

Notes from the CFA TE Caucus Workshop, 8/18/05

Dear Teacher Educators and Friends,

We had a very productive meeting at the Manhattan Marriott on Thursday from 10-4 pm. Most folks stayed over and attended the leadership meeting the next day where we discussed the need for ALL OF US to get out the NO vote especially on Prop 75 and 76 at the special election in November 8th. Get your friends and neighbors registered, if they are not already, and inform them of the serious need to vote at this election. We need to protect public education. The budget for funding K-higher education, collective bargaining, teacher tenure, and pensions are all under attack. Please contact your local CFA leadership for voter registration materials and more information.

Here is a brief summary of what we discussed and the action items we plan to develop. We have at least three projects to choose from if you wish to become more actively involved. Please contact the responsible person if you can contribute some time and energy to any of these projects.

1. The effects of and responses to scripted curriculum, and corporate control of the curriculum/ This includes SB 2042, NCLB, the California High School Exit Exam (CHSEE) and standardized tests, workload, social justice curriculum and ways in which teacher educators can take more control of their curriculum and courses: We discussed our involvement in challenging the deficit theory of Ruby Payne, who authored A Framework for Understanding Poverty. Many of us will present papers, panel discussions at a variety of conferences in the fall. This is part of project #1

Curriculum:

1. We want to empower teachers to subvert SB2042
2. We will do some research on former students who are managing to teach for social justice, three years later, in an era of high stakes testing
3. We want to continue the dialogue between teacher educators and teachers to develop an alternative anti-racist, social justice curriculum model of alternative curriculum
4. Continue meeting with the CTA Peace and Justice Committee around these issues.

We see these as proactive critical multicultural strategies in the Age of NCLB.

contact

person: Virginialea@earthlink.net and Annberlak@yahoo.com

. 2. Recruitment and retention of teachers, especially teachers of color. In what ways can we challenge/eliminate the barriers to recruitment of prospective teachers into credential programs, as well as hiring more faculty of color for all of our disciplines. We also need to find funding for remediation for students who do not pass the standardized entrance exams. We need folks to write op-ed pieces, hold forums, develop legislation that supports this goal. Kitty Epstein(Hayward) has a great letter that was recently published in the SF Chron, and is on our website for viewing. (calfac.org then to Committees and Caucuses, TE Caucus) We also hope to involve student CTA in this project. Contact person robertaahlquist@yahoo.com

3. Data collection to support a CFA collective bargaining proposal that challenges the widely unequal ways in which student teaching supervision ratios are determined. We will be sending out a survey which we want you to contribute to and then to circulate to gather more information on this project. We need to raise public awareness of these critical educational issues. If you can write an op-ed piece, contribute research you have done, or know about, or original research, please contact us. Next meeting will be at the Delegate Assembly on October 14. Several of us will not be there as we are presenting our position on Ruby Payne at a professional conference. We will have a meeting for those who will be at the Assembly, and/or can make this next meeting. Contact person: Teresa Cotner tcotner@csusb.edu

4. Contact language for bargaining that addresses unequal workload for student teaching supervision.currentl@csus.edu

We need to raise public awareness of these critical educational issues. If you can write an op-ed piece, contribute research you have done, or know about, or original research, please contact us. If you have a model social justice program, let us hear about it.

Next meeting will be at the Delegate Assembly on October 14 in Sacramento at the downtown Holiday Inn. A group of CFA Teacher Educators will be presenting our position on Ruby Payne at the Anti-Oppressive Conference in Hawaii during this weekend and will not be able to make this Caucus meeting. But those who can should take the work forward, and we will have our staff person, Maureen Laughran to assist. Time and place will be announced on the TE Caucus website in September. Keep us informed of articles, conferences, research you or others are doing that contribute to our goals. Send relevant articles to me and I'll get these on the website.

Thanks to all who came and participated, and we hope those of you that couldn't make it will become involved in one of these projects.

Here is an important note from Ann Berlak, SFSU:

The attached article by Berliner is relevant in many ways to the discussion we've been having about Ruby Payne. It considers how the structural features of poverty--poor health care, for example, are the root causes of the gap. I hope everyone can see the difference between Berliner's argument and Payne's. The difference is absolutely crucial.

PS:

We have been asked to submit a proposal or topic(s) that the TE Caucus would like to present at the CFA Equity Conference, March 10 and 11, 2006 in Los Angeles. If you have ideas, send me an email and I will forward these topics to the planning committee, as I serve as TE Caucus Chair on this committee. email: rahlquis@email.sjsu.edu

Again, thanks to all who participated.

In union,
Roberta Ahlquist, for the CFA TE Caucus