



A Union of Professionals

Novato Federation
of Teachers

Local 1986
AFL-CIO

UPDATE

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December, 2012

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Negotiations are coming! NFT has submitted the following articles for negotiations:

- Article 5 Grievance
- Article 6 Dismissal or Suspension
- Article 8 Professional Responsibility
- Article 9 Class Size
- Article 10 Evaluation
- Article 11 Transfer
- Article 12 Leaves
- Article 14 Retirement
- Article 16 Compensation
- Article 17 Employee Benefits

These will be sunshined for public comment at the December 4 Board meeting and then negotiations can commence.

NFT chose to wait until now to start the negotiations process in order resolve issues regarding Proposition 30 and the proposed new charter school in NUSD.

The good news is that Proposition 30 passed, which means that the District no longer has to spend the \$3.3 million dollars it had budgeted for shortfalls this year. Additionally, the School board will be making its decision regarding the charter on December 18, which should bring some certainty as to that potential funding loss as well.

Negotiations will begin shortly after December 18 and we will be exploring an interest-based bargaining (IBB) style process in which both sides identify interests and work together to resolve them.

In solidarity,

Aaron Fix, NFT President



Tell the School Board: NUSD Does Not Need Another Charter!

The final decision to accept or deny the proposed new charter in NUSD is December 18th. Until then, Board members are open to contact regarding teachers support. NFT urges you to email the Board and let them know we don't want another charter. Reasons include:

- ✓ The economic burden on the District would lead to increased layoffs and possible school closure.
- ✓ Our neighborhood schools are outstanding.
- ✓ Opening another charter suggest they are not something which is demonstrably untrue – look at our APIs.

Another charter would further fragment and isolate subgroups in our community. Now is the time for the entire community to come together and work as one to help all of our Novato students. Can you imagine what progress could have been made if all of the time, energy and dollars wasted on the charter effort had gone into our existing schools.

Let the Board know how you feel at:

- Maria Aguila - maguila@nUSD.org
- Tom Cooper - tcooper@nUSD.org
- Debbie Butler - dbutler@nUSD.org
- Derek Knell - dknell@nUSD.org
- Cindy Clinton - cclinton@nUSD.org
- Ross Millerick - rossm@nUSD.org
- Shelly Scott - sscott@nUSD.org

Nominating Committee

Elections for the NFT Executive Board, including the position of President, will be held in May. NFT By-Laws state that a nominating must be in place by March 1. Please consider volunteering for this committee. Contact NFT if you are interested.

An Evening with Diane Ravitch.....By Fran Rozoff

Public teachers could create charters. They would take the hardest-to-educate Diane Ravitch is a prominent education scholar who made big waves when she reversed ground and came out against such controversial measures as charters and high-stakes testing and accountability.

"Maybe standardized tests are not good predictors of future economic success or decline. Perhaps our country has succeeded, not because of test scores, but because we encouraged something more important than test scores - the freedom to create, innovate, and imagine."

No one should doubt Diane. She is an historian of education, educational policy analyst, and a research professor at New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. Previously, U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education, she was appointed to public office by both President of the United States George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton. Secretary of Education Richard Riley asked her to serve as a member of the National Assessment Governing Board, which supervises the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

At the outset, Ravitch was hopeful that Charter Schools might be something along the lines that Al Shanker [the late president of the American Federation of Teachers] described. kids. And then they would return to the public schools to say this is what we've learned, free of all regulations.

Ravitch reminds us that now Charters have turned into a competitive force. Most of the people behind the charter movement are coming from the voucher movement, and they see it as a way to drive public education into the ground. Ninety-five percent of charter schools in this country are non-union schools. They try to keep the workforce very young. They have competitive salaries but only at the lowest level.

Ravitch also rejects Race to the Top, which bribes states to expand the number of privately managed schools. She predicts that we'll see more profit-seeking corporations coming in and creating charter chains, and they will be interested mainly in the money, not in the kids.

The most toxic thing in Race to the Top, explains Ravitch, is that teachers will be evaluated by their student test scores. There is no evidence that this will make for better schools. The evidence is that it will cause fanatical, obsessive teaching to the test, a test which Arne Duncan has publicly admitted is no good, yet teachers will be judged by them. Should we here in California worry? The legislature in Florida just passed a law saying 50 percent of teachers' salaries will be based on test scores.

Ravitch goes on to explain that the single biggest indicator of low achievement is poverty. But there is a calculated effort to keep teachers from being heard and to have all the decisions made by the Gates and Broad foundations; the editorial boards; the think tanks (funded by Gates and Broad) who say to blame poverty is an excuse.

Then how will we evaluate the teachers? Diane describes the answer in two words: human judgment. "That's what we do in most other professions. We trust that they have supervisors who know their work better than we do." As Ravitch remarked to sympathetic listeners in her closing remarks Wednesday evening "...when did accountability replace humanity in public education?"



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CFT Convention in March

If you are interested in being a delegate to the CFT Convention in Sacramento March 15-17, please contact NFT to find out how to be elected as a delegate.

Scholarship Reminder

The deadline to apply for the CFT Scholarship is January 10, 2013. The application is available at CFT.org. The NFT scholarship application will be available in January at Novatonft.org.