



Strictly Speaking

**By, Robert Strickler
AEA President**

Changes. I've been thinking a lot about my first years in teaching and the last few years of teaching. I was thinking about the support I received when I began teaching, from parents, colleagues, family, administrators, the government and the public in general.

Has that changed? We all know the answer to that. But for the most part, most of these people still are our biggest supporters. There are many more that support teachers than don't. It just seems lately a few (and they have lots of money) have been the ones making the loudest noise. Waiting for Superman, Wisconsin, test scores, bad teachers, no child left behind, Broad Institute, race to the top, charter schools, pension reform, school choice, anti-union, fiscal crisis, privatization, paycheck protection and more.

It's time we stood together. It's time we begin yelling the truth. Smoke and mirrors, money, and deception should not be the winner. I was approached this past summer by someone collecting signatures to get an initiative on the ballot. I asked what it was

about and was told that it allows you to vote for anyone you want, you don't have to vote party line. So I asked to see the paperwork, and as I read it, found out that they were collecting signatures regarding the "paycheck protection" initiative or more honestly known as the paycheck deception initiative! I wonder why they had to lie about what they were really collecting signatures for! When I confronted the person about why they were lying they just responded, "I get paid for each signature I get." I wonder if they were aware that this already failed twice before. Two things I now look at when I vote are who is behind an initiative and where the money is coming from. Most of the time that tells me more than the initiative itself!

It's hard to standup when we are constantly hearing these negative things about public education. I for one know it isn't the truth. It is time for us to speak out. Public education is for all students, not just a select few. Test scores do not prove that a teacher is good or bad. Public pensions did not destroy the American economy. If you'd like to see some truth about teachers, check out:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzvD9v7CbEE>

AMERICAN TEACHER chronicles the stories of four teachers - Erik Benner, Jonathan Dearman, Jamie Fidler, and Rhena Jasey - who live and work in disparate urban and rural areas of the country. By following these

teachers as they reach different milestones in their careers, the film tells the deeper story of the teaching profession in America today. The film shows us the experience of these four young teachers as they recognize the importance of what they do, and how much they love what they do, but ask: can I afford to continue to teach?

AEA Website



Be sure to check out the AEA website for up-to-date information plus our new sections:

- **Photos:** Photos of AEA and district events.
- **Member Benefits:** CTA endorsed benefits.
- **Bargaining:** Current bargaining issues and the current AEA and AUSD bargaining proposals.
- **Teacher Rights:** Information on Education Code and your rights as a teacher.





“Thank You” to the **School Site Reps** for handing out AEA information in a timely manner.

A very special “Thank You” to **Valorie Luke** and **Pennie Davis** for attending and helping out at the Grant School Carnival on behalf of Antioch Community Outreach (ACO).

A big “Thank You” to **Julie Cullimore** for counting the election ballots and getting them done accurately and promptly.

Much appreciation to **Julie Cullimore, Debby Greene, Genny Payne** and **Sara Savacool** for attending the Leadership Conference and being a part of the Organizing Team. “Thank you!”

“Thank You” to **Lars Blomberg** for stepping up to become the AEA Treasurer.

AEA Executive Board Treasurer and State Council Representative(s) Election Results

AEA Treasurer - Lars Blomberg
Antioch Middle School

State Council Representative - Robert Strickler
AEA President

Note: A second State Council Representative has not been appointed yet, due to a runoff election.

Pennie’s Bennies



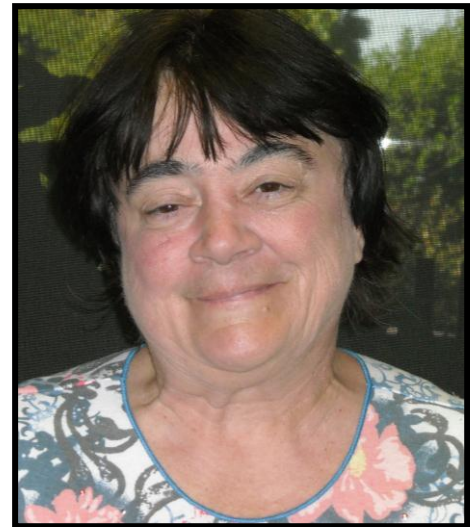
I went on NEA Member Benefits Click and Save last night and got some quick restaurant info. Mac's Old House

and Celia's Mexican Restaurant in Antioch both offered \$25 gift certificates for only \$7. Two of the top five Italian Restaurants in San Francisco had the same offer! Lowe's, Target, and various other stores have special deals for us. When you take advantage of these offers you also earn WOW points that can be used for travel. It is a great way to get more for your money.

If you like you can sign up for weekly information notification which includes classroom management techniques. Don't wonder what your union can do for you - check it out!

Submitted by, Pennie Davis
AEA Secretary

Meet AEA’s Executive Board



Member.....Sarah Odegaard

Sarah joins Karen Vargas as AEA’s Elementary Schools’ Liaison(s)

1. **Where did you grow up?** I grew up in Concord, CA. After graduating from Mt. Diablo High, I went to Sacramento State and St. Mary’s College. I majored in Bilingual Education and got my Master’s Degree in Educational Administration.

2. **How did you come to the AUSD?** I came to the AUSD in 1997 and started at Jack London. I came from the Mt. Diablo School District in Concord.
3. **How long have you taught in the AUSD and what grade levels, schools, etc.?** I have taught in the AUSD now for 15 years. I have worked at Jack London, Sutter and Carmen Dragon. I have taught 4th and 5th grade during this time.
4. **How long have you been involved with AEA and to what capacity?** I have served the AEA for the past couple of years as a Rep at my school site. I enjoy helping teachers find out information that involves their daily job and I like to find ways to make their jobs easier.
5. **Why did you want to become an AEA Elementary Schools' Liaison?** I wanted to become an Elementary Schools' Liaison so that I could learn more about the Union and bring that information to the teachers to help them with their very difficult jobs. I hope to be able to communicate information from the Union and from the Teachers to keep communication and progress moving ahead.

Antioch Community Outreach (ACO)
Participates in Grant Elementary's
Welcome Back Bash



Valorie Luke – AEA Vice President (l)
Pennie Davis – AEA Secretary (r)

Friday, September 23, ACO was invited to be a part of Grant Elementary School's Welcome back Bash. We were able to run the "Fishing Hole" booth, at which students could cast their

pole over the wall to fish for a fun prize. Students won items such as puzzles, word searches, jump ropes, and kites. Parents were handed fliers with age-appropriate math and reading games that they could play at home with their children. The students loved the game and kept coming back for more. Parents loved the tips and were happy to have ideas to take home.

We would love to be part of your next school event! Please contact Valorie Luke through home or district email to inform us of your school's upcoming activities. valorie1234@hotmail.com

Submitted by,
Valorie Luke, AEA Vice President

AUSD HONOREES

Teacher of the Year 2011-2012

Thomas Gravert
Dozier-Libbey Medical High

Teacher of the Year Runner Up

Bonnie Berquist
Bidwell High

Mary Allan Fellows Award Winners

Thomas Gravert, Dozier-Libbey MH
Steve Kish, Deer Valley High School
Chris Mathews, Antioch High School
Margaret Rickli, Diablo Vista Elementary

Mary Allan Fellows Award Finalists

Julie Cullimore, Bidwell High School
Stacey Wickware, Dozier-Libbey MH

Mary Allan Fellows Award Nominees

David Porcel, Diablo Vista Elementary
Deirdre Sheehan, Belshaw Elementary
Kristofor Freeman, Deer Valley High School
Heather Keeton, Deer Valley High School



AUSD Teacher of the Year & Mary Allan Fellows Award Winner
Thomas Gravert (left)
Dozier-Libbey Medical High



Mary Allan Fellows Award Winner
Steve Kish (left)
Deer Valley High



AUSD Teacher of the Year Runner Up
Bonnie Berquist
Bidwell High



Mary Allan Fellows Award Winner
Chris Mathews (left)
Antioch High



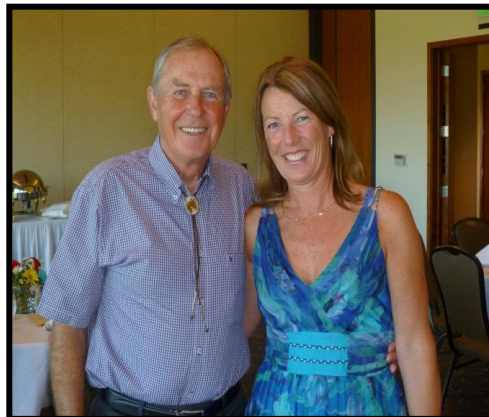
Mary Allan Fellows Award Finalist
Julie Cullimore
Bidwell High



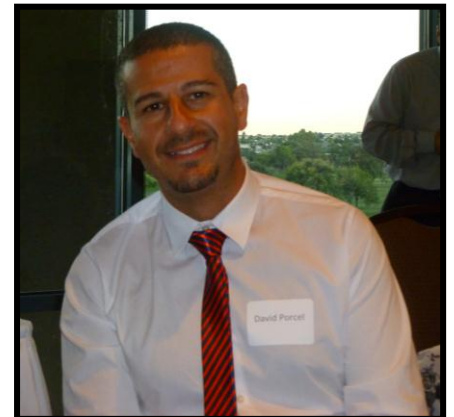
Mary Allan Fellows Award Winner
Margaret Rickli
Diablo Vista Elementary



Mary Allan Fellows Award Finalist
Stacey Wickware
Dozier-Libbey Medical High



Mary Allan Fellows Award Nominee
Deirdre Sheehan
Belshaw Elementary



Mary Allan Fellows Award Nominee
David Porcel
Diablo Vista Elementary

October is National Bullying Prevention Month

NEA's Campaign Against Bullying

Bullied students that go it alone because they don't know who to turn to are far more likely to fall behind in their studies, get sick and/or depressed, miss school, and drop out. And in the most tragic cases, the bullied student commits suicide, or "bullycide," as it has come to be known. But research tells us that one caring adult can make all the difference in a bullied student's life.

It is crucial that bullied students know which adults in their school or community they can go to in their time of distress—adults who will really listen to them and then act on their behalf.

NEA's Bully Free: It Starts With Me Campaign aims to identify caring adults in our schools and communities who are willing to stand out as someone pledged to help bullied students. These caring adults will agree to listen carefully to the bullied student who comes to them. They will also agree to take action to stop the bullying. NEA, in turn, promises to provide those caring adults with the resources they need to provide solace and support for the bullied student, ask the right questions, and take the appropriate actions needed to stop the bullying.

The primary purpose of this initiative is to connect the bullied student with a caring adult—one on one. But it is our profoundest hope that the caring adults who have volunteered for NEA's Bully Free: It Starts With Me will also become part of a larger effort to bully-proof our schools. We encourage these caring adults to speak up for the bullied students and advocate for measures that will stop bullying in the school.

There is now a wealth of research-based information available on the Web about bullying and how to prevent it. And as one of the world's foremost anti-bullying experts, Psychology Professor Don Olweus, notes: "It now all boils down to a matter of will and involvement on the part of adults in deciding how much bullying will take place in our schools."

In other words, when it comes to bullying in our schools, the adults can stop it, fix it, and prevent it from happening again—and NEA wholeheartedly embraces this challenge. It starts with one caring adult and stops with all of us creating safe learning environments and supportive communities for our students.

From: <http://www.nea.org/home/42490.htm>

Take The Pledge: <http://www.nea.org/home/Bullyfree-Take-the-Pledge.html>



I agree to be identified as a caring adult who pledges to help bullied students. I will listen carefully to all students who seek my help and act on their behalf to put an immediate stop to the bullying. I will work with other caring adults to create a safe learning environment for all the students in my school.

Coming Soon..... "Bullying Class"

CTA/AUSD will be offering a "Bullying Class" in March 2011. Attendees will receive district credit for taking the class. Remember our presenter, Gail Watts? She will again present information that will be valuable to you! More information will be shared in the next *Insider*.

CTA "NEWS....."

Upcoming Conferences from CTA

GLBT Conference – October 28-30, 2011

Palm Springs, CA

Issues Conference – "Standing as One – Determining the Future of Public Education" – January 13-15, 2012

Las Vegas, NV

Good Teaching Conference North –

February 3-5, 2012, San Jose, CA

Equity and Human Rights Conference –

March 2-4, 2012, Irvine, CA

Good Teaching Conference South –

March 16-18, 2012, Garden Grove, CA

Reporting from the Desk of CTA President, Dean Vogel

President Obama's Jobs Act Includes Money to Rehire Educators

Putting the needs of Main Street ahead of Wall Street, President Obama announced the American Jobs Act, a bill designed to jumpstart economic growth and job creation. It includes resources to prevent educator layoffs and rebuild public schools and colleges. The Jobs Act calls for \$30 billion to help prevent up to 280,000 teacher layoffs nationwide, including about 37,000 educator jobs in California. He's also proposed \$25 billion for school infrastructure. California would get about \$2.8 billion, which would help create another 36,000 jobs. Joining educators in the call for tax fairness, Obama also outlined his plan for closing the budget deficit, which includes letting tax breaks for millionaires expire and closing tax loopholes for special interests like oil companies. Email your lawmaker today and tell them to support middle class America and the Jobs Act.

NCLB Waiver Trades One Set of Federal Mandates for Another

While we appreciate President Obama's recognition that public schools need relief from the burdens of No Child Left Behind, CTA cannot support the waiver process outlined by the administration as it simply trades one set of top-down, federal mandates for another. The CTA Board voted unanimously to oppose California applying for an NCLB waiver. On its face the waiver sounds like it is providing flexibility, but the fine print is still very restrictive. It requires states to set guidelines for teacher evaluation with the use of student test scores as a significant factor. It continues to use test scores to rank schools and requires states to create two new categories for lower-performing schools: priority and focus schools. It continues the use of unproven interventions for low-performing schools and provides states with NO additional resources to meet these mandates. These mandates continue to undermine teaching and our profession.

Governor Brown Signs Dream Act 2, Fair Election Bill and Diastat Bill

Governor Brown capped a month of bill signings and vetoes in a frantic flurry, dispatching more than 200 bills sent to him before the legislative deadline. Giving all California students

the opportunity for college he signed the CTA-supported California Dream Act 2 (Assembly Bill 131.) The bill allows all students who graduated from a California high school to be eligible for state financial assistance, including Cal Grants, to attend state colleges and universities.

Brown signed Senate Bill 202, which will give more Californians the opportunity to vote on critical initiatives. Returning to original state law, it requires initiatives to be placed on General election ballots, where there is the greatest level of participation. On the same day of the bill signing, proponents of the misleading Paycheck Deception initiative announced they turned in more than 900,000 signatures, almost guaranteeing the measure will be on the ballot in November 2012. This initiative would unfairly restrict union participation in the legislative and political process.

Sending a strong message against testing and using student data as the measure of school success, Brown vetoed Senate Bill 547, which would have changed the state's school accountability system. CTA had a watch position on this bill and hoped to work with the sponsoring lawmaker to make changes next year. In his veto statement, Brown said the bill would add confusion and cost before the implementation of new Common Core Standards. He went on to say that perhaps we have reached "testing nirvana" and nowhere does SB 547 mention "good character" or love of learning. Lost in the bill's turgid mandates is any recognition that quality is fundamentally different than quantity."

CTA is disappointed that Brown signed the Diastat Bill (Senate Bill 161). This CTA-opposed measure charges educators to administer a potentially risky seizure drug in schools. CTA will be monitoring implementation of the legislation in local school districts to ensure participation is voluntary and that educators are not forced to give the medical procedure against their will.

Join the Movement for Tax Fairness

CTA is supporting the nationwide "Occupy Wall Street" movement for tax fairness and against corporate greed. If we are going to fund public education, we must change our tax structures. It's time to demand action and make sure everyone is paying their fair share. Something is not right when one percent of Americans control a third of the country's wealth. We've seen class sizes increase, college tuition explode and job opportunities vanish at the same time banks have received bailouts and large corporations have received tax cuts. It's time for rest of us – the 99 percent – to speak up. CTA is encouraging members and local chapters to participate in events in your communities. Visit www.occupytogether.org for more information.

News from the Standard

Back-to-school reminders from The Standard!

School's back in session and as always, The Standard is available to answer any of your questions about coverage. Their dedicated CTA Customer Service Department can be reached at 800.522.0406 from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday – Friday, or write to them at ctaservice@standard.com with any questions or concerns. You can also visit www.cta.org/thestandard for more information.

Don't get confused during your district's benefits enrollment season.

To-do lists are always lengthy at this time of year, and enrolling in your benefits can be one of the most confusing tasks. With offers and information coming from every direction, it can be tough to tell who is offering what and why you should care. One good rule of thumb is to always look for CTA's endorsement. And there is only one CTA-endorsed provider of Disability and Life Insurance – The Standard.

The district's Section 125 Benefits Plan administrator may try to sell other insurance products, such as cancer care insurance, disability insurance or individual life insurance. Please remember the only CTA-endorsed voluntary and district-paid Life and Disability plans are offered exclusively through Standard Insurance Company and were specifically designed to meet your needs. With a dedicated CTA Customer Service Team and more than 100 years of protecting their customers, The Standard is a partner you can trust. To learn more about CTA-endorsed Life and Disability Insurance contact Standard Insurance Company at 800.522.0406 (TTY) Monday – Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Newly hired CTA member, or new in your district?

If you're a newly hired CTA member or new in your district, now's the time to get coverage. During your first 120 days of new employment, you have a special opportunity to apply for Disability Insurance and/or up to \$200,000 of Life Insurance. Don't miss this opportunity - call The Standard's dedicated CTA Customer Service Department at 800.522.0406 for more information or apply online at www.cta.org/thestandard.

For costs and further details of the coverage and this enrollment opportunity, including the exclusions, benefit waiting periods, and reductions or limitations and the terms under which the policy may be continued in force, please contact Standard Insurance Company at 800.522.0406 (TTY).

AEA Leadership 2011-2012

President

Robert Strickler

Vice President

Valorie Luke, Prospects High School

Secretary

Pennie Davis, Grant Elementary

Treasurer

Lars Blomberg, Antioch Middle School

CTA State Council Representatives

Denise James, Lone Tree Elementary

Sara Savacool, Antioch High School

Robert Strickler, AEA

Pandora Bethea (Alternate), Deer Valley High School

High Schools' Liaison

J Myers, Deer Valley High School

Middle Schools' Liaison

Linda Rhymes, Black Diamond Middle School

Elementary Schools' Liaison

Sarah Odegaard, London Elementary

Karen Vargas, Kimball Elementary

Bargaining Team

Dylan Howell – Chair, Antioch High School

Sharon Ball, Dallas Ranch Middle School

Jeri Creese, London Elementary

Kevin Jones, Antioch High School

Lenore Navarro, Kimball Elementary

Adrian Torres, Black Diamond Middle School

Sharon Weaver, Turner Elementary

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AUSD School Board Members

Diane Gibson-Gray, President

Claire Smith, Vice President

Gary Hack (member); Joy Motts (member)

Walter Ruehlig (member)



Put It On Your Calendar

October 2011

- 21-23 State Council – Los Angeles, CA
- 25 Bargaining – AEA Office/District Office – 8:30 AM
- 28-30 GLBT Conference – Palm Springs, CA
- 31 Staff Development Day
- 31 Halloween



November 2011

- 3 AEA Executive Board– AEA Office – 2730 Lone Tree Way
- 6 Daylight Savings Time Ends
- 7 AEA Rep Council – AEA Office – 2730 Lone Tree Way – 3:45 PM
- 8 Election Day
- 11 Veteran’s Day
- 14 Site Meetings
- 16 AUSD School Board Meeting – 510 “G” Street – 7:00 PM
- 21-25 Holiday Break (No School)
- 24 Thanksgiving
- 28 AEA Executive Board– AEA Office – 2730 Lone Tree Way – 3:45 PM

December 2011

- 5 AEA Rep Council – AEA Office – 2730 Lone Tree Way – 3:45 PM
- 12 Site Meetings
- 14 AUSD School Board Meeting – 510 “G” Street – 7:00 PM
- 16 Minimum Day
- 19-2 Winter Break (No School)
- 20 Hanukkah begins at Sundown
- 21 Winter begins
- 25 Christmas Day
- 31 New Year’s Eve

