
March 2015

Etiwanda Teachers Association

Message from the Vice President

Greetings dedicated Etiwanda Teachers,

Thank you to everyone who so generously donated sick days to help a fellow teacher in need. We were notified that another teacher needs our help and support through the Catastrophic Leave Bank. We are in need of at least 10 more days to help our teacher out. The form is found on the Etiwanda Teachers Association Web Site. Send the completed form to Michelle Carney at Etiwanda Colony. Thank you so much!

Exciting news was released this past week. The California State Board of Education approved the suspension of the state's accountability measurement system, the Academic Performance Index (API) for the 2014-2015 school year. Tom Torlakson, our state Superintendent of Education, announced this suspension so that the state can develop a more comprehensive accountability system based on multiple measurements rather than a single index. He wants a broad range of measures that address California's unique needs and student populations and give a more comprehensive view of progress and college readiness.

Even though we won't get an API score, the results of this year's testing will be reported to the district, teachers, and parents per a conversation Jennifer Uhalley, your ETA President had with Dr. Shawn Judson this past week.

Read on to get details about the informative presentations from our March Site Rep Meeting.

On behalf of the ETA Board, we wish all of you a well-deserved Spring Break. Make sure to take time and spend that much needed time with your loved ones and take time for yourself. YOU DESERVE IT!



Upcoming Events

ALL Site Rep meeting @ DCIS @ 3:30

April 14, 2015

May 12, 2015

Snacks and water provide

School Board Meetings

The following are the dates of our school board meetings. We invite ALL teachers to attend at least one board meeting to show support for the board and for Etiwanda Teachers. Below is a suggested schedule, BUT PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ATTEND ANY MEETING!

April 2nd: Preschool - 2nd Grade
and PDC and Library Staffs

April 16th: 3rd Grade - 5th Grade
and special ed/speech/sdc and PE

May 14th: Intermediate School Personnel

Again...if the date doesn't work for you, plan on attending one that does. I apologize if any group was not listed....we tried to include ALL!

Negotiations

Mark your calendars for March 16th and 18th and show your support of our Negotiations Team by wearing purple. The team is working hard representing ALL the teachers of Etiwanda. Your input on surveys and giving your site rep feedback, helps keep the team in touch with what teachers want!

Insurance Update

At our March Site Rep Meeting, Carl gave us the following informational update for rising insurance costs for the 2015-2016 school year.

Dental...No increase...we already have the best plan available

Vision...No increase....and they are looking at improving the current plan.

Life Insurance.....No increase...did you know you have a \$50,000 policy?

Kaiser.....1.5% increase on plan with NO chiropractic

Kaiser.....2.5% increase on plan WITH chiropractic

Anthem Blue Cross HMO.....7.5% increase

Anthem Blue Cross PPO.....5% increase *(most expensive plan)

Communication Option

Mary Carol Hunt and Chris Sabala from Grapeland found a great way to communicate with parents and with fellow teachers. Through the website Remind, (formerly remind101) they created a group for our site reps so that they can receive updates without using the district email. For those who were unable to attend the meeting, I will send you the information on how to get added to the list.

For classroom application, you can go to Remind and set up your own "classroom" to push out reminders to your parents. It is easy and has many suggestions on how to use this website and is an effective way to communicate. Thank you Mary Carol and Christine for sharing this with us.

Teacher Transfer Assignments should be out by April 10th.

Per Terry

Questions and Answers

Taken from site concerns voiced and written down at the February Site Rep Meeting

1. **Subs are allowed to check a box to indicate that they do not wish to be called the day of an absence. Could this be one of the reasons why we have a sub shortage? Would it be possible to remove this feature?** Substitute teachers have the option of making themselves unavailable by putting up a "do not disturb" sign or just not answer the phone. So there is no box to check or uncheck. Since this has become an issue state wide, different organizations are looking into revising current Education Code to allow retired teachers to sub, without having to wait the required 6 months after retiring.
2. **We are experiencing an extra-long bus duty time as buses sometimes are not arriving at our site to pick up students until after 3:15. Can this issue be addressed please?** The district was made aware of this issue prior to our meeting and have been working on it with Kristin, Doug, Jay, Brad, Laura and the staff at Colony. It was a short term issue to meet the needs of a student while alternate options were being explored. Thank you to the Colony Staff for their patience.
3. **Since a new law requires teachers to stay until an IEP meeting has concluded, and cannot be excused, are subs going to be made available to cover my classroom if an IEP meeting extends into the beginning of the school day?** First, this is not a new law, but teachers now need to stay until the end of the meeting for us to be in compliance. However, in the initial packet that is sent home to parents, there is a form that may be filled out **PRIOR** to the meeting that excuses the teacher, in writing.

We need to raise awareness of this form so that it can be put in a place where parents can sign and respond before the IEP and teachers may be excused to get back to their class after they have given the necessary information needed to best meet the needs of their student.

4. **At the middle school, teachers are being required to cover their partner teacher's class if an IEP goes beyond his/her prep period. Is this considered one of the attached prep periods by administration? This also leaves the 10 minute homeroom class unsupervised.** First, at the middle school, the same form reference above is available. Second, an IEP may be paused for 10 minutes, but there should be school personnel who can supervise those students if notified ahead of time to the need. Finally if administration asks a teacher to cover a class or hold an IEP meeting during their prep time, it would be considered one of the administrator's prep period until Article IX-Unit Members Work Hours and Responsibilities, "G".
5. **When an SDC teacher was out, their sub was pulled requiring students to be split into the general education classrooms. Is there any way that SDC subs can be exempt from being pulled?** If the district is experience a sub shortage, schools are notified if they need to pull a sub to go to another school, to make sure that the shortage does not impact one school more than another one. As for which sub is pulled, it is a site by site decision. Terry will also share this concern with the principals at their next meeting.
6. **We used to have a plan or schedule for school improvements. Is this something that we will see again as our schools age and need more than just touch up paint?** We used to have a Deferred Maintenance Plan that went away in 2009-2010 school year due to budget cuts. 3% of our budget must now go into routine maintenance and it is being looked into again, and a plan is in the works.

Teachers are being encourage to attend the Board Meetings and maybe even addressing the School Board with concerns. Some sites are collectively writing a letter to the School Board so that their voices may be heard. The survey results made it pretty clear how the teachers of Etiwanda are feeling. We need to continue to relay our message and make our voices be heard.

You have a voice!

Good Teaching Conference

By Sally Melvin and Bethany Phelps

Thank you to Sally and Bethany for the wonderful presentation on what they learned over the two day conference in San Jose. First, teachers all love FREE things. Go to <http://www.teachertreasures.com> and sign up for freebies. The first conference on Common Core writing reinforced the need for graphic organizers and teaching good writing habits. Teacher tip: once a graphic organizer is complete, cut it apart and glue each part to its own piece of paper, leaving plenty of room for additions and elaboration.

“Teaching Geek with Common Core Chic” showed great teacher tools at classtool.net. For \$8.99/month “The World’s Best Way to Make Comics” is available. Try the free trial first, but the money is good for up to 200 students.

At MartinPearlPublishing.com they will give teachers a 55% discount on books that are high quality and use struggling CA. artist to illustrate. They also have a link for aspiring writers of children’s books on how to get started.

At “Drawing Out The Best in Common Core K-6”, the ladies listened to an interactive presentation by Jon Pearson on how to use drawing to brain storm, create memory tools, literacy tools and reinforce higher level thinking. Drawing pulls on the inventive mind and can often spark greater memory retention in children. Taking notes using pictures and repetition can make the content come alive.

In “8 Great Strategies to Teach Primary Writing for the Common Core”, the ladies shared how to expand sentences into powerful sentences. Ideas and samples for the handouts will be posted to the U-drive for visuals. Organizers can be enlarged on the poster maker, with students using post it notes to answer questions and make it more interactive. See Learningheadquarters.com for resources as well.

“Actively Engaging Learners with Standards Based Songs” showed how to bring music/song into the science environment to engage the learners. Musicallyaligned.com is the website to view for this wonderful resource.

Thank you Sally and Bethany for the well organized and detailed power point presentation on what the Good Teaching Conference had to offer. Your energy and enthusiasm for what you learned motivated me to use the Jon Pearson drawing the very next day!

We can’t wait to hear from the teachers who attended the Good Teaching Conference in South CA at our next month’s meeting! It’s the perfect way to reenergize ourselves, especially at the end of the year when our bag of tricks is getting old.

Chromebook Advice

"California Educator" March 2015

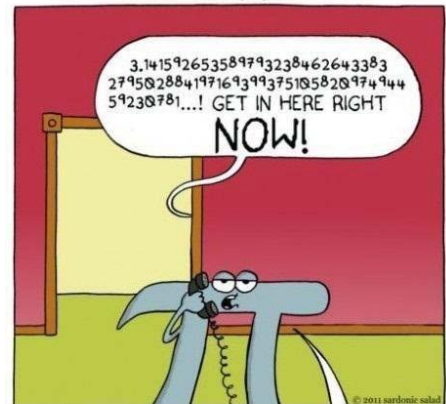
We all have had a HUGE learning curve this year with all of the technology. My students are faring far better than I am. Some days I am not smarter than a 5th grader. I found this great 1 page tech tips that I found helpful and wanted to share.....

1. **Take and edit screen shots.** Just press **CTRL** then press the **Window Switch Key (F5)**. When you see the screen flicker, your screen shot has been taken. It will be saved into your Downloads folder.
2. **Keep files in the cloud.** Chromebooks internal hard drive fills up fast, but you have **100 GB** of cloud storage. I love that it automatically saves to the cloud too if you are in Google Docs.
3. **Too many windows open?** Hit **CTRL-M** once to minimize your current window, or keep hitting **CTRL-M** to minimize ALL windows, till you see the desktop.
4. **Use your Chromebook offline.** Head to drive.google.com and click **MORE** on the left-hand side of the screen. Select **OFFLINE DOCS** and install the app. Once installed, return to **DRIVE** and click the **GOOGLE DRIVE** icon. On the right hand side of the **OFFLINE DOCS** page will be a blue button that says **ENABLE OFFLINE**.
5. **Having trouble seeing?** If you are like me, the eyes don't read the small print as easily as before. To zoom in, or make the print larger, hit **CTRL +** (plus key) combination. If you need to return the page to regular size use **CTRL-** (minus key).

Have any great ideas or websites that you have found to make your life easier? Please share... I am only a click away!

Thanks for reading until the end. Etiwanda Teachers are the most dedicated and amazing group of individuals I have ever worked with. While other districts are either struggling or not even addressing Common Core, Etiwanda Teachers are preparing their students for the 21st Century Classroom! Please know how much you are valued and appreciate!

(Teacher Appreciation Week is coming soon too!)



I'VE GOT TO GO. MY MOM ONLY USES MY FULL NAME WHEN I'M IN BIG TROUBLE.

Respectfully submitted on March 14, 2015 by Julee Barry