

# california educator

MAY 2025 VOLUME 29 ISSUE 5

## *Fighting for* **OUR STUDENTS**

School meals,  
special education  
funds at risk  
**PAGE 16**

**\*MAY 17**  
**EDUCATORS RALLY  
ACROSS THE STATE**  
**PAGE 27**



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# california educator

VOLUME 29 ISSUE 5



## #WeAreCTA

OUR VOICE, OUR UNION, OUR PROFESSION

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

### MAGAZINE

#### PROP. 55 EXTENSION

\$9 billion in funding for schools and community colleges at stake. **PAGE 34**



#### CTA ESP OF THE YEAR

Liz Huerta-Brewster builds bonds with students, fights for members. **PAGE 48**



#### PART-TIME PROFS WIN

Landmark ruling says adjunct faculty must be paid for hours worked. **PAGE 28**

### DIGITAL

#### FIGHT FOR SCHOOLS

Join the statewide action on May 17: Our union and members organize to demand the best for students. **PAGE 27**

[#FFS](https://cta.org/ffs)



#### IMMIGRANTS: HOME IS HERE

Know your rights, and the rights of your immigrant students: Our comprehensive resource for immigrant educators, students and families.



[cta.org/homeishere](https://cta.org/homeishere)

#### EVERY ACTION COUNTS

Vist the CTA Action Center and add your voice now! **PAGE 8**

[cta.org/action-center](https://cta.org/action-center)

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### CTA SUMMER INSTITUTE

Register now for our union's premier training, with 10 different, intensive areas of focus. July 16–20, Los Angeles. **PAGE 8**



[cta.org/conferences](https://cta.org/conferences)

#### NEA CONFERENCES

End of June and early July are prime NEA gatherings, from Racial & Social Justice to Representative Assembly.



[nea.org/events](https://nea.org/events)

#### ED TECH ON TAP

ISTE Live 25, June 29–July 2, San Antonio. **PAGE 8**

[conference.iste.org/2025](https://conference.iste.org/2025)

### MEMBER BENEFITS

#### LEARN AND EARN

Increase your salary with university credits paid by CTA. The CTA University Credit Program lets you earn professional growth hours by attending CTA conferences.

**PAGE 52** [cta.org/credit](https://cta.org/credit)

#### WIN A TRAVEL GIVEAWAY

Enter the CTA Access to Savings contest every day till September for a chance to win a dream vacation. **PAGE 54**

[CTAMemberBenefits/Access](https://ctamemberbenefits.com)

Photo: Grossmont Education Assn. members protest the district school board's vote to lay off dozens of educators, including all high school librarians, in late April.



## FIGHTING BACK

Educators organize as extremists target our vulnerable students and communities

PAGE 16



## POWER FLEX

Union members make our demands known to legislators and leaders

PAGE 24

## EDUCATORS RISING

Aspiring educators showcase a bright outlook for the profession

PAGE 49



## DEPARTMENTS/FEATURES

### In the Know

- 7 Calendar
- 9 News & Notes
- 12 Quotes & Numbers

### Spotlight

- 13 **COMMUNITY SCHOOLS:** NEA president visits California

### Features

- 28 **PART-TIME FACULTY:** Ruling pays adjuncts' for their work
- 32 **SOCIAL SECURITY:** Historic victory for retired educators

### Advocacy

- 34 **SCHOOL FUNDING:** Prop. 55 extension a must-win at ballot
- 36 **LAYOFFS:** How locals are organizing to rescind the RIFs
- 39 **WE CAN'T WAIT:** Campaign going strong on May Day and beyond
- 40 **BARGAINING:** Statewide roundup
- 41 **SURVEY:** Californians & education
- 42 **CHICAGO CONTRACT:** Major wins for students, educators

### Teaching & Learning

- 44 **T-SEL:** Transforming learning

### CTA & You

- 46 **STATE COUNCIL:** April recap
- 48 **ESP OF THE YEAR:** Liz Huerta-Brewster
- 51 **CTA GOLD AWARD:** Create CA
- 52 **LEARN & EARN:** CTA program offers university credits
- 53 **CALM:** Mindful parenting
- 54 **TRAVEL GIVEAWAY:** Enter to win
- 56 **LIT FROM WITHIN:** Works by our members
- 57 **DAY OF THE TEACHER:** Special pullout poster celebrates teachers, nurses, ESPs

Cover: Art by Mer Young (@youngmer), using photo of United Educators of San Francisco member Mariaesther Diaz and her students. Photos this page, from top: Santa Maria Elementary Education Assn. members rally in support of immigrant students and families; Temecula Valley Educators Assn. members after trying to meet with their local congressperson; Dolores Huerta (center) with CTA-AE 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](https://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](mailto:Editor@cta.org); [#WeAreCTA](https://twitter.com/WeAreCTA)



## Events & Special Dates

The *California Educator* magazine publishes in print six times a year, in January, March, May, July, September and November. Because of this schedule and advanced print deadlines, there are many special days and months, as well as events, that are challenging and sometimes impossible to capture. For example, external plans for the multiple heritage/history months that reflect our diverse cultures and celebrations often are not finalized before we go to print, and we are not able to include them.

Please visit [cta.org/events](https://cta.org/events) for our comprehensive calendar. The *Educator* webpage at [cta.org/educator](https://cta.org/educator) also contains print stories and timely news and updates.

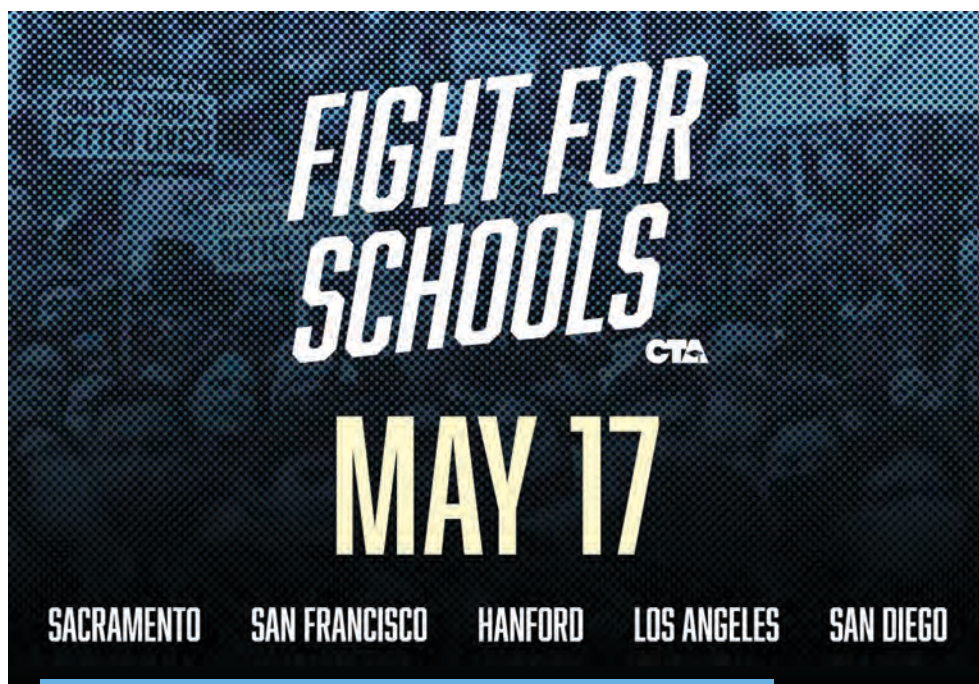


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## JOIN OUR MAY 17 DAY OF ACTION

**FIGHT BACK AGAINST** federal attacks on our schools!

Join thousands of educators across the state in mass actions to fight for our students, communities and public schools in the face of unprecedented attacks on public education from the Trump Administration. We won't stand by while these attacks threaten resources for our students. Our union has the power to demand that Congress protect funding for students and the Department of Education programs we all rely on, and to keep our school spaces safe from ICE raids.

Multiple actions are taking place on May 17 — in San Diego, Los Angeles, Hanford, Sacramento and San Francisco. Go to [cta.org/ffs](https://cta.org/ffs) to RSVP to an action and make your voice heard! See page 27 for details.

## Correction

A story in the Bargaining Roundup section of the March 2025 issue of *California Educator* incorrectly identified the **Mountain View Teachers Assn. Bargaining Team** (pictured here). We regret the error.

For our full social media directory, see [cta.org/social](https://cta.org/social).

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STAFF WRITER Julian Peebles  
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#### MISSION STATEMENT

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.

#### EDITORIAL INFORMATION

*California Educator* is published for the information and edification of CTA members. The editorial philosophy is governed by the policies of CTA. Articles and advertising reflect that philosophy. Letters to the editor may be sent to [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org).

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CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2024, to Aug. 31, 2025) are \$1,029, including a \$20 refundable contribution (see [cta.org/contribution](https://cta.org/contribution) for details). \$25.53 of CTA annual dues is designated for CTA/ABC political activities to support state and local candidates and/or initiatives, and \$15.00 of CTA annual dues is designated for independent expenditures, totaling \$40.53 not deductible for income tax purposes. Please consult your tax adviser.

Subscription to the *California Educator* is \$10 per year, available to persons or institutions not eligible for CTA/NEA membership.

#### CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

1705 Murchison Dr., Burlingame, CA 94010-4583  
650-697-1400; fax 650-552-5002; [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org), [cta.org](https://cta.org)

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# In These Turbulent Times, Our Union Is Organizing

**IN OUR UNION**, we lift each other up in our fight for change each and every day. Inspired by those who came before us, and guided by our belief that a better world is possible, CTA members know how to fight and how to win.

Today, there's a lot to be angry about. There are threats out of Washington D.C to slash nearly \$16 billion – around \$2,800 per student – in federal funding that goes to school meals that feed our hungriest students, support for students with ADHD, dyslexia and life-changing supports for our most vulnerable and overlooked special education students. These are programs that educators and parents have fought for over the generations to help ensure that our students have the support and the education they deserve.

It's unacceptable for the Trump Administration to cut funds for public schools and prioritize tax cuts for corporations and billionaires. They're attempting to dismantle the Department of Education, sending immigration agents to our schools, and targeting people who speak out.

Watching the chaos unfold can get heavy and take its toll, and that is part of the strategy: to keep working people in constant survival mode. But as union members in solidarity with our students, families and communities, we can do so much more than just survive. When we look out for each other and protect our people, we are building and fighting for the society we all deserve.

One of the ways we can maintain hope in the days ahead is by looking back at challenging times we've encountered together, like the last Trump administration, when one out of five CTA members went on strike and won real improvements for educators and students. We also won community school funding during that same period.

Our union has a long history of fighting and winning for our public schools and communities. We are carrying on that legacy every day when we organize.

CTA members are organizing across the state to extend vital Prop. 55 funding and will be launching campaigns to collect enough signatures



*"When we look out for each other and protect our people, we are building and fighting for the society we all deserve."*

to ensure it's on the ballot in 2026. And we're also taking our fight to the streets, with "Fight for Schools" marches and rallies scheduled this month in five cities statewide to defend public education from ongoing attacks on our public schools and resources by the Trump Administration. There are also ongoing bargaining fights in locals throughout the state as part of the "We Can't Wait" campaign to demand fully staffed schools, competitive wages and benefits for educators, and safe schools for our students.

As much as I'd love to say, "Don't worry — we've been here before, we know what to do, it'll all be fine," I can't honestly say that — because we haven't been here before. But here, in California, we *do* know how to fight. We *do* know how to stand together. And in the days, weeks, months and years ahead, we will continue our work together to build a CTA stronger than it's ever been.

**David B. Goldberg**

CTA PRESIDENT



# Meeting the Moment

**THIS ISSUE IS** full of our union members — *you* — meeting the moment. Our coverage shows how you are courageously stepping up to protect and defend your students, colleagues, communities and public education. In the face of enormous challenges and obstacles, your actions demonstrate an unshakeable determination to win.

And win we must: Our current federal government leaders have made moves to cut school meals for kids, many of whom live in poverty and eat their only nutritious meal of the day at school. They want to take away school services in special education, such as those for students with dyslexia and ADHD. The list of unfathomable harms to our students and communities, from allowing ICE onto school campuses to dismantling the Department of Education, increases by the day.

Fortunately, and as always, you are responding boldly and bravely. Our story **“Fighting Back”** (page 16) describes educators and locals up and down the state using their organizing power to repel extremists targeting vulnerable communities.

“Who is going to fight for you when you’re under attack? We need to defend, protect and uplift each other, especially our most vulnerable,” says Mikaela Magaña, Sanger Unified Teachers Assn.

“We have to be present — I’m not going away and I’m not going to be quiet,” says Alhambra Teachers Assn. member Javier Gutierrez.

Our union is leading the charge against the attacks. **“Our Fight for Schools”** (page 24) features CTA delegations of local leaders and board members who met with members of Congress in April to demand their support for students and public education. Some elected officials, shamefully, did not respond to us even though they were on recess — a time dedicated to meeting with constituents.

**“Organizing to Save Educator Jobs”** (page 36) and much of our **Bargaining Roundup** (page 40) concern our never-ending fight against educator layoffs. Despite a growing teacher shortage and shrinking teacher pipelines, more than 3,000 California educators were marked as expendable this year to meet school district budgets.

Finally, our May 17 action **“Fight for Schools”** is an opportunity to make your outrage heard and demand an end to the ongoing insanity on



## CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS: Home to All Students

**Our 2025 Day of the Teacher poster** — pictured here, and at the back of this magazine and on the cover — showcases educators’ work with and for our students. The theme, “California Public Schools: Home to All Students,” underscores how our educators — including nurses, ESPs and all school staff — welcome and nurture every student, and fight for what’s best for them.

We hope you enjoy the poster, by artist Mer Young, and post it in your classroom, school hallway or other public areas. Read more about it on the back page.

a national stage. Join thousands of educators and allies in multiple cities around the state who will rally against the heinous directives and policies that stand to shatter our schools and communities.

“Don’t wait to get active because it’s already a scary time,” urges Luis Benvenuti, Palo Verde Teachers Assn., in our “Fighting Back” story.

It is beyond time to meet the moment.

**Katharine Fong**

EDITOR IN CHIEF  
[editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org)

MAY 2025

# CALENDAR



## National Speech, Language and Hearing Month

**THE MONTH IS FOR** raising awareness about the significance of communication and the challenges faced by individuals with speech, language and hearing disorders. The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders states that roughly one in 12 children aged 3 to 17 experienced voice, speech, language or swallowing issues in the last year. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Assn. (ASHA) reports that more than 1 million children nationwide receive school-based treatment for speech and language disorders annually.

The month is also a time to celebrate the work of school speech-language pathologists and audiologists. Educators can find relevant resources at [nidcd.nih.gov/health/educators-and-students](https://nidcd.nih.gov/health/educators-and-students) and [asha.org](https://asha.org). (SLPs: Has a state policy change impacted your work? See page 38.)

Alice Piper



JUNE 2:

### Alice Piper Day

Alice Piper was a 15-year-old Paute girl living in Big Pine, Inyo County, who was denied entry to Big Pine High School in 1923 due to her race. (State law then prohibited Native Americans from attending a public school if a government-run "Indian" school was within three miles.) Piper and six other Native American children sued the district for the right to attend. On June 2, 1924, the California Supreme Court unanimously ruled in her favor in *Piper v. Big Pine*, thus opening the door for Native Americans to attend California public schools. The case was cited as precedent in *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947) and later influenced the landmark ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). Read details and view a tribute video at the website of the California Museum, where Piper was a 2024 Hall of Fame inductee.

**May 6: National Teacher Day** National Teacher Day is on Tuesday of National Teacher Appreciation Week (May 5–9, [nea.org/TAW](https://nea.org/TAW)). California, however, recognizes California Day of the Teacher on the second Wednesday of May, which is May 14 in 2025. The special day rose out of legislation co-sponsored by our union and the Association of Mexican American Educators in 1982. See the fold-out poster celebrating California educators, ESPs and school nurses at the back of this issue.



## CTA Summer Institute

**JULY 16-20** CONFERENCE

*Westin Bonaventure, Los Angeles.*

At Summer Institute, you will 1) have fun, 2) learn a lot and 3) network with new and old friends. CTA's premier training features 10 different and intensive areas of focus that assist chapter leaders in the day-to-day representation and support of members.

They include:

- Organizing and Building Worksite Power to Win
- Communications
- Instruction and Professional Development



- Economic Justice
- Emerging Leaders
- Essential Bargaining Skills
- School Finance
- Member Benefits

Sign up with your team — or just you!

► [cta.org/conferences](https://cta.org/conferences)

## International Workers Day

**MAY 1** AKA MAY DAY, LABOUR DAY

CTA has been advocating for our profession, students and public schools since 1863. As a member, you're a part of labor history! ► [cta.org/about-us/history](https://cta.org/about-us/history)

## CTA Communications Awards

**MAY 30** NOMINATION DEADLINE

The awards recognize and honor CTA chapters, service centers and UniServes that communicate effectively with their members. ► [cta.org/awards](https://cta.org/awards)

## PBL World 2025

**JUNE 23-26** CONFERENCE

*Napa Valley.* Sponsored by the Buck Institute for Education, this is the premier conference for Project Based Learning. ► [pblworld.org](https://pblworld.org)

## 2025 NEA-Retired Annual Meeting

**JUNE 29-30** MEETING

*Portland.* Connect, advocate for issues affecting retired educators and public education, and participate in professional learning and leadership development. ► [nea.org/events](https://nea.org/events)

## NEA Conference on Racial and Social Justice

**JUNE 29-JULY 1** CONFERENCE

*Portland.* "Promote. Protect. Strengthen. Public Education: A Joyous Rebellion!" Educators, creatives, activists, organizers and other leaders will advance racial and social justice for our schools through the power of our stories. They'll also organize for our future.

► [nea.org/events](https://nea.org/events)

## NEA 2025 Aspiring Educators Conference

**JUNE 28-JULY 1** CONFERENCE

*Portland.* The Aspiring Educators Conference provides the opportunity for future educators to connect with their colleagues, learn about their profession and act on important issues affecting public education. ► [nea.org/events](https://nea.org/events)

## ISTE Live 25

**JUNE 29-JULY 2** CONFERENCE

*San Antonio.* The International Society for Technology in Education holds ISTE Live 25. The conference offers hundreds of presentations and learning experiences by educators and other

innovators, and on-demand content that is available for six months afterward. ► [conference.iste.org/2025](https://conference.iste.org/2025)

## NEA Representative Assembly

**JULY 3-6** CONVENTION

*Portland.* The world's largest democratic, deliberative body, by educators, for educators. Each summer approximately 6,000 educators—including CTA members—meet to debate vital issues that impact public education and set NEA policy and activities for the year ahead. Delegates represent the 3 million members of NEA. ► [nea.org/ra](https://nea.org/ra)

## Presidents Conference

**JULY 31-AUG. 3** CONFERENCE

*Burlingame.* Join CTA for a conference designed to enhance your skills as a local president and help build systems of success for your local chapter. Provides new and returning chapter presidents a foundation to rely upon as we prepare for future challenges.

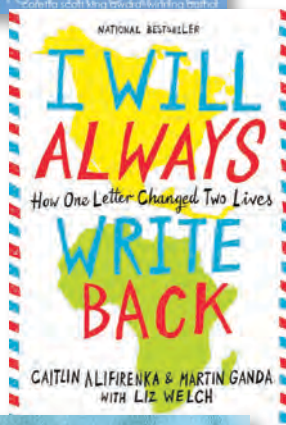
► [cta.org/conferences](https://cta.org/conferences)



# Change the World



**“ONE BOOK, ONE PEN,** one child and one teacher can change the world,” said activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai. Get your students primed for a summer of reading with some good books. Here are a few suggestions from CTA's 2025 California Reads, an annual list of teacher-vetted books for all age levels. Visit [cta.org/careads](https://cta.org/careads) for the full list and past years' selections.



In the first of three books in the **Out of My Mind** series (by Sharon M. Draper; 9+ years), 11-year-old Melody can't walk, talk or write, all because she has cerebral palsy. But she has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She's the smartest kid in her whole school, but NO ONE knows it. Her teachers, doctors and classmates dismiss her as mentally challenged because she can't tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by her disability. She's determined to let everyone know it...somehow. The second and third books (*Out of My Heart*, *Out of My Dreams*) continue Melody's journey as she learns to — literally — speak for herself and advocate for others.

**I Will Always Write Back** (by Martin Ganda and Caitlin Alifirenka; grade 7+) is the true story of an American girl, a boy from Zimbabwe and the letter that changed both of their lives. Caitlin had never heard of Zimbabwe when a class assignment had her writing a letter to an unknown student in a distant place. Martin had never heard of Pennsylvania when he read Caitlin's letter. He wrote her back, starting a correspondence that spanned six years. In this compelling dual memoir, Caitlin and Martin recount how they became best friends — and better people — through their long-distance exchange.

When Tanisha spills grape juice all over her new dress, her classmate wants to make her feel better, wondering: What does it mean to be kind? **Be Kind** (by Pat Zietlow Miller, author, and Jen Hill, Illustrator; Pre-K/TK/Kindergarten) explores what kindness is, and how any act, big or small, can make a difference or at least help a friend. From asking the new girl to play to standing up for someone being bullied, this story shows how two simple words can change the world.

## LGBTQ+ Safety in Schools Grants and Scholarships

The grant program will support groups, projects and presentations that promote understanding and respect for LGBTQ+ people. The grant is to be used directly with students. Special consideration will be given to projects that recognize, promote and celebrate ethnic diversity and other diversity among LGBTQ+ youth.

The scholarship program will support self-identified LGBTQ+ active CTA/CTA Aspiring Educators (CTA-AE) members enrolled in a teacher/counseling credential or graduate program who are pursuing a career in public education and who understand the importance of LGBTQ+ educators as role models in our public schools.



In Memory of  
Guy DeRosa,  
CTA LGBTQ+ Activist

### Who can apply?

#### Grants:

An active CTA/CTA Aspiring Educators (CTA-AE) member, or a public school student(s) sponsored by an active CTA/CTA Aspiring Educators (CTA-AE) member.

#### Scholarships:

Self-identified LGBTQ+ active CTA/CTA Aspiring Educators (CTA-AE) member.



APPLY & LEARN MORE:

[CTA.ORG/LGBTQ-SCHOLARSHIPS](https://cta.org/lgbtq-scholarships)

**Deadline: May 30, 2025**

Questions? Email: [scholarships@cta.org](mailto:scholarships@cta.org)



## Harvey Milk Day **MAY 22**

In 2009, the State of California established May 22 as **Harvey Milk Day** (his birthday). The day honors the life and legacy of Milk, the first openly gay man elected to public office in California. His legacy includes partnering with labor unions to defeat Prop. 6 in 1978, which would have banned gays and lesbians from working in California's public schools. Students can learn about Milk's activism and work through resources available at the Harvey Milk Foundation ([milkfoundation.org](https://milkfoundation.org)).



## Social Justice Champions

The **CTA Human Rights Awards** were presented in March to nine individuals — members who have worked tirelessly to lift up their students and communities. The awards celebrate the diversity of racial equity and social justice work that CTA members create, challenge and participate in.

Pictured above — top row, from left to right: Errol Garnett, Philip Charles Crawford, Greg Lawson, Ron Gochez, Shelby Anderson, Wei-Tsu Loh; bottom row: Oscar Pinto, Lee Wygand, CTA Vice President Leslie Littman, CTA President David Goldberg, CTA Secretary-Treasurer Erika Jones, Donna Fernandez. Read the 2025 awardees' stories in the March issue at [cta.org/2025-human-rights-awards](https://cta.org/2025-human-rights-awards).



## Labor Together

A few labor events are on the calendar along with recognition of **International Workers Day** on May 1. (IWD, also known as May Day or Labour Day, has its roots in the 1886 Haymarket strike in Chicago, which secured the eight-hour workday.)

May 12–14 is California Labor Federation and State Building and Construction Trades Council, Joint Legislative Conference & Union Day at the Capitol, an annual event in Sacramento; [calaborfed.org/events](https://calaborfed.org/events).

Aug. 8–10 is the Strategic Labor Research Conference, held at the Luskin School of Public Affairs at UCLA. Keynote speaker: Marshall Ganz; register by May 16, [bit.ly/3Yuui1N](https://bit.ly/3Yuui1N).



## Celebrate CSEW **MAY 18-24**

Each May, California salutes the important contributions of classified school employees during **Classified School Employee Week** (CSEW). This year, the theme is "Trusted, Inclusive, United."

Classified employees have earned respect as educators and partners in the education community. More importantly, they have become recognized as essential frontline workers who keep our schools up and running while making a difference in the lives of the students they serve.



## Memorial Day **MAY 26**

The federal holiday is a day for remembering and honoring those who have died while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. NEA offers multi-grade classroom lesson ideas to teach students about the significance of **Memorial Day**. Visit [nea.org](https://nea.org) and search "Memorial Day lesson ideas."

# QUOTES & NUMBERS

Compiled by Julian Peeples



## 3,000+

**Number of educators statewide** who received layoff notices by the March 15 deadline.

*"We cannot stand by while lawmakers dismantle the critical programs the Department of Education implements, cut critical funding for students with disabilities, English Learners, poor students, and take higher education and career/tech training opportunities away from the students and families who need them most."*

—NEA President BECKY PRINGLE, in response to the Trump Administration's threat to destroy the U.S. Dept. of Education



*"I know teachers who are forced to clear their back tables for students. These kids are sitting at tables and not desks, which is a problem because they don't have their own space. They're like little sardines in there."*

—CARA COLEMAN, third grade teacher and Fremont Unified District Teachers Assn. member, which authorized a strike in March over wages and working conditions including high class sizes



U.S. Dept. of Education

### Difference in maximum students per kindergarten class

in Chicago Public Schools before and after the recent historic contract victory by Chicago Teachers Union in late March (32 and 25, respectively). Most other grade levels will see their maximum class sizes lower to 29.



*"In Pasadena and across the nation, we're going to fight back — it's what union educators do. We won't accept any cuts that harm our students. At a time when the wealthy few are making BILLIONS and not paying their fair share while cutting critical funds for public schools, we must act now."*

—JONATHAN GARDNER, United Teachers of Pasadena president, in a *Pasadena Now* column calling on Congress to step up to defend public education

## 7.5 million

**Number of students with disabilities** and their families nationally who will lose support they need at school and at home, due to the Trump Administration's slashes to special education funding, according to NEA. Additionally, 26 million students with the greatest need will lose vital support funded through Title I.

*"Layoffs are devastating and chaotic to our school communities and harm student learning conditions. This is even happening in communities like Pasadena, where educators and students lost their homes in wildfires. Our union will not stand by. We will demand that every single one of these notices is rescinded."*

—CTA President DAVID GOLDBERG after Pasadena Unified's school board approved issuing layoff notices to 115 educators months after the Eaton Fire devastated the city

▼ Pringle addressing participants at the National Community Schools Learning Lab in Anaheim in April.



# “Fight for the Right to Learn”

## NEA President Becky Pringle visits California community schools

**NEA PRESIDENT** Becky Pringle was a special guest at the National Community Schools Learning Lab's multi-day session in Anaheim in April.

Pringle was there to participate in the Learning Lab's community schools visits and hear about best practices in implementing community schools' shared decision-making model involving educators, district administrators, community members, students and families.

The Learning Lab, funded by NEA's Great Public Schools initiative and coordinated by Anaheim Secondary Teachers Assn. and the Anaheim Union High School District, brings together teams of local stakeholders from across California and beyond. It recently took its program to several cities on the East Coast.

Pringle spoke to the attendees about community schools' significance in giving our children the education they deserve — and that in this current political climate, especially, how we must step up to protect the right to learn.

“Of all the civil rights for which this world has fought and died for 5,000 years, the right to learn is undoubtedly the most fundamental,” she said, quoting American sociologist and civil rights activist W.E.B. DuBois. “The freedom to learn has been bought by bitter sacrifice. So whatever you might think of the curtailment of other civil rights, you must fight to the last ditch to keep open the right to learn.”

For more about your union's work with community schools, visit [cta.org/communityschools](https://cta.org/communityschools).

▼ Pringle with teacher and ASTA member Veronica Lopez at Loara High School.



▼ Pringle and others at Magnolia High School's Agriscience Community Center (MACC) where MACC Farm Coordinator and ASTA Member Sabina Giakoumis explains that the walls are used to nurture and grow plants.



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\*Summer Benefit is offered by CTA to eligible members who meet additional specific criteria during the months of June and July. CTA provides this benefit at no extra cost, and The Standard acts as the claims administrator of this benefit. Summer Benefit is not provided under the Voluntary Disability insurance policy.

▼ Santa Maria educators organized a community rally to support all students.



# TO PROTECT AND DEFEND: **FIGHTING BACK** *Against Attacks on Our Students*

**Educators organize as extremists target our vulnerable communities** By Julian Peeples

**"I'M NOT LEAVING** my students or these vulnerable communities. As educators, we are dedicated and we stay true to the fight," says Javier Gutierrez, social science teacher and member of Alhambra Teachers Association (ATA). "We have to be present — I'm not going away and I'm not going to be quiet!"

Since the return of President Trump in January, our students, families and public education have been under attack by extremists and billionaires who are working to privatize our schools, cut education funding and hobble crucial services.

The Trump Administration has unleashed a flurry of executive orders aimed at our most vulnerable students and communities, and our government structures that support and protect these groups, including attempting to destroy the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

Across California, educators are organizing to defend our students, families and schools.

"We will continue to defend the rights of every student to schools that are safe and free from harassment and

▼ Alhambra educators rallied to support safe spaces for their students facing attacks from the Trump Administration.



▼ Javier Gutierrez, social science teacher, Alhambra Teachers Association



“Our union will use our collective power to defend against any threats to our beautiful and diverse communities.” —CTA President **David Goldberg**

discrimination,” says CTA President David Goldberg. “We are committed to protecting every single student — regardless of where they were born or how they identify or who they choose to love. Our union will use our collective power to defend against any threats to our beautiful and diverse communities.”

Across the state, educators in their local unions are fighting for the rights and well-being of all students, and the resources they need for the public schools they deserve. Near the Arizona border in Blythe, special education teacher Luis Benvenuti is working hard to defend the community’s most vulnerable kids. He urges fellow members to lead the way in their communities to protect a public education system that serves everyone.

“You need to stand up and fight back. If we just accept what people think is inevitable, it will hurt everyone and create an even more difficult environment for teachers and students,” says Benvenuti, a member of Palo Verde Teachers Association (PVTa). “They want to privatize education. What’s going to happen to our most vulnerable? Immigrant kids? Exceptional children? We want to have a quality education that is for everyone. This fight is all about participation, so get on it, you know? Don’t wait to get active because it’s already scary times.”

## Home is Here

“Every kid who comes here is our kid. This is not political for us,” says Jose Rodriguez, history teacher and member of Santa

Maria Elementary Education Association (SMEEA). “This is our calling as educators and of course we’re going to protect our students. Whether they’re documented or undocumented, all these students belong to us.”

Educators took action in solidarity with their students in Santa Maria in February, helping to organize a community rally in support of students and families who immigrated here and calling on their school board to adopt a resolution of district commitment to not cooperate with ICE raids on school campuses or share information about students with agents. Rodriguez says students had been organizing to protest Trump’s executive orders on immigration and to ask the city council to establish a sanctuary zone around schools when educators stepped up.

SMEEA members and their families joined students in a public display of support before marching to a school board meeting. Rodriguez says he was excited to see other unions, community organizations, families and neighbors chanting, holding signs and leading the fight for safe schools for all.

“It was great to see all the different organizations come out to support our students,” says Rodriguez. “Our kids were already doing walkouts on their own, and I knew we had to do something to support them. I saw what educators did in Alhambra to rally for their students and showed [this to] our members to encourage and inspire them to participate.”



▼ SMEEA members called on their school board to adopt a resolution directing the district to not comply with enforcement attempts by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement agents.



Educators in Alhambra rallied to support safe spaces for their students and families shortly after the return of Trump and his hateful words, policies and attacks on people who immigrated to the United States. ATA's Gutierrez says the effort started eight years ago when Trump was first elected and unleashed widespread attacks on America's immigrant communities. Educators in Alhambra mobilized then and created the "Dream Center," a safe space for all students at Alhambra High School.

This center provides support, activities and resources to students, including school community-building events and legal clinics with immigration attorneys on hand to answer questions. Gutierrez says the Dream Center was part of a deliberate effort by ATA members to create safe places for students in vulnerable communities, including students who are immigrants, LGBTQ+, unhoused, and students with disabilities, which has now spread to the district's other two high schools.

"Our union has been super supportive of the creation of these centers. We got grants from CTA to build these centers and we got active in elections in our community. We revamped who was leading our schools and who was leading our community, so

when this election happened, we were ready to go," he says.

Alhambra educators, students and families marched in support of the immigrant community in February, leaning into the network of allyship and advocacy that ATA has been building for the past eight years. The event was one of many planned this year, including ally lunches and "out of the shadow" events to share unheard voices. Gutierrez says that when the call went out to support the Alhambra immigrant community, ATA members jumped to action for their students.

"We need to be showing our students and demonstrating how to do civil disobedience effectively and make positive change in our community," he says. "We're showing students a time-honored tradition of speaking out against injustice and a path forward of non-violence and civil disobedience. And then the message is 'you've got a safe space here — you have people who have got your back.'"

The work continues to lift student voices and advocate for their rights and opportunities to succeed. Gutierrez says he's proud of this collective effort and grateful to be a part of it.

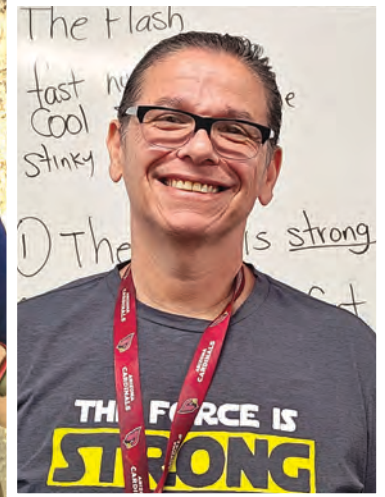
"It's never one-and-done with these things. It's building that

▼ Santa Maria educators stepped up to support their students' efforts to create sanctuary zones around their schools.

▼ Jose Rodriguez, history teacher, Santa Maria EEA



▼ Javier Benvenuti, SDC teacher, Palo Verde Teachers Association



“Of course we’re going to protect our students. Whether they’re documented or undocumented, all these students belong to us.”

—Jose Rodriguez, Santa Maria Elementary Education Assn.

network and community — grassroots, from the ground up. This is the collective expression of our school community and part of a larger movement,” he says. “I’m grateful to come to school every day and work with young adults, be a part of this movement and work to further it.”

## Creating Safe and Brave Spaces for All

“Who is going to fight for you when you’re under attack? We need to defend, protect and uplift each other, especially our most vulnerable,” says Mikaela Magaña, a high school history teacher and member of Sanger Unified Teachers Association (SUTA).

Magaña was shocked when she was told to remove the Pride flag from her classroom in late 2022, with administrators citing a new school board-approved policy and deeming the flag “controversial.” Other educators at Sanger West High School were also told to remove LGBTQ-inclusive flags and posters from their classrooms, some of which had been on the walls for years. The school board had quietly approved the extreme policy a few

months earlier without notifying SUTA of the unilateral change.

Educators compiled information about where and how the policy was being enforced in schools throughout the district, eventually filing a complaint with the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) and winning late last year. An administrative law judge found that the school district violated the law in several ways: 1) The policy was so vague and broad that it could also include banning union symbols; 2) the display of Pride flags and posters is protected activity; 3) the unilateral change was subject to bargaining; and 4) the district failed to provide information to SUTA in a timely manner.

“While I’m happy we won the case, this is just the beginning of continued efforts of educators to support all of our marginalized students,” Magaña says. “This is just the beginning of a marathon that we will be confronting over these next four years. Even though we won this case, people are still afraid of putting up their flags because of potential retaliation. Especially with the current presidential administration, we don’t know what’s going to happen.”

According to Magaña, the school district’s extreme



▼ On March 19, Charter Oak Educators Association members held walk-in rallies to support their schools, students and ongoing bargain.



policy is in line with the district's historical lack of support for LGBTQ+ students, including cancelling a student-organized Pride Week celebration. She said her students noticed the Pride flag in her classroom disappear and many of them organized to fight back against the policy, speaking their truth at a school board meeting — one student told trustees "my life is not controversial."

Magaña says fighting this policy and supporting her students meant honoring her commitment as an educator.

"We learn so often in our prep programs that as teachers we're supposed to be agents of change and this was me following through on that commitment," she says. "I was thankful for that. Nervous of course, but it was necessary."

Having support in this fight from her union and CTA legal staff meant everything to Magaña, reaffirming her decision to speak out. She recommends building a support network of like-minded colleagues with similar values to protect safe and brave spaces for all.

"We need to build community, get to know each other and build a strong foundation so we don't feel isolated," Magaña says. "Show up for your students, whether it's providing Know Your Rights cards in classrooms or being someone

who listens when they're experiencing something and connects them with resources."

## Protecting Special Education Resources

"What is happening at the federal level is extremely scary, because they're bullying the children who need the most," says PVTa's Benvenuti. "If we stay united, not just as a union but with parents and community, we can get greater results. It's scary times, regardless."

Benvenuti is building a movement to defend students with disabilities and the special education resources they deserve in Blythe, deep in the low desert. The special day class teacher worked to form a Special Education Committee in his local to better advocate for his students.

"We are looking into a lot of things that are impacting our classrooms. A lot of us don't have hard caps — last year, I had 20 students," says Benvenuti. "Our students are not getting a quality education. We don't have enough subs,

so our teachers aren't participating in IEPs (Individualized Education Plans). How is that what's best for students? We've been very vocal about it, participating in board meetings and making our voices heard."

Special education services and resources are under threat

**"What is happening at the federal level is extremely scary, because they're bullying the children who need the most."**

—Luis Benvenuti,  
Palo Verde Teachers Assn.



nationally by Trump, who signed an executive order directing the destruction of the U.S. Department of Education (ED). Many educators fear this is the beginning of attacks on students with disabilities and special education — ED is responsible for funding and oversight of these programs across the country, and for stepping in when states don't provide these students with a fair and appropriate public education as legally required. California receives about \$8 billion in federal funding annually, in addition to \$2.1 billion in Title I grants to ensure students living in poverty have access to support to help them succeed.

Benvenuti says educators need to sound the alarm and defend ED and our students.

"It has to start with educating the vast majority of the population about how what they're doing is wrong, not just legally but also morally and ethically, and that kids aren't getting what they deserve," he says. "That's how we can make some movement. We know that the next four years are going to be nonsense, so we need to do what we can to fight back." ➔

## PRO TIPS

### for Supporting Students Under Attack

*"Make sure to rest whenever you can, surround yourself with community and do things that sustain the fight. Understand that everyone's collective effort will make the difference we want to see and will prevent us from regressing as a society."*

—Mikaela Magaña, SUTA

*"Find like-minded organizations in your community who can join you — there's strength in numbers. Have a strong active Political Action Committee. When we elect school board members who are willing to do what's best for students and not push extremist policies, we can build power to protect our students."*

—Jose Rodriguez, SMEEA

*"People come all the time to visit our Dream Centers and they think they can put one together easily, but that's not how it happens. It's a long-term grassroots campaign. If we really want to effect change, it's going to take a long time, and a lot of dedication and support. We don't leave — we stay dedicated and true to the fight. We aren't silent. We speak up and get involved."*

—Javier Gutierrez, ATA

*"Get involved. We have 100% of our teachers as members in our union, but unfortunately not 100% participate. Engage your members and show them how ongoing issues affect them, directly or indirectly."*

—Luis Benvenuti, PVTA

### Special Series

This is the first in a series of stories on educators fighting back against extremist policies that harm our students.

▼ One Alhambra Unified's Dream Centers, a safe space for all Alhambra students.



▼ Students and families joined educators in Santa Maria.



▼ The Alhambra march is one of many unity events planned this year to lift "unheard voices."



"We need to be showing our students how to do civil disobedience effectively and make positive change in our community."

—Javier Gutierrez,  
Alhambra Teachers Assn.

Supporting some of our most vulnerable students requires collaboration, which Benvenuti would like to formalize with the creation of a joint union-district special education committee to be able to discuss issues and concerns before they escalate.

"Also, it could be helpful to get the community involved in this committee, so that we are all working together for our most vulnerable children," he says, adding that PVTa is also exploring ways to provide education, training and development on special education issues to parents. "A parent who is knowledgeable is a kid who is successful."

While the community is mostly conservative, Benvenuti says it doesn't seem like the political affiliations determine how people feel about supporting students in special education.

"You might see a lot of Trump flags around town, but when it comes to education and exceptional children, there is a lot of support," he said.

In March, educators nationwide held "walk-in" rallies before school started in the morning to show support for ED and the crucial services provided by its staff. In communities including Charter Oak, Glendale and Sacramento, CTA members joined students and families in rallying for the federal education support our public schools need.

"The bottom line is we need to create a better environment for our children and our jobs," Benvenuti says. "We are educators and we want the best for our kids." ■

# HOW TO HELP

## *Our Students and Families*

**ALL PEOPLE** in the United States, regardless of immigration status, have certain rights and protections under the U.S. Constitution. Regardless of immigration status of students or their parents, every student has the right to a free public education free from harassment.

Our union believes immigration policies should guarantee human rights and protect the integrity of the family unit without discrimination; we support immigration policies that keep families together. Among the ways you can help your immigrant students and their families:

### *You have constitutional rights:*

- **DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR** if an immigration agent is knocking on the door.
- **DO NOT ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS** from an immigration agent if they try to talk to you. You have the right to remain silent.
- **DO NOT SIGN ANYTHING** without first speaking to a lawyer. You have the right to speak with a lawyer.
- If you are outside of your home, ask the agent if you are free to leave and if they say yes, leave calmly.
- **GIVE THIS CARD TO THE AGENT.** If you are inside of your home, show the card through the window or slide it under the door.



## Know Your Rights Red Cards

Pass out these cards to help people assert their rights and defend themselves against ICE's unconstitutional actions. The cards are available to order for free, in multiple languages. Visit our webpage **Home Is Here: Supporting Immigrant Educators, Students and Families**, at [cta.org/homeishere](https://cta.org/homeishere) or check with your local chapter leadership for details.

## Safe Space Posters and Buttons

Stand in solidarity and help us support a welcoming society for all by ordering or downloading our customizable safe space posters and buttons at [cta.org/homeishere](https://cta.org/homeishere). A variety of designs are available, with text in English and Spanish. Use them on your classroom or school hallways' walls and bulletin boards and wear the buttons to let all students know you support them.



## Home Is Here: Get the Latest, Updated Information

The same webpage ([cta.org/homeishere](https://cta.org/homeishere)) contains the latest information about current immigration policies, resources and guidance you can use to protect yourself or your students and communities. This includes resources for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and other essential immigration information, and the state of California's plans to support those affected in the coming years.

▼ Temecula Valley Educators Assn. members and leaders outside of Rep. Darrell Issa's office; Issa refused to meet with the CTA delegation. TVEA President Edgar Diaz is second from right.



# OUR FIGHT FOR SCHOOLS

## CTA delegations demand that members of Congress protect vulnerable students, families

**IN APRIL**, our union launched an initiative to fight back against federal funding cuts to public education. Delegations of members, local chapter leaders, and both CTA and NEA Board of Directors visited nine GOP Congressional member offices in California, when the elected officials were in their districts on recess.

These members of Congress represent districts at high risk with threatened federal cuts to school meals, Special Education support and more. Delegations met with some of these elected officials; others refused to meet during their recess — time provided to Congressional members to meet with constituents. If a delegation was unable to meet, CTA members and partners protested outside the office and vocalized our demand that the representatives stand with students and families in their districts by:

1. Voting no on any effort to slash funding for public education including special education programs that support students with ADHD, dyslexia and other disabilities; financial aid for college and Career Technical Education;

protection of civil rights; funding for rural schools and communities; and school meals for hungry children.

2. Demanding the Trump Administration reinstate a vital rule that blocked ICE raids from sensitive areas, including school campuses.
3. Voting to protect the Department of Education.

Local chapter leaders in each delegation also spoke about how much federal funding schools in their district stand to lose. (Check out costs by congressional district at [bit.ly/44clC45](https://bit.ly/44clC45).)

CTA Board Member and high school Special Education history teacher Greg Abt shared what transpired during a delegation visit to Rep. Jay Obernolte in Hesperia. “Congressman Obernolte made it clear that he is opposed to funding cuts for students in our district, but would not commit to protecting the Department of Education, an institution that ensures that our communities receive these funds and services.

“We have to keep up the momentum with these critical demands for students in our local schools.”

▼ Chico Unified Teachers Assn. President Charlie Snyder stands outside of Rep. Doug LaMalfa's office; LaMalfa refused to meet with Snyder and others in the CTA delegation.



▼ CTA/NEA-Retired member Kelly Villalobos, CTA Board Member Eva Ruiz and Los Banos Teachers Assn. member Jennifer Wilkin tried to set up a meeting with Rep. Tom McClintock, who never responded. They went to his office during designated walk-in hours but found the door locked.



▼ Left to right: CTA Pre-Retired member Dennis Kennedy, CTA Board Member Greg Abt, a legislative aide, Rep. Jay Obernolte, Hesperia Teachers Assn. President Jim Resvaloso and a legislative aide.



▼ CTA Board Member Jesse Aguilar (at far end of table), Andrew Camacho, Lynn Childree, Steve Comstock, Ed De La Vega, Rafael Gonzales and Amy Kilburn met with Rep. Vince Fong's staff.



## THE BACKGROUND

**IN MARCH 2025**, President Trump signed an executive order to dismantle the Department of Education, putting billions of dollars in vital funding for public school students in jeopardy. Several thousand Department of Education staff have been laid off and school districts across the country have received conflicting and confusing directives, including threats from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to withhold funding for school meal programs for children living in poverty.

Currently, \$2.7 billion in critical federal funds goes to schools state-wide to provide meals for more than 3 million students — for many children the only nutritious meal they have available. And federal funding enables California schools to provide services to more than 800,000 students with disabilities, over 15% of all California students.

## ROLL CALL

CTA delegations asked to meet with the following members of Congress, who represent districts at high risk with threatened federal cuts to school meals, Special Education support and more. Representatives who refused to meet are noted.

- Rep. Ken Calvert, Congressional District 41, *Corona*
- Rep. Vince Fong, CD 20, *Bakersfield*
- Rep. Darrell Issa, CD 48, *Temecula* — **no meeting**
- Rep. Kevin Kiley, CD 3, *Rocklin*
- Rep. Young Kim, CD 40, *Anaheim*
- Rep. Doug LaMalfa, CD 1, *Chico* — **no meeting**
- Rep. Tom McClintock, CD 5, *Modesto* — **no meeting**
- Rep. Jay Obernolte, CD 23, *Hesperia*
- Rep. David Valadao, CD 22, *Hanford*



▼ The delegation that met with Rep. Ken Calvert's staff are "optimistic" he will support public education. Left to right Lake Elsinore Teachers Assn. President Mario Montano, Corona-Norco Teachers Assn. (CNTA) Vice Pres. Ben Williams, CTA Board Member Joe Bartell, CNTA President Meg E'amato, CTA Board Member Grant Schuster, Menifee Teachers Assn. Vice Pres. Paola Lindquist and VP-Operations Bill Fishburn.



▼ After meeting with Rep. Kevin Kiley's staff, educators from all over Kiley's congressional district gathered with parents and community members for an update.



▼ Left to right: Alan Blanchard, Rafael Gonzalez, Wendy Colson, CTA Board Member Jesse Aguilar, Ed De La Vega and Liz Forsythe met with staff at Rep. David Valadao's office.



▼ Left to right: Fullerton Secondary Teachers Org. President Angie Cencak, CTA staff Cliff Schuster, Assn. of Placentia-Linda Educators President Linda Manion, Capistrano Unified Education Assn. 2nd Vice Pres. Jenn Vega and CTA Board Member Grant Schuster met with Rep. Young Kim's staff.



## TELL CONGRESS TO SAVE PUBLIC EDUCATION

**Stop the destruction of the Department of Education.** Gutting the department will destroy programs and protections that guarantee educational opportunities for all students — whether funding for schools or support for students with ADHD, autism and more.

**Protect federal funding for public schools and colleges.** A GOP-led proposal in the 2025 budget resolution would cut funding for public schools and colleges to pay for tax cuts that benefit billionaires. We can't let this happen.

Take action on these issues now! Contact your congressional representative at [nea.org/advocating-for-change/action-center](https://nea.org/advocating-for-change/action-center).

# LET'S FLEX OUR POWER!

Join a statewide action to demand a stop to attacks  
on our students, educators and communities

# FIGHT FOR SCHOOLS!

CTA

S A T U R D A Y

# MAY 17



RSVP NOW! [CTA.ORG/FFS](https://cta.org/ffs)

**WE WON'T STAND BY** while the attacks from the Trump Administration threaten resources for our students.

Dismantling the Department of Education, laying off thousands of dedicated Department of Education staff, appointing someone who has never spent a day teaching in a classroom to be our Secretary of Education.... These are more than just headlines. They are direct threats to public education and the future of students and families across our community.

The Trump Administration is betraying public school students and educators. Education is a non-partisan issue. Students in poverty and students with special needs deserve resources and support in our schools — we can all agree on that. The Trump Administration is targeting students and families in our communities with these vicious plans to dismantle public education.

This is unacceptable and we're fighting back.

Our union has the power to demand that Congress protect funding for students and the Department of Education programs we all rely on, and to keep our school spaces safe from ICE Raids.

Join a statewide action on May 17 in Hanford, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego or San Francisco for rallies. Make your voice heard and fight for our students and schools!

For more information and to RSVP, use the QR code or visit [cta.org/ffs](https://cta.org/ffs).

# Part-Time Long Beach City College Faculty Win Landmark Ruling

**Judge rules  
adjunct professors  
not exempt from  
minimum wage  
laws, must be paid  
for hours worked**

By **Julian Peeples**

▼ Long Beach City College adjunct art professors Karen Roberts and Seija Rohkea won a historic ruling in February that will have an impact on potentially more than 40,000 adjunct faculty in community colleges statewide.



**“WE WERE SO SURE** this was the right thing to do but we were terrified at the same time,” says Karen Roberts, art history professor at Long Beach City College (LBCC) and Community College Association member. “It felt like we were sticking our necks out — we’re just a couple at-will employees.”

Nearly three years after filing a lawsuit against LBCC, Roberts and fellow part-time art professor Seija Rohkea won a historic ruling in February that will have an impact on the 1,000+ members of Certificated Hourly Instructors

CTA/NEA (CHI) and potentially more than 40,000 adjunct faculty in community colleges statewide.

In 2022, CTA filed suit alongside Roberts and Rohkea over the college’s failure to compensate them and hundreds of other adjunct community college faculty at the minimum wage, as required by law. Their lawsuit outlined many additional duties their teaching assignments required beyond the classroom time for which they were actually paid — colleges only pay adjunct faculty for the time they are teaching in the classroom.

*"One of the greatest inequities in education today is that of part-time college professor pay. Part-time faculty will benefit from this ruling, but our struggle for pay equity is not over."*

—CCA President **Eric Kaljumägi**

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

**Seija Rohkea:** "It's so meaningful to have this case and be able to help future adjuncts. Even the word adjunct is demeaning because it means 'temporary.' We're seen as temporary even though we are 80% of the faculty in some colleges. I would love to see that changed so this work is seen as a career."

**Karen Roberts:** "As part-timers, we cite (precedent-setting court case) *Cervisi* all the time to apply for unemployment benefits, so now others might cite *Roberts v. Long Beach CCD*. That's kind of amazing. I feel really proud."

"When I was president of CHI for about eight years, I kept finding creative ways to tell the Board of Trustees they weren't paying us for anything we were doing outside the classroom and we were working for free," Roberts says. "I got tired of hearing ridiculous things like 'you can do your syllabus during class.'"

LBCC and other community colleges require part-time instructors to work many hours performing teaching-related work outside of the classroom, including time spent planning lectures, grading and performing other instructional activities

that are necessary to teach a course. Colleges also evaluate the work performance of these instructors based on their teaching-related work outside of the classroom despite not paying them for those hours worked. The court ruling found that these faculty members are not exempt from minimum wage laws, and they should be paid at least the minimum wage for each of those uncompensated hours.

"The judge affirmed that we are being exploited," says Rohkea, who now works full time at Fullerton College in a classified role in addition to teaching at LBCC. "It's so validating that someone in the legal system agrees with our case."

Community College Association (CCA) President Eric Kaljumägi attended some of the hearings along with CCA Vice President Randa Wahbe. Kaljumägi says this ruling is a step in the right direction for equity for part-time faculty.

"While this lawsuit only modestly dents the dramatic pay inequity in the college system, I am glad to see that Roberts and Rohkea have prevailed," Kaljumägi says. "The Long Beach decision makes clear that to be exempt from minimum wage laws as a professional, you must earn a professional wage — one that is specified in regulation as at least double what a full-time worker at minimum wage would make. At present, Long Beach part-time faculty do not meet this salary threshold (a little under \$69,000) even if they were legally permitted to teach full-time loads both academic semesters."

## Winning Respect and Fighting Exploitation

With the college ruled to be at fault, attention turns to the next phase of the trial (a trial setting status conference is scheduled in early April) where the remedy will be determined. CTA legal staff said that they are requesting compensatory damages for the impacted members, who could see back pay and benefits for unpaid hours of work as far back as 2020 — potentially, tens of thousands of dollars for previously unpaid work.

But with the decision setting a legal precedent that may benefit part-time faculty across the state, Roberts and Rohkea both say this is about more than money.

"I'm hoping that when CHI goes into bargaining, maybe it's not business as usual and we're treated with more respect," Roberts says.

"At times when I was scared, (our CTA staff attorney) kept saying 'how would it feel if you could help set a legal precedent?' Those words were so encouraging," Rohkea adds. "I don't know what we're going to get financially. Will we get something? Yes, but that's not why we did this."

Over the years, California community college districts have increasingly turned to part-time, or adjunct, faculty to teach students and support learning — adjunct faculty teach up to 75% of all community college classes in some districts. These part-time faculty are required to hold the same minimum educational qualifications as their full-time counterparts but are deemed temporary and have little job security. ➔

▼ In March 2024, a Superior Court judge ruled that the CTA-backed lawsuit filed by Roberts and Rohkea could expand the class of the suit to include over 850 other impacted Long Beach City College faculty. Roberts is pictured in the middle (Rohkea did not attend the hearing).



Part-timers are only allowed to work two-thirds the load of a full-time professor, meaning that many string together adjunct jobs at multiple colleges, earning the moniker “freeway flyers” for the amount of uncompensated time they spend commuting between their jobs. To compound matters, community colleges pay adjunct faculty less than full-time faculty and fail to pay them for the many hours of essential work that they do outside of the classroom on behalf of their employers — as in this case and others currently waiting for their day in court.

“One of the greatest inequities in education today is that of part-time college

professor pay,” Kaljumägi says. “At Long Beach, part-time faculty are expected to exercise their independent judgment to complete the same preparation, evaluation, paperwork and communication tasks that full-time professors do, while earning a salary that is on a per-class basis at most 63% of what a full-time professor earns on column 1, step 1 on the salary schedule.”

The combined low pay, lack of respect and unreasonable expectations (like working for free) have made working as part-time faculty unsustainable, according to Rohkea, who says the sacrifices and disrespect made her feel like she was

“renting her career.”

“I would like to see the California Education Code changed, so we are not kept to 67% of a full-time professor’s load. I would like to see a livable wage for adjuncts who are doing this as their full-time careers,” Rohkea says. “When I have students who want to go into teaching, it’s hard to stand behind being a college professor when I know only one in 10 of them will find a full-time job teaching. How do you advocate for your student to go into this?”

Rohkea says the disparity between full-time and adjunct professors became even more evident during the COVID-19

▼ Seija Rohkea advocates for pay parity in 2022.



*"At times when I was scared, (our CTA staff attorney) kept saying 'how would it feel if you could help set a legal precedent?' Those words were so encouraging."*

—Community College Assn. Member  
Seija Rohkea

distance learning years, calling it exploitation — with massive amounts of unpaid work required of part-time faculty, including meetings, certifications and trainings, in addition to their course-related responsibilities.

"All these trainings and things we have to do, we never get paid for any of it," says Rohkea. "That needs to change and I'm hoping that's what comes of this win."

The victory is just the beginning. Our union continues to organize to change part-time faculty compensation laws to win parity for part-time community college faculty. Kaljumägi points out that while paying a vastly lower wage to

a "perpetual underclass of employees is wrong, it is still legal."

Previous attempts to fix this problem in the Legislature have been unsuccessful but the fight continues. Kaljumägi is hopeful this decision will bring momentum to the movement.

"Part-time faculty across the state will benefit from this ruling and I am glad for it, but our struggle for pay equity is not over," he says.

### 'This is All of Our Victory'

Roberts and Rohkea say the ongoing support from CTA legal staff and fellow members across the state has been

## CASE CHRONOLOGY

### APRIL 4, 2022:

CTA filed a class action wage-and-hour lawsuit against Long Beach City College District (LBCCD) in Los Angeles County Superior Court on behalf of more than 650 LBCCD adjunct faculty. The lawsuit seeks the maximum damages of three years back pay and the unpaid retirement benefits owed for uncompensated work hours, as well as penalties and interest.

### FEB. 19, 2025:

L.A. County Judge Stuart Rice issues ruling granting declaratory relief to plaintiffs. Judge Rice rules on essential questions of part-time faculty being non-exempt (due to the district not paying sufficient salary to qualify as exempt from minimum wage laws) and the district's obligation to pay minimum wage for all hours worked by part-time faculty, which he found the district was violating.

### APRIL 9, 2025:

Hearing scheduled for next phase of litigation on compensatory relief, which includes the determination of back pay and back benefits.

integral to their win in court. The professors said the win is a shining example of the power of us.

"It's a collective effort — nobody can be out here by themselves doing this. This is all of our victory!" Roberts says.

"It meant so much to us to know that people were cheering us on. Knowing that there's a bigger picture was everything," Rohkea adds. "When we fight, we win. We have to stay united and in solidarity and keep our eyes on the prize of a livable wage and better quality of life." ■

# SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS ACT CHANGING RETIRED EDUCATORS' LIVES

**Historic victory leads to retroactive payments, increased benefits**

By Julian Peeples



**WHEN RETIRED EDUCATOR** Debra Sheehan checked her balance online in early March to see if she had the money to pay her wireless phone bill, the CTA/NEA-Retired vice president made a shocking discovery: a \$44,000 deposit from Social Security — courtesy of the Social Security Fairness Act, signed into law in January.

“I probably cried for an hour. I was thinking ‘who’s pranking me?’” says Sheehan, who taught second and third grade for Capistrano Unified School District for 20 years. “I’m still speechless. It’s like someone took 50 pounds off my shoulders.”

The long-awaited passage and adoption of the law ended the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), which have unfairly reduced Social Security payments for educators and other public employees for more than 40 years. With the stroke of President Biden’s pen, more than 2.8 million public workers (and their survivors) received more of the money they already put into the system. The amounts are life changing.

“I can pay off my bills. I’m so grateful for the people

who fought so long for this,” Sheehan says. “If we can win this fight, just think what else we can accomplish. This gives me a feeling of confidence and courage that whatever insane thing is coming at us every day, we can react, organize and make things happen.”



Debra Sheehan

Educators in 26 states including California will see an average monthly increase of \$360 in their Social Security benefits, depending on their employment history, according to NEA. Retired CTA member Krista Patterson will see \$1,300 more per month in addition to the \$20,700 lump payment she received in March.

“It’s a good chunk of money but we were even more excited about the increase in our monthly amount,” says Patterson, a former elementary teacher in Scotts Valley. “I subbed for the last three years and this means I won’t have to do that

anymore ... It’s such a good feeling not just for us, but for everyone. It affects 3 million people — that’s huge!”

For four decades, public employees in 26 states have been subject to punitive and discriminatory measures that reduced their Social Security benefits. The GPO and WEP robbed educators of the retirement income they

▼ In 2023, active and retired NEA members, including CTA representatives, met with lawmakers in Washington, DC, to urge repeal of GPO/WEP.



◀ Ed Foglia, pictured in 2016 as an CTA/NEA-Retired Board Member, advocates for CTA to continue actions to repeal GPO and WEP.

**“If it wasn’t for NEA and CTA, this would’ve never happened. This is a victory because we are a union that cares and has a program of advocacy that has made it possible for us to get this victory.” —Ed Foglia, CTA president 1978–1982 and 1986–1992**

earned since 1977 and 1983, respectively. In December, Congress finally voted to fully repeal the laws, ending a marathon of activism by union educators across the country.

“I always had hope. It was such an important issue that was affecting so many people and the unfairness of it all really made me want to win this,” says Ed Foglia, CTA president from 1978 to 1982 and 1986 to 1992.

Foglia served on the NEA Executive Committee when the laws were implemented, working for decades to urge lawmakers to repeal GPO and WEP. Visiting lawmakers in D.C., writing letters, sending emails and making phone calls for years and years, Foglia says this historic victory is a shining example of the Power of Us.

“If it wasn’t for NEA and CTA, this would’ve never happened. This is a victory because we are a union that cares and has a program of advocacy that has made it possible for us to get this victory — our union!” says Foglia.

“The victory only happened through the tireless advocacy of educators and other public service workers. NEA members made nearly half a million calls and sent emails to members of Congress, demanding they repeal these unjust laws. NEA and CTA members also lobbied lawmakers in Washington and in offices here in California, sharing their personal stories of how

these laws have unjustly penalized them and their families.”

The fight for justice had gone on for so long, many didn’t expect GPO and WEP to ever be repealed, especially in our ultra-polarized political climate. Patterson says she was shocked that it made such quick progress after years without much movement.



Krista Patterson

“When we fight, we win. If we keep trying, eventually we will be successful,” she says. “Don’t give up. That’s even more important with the current administration.”

Foglia says it’s fulfilling to see this victory affect so many people in such a positive way — especially when President Trump is wreaking havoc on our structures and livelihoods. He urged members to keep that “never quit” attitude and maintain the fight to protect each other, our students and our democracy.

“Good things don’t come easy — you have to work to make things happen. As an advocate, you don’t get to pick how long you fight for something. We keep fighting until we win,” says Foglia, urging all members to get involved. “Our unions, CTA and NEA, are here for us. We need to be a part of the fight. The only way we can be successful is if our members believe in our union and are willing to work for it.” ■

# Prop. 55 Extension

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## OUR FIGHT FOR SCHOOL FUNDING

### ORGANIZING TO PROTECT OUR STUDENTS

#### Prop. 55 extension: \$10 billion in funding for schools and community colleges

By Julian Peebles

**OUR FIGHT CONTINUES** for the public education our students deserve as local associations across the state kicked off campaigns earlier this year to extend \$9 billion in annual Proposition 55 funding for schools and community colleges with a 2026 ballot initiative.

Since 2012, Props. 30 and 55 have generated significant funding through a tax on California's wealthiest (currently, couples earning more than \$700,000). Prop. 55, passed in 2016, is set to expire in 2030, and our union is already organizing to place an initiative on the ballot next year to continue this vital funding for our students and schools.

A 15% public education budget cut due to the end of Prop. 55 funding would be devastating and result in draconian cuts in public schools and community colleges across the state. An estimated one in every six educators will face potential layoffs without an extension of this funding — a big part of why educators are hard at work already.

"To ensure and secure the education of future generations, it's important that we maintain Prop. 55 funding. Our students depend on us," says Trina Gonzales-Alesi, president of Desert Sands Teachers Association (DSTA).

"It would mean larger class sizes and fewer supplies at a time when we can't rely on the federal government for our educational security."

DSTA is already organizing to defend their students and extend Prop. 55 funding, working to educate members and collaborating with the school board to adopt a resolution of support.

"We're actively educating our members on the benefits. We plan to start a signature gathering campaign in the fall," says Gonzales-Alesi, a Spanish and French teacher for 27 years.

Education campaigns on Prop. 55 funding are ongoing in locals around the state, with signature gathering expected to commence with the new 2025–26 school year to qualify the initiative for the 2026 ballot. A new proposition number will be assigned later in the process when the initiative is certified. A flyer, sample resolution, calculator to see how much funding for your school district is at stake and more are available online at [cta.org/Prop55Extension](https://cta.org/Prop55Extension).

Gonzales-Alesi says these resources are helpful in getting the word out in her local. "People need to hear things multiple times before adopting it as their own."

# History of Props 30/55

**2012**

VOTERS APPROVED  
PROP 30 WITH

**54.4%**

- Increased sales tax by a quarter-cent for four years (2013-2016)
- Increased income taxes on high earners (starting at \$700K annually) for seven years (2012-2018)
- Prevented an estimated \$6 billion in immediate cuts to public education

**2016**

VOTERS APPROVED  
PROP 55 WITH

**63.3%**

- Extended the tax increase on high earners for 12 more years (2019-2030)
- Did not extend the sales tax increase, which expired in 2016
- Maintained funding stability for public schools and community colleges



## How Much Does Your District Stand to Lose?

*Use our [Prop. 55 calculator](#) to check, and to organize*

### PROPOSITION 30

was approved by California voters in 2012, temporarily raising certain tax rates to provide additional financial support for public schools (see graphic at right). Prop. 30 revenues must be spent on classroom expenses and may not be used for administrative costs. In 2016, California voters approved Proposition 55, which extends Prop. 30 from 2019 through 2030.

Check our calculator at [cta.org/Prop55Extension](https://cta.org/Prop55Extension) to see how much funding is at stake for your school district. Use the results to talk to coworkers (as well as friends and family) about the urgent need to take action. Help your site reps hold worksite meetings and develop action plans. Pass a resolution committing to extend Prop. 55.

For a Prop. 55 flyer that you can customize to your district and local and pass out to members and community, visit [cta.org/document/prop-55-flyer](https://cta.org/document/prop-55-flyer).

## TAKE ACTION

- 1** Talk to your coworkers, friends, and family about the need to extend Prop 55. Share how much our district will lose if we don't pass a Prop. 55 extension (see flyer!)
- 2** Pass our resolution to show that we are committed to extending Prop. 55



▼ SAEA members protest the proposed layoffs.



# ORGANIZING TO SAVE EDUCATOR JOBS

## Fighting layoffs and defending important services for our students

By Julian Peeples

**UNION EDUCATORS** are organizing to fight back against more than 3,000 layoffs in school districts across the state that will hurt our students, schools and communities at a time when they need our help and support.

"Layoffs are devastating and chaotic to our school communities and harm student learning conditions," said CTA President David Goldberg. "This is even happening in communities like Pasadena, where educators and students lost their homes in wildfires. Our union will not stand by. We will demand that every single one of these notices is rescinded in the coming weeks."

United Teachers of Pasadena have been fighting to get some of their 115 layoffs rescinded — the fifth highest number issued by a district in the state. San Francisco Unified School District issued the most credentialed layoff notices — 395 — which have all been rescinded after an early retirement incentive program proved more popular than expected.

We checked in with the presidents of two CTA locals, Santa Barbara Teachers Association (SBTA) and Santa Ana Educators Association (SAEA) who have been organizing to fight layoffs of their members.



▲ Sonta Garner-Marcelo

### Santa Ana Educators Association

When 389 SAEA educators received layoff notices, members organized and fought back — holding a series of rallies at impacted sites. Some schools are slated to lose more than half their educators. SAEA President Sonta Garner-Marcelo says members sprang into action to support each other, attending school board meetings along with students, parents and Orange County Labor Federation siblings to call on elected leaders to reverse course. SAEA

▼ Santa Barbara High School students, whose theater teacher received a RIF notice, were expected to perform at the district school board in April. Instead, they stood in silence for minutes before unfolding a sign that said, "If you defund the arts, there won't be any." The notice was later rescinded.



"Losing positions that positively impact our students and programs will result in increased class sizes, lack of support and pushing students and families to other school districts."

—SAEA President  
Santa Garner-Marcelo

held rallies at each school board meeting this spring and is circulating a petition of support for educators and resources for Santa Ana students.

"We have also been educating our parents about the budget and explaining what these layoffs will mean to our students and the SAUSD community," says Garner-Marcelo. "Losing positions that positively impact our students and programs will result in increased class sizes, lack of support and pushing students and families to other school districts."

**Q:** What are your plans for the rest of the school year, and looking ahead to the next?

**Santa Garner-Marcelo:** SAEA will continue to turn out for each board meeting, educate our members, visit sites and have conversations with parents and our community. We will also provide information about SAEA at local community events until the layoffs are rescinded and continue to collaborate with our district to work on solutions that will not hurt our students, educators and community.

**Q:** How can your fellow CTA members support your fight to save jobs and the resources Santa Ana students need?

**SGM:** CTA members can sign and continue to share our No Layoffs petition, which is available at [cta.org/FFSA](http://cta.org/FFSA).

**Q:** What would you like to say to locals across the state about organizing to fight educator layoffs?

**SGM:** Now more than ever, we need to harness the power of our union. There is power in our connections and our commitments to each other. We can advocate for our students, professions and each other by standing united.

We can't wait! Together in solidarity and strength, let's engage in these conversations, strategize our next steps and mobilize our communities. We are one! We need to support and defend each other and the schools that our students deserve.

## Santa Barbara Teachers Association

SBTA started fighting the 79 layoffs they faced this year before they even existed — by establishing a Political

Action Committee (PAC) and taking an active role in last year's school board elections. After successful campaigns to elect district trustees, SBTA President Hozby Galindo says it's been crucial to leverage their relationships to save as many jobs as possible.

"We do not currently have a majority on school board but with our successful campaign, we were able to force the district to rewrite their layoff proposal. They were going to lay off more people," Galindo says. "Right there on the spot, more jobs were saved before they voted on it. There's a lot of power in a PAC changing the makeup of a school board."



Hozby Galindo

After a lengthy school board meeting that went until 3 a.m., where SBTA members, students and community unsuccessfully pleaded with the board to not lay off teachers, SBTA has been a constant presence at meetings to call for rescinding those layoffs. So far, they have been successful in rescinding all but 10.

"We're working all the way up to the May deadline for the RIF (Reduction in Force) finalization and



then into the summer to support our impacted members,” Galindo says. “We’re trying to organize in every space that we can to get our message out and save positions in any manner possible.”

**Q:** What would these layoffs mean for your students and school communities?

**Galindo:** Our district has been struggling to fill elective positions in our elementary spaces. Last year, our high schools didn’t have enough foreign language teachers, so students were forced to learn online. We’re hurting our students and how we’re preparing them for their future. We’re not preparing them to be a part of a global economy. These layoffs are going to exacerbate the inequity that some elementary and secondary students face. If we can’t offer students electives, we’re just hurting them in the long run. The district is

trying to save costs by increasing class sizes and that’s just going to hurt students currently and in the future — we shouldn’t be doing that.

**Q:** What are your plans for the rest of the school year and looking ahead to the next?

**G:** Reaching out to parent groups because these layoffs will be affecting their students. We’re also contacting Parent Teacher Associations across our school sites. Our membership should have noticed now that the work we did with our PAC bore some really good fruit. Our next steps will be to once more have our PAC build campaigns to fill open positions on our school board — and we’re going to start that work next year.

**Q:** What advice do you have for members in other locals on organizing to fight educator layoffs?

**G:** I don’t think anybody understood

how important it was going to be to elect our candidate to the school board. All locals should consider and think about how they work to structure their school board. You can fight RIFs before they even begin if you have the right people on your school board.

Also, bring in the community and share your thoughts with board members about how students will be hurt, through public comment, emails and on social media. Share news and effects of layoffs with your community to let them know what is going on in the school district and how their students will be impacted. Flood meetings where financial and programming decisions are being made. Make sure you are sharing that narrative of how students get hurt if positions are eliminated. ■

## SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS:

# SHARE YOUR STORY

## Has a state policy change impacted your work?

### Attention SLPs!

On Dec., 27, 2024, the California Department of Education (CDE) Special Education Division rescinded its letter to the field on pro-rated caseloads for Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) who work with a mixed caseload of 3–5-year-olds and 6–21-year-olds. This means that:

1. We can no longer file CDE complaints over a lack of prorated caseloads for mixed-age groups on SLP caseloads unless the caseload exceeds 55.
2. If an SLP has a mixed-age caseload, the average of 55 is the maximum permitted under the Ed. Code.
3. Relevant Collective Bargaining Agreement language must still be followed. This does not impact any negotiated caseload provisions.

**Our union wants to hear your story:** How has this policy change impacted your caseload numbers if you are working with a mixed caseload of ages 3–21?

Tell us at [actionnetwork.org/forms/share-your-story-slps](https://actionnetwork.org/forms/share-your-story-slps). We’ll be collecting stories through this fall.



▼ Over a weeklong period, United Educators of San Francisco held pickets at more than 80 school sites in the city.



▼ On May Day, Natomas Teachers Assn. members made their voices heard.



▼ San Diego Education Assn. members rallying on International Workers Day.



▼ Twin Rivers United Educators members picketed at every school site on May 1 to let communities know that [#wecantwait](#) any longer for the schools students and members deserve.



# WE CAN'T WAIT!

## ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

**THE GOLDEN STATE** is now the fourth largest economy in the world — yet it is in the bottom half of states for per pupil funding. School districts across California have called for more than 3,000 educator layoffs this year and deep cuts to student programs and resources.

The “We Can’t Wait” campaign, involving CTA locals’ shared demands and coordinated negotiations with 32 school districts, is going strong. Locals have been out in force — many on International Workers Day on May 1 — urging support for public education Campaign demands:

- Fully staffed schools, with smaller class sizes and caseloads
- Safe and stable schools, with no layoffs, budget cuts or school closures
- Competitive wages and benefits for educators, to match the essential role they play in society

Learn more at [wecantwait.info](http://wecantwait.info).

▼ A dramatic video by United Teachers of Richmond explained why [#WeCan'tWait](#) ([@united\\_teachers\\_of\\_richmond](#)).



# BARGAINING ROUNDUP

Compiled by Julian Peeples



## MONTEBELLO:

### Educators Mobilize and Fight Off Reductions

**Montebello Teachers Association** (MTA) members started organizing in December 2024 when they learned of the school district's plan to lay off 130 certificated educators. Building signs during winter break and rallying support with parents and school communities, MTA members protested the proposal at school board meetings in winter.

With a large turnout expected at a February school board meeting, the meeting was suddenly cancelled for lack of a quorum about an hour before it was scheduled to start, followed by the superintendent issuing a letter saying there would be no layoffs of permanent employees for 2025-26.

## GROSSMONT:

### Organizing to Rescind Certificated Layoffs

The fight continues for **Grossmont Education Association** (GEA) members organizing to force the school board to rescind 49 certificated layoffs. More than 450

GEA members and supporters rallied before an April school board meeting where a motion to rescind the layoffs failed without a second. That was the third rally to save educator jobs with a fourth planned for early May.

Stay current on GEA's fight and leave them a message of support on Facebook at [@GrossmontEA](https://www.facebook.com/GrossmontEA).



## TORRANCE:

### Teachers Form Alliance With Other Unions to Change District Culture

**Members of Torrance Teachers Association** (TTA) are building power with fellow union educators to change Torrance Unified Schools District, forming a labor alliance with three other local unions in the district. Their first joint organizing plan is centered around the demand to force the district to abandon a culture of fear and focus on building relational trust and fostering professional collaboration between labor and management.

The alliance started meeting in February and has already delivered a strong message in a unified voice about building relational trust districtwide — with leaders from all four locals speaking together at a school board meeting that month. In March, the alliance held a blackout silent demonstration, where participants dressed in black and held signs with their messages of change to the school board. TTA and the other unions have approved votes of no confidence in district leadership, particularly in the district's Human Resources Department.

# CALIFORNIANS AND EDUCATION

## New survey reveals state residents' thoughts about public ed

The **Public Policy Institute of California** (PPIC) released its annual survey, "Californians and Education," on April 17. The 2025 survey, based on responses from 1,591 adult state residents from March 27 to April 4, covered state policy direction, local public schools, K-12 funding and early childhood education.

### Key findings:

- Nearly all Californians say teacher salaries compared to the cost of living are a problem in the state (adults: 48% big, 38% somewhat; public school parents: 39% big, 49% somewhat).
- Nearly all adults and public school parents say teacher shortages are at least somewhat of a problem (adults: 50% big, 37% somewhat; public school parents: 43% big, 45% somewhat).
- Strong majorities of adults (66%) and public school parents (69%) approve of teachers' unions.
- 71% of California adults and 74% of public school parents are opposed to the executive order by President Trump to close down the US Department of Education.
- 66% of adults and 74% of public school parents are very or somewhat concerned about increased federal immigration enforcement efforts on undocumented students in their local public schools; majorities favor their local school district designating itself as a sanctuary "safe zone," including requiring school staff to keep information about the immigration status of students and their families confidential.
- 45% of Californians think that the state's K-12 public education system is headed in the right direction, a decline from previous years.

## ADDITIONAL FINDINGS:

### Most Californians give their local public schools a passing grade



Most Californians and public school parents give their local public schools passing grades. Majorities say that their local public schools are doing an excellent or good job in preparing students for college, jobs and the workforce, and engaged citizenship.

### About half say the current level of state funding for their local public schools is not enough



48% of adults think that there is not enough state funding for their local public schools. Majorities of likely voters would vote "yes" on state and local school bond measures. Two-thirds of adults are in favor of the Local Control Funding Formula, which provides additional funding for school districts with more English language learners and lower-income students. About six in ten are very or somewhat concerned about declining student enrollment affecting their local public schools' funding. A majority of likely voters are opposed to providing parents with tax-funded vouchers to send their children to their choice of a public, private or parochial school. For the full report, go to [ppic.org/publication](https://ppic.org/publication).

*Continued from Page 40*

## Welcome to the Family!

**Las Virgenes Education Association** (Los Angeles) negotiated CTE teachers into their bargaining unit. There are 12 new members who will be joining!



# CHICAGO TEACHERS' “EXTRAORDINARY” CONTRACT

**New agreement  
includes major gains for  
students and educators**

By **Jackson Potter**

**IN APRIL**, 85% of the Chicago Teachers Union’s 27,000 active members voted on a tentative agreement covering 500 public schools across the city. A record 97% voted yes.

The contract will run from 2024 to 2028, expiring at the same time as the UAW’s contracts with the Big Three automakers (Ford, General Motors and Stellantis). The negotiation drew the greatest level of member participation and support in CTU’s history and was achieved without a strike or a strike vote.

The new contract addresses both bread and butter concerns and common-good demands. Said CTU president Stacy Davis Gates, a member of the union’s Caucus of Rank and File Educators (CORE): “It was the whole buffet.”

## New conditions

There have been three Chicago Public School (CPS) strikes since the slate supported by the reform caucus CORE, with Karen Lewis as president, came to power in 2010. This contract is more comprehensive and includes the biggest raises and step increases since the advent of collective bargaining for Chicago teachers in 1967. It also lowers class sizes at every grade level.

New political and bargaining conditions contributed to the strong contract and overwhelming ratification vote. After the Illinois legislature restored teachers’ full bargaining rights in 2021, this year CTU was able to bargain on

▼ Teachers union members applaud after the Chicago Teachers Union’s House of Delegates voted for the tentative agreement.



issues other than wages and benefits for the first time in three decades. The city’s current mayor, Brandon Johnson, a former CTU member and middle school teacher, supported teachers’ contract goals.

Members were highly engaged in the negotiation. They submitted over 700 proposals (10 times more than in 2019) and doubled their participation in bargaining through union committees. CTU’s largest ever bargaining team (65 rank and file members) not only led negotiations but initiated the first open bargaining ever, with four two-hour sessions accessible to members and the public.

Under the new contract, union members will see a cost-of-living adjustment of 17–20% (tied to inflation) over the contract. Veteran educators will get raises to encourage them to stay in the district. The contract also expands dental, vision, infertility, and abortion care, as well as gender-affirming care. It guarantees workers will get 12 weeks of paid parental leave and that leave rights will include paraprofessionals and other school personnel.

## Extraordinary advances

The contract is a forcefield to protect against Trump’s attacks on public education. It will reverse the privatization of key positions like tech coordinators and nurses while vastly improving staffing for librarians, case managers for students with disabilities, and teachers who support English Language Learners.

And for the first time, it includes protections for academic freedom, Black history and culturally relevant curriculum. It calls for the continuation of sanctuary schools and creates LGBTQIA+ safe spaces in schools.

"We're proud to have landed a transformative contract that turns away from decades of disinvesting in Black children and turns toward creating the world-class education system for every single student in Chicago Public Schools, no matter their zip code," said Davis Gates.

Under the new agreement, the union, Chicago Public Schools, and city agencies will coordinate for the first time to provide housing support for CPS families in need.

The contract also embraces greener schools. It calls for increasing the number of "Sustainable Community Schools" from 20 to 70 over the course of the agreement. It will provide additional resources to remediate lead, asbestos and

mold in aging school buildings while upgrading to green energy with environmentally sustainable technology, materials and practices.

"Our union is bargaining for what every parent wants for their child in our school communities," said Davis Gates, including "access to arts, sports, wrap-around supports and libraries. Our members should not have to fight to rebuild libraries. All of these resources should already exist in every single school community."

Our new contract, along with a growing resistance to federal attacks on working families, should give us

hope and sustenance for the fights ahead.

*Jackson Potter is vice president of the Chicago Teachers Union. This article first appeared in Labor Notes.*

**"Our union is bargaining for access to arts, sports, wrap-around supports and libraries. Our members should not have to fight to rebuild libraries. All of these resources should already exist."**

—Chicago Teachers Union President  
**Stacy Davis Gates**



The advertisement features a collage of diverse individuals representing various professions and communities. At the top center is a firefighter in a yellow helmet with the number 27. To the left is a woman in a white turtleneck. To the right is a woman in a black polo shirt. Below them are several other people, including a man in a yellow shirt holding a football, a woman in a grey sweatshirt with 'Eagles' on it, a woman in a red shirt, a man in a grey shirt with 'PCC' on it, and a woman in a black shirt giving a thumbs up. The background is blue with a yellow and orange border at the top and bottom. The text '40 YEARS calottery' is prominently displayed in the center. To the right, the 'calottery education' logo is shown with the tagline 'YOU PLAY, SCHOOLS WIN.' Below this, the text '\$46B FOR CALIFORNIA PUBLIC EDUCATION SINCE 1985' is written in large, bold letters. In the bottom right corner, there is a QR code with the text 'SHARE YOUR SCHOOL'S LOTTERY STORY' and the website 'www.calottery.com'.

**40 YEARS calottery**

**calottery education**  
**YOU PLAY, SCHOOLS WIN.**

**\$46B**  
**FOR CALIFORNIA**  
**PUBLIC EDUCATION**  
**SINCE 1985**

[www.calottery.com](http://www.calottery.com)

SHARE YOUR SCHOOL'S  
LOTTERY STORY

# THE POWER OF TRANSFORMATIVE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Educators are reshaping classrooms by fostering deeper relationships with students **By Brenda Alvarez**

### CTA's CADRE Program: T-SEL Training

CTA's CADRE Program offers training in Transformative Social Emotional Learning. The training examines and addresses root causes of inequity to develop collaborative solutions that lead to personal, community and societal well-being.

The training also allows you to explore your personal experiences with stress, as it's essential to manage stress to work effectively with students. Trainers share strategies for self-managing stress in both educators and students. To request a training at your school or local, visit [cta.org/cadre](https://cta.org/cadre) or use this QR code:



**INGRID VILLEDA**, a community school coordinator at 93rd Street Elementary in Los Angeles, knows firsthand how vital it is to provide emotional and social support for students.

After returning from the pandemic, her school introduced calm rooms — designated spaces where students could self-regulate rather than being sent to the principal's office.

"Our goal is for the calm room to be non-punitive," Villeda says. "It's based on kids' needs. And because it's been successful, teachers have now asked for calming corners in every classroom."

The school also restructured recess built on student feedback. Previously, play areas restricted interactions among students from different classrooms, leading to frustration. In response, educators implemented free-play zones, allowing students to choose their own activities and interact more freely.

These practices, rooted in transformative social-emotional learning (T-SEL), are taking place in classrooms across the country. They are some of ways educators are prioritizing wellness in their schools.

CTA offers T-SEL trainings through its CADRE program; the 90-minute training is available to schools and local chapters by request and in addition to focusing on student needs, it examines educator wellness (see sidebar).

### What is Transformative SEL?

Social-emotional learning has long been recognized as a powerful tool for student growth, teaching essential life skills such as self-awareness, emotional regulation and relationship building. However, as Meena Srinivasan, executive director of

Transformative Educational Leadership, explains, T-SEL goes further.

"For many years, social and emotional learning was considered race- and culture-neutral, but nothing is neutral in our country. And so, transformative-SEL takes traditional SEL a step further by explicitly addressing equity, power and belonging," says Srinivasan.

She emphasizes that it helps build bridges across race, class, gender, age and learning needs to create "beloved" communities where everyone feels valued — especially marginalized communities.

Villeda, for example, shares how, after surveying students and families, the school community learned that Black students and families didn't feel welcomed on campus.

"So, we created a Black Parent Advisory Council and small student groups to ensure their voices were heard," Villeda says. The new parent and student groups now have an equal voice alongside others and play an active role in guiding school activities and addressing problems before they escalate.

### A deeper commitment to change

Beyond the classroom, the movement for T-SEL is growing. Schools and districts across the country are integrating its principles into their frameworks. Srinivasan's work in Oakland years ago helped shape a national conversation about making SEL a tool for equity.

"SEL can't just be framed as behavior management in under-resourced schools with predominantly students of color while being seen as a tool for well-being and leadership in wealthier ones. We must ensure that all students have access to transformative learning that empowers



them — fostering liberation, not just regulation,” she says.

This shift is crucial because it affects how students see themselves and their futures. A student who feels empowered, respected and valued is more likely to succeed academically and personally.

## The role of wellness and boundaries

For educators like Villeda, T-SEL has been a game-changer in their schools. But transformative-SEL isn’t just for students — educators, too, are encouraged to prioritize their own wellness.

Todd Scholl, who co-leads the Center for Educator Wellness and Learning (CEWL), a program of The South Carolina Education Association, emphasizes the importance of setting boundaries.

“Teachers are often exploited for their time and energy, and learning to say ‘no’...can help to prevent burnout and carve out more time for their own well-being,” Scholl says.

Through union-led retreats, backed by NEA Great Public Schools grants, educators in South Carolina are given the space to step away from their daily responsibilities and deeply reflect on their emotional and physical well-being. The three-day retreats provide structured opportunities to explore meditation and mindfulness, practice self-care, manage burnout, support mental health and enjoy hikes for relaxation and rejuvenation.

Educators leave with tools to implement T-SEL effectively while also protecting their own well-being. Many report feeling re-energized and equipped with new strategies to prioritize their own wellness.

“SCEA wanted to do more to help teachers’ mental, physical and social-emotional well-being,” Scholl explains. “We need greater investment in educator wellness. It must be a priority because the data clearly shows how stressed and unwell teachers are.”

## Overcoming challenges and expanding T-SEL’s impact

For T-SEL to truly take root, school districts and policymakers must support it. Scholl says that one of the biggest barriers is the pushback from anti-public education politicians who attack SEL to sow fear and mistrust about public schools and the educators who provide these important life lessons.

“Some see SEL as unnecessary or political, but the reality is that it helps students and their teachers develop the emotional intelligence they need to thrive,” Scholl says.

## Bringing T-SEL Into the Classroom...

... does not require an overhaul of existing lesson plans, says Meena Srinivasan of the Transformative Educational Leadership in Oakland. Instead, it’s an “integral part of quality teaching and learning.” How to start:

### 1 Start with yourself

Educators who develop their own SEL practice — such as mindfulness, reflection and emotional regulation — are more effective in fostering these skills in students.

### 2 Center student voices

Invite students to share their perspectives and co-create classroom norms. “Students need to feel agency in their learning,” Srinivasan says.

### 3 Embed SEL into curriculum

Instead of treating SEL as an “extra,” integrate it into existing subjects. For example, history lessons can include discussions about empathy and justice.

### 4 Create spaces for reflection

Practices like journaling, community circles and mindful moments help students develop self-awareness.

### 5 Normalize emotional expression

Model and validate a range of emotions in the classroom. “I introduce my pronouns on the first day,” says South Carolina math/science teacher Alex Del Castillo. “Small things like that open doors for students to feel seen.”

*This story originally appeared in NEA Today.*

▼ David Goldberg addresses the delegates



## CTA STATE COUNCIL REPORT: **Our Fight for Schools** Hope, and calls to action

**CTA State Council of Education** met April 4–6, 2025, in Los Angeles. In his speech to delegates, CTA President David Goldberg acknowledged the current challenges we face — insidious educator layoffs and cuts, assaults on our basic civil rights and freedom of speech, the dismantling of the Department of Education, funding cuts to rural schools and communities, and more.

But he reminded us of the hope we carry within our union, where “we lift each other up to that light of change.” He outlined significant ways our union is fighting back, including the May 17 statewide action “Fight for Schools” ([cta.org/ffs](https://cta.org/ffs)).

“These mass actions are an important means of resistance not just to the attacks from DC,” Goldberg said, “but will also send a clear message to electeds in our state that we will fight for the funding our schools deserve in the fifth largest economy on the planet.”

He ended by urging all to seize the opportunity to make positive change.

“This is a moment of both challenge and opportunity for us, and for the broader labor movement. On one hand we face an existential threat, but on the other a real opportunity to build a stronger, resurgent labor movement.

“The pressure that we are under, as educators, workers and union members, is real. But pressure can also create the kind of crucible where real change occurs, where movements are born, and where courage is forged.”

*“Pressure can also create the kind of crucible where real change occurs, where movements are born, and where courage is forged.”*

—CTA President  
**David Goldberg**

### Election Results

On April 5, the following candidates were elected by the Council body:

#### **CTA President**

Term of Office:

June 26, 2025–June 25, 2028

**Elected — David B. Goldberg**

#### **CTA Vice President**

Term of Office:

June 26, 2025–June 25, 2028

**Elected — Leslie S. Littman**

#### **CTA Board of Directors, DISTRICT C**

Term of Office:

June 26, 2025–June 25, 2028

**Elected — Angela Normand**

#### **CTA Board of Directors, DISTRICT O**

Term of Office:

June 26, 2025–June 25, 2028

**Elected — Gregory Abt**

#### **CTA Board of Directors, DISTRICT P**

Term of Office:

June 26, 2025–June 25, 2028

**Elected — Kisha Borden**

#### **CTA Board of Directors, DISTRICT Q**

Term of Office:

June 26, 2025–June 25, 2028

**Elected — DeWayne Sheaffer**

#### **NEA Director from California, DISTRICT 5**

Term of Office:

September 1, 2025–August 31, 2028

**Elected — Hilary Hall**

#### **NEA Alternate Director from California, SEAT 3**

Term of Office:

September 1, 2025–August 31, 2028

**Elected — Shelly Ehrke**

**CTA/ABC Committee Member,**

**DISTRICT C**

Term of Office:

June 26, 2025–June 25, 2028

**Elected — Mayra Alvarado**

**CTA/ABC Committee Member,**

**DISTRICT F**

Term of Office:

June 26, 2025–June 25, 2028

**Elected — Jennifer Wilkin**

**CTA/ABC Committee Member,**

**DISTRICT K**

Term of Office:

June 26, 2025–June 25, 2028

**Elected — Billie Joe Wright**

**CTA/ABC Committee Member,**

**DISTRICT L**

Term of Office:

June 26, 2025–June 25, 2028

**Elected — La Tonya Curlin**

**CTA/ABC Committee Member,**

**DISTRICT P**

Term of Office:

June 26, 2025–June 25, 2028

**Elected — Jasper Daleo**

**CTA/ABC Committee Member,**

**DISTRICT Q**

Term of Office:

June 26, 2025–June 25, 2028

**Elected — Patrick Mitchell**

Council approved the following CTA Board-Recommended candidates for the NEA Executive Committee

**Mel House**

**Dr. Tia Mills**



## Forum on Immigration

A special forum “**Solidarity With Our Immigrant Communities**” took place at State Council, facilitated by CTA Board Member/District F Director Eva Ruiz (above, far left). Panelists included, from left to right, Pittsburg EA President Celia Medina Owens, President of the Salinas Elementary Teachers Council Oscar Ramos, UTLA Elementary Vice President Maria Miranda, and Alhambra TA Political Action Committee Chair Javier Gutierrez.

The forum discussed educator roles and rights, including legal guidance from CTA and NEA. Panelists spoke about efforts in their local chapters and communities, which range from holding trainings and workshops on immigrants’ rights and partnering with local organizations and government agencies to actively advocating for students and families. Lisa Ramirez, an immigrants rights attorney, joined the forum to talk about the current situation at the federal and state levels and legislative actions to fight back. Find resources and information for educators, students and families, and communities at [cta.org/homeishere](https://cta.org/homeishere).



## Proposed Bylaw Amendment

*At the June 2025 State Council of Education meeting, Council will vote by written ballot on whether to adopt the following bylaw amendment. The proposed amendment is to Article XVI, Section 1.*

Legend: Additions are in **boldface**.

### Article XVI — Amendments

#### SECTION 1. Proposal of Amendments to Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and/or these Bylaws may be proposed by any one of the following: (Amended January 1998)

- The affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the Board of Directors.
- The affirmative vote of a majority of those present at any meeting of the State Council of Education, **provided that a copy of the bylaw change is attached with additions bolded and deletions struck through.**
- The regular initiative or referendum processes as stated in Article IV, Section 1 and 2. (Amended January 1998)

*CTA State Council of Education will next meet June 6–8 in Los Angeles.*

# Paraprofessional Wins ESP of Year Honors

**Liz Huerta-Brewster builds bonds with students, leads fight for members** By Julian Peeples

**“I’VE COME A LONG WAY** to where I am today — public speaking doesn’t come naturally to me,” says Liz Huerta-Brewster, paraprofessional and president of Redlands Education Support Professionals Association (RESPA). “You can’t be quiet when you’re a leader in the union.”

Huerta-Brewster is the 2025 Paula J. Monroe Education Support Professional of the Year — a particularly meaningful honor since RESPA was Monroe’s local association. She says she never imagined winning the award.

“I’m honored to follow in Paula Monroe’s footsteps,” Huerta-Brewster says. “Our local is where the ESP of the Year Award started with Paula and bringing it back to RESPA means a lot.”

Known as “Miss Liz” to her elementary students, Huerta-Brewster enjoys supporting students and building unique relationships with them.

“There’s a bond you have with students as an ESP that is different than with teachers — we have different duties and responsibilities and interactions with the students,” she says.

As the president of 700-plus-member RESPA, Huerta-Brewster says she is dedicated to supporting her co-workers and building power to win better for their students and communities. She’s grateful for the opportunity to lift her voice and share the perspective of ESPs on important issues facing our union. RESPA is the only ESP local in the San Geronio Service Center Council and Huerta-Brewster says it’s important to be at the table to share different perspectives.

“I feel empowered to be in a room with so many educators. I’m part of our big union and I have a seat at the table,” she says. “That’s what I share with the members of my local — our union listens to us. Our union works to make sure ESPs are included at the table in so many different committees. No matter how you look at it, we’re all the same

**“Our union works to make sure ESPs are included at the table in so many different committees. No matter how you look at it, we’re all the same and experiencing the same things.”**

—CTA ESP of the Year  
**Liz Huerta-Brewster**

▼ Liz Huerta-Brewster, honored at CTA State Council in April, is second from left. Left to right: CTA Vice President Leslie Littman, CTA Secretary-Treasurer Erika Jones, CTA Executive Director Jeff Good, CTA President David Goldberg.



and experiencing the same things.”

Huerta-Brewster first got involved in her local when an officer in the union asked her to be a site representative. From there, she became more active, serving on Representative Council, as a State Council Rep and now as RESPA president. Huerta-Brewster tells all of her ESP colleagues to get active in the union.

“We need you to be involved. There’s always something for you to do,” she says. “There’s so much more to the union than just paying dues.”

In the continued fight for public education and against extremists who are undermining our public schools on our local school boards and in Washington, D.C., Huerta-Brewster says there is power in our union. RESPA members have been working together to fight anti-union school board members and their destructive policies in Redlands. Our solidarity is our greatest weapon,” she says.

“We need to be united. We need to all show unity, from leadership to all our members,” the ESP of the Year says. “Sharing our stories with each other and building together, that’s what’s important. Don’t give up — we have to stand firm with what’s going on in our country.”

She urges ESPs to lift each other up and support one another during these chaotic times and remember that our union makes us strong.

“Work together, stand firm in what you believe in, don’t give up and keep fighting,” she says. ■

▼ Guest speaker Dolores Huerta inspired the crowd.



# Bright Outlook

Aspiring educators come together to network, plan and organize

CTA Aspiring Educators (CTA-AE) held its 2025 Spring Event on April 19-20 in Los Angeles, attended by 71 members representing 16 colleges and universities from across the country.

Participants discussed big-picture topics such as the state of public education as well as issues specific to the profession and to the union, including educator residencies, credentialing and chapter organizing.

They also focused on community- and team-building, and elected new officers (see box). Special guest speaker and labor icon Dolores Huerta urged them to use the full spectrum of their skills.

"As a teacher, you are always an organizer in the classroom," she said. "I know you will all be great teachers and you will all become amazing organizers."

A panel of CTA Board members that included Angela Der Ramos, Robert Ellis, Margie Granado, Eva Ruiz and DeWayne Sheaffer spoke about their converging paths as educators and unionists, and how critical it has become to fight for fully staffed, safe and stable schools and improved wages and benefits for educators.

Aspiring educators' energy and enthusiasm were palpable. The future of our profession is looking bright.

*"As a teacher,  
you are always an  
organizer in the  
classroom."*

—Dolores Huerta



Continued on Page 50

## Incoming!

Newly elected CTA-AE board members:

### PRESIDENT:

**Gabriel Mendoza Jr.**  
(UC Berkeley)

### EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT:

**Queen Udofia**  
(Irvine Valley College)

### SECRETARY-TREASURER:

**Ethan Collier-Moreno**  
(UC Berkeley)

### REGION 2 DIRECTOR:

**Tiffany Richey** (CSU Stanislaus)

### COMMUNICATIONS EDITOR:

**Andrea Guevara**  
(CSU Stanislaus)

### RACIAL AND EQUITY

### AFFAIRS COMMITTEE:

**Giselle Reyes** (Santa Ana College), **Jennifer Kay Garcia** (Los Angeles Pacific University), **Elias Antunez** (UC Berkeley)



Continued from Page 49

▼ Newly elected CTA-AE board members: Top row, from left: Elias Antunez, Giselle Reyes, Andrea Guevara, Tiffany Richey, Jennifer Kay Garcia. Bottom row, from left: Queen Udofia, Gabriel Mendoza Jr., Ethan Collier-Moreno.



### CTA-AE

**CTA Aspiring Educators (CTA-AE)** is for anyone aspiring to be a teacher, school librarian, social worker, school psychologist, school nurse or college faculty member. CTA-AE serves as the collective voice for aspiring educators and advocates for what we believe to be fair and just, not only for ourselves, but for our future students.

The mission is guided by CTA-AE's four core values — teacher quality, community outreach, diversity and advocacy.

Membership offers opportunities to engage in personal and professional development, increase your voice and have a medium for social change — the ability to fight for what you believe in. For more information about CTA-AE, including member benefits and services, visit [cta.org/ctaae](https://cta.org/ctaae).



## We're here to help you plan for a better retirement.

At the heart of the CTA 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan is a team of dedicated experts guiding your retirement journey. Proudly, it's the only 403(b) plan endorsed by CTA.



**Let's connect!**

Scan the QR code or call [916-235-9800](tel:916-235-9800)



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TEACHERS  
ASSOCIATION

CTA VOLUNTARY  
RETIREMENT PLANS  
FOR EDUCATORS, LLC



CREATE CA

# Staunch Advocate for Arts Education

## Create CA recognized with CTA's Gold Award

**CREATE CA HAS** led the movement to unite and amplify statewide efforts to reinstate the arts at the core of education for all public school students since its founding in 2011. It merged with the California Alliance for Arts Education in 2021 and built on both organizations' legacy in advocating for equitable access to arts education.

In honor of its vital work, Create CA has been named CTA's 2024 Gold Award winner. The award recognizes individuals or organizations whose leadership, acts and support have had a positive impact on public education.

Create CA's advocacy continues to be vital. Proposition 28, the Arts & Music in Schools Act, was passed by California voters in 2022 and provides Pre K-12 public schools with ongoing funding to increase arts instruction. The unprecedented investment, approximately \$800 million-\$1 billion annually, is intended to increase equity and access to arts education. Prop. 28 requires that funding

supplement existing arts education funding and programming, not replace them, and that 80% of funding must pay for either new arts teachers or arts teachers working additional hours.

In February, LA Unified School District students and the author of Prop. 28 filed a lawsuit against the district and its superintendent, alleging the misuse of \$76.7 million in Prop. 28 funds. The suit, supported by United Teachers Los Angeles and other unions, contends that hundreds of thousands of students have been deprived from receiving expanded arts and music instruction as mandated by law.

Create CA urges parents, students, teachers, arts organizations and community members to engage with their school leaders to ensure Prop. 28 funds are used properly and offers tools to help raise awareness about the issue on their site, [createca.org](https://createca.org).

Congratulations to Create CA!



CALIFORNIA  
TEACHERS  
ASSOCIATION



# UNIVERSITY CREDIT PROGRAM

Increase Your Salary With  
University Credits Paid by CTA!



ADVANCE ON YOUR **SALARY SCHEDULE** WITH

## THE CTA UNIVERSITY CREDIT PROGRAM

By **Julian Peebles**

**THE CTA UNIVERSITY CREDIT PROGRAM** provides members the opportunity to earn professional growth hours needed to claim CTA-paid university credits through our partner, California State University, Chico.

More than 20,000 CTA members have earned professional development hours that qualify them for CTA-paid university units and over 100,000 university units have been awarded to CTA members through the program. Most members in the program have been able to advance on their district salary schedule with an average annual salary increase of \$3,300 per member!

As a benefit to all members, our union covers the cost of up to 12 units per school year. Six units can be claimed September–May and an additional six units can be claimed over the summer, June–August. Twelve units per school year are included with your CTA membership and members can purchase an additional three units for only \$85 each. Most universities would charge over \$5,000 for 15 units.

Members can earn professional development hours by attending more than 15 different CTA conferences held throughout the year or by streaming on-demand workshops via the CTA Virtual Pass to Online Learning, also known as the CTA Virtual Pass. With more than 300 online workshops and trainings to choose from in our catalog, there are offerings for all types of development and interests. The most popular sessions have been curated into 12 categories ranging from classroom management to special education to social justice, leadership and more. Fifteen professional development hours can be used to claim one University Unit.

Since the program's inception in 2020, courses from the online catalog have been viewed nearly two million times. Last year alone, CTA members earned 40,000 university credits.

Learn more about the program at [cta.org/credit](https://cta.org/credit) and get started today!

### What Members Are Saying About the Program

"I've learned so many new things that I've been able to incorporate into my teaching."

"I've been able to quickly advance on the salary scale early in my career."

"I'm a newer teacher and because I was able to advance on the salary scale through the CTA University Credit Program, I've been able to quit my second job."

One member reported earning 45 units over the past three years through the program, resulting in a \$20,000 annual salary increase.

Find out more at [cta.org/credit](https://cta.org/credit) and get started on your journey.



# Mindfulness

## FOR PARENTS

**Find moments of calm  
in the middle of the chaos** From the **Calm** blog

**PARENTHOOD CAN FEEL** relentless. Between toddler tantrums, the endless negotiations, and just trying to get everyone where they need to be on time (mostly), it can feel like you're constantly running on fumes. Some days, you wake up already exhausted, and by the time you finally get a second to yourself, you're too drained to even enjoy it.

That's where mindfulness can help. Being mindful involves doing small, intentional things that help you stay present, relieve stress, and not completely lose your mind when your kid inexplicably puts peanut butter in their hair. Again, it's about learning how to pause before you snap. It's about finding moments of calm in the middle of the chaos.

We'll be the first to admit that mindfulness as a parent is so much easier said than done. So, let's dig into what mindfulness actually looks like for parents and how you can grab a mindful moment here and there. We're hoping this makes it a bit easier to survive your messiest days.



### Get Calm

Sign up for your free CTA Calm subscription at [CTAMemberBenefits.org/Calm](https://CTAMemberBenefits.org/Calm). Questions? Call 650-552-5200 or email [MemberBenefits@cta.org](mailto:MemberBenefits@cta.org).

### What is mindfulness for parents?

Taking care of a child tends to involve a constant stream of distractions, interruptions and meltdowns (sometimes ours, sometimes theirs). This also makes it a great lesson in the importance of mindfulness or living in the moment.

Being mindful basically just means paying attention, on purpose, to the present moment without judgment. You're not silently berating yourself for yelling at your kid to stop jumping off the couch or feeling self-conscious about the fact that they just dumped out their water bottle on the ground. You're just focusing on the present, and letting it pass.

All you have to do to parent mindfully is to pause, breathe and take notice of what's happening inside you and around you. This can make you less reactionary, and help you be fully present with your kids while also accepting that parenting, in general, is going to be complicated and imperfect.

### What are quick mindfulness techniques I can do as a busy parent?

Usually, the best mindfulness techniques are the ones that you can squeeze in on the fly.

Here are three methods you can do while you're still in the midst of the madness:

- **One deep breath trick:** Inhale for four seconds, hold for four seconds, and then exhale for six seconds. This can be a helpful mini-reset button when you feel like you're about to lose it.
- **The mindful pause:** Try just two seconds of stillness before you react. This can give your brain a chance to respond intentionally instead of just saying something you might regret.
- **The five senses reset:** Quickly notice what you see, hear, feel, smell and taste. This can help to bring you out of stress mode and back into the present.

**Paradise is Just  
an Entry Away!**

**You Could Win  
\$5,000 in Travel**

Enter for Your Chance to Win  
**MARCH 3 - SEPTEMBER 1**



# Win a Travel Giveaway!

**Enter the CTA Access to Savings contest and a trip to paradise could be yours**

**IMAGINE RELAXING** on a tropical beach, exploring vibrant cities or taking in breathtaking views at some exotic or adventurous locale. With CTA Access to Savings' \$5,000 Travel Giveaway, a dream vacation could be yours.

You can enter for a chance to win *every day* till Sept. 1, 2025. Here's how:

- You must be signed up for CTA Access to Savings
- Visit [CTAMemberBenefits.org/Access](https://CTAMemberBenefits.org/Access)
- Click the green "Enter button"

That's it — you are now entered to win. Maximum of one entry a day. The more days you visit the Access to Savings travel site, the more chances you have of winning!

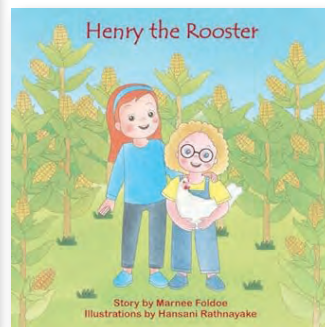
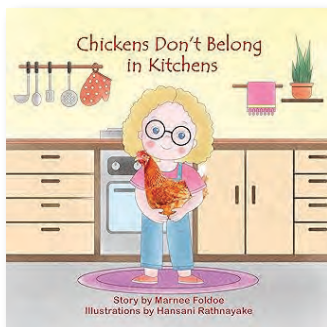
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## Lit From Within Continued from Page 56



### Rosie's Farm Antics

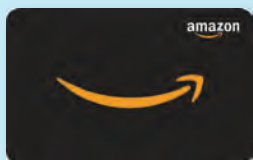
Retired general and special ed educator and CTA/NEA Retired member Marnee Foldoe has written a three-book series called *The Seabright Sisters* (two for ages 3–7, one for ages 7–12). In *Chickens Don't Belong in Kitchens*, Sarah Seabright's beloved chicken, Rosie, is a troublemaker on the Seabright Farm. Rosie has many hilarious adventures as she mysteriously finds her way into the house, much to Sarah's surprise. Why does Rosie venture into the kitchen? Doesn't she realize she's a chicken and should behave like one? Join Sarah as she navigates Rosie's silly antics and tries to manage her misbehaving pet. Check out the series' other books, *Henry the Rooster* and *21 Life Lessons from Chickens*, on Amazon.

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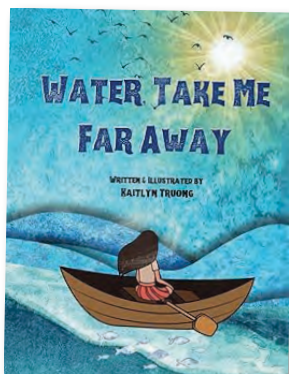
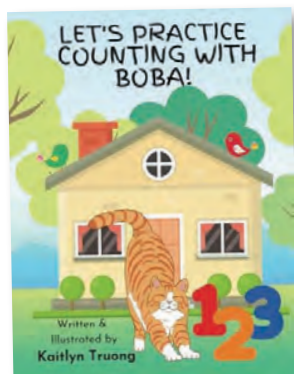
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# Lit From Within

Compiled by **Amy Peruzzaro**

Often educators' creativity spills over into a book, album, blog or vlog, or other work. We showcase our members' talents:

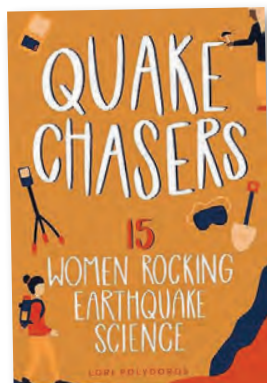
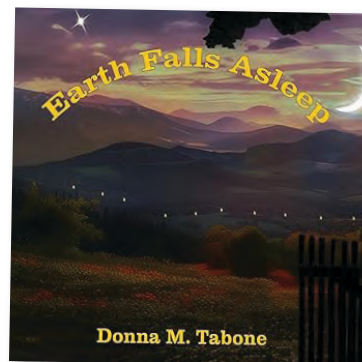


### *Stories to Learn and Inspire*

Garden Grove Education Assn. member and elementary school educator Kaitlyn Truong has written two books, *Water, Take Me Far Away* and *Let's Practice Counting With Boba* (both available in English and bilingual English-Vietnamese versions). *Let's Practice Counting*, geared toward young readers, introduces a playful cat, Boba, who makes learning numbers an engaging adventure. Ideal for readers 7 and up, *Water, Take Me Far Away* is Truong's true story of escaping Vietnam by boat as a little girl with her family, after the Vietnam War in 1975. It is a journey of courage and survival, and a testament to the strength of the human spirit.

### *Peaceful Transition*

A retired Escondido Education Assn. member and grades 2–4 teacher for 23 years, Donna Tabone has written *Earth Falls Asleep*. Tabone drew inspiration for this story from many summer evenings spent in her backyard enjoying the tranquil moments before the sun sets. The book follows various characters on their final tasks as nature prepares to rest. Through peaceful observation of the natural world's subtle shift from day to night, the quiet atmosphere it creates over all living creatures can be appreciated. An ideal story for readers of all ages with the goal of ending each day with peaceful calm.



### *Women and Quake Science*

High school English teacher and Santa Ana Educators Assn. member Lori Polydoros has written the non-fiction *Quakechasers: 15 Women Rocking Earthquake Science*, part of a series called Women of Power. This middle-grade book introduces 15 women who have made major discoveries in earthquake science. Among others, you'll meet Dr. Debbie Weiser, who studies quake damage in places like Japan, geologist Edith Carolina Rojas, who looks for clues in volcanoes and deserts, and geophysicist Lori Dengler, who helps communities prepare for tsunamis. Readers learning about women in STEM and earthquake science will feel empowered to tackle challenging problems impacting our world. Read about Polydoros' other books at [loripolydoros.com](http://loripolydoros.com).

*Continued on Page 55*

Got something for these pages — a book, an album, a podcast or more? We lean toward content that can be used in the classroom. Let us know at [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org) with "Lit From Within" in the subject line. (Check out past issues at [cta.org/lit](http://cta.org/lit).)

## CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

# Home to All Students

*Celebrate 2025 California Day of the Teacher,  
National School Nurse Day and  
CTA Education Support Professionals Day*

**IN CALIFORNIA**, we have a notable history of welcoming all and recognizing everyone's unique contributions. Educators strive to fulfill the promise of a quality public education for all students, regardless of their background or zip code, and take pride in caring for and nurturing every single child and young person.

And in our union, we work together to protect our students and communities that are vulnerable to attacks by powerful forces. Today, decision makers at the federal level are cutting funding for school meals for students in families that make \$39,000 or less annually, support for students with dyslexia, ADHD and other disabilities, and more. Inhumane new policies and executive orders, educator layoffs and slashed school and agency budgets threaten to cause irreparable harm for all of us.

Together, we are fighting to keep schools strong and California a welcoming refuge for all.

California Day of the Teacher, National School Nurse Day and CTA ESP Day are the perfect time to celebrate and honor what we accomplish every day and what we fight for in our communities.

Here are a few ways to celebrate at your school:

- ✦ **Post this poster** in your classroom, school hallway or other public area.
- ✦ **Join your local chapter's celebrations** and attend upcoming union meetings and actions.
- ✦ **Use hashtags** in school and chapter social media: **#DayoftheTeacher**, **#SchoolNurseDay** and **#ESPDay**.

**ABOUT THIS POSTER:** Mer Young (Chichimeca & Apache, [@youngmer](#)) is an Indigenous multidisciplinary artist who lives and works on the traditional lands of Tongva (Long Beach, CA). She is a BIPOC activist and water and environmental justice advocate. Her artworks aim to inspire, celebrate and elevate Indigenous and native cultures and to bring about change within Brown and Black communities.

Pictured on the poster is kindergarten teacher and United Educators of San Francisco member Mariaesther Diaz, with a few of her students at Marshall Elementary School.



DAY OF THE TEACHER, MAY 14, 2025

NATIONAL SCHOOL NURSE DAY, MAY 7, 2025

CTA ESP DAY, MAY 20, 2025

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CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# Home to All Students





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