

california educator

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2024 VOLUME 28 ISSUE 4

THE IMPACT OF A BIG BARGAINING TEAM

PAGE 30



**Vote with
California
educators
on March 5**

PAGE 15

Power & Joy

Educators organize and
win fundamental rights
in first-time contracts

PAGE 22

◀ **LaTonya Pye**
East Bay Educators United

**Glendale
community
stands up to
hate, bigotry**

PAGE 39



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VOLUME 28 ISSUE 4



#WeAreCTA

OUR VOICE, OUR UNION, OUR PROFESSION

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

MAGAZINE

EQUITY MEANS EVERYONE

San Francisco's big bargaining team won a big contract — and increased their chapter unity.

PAGE 30 [f](#) [x](#) [i](#)

[uesf.org](#)

CTA TAKES ACTION ON STUDENT RIGHTS

Union files amicus brief in lawsuit challenging protections for LGBTQ+ students. PAGE 36 [cta.org](#)

SET UP FOR SUCCESS

Educator Danyelle Hodge brings Black students together in a supportive, multi-school BSU. PAGE 14

DIGITAL

ELECTION 2024

On March 5, vote for public education and workers' rights. Use CTA recommendations as a guide. PAGE 15

[f](#) [x](#) [i](#) [cta.org/election](#)

CALIFORNIA READS

Every year, this CTA initiative offers a list of teacher-vetted books for all ages. Find this year's selections on PAGE 10 and past years' lists at [cta.org/careads](#)

CTA SOCIAL MEDIA

Keep up with the latest news and info on your favorite platform: [f](#) [x](#) [i](#) [s](#) and of course at [cta.org](#)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

EQUITY & HUMAN RIGHTS

CTA's annual conference delves into the big issues and celebrates our social justice warriors. Los Angeles, March 1–3. PAGE 9 [f](#) [x](#) [i](#) [cta.org/conferences](#)

NEW-ISH EDUCATOR?

CTA's New Educator Week-end is for you. Hone your practice, get advice and network with peers. Costa Mesa, Feb. 23–25. PAGE 9 [f](#) [x](#) [i](#) [cta.org/conferences](#)

NEA ESP CONFERENCE

National gathering for ESP unity and professional development. PAGE 9 [nea.org/espconference](#)

MEMBER BENEFITS

SPRING BREAK PLANS

If you're wanting a little travel, a little fun, check out CTA's Access to Savings for great deals. [CTAMemberBenefits.org/Access](#)

GET - AND STAY - CALM

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Palmdale Aerospace Teachers Association members, including Daniel Lagomarsino, above, are bargaining their first contract. "A union makes management listen," says Lagomarsino. Story on Page 22.



The First Contract

Charter educators get their rights in writing for the first time

PAGE 22

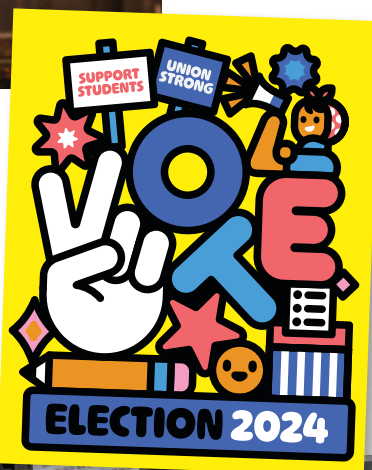
SPECIAL SECTION

Your Vote Matters

PAGE 15

See CTA Educators Run

PAGE 18



Standing Against Hate

Glendale says, "Our community is for everyone."

PAGE 39



Top: Nina Rodriguez, South Bay Educators United, by Chris Robledo. Middle: Illustration by SkinnyShips (Richard Perez/Jennifer DeRosa). Bottom: Glendale educators and allies hold press conference against hate and intolerance. Cover: LaTonya Pye, East Bay Educators United, by Chris Robledo.

DEPARTMENTS / FEATURES

In the Know

- 7 Calendar
- 10 News & Notes
- 13 Quotes & Numbers

Spotlight

- 14 **SET UP FOR SUCCESS:** Black students come together

Feature

- 30 **EQUITY IN THE UNION:** UESF's Big Bargaining Team includes all

Advocacy

- 34 **BUDGET:** Education a top priority
- 36 **AMICUS BRIEF:** CTA, unions support LGBTQ+ students
- 37 **COMMUNITY WIN:** Auburn district keeps DEI statement
- 38 **STATE DASHBOARD:** Data shows student outcomes improving
- 40 **LABOR:** Overview of educators' fight for better schools
- 42 **BARGAINING:** Statewide roundup
- 44 **HEALTH CARE:** Benefits of single-payer health care
- 46 **ORGANIZING:** East Bay CTA chapters support each other

Teaching & Learning

- 47 **PAY ATTENTION:** Engage students with tips based on neuroscience
- 49 **LITERACY:** Six strategies to create stronger readers
- 52 **CYBER SAFETY:** Teach students to protect their privacy and data

CTA & You

- 53 **STATE COUNCIL:** January recap
- 55 **FOR YOU:** Member benefits
- 55 **KUDOS:** CTA member elected as delegate to El World Congress
- 56 **LIT FROM WITHIN:** Works by our members

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK. We accept signed email and letters; we excerpt user posts from CTA social media platforms and cta.org/educator. Content subject to editing for clarity and space. Photos must have permissions. Opinions expressed by writers are not necessarily those of CTA. Editor@cta.org; [#WeAreCTA](https://twitter.com/WeAreCTA)

▼ The Annual Report, at left, and a scene from the Year in Review video.



CTA's Year in Review

CTA's 2022–23 Annual Report and accompanying Year in Review video are available to members. Both showcase CTA and members' work to strengthen our union, support our students, advance public education, and build a more just and equitable society. Find the report at cta.org/22-23, and watch the video at cta.org/statecouncil.

Multiplication Memories

Editor's Note: A stock photo of a multiplication chart run in the Oct./Nov. issue contained errors, and publishing a reader's "corrected" version led to another error — but also, a good memory:

This chart reminded me of an experience I had while covering a class for an absent teacher. At our middle school, the default opening assignment when covering a math class without a plan was to have the class write times tables. The students settled in. Soon a boy called out "What's 7 times 8?" I asked him, "What's 6 times 8?" He gave the correct answer. I said, "Now, add 8 more." One or more students responded, "Is that how it works?" Multiplication is just repeated addition.

MARY STEWART
CTA-NEA/Retired

A Better Way Than the TPA

Having just completed my TPAs this past summer, I could not agree more [with "Redundant, Stressful, Time-Consuming," Dec. 2023/Jan. 2024] that we need be a better way to assess the ability of new teachers in California. What I endured to receive a single subject credential in music was nothing short of ridiculous. [Despite being] a credentialed special education teacher since 2010 [and with 20 years' experience in the U.S. Air Force Band after completing a Bachelor of Music Education degree] I had to enter a credential program to teach music. This turned into a two-year, pencil-pushing waste of time that I would have declined to start had I not had veteran's benefits to cover the shockingly high cost.

At no time during my music credential program did I learn anything about classroom instruction that 11 years of special education teaching experience had not already provided. I had to justify my level of expertise through submission of the TPAs to an unknown evaluator who had never observed me in the classroom. Whether one earns a preliminary credential or not should not be determined solely by how one can write the requisite number of buzz words in a series of documents that match videos clips with the same buzz words in the annotations.

The programs need real mentors who observe candidates in the real-world setting of a classroom. This is where a true evaluation can be made of a teacher's impact on student learning.

ANTHONY SERES
Vacaville Teachers Association



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The California Teachers Association exists to protect and promote the well-being of its members; to improve the conditions of teaching and learning; to advance the cause of free, universal and quality public education for all students; to ensure that the human dignity and civil rights of all children, youth and adults are protected; and to secure a more just, equitable and democratic society.

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CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

1705 Murchison Dr., Burlingame, CA 94010-4583
650-697-1400; fax 650-552-5002; editor@cta.org, cta.org

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A Vision for Public Education



THIS TIME OF YEAR, we celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the rich and amazing history of Black Americans, and the ongoing work of the Black Lives Matter at School movement. Much of this work and history has involved successful organizing. For example, while not widely known, Dr. King's deep partnership with union leaders and members and their powerful vision for public education helped bring people together to make change.

Dr. King organized working people to come together in collective actions. This paved the way for the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act and more. It's a struggle for equity and civil and human rights that all of us continue today.

This time of year is also when the State Budget is on our minds — part of the ongoing struggle as well. California faces a \$38 billion budget shortfall in Gov. Newsom's proposed 2024–25 budget. And while it largely reflects an ongoing commitment to public education, we must work together to ensure that our state budget delivers the schools and resources every student deserves.

CTA has three priorities. First, we must protect the gains we've made in recent years and allow school districts to continue to build on the progress they've made following decades of deliberate disinvestment in California public schools. California is the fifth-largest economy in the world, yet since the passage of Proposition 13 (a ballot measure that restricts property tax increases) in 1978, we've seen our state languish near the bottom of the country in per-pupil funding. Only over the past few years have we seen that start to turn around; we cannot allow ourselves to go back.

Second, we will work to make certain that the budget deficit is not balanced on the backs of educators and school employees with budget cuts and layoffs. At a time when financial markets are hitting record highs and the economy is booming, it would be unconscionable to lay

off educators. Layoffs would not only be devastating to our impacted members, but to their students, class sizes, and the education profession as a whole. California is already facing a severe teacher shortage. Laying off staff would only make things worse, including creating a climate where young people don't see teaching or other education jobs as viable careers. Now is the time to implement ways to *keep* educators in classrooms, not drive them away. That's why CTA is working to remove barriers to entering or staying in the profession, such as the Teaching Performance Assessment, and why we're working to change a broken system that currently offers *no* paid maternity leave for educators.

Finally, we must continue to fight for additional revenue sources for our schools and communities. That means the increased taxes on the wealthy under Propositions 30 and 55 mustn't expire, and we need to look at other solutions, including ensuring wealthy corporations pay their fair share.

To reverse the years of deliberate disinvestment in public schools, it's going to take good organizing on multiple levels. We're going to need to convince voters to prioritize public schools, and elect state and local leaders to put the needs of students first. The March 5 election is an opportunity to do just that.

We're also going to have to ensure that the resources we do have are used effectively, and that educators have a voice in those decisions. That's one of the reasons why local CTA chapter organizing efforts around California's historic investment in Community Schools are so important. The shared decision-making at the heart of the Community Schools model ensures that decisions about how best to use resources are made by parents, educators and administrators together.

This erratic system of starved school budgets during economic boom years mustn't continue. We need to find lasting solutions to California's broken budget system. Before we can do that, we need to build the democratic structures and strong local unions like the ones Dr. King so championed. Then we can win state funding for public education as one of the most important civil rights issues of our time.

David B. Goldberg

CTA PRESIDENT



Ice Cream for All

LISA SIMPSON'S blissful smile in this meme, originally posted by Wisconsin AFL-CIO, says much about the delight and satisfaction found in eating ice cream. More importantly, of course, it reflects the happiness at winning a union contract that gives workers the dignity and respect they deserve.

Such are the emotions experienced by the charter school educators in our cover story, **"The Power & Joy of the First Contract"** (page 22), as they came together or are organizing now to win first contracts that allow them to do their best work for their students. Collectively in their unions, they are pushing for basic rights and protections that most public school educators have the moment they are hired.

LaTonya Pye is one of 36 ESPs officially recognized as East Bay Educators United members in late December who are preparing to negotiate a first contract. Her excitement is palpable. "I never imagined we would go from zero to fully filed in a single semester," she says. "It's a testament to our organizing committee." (Pye is on the committee.)

Organizing to win is the through line for much of the content in this issue. In **"Equity Means Everyone"** (page 30), an inclusive Big Bargaining Team led United Educators of San Francisco educators to a historic victory — and greater unity within their ranks. **"What Can You Do?"** (page 29) is a new video that celebrates hard-won gains by Sacramento City Teachers Association in 2022, after years of disrespect from the school board and superintendent. SCTA and community and labor allies' eight-day strike and successful effort to overturn the board resulted in the superintendent's resignation.

Auburn Union Teachers Association (**"A Win for**



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion," page 37) and multiple locals across the state (**"Bargaining Update,"** page 42) demonstrate the power of organizing union members as well as members of the community. This was also clear at Glendale Teachers Association's January news conference (**"A Community for Everyone,"** page 39), when health care workers, community groups, parents, students and local and state lawmakers joined GTA to fight back against anti-LGBTQ+ hate and disinformation that has plagued their community over the past year and half.

As unionists have long known, there is indeed strength in numbers — and in including all voices, from within the union and from partners and allies who share our values. That strength and unified voice will be needed this election year.

Pye, for one, is all in. "I'm new to this and there's a lot to learn, but there's so much power! This is just the beginning — we're looking forward to many more wins!"

So are we.

Katharine Fong

EDITOR IN CHIEF
editor@cta.org

Your Vote Is Your Voice

Make your voice heard! Vote in the March Primary on March 5. Know that when you follow CTA recommendations, you are voting to support our students, schools and colleges. Go to Page 15 or cta.org/election for CTA recommendations on candidates and important initiatives, and create your personalized voter guide at cta.yourvoter.guide.



February / March 2024

CALENDAR



Inclusive Women

On **International Women's Day** on March 8, **#InspireInclusion**. Inclusion means celebrating women's achievement, raising awareness about discrimination, and taking action to drive gender parity. When we inspire others to understand and value women's inclusion, we forge a better world. Find ideas for action at internationalwomensday.com. March is also **National Women's History Month**. The 2024 theme: "Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion" — recognizing women who understand that, for a positive future, we must eliminate bias and discrimination from our lives and institutions. More at nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org.



Black History Month

Black history is taught all year long, not just in February. But there is still time to celebrate the 2024 Black History Month theme, "African Americans & the Arts," spanning the many impacts Black Americans have had on visual arts, music, cultural movements and more. Educators can explore Smithsonian resources at si.edu/events/black-history-month; the Teaching and Learning Unit at its National Museum of African American History and Culture offers programs and resources for students and educators in grades 3–12.

Humanity by Ruby Ecoff; teacher Milinda Jaffe, Las Virgenes Educators Assn.; 2021 Southern California Youth Art Month Exhibit.

Arts Education

An education without the arts is inadequate and incomplete. The arts are a fundamental way to express oneself and can help students learn and experience different perspectives on the human condition. March is a time to revel in the arts, what with **Music in Our Schools Month** (nafme.org), **Arts Education Month** and **Youth Art Month** (caea-arteducation.org).



▼ EMEID's 2023–24 cohort.



CTA'S EMEID Program Accepting Applications Now

Are you a CTA member and educator of color? Are you interested in broadening your knowledge of your union and exploring leadership opportunities? The Ethnic Minority Early Identification and Development Program may be for you! EMEID's goal is to increase the number of CTA leaders of color in roles such as president, bargaining chair, State Council rep, Service Center Council chair and officers and other respected leadership positions.

The program builds on existing CTA/NEA programs, trainings and conferences and incorporates interaction and coaching with local chapter, CTA and NEA leadership and staff. Participants attend the EMEID orientation, July 23, and the Emerging Leaders Program at CTA's Summer Institute, July 24–28. **Applications are due April 1.** Find out more at cta.org/emeid — and get your questions answered at virtual meetings on Feb. 29 and March 25.



◀ *Romance in the Window* by Toni Lane, Art Enables (gallery/vocational arts program dedicated to creating opportunities for artists with disabilities).

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. About 13% of public school students in California received special education services in 2021–22, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. With the right supports, these students can be included in and contribute to all areas of school and community life. Read CTA's stance on education for those with developmental disabilities at cta.org/our-advocacy/special-education.

Credit: Japanese American Citizens League. ▶

Day of Remembrance

On Feb. 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order that allowed the forced removal and incarceration of some 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast. They had to abandon their jobs, their homes and their lives to be sent to one of 10 concentration camps.

No Japanese Americans were ever charged, much less convicted, of espionage or sabotage against the United States.

Every February, the Japanese American community and others commemorate this experience. It is an opportunity to educate others on the fragility of civil liberties in times of crisis, and the importance of remaining vigilant in protecting the rights and freedoms of all. Find events near you at jacl.org/day-of-remembrance. Find lesson plans and classroom resources at ca.pbslearningmedia.org.



Good Teaching Conference South

MARCH 22-24 *Hyatt Regency Orange County.*

Missed GTC North in early February? You can still attend GTC South, chock full of the peer-led trainings and workshops you need to refresh and refine your K-12 teaching practices. Bonus pre-conference sessions: "Changing of the Lens: Learning to Hold Students Accountable While Better Understanding the Brain's Emotional Climate and Needs," March 21, 5-6:30 p.m. (virtual); and "Stronger Together — Your Essential Guide to CTA/NEA Member Benefits," March 22, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Booking deadline: March 4.

► cta.org/conferences



New Educator Weekend

FEB. 23-25 **CONFERENCE**

Hilton Orange County, Costa Mesa.

For educators in their first three years. Sessions on classroom management, lesson plans, member benefits; networking galore!

► cta.org/conferences

CTA/NEA-Retired Issues Conference

FEB. 29-MARCH 1 **CONFERENCE**

The Westin Bonaventure, Los Angeles.

Learn how CTA/NEA-Retired is protecting your future and watching legislation that affects your benefits. Stay connected, be protected and enjoy great benefits. ► cta.org/conferences

Chavez/Huerta Awards

MARCH 1 **ENTRY DEADLINE**

CTA's Cesar E. Chavez and Dolores Huerta Education Awards honor students who show they understand Chavez's guiding principles. Awards up to \$550 go to both the sponsoring CTA member and the student.

► cta.org/scholarships

NEA Foundation Awards for Teaching Excellence

MAR. 1 **NOMINATION DEADLINE**

CTA will nominate one educator for their outstanding instruction and advocacy to advance the profession to receive the 2025 NEA award. CTA members and staff may nominate themselves.

► cta.org/nea-foundation-awards

Equity and Human Rights Conference

MARCH 1-3 **CONFERENCE**

The Westin Bonaventure, Los Angeles.

Affirms CTA's mission to protect the civil rights of all people and secure a more equitable, democratic society. Speakers and workshops address diversity, equity and social justice.

CTA's Human Rights Award-winners honored. ► cta.org/conferences

NEA National Leadership Summit

MARCH 1-3 **CONFERENCE**

Hyatt Regency, Chicago.

The summit offers opportunities to develop activist leaders and prepare them with the knowledge and skills necessary to lead thriving associations.

► nea.org/leadershipsummit

Read Across America

MARCH 2 **EVENT**

Celebrate this annual event by reading with your students! CTA's California Reads program offers teacher-recommended book selections year-round for students of all ages.

► cta.org/californiareads

NEA Higher Education Conference

MARCH 15-17 **CONFERENCE**

Westin Peachtree Plaza, Atlanta.

College educators gather to share ideas and learn from each other. The 2024 theme: "Education, Democracy, Freedom. Our Right! Our Responsibility!"

► nea.org/higheredconference

Spring CUE

MARCH 21 **CONFERENCE**

Palm Springs Convention Center.

This ed tech conference by CUE (Computer-Using Educators) offers hundreds of sessions with keynotes from world-renowned educators. ► cue.org

John Swett Awards

MARCH 22 **NOMINATION DEADLINE**

CTA's John Swett Awards for Media Excellence recognizes outstanding coverage of education during 2023. CTA chapters and Service Center Councils may nominate. ► cta.org/awards

NEA ESP Conference

MARCH 22-24 **CONFERENCE**

Caesars Palace, Las Vegas.

The nation's premier professional development opportunity for education support professionals enhances ESPs' skills and knowledge.

► nea.org/esconference

CTA Institute for Teaching Grants

MARCH 31 **APPLICATION DEADLINE**

IFT awards competitive grants to member educators for projects that are teacher-driven and strength-based.

► cta.org/ift

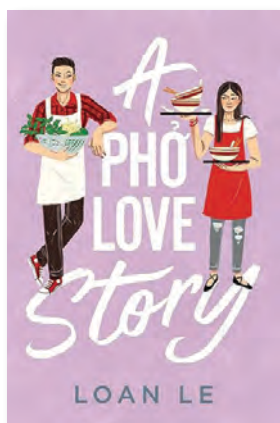
EMEID Leadership Program

APRIL 1 **APPLICATION DEADLINE**

BIPOC members interested in CTA leadership roles may apply online to the Ethnic Minority Early Identification and Development program - see facing page for details. ► cta.org/emeid



The Joy of Reading



Feb. 14 is International Book Giving Day, but you don't have to give books to share the joy of reading with students. Use the books at left from CTA's California Reads program in your classroom to engage, inspire and learn. Find the full list of 2024 teacher-vetted books — available for purchase at a 20% member discount — at cta.org/careads.

Martin & Anne: The Kindred Spirits of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Anne Frank (Nancy Churnin, author; Yevgenia Nayberg, illustrator; grades 3–7) explores how the experiences of both icons — born in the same year — paralleled each other in many ways. Treated as inferior due to their race, Dr. King and Anne Frank dreamed of a world where equality and justice prevail. Ultimately, they believed love is stronger than hate, and that kindness can heal the world.

In *A Is for Ambitious* (Meena Harris, author; Marissa Valdez, illustrator; preschool-grade 2), the bestselling team behind *Ambitious Girl* is back to take AG on a new adventure. A fun and empowering picture book — perfect for read-aloud — reclaims words often used to undermine girls and women from A to Z. When they're ready to take on the world, ambitious readers will have the vocabulary to do so.

A Pho Love Story (Loan Le, author; grades 7 and up) tells the smart, funny story of two Vietnamese American teens who fall in love and must navigate their newfound relationship amid their families' age-old feud about their competing, neighborhood restaurants. Many young readers will identify with the experience of being children of immigrants, assimilation and cultural identity — including cuisine.



◀ *Love Is Loud: How Diane Nash Led the Civil Rights Movement*, one of three books recommended in NEA's Read Across America digital calendar.

Read Across America

Read Across America Day is traditionally celebrated on March 2, which is a Sunday in 2024. Educators, students and community members can celebrate all week long, however, during Read Across America Week, March 2–6.

NEA celebrates a nation of diverse readers year-round, with recommended books, authors and teaching resources that promote diversity and inclusion. Choose from monthly recommendations in NEA's Read Across America digital calendar or search all book lists at nea.org/readacross. Each month has a theme; for example, February 2024 is "Advance Racial Justice," and March 2024 is "Celebrate Diversity."



Community Schools at Work

IN JANUARY, "Inside California Education," a public television series that explores public education, aired a segment on how one community school in Anaheim is addressing the "food desert" in its neighborhood. "Connecting & Feeding the Community" describes how Magnolia Agriscience Community Center on the Magnolia High School campus has developed expansive gardens whose fruits and vegetables provide a healthy alternative for students, families and community members.

Magnolia uses the gardens to bring in and work with community members and organizations. It collaborates with partners such as UC Irvine and CSU Fullerton to teach students about science, sustainable food practices and ecological issues, and to offer job training and work experience. Watch the video at insidecal.org. For more on CTA's work with community schools, visit cta.org/communityschools.



▲ A student, above, describes the impact of the Magnolia High School gardens on students, families and community.

California's Changing Demographics

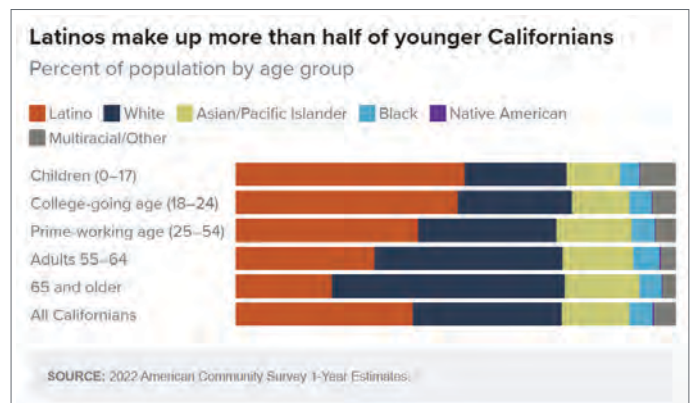
California's latest demographics data shows that Latinos make up a majority of the state's younger population.

The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), using data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, estimates that in 2022 52% of children under 18 and 50.4% of young adults 18–24 in California are Latinx.

By contrast, Californians over 65 are 21.9% Latinx and 52.8% white.

In a January fact sheet titled "California's Population," PPIC reports that the American Community Survey also found that over 10 million Californians are immigrants (and according to another PPIC report, nearly half [46%] of California children have one immigrant parent):

- 27% of Californians are foreign born — more than twice the share in the rest of the nation (12%). (New Jersey, New York and Florida also have relatively high shares.)
- More than half (54%) of foreign-born Californians are naturalized U.S. citizens, compared to 39% in 2000.
- Most other immigrants are legal permanent residents.



The Golden State lost 433,000 people between July 2020 and July 2023, according to the state Department of Finance, with 47 of 58 counties experiencing population declines. The declines have ramifications for school enrollment — especially in Los Angeles and rural areas, which are seeing big decreases, while the Inland Empire and Sacramento are growing.

To see the full fact sheet, visit ppic.org/publication/californias-population.

▼ Chavez (center) on march to Sacramento with United Farm Workers members, 1975.
Credit: John Malmin, Los Angeles Times

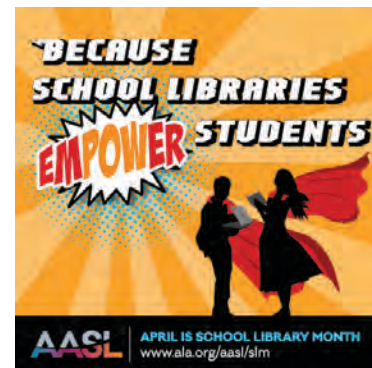


An Enduring Legacy

THERE ARE MULTIPLE WAYS to mark Cesar Chavez Day, March 31, and Dolores Huerta Day, April 10. One is to be of service, as these labor and civil rights icons have stressed throughout their lives. Another is to teach students about their enduring impact on the labor and civil and human rights movements. Lesson plans are available at the California Department of Education (Chavez Model Curriculum, grades K–12), PBS Learning Media (Chavez, grades 3–8, and farm workers' organizing, grades 6–12) and the Dolores Huerta Foundation (grades K–8).

Yet another way to honor both: Have your students enter **CTA's César E. Chávez and Dolores Huerta Education Awards Program**, which recognizes educators and their students who demonstrate an understanding of the vision and guiding principles embraced by Chávez and Huerta through visual and written work. Award amount is up to \$550 for both student and educator. Deadline: March 1, 2024. Details at cta.org/awards.

▼ Huerta at the LBJ Presidential Library in 2019. Credit: Jay Godwin.



Library Power!

National School Librarian Day is April 4, right at the start of School Library Month. School librarians enrich students' lives in innumerable ways. Some activities to consider to honor them and your school library:

- Have students pick their favorite book for a book display.
- Hold a poster contest where students promote their favorite book or books.
- Challenge students to write a graphic novel about the school library and all it offers.
- Host an after-school book swap for students and faculty.



Daylight Savings Time **MARCH 10**

LET THERE BE LIGHT! Spring forward on March 10 — yes, you lose an hour of sleep, but think of those lovely, longer days in the months ahead...

QUOTES & NUMBERS

Compiled by **Julian Peeples**



15,000

Additional arts teachers needed to fully implement Prop. 28, according to a January EdSource article.

73

Percentage of teachers who reported job-related stress in 2022, per RAND Corp. (59% reported burnout.) Need help? Visit cta.org/wellnesscenter for resources or see a professional.

36,000

Schools that need to update or replace heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems — about 41% of districts nationwide, according to the U.S. General Accounting Office.



COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

\$716 million

New federal funding for community schools announced recently by the Biden Administration. Recently proposed legislation backed by NEA would also provide an additional \$3.65 billion over the next five years.

“The budget shortfall, and the potential for cuts or freezes to vital services, highlight the need for long-term, consistent investment in all public services, including public schools. California is the fifth largest economy in the world; our students deserve nothing less than an education system that reflects that economic strength.”

—CTA President **David Goldberg**, in response to the governor’s budget proposal (see Page 38).



“We must get back to pre-pandemic levels quickly, but also let’s be clear: The bare minimum that we aspire to is to get back to what it was in 2019. 2019 wasn’t anything to write home about. Our kids deserve better.”

—Secretary of Education **Miguel Cardona**, in an EdWeek story about Pres. Biden’s agenda for K-12 public schools.

“I play a teacher, my whole family, they’re teachers, going back generations. Teachers are good people, gotta respect them. They do a good thing. It’s a tough job, so this is for teachers as well.”

—Actor **Paul Giamatti**, during his speech after winning a Golden Globe award for his role in “The Holdovers.”



Raph_PH



“Community schools play a critical role in delivering targeted and specific educational opportunities for students while also offering hope, opportunity and transformation to entire communities.”

—NEA President **Becky Pringle**, in response to proposed federal legislation that would provide \$3.65 billion for community schools over the next five years.

▼ A dance party at the BSU Summit at Elsinore High School.



▼ At the BSU Summit, left to right: Danyelle Hodge, BSU advisor and LETA elementary director; Mario Montano, LETA president; Bunmi Adeleke, BSU advisor and LETA high school director.



A Setup for Success

Initiative brings Black students together for unity, camaraderie

EDUCATOR DANYELLE HODGE, a member of Lake Elsinore Teachers Association (LETA), noticed some disturbing trends among students in her school district in recent years. There seemed to be an increase in racial tension, including widespread use of the N-word, and a lack of unity amongst the Black students in the district.

Black students only make up only 3.9% of the district's student population, and Hodge understood that collaboration, unity and education in Black history and culture was vital to their success.

"I knew that something needed to be done to support our Black students, who are such a small percentage of the total number of students that they were insignificant," said Hodge, who is Black and teaches fourth grade. She notes that Lake Elsinore is a "super conservative area."

"I wanted Black students to come together so they could go to each other for camaraderie and help. It was hard for me at first because there are just three Black teachers at my site, so how must it be for students?"

At a CTA conference, Hodge had learned about educator grants from CTA's Institute for Teaching for teacher projects (see Page 37). She had an idea to bring together current Black Student Unions in her district — at three high schools, two middle schools and a K–8 school. After conferring with the BSU advisors, Hodge and her team applied for and received a \$19,180 grant.

"I wanted Black students to come together so they could go to each other for camaraderie and help."

—**Danyelle Hodge**,
Lake Elsinore Teachers Association

Their Black Student Union Initiative is now bringing awareness to the unique issues and topics faced by the district's Black student population. The group held an inaugural student summit on Oct. 17, which featured team-building activities, an inspirational guest speaker and lunch. The initiative plans to host an HBCU College & Career Fair, take students on field trips to cultural museums and theater, and hold a family event in the spring that includes the district's "Junior" BSU (for grades 1–5).

In addition, the initiative will run a districtwide anti-N-word campaign which will include buttons, posters and lesson plans for grades 4–12.

The team now includes members of the local African American Parent Advisory Council. In the future, Hodge hopes to expand BSUs to other district schools. A graduate of CTA's Ethnic Minority Early Identification & Development (EMEID) program, Hodge currently serves as a CTA Cadre Trainer, where she says, "I strive for equality in education, especially in the areas where that seems nearly impossible." ■

Vote With California Educators



Register! Engage! Vote!

MAKE SURE you are registered to vote: Go to sos.ca.gov/elections to check or to register. The last day to register to vote is Feb. 20, 2024.

Be an engaged, informed voter. Talk with friends, family and colleagues about public education and labor issues. Read up on relevant bills and initiatives at cta.org/election to understand the issues and CTA's positions.

Don't forget to build your personalized voter guide: Go to cta.yourvoter.guide.

March 5 is California's Presidential Primary Election (the General Election takes place Nov. 5). Key races and initiatives are on the ballot at the local, state and national level — with many outcomes affecting public education, workers' rights and more. There are 2,000 2024 school board races in California alone.

Your vote is critical, now and in the fall. Know that when you follow CTA recommendations on

candidates and important initiatives, you are voting to support California students, schools and colleges. CTA's recommendation process is democratic and rigorous (see sidebar, Page 17).

Check out the following pages and create your personalized voter guide at cta.yourvoter.guide. Then vote — and help get out the vote! Our future depends on it.



CTA's candidate recommendations in 80 state senate and assembly districts, and 40 congressional districts



2024 Candidate Recommendations

DISTRICT	CANDIDATE	DISTRICT	CANDIDATE
Assembly		Assembly	
AD 2	Rusty Hicks (D)	AD 55	Isaac Bryan (D)
AD 4	Cecilia Aguiar-Curry (D)	AD 56	Lisa Calderon (D)
AD 6	Paula Villescáz (D)	AD 57	Sade Elhawary (D)
AD 7	Porsche Middleton (D)	AD 58	Ronaldo Fierro (D)
AD 10	Stephanie Nguyen (D)	AD 61	Tina McKinnor (D)
AD 11	Lori Wilson (D)	AD 62	Jose Solache (D)
AD 12	Damon Connolly (D)	AD 64	Blanca Pacheco (D)
AD 15	Anamarie Avila Farias (D)	AD 65	Mike Gipson (D)
AD 16	Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (D)	AD 66	Al Muratsuchi (D)
AD 17	Matt Haney (D)	AD 67	Sharon Quirk-Silva (D)
AD 18	Mia Bonta (D)	AD 68	Avelino Valencia (D)
AD 19	No Recommendation	AD 69	Josh Lowenthal (D)
AD 20	Liz Ortega (D)	AD 73	Cottie Petrie-Norris (D)
AD 21	Diane Papan (D)	AD 74	Chris Duncan (D)
AD 23	Marc Berman (D)	AD 76	Joseph Rocha (D)
AD 24	Alex Lee (D)	AD 77	Tasha Boerner (D)
AD 25	Ash Kalra (D)	AD 78	Chris Ward (D)
AD 26	Patrick Ahrens (D)	AD 79	Neutral
AD 27	Esmeralda Soria (D)	AD 80	David Alvarez (D)
AD 28	Gail Pellerin (D)		
AD 29	Speaker Robert Rivas (D)		
AD 30	Dawn Addis (D)	Senate	
AD 31	Dr. Joaquin Arambula (D)	SD 3	Dr. Rozzana Verder-Aliga (D)
AD 34	No Recommendation	SD 5	Neutral
AD 35	Dr. Jasmeet Bains (D)	SD 7	Kathryn Lybarger (D)
AD 36	No Recommendation	SD 9	Marisol Rubio (D)
AD 37	Gregg Hart (D)	SD 11	No Recommendation
AD 38	Steve Bennett (D)	SD 13	Josh Becker (D)
AD 39	Juan Carrillo (D)	SD 15	Dave Cortese (D)
AD 40	Pilar Schiavo (D)	SD 17	John Laird (D)
AD 41	John Harabedian (D)	SD 19	Lisa Middleton (D)
AD 42	Jacqui Irwin (D)	SD 21	Monique Limón (D)
AD 44	Steve Pierson (D)	SD 23	Kipp Mueller (D)
AD 46	Jesse Gabriel (D)	SD 25	Sasha Renée Pérez (D)
AD 47	Christy Holstege (D)	SD 27	Henry Stern (D)
AD 48	Brian Tabatabai (D)	SD 29	Eloise Gomez Reyes (D)
AD 49	Mike Fong (D)	SD 31	Sabrina Cervantes (D)
AD 50	Robert Garcia (D)	SD 33	Lena Gonzalez (D)
AD 51	Rick Chavez Zbur (D)	SD 35	Michelle Chambers (D)
AD 52	Ari Ruiz (D)	SD 37	Josh Newman (D)
AD 53	Javier Hernandez (D)	SD 39	Akilah Weber (D)
AD 54	Mark Gonzalez (D)		

For the latest updates, go to cta.org/election

DISTRICT	CANDIDATE
Congress	
U.S. Senate	Neutral
CD 2	Jared Huffman (D)
CD 3	Jessica Morse (D)
CD 4	Mike Thompson (D)
CD 6	Ami Bera (D)
CD 7	Doris Matsui (D)
CD 8	John Garamendi (D)
CD 10	Mark DeSaulnier (D)
CD 11	Nancy Pelosi (D)
CD 12	Lateefah Simon (D)
CD 13	Adam Gray (D)
CD 14	Eric Swalwell (D)
CD 15	Kevin Mullin (D)
CD 16	Joe Simitian (D)
CD 17	Ro Khanna (D)
CD 18	Zoe Lofgren (D)
CD 19	Jimmy Panetta (D)
CD 21	Jim Costa (D)
CD 22	Rudy Salas (D)
CD 23	Derek Marshall (D)
CD 24	Salud Carbajal (D)
CD 25	Raul Ruiz (D)
CD 26	Julia Brownley (D)
CD 27	George Whitesides (D)
CD 28	Judy Chu (D)
CD 29	Luz Rivas (D)
CD 31	Susan Rubio (D)
CD 32	Brad Sherman (D)
CD 33	Pete Aguilar (D)
CD 34	Jimmy Gomez (D)
CD 35	Norma Torres (D)
CD 37	Sydney Kamlager-Dove (D)
CD 38	Linda Sanchez (D)
CD 39	Mark Takano (D)
CD 40	Allyson Damikolas (D)
CD 41	Will Rollins (D)
CD 45	Kim Nguyen (D)
CD 47	Dave Min (D)
CD 49	Mike Levin (D)
CD 50	Scott Peters (D)
CD 51	Sara Jacobs (D)

2024 Initiative Recommendations

SUPPORT

Proposition 1 - ON THE MARCH 5 BALLOT: Gov. Newsom and the legislature placed a major transformation of the state's behavioral health care system on the March ballot as Proposition 1. Prop. 1 has a General Obligation Bond for construction of behavioral health treatment and residential care settings and permanent supportive housing. It recognizes and supports the critical need to expand a culturally competent and well-trained behavioral health care workforce to address behavioral health capacity shortages and expand access to services. Prop. 1 will promote accountability with results for people with mental health and substance use disorders, including for children, youth, veterans and unhoused people.

OPPOSE

Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability

Act: This is an attack by wealthy corporations and real-estate developers on one of the fundamentals of our democracy. CTA believes any local, state measure or initiative should be passed by 50% plus one, not a supermajority. The measure would put vital services we all depend on at risk.

SUPPORT

ACA 13/Protect and Retain the Majority Vote Act:

For the reasons above and to prevent future attacks on majority rule democracy, CTA believes majority rule should be enshrined in our state Constitution.

Our Union's Recommendation Process

CTA's recommendation process involves interview teams of local educators from throughout the state, who interview candidates and evaluate them on a variety of criteria, including:

- Their positions on and vision for K-12, community college and higher education issues.
- Their historical support for public education, students and educators, in such areas as education funding, budget stability, safe schools and campuses for all students, collective bargaining, educator professional rights, charter school accountability, and equal access to higher education.
- Their viability for success in the office that they are seeking.

Teams then make their recommendations to the CTA Board for discussion before being brought to CTA State Council (CTA's top policy-making body, with 800 delegates), which debates and makes final recommendations.

▼ Telly Tse



▼ Angela Normand



▼ Karla Griego



Ready to Lead: *Educators on the Ballot*

CTA members running for school board in March

By Julian Peeples

“RUNNING FOR SCHOOL BOARD requires good public speaking skills, empathy, thick skin, the ability to multitask and being well-organized (among many other skills),” says special education teacher and school board hopeful Telly Tse. “This is why educators are naturally great candidates for this very important position!”

Tse is running for Glendale Unified School District Board of Education, Trustee Area A, in the March 5 Primary Election — one of 2,000 school board seats that voters will decide on statewide in 2024. A Beverly Hills Education Association member as well as former member of the CTA and NEA Board of Directors, Tse says he developed strong ties with educators in Glendale through his union work and involvement as a coach in youth soccer and softball. While Tse has previously

considered running, he says the time is right for his leadership and experience.

“My hope for my own children and every child that attends Glendale Unified schools is that they graduate from our district with high academic achievement and strong social skills, and as independent and critical thinkers ready to be productive members of our democracy,” says Tse, who is endorsed by Glendale Teachers Association. “We can make this happen by prioritizing racial and social justice, investing in our educators and staff, and implementing stronger and wide-ranging communication in our district.”

Special education teacher and CTA Board of Directors member Angela Normand is seeking reelection in March to the Alameda County Board of Education, Area 2. In the classroom,

Karla Griego

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER / COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COORDINATOR

United Teachers Los Angeles

Candidate for Los Angeles Unified School Board, District 5

karlagriegoforschoolboard.com

Why are you running for school board?

I have been inspired by my daughter, my students, their families and my colleagues who day in and day out are fighting to bring more resources to our schools, hold the district and superintendent accountable, and navigate the bureaucracy at school sites and at the district level. I want to continue this work at the school board: holding the district accountable; supporting the whole child and expanding community schools and LAUSD's Black Student Achievement Plan.

Why is it so important to have educators as school board members?

We educators have been making history in public education: through our collective power when we strike; our organizing with students, families, community organizations and caregivers; and our yearning to create the schools our students deserve — green, healthy, collaborative and enriching. Schools that center and address the assets and needs of the whole child, so we are ready and equipped to lead our districts — with our unions and movements.

What would you say to educators considering running for school board?

Our experiences in the classroom and in education leadership prepare us well for service to our communities on school or county boards. We bring a deep understanding that is unmatched of how education funding should be focused on ensuring schools receive the resources and personnel needed for safe, supportive and nurturing high-quality learning environments. As educators, we deserve to have a seat at every table where decisions are being made about our students, jobs and working conditions.



“Our experiences in the classroom and in education leadership prepare us well for service to our communities on school or county boards.

—Karla Griego

as a union leader and as an elected official, Normand has remained laser-focused on supporting the well-being of students — especially those who are most vulnerable.

“My Marine Corps training taught me that there is no higher calling than to give back to our communities,” says Normand, a member of Brentwood Teachers Association. “I am committed to ensuring that schools serve the whole needs of students, with safe and supportive classrooms and school campuses. This is more than a goal; this is a practice.”

Normand is one of more than 50 CTA members and staff who currently serve on school boards across California, bringing educators' voices to local policy-making discussions and advocating for safe and supportive learning conditions for every student. Last December, these educators/elected officials held their own caucus at the California School Boards Association annual meeting for the second time. At a time when educators and communities are rising together to fight extremists elected

to school boards, like in Chino Valley, Orange, Rocklin and Temecula, more and more educators are stepping up to defend their schools and communities as trustees.

“We are uniquely positioned to identify and work on policies that protect students, teachers and staff, to ensure that all students have opportunities to reach their full potential,” says Normand, who is endorsed by numerous Alameda County teachers' associations. “We advocate for the students who cannot advocate for themselves — specifically, those who are historically underserved and overlooked.”

In Los Angeles, near-20-year educator Karla Griego is looking to become the first-ever special education teacher on the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education. Endorsed by United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) for District 5, Griego is also the community schools coordinator at



Continued on Page 21



Angela Normand

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER

Brentwood Teachers Association

Candidate for Alameda County Board of Education,
Area 2 | angelanormand.com

Why are you running for reelection?

I've dedicated my entire educational career to advocating for the needs of children the system overlooks: students who have special needs, have been expelled, are trapped in the court system, or are young parents. I'll continue to fight to ensure every school provides mental health services, counseling, and safe/secure classrooms and campuses, and I will continue to demand responsible management of our local schools to prioritize classroom learning and the recruitment and retention of amazing teachers.

Why is it so important to have educators as school board members?

Educators know the needs and assets of our schools and students because we are doing the work on the ground. We are also constantly battling and navigating the bureaucracy to better support our students, bring in resources, protect their rights, and work with families to create stronger school communities.

What would you say to educators considering running for school board?

I recently came across a quote that said, "If you run you stand the chance of losing, but if you don't run you have already lost." We are the subject matter experts on any and every school or county board by the nature of our profession. We all do what we do to make a difference, and there is no greater difference to be made than to serve our community in this manner.

"We cannot lesson plan our way out of the needs of many of our students. I am committed to building villages that can support them."

—Angela Normand



Telly Tse

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER

Beverly Hills Education Association

Candidate for Glendale Unified School Board,
Area A | tellytse.com

Why are you running for school board?

When the incumbent decided not to run for reelection, I decided this would be the right time to run for school board and ensure that our school district continues to be a safe and welcoming place for all our children and families.

Why is it so important to have educators as school board members?

School board members make decisions that impact our students, teachers and staff. Educators understand better than anyone else the impact of such decisions and direction at the ground level. They understand what works and what will truly benefit our kids.

What would you say to educators considering running for school board?

If you are an educator and you are considering running for school board in November or beyond, your campaign has already begun. What has been gratifying for me as a candidate for school board is seeing the support from families of children I have coached over the years, educators I've supported, organizations I have been involved with, and fellow parents I've gotten to know through various committees and projects. If you haven't already, be involved in school and community organizations whether it is your school PTA, local political club, or youth sports group. When the time comes to run for school board, you will be more known and more informed.

"Be involved in school and community organizations. When the time comes to run for school board, you will be more known and more informed."

—Telly Tse



Educators Run for Central Committee Seats

CTA members are running for their county Democratic and Republican Central Committees across the state in the March 5 Primary Election. These committees make contributions to candidates or ballot measures, make independent expenditures to support or oppose candidates or ballot measures, and conduct events including voter registration and “get out the vote” drives. Candidates include the following:

- Juliana Adrianzen, *Mt. Diablo Education Association*
- Mayra Alvarado, *Oakland Education Association*
- Monique Barrett, *San Diego Education Association*
- Janey Brunton-Muño, *CTA/NEA Retired* (elected unopposed)
- Celenia Calderón, *United Teachers Los Angeles*
- Trevor Chandler, *United Educators of San Francisco*
- Ava Chiao, *East Side Teachers Association*
- Jim Dear, *United Teachers Los Angeles*
- Jen Drewek, *Woodland Education Association*
- Don Dumas, *Sweetwater Education Association*
- Hugo Estrada, *Palmdale Elementary Teachers Association*
- Cesar Fernandez, *Sweetwater Education Association*
- Tera Fowler, *Centralia Education Association*
- Monette Gavino, *Teachers Association of Long Beach*
- Nicole Grashon, *San Lorenzo Education Association*
- Patricia Hernandez, *El Monte Teachers Association*
- Margaret Hicks, *Palmdale Elementary Teachers Association*
- Meghann Hughes, *San Diego Education Association*
- Audrey Jacques, *Fairfield Suisun Unified Teachers Association*
- Lonny Johnson, *Selma Unified Teachers Association*
- Kayla Klauer, *San Benito Joint Union High School Teachers Association*
- Wade Kyle, *United Teachers Los Angeles*
- Christina Marquez, *San Bernardino Teachers' Association*
- Ed Millican, *San Bernardino Community College District Teachers Association*
- Blake Mittan, *Modesto Teachers Association*
- Richard Moore, *CTA/NEA Retired*
- Jose A Moran, *Madera Unified Teachers Association*
- Val Muchowski, *CTA/NEA Retired*
- April O'Connor, *Teachers Association of Paramount*
- Antonio Ortega, *Wilsona Teachers Association*
- Mary Rose Ortega, *CTA/NEA Retired, United Teachers Los Angeles*
- Corey Penrose, *Vacaville Teachers Association*
- Dr. Forest Peterson, *Gavilan College Faculty Association*
- Bonnie Shatun, *CTA/NEA Retired*
- Therese Sorey, *CTA/NEA Retired*
- Pam Williamson, *Fairfield Suisun Unified Teachers Association*
- Nathan Willis, *Santa Rosa Teachers Association*
- Kassandra Wilson, *Mt. San Antonio College Faculty Association*
- Jimmie Woods-Gray, *United Teachers Los Angeles*
- Jeanette Wylie, *CTA/NEA Retired* (elected unopposed)
- Gina Young, *Hanford Elementary Teachers Association*

Continued from Page 19

McAlister High School, an options school for pregnant and parenting minors.

“My priorities for LA Unified include supporting the whole child through providing more mental health supports, supporting our LGBTQ+ students, and creating enriching curriculum and career pathways,” Griego says. “We need to promote equity, accountability and transparency for LAUSD and charter schools. I want to ensure that the voices of our families and communities are heard.”

Griego agrees that educators are uniquely positioned to lead communities as school board members.

“We have a pulse on the issues and deep knowledge on how to resolve them,” says Griego, a UTLA member. “We bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise in solving problems while centering students’ holistic needs.”

Normand is ready to continue leading in Alameda County to ensure that all students have the support they need and deserve.

“I am a special education teacher — and many students from marginalized communities find their way to my classroom. While many students have educational difficulties, many more are simply trying to learn and thrive in a traumatizing space, or heal from traumatizing circumstances, in a system not designed to see and prioritize their needs,” Normand says.

“This is why I am such an advocate for trauma-informed and culturally competent wraparound services at school sites, known colloquially as community schools. We cannot lesson plan our way out of the needs of many of our students, and I am committed to building villages that can support them.” ■

▼ High Tech Education Collective members won their first contract with powerful unity and a commitment to better.



The Power & Joy of the First Contract

*Charter educators secure basic rights
for the first time at the bargaining table*

By Julian Peeples

"IT'S AMAZING TO THINK about how few workplace protections we had before the contract," says Hayden Gore, president of High Tech Education Collective (HTEC). "All of these things have contributed to a work environment that is more sustainable. The contract has transformed our working lives."

Across the state, educators in charter schools are unionizing and organizing to win sustainable teaching and learning conditions at the bargaining table, building their locals from the ground up and fighting for first contracts that include foundational on-the-job rights and protections that most public school educators have the moment they are hired. Due to what is known as the "mega waiver," the

state's more than 1,300 charter schools are exempt from many important sections of California Education Code — including the laws that guarantee basic rights and working conditions to all public school employees.

For years charter managers trumpeted flexibility and lack of regulation as the recipe for success for their students. But the mega waiver instead became a race to the bottom for charter school management organizations, creating separate classes of educators with vastly different rights and working conditions.

It's a big part of what motivated educators at Downtown College Preparatory in San Jose to unionize in 2020. In the early months of COVID-19, teachers felt like they

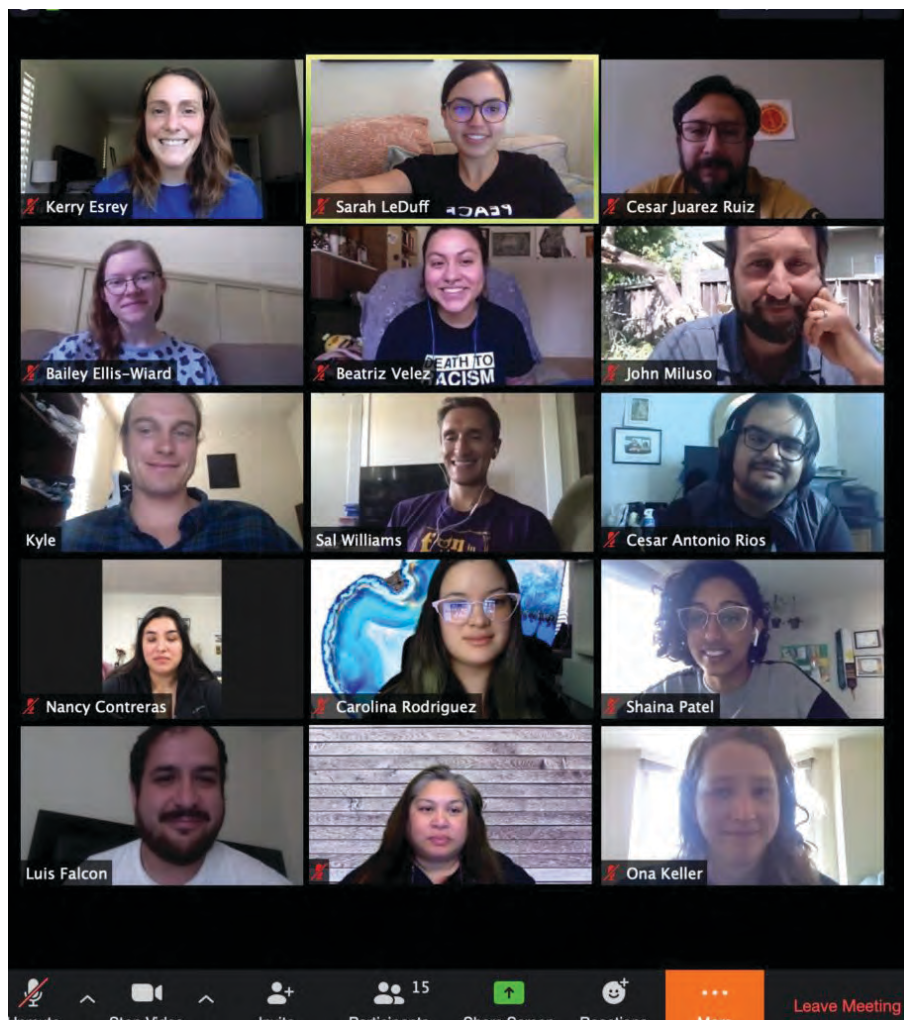
ORGANIZING PRO TIP

"The key to our organizing was individual connection. The union is us, and we built it like that because we did it in an interpersonally connected way."

—Hayden Gore,

High Tech Education Collective

▼ South Bay Educators United formed during the pandemic, holding their organizing meetings virtually.



ORGANIZING PRO TIP

“Try not to be isolated. Have intentional touch points with other unions locally and around the state.”

—Nina Rodriguez,
South Bay Educators United

had no voice as school management decided what instruction would look like during a worldwide pandemic. The fight for each other and their students galvanized educators, who organized and formed South Bay Educators United (SBEU), the first teachers’ union in the country to organize during the pandemic.

SBEU President Nina Rodriguez says after the initial challenge of collecting cards and filing for union recognition during shelter-in-place orders, the first bargain was uncharted waters for educators and charter school management, who not only had to negotiate a contract but learn how to do so, together.

“We had to figure out ground rules and other things,” she says. “It took us more than one academic year to finalize — we were all learning together.”

When the ink dried on their first contract, SBEU members had won major victories in securing working hours and workload rights, as well as transparency in the school’s operations — one

of the main factors driving educators to unionize initially. Rodriguez says the rights they won set much-needed boundaries for SBEU educators and is helping create a structure for the whole school network.

“Management knows what asks they can make of their teachers,” Rodriguez says. “This has created the biggest shift for educators, students and systemwide.”

Members of Palmdale Aerospace Teachers Association (PATA) are in the 16th month of their first contract bargain, currently organizing to get charter management to take negotiations seriously. Lead site representative Daniel Lagomarsino says managers are doing everything they can to delay negotiations, dragging their feet on sharing financial information, copying and pasting articles from other school contracts



Continued on Page 25

▼ Members of Palmdale Aerospace Teachers Association are in their 16th month of bargaining their first contract.



▼ River Charter Schools Teachers Association members (from left) Mary Gomes, Katie Bauer and Kristina Del Moro.



ORGANIZING PRO TIP

“Remember that you’re in this together and to lean on each other when things get rough — tough times don’t last but relationships do.”

—**Mary Gomes**, *River Charter Schools Teachers Association*

ORGANIZING PRO TIP

“In-person conversations are the most important thing you can do. It cannot be a one-person job — you have to build horizontal power as soon as possible.”

—**Daniel Lagomarsino**,
Palmdale Aerospace Teachers Association

▼ Environmental Educators United members are currently bargaining their first contract, focused on stemming chronic teacher turnover.



▼ HTEC members took to the streets last October to rally for fair pay for all staff across High Tech High's 16 sites.



High Tech Education Collective

HIGH TECH HIGH *San Diego County*

430 certificated & 300 ESP members across 16 sites

In only a few short years, High Tech High educators won their union, grew it to more than 700 strong by welcoming the charter network's classified employees, and won a historic first contract that will help stem chronic high turnover that impacts students and families. Through their efforts, HTEC members scored massive victories at the bargaining table: personal time, sick days that roll over and accrue, a 10% increase in the pay scale, retention bonuses and a contractual right to substitute teachers.

"We never had a right to subs — we used to have to teach all day without breaks," says HTEC President Hayden Gore, a sixth-grade humanities teacher. "If we want justice for our students, we have to fight for just working conditions."

Gore says HTEC has built power across all 16 sites in San Diego County by organizing the old-fashioned way, one-on-one conversations in person and on the phone, making connections with each other and rising together to accomplish their shared goals.

"That's our strength today," Gore says. "It's not that our social media is the best, or our website or emails. We're strong about the relational aspects of our union and that builds real solidarity."

River Charter Schools Teachers Association

RIVER CHARTER SCHOOLS *Clarksburg*

50 certificated members at two sites

Forming their union in late 2021 to create a better and more stable future for educators at River Charter Schools, RCSTA won their first contract in May 2023 that includes landmark victories like class-size reduction, guaranteed pregnancy leave and basic Ed Code rights. RCSTA President Mary Gomes says a lot has changed for educators in a short time, going from a place where management made decisions without transparency or teacher input to one where educators have a unified voice and a union contract.

South Bay Educators United

DOWNTOWN COLLEGE PREP *San Jose*

70 certificated members across four sites

Educators at Downtown College Prep blazed trails in 2020, when they organized virtually and won their union, South Bay Educators United (SBEU). Then the tough work began, sitting at a bargaining table where everyone was learning on-the-fly how to negotiate. After a year, SBEU notched major victories for transparency in the charter school network's finances and decision-making, as well as negotiating hours, workload and working conditions, and a guaranteed teacher voice on important issues.

"When sweeping changes are made without teacher input, it's a gamble on how it will affect the learning community," says Rodriguez, an instructional coach. "It was all reactive before, but now we can get ahead of it to minimize the harm to our community and maximize what has been effective."

Bargaining is currently underway for an equity-based salary schedule as well as a fair evaluation process. SBEU is already tapping into the vast resources of the CTA family, collaborating with a member from Chula Vista Educators for ideas on creating their new evaluation process.

"That has saved us so much time and provided models, so we don't have to start from scratch," Rodriguez says.

"Now, we have an equal seat at the table for years to come," says Gomes, a fifth grade teacher. "It's hard to put into words what it means for us."

Gomes says RCSTA's victory is already having impacts for neighboring charter educators and their associations, raising the floor for working conditions and modeling how to fight and win. Next up for RCSTA: bargaining a successor contract and building a new legacy of respect in their schools.

"We're looking forward to figuring out who we are as RCSTA and making sure our members know CTA is here to support us all," Gomes says.

Environmental Educators United

ENVIRONMENTAL CHARTER SCHOOLS

Los Angeles County

120 certificated members
across four sites

Bargaining their first contract has been difficult for EEU members, as charter management continues to unnecessarily delay and drag out the process. EEU Organizing Committee member Fabian Ponciano says educators are looking to win rights and working conditions in their first contract that will help end a school culture that burns out young teachers and denies students the stability they deserve.

"We want this to be a partnership. We have the same goals in mind — we want Environmental Charter Schools (ECS) to be a leader in education and be the best for our community," says Ponciano.

EEU members are fighting to keep educators at ECS, focused on items like improved working conditions and longevity pay, as well as the resources students deserve to help meet their needs. Ponciano says that while that march has been slow, EEU members are keeping their eyes on the prize of a first contract.

"It is tough organizing and at times, it feels like we're not making change — but we are," he says. "It just takes time to make a difference. The momentum builds up and once we start moving, it's hard to stop us."

▼ EEU's Fabian Ponciano, a graduate of Environmental Charter Schools, remembers the impacts of chronic churn on students.



ORGANIZING PRO TIP

"Don't be afraid to approach people you don't usually talk to, because you're going to find common goals and values."

—Fabian Ponciano,
Environmental Educators United

Continued from Page 25

see there's a lot of burden on us," says Ponciano, a ninth grade science teacher. "A contract will mean so many of our teachers will be able to stay and support our students."

In their fights for a unified voice for educators and students, these charter educators are drawing a line in the sand for the conditions that all school communities deserve — inspiring others to also take that stand. Teachers at Leadership Public Schools' three campuses in the San Francisco Bay Area organized East Bay Educators United (EBEU) in 2020, winning their first contract and sending ripples through charter schools regionally. The victory had a palpable impact on their classified colleagues, who began organizing to join EBEU shortly after to win their own guaranteed rights, working conditions and voice on the job.

Starting their campaign in August, the 36 education support professionals became the newest members of the CTA family in late December when they were officially recognized as EBEU members.

"I never imagined we would go from zero to fully filed in a single semester, so it's been a lot to take in. It's a testament to our organizing committee," says LaTonya Pye, EBEU Classified Organizing Committee member.



Continued on Page 28

Palmdale Aerospace Teachers Association

PALMDALE AEROSPACE ACADEMY Palmdale

95 certificated members at one site

Bargaining for PATA's first contract hasn't been a smooth ride with difficult management, but that's only serving to strengthen the resolve of educators fighting for better conditions for each other and their students. PATA members are building a movement to fight for the wages and working conditions they deserve. Educators at the K-12 Palmdale Aerospace Academy don't currently have prep periods, haven't had a pay increase in five years, and don't earn tenure and permanent employment.

"Lately, everybody's really committed and we're moving in a unified way," says Lagomarsino, who teaches history, AVID and yearbook.

Management's unwillingness to take bargaining seriously has PATA on the verge of declaring impasse and preparing for the possibility of a strike if that's what it takes to win their union contract.

"A union makes management listen," Lagomarsino says. "I believe in democracy, and what we have here is a workplace democracy."

▼ HTEC President Hayden Gore with wife Lisa.



Continued from Page 27

“I think people felt like they needed protection — and then also seeing what certificated EBEU members have accomplished. It’s been a huge blessing to see how much good has come out of this for our staff and students.”

HTEC educators experienced a similar outbreak of inspiring solidarity across 16 High Tech High sites in San Diego County. Within a year of their historic first contract win, 300 High Tech High ESPs petitioned to join their 430-plus certificated siblings in HTEC, raising the total union size to more than 730 educators — one of the biggest charter school educators’ unions in the country.

“High Tech High has rhetorically committed itself as an equity project for years. They spoke the language of equity, we believed it, began to internalize it, and then demanded it,” says Gore. “I think we were held captive by this mythology taught to us by High Tech High that being at-will employees is what made us good. If we want justice for our children, we have to fight for just working conditions. All of our contract wins have contributed to a more sustainable work environment.” ■

▼ Rodrigo Ventura, Reginald Finley and LaTonya Pye led the successful effort to organize ESPs and join EBEU; at right, LaTonya Pye.

East Bay Educators United

LEADERSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS *San Francisco Bay Area*

36 ESP members across three sites



ESP^s at Leadership Public Schools (LPS) said “Union Yes” and were officially acknowledged late last year as members of EBEU. LaTonya Pye, a career and community leadership coordinator at LPS Richmond, says ESPs had previously tried to organize unsuccessfully, but this time there seemed to be a strong sense of urgency that pushed them across the finish line.

With bad management and other issues causing high turnover, Pye says their EBEU team is preparing to survey members to develop priorities heading into their first-ever bargain. Among their top concerns: respect, safety, fair and competitive compensation, and job security. While Pye expects bargaining to start in spring, she says they are taking time to gather all member voices to ensure the process is inclusive.

“What is going to provide the best resources because ultimately, the goal is to serve the students in our community,” Pye says. “I’m new to this and there’s a lot to learn, but there’s so much power! This is just the beginning — we’re looking forward to many more wins!”

ORGANIZING PRO TIP

“It starts with having a great team around you. People who understand that it’s about the greater good is how we’ve been able to do so much in a very short time.”

—LaTonya Pye,
East Bay Educators United

▼ SCTA leadership strategize.



▼ After years of disrespect, SCTA members went on an 8-day strike in 2022.



What Can You Do When Great Educators Work Together?

WHAT CAN YOU DO when a superintendent reneges on a signed contract? ...when 10,000 students are without teachers? ...when a meddling mayor, an incompetent superintendent and an obstructionist school board are not on your side?

"What Can You Do?," a new video, tells the story of Sacramento City Teachers Association (SCTA) educators' six-year struggle from 2017 to 2022 to organize and win the support of the community, and build a stronger, more unified union. The lessons learned can help other unions and their supporters in their struggle.

While the Sacramento City Unified School District superintendent and school board forecast huge budget deficits year after year and refused to fund essential school services and educator salaries, at the end of each year there was always a big surplus as the district

sat on healthy reserves. SCTA managed to flip a crucial board seat, but most of the board still supported the superintendent.

In 2022, SCTA and community and labor allies went on an eight-day strike, including a high-profile, parent-led sit-in at district headquarters as they waited for the board to come to the bargaining table. Finally, SCTA reached a favorable agreement that gave students and educators the resources and support they deserved.

But SCTA wasn't done: In 2022, the local's members and allies knocked on 44,000 doors and wrote thousands of letters in a campaign for a new school board. SCTA-backed candidates ended up sweeping the election, leading to the superintendent's resignation.

Watch the video at bit.ly/SCTA_WhatCanYouDo.

Lack of Oversight Leads to Corruption

Highlands Community Charter and Technical Schools, founded in 2014 and based in the Twin Rivers Unified School District, is for adult education and enrolls approximately 15,000 students, both in-person at multiple campuses across the state and online. Most are immigrants.

Highlands is a public charter, meaning it is funded by tax dollars and is lightly regulated. As its enrollment has grown, so has its budget: \$102 million in 2023–24.

A recent, four-part investigative news report by ABC10 in Sacramento found that, with a lack of school administration transparency and close oversight by either TRUSD or Highlands' own school board, funds have been misused. Most egregiously, Linda Fowler, a longtime TRUSD board member who also joined the Highlands board was paid a consulting fee — which the state Fair Political Practices Commission later said was a conflict of interest. Fowler left the Highlands board but is currently a Highlands employee — paid \$53K for halftime work that the ABC10 report found questionable.

Fowler's school board seat is up in March and the **Twin Rivers United Educators** have been actively working to elect Sasha Vogt to replace Fowler. To find out more, go to facebook.com/trueassociation. To watch the ABC10 report, go to bit.ly/HighlandsCharterSchool.

▼ UESF Bargaining Team Coordinating Committee members (from left) Teanna Tillery, paraeducator, UESF Vice President, Paraeducators; Emily Patterson, special education content specialist; Cassandra Curiel, middle school language arts teacher, UESF President; Alex Schmaus, special education instructional aide, UESF Executive Board; Diana Mueller, special education paraeducator, UESF Executive Board; Jeffrey Finger, high school math teacher; Yajaira Cuapio, school social worker, UESF Executive Board; Anaia Gilliam, fourth-fifth grade teacher, UESF Executive Board; Tina Leung, bilingual speech language pathologist; and Maggie Furey, school social worker.



EQUITY

MEANS EVERYONE

The power of the Big Bargaining Team leads San Francisco educators to greater unity — and victory

By **Julian Peebles**

“EVERYTHING CHANGED in this bargaining campaign,” says paraeducator Teanna Tillery. “It was exciting to be on a big bargaining team that had all our voices from different sites. We all truly felt like we were part of the process, and it made a difference.”

When United Educators of San Francisco (UESF) went into contract negotiations last March, leaders knew they wanted to bring an expanded bargaining team to the table to include all the large local’s voices. But they were unaware just how much that would change their understanding of each other, alter their approach for the bargain and build power as a union.

UESF is one of the larger locals in CTA, representing a wide array of staff in San Francisco Unified School District, including credentialed educators, education support professionals (ESPs)

and substitute teachers. In all, UESF represents about 5,000 credentialed and 1,500 classified members. After bargaining in 2020 with a team of 25, UESF leaders wanted to expand even larger to create a team where all members felt their voices and needs were at the table.

UESF President Cassandra Curiel says expanding the bargaining team to 65 was a deliberate decision rooted in equity to build a foundation of solidarity and accomplish their shared goals.

“It wasn’t just having 65 people on the team, there was intention,” Curiel says. “It represented a lot of places and spaces.”

The big number had its challenges. “It was a relief to have many hands making light work. More voices and shared decision-making were huge, but also hard sometimes,” says UESF Executive Board member Darcie Chan-Blackburn.

▼ UESF Bargaining Team Coordinating Committee members met in December to share the story of their historic bargain.



“This contract will allow more educators to remain in their positions, so students have the stable relationships that they deserve”

—Maggie Furey, school social worker



◀ UESF's Big Bargaining Team, announcing on Facebook Live that they reached a tentative agreement.

At the campaign kickoff, union leaders including the bargaining team shared their experiences in their specific roles in schools, the challenges they faced and their priorities for the bargain. After many words of appreciation for their work, paraeducators revealed some of the many inequities they faced at the district, including disparate longevity pay and the lack of a pension for the lowest-paid and most racially diverse group of members. It was a powerful and emotional moment for the team.

“And they immediately pivoted and made us their priority. It went from ‘I’ to ‘we’ — the bargain was like a birth of our union,” says Tillery. “If I didn’t know we were one union before, I do now.”

“This contract is transformative for the students of San Francisco, even the ones who aren’t students yet. At every school site, we are united to make things better for the long-term.”

—UESF President **Cassandra Curiel**

School social worker Yajaira Cuapio called it “a moment of class consciousness” for UESF — one that changed their approach and made them stronger than ever before.

“I think it really transformed us all.

It definitely changed me and the way I identify as a worker and leader,” Cuapio says. “It taught me more about San Francisco and our society. We’re talking about touching community.”

Teacher Anaia Gilliam says learning about how many of her colleagues were living and existing was eye-opening. Through this lens, the bargaining team developed a series of proposals rooted in equity. Rather than traditional across-the-board percentage increases that give the lowest raises to the



lowest paid, the team sought to lift the salary schedule from the bottom, fighting for dignity and a basic standard of living for all UESF members. Gilliam says they even looked at current gaps in equity and anticipated places where district admin would try to divide the union.

“Equity became an important anchor, so we got what the general membership needed at the table,” she says. “It was a learning experience. I hadn’t previously considered others in the unit — I learned about my colleagues in a way I hadn’t before.”

Special education instructional aide Alex Schmaus says they thought strategically about what it means to be a union that is centered in inclusion and unity, including understanding that collective action is higher stakes for ESPs, who often are living close to the edge.

“We set a goal of equity from the beginning. We’re trying to lift a section of our membership out of poverty,” says Schmaus. “This is a path we have to walk for a few cycles, but it’s in sight now.”

Since 1996, paraeducator longevity pay had been stagnant at an additional 30 cents an hour after 10 years of service to the district, different than the usual percentage pay increases provided to veteran staffers. This disparate approach to recruiting and retaining quality paraeducators showed a lack of value for these educators and the important services they provide to San Francisco students.

The bargaining team embraced the idea that making meaningful improvements to paraeducator pay is a special education issue and struck a huge victory for equity, including percentage-based longevity increases for paraeducators and an SFUSD where no classified employee makes less than \$30 an hour.

▼ Thousands of UESF members converged on Balboa High School for a strike authorization vote in October.



THE STRIKE VOTE:

A Show of Unity and Power

After six months of bargaining with a district administration that didn’t seem interested in recruiting and retaining quality educators, UESF held a strike authorization vote in mid-October 2023 that showed just how ready members were to fight for their students and each other. Thousands of educators converged on Balboa High School that afternoon, forming a

massive serpentine line that coiled back and forth across the campus in a powerful display of unity, and a promise to admin that UESF was ready to strike if necessary.

“People were showing up before contract hours were up, so it was almost like a job action,” says Alex Schmaus, a special education instructional aide and UESF Bargaining Team member. “It wasn’t just the numbers; it was the membership showing us they were ready to fight and also wanting to fight.”

When the votes were tallied, 97% had voted to authorize a strike to win the

schools that San Francisco deserved. Bargaining team member Jeffrey Finger says the turnout was a loud message to not blink at the bargaining table.

The tone at the table changed after the strike vote, with admin getting more serious about the bargain and taking a more collaborative approach. In a matter of weeks, the district’s offer improved dramatically — for certificated educators alone, the offer went from a one-year, \$5,500 raise to a two-year offer with a \$9,000 raise the first year and 5% the second.

“We were very far apart for months and months, and then we had the strike authorization vote and they were throwing money at us,” Schmaus says.

“Look at how far the district came in such a short time — and that’s because of organizing,” Finger adds.

“When we are united, we can change district management’s decisions no matter how impossible they claim it to be.”

—Tina Leung, bilingual speech language pathologist

▼ UESF members were committed to each other and ready to fight for better, authorizing a strike with a 97% vote.



“It’s exciting to see moving forward how we can retain staff. We fought for the schools our students deserve and this is a chance to see it.”

—**Emily Patterson**, special education content specialist

WHAT THEY WON

UESF’s Big Bargaining Team won a tentative two-year agreement on Oct. 20 at 6 a.m. after a 13-hour marathon bargaining session. Approved by 86% of UESF members, highlights of the contract include:

- All ESPs will earn a minimum salary of \$30 an hour in the first year of the contract (with ESPs earning more than that receiving an 8% raise), and a 5% pay increase in the second year.
- ESPs will now receive percentage longevity pay increases at 5, 10, 15 and 20 years.
- The average pay increase for ESPs is 39% (or \$10.37 per hour)
- Certificated educators will receive a \$9,000 on-schedule pay increase the first year and a 5% raise the second year. The average increase to annual salary for certificated educators for this agreement is 19.4%.
- Substitute educators: The first-year sub rate is \$316 per day with an additional 5% in the second year, while 160-day QTEA (Quality Teacher & Education Act) subs will receive \$80 more per day.
- New contractual community schools language, including a districtwide steering committee and a requirement for a community school coordinator.
- Won gains that will help all UESF members deal with inflation and the cost of living in the San Francisco Bay Area while also helping to recruit and retain the educators desperately needed to stabilize their schools.
- Additional wins include gains for fully staffed schools, improved working conditions, student support, protections from poor management decisions (such as with payroll, benefits and retirement), and special education.

“When we say solidarity or equity, our actions match our words,” Curiel says. “Our work is easier when we have fully staffed schools. Stable schools mean better working conditions, for all of us.”

Tina Leung, a bilingual speech language pathologist, says it was powerful for the team to build their proposals together and gain an understanding of how it would impact all members. They were deliberately transparent and communicated the goals of the bargain to empower members to fight and win. And when the union made these proposals to the district, UESF members gave testimony and told their stories to humanize the proposals, bringing organizing to the bargaining table.

“So the district’s first engagement with our proposals was with the stories from members,” Curiel says. “It’s about *us* every day — not the contract language on paper.”

Winning the information battle early was key to building power, which was in full display when UESF members voted to authorize a strike with 97% approval (see sidebar). Bargaining team members said it was transformative how much UESF’s strength grew in only a year.

“And it was all very intentional growth,” says special education paraeducator Diana Mueller. “We were meeting and building power at our worksites and getting everyone involved. Our victory was a culmination of that work.” ■

STATE BUDGET:

Governor Remains Committed to Education

Proposed budget keeps equitable access to quality public education and resources for all students



Gov. Gavin Newsom

GOVERNOR GAVIN NEWSOM'S proposed 2024–25 State Budget, released in mid-January, continues a commitment to K–14 education despite an estimated budget shortfall.

Newsom's overall budget includes \$291.5 billion in total funds (\$208.7 billion General Fund). It anticipates that General Fund revenues will be \$42.9 billion lower than the 2023 Budget Act projections, mainly due to weaker-than-expected state revenues, delayed tax deadlines and overspending based on earlier budget projections. After accounting adjustments, the state faces an estimated budget gap of \$37.8 billion in the 2024–25 fiscal year.

Total TK–12 education funding: The proposed budget includes total funding of \$126.8 billion for all TK–12 education programs. TK–12 per-pupil funding totals \$17,653 Prop. 98 (the funding formula determining the portion of the state's General fund that must be spent on TK–12 and community colleges) and \$23,519 per pupil when accounting for all funding sources.

Total community college funding: Newsom's budget provides \$13.6 billion in Prop. 98 funding for the California community colleges (CCC) in 2024–25. Total funding for the CCC in 2024–25 is \$21.6 billion.

Newsom's budget addresses the education funding gap by withdrawing about \$7 billion from the \$10.8 billion Prop. 98 TK–14 rainy day fund, approved by voters in 2014, to cover the shortfall in 2023–24 and 2024–25.

"Governor Newsom's proposed budget continues to keep our state's commitment to equitable access to a quality public education and resources for all California students," said CTA President David Goldberg in a statement following Newsom's budget presentation. "The governor's ongoing commitment to public education means that school districts and community colleges will be able to build on the recent investments in education that have expanded learning opportunities for students.

"We are especially pleased that the governor remains unwavering in his commitment to Community Schools. With the historic \$4.1-billion investment maintained, California is on the road to making one in four California schools a

Community School. This prioritizes democratic decision-making, racial justice and the needs of students."

The governor's plan for universal transitional kindergarten for all 4-year-old children by 2025 also remains intact in the budget, with Newsom proposing to "rebench" Prop. 98 upward. (Rebenching increases the minimum guarantee for programs shifted into Prop. 98 by allocating funds from the state's General Fund.) Additionally, the Prop. 98 guarantee for the Arts and Music in Schools–Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act (approved by voters in November 2022) will be rebenched by \$938 million.

The Prop. 98 portion spent on TK–14 will rise about one percentage point to 39.5% of the general fund. In 2024–25, Prop. 98 funds will be \$109.1 billion.

The Legislative Analyst's Office and the State Legislature review Newsom's January budget over the next few months; the governor submits his May Revision by May 14. The Legislature has until June 15 to adopt it.

"CTA will continue to work with lawmakers throughout this year's budget process to ensure the final budget reflects the will of California voters, educators and parents to prioritize public schools and colleges," said Goldberg.

"We will work to ensure there are no layoffs to educators and school employees as we have seen in some past budget deficit years. Layoffs are devastating and chaotic for educators, students and communities. The budget shortfall this year, and the potential for cuts or freezes to vital services that people depend on, highlight the need for long-term, consistent investment in all public services, including public schools.

"California is the fifth largest economy in the world, and our students deserve nothing less than an education system that reflects that economic strength."

K–12 Spending Proposals

Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF): The governor's budget includes a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) of 0.76% for the LCFF. When combined with student attendance adjustments, the budget includes a decrease of \$1.4 billion in



“California is the fifth largest economy in the world, and our students deserve nothing less than an education system that reflects that economic strength.”

—CTA President **David Goldberg**

Prop. 98 funding for the LCFF. To maintain the LCFF's current level of funding, the budget proposes utilizing state-level reserves and funds reappropriated or reverted to the state.

Educator Workforce: The budget includes the following proposals:

- Provides \$25 million ongoing Prop. 98 funding to support training for educators to administer literacy screenings. The 2023 Budget required LEAs to begin screening K-2 students for risk of reading difficulties by the 2025–26 school year.
- Provides \$20 million one-time Prop. 98 for a county office of education to work with the UC Subject Matter Projects and other providers to develop and provide training aligned with the new mathematics framework.
- Proposes statutory changes to better enable school staff to be equipped with tools needed to recognize and offer appropriate mental health supports to students in a way that is aligned with other state investments in this area.
- Intends to explore teacher apprenticeship programs with cross-agency partners and the Legislature.
- Directs the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to create a new Elementary Arts and Music Education authorization for career technical education (CTE) teachers. This will allow for experienced artists to provide arts instruction in elementary schools in addition to providing CTE instruction in grades 7–12.
- Proposes to allow for the completion of a bachelor's degree to satisfy the basic skills requirement for a credential and improve transcript review to certify subject matter competency.

Instructional Continuity: The budget proposes statutory changes to allow for local educational agencies to provide attendance recovery opportunities to students to make up lost instructional time.

School Facilities: The budget proposes to reduce the planned investment in the School Facilities Program in 2024–25 from \$875 million to \$375 million one-time General Fund. The Administration expects to begin negotiations with the Legislature this spring on an education facilities bond to

be considered in the November 2024 election.

The budget also proposes to delay the \$550 million planned investment in the California Preschool, Transitional Kindergarten and Full-Day Kindergarten Facilities Grant Program from 2024–25 to 2025–26.

State Preschool Program: The budget includes \$53.7 million General Fund to support reimbursement rate increases for the California State Preschool Program (CSPP), previously supported by available one-time federal stimulus funding. These resources are in addition to approximately \$140.6 million General Fund and \$206.3 million Prop. 98 funding identified in the 2023 Budget Act to support the recently ratified collective bargaining agreement with child-care providers.

California Community Colleges

- **Apportionments:** The budget includes an increase of \$69.1 million in ongoing Prop. 98 funding for a 0.76% COLA for Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF) apportionments and \$29.6 million ongoing Prop. 98 funding for 0.5% enrollment growth.
- **CCC Categorical Program COLA:** The budget includes an increase of \$9.3 million ongoing Prop. 98 to provide a 0.76% COLA for select categorical programs and the Adult Education Program.
- **Prop. 98 Reserve Withdrawals:** The budget proposes withdrawals of \$235.9 million in 2023–24 and \$486.2 billion in 2024–25 to support ongoing SCFF costs.
- **Nursing Program:** The budget proposes an increase of \$60 million one-time Prop. 98 funding to expand nursing programs and Bachelor of Science in Nursing partnerships to develop, educate and maintain the next generation of registered nurses through the community college system.

Student Housing: The Higher Education Student Housing Grant Program was established to provide grants for CCC, CSU and UC to construct housing for low-income students. The 2023 Budget Act shifted the program's General Fund support for UC/CSU grants to revenue bonds. It also reverted support for CCC affordable student housing grants with the intent to develop a statewide lease revenue bond or other statewide financing approach by the 2024 Budget Act; the Administration is expected to present a proposal for consideration in the May Revision. ■

CTA Takes Action in Support of Student Rights

Union files amicus brief in lawsuit challenging protections for LGBTQ+ students

A RECENT LEGAL FILING has again demonstrated CTA's unwavering support of trans and nonbinary students.

On Jan. 9, CTA and a coalition of other unions and associations representing school employees filed an amicus brief supporting Chico Unified School District (CUSD) in a lawsuit that challenges important protections for LGBTQ+ students.

The lawsuit against CUSD, *Regino v. Staley*, falsely alleged that a counselor pressured a student to use male pronouns after the student told the counselor they "felt like a boy." The parent who filed the lawsuit claims that parents have a constitutional right to have the school district forcibly out their student to them even when the student objects to that disclosure and feels that disclosure would impact the student's safety.

A federal judge dismissed the lawsuit in July. The parent appealed the dismissal to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

In a news release announcing the amicus brief filing, CTA President David Goldberg said the lawsuit is another example of extremist attempts to erode the rights of students in public school settings, particularly students' rights to privacy, equal protection and non-discriminatory learning environments.

"Trans and nonbinary youth and their families deserve to decide on their own terms when and how to have these conversations, both at home and at school," Goldberg said. "Young people thrive when they have parental support and feel safe sharing their full identities with them; but it can be harmful to force young people to share their full identities before they are ready."

Goldberg added that research shows that LGBTQ+ youth who receive support and acceptance at home, school, in the doctor's office and in local policy debates are less likely to suffer from poor mental health, including suicide attempts, suicidal ideation, anxiety and depression. In addition, trans youth who report having at least one accepting adult were 40% less likely to report a suicide attempt in the past year.

"Our union will always stand up to protect the rights and safety of our students," he said.

"Our union will always stand up to protect the rights and safety of our students."

—CTA President **David Goldberg**

The brief underscores the negative impacts of these forced outing policies on students and school employees, including teachers, counselors, psychologists, nurses and social workers. It also belies the false narrative that schools promote a "parental secrecy policy," when in fact professional best practices advocate for full inclusion of parents when it is safe for the student. Illegal forced outing policies, passed by a handful of districts last year, are currently being challenged in the courts for violating the rights of students and school district employees.

The amicus brief was filed by CTA, the California Federation of Teachers, the California Association of School Counselors, the California Association of School Psychologists, the California School Nurses Organization, and the California Association of School Social Workers.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta led 16 attorneys general in also filing an amicus brief in support of CUSD in the same lawsuit. Several other organizations who support youth also filed amicus briefs in support of the district's policy:

- California Department of Education
- ACLU
- Seven Professors of Psychology and Human Development, represented by the National Center for Lesbian Rights
- National Center for Youth Law
- Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.; GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders; The Trevor Project, Inc.; PFLAG, Inc.; Equality California, Inc.; Courage California; Rainbow Pride Youth Alliance; Sacramento LGBT Community Center; Legal Services of Northern CA

Amicus briefs are legal briefs filed in courts by persons who are not parties in the case, but who have a strong interest in the case's legal issues and its outcome. ■

▼ AUTA filed a grievance over class sizes and other issues last fall; after mediation, the local reached agreement with the district. But the battles continue.



A Win for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

Auburn local celebrates school board's vote to keep DEI statement

Auburn Union Teachers Association and its community partners scored a big victory in mid-December when the Auburn Union School District board voted 3-2 against rescinding the district's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy statement.

AUTA has been conducting a strategic organizing campaign for months against an extremist agenda by three recently elected trustees. This included hosting a town hall prior to the board meeting to coordinate efforts to retain the DEI statement, fight the recent decision to convert three schools to K-8 sites next year, and organize around other issues. The town hall turnout was "unprecedented," according to AUTA President Sara Liebert, with more than 30 community members in attendance.

"Parents and community members needed a safe place to ask

"To take something away that the community and staff worked on for the betterment of our district, students and community is atrocious."

—AUTA President **Sara Liebert**

questions, voice concerns and speak without being criticized or falling on deaf ears. Because the district has not been a safe place for them, they came to AUTA to be heard."

"Losing the DEI statement would have been detrimental to our ELD, homeless, SPED and low socio-economic students," Liebert said. "The harm to our staff and community would have been immeasurable. Everyone should have the right to a barrier-free education, and the thought that the district wanted to eliminate it was awful — an unequivocal abuse of power. To take something away that the community and staff worked on for the betterment of our district, students and community is atrocious."

AUTA and its allies played a role in one of the conservative board members voting — unexpectedly — to retain the DEI policy statement. They made it known that this board member works at Placer Food Bank, which has a DEI statement saying it "is committed to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in our organization."

Public comment at the board meeting raised valid concerns about the district's K-8 transformation with no actual plan in place, no documentation about costs and a lack of communication and transparency with families. AUTA and community members said moving forward with the change would impact the goals and decisions already set by stakeholders in the Local Control and Accountability Plan, threatening Title 1 funds and other monies targeted for the district's lowest performing students and schools.

Earlier in the fall, AUTA educators mounted a "Save Our Students!" campaign over class sizes, inadequate staffing, consolidation of schools that negatively impacted SPED and ELL students, a lack of safe drinking water in some schools, and other issues. While Liebert said AUTA and its partners face an uphill battle with the district, they are energized by the successful DEI vote and hope the momentum will carry over into the work this year. ■

Jackie Howard contributed to this report.

▼ The California School Dashboard shows how schools and local educational agencies are performing on seven state and local indicators.



Rise in Student Outcomes

State's School Dashboard shows 2023 improvements, but continued investment is essential

IN DECEMBER, the state Department of Education (CDE) released 2023 data from the California School Dashboard, which showed statewide improvements in student outcomes in several areas.

The dashboard includes the latest data on graduation rates, suspension rates, test scores, English Learner progress, the college/career indicator, chronic absenteeism and local indicators.

Among other improvements, the 2023 dashboard shows that students in California are graduating at higher levels than before the COVID-19 pandemic and are missing less class time year-over-year:

- The four-year cohort graduation rate for the class of 2023 is 86.2% — a less-than 1% decrease from the class of 2022, and still higher than pre-pandemic levels. (According to the CDE, the decrease is likely due to the phase-out of Assembly Bill 104, which allowed for temporary flexibility in graduation requirements and course grading policies for high school students during the pandemic.)

The 2022–23 four-year adjusted cohort also included more graduates who meet the UC/CSU admission requirements than prior to the pandemic, with 223,727 students (50.4% of graduates) graduating eligible for admission at California's public universities.

- The chronic absenteeism rate, which measures the number of students who missed 10% of the days they were enrolled for any reason, declined to 24.3% in 2022–23, which is a 5.7 percentage point decline from an all-time high of 30% in 2021–22. The CDE notes that California's decrease is greater than the 11-state average reported in October and that equity gaps in chronic absenteeism are becoming smaller, with the most vulnerable students improving fastest and no student groups any longer in the lowest "red" or "orange" categories.

"The data reflects what educators across the state are seeing in our schools: When students have access to the resources they deserve, they thrive."

—CTA President **David Goldberg**

"We're thrilled to see progress on chronic absenteeism, graduation rates and other areas shared on the updated dashboard," says CTA President David Goldberg. "The data reflects what educators across the state are seeing in our schools: When students have access to the resources they deserve, they thrive."

State investment in K–12 public education in recent years has focused on accelerating learning and prioritizing equity that includes \$7.9 billion for the Learning Recovery Emergency Block Grant. The 2023 Budget Act provided \$129.2 billion in total K–12 education funding — the highest per-pupil state funding ever for California students.

In addition, starting in the 2022–23 school year, the state allocated billions to expand access to Transitional Kindergarten for thousands of four-year-olds to improve Kindergarten readiness and long-term student outcomes. The 2022 and 2023 Budget Acts also provided a total of \$500 million for the Literacy Coaches and Reading Specialists Grant Program, which supports school literacy programs and interventions to help pupils in need of targeted literacy support.

"We can see that those efforts are paying off, but this is only the beginning,"

said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond of the 2023 dashboard.

Goldberg concurs, and calls for continued investment in our students. "The new dashboard also shows that there is room for improvement — class sizes continue to be too large in schools across California and many districts are grappling with the teacher shortage crisis.

"Now is the time to invest in public education and commit to providing the resources every student deserves." ■

Find more information about the California School Dashboard at caschooldashboard.org.

▼ Glendale Teachers Association and community groups at the January news conference.



A Community for Everyone

Glendale educators, allies stand up to hate, bigotry By Frank Wells

GLENDALÉ TEACHERS, health care workers, and community groups are fighting back against a wave of anti-LGBTQ+ hate and disinformation that has plagued their community over the past year and half. On January 25, Glendale Teachers Association and the National Union of Healthcare Workers, along with parents, students, local and state lawmakers, and LGBTQ+ support groups, held a news conference denouncing the growing climate of bigotry, disinformation and fear in the community.

The event was strategically held ahead of upcoming school board elections to raise awareness of the growing problem of anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric from speakers during public comments at Glendale Unified School District Board meetings, direct threats against educators, and an increase in bullying among impressionable Glendale students.

While the current GUSD Board has stated it is supportive of its inclusive

curriculum, board candidates for the March election include Jordan Henry, an extremist who is largely responsible for fomenting the current hostile atmosphere among parts of the Glendale community. GTA has endorsed alternative, LGBTQ+-supportive candidates instead, including former CTA Board of Directors member Telly Tse, a Beverly Hills teacher who lives in Glendale. Tse and current board member Chris Bushée were both participants in the news conference. UTLA/CTA Member Ingrid Gunnell, who currently serves on the GUSD Board, was also in attendance.

The genesis for this recent rise in bigotry in Glendale was initially a public records request by Jordan Henry that surfaced emails between a third grade teacher and a district colleague she was consulting on the suitability of various videos and curriculum she could potentially use as part of inclusive LGBTQ+ curriculum under the

school district's policies and under the California FAIR Act, which requires Fair, Accurate, Inclusive and Respectful representations of diverse ethnic and cultural populations in K-12 history and social studies curriculum. The emails and video links were leaked and used as part of a disinformation campaign against the teacher (a member of Glendale Teachers Association), a broad swath of other educators, the school district, and against anything related to LGBTQ+ issues in curriculum. The rhetoric became so extreme that the GTA member became concerned for her own safety. With GTA and CTA assistance, an arrest was made after she received a phone threat from someone who lived far from Glendale, but who had been spurred on by seeing the story on extremist websites.

In the subsequent year and a half, Glendale teachers have been the targets of hate speech, and some have been threatened with physical harm. "WANTED!"-style posters featuring educators' faces and their personal information have been placed along a main Glendale street. Protests that have drawn extremists such as The Proud Boys and January 6 rioters to the community have erupted into violence outside school board meetings. The disruption of board meetings and rise in anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric mirrors events in other school districts, where bad-faith actors are using the same extremist playbook to divide communities and pit parents against educators.

At the news conference, GTA President Taline Arsenian urged the community to stand together against these attacks. "Our community, and especially our schools are for everyone," she told the crowd. "We cannot let extremists undermine the safety of our schools, equitable access to health care, or the welfare of everyone in our community."



Continued on Page 41

▼ More than 3,400 Fresno Teachers Association members packed the Fresno Fairgrounds at an October rally opening their strike vote.



We Must Invest in Education

California's teachers are fighting for better schools

By **Sara Hinkley**

IN AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR for labor, California's teachers have been at the center of a revitalized movement that has successfully demanded better working conditions, family-supporting wages, and a seat at the table for important educational decisions. The toll taken by the COVID-19 pandemic, the stress of working in an increasingly strained education system, persistent state underfunding, and inadequate salaries and staffing have all invigorated teachers' unions to fight for their members and students. In December, the Legislative Analyst's Office issued a stark estimate of the state's fiscal situation heading into 2024–25, which means teachers will once again need to fight alongside families and students to stave off huge cuts in K–12 funding.

This fall, tens of thousands of teachers and school workers in Fresno and San Francisco won significant wage increases and more resources for their students. Both unions voted overwhelmingly to strike, but settled their contracts without walking out. These contract wins come on the heels of an Oakland teachers' strike and Los Angeles educators' solidarity strike with school workers last year and a Sacramento educator strike in 2022. Pre-pandemic strikes by Los

Angeles and Oakland teachers that began the wave in 2019 included big wins for students, school staff and the broader community. Instructors at the California State University system went on strike in January for similar reasons.

Teachers' willingness to strike represents not just a resurgence of union power, but also their determination to call attention to the dire consequences of decades of California's underinvestment in K–12 education. The debate over K–12 education often frames school budgets as a zero-sum choice between teacher pay, student needs and fiscal solvency. But this is a false tradeoff — the challenges facing California's education workforce and its students have been fueled by the state's persistently inadequate funding. The damage done by Proposition 13 property tax reform over the last 45 years has never been overcome — changes to the state's formula for funding education have simply redistributed a pie that is too small.

As federal pandemic stimulus money runs out and state revenues decline precipitously, the structural inadequacy of California education funding is again jeopardizing the state's students. Districts — which must adopt three-year budgets

that show a minimum level of reserves — are threatening layoffs and program cuts even as they struggle to attract and retain qualified teachers and address persistent achievement gaps. These funding constraints come as the state should be investing more in education to address both the consequences of the pandemic disruptions and significant vacancy challenges across the state.

For years, California has ranked near the bottom of the nation in its investment in K–12 education when adjusted for cost of living. Teachers, parents and community groups, anchored by the grassroots alliance California Calls, attempted to address this longstanding crisis with a 2020 proposition ballot measure to reform the state’s commercial property tax system. Unfortunately, voters very narrowly rejected the measure. The impacts of this underfunding on students are measurable: California’s high school graduation rate is 23rd in the nation despite having one of the lowest graduation requirements. California students test well below the national average on standardized tests and have some of the largest average class sizes in the country. The state faces persistent inequities in education outcomes that affect future economic wellbeing: 20% of Black students and 15% of Latino students did not graduate high school in 2021.

This underfunding is one cause of persistently low pay for all school employees. Teachers across the country are underpaid relative to workers with similar levels of education and experience by an estimated 14%. California is no exception. More than half of California’s teachers have at least a master’s degree, yet the average starting salary is just \$51,600 — low enough to qualify for a housing voucher in most parts of the state. The maximum earnings for teachers — most of whom stay in the classroom their entire careers — are also low relative to other college-educated workers. In 2021–22, the highest paid teacher in an average-size district earned about \$105,000. Non-teaching staff are also underpaid relative to similar workers, and often work part-time, below the

“The challenges facing California’s education workforce and its students have been fueled by the state’s persistently inadequate funding.”

threshold for receiving health and retirement benefits.

As a consequence, districts are competing for a shrinking pool of qualified applicants. Education researchers have been sounding the alarm for years about impending teacher shortages as enrollment in credential programs declines and the workforce ages. Now, school districts across the country are struggling to attract and retain the staff needed to help students recover from the educational, social and mental impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Only 60% of districts started the 2022–23 school year fully staffed; 70% report significant challenges finding qualified candidates, especially in science, math and special education. Districts must often fill positions with uncredentialed teachers who are more likely to end up in classrooms with already underserved students, exacerbating educational inequities. The last available year of California state data (2020–21) showed that nearly 20% of classroom teachers lacked the appropriate teaching credential. The difficulty in finding subs and the pressure

to cover gaps in staffing both drive up teacher stress levels and workloads, further undermining our ability to attract and retain qualified teachers.

The largest state in the country must face the challenge of funding public schools head-on, if all California students are to receive a quality education and the economic benefits that come with it. Instead, teachers and their unions are left to fight these battles district by district. As we seem poised to enter a budget cycle dominated by school districts saying they have no choice but to pursue austerity measures, teachers continue to demand that we do better for our students and the people who educate them. ■

This article was originally published by the UC Berkeley Labor Center. Sara Hinkley leads the center’s research on public sector workers, the role of the public sector in the economy, and the future of public sector jobs.

Glendale *Continued from Page 39*

In addition to GTA leaders and members, representatives from NUHW, the Los Angeles LGBTQ Center Los Angeles, parents, Glendale city and school district officials, state senator Anthony Portantino, and assembly members Laura Friedman and Wendy Carillo also spoke out against the extremist voices.

Edgar, a recent Glendale High School graduate, spoke about the chilling impact these attacks are

having: “I’ve had people follow me out of board meetings after I spoke. I’ve had people take pictures of me and target me online. Young people should be encouraged to be part of our democratic process, not be harassed because they don’t agree with divisive and hateful comments.”

Many speakers reminded the public to get out and “vote their values” on March 5. Before closing out the event

Arsenian said, “Glendale public school teachers will not be intimidated. We will continue to teach a rich, inclusive and age-appropriate curriculum with historical accuracy and fact-based science to ensure that students of every race, background, gender, religious affiliation and sexual orientation receive a high-quality education while feeling safe, included and welcome in every Glendale school.” ■

BARGAINING UPDATE

Compiled by **Julian Peebles**



▼ Hartnell College faculty built power with students and community to win a historic contract.



HARTNELL COLLEGE:

Faculty organize and win

After a marathon 16-hour negotiating session, **Hartnell College Faculty Association** (HCFA) won a contract in December that recruits and retains valued educators. The new agreement resolves or improves many issues of concern for all faculty and includes no “takebacks.”

“Student and community support were invaluable to our team to get us over the finish line,” said Nancy Schur-Beymer, HCFA president.

The agreement increases faculty salaries to make them competitive with other nearby colleges and compresses the salary schedule to increase the career earnings of faculty and make the salary schedule more cost-effective.

“While increases will vary, everyone will see healthy increases during this three-year contract,” said Schur-Beymer. “This agreement moves Hartnell College from last place to first in the region and significantly increases the college’s salary rankings statewide.”

The agreement includes health care for part-time faculty that complies with the AB 190 100% reimbursement program.

“This is huge, as faculty unions throughout the state are still struggling to win this. We believe ours is perhaps the 15th agreement out of the 72 community college districts in the state that utilizes the AB 190 reimbursement program. We’re proud part-time faculty will have the opportunity to take advantage of our excellent, employer-paid health care,” she said.

Other wins include improvements in salary for coaches and those who teach lab classes, part-time reemployment preferences and working remotely for non-instructional faculty, including counselors, librarians and instructional specialists. Contract language improvements include expanding bereavement leaves, association rights and release time and grievance procedures.



PLEASANTON:

Educators authorize strike, call on district to invest in student success

Association of Pleasanton

Teachers (APT) members are united and ready to fight for the best resources for their students, after voting overwhelmingly to authorize a strike if the district continues to refuse to invest in student success.

APT declared impasse in December, following continued fruitless bargaining meetings with the district.

“At a time when the needs of our students are greater than ever, management was focused on ‘accounting tricks’ and not providing the resources to retain and attract the very best educators for our students,” said APT President Cheryl Atkins. “Pleasanton Unified School District management has made it clear that they want to refuse to have their budget reflect investment in students.”

For ongoing updates, visit associationpleasantonteachers.org.



CHULA VISTA:

Unity powers successful contract campaign

Chula Vista Educators (CVE) organized and won a contract that will help recruit and retain the educators that Chula Vista students deserve.

CVE won a 12% raise over two years — the largest raise in CVE history. This includes:

- 9% raise for 2023–24, retroactive to July 2023
- 3% raise effective July 1, 2024
- A wage reopener for 2025–26

For more information, follow CVE on Facebook at [@CVEducators](https://www.facebook.com/CVEducators).



OLD ADOBE:

Educators authorize strike and win

Old Adobe Teachers Association

(OATA) members were ready to put it all on the line for each other and their students, voting to authorize a strike and winning a contract agreement in November without having to go on strike.

OATA won a two-year agreement with raises of 10% (retroactive to July 1, 2023) and 5% (effective July 1, 2024), respectively, plus an increase to the district's health care contribution to the statewide average of \$18,834 retroactive to July 1, 2023.

KENTFIELD:

Factfinding leads to contract victory

Kentfield Education Support Professionals Association (KESPA)

members won a contract that will provide a \$2.75 an hour pay increase — about 10%.

The agreement was reached just after a fact-finding hearing, averting a potential strike.

"We are very pleased that we were able to reach an agreement," said KESPA President Gretchen Harris. "Avoiding a strike means that we can continue to provide the best learning environments for our students."

KESPA also reached an agreement on paid vacation: "Starting with the 2024–2025 school year, KESPA members can request a day off with pay that they have legally earned," said Susan Sharpe, KESPA secretary and bargaining team member.

KESPA and the district were unable to reach an agreement for the 2024–2025 school year and will begin bargaining soon in the attempt to reach a three-year agreement.

▼ Anaheim Secondary Teachers Association members won more pay, better healthcare and leave for reproductive loss.

ANAHEIM:

Pay increase, improved health care

Anaheim Secondary Teachers Association (ASTA)

members reached an agreement in January that will help recruit and retain the educators that Anaheim secondary students deserve. The agreement includes a 4.5%, across-the-board salary increase for 2023–24; an increase in the district's contribution for health care that means members will not incur a monthly pay-check deduction for 2024, and the creation of workgroups with the district to create unique tools to evaluate school nurses and speech and language pathologists. ASTA also won five days of reproductive loss leave for members and other contract language improvements, community schools language and increases to many high school athletic stipends.





Single-Payer Health Care & Public Education

Its impact on students, schools and workers

IT'S ESTIMATED THAT more than 3.2 million Californians have no health care insurance, and millions more with coverage delay or cannot access needed health care services, including medications, due to cost. That number has grown in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, as many workers lost their employer-based coverage or have been unable to afford the cost of health care.

This dire situation affects all of us — not only those without coverage or enough funds, but our society as a whole, which must contend with the sick and suffering, a negative impact on our workforce and communities, and ever-rising costs to “fix” the problems. (Even people with insurance are painfully familiar with increasing deductibles and out-of-pocket costs, as well as insurers’ routine denial of care.)

In recent years, advocates and legislators have pointed to a single-payer health care system as a solution. But what is it, exactly?

The goal of single-payer health care is universal, guaranteed health care for all. It is based on the ideal that health care is a human right — an acknowledgement that public health and well-being are moral obligations in a humane society.

With single-payer health care, all residents are covered equally. Services are paid for and overseen by a government or public agency through federal funding and taxes. This is sometimes referred to as “Medicare for all.”

Single-payer benefits students, schools, workers

In recent years educators and unionists, including CTA members, have become vocal supporters of single-payer health care. Shelly Ehrke, a member of Santa Monica-Malibu Classroom Teachers Association, is part of Educators for Single-Payer, a group of California educators who have been meeting regularly on the subject.

“More and more educators across California are strongly supporting and organizing for single-payer health care because we see first-hand how the inequities and skyrocketing costs of our current system are impacting our schools, students and members,” Ehrke says.

These impacts are pernicious, she says. “Ever-increasing insurance premiums are siphoning billions of public education dollars away from our schools simply for insurance company profit; millions of students lack the consistent, quality health care that would set them up for success in

▼ CTA State Council Single-Payer Forum, March 2023. Left to right: Shelly Ehrke, Ever Flores, Anthony Arinwine, Radha Bala, Tina Fredericks, Mari Lopez (California Nurses Association), Mark Norberg, Emily Rogers.



“More and more educators are supporting and organizing for single-payer health care because we see first-hand how the inequities and skyrocketing costs of our current system are impacting our schools, students and members.”

—Shelly Ehrke,
Educators for Single-Payer



◀ Erika Feresten, left, and CTA members Shelly Ehrke and Mark Norberg are part of the group Educators for Single-Payer.

school; our bargaining teams spend an extraordinary amount of time and resources negotiating health care that could never be as comprehensive, consistent or cost-effective as single-payer instead of being able to dedicate that time to other education-related issues; and despite the incredible work of our bargaining teams, members still deal with denials, deductibles, co-pays, network restrictions, gaps in coverage and surprise bills.”

Educators for Single-Payer and other advocates use recent research studies and surveys to identify several primary reasons a single-payer health care system benefits public education and workers. Among them:

- Students with consistent health care have better test scores, attendance, focus, graduation rates, social-emotional well-being and long-term educational attainment.
- Implementing single-payer could save California schools over \$5 billion, cutting district health care expenditures by half or more.
- The savings from a single-payer policy would allow school districts to invest in class size reduction, better salaries, more staffing, mental health supports, facilities, student resources and more.
- Single-payer would take health care off the negotiating table, freeing up our bargaining teams to focus on other important issues in education.

- No union-negotiated health benefits will ever be as comprehensive, consistent or cost-effective as single-payer.

Coverage for all

Universal, guaranteed health care for all aligns with an equitable and socially just society. For Educators for Single-Payer, it also makes sense.

“With a single-payer system, every single person in California would have comprehensive health care, with any provider they choose, from the cradle to the grave — expanded to include dental, vision, long-term care, home care, prescriptions, medical devices and more — all at a fraction of what the state, our districts and individuals spend now,” Ehrke says.

“That’s why Educators for Single-Payer strongly believe health care justice is a public education issue worth fighting for.”

While CTA supports a single payer system, any position on specific legislation is determined in a democratic process and upon review of the language to ensure alignment with our mission and values, including protection of the Proposition 98 funding guarantee. ■

▼ One of multiple Dublin Teachers Association pickets on Jan. 30.



STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

East Bay chapters stand together

THE EAST BAY COALITION FOR STUDENT SUCCESS, comprised of over 18 California Teachers Association chapters, held a press conference in January to announce EBCSS chapters that have authorized a strike. Other chapters are at impasse, preparing to hold a strike authorization vote, continuing to bargain or have settled.

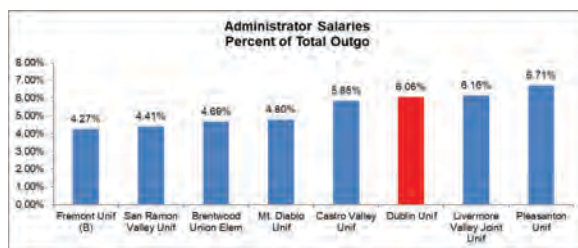
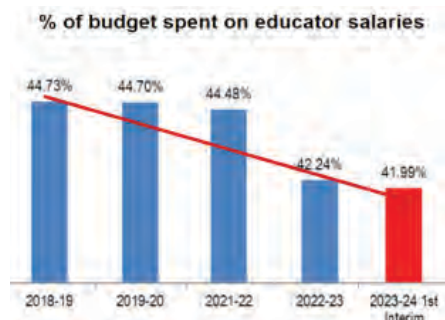
All coalition chapters have been bargaining with their respective districts on basic issues such as student resources, educator living and working conditions, and more. Dublin Teachers Association (DTA), for example, is fighting for a living wage for educators; it says the district has only offered only a 2% salary increase while receiving 8.22% in additional ongoing, per-student state funding in 2023–24. Investment in educators has dropped markedly in the past six years — see top graph — while the district spends a comparatively high amount for administrator salaries — see second graph.

Other coalition chapters have similar issues. “The blatant disrespect from some districts is not tolerated within our coalition,” said Celia Medina-Owens, president of the Pittsburg Education Association and coalition member, at the press conference. “Together, we are calling on our partners to remember what we are all about: the safety, health and overall well-being of every student. We must collaborate effectively to meet the needs of all our students.”

At press time, these were the results of individual chapters’ strike authorization votes:

- 100% of members of the Association of Piedmont Teachers (APT) voted; 96% voted yes
- 99% of members of the Association of Pleasanton Teachers voted; 98.5% voted yes

▼ Graphs from Dublin Teachers Association:



- 100% of Dublin Teachers Association (DTA) members voted; 98.8% voted yes
- 100% of Martinez Education Association members voted; 98% voted yes
- 100% of Moraga Teachers Association voted; 100% voted yes

A coalition strike — if chapter leadership deems it necessary — would occur across multiple cities and would impact thousands of students in the East Bay.

Coalition chapters — even those whose membership voted overwhelmingly in support of a strike — continue to explore alternatives. APT participated in a second mediation session with the district on Jan. 31. It also plans to hold a second community forum; 250 people attended the first one. DTA conducted informational picketing and leafleting at all sites in its district on Jan. 30, the same day it was in mediation. Pleasanton is going to fact-finding. Other actions are planned in the latter part of February.

EBCSS, launched in 2022, is a student-centered coalition with a guiding principle that all students deserve a supportive environment, with the tools and conditions they need to thrive. It strives to bring across-the-board improvements for students: the best resources, smaller class sizes so every student gets the attention they deserve and retaining and attracting the best educators. ■

“The blatant disrespect from some districts is not tolerated within our coalition.”

—Celia Medina-Owens,
Pittsburg Education
Association President



6

Ways to Capture Students' Attention

Teachers can use insights from neuroscience to help ensure that learners stay engaged

By **Judy Willis** and **Jay McTighe**

THE BRAIN EVOLVED to promote survival. Every second, millions of bits of sensory information from the receptors of the eyes, ears, internal organs, skin and muscles make their way to the brain's attention entry gate, but only about 1% of it enters consciousness.

The system that determines what gets in (i.e., what the brain attends to) is the reticular activating system (RAS). This primitive network of cells in the lower brain stem, through which all sensory input must pass to reach any higher regions of the brain, is essentially the same in your cat, your dog, your child and you.

In the wild, an organism is well-served by an attention system that gives priority to things that are unexpected, changing and different from the usual. This is the key to the RAS attention gate: Any perceived source of danger is prioritized. However, in the absence of threat, attention is directed to any changes in an animal's or human's environment.

Understanding the attention-getting system of the brain

informs teachers about specific techniques they can employ to capture students' attention as new topics are introduced.

Capturing attention in the classroom

Although survival in the wild isn't much of a priority for most humans today, the RAS is still programmed to attend to perceived threats and change. If students feel physically and psychologically unsafe in a school or a classroom, they're less likely to focus their attention on the lesson. As noted earlier, in the absence of perceived threat, our brains are particularly receptive to what's new, curious or unexpected.

In school, the students' brains are always attending... just not always on the topics we're teaching! When students aren't attentive to a lesson or a textbook, the RAS isn't giving priority entry

to the teacher's voice or words on the page, but to other more interesting or distracting sights, feelings and thoughts.

"The intent of using the techniques described is to hook student attention, but [not] simply to gain immediate attention for the moment. The longer-term goal is to hold that attention over time."



In order to capitalize on the brain's selectivity, here are six practical and proven attention-getters you can use at the start of a new unit or lesson.

1. Surprise students

Since the brain is attracted to novelty, do something unusual or unexpected to arouse curiosity and open the RAS attention filter.

EXAMPLE: Wear something unique, bring in an unusual object or play a song when students enter the room to promote curiosity, hence focus. Tell students that there's a link between your clothes, the object or the words in the song and something in the lesson. Invite them to guess what it is.

EXAMPLE: At the beginning of a unit on negative numbers, or on past tense in language, a teacher enters the room by walking backward and then asks students to guess why.

2. Present odd facts, anomalies or discrepant events

The brain is fundamentally a pattern-making organ. Constructing patterns enables humans to make sense of the world. However, when an established or expected pattern is broken, the brain is immediately aroused.

EXAMPLE: A science teacher blows up a balloon, then slowly pierces one end with a sharpened wooden cooking skewer. To the amazement of students, the teacher pushes the skewer through the opposite side of the balloon without bursting it. Students are transfixed and want to see the demonstration again!

3. Invite students' predictions

The ability to make sound predictions is fundamental to survival, and the brain rewards successful prediction through its release of dopamine, a pleasure-inducing chemical.

Teachers can provide opportunities for students to make predictions about the relationship of the curious sensory input or other novelty to the lesson.

When this happens, students will seek information to help them make correct predictions and remain attentive as their brains seek to find out if their predictions are correct.

EXAMPLE: In a science lesson for first graders, ask children to predict which objects will float and which will sink in a tub of water.

EXAMPLE: A high school psychology teacher can ask students to predict the results of a schoolwide student survey.

In both cases, students are engaged and eager to find out if their predictions are correct.

4. Pose a provocative (hook) question

A stimulating question can be an "itch" in students' brains that they'll want to scratch. **EXAMPLES:**

- *Can what you eat prevent zits?*
- *Does a fart contain DNA?*
- *Is aging a disease?*
- *What superpower would you want?*

The best hook questions are open-ended. They're meant to stimulate thinking and discussion and to open the door to further exploration. Give students a reasonable amount of quiet thinking time before they answer. Have them do a quick write about their thoughts and/or engage in a think-pair-share with another student. After this personal engagement, learners are likely to be more attentive to your teaching on the related topic.

5. Cite a current event or issue relevant to students

Students often have opinions about current events or controversial issues in their school, town, state, etc., and these can be used to spark engagement.

EXAMPLE: For a unit on persuasive writing, a middle school teacher shows a newspaper article about a school board proposal in another district that would require students to wear uniforms. Students then discuss the pros and cons, state their position and even

switch sides to try to better understand different perspectives and develop rebuttals, all as an opening to the unit on persuasion.

6. Use humor

Humor is a guaranteed dopamine booster and can serve as a great attention hook.

EXAMPLE: A sixth-grade mathematics teacher begins a unit on ratio and proportion by presenting funny caricatures of celebrities. She asks students to describe why the pictures are funny, and they note that various physical features (e.g., eyes, nose, ears, head) of the characters are greatly exaggerated. Then, the teacher shows da Vinci's Vitruvian Man to illustrate idealized proportions of the human body.

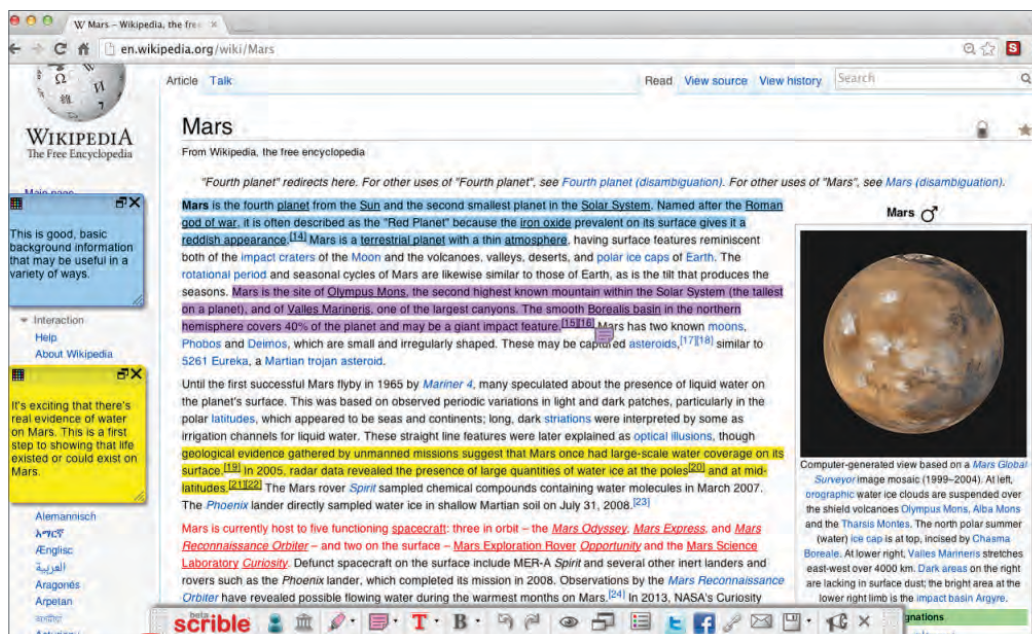
Hook and hold attention

We recommend that you rotate your attention-getting techniques to avoid being predictable. The intent of using the techniques described above is to hook student attention, but the intent isn't simply to gain immediate attention for the moment. The longer-term goal is to hold that attention over time.

There are numerous ways to capitalize on initial attention by employing active-learning strategies, including the use of authentic tasks and projects, inquiry-oriented instruction, cooperative learning, Socratic seminars, simulations and role-plays and design thinking (e.g., using maker-spaces, where students can create tangible products), and allowing students appropriate "voice and choice" options in assignments and performance tasks. ■

This story originally appeared in Edutopia.

▼ An example from the Chrome extension Scrible, which lets users annotate websites with highlights and comments.



6 Tech Strategies to Create Stronger Readers

Motivate reluctant readers, facilitate deeper comprehension and level the playing field among students of differing abilities

By Stephen Noonoo

READING IN PRINT may give students an edge when it comes to comprehension and understanding, according to linguist and reading expert Naomi Baron. After all, reading on laptops or phones introduces distractions — messaging apps, video players and ads, for example — and much of what we see online is designed to be read quickly, as opposed to absorbed deeply like a book.

Studies also suggest that we comprehend less when we read while scrolling and don't slow down to deploy time-tested study strategies like highlighting, posing questions and taking notes.

But digital books can be powerful literacy tools, likewise backed by research, especially when they come with

embedded tools that aid comprehension, like dictionaries and text-to-speech features, or when they use motion and sound to enhance the story in ways that increase engagement and deepen understanding.

Technology can also facilitate social learning activities like shared annotation; peer-to-peer discussion; and communal, video-based book reviews. In short, when used correctly, tech can help create readers with strong comprehension and analysis skills.

We collected some of the best classroom strategies to boost literacy skills, differentiate your instruction and promote a love of the printed word:



▼ Tools such as Diffit can transform a challenging passage into language tailored to any grade level from two through 11. Shown is Federalist Paper #51 for an 11th grade reader.

The screenshot shows the Diffit website interface. At the top, it says "11th Grade" and "Translate". There is a button "Get Student Activities". Below that, it says "Add Image" and "No. 51". The main section is titled "Adapted Reading Passage" and includes buttons for "Adjust Length", "Show Sources", "Edit", and "Copy". The passage text is as follows:

The passage then discusses the need for a system of checks and balances within the government. It acknowledges that the existing provisions are insufficient and proposes that the structure of the government itself should be designed in a way that allows its different parts to keep each other in check. While not going into full detail, the passage offers some general observations to help understand the principles and structure of the government outlined by the convention.

To establish a strong foundation for the separate exercise of different powers in government, it is crucial for each branch to have its own will. This means that members of one branch should have as little influence as possible in choosing members of another branch. While this may seem challenging, it is necessary to prevent one branch from becoming too powerful. The best way to achieve this is by giving each branch the necessary tools and motivation to resist encroachments from the others. Ambition must counteract ambition, and the interests of those in power must align with the rights granted by the constitution.

1. Use blended learning to drive motivation.

To help her class digest and better enjoy the novels they read for class, high school English teacher Shelby Scofield has students separate into small groups and choose a book together. She uses a blended station rotation model where students rotate group activities, annotating text to identify main ideas, creating character profiles, developing plot timelines and uploading their own video reviews using Flipgrid. Not all activities make use of tech, but they're a regular option: "Allowing students to pick from a variety of task options creates buy-in and valuable opportunities for academic growth," she writes.

Library specialist Flordeliza L. Cadiz Marks directs middle school students to the podcast "Book Club for Kids" with episodes centered around what other kids think of particular titles. She also uses video tools to create book trailers and add student book reviews to class social media pages, where parents can see them too. The goal is to create the right kind of peer pressure that comes when multiple students get excited by the same titles. "Listening to what other students are saying about a particular chapter book prompts them to borrow the book and read it as best they can," she says.

"Listening to an audiobook offers similar comprehension as print reading — stimulating the same cognitive parts of the brain."

2. Try ear reading to prod reluctant readers.

According to elementary school librarian Kimberly Rues, "a quality audiobook is one of the most effective tools in my librarian toolbox." Students who struggle with reading, or don't enjoy it, can more easily follow along with the printed book while building comprehension and reading fluency.

That practice, called ear reading, has proven benefits for students learning or struggling to read. Research has shown that listening to an audiobook offers similar comprehension as print reading — stimulating the same cognitive parts of the brain.

Reading isn't just decoding symbols with our eyes, Rues writes. It also involves "visualizing, inferring, predicting and connecting with the text.... When a child struggles to decode, the rest of the process erodes very quickly." Audiobooks

bridge that gap, helping students decode while they listen and build reading skills to use the next time they pick up a printed book to read independently.

3. Level reading passages using artificial intelligence.

Students in high school teacher Kristen Starnes' social studies classes read at many different levels — and her class

includes some students with specialized IEPs. But they're all responsible for learning the same concepts.

To make it easier for all students to keep pace, she swears by AI text levelers, such as Diffit (web.diffit.me) and Magic-School AI (magicschool.ai). In less than a minute, the tools can transform a challenging passage into language tailored to any grade level from two through 11 and attach handy vocabulary lists and multiple choice questions to gauge comprehension.

These tools, and others like them, can also be used to translate materials from one language to another — ideal for multilingual learners, writes educator Tan Huynh, who often uses AI to generate mentor texts, a task that previously took him hours to fine-tune. "With AI, that time is reduced to mere seconds," he explains. The downside: Passages run through AI are often shortened and truncated, as essential details are left out in favor of brevity.

4. Increase comprehension with (collaborative) annotation tools.

One of the best ways to engage with text is by marking it up, reading specialist Mark Pennington tells MindShift. By interacting directly with the text, students are engaging in a kind of conversation, learning "to create an internal dialogue with the text." To set students up for the activity, model the behavior, reading passages while asking questions, rereading areas that cause confusion, and identifying important concepts, says English teacher Mackensi Crenshaw.

Middle school language arts teacher Frank Ward uses Chrome extension Scrible (scribble.com) to annotate with his class. The tool saves files and webpages to a cloud-based library and lets students annotate them either individually or collaboratively. Likewise, the free, open-source tool Hypothesis (web.hypothes.is) lets users mark up texts publicly, with edits viewable by anyone, or privately (e.g., just a class).

Before asking students to annotate a text, high school English teacher Lauren Gehr hands out guided analysis prompts — e.g., write two extended comments and pose one question. After students finish annotating on Google Docs, they might analyze a different class's responses to the same prompt "to find inspiration, discover similarities or ask questions," writes Gehr. "At the end, students had a collection of annotations that showed several different processes of reading a text."

5. Help students deconstruct reading habits.

Eye-tracking research on digital reading habits shows that we sometimes scan from left to right before scanning vertically for points of interest, making what's known as an

"F-pattern." Websites with less text can draw eyes in a Z-pattern. Both approaches may indicate skimming, leaping ahead in the text or taking in less information.

Educator Jennifer Wood suggests introducing these patterns to students and asking them to read a webpage to see where their eyes are drawn and "to discuss how the text on the page impacts what they notice." Write a word or concept on the board and ask students to keep it in mind while they reread the text independently. Afterward, you can reflect as a class on what students have learned about their digital reading habits.

Eye movements aside, good digital literacy is just good literacy. Former educator Devin Hess tells MindShift that his students still need to break down complicated texts, identify key ideas and formulate arguments regardless of whether they're reading in print or digital.

Many of his lessons adapt standard reading comprehension lessons to take advantage of collaborative tools like Google Docs. He describes a "Headings and Highlight" lesson where students

read a text on their own and highlight unfamiliar concepts and vocabulary. Then they pair up to discuss key ideas. Later, students summarize a portion of the text into a four-word header on their own and compare it with their partner's effort.

6. Scaffold reading with assistive learning tools.

Research into assistive technology, particularly text-to-speech tools, shows that these supports can improve the way students with disabilities feel about reading and school, along with their perceptions as independent learners.

Literacy expert Jessica Hamman suggests text-to-speech reader ReachDeck (texthelp.com/products/reachdeck), which reads websites and other digital materials aloud. (Dragon, VoiceNote, and similar tools are also available.)

Simple tricks like turning on video captions can benefit all students, by tying together reading and listening comprehension, writes special education expert Jennifer Sullivan. "It is crucial for students who are hard of hearing and can support students' reading skills," she explains.

Students of any level may also benefit from visual timers, which count down how much time they have to complete a task and may particularly help those with executive functioning challenges. Teachers can place a physical clock or project one on a whiteboard. Using a timer can "help students prepare for transitions and ease test anxiety, as they are able to see at a glance how much time is left." ■

This story originally appeared in Edutopia.

"Assistive technology, particularly text-to-speech tools, can improve the way students with disabilities feel about reading and school."

Students and Cyber Safety Basics

Teach students to protect their privacy and data online

By **Rachelle Dené Poth**

WITH THE CAPABILITIES OF TECHNOLOGY expanding so rapidly, teaching students about cybersecurity and cyber safety is more important than ever. These are topics that need to be discussed and explored at all grade levels.

Cybersecurity is the practice of protecting electronic devices, networks and sensitive information from unauthorized access. It means proactively taking measures to ensure that confidentiality is protected and thoroughly checking out the resources that we use.

Cyber safety refers to the practice of responsibly using technology and resources available through the internet. It is especially important to use care when accessing and sharing information online to avoid the risks and potential harm that can result, such as cyberbullying, hacking, phishing, identity theft, exposure to inappropriate content and other threats.

With the increased use of AI in our schools through personalized learning platforms and data analysis tools, we need to understand how to protect personal information from the risk of data breaches and other negative effects.

Here are some strategies to keep your students safe:

- **Make time for conversations about cyber safety and the different ways that we can be good digital citizens.** Students should know that just because the website exists or the resources are available, there are no guarantees that the information is valid and reliable.
- **Keep your machine safe.** Teach students that links they might click on different websites or in emails, as well as downloading files from unknown sources, can lead to malware and viruses on their devices. Use antivirus programs to protect devices and keep software and operating systems updated. Log off after using computers, especially in public. Be careful using public wi-fi. Don't share personally identifiable information — such as log-ons for banking or credit card accounts, as such information could be compromised.
- **Create strong passwords.** Help students understand that a strong password is important, and help them create strong passwords. Create unique passwords that includes letters, numbers and symbols to make it more difficult for the passwords to be discovered. Have a different password for each account. Remind students not to share passwords with friends. Show students different passwords and ask them to evaluate if they are secure.
- **Use two-factor authentication.** Two-factor authentication provides an additional layer of security; it usually involves sending a text message or an email to the

person trying to access the account. The added security setting will prevent unauthorized access, even if a password is compromised. Remember to change the compromised password to avoid any further problems.

- **Check your privacy settings.** Always check privacy settings when using social media, email, digital tools or other platforms. Understand what permissions you are granting to the apps and other software and how your information might be used and/or shared — check for a FAQ or standalone page that details this, and verify that the site settings are up-to-date. Compliance with COPPA (Children's Online Protection Privacy Act) and FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) is essential for any digital tools in and out of classrooms. Remind students to limit the personal information they share, such as name, birth date, location, social security numbers and other sensitive data.

Select different websites to explore and ask students to find the privacy information: Look for the COPPA and FERPA guidelines and see if they are in compliance; look at the terms of use, and the date of the last update of the website. On some websites, this information is listed on the "About" page or in a "FAQ" section; it is also sometimes listed on the main landing page. Students can check out Common Sense Media ([commonsensemedia.org](https://www.commonsensemedia.org)) for ratings and information about the age use and privacy settings of different apps.

You can create different scenarios and ask students to come up with solutions. For example, what should students do if they get an email telling them they've won a prize, or there is an ad for a free game, and all they have to do is send their information? Another: Ask students about posting their driver's license on social media. What problems could arise?

Resources

In my STEAM course, we use Nearpod (nearpod.com) lessons on cyber safety to cover important topics, such as cyberbullying, digital identities, social media and more. Common Sense Media offers 23 lessons on internet safety. Be Internet Awesome (beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com) helps students develop their internet safety skills online.

To assess student understanding of cyber safety and cybersecurity, I have used Quizizz (quizizz.com) to create games or for ready-made games, lessons and quizzes. It helps us review and gives me data to adjust my lessons. ■

This story originally appeared in Edutopia.

▼ State Council delegates voting on one of many important issues.



▼ CTA President David Goldberg speaks to energized State Council delegates.



Focused on the Future, Building Power to Win

*CTA State Council of Education
sets course for challenges ahead*

By **Julian Peebles**

INSPIRED BY THE WORDS of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and powered by our unbreakable unity, CTA State Council of Education in January set a path for our union's future, as we continue to fight for the schools all students deserve.

In his address to State Council, CTA President David B. Goldberg highlighted Dr. King's "people-powered movements for justice," reminding council representatives of the solidarity that was the foundation of these historic movements.

"It fills me with hope to know that the people I'm looking at right now — a room of nearly 1,000 public school educators — are carrying on the legacy of Dr. King today. In our union. And in our classrooms. In our people-powered campaigns. We're all united by the struggle for public education," Goldberg said. "The idea that children of every race, background and zip code should have the freedom to learn and pursue

their dreams. The idea that every child deserves an accurate, honest and quality education, no matter the color of their skin or where they call home. An education that reflects their truth, their history and who they are as a person."

"Dr. King said, 'The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.' My friends, we are critical in the movement to bend it."

—David Goldberg, CTA President

At the beginning of a crucial year that includes the election of a president, U.S. senator and 2,000 school board members, as well as a near-\$40 billion state budget deficit, Goldberg reminded State Council that our commitment to each other and our students is our greatest resource.

"As union educators, we have the power to impact the outcome of every election, and in particular our local school board races," Goldberg said. "It's through strong locals and collective action that we can ensure victory in those board races."

To help achieve our union's goals on Election Day, CTA State Council approved \$1.5 million for ballot



initiatives during 2024. Council also made additional candidate recommendations for the coming election — view all CTA's recommendations on Page 16–17 and at cta.org/election.

It was a State Council meeting filled with gratitude for retiring Executive Director Joe Boyd, who is stepping down after five years at the helm. He led CTA's staff during unprecedented times, supporting the CTA Officers and Board of Directors in the fight for safe, healthy and racially just schools with an old-school organizer's mindset and a big heart. As part of his final report to CTA State Council, Boyd shared his Top 10 list of items for union success.

"Don't third party the union," Boyd said. "It's 'we' and 'us,' in good times and bad."

The CTA Board of Directors hired Jeff Good to be CTA's next executive director; he starts in early March. Good previously worked as a primary contact staff, as well as executive director of United Teachers Los Angeles. He will address CTA State Council for the first time as executive director at the next meeting.

Council elected the following members to terms on the NEA Board of Directors:

- District 2: Ever Flores
- District 7: Lorraine Richards
- District 8: Rafael Gonzalez
- District 9: Grant Schuster
- District 11: Yulil Alonso-Garza
- District 14: Kelly Villalobos
- District 15: Barbara Jackson

CTA State Council will next meet April 5–7 in Los Angeles. Goldberg encouraged members to step up the fight during this important year.

"We have righteous work before us! Our history tells us it is possible," he said. "Dr. King said, 'The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.' My friends, we are critical in the movement to bend it." ■

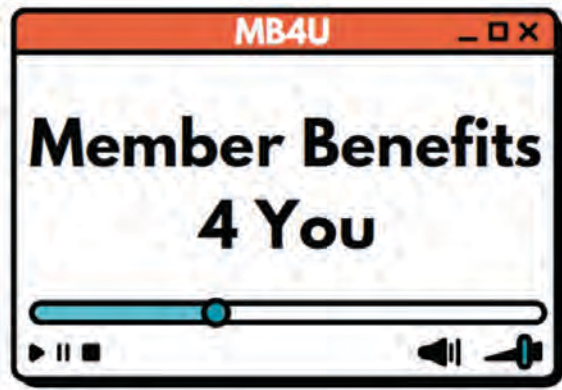
▼ CTA African American Caucus Chair Camille Butts, along with members of the Racial Equity Affairs Committee, introduced a powerful African American Community Presentation.



▲ CTA Officers pose with the 2023-24 Ethnic Minority Early Identification & Development cohort. (Applications for the 2024-25 cohort are now open at cta.org/emeid.)

▼ Outgoing CTA Executive Director Joe Boyd bids farewell to State Council delegates.





Member Benefits For You

Join **CTA Member Benefits** every first Tuesday of the month at 4 p.m. PST to learn about your member benefits. Each monthly session of up to 30 minutes addresses a new topic. Upcoming 2024 topics:

- March 5: NEA Student Loans
- April 2: Leader Resources
- May 7: Provident Credit Union

Register now at bit.ly/MB4U.



California Delegate to the EI World Congress

Kudos to **Maritza Avila**, Oxnard Educators Assn. and NEA Director for California District 5, who has been elected as an NEA delegate to the 10th Education International (EI) World Congress in July 2024. EI represents 32 million educators in 381 unions and 178 countries, working toward quality public education for all. The World Congress is held in person every four years, and takes place in 2024 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. (NEA is allotted 50 delegates, plus additional observers.)

Our union, our plan.

Did you know that CTA offers a high-quality, easy-to-use retirement savings plan that's backed by industry experts? You are in good hands with the CTA 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan, the only 403(b) program designed and endorsed by our union.

Start a conversation!



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Lit From Within

Often educators' creativity spills over into a book, blog, app or other work. We're happy to showcase members' talents.

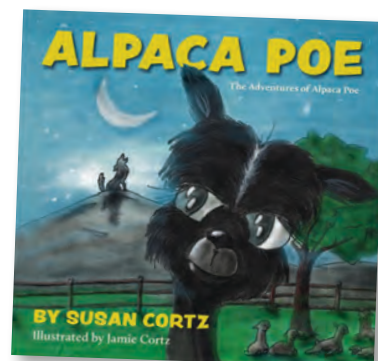


Spread Love Not Hate

Second grade teacher and Teachers of Encinitas member Danner Barrett-Jantzer has written "Spread Love Not Hate: Why We Do Not Say the 'N' Word." The story is based on a true event that occurred when two boys were overheard saying the N-word. Barrett-Jantzer, the only Black classroom teacher at her school, felt compelled to turn this negative experience into a teachable moment. She hopes the book helps fellow educators, parents and children in both primary and upper grades spark discussion and bring about understanding and compassion, while learning the history and meaning of the N-word and why we do not say it. Includes discussion questions for students and suggestions for teachers and school districts on how to address the issue. At Amazon and Barnes & Noble; also at outskiirtpress.com/SpreadLoveNotHate at a 10% discount.

Teaching Acceptance

Redlands Teachers Association member Susan Cortz has written "Alpaca Poe," the first installment in the Adventures of Alpaca Poe series, a collection of tales that aims to foster kindness, character and individuality in young readers. The story revolves around a quirky young alpaca who is unexpectedly plucked from the safety of his farm and family and thrust into an unwelcoming herd. His kind heart, determination and mother's wise words guide him on his journey to find happiness in a place where the herd first sees him as a strange — and inexplicably pleasant — outsider. The book can be used for SEL and teaching citizenship and acceptance to elementary students. At Amazon and other online retailers.



Family Love

We last mentioned Tuxedo Baby, the lonely penguin adopted by conure parrots, a year ago. Author and CTA/NEA Retired member Victoria Smith has since published two more books in the series: "Tuxedo Baby and His Annoying Cousins," who always make trouble, and "Priscilla and Tux: Brothers are Caring," about Tux as an adoring big brother. For grades K-3, all the books are about family love, trying your best, determination, trusting others and believing in yourself. Find them at familyzooproductions.com.

Got something for Lit From Within — a video series, podcast, album or something else? Tell us at editor@cta.org with "Lit From Within" in the subject line. We lean toward new(ish) work that can be used in the classroom. Check out past issues at cta.org/lit.

Take Along a Friend!



This spring, give friends and family big thrills —

and give yourself big savings — at California's great theme parks. Just one of the many benefits of membership in CTA, NEA and your local union. CTAMemberBenefits.org/Access





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