School budgets and funding can be as confusing as computing Algebra in Sanskrit. In this article I hope to make school funding a little less confusing. School districts in California use a system called fund accounting to record all of their revenues and expenditures. Their money must be placed into special funds designated for specific items. Each fund is similar to a checking account with money coming in (revenues), money going out (expenditures), and a running balance.

When the district or TRUE members talk about “The Budget” they are referring to the General Fund. This budget must cover the day-to-day running of the school sites, the salaries of our teachers, classroom aides, administrators, custodians, school secretaries and clerks, librarians, counselors, maintenance workers, district administrators, and clerical support staff, and other certificated and classified staff are accounted for in the general fund. Our textbooks, other books and supplies, utility costs, repair costs, consulting services, and equipment costs are also paid out of the General Fund, in addition to a plethora of other items too long to list.

This fund is split into two parts: restricted and unrestricted. The items that are required by law or regulation are accounted for and tracked separately, the restricted funds. This categorical funding has very controlled ways of spending money, and with control comes a lot of paperwork. Title 1 for example, is money given by the Federal Government for “Improving the academic performance of the disadvantaged”. This money has a lot of restrictions. For example, when I worked in Categorical Programs as an office assistant I could purchase computers for a new lab at the school site, the programs, for the computer, even the batteries needed for the remotes in the overhead projector. What I couldn’t purchase through Title 1 were the tables to put computers on or chairs for the students to sit in. So I was left with 32 computers on the floor; just imagine!!

The unrestricted parts of the general fund are what our Negotiation team can work with for increased salaries or decrease our out of pocket expense for benefits. Unrestricted revenues can be spent at the discretion of the school board – but within the constraints of contracts with the employees and the Education Code.
I hope everyone has a restful holiday break. 2013 should be an interesting year as the Twin Rivers Unified School District moves in a different direction. Events at the District are volatile and changing daily. Unfortunately, there are internal and external forces working against needed change.

TRUE is becoming an agent of change. TRUE Vice-President Kristin Finney and a group of teachers are working as equal partners with the District to implement Common Core. TRUE Secretary Chris Moran is working with the District to narrow the achievement gap. As educators, we think we know some of the answers to the achievement gap, but we need to coax the District into making concrete changes.

One other area we are working on with the District is the area of relationships. We need to be equal partners with the Administration, have open lines of communication, and have this spill over to negotiations and to resolving/settling grievances a lot quicker and more effectively. Currently we have open dialogue with the School Board members and the top administrators.

TRUE also has some solid working relationships with community groups. These community groups and parents are people who have demanded change and have intimate knowledge of their neighborhood needs. I am more optimistic about 2013 than any other year since 2007. Perhaps in 2013 we can return from the financial and spiritual abyss we have found ourselves in.

John Ennis
TRUE President

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec 18</td>
<td>Rep Council</td>
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<td>Dec 21</td>
<td>Student Minimum Day</td>
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<td>Dec 24-Jan 4</td>
<td>Winter Break</td>
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<td>Jan 7</td>
<td>Furlough Day</td>
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<td>Jan 8</td>
<td>TRUSD Board Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 10</td>
<td>Kindergarten Meeting (4pm at TRUE)</td>
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<td>Jan 10</td>
<td>Organizing Meeting (4pm at TRUE)</td>
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<td>Jan 15</td>
<td>TRUE Executive Board Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 21</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Schools and D/O Closed)</td>
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<td>Jan 22</td>
<td>TRUSD Board Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 23</td>
<td>School Board Forum (430pm at FRMS)</td>
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<td>Jan 29</td>
<td>Rep Council (4pm at CTA)</td>
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**MEMBER BENEFITS**

**Cell Phone Discounts**

AT&T and Verizon both give a 15% discount to CTA members on monthly cell phone bills. If you are not getting this discount go in to your local phone store and sign up immediately. You will need to show your CTA membership card or a photo work ID. Verizon also gives 25% discount on any accessories you purchase for your phone such as cases, protective covers etc. Other cell phone companies may give a discount to CTA members call or go in and ask.

**CTA Travel**

**Entertainment and Purchasing Discounts**

By being a CTA member you can take advantage of discounts on amusement park entrance fees, movie tickets, dinner shows and retail shops. As well as on vacations, cruises, train travel, hotels, tours and rental cars.

For more information, visit [www.ctamemberbenefits.org](http://www.ctamemberbenefits.org)
(Continued from page 1- Wait Where Is The Money For Schools)

The general fund receives most of its money through the average daily attendance (ADA) of our students. If the student is not there, then the district doesn’t get paid for that student for that day.

If the General Fund is like a checkbook, then why is it so difficult to spend the money or get things we as educators need? Well, do you know what you are going to spend next month? How about three months? A year? Three years? The district must report to the state a yearly projected budget as well as a three year projected budget that has a positive ending balance and about 15% in savings or “carryover”. I couldn’t do this for my household let alone a school district.

Our budget is planned out and adopted prior to July 1st. This includes predictions about what might be spent for the whole year in every category mentioned above. The budget is then revised twice a year. In January, when the Governor’s proposed State Budget is released our district recalculates the budget and projects for the rest of the year. In April, Principals must turn in all of their outstanding purchase orders and account for possible future expenditures. The second revision is then done in May when the Governor updates the revenue projections. The budget must be finalized by the end of June just in time to adopt a new budget for the following year.

So what does this mean for TRUE members? Well, the budget is a conservative projection of future funds that we may or may not have access to use. Unlike our own bank accounts the district cannot always transfer money between different funds because of the laws and restrictions in place. Just keep this article in mind when you hear the district is getting a ton of money, in May, and they need to spend it quickly. Like when the district decides to buy teacher laptops and not fix the air conditioning. I leave you with a thought – “Congress, the press, and the bureaucracy too often focus on how much money or effort is spent, rather than whether the money or effort actually achieves the announced goal” - Unknown

Mysti Lingenfelter
TRUE 7-12 Director-At-Large

NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

We have had several bargaining sessions with the District this year. We are currently working on special education language to address safety concerns and working conditions for all members. The fact that Proposition 30 was passed by voters helped education avoid devastating cuts. Unfortunately it does not bring in new money to school districts and as a result TRUSD is still deficit spending. As you know, California has slashed funding to schools for the past several years in such a way that districts are spending more money per year than they are given. You may have heard that Twin Rivers has a healthy reserve, but it is being drained as the District continues to conduct business. The Governor’s proposed budget will be released in January and that will clarify the financial picture for school districts in the year to come. At this time our furlough days and no class size limit are set to expire on June 30, 2013. We will continue to fight for better working conditions and financial gains for our members. As always, if you have any input or information you would like your negotiations team to have, please contact us at negotiators@trueassociation.org

Chris Moran
TRUE Lead Negotiator

TRUE PHONE BANKING SUCCESS

TRUE members pulled together in October and November in an effort to defeat Proposition 32 and to pass Proposition 30. TRUE hosted seven nights of phone banking, and had a great turnout. Our callers made over 1,000 calls to the community and 200 calls to CTA members. Each call was important to the success of the campaign. We send a big THANK YOU to all of our volunteer callers.

Julianne Neal
TRUE Organizing Chair
I know we are running thin on resources and time. I am always looking for ways to alleviate the time constraints for our special educators. Sometimes scheduling an IEP during the day is the practical option for the parties involved. We are required to have a general education teacher present at our IEP meetings. Scheduling this during the day allows for that teacher’s presence, as well as other involved staff. When scheduling an IEP during your work day, please note that a substitute is available for our utilization. This is outlined in our Collective Bargaining Agreement Contract in article 4.4:

4.4 The Special Education and Student Services Department may provide a limited amount of substitute support to Special Education staff when the school site has determined a need to hold Individualized Educational Plans and Section 504 meetings during the school day. A form to request these services must be completed, submitted and approved by the Special Education and Student Services Department prior to the Department providing the substitute support.

The form is available through the District office, although I have sent copies to your Department Chair for distribution and use. Please note that the form must be submitted and approved by Student Services prior to the meeting date. I would utilize this option the same as a translator request (have it approved and scheduled a couple of weeks in advance).

Chris Bach
K-12 Special Ed Director-At-Large

Question: What is the SAT?

Answer: The term “SAT” is a set of initials or “autonym,” standing for “Scholastic Attitude Treaty Organization.” This is a series of tests that predict your ability to perform in the college environment by measuring the degree to which you possess knowledge that nobody would ever in a million years actually need.

~ Humorist Dave Barry ~
“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 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 in 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 more as a “gym membership” and not an insurance agency. We all need to get involved and work hard towards reaching our collective goals.

As we move towards the “new day” promised by our District, we have several issues to organize around. First, we need to organize to support the negotiations team. We need to improve and clarify some contract language to improve working conditions of our members and learning environments of our students. The passage of Proposition 30 will help our District budget and alleviate some of the devastating cuts. Unfortunately, the District keeps asking for continued concessions. Our bargaining team is only powerful when all members unite behind them. Second, we can organize around the professional concerns of our members. The implementation of the new Common Core State Standards is an area where we can come together to work for an implementation that is best for the learning needs of our students.

TRUE sent two Organizing Team members, John Kreutzer and Julieanne Neal, as well as our Lead Negotiator, Chris Moran, to the CTA Region II Organizing for Power training, from November 30, 2012 to December 2, 2012. The team was trained on Relational Organizing using the Constant Organizing Goals (COG) method, which involves the steps: Listen, Plan, Act, and Evaluate. They were given the opportunity to update the TRUE Organizing Plan and look forward to sharing this plan with all members. The Organizing Team hopes to be out at sites soon, to learn about the needs of our members.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

~ Nelson Mandela ~
Reno, October 5-7, 2012

This was my first time attending CTA’s Leadership Conference. I received some interesting information from the Federal Issues Session, phone banked for No on Prop 32/Yes on 30, heard Mary Bell of Wisconsin’s Education Association give an inspiration speech for getting involved in campaigning for No on Prop 32, and got better acquainted with fellow members of TRUE and CTA.

Jane Robb of CTA led the discussion during the Federal Issues Session. The discussion began with the latest on the Federal Race to the Top Funds. Because the State of California has refused to comply with the mandates tied to the funds, the federal government is now targeting individual districts. Districts applying for Race to the Top Funds must have the application signed off by the local education association. There are a number California districts and locals currently applying for the Race to the Top Funds.

I also received information of the impact on public education when corporations avoid paying taxes. The amount of revenue the federal government has lost through corporate tax avoidance is $222.7 billion for 2008-2010. The amount of federal revenue lost through corporate tax avoidance that would have gone to public schools and colleges is 9.8 billion. That 9.8 billion would have provided NEA & US Department of Education, 2008-2010:

- $1,092 average amount of extra academic support to help 9 million students living in poverty catch up with their peers,
- $1,474 average saving for school districts for each disabled student resulting in a greater federal cost sharing,
- $1,276 average amount in additional college financial aid to ensure 7.7 million students in need continue or complete their postsecondary studies,
- 446,655 additional children in poverty enrolled in preschool,
- 126,568 education jobs.

The impact on California:

- 1,112,345 students in poverty that would have benefited from Title 1 Grants
- 671,809 disabled students that would have benefited from Special Education Funds
- 832,916 students that would have benefited from Pell Grants
- 48,312 additional children in poverty that would have benefited from Head Start
- 10,662 education jobs that would have been supported.

I was also lucky enough to phone bank with the winning phone banker, our own Julieanne Neal. Julieanne received the top caller award with 148 phone calls. Way to go Julieanne! She was also recognized and awarded at Sunday’s closing session. During 3 different phone banking sessions during the weekend, members were able to make over 3,000 calls for the No on 32/Yes on 30 campaign.

Lisa Gant
Pre-K-6 Director-At-Large

ORGANIZING UPDATE

The organizing team is planning three School Board forums. The focus of the forums is to support the Bargaining Team in the current round of negotiations. The general theme for the meetings is to improve working conditions and learning environments for our members and students. Our goal is to open dialogue and to continue to build relationships with the new Board.

The first forum is scheduled for January 23, 2012, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., at Foothill Ranch Middle School. The focus of this forum is special education working conditions and learning environments. All members are welcome to attend. Please come with a description of the issues and problems at your sites, as well as your possible solutions. Two additional forums will be scheduled for the beginning of March and the end of April.

Julieanne Neal
TRUE Organizing Committee
The Professional Issues Committee is up and running! As included in the October TRUE NEWS, this committee is focused on providing professional development that addresses the needs of our association members. Toward that end, we have worked with TRUSD to create a professional development survey which was sent to teachers in the District; 280+ teachers have responded thus far. This provides valuable information that is being used by both the district and TRUE in the planning and implementation of professional development designed to meet teachers’ needs and requests. TRUE also held a successful Common Core State Standards training on November 28th at our local CTA office that was well attended and received. This is a wonderful start to this committee’s efforts and the association’s continued work in supporting TRUE teachers!

We continue to need direct involvement by TRUE members on this committee and welcome your participation, ideas, and suggestions. If you would like to join us please email the TRUE office at true.office@yahoo.com

Edna Shoemaker
Professional Issues Chair

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMES TO TRUE

On November 28th, TRUE held a Common Core Training at CTA’s Region 2 Office in Natomas. The presenter was Marlene Fong who is CTA Staff in CTA’s Instruction and Professional Development Department. TRUE hosted this professional development because of the need TRUE leadership recognized for our members to be exposed to Common Core. At the time that TRUE was planning this training, the District was providing very little PD on Common Core.

There were 27 TRUE Members in attendance, a district coordinator and our own CTA staff person. This training was an overview of Common Core. Discussion began with the process of how Common Core was developed, the timeline of implementation and looking at how Common Core will be assessed.

A part of the training gave participants an opportunity to work in groups to look at and discuss the differences and similarities of Common Core standards and current standards in both Language Arts and Math. The discussion was lively and teachers were, overall, excited to see and hear about what is coming.

To close the training, we asked why participants came and what they wanted to see next. Comments were: have this same Common Core training again to share this with more members, next time focus trainings by grade level or content area and dive deeper into the standards, have a training focused on demo-lessons and tasks, and look at the assessment piece in more depth.

TRUE is looking forward to our next training. Our Professional Issues Committee is in the process of scheduling what our next training will be and when. You may see an email asking for your input, please share your area of interest with us so we can support you!

Kristin Finney
TRUE Vice President
Twin Rivers Employee Relations Council (TRERC)

The Twin Rivers Employee Council 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. We are looking to add one member and anyone interested should contact John Ennis at the TRUE Office.

One of the issues that is being analyzed is the reconfigured 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 Grievance Chair