



ACE ON TASK

President's Message by Karen Houck

Welcome back to another school year! During the summer while many of you had some time off, we have been getting ready for another round of negotiations. The bargaining team attended training at CTA's Summer Institute at UCLA and is ready to face the challenges of the district's budget strategies. For those of you who haven't gone through the process before, we will be sending out a survey asking which articles or sections you would like to open. From that, the bargaining team will compile them and make a recommendation on which articles to open. Then we sunshine to the school board and after that, we start the process of negotiating. So, start taking a look at your contracts, or checking the one on our website to complete your surveys.

Also this summer, there was the NEA RA where we had three voices, the President's Conference and Summer Institute (a training for negotiations, communications and emerging leaders). Eight

of our members attended Summer Institute and will be involved more in the Association this year. The communications strand involved trainings on more ways to get our message out both internally and externally. We will be focusing on improving methods and trying to keep up with our members. Some of you are very tech savvy and we will be working with you to stay in touch. If you are interested in joining our communications team, we would love the help.

Advocating for our members has not slowed down this summer. Most of the RIFed teachers have been brought back to work in elementary and several in secondary. We will continue to look for ways to bring the others back. We were also able to settle the special education transfer grievance and have an arbitration date set for the elementary class size grievance. We are scheduled to mediate the transfer (bumping) grievance and will resume the timeline on several grievances now that school has started again. If you have a grievance, there is a limited win-

dow to file. Check the contract and get in touch with your site representative as soon as you suspect there is something wrong. We are watching the transfer of overflow teachers very carefully and monitoring class sizes.

Some pressing issues that will be of importance right away are summer school and the calendar for next year. We collected data from the surveys last year and are prepared to move forward with a modified traditional calendar. We will be meeting with the district in the next several weeks to work on that calendar. Drafts will be posted on our website for feedback. Our goal is to get any changes to the school year out as soon as possible so folks can plan their summers accordingly. Summer school is another issue the district is evaluating in this economic climate and we will be working with them closely on what changes are necessary.

Association of Colton Educators ACE/CTA/NEA

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I am not the workhorse by Arlene Roper

I will always remember reading the book Animal Farm by George Orwell. The book is a satire about the Soviet Union describing an uprising of animals that take a farm away from their tyrannical human rulers and run it for themselves. One character that I found particularly sad was the cart horse. On the farm most of the animals worked together for the common good; but, the horse took a lot of the labor on himself. When things began to go wrong, the horse's motto became "I will work harder." He thought that if things were wrong it must be because of some fault of the animals; so, he worked harder and longer. Things continued to go wrong and the horse continued to work longer and harder, until one day he collapsed. Those in charge on the farm promised to send him to a vet to be taken care of. Yet, those in charge had become just as tyrannical as their human counterparts. As the truck pulled away the other animals saw that "Horse Slaughterer" was written on the truck. The animals yelled for the

horse to get out of the truck; but, by the time the horse realized what was happening he could not free himself. In the end, the horse could not save the farm, his friends or himself.

I tell this story because there are times when I want to scream, "I AM NOT THE WORKHORSE!" It seems that the problems of education in this country fall squarely on the shoulders of educators. Students are not testing well enough so we need more minutes and training, less recesses and lunch. We need more afterschool tutoring, more committees and come in during your vacations to prep your classrooms. Still, it isn't enough. **Now, the State and District want us to do everything we do with more students, less money, and less prep days.** "I AM NOT THE WORKHORSE!"

I know we get paid to be professionals and get a job done. I also know that we love our students and want to do a good job for them. We all need to realize that just working

harder and longer isn't going to accomplish our goal. We all need to find ways to work smarter, not longer. How? Let's start by insisting that whenever we are told we must do more we ask, "What are you taking away?" When we are being "trained" ask to see the research behind the "new." We need less "expectations" about things that do not matter and more freedom to make decisions that are appropriate for our students. We need less staff meetings and more collegial meetings where we work together to improve the curriculum. We need less committees where we are informed of decisions made by others and more committees where we work together to create solutions that will work for everyone. We need less mandates and more compromise. I believe we will not get any of these things unless we insist upon them!

Reflection by Paul Lucero

As I get geared up to go back to my classroom, I reflect on why I got into teaching. 7 years ago, my classroom had desks piled high like a pyramid and 126 pencils stuck to the ceiling (I counted). I simply went about cleaning it up, and prepared for the year. I paid no attention to the negative because I was truly excited about being a teacher and having the chance to change and shape young minds for the better. I had no idea what was reality. For the past 7 years I have been adapting to the complex life of content standards, IEPs, DAIT, walkthroughs, data analysis, countless remedial programs, CST test preparation, benchmark exams, etc. However, I now wonder if this adaptation was truly adapting or reacting. I have changed into something different. My first true act of employment this year was to go to Edusoft and look up my test scores. My students did wall and then I looked at

the standards that my students struggled with and went to modify my lesson plans. I began to get frustrated. Why didn't they get that? This was definitely not my fault; I taught that concept up and down. I started to feel stressed. How could, seven years ago, a pile of desks and 126 pencils stuck in a ceiling not cause me any frustration or anxiety, and now just looking at test scores causes me severe anxiety and frustration? While thinking of my students I began to feel guilty. I wondered why I felt guilty? Then it struck me. My focus had changed. I was now using my students to get test scores instead of making my students better people. Can I still focus on the student with so much expected of me? Is there a balance? I have not answered these questions yet, however, I am committed to be much more of a student focused teacher this year.

If these walls could talk by Bernadette Pedroza

Focus Walls, Math Walls...yadda, yadda, yadda

Welcome back to the wonderful world of teaching in CJUSD! It is that time of year again when we pick up where we left off, with "visits" from the DAIT Providers or Educational Services looking for the mighty Math Walls and Focus Walls of the District. Instead of teachers being able to plan for students, most had to put up Focus Walls and Math Walls, walls which even when embedded in daily instruction are rarely ever looked at by students. But they sure do look good!!

That's what it's all about isn't it? Looking good. Who cares that our District doesn't have an elementary writing program, our GATE program is non-existent, and CJUSD is filling our classrooms with more than thirty students. Show us the research that shows that these walls increase stu-

dent performance! Just as administrators tell teachers every day, "show me the data." We are telling the District "SHOW US THE DATA!" For every district that got out PI and happened to have Focus walls, we will show you THOUSANDS OF TEACHERS who worked their fingers to the bone to raise student achievement!

CJUSD has to make student instruction a priority. This past week, a group of approx. 10 district personnel from Educational Services "visited" classrooms around the District. To do what you may ask? Look at Focus Walls and Math Walls. WHY?, because those boards reflect student learning! It took 10 people to walk around a classroom to assess bulletin boards. Hmm..., good use of district funds there, huh? In the time it takes a teacher to create

(the district has not given teachers one cent to purchase materials for these walls or any extra prep time) a Math Wall he or she could have spent one hour, three days a week, tutoring low achieving students.

Why doesn't the district seek out teachers who have innovative ideas like awesome teaching strategies that encourage student learning. These are the teachers whose ideas can't be stapled onto a bulletin board. One thing this District falters in is tapping into its own resources and that is a shame. There are so many effective and innovative teachers out here and their expertise is being underutilized.

Focus Walls and Math Walls are not the answer... Good teaching is. LET US TEACH!!

OPEN VACANCY ON ACE EXECUTIVE BOARD

We currently have an open position for Middle School Director. Please call the

ACE Office to apply!
(909) 825-0332

Health Benefits by Arlene Roper

I have represented you on the High Desert Inland Employee Employer Trust for the past six years. During that time, I have learned a great deal about our Blue Shield and Kaiser benefit plans. Part of the law overseeing Trusts requires an education component. Therefore, we investigate benefit plans, get legislative updates and have speakers from the medical and insurance fields talk to us about trends in health care. This year I am going to try and share some of that information with you. As the Federal and State governments grapple with the Health Care "Hot Topic" issues, I

hope this will help you make informed decisions on what to support.

Last year we had a local Doctor and an Executive from Blue Shield come to talk to us about trends in health care. They spoke at different times about different subjects; yet, they both spoke of the need for Universal Coverage. The Doctor spoke of the 45 million in the United States that are not covered and the need for preventive care rather than the emergency care they seek in ER's. The Blue Shield Executive spoke of how HMO's were

subsidizing the uninsured. HMO's are often charged 140% of actual costs to help medical groups and hospitals make up the difference for the uninsured. We were all surprised to hear both speakers at different times of the day speak in support of an issue that their respective groups had opposed in the past.

The issue can be complicated but please keep an open mind to changes that may be coming. Also, please remember that our benefit plans won't change unless we negotiate those changes.

ACE Calendar September 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 School Board	4	5
6	7 Labor Day	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 Exec. Board	15	16	17 School Board	18	19
20	21 Rep Council	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Special Events

WELCOME BACK EVERYONE!

September 3: School Board

September 7: Labor Day

September 14: ACE Executive Board Meeting

September 17: School Board

September 21: Rep Council

School Board Members

Your current School Board Members are:
 Marge Mendoza-Ware, Mel Albiso, Patt Haro, Kent Taylor, Robert Armenta, David Zamora, and Frank Ibarra. Please let them know how you feel as to the current status of CJUSD. They are very interested in teacher feedback and the more informed they are, the better decisions they can make. Stay tuned here next month for more information on the School Board.

Member Benefits

Your membership in CTA entitles you to a number of additional benefits. TSA, a subsidiary of First Financial Credit Union, offers discounted tickets to a variety of savings for Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, Legoland, Medieval Times Dinner and Tournament, Pirates Dinner Adventure, Movie Tickets (AMC Cinemas, Regal, Edwards, United Artist and Pacific Theaters), SeaWorld, Universal Studios Hollywood, San Diego Wild Animal Park and San Diego Zoo. Also available are See's Candy Gift Certificates. For a complete list of availability, prices, and service charges, call (800) 537-8491 or visit their website at www.tsaspecialservices.com

CONTRACT CORNER

This new feature is dedicated to answering questions about our contract. If you have questions you want answered here, please email them to ACEteach@aol.com with Newsletter as the subject.

Article 9.3: Class Size

K-3: MAXIMUM 20 students

4-6: MAXIMUM 34 students with an AVERAGE of 30 per class.

7-12: MAXIMUM 36 students with an AVERAGE of 32 per class.

The District has 20 student days from the start of school to fix it.

If your rights are being violated, see your Rep on campus and FILE THAT GREIVANCE!

ACE ON TASK is a publication of the Association of Colton Educators
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