ willingness to bring attention to this issue in this way was truly overwhelming to me. They did not get special treatment during their night in jail. They came out exhausted but did not regret what they did. Their students are that important to them. This situation is that important. It was time to let the public know this.

It was wonderful to work at the rally and see so many teachers, parents, families and community members coming together to support education and extending the taxes.

We Are One and we are not done!

Kristin Finney
TRUE Vice President

CTA Officers Elected

CTA Board Members Eric C. Heins and Mikki Cichocki, were voted Vice President-elect and Secretary-Treasurer-elect, respectively, on Saturday, April 2nd at State Council meeting. CTA President-elect, Dean E. Vogel was voted in on Saturday, February 5th. They all begin their four year term on June 26, 2011.

TRUE Officers Elected

The results of the most recent election for TRUE Executive Board Officers is as follows:

John Ennis—President
Kristin Finney—Vice President
Rick Mau—Treasurer
Christine Moran—Secretary

Their term will be from June 1, 2011 to May 31, 2013.
Congratulations to all of you!
More on California State of Emergency

400 chairs were placed outside the State Capitol to represent the 40,000 educators (30,000 teachers and 10,000 support professionals) who have been laid off over the past 3 years due to the state budget crisis. This is NOT business as usual. Our schools are being decimated – we must all stand up and fight for them!

On Tuesday, May 10th, teachers were asked to go to the Roseville Galleria, Sunrise Mall and Arden Fair Mall, and correct papers, prepare lesson plans, etc. from 4 to 6 pm. That was an opportunity to make people aware that the teachers’ day doesn’t end when they leave the schools. Teachers were asked to share with the public their concerns regarding the state of educational funding. Teachers all over the state planned similar activities to make a statement and put pressure on the Legislature to pass tax extensions to prevent deeper cuts to schools, colleges and other essential public services.

Political Action Committee

The Political Action Committee (PAC) has been very busy in many directions. The entire committee participated in the State of Emergency May 9-13 in Sacramento. They were asked to lobby local legislatures, participate in human billboards and testify at hearings during legislative sessions. Many TRUE members made contributions, one stand out volunteer made a notable influence. She has been asked to join the PAC committee. Suzie Dollesin was actively involved at every level during the week. The committee members are looking forward to her added energy to the PAC team.

The PAC team will be attending a CTA planning session in June to map a plan leading up to next year’s School Board elections. If you are interested in joining these efforts please contact Joyce Childs, PAC Chair, joyandmic@sbcglobal.net.

TRUE CARS+ CORNER

TRUE CARS Plus held its’ last meeting for this school year on May 19 in Bay C at The District office. The meeting was billed with a guest speaker Dr. Berry, an expert on direct instruction. Dinner was provided by textbook company McGraw-Hill. The presentation covered the history of direct instruction and related research. Dr. Almitra Berry shared statistics regarding the effects of proper direct instruction.

TRUE CARS also asked members to bring personal materials for a SWAP meet. Many people brought usable materials that they were no longer using in their own classrooms. Everyone took the opportunity to sift through the materials and take items they could use themselves. Those who attended said that TRUE CARS should do this again in the fall. One teacher’s trash is another teacher’s treasure.

Joyce Childs
CARS+ Region 7 Director
NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

Negotiations with the District began on Monday, May 2. We are working on the definition of an Elementary School and a Secondary School and where all of our various configurations fit. It is clear that in their quest to provide multiple options for parents, the District has created some issues that need to be clarified in the contract. Thank you to those who took the time to complete the Negotiations Survey. We will use your feedback to help guide our negotiations sessions. If you did not get a chance to complete the survey but still have input for the team, please email me at rlteacher@yahoo.com.

Chris Moran
TRUE Lead Negotiator

TRERC UPDATE

The Twin Rivers Employee Relations Council (TRERC) meets once a month to discuss issues with District Administration. For the 2011-2012 school year we have two openings on the team.

Anybody interested should send an e-mail to the TRUE office (true.office@yahoo.com). This is a great opportunity for someone who doesn't feel heard and has an interest in representing a site, program, or specialty group.

Paul LeFrancois
TRUE TRERC Representative

Teacher Funnies

A teacher was having trouble teaching arithmetic to one little boy. So she said: "If you reached in your right pocket and found a nickel, and you reached in your left pocket and found another one, what would you have?" "Someone else's pants".

NEA News

Federal Law Increasing Instruction Time May Overburden Districts.

KXTV-TV Sacramento, CA (5/18, Freedburg) reports that despite being "well-intentioned," a proposed Federal law to "reward school districts that increase instruction time" "is emblematic of the mismatch between expectations emanating from Washington and the realities facing California school districts struggling to stay afloat. It is consistent with calls by President Obama and US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan for children to spend more time in the classroom, despite California schools' struggle just to keep their doors open for the same number of days as last year." However, states and districts may not be able to afford such measures.

Baby Boomer Retirements Could Lead To Oklahoma Teacher Shortage.

The Oklahoman (5/18) reports that Oklahoma, like other states, "could see a teacher shortage in the next decade as large numbers of baby boomer educators retire and school enrollments rise." The piece cites data from the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future indicating that as many as half of the nearly 3.5 million teachers in the US could retire over the next ten years. "The same type of situation is being predicted for Oklahoma,' said Lisa Holder, director of teacher education and minority recruitment at the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education." Moreover, "Nationally, at least 20 percent of new teachers leave the profession within the first three years of teaching, according to the National Education Association."
The High Cost of Low Teacher Salaries

NY Times, May 11, 2011 -- WHEN we don’t get the results we want in our military endeavors, we don’t blame the soldiers. We don’t say, “It’s these lazy soldiers and their bloated benefits plans! That’s why we haven’t done better in Afghanistan!” No, if the results aren’t there, we blame the planners. We blame the generals, the secretary of defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff. No one contemplates blaming the men and women fighting every day in the trenches for little pay and scant recognition.

And yet in education we do just that. When we don’t like the way our students score on international standardized tests, we blame the teachers. When we don’t like the way particular schools perform, we blame the teachers and restrict their resources.

Compare this with our approach to our military: when results on the ground are not what we hoped, we think of ways to better support soldiers. We try to give them better tools, better weapons, better protection, better training. And when recruiting is down, we offer incentives.

We have a rare chance now, with many teachers near retirement, to prove we’re serious about education. The first step is to make the teaching profession more attractive to college graduates. This will take some doing.

At the moment, the average teacher’s pay is on par with that of a toll taker or bartender. Teachers make 14 percent less than professionals in other occupations that require similar levels of education. In real terms, teachers’ salaries have declined for 30 years. The average starting salary is $39,000; the average ending salary — after 25 years in the profession — is $67,000. This prices teachers out of home ownership in 32 metropolitan areas, and makes raising a family on one salary near impossible.

So how do teachers cope? Sixty-two percent work outside the classroom to make ends meet. For Erik Benner, an award-winning history teacher in Keller, Tex., money has been a constant struggle. He has two children, and for 15 years has been unable to support them on his salary. Every weekday, he goes directly from Trinity Springs Middle School to drive a forklift at Floor and Décor. He works until 11 every night, then gets up and starts all over again. Does this look like “A Plan,” either on the state or federal level?

We’ve been working with public school teachers for 10 years; every spring, we see many of the best teachers leave the profession. They’re mowed down by the long hours, low pay, the lack of support and respect.

Imagine a novice teacher, thrown into an urban school, told to teach five classes a day, with up to 40 students each. At the year’s end, if test scores haven’t risen enough, he or she is called a bad teacher. For college graduates who have other options, this kind of pressure, for such low pay, doesn’t make much sense. So every year 20 percent of teachers in urban districts quit. Nationwide, 46 percent of teachers quit before their fifth year. The turnover costs the United States $7.34 billion yearly. The effect within schools — especially those in urban communities where turnover is highest — is devastating.

But we can reverse course. In the next 10 years, over half of the nation’s nearly 3.2 million public school teachers will become eligible for retirement. Who will replace them? How do we attract and keep the best minds in the profession?

People talk about accountability, measurements, tenure, test scores and pay for performance. These questions are worthy of debate, but are secondary to recruiting and training teachers and treating them fairly. There is no silver bullet that will fix every last school in America, but until we solve the problem of teacher turnover, we don’t have a chance.

Can we do better? Can we generate “A Plan”? Of course. The consulting firm McKinsey recently examined how we might attract and retain a talented teaching force. The study compared the treatment of teachers here and in the three countries that perform best on standardized tests: Finland, Singapore and South Korea.

Turns out these countries have an entirely different approach to the profession. First, the governments in these countries recruit top graduates to the profession. (We don’t.) In Finland and Singapore they pay for training. (We don’t.) In terms of purchasing power, South Korea pays teachers on average 250 percent of what we do.

And most of all, they trust their teachers. They are rightly seen as the solution, not the problem, and when improvement is needed, the school receives support and development, not punishment. Accordingly, turnover in these countries is startlingly low: In South Korea, it’s 1 percent per year. In Finland, it’s 2 percent. In Singapore, 3 percent.

McKinsey polled 900 top-tier American college students and found that 68 percent would consider teaching if salaries started at $65,000 and rose to a minimum of $150,000. Could we do this? If we’re committed to “winning the future,” we should. If any administration is capable of tackling this, it’s the current one. President Obama and Education Secretary Arne Duncan understand the centrality of teachers and have said that improving our education system begins and ends with great teachers. But world-class education costs money.

For those who say, “How do we pay for this?” — well, how are we paying for three concurrent wars? How did we pay for the interstate highway system? Or the bailout of the savings and loans in 1989 and that of the investment banks in 2008? How did we pay for the equally ambitious project of sending Americans to the moon? We had the vision and we had the will and we found a way.

Dave Eggers and Ninive Clements Calegari are founders of the 826 National tutoring centers and producers of the documentary “American Teacher.”
CTA President David A. Sanchez urged an estimated 3000 participants at the Friday, May 13 Capitol rally to keep the pressure on Republican lawmakers to provide the votes needed to extend the state’s temporary taxes and approve a budget that will block another $4.1 billion in cuts to education.

The CTA leader spoke to the crowd for the first time after spending a night in jail with 26 colleagues. All were arrested Thursday night for refusing to leave the Capitol until two Republican leaders – Sen. Bob Dutton and Assembly Member Connie Conway – agreed to provide the GOP votes needed for the temporary tax extension and the budget.

The crowd roared its response as the CTA president declared, “Si puede, si puede.” He told participants that this week’s intense activities would continue in legislators’ districts until those goals are achieved. In the long term, CTA efforts will continue until education secures an adequate and stable source of funding.

Supt. of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson and representatives of education groups and labor garnered cheers from the crowd as they pledged to work together to win the battle for public schools. “We are one, we are one” was the theme each one sounded.

The rally, which began shortly after 4:00 p.m. and adjourned at about 6:42 p.m., brought together an estimated 5,000 Capitol Insiders, other CTA members, members of unions including Service Employees International Union Local 1000 and the California Federation of Teachers, and the State Parent Teachers Association, representing more than one million Californians. It was the last scheduled activity for the 300 CTA members who had volunteered to spend a week in Sacramento fighting for funding for schools. Local legislators also turned out to show their support, including Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) and Assembly Member Mariko Yamada (D-Yolo).

During the rally, speakers read from the completed “exam books” turned in by lawmakers in response to a “homework” assignment given them by CTA that asked them to solve the state’s fiscal crisis. Among the answers held up as exemplars was the one from Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg. In his answer, the leader of the Senate pledged to hold all state Senators in a locked meeting room until they vote to approve the tax extension and the budget that the educators are calling for. (article from http://castateofemergency.com, photos from TRUE Members)
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TRUE / CTA / NEA

TRUSD Office
Summer Closure Days

Friday June 10
Friday June 17
Friday June 24
Friday July 1
Monday July 4
Friday July 8
Friday July 15
Friday July 22
Friday July 29