

PAEA BUZZZ

FEBRUARY 2008
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PALO ALTO EDUCATOR'S ASSOCIATION

DID YOU KNOW...

I get many emails requesting clarification of language in the contract or just questions about our jobs. I intend to answer most questions in the BUZZZ on a monthly basis. Please continue to email questions to trionag@earthlink.net.

What are class sizes now? Article IX spells out class size. The class size staffing ratio within each school shall be based on the following:
Grades K - 5 ...One teacher per average of 20 students
Grade 6- 12 ...One teacher per average of 28.5 students
Grade 6 (Core)..One teacher per average of 24.0 students
Grade 7-8 (Math and English)..One teacher per average of 24.0 students
Grade 9 (English and Math) ..One teacher per average of 20.0 students
Grade 10 (English) ..One teacher per average of 24.0 students
Some of these smaller class sizes are paid for by the State's Class Size Reduction program and some are funded by the Palo Alto Parcel Tax. We all know that the district is growing and we are seeing class sizes creep up as more children move into the district. In grades K through 5 when the average class size exceeds 22 remediation measures will apply. The principal and involved staff members discuss the various options. Frequently remediation has meant additional aide time. Occasionally other solutions have been found such as funds for technology or transfer of students.

Do Special Day Classes get prep time? YES

This year preparation release time was negotiated for Special Day Class teachers at the elementary schools. Each teacher will receive release time from class comparable to her/his grade level colleagues for the purpose of preparing lessons. Scott Bowers will be contacting each principal in December to determine the current practice at each site. Following that a plan will be drawn up to provide teachers with student free time that does not conflict with the students IEPs.

Money...

Are you looking for money to send someone to college? CTA has a number of scholarships available to members and their dependent children. You can view these scholarships on the CTA website cta.org. The scholarships range from \$2,500 to \$5,000. You will have to log on to the MyCTA part of the web site. This is as easy as a few clicks. Once logged on you can go to the following page:
www.cta.org/mycta/profession/scholarships/

More Money...

Are you interested in financial planning workshops? STRS (State Teachers Retirement System) usually provides yearly workshops on how to best meet your retirement goals. This year one of the Retirement Workshops will be on March 10th and you can contact Amanda Tran Sakakihara for more information.
BUT what about **other financial goals**. PAEA will hold a financial planning workshop on Thursday March 13th focusing on goals such as college or home buying. Please email Triona Gogarty if you are interested. trionag@earthlink.net

FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP CHAIR, CHERYL TSURUDA

97% of PAUSD teachers are active members of PAEA. Are you one of the 97%? If not, are you aware that dues are being deducted regardless of whether you are an active member and receiving the benefits of membership?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the spring of 1991 the certificated staff in Palo Alto voted to have an "Agency Fee," which means that all certificated staff who work 50% or more must pay association fees. Both active members and agency fee payers pay the same amount, which is determined by the percentage of time you work. Your fees go to PAEA, CTA, and NEA.

The contract gives you three membership options which all cost the same amount of money. The difference is in the level of participation and the benefits.

MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

I Agency Fee Payers receive some benefits of PAEA, CTA, and NEA, but are not designated as members and do not receive the same level of service and benefits as active members. Most importantly, they are not covered by CTA's \$1,000,000 liability policy, are not eligible for CTA and NEA's travel and purchasing discount services and home and auto insurance. They can, however, apply for a rebate of the portion of the dues that are not directly used by PAEA for contract negotiation. If you work more than 50% and do not fill out an application to join PAEA, you automatically become an Agency Fee Payer (by default).

II Those who declare a religious objection to joining an employee association donate the dues amount to a charity. The contract stipulates that you may pay an amount equivalent to your dues to any charity or educational foundation jointly agreed upon by the District and the Association. You need to discuss this with Triona, our PAEA President.

III Active Members show their support for their local governing body, which is made up of elected representatives who bargain with the district during contract negotiations, assist with problems in the workplace, and process grievances. Active members are eligible for all economic benefits, attorney consultation, and the \$1,000,000 worth of liability insurance.

ARE YOU AN ACTIVE MEMBER?

As mentioned earlier, 97% of PAUSD teachers are active members. How can you make sure that you are an active member? If you received a membership card at the beginning of the year (either at the beginning of school year event at Gunn or in your box at your school site) you are an active member.

If you have not received your membership card, you are probably not on the CTA roster. I work on reconciling the roster with the list of PAUSD teaching staff 3 times per year, so you probably have received at least one letter or e-mail from me explaining the different membership options and inviting you to join.

Some reasons you may not be listed as an active member:

- you were hired after school began and have not yet filled out an application to join PAEA
- you returned from a leave and need to fill out a new application
- an error has occurred either locally or at CTA

If you are not currently an active member and would like to be, please contact me and I will send you an application. It is very simple and fast!

TEACHERS WORKING LESS THAN 50%

You are not required to pay association dues. However, many teachers opt to do so in order to be Active Members of PAEA and to receive the benefits of membership. If you work less than 50% and you are not an active member but would like to be, please contact me for a membership application. If you work less than 50% and are having dues deducted now but would like to change your membership status, please let me know.

REMINDER TO ALL TEACHERS

Please be aware that PAEA is not allowed to fund legal assistance for non-members should the need arise, although PAEA can and will continue to work in numerous other ways to support all Palo Alto teachers.

QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

If you have a question or concern about your membership status, please contact me. Email is the easiest and most efficient way to communicate with me. You can reach me at ctsuruda@yahoo.com.

Feb. Rep Council Meeting will be held on Thursday **2/21**, 4:00–6:00 PM at Gunn High School in the Library.

What are Social Security Offsets? The Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset are federal laws which prevent private-sector workers who move into public-sector jobs, like teaching, from collecting some of the Social Security benefits they or their spouses earned prior to entering a public employee retirement system such as STRS. A typical second career teacher can have her or his social security benefit cut by almost \$4000 per year.

The news on the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision is better than ever. There are now three hundred and thirty one co-sponsors in the House and 35 co-sponsors in the Senate for the legislation to repeal these provisions which in effect penalize teachers, firefighters, police and other civil servants in 14 states for their public service.

However at this point the new legislation remains bottled up in the House Ways and Means Committee. NEA is actively working for the passage of this legislation. You can send your story to Patty Taylor at pattysbta@aol.com.

Site Reps for 07-08

Addison- Joanne Geraghty	Barron Park Ashley Emling	Briones Mary Goodkind Joane Soraghan	Children's Hospital Cammy Sunde	Duveneck Mangla Oza Doug Burress	El Carmelo Annette Isaacson
Escondido Richard Garcia Amanda Dungan	Fairmeadow Valerie Sabbag	Greendell Marion Krause	Gunn Gabriela Dominguez Yukie Hikida Judy Niizawa Sarah Stapp	Hays Chris Grierson	Hoover Lonnie Spencer
JLS Jay Brethauer Hayley Dupuy Bobbie Whiteman	Jordan Millie Balsam Mark Allendorf	Nixon Beryl Deremigio Janice Mulholland	Ohlone Cindy Halstead Frankie Murray	Palo Verde Pat Hanley Sheri Cundall	PALY Kay Gibson Eric Bloom Miriam Motoyama Carla Guerard Emily Garrison
Terman Lynn Repetsky Mark Dungan Martin Vetter	Traveling /Music BJ Florsheim	Traveling/PE Karen Dolkas	25 Churchill Open		