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2011-12

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The VOICE

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State of the "Union"

For those of you who have been around awhile and have attended any CTA sponsored workshops or conferences, you already have heard of or seen the COG model: Constant Organizing Goal. The COG model is depicted as a continuous circle of Plan, Act, Evaluate. Around the outside of the circle is the word, "LISTEN".



For me personally, it is always fun to set goals and work to strive to meet them. But common to many of us, I have the tendency to forget to evaluate how things are going as I surge forward. I listened to a little of President Obama's State of the Union address a few weeks ago and it dawned on me. It's time to take a look at our own "union."

Before being elected your president, I had the great opportunity to train and become part of the Organizing Committee. We set our goals for BTA and formed an Action Plan to give us direction to accomplish them. Last year's Executive Board voted to approve it. As your president, I have been working towards those same goals for our association. I am fortunate to have the support of a Board of Directors to help.

THE GOAL: To build a more powerful, organized union.

ACTION PLAN: Improve organization, more communication, and increase member involvement by offering trainings.

My own opinion based on an informal ("suggestive?"), self-evaluation and comments of Board of Directors and general membership, is that our association is moving towards the goal. This opinion is based on:

1. New and improved website
2. Many emails sent and received

3. Attendance at CTA workshops and conferences, CTA presidents' meetings, School Board meetings
4. Numerous volunteers that participated in the BUSD School Board campaigns which resulted in the election of 2 out the 3 BTA endorsed candidates

If may, at this time, I would like to mention some personal goals for us I have had in addition to the ones previously mentioned. Many discussions with my Board of Directors have helped to establish these goals as well.

The first thing we wanted to do was change the format of the Representative Council (RC) meetings...mainly to shorten them, i.e. 1 hour. After a two month glitch in the process, I now believe we're on our way to this goal being met. The rationale was to encourage RC involvement. What I was hearing from members was that they did not have the time. The promise of one hour per month should encourage all members to be involved at this very basic level.

My strongest desire and impetus for being your president was to improve our relationship with the school district administration and the school board. It was very troubling, to say the least, to witness the breakdown of that over the past few years. It is very fortunate for us that we now have Brian Jacobs as our new Superintendent of Instruction and Debbie Cuadros on our School Board. I look forward to meetings with Brian each month on a one on one basis and also at the monthly Focus on Learning meetings. Discussions are very thoughtfully stimulating and professional as we both love discussing the education process of the students. As you know, his focus and concerns are directed towards the students having the best educational experience possible, as it is for each and everyone of us as teachers who face them each day. I find that he fully understands the best ways to accomplish improved experiences and the impact teachers have upon those experiences. He HEARS our concerns and so far, has shown to be is a reasonable leader. Many teachers are beginning to see changes in their site administrators after Brian's meetings with them. Please be aware that I have been in discussions with Brian on how his directives are being played out at the school sites, as I ask for clarity with what his directives were. Bottom line, I appreciate that he is so approachable and willing to meet with me if concerns arise that need immediate attention.

As we enter into the last half of our school year and into negotiations of our contract, you can look forward to the opportunity to express the changes you think we need to make. Surveys will be developed and sent out via our new website. I hope we hear from ALL of you!

Respectfully, your Prez.,

Elayne

