CTA LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

This year the CTA Region 2 Leadership Conference was held over the weekend of October 17-18, 2014 at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, Nevada. Region 2 is the largest CTA region; it encompasses unions from as far north as Siskiyou County and as far south as Kern County. There were over 600 teachers in attendance for this weekend of learning about how to be better leaders in our local chapters. Registration began on Friday October 17. There was an orientation for first time participants, and exhibitors were available to give teachers information on their products and services. Tom Torlakson, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, stopped by at the Sunday brunch to thank us for supporting his re-election campaign.

CTA is using the slogan **Your Voice, Our Union, Our Future.** Public education is being attacked in many ways. We need to be ready to combat possible obstacles that may come upon our unions, as court cases, privatization advocates, and the uninformed public, threaten our profession as we know it today.

CTA has developed a Strategic Plan that has two main Areas of Focus: Quality Public Education and Our Profession and Building a Strong Union. The sessions for the Region 2 Leadership Conference were aligned with these two areas of focus. Each focus area had sub areas and the sessions were assigned under those sub areas of focus.

Quality Public Education and Our Profession had two sub areas: **Advocacy on Education Reform** and **Transforming our Profession.** The other focus area was Building a Strong Union. The sub areas were **Building an Organizing Culture, Leadership Development, Community Engagement and Coalition Building, Organizing Unrepresented Education Workers, Social Justice, Equity, and Diversity.** Building a Strong Union was emphasized strongly, with the majority of the weekend sessions revolving around this area.

Tom Torlakson, California Superintendent of Public Education, with TRUE members (from left to right) Bill Avery, Julieanne Neal, Chris Moran, Rebecca Le Doux, Kristin Finney, Mysti Lingenfelter and Ann Murray, at the CTA Leadership Conference.
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

During the month of October 8, leaders in TRUE had the opportunity to attend CTA’s Region 2 Leadership Conference in Reno, NV. As a group we walked away with Organizing, Community Engagement strategies and strategies to strengthen our engagement with the District in the process of writing the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). This plan has become as important as bargaining is. As the District begins its timeline to revise its plan from last year, you need to look for future opportunities to engage in giving input on revision.

November 4th Election Day is a week away! I had the opportunity to talk with Tom Torlakson, the current Superintendent of Public Instruction, who is running for reelection. Tom is a teacher who understands that building capacity with teachers and treating them as professionals is the future of public schools being successful. The office he holds has direct influence on how schools are held accountable in the new LCAP process. We need to have someone in this position who has respect for teachers as professionals and treats them this way. Marshall Tuck, Tom Torlakson’s opponent, does not. Talk to your family and friends, and tell them to vote for Tom Torlakson. We have too many other issues to deal with. We don’t need more initiatives to deal with, that will limit our professional rights, if Marshal Tuck wins this election. Vote for Tom Torlakson.

On January 1, 2015 AB 420 will take effect. This is the new law that restricts suspensions of K-3 grade students for willful defiance. The District is currently giving information out regarding this new law. The bottom line for you is that you can still suspend a student from your classroom, period.

Kristin Finney
TRUE President

ORGANIZING UPDATE

The role of the TRUE Organizing Committee is to create solidarity among our members. This solidarity creates the powerhouse required to bargain good contracts or to prevail in any stand the association takes at any given time. Creating this solidarity for TRUE members is one goal of the Organizing Committee. Many of our organizing activities this year will focus on achieving this goal.

In order to meet this solidarity goal, TRUE’s Organizing Committee will be hosting member forums starting in January 2015. At these forums, members will be given the opportunity to discuss the changes to our working conditions this year. We will notify TRUE members of the dates and locations as soon as they are confirmed.

TRUE Leadership has asked members to attend School Board meetings to share stories related to their working conditions. I would like to thank the sites and individual members who have pulled together to share their stories. It is making a difference. Those of you that have not attended a Board meeting so far this year, please set aside a Tuesday night to come out and support one another.

The Organizing Committee has collected data that shows the dedication of TRUE members and our efforts to meet the needs of our students. TRUE members were asked to complete a three question survey on the amount of money spent to “set up and maintain” their classrooms and the number of hours you work outside of contracted hours to meet the needs of your students. We received over 200 completed surveys from educators throughout the District. When reviewing the responses, we found that most teachers spent between $100 and $500 of their own money to set up their classrooms, and that most TRUE members spend between two and three hours a day outside of the school day planning, preparing, and correcting work to meet the daily needs of their students. They are also putting in a lot of hours over the weekend. On average our educators work three to five hours over the weekend preparing materials for students. TRUE members are dedicated to meeting the needs of their students. All the data collected has been given to the TRUE Negotiations Team to aid in the negotiations process.

The Organizing Team has also been out engaging with the community. TRUE had a booth at the 2014 Labor Day Picnic hosted by the Sacramento Central Labor Council, and another booth at the North Highlands Jubilee on October 25th at Freedom Park.

Julianne Neal
Organizing Chair
TWIN RIVERS AND SAC CITY CALENDAR COMPARISON

Why can’t Twin Rivers start after Labor Day and end on June 11 like the Sacramento City School District? This question has been asked many times. As a TRUE representative on the District Calendar Committee, I felt the need to address the questions, so I will try to answer it by comparing both calendars and showing the differences between them. I’m using the Sac City 2013-2014 calendar as an example; Sac City started school last year on Sept. 2 and TRUSD started on Aug. 15; both districts ended on June 11.

1.)- Sac City had a 178 day student calendar
   TRUSD had a 177 day student calendar

2.)- Sac City Teachers worked 182 days (with 3 Planning days and 1 Faculty work day)
   TRUSD Teachers worked 186 days (with 6 PD days, 1 Teacher work day, 2 Parent Conference Days)
   **(A difference of 5 days.)**

3.)- Sac City observed 2 weeks for Winter Break
   TRUSD observed 2 weeks and 1 day for Winter Break **(A difference of 1 more day.)**

4.)- Sac City observed 2 days for the February President’s Holiday
   TRUSD observed 5 days for the February President’s Holiday **(A difference of 3 more days)**

5.)- Sac City observed 1 week for Spring Break
   TRUSD observed 1 week and 1 day **(A difference of 1 more day)**

6.)- TRUSD had March 14 as a non-student day and had the Friday before Memorial Day off. **(A difference of 2 more days)**

In total, there were 12 days difference between the Twin Rivers and Sac City calendars.

The 2014-2015 Sac City calendar is almost identical to last years’, as well as TRUSD’s, with the exception of Sac City teachers now working 184 days, starting in August (2 work days), instead of September.

I hope this clears up the controversy over these two calendars. The TRUE members on the District Calendar Committee have taken all of your feedback and are working hard to make a calendar that will address the desires of staff and the needs of children.

**Sharon Reichelt**
TRUE Rep on Calendar Committee

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TWIN RIVERS EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COUNCIL

The Twin Rivers Employee Relations Council (TRERC) meets once a month and the first scheduled meeting for 2014-2015 was held on October 27. TRERC attempts to resolve issues within the District that are not negotiable items. At TRERC, Bill Avery represents all TRUE members in the Specialty Groups (speech therapists, psychologists, counselors, nurses, librarians, program specialists, TOSAs and SLC/SSTs); Paul Le Francois handles all concerns from teachers at both Elementary and Secondary. You can reach Bill Avery at: fishingy5501@gmail.com, and Paul at: lefrancois1@earthlink.net

TRUE’s concerns brought before TRERC are based on input from the TRUE Executive Board and TRUE Site Representative Council. Topics for the October meeting: substitute issues, reconfiguration update and Special Education case loads.

**Paul Le Francois**
TRUE Representative on TRERC
During the last 8 months educators have heard Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) used interchangeably. Presenters have indicated that there needs to be a paradigm shift from Response to Intervention and Instruction (RtI2) to MTSS. Of course neither is a place and both special education and general education teachers will need to focus on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) so that all students will have access to the core curriculum within the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

Originally RtI was outlined as a general education function to support struggling students in a three tiered format of interventions for both academic and behavioral needs to support a student’s educational success. California Department of Education (CDE) says that “RTI is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and intervention matched to student needs by analyzing the learning rate over time to make important educational decisions. High-quality instruction is based on scientific research to produce high learning rates for most students.”

http://pubs.cde.ca.gov/tcsii/ch2/responsetointerven.aspx

While MTSS has been developed as a method for systemically providing interventions that are proportional to students’ needs. This makes it clear why educators are now confused regarding RtI2 and MTSS.

To be more specific Multi-tiered System of Support is a method for systemically providing interventions that are proportional to students’ needs, sounds like RtI right?

In 2009 Sugai and Homer identified the following defining features of MTSS:

1. Interventions supported by scientifically-based research.
2. Interventions organized along a tiered continuum that increases in intensity (e.g., frequency, duration, individualization, specialized supports, etc.)
5. Emphasis on assessing and ensuring implementation integrity.
6. Regular and systematic screening for early identification of students whose performance is not responsive to instruction.

Most of the articles outlining the differences state that RtI is one strategy that falls within the broader paradigm of MTSS.

The following erupt from The SpecialEDge Article, MTSS and CCSS; (Winter/Spring 2014 Volume 27 Number 2) continues to discuss the importance of MTSS for the success of CCSS:

“Multi-tiered System of Supports and the Common Core State Standards share four central features that promote effective instruction:

- Clear academic and behavioral goals
- Curriculum and instruction that are universally designed (UDL)
- Alignment of what is taught, studied, and learned with what is tested
- Regular progress monitoring through formative assessments (formal and informal) that direct decisions about instruction and interventions.

What is particularly important, and helpful for students with disabilities is that a well-executed tiered system of supports ensures that students with disabilities:

1. receive their instruction in the regular education classroom to the greatest degree possible,
2. receive strong core instruction with embedded strategies that enhance their instruction,
3. are provided with interventions that are based on assessment data and that are what the students need in order to master the curriculum,
4. are being taught to the same standards as their general education peers, and
5. are given supports and services based on their need, not label.
6. These five features are critical if students with disabilities are to benefit from the new standards.”

Many special educators have been solicited by their sites and districts to implement the researched based intervention to the general education students. CARS Plus has heard that this has caused some difficulties implementing the supports outlined in their caseload’s IEPs. Districts have gone so far as to make changes to the job title of resource teachers so that these educators are not limited by a specific caseload limit.

Sugai and Homer have also identified “a legislative
barrier to implementation of MTSS, it is limiting resource specialists (RS) to a case load of 28 students, as codified in California Education Code 36362(c), and prohibiting them from serving as both RS and a teacher assigned to a general education class. RS teachers can serve many important functions within a MTSS model including teacher consultant, interventionist to students with and without IEPs, and co-teacher in general education classrooms. The restriction to 28 students is a major barrier to utilizing RS teachers in MTSS as they are not permitted to provide intervention to students who may need their level of expertise. Further, if MTSS lowers special education identification rates, RS teachers may be required to cover additional schools to maintain a caseload of 28 students, thus watering down their potential impact on struggling learners. The school and clinical training of RS teachers make them ideal candidates to serve on MTSS implementation teams as well as assist with progress monitoring, provision of scientifically-based interventions, and assessment of intervention integrity. Allowing LEAs and school sites to determine how best to allocate this asset based on individual school needs and structures is consistent with a MTSS. http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/cc/documents/mtss.pdf

So RtI2 and MTSS are not interchangeable, and MTSS will not necessarily replace RtI2 as the method of supporting struggling students. Instead RtI2 will be one of the strategies provided to struggling students to achieve success with the Common Core States Standards. The differentiated style in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) will provide all students with access to the curriculum and participation in ways that address the academic needs of each individual student.

Joyce Childs
RSP Teacher at Joyce Elementary
CARS Plus President Elect

SPECIAL ED FROM A GENERAL ED TEACHER

On September 20, 2014 I attended the CARS Plus Region 7 regional meeting at the North Highlands Recreation and Parks District. They opened with a business meeting that covered the local CARS Plus membership and a steering committee was established for the 2014-15 school year. After the formal business meeting, the workshop began.

I am a General Education teacher and I found the discussions very enlightening. The one that was most interesting to me was about the unidentified “special education” student in the regular classroom. You know that child that is undiagnosed but, you, the teacher, know that he has Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder and needs medication. I say “he” because the majority of these undiagnosed children are boys, and adding on to that fact, these boys are more often boys of color, mostly African American and Latino boys. Can they all be medicated? There are more and more of these children/boys in our General Education classrooms and they may be there all year never getting a formal diagnosis from a doctor or being prescribed medication. These children may flip out daily in your class and you send them to the office or call the office to come get them. That child loses valuable class instruction, falls behind and does not learn what he needs in order to be successful in this grade level or the next, and the next and the next. In a few years, he finds himself at age 16 in high school, still not diagnosed, still no meds, still failing, and now he feels totally worthless, so he drops out of school.

Could this child have been saved early on? How about as early as kindergarten? What could have been done differently? I was not trained in my student teaching program on how to teach “this type of student”. What does the untrained General Education teacher do? These were my questions. I had some answered during this meeting and I will share them with you in the next newsletter.

Ann Murray
TRUSD Kindergarten Teacher
TRUE/CTA MEMBERS BENEFITS

Thomas R. Brown Athletics Grants
Entries for the 2014/2015 California Casualty Thomas R. Brown Athletics Grants are now being taken for California public high schools in need of funds to preserve their athletics program. The grant program was created to offset severe budget cuts that have forced public high schools across the nation to decrease, eliminate or implement fees for their sporting programs – leaving some kids sitting on the sidelines unable to participate. The deadline to enter for 2014/2015 consideration is January 15, 2015. Details and entry forms can be found at www.calcasathleticsgrant.com.

California Casualty has partnered with the CTA since 1951 and provides the CTA Auto and Home Insurance program. The company gives back through numerous community impact Initiatives:
- The $2,500 Academic Award – given annually to an educator to help buy school supplies or provide for school programs facing cuts, www.calcasacademicaward.com
- The $7,500 School Lounge Makeover® to create a more soothing and relaxing area for educators to recharge during the school day, www.schoolloungemakeover.com

Learn more about the CTA Auto and Home Insurance Program provided by California Casualty at www.CTAMemberBenefits.org/calcas or www.calcas.com/CTA or by calling 1.800.800.9410.

Healthy Me, Better Year Pledge NEA Health Information Network has recently launched a pledge-based social media campaign around member self-care – the Healthy Me, Better Year Pledge. This simple engagement tool is a way to remind members that taking care of themselves benefits the students and the entire school community. It would be fabulous if members could share the Healthy Me, Better Year Pledge through their social media. Here is a link for the Pledge -- http://bit.ly/HMBYpledge; NEA is using the hashtag #NewSelfie1415 across social media platforms.

WHY JOIN A UNION?

What are the benefits of being a union member? Unionism can improve your life. Being in a union can help improve your working conditions. Unions often get results when there is a problem, being a union member gives you a voice, and unions help members to obtain better wages and benefits.

Unions get results. Unions have a concrete way to improve the jobs and lives of their members. Standing in solidarity as part of a group can help members to effectively solve problems.

Union members have a voice. Through negotiations members can secure the things they like about their job and can make changes in areas that need improvement. Faced with unfair treatment by the employers, unions negotiate policies to ensure fairness. Unions have a voice when making changes in conditions at work.

As a union member you have several other benefits. You have protections from harassment at work. Union members have liability insurance to protect you from lawsuits from incidents that occur while on the job. It is not uncommon nowadays for lawsuits to be filed against all school personnel if something happens or is alleged to have happened to a student while at school. NEA/CTA/TRUE members are protected by a $1,000,000 liability insurance policy that protects your family and your assets from any liability. Union members are also entitled to a vast array of association member benefits. NEA/CTA/TRUE members can receive discounted insurance rates, discounts on travel, dining, and investment advice. Go to http://www.cta.org/Member-Services/Member-Benefits.aspx for CTA member benefits, and go to http://www.neamb.com/ for NEA member benefits.

Julieanne Neal
TRUE Director-at-Large for PK-Grade 6
Know the Facts
CANDIDATES FOR SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

TOM TORLAKSON
He helps bring millions to students
Torlakson worked with CTA to pass Prop. 30, which is starting to reverse the years of devastating cuts to schools by restoring funding.

He is one of us
Torlakson says that what he learned as a classroom teacher still guides him today as California’s Superintendent of Public Instruction.

He fights for all students
Torlakson sponsored CTA’s Quality Education Investment Act to provide nearly three billion dollars to help lower-performing schools. The program focuses on proven reforms like reducing class sizes, hiring more high school counselors, and providing teachers and administrators with high-quality training.

He doesn’t support top-down mandates
Torlakson rejected the federal Race to the Top program in California because it is another one-size-fits-all program from Washington that ignores the needs of local students and schools. He says competitive grants create winners and losers when all kids deserve well-funded schools.

He believes in learning and career readiness
Torlakson knows that students need skills they can apply in the real world of careers and colleges — that’s why he has led the way in expanding career and technical training for high school students.

Torlakson recognizes the importance of strengthening math and science education to keep California competitive in the emerging high-tech economy and will increase teacher training in math, science and engineering.

MARSHALL TUCK
He takes money from billionaires
Wall Street billionaires are spending millions to elect Tuck because he supports a corporate takeover of public schools that would allow out-of-state for-profit companies to run California public schools with taxpayer money.

He is not a teacher
Although he claims to be an educator, Tuck has zero professional teaching experience.

He fights against all teachers
ELECTING TUCK is the top priority of groups whose mission is to scapegoat teachers, weaken their rights, undermine their secure retirement, and even eliminate teachers unions.

He is pushing Duncan’s reforms
Tuck is running to push ahead with Secretary Arne Duncan’s federal education reforms in California, which means more high-stakes standardized testing, evaluating and paying teachers based on student test scores, and less freedom for teachers to teach kids the critical thinking skills they need.

Tuck’s agenda is a full-out assault on educators’ rights. He wants to eliminate the right to a hearing before being dismissed, increase the probationary period from two years to as long as 10 years, and eliminate experience as a factor in decisions about layoffs.

He believes in testing over learning
Tuck’s education agenda is to push more high-stakes standardized testing, evaluating and paying teachers based on student test scores, and less freedom for teachers to teach kids the critical thinking skills they need.

Vote Tom Torlakson on Nov. 4
Learn more at cta.org/campaign
**SUPPORT**
Prop. 47 – Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act

Prop. 47 seeks to replace prison system waste with common sense solutions that create safe neighborhoods and save taxpayer dollars. Prop. 47 changes low-level, nonviolent crimes from felonies to misdemeanors, which will reduce prison overcrowding, allow law enforcement to focus resources on violent crime and use the savings to support victim services, prevent crime and improve schools.

**OPPOSE:**
Prop. 46 – Stop Higher Healthcare Costs

Prop. 46 would make it easier and more profitable for lawyers to sue doctors, clinics and hospitals. Unless defeated, Prop. 46 will increase health care costs, reduce access to care for patients and threaten the privacy of personal medical and prescription drug information. In addition, it threatens cuts to more than 200 health clinics on public school campuses.

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**True executive board**

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<th>Officers:</th>
<th>Kristin Finney - <a href="mailto:true.office@yahoo.com">true.office@yahoo.com</a></th>
<th>Vice-President:</th>
<th>Chris Moran - <a href="mailto:rlteacher@yahoo.com">rlteacher@yahoo.com</a></th>
<th>Secretary:</th>
<th>Michelle Dice-Hodgdon - <a href="mailto:dicehodgdon@aol.com">dicehodgdon@aol.com</a></th>
<th>Treasurer:</th>
<th>Rick Mau - <a href="mailto:rickmau@trueassociation.org">rickmau@trueassociation.org</a></th>
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<td>Directors-at-large:</td>
<td>For Pre-K - Grade 6 Regular Education Teachers:</td>
<td>Julieanne Neal - <a href="mailto:julieanneneal1@surewest.net">julieanneneal1@surewest.net</a></td>
<td>Rebecca LeDoux - <a href="mailto:rebecca_ledoux@yahoo.com">rebecca_ledoux@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>Mary Durbrow - <a href="mailto:marydurbrow@hotmail.com">marydurbrow@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>Paul Le Francois - <a href="mailto:lefrancois1@earthlink.net">lefrancois1@earthlink.net</a></td>
<td>Sharon Reichelt - <a href="mailto:sreichelt23@gmail.com">sreichelt23@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>Paul Le Francois - Azeta Towfighi</td>
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<td>For Grades 7-12 Regular Education Teachers, Charter &amp; Adult Ed.:</td>
<td>Paul Le Francois - <a href="mailto:lefrancois1@earthlink.net">lefrancois1@earthlink.net</a></td>
<td>Sharon Reichelt - <a href="mailto:sreichelt23@gmail.com">sreichelt23@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td>For K-12 Special Education:</td>
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<td>Bill Avery - <a href="mailto:fishngy5501@gmail.com">fishngy5501@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>For Specialty Groups (Psychologists, Speech Therapists, Counselors, Nurses, Librarians, Program Specialists, TOSAs, SSTs):</td>
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<td>For Ethnic Minorities:</td>
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<td>Wendy Gallimore</td>
<td>TRUE contract enforcement (grievances)</td>
<td>Paul Le Francois - Grades 7-12 &amp; Adult Ed.</td>
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**Dates to remember**

- November 2 …………. Daylight Savings Time (Clocks Fall Back One Hour)
- November 4 …………. Election Day - Don't Forget to Vote!
- November 4 …………. TRUE Executive Board Meeting
- November 11 ………….. Veteran’s Day - No School
- November 13 …………. Professional Development Committee Meeting at True Office 4-5:30pm
- November 18 …………. TRUE Site Rep Council Meeting at CTA Offices, Truxel Rd., 4-6:00 pm
- November 20-21 …….. Parent-Teacher Conferences (Elementary), Collaboration (Secondary)
- November 24-28 …….. Thanksgiving Recess

**TRUE News**

**November 2014**