

T H E P O D I U M

AEA STAFF

Leigh Hawkinson
President

Meg Decker
Vice President

Kaja Stoll-Smith
Secretary

Carol Schmidt
Treasurer

Holly Barnes
High School Director
Russ Turner
Middle School Director

Cheryl Fergus
Elem. School Director

Matt Hurtado
At-Large Director

Lisa Martinez
Minority Director

Dan Bartlett
CTA Executive Director

Betty Harris
Office Manager

4140 Tyler Street
Riverside, CA 92503
951-689-0804
www.alvordeducators.com

Lisa Pynn
Podium Editor

Comments, articles and letters
to the editor are welcome.
Please direct to:
aeaneewsletter@aol.com

President's Message

*You make a difference each and every day in your students' lives. Despite the negative stories and commentaries in the press, always remember this fact. Whether you are a classroom teacher, counselor, psychologist, nurse, etc...you make a difference. It always amazes me how the press can find the one negative story, in the thousands of positive ones, related to public education. Commentators give endless opinions about what needs to change. The state and federal governments put endless rules and regulations in place for "needed" changes. Our District continues to pile on more and more "activities" for improvements. What all of these people forget to do is ask the employees, like you, what needs to be changed. Some of these people are so out of touch with public education—if they were **ever** even a part of it—that they have no clue. The current fad is the desire to use test scores in teacher evaluations. Numerous studies have shown that this is not a valid indicator of a quality educator, and yet, it is still the "change du jour". Those who pontificate about this idea have no clue what factors influence test scores and how many things are out of our control. Attendance and behavior are two prime examples. Educators use precious time to deal with behavior issues, for which all too often they receive little, if any, support from administrators and parents. Attendance, of course, greatly affects education and test scores, yet we have few programs in place to improve attendance.*

*All of these things affect student test scores, but do not factor into using them as an evaluation tool. The public doesn't seem to understand that we **MUST** educate every student who walks through our doors, despite whatever "baggage" they bring.*

*The great news is that, despite these barriers, you are all getting the job done each and every day. You go the extra mile to help students succeed and test scores don't always tell this story. So, I take my hat off to each of you and thank you for the work you do, and for dedicating your life to public education. **And always remember...***

YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Thank You Teacher Project

Many of you have received thank-you notes and letters from students whose lives you've touched. Here's a chance to go public with them. As part of a special Thanksgiving story in CTA's *the California Educator* would like to publish some of those letters. If you have a note or letter you would like to share, please send a copy to: Thank You Teacher Project, CTA Communications Dept., 1705 Murchison Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010, or email to: dmartin@cta.org.

In keeping with CTA's special Thanksgiving stories, the *Podium* is also looking for members' stories regarding what being a teacher, counselor, nurse, and/or psychologist has meant to you. We all have special stories and experiences that make us thankful for our chosen profession. Please submit them to aeaneewsletter@aol.com and we will publish them in the November *Podium*. November is a good month to share stories about people, both colleagues and students, that have made a difference in our classrooms and our lives.



How Your Modified 2011-2012 NEA Dues Dollars Are Allocated

As part of our Association dues, a percentage (approximately \$112 annually) is allocated to NEA to support and represent members and affiliates in their efforts to achieve NEA's mission. The following demonstrates how this money is used:

- ◆ \$9.57 Improve Teaching and Learning: Advocate for quality teachers and support professionals in every classroom and work site
- ◆ \$56.32 Support Strong States and Locals to Protect Member Interests: Support the Uniserve programs, trainings, and communication
- ◆ \$21.58 Partnerships and Public Relations: Strengthen existing partnerships and establish new ones with diverse supportive groups
- ◆ \$20.34 Legislative and Ballot Initiative Action: Build bipartisan support for public education
- ◆ \$5.14 Leadership Development and Constituency Support: Provide conferences, training, support and leadership development
- ◆ \$20.01 Legal Support: Implement advocacy programs for members; one million dollar per member Educators Employment Liability Insurance Program
- ◆ \$5.89 Governance: Implement an inclusive, engaged governance process that fosters member participation
- ◆ \$37.73 Administrative Support: Ensure organizational effectiveness through technology infrastructure, financial services, facilities services, and human resources to serve the needs of affiliates and members
- ◆ \$1.42 Contingency: provide funding for emergencies at the national, state or local levels

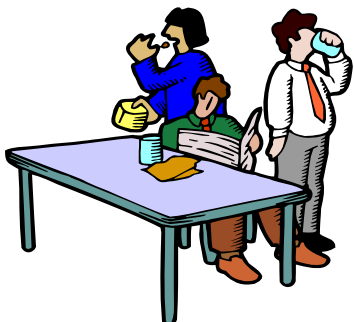


Win a Lounge Makeover!

California Casualty, the CTA-endorsed Auto and Home Insurance Provider, would like to invite you to enter the School Lounge Makeover contest. This is an opportunity for your school to get a FREE makeover of its school lounge. The lounge makeover is valued at \$7,500 and the winner will be announced on November 15, 2011.

You can increase your chance of winning by encouraging as many people in your school as possible to enter the contest. If your school doesn't win in November, each entry will automatically remain in place for three additional drawings that will occur in 2012. This means you have four chances to win!

To enter the contest go online to www.schoolounge makeover.com. It only takes a few minutes. You will also be able to see a video of the winner of the first school lounge makeover contest.



Calendar of Events

October 2011

- 05 - Executive Board meeting 4:00 pm
- 12 - Rep Council meeting 4:00 pm
- 15 - Bake Sale/AVID/Villegas M.S. 10:00 am
- 20 - AUSD Board meeting 7:00 pm
- 21 - CTA State Council/L.A.



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 - Veteran's Day Holiday
- 17 - AUSD Board Meeting 7:00 pm
- 21-25 - Thanksgiving holiday week





Re-elect the Alford Teachers' Choice for Alford School Board

Alford classroom teachers know what is happening in the classroom—and we know what kind of leadership it takes on the school board to help prepare our students for tomorrow's challenges. Alford Teachers have done our homework! We have interviewed and researched the candidates and we know we can trust **Carolyn Wilson**.

Carolyn Wilson is the current President of the Alford School Board. As a parent and school volunteer, she has developed a keen insight into the individual needs of our teachers, students and their families. Carolyn's key priorities are:

- ◆ Quality Education for all Students
- ◆ School Safety
- ◆ Enhanced Communication
- ◆ Strengthening Alford's Financial Position

Our schools benefit from teachers who make a difference in students' lives each and every day. Keeping Alford students on the right path is the key to their success. This is why Alford teachers recommend re-election of Carolyn Wilson. Please encourage Alford community members to vote Carolyn Wilson on November 8th.

For more information on how you can help Carolyn's re-election campaign, please visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Re-Elect-Carolyn-M-Wilson-Alford-School-Board/125150617585900>



CONTRACT QUICKIE—Salary Schedule Rules and Regulations



Acceptable Units for Salary Classification: Limited to upper division or graduate units earned after the date on which the bachelor's degree was conferred, given graduate credit by the college or university if earned prior to the bachelor's degree, or units earned in a District Intern Program which results in a credential issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

Effective Date of Salary Classification Changes: Columnar advancement on the salary schedule shall occur only twice a year in accordance with the timelines specified in Section 1(a)(4) and 1(e) of this Appendix. More than one column may be advanced per reclassification period.

Application Deadline: Unit members shall submit an appropriate form (see Intranet for Salary Classification Change form) by **May 10** for a July reclassification and **November 10** for a January reclassification. *The District and the Association agree that those not meeting the timelines for reclassification will not be considered until the next reclassification period.*

Go to www.alvordeducators.com for more information. Click on Contract.

September Rep Council RECAP

Mrs. Carolyn Wilson addressed the Council and thanked them for their endorsement and support

The meeting was called to order at 4:14 pm on Wednesday, September 14, 2011 by President Leigh Hawkinson. Highlights of the Rep Council meeting are as follows:

- ◆ The Bargaining Team discussed the trigger language because of the ending balance in the District's budget. December 15, 2011 is the cut off date for mid-year cuts from the state. The first week of January will not be instructional days. We most likely will not get these days back. We did get the 2.9% and the last work day of the year back on July 1, 2011.
- ◆ The new high school will not open with mid-year cuts. Our money must be restored before the new high school will open.
- ◆ The District is paying into our benefits as agreed.
- ◆ Loma Vista Middle School won the Governor's Fitness Grand Prize. The school will receive a new fitness center. **Congratulations to Loma Vista!**
- ◆ The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m. with the introduction of new Superintendent Nick Ferguson.



Meet Kaja Stoll-Smith, AEA Secretary

Kaja Stoll-Smith grew up in the burbs of San Francisco and was raised by a single mother. She spent summers with her grandparents in Santa Cruz, California and later lived in Santa Cruz for ten years. After helping out in her daughter's kindergarten classroom, she enrolled in San Jose State University to become a teacher. While studying at SJSU, she worked as an office manager for the Dance Program at the university. She received her B.A. in Liberal Studies with a minor in math from SJSU. She also received her teaching credential at the same university. Kaja later received her Masters in Math Education at the University of Phoenix Online University. She worked as a teacher in Northern California before taking her current position at Villegas Middle School.

Kaja's hobbies include Star Trek (she is currently part of the crew of the U.S.S. Blackheart) and living history. She enjoys Dr. Who and Torchwood. Kaja is currently the proud owner of a Bichon Frise named Alala. She spends her time reading and listening to non-fiction books, having adventures with friends, playing with technology (not just playing games!) and perfecting her recipe for high fiber chocolate chip cookies. Kaja has definitely been an asset both as a teacher in A.U.S.D. but as an active member of our Association. She is currently serving as AEA Secretary. Thank you, Kaja, for your contributions to Alvord students and AEA!

More Sad News

With our deepest regrets we have to report the loss of another Alvord teacher. Suzanne Martin (DiRocco) passed away in her sleep at the end of September. Suzanne had battled diabetes all of her life. She was hired in Alvord in 1990, and spent her entire career teaching multiple grade levels at McAuliffe.

She was instrumental in creating and running the Drama Club and, in one way or another, Suzanne touched the lives of every student who attended McAuliffe.

Our condolences go out to Suzanne's family, including her mother, Nancy Hoey, a Speech Specialist in Alvord. Suzanne will truly be missed!