

## SCTA News Messenger: February 22, 2011

### **Educators Joined “We Are One” Sacramento Candlelight Vigil Tuesday, February 22, to Show Solidarity for Wisconsin Teachers**

Local teachers showed their support for their fellow Wisconsin teachers who are under siege by its governor who wants to end their collective bargaining rights and greatly reduce their pension and health benefits. Sound familiar.

Teachers and other union groups are under attack by right wing zealots who want to end fair conditions for workers in Wisconsin.

### **Sacramento Teachers Pensions and Class Sizes Also Under Attack**

Even though teachers' pension and health benefits cost substantially less than other employees in the District, the SCUSD board says will still seek to reduce them even more. Over the years, SCTA has made your benefits and salary a high priority. The effort has been successful even with the Districts higher contributions to other employee groups.

The District provides a small 8.25% contribution to teacher pension benefits and a much larger 18-20% contribution to pensions for most District Serna administrators in Cal Pers and all District and site classified employees. For health benefits, the District pays between 5 to 10% more for Cal Pers health premiums for those same employees compared to teachers.

For example, after 30 years a \$75,000 classified retiree will receive nearly \$78,000 in retiree pension benefits for working just one job with a District. (\$54,000 from Cal Pers and between \$12,000 and \$24,000 from Social Security with no offsets). A \$75,000 teacher at 30 years will receive \$45,000 in retiree pension benefits from STRS and nothing else. Teachers who earned social security from another job from another employer will be offset (that means reduced) and their spouses will receive nearly nothing.

Teachers here in Sacramento and elsewhere should be angry that they are becoming the targets of the zealots. Teachers deserve the same level of pensions that are provided other governmental employees such as police, firefighters, and administrators, not less.. Their retiree pensions and health coverage often include family coverage including paid Medicare B, dental, and vision. Their coverage is paid for by tax dollars and tax increases.

### **Some Good News: Retro Checks for Extra 9 Hours In April**

The District confirmed that retro payments will be made in April and that the March 30 pay warrant should include the .75% increase for working the extra hours for CPT to help improve student achievement.

### **Teachers and Students Not Supported by Your Elected School Board**

Yes that's right. The same school board that was elected by you the teachers of Sacramento is looking for your help again. Except that this time the school board wants to increase class sizes for students and teachers. **Increasing class size is a euphemism for laying off or reducing the number of teachers.** At its last meetings, the School Board has been identifying just your jobs for elimination along with maybe 18 driver positions. Yes, everyone knows that the State is in deep financial trouble. But the School Board wants to balance the budget on the backs, fronts and sides of just teachers.

Call a school board member and ask them why they want to continue to pay more in pension and health benefits for administrators and classified workers in Cal Pers. Ask them how many site and district administrators will be laid off to balance the budget? Be prepared to hear that the District has reduced Administrators and others. Ask them how in the world non teacher positions could have been reduced when the District has added over 12 schools and new departments over the last 12 years and maintains far more schools than a normal district. Ask them how increasing class size will improve student achievement?

### **District Budget Projections Still Include Funds for Initiatives: Disruption Hurts More**

Right or wrong the District budget still seeks to add educational initiative at the cost of between \$1-2 million from categorical funds.. That assertion means the District leadership feels more needs to be done to improve student learning. SCTA is concerned that the overall approach the School Board is taking is detrimental to core learning theories.

Taking apart school staffs by way of laying off teachers, violating common sense class size rules, increasing assignment changes will not help our schools. SCTA believes the School Board needs to take a fresher newer look at building a school budget for once.

Teacher staffs are the core for student learning. All other general fund positions are supportive and maybe superfluous. Also, teachers and parents in the District need to be engaged over the question as to how much more can they do at their sites to cover for work that is not generally considered teacher work.