



ACE ON TASK

President's Message by Karen Houck

Some people thrive on conflict and others avoid it at all cost. This is a basic concept I have noticed as I continue to deal with difficult situations and individuals. Some people in Administration are natural problem solvers, see both sides and act in the best interest of the parties involved. They compromise. Others are deliberately evasive, elusive, and seek to cause the maximum amount of damage. This is becoming increasingly evident with the members of our school board. As a group, they give the outward appearance of thriving on conflict.

Let's look at some recent examples of their problem solving skills. A Principal at a major comprehensive High School has numerous complaints filed against him by staff, parents and students. Public meetings were held, walkouts occurred and the media became involved. It wasn't until it became a full-blown media event that the board finally took the appropriate action and removed the Principal. Then the certificated employees entered into protracted contract negotiations, rallies were held, parents got

involved, the media showed up, fact-finding occurred and a strike vote was taken. Again a full-blown media event occurs before a resolution is achieved. Finally, a new high school name is chosen, parents protest, alternatives are proposed, the media gets involved and a resolution is reached. Why does it take media coverage and a packed school board meeting to get the school board to do what is right? Why don't they have any faith in the employees they hire to solve problems? Why aren't these employees empowered to act in the best interest of their stakeholders? Instead of making headlines for the things that are wrong with Colton, it would be great if we made headlines for what we do well, educating children no matter what gets thrown at us.

We will have the opportunity to judge the character of our elected officials when they take on the next problem presented to them. There is a Director who is creating a hostile work environment for her employees and has allowed an advocate to have unprecedented access to the staff and their programs. After months of problem solving with district

officials, it is time to take it to our Governing Board. Information will be presented and they will be asked to take appropriate action. The media and the parents are not yet involved. Time will tell if they need to be. We will soon see if they have learned from past events or continue to seek conflict. Stay tuned.

Activities are being planned around the state at each school to protest the budget cuts to public education on March 4, 2010. CTA will be working with our educational partners to make sure we have their support. The purpose is to get the message out to the voters that education is a priority and changes need to be made to fund our programs. Cuts can't keep coming out of our program and hurt our kids. We are hoping to have district administrators and school board members involved.

Association of Colton Educators ACE/CTA/NEA

Issue 6
January 2010

ACE Executive Board

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State Council	Dona Hines

Tax Information:

Membership dues for ACE/CTA/NEA in 2009 totaled \$972.50. Up to \$17.97 of the annual dues is designated for CTA/ABC Political Activities to support state and local candidates and/or initiatives and is not deductible for income tax purposes.

DAIT Forms by Linda Placencia

Hopefully you all had a wonderful break. I know that for me the weeks flew by so quickly. And, it seems the last three weeks are flying by with so much to do and so little time. Each of us has our personal obligations for this season, but in our classrooms we rushed back and have found ourselves busy trying to keep up with our pacing guides, schedules, and oh yes, administering the DAIT Form B Tests.

Many teachers welcomed the district's new policy that gave us a measure of latitude in the choice for our grade level assessments and resulting grading practices. However, administering and scanning The DAIT Form A, B, and C tests has also presented its share questions or challenges. How can

the problems that develop when numerous teachers are trying to scan these tests during a small window of time be eliminated? How do the mistakes that found their way into some of the final drafts affect the outcomes? Were the last minute memos about those mistakes helpful? How does our students' perception of these difficult tests that are filled with many concepts that have not yet been addressed this school year affect each student's motivation to perform to their best ability? Therefore, how accurate is the data produced? Will these tests prove to be valuable in showing how effective or ineffective our various intervention programs are? Will we as individual teachers find the resulting data truly helpful or burdensome? Can these help success-

fully drive our instruction? How do they affect good teaching practices? Because of the format presented in the tests, do they provide our students with some valuable or irrelevant experience for the upcoming CSTs? Finally, what are their real values in each of our classrooms and for each of our students?

When all is said, we must remember that whatever the programs or testing practices that are in place it is the good teaching practices of our wonderful teachers that make a difference in the classroom and with each of our students. Good teaching practices are our gift to our students this season and all the year through.

Welcome to Colton

When new people come to the Colton District, I feel like saying, "Hi, welcome to Colton, we have a problem." Every time I turn around, someone in management is crying wolf that the sky is falling. A few years ago, the District claimed we were broke and could not afford to give employees a raise from monies they had ALREADY RECEIVED from the state. If they did, we would be bankrupt. After giving the raise to ALL employees (not just teachers), three years later, they had an additional 12 million dollars in the bank. Last year, the District claimed they needed to fire (RIF) TONS of teachers. They finally settled on 34 (still WAY too many in my opinion). The District claimed they NEEDED to do this to avoid being broke and because "we didn't need them." FYI: the District hired back over 80% of those people.

by Robert Lemoine

At the beginning of the school year, the District claimed that they were going broke. You have probably seen the dog and pony show that the District is giving employees about the budget. Apparently, they did not learn from their past mistakes in the crisis years. The District claims they need to cut 12 million dollars (ironically, the same amount they have saved since the year they gave all employees a raise that supposedly would make them go bankrupt). In researching official documents that they give to the county, they started this year with a fund balance of over 37 million dollars just in ONE account. Now District officials have asked ACE to show them where the money is hiding. So, we are paying hundreds of thousands of dollars to a department that cannot even understand the budget and documents they create and submit to

the county? And still, the District claims that they need more money. Now, the District claims there is a "cash flow" problem and soon, there will be no money to pay bills. REALLY?!? There is an old saying, "You lie so much, you believe yourself." Enough is enough. Don't they realize that we are EDUCATED people?!? For years, every single time an employee turns around in this District, he or she hears about no money and budget cuts. Certificated positions are cut, yet management positions and our fund balances have grown. All of these "doom and gloom" statements are indeed PROJECTIONS by the same people who have been wrong in the past. The real problem for the Colton District is that no one believes the lies anymore.

Always Connected by John Chovan

My wife and I were fortunate to have the opportunity to travel during our Thanksgiving recess. While on vacation in Kauai, we visited a cacao farm where both my wife and I dutifully clicked away on our digital camera and our camera phones as we learned all about cacao and the process by which it was turned into chocolate. Without really thinking about it, I posted some pictures from my iPhone onto my Facebook account. About twenty minutes later, as I was uploading a few more

pictures, I saw that one of my postings had a comment from a colleague that went something like this: "You're on vacation, why are you on Facebook....go enjoy!" As I thought about this comment (and the unbridled jealousy that my colleague had for me being on vacation in Hawaii), I realized that I hadn't even thought about making my whereabouts known to my friends. I just utilized the technology at hand. With that in mind, I pondered the implications

this technology could have for ACE (not while I was on vacation, but after I returned!). So, I pose this question to the members of ACE: Is there any interest amongst ACE members to warrant the creation of a Facebook and/or Twitter account dedicated to ACE updates? Facebook and Twitter are possible means of communication that many people utilize on a daily (and sometimes hourly) basis. Let us know your thoughts at aceteach@aol.com!

State Council 1/10 by Rebekah Acord

The next CTA State Council will occur on the last weekend in January. As always, it will be a full weekend of work. The two main issues that most likely will be discussed are Race To The Top and the budget. There are a few other issues as well, I'm sure. It is worth your time to get your CTA membership number and sign in on the CTA website. All of the current issues are discussed there. If you enjoy going to conferences, there is a list of upcoming conferences on the site. Remember, the Good Teaching conference is in March. I am on the Special Education committee at State Council. We spend Saturday afternoon discussing all the latest issues that affect us and our students. If there are any issues that you would like State Council to discuss please contact your State Council Representatives. We are Rebekah Acord, Paul Lucero, and Dona Hines.

ACE WOULD LIKE TO
WISH YOU, YOUR FAMILIES
AND LOVED ONES A
HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Healthy Rewards \$\$\$\$ by Arlene Roper

Healthy Rewards is a Wellness program sponsored and funded by Blue Shield and available to all Blue Shield enrolled members. It is easy to use and pays up to \$150. To use this program you must sign up on the Blue Shield website and take the WebMD wellness assessment. Then you pick a program to follow from week to week on the Healthy Rewards website. Some of the programs are Weight Management, Nutrition, and Smoking

Cessation. Each week you log on you get a credit. All you have to actually do is log on. There are no other requirements. When you receive 12 credits for 12 weeks, you redeem them on the website and Blue Shield sends you a Visa Debit card for \$50. When you earn another 12 weeks of credits Blue Shield will add another \$50 to the Debit card. You can earn up to \$150 during the year. You can use the Debit card to

pay for co-pays, over the counter medication or anything else you want. The information in the programs is useful and promotes a healthier lifestyle while earning you a few extra dollars too. Blue Shield will send out a post card with the website and instructions when the enrollment period starts. So sign up and earn a few extra dollars while getting healthy!

ACE Calendar February 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Exec. Board Mtg.	2	3	4	5	6
7 Super Bowl Sunday	8	9	10 Candidacy forms due by 5 pm	11	12 Holiday	13
14 St. Valentine's Day	15 Holiday	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 Rep. Council Mtg.	23	24	25	26 Urban Issues	27 Urban Issues
ACE Elections/Voting through March 5						
28 Urban Issues						

Special Events

February 1: Exec. Board Meeting
 February 10: Declaration of Candidacy Forms due no later than 5 pm
 February 12: Holiday
 February 14: St. Valentine's Day
 February 15: Holiday
 February 22: Rep. Council Mtg.
 February 23-March 5: ACE Elections
 February 26-28: Urban Issues in San Jose

Elections for ACE

Starting January 25th, members can pick up and turn in their declaration of candidacy forms. The positions up for election this year are: President, Vice-President, 2 Elementary Directors, 1 Middle School Director, 1 High School Director, 1 CTA State Council Representative, and 5 NEA/RA Delegates. The forms are due no later than Wednesday, February 10th at 5 pm. Elections will take place February 23-March 5. Good luck!

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 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

CONTRACT CORNER Article 9 Grievance

Your association received the ruling from the arbitrator on the class size grievance that was filed. The ruling was filed in our favor. So, your class size should be 30 students (or less) in grades 4-6. Section 9.3 clearly defines your class size in chart. Secondary grievances on class size have been filed and it will be interesting to see how the District responds to them in light of losing the elementary grievance. Stay tuned.

ACE ON TASK is a publication of the Association of Colton Educators
 190 W. H St #101 Colton, CA 92324 (909) 825-0332
aceteach@aol.com
 Edited by: Robert Lemoine and Rebekah Acord and published once monthly for the Representative Council and its membership.