



NEWSBREAKER

Volume 6, Issue 5

January 2011

Calendar



1/17 HOLIDAY
(MLK, Jr.)

1/14-1/16 Rural Issues
Conference

1/21-1/23 Good
Teaching Conference

2/7 Eboard 4pm

2/11 HOLIDAY
(Lincoln's Birthday)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Melanie Driver

Happy New Year!!! I hope everyone enjoyed the winter break. If you were like me, I enjoyed spending time at home and being able to set my own schedule. I know we all needed time to get reenergized to finish the year.

I want to share some more concepts that were emphasized at the NCUEA conference I attended. Many of the presenters took time to speak about test scores. Several spoke about test scores and the reality that they are immaterial in the long run. One spoke about what truly mattered was what the kids and teachers are doing in the classroom and the importance of seeing the student's work as an indicator of what is happening. Another presenter stated that currently there is a focus on standardized tests and graduation rates but that this doesn't improve output. Tests scores have become a definition of education and zip codes predict test scores. Another important point made was that there is a negative correlation between test scores and creativity.

We were encouraged to start work at the local level to find ways to change the discussion. This can be done by newsletters that are not just distributed to families in schools but distributing them and making them available in supermarkets and around the community. It needs to include student work along with policy issues. This can also be done by educators writing letters for publication in the local papers and calling in to radio stations to share our views. We truly need to step up our efforts in educating the community. I want encourage you to share stories from your experiences. Share actual work done by your students so that others can find out what your students know and can do. As work begins in Congress on the reauthorization of ESEA, we need to be more vocal in advocating our position that a single test is an inaccurate measure. The National Center for Fair & Open Testing believes that if you want to find out what kids know and can do, you need to look at their actual work. By focusing on the classroom, we can assess important learning standardized tests cannot, such as research projects, oral presentations, essays, problem solving and using computers in real situations. This enables us to evaluate higher order thinking skills and deeper knowledge over standardized tests. High quality assessment improves teaching and learning. If we don't want to have to keep doing more of the same, we need to speak up.

Each site will be selecting the site teacher of the year. Each unit member should have received a notice announcing the process. The timeline will be strictly followed.

Each unit member should have verified the information on the seniority list that was sent to sites on December 13. This is the initial seniority list and it is always listed in alphabetical order by first date of paid service. The list looks different because of the change to Aeries. After everyone has a chance to correct any inaccurate information, the list is then used to create a seniority list for the purpose of layoffs. The point system is used giving points for all credentials or additional authorizations. Verifying the accuracy of information is important for all unit members.

February is the month when administration determines whether it will release without cause any probationary employee. This is always a very frustrating process because the Ed Code allows districts to release employees without cause during their probationary status. As professionals, we want to be told why we are being released. Unfortunately, that means that administration is not permitted to state why an employee is being released otherwise it is with cause. In the past, F-SUTA has been notified that these meetings are occurring and provides representation. Anyone receiving notice that they need to attend a meeting in HR should contact me immediately to confirm that we have been notified and will have representation present. Any unit member that would prefer to bring someone else to the meeting for support is encouraged to do so.

Once again, thank you for everything you do. It is amazing the great things that are happening around the District. The students in Fairfield and Suisun are fortunate to have such wonderful, caring and dedicated teachers.

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BARGAINING UPDATE!

Read All About It!

The Bargaining Team has met with the District two times in December. We have had long discussions on the Violent Student Notification and *Aeries*.

We have drafted new language for Violent Student Notification. Prior to reporting at the start of each school year, you will be receiving a list of all students at the site who have been disciplined for violent offenses for the past three years.

You will receive this notification via district email. Notification of subsequent violent offenses will be provided to you no less often than weekly. However the District has assured us that you will be receiving notification in less time. In addition, you will also receive a list of all students in your classes who have been suspended or expelled for any reason within the past three years. Notification of subsequent offenses will also be provided no less than weekly.

Thank you to all the secondary members who took the time to complete the survey. You will find the results in the next Newsbreaker. The data from the survey has been given to the Executive Board members. The greatest concerns have been not being able to access information for all the students at your site. We have been told that *Aeries* does not allow the “read only” access to student information. The second issue has been that it logs you off too quickly. Twenty minutes isn’t enough time when you are inputting grades. The log out should be increased to thirty minutes. We have asked the District to have a warning on the last three minutes prior to logging you off the system. This way you are able to save your data prior to having to log off. Rodriguez High, Green Valley Middle, and Suisun Elementary will be piloting the Parent Portal at the end of January. We asked for training so these site members can better understand how to use it before it becomes district-wide. Talk with your site administrators to find out the dates for the training.

We had a discussion on release time in the elementary sites. Elementary members – look for a survey asking you to reassess this year’s release time. We realize that having it at the beginning of the day was difficult. Although we would love to bring back Music and P.E., it is now looking doubtful that money will be available to do it. Think about it – what worked well? What did not work well? Other than bringing back Music and P.E., when would you like to take your release time?

THE FACTS ABOUT DUE PROCESS

Teachers unions provide due process so that teachers cannot be fired arbitrarily or for no reason. Under the state’s Education Code, teachers may be dismissed for the following causes:

- immoral conduct
- unprofessional conduct
- dishonesty
- incompetency
- addiction to the use of controlled substances
- failure or refusal to perform the normal and reasonable duties of the position
- conviction of a felony or conviction of any misdemeanor involving moral turpitude
- Drunkenness on duty

In addition, any permanent or probationary employee who is physically or mentally unfit for the position occupied may be suspended, demoted or dismissed. Teachers have a right to due process and a hearing before being fired.

2011 NEA/RA CONVENTION IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

**YOU CAN
REPRESENT
YOUR
ASSOCIATION!**



F-SUTA will be electing six (6) delegates to this year's NEA Representative Assembly to be held in Chicago. Delegates will need to arrive on Wednesday, June 29 and depart on Wednesday, July 6. The first California Caucus meeting will be held on Thursday, June 30th at 10:15 a.m. Any NEA member is eligible to be a local delegate candidate by filing a Declaration of Candidacy form. All forms must be filed at the SEC office by 5 p.m. on Monday, February 14, 2011.

There are six (6) positions available. These locally-elected delegates will be responsible for paying for their meals, hotel room and transportation for June 29-July 6. Elected delegates will be eligible to be reimbursed up to \$1950 with appropriate receipts and attendance at all caucus meetings and all business meetings of the RA.

If you are interested in being a local delegate candidate, please see your site representative for a Declaration of Candidacy form. The form is also available at www.fsuta.org. The bottom of the Declaration of Candidacy form has the Duties of the Delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly that must be signed to be a locally funded delegate.

**FAIRFIELD-SUISUN UNIFIED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY
FOR LOCAL DELEGATE TO THE NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY IN 2010**

I am a member in good standing of the following

- Chapter: Fairfield-Suisun Unified Teachers Association
 California Teachers Association
 National Education Association

Name: _____ Signed: _____
(please print)

Address: _____
(same as for "NEA Today")

City: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime telephone: (_____) _____

The following information is needed to complete delegate reporting forms to the NEA:

Social Security No. _____ Gender: Male _____ Female _____

Educational Position: _____ Teacher-NEA Active (Non-Supervisory) Member

Ethnic Grouping: _____ African American _____ American Indian/Alaska Native _____ Asian
_____ Caucasian _____ Hispanic _____ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

This form must be submitted no later than 5 pm, Monday, February 14, 2011 to 4735 Central Way, Suite C, Fairfield, CA 94534 via postal mail, District mail or Fax (707) 864-6284.

Please use the following campaign statement/biographical sketch on the flyer that accompanies the ballot. I understand that only the first 25 words will be used, but a reference to ethnic minority identification will not be counted in the limitation of words.

Please print name as you wish it to appear on the ballot: _____

Statement limited to 25 words:

Must be signed by individuals wishing to run as a funded delegate of F-SUTA

Duties of the Delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly

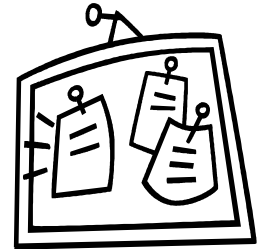
1. Each delegate will be expected to arrive in Chicago by June 29, 2011. This will allow delegates enough time to complete California and NEA registration as an official delegate to the Representative Assembly and also attend California's first Caucus meeting, which is scheduled for June 30, 2011 at 10:15 am.
2. Each delegate will be expected to attend all caucuses of the California delegation. The caucus usually begins at 7:00 a.m. daily. Delegates must be registered with the California delegation to sit with and participate in the caucus.
3. Each delegate shall attend all business meetings of the RA.
4. Each delegate is strongly encouraged to attend NEA Budget Committee Hearings, Resolutions Committee Hearings, Bylaw Committee Hearings, and speeches by prominent national figures, etc.
5. Each delegate should take into consideration CTA State Council and caucus policy when voting. Each delegate is encouraged to participate fully in all activities of California's delegation.
6. Each delegate, state and local, will be expected to sit with his or her Service Center Council delegation on the RA floor. This is to ensure communication regarding RA business and/or personal emergency information of concern to the delegate, as well as to verify attendance.

I understand that, as a local delegate, my attendance is being directly funded by membership dues. I accept my responsibility to carry out the above-specified duties.

_____ Date

_____ Signature

MESSAGES FROM YOUR COMMITTEE CHAIRS...



I hope you have all had a great holiday season. Thanks to everyone who completed the discipline survey! Results will be coming out soon and will be available to all. Hopefully, the District and the teachers can work together to improve the discipline in our district.

Organizing will continue to work toward increasing the voice of the teachers in our district. F-SUTA needs you. Get involved!



Whatever you can afford to do will help your fellow teachers. There are many committees that need

your help. Contact me if you are interested in becoming more involved. Thanks!

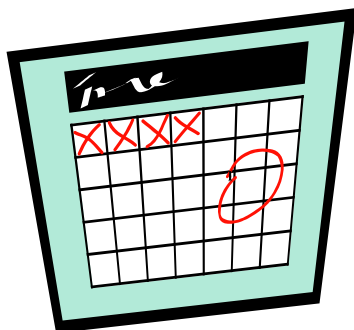
Earl Handa, *F-SUTA VP & Organizing Chair*

In 2011 the FSUSD will have six (6) positions on the school board up for election. This is an opportunity for F-SUTA to influence the make-up of the Board by supporting candidates who support teachers and public education.

The Political Action Committee (PAC) will be holding a workshop on the 2011 School Board election on January 20. The workshop will cover finding and grooming candidates and the operation of an independent expenditure campaign. It is open to members who may be interested in joining the PAC. If you are interested in attending, please contact Kevin McNamara through *Groupwise* before January 18.

Kevin McNamara, *F-SUTA PAC Chair*

CALENDAR COMMITTEE MEETING DATES ARE AS FOLLOWS:



**Tuesday, January 11, 2011, 4:00 p.m.,
Conference Room #200**

**Tuesday, January 25, 2011, 4:00 p.m.,
Conference Room #200**

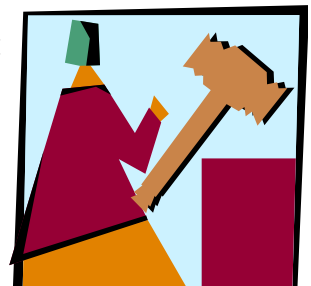
Please note: Dates are subject to change

Volunteers Needed!

As the year 2011 begins we have much to look forward to. February is Black History Month and this year, One World Agenda in collaboration with Delta Sorority, Tri-City NAACP, and the F-SUTA MAC Committee will be presenting an Oratory Contest for Middle and High School students. If you would like to volunteer to participate as a judge on February 26, 2011, please call Nancy Garrett @ 707-384-2475. We require a commitment of two meetings prior to the event.

Happy New Year!

- Jaki Moultrie



ENROLLMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW HIRES IS ENDING SOON

If you're a newly hired CTA member, or if you have transferred to a new district, you have a special, limited-time opportunity to get Disability and Life insurance coverage from the only CTA-endorsed provider, Standard Insurance Company. During your first 120 days of new employment, you can get Disability Insurance and/or up to \$200,000 of Life Insurance. Don't miss this limited-time opportunity. Visit www.cta.org/thestandard to learn more and apply. Make sure you are registered with CTA's website, www.cta.org. You will need a CTA Individual ID (located on your CTA membership card) to register, gain access to information and apply on-line.

For costs and further details of the coverage, including exclusions, benefit waiting periods and any reductions or limitations and the terms under which the policy may be continued in force, please contact The Standard's dedicated CTA Customer Service Department at 800-522-0406.



THE EDUCATION CODE OF CALIFORNIA

The rights and responsibilities of teachers in California's public school are outlined in two documents: the local contract and the Education Code.

The Education Code is a compendium of all the laws and regulations that govern the public schools in California. Many of the basic rights and responsibilities of teachers (and administrators) are delineated in the "Ed Code." For example, the procedures for dismissing a teachers-temporary, probationary, or tenured-are set forth in the Ed Code, not the contract.

The contract negotiated between the Association and the District cannot violate the Ed Code. However, in certain cases, the terms of the agreement may supersede or supplement the express provisions of the Ed Code.

It is important for teachers to understand the provisions of the Ed Code that apply to their work in the classroom. Under the Ed Code, a grade given a student by a teacher is final and cannot be changes by the principal or other administrator without the teacher being given an opportunity to explain the basis of the grade.

The Ed Code also sets forth the responsibility of teacher regarding students who are in anger of failing a class. Most importantly, teachers are required to notify the parents of any student who is in danger of failing a course.

Another provision of the Ed Code states that a teacher may suspend a student from class for up to two days. During this time, it is the responsibility of the principal to deal with the student.

Ten Ways to Reduce Stress

1. Take Calls at School- You don't have to give out your home number; it's okay to draw the line. You can return calls when mutually convenient, either right after school, or in the evening.
2. Leave your Teaching at School-If you must lug home school work, try to get it done early in the evening. Better yet, do it at school and leave it there. Those late afternoon hours after the students can be dismissed are quiet, immediate, and focused.
3. Don't Procrastinate-Do things you have to do.
4. Keep a "To Do" List-Review it daily and do at least one or two things. When you cross something off the list, you will have a sense of accomplishment.
5. Recognize and Accept Your Limits-Most of us set one or two goals a day. Don't try to do too much. Pace yourself.
6. Find a Colleague Who Will Listen-There is probably someone in your building who can be a trusted listener. Talking a problem out won't make it go away, but it can relieve tension and help you explore options.
7. Don't Feel You Have To Do Everything-You can't and you won't. So why worry about it.
8. Get Plenty of Sleep-Go to bed early if you are tired. Don't lie awake worrying about how you should have handled Johnny in class.
9. Don't Schedule All Of Your Leisure Hours-You live by a schedule all day long. Leave yourself some open space.
10. Rid Yourself of Worry-A study has shown that 40% of the items people worry about never happen; 35% can be changed: 15 % turn out better than expected; 8% involve needless concern; and only 2% really deserve attention Exercise helps to reduce worry.

PLEASE NOTE: These are suggestions offered by experienced teachers.

Develop a strategy that works for you, and take some time for yourself!

