

## American Education Week Salutes Substitute Educators

*New Advocate*  
An OEA Publication  
Autumn 2003  
Tony Miele, Editor

Nov. 16-22 will mark the 83rd annual observance of American Education Week--a time for saluting our public schools and the relationships between all school employees, students and parents. The theme of this year's celebration, "Great Public Schools for Every Child--America's Promise," reflects our nation's commitment to all students. The Friday of that week, Nov. 21, has been designated Substitute Educators Day. Substitute Educators are employees who are called in to temporarily replace a regularly employed teacher or education support professionals, such as classroom aides. We hope you'll take some time to thank those committed educators who have taken on the opportunity and the challenges of working as substitute educators.

Substitute Educators are professionals who have learned their craft and are as skilled as the people they replace on a daily basis.

## Reflections of a New Delegate ~ 2003 RA

The 2003 Representative Assembly was my first opportunity to participate in the NEA at a national level. It was an experience that was both daunting and inspiring. I normally teach a Special Day Class at Emerson Elementary School and serve as the school site representative for the OEA. I went to the RA expecting to be satisfied with sitting back and observing the proceedings while representing Oakland teachers with my vote. The moment I walked onto the main floor of the convention center and saw the assemblage of something like 10,000 teachers, I realized that sitting back and only voting as an individual was going to make little difference with a body of this size.

Watching the RA in action, I was impressed with how caucuses and individual teachers and service personnel brought up important issues before the entire body for adoption. I quickly found myself looking for ways to be a more active participant. I had not come to the RA prepared to introduce any particular motion or action, but after attending a few caucus meetings it was clear that there were other ways to participate.

The individual state caucus meetings were mandatory. For my optional participatory caucuses, I chose The Caucus of Educators for Exceptional Children and the Peace and Justice Caucus as the two groups most likely to have issues that I would want to support. At the caucus meetings it was clear that individuals were able to choose a level of support that they were comfortable with from being one of the 50 people needed to sign a list to get the motion before the body to volunteering to speak to the motion in front of the entire assembly.

Another way to participate in the RA was to help shape the goals of the individual caucuses. By paying a small fee to join, members are quickly given a voice and a vote in the caucus meetings. The members of the caucus meetings that I attended were very accepting of new voices and I felt comfortable actively participating in their discussions.

As one of the larger (and most vocal) locals from the largest state, Oakland's presence at the Representative Assembly was impressive. While it is easy to sit back and be swept along with the crowd, Oakland members stood up for our issues and left their mark on the RA.

*The Advocate* is looking for submissions, particularly, success stories. How are you coping as a teacher in a district under state control? Has this atmosphere adversely affected you or has it inspired even greater teaching from you? Let us know. Forward all submissions (preferably as an attached Word document) to teek427@earthlink.net.

Aaron Stark

# Oakland Teachers Pass New Business Items at Representative Assembly in New Orleans

## **New Business Item 16: Action on Education Funding and Tax Reform**

**Craig Gordon, OEA Rep, Fremont High**

In order to put into action NEA's official support for full funding for education (Resolution A-14) and tax reform (A-22), NEA shall:

(1) Publish articles in NEA Today and other NEA media educating members about the necessity and feasibility of enacting progressive tax reform and other means of redistributing corporate wealth and highlighting affiliates' efforts in this regard, (2) Direct existing staff to provide information and other assistance to affiliates pursuing this goal, (3) Provide seed funding to affiliates' efforts toward this goal of \$1000-2000 each, not to exceed a total of \$10,000 from NEA, and (4) At appropriate political events and through NEA-run media, including its website and NEA Today, promote the slogan quoting NEA President Reg Weaver, "It is our children, not the corporations, who need a break" ("The Big Bite" 2/16/2003, [www.nea.org/columns/rw030216.html](http://www.nea.org/columns/rw030216.html))

## **New Business Item 32, Adopted as Amended**

**Jim Mordecai, Substitute Teacher, OEA Executive Board**

The NEA will use its print media to describe our commitment to protect students'

Children from E. Morris Cox Elementary School in East Oakland enjoy their newly constructed play structure. The structure was erected as a result of a concerted effort by the Cox Community.

## **Ed Fact**

You must renew your credential every five years, if:

- The credential is a Single or Multiple Subject Professional Clear Credential.
- The credential has an issuance date AFTER August 31, 1985.
- The credential is your first clear Multiple or Single Subject Teaching Credential.

*Education is what survives  
when what has been learned  
has been forgotten.*

*B.F. Skinner*



## **Book Review**

Author Gerald Bracey challenges the assertion that America's public schools are failing in his latest book, *On the Death of Childhood and the Destruction of Public Schools*, published by Heinemann. Order the book online at [www.heinemann.com](http://www.heinemann.com).

## Dr. Randy Ward's 2 1/2% Salary Reduction Rationale

State Administrator Randy Ward announced at the recent District II Educational Summit he'd take a two and one-half percent salary reduction. He says that he pegs his salary reduction to the teachers' four percent salary reduction in their newly signed one-year contract. And, he says, since teachers are able to make up one and one-half percent by working in-service training days, he will reduce his salary two and one-half percent.

Many teachers only wish that they could fully recoup one and one-half percent of their lost salary. Reality is that pay for working the three voluntary in-service days is based on complex formulae that may result in few if any teachers receiving as much pay as last year. Although the in-service days have already been worked, it will be sometime in the future that teachers will be paid. And, when the teachers' pay checks finally arrive the majority of Oakland teachers will most likely find they are short of recouping one and one-half percent lost salary.

Under the previous Contract teachers were paid one and one-half percent of their salary for three in-service days. Under the present Contract teachers will be paid a flat rate. The result being that more experienced teachers will be receiving less than last year. And, it remains to be seen if even the most inexperienced teachers will be receiving as much pay as last year. By separating teachers into a category that generates in-service training money, and into a category that doesn't; and then mixing and dividing up the money: it is impossible to predict how much money will be paid for working the three in-service days.

State Administrator Ward avoids the above complexity and simply says that the real loss in teacher salary was a two and one-half percent reduction (health care co-pays are ignored). The *Advocate* believes that teachers who worked the voluntary in-service days to recoup one and one-half percent and find their check falling short will be less than sanguine whenever State Administrator Ward quips ***my pay reduction sacrifice is the same as the teachers!***

## OCR Training Continues

Educators gathered on October 20 for a week long *Reading First* Training at the Hilton Garden in San Leandro. Facilitator, Gloria Grant, pictured on the right leading a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade workshop, brought a human approach to the OCR doctrine of implementation. The treat of such an occasion was for teachers to meet one another, share knowledge, and ultimately acknowledge the enormous breadth of talent they bring to the classroom.

In addition to *best practices* the workshop yielded compelling debate. Participant, **Max Velez**, who is an Instructional Facilitator at Hawthorne, stated that if teachers don't take advantage of the Wednesday Collaborative Inquiry Cycles the message we send "downtown" is we don't need the collaborative time. Whittier teacher, **Elizabeth Henry**, said she appreciates the time allotted for teachers to collaborate, however, much of the meeting is consumed by filling out the CIC paperwork. Velez went on to

***Spoon-feeding in the long run teaches us nothing but the shape of the spoon.***

***M. Forster***

***E.***

## ***Thinking of Retiring?***

Good news for prospective retirees - possibly? CTA has sponsored a measure (AB 1207) by Assembly Member Ellen Corbett (D-San Leandro), which will allow K-12 school districts, county offices of education and community college districts to offer senior teachers up to two (2) years of additional service and age credit in the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS). The legislation has already been signed into law by Governor Davis and is commonly referred to as the "2+2" retirement package.

**Here's how it works** - Your teacher's pension is based on three basic tenets:

**SERVICE CREDIT:** The number of years you have **PAID INTO** the State Teachers Retirement System (not necessarily how many years you have been working as a teacher!) **MULTIPLIED BY**

**AGE FACTOR:** How old you are at time of retirement? - expressed as a %; e.g., 1.400% at exactly Age 55 with less than 30 years Service Credit **MULTIPLIED BY**

**FINAL COMPENSATION:** Meaning the average of your highest 12 month salary if you have more than 25 years Service Credit or the average of your 36 month salaries if you have less than 25 years paid into the STRS system **EQUALS**

**UNMODIFIED:** meaning your highest monthly pension amount given the above three (3) factors.

This "2+2" retirement package **MUST** be bargained for as part of a local contract under AB1207, which takes effect in January, 2004. The two types of options are: 1) Two years of service credit; 2) Two years of service credit and two years of age credit (referred to as "2+2") to determine the age factor for calculating the pension amount.

Because the district has to reimburse STRS for all its costs, it must be able to show a net savings as a result of offering the options. The amount a district has to pay STRS depends on the individual's salary, age, and years of service.

For example, an employee at age 60 with a salary of \$5727 per month and 29.542 years of service (no career or longevity bonuses) credit would cost the district approximately \$112,000 for a "2+2" retirement package. The cost of offering two (2) years of service credit, but not age credit, would be approximately \$36,000.

The Oakland Education Association will have this retirement package as one of its proposals when bargaining begins for the new contract. We shall see!!!

**NOTE:** Another bill that CTA is pursuing is AB212 (Maze), which would authorize bargaining for two (2) or four (4) years of Service Credit, but no Age Credit. The bill is in the Senate Appropriations Committee and will be taken up in the next legislative session. CTA's lobbyists will be on top of this bill and will hopefully be successful.

## ***Grievance Tracker***

Grievance Committee Chairperson Bonnita Solberg and Adult Education teacher

Elaine Brooks successfully argued in Grievance 2002-49 against splitting a

contract position in Adult Ed into two hourly positions. The split position

would have diminished the OEA unit by 1 contracted member. Most importantly,

an hourly teacher would have been denied a full time contract position. The

successful settlement of this grievance prior to arbitration sets the groundwork for meeting past practice guidelines for awarding contracts in

**Congratulations to Substitute  
Caucus Chair, Doug Provencio,  
on the publication of his  
invaluable handbook, *Standing in  
Your Shoes - A Checklist for  
Classroom and Substitute  
Teachers*, published by NEA  
Professional Library.**



*The world talks to the mind.  
A teacher speaks more intimately;  
A teacher talks to the heart.*

*Haim Ginott'*

Every child is unique  
And they learn in different ways  
Teaching is helping children learn  
The way they learn best  
But a new federal law  
The "No Child Left Behind" Act  
Creates a one-size-fits-all mandate  
For all of America's children  
One size does not fit all  
Teachers and support professionals  
Want you to know  
Congress needs to change the law

A message from the  
National Education Association  
Making Great Public Schools for  
Every Child!

Reg Weaver  
NEA President