



# A Report from our *President*

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Just when you think things are getting, better reality sets in. I had assumed we were reaching the top of our climb only to find there are many more obstacles. What we need to do is to use all these obstacles as stepping stones to where we want to be.

Before we confront those obstacles I want to celebrate our successes. We successfully negotiated a three year contract that prevented RIF's for the third year in a row. This is an awesome victory for everyone. The final count for RIF's throughout the state was over 26,000. In our region, (region 3), 7,800 members participated in RIF hearings. Bargaining Unit Members of MTA can feel proud that not a single permanent member was RIF'ed for 2009/2010.

Our negotiating team was successful in crafting the Retirement Incentive and the Volunteer Transfer Program. We showed solidarity and support for our schools on March 4<sup>th</sup> and we sent a message to our elected officials that educators and students will not bear the financial burden to keep our schools functioning. Our school calendars for the next two years have been negotiated and although we have seven budget-cut days scheduled for the next two years, we have contract language that will reinstate those days as funding becomes available.

As we gear up for the CST's, thank you for all the hard work you do in your classrooms. Your dedication to your students is evident. Our constant steady growth in our AYP/API is the result of your relentless work. However, our steady pace, on this straight path, has come to a fork in the road. Before we can move forward we need to access our obstacles.

Nationally, we need to reiterate that President Obama's ESEA blueprint does reflect a change from the previous punitive law that was based on erroneous assumptions about how to improve schools. Congress and state legislatures should not tell teachers how to teach. Good education

cannot be achieved by a strategy of testing students, shaming educators, and closing schools.

State wide, the newest Senate Bill 955, attacks the civil right of teachers. We, the education community, must still address the Race to the Top reforms. Remember California hastily passed new laws to become eligible for these monies.

Locally, within the last few days I've been made aware that the members of the Board of Education have acted irresponsibly. They created a new cabinet level position with over a 12.5% increase in salary. This was approved on the same day that they approved our seven furlough days. What can \$18,560 dollars bring to a classroom, or a school site? How many intervention programs could be received by our students? What message are they sending to the students, community, and teachers by creating a position as Liaison to the Board? When you hear Liaison to the Board what's your first thought? As class size increases in the elementary levels and one hundred K-12 positions are eliminated, how does this board justify the need for an additional cabinet level position? And so, we are faced with a decision. What is the best way to have the Board of Education hear our displeasure?

I will continue to visit school sites to get your input and hear your concerns. The Executive Committee's focus is our members. This is our third year of painful cuts to education. We will not be cut as the Cabinet grows! We are known for our organizational efforts. As always... **One voice, united!**