



ASTA Action

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Dean Elder, President



President's Report

Have you been participating in ASTA's organizing efforts and feel the urge to be more involved? There are many ways to get more involved in ASTA. Run for a Site Rep position at your school – each site holds an election in the spring. Attend the CTA Summer Institute and learn about education law, district budgets, health insurance, leadership, and much more. Represent ASTA on a district committee or a joint task force. Attend a CTA training or workshop. Volunteer to work on a political campaign. And if you are feeling really adventurous, on February 18 nominations opened for the offices of ASTA President, Secretary, Director at Large, CTA State Council, and for NEA Delegates to attend the NEA Representative Assembly this summer in Washington DC.

While the office of President may not be the place you want to start, I am providing a brief job description below to give you an idea of the scope of activities in which ASTA members participate and the

range of skills that you could develop. The ASTA President is a full-time release position.

1. Advocacy. The President acts as an advocate to protect member's contract and due process rights in disciplinary actions. The President also meets every other week with the Superintendent and all three Assistant Superintendents and occasionally with Directors and Board members to discuss issues of concern to members.

2. Communication. The President organizes a monthly newsletter and writes a weekly update. There are two or three site visits to all 22 work sites each year. Individual member's questions are researched and answered through email, text, phone, and at Representative Assemblies.

3. Negotiation. The President organizes the bargaining team and participates indirectly in contract negotiations. Negotiating is also an important part of settling contract disputes and advocacy.

4. Public speaking. The President acts as moderator for two monthly Executive Board meetings and one monthly Representative Assembly. The President speaks at Board meetings and occasionally at other events, such as City Council meetings.

5. Political campaigning. The President works with the Political Action Committee to interview candidates for possible endorsement and organize political campaign activities on local board elections and bond measures, and possibly county elections, assembly and senate seats, and state ballot initiatives.

6. Networking. The President regularly meets and communicates with other local Presidents and other CTA affiliates across the state.

If you are interested and want more information on any of the activities mentioned above, contact me at: astapres@gmail.com

by Joanne Fawley,
ASTA Organizing Chair (Cypress)

Organizing for Fairness

Reasonable proposals from ASTA combined with the District's ability to pay should equal a fair and equitable settlement. Unfortunately that has not yet occurred. Therefore, organizing activities are underway to demonstrate that ASTA bargaining unit members are united and committed to a successful outcome.

Over 250 teachers attended

the January 21 school board meeting to stand together and make a statement. 94% of the teachers signed our petition calling for a fair settlement. Teachers participated in the Stick(er) Up for Bargaining on February 12 to show support for the ASTA Bargaining Team and to insist that the District makes teachers a priority.

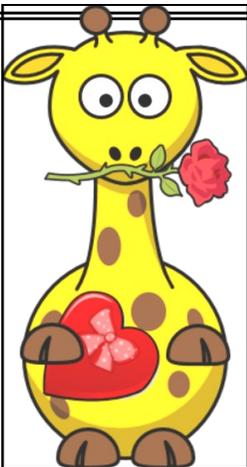
Pending the outcome of the

February 12 and 24 bargaining dates, there may be a need to increase our efforts in order to achieve a fair settlement. Teachers deserve no less than the best efforts of the District since teachers give their best efforts daily to serve students and the community.

We will keep you informed. Thank you for being ready and willing to act in solidarity.

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Love Your Special Someone!
From your friends at ASTA.

All Students Should Feel Safe On Campus

by Karen Reta,
Contributor (Western)

CTA Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, & Transgender Issues Conference Educators from throughout the state, including CTA president Eric Heins, gathered in San Jose in November to discuss current GLBT issues. Many informative sessions were offered. Interesting and important points included:

- All students AND staff are protected by law from discrimination.
- It is the responsibility of educators to prepare ALL students to thrive in a diverse world.
- Explanations about the differences between sexual orientation, sexual identity, and gender expression were given.
- Teachers MUST address the student by

the pronoun he or she identifies with. It's the law!

- “It's a Choice” video showed people on the street being asked if they thought homosexuality was a choice. If they answered “yes,” they were then asked “So at what age did you choose to be straight?” After pondering the thought, most said “Good point.”
- Some startling statistics: 40% of transgender students will attempt suicide; 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBT. LGBT students who come from highly rejecting families are 8 times more likely to attempt suicide, 6 times more likely to report high levels of depression.

This topic came up in several sessions: how should teachers (or anyone) respond to someone who says “That's so gay” as an insult to another student.

- Stop It: Keep it simple with quick responses.
- Don't Ignore It.
- Educate: If you have the time and opportunity to educate on the spot, do it. If you don't, make time later.
- Be Proactive: Develop an environment of respect and caring for ALL students in your class and school by using inclusive language, books and other materials. A strong Gay-Straight Alliance club on campus can aide LGBT students and allies in feeling like part of the school culture.

Support Your Profession: Support Your Union!

by Dean Elder,
President

In January, I attended a meeting of the CTA Large Urban Advisory Committee. At the meeting, CTA's lead attorney spoke to us about the possible outcomes of the Friedrich's v CA Teachers Association, which affects agency fee. Friedrich's makes two claims: one that nonunion employees should be allowed to benefit from union services without having to pay for them; and the second that nonunion employees should pay lower fees than union members for the same services. In states that have already repealed agency fee laws (WI and MI, for example) union members were bombarded with emails and mailers encouraging them to drop out of the union. The groups that are financing and organiz-

ing the anti-union push, particularly the Wal-Mart groups and the Koch Brothers, are not so much interested in the stands CTA has taken on divisive political issues such as reproductive rights and marriage rights. They are interested in voiding worker's rights, such as due process and tenure, and having easier access to teacher's retirement systems. In states where laws have been passed to curtail union's strengths (TN and GA, for example) the next step in the campaign has been to attack worker's rights laws and teachers retirement systems.

Here in CA, the Reed/DeMaio ballot initiative, drafted for the purpose destabilizing

Cal STRS and CalPERS, was recently pulled from the November 2016 line-up to await the outcome of the Friedrich's case. The thinking is that it will be much easier to pass the ballot initiative to undermine Cal STRS and CalPERS if there is a weaker CTA in 2018. Should CTA lose the Friedrich's case, it is essential that we remember the importance of having a collective voice and that we stand together to protect our employment rights and our retirement system. *It is imperative that we all remember that we have tenure, due process, and Cal STRS because of our collective efforts working through CTA. CTA is us and it will only be as strong as we make it!*

Charter School Update

by Ryan Ruelas,
CTA State Council (Anaheim)

Earlier this year, the Anaheim City School District was presented with a charter school application from the Magnolia Science Academy Charter School. The charter school provided a nice presentation, had a few speakers who testified on their behalf, and brought with them a few employees who all spoke passionately about working with this particular charter school company. However, many red flags were raised, especially once a lawyer for the country of Turkey delivered remarks cautioning the ACSD school board about this particular charter school company and its connection to the Gulen Movement. A few days later, the Magnolia Science Academy came to our very own AUHSD board meeting and delivered another presentation,

which was also rejected. AUHSD, however, took things a step further and penned an Op-Ed piece calling for a temporary moratorium on the expansion of large corporate charter schools like the Magnolia Science Academy, signed by all our board members and our Superintendent.

As a result of their actions, the shortcomings of large corporate charter schools was brought to light, calling into question the “pro charter school” solution groups like our very own Orange County Board of Trustees sees as the magical remedy to fix low performing schools. But please do not get me wrong—not all charter schools are bad! Those that are locally controlled, that are transparent with their governance and

finances, and are accountable to the same standards that we public educators are currently held to are appropriate educational settings in some school districts. Unfortunately, most large corporate charter school companies do not follow these regulations and are not required to. But the time has come for these corporate charter schools to be held accountable; please visit reformcharterschools.org, sign the petition to our government officials letting them know that you as a taxpayer want the current charter schools laws to be reformed, and spread the word to your family and friends. This is the responsible thing to do to ensure our children continue to receive a top-notch education.

Know Your Contract: Representation — Part 2

by Dean Elder,
President

Employees who are members of a Union have the right to request representation by the Union during an investigatory interview. The teacher must request representation before or during the interview. A standard statement that may be used is:

“If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or discharged, I request that my ASTA representative be present at the meeting. Without representation, I respectfully choose not to answer any questions.”

If the administrator denies the request, the teacher still may not leave the interview until dismissed by the administrator.



A teacher does not have the right to refuse to answer the employer's questions if an ASTA rep is present as requested.

In cases involving law enforcement, it is always advisable to seek legal counsel before speaking with an investigating officer. If you are an ASTA member, you are provided no-cost legal assistance in these situations.

Weingarten rules give ASTA representatives the right to speak when representing a teacher in an investigatory interview. ASTA reps have the right to be informed of the subject matter of the interview by the administrator, speak to the teacher in a private conference before the

interview begins, speak during the interview, request that the administrator clarify a question, give a teacher advice on how to best respond to a question, suggest and provide additional information to the administrator at the end of questioning. An ASTA rep does not have the right to advise a teacher not to answer a question or to give false answers. A teacher can be disciplined for refusing to answer questions in an investigatory interview. Administrators are under no obligation to bargain with ASTA reps during the interview. The ASTA rep is in the interview to assist the teacher who is being interviewed.

Only employees who are in a Union have Weingarten rights!

Have You Considered Becoming an NBCT?

by Margaret Tagler,
Contributor (Magnolia)

Five years ago I became a National Board Certified Teacher in the area of English Language Arts. It required a substantial amount of time and energy to complete, but it was the best process to help me refine my teaching. The reflection led to major changes as I evaluated how I was, or was not, impacting student learning. National Board made me a better teacher. National Board is centered on Five Core Propositions of Teaching that all teachers should pursue. These include ideas such as “teachers are committed to students and their learning.

Teachers know the subjects they teach and

how to teach those subjects to students. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.” According to research, “National Board certification distinguishes more effective teachers from less effective teachers with respect to student achievement” (National Research Council), and “the positive impact of having a Board-certified teacher is even greater for minority and low-income students” (Cavalluzzo, 2004; Goldhaber & Anthony, 2007). Attaining certification means that you have the knowledge and expertise to positively impact student learning.

Only 3% of teachers nationwide are NBCTs. I recommend pursuing National Board Certification to all teachers. You will not be alone in the process. Cal State Fullerton has a support program that meets once a month. If interested, visit <http://ed.fullerton.edu/impact/national-board-for-professional-teaching-standards>. AUHSD is looking to start a cohort of teachers interested in pursuing certification. Contact Jackie Counts at the district for more information. For a general overview about National Board and information on applying, please visit <http://boardcertifiedteachers.org>.

High-Stakes No More: Back to Basics!

by Julie Nielsen,
CTA State Council (Savanna)

Recently, POTUS has said testing should be less than 2% of the school year. While we may want to jump for joy, it may be time to sit down and start having the critical discussions around testing that return us to the purpose of why we assess.

At January's CTA state council, the delegates heard from W. James Popham, testing guru and author many basic texts for teacher preparation programs. He suggested that there are three purposes for testing:

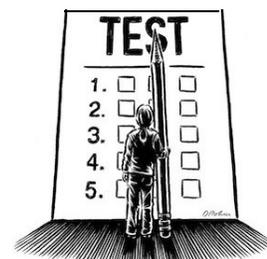
1. Comparison among test-takers.
2. Improvement of ongoing instruction and learning.

3. Evaluation of Instruction.

Whether you agree or not with the reasons, the critical piece came when we discussed the VALIDITY -the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of results for uses of the test. Are the assessments we create testing what we intend?

After 15 years of badly principled standardized testing, we have to question our testing practices. After all, we have new teachers and administrators that have only been under a NCLB regime. Also, we have to be honest that we MAY have formed ineffective habits or overall animosity for testing in general. Are we as

educators having the fundamental conversations of what and why we are assessing? More importantly, do we have the evidence to validate our tests and our conclusions? While standardizing a test is clearly ineffective, standardizing the approach we have in why we test may be a better strategy.



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-CTA

Mark Your Calendar!



Good Teaching Conference, February 26 - 28, in Garden Grove

-CTA Equity Issues Conference, March 4 - 6, in Torrance

-Walk to Celebrate Our Schools, March 5, at Ball JHS

-Spring Break, March 14 - 18

-Cross-Cultural Training Workshop at the Orange Service Center, Mar 24, in Orange

-Getty Museum Field Trip from Orange Service Center, May 21, from Orange

-Last Day of School for Teachers, May 27

Walk To Celebrate Our Schools

by Teresa Shimogawa,
Contributor (Cypress)

"Education then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men, the balance-wheel of social machinery." -Horace Mann

Mark your calendars, on Saturday March 5th from 8:30am to noon, we will be celebrating the great work our schools are doing with a rally and a neighborhood walk in the Ball/Loara area. It will take place at Ball Junior High, located at 1500 West Ball Road, Anaheim, 92802.

The morning will start with light refreshments, followed by a brief rally featuring students, parents, teachers, and community members. Then, participants will walk the neighborhoods in the area to share the good news about our local public schools and let people know what we do. We will talk to neighbors who have children. There will be a brief training and no experience is nec-

essary.

This is a great opportunity for us to foster positive community connections and promote school spirit. It's low-pressure, easy, and a fun way to engage the community.

Bring your colleagues. Bring your families. Come alone. Bring some friends. We'd love for everyone to come out and celebrate our schools together.

Public schools belong to the community. They are a community resource. Teachers, students, and parents come and go, but the schools stay in the community for future generations. Public schools are the great equalizer in society, a place for all students to have a free and quality education, and to have the opportunity to learn and grow and become prepared for life.

We have so many things to be proud of

in our schools. Let's get out there and share it with the neighbors.

After the walk, there will be a complimentary lunch at Ball Junior High.

We anticipate that this will be a great event enjoyed by the community and hope to continue these events throughout the District in the future.

Please RSVP to balljhsrally@gmail.com by March 3.

For more information, you can contact Teresa at teresamoran@gmail.com

