Have you ever wondered if you have a cause to file a grievance. By definition a grievance is “an allegation by one or more members of the bargaining unit or by the Association that a member(s) has been adversely affected by the employer’s violation, misinterpretation or miss application of a specific provision(s) of the collective bargaining agreement. Beyond the technical definitions, the member usually views the grievance situation as one in which he/she has been treated improperly or unfairly by the employer for whatever reason and that this poor treatment must be stopped. So how do you know if it is a grievance or a complaint?

- Can you cite a specific provision of the contract that has been violated?
- If there is no contract language covering the issue, or if it is unclear, has established past practice been violated?
- Has there been a violation of School Board polices, procedures, or regulations?
- Has there been a violation of state or federal law?

When in doubt, err on the side of caution and contact the Grievance Committee who can help determine whether the problem is actually covered under the grievance process.

**Is It a Grievance?**

If it is a grievance, you’ll find it in the contract. Check the definition of a grievance first (article 16 of our contract). Then find the sections of the contract that have been violated. List everything in the initial grievance that you can think of. It is always easier to withdraw something later than it is to add it.

**Is It a Problem?**

If it is not in the contract, it may be a problem. A problem may be resolved by your negotiating team adding language to the contract, by filing a complaint under Board policy, by taking legal action, by organizing around the issue or by employing alternative dispute resolution methods.

**Is It an Unfair Labor Practice?**

If the situation violates your right to involvement in union activity, it is a unilateral change in past practice, or constitutes bad faith bargaining, the Union may be able to file an Unfair Practice Charge. Talk with your local association leadership or staff person if you believe this may be the case.

**Is It a Legal Problem?**

If it is not in the contract, look to the Education Code or other statutes that regulate employment relations. It may be a legal problem that requires involvement of a CTA attorney.

**Is It Something Else?**

Maybe it’s an issue that can be resolved through your union, or it can be organized around. If it’s not in the contract, but is an annoyance to the members, the union might be able to organize members to take action to change the situation.

**Sharon Reichelt**

Grievance Committee Member
TRUE NEWS
November/December 2011

T.R.U.E. PRESENTS
An evening with
DIANE RAVITCH
FRIDAY, JANUARY 20TH, 2012
6-7:30pm
SACRAMENTO CONVENTION CENTER
1400 J Street, Sacramento

Come learn firsthand what Diane Ravitch has to say about our public schools, and what we can do as a community to provide a quality education for our students.

Encourage your colleagues to spend an evening with Diane Ravitch. She’ll provide the tools you need to fight attacks on teachers and public education.

Once an educational conservative and an early supporter of President George W. Bush’s “No Child Left Behind” policy, Diane Ravitch has shaken up the education world by doing a complete about-face on testing, accountability and the merits of charter schools.

Through her speeches, her appearances on such popular TV programs as Jon Stewart’s Daily Show, her tweets, and her bestselling book, “The Death and Life of the Great American School System,” Ravitch continues to take on the privatizers, the charter school movement, and those who have little understanding of what goes on in the classroom.

“Congress does not know how to reform schools. Neither does the U.S. Department of Education,” she has said. And, as a renowned education historian, research professor at New York University and former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education, she should know.

She has been called the “anti-Michelle Rhee,” and blasted the former District of Columbia schools’ chancellor during last spring’s test fraud scandal following Rhee’s departure to head the Sacramento-based “Students First” organization. Ravitch wrote of Rhee’s efforts to subject public education to free-market forces, including competition, decision by data, and consumer choice in the online Daily Beast.

“All of this sounds very appealing when your goal is to buy a pound of butter or a pair of shoes, but it is not a sensible or wise approach to creating good education. What it produces, predictably, is cheating, teaching to bad tests, institutionalized fraud, dumbing down of tests, and a narrowed curriculum,” she wrote.

TRUE IS GIVING AWAY FREE TICKETS TO TRUE MEMBERS!
(first come, first served basis; limited number of tickets)
Get your free ticket at the TRUE Office or through your Site Rep
HURRY, DON’T MISS THIS IMPORTANT EVENT!!

This event is sponsored by Sacramento, San Joaquin and Yolo County Teacher Associations.
Tickets can be purchased by calling or visiting any of your local associations or at:

TWIN RIVERS UNITED EDUCATORS
3318 Howard St., McClellan, Ca. 95652 (916) 648-9791
November 29, 2011

I hope everyone had a restful Thanksgiving week. It is only three weeks to the next holiday period. I hope our TRUE members are taking care of their health and families. The 2012 will be a major economic and political “change” year.

The official school year ends June 1, 2012. TRUE, however, will be working hard through June 5, 2012, for that Tuesday is election day for the Twin Rivers School Board. TRUE members need to have the mentality that our work year is not over until Tuesday, June 5th, when the ballots have been counted.

To select the School Board candidates that TRUE will support, TRUE is following a procedure that includes inviting all candidates to fill out educational related questionnaires, an interview process and a selection process.

For this Board election, a diverse group of candidates, with input from the community, is essential. The future Twin Rivers School Board needs to be comprised of citizens that are truly interested in education and reflect the values of teachers and the community. Our community has a wealth of knowledge and spirit that will make the Twin Rivers District a great place for education and a decent place to work.

John Ennis
TRUE President

Save the date!

TRUE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING!

~ Budget & Negotiations Updates ~
~ Meet some of the candidates for the Twin Rivers School Board ~

When: January 31, 2012
Where: CTA, 4100 Truxel Road, Sacramento, CA 95834
Time: 4:00 p.m.

Update on the School Board Election

The School Board election is on the forefront of the TRUE Political Action Committee. The committee has reached out to the community and discovered many individuals that are interested in running for the position of trustee on the Twin Rivers Unified School Board. The team developed and sent out a candidate questionnaire to all who might be running, including the current sitting Board members.

The District approved a new area map and sent it to the County Board of Education for their approval. However, the community had given the District constructive suggestions that were not acted upon by the District consultants. The community members completed their own research and developed a map that included the input of the activists in the neighborhoods of Twin Rivers. The concerned stakeholders also attended the County Board meeting and presented their concerns. The County Board listened to the community and rejected the District’s proposed area maps. The County Board sent the District back to the drawing board to create a new district map that would be acceptable to the citizens of the Twin Rivers Unified School District.

The Twin Rivers Board of Trustees has now appointed an ad hoc committee to develop a more acceptable district area map.

Now the TRUE PAC committee is waiting for the final official map so that our PAC can determine which candidates live in which of the outlined election areas. Interviews and endorsements cannot be completed until the Sacramento County Board of Education approves the area map based on the latest census information.

TRUE members interested in joining the TRUE Political Action Committee should contact Joyce Childs at joyandmic@sbcglobal.net

Joyce Childs
TRUE PAC Chair
California Districts Mull Cutting Days To Deal With Funding Cuts.

The AP (11/18, Williams) reports that a dearth of state education funding to California districts could result in a "direct hit" to students, describing "the prospect of fewer school days that would make California's school year among the shortest in the nation and could worsen its already troubled school system. The state's schools face up to $1.4 billion in automatic spending cuts after analysts determined that California's revenues have come in dramatically lower than Gov. Jerry Brown and state lawmakers had hoped." The piece notes that some districts in the state have already cut days from the academic calendar. "But cutting the school year quickly could prove challenging unless lawmakers agree to revisit a law also passed last year that was intended to protect teachers' jobs, as some school administrators would like them to."

The AP notes parenthetically that Education Secretary Arne Duncan has urged districts to extend the school day.

The San Jose Mercury News (11/18, Noguchi) reports, however, that though districts are facing "painful" budget shortfalls, "the 2011-12 school year probably won't get any shorter. ... That's because school officials largely skirted a state law ordering them to ignore the possibility of dramatic midyear budget cuts when planning their finances earlier this year. And even though those cuts are a strong possibility starting Feb. 1, due to anemic tax revenue, many school districts built enough of a cushion into their budgets to absorb most of the blow."

Report Compares States' Teacher Evaluation Programs.

A new report from the National Council on Teacher Quality on state teacher evaluation programs generated a number of articles today. Education Week (10/27, McNeil) reports that the report "calls out four Race to the Top states for so far not delivering high-quality, ambitious teacher-evaluation plans: Georgia, Hawaii, Massachusetts, and North Carolina. The report praises 17 states plus D.C.-a list that includes all eight of the remaining Race to the Top winners-for adopting through law or regulation ambitious teacher evaluation policies that include 'objective evidence of student learning and mandate student achievement and/or student growth will 'significantly' inform or be the preponderant criterion' for evaluations." The piece continues to detail why each of the four criticized states was called out by the report.

The Los Angeles Times (10/26, Blume) reports that the report indicates that California is a "notable exception" to the trend of states making "significant changes in teacher evaluations in the last two years, with many for the first time taking into account student achievement in such high-stakes decisions as granting tenure protections and dismissing instructors for poor performance." The Times adds that "critics insist the state is trailing the nation in this area while others applaud California for resisting unproven strategies." The Times points out that the council "compiles data and advocates for policies it favors," such as "teacher performance reviews that take into consideration students' academic growth and use this as the primary criterion for evaluating teachers, in addition to weighing other evidence of student learning."

TRUE CARS + CORNER

TRUE CARS+ has had a very busy fall schedule of events. Every month we have had a specific focus and guest. In October the Chapter held a short meeting and an introduction reception for Tom Anderson, the new Director of Special Education for Twin Rivers Unified School District. Tom shared with the attendees a little bit about his career in special education that led him to Twin Rivers. People had the opportunity to ask questions in a group format and then we socialized informally with snacks and conversation. Those in attendance had an enjoyable time getting to know Tom.

TRUE CARS+ Chapter has two new officers: Lovina Robinson from Foothill Ranch Junior High was elected as the new Vice President, and Tina Mischke from Norwood Junior High has volunteered to be the new Treasurer. Both Lovina and Tina want to be more active in CARS+ and they have also volunteered to be appointed to the state level CARS+ Legislative Committee. They will be keeping us posted on legislation related to special education issues.

December 3rd was the official “Day of the Special Educator” for California. This year Region 7 celebrated this with TRUE CARS+ on December 2nd at Lion’s Gate Hotel. The guests included Fred Balcom, State Director of Special Education for California, Dee Torrington, the Vice President Elect for the Executive Board for CARS+, and Dana Dillon the CTA Director for District D.

Joyce Childs
CARS+ Region 7 Director
PLANNING YOUR RETIREMENT?

CTA

Capital Service Center Council

Presents

RETIREMENT WORKSHOP

Tuesday, January 10, 2012
4:30 pm—7:30 pm

CTA Natomas RRC
4100 Truxel Rd.
Sacramento, CA 95834

Presenter: Steve DePue
Regional UniServ Staff – NODD

Dinner will be provided

Please email RSVP to Shelbie Cassella scassella@cta.org by Friday, January 6, 2012

Project DREAM (Developing Resiliency through Education, the Arts and Mentoring) is a private, non-profit, all volunteer organization that supports enrichment activities in the schools and communities within Twin Rivers Unified School District (TRUSD).

DREAM raises funds for 28,000 students in 50 schools within the communities served by TRUSD, an ethnically diverse and urban school district in which 79% of students qualify for free or reduced cost meals and over 1,800 students are homeless.

Earlier this school year, the all volunteer DREAM Board approved over $13,000 in grants in support of 5 environmental learning projects that had a direct impact on the lives of well over 300 students within TRUSD.

Due to lack of monetary contributions, DREAM can no longer support outdoor education projects.

You can help DREAM by donating material resources, money, or volunteering. Please visit www.dreamtwinrivers.com

Suzie Dollesin
Project DREAM Board Advisory Member

Now’s the Time to Apply for a Grant of $1,000 or More for Your High School’s Athletics Program

Applications for the Thomas R. Brown athletic grants will be accepted through January 15, 2012 and award recipients will be announced in April 2012.

The California Casualty Thomas R. Brown Athletics Grant was established to provide support to public high school sports programs impacted by reduced budgets. As an employee of the school and a member of CTA, you can apply for a grant award for your school’s sports program.

Last year California Casualty, CTA’s trusted auto and home insurance partner for over 60 years, presented athletics awards to six California public high schools. Each school received a check of $2,500 to be used for much needed safety equipment and uniforms, for a grand total of $15,000. The six districts were: Mira Loma High School (Sacramento), Pacific High School (San Bernardino), Harbor Teacher Preparation Academy (Los Angeles USD), Mt. Diablo High School (Concord), San Ysidro High School (San Diego), and Mount Pleasant High School (San Jose). Dan Barclay, California Casualty AVP and one of the grant presenters last year said, “It was rewarding to be able to give back to schools at a time when they are struggling with budget shortfalls.”

For more details or go to www.CalCasAthleticsGrant.com.
ELECTIONS UPDATE

We just completed the election for a TRUE State Council Representative and TRUE State Council Alternate.

Congratulations to Joyce Childs as our new Representative and Catherine Roller as our Alternate.

We are not planning any other election until February, unless the Negotiations are completed and we need to vote on a proposed contract.

Julianne Neal
TRUE Election Chair

SCHOLARSHIPS

The California Teachers Association (CTA) has announced it is now accepting applications for CTA Scholarships for dependent children and members.

There are different types of scholarships, which range from $3,000 to $5000.

Application forms are available through the CTA website (www.cta.org, under “member services”). Scholarship applications are several pages long, require several documents (transcripts, letters etc), and must be signed by the TRUE President, so start the process early!

Member Benefits Through CTA/NEA

With the holidays upon us we are all enjoying a lot of food. And putting on a few extra pounds. We may need a little help to get rid of the added weight in the new year. Jenny Craig is offering NEA members a 30 day free trial program and 25% off on a premium program. Go online to nea.org and click on the Jenny Craig link to download the coupon and get the codes needed to activate this offer.

Coupons expire February 1, 2012

Adding Special Education Article to the Contract

The Negotiating Team, led by Christine Moran, Janet Schafer and Chris Bach, is in the process of adding an article (specific to special education) to our employment contract.

There was a meeting at the TRUE office on November 30th at 4pm. There were many Special Educators discussing various issues that are unique to special education. The major points to the discussion will be implemented into a survey. This survey will delineate the areas of high importance to special educators.

Chris Bach
TRUE Negotiations Team Member

TRERC UPDATE

The Twin Rivers Employee Relations Council meets once a month to resolve issues that do not involve negotiations.

At the meeting on November 28, the following topics were discussed: Transportation issues with field trips, transitional kindergarten, issues at MLK and a review of all reconfigured sites (K-4, K-8, 5-8, 6-8). The District acknowledged there were issues with transportation and will work to get the confirmation for trips out earlier. There will also be a review for the reconfigured sites in the future.

If there are items you would like to see discussed at TRERC, contact Paul Le Francois at lefrancois1@earthlink.net.

Paul Le Francois
TRUE Grievance Chair

NEOTIGATIONS

The TRUE Negotiations team met once this month and worked on finalizing the language for Article 11 (Discipline Procedure). We have two sessions scheduled in December.

We are closely monitoring the state budget trigger situation and evaluating the impact it might have on the District. The TRUE team is also collecting information from surrounding districts to compare our furlough days, class sizes and benefits.

Christine Moran
TRUE Lead Negotiator
On the evening of October 26th, the Sacramento Central Labor Council held an event entitled “A Salute to Labor”, where, in the presence of various labor union representatives and community leaders from across the state, the California Teachers Association was recognized for the valiant effort of its members who fight and stand in solidarity on behalf of the working class.

CTA was described as “the intersection of what was happening in Wall Street and what is happening in the real streets of California”. Complemented by a bright orange t-shirt to advocate the slogan “We are One”, CTA Board Member, Toby Boyd accepted the award.

In a heartfelt speech, Boyd addressed the devastations to education as a result of funding cuts and a lack of consideration to what it means to educate tomorrow’s leaders. He insisted, “We are the ones who are going to teach the future leaders of this state; we have to be able to teach them in the proper way.”

National Education Association Director, George Sheridan, who was arrested at the Capitol during a peaceful State of Emergency demonstration, closed by stating, “The Sacramento County Jail is not a great place to spend the night in, but... I’m ready to go back”.

Suzie Dollesin
TRUE PAC Member

Organizing for Power

“Organizing is providing people with the opportunity
to become aware of their own capabilities and potential.” ~ Fred Ross, Sr.

We are living and teaching through tough times. TRUE members are facing several challenges coming from both the District and the community. We are facing higher class sizes, rushed pacing guides that do not allow us to teach to mastery, and an increasing number of violent and aggressive students in our room. We have had yearly requests from the District to make concessions to help offset the shrinking District budget. Furthermore, our members’ rights to bargain and our retirement benefits have been attacked, while potential changes to our evaluation system have been demanded by the greater community. But all hope is not lost.

Effective organizing is essential while we navigate our way through the sea of educational change. Long term organizing builds a more powerful and effective union. We need to listen to our members and identify their goals and visions. We need to employ strategies that put pressure on the administration to help reach our organizing and negotiations goals. At the same time, our membership must become more engaged in our organizing plan. We need to think of our union as a gym membership and not an insurance agency. We all need to work towards reaching our collective goals.

In an effort to strengthen our Organizing Team, TRUE sent four team members for more training. Julieanne Neal, Nicole Pinto, Cathy Mapes, and Catherine Roller attended the CTA Region II Organizing for Power training from November 4 – 6, 2011. This group was trained on Relational Organizing using the COG method. This involves the following four steps: Listen, Plan, Act, and Evaluate. They were given the opportunity to update the TRUE Organizing Plan and we look forward to share this plan with all members.

Julianne Neal
TRUE Director-at-Large
Organizing Team Member
TRUE TEAM

EXECUTIVE BOARD:

OFFICERS:
President: John Ennis - true.office@yahoo.com
Vice President: Kristin Finney - pazgirlk@yahoo.com
Secretary: Christine Moran - rlteacher@yahoo.com
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Catherine Roller - caroller54@aol.com
Chris Back - bacher3@aol.com
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Maria Gallegos - gallegos4@gmail.com

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Joyce Childs - joyandmic@sbcglobal.com
Sharon Reichelt - sreichelt23@gmail.com

ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
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POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC)
Committee Chair: Joyce Childs - joyandmic@sbcglobal.com

TRUE REPS on the Employee Relations Council (TRERC)
Paul Le Francois - Shirley Chambers - Julicanne Neal
Marias Gallegos - Joyce Childs - Jack Masters

CTA STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES
Janet Schafer - Kerri Asbury - Joyce Childs
Wendy Gallimore - Ann Murray
Alternate: Catherine Roller & Lisa Gant

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Twin Rivers
United Educators

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS
Dec. 17-Jan. 3 Winter Break
January 10 TRUE Exec Board Mtg.
January 10 Pre-Retirement Training
CTA Natomas Office
January 16 Martin Luther King Holiday
No School
January 17 TRUSD School Board Mtg.
January 20 Diane Ravitch—Sacramento
Community Center
January 24 TRUE Site Rep Council
Mtg.
January 31 TRUE General Membership
Mtg. at CTA, Natomas
January 31 TRUSD School Board Mtg.