

Joe Nuñez, CTA Executive Director

Former Santa Maria teacher and CTA Governmental Relations Director Joe Nuñez brings a wealth of union, classroom and political experience to his demanding new job as executive director of the 325,000-member California Teachers Association. He has more than 35 years of experience in the California public education arena.

Nuñez is the first Latino executive director in CTA history and succeeds Carolyn Doggett, who was the first woman to oversee the daily operations of the association. Responsibilities of the position include directing the work of more than 435 staff at one of the largest unions in the nation. CTA is also the largest state affiliate of the 3.2 million-member National Education Association.

Nuñez joins the executive leadership team of CTA President Dean E. Vogel, Vice President Eric Heins and Secretary-Treasurer Mikki Cichocki-Semo. CTA President Vogel praises Nuñez, declaring that his knowledge of education policy, his political expertise and his hard work on behalf of students and educators are “well-known and respected by educators, politicians and community leaders in Sacramento and throughout California.”

Appointed associate executive director for Governmental Relations in 2004, Nuñez led several successful CTA political campaigns. He served as chair of the Alliance for a Better California in 2005, when the labor and community coalition defeated four initiatives that would have hurt students, public schools and workers. He also directed campaign efforts in 2012 for the defeat of Proposition 32, which sought to silence the political voice of California’s unions, and the passage of the landmark Proposition 30, which will bring \$47 billion to schools, colleges and local public services over the next seven years.

Born in Santa Maria and raised in nearby Guadalupe in Santa Barbara County, Nuñez was the ninth of 11 children. His parents, Chon and Doris Nuñez, were farmworkers who toiled in the fields of the Central Coast to provide for the family. He served as a teacher leader and president of the Santa Maria High School District Faculty Association, where he led a successful, month-long strike in 1990 over pay and benefits. He was hired as CTA staff in 1995. He also served on the State Board of Education for six years.

Nuñez is a graduate of California public schools and was a teacher for almost 20 years. He believes that CTA is one of the most influential organizations in California because of the passion our members bring to providing the highest-quality education to our students – and their commitment to California’s future and prosperity.

Nuñez served on the California State Board of Education from 2001 until January 2007. He served as the assistant executive director for CTA, overseeing CTA Region 2, from 2000 to 2004. From 1997 to 2000, Nuñez was a legislative advocate for the association. He began his career with CTA as the executive director of the Stockton Teachers Association, a position he held from 1995 to 1997. In 1992, he received the CTA WHO (We Honor Ours) State Award, and in 1987 he was the recipient of the California Agriculture Teachers Association’s Teacher of Excellence Award.

Nuñez taught at Ernest Righetti High School in the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District from 1975 to 1994, where he also served as the advisor to the school’s Future Farmers of America. He taught agriculture science, practical science, algebra and ornamental horticulture. He earned his bachelor and Master of Science degrees from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. He lives in Stockton.

