

GTA Advocate



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Glendale Teachers Association

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President's Message: Divide and Conquer = Bondage By Tami Carlson tamicarlson@glendaleteachers.org



Divide and conquer is a common military and political offensive tactic used by one side to defeat the other. The object is to win by getting one's opponents to fight among themselves. GTA is and has been the victim of this tactic repeatedly. It is the District's most powerful weapon. Most are unwitting participants in this destructive tactic; unfortunately there are those among us who knowingly comply.

Last school year was devastating to our members. We lost our fully funded health benefits. The "perfect storm" of devastating cuts to public education and a national recession bordering on a depression set the stage for District take cutbacks across the state. But GUSD had approximately \$55 million in unrestricted reserves at the end of the 2008/09 school year that should have been used to maintain the educational program for our students and the benefits for all employees. They did not need to RIF any of our teachers as by the end of 2009/10, those reserves had risen to over \$60 million. So how and why did this happen? One reason is the success of the divide and conquer strategy that we see too often in print, in discussions, and at GUSD Board meetings from our membership.

How did divide and conquer work in losing our fully paid Health Benefits?

Single vs. Family, PPO vs. HMO – member against member

Why were we unable to get the out of pay check expense down for family PPO?

GTA vs. GSMA, CSEA, and the district. A wedge was created between GTA and CSEA's past leadership. United we would prevail.

Why were our RIF'd teachers not brought back until the 11th hour?

GTA vs. Parents – Somehow we became the enemy although it was always GTA who was advocating for the return of our teachers (which happened before the

Jobs Bill was passed but too late for authentic rescheduling of classes to benefit students). The District changed the issue to bargaining timelines instead of using some of their \$55 million in reserves to bring teachers back.

Our newest challenge – The Bond

GTA has been discussing the bond issue with the District for months. We have grave concerns. The District has said that if the bond passes, they will have 19 million dollars available to go directly to the classroom. GTA has asked for that money to be used to cancel furlough days for 2011/12 and 2012/13 as well as return us to last year's class sizes. We asked the district to sign an agreement with us to that effect.

The district refused and continues to refuse to do so despite the fact the state gave K-12 education an increase of \$271 per ADA (approximately \$7 million in on-going money for GUSD) in the last budget that Governor Brown has left untouched.

Consequently we are very suspicious of their actual intent for the use of that \$19 million.

Nonetheless, some well intentioned members accepted the District's invitation to come to the December Board meeting and speak in favor of the bond. The District was, and still is, attempting to undermine the GTA's efforts to secure the District's promises to us and the community.

We know that the GUSD is "out to bid" on the installation of solar energy at many of our sites. They will not answer my question of the anticipated cost of the project which very well may be a large portion of the bond money they hope to get.

Remember, solar energy does not begin to pay for itself until after 20 years of installation. And know that the panels cannot be put on a school site's roof so teacher parking lots, or site playgrounds and fields will have to be used.

Yes, GTA has grave concerns about the

District's use of the bond money. We remember all too well the atrocities that happened with Measure K and do not believe the bond revenue is enough money for all that has been promised. And we believe there is nothing more important to a student's success than class size; teachers in the classroom is the one promise the District will not make.

GTA is working on your behalf, always. But we have to fight for everything. The District is so certain we will do nothing that they do whatever they want. Many sites are having 2 - 3 hour faculty meetings after contract hours with the District's blessing, they refuse to negotiate with us regarding the bond initiative, won't agree to keep classroom thermostats at their current levels should there be an early start calendar, and we are seriously worried about our new insurance broker's ability to restore our benefits.

We are not being unreasonable or greedy. We are trying to protect the classroom and we are failing. We cannot win the fight without you. You must stand up and stand behind us on every issue, every step of the way. This District can afford to return our class sizes to those of 2009/10. This district can afford to cancel all the scheduled furlough days for next two years. This district can afford to make everyone's insurance affordable. There is absolutely no reason for anyone to have to put in an over 10 hour day because of a ridiculously long faculty meeting. Absolutely no reason except we let it happen. Stand up. Stand strong. Speak up. Speak loudly. And most important, Stand united. Stand in support of your GTA. There is much to lose if you don't.

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Governor Brown's New State Budget

By Michael Romo, GTA Executive Director

Jerry Brown is presently confronted with the largest budget deficit ever faced by any governor in U.S. history. California's \$25 Billion deficit is mammoth; no other state faces the challenges that our state does.

In early January Governor Brown presented his proposed state budget plan. This plan is his answer to the economic quagmire that we face. He plans to close the deficit using a combination of budget cuts, a realignment of services and a continuation of temporary taxes. What follows is a brief look at each aspect of his plan.

Budget Cuts

Since the economic crisis began the education budget has taken the lion's share of cuts - \$18 billion worth over three years. This time around Governor Brown has acknowledged that education has already taken more than its fair share of cuts and he is proposing \$12.5 billion in cuts, which come primarily from other areas of the budget.

Realignment

The governor is proposing to restore local control of some services as a way to save the state money. To this end the Governor's Proposed Budget calls for a shift of government services to the local level (counties and cities). This transfer of responsibilities would be accompanied by dedicated revenues being shifted to the local level.

Some of the services that would be restored include the following:

- Custody and care of juvenile offenders and low-level adult felons
- Court security
- CAL FIRE, fire and emergency response activities
- Foster care and child welfare services
- Adult protective services
- Mental health services, including AB 3632

Governor Brown also proposes to phase out redevelopment agencies beginning in 2011-12.

The agencies would not have any new obligations; however, existing obligations would be honored. Freed-up funds from this phase out would provide relief to the state's General Fund. In future years, funds would become available for local government, including schools. It is estimated that \$900 million by 2012-13 would be freed up in this manner.

Continuation of temporary taxes

The governor is proposing that temporary taxes be extended by five years. The Governor's Budget proposes *flat funding* for K-12 education *if* the temporary taxes are extended. While the Legislature has the authority to extend the taxes; the Governor is calling for voter approval. A June 2011 ballot measure is proposed that would authorize the extension of temporary taxes. In order for this ballot measure to be on the June 2011 ballot the legislature must by a 2/3 vote approve the placing of the measure on the ballot.

Take it or leave it

Basically the Governor has two plans:

- If the temporary taxes are extended, the cuts are budgeted in January and education would be flat funded for 2011-12 (this includes the October ADA increase of \$271; approximately \$7 million in on-going money for GUSD)
- If the temporary taxes are not extended, an estimated additional \$9 billion in cuts would be needed, including large cuts to education. We face an additional \$2.3 billion in cuts, or more, to education if this were to happen

We will know by the end of March or the beginning of April if the legislature will agree to have a ballot measure that would ask voters to extend temporary taxes in June of 2011. If the legislature approves this measure then the fate of education will be in the hands of the voters. We will all need to be prepared to do all that is possible then to protect education in California. The prospect of a failure to extend temporary taxes is too horrific to even contemplate.

Vice-President's Message

By Jana Wells

Those of you who work in elementary know that you have special issues and concerns. GTA wants to be able to address these concerns. With this in mind, we are having a **GTA Elementary Issues Forum at Sparr Heights Community Center on February 9th, from 4:00 to 5:00**. We would like 2 to 3 teachers from each site to join us. I would like to be able to hear from many different grade levels, because each grade offers its own insights. If you would like to join us, please contact your GTA rep or me at janawgta@gmail.com.

Over the last month I have attended many meetings with the district about technology in the classroom. At GTA we are striving to make sure that you get the technology that will help you meet your students' needs. The right technology for you may not be right for another teacher.

Half day sub time; I have talked to Maria Gandera and she said to talk to your administrator and find out what time is half a day for your site, (3 hours and 37 minutes after the time you are supposed to be at work). Then when you go to put in your request for the morning off, change the start time to the time teachers are supposed to report and change the end time to reflect the half way point for your school. If it is for the afternoon, change the start time to reflect the mid day time and the ending time to reflect the end of your contract day. For example, at Dunsmore, our day is 7:45-3:00, so half way is at 11:22. Your sick days should only be docked for .5 of a day. If there are any problems with this, such as more than a half day is docked, contact the district and/or me.

The news from The Standard is that we did not get enough members to sign up for disability insurance during open enrollment. This means that if you signed up, you will need to fill out the health survey. Don't let this deter you, fill it out and get this very important coverage. If you are unsure of what will be covered, call The Standard at 1-800-522-0406. There were enough new enrollees for life insurance, so all that signed up for that have gotten it.

As I continue to visit sites, I am more and more impressed with how dedicated our teachers are in Glendale. Thank you for all your hard work.

Health Benefits Update By Tami Carlson

The Health Benefits Committee has finished the interviews for a new broker and the GUSD has hired Aliant. We have met with them once since they have been hired and plan to meet with them twice a month to discuss options in reducing our out of paycheck deductions.

Although CSEA's past leadership had asked the Committee to include Segal in the interviews for a new broker, they sided with the District and GSMA in recommending Aliant. GTA has grave concerns as we had received unflattering information about this brokerage firm. Time will tell but we are nervous.

Since then, CSEA has new leadership and we look forward to working cooperatively with them in the interest of both our memberships.

One option we have been interested in reviewing is that of the District self funding our medical Health Benefits entirely or at least our Prescription Drug Plan. This could be a huge cost savings but the District has indicated they may not be able to have the information they need gathered until after this year's renewal.

This makes us even more nervous as Aliant informed us at our last meeting that when many people leave a PPO for an HMO (as has happened this year), the insurance provider is likely to come in with a larger renewal rate as they do not make as much on the HMO as the PPO.

In addition, we have high usage. The insurance company wants to see usage at about 80% on average and we are over 90%. To help with this, please do not visit the ER unless it really is an emergency as ER visits drive up our usage percentage.

GTA and the Health Benefits Committee will be looking into school group plans and other providers to ascertain if they could closely match our doctor lists and plan design from last year at a more reasonable price.

We will keep you posted.

Bargaining Update **By Tami Carlson**

An Increase to ADA

In our last contract, we agreed that if there was a change in Base Revenue Limit (BRL) of \$50.00, we would come back to the table within 10 days to negotiate salary.

There was an increase to BRL of \$271.00 per ADA (7 million dollars in on-going money for our District) in last October's budget. GTA has notified the District that we want to negotiate but they have not yet given us any dates of their availability. We are still working on getting to the table.

Governor Brown's budget does not include cuts to K-12 education. Consequently, the \$271.00 per ADA increase that we did not expect, and vastly changes our economic outlook for the coming years, will continue. However, if Governor Brown's June ballot initiative to continue the temporary tax increase for an additional 5 years does not pass, all cards are off the table. It is estimated that we would lose that \$271 increase + an additional \$60.

For this reason, GTA will ask the District to negotiate with us as if the \$271 were to remain intact and add language to the contract, like we did last time, that if there is a certain amount cut from ADA, the agreed upon monetary increases will not take effect. Likewise, should ADA increase, we would return to the table to negotiate the increase for the bargaining unit.

GTA believes this is a fair way for both parties to have confidence that our monetary agreements will not harm either side. We are willing to make such agreement(s) and return to the table on a regular basis, as suggested by Ron Bennett at the latest School Services Budget update workshop, to review and modify our agreement(s) until the budget amount is certain.

The extension of the tax increases is planned to be on the ballot in June. Governor Brown and the legislature can authorize a continuance of the temporary tax increase without a vote but the governor wants to take it the voters.

The June vote will let us know before the start of the 2011/12 school year whether or not monetary changes to our benefit will take effect or whether we will have to make concessions.

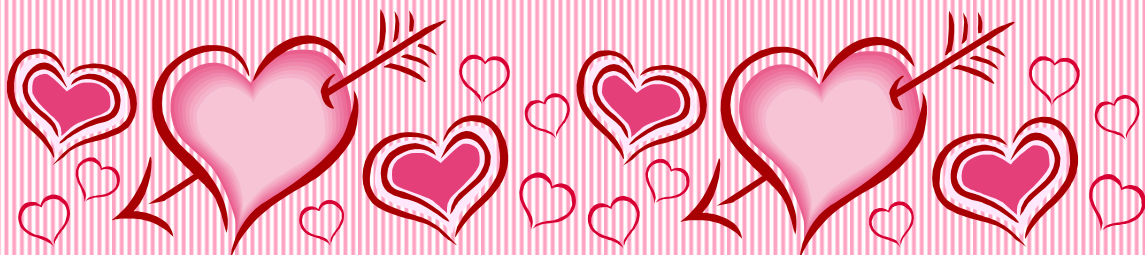
Please support us in this fair plan and advise all your friends, family, and acquaintances to vote **Yes!** on the ballot initiative to continue the temporary tax increases.

Calendar

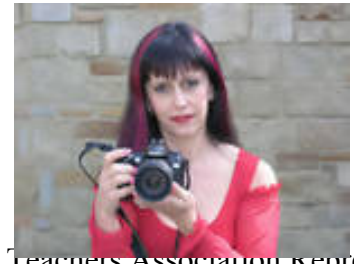
The District has spoken to us about negotiating the calendar for 2011/12. The District has reported they have two calendars to share with us, one starting at the same time as this year (around August 22), and one starting a week earlier (around August 15) in anticipation of the early start calendar in 2012/13.

GTA believes we should negotiate the conditions of the 2012/13 early start calendar before discussing the start date of the 2011/12 one. Should we come to an agreement about the conditions of the early start calendar, then GTA would want to start back to school a week earlier next year than this one to prepare for the early start in 2012/13.

Conditions that GTA is concerned about for the early start calendar are an eleven or twelve month pay schedule and the maintenance of existing temperature controls in our classrooms.



Community Outreach Committee by Karine Armen



The Community Outreach Committee has been busy attending events as Glendale Teachers Association representatives. In November Pat Vakian Yoho and I attended the Glendale Chamber of Commerce Mixer. In December Pat and I attended the Montrose Chamber of Commerce Holiday Mixer and Marilyn Hande and I attended the Glendale Chamber of Commerce Holiday Mixer at Hollywood Productions. We met *Education Meets Entertainment* at that mixer. They provide an educational website for kids. Check it out at www.luckykattv.com

The Community Outreach Committee is always looking for new members. We need people who belong to community organizations such as the Kiwanis, the Elks, etc. to become members of our committee to represent us at those meetings. We are also looking for people who would be willing to help staff a GTA booth at community events such as the Montrose Farmer's Market.

Please contact Karine Armen @ photokarine@hotmail.com or Tami Carlson @ tamicarlson@glendaleteachers.org to join the community outreach committee.



Montrose Chamber of Commerce dinner honoring Bud Yoho
First Row, from left: Annie Vakian, Patty Yoho
Second Row, from left: Marilyn Hande (former GTA BOD and current COC member), Mary Garripolli (former GTA BOD), Jacqueline DaVolio (GTA BOD), Sierra Vasquez (GTA BOD), Karine Armen (former GTA BOD and current COC chair)



Montrose Chamber of Commerce Honored Bud Yoho's memory and awarded him Certificate for the Best Educator. Patty Yoho holding the award.



Patty Yoho and Nayiri Nahabedian



Community Outreach Committee Members. From left: Marilyn Hande, Annie Vakian, Patty Yoho, Karine Armen



Montrose Chamber Members

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Discount is being offered by Universal Studios Hollywood to teachers and school employees, but Universal Studios Hollywood – A Salute to Our California School Employees is not an endorsed program of the California Teachers Association.

Tax Info for Members

2010/2011 Dues for Tax Deduction Purposes

2010/2011 Dues

With PAC Allocation Deducted

(99% of members will fall into the category of those who allocate funds to the local PAC).

Cat. 1	\$967.80
Cat. 2A	\$503.90
Cat. 2B	\$580.70
Cat. 3A	\$313.80
Cat. 3B	\$351.90

Without PAC Allocation Deducted

(for those who do not allocate to the local PAC)

Cat. 1	\$997.80
Cat. 2A	\$533.90
Cat. 2B	\$610.70
Cat. 3A	\$343.80
Cat. 3B	\$381.90

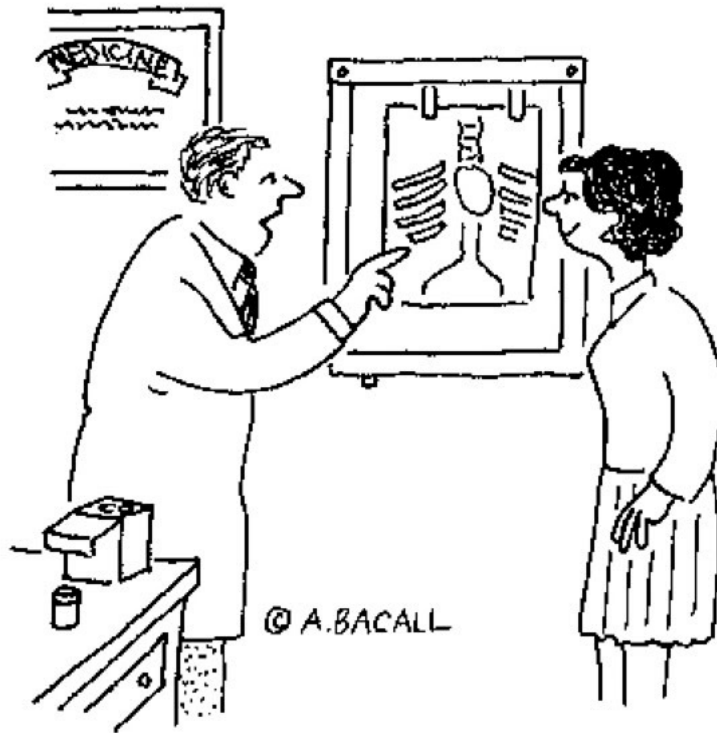


Educator Expense Deduction

If you are an eligible educator, you can deduct up to \$250 (\$500 if married filing joint and both spouses are educators, but not more than \$250 each) of any unreimbursed expenses [otherwise deductible as a trade or business expense] you paid or incurred for books, supplies, computer equipment (including related software and services), other equipment, and supplementary materials that you use in the classroom. For courses in health and physical education, expenses for supplies are qualified expenses only if they are related to athletics. This deduction is for expenses paid or incurred during the tax year. The deduction is claimed on either line 23 of [Form 1040](#) (PDF) or line 16 of [Form 1040A](#) (PDF). You are an eligible educator if, for the tax year, you meet the following requirements:

- You are a kindergarten through grade 12:
 - Teacher
 - Instructor
 - Counselor
 - Principal, or
 - Aide, and
 - You work at least 900 hours a school year in a school that provides elementary or secondary education, as determined under state law.
- Qualified expenses are deductible only to the extent the amount of such expenses exceeds the following amounts for the tax year:
- The interest on qualified U.S. savings bonds that you excluded from income because you paid qualified higher education expenses,
 - Any distribution from a qualified tuition program that you excluded from income, or
 - Any tax-free withdrawals from your Coverdell Education Savings Account.
- For additional information regarding personal credits and any alternative minimum tax (AMT), refer to [Publication 17](#), *Your Federal Income Tax*.

From: www.irs.gov



"Your heart is slightly bigger than the average human heart, but that's because you're a teacher."—Cartoon by A. Bacall

To My Valentine
By Ogden Nash

More than a catbird hates a cat,
Or a criminal hates a clue,
Or the Axis hates the United States,
That's how much I love you.

I love you more than a duck can swim,
And more than a grapefruit squirts,
I love you more than a gin rummy is a bore,
And more than a toothache hurts.

As a shipwrecked sailor hates the sea,
Or a juggler hates a shove,
As a hostess detests unexpected guests,
That's how much you I love.

I love you more than a wasp can sting,
And more than the subway jerks,
I love you as much as a beggar needs a crutch,
And more than a hangnail irks.

I swear to you by the stars above,
And below, if such there be,
As the High Court loathes perjurious oaths,
That's how you're loved by me.



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