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*The LCEA Newsletter
is published monthly.*

The Tutorial Enterprise

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Transcript (with informational links) of the speech given by Steve Fargan, Lyon County Education Association President at the April 13, 2010 meeting of the Lyon County Board of School Trustees

I am Steve Fargan, President of the Lyon County Education Association. I would like to address some perceptions and priorities as well as math problems.

In the days and weeks following the March 9, 2010 school board meeting I have heard many people voice their concerns based on the document “Special Session Update during Board Meeting” as well as information shared by site administrators based on this document.

(Here is a link to the document “Special Session Update during Board Meeting”:

<https://v3.boardbook.org/Public/PublicItemDownload.aspx?smk=462>)

Near the top of this document it states “...Informational Only...”

However, the details of the “Proposed process” being shared by site administrators has created an uneasy atmosphere that is raising many concerns with our licensed staff.

Perceptions.

Public Perception.

What perception does the public have of the Lyon County School District when on one hand they are spending well over a million dollars building synthetic turf fields at two school sites, while on the other hand there are suggested proposals to cut the athletic programs that could be using these new fields? The minutes of the March 29, 2009 school board meeting include interesting discussion on item number 17.

(Here is a link to the minutes of the March 29, 2009 Lyon County Board of School Trustees meeting:

<https://v3.boardbook.org/Public/PublicItemDownload.aspx?mk=20029111&fn=minutes.pdf>)

Parent Perception.

What perceptions do parents have of the Lyon County School District when on one hand a new school is being built while on the other hand there are proposals to cut licensed staff? Refer to the minutes of the February 10, 2009 school board meeting.

(Here is a link to the minutes of the February 10, 2009 Lyon County Board of School Trustees meeting:

<https://v3.boardbook.org/Public/PublicItemDownload.aspx?mk=20027258&fn=minutes.pdf>)

Employee Perceptions.

Here, I must first ask a short three-part math story problem.

How many administrators and other staff were in the Lyon County School District office during the 2005-2006 school year when student enrollment was at 8,696 and growing?

How many administrators and other staff are currently in the Lyon County School District office during the 2009-2010 school year with enrollment at 8,670 and declining?

What is the difference between these two district office figures?

I don't know the exact answer to this yet.

I do hope that others are asking for answers to these questions.

(Here is a link to the report Enrollment 3-12-10.pdf:

<https://v3.boardbook.org/Public/PublicItemDownload.aspx?smk=901>)

This will be required by Nevada Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 2.

Item number three in the sixth paragraph states:

“3. Reviewing the ratios of administrators to staff and administrators to students and considering adjustments to those ratios if it is determined that the number of administrators is too high in relation to the number of staff or students as applicable.”

Item number seven states:

“7. Considering the “shared sacrifice” that is necessary to prevent massive layoffs and to ensure a high quality of service to Nevada’s students.”

(Here is a link to Nevada Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 2:

http://leg.state.nv.us/26th2010Special/Bills/ACR/ACR2_EN.pdf)

Next, I'll ask more multi-part math story problem that I do have some of the answers to.

How many positions were there for licensed non-administrative staff in the 2008-2009 school year?

Answer - 627

How many positions are there currently for licensed non-administrative staff in the 2009-2010 school year?

Answer – 587

What is the difference?

Answer – 40 less positions.

(Here is a link to the minutes of the October 13, 2009 Lyon County Board of School Trustees meeting:

<https://v3.boardbook.org/Public/PublicItemDownload.aspx?mk=20038201&fn=minutes.pdf>)

(Here is a link to the minutes of the November 10, 2009 Lyon County Board of School Trustees meeting:

<https://v3.boardbook.org/Public/PublicItemDownload.aspx?mk=20040662&fn=minutes.pdf>)

(Please look at the Public Participation portion of both of these meetings.)

What was the student enrollment on count day of the 2008-2009 school year?

Answer – 8,937

What was the student enrollment on county day of the 2009-2010 school year?

Answer – 8,766

What is the difference?

Answer – 171 less students

What is the ratio of licensed non-administrative positions lost to the difference of students enrolled?

Answer - 40 to 171 or 1 to 4.25

What is the current reported average student to teacher ratio in the Lyon County School District?

Answer – 1 to 19.63

Notice that these ratios are very different.

What was the student enrollment on count day of the 2009-2010 school year?

Answer – 8,766

What is the current student enrollment on the latest report?

Answer – 8,670

What is the difference?

Answer - 96 less students

The Special Session update at the March 9, 2010 school board meeting includes a proposal to reduce 35 licensed staff.

(Here is a link to the document “Special Session Update during Board Meeting”:

<https://v3.boardbook.org/Public/PublicItemDownload.aspx?smk=462>)

(Here is a link to the report Enrollment 3-12-10.pdf:

<https://v3.boardbook.org/Public/PublicItemDownload.aspx?smk=901>)

Priorities.

Does it make sense that one of the first places the Lyon County School District is looking to cut is the number of licensed staff?

I remind you that our dedicated licensed staff are those people who work directly with our students.

Finally, Student Perceptions.

How many students will be asking this question?

Will I get to see my teachers next year?

LCEA Mini-Grants Thank You Notes

Please extend my heartfelt thanks to the LCEA board members for the \$200 Mini Grant award for our Organic School Garden. I've purchased the curriculum supplies already (and turned them over to the grade school teachers), and am just getting ready to buy the gloves and tools for the kids: they're really excited, and the work on the garden is going well. We have seedlings started, garden journals are being made, and we're meeting with the landscape designer this week on Thursday morning.

Our organic grower/advisor, Marcia Litsinger of Churchill Butte Organics, just got tapped by the White House to take a position leading the push in NV to create organic garden initiatives and to work on school-to-table farming programs. She called this weekend, and I asked if she would like to invite the Obamas to visit our garden this fall when they arrive to support Reid during the election season. She thought that was a great idea, and rattled off the list of contacts she'll send an email to with the invitation. (I'd love to see LCEA leadership there if that happens for us).

Thank you again for the support-we so needed kids' sized gloves and tools for the project. I'm very happy my union goes the distance for those of us who go the extra mile for our students in the county. Thanks for all the work that all of you do for all of us: I'm union and proud of it.

Yours truly,

Laura

Laura Fillmore
Smith Valley School
K-12 Art Teacher

I want to thank you for the funding to purchase the anatomical models. The very first day I had the model of the brain on display it got the attention of a student who is somewhat academically challenged. He was thoroughly enjoying taking it apart and putting it back together and he was asking "what's this part" and "what's this section do?" This was exactly the response I was hoping to get out of my students and it worked on day 1 of having it in my classroom! The foot model was also very well received by the students and I have used it to explain some recent ankle injuries. The students are excited and really enjoy checking out and manipulating the models. Thank you LCEA for improving the education of students!

Sincerely,

Heather Rogaczewski
Physical Education/Health/Sports Medicine Teacher
Smith Valley School

LCEA plans to offer Mini-Grants again during the 2010-2011 year. Applications will be included on the LCEA website when they are available.

2010 NEA Pacific Regional Leadership Conference

By Steve Fargan

I attended the NEA Pacific Regional Leadership Conference in Reno, Nevada the weekend of March 19-21, 2010.

On Friday night we were welcomed to the conference by NSEA President, Lynn Warne. She introduced the keynote speaker, NEA Vice President, Lily Eskelsen. Lily's speech was entertaining and uplifting and got us off to a fantastic start.

On Saturday I attended four sessions. Two sessions were held Saturday morning and two sessions were held Saturday afternoon.

The first session I attended on Saturday morning was "Never Let a Crisis Go To Waste: The Political Optimist's Workshop." This session had two presenters from NEA Campaign and Elections, Tricia Bosak and Trish Welte. We discussed the political landscape we face in 2010.

"You Can See Clearly now the Rain has Gone: Utilizing NEA Member Benefits in the Future" was the second morning session I attended. This session had two presenters from NEA Member Benefits, David Glenn and Teresa Munch. David Glenn previously gave a great presentation at our December LCEA Executive Board meeting. It was good to see David again and learn more about the many member benefits that NEA offers.

The keynote speaker at lunch was NEA Secretary-Treasurer, Becky Pringle. She gave a very serious and powerful speech.

The first Saturday afternoon session I attended was "Yoga in the Classroom." This session was presented by Julianne Dauble a teacher from the state of Washington. We were able to participate in a yoga session and feel for ourselves the benefits of yoga and also hear about how it helps Julianne's students.

The fourth and final session I attended on Saturday was "Web Video and Strategy". This session was presented by Jamiah Adams Fellow of New Media Training. I not only learned more about video editing using computer software, I also appeared in one of the videos.

On Sunday morning I attended the Open Hearing on the Reauthorization of ESEA. I listened to teachers from various states voice their concerns. I also submitted a page of concerns about the reauthorization to NEA.

Keynote speaker, NEA President, Dennis Van Roekel was much more intense than in the previous times I have heard him speak. His fiery speech on the current issues we face was inspiring and a great finish to a wonderful conference.

I also met and had discussions with many other teachers from the eight states of the Pacific Region throughout the weekend.

I appreciate the opportunity I was given in being able to attend the NEA Pacific Regional Leadership Conference. I would be happy to share more details about the conference with interested teachers.