I had a wonderful experience at the Good Teaching Conference in San Jose on February 7th-9th. I was able to go to a number of different workshops that had some real and effective methods of teaching and classroom management. My first workshop was presented by a veteran teacher from Moreno Valley. He talked to us about a procedure called “Refocus”. This program comes from the Center for Teacher Effectiveness. The presenter talked about having an area of your room that you designate as a “Refocus” area. Students go there to think about their behavior, allowing you to continue with instruction. The belief is that through relationships we build a good learning environment. We need clear limits and expectations along with consistent and effective discipline.

Another workshop I went to was called, Simple Solutions to Common Classroom Problems #3: Student Engagement. The presenter of the workshop was Rick Morris. He talked about how much teachers talk on any given day, which we all know is a lot. He mentioned how we should stop doing something he calls “echoing”. This is when teachers repeat what a student has said after they say it. Students begin to have the attitude that they don’t have to listen to each other because the teacher is going to repeat anyway. By not repeating what the students have said, you are forcing your students to pay closer attention in class. This way they understand what is happening. You also do not want to raise your voice and repeat. When asking for an answer in class, take multiple responses from students who want to answer a question and say “Thank You”. You will get more students raising their hands. I have used this technique in my classroom, with great success.

Guided Writing for Grades K-2, was another workshop. I learned about how to get students more motivated to write narrative, informative, and opinion stories. It is important to get a good literature book to read to students that will support what you are asking them to write. We were also given various graphic organizers to help with the writing process.

The last workshop I attended at the conference was, Drawing Out the Best in Your Students. The presenter was Jon Pearson. He talked about how writing is something that should paint a picture in your student’s mind. So why not make it a picture, allowing students to recall information more easily. He showed us some brain power techniques we can use to help our students with their recall. If they write things down by drawing, their recall goes up tremendously.

Louise Holder
1st Grade Teacher at Del Paso Elementary
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

March 11, 2013

This time of the year can be a difficult time for educators. It is layoffs season, standardized testing time, and students are anxious to be outside. Luckily, after spring break there are only nine weeks left of school.

TRUE will be scrutinizing the Governor’s May revised budget and the final State budget around June 30th. Changes to the ways school districts are financed, and the way ADA is formulated, could substantially benefit the Twin Rivers District and its students. If these two proposals move forward, TRUE will immediately demand to bargain the additional monies.

While TRUE believes overall the District is in good financial shape, sometimes people forget about expenses such as the 10 million dollars in lawyer fees, millions of dollars in legal settlements, and the ever-increasing insurance rates. The Schools Insurance Authority, which covers the District and the Police Force, has raised rates significantly. All these expenditures and payouts come out of the General Fund. When the General Fund shrinks, there is less money for the classrooms.

John Ennis
TRUE President

ELECTIONS UPDATE

We are currently running a CTA State Council Election for one State Council seat and one alternate. Declarations of Candidacy and Timelines have been posted on the TRUE website and emailed to TRUE Members. All Declarations of Candidacy are due back to the TRUE office by 4:30 p.m. on April 3, 2013.

TRUE Officer elections will take place starting in April. If you are interested in running for an Officer position, look for Declaration of Candidacy and Timelines to be posted early April.

No voting was needed for the TRUE NEA-RA Delegate seats, as only two Candidacies were submitted. John Ennis and Julieanne Neal will join Chris Moran and Joyce Childs in Atlanta as representatives from TRUE.

Julieanne Neal
TRUE Elections Chair

MEMBER BENEFITS

Jenny Craig
Get a discount on membership to Jenny Craig’s weight loss program. Go to neamb.com to find more information.

Entertainment
Purchase discounted movie theater tickets amusement/ theme park passes, water parks, aquariums, comedy clubs, dinner shows by calling (800) 537-8491.

Education
NEA Academy meets your needs for professional development or continuing education credits. There is a variety of peer-approved, high quality courses on the NEA Academy web site.

Get more information on Member Benefits: www.ctamemberbenefits.org www.neamb.com
PROFESSIONAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Continuing its focus on professional development for TRUE members, the Professional Issues Committee held a successful repeat of CTA’s “Common Core State Standards Overview” workshop on February 4th. With nearly thirty educators in attendance – including a couple who attended in November and returned for a second time – this was an opportunity to learn about important aspects of the Common Core State Standards and what they mean for students and those of us who work with them.

The Professional Issues Committee also met on February 7 and March 7, 2013 to discuss future workshops that would be of value to our members. As a result, we now have a few ideas in the works - stay tuned for details. We’ll be disseminating information about upcoming workshops and other opportunities via email, so if TRUE does not have your personal email address, please contact the office to provide it. A big “Thank you!” to those of you who joined us at these committee meetings; your comments and suggestions are invaluable!

Do you have a great idea of how to support student achievement? Would funding help you put your idea into action? One of our agenda items at the March meeting was CTA’s Institute for Teaching (IFT) Grants which are ”intended for CTA members and chapters to support strength-based, teacher-driven reform for students and public schools. Educator grants will be awarded to individuals and small teams of teachers in amounts up to $5,000. Chapter grants will be awarded to associations in amounts up to $20,000.” The deadline for applications is April 30, 2013. Additional information is available at www.teacherdrivenchange.org.

If you have ideas about how the Professional Issues Committee can support you, don’t hesitate to let us know at truc.office@yahoo.com. And please join us at our next committee meeting on Thursday, April 4th at 4:00 p.m. We will meet at the TRUE office and look forward to seeing you!

Edna Shoemaker  
Professional Issues Committee Chair

CHANGES COMING FOR CTA STATE COUNCIL

Over the last several years CTA has lost more than 34,000 members due to increased class sizes and loss of programs. This has had a great impact on the CTA’s financial situation. It has also created an unbalanced level of representation across the state. In an attempt to reduce costs and to create a more even distribution of members to representatives, State Council voted, Sunday January 27th, to reduce the number of representatives, to bring the ratio of members to reps closer to the ideal 415:1. For TRUE this means the loss of one representative seat; going from the current four seats down to three. This reduction will result in the elimination of a soon to expire seat. Currently, representing TRUE at CTA State Council are teacher members: Kerry Asbury, Joyce Childs, Wendy Gallimore, and Janet Schafer.

Janet Schafer  
State Council Representative

TRUE SCHOLARSHIP

There is a total of $7000.00 a year in the TRUE Scholarship Fund. TRUE Scholarships are available for TRUE members, TRUE members’ dependent children entering college or already in college, and for TRUSD Seniors. Scholarship applications are now available at the TRUE office or on the TRUE website www.trueassociation.org. TRUE scholarship applications are due at the TRUE office no later than Friday, May 3, 2013. Scholarships will be awarded in $250.00 increments for community college and $500 increments for 4 year universities. We will announce scholarship recipients at the May Site Rep. Council meeting. Money will be awarded in September, or after proof of enrollment has been presented.

The available scholarships are as follows:

- 8 Member scholarships: 4 university and 4 community college
- 8 Members’ dependent children scholarships: 4 university and 4 community college
- 3 TRUSD Seniors scholarships: one university and 2 community college

Sharon Reichelt  
TRUE Scholarship Chair
CARSPlus Conference Report
By: Theresa Bradley,
Foothill Ranch Middle School
I was an attendee at the CARS+ 2013, “Acorn to Oak”,
conference in Oakland, California. I was supported by
both my school district (Twin Rivers Unified) and my
union (Twin Rivers United Educators, TRUE). My
partner teacher and I drove down to Oakland on
Thursday February 14. The hotel we stayed in was
connected to the Oakland Convention Center. We
never needed to move our car. This saved
on extra parking fees. The hotel staff was
accommodating and professional at every
turn. The food was scrumptious and the
cooks delivered my dietary needs with a
personal appearance. Two meals were
included each day, breakfast, lunch, and
even an afternoon snack. The session
choices had appropriate topics, and the structure made
it easy to select because of the strands (Behavior,
Instruction, Technology, Administrative, etc...). I was
overwhelmed by the pleasant vibe of the
vendors/exhibitors. Everyone was willing to share their
product. The motivational speaker brought tears to my
eyes and made me laugh. Just as I expected he might.
It was an amazing memory to be on the 21st floor of the
Marriott Hotel in downtown Oakland as the sun was
setting over the Port of Oakland. I was invigorated and
ready to sign up for next year’s convention. We drove
back to Sacramento/Lincoln on Saturday after the
convention ended, and traffic was a breeze. I was
delighted by my first professional convention
experience. Things were very well planned. Tickets are
selling for only $199.00 at this time for next year’s 2014
CARS Plus Convention. It will be held in Irvine,
California. I encourage you to make the time and plan
to attend. It will not only give you something to look
forward to, but it will give you an opportunity to make
new friends, gain new insight, and develop growth in
your chosen profession. I look forward to meeting you
there.

CARSPlus Conference Report
By: Lovina Robinson
Foothill Ranch Middle School
This year’s conference was fabulous! I
was so impressed with this conference in
many ways. I would like to start by saying
the hotel location was perfect, close to
home yet far enough away to feel like a
mini vacation. The hotel was very clean
and comfortable. The food was superb.
The staff was very helpful and friendly. The
presenters were engaging and the information was
useful. I learned a lot from Ge Ge Drozen’s
workshop “Tools to Make You Cool.” I love
technology and I incorporate it into the classroom
daily with my students. I teach in a Special Day
Class for the Moderate to Severely Handicapped and
my students connect well with technology. I really
enjoyed the motivational speaker. His positivity was
contagious and encouraging. I want to take a
moment to encourage any and all Special Education
Instructional Specialists to attend the CARS
conference next year. I believe you will walk away
recharged and motivated with new tools for your
teacher’s tool box that can be applied immediately to
the classroom.

CARS+
Members of TRUE CARS attended the CarsPlus Convention and had the best time getting to know one
another. One of the best assets of CarsPlus is the connection you make by meeting other teachers that are
familiar with your issues. Sarah Kesty, a teacher from Oakdale and a member of Region7 CarsPlus is work-
ing on publishing a new book titled, “Everyone Has Something”. This read aloud book assures children that
having a challenge is part of life. Look for books in print this summer. Kerri Asbury from Village has been
asked by a Senate Liaison to submit an application for appointment to a seat on the State Commission for
Disability Access. To have a classroom teacher and member of CarsPlus, on a committee at this level would
be so beneficial for our students and our profession. TRUE CARS is planning a joint meeting with other area
members (Tentative Date April 18th) to share information we learned at the convention. I have also asked the
Chair of the Advisory Commission of Special Education to be a guest. She is checking her availability.

Joyce Childs
CARSPlus Director, Region 7
EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

After attending the Equity and Human Rights Conference I had a multitude of ideas buzzing around my head. It was difficult deciding what to share first with everyone. Most impressive to me were the speakers from the Inglewood Unified School District Teachers Association (ITA) and the partnership they formed with the California Teachers Association (CTA). To understand the magnitude of this partnership it is important to understand that the Inglewood Unified School District had been in the LA Times newspaper no less than 20 times and received unfavorable publicity about administrators, teachers and their financial woes. Last year, the District was taken over by the State of California due to bankruptcy. The teachers and the District were hurting badly.

Inglewood Teachers Association (ITA):

Last year a few of the teachers concerned about closing the achievement gap for their students joined together and formed a “Speak Up For Education” team, and they reached out to ITA and CTA for help. CTA did research on their behalf and their research led them to a UCLA study about parents. The newly formed “Speak Up for Education” team along with CTA and ITA contacted UCLA about their studies regarding parents. The team then began discussing their district’s needs and their concerns. This discussion became the genesis of a project which led to ITA applying for a grant. The application was accepted and the team received funds which allowed them to pursue their ideas about parent outreach. This journey continues to unfold.

The ITA Team & UCLA:

Due to their findings on parental need in their community, UCLA formed a program called Parent University. Parent University is a program that believes in and strives for a true partnership between parents and teachers. The ITA Team embraced parts of the program that provided valuable information on topics relating to students and student achievement.

The goals of their program are:

- to work with parents on ways to participate in their children's education
- to provide parents with information on homework, instructional requirements, Common Core State Standards, school structure, district policies, and other educational issues.

The ITA Team:

The team reached out to parents in two schools and asked, “What would you like to learn more about so that you can help your child succeed in school? The teacher’s collected responses to their query by telephone or from parent’s they knew. They then identified the 3 top parent concerns were Enrichment Programs, Parent/Teacher Communication, & Academic Support. Workshops were developed for the parents to address their concerns. They added three more subjects that were also on the minds of parents, Policies & Procedures, Child Development the Needs of Parents and more workshops were created. The Team also decided to take parents on field trips beginning with a trip to a local Science Program. In this way, parents were exposed to the content teachers delivered and parents became familiar with the type of field trips students participated in. The team put in long hours and discovered success. Over 37 parents began attending their workshops and their field trips. The team’s approach has now developed a growing collaboration with parents.

The team stated “As teachers, we are always striving towards increasing parental involvement, as well as building a solid connection with parents, because that is what gets results. A partnership between parents and teachers is what increases achievement and helps to close the achievement gap.” The parents then began to connect more strongly with the teachers. As I listened to the teachers tell their story I couldn’t help but believe that their approach held promise for all grade levels. I could envision taking parents on field trips to local colleges and universities and exposing them to all the potential future opportunities for their children. I believe ITA’s approach to parent involvement merits discussion. What do you think?

Maria Elena Gallegos
Counselor at Keema HS

DISTRICT SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM (DSLT) UPDATE

The DSLT (District School Leadership Team) met on February 13 with WestEd to review the results of their Four Dimensional District Study. While the report is quite lengthy, there were definite themes throughout. There is a need to rebuild trust within our District, a need to reestablish a common vision, a need to develop a structure for defined autonomy within our schools, and a definite need to focus on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Look for more specific information from the DSLT to come out in the near future.

Chris Moran
TRUE Executive Board Secretary
We are still discussing and refining Special Education language. While we are closer to having more information about the financial picture of the district, we are waiting for the reorganization of the District Office to occur as there will be significant savings. We have many long term goals for our members: mitigating the increased cost of benefits, lowering class sizes (especially in the primary grades), improving our working conditions and increasing our salaries. As the state budget becomes clearer, we will hopefully be able to achieve our goals over the next few years. As of now, our furlough days will all expire on June 30, 2013, class size caps will be restored based on contractual levels, and a committee is exploring options for our benefits in the years to come. Education has taken many financial hits in recent years but we are optimistic that the worst is over. Now it is time to focus on restoring what we have lost and to look forward to improving our working conditions and financial situations.

Chris Moran
TRUE Lead Negotiator

It is that time of year again where the District, based on Article 24 of the Contract, can transfer up to eight members. These transfers are called Administrative Transfers. The District must show that the member is performing unsatisfactorily, or that there is a personality conflict with Administration. From my experience in working these cases, most members are transferred for personality conflicts. Site Administrators turn in their recommendations to Human Resources to start this process. If Human Resources feels they are justified, the Administrative Transfers are presented at the TRERC. The TRERC will call all members affected and then will work with the member and District to resolve the issue. In some cases members are eager to leave and other times grievances are filed for members. Last year nobody was transferred under this clause. However, the year before six members of our association were transferred.

Paul Le Francois
TRUE Rep on TRERC

Teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself!

~ Chinese Proverb

Adults Urged To Finish GED Before Common Core Change.  
Scripps Howard News Service (3/9) reports, "Adult schools have a message for students working toward their GED diplomas - pass all your tests by year's end or you'll have to start over." The piece notes that GED's "will change in January, and the tests students take will change with it" to align with the Common Core Standards. "Students who haven't passed all five exams now required for the certificate by the end of December will have to start again with the new tests."

More States Retaining Third Graders With Low Reading Scores.  
The Washington Post (3/11, Layton) reports, "A growing number of states are drawing a hard line in elementary school, requiring children to pass a reading test in third grade or be held back from fourth grade." Noting that 13 states adopted laws mandating high-stakes reading tests for third graders, the Post adds that some are required to hold failing students back. "Not every state requires retention; some allow schools to promote struggling readers to fourth grade as long as they are given intensive help. Advocates of the new tough-love policies say social promotion - advancing students based on age and not academic achievement - results in high-schoolers who can barely read, let alone land a job or attend college." However, the Post adds, opponents of such measures, complain of the social stigma and of blaming students for schools' deficiencies.
TWIN RIVERS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
2012 NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHER RECOGNITION
JANUARY 8, 2013

Wendy Ichikawa with John Ennis, TRUE

Kimberly Velo with Chris Moran, TRUE and Joseph Williams, Interim Superintendent

Caylee Kizer with Kristin Finney, TRUE

Phillip Brown

(left to right)
Ginna Myers, Coordinator
Angela Rooney
Caylee Kizer
Wendy Ichikawa
Phillip Brown
Beverly Weber
(not pictured)
Kimberly Velo
Julie Pepper

Angela Rooney with Roberta Raymond, Principal

Beverly Weber with Laura Lofgren, Principal
Go to www.trueassociation.org to see:

- TRUE Scholarship Application
- Election Announcements
- Monthly Newsletters
- Upcoming Events
- Dues Structure
- Calendars
- Catastrophic Leave Bank Forms
- Grievance Forms
- Current Contract
- Helpful Links

**VISIT THE TRUE WEBSITE**

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Ann Murray - annmurray456@gmail.com

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

- March 22nd - Furlough Day
- March 25-29 - Spring Recess
- April 1st - Furlough Day
- April 2nd - TRUSD Board Meeting
- April 4th - Professional Issues Committee Meeting, 4pm @ TRUE
- April 9th - TRUE Executive Board Meeting
- April 16th - TRUSD Board Meeting

**TRUE Contract Enforcement (Grievances)**
Paul Le Francois - Grades 7-12 & Adult Ed.
Sharon Reichelt - ECE to Grade 6

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Janet Schafer-Chris Bach-Mysti Lingenfelter

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Kerri Asbury  Joyce Childs
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**Happy Spring**