Educators and other union members are in a fight to keep our voices and our rights, as well as protecting against additional school budget cuts. Proposition 32 is a deceptive proposition that will magnify the influence of the super wealthy while effectively shutting out our political voices. If proposition 32 passes, we will have no ability to defend against attacks on collective bargaining, our pensions, and tenure rights. Proposition 30 will provide additional revenue to our schools. Passing proposition 30 will prevent major mid-year school budget cuts, from pre-k through universities. For many districts there will be no alternative to cutting as many as 15 days to the school year. This would be devastating to our students.

To help with this fight, TRUE is hosting a phone bank for NO on 32 and YES on 30. We need to contact as many voters as possible, and every minute of calling will help. It is vital we all get involved! Upcoming phone banking dates: October 24th, 25th, and 30th; November 1st and 5th. Contact the TRUE office (true.office@yahoo.com) to sign up to make calls.

Julieanne Neal
Organizing Committee Chair

October 2012
Volume 5, Issue 3

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Visit our Website: www.trueassociation.org

TRUE/CTA/NEA
I want to let you know the last three TRUSD School Board meetings have ended public sessions at 1:00 am, 12:40 am and 1:00 am. This Board is spending an inordinate amount of time deliberating in closed and public sessions.

So far, this School Board has only made minor District changes. On October 16th, they had the opportunity to hire a new law firm, but they only narrowed it down to two law firms, and the final decision is still pending. Hopefully we will soon make a final selection. We have done some research ourselves on all the law firms, and asked around, and it seems the five options are all decent and would be cheaper, and a step away from Tim Cary and Associates. As time goes on, it has been interesting to listen to people who have worked in the District Office these first four years. Tim Cary and Associates were involved in every aspect of the District and were involved in every department. An External Auditor is now examining Tim Cary’s billing processes.

TRUE is hoping and planning on the new School Board, new law firm, and new Interim Superintendent, to take a serious look at our hostile work environments at Pioneer Elementary and MLK Jr. High School. We are looking for conclusion to these problems, but will continue to litigate, if necessary.

I want to remind all TRUE members of the importance to participate in the November 6th election process. Public education funding and educators’ right to be heard are both on the line. Get involved! Do some phone banking, send e-mails to friends and family and ask them to vote NO on Prop 32, vote YES on Prop 30.

John Ennis
TRUE President

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Oct. 24, 25, 30…..Phone Banking at TRUE
Oct. 31………………Professional Development Day
Nov. 01, 05………..Phone Banking at TRUE
Nov. 06………………Election Day. VOTE!
Nov. 08…………….TRUE General Membership Meeting @ CTA /Natomas
Nov. 09…………….Furlough Day
Nov. 12…………….Veterans’ Day
Nov. 13…………….TRUE Executive Board Meeting
Nov. 13…………….TRUSD Board Meeting
Nov. 15-16………..Parent Conferences (Elementary) Collaboration (Secondary)
Nov. 19-23……….Thanksgiving Recess
Nov. 27…………….TRUSD Board Meeting
Nov. 28…………….Common Core Training @ CTA

MEMBER BENEFITS

NEA Home Appliance Discount: TRUE/CTA/NEA members have the opportunity to receive savings from Whirlpool Corporation, for hundreds of popular consumer home products from brands such as KitchenAid, Maytag, Amana, Whirlpool and many more. Members and their immediate family members can purchase up to 12 products every year.

Call Whirlpool VIPLINK Customer Service
• 866-808-9274
• Mon-Fri 8am-4:30 pm Eastern Time
(3 hours ahead of California)

NEA Complimentary Life Insurance: The following coverage is at no cost to TRUE/CTA/NEA members:
• Up to $1000 group term life insurance
• Up to $5000 accidental death and dismemberment insurance
• $50,000 accidental death & dismemberment insurance of any covered accident that occurs while on the job or serving as an Association leader
• $150,000 life insurance for unlawful homicide while on the job

Visit NEA Member Benefits: www.neamb.com
Thank you to everyone who participated in our most recent negotiations survey. We sent the survey to 1140 members and 357 responded. While we obviously would like all members to participate, this is an increase of responses compared to previous surveys.

We would like to explain why we had a separate special education question, as it was clear from many comments that this caused some members concern. Many districts have special education language in their contracts to cover those members in special education teaching assignments, but Twin Rivers does not. As we have held Negotiations Committee meetings over the past few years, it has become clear that we need to add some language in this area to our contract. We conducted surveys in the spring for our members in special education assignments but did not add any language in the Tentative Agreement. We reserved the right to negotiate a special education article this time and wanted to update our information, hence the question of whether or not you are a special education teacher. We are gathering data to determine areas of need to assist us in determining appropriate language to add to our contract. We understand that many of our general education teachers are impacted by special education students in their classrooms and that fact will also help guide our negotiations.

Hopefully by now you all understand the dire importance of Proposition 30 passing. We will not know for a few weeks what we are faced with, but we now have a better understanding of our members' wishes. According to the survey, if we have to make concessions this year, 49% of those who responded chose “increase out-of-pocket employee cost for benefits” as their first choice. Second, with 42%, was “continued and/or additional furlough days”, and third, with 40.1%, was “continued no cap on class sizes”. We hope everyone understands that if Proposition 30 fails, we WILL be faced with one or more of these concessions. While we firmly believe that the District will also need to show good faith by cutting administration and other costs, it is inevitable that we will also be hit with some financial concessions.

If Proposition 30 passes, it does not mean new money will be coming to education. However, on the off chance that we are in the position to bargain for any money, 69.5% of those who responded would like to see that money used to “increase salary schedule” and 30.5% would like us to “decrease employee out-of-pocket cost for health benefits”.

Thank you again to all who took the time to participate in our survey and for all of the positive comments. They are very much appreciated by the team. We are beginning negotiations on October 24 and will keep you regularly informed of our progress. If you did not have a chance to participate in the survey and would like to let the team know your opinion, please email rlteacher@yahoo.com with your input.

Chris Moran
TRUE Lead Negotiator

A new committee is being formed this year called the Professional Issues Committee. The goal of this committee is to address the needs of our members by providing professional development. We have already started discussions with TRUSD. Our ultimate goal is to work in conjunction with them to best assist our members. Our first training will focus on Common Core Standards and will take place on November 28th, at CTA offices in Natomas. We will be sending an e-mail with information on this training. We will also send out a survey to determine additional training topics; your participation in that survey will be very important.

We are just starting this committee and are in need of members who would like to join it and help plan trainings. If you are interested in getting involved, please e-mail rlteacher@yahoo.com, or the TRUE office at true.office@yahoo.com. This is a great opportunity to become active in your professional association by helping us provide trainings to improve our teaching practices.
I had the opportunity to recently attend the CTA Region 2 Leadership Conference. This year the focus of the conference was centered on both Proposition 30 and 32, but there were also many elective sessions. I attended two sessions focused on special education to prepare myself for the upcoming negotiation of an article in our contract on special education. The sessions were “Understanding Special Education: Impact and Implications for Classroom Teachers” and “Changing Faces of Special Education: Advancing Working Conditions for General and Special Educators.” I also attended a session with Estelle Lemieux called “Sacramento Scene and Legislative Update”.

As you can tell from the titles of the sessions, the special education trainings had a global approach as the issues impact all educators. Topics discussed were service delivery for students with disabilities, teacher rights, IEP issues, inclusion, response to intervention, added authorizations and professional development. The information I received will be utilized during this session of negotiations as we look at adding language to our contract to cover these issues.

Estelle Lemieux provided information on the last legislative session and bills that impact education and public employees. She also reviewed Proposition 30 and the impact of it passing or failing. If it passes, there will most likely not be any new money to negotiate for this year. However, it does start to pay off what is owed to education by the state and over time it provides for additional money to education. If it fails, we are all facing devastating cuts.

The highlight of the conference for me was the opportunity to hear Mary Bell, President of the Wisconsin Education Association Council. While I followed the events in Wisconsin closely while they were happening, it was very emotional to hear first hand from someone who experienced the dismantling of employee rights. Without unions to fight for them, teachers in Wisconsin have faced devastating pay cuts, loss of benefits, and loss of jobs. Districts are able to fire employees with no due process and that has impacted thousands of teachers across the state. Over my years of involvement in TRUE, I have heard many opinions expressed about our association and decisions that have been made. I understand that not everyone has supported every decision or philosophy. However, I encourage you all to do some research about what teaching will be like with no association to speak up for your rights. Based on the information I heard from Mary Bell, it is devastating. Please pitch in and help in any way you can to help us defeat Proposition 32 (and pass Proposition 30).

I know you are probably all tired of hearing about these Propositions, but this will be the last newsletter before the election and you won’t hear about them any more. I am not usually a very political person (although my work with TRUE these past few years has turned me into more of one than I ever thought possible!) but one thing I am very passionate about is education. Both of these Propositions can have devastating impacts on the career I so deeply love. I hope all of you who equally care about your profession will step up and help out in the weeks leading up to November 6. Hopefully by working together we can pass Proposition 30 and defeat Proposition 32 so we can spend our extra time and energy on other things (like our Professional Issues committee!).

Chris Moran
TRUE Executive Board Secretary

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ELECTIONS UPDATE

Congratulations to Luke Flores, our newest Pre-K through Grade 6 Director-at-Large on the TRUE Executive Board. Luke teaches 5th grade at Fairbanks Elementary, and will be an asset to teachers in that area of the District. Luke received 98% of the vote, but unfortunately only 25% of our members voted. -There are no additional elections scheduled at this time.

Julianne Neal
TRUE Elections Chair
I am fairly new to TRUE and CTA family, and when I joined their ranks I had some misconceptions about what the union is and what it does for us. I chose to get involved due to being laid off every year since I was first hired six years ago. I attended the lay-off hearings each year, and experienced the work of our union first hand. It was during one of those hearings that I decided to get involved in my own future rather than letting other teachers do that work for me.

I recently attended the Region 2 Leadership Conference in Reno, NV, and learned more than I thought I ever could. I went to several training sessions on topics from budget analysis for districts, to negotiation strategies, to common core requirements. I found the sessions well thought out and the presenters very knowledgeable, a refreshing change from what I am used to. Although the sessions were engaging, they were not what impressed me most.

I have to begin with an embarrassing story. On Sunday morning, I woke up early and had an hour to kill before the key-note speaker would be presenting. I went down to the registration area, found some coffee and had a seat at a large table to go through my notes from the previous day. A very nice woman approached me and asked if she could share my table. I told her that if she waited for an hour or so, Mary Bell would be speaking regarding things that had occurred in Wisconsin when a proposition similar to Prop 32 passed. She smiled politely and said, “Thank you.” Another gentleman approached, smiled at me, and introduced himself to the lady sitting with me at the table. He complimented her on all her work she had done with the teachers in Wisconsin. I was sitting with the key-note speaker Mary Bell. If at this point you are wondering if I am blonde, yes, yes I am.

The three of us went on to have a very candid conversation about what happened to the teachers in Wisconsin. I had heard all the facts before, no contracts – handbooks instead, teachers being fired for getting a speeding ticket, teachers being required to wear heels and skirts to work, and loss of bargaining rights with the district. What I didn’t know was districts would save money by cutting salaries across the board by two to three thousand dollars a year. Additionally, by firing teachers with more experience and credentials, and replacing them with new teachers it would cost the district far less in salaries.

Mary then spoke about one teacher who told her student’s parents that the program their child attended after school would not be available because of budget cuts; this teacher was in turn fired for not acting as an advocate for the district. Mary also described what the state of Wisconsin was going through in the legal battles of overturning the laws. The legal battle is proving to be a slow process, and she is not convinced that teachers will get their rights back. She illustrated the horrible effects that can and will most likely come our way if Proposition 32 passes. I felt Mary was very open with me about her personal story and what she has lived through.

I found this to be true of all the people there. Everyone was willing to share, they were approachable and helpful. I even had a wonderful conversation with CTA President Dean Vogel. Attending this conference has been the reassurance I needed to know that getting involved is the right thing to do. I urge you all to get involved: become a site rep, attend a meeting, e-mail your Director-at-Large, or just talk with your site rep to see how you could help. We can create a better working and learning environment if we are involved and vocal. Join me!

Mysti Lingenfelter
TRUE Director-At-Large Grades 7-12, Charter and Adult Ed.

“I ALWAYS WONDERED WHY SOMEBODY DIDN’T DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE ISSUES WE ARE HAVING, AND THEN I REALIZED: I AM SOMEBODY.”
WHY DO YOU NEED TO TAKE SOME TIME TO RESEARCH SUPPLEMENTING YOUR PENSION?

One of the sessions at the CTA Region II Leadership Conference in Reno was very informative on the importance of supplementing your retirement with 403(b) and 457 plans. According to a recent Reuters newspaper article, more than two-thirds of Americans are living paycheck to paycheck. When you retire, will you be able to maintain the same lifestyle with even less monthly income?

Planning today for tomorrow is very relevant to your future financial well being. Did you know that to just keep up with inflation and the type of lifestyle you live today, you will need between 80 and 100 percent of your pre-retirement income? The average CalSTRS retiree pension typically replaces only 63% of pre-retirement income. Inflation further erodes your purchasing power.

Teachers have some of the best tax-deferred opportunities of pension retirement and you owe it to yourself to invest in your future. Preparation for maintaining the same lifestyle you have today requires planning. 403(b) and 457 plans can assist you.

Whether you need to establish or review your retirement goals, investing early pays off. Take at least 5 minutes to go to this free retirement income calculator: www.ctainvest.org/home/calculators/projected-retirement-gap.aspx

As educators, we educate the future. Why not spend some time benefiting your future through web surfing and planning using these free tools: www.ctainvest.org    www.403bcompare.com

Should you have questions, feel free to contact Luke Flores (lukeflores@trueassociation).

Rick Mau  
TRUE Treasurer

Luke Flores  
TRUE Director-At-Large PreK– to 6

NEA NEWS

FORMER EL PASO SUPERINTENDENT SENTENCED TO PRISON IN ASSESSMENT GAMING SCANDAL.

Education Week (10/17, Zubrzycki) reports that former El Paso, Texas, Superintendent Lorenzo García "was sentenced this month to 3½ years in prison and hefty fines after pleading guilty to two counts of fraud, including an elaborate conspiracy to manipulate student enrollment to boost his district's performance on state tests." The piece notes that García "also admitted to a fraud that involved the assignment of a $450,000 consulting contract to a woman with whom he had a personal relationship. ... He was also fined $56,600, the amount of the personal bonus he received when the district appeared to be performing better because of the manipulations, and ordered to pay $180,000 in restitution for the contract fraud." The piece quotes ED OIG spokesperson Catherine Grant saying that this case is "the first completed case we have involving a school superintendent manipulating data related to adequate yearly progress for financial gain."

TEACHER: FILM OVERSIMPLIFIES SCHOOL TURNAROUND PROCESS.

In an op-ed in USA Today (10/13, Vega), Boston, Massachusetts, teacher Andrew Vega writes about the successful three-year school turnaround effort at his school, writing, "The new film “Won't Back Down” - based on ‘parent-trigger’ laws that provide parents with a process in which to take over and reform a public school - doesn’t do justice to the process of fixing a struggling school. Instead, it suggests that turning around a bad school can happen in a single year, led by an inspired few. In reality, truly remaking a school can only be successful with a collective effort." Vega describes the collective effort that went into the process at his underperforming school, criticizes the film for demonizing teachers unions, and challenges the film's makers to present a more balanced version of the issue.
General Membership Meeting

When:
Thursday, November 8th, 2012
4:00 p.m.

Where:
CTA Region 2 Office
4100 Truxel Road
Sacramento, CA 95834

Got Questions? Comments?
Concerns? Suggestions?
Get Answers!

California Casualty
Thomas R. Brown Athletics Grant

Applications will be accepted between September 15, 2012 and January 15, 2013.

Applications must be submitted by an active employee of the public high school for which the grant is being requested. The applicant must be a current member of the state NEA affiliate or one of our participating educator associations including: ACSA, CASE, COSA, KASA, NASA or UASSP. Please advise your principal of your grant request. California Casualty may contact your Principal and the Athletics Director directly to advise them of the application status.

Not all schools are guaranteed to receive a grant award. A selection committee will review all applications and determine award recipients and grant amounts. All applicants will be notified of their application status by April 30, 2013. Grant award amounts will range from $1,000 to $3,000. Checks will be made payable to your high school and delivered no later than May 15, 2013.

Awards must be used to subsidize the sports program(s) identified on the grant application and cannot be used for individual student awards, construction projects, organizations whose primary purpose is fundraising, or other school programs.

Only one grant will be awarded per school during the 2012-2013 academic year. If your school is not awarded this year, your school will be eligible to apply again next year.

California Casualty has permission to publish the details of the award, school name and applicant’s name and photo in promotional materials.

For more information about the California Casualty Thomas R. Brown Athletics Grant or to apply online, go to CalCasAthleticsGrant.com or email athletics_grant@calcas.com.

To learn more about California Casualty or to get an auto or home insurance quote, visit calcas.com or call 1-866-680-5142.
The Twin Rivers Employee Relations Council (TRERC) started back up again on October 15. The primary purpose of the Council is to resolve issues that are not dealt with during negotiations. TRERC meets the third Monday of each month. Currently, Shirley Chambers and Paul Le Francois represent TRUE on this Council. We are looking to add one more member; anyone interested should contact John Ennis at the TRUE Office (true.office@yahoo.com).

One of the issues that is being analyzed is the re-configured middle grades. With an Interim Superintendent in place, we are looking for a review of all sites to see what is and isn’t currently working.

Paul Le Francois
TRUE Rep. on TRERC

The TRUE Organizing Team has been working with CTA, RTA, and other community members on a Public Engagement Project focusing on closing the achievement gap within our District. There will be two community conversations taking place mid April. The conversations will center around the theme “It takes a village,” and will provide educators, parents, and community members the opportunity to discuss possible solutions for closing the achievement gap. If you are interested in helping with the project, we would be happy to add you to the planning team. We are also looking for individuals who will be willing to work as a moderator or recorder at the events. Contact the TRUE office or me directly (julieanneneal1@surewest.net) and we will add your name to our list.

Julianne Neal
Organizing Committee Chair

△ Check out the new CTA Member Benefits website! www.CTAMemberBenefits.org △