

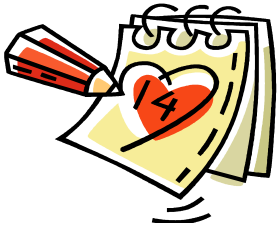


NEWSBREAKER

Volume 6, Issue 6

February 2011

Calendar



2/11 HOLIDAY
(Lincoln's Birthday)

2/21 HOLIDAY
(President's Day)

2/28 Rep Council 4pm

**3/2 Read Across
America**

**3/4-3/6 Equity & HR
Conference**

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Melanie Driver

We have just completed the first month of 2011. My pile of work continues to grow. I always try to get back to people as quickly as possible but that task has become increasingly difficult. I appreciate those members who are first contacting their Site Representatives and the Executive Board members assigned to their site. Many issues and concerns are easily resolved at these levels. If you are not sure who your Executive Board member is, it should be posted on your F-SUTA Bulletin board. You can also find the contact information listed on the fsuta.org website. I am always available to help with anything that can't be handled at the site. Just understand that there may be a delay depending on the urgency of the situation.

This is the time of the year that the District will be sending out a form called *PROCEDURE FOR FILLING VACANCIES, VOLUNTARY TRANSFER AND REASSIGNMENT*. This is a voluntary form. This is a request for information. This simply lets the District know if you are planning on returning to your current position or if you are requesting a change of assignment. You are not required to return this document. Last year this document was sent out on February 22 with a return date of March 12. This just helps the District with planning for assignments for next year. Returning this document does not change contract language regarding filling vacancies or reassignment procedures.

You will receive a second form that you are required to return to the District prior to July 1, 2011. This form is called *REQUEST FOR RESPONSE, PROBATIONARY/PERMANENT CERTIFICATED EMPLOYEES*. The consequence of the employee's failure to meet this deadline is that the employee may be deemed to have declined employment for the following school year and his/her services as an employee of the District may be terminated.

Each year there are employees that have completed coursework but do not submit the proof of completion of the coursework for advancement on the salary schedule. It is the employee's responsibility to provide proof of completion to Human Resources. This is found in Article 22.5 of the CBA. Employees must provide the proof by July 1st for change on the July 31st paycheck and notification must take place by October 15th for the change to occur on the November 30th paycheck. My recommendation is to turn in proof of all completed coursework as soon as possible.

The District has already begun working on determining the number of Certificated Employees it will need for next year. March 15 is the deadline for the preliminary lay-off notice. The Governing Board will most likely approve a Resolution to eliminate the number of Certificated Employees before that date due to a Reduction of Particular Kinds of Services. The chief reason this year will be to address the declining enrollment.

The Governing Board also has the ability to develop a 'skipping criteria'. Skipping is where a junior employee is being retained to render a service that a senior employee is credentialed and competent to perform because of a specific need or a specialized skill of the junior employee. If the Governing Board approves a skipping criteria, both the junior and senior employee must be noticed. It is then up to an Administrative Law Judge during the RIF Hearing to determine whether the special training and experience really is necessary to teach the specific course. There are two new areas that we are hearing that Administration will attempt to use as skipping criterion. Those areas are EL authorization and PI schools where teachers have participated in professional development activities.

(President's Corner continued on next page...)

(President's Corner Cont'd...)

It is important that anyone that receives a RIF notice pay attention to the timeline. If the District does not receive the Request for a Hearing form and the Notice of Defense within the timeline, the unit member is not eligible to participate in the RIF Hearing.

RIF Timeline:

1. RIF Resolution and RIF Notices sent out-on or before March 15
2. Request for Hearing-You must submit this within seven calendar days of receiving RIF Notice
3. District Sends Accusation-sometime after the deadline for requesting a hearing
4. Notice of Defense-You must submit this within seven calendar days of receiving Notice of Defense
5. RIF Hearing-On or Before May 7
6. Recommendations go to School board before May 7
7. Final RIF Notices-By May 15

CTA Legal Services has issued the following step for getting ready for educator RIFs

1. Make sure that when you verify your seniority date and credentials that the information is 100% correct before you sign. RIF hearing officers often restrict individuals from contesting incorrect credential or seniority information at the RIF hearing especially when the individual has already had an opportunity to set the record straight.
2. Make sure that ALL of your credentials and certifications are on file with the school district especially certifications to teach English language learners. If you hold a credential or certification, but it is not on file with the district by March 15th, you will not be credited with that credential or certification in the RIF hearing. If you want to verify, go to <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/lookup.html>.
3. Check your personnel file. Copy any documents from the file that you will need to prove your first day of paid service with the district as a probationary employee.
4. If you are an agency fee payer, join CTA so that you will be represented by CTA in any RIF hearings that occur.
5. Contact your CTA staff person immediately if you receive a layoff notice.

F-SUTA is a union that develops its strength by member involvement. All members of the F-SUTA Executive Board, Rep. Council and committees volunteer countless hours to make F-SUTA strong. We need your involvement. We will be starting the election process in March for F-SUTA positions for the 2011-2012 year. Consider increasing your involvement by becoming a site representative or running for an elected position within F-SUTA. We have many committees that need members. United, we have the ability to accomplish a great deal. Consider ways you can become more involved.

2011-12 State Budget Proposal Talking Points *January 18, 2011*

Governor Brown's approach to solving the state's \$25.4 billion budget deficit is a balanced approach that includes tough cuts and revenues. Extending the state's current revenues is critical to trying to maintain an effective public education system.

We appreciate the governor's trying to limit cuts to K-12 education. As he pointed out, K-12 education has "borne the brunt" of the state's budget cuts, with more than \$18 billion in cuts over the last three years, or roughly \$1,900 per student.

Public education is in a state of financial emergency, and this budget does not restore any of that much-needed funding. The \$2 billion deferral in K-12 funding and the proposed cuts to higher education will directly impact students and programs.

Our students are facing larger class sizes and the reduction or elimination of art, music, career technical education programs, and transportation. According to a California Watch report, more than 1 million students are losing up to 5 instructional days as districts struggle with budget shortfalls. Many classrooms have more than doubled in size.

Higher education is being cut by \$1.4 billion—community colleges by \$400 million and the UC and CSU systems combined by \$1 billion. Over the last few years CSU and UC students have seen triple-digit fee increases, and many are being priced out of a college education.

More than 30,000 educators and 10,000 other school employees have been laid off over the past three years. California ranks at the bottom of all 50 states in the ratios of teachers, school counselors, librarians and nurses to students.

The governor is proposing an initiative to extend the temporary taxes approved in 2008 for five years to help prevent further cuts to our schools, students and other programs. According to the Legislative Analyst, without continuing revenues public education would be cut another \$2.3 billion. California cannot continue to compete in the 21st century if we don't provide a first-rate public education to all our students. They deserve better.

California teachers, parents and the entire Education Coalition support additional revenues for our schools, and extending the current revenues for 5 years is a necessary and viable option. We look forward to working with the governor and the Legislature on a budget package that includes revenues to prevent further devastation to our students and schools.

Words of Wisdom..

“Last Saturday there was a shooting in Tucson, 6 dead, many wounded. Whatever reason (if there is one), it appears that negative discourse might have led to this tragedy.

I bring this up because words can hurt people. I hope that as we go through what could possibly be more cuts or as we work together if we need to vote to bring money to the schools that we remember our words. If we disagree, let’s try to do it with restraint and dignity. While under the first amendment we have the right to free speech, remember negative words have consequences.

I would like to publicly thank Gov. Brown for not cutting k-12 education. While we might need an election to restore the January 1 taxes that expired, or to extend current taxes, I want to publicly state that I will work on any election to help our students”. – *Monica Brown, FSUSD Board Meeting, 1/13/11*

CALENDAR COMMITTEE UPDATE

By Keith Bryan



You may be wondering what has been happening with the calendars. Well not much. Since our last news breaker update the committee has had 4 meetings cancelled by the district administration for various reasons. We finally met on January 25.

During this meeting we looked at the calendars for the surrounding districts. For those of you who either live in or have seen other districts calendars it is important to note that the start and stop dates are affected by a couple of things other than the breaks. Those things are furlough days and number of student contact days. Our district has 180 student contact days, but a number of other districts have 170 or 175 student contact days. These fewer days make it easier for them to have the same number of days for each break that we do, but get out earlier. Currently we do not have furlough days, and as of the last rep council in January they had not been discussed in negotiations.

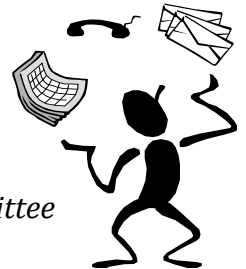
We also discussed the student start and ending dates, and decided that we needed a firm decision from staff as to what the preference was. Therefore, we sent a fast turn-around survey to the administration, clerical and support staff, and the teachers. Your site rep was to inquire as to which of the 2 options presented you would want. While we cannot guarantee either option (the final decision rests with the board), we are using this information to determine the path we need to take.

With this information in hand we will prepare the calendar that will go to the board. This calendar is scheduled to be presented to the board during the last meeting in February, with the vote to be taken at the next meeting in March. Once the calendar is prepared, and before it goes to the board, we will send it out for review. When this happens, please note that the turn-around will be very fast, the start and end dates, and all holidays and breaks will be held firmly in place. The input we will need will be with regard to the progress reports, report cards, minimum days, back to school night, and the high school open house. The high school open house is the only one the committee must place because of the minimum day that follows.

Finally, it is the districts desire to produce two years worth of calendars. However, we may not be able to do this because of the controversy due to the winter and spring breaks. We will keep you posted. For those of you who are interested, our next meeting date is February 9 at 4:00 in the district office. We want to thank you for your help with the quick turn-around surveys and the comments you have shared. Next month we will tell you the results of the quick turn-around surveys.

Participation in the discipline survey was a great success. 864 teachers and 43 administrators filled out the surveys. It was extremely helpful that the district allowed us time at staff meetings to do the survey. You will get the results as soon as possible. We will be presenting copies of the results to the board/district as well. We’ll be working with the district to make positive changes. We all want to make our district better. Our goal is to provide input and/or share in the major decisions that affect teachers. Thank you for your participation.

Earl Handa, *F-SUTA Organizing Committee*



DO YOU OWN YOUR CLASSROOM? NEED TO ESTABLISH YOUR AUTHORITY IN YOUR CLASSROOM?

- Arthur Aronsen, F-SUTA Grievance Chair



The pressure is on and the expectation is for teachers to raise test scores. The constant expectation and belief of some administrators is that teachers should handle their own discipline problems. Use Article 17.2 if you need to suspend a student from your class. Article 17.2 (a) states: A unit member may suspend a student from his/her class for reasons stated in California Education Code for a maximum of two (2) days (the day of suspension and the day following). The unit member shall comply with all suspension regulations including contacting the parent for a conference regarding the suspension. If necessary the teacher will be released from class to make the parent contact.

If you find yourself in the position of having to remove a student from your class, follow these procedures:

1. If your site does not give you referral forms, make your own. The site administration cannot prevent you from suspending the student just because they will not give you a form.

Write down the students name, classroom, date & time the event happened and then state what happened in no uncertain terms. If in-appropriate language was used, quote it exactly, no pussy footing, and write on the referral, **"Suspended Per Ed Code 48910"**. Defiance is the most often used reason and that covers most everything. I also write on mine, **"I will not sacrifice the education of 33 students for the behavior of 1"** and **"this site wants higher test scores, I want a disciplined teaching environment for my students."** If this behavior is repeated a second or third time, I write **"Pattern of Behavior"** in addition to the above. Remember to sign it and date it.

2. The teacher shall immediately report the suspension to the principal of the school and send the pupil to the principal or the principal's designee for appropriate action. The pupil shall not be returned to the class from which he or she was suspended, during the period of the suspension, without the concurrence of the teacher of the class and the principal. (Do not take a student back into your class during the suspension once you have suspended them.)

3. The teacher has 24 hours to contact the parents, but it is best done at the end of the day. The teacher shall ask the parent or guardian of the pupil to attend a parent-teacher conference regarding the suspension (A telephone conference does the job). Whenever practical, a school counselor or a school psychologist shall attend the conference (not mandatory). A school administrator shall attend the conference if the teacher or the parent/ guardian so requests.

4. **A pupil suspended from a class shall not be placed in another regular class during the period of suspension.** However, if the pupil is assigned to more than one class per day this subdivision shall apply only to other regular classes scheduled at the same time as the class from which the pupil was suspended. (The students may sit in the principal's office and then the principal may decide what to do...keep them or send them home, but they will not be going back into your or any other teacher's classroom.)

To my knowledge, there have been only a couple of times that administrators have tried to return the student or send back the referral denying it. Both times the administrators changed their tune when the threat of filing a grievance as this is not only in our contract, it is also state law and therefore Ed. Code 48910 trumps any hoops that the administration wants you to do first. I use this when I write a referral and I give out the full 2 days. I have not had one returned saying it was denied. After the students saw that I could do this without principal approval, I have had fewer problems in class with discipline.

If you have any problems with this, please let me know using *Groupwise* at Arta.

***YOUR HEALTH & SAFETY CHAIR, JOAN GAUT, ENCOURAGES YOU TO BE CAUTIOUS
AND ALSO CONVERSANT WITH YOUR CONTRACT...***



ARTICLE 17 - SAFETY

17.1 Safe Working Conditions

- O. At the Elementary school sites, site administrators and staff shall work collaboratively to ensure that teachers have morning and after lunch breaks so that unit members may use the restroom. The break times can include non-duty recess breaks, and/or release time.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

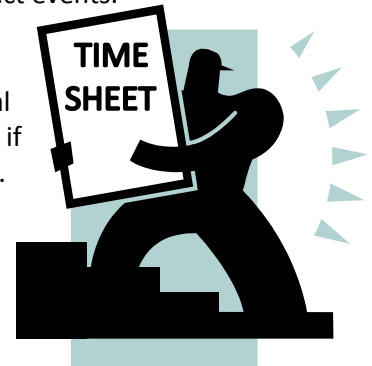
Employees that work in the Fairfield Suisun Unified School District and are paid according to the Fairfield-Suisun Unified Teachers Salary Schedule are required to work 185 days each year. The salary schedule includes 184 workdays and one mandatory day of staff development.

Staff development for unit members is described in Article 20.2 of the 2008-2010 Contract. Professional Development is defined as 6 ½ (six and one-half) hours of staff development activities. This day is on the salary schedule for full time employees. Part time employees will be compensated at their per-diem rate of pay for the remainder of the day. It is important for you to understand that if you do not complete your one mandatory day of Professional Development (Buy Back), you will be docked a day of pay and this will result in not receiving a full year of STRS credit.

All unit members should have received a copy of the Professional Development Per Diem (Buy Back) Timesheet. Please pay close attention to the instructions. The Check-off list includes:

- Submit ONE timesheet per year. (Only one timesheet will be accepted each year)
- The last day to turn in a completed timesheet is June 15. If you are participating in a professional development activity between June 15 and June 30, you may turn in your timesheet on June 30.
- Professional development you attended is on the Approved List or you obtained approval from the Professional Development Committee.
- Verification of attendance is attached:
 - Agenda(s) with dates, times, and content is REQUIRED. Remember that hours and minutes are calculated using the activity agenda. Do not include meals, with or without a keynote speaker, conference registration, breaks, breaks between workshops, and viewing of exhibits or conference time that is not staff development training.
 - Original signed Verification of Participation, including agenda, from in-district events.
- Administrator signature
- Employee signature

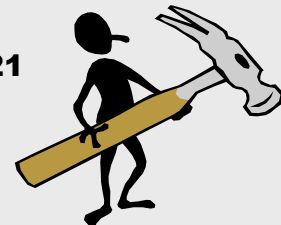
It is a good idea to submit your timesheet early if you have completed all of the professional development you plan to complete. You will receive confirmation of your per diem pay and if there are any problems with your timesheet, you will have the opportunity to correct them.



RESTRUCTURING

THE RESTRUCTURING COMMITTEE WILL BE ATTENDING THE FEBRUARY 28TH REP COUNCIL MEETING TO GO OVER THE RESTRUCTURING PROCESS AND THE NEW CHECKLIST FOR RESTRUCTURING PLANS.

- **DEADLINE TO FILE FOR A CONTINUANCE – APRIL 21**
- **DEADLINE TO FILE FOR NEW PROGRAMS – MAY 13**

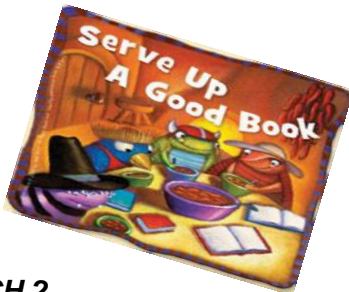


WHAT IS READ ACROSS AMERICA?

Read Across America is a national day celebrating reading. Read Across America is sponsored by the National Education Association and the California Teachers Association along with many of the country’s leading literacy and youth groups to motivate children to read and generate new enthusiasm for reading.

EVERYONE IS CELEBRATING

The theme for Read Across America 2011 is “Serve Up a Good Book!” Gobble up the spicy fun for some tasty reading and join Miss Billie Armadilly, Tex the tarantula, Mackie the bluebird and Taffy the horned toad – characters created by award-winning illustrator Will Terry. Get cookin’ and be a part of the fun celebration! This year’s activities include breakfast read-ins, book drives and chili cook-offs. These are examples of fun things you can do to share the joy of reading. Will Terry has illustrated 20 children’s books — his lifelong dream after starting his art career illustrating for magazines and advertisements. He enjoys talking to kids of all ages – in fact, his studio is often overrun by one or more of his kids and their friends and is frequently open to school classes from elementary through college.



MARCH 2

In California, Read Across America is observed on Wednesday, March 2, in honor of Dr. Seuss’s birthday. Mark your calendar at home and school to remember this special day of reading for students, family and friends.

WHY CELEBRATE READING?

Learning to read is one of the most important things a child will ever learn to do. Celebrating reading through different events is a fun way to introduce children to the world of books, words and reading. Mastering basic reading skills helps motivate children to learn. The more children read, the better they read. And the more they read outside of school, the better they do in school. Continued exposure to reading and vocabulary encourages learning and the expansion of new ideas.

HOW TO CELEBRATE READING

Parents can pick up a book and read with children. Older children can read to younger children. Local, city and county librarians can arrange special story hours. You can invite a local news anchor, police officer or firefighter to read at a Read Across America event. Or invite a local bookstore to host a children’s read-in. The list is endless. Get involved and this year will be a bigger and better celebration!

**FAIRFIELD-SUISUN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
2011 SITE TEACHERS OF THE YEAR**

School Site	Teacher of the Year
Cordelia Hills Elementary	Jane Bosch
Crescent Elementary	Lilli Ede
Fairview Elementary	Jan Carlisle
Cleo Gordon Elementary	Linda Engel
K. I. Jones Elementary	Cindy Stuart
Anna Kyle Elementary	Jose Rico
Laurel Creek Elementary	Bruce Rasmussen
Nelda Mundy Elementary	Alyce Broschard
Oakbrook Elementary	Lee Ann Glassow
Suisun Elementary	Carrie Joslin
Suisun Valley Elementary	Christina Brown
Tolenas Elementary	Megan Taylor
David Weir Elementary	Rebecca Dinwiddie
B. Gale Wilson Elementary	Blanca López
Crystal Middle	Melissa Apostolos
Grange Middle	Pete Smith
Green Valley Middle	Sue Kinder
Sullivan Middle	Dustin Cloud
B. Gale Wilson Middle	Wendy Haggmann
Armijo High	Joe Summers
Fairfield High	Kathy Link
Rodriguez High	Scott A. Miller
Matt Garcia Learning Center	Sarah Parker
Sem Yeto High	Wes Lai
Fairfield-Suisun Adult	Regina Williams