

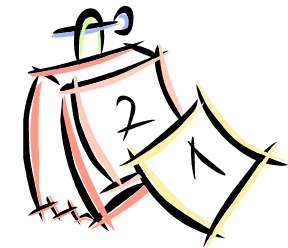


NEWSBREAKER

Volume 6, Issue 4

November 2010

Calendar



**11/11 HOLIDAY
(Veteran's Day)**

11/12 No School

11/15 Rep Council 4pm

**11/22 – 11/26
Thanksgiving Break**

12/6 Eboard 4pm

12/13 Rep Council 4pm

WHAT'S INSIDE

President's Message	1
Community Support	2
School Board Elections	
Corr. Secretary's Message	3
Reduction in Workload Survey Results	
Calendar Comm. Survey Results	4
Vice President's Message	
Grievance Chair Message	5
Pension Myth Buster	
Kindergarten Readiness Act	6
2011 CTA Scholarships	

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Melanie Driver

Many of us are thankful that we have made it to the Thanksgiving Break. This has been a challenging year and we are all deserving of time off. I hope everyone is able to use this week to get away and spend time with family and friends. I want to wish everyone time to do what you love and also a safe return.

I want to provide an update on the rehire list. As of this writing, there are 115 individuals on the rehire list. Many individuals have kept us updated. Using information we have received of the 115 individuals:

- 12 are in temporary positions in the district
- 10 have been partially rehired
- 16 have obtained employment elsewhere
- 1 is in a long term sub position
- 76 remain on the list, some may have employment elsewhere

The largest groups represented on the rehire list are:

- 53 multiple subject teachers-majority were hired in 2007
- 18 p.e. teachers-8 hired in 2009-10 school year because of elementary increase in class size and inability to combine classes.
- 14 counselors-many hired in 2007 with special funding

The October 28 board meeting went to almost 11 p.m. Board members have added agenda items to the November 18 board meeting that all unit members need to be aware of so that they may provide input. The board has requested information on program cuts from the past three years and the cost associated with each of the program cuts. They are considering using some of the Federal Jobs Funding to restore programs. The Administration has recommended holding on to the Federal Jobs money because of the uncertainty as to whether the state budget will hold. Board members have determined that they would like to have costs associated with different programs to develop a wish list for prioritizing which programs they would like restored as funding becomes available. Groups may wish to be present at this meeting to advocate for their program. Watch for the next board agenda and plan on attending if you wish to let the FSUSD Governing Board know how you feel on this topic, which may be to encourage the Governing Board to hold on to the Federal Jobs money for the 2011-2012 school year to prevent the need for budget cuts for the anticipated budget shortfall.

Here are some informational items from the October 22-24 State Council Meeting:

- A member of the Redwood Service Council, Doreen McGuire-Griggs was elected as the NEA Director for District 1.
- The Curriculum and Instruction Committee reported that the Common Core State Standards were adopted by the State Board of Education on August 2. The standards cannot be operational until the frameworks are revised and textbooks are adopted.
- Pupil Services Coalition is supporting the attempt to repeal *American Nurses Ass'n V. O'Connell* decision at the CA Supreme Court level. This involves insulin injections and currently only nurses are allowed to perform this service.
- AB 3632 funding was vetoed by the Governor. This results in cuts to mental health services which are mandated in many IEPs. The result is that districts or SELPAs must pick up the cost. This is being challenged in the U.S. District Court as a violation of IDEA, Section 504 or the Rehabilitation Act and the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). CTA Staff pointed out that Federal Jobs Bill monies can be spent to hire student support service personnel assigned to sites, rather than the District Office.
- The State Council authorized up to \$1 million from the Initiative Fund to support CTA's position on the November 2010 General Election ballot initiatives.

Thanks for all you do. I continue to see unit members putting in far beyond what is expected in an effort to provide a quality educational program. You are to be commended for the tireless work that you do.

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY



F-SUTA will be encouraging members to participate in three activities this year that will help to create a positive image for teachers in the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District. This is the second activity that we are asking our members to join us in Supporting. The first activity was the Solano Turkey Trot.

It is truly amazing to see what happens when families who are homeless, struggling, and disheartened find a home. It's also amazing to see what happens when people of different faiths work together to help these families.

Since 2001 the Interfaith Council of Solano County has operated Heather House Homeless Shelter. The Council took a leap of faith and stepped in to rescue the city of Fairfield's homeless shelter, when the previous contractor ran out of funds. Since opening, they have assisted over 1100 clients. For those completing the program, 92% have been able to move into permanent housing. Unlike many shelters, at Heather House you'll find a warm, home-like environment where our guests, primarily single mothers and their children, can reclaim their dignity, their hope and their lives.

Heather House looks like any other home in the neighborhood. But beyond the quiet residential street, you can see that Heather House is much more. You'll find rooms to accommodate up to 24 guests in our emergency shelter, three longer-term transitional apartments, and a playground and learning center for the children.

Heather House is a zero drug/alcohol tolerance shelter. With a curfew, mandatory meeting attendance (NA/AA, parenting, budgeting, life skills, etc.) daily job/housing searches and chores, the residents are given the "hand up" that they desperately need. There are no fees attached to services at the shelter, and homeless families receive case management and an individualized case plan to help them return to self-sufficiency.

The Council has partnered with Healthy Start, Child Haven, The community Action Agency, The Salvation Army, Solano County Mental Health, Youth and Family Services, The Solano County Homeless Shelter Collaborative and Child Protection Services to ensure that families are given the necessary tools to strengthen their families, clean up their credit/eviction issues, find gainful employment and move into permanent housing.

During this holiday season as we give thanks, we ask that you join us in helping others. Your gift will make a real and lasting difference in someone's life.

Below is a Wish List from Heather House. You may work with others at your site to collect donations or do so individually. You may send your donations with your F-SUTA site representative to a Rep. Council meeting, deliver any donations directly to Heather House or contact Melanie Driver, 707-290-0153 to arrange pick-up. We want to encourage everyone to get involved.

Heather House Wish List:

- Toilet Paper
- Paper Towels
- Cleaning supplies (window cleaner, cleanser, all purpose cleaner)
- Laundry detergent
- Dishwasher powder/ liquid
- Bleach
- Disposable diapers (sizes 3-6)
- Computer paper
- Flour
- Sugar
- Cooking Oil
- Gift cards to Target, Food Maxx, Wal-Mart

If you would like more information on Heather House go to: <http://www.interfaithcouncilsolanocounty.org/HeatherHouse.htm>

You may donate directly to Heather House at this website. Heather House is located at:
724 Ohio Street
Fairfield, CA 94533
Phone-707-429-3075

If your class is interested in sponsoring Heather House, you may call the number listed above. This is a great opportunity for classes to become involved in supporting the community. They are also available for class field trips.

Thank you in advance for your support in helping the homeless in our community. By supporting Heather House, we are helping many of the children that attend our schools have a safe home and good nutrition while their family is looking for permanent housing and getting the life skills training needed to become self-sufficient.

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO PREPARE FOR OUR FUTURE!

With the mid-term election over, the Political Action Committee (PAC) is beginning to look toward an equally if not more important election in November 2011, the FSUSD Governing Board. All of the members on the Board will be up for election with the exception of Dave Gaut.

We have a unique opportunity to help elect a school board that is more interested in our views on education, our working conditions, and the future of public schools. If you are interested in helping reshape the school board, please contact Kevin McNamara at kevinm@fsusd.k12.ca.us.

You make a difference



Unity

During these difficult times, now more than ever, we need to be reminded of the relationships we have forged with one another. We need to take the time to celebrate our victories and find answers to our questions. In order to help us come together across the district to ask questions, find answers, and share ideas F-SUTA has created a Facebook page (Fairfield-Suisun Unified Teachers Association, <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Fairfield-Suisun-Unified-Teachers-Association/122906071100988>) and a twitter feed in order to help us more easily connect with one another.

On the Facebook page, there are discussion threads set up by grade level (k-6) and subjects (middle and high school levels) but these are just starting points. Please feel free to create new discussions and to add topics. It is our hope that you will find this page useful and that you will take advantage of the opportunity to connect with others throughout the district.

Celebrate!

This space is reserved to congratulate those who have recently wed, become parents, or have accomplished a dream (earned a degree, been recognized or honored in some way that they would like to share with their colleagues, or anything else you can think of). Send the name and events to be recognized to me, at lilreader1@yahoo.com.



This space is reserved to provide public recognition of others whom you would like to thank for their assistance. Just email me at lilreader1@yahoo.com with the name of the person you would like recognized and why, then watch for the information to appear in the next *Newsbreaker*.

I would like to start this off by thanking the third grade team at Anna Kyle (Tracy, Kathy, Diljeet, Earl, Julie, and Karen) for welcoming me into their fold and for helping me learn a new grade level while dealing with several family issues that required me to have an extended absence at the start of the year. THANK YOU!!!!!!

F-SUTA's E-Board would like to thank the site reps who were able to attend the recent rep. council meeting. We are always excited to talk to you and to provide each site's reps an opportunity to talk to one another.

At the last Rep Council, I passed out the results of the Reduction of the Workload Survey.

Here are the top results:

- | | |
|---|---|
|  PROGRESS REPORTS FOR AT RISK ONLY |  2 REPORT CARDS AND 2 PROGRESS REPORTS |
|  ELEMENTARY PE/MUSIC BROUGHT BACK |  2 ND CONFERENCE FOR AT RISK STUDENTS |
|  ELIMINATE/LESS DISTRICT TESTING |  ONLY |
|  ELIMINATE DRA TESTING |  2 REPORT CARDS AND 2 PROGRESS REPORTS |
|  REVISE ELEM REPORT CARD FOR LESS INTENSE MARKING OF STANDARDS |  1 STAFF MEETING PER MONTH NOT 2 |
|  45 MINUTE LUNCH |  NO RECESS/YARD DUTIES |
| |  ELIMINATE OR REDUCE ADJUNCT DUTY |

The Executive Board will be reviewing your results and be making a recommendation to the Bargaining Team.

Thank you, Stephanie Cobb - F-SUTA Bargaining

CALENDAR COMMITTEE SURVEY RESULTS REPORT



By Keitha Bryan

This month we bring you the results of the annual survey. Out of approximately 950 surveys sent out, there were 196 returned. This is 21% of the teaching population in our district. Why so few you ask? Well when I inquired about this I was told the following “I am happy with the calendar so I didn’t send it in”, “I am happy with the calendar, but want more breaks”, “I am happy with the calendar, but would like to start earlier to balance the semesters”, or “I don’t care what calendar we have”. With answers like this and the lack of participation in the survey, the committee has to assume that the 79% of the surveys we didn’t receive want us to leave the calendar as is or make minor changes. This is about what we get each year. We say this because we have been accused by some of not serving the interests of the teaching staff. However, the majority of the teaching staff seems satisfied, and we realize that there are those who are not happy. We know that having everyone happy with the calendar is not realistic, so we strive to include something for everyone.

On to the rest of the results. These results are percentages based on the 196 surveys we did receive. For the first question of how do you feel about starting earlier, the result was 67% against. On question number 2 asking the elementary on how they feel about reducing the number of progress reports and/or report cards, the result was 90% in favor. For question number 3 asking secondary about ending the semester before winter break, the result was 70% in favor. Finally, one question we have been asked concerns back to school night at the secondary level. The question is why was high school moved from Thursday night to Wednesday

night and why do they have a minimum day? The answer to this is the Thursday nights are being alternated to make it fair to the middle schools and high schools. As to the minimum day after back to school night for the high school, they are owed this because they serve all 16 hours of adjunct in other ways.

The committee has had one meeting with the district to determine what information we need in order to put the calendar together for next year. Among the items we discussed what are the other districts calendars like, what are the other districts start dates, possible changes in the number of progress reports and report cards at the elementary level, ideas of how to balance the semesters, where the holidays are that impact ADA (average daily attendance) figures, where the testing window will be in relation to spring break, and possible start/ending dates. All of this information is now being gathered for our next meeting in October.

Finally, the committee is always open to ideas, visitors, and answering any questions or concerns you may have. Feel free to contact any of us. The current committee members are Rick Bryan (secondary), Claudia Wilde (secondary/elementary), Liz Priest (elementary), Deni Gordon (secondary), and Keitha Bryan – Co Chair (elementary). While there are five of us only four members are allowed to vote on any given issue, and all members come to the table with the resolve to do the best we can to make a calendar that is conducive to learning, maximizes the opportunity to do well on the CST’s, and avoids loss of ADA money. Next month, where are we now with the calendar.

DO YOU HAVE ANY COMPLAINTS ABOUT YOUR TEACHING CONDITIONS? WHO DOESN'T?

Remember, you are the teachers’ association. Leadership needs your input, your direction. As the song says, “*you can’t always get what you want*” but, if you don’t use your voice, you and everyone who thinks like you won’t be heard. Speak up and leadership will listen and do the best we can to respond. Share your concerns and solutions with your rep. And they will be shared at rep council. Respond to surveys that are given to you. We will use the information. A discipline survey will be coming soon. Take the time to fill it out. The more people who complete the survey, the stronger the data becomes. The association needs you. We are one and the same. – Earl Handa, F-SUTA Vice President



YOUR VOICE COUNTS!

FLEX YOUR RIGHTS

- By Arthur Aronsen, F-SUTA
Grievance Chair

Article 12 – Parent Complaints

There are many teachers who think that filing a grievance is not worth the trouble so they allow the administration to ignore the rights of teachers as agreed to in the contract.

A little thing like the failure of the site administrator to send a parent to you, if the parent has a complaint (as agreed upon in the contract), concerning your teaching style or grades. If you are too busy for such a small thing and the teacher is right anyway, or so you think, you are in for a big surprise.

So now that you are allowing the administrator to take care of your issues with the parents, you don't have any problems, right? Wrong...

The administrator then can handle the issue any way they wish to and you will not know about it until you get called into the office and the administrator starts asking question about what you did not do, or what you did do with a most accusing voice. They have the information that you did not want to discuss since you did not talk with the parents, so you have no idea what was said and you start to spill your guts to try to get out of the hole being made. The only problem is that you are only digging deeper as you have no idea what the answers should be and everything you say is open for interpretation and misuse and misquoting.

Never, never let your site administrator handle any parent complaints for you and if they do, you need to file a grievance for the violation of Article 12.

This Article is one that F-SUTA teachers went out on strike for. The District wanted it scrapped so that the District could have parents come directly to them and they would then go after the teacher, who might know nothing about what was going on until



the District wished to discipline you with days off without pay. Yes, that almost happened and the strike did happen, and that is why you have such a good contract with as many protections as you have. **Never treat your rights with indifference.** Members of F-SUTA have metaphorically spilled their blood for these rights; do not give them up so easily.

Violent Student Notification is mandated by state law. The only problem is that the District stopped notifying teachers when someone went and printed out a list and then tossed it in the waste basket and someone else found it and things went south from there.

F-SUTA then filed two level 3 grievances directed at the fact that

the contract was not being followed and neither was state law, on which our contract is based. Back to the binders in the front office, from 10 years ago, back to the stone-age...because of someone being careless with confidential information. And it is confidential information, so do treat it as such. It is not to be printed off, or placed in such a way that anyone other than the designated staff can see or read it. This teacher could be facing legal action by any parent whose child was exposed to this infraction of the Ed. Code, as this information is confidential with penalties against those who make it public.

So after presenting the law and the legal requirements and a lot of work by the President, Bargaining Team, CTA, and Grievance Chair, we convinced the District that our interpretation of the law was the correct interpretation. After talking with their legal counsel their legal people agreed to our position and now they are working to get you the information you have the legal right to have delivered to you at your desk thru Aries.

This may take a bit of time, but it is being worked on as this article is being written...What we do not need is another teacher to take this confidential information lightly. There are consequences that can be placed upon any teacher that does not treat this information with the proper sensitivity and keep it confidential.

PENSION MYTH BUSTER

“Teachers retire too early and with extravagant pension benefits”

CalSTRS has approximately 850,000 members.

71% of the CalSTRS members are women.

2009 data from CalSTRS currently reports 224,000 benefit recipients.

Only 1.8%, or 3800 CalSTRS benefit recipients receive a pension of \$100,000 or more, known as the “\$100,000 Club.”

- These are usually administrators and superintendents.
- These recipients have worked an average of 38 years.
- Average salary at time of retirement was \$125,000.

Realities of everyday retirees (non administrative):

- Average age of retiree is 71.
- Average retiree receives a pension of about \$3,100.
- Live expectancy of the retiree is 18 years beyond retirement.
- He or she retires at age 61 after 28 years beyond retirement.
- He or she retires at age 61 after 28 years in the system.
- Retirees receive 62% replacement of pre-retirement income.
- Retirees do not receive Social Security.
- 60% of all retirees receive no financial support for health care after age 65.

Teachers pay 8% of their income into the CalSTRS system.

**SB 1381 (Simitian):
Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010
(Transitional Kindergarten)
Talking Points**



- Transitional kindergarten will become the first year of a two-year kindergarten program and will use a modified kindergarten curriculum.
- Transitional kindergarten will serve four-year-olds whom are currently eligible to attend kindergarten. These students will turn five-years old on or before December 2nd of each school year.
- All eligible four-year olds that would be phased into an earlier start date must either be served through transitional kindergarten or must continue to be served in a traditional kindergarten program until a transitional kindergarten program is established within their school district.
- Transitional kindergarten students will generate ADA, as will current kindergarten students. Students that attend both transitional and traditional kindergarten will be able to generate no more than two years of ADA.
- School districts are required to offer transitional kindergarten which will be phased in over a three year period for children that will turn five years old by the following dates:
 - December 2 of the 2011-12 school year;
 - November 1 of the 2012-13 school year;
 - October 1 of the 2013-14 school year, and ;
 - September 1 of the 2014 school year and each year thereafter.
- Local school boards will be able to continue admitting five year old students on a case-by-case basis to traditional kindergarten program at any time during the school year.
- While this bill does require local districts to offer transitional kindergarten after the phase-in period, it does not mandate that children participate in either transitional or traditional kindergarten.



2011 CTA Scholarships

CTA is pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted for 2011 CTA scholarships. Eligibility and application information is now available on the CTA website. Just go to www.cta.org and enter your membership information to access the members only portion of the website. Scholarship information is listed under Professional Development. Just click on Scholarships and Grants.

2011 CTA Scholarship for Dependent Children-Up to thirty-five (35) - \$5,000.00 scholarships will be awarded. Applicant must be the dependent child or an active, retired or deceased CTA member and be claimed as dependent status on the current year's IRS form. High school grade point average should reflect a high unweighted average.

2011 Del A. Weber Scholarship for Dependent Children Attending Continuation High School/Alternative Education Programs-One (1) - \$5,000 scholarship will be awarded. Eligibility for this scholarship is the same as for the Scholarship for Dependent Children. High school grade point average should reflect at least a 2.0 average.

2011 CTA Scholarship for Members – Up to five (5) – scholarships will be awarded. The applicant must be a current “active” member of CTA (including members working on an emergency credential). The Chapter President must sign the Membership Verification Form for each of these scholarships. A completed application must be submitted and received by February 4, 2011.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Scholarship – In order to be eligible, an applicant must be pursuing a teaching related career in public education and be a member of a defined ethnic minority group. Applicants must also be:

*An active member of CTA, or a dependent child or an active, retired, or deceased CTA member

Scholarship applications for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Scholarship are made available in January of each year and can be obtained from the CTA Web Site at www.cta.org. Applications must be postmarked on or before Friday, March 4, 2011.

The CTA Cesar E. Chavez Memorial Education Awards Program - This program is designed to provide recognition for teams of students and teachers who demonstrate an understanding of the vision and guiding principles by which Cesar E. Chavez lived his life. The Awards Program honors the memory of this great man and ensures that the spirit of his work continues in the classrooms of California. The top prize winners will receive recognition plus \$1,000 for both students and CTA members. Group entries will share the award. For the current school year, eligible projects must fit into the category of either Written Essays or Visual Arts. Applications must be postmarked by January 14, 2011.

Information website is: <https://www.cta.org/About-CTA/CTA-Foundation/Scholarships> (Members Only Site)