



Teachers Association of Long Beach, CTA/NEA

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UPDATE

February 5, 2009

SAVE THE DATE...

MARCH 13 DAY OF ACTION

Friday, March 13, will be a statewide DAY of ACTION to protest cuts to education. Tentatively billed as "Pink Friday" to protest what are likely to be thousands of pink slips (layoff notices) issued to CTA members across the state. We need strong participation from every member in every school to send a message about the importance of our local schools, and to stand in unity with all CTA members statewide who get a pink slip. Look for more details in upcoming UPDATES.

At this writing (February 5), we are still waiting for a state budget and Federal legislation that will define the depth of local cuts. As a part of our ongoing effort to keep members up to date, we have our most recent Frequently Asked Questions on the reverse. Please read it, attend TALB site visits and meetings, participate in the March 13 Action, and call us at TALB if you have questions.

FEBRUARY 18 RETIREMENT PRE-PLANNING WORKSHOP

Thinking about retirement soon? TALB will sponsor a workshop designed to provide members with information on STRS, Social Security, Medicare, and other issues that need consideration prior to retirement. The workshop will be WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, (**PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE**) from 4:15 to 6:00 p.m. at Longfellow Elementary, 3800 Olive Ave, near Bixby Rd and Olive. Call the TALB office at 562-426-6433 to RSVP so we can be sure to have adequate materials for all attendees.

INCOME PROTECTION OPEN ENROLLMENT SIGN UP NOW -- NO MEDICAL SCREENING

CTA's endorsed Life and Disability Insurance Carrier, The Standard, will be conducting an open enrollment beginning in March. Nearly two thousand TALB members are already signed up. The plan helps TALB members every year by providing income protection in the case of a disability, illness, or maternity leave for health reasons. The coverage kicks in if your sick leave runs out. In these challenging economic times, this coverage provides a very inexpensive safety net. You will receive a mailing from the Standard in early March explaining the coverage and how to sign-up. There will also be an open house on Wednesday March 4th from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at TALB, with pizza and drinks, where you can talk to Lane McQuin, the Standard Rep, about this program and sign-up. This is a rare "open enrollment", meaning if at least 223 TALB members sign-up, there is no health screening. Don't miss your chance to sign-up in March. Please RSVP to Ingrid for the Open-house at 562-426-6433 xt 223.

WINE AND BASEBALL... SAVE THE DATES!

"Connoisseur" Wine Tasting Party. Friday March 6, from 4:00PM to 6:00PM. Taste five award winning California wines and indulge in delicious appetizers for only \$15 per person. Come join the fun and let your inner wine snob out for a couple of hours.

TALB Nights at Angel Stadium. See either the Dodgers play the Angels on June 20th or see the Angels take on the Chicago White Sox on May 27th. Tickets are limited so call ASAP!

For reservations or for more information call Eric at the TALB office.

-OVER-

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS...

BUDGETS, BARGAINING, AND BENEFITS

Here are some of the more frequent questions that we get at sites, via telephone calls, and via email.

DO WE KNOW HOW DEEP OUR LOCAL CUTS WILL BE? *We are all waiting for a final state budget and what, if any, help comes from pending federal legislation. The County Office of Education is telling school districts to assume a general fund cut of 4.57% for this year, and an additional 2.52% cut for next year. The cut for this year is problematic since the school year is already half over, meaning the cuts will come from reserves and/or future expenses.*

WILL THERE BE LAYOFFS IN LONG BEACH? *Most Districts are bracing for layoffs. Probationary and Permanent teachers are required by law to receive a layoff notice (pink slip) by March 15. TALB has been working with the District to mitigate layoffs and we will know where things stand within the next few weeks.*

WILL THERE BE CUTS TO DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION? *TALB continues to advocate keeping cuts as far away from the classroom as possible. Unfortunately, cuts in administrative jobs will not necessarily mitigate cuts to classroom teachers since most administrators have seniority that allows them to bump back in to the bargaining unit resulting in the layoff of a less senior teacher.*

WILL THE DISTRICT CUT MY HEALTH BENEFITS? *To date, the District has made no proposal to cut benefits. The TALB Bargaining Team plans to work with the District to maintain our quality benefits. Of course, if the District makes a proposal to cut benefits we will let you know immediately. We know from our recent surveys that protecting health care in these difficult times is of the highest importance for TALB members.*

CAN'T WE JUST STOP BARGAINING WITH THE DISTRICT TO PROTECT OUR BENEFITS? *If the District is indeed determined they want to go after benefits, they obviously won't agree to just end negotiations. Bargaining includes two parties – TALB and the District. Both parties are obligated to bargain in "good faith" and one party or the other can't simply walk away. From a practical standpoint, ending negotiations for this year will not accomplish anything since we have already protected our benefits at least through next January. And the District is unlikely to agree to wrap up negotiations for next year until the state budget situation is clear or without an agreement on the proposal to cut the school year by five days. Unfortunately, there is no simple bargaining maneuver that will save benefits or salaries...if those basics are threatened it will only be our solidarity and organizing that protects us.*

WILL THE DISTRICT SHORTEN THE SCHOOL YEAR BY FIVE DAYS? *This is a proposal by the Governor that would shorten the school year by five-days, and result in about a 3% pay cut for TALB members. It may or may not be in the final state budget agreement. The District may or may not propose to implement it. Our recent surveys indicate that our members will oppose a cut in salary...but it has not been proposed by the District at this point. This may be an issue we will need to organize around in the future.*

WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF THE TALB SURVEYS? *The TALB budget surveys completed in December and January overwhelmingly indicated that protection of health benefits and salaries as the highest priorities for TALB members.*

SHOULD WE TAKE A PAY CUT OR CUT OUR BENEFITS TO SAVE JOBS? *We have been asked this question by members, however this is not an issue at this point and the District has not proposed anything of this nature. But the question often comes up in difficult economic times. At worst, management will pose this as a Hobson's choice that can divide employees and destroy morale. It takes years to recover from cuts to benefits and salaries and such cuts only serve to cover up the public's failure to adequately fund schools.*

IF CUTS ARE PROPOSED, CAN WE PROTECT OUR BENEFITS AND SALARIES? *Yes we can. We will need to be united. We will need to be organized. And, we will need to be persistent.*

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP? *Participate in Pink Friday on March 13, and in future actions. Stay informed...and stay united!*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK THE TALB WEBSITE AT WWW.TALB.ORG
OR CALL US AT 562-426-6433**