

# United Educators of San Francisco Assembly Meeting

Wednesday, March 20, 2002, 4:00 p.m.

## Minutes

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***The meeting was called to order at 4:17***

### ***Special Order of Business:***

**Greetings from Osaka, Japan .....Osaka Teachers**

Sister Hene Kelly introduced the visitors from Osaka, Japan. They are here as part of an exchange program. They have an ongoing working relationship program with Burton, Rooftop, and Hoover in the SFUSD. Their particular focus of interest is in preventing discrimination against students.

Mr. Shinji Fuji spoke: In Japan, which is perceived as a homogeneous country, and our hometown has many Koreans and Okinawans, as well as Chinese. The Buraku have the same culture and religion as the Japanese, but are a minority. In Osaka there is the strongest effort in Japan to prevent discrimination. Discrimination against Buraku is hard for Americans to understand. It is based solely on where they live and does not have to do with color, beliefs, language or anything else. Before the 1950s the poverty and discrimination against the Buraku kept their children out of school. The situation has been addressed and is improving, although discrimination still persists. The biggest challenge is to improve the academic level of the Buraku children so that they can succeed in college. In the 1970s the schools targeted high school entry and the tests that the Buraku children needed to pass to enter and compete. There had been no attention to discrimination in high school before then. Osaka has four schools but the word got around and the schools were tagged as schools for minorities and not for the rest of the population. The student bodies tended to be mostly minority students and majority students did not want to be seen as a part of those schools. It once cost \$80,000 a year to repair the windows in the schools that were designated the schools of minority students. The schools have improved over the past ten years to the point that they are now much better. The reason for the improvement is the empowerment of the Buraku students as well as the Koreans and Chinese and handicapped and other foreign students. They are to keep their identity, and the students with hardships are at the heart of the movement. We come here to search for ways to enhance the empowerment of the students. There are not a lot of such schools in Japan, but it is the belief of these teachers that there should be such a movement globally. Now they want a student exchange to help facilitate the empowerment of students.

A question from the floor elicited the following response:

Japan is in a transitional time. I am a union member. Previously the union wanted a higher wage. Now the choice is "Hired or Fired" and the union must work to change those policies. Teachers union membership has fallen to a third of the teachers. Overall union membership is at about 25% nationally.

Mr. Toru Sasaki served as the translator. Mr. Tatsuya Omonishi was the third member of the delegation. A fourth member did not attend this meeting.

### ***Minutes***

**Approval of Minutes .....Dennis Kelly**

MSC to approve the minutes. There were two editorial changes on the first page. The first word of the third line in the third paragraph under the President's Report should read "be", not "have".

### ***Reports***

**1. Treasurer's Report.....Lily Gee Hickman**

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CTA is currently in arrears in its payments to UESF. This is a result of when the local did not pay per capita dues to CTA as part of the attempt to buy the 14th Street building and the need to have a fund for down payment

The actual number of fee payers is not clear from the report, but that information is available. They are paying about 25% less than members and number about 100 teachers.

There were several questions about the way that COPE money can be integrated into the general fund.

### **2. Vice President's Report..... Rudi Faltus**

- Weighted Student Formula training is about to begin. Critical issues for site leaders include a heightened awareness that the contract is in place. There will be changes to the staff allocation process. The trainings will take place without the budgets. Staffing issues and article 15 regarding staffing allocations are important. Although it will look different, it is based on the same contractual agreements as before. The concept remains the same. The UBC is the appropriate body to deal with staffing of certificated and classified staffing. Schools will be told that they cannot reduce paraprofessional budgets for the next year. This, again, is part of the failure of the district to know or learn seniority dates.

A comment from the floor pointed out that WSF will make for more work for teachers who are involved in it and should have been opposed by the union. A contrary opinion was also voiced.

Special Education, which has a federal mandate ,seems to be placed in the hands of the site to determine what should happen with it. The vice president believes that special ed has been taken out of the local control and remanded to the district. A trainee confirmed that perception.

A building rep, upon seeing the next staffing allocation, should contact the administration to work out what the staffing should be and then take that to the site council. If there is a dispute between the UBC and the site council, there is dispute resolution language in the Weighted Student Formula outline.

This process may well be confusing in the coming year.

A member pointed out the short period of time available to do all this work this year.

Another member spoke about the burden that WSF will impose on the teachers and the dissatisfaction that members in the field feel over the lack of communication between the union and the field.

- There will be a distribution out tomorrow.

### **3. President's Report.....Kent Mitchell**

#### **Weighted Student Formula:**

Divide it into three topics:

a. Site Decision Making: (note that CTA's AB 2160 is an effort in that direction). This is something that the union has long supported.

b. A change in attitude in Central Office. This means that the Central Office will have to stop being the dictator and instead will have to provide information. The district will need to have itself together to make this work. This is a work in progress and is likely to cause the most problems.

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c. The assignment of weights to determine the money the school gets: This is a relatively minor part of the whole process and will not add a lot of new money to the sites. The weights will be subject to revision.

The actual costs of salaries and seniority of staff is not a factor in the WSF decision-making because the district has decided to use only average salaries, not actual ones.

- **The Elections**

We made an effort in two Assembly districts and did not win. We will learn how to work collaboratively with the newly elected Assemblypersons.

- There will be a gathering of AFT locals in San Francisco at the Gough Street campus of City College on 19 April from 4-7 to honor Nancy Pelosi.

- **Lobby Day**

Jill Wynns and the president of the Oakland School Board, as well as the Oakland teachers' union and UESF are working on creating a special Lobby Day on 8 May.

The CFT will have its Lobby Day on 28 April. The CTA Golden Gate Service Center will hold its Legislative Breakfast on 27 April.

### **Bargaining Update**

The time after 31 January and the PARS decision began a bleak time in terms of the relationship with the district. An 11 March meeting with the Superintendent made a change in direction. The Board then got the first interim budget report from Sarah Hart. The union needed this for real work on salary and compensation. The superintendent and UESF president agreed that all the open issues could not be finished before the end of summer. It made no sense to hold up the available money until then. The core bargaining team agreed to a narrow set of conditions that will govern the opening of school and take that portion of the contract through the ratification process in the spring. Money implementation could then begin in May. Also discussed were ways to handle the PARS issue and the lesser amount of money available there. This also would be available at the time of the spring ratification process.

The union was ready to bargain last June. The district's inability to proceed put everything off for a few months.

Since 11 March the bargaining process has been "ramped up". It has meant a lot of time spent by the president developing "scattergrams" and other data. The district started on theirs last Thursday and made it available within a week. There is agreement between the numbers on the very small sample that has been compared.

The potential flaw is that the work has been going forward on "straw designs", conceptual agreements. The actual contract language may provide some problems.

There is a meeting scheduled in the office for the PARS class action grievance. The level two grievance will be heard after that date.

Comments from the floor:

- CFA agreed on a 1.8% raise because they agreed with management that the money is not available. Is UESF in a similar situation?

SFUSD does not get the full state COLA because it is a "declining enrollment" district and that triggers deductions from the full COLA.

- The Board of Education can vote on the contract provisions if they give 72 hour notice.

### **Action**

#### **New Business**

MSC to support the Feinstein bill which eliminates the Social Security offset.

***Old Business***

***Good of the Order***

- There needs to be a time set aside at these meetings for problem solving, perhaps earlier than the beginning of the meeting. There are building reps who need information and these meetings do not provide the answers.
- The union staff is committed to bargaining leaving only Rudi and Mary Anne functioning as the office staff.
- It is helpful to have groups which meet to discuss how to use WSF so we profit from the experience of others. It is also important to educate ourselves around the issues of small schools.
- Good sounding reforms must be carefully looked at since some are extremely top-down and anti-teacher.

***Adjournment***

The meeting adjourned at 6:20.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Kelly, Secretary