April 10, 2020

Dear ETA Member:

The District emailed all employees regarding our possible mobilization as “disaster service workers.” I imagine that many of you have questions and concerns about this communication. We have been in close contact with CTA and wanted to provide you with the following explanation about “disaster service workers” as referenced in the District’s letter.

What is “disaster service” and who are “disaster service workers”?

There are legal terms. “Disaster service” means activities authorized by, and carried out pursuant to, the California Emergency Services Act, which addresses government responses to public emergencies. By law, all public employees—including all of us as public educators—are classified as “disaster service workers.” (Gov’t Code § 3100.) This means that we may, when authorized by law, be subject to “disaster service” assignments.

Have we been ordered to perform “disaster service”?

No. Under State law, ETA members - by virtue of being public employees - may be mobilized to perform “disaster service” assignments. But this has not happened.

To date, there are no emergency orders requiring the activation of “disaster service workers.” As the California Association of School Administrators recently reminded school districts, “Currently, school district and county office employees have not been ordered to report to work as disaster service workers pursuant to Government Code section 3100.”

Are we going to be ordered to perform “disaster service”?

Although we cannot offer promises, it appears very unlikely that public educators will be ordered to perform “disaster service.” We are already performing the same critical work we did before the coronavirus pandemic: educating the State’s young people. Importantly, even after the outbreak of this pandemic, the State of California has repeatedly found that public education is an “essential” service, and that public educators should continue to provide these essential service, including pursuant to Emergency Orders N-26-20 and N-33-20.

We hope this addresses your questions and concerns regarding the District’s recent communication. Please rest assured that your Union—with the backing and support of CTA—will continue to monitor this situation and keep you updated.