



Your Union, Your Voice Your Newsletter

Hesperia Teachers Association

September 2015

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DO

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He who opens a school door, closes a prison. ~Victor Hugo.

President's Message

Welcome back to a new and exciting school year.

We have seen many changes in the last couple of years that bring to us new challenges but give us great opportunities we have not had in the past. We have a new arrangement of standards that gives us the gift of time to teach and the choice of curriculum. We are professionals in education and have been given the opportunity to exercise our professional judgment to do what we know is right for our students.

Few people have the joy of being able to experience what we do and see the fruits of our work. Our profession touches and shapes the lives of every person out there. We are the foundation and stepping-stones for every profession. We inspire confidence and trust in every life we touch. This is why our profession has one of the highest rated levels of confidence on any issues...nearly 70%... and if you are talking educational issues it is over 90%...

Our voice is powerful!

Cypress

James Fogo
Carolyn Stayton

Hesperia High School

Ellen Stephen
Devon Bostock
Jeremy Topete
Stephanie Seitz

Hesperia Junior High

Cheryl Franks
Debbie Herndon

Hollyvale

Kathy Brawthen

Joshua Circle

Cheryl Cope

Juniper

Cynthia Greenlee

Kingston

Todd O'Neal

Krystal

Jamie Barnhardt

Lime

Penny Hale
Christine Robinson

Maple

Virginia Marquez

Mesa Grande

Kelly Denny

Mesquite Trails

Louise Oliekan

Mission Crest

Susana Castillo
Teri Jo Muzquiz

Mojave

Evlyn Puentes

Oak Hills

Steve Trudeau

Sean Shea

Jim Kutch

Ron Clabo

Mike Stayton

Ranchero

Irma Campos

James Carter

Shadow Ridge

Kelly Ford

Sulfana

Jeremy Topete

Jim Kutch

Brett Simmons

Topaz

Marcia Rhodes
Alysia Van

Welcome Back to Good News

- As most of you know, we were given the good news of an offer of an additional 3% raise over the summer. As is the case with all issues involving salary/benefits, in order to move forward with the offer we needed to have a vote of membership with a majority of members voting yes. It is important for membership to understand that in order for any item regarding money to pass, it is required that at least 51% of membership vote yes. It is not a majority of members who vote. A non-vote is counted as a "no" vote. Please keep this in mind as issues are brought forward in the future.
- The raise was ratified by membership and now awaits board approval. At this time we do not anticipate any reason for the board to not approve our raise. The board meeting is on September 14, 2015 at 6 pm in the annex.
- As soon as the new salary schedule is approved, it will be posted on our website www.hesperiateachers.com
- Click on the link for the contract in order to find the new salary schedule.
- In the meantime, take a few minutes to read over the contract and see if there is anything that surprises you or that you think should be changed. The negotiations team will be sending out a survey in the near future where you will have a chance to give input.

Hesperia Days Parade!!!

Sept 19th at 9:00am



Come walk with H.T.A wearing your best smile and your school colors.

- Bring your family.
- Bring signs with your school name to show your spirit.
- Be ready to have lots of fun.
- Contact your site rep for more information.
- **Can't wait to see you there!**

What has my Union Done for me Lately?

While it is only the beginning of school, HTA leadership has been busy. HTA hosted a well-attended general meeting/lunch on Friday, August 7th immediately after the all-district in-service. Over 300 teachers enjoyed a Subway lunch.

On Tuesday, August 18th, new teachers were invited to learn and discuss how to navigate the years as a probationary teacher before being granted permanent status.

Then on Tuesday, September 1st HTA hosted a meeting for the high desert on student loan forgiveness. Sean Mabey of the NEA Membership Benefits Department provided the presentation. Sean presented to a full house of nearly 300 high desert teachers an abundance of information regarding student loans and potential forgiveness. The presentation can be found on our website www.hesperiateachers.com under the tab "legislation."

We also helped take care of some AC issues at a couple of sites, pushed to have some class size issues addressed, clarified that teacher footwear dress code items were actually recommendations and not mandates, and addressed other situations as they arose.

All of these events are part of the ways that HTA leadership works to advocate for members. However, it is important that all membership recognizes that HTA leadership is only a small part of HTA. The power in our association comes from the 1000 members... you are HTA.

Leadership works hard to advocate for membership by attending board meetings, meeting with board members and administration, staying on top of legislation and ed. code and advocating for work conditions that will support our members as they support our students. We understand that teachers' work conditions are our students' learning conditions and that issues such as class size are about doing what is best for all of us; teachers, students, and ultimately our community as we send our graduates out to conquer the world.

But we can't do it alone.

When we are seen as a small group fighting for the masses, our influence diminishes.... Our voice is small. Currently things are quiet and our relationship with administration is positive. But we know that this can change quickly and we need to be ready. We need to be seen by administration, the school board and our community as what we are; a force with influence, credibility and the power to do what we know needs to be done to give our students the best education possible. We need to ensure that we can attract and retain quality teachers so that our students are well prepared for their futures and we can only do this if we can offer competitive salary, benefits and work conditions.

How can you help?

We are 1000 members strong; and we need to show this. If we only show up en masse during a crisis, the ability for leadership to get things done is greatly diminished. For example, 3-4 members of HTA Leadership are at every board meeting so that we can stay on top of what is happening and to show that we are paying attention. While our presence helps, that is less than 1% of membership. When decisions are made that affect

membership such as the issue with portables not being ready, it is difficult to have influence when it appears to those that make the decisions see that less than 1% of membership care. There are ten regular board meetings scheduled for the rest of the year. If each member simply showed up to one meeting a year we would average 100 members at a meeting. Just one evening a year would make a huge difference especially if we show up wearing HTA shirts or at least HTA colors. If members could commit to just 2 meetings a year, we would average 200 members at a meeting, which would completely fill the room. You don't have to speak at the microphone. Simply be present; maybe chat with a board member at a break. Let them know what you feel is best for our students. Our power is in our unity.

Your voice. Your power. Your union.

In the meantime....

Your site rep was given the information to share with you about our Hesperia Days event. This is a chance for us to connect with our community and build those positive relationships so that we will have their support when we need it. We strongly urge you to join us for this very fun day. For those of you already participating in the 5K walk, please stick around and join us in the parade. For the rest of us, we are going to be a "Walking Float" of Hesperia Teachers having fun and engaging our community. We will have treats to hand out to the children. Please show up wearing your school shirt to show the community that we care about our kids. Bring your family and make it a great, positive day!

After the parade, we are looking for volunteers to work in our booth at Hesperia lakes. We will be giving out books to children, face painting and interacting with our community in a fun and positive way. It will be a great day and we look forward to seeing as many as you out there as we can.

Dates to Remember

September 14

School Board Regular Meeting @ 6 pm

September 19

Hesperia Days Parade and Event

October 2

HTA Social @ Marie Callendar's
3-6 pm

October 5

School Board Regular Meeting @ 6 pm

Excerpts from article:

Darling-Hammond: The mess we are in

By Valerie Strauss

Many people are asking: *Why are we here?* We are here because we are committed to a strong public education system that works for ALL our children. We are here because we want to prepare children for the 21st century world they are entering, not for an endless series of multiple-choice tests that increasingly deflect us from our mission to teach them well

And while many politicians talk of international test score comparisons, they rarely talk about what high-performing countries like Finland, Singapore, and Canada actually do: They ensure that all children have housing, health care, and food security. They fund their schools equitably. They invest in the highest-quality preparation, mentoring and professional development for teachers and school leaders, completely at government expense. They organize their curriculum around problem-solving and critical thinking skills. And they test students rarely (in Finland, not at all) – and almost never with multiple-choice tests.

Many of the top-performing nations rely increasingly on assessments that include research projects, scientific investigation, and other intellectually challenging work – developed and scored by teachers – just as progressive educators here have been urging for years.

None of these countries uses test scores to rank and sort teachers – indeed the Singaporean minister of education made a point of noting at the recent international summit on teaching that they believe such a practice would be counterproductive – and none of them rank and punish schools – indeed several countries forbid this practice. They invest in their people and build schools' capacity to educate all their students.

Our leaders seek to solve the problem of the poor by blaming the teachers and schools that seek to serve them, calling the deepening levels of poverty an 'excuse,' rewarding schools that keep out and push out the highest need students, and threatening those who work with new immigrant students still learning English and the growing number of those who are homeless, without health care and without food. Are there lower scores in under-resourced schools with high-need students? Fire the teachers and the principals. Close the schools. Don't look for supports for their families and communities, equitable funding for their schools, or investments in professional learning. Don't worry about the fact that the next schools are – as researchers have documented -- likely to do no better. If the banks are failing, we should fire the tellers. [And whatever you do, pay no attention to the man behind the curtain.]

But public education has a secret weapon: the members of communities and the professionals like yourselves who are committed first and foremost to our children and who have the courage to speak out against injustice.

This takes considerable courage – of the kind that has caused each of you to be here today. Remember, as Robert F. Kennedy said:

"It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a person stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope."

Thank you for each ripple of hope you create – for each and every time you do what is right for children. Thank you for your courage and your commitment. It is that courage and commitment that will, ultimately, bring our country to its senses and save our schools. Keep your hand on the plow. Hold on!

To read the article in its entirety, go to https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/darling-hammond-the-mess-we-are-in/2011/07/31/gIQAXWSl0l_blog.html