

# COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND K-12 COALITION FOR STRS FAIRNESS

On August 29, 2013 a circular was issued by STRS which in effect de-classified specific administrative positions that were historically considered "Educational Administrators" and deemed their service while in those positions as not creditable. As this action directly impacted many members of ACCCA and ACSA, and threatened to result in lawsuits that would negatively impact districts for years to come. Given these developments, an effort was made to pull together a coalition of impacted organizations to consider solutions.

On Friday, November 22, 2013 a coalition of like-minded and interested parties who represent the various constituencies directly impacted by what is now being seen as a recent "ramp up" by STRS to re-interpret designated classifications of creditable service, held an initial organizing meeting in San Francisco at the request of ACCCA—the Association of California Community College Administrators. Those present included:

- **Willy Duncan**, President, Sierra College and President of the ACCCA Board
- **Mary Dowell**, Partner, Liebert Cassidy Whitmore and Business Member Rep on the ACCCA Board
- **John Didion**, Executive Vice Chancellor, Rancho Santiago CCD and Co-Chair of the ACCCA CFLA
- **Susan Bray**, Executive Director, ACCCA
- **Linda Beam**, Vice President of HR, El Camino CCD and ACCCA Consultation Rep
- **Rose DelGaudio**, Vice President of HR, Long Beach CCD and Co-Chair of the ACCCA CFLA
- **David Bugay**, President, ACHRO and Vice Chancellor HR at South Orange CCD
- **Bonnie Ann Dowd**, President, ACBO and Executive Vice Chancellor, San Diego CCD
- **Sal Villasenor**, Governmental Relations Director, ACSA
- **Keith Bray**, Chief Counsel, CSBA (via phone)
- **Russell O'Donnell**, Chief Operating Officer, ASCIP
- **Tim Keenan**, Senior Vice President, Keenan & Associates & SWACC Rep.
- **Bill Polland**, Representative, Keenan & Associates
- **Margaret Merchat**, Attorney, School & College Legal Services of California
- **Virginia Riegel**, Attorney, School & College Legal Services of California
- **Tom Manniello**, Attorney, Lozano Smith

Other confirmed members of the Coalition who were not present included **Helen Benjamin**, Chancellor, Contra Costa CCD and President of the Board, CEOCCC; **Jeff Vaca**, Deputy Executive Director of CASBO; and, **Mike Ecker**, President of the Board of Directors, ACSA.

Following welcoming comments from ACCCA Board President **Willy Duncan**, members began with introductions and clarification of their organization's interest in the issue, including their perceptions of the impact of STRS actions to their constituencies.

A summation of a variety of legal perspectives and the identification of pertinent and relevant Education Code sections related to the re-classification of administrators was provided by the attorneys attending the meeting.

Representatives of the various K-12 and Community College member organizations provided anecdotal testimony regarding the significant and direct impact on their members and the efforts of their organizations to respond on their behalf following the release by STRS of the 8/29/13 circular.

Representatives of the Insurance and Benefits Management companies reported that in some cases, district coverage specifically *excludes all costs other than defense costs* for this situation, which may leave some districts without adequate protection for judgments against them that would likely result if administrators are negatively impacted because of the STRS amended policy.

Following the reports of these representative groups, members of the coalition agreed to the following:

1. That the “*Coalition for STRS Fairness*” shall be formed to address the concerns of both K-12 administrators and districts and of Community College administrators and districts, and that its members consist of those already established as “Partners of the Coalition”;
2. That the case for action to address concerns generated by the STRS circular dated August 29, 2013 which expanded the definition of administrators who shall no longer be considered “educational administrator” has been made. Further, regardless of any “solution” to the issue currently being offered by STRS, the coalition shall still press forward with a more comprehensive legislative solution that provides a remedy to all who are affected;
3. That the comprehensive solution must address the overriding problem of STRS not recognizing a district governing board’s authority to designate and define “educational administrator” in the context of their own district’s policies; and,
4. Lastly, it was resolved by the members present that any legislative or other solution developed by the coalition going forward needs to encompass the perspectives of both the K-12 partners as well as the community college partners within the Coalition.

The Coalition will meet regularly to draft legislation and begin the process to address the concerns of administrators and districts. Additional and regular distribution of information about the progress of the Coalition will be provided through ACCCA upon approval of the Coalition members.

For clarification of this information contact ACCCA Executive Director, Susan Bray at (916) 443-3559 or you can email her at [director@accga.org](mailto:director@accga.org).