We Are Not Alone!
by Susan Sawyer, Bargaining Chair

As we negotiate our Health and Welfare benefits, we want to keep you informed of what teachers in surrounding districts are accomplishing through the bargaining process. Here is an overview of our negotiations this year and how we compare to other districts in the San Gabriel Valley.

- The negotiating teams have worked together on several Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and completed Tentative Agreements (TAs) to the Contract.
- We have studied and discussed the budget with Dr. Pappalardo, PUSD Chief Finance Officer.
- We have actively explored alternative health plans.
- We have mutually agreed to postpone open enrollment in order to fully explore other health plan options and to educate our membership.
- We have pressured the District, and the proposal for three furlough days this year has been rescinded!

Negotiations in neighboring districts throughout the San Gabriel Valley:

Bonita
- Health & Welfare: 2012-2013 – Increased $1,000
- Salary: 2012-2013 – 1.5% increase, retro pay, 2013-2014 – 3% increase
- 2012-2013 – lowered class size and hired over 40 new teachers,

Chaffey
- Kaiser Family Rate as the health cap.

Claremont
- Health & Welfare: 2012-2013 – 20% increase
- Salary: 2012-2013 - 1% pay increase plus additional step added for longevity

Covina Valley
- Health & Welfare: Ratified New Plans – switch to JPA (SCSEBA) cont. 3 tier
- 2012-2013 – 3rd year of 3 yr. closed contract – kept it closed.

- 2013-2014 – negotiating salaries and language in December: to be based on Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) numbers out of the School Site Council (SSC) formula.

Montebello
- Salary: 2013-2014 – 5% increase

Rowland
- Health & Welfare: 21% raise in the health cap
- Salary: 2011-2012 – 0.5% increase, 2012-2013 – 0.5% increase

We will continue to gather and share numbers, issues, and outcomes from our neighbors.

NOW is the time to acknowledge our cutbacks and support of the District during hardship:

- We had significant cuts to our members, support staff, and our take home pay.
- We have soldiered through with larger class sizes, larger case loads, less support staff, new curriculum, trainings, the list goes on.
- We All need to stand together to obtain Health and Welfare Benefits that are affordable Now and into the Future.
- We All need to stand together to obtain Salaries that allow us to support our families and provide a quality of life.

The conditions that would Restore and Enhance the Health and Welfare Benefits and salaries of members, keep PUSD a competitive employer, and honor the contract language that both parties ratified in February 2013:

NO $5 CAP on the District contribution to Health and Welfare Benefits AND a 3% increase to the salary schedules this school year.

We are not alone in expecting that our profession and our efforts are fairly compensated.

What we are asking for is Fair, It is Reasonable, and It is the Right Thing to Do.

Rally at the Ed Center, November 21, 2013
Honor the Contract: Restore and Enhance Total Compensation

President’s Message — by Alvin Nash

The issues of concern to all of our members are Health Benefits and Salary. The District’s most recent proposal presented on November 22 still does not restore nor enhance the levels of total compensation to those of 2009-2010. UTP members have not received a salary schedule increase since July 2007, and we have paid more out-of-pocket for health benefits during the last three years. Further, we were subject to five furlough days each year for two years, which was a 2.7% pay cut for those two years. Meanwhile, the cost of living has continued to rise without any adjustment to our salary schedule.

In February of this year, both parties ratified the agreement that the District was committed to restoring AND enhancing the total compensation levels for UTP members. The District’s latest proposal does not fulfill this agreement. While some—but not all—of the proposed out-of-pocket costs for health benefits may restore the total compensation levels for some members, this would only last for a brief period of time until September 30, 2014.

Regarding salary, the District proposed (a) NO (0%) increase to the salary schedule, OR (b) a 1% increase to the salary schedule with greater out-of-pocket rates.

Moreover, the District’s ending balance on June 30, 2013, was over $14 million ($9 million surplus and $5 million in reserves). Additionally, 2013-2014 is the year in which the District is receiving over $5 million in new funds due to the Local Control Funding Formula from the State. For this school year, the District also is projecting an ending balance of over $10 million ($5 million surplus and $5 million in reserves).

If the District will not decrease our costs for health benefits AND will not increase our salary schedule this school year, then when will it? NOW is the time for the District’s actions to honor our agreement and to show that it values its teachers, counselors, nurses, librarians, and speech therapists that serve the students of Pasadena Unified.

See Pasadena Unified Teacher Salary Comparison on pages 6 and 7.

General Information

UTP Office:
United Teachers of Pasadena
2303 E. Washington Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91104
(626) 798-0928
(626) 798-5452 fax
aenash@sbcglobal.net
utplara5@yahoo.com
www.utofp.org

UTP Area Directors:
Bernadine Burgess, Elementary I
Lorna Washington, Elementary II
Tina Renzullo, Elementary III
Yolanda Munoz, Elementary IV
Roger Gray, Middle School
Carol Locke, High School

Frequently Requested P.U.S.D. Numbers:
P.U.S.D. Ed Center (626) 396-3600
• Human Resources ext. 88380
• Health Benefits ext. 88144
• Substitute Line ext. 88382
• Payroll ext. 88360

Frequently Requested Numbers:
CAL STRS (800) 228-5453
CTA Group Life and Disability Insurance (800) 522-0406
CTA Auto and Home Insurance Program (800) 800-9410

Important Dates

December 9 — Representative Council, 4pm, PHS Cafeteria
December 10 — General Membership Meeting, 4pm, PHS Franco Theater
December 11 — UTP Holiday Celebration, 4pm, Hamburger Hamlet
December 17 — Shortened Day, Blair, Marshall, Muir, PHS
December 18-20 — Final Exams, Blair, Marshall, Muir, PHS
December 19 — Board of Education Meeting, 5:30pm, Board Room
December 20 — 1st Semester Ends, Shortened Day, K-8
December 23– January 3 — Winter Break, Schools Closed
January 6 — Staff Development Day
January 7 — 2nd Semester Begins
January 17-19 — CTA Issues Conference
January 20 — Martin Luther King Day, Schools Closed
January 23 — Board of Education Meeting, 5:30pm, Board Room
January 24-26 — CTA State Council
January 27 — Representative Council, 4pm, PHS Cafeteria
Formal and Informal Observations

**Article XVIII, Evaluation Procedures**

Informal observations may occur at any time; you must be provided a written note on any observation lasting more than fifteen (15) minutes. **Formal observations** shall occur according to the schedule provided below. You are to complete a pre-observation form and submit it two days prior to your scheduled observation. A pre-observation conference is optional—at the request of either yourself or your evaluator. Formal observations must encompass one lesson or class period and no event will be less than thirty (30) consecutive minutes. Lastly, within ten working days after the formal observation, a written report must be submitted to you by the evaluator and discussed in a post observation conference. You should receive the written report at least one day prior to the post observation conference.

**Full-year permanent unit members, with satisfactory prior evaluations** (Section 8.10):

b. Prior to December 15—At least one informal classroom observation, of more than fifteen (15) minutes, may be conducted each semester; supporting data may also be gathered (8.10.4b)

c. Prior to April 15—At least one formal classroom observation and post observation conference shall be conducted and supporting data gathered (8.10.1c)

**Full-year permanent unit members with prior year unsatisfactory evaluations** (Section 8.10.2):

b. Prior to December 15—Two formal classroom observations and two post observation conferences shall be conducted; supporting data shall also be gathered (8.10.2b)

c. Not later than December 15—the summative evaluation shall be completed and given to the unit member personally; in the case of an overall unsatisfactory summative evaluation, it shall include identification of written suggestions for improvement (8.10.2c)

d. Between January 15-April 15—Two additional formal classroom observations and two post observation conferences shall be conducted if the December summative evaluation was less than satisfactory; supporting data shall also be gathered (8.10.2d)

**Full-year probationary unit members in their first or second year of probationary status, and those probationary unit members holding an emergency permit or pre-intern certificate** (Section 8.10.3):

b. Prior to January 31—Two formal classroom observations, with two post observation conferences shall be held; supporting data shall also be gathered (8.10.3b)

c. Between January 31 and March 31—one formal classroom observation and post observation conference shall be held; supporting data shall also be gathered (8.10.3c)

**Full-year temporary unit members** (Section 8.10.4)

b. Prior to April 15—at least one informal classroom observation, of more than fifteen (15) minutes, may be conducted each semester; supporting data may also be gathered (8.10.4b)

**End of Semester Testing: High Schools**

Article VI, Hours

The testing day schedule of instructional minutes at the high school level for three days at the end of each semester shall be; two hundred forty-seven (247). (Section 6.9.3)

**Voluntary Transfers**

Article VII, Transfers and Reassignments

A voluntary transfer is the movement of a permanent unit member from one work location to another work location. The transfer may include a change in grade levels and/or subject area as long as the move involves changing worksites. An overall rating of “unsatisfactory” on the most recent summative evaluation shall preclude a unit member from submitting a request for a voluntary transfer. (Section 7.3.1)

The following factors shall be utilized in priority order to determine which unit member receives an interview for a voluntary transfer to fill a vacancy/opening: (Section 7.3.2)

1. Possession of appropriate credential and/or authorizations (Section 7.3.2.1)
2. Unit member must have a voluntary transfer request on file with the District on or before the closing date. (Section 7.3.2.2)

A selection shall be in place to interview those voluntary transfers that meet criteria in Section 7.3.2. In cases where no selection is made, openings/vacancies shall be posted for external candidates. The top two (2) voluntary transfer candidates from the previous interview shall be afforded a second interview. (Section 7.3.3)

A transfer request shall not be denied arbitrarily, capriciously, or without basis in fact. (Section 7.3.4)

If a unit member’s request for a voluntary transfer request is denied, the District shall notify the unit member. Upon request, the unit member shall receive written reasons for the denial. Such request(s) shall be made within ten (10) working days of notification. The Director of Human Resources shall provide the written reasons within ten (10) working days of the request. The unit member, upon request, shall be granted a meeting with the administrator who denied the request to discuss the reasons for the denial. (Section 7.3.5)

If the unit member requests that her/his application for transfer be kept confidential, the supervisor at her/his worksite shall not be notified by the District of the application. (Section 7.3.6)

An employee may file a transfer request by submitting a request to transfer form to Human Resources. (Section 7.3.6.1)

Properly filed transfer requests shall be valid for one (1) calendar year. Continuing transfer requests must be renewed in writing after one (1) calendar year. (Section 7.3.6.2)

The filing of a request for transfer is without prejudice to the unit member and shall not jeopardize the unit member’s present assignment. (Section 7.3.6.3)

A request for transfer may be withdrawn by the unit member in writing to Human Resources at any time prior to official notification or transfer approval. (Section 7.3.6.4)

Upon request, a unit member in a special education program assignment who holds another teaching authorization, shall be eligible for a voluntary transfer out of the special education program after serving five (5) consecutive years in the assignment. (Section 7.3.6.5)

When a transfer request is granted, the Director of Human Resources shall give the unit member and appropriate division and site management official notification of its disposition. (Section 7.3.7)

A unit member granted a voluntary transfer normally shall be expected to remain at the site for not less than three (3) years. (Section 7.3.8)
Inclusion in Action: A Tale of Two Teachers

Human Rights Committee

Irina Shlykava, Severely Handicapped Class, Blair Middle School

Describe a typical day.
Middle school students are at that age where there is so much going on with them socially as individuals, biologically as adults-in-the-making, and developmentally as a group of learners. My middle-schoolers are students with special needs, so their needs are even more varied than a mainstream class. All teachers must break content into chunks to accommodate short attention spans and different skills and abilities, but my students have added physical and cognitive challenges that also affect their performance in school. The 8 students in my classroom are considered medically fragile, and many have multiple special needs and combinations of cognitive, gross motor, sensory challenges, including blindness. I and the 4 aides assigned to my classroom are constantly vigilant for signs of choking, seizures, and for a few students, outbursts of aggressive behavior (such as hitting or biting). I spend every day balancing the diverse needs of my students, making sure that the modified, highly individualized curriculum allows them all to develop their independence and acquire functional academic skills. I partner with physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech therapists to teach self-help and life skills appropriate for each individual student, for example, getting up from the floor, activating switches to turn on music or fans, spelling words on the computer, signaling to ask for wants or needs, holding a spoon properly, and eating or drinking without choking.

I teach five periods a day; all subjects including art and PE, in collaboration with the Adapted PE teacher. From 7:40 to 8:10, I meet students at the bus. Buses are staggered and as each student arrives, they are taken to the classroom by me or an aide. If an aide is absent, other Special Ed teachers help with the scramble to get the students across the street and into the classroom. Students can never be left without direct supervision. Even during my conference period, when students are in a general education music class, I am on call to assist in case of a seizure or other emergency. The rest of each day is student-centered. All of my students follow a scheduled routine. At the end of the day, the students are taken to the buses. Usually they are all on the bus and ready to go home by 3:20, but sometimes I wait as late as 4 pm for the last child to be picked up. Other than that, as any teacher knows, there is no “typical day!”

What are your biggest challenges and what support is missing?
The biggest challenge I face is that there are not enough aides to move students in wheelchairs between the classrooms and to provide constant supervision. Buses are staggered, but if a bus is late, I or someone must remain with the students. If an aide is absent, often there are no substitute aides at all or a sub aide does not have skills to address my students’ unique needs (including medical ones). Then other teachers must pitch in to assure consistency and routines. It can be difficult to coordinate student needs, the schedule, and safety precautions—which are of the highest concerns. Another challenge I face is integrating life skills that are applicable to each student and specific to their challenges with the standards. Making content accessible is a challenge for every teacher.

What successes have you witnessed?
Working with students with special needs is very fulfilling for me. I have a small class, so I can really focus on each student. It is like a puzzle, I have to focus on each piece to make it work. I love breaking the code and evaluating all components, such as interests, needs, supports, and strengths, to find the most effective ways to help my students learn and grow. I also love being able to create and maintain an environment of inclusion, flexibility, and support. I see small successes everyday, but often it is when one of my students is included in the general population that I see the most growth. It is always great to see individual and class growth in social interactions and acceptance by their peers.

I love being at my school site, because my students are included with students of their own ages. One student is confined to a wheelchair, and uses assistive technology to communicate. He can read and loves to socialize. He is currently taking world history in the general education setting, and he is being challenged and motivated in a way that would not be possible in my class. He is using his communication device more, and his reading has improved. Last year, another of my students was included in an 8th grade science class. Although she is non-verbal and a non-reader, she participated in the hands-on activities, and gained valuable listening skills, and socializing experiences. The students in her class went out of their way to say hello when they saw her in the halls. My students are able to enjoy the whole experience of middle school here at Blair, rather than being coddled in a separate classroom as they were previously. And I think the experiences benefit their general education peers as well.
Describe a typical day.

On a typical day, my 37 4th and 5th graders come into the classroom, settle down and scoot around the crowded room to get situated. There is enough time for a Language arts lesson, and then we split into 4th and 5th grade groups, each group taking turns working in the hallway while the other group works in the classroom. Two days out of the week, the students go to violin class, some in advanced and some in beginning, so different students are leaving and entering at different times throughout the morning. All of that must be coordinated. After recess, we scoot around again to organize ourselves for literature circles. Again, one of the grade levels is out in the hall and the other is in the classroom. There is no aide in the classroom to help manage the two very distinct groups, but fortunately, it is my 2nd year with my 5th graders, and they are high-achieving students, so they are very independent and know the routine.

What are your biggest challenges and what support is missing?

Getting support when I need it is my biggest challenge. A class of 37 students, of mixed grade levels, let alone abilities, is no easy task to manage on a typical day, but when a student is having a “melt-down” and needs to be removed from the classroom for a time, the challenge becomes acquiring the support needed to maintain a safe and learner-centered environment for all of my students. In addition, there is little grade-level-to-grade-level articulation currently, so I often come into a new year blindly—unaware of the particular needs and challenges of individual students. I have a student with Autism in my class this year, but I received no training in strategies for students with this particular diagnosis. In addition, there is a student who has not yet learned to read, and I initiated the referral for special education services. This was necessary, but the idea that it took until 4th grade worried me. Teachers need support in the form of a process that allows teachers to exchange information that could be helpful in allowing students access to the many services, supports, and interventions that are available.

What successes have you witnessed?

Because of the lack of preparation for my student with autism, it has been an on-the-spot discovery process to maintain balance and to meet her unique needs. She reads at the 12th grade level, so I choose my battles and do not fight with her over nonessentials. I use a calm voice when reminding her of consequences rather than mirroring her energy level in the time of crisis, and it has a calming effect on the outcome. Because the class has been trained to stop and wait, her “melt-downs” and behavior problems have not been as disruptive as they were before. This has been a learning experience for my students, and I have enjoyed the challenge of facilitating her development.

Reflection

The Human Rights Committee would like to thank the teachers who took part in this vignette. As public school teachers, we are not able to choose who ends up in our classrooms. We are responsible for the development of every student who enters our doorways. While these two teachers represent two very different worlds, both effectively meet the individual needs of ALL of their students willingly and with great passion. They face each day with an open mind, and continually hone their craft to better serve their students.

With so much focus on what teachers don't do, and how our institutions fall short of the mark, we felt the need to showcase the nobility of this day-in, day-out, shape-shifting, all-encompassing, meticulously planned but impromptu profession.

It is good for us to remember that whether general or special educators, we ALL serve students with special needs, and this will only become more true in the coming years.

It is our responsibility as a Union to demand the supports we need for our students to be successful. By featuring these stories, we want to spark discussion and promote understanding between members, combating the feeling of isolation that many teachers experience when they believe their challenges to be unique to their classrooms.

What Can You Do?

The Bargaining Team is bargaining the Special Education Article of our contract this year. As part of this process, the Human Rights Committee is hosting a series of Fact Finding Forums to hear the concerns of our teachers in relation to inclusion and Special Education.

We invite all teachers to come, make your voices heard, and collaborate to press for the support that we need.

Wednesday, January 22 at Webster Elementary
and
Tuesday, February 4 at Altadena Elementary

See You There!
The Challenges of Inclusion...An Opinion
Editorial

As a teacher, I know that including students with exceptional/special needs into general education classes is critical to inspiring understanding and compassion for all involved. My journey began several years ago when I was asked by a teacher from the special day class if I would be willing to mainstream a student with special needs in my classroom for a portion of each day. Having grown up without much contact with individuals with special needs other than the occasional encounter while out shopping, I remember feeling nervous and, at times, even afraid, but knew that creating the opportunity for children to learn and grow together could be an incredible experience that would benefit us all.

I agreed, and though, at first we were all on a learning curve, it was a positive experience for all the students, as well as myself.

More recently, we have seen a change in which students with exceptional/special needs are included into general education classrooms. On the surface, this seems to be a step in the right direction. In many instances, it has been a very positive learning experience for both the students and the teacher. But, there are also instances where it has not been a positive experience for anyone involved.

In the past few years that students with exceptional/special needs have been included into general education classes, we have also experienced increased class sizes. At the same time, some programs and resources have been cut or eliminated. Some of the general education classes at my school have had as many as five students with a wide range of exceptional/special needs included. While some of the students included into the general education classes have been well-suited for inclusion, others, due to having severe behavior problems, have not. Children with extremely disruptive behaviors that impede the learning environment and jeopardize the safety of others are not suited for a general education class. It is critical that the rights of ALL students be considered when it comes to providing a safe learning environment.

Most of the general education teachers who have had students with exceptional/special needs included into their classes have not been trained in dealing with severe behavior problems or in how to effectively teach children with exceptional needs. Many are not prepared to take on such a challenge, or even asked if they are comfortable in this environment. This, with the additional workload due to the increased class sizes, the need to attend many IEP meetings and informal meetings with support providers (speech, occupational therapists, psychologists, special education resource teachers, etc), and the additional paperwork required, has been extremely overwhelming and stressful for many teachers.

It is my belief that in order for inclusion to be successful, the following conditions must be present:

- Inclusion class sizes must be smaller with a limited number of included students,
- Support needs to be in place for students who struggle with inclusion,
- The general education teacher must be trained in effective pedagogy and challenges,
- A special education teacher as well as a highly trained aide, should be in the classroom, or available for consult,
- Collaboration time set aside (outside of instructional time and teacher preparation time) for the teachers and classroom aide.

Pasadena Teacher Salary Comparison

Source: LACOE 2012-13 LA County District Salary Survey. Both the Union and the District have agreed that these 19 districts are “comparable districts.”

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<th>Beginning Salary --BA only, no experience</th>
<th>Step 1, Column A</th>
<th>Maximum Column and Step Placement BA+60, MA, 9 yrs experience</th>
<th>Step 10, Column E</th>
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Welcome New Members!

Blair
Omar Tallamantes
Burbank
Rebekah Taylor
Eliot
Carol Williams
Field
Wei Liu
Le Xu Shen
Shu Zhang
Yuan Zhao
Focus Point
Mary Esther Chavez
Kelly Raney
Hamilton
Sarah Jensen
Marshall
Wayne Hagen
Lena Hicks
McKinley
Adrianna Smith
Muir
Alejandra Diaz
PHS
Sangeeta Morar
Rose City /Blair
Kathleen Sander
Sierra Madre ES
Susan Andres
Emily Hawkins
Stacey Torres
Wilson
Michele Raymer

Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Scholarship

CTA recognizes the shortage of ethnic minority teachers in California (2011-12 California Dept. of Education).
Total ethnic minority students - 74.0%
Total ethnic minority teachers - 29.6%
The goal of the Fund is to encourage ethnic minority students to become educators and to promote professional growth for ethnic minority teachers and paraprofessionals.
This scholarship is supported by voluntary contributions from the CTA membership and the CTA Foundation for Teaching and Learning. Scholarships vary each year depending on the amount of contributions and on the financial need of individual applicants.

Scholarship funds must be used for education-related expenses only.
Applicants for the Scholarship must also be:
- An active member of CTA, or
- A dependent child of an active, retired, or deceased CTA member, or
- An active member of Student CTA (SCTA)

In order to receive the scholarship, the active SCTA member must:
- Reside in California
- Maintain membership at the time of disbursement

More information can be found at http://www.cta.org/mlkscholarships

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<td>$87,345</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alhambra</td>
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<td>Bonita</td>
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<td>Duarte</td>
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<td>Monrovia</td>
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<td>La Canada</td>
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<td>Baldwin Park</td>
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<td><strong>Pasadena</strong></td>
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<td>Temple City</td>
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<tr>
<td>Azusa</td>
<td>$81,588</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Gabriel</td>
<td>$79,688</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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Union Code of Conduct
- I will not criticize any union member except to the individual directly.
- If any member is being criticized in my presence, I will confront the criticism and ask that it stop.
- I will not participate in any conversations with management that criticizes or negatively speculates about any union member.
- I will settle my differences with members within my union.
- I will engage in debate, offer others every opportunity for debate, and respect minority viewpoints. I will, however, observe and support the majority mandate of my union.

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