

The Health Care Challenge

As you may recall at the end of the spring semester we were faced with a large premium increase from Blue Cross. Over the summer the 22% increase dropped to 15%. It is a sign of the times to note that this causes us to feel somewhat relieved. However in a period of no inflation, Why do we have even a 15% increase?

The Health Care Industry is exempt from federal anti trust laws. This has led to the current situation in Northern California where there are very few companies providing health insurance to large groups such as our district. Competition could help tremendously. A bill was introduced in congress last winter. **H.R. 4626** or the **Health Insurance Industry Fair Competition Act** eliminates the exemption from federal anti trust laws currently enjoyed by insurance companies.

Congress passed this bill and it has moved on to the senate. I am told the senate is where bills go to die. **Don't let this one die.** Please write to your senator and everyone else's if you can. Let them know we need to have real competition between insurance companies. The insurance lobby has spent over \$700 million in the past three years to buy protection for themselves. We need to remind our legislators that they represent us. We vote and so do our families.

You can find your Senators email address at <http://capwiz.com/nea/ca/home>.

Public Education Under Attack

This year many of our biggest challenges are coming from the outside. There are those who blame teachers and schools for the problems of our nation. We are scapegoats.

I recommend Diane Ravitch's book, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*. It is an authoritative and insightful review of the track of public education in the last 100 years with a focus on the past few decades. It provides a wealth of facts in response to the attacks on public education we see and hear in the news on a daily basis.

For those who will not be able to find the time to read yet another book there is a 12 minute interview at <http://act.commondreams.org/go/1524?akid=119.6185.fy-aXs&t=18>

FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP CHAIR, CHERYL TSURUDA

98% of PAUSD teachers are active members of PAEA. Are you one of the 98%? 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, 98% 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.

Did You Know?

PAEA now gives teachers who have successfully completed their National Boards Certification or Certificate of Clinical Competence in the past year, \$300 dollars as a stipend for the effort and expenses involved in this achievement. The checks are distributed at the Annual Chow Down in August. This year's recipients are:

**David Degeller, Diane Gleason, Kathy Hawes, Heather Mellows Angela Merchant.
Congratulations!**

PAUSD now has 65 certified teachers.

What is SB 1381

A group of Palo Alto Teachers headed by Natalie Bivas and Diana Argenti to name just two decided to tackle the problem of California children starting kindergarten before they turn 5. These children are likely to start behind their peers and remain behind despite the best efforts of the schools. Natalie and Diane wrote a letter to Joe Simitian asking him to introduce legislation to move the kindergarten start age back to 5 years by Sept 1st. the letter was signed by 300 plus Palo Alto teachers. Sen. Simitian has done so and SB 1381 will come before the California Senate this August for a vote. Way to go Natalie and Diana!

SALLY SIEGEL AWARD

This year the Palo Alto Educators Association voted to present the Sally Siegel Award to Palo Alto Partners in Education. There is not a single teacher or student in Palo Alto who has not benefited from the efforts of Palo Alto PiE. Since its inception in 2005 PiE has contributed more than \$12 million towards science enrichment, general classroom aides, arts instruction, student guidance, electives enhancement, college and career counseling, and technology mentoring. The support of PiE and the parents and community members behind the name are one of the reasons it is so wonderful to work in Palo Alto. Thank you.

PAEA Scholarship

This past June the PAEA scholarship was awarded to Mary Vericat from Paly.

Calendar Committee

Kevin Rouse, Laura Losier, Faith Stackhouse-Hilal

Joint Benefits Committee:

Rachel Haslanger, David Tomatis, Josh Spira, Triona Gogarty

PAEA Negotiations Team

Teri Baldwin, Martin Vetter, David Tomatis, Triona Gogarty

Sep. Rep Council Meeting will be held on Thursday 9/16 4:00–6:00 PM at Palo Verde in the Library. Hosts Sherry Cundall and Matt Lindner

Stop in to the meeting when it is at your site.

Site Reps for 09-10

Addison- Teri Baldwin	Barron Park Open	Briones Pam Dappen Jessica Gillis	Children's Hospital Kevin Danie	Duveneck Mangla Oza Grace Bunya	El Carmelo Diane McCoy
Escondido Richard Garcia Carrie Widner	Fairmeadow Barbara Carlson Valerie Sabbag	Greendell Marion Krause	Hays Helen Carnes Kevin Rouse	Hoover Lonnie Spencer Peter Lee	Nixon Beryl Deremigio Janice Mulholland
Ohlone Kim Prescott Ashley McCrea	Palo Verde Sheri Cundall Lisa Swagerty	Traveling/Music BJ Floersheim	Traveling/PE Karen Dolkas	25 churchill Room for one or a share	
Terman Lynn Repetsky Mark Dungan Martin Vetter Rachael Shepherd	JLS Hayley Dupuy Andrea Gruner Linda Howard Liz Walton	Jordan Keith Clarke Sarah Pierce Joleen Roach Mary Sano Maria Thomas	Gunn Ken Plough ROOM FOR MORE	PALY Steve Sabbag Magdalena Rivera Tijen Sambul ROOM FOR MORE	

If you would like to be a Representative for your site contact Triona Gogarty. There are once a month meetings for which you receive a stipend. Each site can have more

Please send comments, suggestions or requests for the Buzzz to

Triona Gogarty - trionago@gmail.com

Buzzz is posted online at paeacta.org