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Read Across

America

March 2, 2006

Got Books?



State Council Representatives Contact Info:

Keith Pickering-Walters – 925-337-0173
leastatecouncil@livermoreteachers.org

Tim Sbranti – 925-858-5303
tsbranti@aol.com

Kelly Connell Sandler – 925-462-6376
KSandler@pleasanton.k12.ca.us

Jacquelyn Smith – 925-828-9341
jasmith@pleasanton.k12.ca.us



November Victory...Now What?

by Tim Sbranti

At the recently concluded CTA State Council meeting, President Barbara Kerr praised the work of rank-and-file teachers all over the state who spent countless hours calling at phone banks and walking precincts to defeat the Governor's harmful initiatives last November.

With last November's election victories, CTA is in a stronger position than ever before, recognized throughout the State Capitol for its power to rally its members and turn out supporters. Over 83% of public school teachers in California voted No on Propositions 74, 75, and 76, which is a higher total than voted in favor of Prop 98. In addition, CTA is now in a strong and united coalition with other education groups, community organizations, and labor unions - all of which have vowed to stay together in 2006 and beyond to influence positive change in California instead of just defeating bad ideas.

Along those lines, President Kerr established an Educational Change Workgroup. This workgroup consisted of teachers from diverse backgrounds from across the state to determine major priorities that CTA should focus on in the coming years either through legislation or at the ballot box.

The recommendations from the group include: bringing equity to school funding so that funds are distributed to schools based on the needs of students and not the wealth of the school district; providing teachers with quality salaries that are equivalent to salaries of other professionals; improving teacher preparation programs; assisting lower-performing schools; and developing a testing system aimed at improving instruction and not punishing students.

CTA took the first step in endorsing positive change by voting at State Council to endorse Rob Reiner's "Preschool for All" initiative. By supporting this measure, CTA reaffirmed its commitment to early childhood education, recognizing how important this is in determining later academic success for students. The measure, which has qualified for the June primary ballot, would raise \$2.4 billion per year from the wealthiest Californians by the time it takes full effect, and would allow all California parents the option (if they wish) of having their children attend state-funded preschool.

To stay involved in the
Alliance for a Better California:

<http://www.betterca.com>

To stay involved in the
Education Coalition:

<http://www.cta.org/PoliticsandLegislation/PAL.htm>



Don't take
all of the
burden
upon
yourself -
join your
fellow
union
members.

Together,
we can
make our
world a
better place!



Council Delegates Ratify CTA Recommendations

by Mary Jane Keogh

CTA is committed to recommending and supporting candidates that have a record of strong support for public education, regardless of their political party affiliation.

Throughout the state, the legislative committees of service center councils interviewed prospective candidates in order to make recommendations for state assembly and senatorial districts, as well as congressional districts.

For statewide candidates, CTA has a committee which screens and interviews announced candidates in order to ascertain their views towards public education. Upon completion of this process, names are submitted to the CTA Board of Directors, which then makes candidate recommendations to the Council delegates.

Following floor discussion, the body voted to support the following candidates: State Treasurer Phil Angelides for Governor, Jack O'Connell for re-election to State Superintendent of Public Instruction, John Garamendi for Lieutenant Governor, Rocky Delgadillo for Attorney General, Bill Lockyer for Treasurer, Cruz Bustamonte for Insurance Commissioner, and Betty Yee and Judy Chu for State Board of Equalization Seats 1 and 4.

In her comments, President Barbara Kerr expressed to the body, "All of these candidates have a strong record of supporting schools, kids and teachers. California students deserve a state government that values education as much as its citizens do."

Is Assemblyman Richman Trying to Take Your Pension?

by Keith Pickering-Walters

ACA 23 is a Constitutional Amendment currently sponsored by Assemblyperson Richmond. CTA State Council has taken an "oppose" position. This bill provides that starting July 1, 2007, any public employee hired (including all public school employees) shall enroll in a hybrid plan or a defined contribution plan of a public pension or retirement system, and is prohibited from enrolling in a defined benefit plan. The measure would permit an active member of a defined benefit plan to transfer a sum equal to the member's interest in the defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan or hybrid plan. The new hires could not receive employer paid health care unless they reach the minimum retirement age of 65.

This bill creates a two-tier retirement system. Many people believe that creating a defined

contribution plan will cause an unstable retirement system for those members remaining in the defined benefit plan because the contribution for new hires will go to the new defined contribution plan instead of paying for current retirees.

If you are concerned about this proposed Constitutional Amendment, check the CTA website to stay updated and speak to your Assembly Representatives.

Don't Know Who Your Legislators Are?

For the quickest way to find your representatives, visit the CTA website. Click on "My Elected Officials"

<http://capwiz.com/nea/ca/state/main/?state=CA>

CTA State Council Special Education Committee UPDATES

by Kelly Sandler

CAHSEE - Good News for Class of 2006

Senator Romero's bill, SB517 has finally passed, granting high school diplomas to members of the class of 2006 who meet the following criteria: 1) Have had an IEP or Section 504 Plan in place as of July 1, 2005, 2) Have completed or are about to complete all other state and local graduation requirements in 2006 including algebra, and 3) Have taken the exit exam at least twice after tenth grade, including once during their senior year with any accommodations or modifications specified in their IEP or Section 504 Plan.

In addition, one of the following must be true: 1) The student must have received remedial or supplemental instruction focused on the CAHSEE either through the school, private tutoring, or other means, or 2) the school district or state special school failed to provide the opportunity for the student to receive the necessary remedial or supplemental instruction.

A further requirement is that if remedial or supplemental instruction is received, the student must take the CAHSEE at least once after receiving it unless there is no further administration on or before December 31, 2006. The student (or if a minor, parent or guardian) also must acknowledge in writing that the student is entitled to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) up to and including the academic year in which the student turns 22, unless he/she receives a high school diploma first. (The easiest way to assure this is to routinely make that written form available as part of annual IEP and 504 Plan reviews.) The CDE and State Board of Education promise to work to specify the reporting process required under SB517 and to adopt new legislation to support it at the earliest possible date. Even if eligible for the exemption, the student retains the right to take the CAHSEE and receive remediation and supplemental instruction for any section of the exam not yet passed.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell hopefully now will be working more closely with CTA educators to address how to better maintain high standards while considering special needs.

Caution Is Urged on Response to Intervention (RtI)

Be on the lookout for a program called Response to Intervention (RtI) being adopted in many districts at this time. RtI has huge implications for the workload of the general educator. It may also be the final blow to caps on special education caseloads and could decimate already strapped Special Education budgets. Up to fifteen percent of the monies now allocated to SpEd budgets can be transferred to RtI. Administrators and school boards are excited about that prospect, and they may make this move without considering its full impact on teachers. We need to be proactive on RtI and bargain its impact.

IDEA no longer requires the discrepancy model to qualify for special education services. As educators, we also support early intervention rather than waiting for a discrepancy to become apparent, in what often was called "wait to fail." The problems with RtI, however, in addition to the obvious differences between Iowa and California, are 1) that RtI funding is taken from SpEd budgets, and 2) that RtI dramatically increases the workload on the classroom teachers. RtI is aimed at K-3 now, but is expected to become K-12.

Based on limited research done in Iowa, RtI is being pushed as a panacea. RtI is designed to allow for early intervention through general education in a three-tier program. The classroom teacher is responsible for noting students who do not make adequate progress (Tier 1), and then the general education teacher is also expected to work individually with those students one-on-one using differentiated instruction utilizing research-based best practices (Tier 2). Should

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CONFERENCES & ACTIVITIES

There are a few activities coming up that CTA members in local chapters might be interested in participating in:

- [Read Across America](#)
March 2, 2006
–Your School Site
- [CTA High School Reform Briefing](#):
March 10, 2006
–Los Angeles
- [CTA Alcosta Leadership Conference](#):
March 17-18, 2006
–San Jose
- [CTA Alcosta Lobby Day](#):
April 4, 2006
–Sacramento
- [CTA Summer Institute](#):
July 30-August 4, 2006
–UCLA Campus

Contact your local chapter's leadership to find out if your local is sponsoring any members to participate.



State Council Update 02.20.06



We're on the Web!
See us at :

www.livermoreteachers.org

www.dublinteachers.org

www.cta.org

www.nea.org



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that intervention fail to produce the desired results, referral to special education then can be considered as the third tier.

Little is being said, however, about how the personnel, training, time, tools, or money for RtI will be provided for the teachers. The teachers we heard from who have RtI in their districts have just taken on extra workload without anything being taken off their already full plates. Be prepared to bargain the impact of RtI now, not later. What was actually shown in the data presented to us in Tier 2 at State Council, sadly, was the repeated use of "drill-and-kill" phonics word lists for dyslexics, and we teachers already know better than that. More will be coming on RtI, and your State Council Reps will update you after they attend two upcoming conferences with workshops on what RtI really means for our California schools.

State Council Local Election

by Keith Pickering-Walters

One seat will be up for election/re-election this Spring representing Multiple A-2 at State Council. The three-year term runs from 2006 to 2009. State Council representatives are expected to attend and participate in State Council committees and activities during four weekends each year and attend the Regional Meeting four times a year. State Council Reps act as a direct link between our members and CTA State Council.

State Council, held in Los Angeles, generally meets during the months of October, January, March, and June. Any active member of CTA/NEA and one of the local chapters served by Multiple A-2 (Dublin, Pleasanton or Livermore) may run.

Peace & Justice Caucus Youth Activism Awards

by Jacquelyn Smith

The 2nd Annual CTA Peace and Justice Caucus Youth Activism Awards Ceremony took place at State Council on January 28, 2006. While both groups and individuals were honored, one of the most remarkable awardees was Ethan Masuda, a second grade student from Raymond Elementary School in Fullerton. He wrote the book, The North Pole is Sinking: A Tale about Global Warming. After recounting a conversation he had had with his father regarding the melting of the polar ice caps, Ethan told us that he had become concerned about what Santa would do without the North Pole. He decided to write a book. He explained to the audience that to write requires one to brainstorm ideas, organize them, write a first draft, let readers read and edit, and then you are ready to publish. He concluded his speech with a song his teacher had taught him "Let Peace Begin with Me..." After the ceremony Ethan agreed to autograph his book. While many of us were able to purchase the book at the State Council, the Peace and Justice Caucus sold out of the books they had on hand. The book is available from BlueState Press and will be available at various CTA conferences, including the Equity and Human Rights

Conference March 3-5 in Newport Beach and at future State Council meetings.

Other awardees included the Leadership Team from Pleasanton Middle School who had raised over \$30,000 for the victims of Hurricane Katrina; Anitra Wetzel who is a peace activist developing strategies to demilitarize our schools; and Eric Reed, Berkeley High and Ruby Butler, Youth Empowerment School in Oakland for their work in organizing the conference, "On The Frontlines: Options for Youth in Times of War." The newly established Rosa Parks Social Justice Award went to *Californians for Justice* for their work on the Williams lawsuit regarding unequal education and their challenge of the California High School Exit Exam.

The Peace and Justice Caucus is accepting nominations for the Third Annual Youth Activist Award, 2007 as well as donations to help with the costs of the awards and the transportation to the award ceremony for our activists.

Please feel free to contact jacquelyn53@comcast.net or andycab6@aol.com with nominations and/or donations.