



NEWSBREAKER

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Calendar

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Melanie Driver



- 3/16 F-SUTA Officer Nominations Open
- 3/31 Cesar Chavez Day
- 4/6 4pm Eboard
- 4/10 HOLIDAY (Good Friday)
- 4/13 – 4/17 Traditional Spring Break
- 4/20 F-SUTA Officer Nominations Close
4pm Rep. Council

The 80-to-80 Protest was a huge success. Texas Street was lined with students, parents, teachers, community members, principals, administrators and other district employees. It was clear that we had one message and one purpose. Together we can use our voice, send the message to Sacramento and let our elected representatives know the devastation that is taking place across the state of California due to the budget cuts, and that we will not tolerate any further cuts. Thank you to everyone that came out to show their support of public education and educators that received the lay-off notices. Thank you to Art Aronsen for organizing this event and those who made posters, distributed flyers and spoke to the community about the destruction occurring at our schools.

The state has adopted a Budget for the 2009-2010 year but as the financial condition of the state changes, this Budget may need significant revisions. State revenues are projected to continue to drop through 2009-2010. The outcome of the May 19 election will also impact the Budget. The amount of money reaching the school district from the federal stimulus package will also be a factor.

The Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District Governing Board adopted a budget for the 2009-2010 school year that identified \$4,765,000 in cuts. This included reducing the number of Consulting Teachers by 5, reducing the number of Teachers of Academic Support by 4, and increasing class size to 22-1 in K-3. The class size will not be increased at the QEIA schools.

The F-SUSD Governing Board approved the Resolution to lay-off employees based on not knowing what the financial condition of California would be in May. They felt that they needed flexibility to lay-off more teachers if needed, if the financial picture worsens before May. The Resolution approved by the Governing Board is based on eliminating elementary P.E., Music, and Art, increasing class size to 32 in grades K-3, eliminating all Academic Support, Consulting Teachers, elementary Librarians, Curriculum & Instruction Coaches, and most Counselors.

The District is currently rescinding lay-off notices as it receives Voluntary Separation notices. Voluntary Separation notices are turned in by individuals that are retiring or leaving the District and will not be returning next year. If you will not be returning to F-SUSD next year, **PLEASE** turn in your notification as soon as possible to allow one of our unit members that received a lay-off notice to be notified that they will have a position for next year.

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Budget Package no “Deal” for California’s Students; Includes \$11.6 Billion in Devastating Cuts to K-12 Schools

February 19, 2009

The budget deal passed today by state lawmakers includes deep cuts to education unlike any we have seen in our state’s history, to the tune of \$11.6 billion dollars in cuts to K-12 public schools alone. There is no question that the consequences of these budget cuts will directly impact students in the classroom, devastating our state’s public schools and chronically shortchanging California’s 6.3 million schoolchildren.

In addition, California’s Community Colleges, which serve 73 percent of all students enrolled in California higher education, will be cut by more than \$230 million.

With this budget package, California’s students, who already live in a state that ranks 47th in the nation in per-pupil spending, will be forced to endure an additional nearly \$2,000 in per-pupil cuts. These massive cuts will give California the dubious ranking of “last in the nation” in spending per student.

To illustrate the magnitude of these cuts, \$11.6 billion in slashed funds is equivalent to:

- **\$49,153 less per classroom, or**
- **\$19.66 million less per district, or**
- **Laying off 165,714 teachers, or**
- **Laying off 290,000 custodians, food service workers, bus drivers and other classified employees, or**
- **Closing California’s schools for 40 days, or**
- **Swelling class sizes by up to 55%**

Clearly, none of these cuts is acceptable in a state where we value our students’ education and our shared future. We invite lawmakers to visit schools in their districts to witness firsthand the impacts these cuts will have. It’s more apparent than ever that we need long-term, permanent solutions to provide adequate funds for California’s schools. It is time to stop devaluing our children and start listening to the people of California, who have said, time and again, to put our students first.

That’s why the Education Coalition will continue to fight to restore the funding schools are owed under Prop. 98. We recognize that the budget plan includes a provision that will go on the May 19th ballot, which could pay back approximately \$9 billion of the funds schools are owed.

The Education Coalition represents more than 2.5 million teachers, parents, administrators, school board members, school employees and other education advocates in California. For more information, please visit our website at www.protectourstudents.org.

Economic Recovery Resources

For more information on the economic recovery funds for schools, check out these resources:

- The first \$44 billion in economic recovery funds for schools will be distributed within 45 days, the Department of Education announced on March 7. The department released guidance explaining how local districts can get their funds. Another \$49 billion will be available within six months. The new information is on the department's [web page](http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/r) (<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/r>

Got Retirement?

You should have received two emails on Groupwise regarding the Retirement Incentive. Deadline for submitting your intent is due to the Human Resource Office by March 31st. This Retirement Incentive is only for the 2008-2009 school year. Please note – once you submit your intent to retire, you cannot take it back. Your resignation cannot be changed.

Option One

Unit member will receive a one-time payment of \$7,500. Part-time unit members will receive \$3,750.

Option Two

If you worked for the district at least 10 years, you will receive one-half (1/2) of the medical only payment for medical. You will pay for one-half and the district will pay for one-half or five years or until you turn age sixty-five.

Option Three

If you worked for the district at least 15 years, the district will pay for full medical (medical, dental, and vision) for two years or until you turn age sixty-five.

Additional Optional Benefit

If you were employed during the strike in 2000-2001, you will have the opportunity to work an additional nine (9) days. These days must be worked between July 1 – August 31, 2009.

For teachers who need additional years in order to retire, let me direct you Article 24 – Reduced Teacher Service Option. This option allows you to work one-half (1/2) of the year while contributing to STRS for a full year. In order to qualify for the program, you need to meet the requirements listed below:

- Worked at least ten (10) years of full-time service
- Must be at the age of 55 prior to the beginning of the school year
- Certification of eligibility by the State Teachers' Retirement System
- Cannot have a break in service during the past 5 years.

Association Membership for Retirees

Did you know that you can continue your CTA/NEA membership when you retire?

CTA/NEA-Retired is a strong voice for education retirees in state and local policy making. The organization works hard to protect and making your benefits:

- Working to repeal the unfair Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)
- Opposing efforts to privatize Social Security
- Working to strengthen Medicare
- Advocating for Defined Benefit Pension Plans
- Protect and enhance State Teachers pension plans that come under attack

CTA/NEA-Retired devotes 100% of its time and resources to serve the combined interests of retired teachers, educators, college & university professors and education support personnel.

Benefits for CTA/NEA-Retired Members

The benefits of membership in CTA/NEA-Retired begin as soon as you begin your retirement. CTA/NEA-Retired members are entitled to one hour of advice and consultation relating to retirement benefit issues, health and welfare benefit issues and substitute employment. This consultation regarding your retirement rights is provided through the CTA Group Legal Services program.

By continuing your membership in CTA/NEA-Retire, you are also eligible to continue to participate in the many economic benefits available to active members. The following is a partial list of those benefits:

- Life insurance (Must be participating in this at the time of retirement)
- Automobile and Homeowners Insurance
- Credit Union services, Savings account, Home loans, Personal loans
- 1 Million dollars Liability
- Entertainment travel and purchasing

Interested in an Association Leadership Position?

Have you ever wondered about getting involved in an association leadership position? CTA has developed a program called the Ethnic Minority Early Identification and Development Program (EMEID Program). The EMEID Program matches a participant with CTA staff. Together you will explore leadership roles, define goals and identify appropriate steps to achieve those goals at the local, regional, State and National level, as well as other CTA staff positions. EMEID will broaden your knowledge of the association and explore the possibility of a role in leadership.

Applications are available online at www.cta.org/emeid through April 17, 2009. If you know any ethnic minority member, do refer them to this program. Members can self-refer by completing the online application. Each region will select only five (5) ethnic minority members to participate in the program. Participant must agree to attend the CTA Summer Institute Emerging Leader strand, August 28 at UCLA. CTA will fully fund attendance at this session.

Members selected for EMEID Program will receive notification by May 17, 2009. You can find the EMEID program brochure online at www.cta.org.

So – how do you sign up? It's easy!

Access the CTA web page www.CTA.org. Click on "Register for MYCTA" on the right hand side of the www.CTA.org home page.

First Step

The registration page will prompt user to answer the five required fields:

- Member's ID number (Can be found on your CTA Educator label)
- First Name
- Last Name
- Zip Code
- Personal Email Address

Click the SUBMIT button when finished

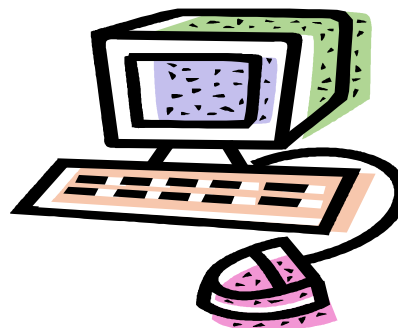
Members will receive an email with a link to the second registration (membership authentication has occurred)

Second Step

- Registration will prompt user to create Username and Password (both are case sensitive and require at least six characters) and then select a secret question for further security
- Click CREATE ACCOUNT button (member is now registered) and screen reverts back to www.CTA.org homepage to log in
- Member will receive another email with account details for future reference

Once registered, enter your Username and Password and click on the SIGN IN button and this will direct the member to the MyCTA homepage – the members-only section.

Application for the Program



Chrissy Hill is a second year special education teacher at Mary Bird Community Day School. At once you realize that she is a bubbly and outgoing person, someone you could become quick friends with. She is personable and quick to laugh which is important in her teaching position. She teaches students in the pre-expulsion program in grades 7 – 12. The pre-expulsion program is an eight-week process that students participate in before they are expelled. Due to the short duration of the program, Chrissy said that getting the kids to 'buy in' that their two hours in class a day is "real school" is the biggest challenge of her job. While in the pre-expulsion program Chrissy has to ensure that all of the IEPs are up to date and that all of the accommodations in the IEP have been and are being met. The paperwork, as any special education teacher will tell you, is a constant struggle to keep up with. Eventually, as the school year progresses there will not be enough special education spots in the expulsion program and she will get to keep her students through the spring.

Chrissy admits that she "hated school as a child until [she] was sent to an alternative school". She says that this move is what made her want to become a

before she found her way into teaching. Chrissy states that she always knew she

Within minutes of sitting down with Chrissy one can see the passion she has for teaching and for the kids she works with every day.

would teach at the high school level. She said she "really likes the idea of social change and ideas. In high school [students] are more mature [and] ready for social change and they are open to ideas about how to make a difference."

Chrissy told me that her social studies teacher told her that she had ten years to get her teaching credential and to come back to Davis to take his position. She laughingly states that her brother-in-law now has that job. After school, she traveled a great deal and then found herself managing a floral shop and creating floral designs. She taught floral design at a community college and found that she really enjoyed teaching; it brought back her desire to teach full-time. At that point, she switched her major from business to social sciences so that she could enter the teaching credential program. Chrissy chose to pursue special education because a friend of hers kept telling her that is where she belonged and all of the continuation schools were looking for special education teachers. It was then that

needed a new credential and she is currently finishing classes for her special education credential.

Within minutes of sitting down with Chrissy one can see the passion she has for teaching and for the kids she works with every day. Though her students are only in class for two hours a day she insists that they work on the standards they need to master...she refuses to dumb down the work for them. The rewards are worth it though! When asked what she likes the most about teaching she states, "of course it is the aha moments when you talk about a new concept and it clicks" and special field trips to R.O.P. (Regional Occupational Program) classes and to see the impact it can have on the kids. Some of her students have even joined the R.O.P. program for the welding certification. When she thinks about it for a minute though her face lights up and she excitedly tells about reading *Go Ask Alice* with her class and then showing them the bad "made-for-TV" movie from the 1970s. Chrissy was so excited when she spoke about how the kids hated the movie and were eager to discuss why the book was better. Chrissy nearly jumped out of her seat as she discussed how she was so excited about their realization that "YES! books

moments like this that make teaching so worthwhile for Chrissy.

“There are so many places to go in education [that] I don’t know [where I will be in five

or ten years] maybe writing curriculum, working at a charter school, pursuing an additional credential...[it] all sounds so cool!” **Chrissy Hill is a teacher to know!**

If you know someone who you would like to see highlighted in this article please email me (Stacie) at lilreader1@yahoo.com.

CTA and Senator Loni Hancock Introduce Legislation Today to Halt Needless, Costly Testing of Second Graders

February 27, 2009

Sacramento - Committed to protecting second grade students from the unnecessary and costly high stakes testing that they are put through each year and aligning the testing system with the federally mandated No Child Left Behind Act, today the California Teachers Association and Senator Loni Hancock announced the introduction of legislation to halt second grade testing. “The standardized testing that our second grade students are forced to undergo each year does not help them and it does not assist teachers in assessing their performance, development and learning needs, said David A. Sanchez, president of the 340,000-member organization. “Eliminating these tests will free up precious instructional time that teachers need with these students and it would save millions in the face of unprecedented cuts to public school funding.” Senate Bill 800 exempts second graders from the annual Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program, aligning the state program with the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which doesn’t require state wide testing until third grade. The law what would have ended second grade testing June 30, 2007, was

extended to 2011 by the Big 5 in a budget education trailer bill in 2007. According to California Department of Education estimates, the cost of administering and supporting second grade testing is approximately \$4.5 million. “If we are going to reduce funding to local school districts, we should reduce the bureaucratic requirements we place on them. We need to let teachers teach, “ said Senator Hancock. “Testing second graders simply starts the ‘teaching to the test’ process too early. We don’t need to formalize this process by mandating a test as early as second grade.” “Teachers believe that testing students is an important component in assessing their development and learning needs, but second grade tests are not helping teachers help our students. Additionally, these tests create harmful, unintended consequences for our youngest learners because they are not age and developmentally appropriate. At a time when the state is cutting billions from education, it certainly makes sense to cut unnecessary, mandated tests.” said Sanchez.

Online Beneficiary Registration at MyCTA!

The CTA Death & Dismemberment Plan

1. Provided by the CTA Economic Benefits Trust
2. A Death Benefit of up to \$2,000
3. An Accidental Death and Accidental Dismemberment Benefit of up to \$10,000
4. A \$50,000 Benefit if the member dies or suffers a dismemberment due to an accident or assault while engaged in any activity which was in the expressed or implied terms of his or her occupation, or while acting in the capacity of an Association Leader
5. A life insurance benefit that increases

You may name anyone as your designated beneficiary. To check to see if you have a beneficiary on file, or to designate or make changes to a beneficiary, simply click on My Profile under the My CTA tab at www.cta.org (login required). By doing so, you will not only ensure that your designated beneficiary is registered, you will have personal security that comes with your CTA membership.

This is not a complete description of the Plan. For a complete description, please refer to the booklet entitled “CTA Death & Dismemberment Plan and Summary Plan Description,” and to make a claim or for

Don't Forget to Check Out These Other [CTA Resources](#)

NEA Member Benefits and NFCC: *Offering Solutions to Help You Manage Debt*
debtadvice.org/nea
nfcc.org
neamb.com

Transferring Coverage to the Standard:

Starting April 1st you can switch your current voluntary