

HDTA/CTA ELECTIONS

The yearly election cycle for CTA and HDTA elections will be commencing shortly. HDTA chapter elections customarily occur along with either NEA State Delegate elections or CTA State Council elections in an effort to increase voter turnout.

Chapter elections and CTA State Council elections will be held at sites between April 16-20, 2012. For a more detailed timeline check with your building rep as they have a copy of the full election timeline.

Any HDTA member who wants to run for chapter president, first vice president, second vice

president, secretary, treasurer, member at large, or building rep may contact Cassandra Perez, Election Coordinator (West Ranch High School) to request a Declaration of Candidacy form. Each office has a one-year term. For State Council, a declaration of candidacy form can be obtained at the HDTA office. Declaration forms must be returned to the HDTA Office (26111 Bouquet Canyon Rd., Suite H-5, Santa Clarita, CA 91350) no later than 5:00 p.m., March 30, 2012.

SPRING BREAK OFFICE HOURS

This edition of THE VOICE will be the last to arrive before Spring Break. April's edition will come out after the April 2-6 break from school in the Hart District. The Santa Clarita Valley Uniserv office will be closed for much of the time. If you end

up having professional concerns or issues over the Spring Break, please call 661-255-0311 or use the e-mail link on the association website. Leave or send a message and someone will attempt to get back to you.

GOVERNOR'S INITIATIVE

As we are all well aware, funding for public education in the state of California and our district has been drastically cut over the past four years. We have all been working with larger class sizes, fewer resources and less school days while still providing a top-notch education to the young people of the Santa Clarita Valley. Unfortunately, without some major action on the part of the people of California, the situation could get much worse!

Governor Brown has tied his proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2012 to a funding initiative that he is attempting to get to the ballot for the November 2012 election. The purpose of this initiative is to fill in some of the budget deficit in the state. It will help by preventing additional cuts to school funding and health and human services, and eliminate some of our structural budget deficit. What it does not do is provide additional funding to education. To quote CTA President Dean Vogel, "It's just enough to keep us at awful!"

The nuts and bolts of the initiative are as follows: a ¼% raise in sales tax (this is equivalent to 25 cents on every \$100), a 1% increase in state income tax for joint filers with income over \$500,000, a 2% increase for joint filers with income over \$600,000, and a 3% increase for joint filers with income over \$1 million. The sales tax increase would expire at the end of 2016 and the income tax increases would expire at the end of 2018. There are some other terms which are still to be worked out, but this is the bulk of the initiative. Also, this is a compromised version of his preliminary initiative that was agreed upon with the supporters of a competing initiative in return

for them removing their bill from signature gathering.

You may ask why we should support an initiative that just keeps us at "awful"? Well, the alternative is devastation! The impact of the initiative not passing is the equivalent of shutting down school for three weeks or having class sizes close to 50. It would cause school boards to ask for double digit pay cuts and larger contributions from employees for health benefits. We have fought the good fight at the local level for the past four years and we have nothing left to give. Another budget cut will dig deeply into our pockets, and it will be drastic.

This initiative is not a panacea for the financial woes of California. It is a stop-gap measure to keep us afloat as we continue to work on a more permanent solution to adequately fund public education in our state. While supporting it will not cure all of our ills, not supporting it may but us on life support.

The Education Coalition, which includes the teachers, administrators, school board, classified and parent organizations, believes that this year marks a key turning point where California must decide whether to continue the devastating cuts to our education system and other vital state programs, or rebuild the infrastructure that made California the 9th largest economy in the world. We are all going to have do our part to protect school funding. Look for more information on this initiative and others this spring.

-Brian Breslin

JAYME'S MEMBERSHIP CORNER

Welcome to Quarter 4! How is your spring going? My mom did not lie when she said that time would go faster the older I got; things are going by in a blur. Looking back over the first few months of 2012, I realize that I'm being as faithful to my New Year's Resolutions as I can possibly be. If you are finding yourself slipping a bit and not getting to the gym or out for a brisk walk as often as you would like (or should), the www.neamb.org site has some great helpers that might motivate you in the Heath & Wellness tools. Besides offering you some practical advice and guidance, they also have some spots to assess your heart health and other vital areas. It might be worth taking a look – though a bit scary. In a nearby area of the site, you will also find the Everyday Living Guides. I particularly liked the part about Backyard Conservation – I have

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am going to start this month's message like I start my classes, with a quiz. For each of the questions, the choices are as follows:

- a. local School Board/local Association
- b. Congress, President
- c. State Legislature/Governor
- d. b and c
- e. a,b, and c

Here's the quiz:

1. Who determines your salary?
2. Who determines the length of the school year/work year?
3. Who determines class size/work load?
4. Who determines hiring practices?
5. Who decides on standards for classes and testing of those standards?
6. Who decides health and safety standards?
7. Who decides length of the workday?
8. Who decides your fringe benefits?
9. Who makes the decision on the school budget?
10. Who determines how you are to be evaluated?

Here are the answers:

1. a
2. d
3. d
4. e
5. d
6. d
7. a
8. a
9. a; without local association
10. d; although Congress is exploring this in the reauthorization of NCLB.

If you notice, all of the answers indicate that someone other than a teacher plays a role in making decisions that impact our salary, our benefits, and what we teach. All three levels of our association, NEA at the national, CTA at the state, and HDTA at the local level, have worked

an affinity for birds. You will be surprised at all of the things you can find at www.neamb.org. Remember that Spring Break is fast approaching and you may be looking for travel ideas or fun things to do locally. The "Click n' Save" area is mighty helpful in those areas.

On a more local note, please remember that your voice counts when it comes to chapter elections. Give your building rep a hand and show up for elections. As an association, we are only as strong as our membership wants us to be – every little bit helps.

If you have questions about any membership concerns, please feel free to email me at jallsman@hartdistrict.org

Until next time! Jayme

in various ways to make sure that those who make the decisions are supportive of public education and that proposed legislation is not harmful to those in the classroom, both teacher and student. It is more than just taking positions on initiative. It is lobbying at both the state and federal level for each and every bill that impacts public education.

This November, a new initiative (the so-called "Stop Special Interest Money Now Act") proposes to put an end to our ability to influence local, state, and national legislation. It claims to be about stopping special interest money in politics, but the reality is that it is an attempt to limit our ability to influence the political process but does nothing to stop corporations from continuing to contribute to political campaigns.

The measure states that it will stop corporations and unions from collecting political funds through payroll deduction, but corporations almost never use payroll deductions to collect funds, they use corporate profits. Currently corporations outspend unions 15 to 1 in political campaigns.

If passed in November, this measure will effectively prevent educators from using their political voice to protect students, improve schools and colleges, and enhance the teaching profession. Without our ability to impact the political process, we would be unable to advocate to preserve salaries, secure retirement plans, protect the right to collectively bargain, oppose NCLB, oppose tying teacher evaluations to test scores, and even be unable to take a stand on local school board races.

This measure is unnecessary because current law already creates a process for those who dislike the politics to opt out of having their dues money used for political contributions. This measure attempts to fix something that doesn't need fixing in order to hide the real intent –to keep educators and other public sector unions from speaking out. The stakes are extremely high this November and we will need your help to make sure that our voices are not silenced.

-Leslie Littman