



# the Fontanan



Volume 36, Issue 2

October 2014



Sue Felt  
FTA President

## Leadership

At the end of September, FTA leadership (Troy Liggins, Nancy Hofrock, and myself), District leadership (Dr. Boozer, Ayanna Balogun, and Brinda Leon), as well as our CTA Executive Director Barbara Smith had the opportunity to visit Montgomery County Educators Association as guest of NEA. MCEA has led the way with their vision of teachers as leaders for several years. Their association has worked collaboratively with their district to empower teachers to be an integral part of decisions effecting student learning and working conditions. During the training it became clear that FTA and the District are dedicated to fostering a collaborative relationship when formulating goals, strategies, and systems to positively impact student achievement and professional growth.

The following is a small excerpt of the philosophy behind the work at MCEA:

“Public support for- and expectations of- public education continue to change rapidly. Public school teachers and their unions are being attacked in the media and by legislators throughout the country, many state associations who have previously fought hard to win bargaining and representation rights have had then stripped away by adversarial governors and legislatures. The way we as unions have always done things will no longer be sufficient to meet the new challenges we face in our public schools. That means putting the quality of teaching and learning at the center of our agenda. We understand that our members’ futures depend on the success of our schools.

Teacher leadership is an indispensable ingredient both for school success and to ensure quality in our profession. Those who teach every day are in the best position to define and guide decisions about teaching and learning in our schools. When teachers lead, it should not be for the purpose of being promoted into school administration but rather to grow the capacity of the teacher workforce to improve teaching and learning. There must be opportunities for teachers to guide, direct and influence other teachers to achieve a common vision of effective teaching- and to be acknowledged, affirmed and compensated for their leadership as teachers.

Teacher leadership means that teachers are empow-

ered to take responsibility for the quality of their work, the profession and the school. To accept these responsibilities, teacher leaders must be enabled and trained to participate in school decision making processes, to represent the interests of their colleagues, and to organize others to help advocate for change.”

I won’t go into all the leadership positions that were created for the teachers of MCEA, if you would like to know more please visit their website where you will find their teacher leader program outlined as well as more about the great work that is being done there.

This doesn’t mean that the union isn’t still putting out fires, representing member, or negotiating for a better contract. What it means is that in addition to all that, we will be given the ability to be the experts and have our work valued. The good news is that the District is on board with this vision of change. We may sit on opposite sides of the negotiations table, but we are on the same side when it comes to creating the best schools for our students.

The process will take time and effort to fully implement, but we hope to establish a range of teacher leadership opportunities within FUSD. These new positions will be negotiated along with compensation. The ILT positions are along the lines of the types of positions we are talking about. I apologize that it wasn’t rolled out properly, it was something the district already had planned to do before we went to MCEA, but we will be able to rectify with language and stipends soon. Please know that we will be working to expand opportunities for teachers to take on responsibilities in their schools beyond the classroom without having to leave teaching for administration. Dr. Boozer has already created the ELT (Executive Leadership Team) which will consist of all three union presidents, their executive directors, and district leaders. This team will review and update annual goals and strategic frameworks, providing feedback on revisions to policies and procedures, setting system-wide targets and goals and reviewing student and system data to improve student achievement. We look forward to moving to Interest Based Bargaining as well.

Thank you for all the hard work you do on behalf of our students. You truly are the education experts. It is our goal through the development of this system of leadership to empower you to bring about effective change.

## Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender History Month by Lynnette Monk Dezan

October is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender History Month (LGBT). As I began researching LGBT History Month I was very pleased to find out that it was founded by a Missouri high school teacher, Rodney Wilson and first celebrated in 1994. October was chosen because National Coming Out Day, October 11th was a widely known event and it commemorated the first March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation for LGBT people in 1979. LGBT History Month is intended to encourage honesty and openness about being LGBT. In 1995, NEA passed a resolution to include LGBT History Month within a list of commemorative months.

LGBT History Month is also celebrated with annual month-long observances of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history, along with the history of the gay rights and related civil rights movements. National Coming Out Day (October 11), as well as the first "March on Washington" in 1979, are commemorated in the LGBT community during LGBT History Month. Each day in October, an Icon is featured with a video, biography, bibliography, downloadable images and other education resources at [www.lgbthistorymonth.com](http://www.lgbthistorymonth.com).

In 2012, California passed the FAIR Education Act to end the exclusion of people with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people from history and social studies lessons. For guides and resources go to [www.faireducationact.com](http://www.faireducationact.com).

LGBT youth face unique challenges in their daily lives. It is an invisible minority that is often the brunt of derogatory words and actions. Many LGBT youth do not feel like they have a safe space, not at home or at school. A student that identifies as LGBT is 4 times more likely to attempt suicide. Nine out of ten LGBT teens say they have been bullied. TheTravorProject.org provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services for LGBT youth ages 13-24. The "It Gets Better Project" was created to show young LGBT people the levels of happiness, potential, and positivity their lives will reach – if they can just get through their teen years.

This year the Human Rights Committee is holding its first LGBT History Month Contest. It is open to every grade level, Preschool-12th grade and is not mandatory. We are looking forward to seeing the student's entries. Information for this article was obtained from Wikipedia, [lgbthistorymonth.com](http://lgbthistorymonth.com), [faireducationact.com](http://faireducationact.com), [gsanetwork.org](http://gsanetwork.org), [thetrevorproject.org](http://thetrevorproject.org) and [itsgetsbetter.org](http://itsgetsbetter.org).

## Common Sense in the Classroom By Nancy Hofrock

It is essential that we all use common sense in the classroom. It is easy to find ourselves wanting to assist students in every way possible. We need to be able to provide an environment for excellent student interactions and amazing learning, while not overstepping our role. There are many situations that can cause a teacher to have to explain innocent actions with administration. Areas of concern include: touch, appropriate conversations, financial boundaries, community relationships, social media and district e-mail.

While it is difficult to avoid touch in Pre K-2nd grade classrooms, touching older students can be problematic. To avoid accusations of inappropriate touch, with the exception of a handshake or a high five, avoid touching students. Additionally, try not to be alone with a student.

Always keep conversations with coworkers, parents and students positive and solution centered. Refrain from profanity, suggestive humor and overly personal discussions with students. Parents may file complaints when they feel the teacher shares too much personal information with their child. Do not write or exchange notes, letters or emails with students. Keep in mind that troubled students can draw you into a professionally sticky situation and should be referred to school counselors for assistance.

It is inappropriate to accept gifts from parents or students that are significantly more lavish than gifts from other students in the class. Avoid hiring a current student to be your baby sitter. Don't give gifts or money to students. Loaning a student lunch money on occasion is not considered a risk.

Outside relationships with students, parents and other family members can be tricky. Always maintain the appropriate boundaries between a child and an adult. Otherwise, avoid outside relationships with students, as well as their parents. For example, dating a student's parent or family member, puts both you and the student in an awkward situation that doesn't facilitate learning.

Remember, as a teacher, you are a public figure. Teachers are scrutinized by the community. Do not post anything on Facebook or any social media that would undermine the communities trust in you. Photo's should not show you engaging in anything illegal or in any questionable activity. All photo's you post or that remain on your social media should reflect your professionalism. You may want to make sure your settings require you to approve tags.

Finally, use district e-mail for only professional reasons. Do not send e-mail that is personal in nature, chain letters, or even e-mails to friends. This is all public record. Do not use student names in e-mail. Always maintain a professional tone in all electronic communications.

Remember that using common sense when relating to coworkers, parents and students enables you to maintain positive relationships that promote student success.



Pre-order your discounted  
Holiday See's Candy  
at the FTA Office

16850 Seville Ave. Fontana, CA 92335  
909.829.0940

## Knott's Berry Farm Tickets

Adults (12-61)

\$35

Kids(3-11)/  
Seniors (62 and  
up) \$27

The  
Negotiations  
Committee meets  
the Monday before  
Rep Council at  
3:45 pm at the  
FTA office.

All members  
welcome!!

### A United Union Will Prosper

We are the FTA, CTA and NEA! The building on Seville is not the FTA. The officers we have are not the FTA. Our small but mighty group of representatives are not the FTA/ All the teachers in Fontana need to step up to the plate to make a difference in your classroom, your school, and your district.

We must be united, informed, and on point to defend the profession of teaching to the public.

We includes all teachers including those on special assignments and special ed, counselors, school nurses and teacher librarians. We sit around tables at meetings talking to each other about how much research and technology goes into our lesson plans, meet in PLCs above and beyond to improve and perfect our teaching, spend that extra time to phone homes, teleparent, or write letters to open communication over a difficult child. Lastly, we spend evenings or weekends grading and recording work to help students improve.

Where are we coming from? We are coming from a career that requires people with caring, tough, nurturing, determined, cooperative, and disciplined professional skills who take a class of students and shape them into a force that can change the world.

It is imperative we stay united in the face of any attempts to separate us in to camps that argue amongst ourselves. Together we will not only survive, but can actually go back to THRIVING!

In solidarity,  
FTA Organizing Committee

### The Director's Bookshelf by Trent Stillman

#### A Fighting Chance

By Elizabeth Warren



Every once in a while along comes a biography that just captures your full attention. Senator Elizabeth Warren's autobiography last summer is one of those books. The only exposure I had with Senator Warren previously had been a popular you-tube clip of her passionately talking about the middle class.

Her story is an admirable one. From pretty humble origins on the dusty plains of Oklahoma, she drove herself to seek a better life. Reading her book will give you a sense of all the barriers she faced on the road to reaching college. There is a sense while reading her book that a lot of her life experiences are something many educators will be able to relate to. Her desire was to complete college and become a teacher no matter what barriers presented themselves.

Elizabeth's first job after completing her undergraduate degree was as a special education teacher. She enjoyed teaching so much she knew it would always be something she wanted to do. The next stage of her life involved her pursuit of a law degree. The book chronicles her desire to not stray away from teaching having found her passion in life. When an opening to teach at her law school opens she applies for the position.

It's funny how something we had never planned on doing opens up new and fascinating paths. The law school strand Elizabeth was hired to teach only needed someone dedicated to financial law. The new curriculum opened up her eyes to the practices of predatory lending and the impact of wages on the middle class. The book takes you through her growing concern over wage stagnation, and the ever increasing inequalities within the United States.

The expertise gained from spending years involved with research on the middle class, led to Elizabeth becoming a popular expert on panels and committees. The book leads up to her eventual call to Washington, and her exposure to politics on a national level. If you have an interest in reading about how someone wades into the Washington scene and fights the established powers, this book is it. The victories and the defeats, it's all here.

The book ends with a detailed summary of her experiences deciding to run for United States Senate for the state of Massachusetts. The in- depth look at how one explores, and then plans a senatorial campaign is fascinating. I encourage members interested in politics to grab this book. Elizabeth Warren is a leader we might be seeing more of on the national scene. If I had to guess this book is setting her up for a potential presidential run.

Stay in the Loop!  
Sign up for FTA email  
alerts at  
fontanateachers.org

### 14-15 Rep Council Meeting Dates

August 20

September 10

October 8

Nov. 12

Dec. 10

January 21

February 11

March 11

April 8

May 13

### 14-15 TGIF DATES

~~AUGUST 15~~

~~SEPTEMBER 12~~

OCTOBER 10

NOVEMBER 7

DECEMBER 12

JANUARY 23

FEBRUARY 20

MARCH 13

APRIL 10

MAY 15

## FTA Social Events

**TGIF at Pancho Villa's**  
10/10/14 3:00pm to 5:00pm

### Disneyland Tickets

1 Day 1 Park

\$92.00 Adult (ages 10 and up)

\$86.50 Kids (ages 3 - 9)

Tickets Expire December 31, 2015

1 Day Park Hopper

\$125.00 Adult (ages 10 and up)

\$120.00 Kids (ages 3 - 9)

No Block Out Days

Tickets Expire December 31, 2014

Cash Only

(prices subject to change)

### AMC & Regal Movie Tickets

\$8.00

No Restrictions

Extra Charge for 3D

Cash Only

## Important FTA Email Addresses

Sue Felt

ftapres@

fontanateachers.org

Nancy Hofrock

ftavp@

fontanateachers.org

Grievance Team

grievance@

fontanateachers.org

Nathalie

nalvarez@

fontanateachers.org

Mandy

apeters@

fontanateachers.org

Barbara "Bubba" Smith

bsmith@cta.org

FTA Office

ftaoffice@

fontanateachers.org

FTA Teacher Halloween

Costume Contest

Email pics of yourself

in your costume to:

ftaoffice@fontanateachers.org

or message them to:

(909) 206-2013

Winners will be announced on Nov. 3rd!



## Fontana Teachers

### Association

16850 Seville Ave

Fontana, CA 92335

909.829.0940

fax 909.829.0466

ftaoffice@

fontanateachers.org

