TRUE ORGANIZING - PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT -

There is a fabulous opportunity for TRUE educators to work with families, community members, and other educators to make a difference. We are having Community Conversations to address the achievement gap in Twin Rivers and Robla Public School Systems. We are looking for solutions to this problem. We want ideas about what we can do as parents, educators, and community members to make sure all of our students have the tools they need to succeed in school.

It is very important to have many of our educators participate in these events and contribute to the conversations. It is also vital that educators invite parents from their schools to take part in these conversations. We continue to need moderators and recorders for the small group conversations held at each event. All gatherings will be from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The first event took place on April 20th, at Norwood Jr. High (turn to Page 7 for more information). Upcoming dates and locations for the following two events are:

**SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 2013**
**HIGHLANDS HIGH SCHOOL**
6601 Guthrie Way, North Highlands, CA 95660

**SATURDAY, MAY 4, 2013**
**RIO TIERRA JR. HIGH**
3201 Northstead Dr., Sacramento, CA 95833

A light breakfast and lunch will be provided at each event. Play care for children ages 5-12 will also be available with advanced registration by calling 916-288-4925 or sending an e-mail to scassella@cta.org.

Participate! Become part of the solutions!

Julianne Neal
TRUE Organizing Chair
As this message is written, TRUE has 62 members on the lay-off list. I expect this to be dramatically reduced in the next month. TRUE won’t be satisfied until everyone is placed in a job for next year.

At this time, the District is in a search for a permanent Superintendent. The School Board has three closed session meetings scheduled to narrow down the selection. We believe someone will be picked by early May. At the same time, the District is filling openings in the District office. The best news for TRUE members is the elimination of the 4.5 furlough days, and the reinstatement of class size caps and overage pay. While none of these constitute a pay raise per se, the trend seems positive.

The Governor’s proposed budget and the final June 30, 2013 State Budget will more than likely give additional monies to school districts. The Governor’s new formula for schools would give Twin Rivers about $10 million extra dollars. We expect this money would be available for salary and benefits. I promise the day after the budget is signed, TRUE will demand to bargain this money.

California “Day of the Teacher” is on May 8th. This marks the 31st anniversary of the day established to give special recognition to teachers for their contributions to education and the lives of California’s children. This year’s theme is: “California Teachers: Honoring our past, guiding the future.” The Day of the Teacher is a day to celebrate our profession and remind ourselves that the hard work and long hours we dedicate to our jobs will make a big difference in the future of our students.

John Ennis
TRUE President

CTA MODERATOR AND RECORDER TRAINING

On Monday, April 15, 2013 TRUE members joined other educators and community members for a Moderator and Recorder Training in preparation for the three “Community Conversations on Closing the Achievement Gap”. Volunteers in attendance included TRUE members, CTA members from other locals, Rebecca Sandoval, TRUSD School Board member, and representatives from several community organizations including churches and after school program providers.

The training session gave a clear overview of the goals and content of the three conversation events, a clear description of the roles for moderators and recorders, and an opportunity to practice and perfect those roles. Many THANKS are sent to all the volunteers who are helping with the community conversations as moderators and recorders. These volunteers are vital to the success of the conversations, and no community conversation could take place without them.
WHEN CONSEQUENCES DON’T WORK

I had the opportunity to attend the Good Teaching Conference in February. I attended a session that addressed those students who just don’t seem to respond to any consequence you give them. This session addressed:

- positive connections
- positive assumptions
- conscious consequences and
- breaking the cycle of misbehavior

The biggest key I took away from this session was Positive Connections. The strategy used to make positive connections with students is called 2 X 10: 2 minutes a day, 10 days in a row. This is to be used with your toughest student, the one you think just doesn’t care about a thing. This strategy is as simple as spending 2 minutes a day with a student just discussing something of interest to them: clothing, music, food, family, sports. Anything you think they are interested in. Some suggestions for when, during the day, you could do this are: for Elementary aged students, at lunch, recess, right before or after school, and for Secondary, it could be during a passing period also. The point of it is doing this at least 10 days in a row and each interaction is positive and about their interest. It was pointed out not to do this right before a big break in school, but 10 consecutive days.

The teachers that used this strategy showed an 85% improvement in student behavior.

A critical piece in this session is the teacher needs to make the assumption that all students want to learn appropriate behavior and it is our job to teach them this, in addition to the content we must cover. “When they trust us, they stop testing us.” A response to defiance is to: assume the best (be on the student’s side), soft eyes, soft voice, make their choices clear, respect the choice they make, give consequence and repeat with new/escalated choices. Escalate choices to deescalate behavior. The presenter talked often about the frustration these students cause us, but did a very nice job at reminding us to stay calm and make the assumption that teacher’s teach content and appropriate behavior, and students want to learn appropriate behavior.

Please look forward to next year’s Good Teaching Conference Scholarships that TRUE offers. I gained so many new ideas that are simple, short and ready to implement on Monday when I got back to school. The conference is held in February over a weekend.

Kristin Finney
TRUE Vice President

MEMBER BENEFITS

As a California educator, you have unique insurance needs. That’s why CTA Member Benefits, in partnership with Standard Insurance Company (The Standard), created voluntary Disability and Life Insurance plans with features specifically designed for education professionals like you, including:

- Provisions to allow for continuation of coverage during temporary layoffs and labor disputes
- Access to the CTA Advisory Panel on Endorsed Services
- Coverage for extra-duty pay such as coaching and tutoring
- Coverage for disabilities that occur on or off the job

From April 1 through May 31, 2013, members who have disability and/or life insurance coverage through another provider have a special opportunity to make the switch to the only CTA-endorsed Disability and Life Insurance plans – The Standard.

No other provider can offer you the peace of mind of CTA-endorsed coverage created specifically for CTA members like you. To start the change-over process, call The Standard’s dedicated CTA Customer Service Department at 800.522.0406 from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Pacific time.

For costs and further details of the coverage, including exclusions, benefit waiting periods and any reductions or limitations and the terms under which the policy may be continued in force, please contact The Standard’s dedicated CTA Customer Service Department at 800-522-0406 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
**NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE**

We are happy to report that we held the line and have **NO** furlough days for the 2013-2014 school year. They will expire on June 30 as outlined in our current contract. TRUE and TRUSD recognize the fact that as a district we are behind where we should be for Common Core implementation and have agreed that we will have three additional Professional Development days next year. This is in addition to the three that are currently on the calendar. We also agreed that no less than three of the professional development days will be dedicated to training for implementing common core. The actual dates are being determined by the Professional Development Committee and Calendar Committee and will be presented to the board for approval.

Our work year will be 186 days (pre-furlough level) and our student calendar will be 177 days (two more than this year). We also refused to continue class size waivers for another year. We will revert to contract language and overage payments for the 2013/2014 school year. TRUE has expressed that as the state budget becomes clearer and money comes back into education, we need to focus on improving our working conditions and programs in addition to wages and benefits. Our next negotiations session is on April 24. We will continue to discuss language for Special Education and our Catastrophic Leave Bank article.

*Chris Moran*
TRUE Lead Negotiator

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**ELECTIONS UPDATE**

The TRUE Elections Team has been working on two different elections. The first election is for CTA State Council Representative. Ballots for this election were counted on April 18, 2013, but no one received the required majority vote, so a run-off election had to take place from April 23-May 1. The run-off election will be decided by plurality vote.

The second election coming up is for the TRUE Executive Board Officers: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. TRUE members wishing to run for one of these positions must submit a Declaration of Candidacy to the TRUE office by 4:30 p.m. on April 29, 2013. Declaration of Candidacy forms can be found on the TRUE website.

At this time the contract is still being discussed (see the Negotiations update in this newsletter), when a tentative agreement is reached, a ratification vote will be planned.

*Julianne Neal*
TRUE Elections Chair

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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

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<td>June 3rd</td>
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**VOLUNTARY TRANSFERS**

The Voluntary Transfer posting period (as stated in our contract) recently ended for any members looking to change positions for the 2013-2014 school year. However, jobs are posted periodically all through the summer. Please monitor weekly as positions are added due to retirements, resignations, other transfers, etc. My recommendation is to not only look on Ed-Join, but also to check out the Employment page on the Twin Rivers Website.

*Paul Le Francois*
TRUE Director-at-Large
JOIN CTA’S TEACHER LEADERSHIP COHORT

Does your passion lie in quality instruction or being an advocate for teaching and learning? CTA is excited to announce the launch of a new program, called the Teacher Leadership Cohort. This program is designed to develop a cohort of 24 members from across the state to assume new or expanded leadership roles as advocates in improving teaching and learning. Members of CTA’s Teacher Leadership Cohort will be strong advocates for the profession and will take on local, regional, and statewide leadership roles in teaching and learning.

CTA’s Teacher Leadership Cohort will begin with a statewide Leadership Academy on July 30-31, 2013 in Burlingame at CTA Headquarters. Cohort members will continue to meet through 2013-14 in their regional sub-groups, both face-to-face and online, typically on a monthly basis. Participants will each plan and implement an activity, project, or program focused on advocacy in instructional improvement and professional practices which will be completed by February, 2014.

Each leadership project will be designed by the participants to match their personal strengths, as well as the local context and needs. Possible projects might include: organizing and leading a collaborative inquiry group, presenting Common Core Standards training for school staff, developing and presenting a session at CTA’s Good Teaching Conference or another professional conference, or advocating about an education issue.

Cohort members will receive:

- Travel and lodging for the Leadership Academy paid for by CTA
- $500 stipend upon completion of project
- Support from other Cohort members, CTA staff and external resources
- Release time may be available

The application deadline is May 10. To apply go to http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CTALEadershipCohort.

I want to take a moment to thank you for everything you do! Whether you are in Pre-K or higher education; working in the classroom, in the school office or in the cafeteria; YOU are making a difference for California students. I thank you for all of your hard work as we get ready to celebrate the California Day of the Teacher and Education Support Professionals Day (ESP).

Day of the Teacher is May 8, while ESP Day is May 22. Keeping with our sesquicentennial, the theme is "California Teachers: Honoring our Past, Guiding the Future." This year, I'm asking you to take a moment and breathe, and to think about some of your own accomplishments. Take a moment to give yourself a pat on the back for a job well done. It has been an incredible year and you deserve it. I also ask you to stop and thank a colleague or a mentor. It's what these days are meant for.

Dean Vogel
CTA President
I had the opportunity to represent TRUE on the Superintendent Screening Committee. This committee was comprised of one appointed community member from each trustee area, one student, and one representative from each of the labor units for certificated staff, classified, staff and police (TRUE, CSEA and TRPOA).

The applications were first screened by CPS HR Consulting (the firm selected by the Board to do the search) to ensure they met the minimum criteria set forth in the posting. Those who met the criteria were sent forward to the committee for screening. The committee met to discuss the criteria put in the job posting and to develop scoring benchmarks. We were then asked to come in and score the letters of introduction and resumes of applicants using a rubric. All pertinent information (names, district names, etc.) was edited out so we did a “blind” screening.

The scores were all added together and averaged and the top seven were sent on to the School Board as the committee’s recommendation for interviews. The process is now in the hands of the School Board. They will decide who they are going to interview, and will conduct interviews and background checks over the coming weeks. Once they have narrowed the selection down, Board members will travel to the candidate’s current district to talk with staff. They will then ultimately decide who will be the next Superintendent of Twin Rivers Unified School District. It is my understanding that if all goes well, we will start the 2013-2014 school year with our new Superintendent in place.

Chris Moran
TRUE Secretary

Poll Supports California Governor's School Funding Plan.

Noting that California Gov. Jerry Brown has called on legislators to overhaul the state’s education funding formula to steer more money to districts with high poverty levels and numbers of ELL students, the San Jose Mercury News (4/19, Harrington) reports that "a Public Policy Institute of California poll released earlier this week showed a majority of those surveyed back the governor's proposal, which is called the Local Control Funding Formula. This has bolstered the hopes of supporters of the plan, who fear critics could sway legislators to back away from making bold changes to the education budget."

Indiana Lawmakers Decide Pre-K Would Be Too Expensive.

WTIU-TV Bloomington, IN (4/19, Moxley) reports, "Indiana is one of 11 states that doesn't provide public money for preschool. State lawmakers say it's because they just can't afford to pay for pre-K, not after agreeing last session to fully fund kindergarten to the tune of an additional $80 million a year." Sen. Dennis Kruse (R-Auburn) suggested that a fully funded pre-k program "could be $150 million a year, which would be a lot of money."
CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP
COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

The first in a series of three Community Conversations took place on Saturday, April 20, 2013 at Norwood Jr. High. The event was well attended and the conversations were rich and productive. The conversation opening was provided by Kristin Finney, TRUE Vice President. She introduced the various stakeholders in the audience, and reminded the crowd that it takes everyone: families, community groups, elected officials, educators, and administrators to assume a role in the success of children.

Vern Ahnin, President of the Robla Teachers Association, provided the crowd with an overview of the conversation. He described the planning committee’s three focus areas: school safety, accountability, and parent involvement. He encouraged participants to consider how the success of the student is dependent on his/her experience in and out of the home, as well as in and out of the school. He challenged participants to consider the safety of students to and from school. He asked participants to consider who is accountable for student success. He concluded by asking participants to define healthy parental involvement.

Conversation participants were then treated to an overview of The Achievement Gap as presented by Uve Dahmen, Director of Assessment and Accountability in the Twin Rivers Unified School District. He showed the discrepancies between various subgroups in both English language arts and mathematics. After the data was presented, motivational speaker Kein Bracey gave an inspirational talk on the importance of self esteem. When the problem was defined and the participants were motivated to succeed, Julieanne Neal, TRUE Organizing Chair, directed participants to their conversation break out rooms to discuss the three priorities. Once in the rooms, the CTA trained moderators facilitated a small group conversation on each of the three priorities: safety, parental involvement, and accountability. CTA trained recorders captured the information as common ground, areas of disagreement, questions and concerns, action ideas, and next steps. Each breakout group held rich, meaningful conversations, and then prioritized action items and possible next steps. Each group then reported out to the rest of the participants.

The information and ideas gathered at this event will be combined with the data collected at the remaining two conversations and analyzed. It is the goal of the planning committee to use the data to generate an action plan to present to the School Board. Educators, administrators, parents and other community members will have the opportunity to attend two additional conversations. The second event will take place Saturday, April 27th, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm at Highlands High School, and the last conversation will take place Saturday, May 4th, at Rio Tierra Jr. High from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Breakfast and lunch will be served at each event, and raffle prizes will be available to lucky participants. Please encourage everyone to attend.

Julieanne Neal
TRUE Organizing Committee Chair
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