WHY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS?

Are you wondering, why teachers are being paid 1% for taking professional development classes? Have you thought that this is just another new thing the district has come up with to use money? Could that money have been used for a raise on the salary schedule? Here is a report from the School Improvement Network that may help answer your questions and concerns.

Thanks to an unexpected surplus this year in the State General Fund, California’s Pre-K-12 teachers and administrators have an additional $500 million to spend on professional development to support teacher and administrator development.

As specified in the 2015–16 Educator Effectiveness Funding Program, as well as the 2015-16 California Senate Bill 77 Section 58 (SB-77 Section 58)—the legislation from which the Funding Program originated—each district, county office of education, charter school, and state special school with certificated staff can receive a share of these PD funds, now called the 2015–16 Educator Effectiveness Funding Program.

What is California SB-77 Section 58? Section 58 is a new addition to the 2015-16 version of the Education Finance: Education Omnibus Trailer Bill (SB-77) that covers funding for professional learning for every system throughout the state. The $500 million earmarked for PD in Section 58 is the source of funding for the 2015–16 Educator Effectiveness Funding Program, and represents one of the largest investments in professional development and teacher effectiveness ever made by California and has the potential to improve every classroom in the state.

Who is eligible for the 2015–16 Educator Effectiveness Funding Program monies? The funds in the 2015–16 Educator Effectiveness Funding Program are being made available to every district, county office of education, charter school, and state special school in an equal amount per certificated staff to use for professional development.

The California Department of Education (CDE) is currently determining the exact number of certificated staff at each eligible district and organization. When those numbers are verified, it is CDE’s intention to distribute the money to each district and organization as soon as possible. It is expected that the money will be delivered early fall 2015.

Based on information received from multiple local and state education officials, it appears that the amount to be distributed per each certificated staff member will be approximately $1,400.

Continued on page 3
Dear TRUE Members,

The Voluntary Transfer Process has begun. You should have received an email from Zenobia Gerald on March 15th with a link to the list of openings and a description of the process. This list of openings is also on TRUE’s website: www.trueassociation.org.

There were 9 proposed lay-off notices (Reduction in Force) given to ECE (Early Childhood Education) teachers this year. A hearing before an Administrative Judge is currently being scheduled to review and discuss the proposed lay-offs. During that type of legal hearings the district is held accountable for any mistakes that may have been made during the process to determine which teachers are given a RIF notice. TRUE Members affected by the proposed lay-offs are being given legal representation during the process, paid by TRUE/CTA. This is a huge benefit for union members because nonmembers do not get free legal representation during this process. Many times, during the hearings mistakes are caught and members’ jobs are saved because of this representation.

The reason the district gave for these layoffs was a mistake that was made in the ratio of teachers to students for ECE classrooms. This incorrect ratio was used at the end of last school year and additional teachers were hired over the summer to meet it.

TRUE’s Principal/Administrator Survey was completed and results were passed on to district leadership. Please see the article about the survey results in this edition of the TRUE newsletter. The survey results for each school and department are available in the TRUE Office to view. Thank you to all who took the time to do this.

The first day of school for the 2016-17 year is August 5th. August 3rd and 4th are summer pay PD days ($250 per day) that will be held at school sites.

After the TRUE PAC (Political Action Committee) completed the process of interviewing candidates for the Twin Rivers School Board Election coming up in June 2016, TRUE has decided to endorse:

- Michael Baker, current Area 1 Trustee
- Walter Kawamoto, current Area 3 Trustee
- Basim Elkarra, candidate for Area 5 (seat currently held by Sonja Cameron)
- Francisco Garcia, candidate for Area 7 (seat currently held by Linda Fowler)

At this time we have two “Save the Dates!” for walking in Area 7 (North Sac) for candidate Francisco Garcia:

- Kick-Off: Saturday, May 7th, 9:30 am to 1 pm
- Final Push: Saturday June 4th, 9:30 am to 1 pm

Kristin Finney
TRUE President

Stay Informed!
VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
www.trueassociation.org
How can the funds be spent? Currently, the only guideline issued by the CDE is the language in the bill itself. The CDE will leave it up to each district and organization to spend the money according to the needs of the local district as aligned to the language in SB-77 Section 58.

Of the total $500 million provided by the 2015–16 Educator Effectiveness Funding Program, $10 million is set aside to provide professional development and technical assistance to local educational agencies related to network management. The remaining $490 million is targeted specifically to support professional development activities around the following areas of focus:

1. “Beginning teacher and administrator support and mentoring, including, but not limited to, programs that support new teacher and administrator ability to teach or lead effectively and to meet induction requirement”
2. “Professional development, coaching, and support services for teachers who have been identified as needing improvement or additional support by local educational agencies”
3. “Professional development for teachers and administrators that is aligned to the state content standards”
4. “To promote educator quality and effectiveness, including, but not limited to, training on mentoring and coaching certificated staff and training certificated staff to support effective teaching and learning.”

The money must be spent over the 2015–16 fiscal year, 2016–17 fiscal year, and 2017–18 fiscal years. For more information go to----http://www.schoolimprovement.com/california-funding-sb77.

EVALUATION PROCESS

There have been a number of questions regarding the evaluation process and timeline changes for this year. Administrators may walk into your room at anytime for informal visitations. However, if they plan on using anything witnessed during a visit, they must provide written documentation to you within ten days. Formal observations only take place during your evaluation year. You may request a second formal observation if the first one does not go well. The administrator must meet with you within ten working days after the formal observation. All written documentation shall be provided to the member during this post-conference.

This year, tenured teachers must receive their final evaluation by May 1. Remember the evaluation is the accumulation of everything and not just the formal observation. Tenured teachers are evaluated every other year, unless you are on the five year cycle. The five year cycle must be agreed upon between both the administrator and Member, but this agreement may be withdrawn at any time by just one of them. The five year cycle is part of Education Code 44664.

TRUE NEGOTIATIONS

On Thursday, February 11, 2016 I met with Gina Carreón, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Labor Relations for TRUSD, to sunshine" articles for the 2016-17 Contract Negotiations.

TRUE, after collecting input from members by means of a Negotiations Survey, moved to open Article 4 – Work Day/Work Year, and Article 12 – Member Safety.

TRUSD has moved to open Article 8 – Transfer, and Article 9 – Extra Duty Assignments.

In addition to those articles, Article 13 - Salary, Article 14-Employee Benefits, and Article 7 – Class Size will also be opened for modification through negotiations.

The two Negotiations Teams will be meeting soon; exact dates are pending as we go to press.

Paul Le Francois
TRUE Grievances Chair

Janet Edwards
TRUE Lead Negotiator
PRINCIPAL/ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY RESULTS

A record 543 TRUE members participated in our 2016 survey of principals and administrators. Research proves that site leadership is second only to teacher effectiveness (yes, we teachers are the most important!) to increase student achievement. (Wallace Foundation, 2011) The largest leadership effects are for the most troubled schools, “Indeed, there are no documented instances for troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader.”(Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). Because great leadership is so important, many school districts, and most Fortune 500 companies, ask employees to rate their supervisors to gather more complete feedback on overall performance. Our district does not create or compile the survey; your union does and shares the results with district leadership in an effort to improve student success and your working conditions.

Overall, for the combined district, principals/administrators rated highest on these questions:

- The principal/administrator protects the rights and confidentiality of TRUE members - 70% meeting or exceeding expectations, 16% not meeting expectations.
- The principal/administrator values and respects me as a professional - 67% meets/exceeds and 18% not meeting member expectations.
- The principal/administrator models a personal and professional code of ethics - 66% meets/exceeds and 17% not meeting expectations.

Principals/administrators rated lowest on these questions:

- The principal/administrator utilizes effective and nurturing practices in establishing student behavior management system - 44% meets/exceeds and 29% not meeting expectations. This is especially problematic as one of TRUSD core beliefs is “All students will have a safe, clean, and secure environment that is free of bullying and creates opportunities for learning.”
- The principal/administrator sustains a safe, productive school environment by dealing with student discipline problems quickly and effectively – 43% meets/exceeds and 27% not meeting expectations. Teachers not only stated that discipline is inconsistent, but because principals are at the district office/off campus so much of the time, many discipline problems are never addressed.
- The principal/administrator is an effective manager and leader – 50% meets/exceeds and 27% not meeting expectations.

Members reported on the lack of behavior management plans and inconsistencies if a plan was in place. This leads to unsafe, even dangerous, on-going behavior problems at their schools.

- The principal/administrator sustains a safe, productive school environment by dealing with student discipline problems quickly and effectively – 43% meets/exceeds and 27% not meeting expectations. Teachers not only stated that discipline is inconsistent, but because principals are at the district office/off campus so much of the time, many discipline problems are never addressed.
- The principal/administrator is an effective manager and leader – 50% meets/exceeds and 27% not meeting expectations.

This overall data may not be valid for your school/location but gives us an idea on what areas to focus on for improvement.

We had sixteen (16) schools where principals/administrators were rated ‘Exceeds Expectations’ by their staff. TRUE member remarks included “highly visible at school,” “communicates clearly,” “fair,” “positive,” and “inspiring.” We even have principals who teach model lessons in classrooms and ride the school bus to deal with problem behaviors on the way to school.

Conversely, we have eight (8) sites/departments where members rated principals/administrators as ‘Not Meeting Expectations.’ Comments range from “not visible,” “lies,” “needs psychological counseling”, to “HELP!"

After all confidential remarks have been removed, the survey results will be shared with Senior District Leadership by our TRUE President, Kristin Finney. We hope that District Leadership will act on this data.

If you are thinking about or planning to transfer to another site, the survey results, separated by sites, will be available for you to examine at the TRUE office. TRUE Office hours are 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Also, principals/administrators are free to check out the results at the TRUE office.

Jeanne Regello
ECE TOSA/TRUE Member
TRUE SCHOLARSHIPS

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 6, 2016. Scholarships will be awarded in $250.00 increments for community college and $500 increments for 4 year universities. We will announce scholarship recipients by June 3rd. Money will be awarded after proof of enrollment has been presented to the TRUE office.

Sharon Reichelt
Scholarships Committee Chair

CALANDAR of EVENTS

MARCH 2016
♦ 3/25 TRUE Office Closed
♦ 3/29 4 pm Site Rep Council Meeting at CTA Office
♦ 3/30 4-5:30 pm Cars Plus Chapter Meeting at Boxing Donkey

APRIL 2016
◊ 4/5 7 pm TRUSD Board Meeting at District Office Board Room
◊ 4/6 4 pm Political Action Committee at TRUE Office
  4:15-5:30 pm Organizing Meeting at TRUE Office
◊ 4/9-11 CTA State Council Meeting- Los Angeles
◊ 4/12 4 pm TRUE Executive Board Meeting at TRUE Office
◊ 4/13 4 pm TRUE Professional Development Committee at TRUE Office
◊ 4/19 4 pm TRUE Rep Council at CTA Office
   7 pm TRUSD Board Meeting at TRUSD District Board Room

May 2016
⇒ 5/6 5pm Deadline for TRUE Scholarship Applications

To view the entire calendar and for more information go to: http://trueassociation.org/calendar/

Do you know about the CTA Member Benefits website? http://www.ctamemberbenefits.org/
A wealth of information for all members, including new members and retiree’s. Check it out!
**Ethnic Minority Early Identification & Development Program (EMEID)**

The Ethnic Minority Early Identification & Development Program was created to identify ethnic minority members who are interested in expanding their roles in the organization, locally and statewide.

The program builds on existing CTA/NEA programs, trainings, conferences, and events. The program incorporates coaching and interaction with leadership from local chapters, CTA/NEA as well as CTA board members and staff. The ideal candidate for this program is an ethnic minority member interested in leadership within CTA and its local affiliates.

Once identified and accepted into the program, participants are teamed with a staff coach and board member who guides them to set goals and identify appropriate steps to achieve those goals.

Members selected to participate in the program must commit to attend the Emerging Leaders Program at CTA’s Summer Institute held on the UCLA campus, Sunday, July 31 — Thursday, August 4, 2016. (CTA funded)
ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTION OF 1 CTA STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE & 1 ALTERNATE

The Twin Rivers United Educators (TRUE) will be holding an open nomination election for ONE CTA State Council of Education Representative, and ONE Alternate Representative, each with a three year term going from June 26, 2016 to June 25, 2019. The State Council Representative and Alternate will be elected by and from the TRUE active membership: the Representative by majority vote and the runner-up becomes the Alternate (by plurality vote).

"The State Council of Education is the statewide representative body of CTA and serves as its legislative and policymaking body. It considers and acts upon proposals affecting the welfare of the public schools of California; it elects the CTA Executive Officers and other Board of Directors members, determines CTA membership dues and adopts the CTA annual budget."

ELECTRONIC/ONLINE VOTING WILL BE USED FOR THIS ELECTION. TRUE members must make sure the TRUE office has their current home e-mail address to receive the link to vote online. For those not wishing or not able to vote by electronic means, during the voting period paper ballots will be available only at the TRUE office, which is open Monday-Friday, 9 am - 7 pm.

OPEN NOMINATIONS:

TRUE members wishing to run for these seats must file an official Declaration of Candidacy form, together with a signed acknowledgement of CTA campaigning rules, to be received no later than 4:30 pm on April 07, 2016 at the TRUE office: 3318 Howard Street, Suite 10, McClellan, CA 95652. Declaration of Candidacy form and campaign rules acknowledgement form can be downloaded directly from the TRUE website: www.trueassociation.org. Both documents will also be made available through the TRUE Office (e-mail request to: true.office@yahoo.com). A candidate statement of no more than 30 words may be submitted along with Declaration of Candidacy. Candidate statements will be published with the ballots.

ELECTION TIMELINE:

March 18, 2016: Announcement of Election of CTA State Council of Education Representative and Alternate.

April 07, 2016: Declarations of candidacy due by 4:30pm at the latest at the TRUE Office, (see address above). Post-marked date not accepted.


April 08-April 21: Voting takes place by electronic and paper ballots.

April 21, 2016: Voting period closes at 4:30 pm, both online and at the TRUE office.

April 21, 2016: Starting at 4:35 pm, TRUE Elections Committee counts paper ballots and tallies electronic votes.

By April 22, 2016: Announcement of election results. If a run-off election is needed, the timeline for it will be included in the announcement of results.

May 02, 2016: Challenges to this election must be in writing and are due to be received by 4:30 pm at the latest at the TRUE office. Post-marked date not accepted.

By May 31, 2016: Election results must be reported to the CTA Elections Committee.
Teacher Feature - Lisa Liss

Teaches: Fifth Grade at Woodlake Elementary in Sacramento, California

Lisa Liss was selected as one of this past year’s Look at Agriculture... Organically! Grant recipients. In the fall of 2014, Lisa and her students worked with Healthy Planet in San Francisco to create 15 raised beds and start growing strawberries, tomatoes, onions and peppers. This month, they planted onions and potatoes in their raised beds. In 2015, they started making jam out of the berries, which they deliver to teenagers at the local homeless shelter.

What's your Jammin' with Wind Youth project?
"My goal is for students to grow organic fruit and learn how to make it into jam. My students live in a high poverty area. Most of them do have a warm place to lay their heads at night and forget that others have it much worse. The Jammin’ with Wind Youth project includes planting the berries, setting up irrigation to keep them alive during the summer, making jam and delivering it to the Wind Youth Center. Another goal is to get the youth at the center to come to our school and help us garden."

What inspired you to create this project?
"For my entire 28 years of teaching, I have made having a garden a priority. This is my fifth year at Woodlake and we now have an abundant tomato garden and eight fruit trees that are beginning to produce. We created salsa and gave jars to the Wind Youth Center. In my first year of teaching, we grew everything to go inside egg rolls, but we had to haul water a large distance. Woodlake is blessed to have many acres of land for us to use. Our pre-school class has joined us with gardening!"

Recently, our gardens have produced cauliflower, broccoli, and lettuce. We experimented with cauliflower to make cauliflower fried rice, cauliflower-crust pizza and more. Armando, one of my students said it best, "We are the best little farmers in the entire state!" My students are eager to try anything and everything we grow. I truly believe that if children can be taught to grow their own food, being hungry and healthy will never be an issue in their lives."
Ordered by the federal government to elevate academics for students with disabilities, and ordered by the state to raise low-income student achievement, the California Department of Education is working to create a unified system that will do both. This move aims to bring special education students into every school district initiative to improve achievement.

The department is “building the basis of one coherent system,” Tom Torlakson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, told the State Board of Education last week at its meeting.

For the first time, the California Department of Education’s Special Education Division is planning to align new federal progress measures for students with disabilities with the State Board’s system of evaluation, which is now being created. It will gauge success under California’s school finance system. That system, known as the Local Control Funding Formula, directs additional funds to districts to serve “high-needs” students, defined as low-income students, English learners and foster children.

“We are no longer going to have silos of accountability,” said Matt Navo, Superintendent of the Sanger Unified School District and a member of the State Advisory Commission on Special Education. “You are going to have to talk about what you are doing for all kids, and then explain why or why not subgroups of students, including special education, have access to programs.”

Due to the complex federal mandates and funding streams, special education is not explicitly named an area of focus in California’s school finance system. However, 70 percent of students with disabilities are members of the high-needs groups that are intended to benefit from the new student supports, said Chris Drouin, Interim Director of the Special Education Division of the California Department of Education. The 70 percent figure is an unduplicated count in which no student is counted more than once, even if the student belongs to several of the identified groups. The data, he said, adds to the case for a new level of collaboration between special education departments, teachers, administrators, and parents as districts create and refine spending plans, known as Local Control and Accountability Plans. The intent of these plans is to document district efforts to improve outcomes for high-needs students, and Drouin said the state is interested in tracking data on the performance of special education students who also are in those subgroups. He also said, “We are in a position to take a federally driven program and align it to be a major contributor to our work in a state-driven initiative.”

Obstacles to aligning federal and state accountability systems remain, said Connie Silva-Broussard, director of the State Performance Plan Technical Assistance Project, which helps districts meet federal special education performance targets. While districts are investing in an array of supports for high-needs students, including hiring counselors and introducing alternative methods for disciplining students, the federal government is focused on one metric – the test scores of students in special education. “I don’t believe it’s a real easy fit,” she said.

Special education in California has grown into a behemoth that largely operates outside the realm of everyday school administration, according to “One System: Reforming EdServe All Students”ucation to the final report of the Statewide Special Education Task Force in 2015. In addition, the current system is broken, the report said, noting that the achievement levels of students with disabilities in California are among the lowest in all 50 states. However, they need not be, according to Martha Thurlow, director of the National Center on Educational Outcomes, a leading research organization. Eighty to 85 percent of special education students are capable of the same achievement levels as other students “if they are given specially designed instruction, appropriate access, supports and accommodations” as required by federal law, according to a research report by Thurlow and others.

A more cohesive approach would allow all students to benefit from the instructional approaches; including small group learning and visual aids that are used in special education said Janice Battaglia, director of the Inclusion Collaborative at the Santa Clara County Office of Education. “Just because students aren’t in special education doesn’t mean they shouldn’t be able to access those resources.”

The details of how to absorb special education services into general education have yet to be worked out, said Gina Plate, chair of the State Advisory Commission on Special Education. However, the intention to do so is a significant shift, she said. “This is the first time the state board and the Superintendent are saying we are committed to merging our two separate systems into one system that serves all students. She told the state board, “Thank you for bringing special education into the fold.”

Article from Ed Source Written By Jane Meredith Adams
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