

# the CTA-ALCOSTA

Relay

A STATE COUNCIL NEWSLETTER FOR DISTRICT B & C  
MEMBERS OF THE CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

## ✧ October 12-14, 2007 Council Meeting ✧

### COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

*by Ann Katzburg: San Ramon Valley Teachers Association and Lory Quam: Mt. Diablo Educators Association*

There is pending litigation on the use of teacher mailboxes for political information. CTA is informing teachers to not put anything explicitly political into school mail boxes, but use tables and bulletin boards for this purpose. Political information that is not explicit, as in newsletters, is fine.

CTA will be involved with 3 elections for next year. The communication committee will be providing information and ad campaigns for each election.

The communications committee would like for you to encourage your members to visit MyCTA at [www.cta.org/mycta](http://www.cta.org/mycta). This members-only website has an abundance of information for our members. There are video clips, pamphlets covering useful tips for teachers such as parent/teacher conferences, and family involvement brochures to download in 13 different languages.

Our family involvement campaign has a number of radio ads airing throughout the state. We are now sponsoring the California Report on

National Public Radio, and that has added 35 more stations to our campaign.

Because of our efforts to fight the reauthorization of NCLB, we are beginning to see movement in Congress. One new tactic that we have implemented is launching ads on political websites and Blogs. Because of this effort, when NCLB is Googled, CTA is the first link that appears.

### AWARDS

Gold State Awards: Bestowed upon any individual or organization who proves to be a true friend of education. Locals are encouraged to submit applications to recognize those special individuals or organizations that rise above. Applications can be found on the CTA website and must be submitted by January 11, 2008.

Has a local reporter done an exceptional job covering education issues in your area? Submit their work to CTA through your local Association to be considered for the John Swett Award for Media Excellence.

## Conferences & Activities

- Alcosta-CTA Human Rights Reception

**November 15, 2007**

–Concord, CA

- CTA Good Teaching Conference: North

**January 11-13, 2008**

–Burlingame, CA

- CTA State Council

**January 25-27, 2008**

–Los Angeles, CA

- CTA Equity & Human Rights Conference

**March 28-30, 2008**

–Southern CA

Contact your Local Association to learn more about these conference and event opportunities.

## WHAT'S GOING ON IN C & I?

*by Bryan Blattel: Newark Teachers Association*

It was a different sort of weekend in Los Angeles this time around. We received a bit of rain Friday night and even though it was the 12th and not the 13th, a freeway pile up occurred just outside of L.A. at the intersection of I-5 and the 14. Was this to be an omen?

Saturday's morning session experienced spirited debate regarding one particular section of the CTA Education Change Workgroup Report. There was heard much argument concerning language about alternative pay systems and "merit pay" amid a clamor of procedural mishaps. More than a few State Council Members stated that nothing of this sort had happened in at least a dozen or so years. The reauthorization of NCLB was and is on everyone's mind. Council members had pictures taken of themselves, attached the photos to postcards and wrote their congressperson about their personal experiences dealing with the realities of NCLB.

The Curriculum and Instruction Committee (C&I) had several tasks to undertake. One was to continue to review the Education Change Work Group Report and how new language adheres to / affects policy. We also supported the creation of a task force designed to respond to Scripted Learning models. Another charge was to study a proposal to change the status of Earth Science from a "G" requirement to a "D" requirement as per the U.C. A-G requirements. This would make Earth Science a lab course on par with Physics, Biology, and Chemistry. We had a guest speaker, Patricia Rucker, who explained the recent changes to the Career Technical Education Frameworks. We found that the new frameworks are in alignment with current policy. After setting our agenda for the coming school year, we can look forward to our next meeting in January.

## INTERESTING TID-BITS FROM THE STANFORD STUDIES

"Stronger collective bargaining agreements may attract and retain higher quality teachers."

"Districts with determinative transfer and leave provisions enjoy a more qualified teaching force."

## SERVICE CENTER COUNCIL CHAIR'S REPORT

*by Greg Bonaccorsi: Chair, ALCOSTA-SCC/CTA/NEA*

Greetings, Everyone! Welcome to the first issue of this newsletter for 2007-2008. It promises to be an extremely busy year for all of us, not only with challenges that reach us at the local level, but also those that reach us from Washington, D.C. I hope everyone has taken a few minutes to contact the congressional offices of George Miller and Nancy Pelosi, as well as your own legislator in Congress, to send a strong message opposing the current version of the reauthorization of ESEA/NCLB.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the Alcosta State Council members involved in the debate against the Directorial Redistricting Plan #2. I felt that we were a united front, and we joined other Service Center Council areas that had concerns similar to ours. While our position did not become the majority view, I believe that more folks better understand the loss that Region 1 and District B took as a result of this plan. Thanks, again!

ALCOSTA has several events and activities scheduled between now and the next State Council meeting. Please be sure to mark your calendars with the dates listed on page 2. I wish you well in what remains of 2007.

## HEALTH CARE REFORM IN CALIFORNIA

*by Laurie Tewksbury: Acalanes Education Association*

The Governor has a plan but, to date, no legislation has been written or proposed. AB 8 - the Nuñez/Perata bill - was vetoed by the Governor on Friday (10/12/07). SB 840 (Kuel's single payer initiative) has become a 2-year bill and will come up for consideration again next year. The companion bill, SB 1014, (designed to fund SB 840) did not get out of committee this year. So, it would appear that there will be no health care reform in California this year. However, we still need to be vigilant about so-called "reform" as some of the most onerous aspects of the Governor's plan and AB 8 (mandating that people be covered by health insurance in the same manner that car insurance is mandated but not funded) are still being considered by Presidential candidates and other "reformers."

## *California Teachers Association* *State Council Committees*

Alternative Career & Technical Education • Assessment & Testing • Budget • Civil Rights in Education • Communications • Credentials & Professional Development • Curriculum & Instruction • Early Childhood Education • Elections & Credentials • Financing Public Education • Language Acquisition • Negotiations • Political Involvement • Professional Rights & Responsibilities • Representation • Retirement • School Safety / School Management • Special Education • State Legislation • Student Support Service • Teacher Evaluation & Academic Freedom

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR ADMINISTRATORS & BOARD MEMBERS

*by Lorraine Riggio-Schwartz: Fremont Unified School District Teachers Association*

CTA State Council adopted new policy recommended by the Political Involvement Committee that addresses full disclosure of personal and private financial interests on the part of all elected and/or appointed school officials.

The new CTA policy reads, in part, "CTA believes that education employees should have reasonable access to information about their employers' (superintendents, board members, charter school operators, etc.) economic interests. This information should be readily available to the greater school community."

## CAUCUS NOTES

*by Linda Lambie: United Teachers of Richmond*

The Hispanic Caucus met for the first time this year on Saturday morning. One note of interest was the formation of a planning committee for our upcoming 4th Hispanic Issues Conference, to be held in the spring of 2008. The NEA Hispanic Issues Conference will be held the 3rd weekend of May in Atlanta, Georgia. Also discussed was the annual joint forum with the other minority Caucuses, which will take place at the January State Council Meeting. At this time, all members will review and discuss the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee Report.

## NEWS FROM NEGOTIATIONS

*by Linda Lambie: United Teachers of Richmond*

As part of a report from one of our consultants, Felice Strauss gave everyone a "head's up" about any of us at, or dealing with a QEIA school. It seems that there are school sites making "side deals" with their administration, which leads to violations of the Contract. Areas of concern include Transfer Rights, Class Size, Hours of Employment, and Length of the School Year. CTA wants to leave much of the planning details up to the individual locals, but still stresses that in this crucial planning year, those involved in the QEIA planning should remember that no proposed program should violate any of the local Collective Bargaining Agreement.



Find archived editions of the Alcosta Relay and additional current articles and materials on our Service Center Council website:

[www.alcosta-cta.org](http://www.alcosta-cta.org)

THE ALCOSTA RELAY IS A NEWSLETTER COVERING THE ACTIONS TAKEN AT CTA STATE COUNCIL.

ALL STATE COUNCIL MEMBERS IN THE ALCOSTA SERVICE CENTER ARE INVITED TO CONTRIBUTE.

LAYOUT AND EDIT BY KEITH PICKERING-WALTERS

## *Special Insert to the Alcosta Relay:*

### **GASB 45:**

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN YOU NEGOTIATE**

*by Laurie Tewksbury: Acalanes Education Association*

### **What is GASB 45?**

It is a *recommendation* made by a non-profit group (Governmental Accounting Standards Board) about how school districts (and other public employers) should note "other post employment benefits" (OPEB - mainly retiree health benefits) on their financial statements. What GASB 45 states is that employers need to "measure, recognize, and present benefit costs in financial statements." Note that this is a reporting recommendation; *NOT* a funding mandate.

### **What you may hear at the table and how to counter these "fallacies":**

#### ***1. We have to fund the "unfunded liability" now; GASB 45 requires/mandates this.***

This is NOT correct.

GASB 45 states that the unfunded liability for OPEB/retiree health costs (calculated by actuarial study) should be noted in district financial reports. That's all it says!!

The timeline for this reporting is:

- Districts with revenues in excess of \$100 million - this should have been implemented in the first fiscal year after December 15, 2006
- Districts with revenues between \$10 and \$ 100 million - this needs to be implemented in the first fiscal year after December 15, 2007
- Districts with revenues less than \$10 million - this needs to be implemented in the first fiscal year after December 15, 2008.

#### ***2. GASB 45 implementation and/or funding is required by state law.***

This is NOT true!

GASB is a non-profit group that makes accounting recommendation statements not laws.

The Governor established a commission (Governor's Commission on Public Employee Post Employment Benefits also known as the Public Employee Post Employment Commission) last year to make policy

recommendations regarding GASB 45. (Our own Lee Lipps is on this commission!) This commission will present their recommendations to the Governor and Legislature January 1, 2008. At that point, lawmakers will decide what, if any, legislation should be enacted regarding GASB 45.

***3. If we don't fund/pre-fund the unfunded liability, then our bond ratings will be jeopardized.***

This is false!!

The Governor's Commission on Public Employee Post Employment Benefits (mentioned above) interviewed three of the largest credit rating companies in the state (Fitch, Mody's, and Standard/Poors) about the affect GASB 45 would have on district bond ratings. The response to this commission was "If a public agency is financially healthy, not pre-funding retiree health costs would not hurt the agency's bond rating."

***4. Once the liabilities for retiree health care costs are established in an actuarial report, they are (a) correct, and (b) set in stone.***

The liabilities that are established are only as good as the assumptions they are based on. You need to closely scrutinize the assumptions used in the actuarial report. Two actuaries of the highest professional and ethical standing could potentially come to different conclusions about liabilities by choosing key different key assumptions even if they conducted their valuation at the same point in time.

### **The Bottom Line**

The percent of an average school district budget that is spent on salaries and benefits (including retiree benefits) has been and continues to be 85% (even with the increasing costs of health benefits). As health care costs have increased, local Associations have self-adjusted and taken less on the salary schedule. School districts have always had the "unfunded liabilities" that GASB 45 is now recommending be reported and it hasn't made any difference in their budgeting and expenditures (and it won't make a difference in the future). Districts may want to use current general fund revenue to pre-fund this liability (that may or may not exist 5, 10 or 20 years from now) but there is no need to do this. GASB 45 recommends an estimation and reporting of these liabilities that have always existed, nothing more. School Services of California and CTA put out a joint memo on GASB 45 that your Association President and/or Bargaining Chair can find on the CTA Search website.