Foothill Ranch at the Special Olympics

On Saturday, May 17, 2014, Foothill Ranch Middle School, led by PE teacher Joy Schrudell, Special Ed classroom teachers Theresa Bradley, and Crystal Standley, brought 11 Olympians to participate in the Special Olympics Track and Field event at Cordova High School.

Foothill Ranch is the ONLY ‘Gold School’ in the Sacramento area, as deemed by Special Olympics of Northern California. This means that the Ranch and its staff and students joined forces to complete four of these requirements:

1. Rally whole school support to END THE 'R' WORD campaign
2. Circle of Friends peer buddy group
3. Integrated PE and training: Peer/partner participation with an athlete
4. In the stands fans from General Ed.

The students were thrilled to compete in this event and very proud of the medals they won.

Theresa Bradley
Teacher, Foothill Ranch Middle School
The end of the year is always such a flurry of activity. In the middle of our regular end of the year activities, we have an important School Board campaign to finish up. The race between John Dexter and Michelle Rivas is very close. If you are saying to yourself: “Boy, it sure would be nice to hear something else from our President besides this campaign.”, then I don’t think you understand the importance of this election. Having people on our School Board who will ask the hard questions and make sure the students of our District are being served by supporting the teachers and employees, is my priority right now. Without this, it doesn’t matter what I do or we do, our voice will not be at the table to be heard.

My message this month is simple: We need your time. We will continue phone banking Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 5:00 to 8:00 pm, at the TRUE Office, through this week. Saturday will be our final precinct walking day for John Dexter. We will be meeting at Dexter’s home (6672 Silverthorne Circle, Sacramento, 95842) beginning at 9:00 a.m. On Monday, June 2nd will be our last phone banking night. Tuesday, June 3rd, Election Day we will need volunteers to phone bank during the day to make sure the people go to the polls to vote.

The next Newsletter you receive will be our Back to School edition. I hope it includes the news that John Dexter and Lanette Robinson were elected to TRUSD School Board and you were a part of making this happen. If this is the case, the challenges we will continue to face in the coming years will be easier to solve, knowing that the teachers and employees of our District will have their voice heard at the table.

Kristin Finney
TRUE President

By the time you receive this newsletter we will be at the home stretch of our campaigning, phone banking and precinct walking. It is more important than ever to get involved!!

Please come out and join us for our final days of campaigning for John Dexter and Lanette Robinson. May 28, 29, and June 2 phone banking for both candidates will take place at the TRUE office, 3318 Howard St. McClellan, Ca 95652. Come join the final precinct walk for John Dexter on May 31. Meet at his home 6672 Silverthorne Circle, Sacramento 95842, at 9:00 am.

Thank-you to those of you who have spent countless hours phone banking and precinct walking. We could not have done it without you.
NEGO Ti TIONS UPDATE

On May 6, 2014, the TRUSD Board of Trustees approved our Tentative Agreement. Our checks for the 2% one-time money (based on the salary schedule) along with the 2% retroactive salary increase were mailed to our home addresses and should have been received around Friday, May 16, 2014.

The TRUE Negotiations Team has continued to negotiate for the 2014-2017 Contract. To this date, most of the work has focused on reviewing the articles and educating current District management about our contract language. Preliminary discussions have been held on salary and benefits, specifics will be discussed in the upcoming negotiations. Funding for schools in California has undergone a dramatic shift this year. Under Local Control Funding Formula, each district receives a level of base funding and based on student population, others receive supplemental and concentration grant funding.

- **Base funding**: amount per student that is adjusted by grade level
- **Supplemental grant**: amount per student, equal to 35% of the base grant for the unduplicated number of English Learners, foster children and economically disadvantaged students.
- **Concentration grant**: amount per student, equal to 35% of the base grant for the unduplicated number of English Learners, foster children and economically disadvantaged students above 50% of the school district enrollment.

The LCFF (Local Control Funding Formula) is to provide more resources to students with greater needs. It requires school districts to use their supplemental and concentration grants to “substantially benefit” the students for whom the grants are intended.

The shift in school funding means that school districts all receive different levels of funding based on the specific needs of the students in the district. This makes it extremely difficult to compare districts to each other when it comes to raises for employees. The days of assuming our raise will be the same as those districts around us have come to an end. Additionally, in the LCAP (Local Control Accountability Plan) requires that districts show that the supplemental and concentration grant money is being utilized to provide improved services to the groups of students that generate the additional money.

We will not reach a Tentative Agreement for 2014-2015 before the school year is over (as had been our goal!). At this time, our next scheduled negotiations dates are June 5 & 26. Negotiations will likely resume in August, and we hope to reach a Tentative Agreement early in the school year.

**Chris Moran**
TRUE Lead Negotiator

ELECTIONS UPDATE

On May 19 the TRUE Elections Committee counted the ballots for the election of eight Directors-at-Large on the TRUE Executive Board. Our thanks to all TRUE members who took part in this election. There were 471 legal ballots cast. The results were as follows:

- Three Directors-at-Large for Pre K-6: **Rebecca Le Doux, Julieanne Neal and Mary Durbrow**
- Two Directors-at-Large for Grades 7-12: **Paul Le Francois and Sharon Reichelt**
- One Director-at-Large for K-12 Special Ed: **Peter Schorr**
- One Director-at-Large Minority Representative: **Ann Murray**
- One Director-at-Large Specialty Groups: **Bill Avery**

All the elected Directors-at-Large will serve on the TRUE Executive Board for a term of two years, from June 1, 2014 to May 31, 2016.

A special thanks to the dedicated members of the TRUE Elections Committee: Wendy Ichikawa, Tara Jacobs, Sharon King, Edie Kuntz and Teresa Taranto, who volunteer so much of their personal time to ensure that our elections procedures are duly followed.
Thank you for participating in the annual Principal Survey. We appreciate the effort and time to help TRUE make a difference in our working conditions and relationships with the District Administration. Overall the results were mixed and we are hoping next year’s survey will involve more member participation. Participation is critical to identifying and understanding the issues and concerns. TRUE hopes that the survey will continue to recognize Principals that reflect a level of performance that values, supports and understands what our members need to succeed in the classroom. TRUE also hopes that the survey will continue to recognize and highlight concerns and Principals that are not up to an acceptable level of performance regarding values, support and classroom needs to succeed.

The top concerns were:
- Lack of a District wide discipline plan that is consistent and meaningful
- Membership safety regarding violent, disruptive students
- The fact that the Principal is not available or absent.

These concerns greatly impact our ability to succeed in teaching, so students will learn. The results indicated that many members were not supported with needed disciplinary action and consequences to students for their negative behavior. In addition to the lack of support, the Principal simply was not available. These are concerns that need to be addressed. TRUE leadership has met with the District to begin sharing these results, in order to change the unsatisfactory culture that our members endure.

We encourage members to visit the TRUE office and view the entire survey results, especially if you are changing sites.

Aaron Chan, Michelle Dice, Sharon Reichelt
Principal Survey Committee

## CTA/NEA RETIRED

Whether you are retiring soon, or even if it is still a few years away, it may be time to take a look at CTA/NEA-Retired membership. There is only one way to continue your role as an integral part of the CTA and NEA family after you are no longer an active school employee, and that is to become a retired member.

**Stay Connected:** Enjoy social opportunities and stay in touch with the friends you have made working all these years! Continue to receive information about the profession to which you devoted so much of your life, being a CTA/NEA-Retired member will keep you in the loop.

**Be Protected:** CTA and NEA endorsed insurance programs are only available to CTA/NEA members; CTA/NEA-Retired membership will allow you to continue using many of them, including Home and Auto, Life Insurance, as well as being eligible for CTA’s Disaster Relief Fund. As a CTA/NEA-Retired member you have the opportunity to work with CTA to protect the pension benefits you have earned from the myriad of attacks that you face. Don’t let others decide what is good or important to you!

**Enjoy Benefits:** CTA and NEA Member Benefits offer a myriad of discounts for retail, travel and more, which can really help with vacations and more for those on a fixed income.

Join CTA/NEA-Retired today! There are different options for membership.
- If you are not retired yet you can choose the Pre-retired option that will give you a lifetime membership.
- If you are retired or retiring you can opt for either an annual or lifetime membership. If you are concerned that you might forget to pay your annual dues (you don’t want your membership to lapse and lose your insurance), CalSTRS payroll deduction is a great option!

For more information contact CTA/NEA-Retired by phone at (650) 577-5150 or email at CTA-Retired@cta.org. Enrollment forms are available by calling, emailing or they may be found on the website at www.CTA.org/Retired. Check us out on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ctanearetired.
HOW LONG COULD YOU GO WITHOUT A PAYCHECK?

The answer to that question is different for everyone, but for most Americans it’s not very long. In a national survey, the Federal Reserve Board found almost half (48 percent) of U.S. families save none of their annual incomes and 68 percent of adult Americans have no money set aside for emergencies. ¹

It’s important to understand how long you could continue to cover your necessary living expenses if you are unable to work for an extended period of time. Here are five questions to ask yourself:

1. What are my “necessary” monthly living expenses that would continue even if my income stopped? For most people, that means things like rent or mortgage, utilities, child care, groceries and gas.

2. How long would my personal savings cover those necessary monthly expenses – one month, three months, six months, a year?

3. What other expenses will I have if I’m sick or injured in addition to my necessary monthly living expenses? For most people, that primarily means out-of-pocket medical costs (i.e. deductibles and/or co-pays).

4. How much sick leave have I accrued in my job and what is my district’s differential pay policy (i.e. how much differential pay will I earn and for how long)?

5. Am I currently participating in a disability insurance plan? If so, when would benefits start, how much would it pay me and for how long? If not, do I have access to affordable group coverage? Hint: As a CTA member, you may be eligible for the CTA Voluntary Disability Insurance plan offered by Standard Insurance Company (The Standard).

Once you’ve answered the questions above, you can start to plan for how you would get through a period where you can’t work due to a disability.

Think it Won’t Happen to You?

Most people think they won’t ever get sick or hurt badly enough to miss significant work time. But during the 2012-2013 school year, the CTA Voluntary Disability Insurance plan paid benefits for nearly 4,400 disability claims filed by CTA members.² The average claim that year lasted 110 days.² For non-maternity claims, the average duration was 153 days, and more than 500 claims lasted 200 days or longer² – more than six months off of work! The benefits received by these members went a long way towards helping them cover their necessary monthly living expenses.

Participating in a group disability insurance plan is often one of the most cost-effective ways to protect yourself, especially if you don’t have much personal savings or don’t have a lot of accrued sick leave. And the CTA plan offers some useful benefits, even if you have built up significant sick time:

- $25 benefit per work day paid in addition to your sick pay when you are on fully paid sick leave. This benefit can total $500 or more in a calendar month, and can be used to help cover additional expenses like health insurance deductibles and co-pays.

- $35 per day in addition to any other benefit payable when you are a registered, in-bed patient in a hospital.³ Almost 60% of the disability claims paid by the plan during the 2012-2013 school year also received a hospital benefit payment.²

- To learn more about the CTA Voluntary Disability Insurance plan, including costs and further details of coverage such as any exclusions, limitations, reductions and benefit waiting periods, as well as the terms under which the policy may be continued in force, contact The Standard’s dedicated CTA Customer Service Department at 800.522.0406, Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Article taken from www.cta.org

1. U.S. Federal Reserve Board, Survey of Consumer Finances, 2010
3. Up to a maximum of 60 days during the first two benefit years only; note that the definition of hospital does not include nursing homes, convalescent homes or extended care facilities.
California Schools Not Ready For Common Core Testing
In commentary for EdSource Today (5/20), Doug McRae, a retired educational measurement specialist, writes that California schools are not technologically ready to administer Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium tests, arguing that the earliest feasible date would be spring 2017. McRae writes that before the state can implement computer-based Common Core assessments, “Common Core instruction must be implemented for all students the entire school year before tests are implemented in the spring,” and “technology, including human support, needs to be available for all schools.”

California Superintendent Race Turning Into Test On Future Of Education
The Sacramento (CA) Bee (5/19) reports that although the California superintendent of public instruction position has traditionally been “safely Democratic,” and thus a positive indication for incumbent Tom Torlakson, ex-charter schools executive Marshall Tuck is gaining from considerable support “from advocates of educational change, the private sector and newspaper editorial boards.” Consequently, says the piece, this “has given a jolt to the race in the midst of a relatively quiet 2014 election season.” The Bee points out that the race has emerged as a “potential proxy” of the direction of education as a whole, in which “has pitted school unions against wealthy education advocates pushing for changes opposed by teachers.” The Los Angeles Times (5/20, Blume) offers a similar report, also noting that the race “has become a window into differing, and influential, visions for public schools.”

Many Schools Remain Segregated Even 60 Years After Brown Decision
Education Week (5/14, Maxwell) reports that although US schools are 60 years removed from the Supreme Court’s decision to strike down the “separate but equal” education premise in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, many areas of the country maintain school districts that remain “highly segregated.” The article points out that the issue remains a challenge for leaders as it constitutes “mounting evidence of continuing widespread disparities in both opportunities and outcomes for African-American, Latino, and low-income students compared with their white and wealthier peers.” Group Gathers At Supreme Court To Mark 60th Anniversary Of Brown, Protest Educational Issues US News & World Report(5/14, Bidwell) reports that on Tuesday, the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools, “which represents more than 7 million parents, students and educators nationwide,” held a rally on the steps of the Supreme Court to mark the 60th anniversary of the Brown decision and also urge leaders to do more to alleviate the segregation that still exists in US schools. The article points out that the protesters also “took issue with several controversial topics in education, including a perceived overemphasis on high-stakes standardized testing, school closures due to low test scores or financial struggles, zero tolerance discipline policies and private involvement in public education.

Measure Would Allow Some Schools To Opt Out Of Healthier School Lunch Program
The AP (5/20, Jalonick) reports that House Republican spending bill for agriculture and food programs released Monday would “let some schools opt out of healthier school lunch and breakfast programs if they are losing money.” Under the GOP measure, schools could “apply for waivers if they have a net loss on school food programs for a six month period.” In a release, the Appropriations Committee said that “the waiver language is in response to requests from schools.” TIME (5/20, Rhodan) reports only that schools may receive “a temporary waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture” from measures that “require school lunch programs to ramp up offerings of fruits and vegetables, while placing caps on sodium, trans fats and calories in cafeteria food.” The School Nutrition Association in particular “commended the Appropriations Committee’s proposal on Monday, saying the one-year waiver would help ‘ease the burden on school meal programs.’” Evie Blad writes at the Education Week (5/20) “Politics K-12” blog that under the measure, USDA “would have to grant schools a waiver from some strengthened school nutrition standards for the 2014-15 school year if they can demonstrate that compliance created an economic hardship.” Blad writes that nutrition groups like the School Nutrition Association “argue that the new meal standards, created as part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, strain schools with costly requirements and compliance issues.” First Lady Vows To Fight Rollback Of Healthy Lunch Standards. The Washington Post (5/20, Hamburger, Kindy) reports that in a private conference call Monday, the First Lady sounded “a new aggressive tone,” and vowed “to fight industry efforts at rolling back healthy school-lunch standards, an issue that could come up for a vote on Capitol Hill this week.” While the call was intended to be off the record, “several participants were so struck by the first lady’s forceful presentation that they discussed it with a reporter.”
At the start of the 2013-14 school year, the Fentress County School District in Tennessee announced that it would enforce a district-wide ban on graded homework assignments.

Administrators explained their decision by pointing to the large majority of students who lacked at-home resources to help them with their homework. Anywhere between 65%-75% of each school’s student body qualify for free or reduced lunch programs, so it was decided that students should not be singled out for failing to adequately complete take-home assignments.

“We don’t want kids to be unfairly penalized for their work because they don’t have the resources or support they need at home,” explained Randy Clark, Fentress County Schools’ Curriculum and Instruction Supervisor. “Our new motto for assignments is ‘review and preview.

“That means that homework in the district now constitutes an ungraded review or preview of current course work that is the students’ responsibility to independently complete. Spelling words, vocabulary practice, and study guides for testing all fall under this preview.

Districts across the country are taking second looks at the practice. The principal of Gaithersburg Elementary in Maryland decided to ask students to spend only 30 minutes in the evening reading. The decision was reached out of the realization that worksheets and other assignments had been assigned merely out of a sense of obligation to dole out homework to students.

Across the country, parents, teachers, and students are voicing their opinions whether or not there is too little or too much assigned work. On the issue of the actual educational value of homework, it may seem straightforward to many educators that reviewing lessons and practicing concepts after school would correlate to a greater retention of course material, but studies suggest that the link between assigned homework and academic achievement is drastically overinflated.

Researchers at the University of Virginia’s Curry School of Education found in a 2012 study that math and science homework didn’t correlate to better student grades, but it did lead to better performances on standardized tests. And when homework is assigned, the help provided by parents often mitigated any of the positive effects of the work. Critics of this type of parental involvement say it can be counterproductive because parents may assume too great a role and/or may not fully understand the lessons being taught.

In April, Denise Pope, a researcher at Stanford University, found that too much homework can negatively affect kids by increasing stress and sleep deprivation and generally leaving less time for family, friends, and activities. According to Pope, homework should not be simply assigned as a routine practice.“Rather, any homework assigned should have a purpose and benefit, and it should be designed to cultivate learning and development.”

No Homework the New Norm?

“There are simply no compelling data to justify the practice of making kids work what amounts to a second shift when they get home from a full day of school,” says Alfie Kohn, an expert on child education, parenting, and human behavior, as well as the author of The Homework Myth: Why Our Kids Get Too Much of a Bad Thing. Should schools then assign less homework or at least reevaluate what they assign? No, says Kohn, schools shouldn’t assign any homework. Teachers who do assign it need to have a very compelling reason for extending a student’s school day.

“My general suggestion is to change the default: No homework should be the norm,” Kohn says, “Six hours of academics is enough—except on those occasions when teachers can show strong reason to infringe on family time.

Article taken from neatoday.org
TRUE NEWS May 2014

TRUE EXECUTIVE BOARD

OFFICERS:
- President: Kristin Finney - true.office@yahoo.com
- Vice-President: Chris Moran - rlteacher@yahoo.com
- Secretary: Michelle Dice-Hodgdon - dicehodgdon@aol.com
- Treasurer: Rick Mau - rickmau@trueassociation.org

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE:
For Pre-K - Grade 6 Regular Education Teachers:
- Julieanne Neal - julieanneneal1@surewest.net
- Sharon Reichelt - sreichelt23@sbcglobal.net
- Lisa Gant - lisa.ging@sbcglobal.net
- Luke Flores - lkesfr@gmail.com

For Grades 7-12 Regular Ed Teachers, Charter & Adult Ed.:
- Paul Le Francois - lefrancois1@earthlink.net
- Mysti Lingenfelter - mysti.lingenfelter@gmail.com

For K-12 Special Education:
- Chris Bach - bacher3@aol.com

For Specialty Groups (Psychologists, Speech Therapists, Nurses, Counselors, Librarians, Program Specialists, S.L.Cs and S.S.Ts):
- Bill Avery - fishngy5501@gmail.com

For Ethnic Minorities:
- Ann Murray - annmurray456@gmail.com

TRUE NEGOTIATIONS TEAM:
- Chris Moran - rlteacher@yahoo.com
- Janet Schafer - mysisti@trueassociation.org
- Paul Le Francois - grades7-12@trueassociation.org

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

MEMBER BENEFITS
Click and Save is the NEA Member Benefits most popular discount program for members and their families. This is an exclusive shopping service that offers savings on brand name merchandise from hundreds of top retailers, online stores and local merchants. Save on clothing, electronics, restaurants, jewelry, movie tickets and more. Some of the merchants are Target, Best Buy, Macys, Fandango and many more. New offers are added everyday from cell phones to Disney cruises. Register or sign on to neamb.com to start shopping. You can set email reminders for your favorite merchants so you will be notified in advance of upcoming sales and discounts.

DATES TO REMEMBER
- 5/30 - CTA State Council
- 5/31 - Precinct walking w/ Dexter
- 6/3 - ELECTION DAY!
- 6/10 - TRUSD Board Meeting
- 6/12 - Last Day of School
- 6/24 - TRUSD Board Meeting
- 6/30-7/6 NEA-RA Conference
- 7/1 - TRUSD Board Meeting
- 7/4 - Independence Day
- 7/17-20 CTA Presidents' Conference
- 8/3-7 CTA Summer Institute
- 8/12 - PDD (K-12)
- 8/13 - Teacher Work Day
- 8/14 - Students back to school

TRUE NEWS Editor:
- Ann Murray - annmurray456@gmail.com

Editing Assistants:
- Evelyn Alvarado and Jen Turner

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