

THE PODIUM

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President's Message

By the time you receive this, you should be getting ready for Thanksgiving. It has been a busy month in Alvord. AEA has focused on class sizes and rehiring our laid off teachers, among other issues. Foremost in my mind to write about in this issue, is our vulnerabilities as public school employees. Unfortunately, several of our fellow educators have had various allegations made against them for a wide range of things. I have always said that, right or wrong, public school employees are held to a different standard of fair and unfair. We can find ourselves in the position of having a target placed on us and being seen as *guilty until proven innocent*. Added to this, is a governing body known as the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). They can be a scary bunch. Did you know that you can be exonerated of any wrong doing and still have the CTC take action against your credential? It's true! This has happened to many school employees in California.

The AEA Rep. Council hears me "preach" every meeting about our employees being careful about what they say and do in and out of the classroom. Facebook, Twitter and the like are my primary focus when I talk about being careful what you say and do. There is no expectation of privacy in those venues and we have had things from those sites used against our employees. My recommendation is not to have those accounts at all, but if you do, DO NOT allow access by students or parents (or administrators or Board members for that matter). Even with that, people who you do allow access can and have ended up sharing your information with others.

This may sound extreme, but believe me it won't feel that way if you are "called on the carpet" for improprieties. Please rest assured that AEA will protect and fight for you if any accusations are made, but this doesn't always make you feel any better to go through the agonizing process of false allegations.



ALVORD SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION RESULTS

On November 8, 2011 an election was held for two seats on the Alvord School Board. AEA/CSEA endorsed candidate, Carolyn Wilson won the first seat with a whopping nearly 35% of the vote. This was the highest percentage of any School Board candidate in the county. Ben Johnson, incumbent and CSEA endorsed, won the second seat on the Board. Our congratulations to both candidates and we look forward to working with both over the next four years!

Governor's Legislative Pension Proposal

Governor Jerry Brown unveiled a 12-point public employee pension reform plan that he wants to put before voters in November 2012. The proposal increases the retirement age of public employees and puts them in a hybrid plan that relies upon a combination of a Defined Benefit plan, a Defined Contribution plan and Social Security (which teachers DO NOT receive). The proposal changes the one-year final compensation to three-year final compensation, limits post-retirement employment, and prohibits retroactive pension increases and pension holidays for employers and employees. This plan does not address the short and long term funding needs of CalSTRS.

The governor's proposal is the first step of potential legislative action. The proposal will be considered by the Joint Conference Committee on Pensions, whose charge it is to review all pension proposals. This proposal could result in a ballot measure, but it must go through the legislative process first.

CTA shares in the governor's vision of having a strong retirement system for educators, but there are questions and concerns on some of these proposals. CTA is looking forward to further clarification of the proposal and what the impact will be on the retirement benefits of educators, public education and the economic stability of California.


Budget cuts have already made it harder to attract and retain teachers in our classrooms and we want to ensure that the plan does not diminish our ability to recruit teachers to neighborhood schools. It's important to remember that educators have been paying half of their retirement for over 40 years.

CTA will continue to work with the governor and the legislature on measures to sustain California's retirement system, and continue to act as partners with taxpayers in finding solutions to help rebuild our state's working class.



Calendar of Events

November 2011

- 02 - Executive Board meeting 4:00 pm
- 03 - AUSD Board Meeting 7:00 pm
- 08 - Election Day-Vote!!
- 09 - Rep Council meeting 4:00 pm
- 11 - Veterans Day
- 17 - AUSD Board Meeting 7:00 pm
- 21-25 - Thanksgiving holiday 

December 2011

- 06 - Executive Board meeting 4:00 pm
- 07 - Rep Council meeting 4:00 pm
- 08 - AUSD Board meeting 7:00 pm
- 16 - Minimum day-students
- 19-30 - Winter Break

January 9—School resumes

Parent Advice 

NEA Today's Facebook friends answered the question, "As a teacher, you work with parents on a regular basis. But as a parent, you also need to work with your own child's teacher. Wearing your 'parent hat,' what advice would you give to your kids' teachers about effectively working with parents?"

Take the time to listen and acknowledge the parent's point of view, even when you disagree with it. This helps to create a common ground and helps you find solutions to many problems.

-Kyle Wormuth

I don't have children of my own, but I have been teaching for 23 years. My first contact with parents, preferably by phone, are ALWAYS positive. Then, if I have to contact them about a negative issue I have already developed a positive relationship. I also remember that parents are sending us "their best!"

-Kathy Lorenz

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Meet Dan Bartlett Regional UniServ Staff, Alvord Colton UniServ

Dan Bartlett has served as the Alvord Colton UniServ CTA staff for the past four years. Dan's position in CTA allows him to be both an advisor and consultant to AEA and Colton. He provides a vital link to CTA for both chapters and maintains an office at AEA and at Colton's union office.

Dan is a graduate of the University of South Maine with a degree in English and Liberal Arts. He did not see himself becoming a teacher, however, many of the people he knew and liked were teachers. He became employed as a chef, but began to get involved with kids both as a volunteer at youth camps and through coaching. He found he enjoyed working with youth and soon became a substitute teacher and returned to the University of Maine to seek his master's degree in education. He began his formal teaching career as an English teacher at a regional high school in Waterville, Maine. After moving to Vermont, Dan became active in the union, serving at all levels from site rep to chapter president. While serving as president of his local chapter, the teachers actually went on strike for five days. Dan was also elected to the NEA Board of Directors as the only rep from the state of Vermont.

Dan married, moved to California and began teaching middle school language arts in San Bernardino. He participated in the NEA UniServ Pre-Employment Development Program which trained him in staff work and provided an internship in Temecula. Soon after, Dan became the UniServ staff at Citrus Valley UniServ (Redlands Teachers & ESP/Rialto/Yucaipa/Calimesa/Jurupa) for seven years. He came to the ALCO (Alvord/Colton) UniServ in February of 2008.

Dan came from a family who was highly involved in union activities and valued people involved in union leadership. He enjoys working directly for CTA and is proud to be part of a democratic organization which encourages and allows people to have a voice in such matters as working conditions, health benefits, and overall quality of life issues. His job allows him to work with teachers and help them have opportunities to speak up and make change happen.

For our chapter, Dan works directly with the negotiating team and provides information for the Executive Board and Rep Council on California education and finance issues. He provides Site Rep trainings on such issues as grievances and working effectively with administrators. He also provides training on effective School Site Councils. As our UniServ staff, Dan continues to be concerned with the state economy and its effect on public education. This is a time of more and more attacks on public education and its employees and he feels it is more important than ever to talk about the importance of a good public education in our community, state and nation. As Dan points out, public schools are where we reach most of our nation's students which has tremendous influence on the future success of our country.

In his spare time Dan enjoys reading and exercising. His exercise time has been limited in the past year after experiencing quite a unique accident while riding his mountain bike. In August of 2010, while riding with a group from CTA in the mountains, a bear ran across the road in front of Dan and he collided with the bear. Fortunately, the bear continued on its way, but Dan has continued to experience physical limitations from his injuries. On a happier note, Dan has recently remarried and has one child, a 13 year old daughter who attends Riverside public schools. AEA is fortunate to have Dan Bartlett as our CTA staff consultant!



Negotiating at the Speed of Trust Conference

On November 10, bargaining team members from AEA, CSEA and the District's negotiating team are attending the Negotiating at the Speed of Trust Conference presented by the Leadership Institute of Riverside County. Both groups will participate together in an effort to learn to improve trust and communication. The conference is based on the principles of trust presented by author Stephen Covey in his best-selling book, *The Speed of Trust*. This is a unique opportunity for those attending to learn to deliver meaningful results at the bargaining table and improve relationships at all levels in our school district.

October Rep Council RECAP

The meeting was called to order at 4:20 pm on Wednesday, October 12, 2011 by President Leigh Hawkinson. Highlights of the Rep Council meeting are as follows:

President's Report

- ◆ PAC—has been working with Carolyn Wilson's campaign
- ◆ Personnel/District-class size is getting better; we are down to 5 on our lay-off list
- ◆ School Visits—Leigh has been making school visits; contact her if you would like her to come to a staff meeting
- ◆ Email/Facebook-reminder that on any district email system or network there is no privacy; it is not a good idea to “friend” parents on Facebook; anything you write on a social networking site can be used against a person and can be taken out of context

Other Discussion

- ◆ Members are needed on various AEA committees
- ◆ Reps have been calling and walking for Carolyn Wilson
- ◆ State council reports

Adjourned at 4:55 pm. Next meeting November 9 @ 4:00 pm.



Suspension By Teacher Teacher Rights and the Law

A teacher may suspend any student from his/her class or class period for any act listed in Ed Code 48900, for the day of suspension and the day following, and the student can't return to class during this time without approval from the teacher. The suspension must be immediately reported to the principal and the student sent to the principal for further action. The teacher must also request a parent/teacher conference with a counselor regarding the suspension as soon as possible. The student shall not be returned to the class from which he/she was suspended without the concurrence of the teacher and principal (48910).

The district SHALL adopt a policy authorizing teachers to require the parent/guardian of a student suspended by the teacher to attend a portion of the school day in the classroom from which the student was suspended. Parents are to be notified of this policy prior to its implementation, and are to meet with the school administrator after the classroom visitation. Parents are protected against unfair treatment in their employment in retaliation for being absent from work for this purpose. (48900.1)

A teacher may also recommend a student for suspension from school, but final decision lies in the hands of school administrators after following detailed procedures. These suspensions may last for no more than five (5) consecutive school days and the student has certain rights to at least an informal conference BEFORE being suspended. The referring teachers is to be present if possible, however if the student poses a “clear and present danger,” suspension can precede the conference. Once the student returns, the teacher can require him/her to complete missed assignments or tests. (48913) In a given year, a student cannot be suspended for more than twenty (20) days from a given school, or thirty (30) days if he/she transfers to another school. (48903)