



ACE ON TASK

President's Message by Karen Houck

The state budget crisis is on everybody's mind and is the topic of discussion and sometimes debate at every site and meeting I have been to in the past few weeks. The information changes daily and all we have right now are proposals and projections. It is virtually impossible to address all of the possible contingencies that COULD materialize in the state budget. The Association and the District are working with all of the appropriate agencies and groups to try to figure out what to do. There are as many rumors floating around as there are people to spread them. Here is what we know:

- Nothing can be finalized until the State amends the budget

- Layoff notices have to be given by March 15th
- Changes in the work year MUST be negotiated
- Bond money CANNOT be used for the general budget

We are involved in budget meetings with the district and are also attending state-wide updates from CTA to get the latest information to pass on. Right now, the district has prepared the seniority list IN CASE there are positions that need to be eliminated for next year. Each site Administrator will be given a copy and each member has to verify their place on it. You will need to make sure the district has your correct hire date and has recorded all of the credentials you hold. It is very important that each employee makes sure the information is correct before any lay-off notices are sent out.

The district is also preparing to offer a retirement incentive stipend to anyone who is planning on retiring this year. This is NOT a Golden Handshake. It would be a one-time cash stipend. Both Associations are calling around to see what other districts are offering so we can be competitive. We are sending out a survey to see who might be interested in this program.

We know that other districts are worse off than Colton and are forced to make deep cuts, including lay-offs. Stay focused on your job and watch for ACCURATE updates on this crisis.

Association of Colton Educators ACE/CTA/NEA

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ACE Executive Board

President	Karen Houck
Vice President	Robert Lemoine
Secretary	Rebekah Acord
Treasurer	Vacant
Elem Dir	Bernadette Pedroza
Elem Dir	Arlene Roper
Elem Dir	Steve Villa
Elem Dir	Linda Placencia
Mid. Sch Dir	LynnMary Toscano
Mid. Sch Dir	David Johnson
Sr. High Dir	Erwin Schaefer
Sr. High Dir	Marcella Cook
PPS Dir	Georgene Dixon
State Council	Paul Lucero
State Council	Rebekah Acord
State Council	Vacant

Successes

ACE leadership has been working on opening up the lines of communication further with the District. So far, we have been invited to sit on interview panels for various administrative positions and the President has also been invited to a Cabinet meeting. On January 26th she will be going to the Management meeting. We look forward to many more such opportunities.

Elections

We are holding an election for the vacant State Council seat for the remainder of the term. The declaration of candidate forms for State Delegate to the NEA-RA are due this month and we will be holding our regular elections for Secretary, Treasurer, High School Director, Middle School Director, 2 Elementary Directors, PPS Director and State Council this spring.

Tax Information

Dues for last year were:

\$955.42

Builder's Club: a Worthwhile Opportunity by LynnMary Toscano

Do you have a Builder's Club at your middle school? If not, you may want to consider starting one for your students. Among the worthy goals of the Builders Club, as stated in the Kiwanis brochure, is to develop a "strong moral character" and "encourage loyalty to school, community and nation" while students work together making "a difference to the world around them." The Builder's Club was established by the Kiwanis in 1975. The Kiwanis membership includes community business professionals and leaders who sponsor a "family" of clubs. Among these clubs are K-Kids for elementary students, the Key Club for high school students as well as many other clubs that extend participation into the college setting.

The most important reason for launching a Builder's club on your campus is from the perspective of the students who are already members. When the Bloomington Middle School (BMS) Builder's Club President, Elisa Cardenas, was asked why she decided to join the club, she responded that she "wanted to join a club where [she] could help people." Emily Jimenez, the BMS club's Vice President, reports that she wanted "to help out [her] community ... to see how hard it is everywhere."



These two 8th graders have "collected donations for UNICIEF" and "fixed food boxes for the needy." Emily added that, in February, they are "going to the Loma Linda Ronald McDonald House to serve dinner." For Elisa the best part about being a member is "going to all the activities." Emily agrees that she likes "helping those that need to be helped."

These students model the type of character traits we want to cultivate in our global village. Let's pave the foundation for our students to practice humanitarian service in their school and community by instilling in them a sense of sharing through the Builder's Club.

ACE Update by Rebekah Acord

As of this writing, the main concern that we all have is the impact of the State Budget on our jobs. The School Board meeting on Thursday, January 15th dealt with the proposed facilities projects, and how the Bond monies will be spent. None of this money can go for salaries, and that is only right.



We await word on if any of our positions will be eliminated. One of the interesting things that Mel Albiso, a School Board member, said was that when he came to the Board, he was surprised that concerning the state of some of the schools, that monies were spent for Astro-Turf on a playing field before dealing with classrooms. The Executive Board meeting dealt with some of the grievances that we, as an association, are handling. We certainly hope that an equitable solution can be worked out.

As a whole, it does seem that we are making progress, little by little with the District. After all,

we are all in this to help our students to the best of our abilities. I, personally, feel that we do this. Linda Placencia and I made some visits to schools in December. We saw very dedicated teachers, and it was interesting to note that some of the Principals had gone out of the way to ensure that we were welcomed at the schools.

As we are all in this budget mess together; if we truly had parity with the District, it could certainly go a long way to make it better.

Budget Crisis Preparations by Arlene Roper

Everyone knows that the State of California and our Country are facing difficult financial times. We've all seen the dire reports and watched as the unemployment rate has increased. During the new administration we're expecting to see changes in the No Child Left Behind law. But, will the changes make things better or worse? Health benefits have always been a major concern to our members. No one wants to sacrifice good health benefits especially in a day when benefit costs continue to rise. President Obama has promised to address the issues of the economy, education and health care in his first administration. Some might

choose this time to sit back and see what happens. I would hope that none of us do that. Now, more than ever, we need to be active in our Association and in contacting our state and federal representatives. We have proven that if we call or write our representatives it has an impact on how they construct legislation and how they vote. **We must make sure that our students, our schools and our own well being are not being sacrificed.**

So what can you do? **Organize!** Is your phone tree and e-mail bank up to date? Now is the time to get it there. By going to the CTA website

or by looking in the phone book you can find who your representatives are. Make sure you have their local, Sacramento and Washington D.C. addresses and phone numbers. The Association may be calling on you soon to help make an impact. The changes that will be made in the next couple of years will be with us for a long time. **Make sure your voice is heard!**



State Council Update by Rebekah Acord

The next meeting of CTA state council will occur on the weekend of January 23rd. It most certainly will deal with the current budget stalemate in the State Legislature. CTA has proposed an initiative that would raise the State's sales tax up one cent. These monies would only be used to fund education, and CTA feels that it would keep education from being held hostage each year

when the State's budget is ironed out in the Legislature. Please note that this is information and not my personal opinion. If you do have an opinion concerning this information, feel free to let me know. State Council Representatives are at State Council to represent our local after all.

In my committee, there is to be a speaker on Friday evening who

will talk about the Autism Spectrum Disorders. I am looking forward to this presentation. I have the information for Read Across America, which I will give to one of the Elementary Director's at Rep. Council January 26th. As always, if you would like any information on State Council, please call the ACE office.

Emergency Room vs. Urgent Care by Arlene Roper

Do you know where the nearest Urgent Care is? Do you know its hours? Knowing where one is and if there is one nearby that offers 24 hour a day service can save you money. The copays for Urgent Care are much lower than for Emergency Rooms. In addition, the cost of an Emergency Room

visit to our Health Plans drives our renewal rates up. Depending on the plan, around 40%



of the visits to the Emergency Room are not emergencies and could have been handled at an Urgent Care. If you don't know where an Urgent Care is, call your Health Plan and find out. Knowing where one is could save you and all of us a lot of money.

ACE Calendar February 2009

Special Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Exec. Board	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 Holiday	10	11	12	13 NEA Conf.	14 NEA Conf.
15 NEA Conf.	16 Holiday	17	18	19 Outreach Training	20 Outreach Training	21 Outreach Training
22	23 Rep. Council	24	25	26	27 Urban Issues	28 Urban Issues

January 30: Deadline for State Delegate Declaration of Candidacy forms for NEA-RA in San Diego

February 13-15: NEA Pacific Region Conference in Seattle

February 27-March 1: Urban Issues Conference in Newport Beach

March 2: Read Across America

March 6-8: Equity and Human Right Conference in San Jose

March 13-15: Good Teaching Conference in Anaheim

School Board Actions

The Board had a special budget workshop on January 15th to deal with the bond monies. They reviewed a list of the facility improvements and provided feedback. The bond oversight committee will be meeting and it is hoped that the projects can get underway soon. They also approved the cost of relocating Inland Timber off of the site in Grand Terrace and so the High School construction can begin this spring. As far as the budget cuts are concerned, they listened to a brief update by Jim Ayala (Asst. Supt. Business Services) saying we were waiting until the state budget was adopted. The District has asked both Associations to get the word out to the members that they are interested in offering a retirement incentive stipend to anyone who wishes to retire this year. We are currently asking around to see what other districts are offering.

Member Benefits

Your membership in CTA entitles you to a number of additional benefits. TSA, a subsidiary of First Financial Credit Union, offers discounted tickets to a variety of Southern California entertainment venues. You can order advance tickets at a savings for Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, Legoland, Medieval Times Dinner and Tournament, Pirates Dinner Adventure, Movie Tickets (AMC Cinemas, Regal, Edwards, United Artist and Pacific Theaters), SeaWorld, Universal Studios Hollywood, San Diego Wild Animal Park and San Diego Zoo. Also available are See's Candy Gift Certificates. For a complete list of availability, prices, and service charges, call (800) 537-8491 or visit their website at www.tsaspecialservices.com

Student Government Day

On January 8th, over 40 students from the 4 High Schools met at the Colton City Hall for a job shadowing experience. They were greeted by Mayor Kelly Chastain and Board President Marge Mendoza-Ware. After a welcome message by both of these leaders, representatives from Congressman Baca's and Assemblywoman Carter's offices encouraged the students to be civic minded and ask lots of questions about the inner workings of the local government. Then the students were paired up with department leaders from the following offices: Mayor, City Manager, City Clerk, Community Services, Human Resources, Finance, Public Works, Police, Fire, City Attorney, Electric, Community Development, Water/Waste Water, and Economic Development.



After a 2 hour tour of the facility and the opportunity to ask questions, the students met again as a whole group for lunch and presentations of their experiences. Allen O'Neil and Michael Walling, BHS Counselors, brought their group over to the

ACE office to get a different perspective of local leadership. ACE thanks all of the students and their chaperones for participating in this unique opportunity. We hope they continue to take a leadership role.

ACE ON TASK is a publication of the Association of Colton Educators
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