



<http://www.fmea.org>

# The FMEA OBSERVER

## Welcome Back to the 2014/2015 School Year!

### Notes from the President By Scott Shulimson

Hello FMEA members, I hope you had a terrific summer break and a good start to the new school year. This is going to be a big year of changes in our district. From the composition of our School Board and district office administration, to the implementation of Common Core and the new Curriculum Support Specialists (CSS), this will be a year of transition. It's also our second year under the state's new funding formula (LCFF). There's a lot of increased funding coming to our district, but it's not clear whether this influx of money will be passed on to employees. As they say, we can hope for the best as we prepare for the worst.

Last year Governor Brown and the state legislature completely reworked

how education funding is distributed in California. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) allowed districts more flexibility, and also began providing more funding to districts with large numbers of students who are English language learners or on free and reduced lunch. This means that districts like ours are receiving significantly more funding than most. The other new component introduced last year was the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). This is the document that is supposed to be built from the input of students, teachers and administration and outlines each district's plan for how they will spend the money provided in the LCFF.

After many years without a salary increase, 2013/14 brought teachers, Classified staff and administrators a 5% raise. This year it's becoming increasingly clear that a raise of that size will not come easily, even though the district is receiving over 10% more funding per student in 2014/15! The district has also maintained its very healthy reserve that grew throughout the recession to the current level of \$9.3M. There are a number of reasons the district claims it cannot afford a substantial salary increase at this time, but the facts above are irrefutable. September 30<sup>th</sup> is the next bargaining meeting, and on that date a complete overview of district finances has been promised. The path ahead will be much clearer at that time.

Many things in our district seem to constantly change, but our School Board has remained very consistent. However, this year marks the

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*Here's a sneak peek at what's inside this issue:*

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departure of at least two Board members. Buu Thai and Maya Esparza will not seek reelection this November. In fact, Rudy Rodriguez is the only incumbent seeking reelection at this time (George Sanchez and John Lindner's terms aren't up until 2016). In all, there are four candidates vying for three Board seats this fall. FMEA Rep Council has endorsed parent Tina Castillo and incumbent Rudy Rodriguez. There will be precinct walks announced shortly for all of those interested in helping with the campaigns.

With the shift to Common Core, along with the myriad of other changes taking place, this really is the beginning of a new era in our district, in California and in education nation-wide. It is more important than ever that those in charge of our district hear our voices and know the impact of their decisions, the places the district is falling short, and the changes that need to be made to better serve the students of Franklin-McKinley. Your voice and your input are crucial in redirecting our district's path when we are being pushed the wrong way. Let your Site Rep or me know when there are problems, when there are untapped resources, when the choices made at the top aren't working in the classroom. Communication is the key, so please keep in touch. Thanks for all you do!

As always, don't hesitate to get in touch with me with your ideas, questions or concerns.

Sincerely,  
Scott Shulimson

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### CTA Odds & Ends

CTA is offering a School Site Council training on Thursday, October 16 from 4:00-5:30 at Mt. Hamilton CTA, located at 888 S Capitol Ave. This will be a very informative training and all are invited.

For all newly hired teachers, during the first 120 days of employment you have the ability to join the CTA endorsed disability program, The Standard, without having to disclose pre-existing conditions. Here's the number for anyone interested. 800-522-0406.

### Board Briefs

#### *August 12<sup>th</sup>*

- The Board was given a budget update which was focused on a couple of recent disappointments including increased CalSTRS costs and a lowering of 2015/16 projected funding.
- The Board approved contracts at many sites for partnerships with various instructional and recreational groups.

#### *August 26<sup>th</sup>*

- The San Jose PD presented updates on "Active Shooter Protocols."
- Sites reported out about the success of their summer school programs.
- The Board certified that all students have textbooks per the Williams requirement.
- Superintendent goals were reviewed.

#### *September 9<sup>th</sup>*

- Dr. Porter's contract was extended through June 2018.
- The district's financial Unaudited Actuals were released showing that the district has maintained its reserve of over \$9M.

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### FMEA Email List

If you don't receive FMEA Update emails please contact Scott Shulimson at [fmeapresident@yahoo.com](mailto:fmeapresident@yahoo.com) from a non-district email address. If you prefer to be blind copied on FMEA emails indicate this.

## Letter to the Editor

### ***Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See?***

(I see administrators neglecting responsibility)

*Below are a series of transcripts between FMEA colleagues. They reveal some of the district's common practices in the most underprivileged of our schools. The list of communications is not complete because many worry their situation will be recognized and they do not want to face retribution. However, the following narrative is complete enough for us to "See."*

#### **September 4th**

How come so many classes still have substitute teachers? I know this is not a contractual issue, but isn't it an ethical issue? When the district sees 47 students entering 5th grade back in June, shouldn't they do something to make sure that those students all begin the year with a teacher - or at least are not still in a room with a sub the third week of school?

#### **September 8th**

I just want to update you regarding the sub start and other "start" type situations at school. We still have a classroom being run by a sub and I do not think the job is posted yet. I think it will be a 4/5 combo position (the district knew about these numbers since June).

Also, a group of students were moved from one school to another school. I am curious why the district could not send out an email simply to alert the teachers that we will be getting new students in our classrooms on Monday morning and allow the teachers to at least make sure we have enough desks and chairs for the incoming students. For example, I got three new students at 8:40 this morning (we start school at 8:15) and I had no idea they were coming and I did not even have enough desks in my room to accommodate them. A simple email to alert the teachers would be helpful. The principal said that he/she had no idea we were getting these students until Sunday evening. The district also knew about the numbers at this site since June.

#### **September 11th**

It looks like the higher ups can pass the buck and say the principal asked for only one teacher; but if they are responsible for staffing then they are responsible. The principal doesn't do his/her work in a vacuum. Is there pressure on him/her to keep staffing down? Are there incentives for administrators to not hire too many teachers? How can anyone in charge of staffing ratios, interviews and appointments, following protocols for hiring all that, just say that it is the principal's call? Is that not HR's job? And if not, why not? If he/she had requested too many teachers, HR would have called him/her on it right away. They act slow and conservative because ours is a "barrio" school; this is de facto racism and class-ism in our neighborhood. And who better to implement it than a Latino and Latina. They "work" this way because they know they can get away with it. Now we haven't even discussed how this has impacted the teachers who have had to carry the extra load in the absence of regular teachers. Both \*\*\*\*\* and \*\*\*\*\* have had to prepare lesson plans for those classes and they do so because they care about the kids and they are decent people. There is real friction and stress because of HR's and the principal's negligence (and Supe). I can go on but I think I have made my point.

As for there being a combo, they couldn't possibly allow a class to have a small class size. \*\*\*\*\* mentions that the principal said the district doesn't want combos but some schools get them too often. Off the top of my head--\*\*\*\*\* , \*\*\*\*\* , \*\*\*\*\* , and myself--have all done combos within the last five years. One year I did a 3/4 combo with 4 third graders.

## **September 12th**

Another school that also serves an extremely underprivileged neighborhood, also had 40-something students assigned to one 6th grade class.

What caused that to happen? Was that also the principal or was it a choice the district made? As a result of that choice seven disadvantaged 6th graders got bounced around between that school and this school.

## **September 15th**

\*\*\*\*\*, in transportation, told me that students cannot be asked to miss instructional time for the bus and the bus policy is to wait 5 minutes after students are released before they leave. I do not understand what is happening - they might just have a schedule that is stressful and overbooked - but the bus keeps leaving students behind. I released my bus student at exactly 2:35 and by the time he walked to the office, the bus was leaving and he missed it. The concern over missing the bus preoccupies these students for the entire second half of the day. I wonder if one of the big wigs could help get to the bottom of what's going on.

It does not seem right for the bus to leave the students behind. It's a dangerous walk from school. The whole situation is creating a lot of stress for the students, the teachers, and the office staff. Anything you could do to help resolve this would really be appreciated.

It seems to me that all of this is connected to placing too many students in one class in June and then not doing anything to resolve it until a couple weeks into the school year.

As of **September 17<sup>th</sup>**, there is still a classroom at school that is operating with a substitute. The SEAL coach is unable to leave her classroom at school because the district has not hired her replacement. Who is responsible for hiring the teachers? Who picks up the pieces when the district fails? Like Brown Bear, these are things we "See." What do you see? We encourage you to observe and report.

*The author of this letter chose to remain anonymous*

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**FMEA's**  
**Beginning-Of-The-Year**  
**Oktoberfest Party!!!**  
**Thursday, October 9<sup>th</sup>**  
**3:30-6:00pm At Kelley Park**  
*See page 5 for more info*



## Grievance Grove



- There were a number of class-size grievances though nearly all appear to have been resolved.
- An arbitration was filed regarding a teacher disciplined inappropriately.
- An arbitration was filed over a safety issue at Ramblewood.

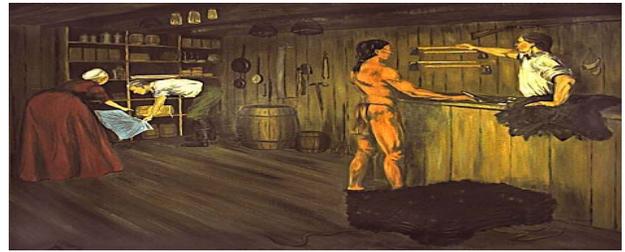
## Contract Corner

### *4.83 (Adjunct Duties)*

“At the beginning of the school year, the principal will hold a meeting with staff to discuss the adjunct duties. *Unit members shall be given a list of adjunct duties for which they can sign up.* In the event that a unit member does not sign up for 30 hours of adjunct duties, such duties may be assigned to him/her by the principal.”

*FMEA’s Beginning-Of-The-Year-Party is coming up on October 9<sup>th</sup> at Kelley Park from 3:30-6pm. There will be plenty of food, drinks and a friendly volleyball game. We will be at the Twin Oaks picnic grounds, which is on the grass near the amphitheater. FMEA will cover the cost of parking for the first 30 people who decide to attend so if you plan to attend and want a free parking pass contact Scott Shulimson or your Site Rep. It’s going to be a great day in the park so don’t miss it!*

## Trading Post



**Guidelines for Ads:** Ad service is provided as a convenience for FMEA members and our parent community. Ads may be run two times.

*Please submit ads to [lkpitino@hotmail.com](mailto:lkpitino@hotmail.com)*

## FMEA Fall Calendar

September 30 <sup>th</sup>	Bargaining
October 6 <sup>th</sup>	Rep Council
October 9 <sup>th</sup>	FMEA Party
October 13 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup>	Vacation
October 20 <sup>th</sup>	Bargaining
November 4 <sup>th</sup>	Election Day
November 11 <sup>th</sup>	Veterans Day
November 12 <sup>th</sup>	Bargaining
November 17 <sup>th</sup>	Bargaining
November 17 <sup>th</sup>	Rep Council

## Minority Incentive Grants

CTA is offering Minority Incentive Grants for their winter conferences, which include the Good Teaching, Equity And Human Rights and GLBT conferences. All applications are due November 9<sup>th</sup> except for the GLBT conference which has a deadline of September 30<sup>th</sup>. All information can be found under the professional development tab on [cta.org](http://cta.org).

**Here is an excerpt from an interesting article discussing the correlation between the decline of unions and the decline of the middle class. For the complete article, please go to the following website.**

<http://www.americanprogressaction.org/issues/labor/news/2013/09/17/74363/latest-census-data-underscore-how-important-unions-are-for-the-middle-class/>

Latest Census Data Underscore How Important Unions Are for the Middle Class

By David Madland and Keith Miller (September 17, 2013)

The middle class remained historically weak last year, according to Census Bureau numbers released today, as it continued to feel the effects of a decades-long slide driven in part by the decline in union membership across the country. Last year, the middle class's share of the nation's total income remained stagnant at its lowest point since these data were first reported: The middle 60 percent of households took home only 45.7 percent of the nation's income in 2012, the same percent it took home in 2011 and well below the 53.2 percent it used to take home in 1968.

Driving this decline is a stagnation of middle-class incomes that has occurred at the same time that the nation's highest earners have seen their incomes grow dramatically. Between 1967 and 2012, the average income of the top 5 percent grew by 88.2 percent in real terms, or three times the 26.6 percent growth experienced by the middle 60 percent. Middle-class incomes grew only slowly in the 1970s and 1980s but have now been in decline for some time, with the median household income in 2012 below the level it was in 1989. There are a number of reasons for this unequal growth, including increased globalization that has undermined middle-class wages and rising returns to higher education that have disproportionately grown the pay of those at the very top.

Among the most overlooked of these factors, however, has been the decline of labor unions. As Figure 1 shows, the fall in labor-union participation since the late 1960s is highly correlated with the decline in the share of the nation's total income going to the middle class.

Between 1967 and 2012, nationwide union membership fell from 28.3 percent of all workers to a low of 11.3 percent, with significant drops observed in all 50 states. This trend has been mirrored by the steady decline in the share of the nation's income going to the middle 60 percent of households, which fell from 52.3 percent to 45.7 percent over the same time period. According to the newly released Census figures, neither measure showed any signs of reversing these troubling trends last year. Between 2011 and 2012, union membership declined even further, by 0.6 percentage points, while the middle class's share of national income remained stagnant at 45.7 percent, its lowest level since data were first reported.

Meanwhile, the share of national income going to the top 5 percent has only increased. Last year, it stood at 22.3 percent, up from 17.2 percent in 1967. Last year's measure equals the second-highest level recorded since the Census Bureau began keeping track of the figure 45 years ago.

These figures make clear that if the middle class is to get back on its feet and become the engine of economic growth it once was, unions will have to play an important role in its revival. By standing up for middle-class interests both in the workplace and in the political arena, unions help grow the ranks of the middle class and ensure that all working families' voices are heard.

The most direct manner in which unions work to strengthen the middle class is by advocating on behalf of their members for fair pay, access to essential benefits, and basic workplace protections. Workers who form a union are able to negotiate with their employers on a more even playing field and are more likely to have their concerns and suggestions recognized. Indeed, research has repeatedly shown that being in a union substantially increases workers' wages and significantly improves workers' likelihood of having pensions and health care coverage. And when union density is sufficiently high in an area, the benefits that unions bargain for can help set standards for other employers, which can benefit nonunion workers as well.

Unions also work to bolster the middle class via the political process by encouraging greater worker participation in politics and by advocating for economic programs that help working families get ahead. Unions help increase voter participation by enlisting members in registration and "get out the vote" efforts, and they have fought in the past to defend programs essential to the middle class, such as Social Security, the minimum wage, and most recently, the Affordable Care Act. By helping workers navigate the political process and by lobbying on their behalf, unions help ensure that democracy works for the middle class.

<http://www.americanprogressaction.org/issues/labor/news/2013/09/17/74363/latest-census-data-underscore-how-important-unions-are-for-the-middle-class/>



# Important Contacts

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