



MTA News

Volume 6 Issue 10

March, 2010
MTA Newsletter

Get More Involved
Join an MTA Committee!

Health Insurance
TBA

Health Benefits
TBA, MTA Office

PAC
Meets as needed, off site

Negotiations
See MTA's website for updates under Bargaining

Special Education
TBA

Grievance
Meets via online communication and quarterly meetings as needed.

Organizing Committee
Online and meetings on site when needed

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President's Message

President's Update

The Ad Hoc Committee consisting of MTA Representatives (Kathy Ericson, Jack Mitchell and Wayne Conklin) and District Representatives (Pat Kelley, Stacy Coleman and Pam Wilson) have concluded their work for the 2010-2011 school year. In doing so, hundreds of documents were examined and District leaders were interviewed. A focus on identifying expenditures as "nice to have" versus "need to have" was utilized while determining potential savings areas in the district budget.

The Committee was able to come up with an approximate \$8 Million bite out of the expected shortfall. This brings the numbers closer to something that the Association and District can begin to deal with in coming bargaining sessions .

MTA is to be commended for requesting the Ad Hoc Committee to reconvene. The MTA representatives on the committee are to be commended for the complete and thorough work in studying the financial

details of the District. Areas of new consideration were indentified and the committee found the process to be very productive. The District is to be commended for pursuing a history of fiscal responsibility and for aggressively reducing the scope of the district's financial challenges through significant and on-going cost cutting measures during the last three years. The work of continuing to look for any and all appropriate reductions will be an on-going effort.

Negotiations have resumed and both teams have expressed goals to maintain a quality educational program for students and to keep those who provide those programs to our students working to the greatest extent possible. MTA members can look to the website for bargaining updates from Negotiations Chair Matt Johnson.

Chuck Smith

MTA President

Register to vote in CTA/NEA Elections

Voting for the National Education Association and California Teacher Association Representatives is done on line.

In order to vote online, MTA members must first register on My CTA.

Follow these directions to complete the process:

1. Go to cta.org and register yourself. You need the number that is on your CTA membership card.
2. If you don't have that number, contact Mary at the MTA office:
Murrietata1@verizon.net
951-304-0528
3. Remember to vote online when it's time for Representative Assembly elections.

Research on the Use of Student Test Scores to Evaluate Teachers

Interest in including evidence of student learning in evaluations of teachers has been growing. After all, if student learning is the primary goal of teaching, it appears straightforward that it ought to be taken into account in determining a teachers competence. However, the research literature includes many cautions about the problems of basing teacher evaluations substantially on student test scores.

These include concerns about overemphasis on "teaching to the test" at the expense of other kinds of learning (especially given the narrowness of most tests currently used in the United States; problems of attributing student gains to specific teachers; and disincentives for teachers to serve high-need students. For example, those who do not yet speak English and those who have special education needs and whose test scores may not accurately reflect their learning). This could inadvertently reinforce current practices in which inexperienced teachers are disproportionately assignment to the neediest students or schools and may discourage high-need students from entering or staying.

Researchers have been developing value-added methods (VAM) for looking at gains in student test scores, and these have proved valuable for research on groups of teachers. However, most researchers agree that value-added modeling (VAM) is not appropriate as a primary measure for evaluating individual teachers. Reviews of research on value-added methodologies for estimating teacher "effects" based on student test scores have concluded that these measures are too unstable and too vulnerable to many sources of error to be used for teacher evaluation. A major report by the RAND Corporation concluded that: The research base is currently insufficient to support the use of VAM for high-stakes decisions about individual teachers or schools (1). Similarly, Henry Braun of the Education Testing Service concluded in his review of research: There are many pitfalls to making causal attributions of teacher effectiveness on the basis of the kinds of data available from typical school districts. We still lack sufficient understanding of how seriously the different technical problems threaten

Quick Reference Corner

Rights: You have the right to representation in any meeting that could result in disciplinary action. You have the right to stop the meeting and **DEMAND** representation and to postpone the meeting until your representative can join you. This is a private sector rule that has been made applicable to public school employees under the EERA. (See Redwood CCD v. PERB (1984) 159 Cal. App. 3d 617)

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Executive Board 2010

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President: Chuck Smith

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Secretary: Annette Gross

Middle School: Matt Johnson

Treasurer: Tom Kuzma

High School: John Grissom



We're on the web!

murrieta-teachers.org

Emergency Room or Urgent Care?

According to some estimates, more than three-quarters of the people who visit an emergency room do not need to be there. Many of these patients are likely better candidates for a visit to an urgent care center.

Do you really need the ER?

Emergency rooms are located in hospitals and are staffed by medical doctors who use sophisticated equipment to handle life-threatening injuries and illnesses, and other serious medical conditions such as difficulty breathing or sudden severe pain.

Patients at the emergency room are sorted, or triaged, according to the seriousness of their condition. For example, a patient with severe injuries from a car accident would likely be seen before a child with an ear infection, even if the child was brought in first. People who go to the ER with relatively minor ailments often have to wait more than an hour to be seen.

An emergency is defined as a condition that may cause loss of life or permanent or severe disability if it isn't treated immediately. You should go directly to the nearest emergency room if you experience any of the following:

Chest pain, shortness of breath, severe abdominal pain following an injury, uncontrollable bleeding, confusion or loss of consciousness, especially after a head injury, poisoning or suspected poisoning, serious burns, cuts, or infections, inability to swallow, seizures, paralysis, broken bones.

Using urgent Care Instead

Urgent care centers are usually located in clinics or hospitals, and like emergency rooms, offer after-hours care. They are not equipped to handle life-threatening situations. Rather, they handle instances which require immediate attention; those where delaying treatment could cause serious problems or discomfort.

Participate in the U.S. Census!

Some examples of conditions that require urgent care are:

Ear infections, sprains, urinary tract infections, vomiting, high fever.

Urgent care centers are usually more cost-effective than ERs for these conditions. In addition, the waiting time in urgent care centers is usually much shorter.

Did you know...?

Most health plans will **pay a higher benefit** for urgent care centers than they will for emergency rooms, meaning your out-of-pocket costs will be less. A regular doctor's visit costs even less than urgent care. If you think you do need to go to an urgent care center, try to find one that is affiliated with your current health plan.

Using an Urgent Care versus an Emergency room saves all covered members of our plan money. Please make every effort to save money for all, and time for you and your loved one.

Participate in the U.S. Census

Participate in the U.S. Census and encourage everyone else to participate! School funding will be impacted by the results of the Census.

For every household that participates and shows school aged children, districts will receive federal funds. This makes participation in the census essential for everyone since all California districts are hurting financially and children will continue to feel the loss of programs and class sizes.

Please encourage everyone you know that resides in California to participate in the census! Let's do our part to help our schools receive the deserved and fair funding for our students.

Research on Student Test Scores to Evaluate Teachers continued from page 2

the validity of such interpretations (2). According to these studies, the problems with using value-added testing models to determine teacher effectiveness include: Teachers' ratings are affected by differences in the students who are assigned to them. Students are not randomly assigned to teachers-and statistical models cannot fully adjust for the fact that some teachers will have a disproportionate number of students who may be exceptionally difficult to teach (students with poor attendance, who are homeless, who have severe problems at home, etc.) and scores on traditional tests are frequently not valid (e.g. those who have special education needs or who are EL learners). In addition, student attendance can have as large an effect on student learning growth as teachers' competence. All of these factors can create both misestimates of teachers' effectiveness and disincentives for teachers to want to teach the students who have the greatest needs.

Value-added models of teacher effectiveness do not produce stable ratings of teachers. Teachers look very different in their measured effectiveness when different statistical methods are used (3). In addition, a given teacher may appear to have differential effectiveness from class to class, from year to year, and even from test to test. Researchers have found that teachers' effectiveness ratings differ significantly when their students are evaluated on different tests, even when these are within the same content area (4). Braun notes that ratings are most unstable at the upper and lower ends of the scale, where many would like to use them to determine high or low levels of effectiveness.

It is impossible to fully separate out the influences of students' other teachers, as well as school conditions on their apparent learning. Many prior teachers have lasting effects, for good or ill, on students' later learning, and current teachers also interact to produce students' knowledge and skills. Writing skills may be learned in History class, but attributed to the English teacher even if no writing was assigned in class. Skills and topics taught in one year may not be tested until years later. Students at schools with support staff specialists may appear more effective on tests than schools without these resource staff. Therefore, as Braun states, "Treating estimated teacher effects as accurate indicators of teacher effectiveness is problematic."

1. Daniel F. McCaffrey, Daniel Koretz, J. R. Lockwood, Laura S. Hamilton (2005). Evaluating Value-Added Models for Teacher Accountability. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.
2. Henry Braun, Using Student progress to Evaluate Teachers: A Primer on Value-Added Models (Princeton, NJ: ETS, 2005), p. 17.
3. Rothstein, J. (2007). Do Value-Added Models Add Value? Tracking, Fixed Effects, and Causal Inference. National Bureau for Economic Research.
4. Lockwood, J. R., McCaffrey, D. F., Hamilton, L.S., Stetcher, B., Le, V. N., & Martinez, J. F. (2007). The sensitivity of value-added teacher effect estimates to different mathematics achievement measures. Journal of Educational Measurement, 44 (1), 47-67.

Please Take Note

Dear Colleagues:

It is easy to feel helpless today with our economy continuing to flounder and the effects being felt by us all. Schools continue to be hit with budget reductions, impacting our daily lives. There is a way to improve our situation. Take the U. S. Census!

The more accurate the census information, the more funding California will receive for schools. As a force of professionals, let's get the word out about the importance to school funding that completing the survey will have.

Rep. Council Meeting Dates

Representative Council Meetings

March 4, 2010

April 15, 2010

MTA Office, 4:00 p.m.