

From the President



Steve Courter

This is a difficult start of a new year, but optimism about the future is not groundless. New leadership has arrived, and a renewed determination to rejuvenate our district can be sensed in the community and among our own ranks.

How did we get to where we are presently? Over the last several years, our district's enrollment has dropped considerably, but staffing and facilities were not reduced correspondingly. The reason that is of concern is that the state pays Maintenance and Operations (M&O) on a per student basis. There is a widespread misperception that there is an automatic 2% increase to the district budget each year. Even if that were true, that would place TUSD and other districts in an untenable financial position because districts are affected by inflation just as any other individual or entity, and we all know that inflation is rising at more than 2%. The fact is, however, the inflation funding is not simply added on to the previous year's district budget, but is based on the last year's ADM (essentially, an attendance figure calculated on the average daily attendance between the 40th and 100th day of the previous school year).

See President p. 3

**TEAPAC Forum
of TUSD Candidates
Rincon High Little
Theater
Thursday, August 28th,
5:30-7:00 PM**

TEA Welcomes New UD

The Tucson Education Association is pleased to announce that Margaret Street began to work for TEA on July 21. Known to most as **Peggy**, our new UD comes to us from the Des Moines, Iowa, area after having worked for the Iowa State Education Association for several

See New UD p.2

FYI...

Insurance for Dependents

If you are considering obtaining or continuing family/dependent health insurance by the August 31 deadline for TUSD benefits, please check to see if you are eligible for Association rates on Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona Individual Health Plans. Members commonly save several hundred dollars per month on dependent coverage—more than paying for their membership dues. Check out both the spouse-only and child-only rates by contacting AEA's endorsed provider, Glass Financial Group, toll free at 877-895-5012 or by going to www.gfgbenefits.com and clicking on the button "AEA/BCBS Info."

AEA Leaders Conference

The Annual AEA Summer Leaders Conference took place at the Wigwam Resort July 11-12. TEA sponsored several members to attend this conference: **Angélica Bejarano, Steve Courter, Marivel Roybal, and Gail Schellhorn**. They joined AEA Region 1 Director **Marilyn Calhoun**.

See FYI p.4

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From the Vice President

Luci Messing

Building Connections as Your New VP

Where did the summer go?! I hope that you were able to catch up on some well deserved rest and relaxation. Making a point of doing so helps keep you in a good state of mind when duty calls. That is probably why the Wellness Retreat we offer is so well attended.

As your vice president, I have many responsibilities relevant to the Association. I co-chair the Membership Committee with **Marivel Roybal**, and collaborate with the TEA Political/Legislative co-chairs, **Beth Slaine** and **Brandi Kitzberger**. I am responsible for scheduling professional development classes for our members. Keep an eye out for classes coming to you. Association Representatives have been given a tentative schedule of TEA study groups for the fall. If you have any suggestions for P.D., let me know. There are numerous other tasks, but none satisfies me more than working with members to help them address issues so that they can maximize their effectiveness working with students.

The Arizona Education Association has rolled out this year's theme and focus: "Building the Connections." What it means to **you** is the key. What is the connection between you and your students? Do you have a connection with your administration that fosters a positive working environment? Is your school council connected with the needs of your school? How about the impact of the individuals who serve on the local school board? Are they connected to the needs of our students, teachers and community? What effect would an education friendly legislature have on our



public schools? How does being a member of the Association empower you? The connections are everywhere.

I firmly believe there is no better way to connect than exercising our right to vote. Whether it's voting for a School Council representative or the President of the United States, we have a responsibility to express our choice. Don't complain if you have not participated in the one action that no one can stop you from exercising. It really is that simple.

This year you will be asked to cast your vote in a number of elections. Remember that the more local the election, the more immediate the impact upon you personally. The race for School Board will affect you as much, or more, than the election of our President. Who we elect to represent us in the State Legislature will impact funding for public education for years to come. Educate yourself on the candidates for all offices and make your voice be heard by voting. Make your connection.

Invite me to your school to dialogue with members and share information. That is one of the reasons I was elected to represent you. I want to listen to your concerns and clarify any issues that might exist. My door is open; let me help you make the connections that will make our schools and Association the best they can be.

New UD (cont. from p.1)

years. (No, she didn't know Dr. Celania-Fagen before coming to Tucson.) While with ISEA, she worked with a UniServ Unit comprised of 23 locals, both large and small, giving her experience in bargaining contracts for locals with 450 members as well as locals with as few as 9 members. Peggy was an active participant in the annual state-wide Association Representative meeting.

Her UniServ work includes two plus years with the Kentucky Education Association in its Bowling Green office where she established herself as a successful advocate, communicator and mediator. Peggy was the UniServ Director in a one-director office that represented 17 county school districts. Her success in organizing while in Bowling Green was realized in the overall membership growth of each of the locals. While in Kentucky, Peggy was a regular presenter at the KEA State Convention, was a member of the Membership Marketing Team, and worked extensively with the NEA in its membership recruiting and retention efforts.

Originally from Massachusetts, Peggy began her career as a high school business teacher and was active in her local as a building representative and officer. Her undergraduate degree in education is complemented by graduate degrees in education and law. Additionally, she has participated in numerous NEA conferences and training programs, including the UniServ Pre-employment Development Program (UPDP), which she successfully completed in August of 2002. Peggy looks forward to fully relocating her family to Tucson.

For now, Peggy is designated to work with most of the schools previously assigned to Don Prince, who retired on June 30.

From the Executive Director

Pernela Jones

PD Reminders

It's never too early in the year to start collecting and preparing your documentation to submit for professional development (PD) credit.

Certified

As certified teachers know, they have to document 180 hours of PD in order to complete their recertification process every six years. However, in order to receive the PD Stipend from TUSD as negotiated in Consensus Article nineteen, MBUs (Members of the Bargaining Unit) must submit at least three credits/45 hours per year. By doing so, an MBU should receive payment "three full pay periods following the submission of credits." The exception to this is for documentation submitted after **April 1**, in which case the payment will be made in the follow-

ing fiscal year. (See Consensus Agreement 19-3-G and H for more details.)

ESP

The PD advancement for Education Support Professionals (ESP), who make up the White Collar/Food Service bargaining unit, is very unique in our state. You can (permanently) earn one full increment step per year on the ESP salary schedule by submitting the appropriate documentation for four credits/60 hours of professional development work. In order for the payment to be applied retroactively to the current year, you must submit documentation by November 1. (Read White Collar/Food Service Agreement Article 17 for the details.)

President (cont. from p.1)

So as not to be too wonkish on this subject, let me illustrate the significance of this fact for TUSD and for you personally. Last year we saw the highest ever drop in ADM, about 1300 students. TUSD's finance director has calculated that had that drop been 300, itself a serious development but more in line with the last several years, TUSD would have received about \$5 million more in state M&O funding. That alone is roughly enough for a 2% across-the-board compensation increase. The bottom line is we need to turn around this loss of students.

Secondly, we need a more realistic and rational discussion around the fact that even if we see some improvement in our student count, we are unlikely in the foreseeable future to return to TUSD's historic high. Charter school competition will continue, the lifting of the desegregation order facilitates the move of TUSD students to other districts, and there are quantifiable, long-term demographic trends that show families moving out of central Tuc-

son to find more affordable housing elsewhere. To continue budgeting for personnel, programs and facilities as if these factors did not exist invites only a more severe financial squeeze later, perhaps more severe than the \$20 million deficit that initially loomed for 2009.

TUSD, in part with the urging and cooperation of TEA and other employee groups, has taken some important steps to reduce costs. Over 80 central administration cuts have been made, including in highly-paid positions. Programs such as the class-size reduction initiative had to be pared back, school-based clerical and elementary technology positions were reduced, transportation costs were cut back, 175 certified positions were eliminated, some certified personnel were placed back in the classroom, small schools will be sharing principals, and there were other budget-trimming steps. However, there are limits in replicating such cuts. Even those cuts that were made were painful and will

White Collar TEA Members

Article 8-6 (Interview Process) of the White Collar/Food Service Agreement requires that interview committees for white collar vacancies consist of a TEA white collar member.

Please keep an eye out for a flyer inviting you to participate in this important negotiated position. No election is necessary; you'll simply need to fill out the required information on the flyer and return it to the TEA office. (Some paid release time from your position will most likely be required.)



affect services for students and support for teachers. We are simply going to have to support our new superintendent, Dr. Celia Fagen, as we redefine our district's core mission and essential services, and protect those priorities by being prepared for further trimming of desirable but non-essential positions and services. Given what happens with student enrollment and ADM, we may even find ourselves back in the situation of considering reduction in facilities, although with a far better process than what we saw recently.

So why do I insist in being optimistic? I believe we possess the intelligence and capability to confront these challenges and turn them into opportunities. All I question is if we have the will. Let's make this year the time when we show we have what it takes to put our district on a more sustainable long-term path, thereby ensuring providing the education our students need and deserve, and the compensation employees merit by their dedication.

- **Office Hours**

The TEA office is operating on its regular business hours of 7:45 A.M. – 4:45 P.M. Whenever possible, please call in advance to set up an appointment if you're interested in meeting with an officer or your UniServ Director, as they are often out of the building for meetings.

Please note: if you need to drop anything off prior to or after office hours, there is a mail drop by the front door.

- **TEAPAC Steering Committee**

Andrea Haber was elected to the TEAPAC Steering Committee in a special election held May 14 to complete the second year of a vacated term. She will join **Steve Courter, Jason Freed, Robert Jones, Luci Messing, Rosalva Meza** and **Tony Vacura**.

TEAPAC is a sister organization of TEA and is the entity that votes on endorsing public education-friendly candidates and issues. Only TEAPAC Contributors vote on endorsements. Unfortunately, less than 300 TEA members form TEAPAC (approximately 10%); it should be much higher than that. Won't you join? As a member of TEA member you can become a member of TEAPAC and thereby participate in the endorsement procedure for TUSD candidates to be concluded within the month. Simply drop by the TEA office during regular business hours and complete a TEAPAC contribution form. Otherwise, you can request a form from your Association Representative or the TEA office.

- **AEA Campaign College**

TEA members jumped into high gear for the 2008 elections with the help of the Arizona Education Association's Campaign College, held concurrently with the AEA Leaders Conference. **Frances Banales, Margaret Dodson, Brande Kitzberger, Cathy Paredes, Beth Slaine, and Michael Gordy** (now AEA-Retired) participated in training activities to support endorsed candidates and ballot initiatives.

- **NEA Action Guide**

Check out NEA's new NCLB/ESEA Action Guide, which is designed to promote the Association's commonsense proposals for overhauling NCLB. The Action Guide contains information, tools, and resources to help members, concerned citizens, and policy makers participate in urging Congress to make the law more responsive to the real needs of children. View the guide online at www.nea.org/nclbaction.

- **Change in Contact Information**

Please inform the TEA office at laurie.damiani@arizonaaea.org or 795-8870 to let us know if there's been any change in your membership information – name, address(es), home number, site, hours of work, etc.

Welcome

back to another school year...