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#WeAreCTA

OUR VOICE, OUR UNION, OUR PROFESSION

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

MAGAZINE

ESP OF THE YEAR

United Educators of San Francisco paraeducator Daniel Ryan is a staunch advocate for colleagues, students, schools — and his union. **PAGE 13**

PERFECT PARTNERS

CTA/NEA Retired members kick their union organizing into high gear. **PAGE 28**
cta.org/retired

A WIN FOR STUDENTS

Legal victory in West Contra Costa County upholds landmark case that guarantees a qualified teacher in every classroom. **PAGE 45**

DIGITAL

PROP. 55 EXTENSION

We did it! Members help gather enough signatures for the Prop. 55 permanent extension to qualify for the ballot. **PAGE 27** cta.org/prop55extension

FULLY FUND SCHOOLS

Our union's fight for the schools students deserve underpins our legislative platform. **PAGE 36** cta.org/legislative-advocacy

VOTE ON JUNE 2

Find our recommendations — including Richard Barrera for Superintendent of Public Instruction — on **PAGES 49, 52** and cta.org/election-2026.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SUMMER INSTITUTE

Nine intensive training “tracks” will prep you and your local for the coming year. Among them:

- Building a High-Participation Contract Campaign
- Organizing and Building Worksite Power to Win
- Teaching & Learning

Los Angeles, July 15-19. **PAGE 9** cta.org/conferences

NEA CONFERENCES

NEA's annual Racial & Social Justice and Aspiring Educators conferences, along with NEA Representative Assembly, take place in Denver in late June/early July. **PAGE 9**
nea.org/events

MEMBER BENEFITS

VACATION PLANS?

Get deep discounts to theme parks, rental cars, hotels and more at CTA Access to Savings. CTAMemberBenefits.org/access

GET YOUR CREDITS

The CTA University Credit Program lets you earn professional growth hours needed to qualify for credit units by attending our conferences. cta.org/university-credit

Photo: Natomas Teachers Assn. members won more than \$26 million in district investments after their strike; story on Page 17. Credit: @movementphotographer



WHEN WE STRIKE, WE WIN!

Locals go on strike across the state — and win big for students and schools

PAGE 17

Fully Fund Our Schools

Our union’s 2026–27 legislative platform fights for public education

PAGE 36



Celebrating Change Makers

This year’s courageous, amazing Human Rights Award winners

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- 57 **DAY OF THE TEACHER:** Special pullout poster celebrates teachers, nurses, ESPs

Photos from top: Little Lake educators on strike; CTA President David Goldberg speaks at the launch of UnRig California, a coalition of labor unions, community organizations and others demanding that legislators close corporate tax loopholes.



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

Vote on June 2!

As educators, we care deeply for our students and profession and know that what happens on the ballot greatly impacts our classrooms. It's important that we vote in California's June Primary because the top two finishers in each race advance, regardless of party, to face off in the November General Election.

Our union interviews and recommends pro-public education candidates and takes pro-public education positions on California initiatives. We recommend **Richard Barrera** for State Superintendent of Public Instruction and **Tom Steyer** for Governor of California. See pages 49 and 52 for details about both, and find all recommendations at cta.org/election-2026.



Women's Leadership on Display

Our union's inaugural Women's Leadership Conference took place in April in San Diego. Women educators and allies came to learn and mentor, network and flex their power. Attendees agreed that the gathering renewed their sense of purpose, and gave them new tools and resources and connection to a growing group of women committed to leading in union advocacy. Onward!



Celebrate Educators!

At the back of this issue is a poster marking California Day of the Teacher (May 13), National School Nurse Day (May 6) and CTA ESP Day (May 19).

This year's theme is **We Can't Wait: Invest in the Schools Our Students Deserve** — tied to the We Can't Wait campaign that has seen educator strikes and actions for the past six months and is still going strong. Educators across the state can't wait any longer for the resources and improvements students deserve and greater stability for school communities.

The poster is by Sacramento-based Franceska Gamez, one of several artists who created artwork for the campaign. "This piece is a reflection on care — what it means to truly tend to our future. The teacher watering plants growing from open minds represents the daily, often unseen support and dedication educators give to help young people grow."

To learn more, and to view and order all posters, visit wecantwait.info.

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

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California 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.

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CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2025, to Aug. 31, 2026) are \$1,077, including a \$20 refundable contribution (see cta.org/contribution for details). \$27.54 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 \$42.54 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.

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We Are the Ones We've Been Waiting for!

WHAT A POWERFUL TIME for our union, as educators organize and fight across our state for the safe, stable and fully staffed schools all California students deserve.

I'm excited to share that we reached an important milestone in our mission to permanently extend Proposition 55, submitting more than 1.6 million signatures last month — far exceeding the approximately 875,000 signatures needed to qualify the initiative for the November ballot. This is because of all of you! We had more than 100 chapters with 85% of members signing a petition — there's nothing we can't do if we have ambitious goals, a plan and a commitment to win together.

We'll be in touch with ways you can be a part of our campaign to win and prevent a \$15 billion cut to our public schools.

We're also rising together and winning bold contract fights this school year — from six historic strikes for our students and families in Richmond, San Francisco, Dublin, Twin Rivers, Natomas and Little Lake to massive victories in many other locals, where our members won major improvements to teaching and learning conditions by building the power they needed to present a credible strike threat.

And all of this has been with the backdrop of a Trump Administration and Republican Congress slashing education funding and attacking our public schools and other institutions — when corporate greed is at an all-time high. Despite all the obstacles, our solidarity is unstoppable.

This is what it looks like to be a union in motion and what it feels like to build a movement. Just one month ago, the idea that every public education worker deserves and should have fully funded family health care was a dream for so many but today, after these powerful strikes, it is a standard that every educator now has the leverage and the roadmap to achieve.



Our fight continues in Sacramento against a governor who thinks it's OK to take almost \$6 billion from our schools and students. Prop. 98 funding isn't a piggy bank you get to borrow from. It's the voter-approved law that guarantees our students have the funding they need to learn, and we will not allow it to be undermined.

Another important part of our bold agenda is to elect a State Superintendent who is both pro-teacher and pro-union. Richard Barrera has decades of experience in public education and as an advocate for working people. He understands the challenges we face at the district and state levels and has a vision to work alongside us to demand better schools for our students and communities. I hope you'll join me in supporting his campaign to victory. I also hope you'll vote for Tom Steyer for Governor in June and November. Steyer has come out in support of reforming Prop. 13 and is a strong advocate for more revenues for education, which aligns with our values to protect and strengthen school funding. He has joined educators on the picket line. His positions and actions are exactly what it takes to earn the support of educators.

These times are challenging and the stakes are high, and our union is positioned to lead the fight back and fight forward. I'm so proud to be in this fight with all of you — we truly are the ones we've been waiting for.

David B. Goldberg

CTA PRESIDENT



Fighting — and Winning — on All Fronts

LAST YEAR, WE wrote about California public schools whose dire conditions exposed children and adults to asbestos, mold, unsafe drinking water and more. One of those was in Richmond, where United Teachers of Richmond members organized and filed a lawsuit against West Contra Costa Unified under the Williams Act, which guarantees all students equal access to instructional materials, safe facilities and qualified teachers.

While the school closed abruptly following an inspection, the lawsuit also addressed the lack of “**Qualified Teachers in Every Classroom**” (page 45). In March 2026, a state appeals court found that the district had broken the law by not exhausting all options to fill teacher vacancies; students instead endured years of uncertified substitutes. The outcome is a victory not only for UTR but for all educators and students.

Other wins have been more visible: The We Can't Wait campaign over the past six months has shown that when educators have gone on strike or come close to striking — up and down the state, in locals big and small — they've made major gains in wages and health care, resources for students and improved teaching and learning conditions. Check out our recap “**When We Strike, We Win!**” (page 17).

And because we can't wait any longer, our locals and members hustled to help qualify the Prop. 55 permanent extension on the November ballot (“**We Did It!**,” page 27). As part of a collective effort, our union helped gather far more signatures than needed before the deadline and will kick into high gear to get out the votes to pass it.

▼ Signs from the heart, during the Little Lake strike.



Our union's legislative fight has ramped up as well. In the effort to “**Fully Fund Our Schools**” (page 36), our 2026–27 legislative platform demands funding and fairness for educators, students and public schools — now. From increased revenues for schools and communities to expanding the Community Schools model to achieving paid pregnancy leave for educators and strengthening the teacher pipeline, our issues are clear and stark: We must take legislative actions to ensure our students' and society's future.

In the courts, on the streets, at the State Capitol and at the ballot box, this issue of the Educator is all about members — you — fighting and winning.

There is much more to celebrate in these pages as well, from CTA ESP of the Year Daniel “Jokie” Ryan (“**Paraeducator Lifts Voice for Students, Union Colleagues**,” page 13) to our incredible Human Rights Award winners (“**Celebrating Change Makers**,” page 30) to our CTA/NEA-Retired chapters stepping up to assist where needed (“**Solidarity Forever**,” page 28).

We also celebrate the power of art, and the power of artful messaging, that arises from our struggle and graces our work — such as the poster at the back of this issue that honors teachers, nurses and ESPs (page 57), as well as the creative and often beautiful one-off signage that adds color and heart to what we do.

Happy Spring!

Katharine Fong

EDITOR IN CHIEF
editor@cta.org



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SPRING 2026

CALENDAR



MAY: National Speech, Language and Hearing Month

The month raises awareness about communication and the challenges faced by individuals with speech, language and hearing disorders. The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders states that approximately 1 in 14 U.S. children ages 3–17 has had a disorder related to voice, speech or language in the past year; almost 60% of them received intervention services in the same period.

The month is also a time to celebrate the work of school speech-language pathologists and audiologists. Educators can find resources at nidcd.nih.gov/health/educators-and-students and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (asha.org).

MAY 5: National Teacher Day

National Teacher Day is on Tuesday of National Teacher Appreciation Week (May 4–8). California, however, always recognizes California Day of the Teacher on the second Wednesday of May, which is May 13 in 2026. 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 and ESPs, and school nurses across the country, at the back of this issue.

Photo: Farrinni / Unsplash



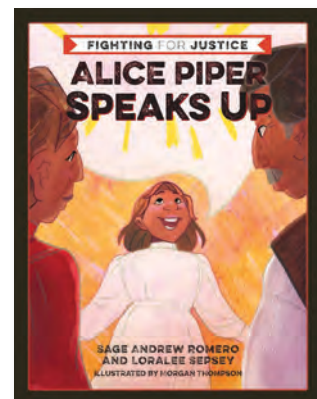
MAY 25: Memorial Day

The red poppy is a symbol of sacrifice worn on Memorial Day to honor fallen U.S. service members. Inspired by the WWI poem “In Flanders Fields,” the poppy symbolizes the blood-red flowers that grew on battlefields, signifying remembrance and hope. Find lesson ideas for grades 3–12 at nea.org (search “Memorial Day lessons”).

JUNE 2: Alice Piper Day

In 1923, Alice Piper, a 15-year-old Paiute girl from Big Pine, Inyo County, was denied entry to Big Pine High School along with six other Native students due to their race. (State law then prohibited Native Americans from attending a public school if a government-run “Indian” school was within three miles.) Alice and the others sued the district for the right to attend. On June 2, 1924, the California Supreme Court unanimously ruled in their favor in *Piper v. Big Pine* — opening the door for Native Americans to attend California public schools. (See related story on page 55.)

Alice Piper Speaks Up (Heyday) is a new book that details Alice’s story through verse and illustrations; sidebars include timelines, primary sources, historical context and more. Indigenous authors Sage Andrew Romero and Lorelee Sepsey come from the same tribal community (Big Pine Paiute) as Alice.





CTA Summer Institute **JULY 15-19**

Westin Bonaventure, Los Angeles. Network with new and old friends and build the skills needed to meet the challenges of the coming year. CTA's premier training offers sessions in areas that assist chapter leaders in the day-to-day representation and support of members. "Tracks" include Instruction and Professional Development, Emerging Leaders, Bargaining, School Finance, Member Benefits and Community Engagement. Sign up with your team — or just you! ▶ cta.org/conferences

International Workers Day

MAY 1 AKA MAY DAY, LABOUR DAY

Our union has been advocating for our profession, students and public schools since 1863. As a member, you're part of the fight to improve teaching and learning in California. See page XX for more about International Workers Day. ▶ cta.org/about-us/history

CTA Communications Awards

MAY 29 NOMINATION DEADLINE

The Communications Awards Program honors CTA chapters, service centers and UniSerts for excellence in engaging members and the public through creative media. ▶ cta.org/awards

PBL World 2026

JUNE 15-18 CONFERENCE

Napa Valley. "When Curiosity Leads, Learning Lasts." Sponsored by the non-profit Buck Institute for Education, PBL World is a leading conference for Project Based Learning. ▶ pblworld.org

2026 NEA-Retired Annual Meeting

JUNE 30-JULY 1 MEETING

Denver. For retired educators to connect, advocate for issues affecting retired educators and public education, and participate in professional learning and leadership development. ▶ nea.org/events

CA LMI Summer Institute

JUNE 15-16 *San Diego.* The California

Labor Management Initiative's biennial Summer Institute brings together labor-management teams to energize partnerships, build community and navigate the upcoming challenges together. ▶ cdfoundation.org/clmi

NEA Conference on Racial and Social Justice

JUNE 30-JULY 2 CONFERENCE

Denver. "Resilience. Respect. Power. Saving Public Education and Our Democracy." Educators, 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

NEA 2026 Aspiring Educators Conference

JUNE 28-JULY 1 CONFERENCE

Denver. The conference is an opportunity for future educators to connect with colleagues, learn about their profession and build leadership competencies. ▶ nea.org/events

ISTE Live 26

JUNE 28-JULY 1 CONFERENCE

Orlando. The International Society for Technology in Education conference offers hundreds of presentations with strategies that can be used immediately and content for every instructional team member. Six months of on-demand learning is available post-conference. ▶ conference.iste.org/2026

NEA Representative Assembly

JULY 3-7 CONVENTION

Denver. The world's largest democratic, deliberative body, by educators, for educators. Approximately 7,000 educators — including CTA members — meet to set policy and chart the direction of NEA business. ▶ nea.org/ra

Presidents Conference

JULY 30-AUG. 2

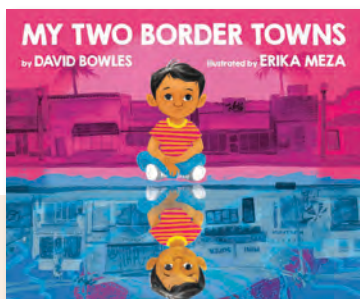
Burlingame. Join CTA for a conference designed to enhance your skills as a local president and help build systems of success for your chapter. Provides new and returning chapter presidents a foundation to rely upon as we prepare for future challenges. ▶ cta.org/conferences

Learning Through Reading

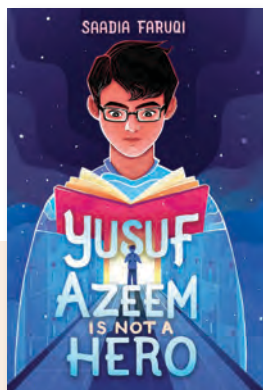
By Amy Peruzzaro



NOW IS A GREAT TIME to introduce your students to good books for summer reading. Encourage them to choose from the 2026 CTA California Reads list of teacher-vetted books for all age levels. Here are a few; find more and past years' lists at cta.org/careads. Members can purchase all books with a **20% discount at Ink Spell Books** (use code **CTA2026**).



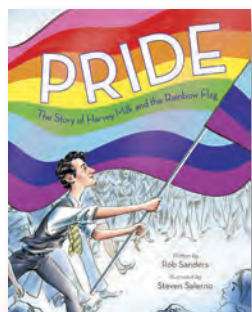
My Two Border Towns (David Bowles, author, and Erika Meza, illustrator; Pre-K–grade 3) offers a nuanced perspective of life along the Rio Grande. Readers follow a father and son's weekend ritual to El Otro Lado/ The Other Side, where they eat at their favorite restaurant, run errands and enjoy paletas (frozen treats). The story culminates in a powerful act of helping the community at the border bridge. This book is a perfect tool for teachers to discuss empathy, asylum and the complexity of the U.S.-Mexico border with compassion and vibrancy. Available in English and Spanish.



When Yusuf is confronted by townspeople protesting a new mosque on the twentieth anniversary of 9/11, can he maintain his joyful outlook? *Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero* (Saadia Faruqi; grades 3+) follows Yusuf, a boy determined to win a regional robotics competition despite rising tensions in his Texas town. As he navigates prejudice that feels both historical and painfully current, Yusuf learns to persevere. This story can help young readers understand recent U.S. history, its modern impact and the power of holding onto joy and friendship.

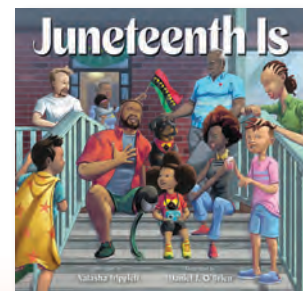


Love in English (Maria E. Andreu; grades 9+) is the story of Ana, a sixteen-year old poet and language-lover who has recently moved to New Jersey from Argentina. While at first lacking the words to fully express herself, Ana meets Harrison, who shows her love is a universal language. However, when she meets a Greek Cypriot boy named Neo in ESL, she learns matters of the heart are even more difficult to navigate than English grammar. With clever moments exploring the oddities of the English language, this witty and lighthearted story beautifully captures the immigrant experience.



Books to Celebrate Special Days

Special times call for good reads. For example, young students can learn about **Pride Month** in June and **Juneteenth** with an abundance of informative, vibrant books. Try *Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag* by Rob Sanders (Harvey Milk Day is May 22) and *Juneteenth Is* by Northern California author Natasha Triplett (Juneteenth is June 19).



Californians Stand With Striking Educators

NEW STATEWIDE POLLING from Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) shows 2 in 3 public school parents (65%) and 6 in 10 Californians overall (61%) support public school teachers striking for higher pay — with majorities in every region of the state.

PPIC’s “**Californians and Education**” survey, released in April, shows that affordability concerns are helping drive support: An overwhelming majority of Californians say teacher salaries, relative to the cost of living, are a problem. And 7 in 10 public school parents say they support teachers’ unions.

The survey also shows that

- Teachers’ unions receive strong support from public school parents (70%) and Californians overall (66%), with majorities approving across regions and demographic groups.
- About half of respondents think their local public schools are doing an excellent or good job in preparing students for college, and in preparing students for jobs and the workforce, with higher ratings by public school parents.
- 49% of Californians say that teachers’ salaries, relative to the cost of living, is a big problem.
- Nearly all respondents say that a shortage of teachers is at least somewhat of a problem.

To read the full report, visit ppic.org.



Lobbying for Fully Funded Schools

CTA members lobbied legislators at the State Capitol in March, demanding the full allocation of Prop. 98 education funds in the state budget and telling their own personal stories of how cuts impact students and schools. Left to right: Sarah Darr, SDEA; Nathalie Hrizi, UESF; Betty Robinson-Harris, UESF; Helen Kang, UTR; Jennifer Wilkin, Los Banos TA; Andrew Shrock, Simi Valley EA; Kampala Taiz-Rancifer, OEA; Anna Cordero, CVEU; Charles Jones, Hayward EA; Shelly Ehrke, SMMCTA; Josie Malik, CCA; Gabriel Mendoza, CTA-AE; Carrie Anderson, OEA; John Martin, CCA.



California History-Social Science Project



May: Labor History Month

May is officially recognized as Labor History Month in California. The month encourages schools to teach students about the labor movement's role in shaping California and the nation. Educators can focus on celebrating workers' contributions, collective struggle, worker rights and the history of labor activism. Students should understand how and why their rights as workers came to exist — protections not guaranteed by the original Constitution but won by previous generations of activists. Visit chssp.ucdavis.edu (search for "labor") for resources and lesson plans.



Teachers of the Year Recognized

Our union celebrated the stellar 2026 California Teachers of the Year at State Council of Education in March. From left: Chrizia Dela Rosa (East Side Teachers Assn.), Corina Martinez (Escondido Elementary Educators Assn.), CTA Vice President Leslie Littman, Dr. Heather Povinelli (Monrovia Teachers Assn.), Rene Romero (Covina Unified Education Assn.), CTA President David B. Goldberg, April Raguindin (Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Assn.), CTA Executive Director Jeff Good and CTA Secretary-Treasurer Erika Jones. Photo: @littlejohnphoto



COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Community Schools Learning Lab Sets Dates

Community Schools have been shown to improve students' academic and social-emotional outcomes. Join the movement! The National Community Schools Learning Lab, based in Anaheim, has set its 2026–27 program dates:

- Sept. 22–23, 2026
- Oct. 27–28, 2026
- Feb. 23–24, 2027
- Mar. 16–17, 2027
- Apr. 20–21, 2027

Local leaders and team members learn how to build an effective steering committee through collaborative and inclusive leadership, develop strong and proven curriculum, promote high-quality teaching and build transformational relationships with education and community partners. CTA, NEA and the Anaheim Secondary Teachers Association provide invaluable resources for your Community Schools journey. Email ncslearninglab@gmail.com for details and find more information at cta.org/communityschools.

Paraeducator Lifts Voice for Students, Union Colleagues

Daniel Ryan is CTA Education Support Professional of the Year

By Julian Peebles

DANIEL “JOKIE” RYAN approaches his work and his union with the same intentionality — reflecting a deep understanding of both student needs and how collective action can create real change for the broader school community. It’s part of why the Access SFUSD Paraeducator and United Educators of San Francisco (UESF) member was named the 2026 Paula J. Monroe CTA Education Support Professional of the Year.

“I never imagined in my wildest dreams that I would receive such an honorable recognition,” says Ryan, a 23-year paraeducator.

In his work with students with disabilities aged 18–22, Ryan leads with creativity, leadership and innovation, supporting students as they develop the independence, life skills and confidence they need to enter adulthood. Ryan says he most enjoys putting his lifetime of study and experience into action to guide and support his students.

Integrating technology to improve access, communication and student engagement, Ryan is committed to professional growth and systemic improvement as he fights to enhance outcomes for students with disabilities, according to UESF Vice President for Paraeducators Teanna Tillery. She says Ryan is an advocate for paraeducators and ESPs at the local, state and national levels — attending the NEA ESP Leadership Institute last year and serving on California’s SB 1288 Artificial

Intelligence Workgroup, contributing an ESP perspective to conversations about emerging technologies in education. Ryan is also an active member of the SF Unified Paraeducator Leadership Team.

“Through these roles, he consistently advocates for ESPs, public education and equitable working conditions,” Tillery said. “Daniel actively encourages colleagues to engage in union work by demonstrating how leadership development and collective action create real change.”

Ryan says paraeducators and all ESPs are so much more than a job description.

“We are highly skilled professionals, and we want to remain in our roles and receive appropriate professional development and compensation,” he says. “I want to end the culture of silence around what we do and our skills, and have our education and training acknowledged, so those responsible for our budgets can make informed decisions about fair wages and benefits.”

Earlier this year, Ryan and UESF members went on strike for five days to win the resources all San Francisco students deserve — an experience he called “empowering, exhausting and absolutely necessary.”

“As workers, we must be able to survive to do our jobs. As educators, we must have the security to stay in our profession, gain knowledge and experience, and regularly adapt to a changing world,” says

▼ Daniel “Jokie” Ryan works the phones.



Ryan’s Paraeducator Pro Tips

- “Take a good look at what you do, communicate and collaborate to get a clear picture of your value to students, education and society.”
- “While developing into a teaching role is an option, those who remain paraeducators or other classified staff throughout their careers are essential. Find ways to redevelop your role in line with your values and the needs of your school and students.”
- “Support one another, whether as lifelong paraeducators or those who become teachers. Empathize with one another — those with whom you work and for whom you work.”
- “Many hands make light life. It isn’t just about work, but the quality of human experiences we can compose and maintain.”

Ryan. “We want our students prepared for what’s on the other side of the school door the day they graduate. We cannot accomplish this goal amid high turnover or the constant stress of worrying about our ability to pay for basic needs like rent.

“I actually cried tears of joy that we won, that our students and community won — we did it!” ■

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*Summer Benefit is offered by CTA to eligible members who meet additional specific criteria. 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.

▼ Our union on the march at No Kings in LA earlier this spring.



May Day Values Every Day

Working people standing together for our future

MILLIONS TOOK PART in the massive “No Kings” protests across the country in March — saying an emphatic “No!” to authoritarianism and a country run by and for billionaires. In May, our union joined a broad coalition of educators, families and community to advocate for “workers over billionaires” on May Day — May 1.

Educators participated in local events across California, including rallies and teach-ins designed to honor the history of the eight-hour workday and push for modern labor rights. (May Day, also known as International Workers Day, has its roots in the 1886 Haymarket strike in Chicago, which secured the eight-hour workday.) Now we must carry on with May Day’s goals into the future.

Our union is organizing alongside working people everywhere to demand that wealth generated by workers in our society is shared in every community. Our goals to build the society we all deserve include

May Day was a day of rallies, marches, teach-ins, labor actions and a refusal of business as usual — because when those at the top rig the system, collective action is how we set it right.

- **Fully funded schools:** Ensuring all public schools, health care and housing are fully funded
- **Protection of public programs:** Defending Medicaid, Social Security and other essential services for working people
- **Social Justice:** Standing against policies that target immigrants, people of color and the LGBTQ+ community
- **Anti-Corruption:** Demanding an end to the “billionaire takeover” of government systems that tilt the rules against the rest of us

Our actions in California were part of a national effort led by NEA and others. Our union and our allies will continue to hold corporations and billionaires accountable through our upcoming revenue fights.

▼ Striking Twin Rivers and Natomas educators march across the landmark Tower Bridge in Sacramento.
Credit: @movementphotographer



WHEN WE STRIKE, WE WIN!

Locals joined forces with families and community in strikes that reverberated across the state — and saw big gains for educators, students and schools

THE PAST FEW MONTHS have seen many of our union's locals demand that school districts meet their needs — for a living wage, for fully funded health care, for safe and stable schools where students have the resources to flourish.

Several locals, after months at the bargaining table, have gone on strike with overwhelming support from their members and communities.

“This storm is driven by decades of disinvestment in us as workers and our students,” said CTA President David Goldberg. “Members across the state are saying ‘we’re not waiting anymore.’”

The strikes, he adds, are “not a flex of political muscle. This

is a flex of worker power and worker pent-up frustration of not being able to survive.”

Strikes at United Educators of San Francisco, Dublin Teachers Association, Twin Rivers United Educators and Natomas Teachers Association won major gains; see highlights on the next pages. Other locals are poised to follow their lead in the coming weeks.

Our union remains strike-ready and prepared to put everything on the line to get what educators and students deserve, Goldberg says. “When we all fight back, there is no limit to what we can win.”



▼ TRUE educators and allies made their message clear. Top photo credit: @movementphotographer



"Our union is forever changed for the better. We held the line for 12 days and the relationships and the bonding that happened within the sites, with the community, across sites was amazing. This is generational change, not only for our union, but for our whole district."

—TRUE President **Brittoni Ward**

TWIN RIVERS UNITED EDUCATORS

Membership:

About 1,500 teachers, counselors, nurses and other certificated staff

Strike dates:

The first strike in Twin Rivers Unified's history ran March 5–22 after more than a year of stalled contract talks.

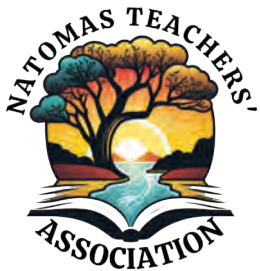
What TRUE won:

Fully employer paid health care, including for families; union members had been paying about \$1,600 a month for family coverage — equivalent to a housing payment. Other highlights of the two-year agreement include:

- 7% raises and a \$4,000 bonus
- 100% employer-paid health care for families retroactive to July 1, 2025–26
- Speech language pathologists will receive additional pay increases; strengthened language for SLP and pre-school educators, and support for IEPs, SSTs and 504 meetings.



▼ Natomas Teachers Assn. members stood firm in their demands. Photos: @movementphotographer



NATOMAS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Membership:

667 teachers, counselors, nurses and other certificated staff

Strike dates:

The strike ran March 10-18 after more than a year of bargaining.

What NTA won:

The two-year agreement includes more than \$26 million in investments toward stabilizing the district's staffing crisis, which has left more than 800 students without a permanent educator.

- A 5.25% salary increase (3.25% backdated to July 1, 2025, and an additional 2% raise on July 1, 2026)
- Effective April 1, 2026, teachers receive a \$138 monthly increase in health care benefits for employee-only coverage, worth \$1,658 annually, and a \$1060 increase in family coverage, worth \$12,242 annually; additional increases will occur on the first day of 2027 and 2028.
- More prep time and support to improve classroom and campus safety
- Increased pay for teachers with high special ed caseloads and class size overages



"The outpouring of support for our struggle only strengthened our resolve at the table. As frontline educators in our community, we know this fight is not just for ourselves and our students, but for the future of public education in our community."

—NTA President Nico Vaccaro



▼ Top: Educators took to the streets; bottom: Teachers walk out with their classroom gear in preparation for the strike.



DUBLIN TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Membership:

About 700 teachers, counselors, nurses and other certificated staff

Strike dates:

The strike ran March 9–12

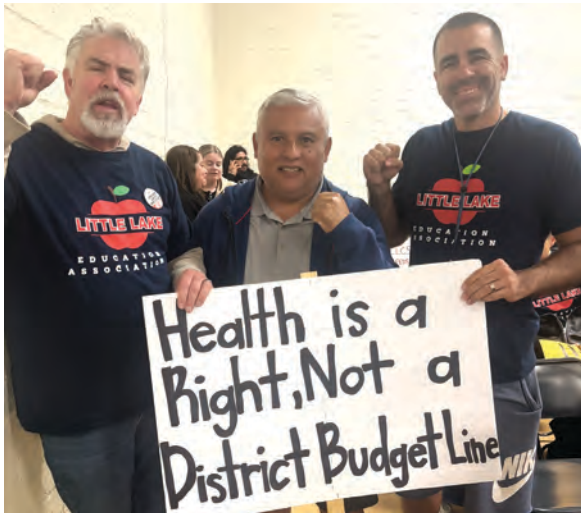
What DTA won:

- A 2.3% COLA pay increase for teachers, retroactive to July 1
- Increased health benefits — 85% covered by July 1, 90% by Jan. 1, 2027, and 100% by Jan. 1, 2028
- Guaranteed full-time counselors at every elementary school
- Special education caseload reduced from 28 to 23
- Reduced class sizes for elementary school classes
- 45-student limit for high school PE classes to increase safety

“Educators, CSEA partners, families and community members stood together day after day. By forcing Dublin Unified to invest in our students by decreasing class sizes and increasing compensation and health care to retain and recruit the best educators for our students, we’ve made important steps towards the schools our students deserve.”

—DTA President **Brad Dobrzenski**

▼ Mighty LLEA was joined by hundreds of parents and community members as they held the line for 10 days and demanded the district prioritize students.



“Parents were on the line with us every day. They opened their homes to give us a place to rest.... How much the community supported us is the best teacher appreciation present this union could ever receive.”

—LLEA President **Maria Pilios**

LITTLE LAKE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Membership: 200 educators

Strike dates: The first strike in Little Lake school district in 150 years ran April 16–29 after eight months of negotiations. LLEA had sought better health care coverage, smaller class sizes and improved student support services. At the time that the strike started, the district had imposed a cap on health care contributions, enforced pay cuts and proposed increasing class sizes. During the strike, the superintendent suddenly resigned.

What LLEA won:

- Coverage for 90% of the cost of health benefits with a flexible cap
- Additional support for special education teachers
- No increase to class sizes
- Each teacher to receive a \$1,000 bonus



▼ Photos this page: The Richmond community came out strong in support of their educators.
Credit: @movementphotographer



Photo by Brooke Anderson | @movementphotographer



UNITED TEACHERS OF RICHMOND

Membership:

About 1,500 teachers, counselors, psychologists, speech pathologists, nurses and other certificated staff

Strike dates: The first strike in West Contra Costa Unified's history ran Dec. 4–10, 2025

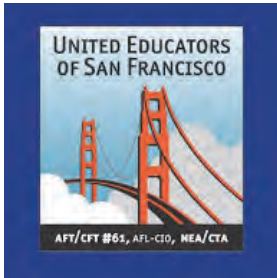
What UTR won:

- 8% raise over two years
- 100% employer-paid family health benefits by mid-2027
- Increased pay for special education staff
- Strengthened protections for educators and student class sizes

“The next stage in our fight will require us to join forces with working people across our state as we organize and demand the full funding our schools and students deserve, and we are ready to continue that fight.”

—UTR President **Francisco Ortiz**

▼ Photos this page: Neither rain nor a recalcitrant school district stifled UESF members' voices.



UNITED EDUCATORS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Membership:

About 6,500; about 5,000 certificated staff; 1,500 classified staff; also includes substitute teachers within the district

Strike dates:

The first strike in almost 50 years ran Feb. 9–13.

What UESF won:

After an 11-month campaign and 4-day strike educators won a historic two-year agreement. Highlights:

- 2% raises this year and next and additional paid work days for certificated employees; 8.5% over two years, with 4% in Year 1 and 4.5% in Year 2, for classified employees, plus an additional floating holiday
- Paraeducators providing specialized medical services receive an additional 5% salary increase
- Fully funded family health benefits starting on Jan. 1, 2027; relief for family health care available to eligible employees starting on July 1, 2026.
- Additional support for special education educators
- Sanctuary and housing protections for SFUSD families



“What we achieved is the ability to stabilize school staffing and ensure educators can afford to live and work in San Francisco. This contract is a strong foundation for building the safe and stable learning environments our students need.”

—UESF President **Cassandra Curiel**





UNITED TEACHERS LOS ANGELES

(30,000+ MEMBERS)

Won agreement on April 11

- Fixed broken salary scales
- Won average salary increase of 13.86%
- Won four weeks of paid parental leave
- More than 450 new counselors, social workers and school psychologists
- Breakthrough Special Education agreement with first-ever 20-to-1 ratio for resource specialist teachers and planning time at schools with 80% of students in general ed setting for 80% of the day
- Improved penalty pay for special education class size violations
- Protections against subcontracting and Artificial Intelligence
- Contractual commitments in support of immigrant students and families
- Health care for substitutes after 93 days of work
- Maintains Black Student Achievement Program staffing

Locals Show They Are Ready to Walk and Win

By Julian Peeples

THIS SCHOOL YEAR has shown across the state that when we strike, we win — and even the real threat of a strike can be the difference in winning at the bargaining table.

Members in four locals voted to authorize strikes, organized in their communities, held art builds and prepared to put it all on the line to win the safe, stable and fully staffed schools their students deserve — building so much power and showing district management their commitment to each other and their students that they were able to win landmark agreements by being strike-ready.



SAN DIEGO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

(6,000+ MEMBERS)

Won agreement on Feb. 13

- Won 5% raise over two years
- Improved Special Education staffing
- No layoffs
- Locked in fully paid family health care
- More stability for San Diego students and families

“By forcing Oakland Unified to invest in creating stability in our classrooms and schools we are making a historic investment in the future of Oakland.”

—OEA President **Kampala Taiz-Rancifer**

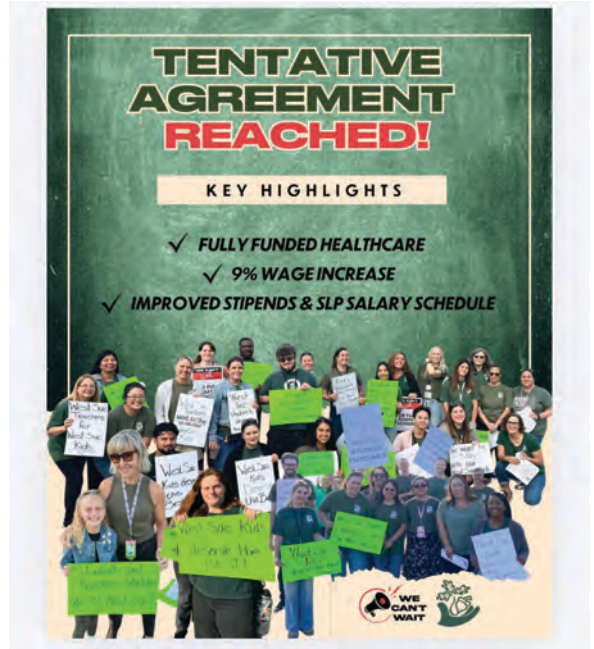


OAKLAND EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

(3,000+ MEMBERS)

Won agreement on Feb. 27

- Won 11–13% pay increase (partially retroactive to July 2025)
- Won additional salary increases for credentialed special education teachers, school nurses, early childhood educators, school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, social workers and athletic coaches.
- Smaller class sizes in kindergarten and first grade
- Reduced number of required professional development days
- Language to reduce district outsourcing
- Added harassment protections, including cyberbullying
- Creation of new district Psychological Safety Committee, to address racism, discrimination and emotional harm
- Won immigrant legal rights MOU, which expands legal supports for immigrant students and families
- Commitments to Black Thriving Schools and Community Schools



WEST SACRAMENTO TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

(450 MEMBERS)

Won agreement on March 25

- Won fully paid Kaiser health care for all groups, retroactive to January of this year, which runs through 2027.
- Won a 4.5% raise retroactive to July 2025
- 4.5% raise for 2026–27
- Increased stipends by 15% and added several new stipends

“When students don’t have what they need to succeed, it impacts everyone in the school community. It took the entire community standing up together to make a difference.”

—SDEA President **Kyle Weinberg**

▼ ASTA brought together other locals, six superintendents and student leaders in coalition to fight for Prop. 55's permanent extension.



PROP. 55 EXTENSION

The Power of Many

By Julian Peeples

IN THE FIGHT for public education, securing stable funding is absolutely essential. Proposition 55, approved by voters in 2016 but set to expire in 2030, generates almost \$15 billion annually for California schools and community colleges.

Our locals successfully gathered signatures to help qualify a permanent extension to Prop. 55 on the November ballot (see next page). Now we must work to pass it. Without an extension, schools and community colleges will be hit with an immediate 15% cut in funding; one in six of our colleagues will lose their jobs..

Anaheim Secondary Teachers Association (ASTA) is focusing on coalition-building that can power not only Prop. 55 extension efforts, but longer-term support for public education.

“A lot of Orange County locals have good relationships with their school districts, and coming together around Prop. 55 is a way to strengthen those bonds,” said ASTA President Geoff Morganstern. “We’re in a political landscape where we have to work together to save public education and that means putting our differences aside to do what’s best for students.”

Leaning into the same principles that guide their trailblazing community schools work, ASTA is bringing together other



locals, students, school districts and community. The coalition first met at a joint education/training around the Prop. 55 permanent extension campaign in January, with the presidents of six CTA locals, student leaders from area school districts and superintendents. Co-hosted with Anaheim Elementary Education Association, the event was a huge success, said Morganstern.



Geoff Morganstern

“We had six superintendents in that room who now understand the issue surrounding Prop. 55 and why we need to do something together about it. This fight is something that everyone can come together around.”

Coalition chapter presidents and their superintendents will visit local State Senate and Assembly members at their offices in April and May to share the need for continued and increased funding for public education.

“The experience of engaging our community at open houses, LCAP meetings, school board meetings and community events taught us important lessons in approaching our community to help pave the way for

One in six of our colleagues will lose their jobs unless we pass the Prop. 55 extension in November.

a successful get-out-the-vote effort this fall,” Morganstern said.

“We were also able to present at a local CTA-Aspiring Educators meeting and worked closely with our Anaheim CSEA chapter to coordinate site visits. This approach has seen organic leaders within ASTA and our community spring up who want to help secure the resources students and schools deserve. As a core We Can’t Wait local, we were able to make the connection with our members about the need to renew Prop. 55 to ensure that our WCW wins will continue to be funded with state revenue.”

ASTA is also working with aspiring educators from nearby Santa Ana Community College to inform them about Prop. 55 and to engage, mentor and help educate them about the union. The local awards 10 \$1,000 scholarships annually to Anaheim students who want to become educators, with the goal of graduating students who have strong union values from the moment they earn their credentials. Modeling how shared governance looks, ASTA invited the Anaheim Union High Community Schools Steering Committee to make the scholarship selections this year.

“It’s powerful to educate and engage aspiring educators,” Morganstern says. “This is part of a long-term goal: What can we do now, but also what can we do in the future?” ■



We Did It!

Our union gathers the majority of signatures to put Prop. 55 permanent extension on the ballot

ON APRIL 22, more than 1.6 million signatures were submitted to county election officials to place a permanent extension to Proposition 55 on the November ballot. The signatures submitted far surpasses the ~875,000 required to qualify it for the ballot.

If passed, this extension, also known as the California Children’s Education and Health Care Protection Act of 2026, will prevent billions in cuts to schools and health care by extending the existing tax on the wealthiest Californians.

Our members secured the vast majority of signatures by talking to each other at our worksites. More than 100 local chapters had more than 85% of members sign a petition.

A strong coalition of other unions joined our effort including California Federation of Teachers, California Service Employees Association, Service Employees International Union, California Professional Firefighters, and more. Together, we secured 1.6 million signatures. What Comes Next: Once signatures are validated, the initiative will be assigned a new proposition number and will be included on the November ballot.

Then it’s going to take all of us working together to get out the vote for public education. If we don’t extend Prop. 55 in November the wealthiest will get a tax break in 2030 while 1-in-6 educators would lose their jobs.

Our power as a union can win this! We’ve shown time and again that there’s nothing we can’t do if we have ambitious goals, a plan and a commitment to win together.

Background on Prop. 55

Prop. 55 is income tax on California’s wealthiest that is set to expire in 2030. It was passed by voters in 2012 and extended in 2016. Since its passing, Prop. 55 has generated billions in revenue for California’s general fund, 40% of which is constitutionally mandated by Prop. 98 to fund the state’s public schools. Learn more at cta.org/prop55extension.

▼ CTA/NEA-Retired members at the No Kings protest in March in LA. Inset: Members at this year's annual conference, also in March.



Solidarity Forever

CTA/NEA-Retired chapters step up to help



CTA/NEA-Retired members are kicking their union organizing into high gear!

As We Can't Wait locals took actions and went on strike over the past months to push for improved teaching and learning conditions, retired members joined in the art builds, walked picket lines, marched and rallied with colleagues and offered support wherever they were needed.

In the quest to gather signatures to get the Prop. 55 permanent extension on the November ballot, retired members partnered with locals to fan out to school sites, especially sites

with few signatures. They spoke to educators at staff meetings, in lunchrooms and lounges. They held social events to encourage fellow retiree members to sign petitions as well.

Now, they're planning get-out-the-vote activities for both the June Primary and November General Election.

"During the United Educators San Francisco strike buildup, retired members did support work and walked picket lines," says CTA/NEA-Retired President Dana Dillon. "We picketed with Twin Rivers United Educators on a daily basis and helped at Natomas Teachers Association with whatever they needed.

▼ Members supported Apple Valley educators in their fight for a fair contract.



Our retired secretary-treasurer is former president of West Sacramento Teachers Association, and he worked with them. Our members were working with United Teachers Los Angeles.”

With 36 chapters and about 22,000 members, CTA/NEA-Retired is a powerful component in our union’s arsenal of solidarity and collective action. Dillon notes that multiple standing committees are working regularly for the first time this year, such as

- **POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT**, which coordinates CTA/NEA-Retired’s efforts with CTA active locals, as well as CTA statewide activities; the committee works closely with CTA political organizers in each region;
- **MEMBERSHIP**, which focuses on growing membership and member involvement;
- **SCHOLARSHIP**, which works on fundraising for the two CTA scholarships it oversees — the Gloria Pedretti Credential Candidate Scholarship and the Sharilynn Gardella Russo Memorial Scholarship (see cta.org/awards).

“We urge our chapters to reach out to active chapters,” Dillon says. “We really want to cultivate those relationships and be seen as a partner, not as a separate organization.”

Dillon, who is in the second year of her first term as president, is running again this spring. “I haven’t finished what I want to accomplish!” Our union fights to ensure that every educator has dignity in retirement.

The continued organizing by CTA/NEA-Retired members shows that dignity and solidarity go hand-in-hand and are critical to the future of our union and public education. ■

▼ Deborah Burfeind, fourth from left and flanked by her husband Jim Burfeind and CTA/NEA-Retired President Dana Dillon, accepted the CTA Chapter in Politics Award on behalf of her chapter in 2025.



Chico in Action

CTA/NEA-Retired Chico has forged a strong working relationship with Chico Unified Teachers Association (CUTA) over the past few years. The retired chapter in Butte, Glenn and Plumas counties has about 50 active members, according to President Deborah Burfeind.

In 2022 and 2024, when extremists tried to win a majority on the Chico Unified school board, CUTA asked CTA/NEA-Retired Chico for help. Retired members wrote hand-written postcards — 3,000 of them in 2024 — sent letters to local papers, put up yard signs, canvassed and distributed fliers for endorsed candidates, resulting in two of them winning in 2022 and all three candidates (endorsed by CUTA and Oroville Elementary Teachers Association) winning in 2024.

For the 2024 election, the retired chapter recruited a union president nearing retirement to run for school board, and CUTA invited several members to a CTA political organizing workshop. CUTA is requesting similar help in 2026 campaigns.

In Spring 2025, CTA/NEA-Retired Chico sent a carload of members to the May 17 “Fight for Schools” action in Sacramento. That fall, CTA staff asked for the chapter’s assistance in signature-gathering for the Prop. 55 permanent extension, including reaching out to several locals.

“We delivered petition supplies to the Butte County Teachers Association and the Butte College Teachers Association, located union leaders and motivated the importance of signature collection,” said Burfeind.

For their work on the 2024 school board campaign, CTA/NEA-Retired Chico was honored with the CTA Chapter-in-Politics Award — the first time that a retired chapter has won the statewide award.

▼ This year's Human Rights Award winners (pictured with CTA officers) were honored at the Equity & Human Rights Conference in March. See full caption on page 35.



CELEBRATING Change Makers

The winners of our 2025–2026 Human Rights Awards

CHANGE MAKERS create positive, meaningful change by taking action that improves the lives of others and makes the world a better place. Look no further than our union members to see examples of change makers — educators who are always striving to change things for the better for our students and families, public education and the broader community.

The CTA Human Rights Awards are given annually to CTA members, chapters and service center councils to celebrate their exemplary contributions in human and civil rights. This year's winners were recognized in March at

a special ceremony at the Equity & Human Rights Conference.

“We celebrate our winners for their unflagging efforts to uplift, carry forward and educate others about people and cultures and ways of life that might otherwise be forgotten or ignored.”

—CTA President **David Goldberg**

“Our 2026 awardees have done amazing work. We honor them for their courage in stepping up in the face of grave injustice, whether fighting systemic racism year after year or defending the vulnerable from ICE raids and deportation,” said CTA President David Goldberg. “We celebrate them for their unflagging efforts to uplift, carry forward and educate others about people and cultures and ways of life that might otherwise be forgotten or ignored.”

The 2025–2026 winners:



Gladys Williams

AFRICAN AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD IN HONOR OF LOIS TINSON

Gladys Williams' 35-year career as a Modesto educator was defined by a tireless commitment to labor advocacy and social justice. Her union work spanned decades within Modesto Teachers Association (MTA), CTA and NEA.

An elementary school teacher, Williams was a fixture at the NEA Representative Assembly for 25 years, where her service on the resolutions committee led to a congressional apology for slavery. At the state level, she was a dedicated voice at CTA State Council meetings, and served as a member of what is now the Racial Equity Affairs Committee (REAC). She was actively engaged in working toward MTA goals, including equity meetings both at the local and service center level. She chaired the affirmative action committee for the Modesto City Schools district.

Williams' activism was inseparable from her leadership in the community, including four decades of service and a presidency with the Modesto-Stanslaus chapter of the NAACP. During this time, she helped revise over 100 school policies toward reducing expulsion and suspension rates and disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline, particularly among Black students.

Even in retirement, she continued to work as a substitute teacher and remained an active presence at local Representative Assembly meetings, serving as a vital mentor to new educators. She was known for guiding younger teachers and encouraging them to step into roles as site representatives and equity committee members.

Her advocacy continued into her final years, whether she was campaigning for Modesto's 2022 Measure L school bond, attending town halls for Special Education teachers, or advocating for student and teacher interests at monthly school board meetings.

Unfortunately, Williams passed away in November 2025. She leaves behind a legacy of equity, decency and an unwavering belief that the struggle for teacher and student interests is a lifelong calling.

James Gensaw

AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE
HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD IN HONOR
OF JIM CLARK



An educator for almost 20 years, **James Gensaw** works to protect the culture and language of his people. Tribal officials say he is one of 16 advanced-level

Yurok language-keepers alive today. An enrolled Yurok tribal member, Gensaw is also part of the tribe's Yurok Language Program, which is at the forefront of efforts to keep the Yurok language alive.

Today, the Yurok language is offered as an elective at four high schools in far Northern California. Gensaw helped write the curriculum for the classes; it meets language instruction requirements for admission to the UC and CSU systems. He teaches at two of the four schools, teaching at one remotely while based at Del Norte High, his alma mater. According to a Del Norte High social media post, he can often be heard sharing the traditions of the Yurok nation through song and through drums.

In addition, Gensaw leads the Native American club, observances of orange shirt day (an annual day of remembrance that honors Indigenous children who were sent to Indian boarding schools in the U.S. and Canada) and is coordinator of the Yurok Language Department. He has also coached wrestling and been a key part of restorative circles reducing suspension of Native youth.

The Yurok community is the largest Native American tribe in California. "My elders encouraged me to pass on the language and culture," he said of becoming an educator. "Winning this award is a way to honor them." Teaching Yurok history is particularly gratifying. "If you can tell the stories (to the students), they are fixing wrongs from 100 years ago."

Many of his students have received Seal of Biliteracy awards for mastery of the Yurok language.

His work has helped to eliminate stereotypes and create positive role models. "I can only save this language for another 50 years. But [my students] ... they can bring this language in for another 60, 70 more years."



Adrian Tamayo

CÉSAR E. CHÁVEZ
AND DOLORES HUERTA
“SÍ SE PUEDE” HUMAN
RIGHTS AWARD



A special education teacher at Lorena Street Elementary, **Adrian Tamayo** is committed to ensuring that every student — regardless of background or ability — has access to an engaging and inclusive education. He has been a steadfast union leader and organizer in United Teachers Los Angeles East Area for more than two decades, advancing equity and justice for educators, students and families. His work reflects the heart of Chávez and Huerta’s legacy: education as empowerment and organizing as love in action.

Tamayo founded and leads the Lorena Street Rock Band, which lets students express themselves through music while building confidence and community pride. The band performs at school and community events, serving as a symbol of creative inclusion and student empowerment.

He has served 15 years on United Teachers Los Angeles’ East Area Board of Directors, including the past nine as East Area Chair, where he is respected for his calm, principled and inclusive leadership style.

He played a pivotal role as part of team in UTLA’s landmark 2019 strike, serving on the bargaining team that advanced a “Bargaining for the Common Good” platform and helping forge strong alliances with parents and community organizations. The resulting contract secured smaller class sizes, expanded bilingual resources, and strengthened special education supports — major gains for historically underserved students across LA. He also helped lead the 2023 solidarity strike, reinforcing union unity and cross-sector collaboration.

In 2013, when his school faced an abrupt co-location, Tamayo mobilized more than 100 parents, educators and students within days, launching a grassroots defense campaign. He cultivated lasting partnerships with local advocacy organizations, uniting labor and community voices to defend public education in Boyle Heights and East LA.

Tamayo serves as a delegate to CTA State Council, vice chair of its Special Education Committee, and a longtime representative to NEA. His union work reflects a lifelong commitment to dignity, justice and the belief that when educators, families and communities stand together, meaningful change is possible.

Dr. Malinda L. Hurley

CTA MEMBER HUMAN
RIGHTS AWARD



Dr. Malinda L. Hurley is an educator, union leader and community advocate whose work centers on equity, public education and the empowerment of historically marginalized communities. A member of Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association and a middle school English Language Arts educator, Dr. Hurley is committed to nurturing students while promoting the teaching profession. Through her work with multiple CTA programs and committees, she actively encourages young people to pursue careers in public education, mentoring future educators and demonstrating the importance of strong public schools and educator advocacy.

As a CTA State Council and NEA Representative Assembly delegate, Dr. Hurley brings forward issues affecting educators and vulnerable student populations, including introducing child welfare resolutions focused on foster youth.

Her commitment to education is deeply personal. Having grown up in the foster care system, Dr. Hurley found stability and inspiration in public school classrooms. This experience motivated her to become an educator and ultimately earn a doctorate in educational leadership. Her dissertation, “How Resilience Plays a Role in Former Foster Youths’ Success in Higher Education,” reflects her ongoing dedication to supporting students facing adversity.

At her school, Dr. Hurley advises the Student Trust and Resilience (STAR) Scholars Foster Youth Club and an Equity Squad that promotes cultural awareness, diversity and inclusion. Through these efforts she helps students understand the importance of civic engagement, civil rights and the role of unions in advocating for educators and students alike.

Dr. Hurley also builds meaningful family, school and community partnerships as an Alta Loma School District Board trustee, where she is currently vice president. She assisted in creating Alta Loma district’s Foster Youth Advisory Committee to monitor foster youth students. She holds an annual Girl Empowerment Luncheon, Winter Wonderland and other events in the district that support and provide resources for foster youth, homeless students and families in need. She mentors youth through the non-profit Simply Friends; this work led her to be invited to the United Nations in New York.



Maya Suzuki Daniels

CTA PEACE AND JUSTICE
HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

Maya Suzuki Daniels is a 10th grade English and AP Language teacher at San Pedro High School and an educator, organizer and leader whose work bridges the classroom, the union movement and the broader community. A member of United Teachers Los Angeles, Suzuki Daniels is recognized for her ability to inspire educators and students to pursue equity, justice and democratic participation.

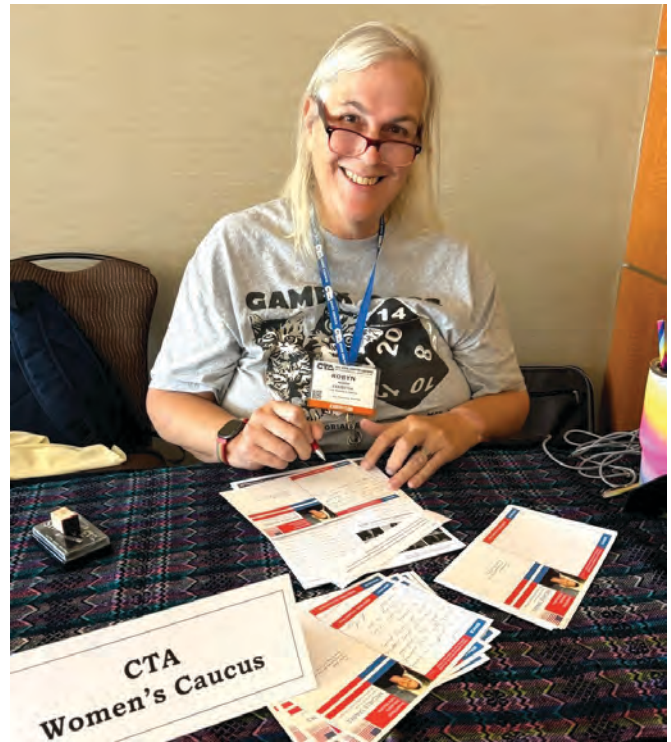
Her workshops at conferences and professional gatherings are known for being thoughtful, engaging and action-oriented, leaving participants with new understanding, practical resources and concrete strategies for organizing. Through creative and accessible approaches — such as using The Wave as a metaphor for collective organizing — she helps educators see how grassroots leadership can create meaningful impact.

In the classroom, she encourages critical thinking and civic engagement, guiding students through discussions about social issues such as race, class, gender and immigration across historical contexts. She structures her classroom to empower students to lead these conversations and supports them as they develop the confidence and skills needed to engage with difficult topics in the world.

Suzuki Daniels is the founding advisor of San Pedro High's Students Deserve chapter, where she supports students in organizing and advocacy. Students Deserve student leaders have spoken at events including a citywide "We Can't Wait" rally and a UTLA leadership conference. She has also helped organize youth-centered events, including a May Day art workshop and student panel exploring the intersections between Palestinian liberation and policing in Los Angeles.

Beyond the classroom, Suzuki Daniels continues to build educator and community power. She was a founding organizer of the Educator Defense Network, which supports educators facing harassment for their activism. In 2025, she co-founded the Harbor Area Peace Patrols, which organized daily community patrols throughout San Pedro, Wilmington and the Port of Los Angeles; these patrols contributed to ICE agents leaving their Terminal Island staging ground in early 2026.

Through her leadership, Suzuki Daniels exemplifies the role educators can play as advocates for justice, solidarity and community empowerment.



Robyn Lee Nixon

HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD FOR LGBTQ+ ADVOCACY IN
HONOR OF NANCY BAILEY

Robyn Lee Nixon has been a tireless advocate for LGBTQ+ inclusion as an educator and at every level of union leadership. Within the Capistrano Unified Education Association (CUEA), Nixon has served as a site representative, chapter treasurer for four years, alternate CTA State Council representative, and now as a State Council delegate for the past eight years. She led an initiative to train CUEA educators through an LGBTQ+ awareness day, helping make Capistrano Unified one of the first districts to adopt a non-discrimination policy protecting students and educators based on gender identity and expression.

In 2013, she created an LGBTQ+ training conference at the local level, designed to build and mentor current and prospective LGBTQ+ members of CTA and CUEA.

Nixon has represented CTA at the NEA Representative Assembly every year (save one) since 2016. As a member of State Council's Civil Rights in Education subcommittee, she authored a successful initiative that led the CTA president and executive committee to formally advocate for non-binary and transgender educators through NEA to President Donald Trump in 2019. As co-chair of CTA's SOGIIAC (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues Advisory Committee), she advocated for the creation of a transgender transition employment guidebook, laying the groundwork for its publication two years later in 2021.



▼ Nixon helped bring an LGBTQ+ Historical Archives display to State Council in 2019.



In June 2019, Nixon helped bring a two-room LGBTQ+ Historical Archives display to the entire State Council delegation.

Nixon currently chairs the CTA Women's Caucus and has expanded representation for transgender women within CTA. She also served on CTA's LGBTQ Issues Organizing Committee and the Orange County Service Center executive committee. Throughout her union career, she has been a dedicated mentor working to advance the leadership and visibility of women and LGBTQ+ members across CTA and beyond.

Nixon is a founding member of the Orange County Cultural Pride Committee and helped establish the county's first Pride festivals. She has volunteered and served with many organizations and committees as a vocal LGBTQ+ advocate.

▼ Luther Burbank Education Association President Fadi Saba.



Fadi Saba

ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD IN HONOR OF KENT WONG

For decades, **Fadi Saba** has woven together his work as an educator, union leader and human rights advocate. Born a Palestinian stateless refugee, he brings a global perspective to his role as a teacher and as president of the Luther Burbank Education Association (LBEA) in San Jose. Through his local union and CTA, Saba has advanced a vision of public education rooted in equity, immigrant rights and community empowerment.

As LBEA president, Saba has strengthened member engagement while building partnerships between educators, families and community. He and colleagues organized "Know Your Rights" workshops for families at their school — 90% of whom are Latinx — ensuring they have accurate information and support amid shifting immigration policies. He has coordinated rapid response network sessions, distributed emergency contact bracelets for families

concerned about ICE, and organized neighborhood ICE patrols to safeguard students' well-being. His union leadership reflects a belief that educators must stand alongside the communities they serve.

He has worked with multiple advocacy and social justice organizations. With San Jose's Nihonmachi Outreach Committee he helped organize events showing similarities between the treatment of Japanese-Americans in the 1940s and Arab-Americans in the aftermath of the 2001 World Trade Center attacks.

Saba has engaged in local and statewide advocacy through CTA, the Loma Prieta chapter of the Sierra Club, and Defending Rights and Dissent, where he is a board member. He has lobbied elected officials in Sacramento on issues ranging from educational equity and academic freedom to environmental justice, drawing on earlier experience as a policy advisor to an elected official in Santa Clara County — the first Arab American to hold such a role there.

In the classroom, he connects U.S. history to contemporary struggles, encouraging students to think critically about

colonialism, civil rights and solidarity. Through his leadership, Saba models how unions can be powerful vehicles for dignity, safety and justice — proving that advocacy inside and outside the classroom are inseparable parts of the same lifelong commitment.

Dr. Hezekiah Herrera

STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS
HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD



Dr. Hezekiah Herrera, a member of Chula Vista Educators, is an educator and union leader whose work reflects a deep commitment to educational equity for students with exceptional needs. As a father to children with disabilities, his advocacy is deeply personal. He models a proactive, solutions-oriented approach that empowers other educators to become better advocates and partners in inclusion.

In his classroom, Dr. Herrera focuses on creating inclusive environments where students with extensive support needs can participate fully in school life. Recognizing that traditional curriculum often fails to meet the needs of such students, he has developed innovative instructional tools and customized learning materials tailored to students' communication, sensory and academic needs. He has also authored inclusive children's literature to ensure students see themselves reflected in the stories they read.

Dr. Herrera designed a suite of digital learning applications aligned with students' Individualized Education

Program goals. These include a digital communication platform where students practice composing functional emails and texts, and applications that teach essential life skills such as managing money. He created a progress-tracking system that provides instructional guidance for paraprofessionals, ensuring students receive consistent, high-quality support.

He also built a specialized support plan generator for events and field trips. The tool generates a comprehensive document in minutes that details all accommodations, medical needs and sensory supports required. It demystifies support, reduces anxiety for staff, and directly tears down barriers that traditionally prevent students with complex medical and physical needs from participating in these activities.

Beyond the classroom, Dr. Herrera serves on CVE's executive board, participates in his district's Special Education Task Force, and, as a CTA State Council representative, contributes to the Special Education committee. Through these roles, he amplifies educators' voices and advocates for safer classrooms, adequate staffing and stronger supports for students with exceptional needs.

He also actively partners with community organizations to champion the rights and opportunities of all students with disabilities. Dr. Herrera truly models what it means to be an innovator and human rights advocate.

▼ From left to right: Adrian Tamayo, CTA Vice President Leslie Littman, James Gensaw, Dr. Malinda Hurley, Nicole Williams (standing in for Gladys Williams), Dr. Hezekiah Herrera, Robyn Lee Nixon, Maya Suzuki Daniels, CTA Secretary-Treasurer Erika Jones, CTA President David Goldberg, Fadi Saba.



You can watch videos of the 2026 award winners at youtube.com/Californiateachers. To learn more about the CTA Human Rights Awards, and to nominate a member, visit cta.org/awards.

▼ At the UnRig California rally and press conference in March, CTA President David Goldberg joined labor unions, community organizations and others in demanding that our legislators close corporate tax loopholes.



Fully Fund Our Schools

Our union’s 2026–27 legislative platform demands funding, fairness for educators, students and public schools — now

WE LIVE IN the fourth largest economy in the world, and yet our schools lack the resources to support students and educators. Unstable funding, federal cuts and unfair and disruptive policies have created massive inequities in classrooms and on campuses across California. In our survey of 2,000 CTA members earlier this year, 88% of respondents said that insufficient school funding is a serious issue, citing lack of resources, inadequate staffing and overcrowded classrooms as results.

In addition, educators are increasingly worried about affordability for themselves and the families of their students, including the cost of housing, everyday goods and services, health care and basic household expenses.

Educators reported a willingness to strike for improved teaching and learning conditions, wages and benefits — and have done so at multiple locals up and down the state.

Fully funded schools are the key. We know what works — from the shared governance model of community schools to a district

budgeting system focused on today’s students to making our profession a viable and respected option for future educators. We know that billionaires and corporations must pay their fair share to make these initiatives happen. Our union will fight for all this and more in the State Legislature this coming year. Visit cta.org/legislative-advocacy for details.

Our 2026–27 Legislative Platform:

- Protect school funding promised by Prop. 98
- Increased revenue for schools and communities
- Commitment to Community Schools: A model for public schools
- Establish paid pregnancy leave for educators
- Relief for school communities with emergency state loans
- Eliminate 3-year budget manipulation
- Strengthen the teacher pipeline

“Prop. 98 isn’t a piggy bank you get to borrow from. It’s the law that entitles our students to the funding they need.”

—CTA President
David Goldberg

1

PROTECT SCHOOL FUNDING PROMISED BY PROP. 98

Passed by California voters nearly four decades ago, Proposition 98 enshrines funding for public schools into the state constitution. It guarantees a minimal annual funding level in our state budget for public schools and community colleges. This year, that guarantee is \$121.4 billion.

But this year, Governor Newsom proposed a shell game and is attempting to withhold \$5.6 billion from Prop. 98 to help cover the State’s ongoing budget deficit. **This massive cut is equal to nearly \$1,000 per student.**

Weeks after the governor’s announcement earlier this year, administrators at more than 100 California school districts weaponized his proposal by issuing nearly 2,500 preliminary layoff notices. The cut in funding also means larger class sizes, even less mental health support for students, slashed programs and resources, and further deepening of the escalating educator recruitment and retention crisis.

“On top of fighting for and often self-funding the basic resources we need to do our jobs, the moral injury of getting a layoff notice and then having to wait two months to see if our job exists next year is driving deeply committed, highly qualified educators from the profession,” said CTA Secretary-Treasurer Erika Jones.

Jones, an elementary school teacher in Los Angeles, once received a layoff notice in the middle of the school day while teaching kindergarten.

These layoff notices underscore the need for robust funding and increases in revenues for the state. In a time of national uncertainty

CTA

**DON'T ERASE
SCHOOL FUNDING**

**GOVERNOR GAVIN NEWSOM'S
PROPOSED BUDGET WOULD
WITHHOLD
\$5.6 BILLION
IN SCHOOL FUNDING GUARANTEED BY
PROPOSITION 98.**

with mounting attacks on education gaining traction at the federal level, threatening cuts to education funding in California only compounds the funding gaps we see in classrooms.

Our union has been actively fighting for this proposed shell game to be removed from the governor’s revised 2026–27 State Budget in May or to be corrected by the State Legislature before its approval of the budget in June, and will continue to fight for every dollar guaranteed by law.

“Prop. 98 isn’t a piggy bank you get to borrow from,” said CTA President David Goldberg. “It’s the law that entitles our students to the funding they need to learn. Prop. 98 is the floor — not the ceiling — and this governor is trying to dig a big hole in that floor instead of making the wealthy pay their fair share.”

To learn more and support our fight to restore Prop. 98 funds, visit cta.org/prop98.



▼ Members lobbied for SB 1349 at the State Capitol in April.



2

INCREASED REVENUE FOR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

Our union has long fought to ensure that the wealthy and the billionaires pay their fair share and against an agenda that promotes privatization, charter schools and funding cuts to public education.

This year, we have joined major labor unions in the state including SEIU, United Domestic Workers and the California Labor Federation, which represents more than 1,300 unions, in the UnRig California campaign. **The campaign is demanding that state lawmakers close corporate tax loopholes and contribute to services like the rest of us. This will help raise revenues to close state budget deficits without deeper cuts to education and essential social services.**

A majority of Californians agree with us. According to the Public Policy Institute of California's February statewide survey, 62% of adults favor closing the state's budget deficit by raising state taxes paid by the wealthiest Californians.

Corporations and the wealthy have benefited greatly from tax cuts pushed by President Donald Trump, while California workers — and educators — deal with the accompanying cuts to federal health and human services programs.

"We can't have a system where it is always socialism for the rich and capitalism for the workers — where we have to survive and they get the handouts," said CTA President David Goldberg at the mid-March rally and press conference announcing UnRig California.

UnRig California's focus:

- **Pay their fair share** — Nearly half of profitable California corporations pay ZERO state taxes above the \$800 minimum — significantly less than most working people.
- **Invest in working people** — Corporate profits have hit a record \$1.87 trillion, yet workers' share of wealth is at its lowest point since 1947. We need a tax code that supports shared prosperity.

- **Protect the safety net** — When corporations pay poverty wages, their workers are forced to rely on public programs like Medi-Cal and CalFresh. Highly profitable employers should contribute to the cost of the safety net they exploit.
- **Close corporate tax loopholes** — Eliminate outdated tax dodges written by corporate lobbyists. Companies doing business in California should pay taxes on real global profits.

A major corporate tax loophole is what's known as Water's Edge, where companies can choose to only report income earned within the U.S. (the "water's edge") rather than their total global profits. This allows corporations to artificially shift profits to offshore tax havens to exclude them from California's 8.84% corporate tax rate.

AB 1790 (Connolly) was introduced in February and would end the Water's Edge tax break. "Closing corporate tax loopholes will raise \$3 billion in state revenue that would go to the General Fund and increase education funding and bring critical resources back to classrooms," said CTA Board Member Mara Harvey at the AB 1790 press conference.

"As a public school teacher, I know what happens when classrooms are asked to do more with less — outdated materials, overcrowded classes and fewer counselors and support staff for students who need them most. ... If we want California students to have safe, stable, fully funded schools, closing the largest corporate tax loophole in the state is just common sense."

Co-sponsored by CTA, **SB 1349** (Gonzalez) would ensure that the Legislature has the information needed to evaluate tax expenditures that have been on the books for decades — to help identify lost revenue and make sure corporations pay their fair share.

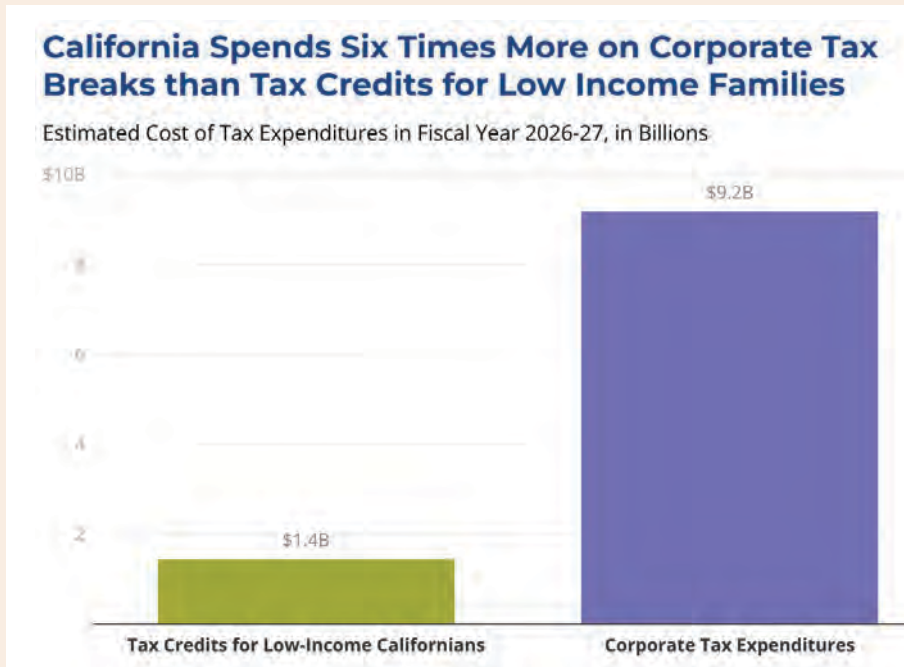
See the related sidebar on the next page. To learn more and get involved, visit unrigca.org.



◀ CTA Board Member Mara Harvey speaks at the AB 1790 press conference; the bill would end the “water’s edge” tax break where companies can choose to only report income earned within the U.S rather than their total global profits.

“If we want California students to have safe, stable, fully funded schools, closing the largest corporate tax loophole in the state is just common sense.”

—CTA Board Member **Mara Harvey**



TAX BREAKS FOR CORPORATIONS WHILE CALIFORNIANS STRUGGLE

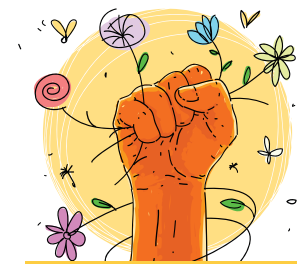
According to a March report by the California Budget & Policy Center (CBPC), the Golden State is estimated to spend over \$9 billion on tax breaks for corporations. Under Gov. Gavin Newsom’s current budget proposal, the state is estimated to spend almost six times more on tax breaks for corporations than on state tax credits for low-income Californians during the 2026–27 fiscal year.

Many lower-income Californians and others across the country are already struggling to get by — especially after H.R. 1, the “Big Beautiful” federal megabill, passed in 2025 and made unprecedented cuts to health care and food assistance programs. CBPC notes that H.R. 1 is also giving out more than a trillion dollars’ worth of tax breaks to corporations and the wealthy.

Most Californians want the uber-wealthy to pay their fair share. A new survey by the Public Policy Institute of California shows that 62% of likely voters would vote yes on an initiative that would make existing tax rates for high-income Californians permanent.



▼ Students and their teacher at Buena Vista Horace Mann K-8 in San Francisco, a community school.



COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

3

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY SCHOOLS: A MODEL FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Our union is committed to helping grow and support California Community Schools, in partnership with students, families, communities, school districts and the state.

The community schools model of meaningful shared governance and shared decision-making has proven to be a resounding success: In a year’s time, according to a Learning Policy Institute (LPI) study, students at community schools have made major gains in academic achievement and social-emotional well-being. Community schools have transformed into neighborhood hubs that integrate high-caliber education with mental and physical health and other community services to support students and their families.

The state has provided \$4 billion to fund the California Community Schools Partnership Program, and nearly 2,500 schools, or about 25% of the state’s campuses, have received grant funding since 2021. In his 2026–27 State Budget, Gov. Newsom is proposing an ongoing annual appropriation of \$1 billion to CCSPP to maintain and expand community schools. Under his proposal, an additional 3,700 schools would be eligible for funding each year.

“Our union fully supports ensuring the sustainability of community schools by building this funding into the state budget formula,” said Goldberg. With more funding on the horizon for Community Schools, our union is advocating for shared governance models in every layer of the community

schools infrastructure, strengthened eligibility, oversight and accountability measures, and improved systems of support for implementation guidance.

“By pairing sustained funding with clear eligibility standards, strong accountability and aligned support systems, community schools can continue to be transformative spaces that uplift students, families and entire communities,” Goldberg added.

In addition to significant academic gains, the LPI study showed students at community schools increased attendance and engagement at schools: Chronic absenteeism declined, on average, 30% more than at comparison schools and suspension rates decreased by an average of 15% while comparison schools saw slight increases. Gains were greater at elementary schools and among underserved students.

Community schools’ whole-child approach with programs and services tailored to individual school and student needs; and student, parent and community voice in decision-making and governance results in students, their families and community members who are more connected and engaged with school.

To learn more about CTA’s work with community schools, visit cta.org/communityschools.

▼ Front row, left to right: CTA Secretary-Treasurer Erika Jones, Natomas Teachers Association member Lydiana Alfaro and her baby, Asm. Cecilia Aguiar-Curry in 2024 supporting the Paid Pregnancy Leave for Educators Act. Similar bill AB 65 is currently working its way through the Legislature.



“The time is now to provide teachers with the dignity to build their families without the added stress of trying to figure out sick days and lower pay.”

—CTA Secretary-Treasurer Erika Jones

4

ESTABLISH PAID PREGNANCY LEAVE FOR EDUCATORS

Our union continues to fight for paid pregnancy leave — a basic right in most countries — to address the inequities faced by educators, the majority of whom are women. Currently, educators must use all sick time before accessing reduced pay, forcing many to return to work prematurely or face financial hardship. This discriminatory practice impacts their health, family planning and retirement, where women already earn significantly less than male colleagues.

“Educators devote their lives to their students; yet, when it comes to their own families, they have to constantly sacrifice because of the lack of basic supports such as paid pregnancy leave,” said CTA Secretary-Treasurer Jones. “The time is now to provide teachers with the dignity to build their families without the added stress of trying to figure out sick days and lower pay.”

CTA is sponsoring AB 65 (Aguiar-Curry) to establish paid pregnancy leave for educators. Its passage would grant public school employees up to 14 weeks of leave with full pay when an employee is pregnant or experiences pregnancy-related health issues, including childbirth, miscarriage, termination of pregnancy or recovery from those conditions.

In 2023–24, our union co-sponsored similar legislation, which stalled in the Senate; we also collected 20,000 signatures of educators and others supporting the bill. Many of them detailed their horror stories — of taking unpaid days off for doctor appointments for their newborns because they had used all their sick time, being unable to pay bills because of their reduced pay, returning to work too early because they needed the money.

“I am currently pregnant with my first child,” said Ashley Thompson, a member of Menifee Teachers Association. “Rather than being excited, my husband and I are trying to

plan how to pay our bills and make sure we have food on the table. My child deserves a mom who is present, not one concerned about returning to work as soon as possible so I can receive my full pay.”

The financial impacts of this inequity are long-lasting. Because women are forced to use all sick time with each pregnancy, they have substantially less sick days at retirement, meaning that they need to work longer or earn less in retirement. On average, women receive almost \$100,000 less in retirement than their male colleagues.

“After 35 years of teaching, the lack of pregnancy leave is still affecting me in retirement,” said Susan Heflin, a member of CTA/NEA-Retired. “I lost about six months on my years of service credit in retirement from my pregnancy leaves, but I also lost the years of service credit for the lost sick days. It’s not right!”

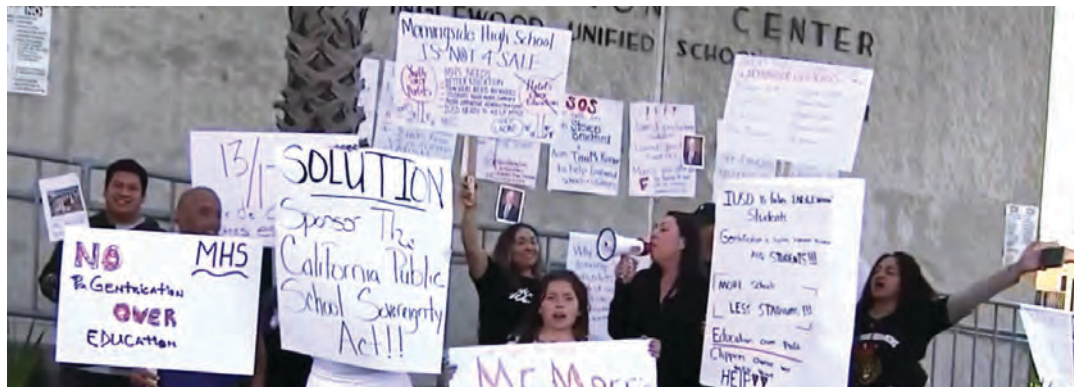
Without pregnancy leave policies, schools and students pay the price. According to the National Council on Teacher Quality, 15% of teachers who leave the profession cite personal reasons such as pregnancy, childbirth and caring for family. Replacing teachers comes with a steep price tag, with estimates suggesting districts spend between \$11,000 and \$25,000 to replace a single teacher depending on the size of the district. Teacher turnover also harms student outcomes, while teachers who stay become stronger each year.

The total estimated cost to provide 14 weeks of pregnancy leave for California educators would be the equivalent of \$6 annually per taxpayer — about the cost of a cup of coffee. This investment would give teachers critical paid parental leave that ultimately strengthens families, classrooms and the economy.

To learn more and to add your name and your story in support of AB 65, visit cta.org/pregnancy-leave.



▼ Students and community members protested the closure of multiple Inglewood schools in 2024. Courtesy NBCLA



5

RELIEF FOR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES WITH EMERGENCY STATE LOANS

A total of nine California school districts have received state emergency loans due to severe cash shortages. In recent years, districts that have required such apportionments include Plumas Unified (\$8.5 million in 2025), Inglewood Unified (\$29 million in 2012) and South Monterey County Joint Union High (\$13 million in 2009). A handful of districts in the 1990s and early 2000s, such as Vallejo and Oakland, also required significant support.

A state emergency loan comes with state receivership and involves rigorous state and county oversight, loss of local control, painful restructuring and cuts, extra expenses in paying off the loan, and other conditions that last for years. **Debt repayments can cripple what districts are able to spend on today's students.**

For example, West Contra Costa Unified was the first district to receive a bailout after AB 1200 was passed in 1991 to ensure districts' fiscal accountability and prevent insolvency. While WCCUSD received \$28.5 million in 1991, it took 21 years for the district to pay off the loan, plus \$19 million in interest and fees.

As a result, then-school board member Madeline Cronenberg told local news outlets, "thousands and thousands of children were unable to get what other districts provided."

Our union believes school districts struggling with financial health should be supported, not burdened with debt for decades, and that emergency loan repayment traps school communities in a vicious cycle of paying off debt while struggling to invest in students today.

Inglewood Unified (IUSD) pays about \$400,000 a year in interest on its emergency loan, the Inglewood County administrator recently told *The LA Local*. "That's \$400,000 that children who are in our schools today don't have the opportunity to benefit from because the children today are paying for mistakes from the past."

As it tries to meet standards to exit state receivership, IUSD has slashed budgets and shuttered multiple schools. Meanwhile, enrollment has plummeted, from 18,000 students in the early 2000s to fewer than 7,000 today, and test scores, graduation rates, attendance and other metrics have declined.

In December 2025, Inglewood Teachers Association (ITA) and the ACLU submitted a formal complaint asking the state attorney general to investigate the "sweeping school closures and state receivership harms."

"For over a decade, students and families in Inglewood have endured state mismanagement and broken promises that have exacerbated decreases in enrollment and school closures," said John Hughes, president of ITA and a parent, in the complaint. "The procrastination, indifference, and ignoring of basic fundamental educational foundations can no longer be withstood. Our students' rights to a free and appropriate public education must be safeguarded. There is academic, psychological, and now physical harm from safety issues, and our children deserve better."

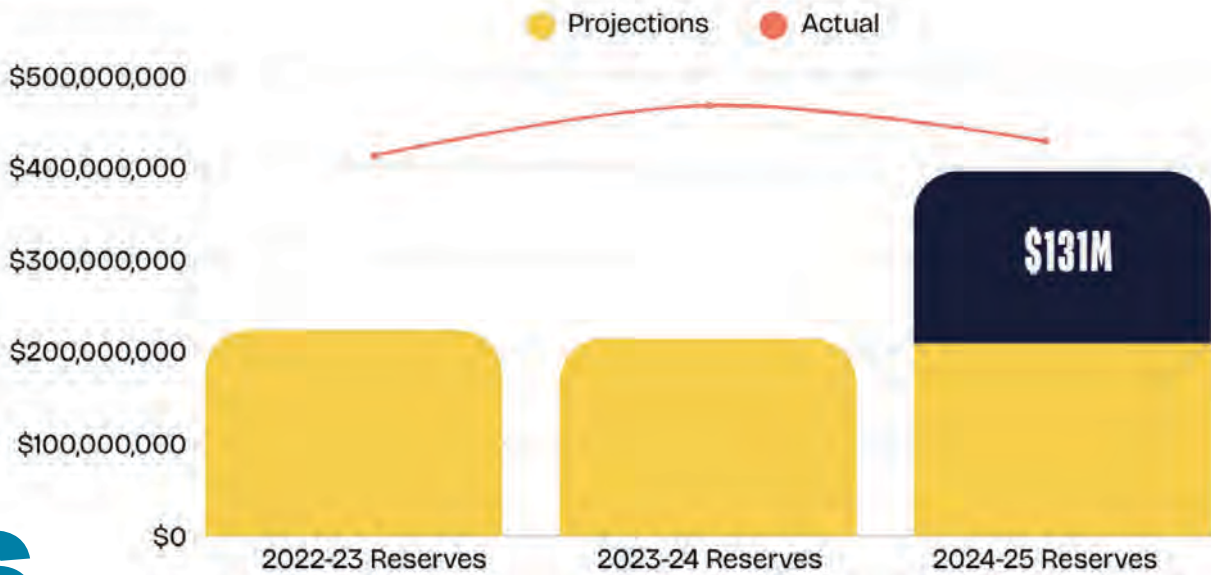
More than 80% of IUSD students are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and in fact, districts that have declared insolvency overwhelmingly serve students of color. Several that have paid off their loans, such as Oakland Unified and Vallejo City Unified, continue to struggle financially.

It's time to provide relief for students and communities affected by state emergency loans and invest in students today. We are asking policymakers to

- Establish a pathway to loan forgiveness; district debt repayment unfairly penalizes students who have nothing to do with the problem
- Ensure that money spent on debt repayment and interest is not a burden on today's students
- Safeguard future generations from paying the price for the district's fiscal crisis
- Not impose punitive fiscal measures on affected districts

▼ **San Francisco Unified's Reserve Fund 2022–2025:**

As a result of underestimating revenue and overestimating expenses, SF Unified's reserve fund was \$131 million more than projected. UESF educators went on strike to demand that these funds be spent on today's students and classrooms.



6

ELIMINATE 3-YEAR BUDGET MANIPULATION

California schools are unfairly required to budget for today's students based on speculative three-year revenue projections, a mandate only five other states impose.

This practice allows school districts to claim financial hardship, hoard education funds in growing reserves and avoid spending on students and educators.

Removing this requirement will ensure resources are used to give today's students the quality education they deserve now.

Background: AB 1200, signed into law in 1991, requires that school districts make three-year projections in their budget to ensure that they have the minimum reserve levels required by law to prevent insolvency. In practice, these projections frequently overestimate expenditures and underestimate revenue. Too often these inaccurate budget projections result in unnecessary cuts to school staffing and student supports, creating instability for students, educators and school communities.

Decades of school district budget cycles and projections prove that three-year projections are highly unreliable when tested against what happens in California school districts. The large San Francisco Unified School District, for example, underestimated their revenues over a three-year period so that by the 2024–25 school year it had amassed \$131 million dollars *more* in its reserves than what it had projected. During the same time period, medium-size

Natomas Unified School District's reserves were \$30 million more than what it had projected.

Educators in both San Francisco and Natomas went on strike earlier this year to demand their districts invest these critical funds in today's students and classrooms, rather than have them sit in reserve funds.

"It's a weaponization of multi-year projections, and it really comes out in the third year," said United Educators of San Francisco (UESF) President Cassandra Curiel. "When our funds are based on projections that are underestimated, it causes the district to lean into an austerity narrative — school closures, other essentials that need to be cut.

"The district had \$300 million in a bank account at the time we went on strike. We won an agreement to spend this money."

Statewide, school districts diverted an average of \$30 million away from their classrooms into reserves in the 2024–25 school year — all due to the three-year budget manipulation.

Average daily attendance (ADA, the days students are present divided by instructional days) is the primary way budgeting is determined. Districts control what assumptions they build into their three-year projections, which are not open to stakeholder input. This lack of transparency undermines trust between districts and their educators and students/families.

Our union is asking lawmakers to eliminate the three-year budgeting requirement and ensure ADA dollars are spent on today's kids, not on reserves.



▼ Elyse Johansson, Lena Hwang and Rachel Herrera at Aptos Middle School in San Francisco in 2022. Hwang is a mentor teacher; Johansson and Herrera were resident teachers under her and now both teach in the district.



“We are committed to building our future for our students and communities. This requires well-prepared, resourced educators.”

—CTA Vice President **Leslie Littman**

for them to do their jobs and for students to learn and succeed.

Our union believes ongoing funding for programs to address teacher education and preparation, and recruitment and retention, are vital to ensure we have a supply of qualified educators now and in the future. We support the \$250 million in the Governor’s 2026–27 budget proposal for educator residency programs. Such investments, alongside initiatives like the Golden State Teacher Grant Program, are critical in preparing, recruiting and retaining diverse, highly

qualified teachers.

Our union also supports **AB 1904** (Gipson), which establishes the Credentialed Educator Apprenticeship Act at the Commission on Teacher Credentialing in partnership with the Division of Apprenticeship Standards. The credentialed teacher apprenticeship program would assist in recruiting a more diverse pool of candidates and be a new pathway that would strengthen the preparation process of new educators; provide a financial incentive to enter the profession; and offer high-quality, ongoing professional learning for candidates to help ensure they are supported, can be effective, and persist in the profession.

AB 1904 will allow prospective teachers to earn while they learn through paid, on-the-job training and mentorship from experienced educators. It would align California’s existing teacher residency programs with a federal and state apprenticeship framework, enabling participating programs to leverage both federal and state funding.

In addition, our union has sought to remove barriers that dissuade otherwise talented and qualified aspiring educators from entering the profession by eliminating Teaching Performance Assessments (TPAs). TPAs are time consuming and expensive, do not prepare teachers for the classroom, disproportionately impact BIPOC educator candidates and detract from programs with proven success.

7

STRENGTHEN THE TEACHER PIPELINE

The teacher shortage in California is acute, and as more educators retire or leave the profession, the need to grow the pipeline of qualified educators to replace them is increasingly urgent.

Many school districts struggle to fill vacancies with fully credentialed teachers, and often end up hiring underprepared or substitute teachers, increasing class sizes, or cutting courses. California has invested more than \$1 billion to strengthen the teacher workforce, focusing on increasing teacher supply in shortage areas, improving affordability and access to teacher preparation, and incentivizing skilled teachers to work in high-need schools. But many of these investments rely on one-time funding or funding that expires.

Meanwhile, the educator pipeline is dwindling. According to the Learning Policy Institute, half as many new teachers in 2022 graduated through a California-based traditional teacher prep program as in 2004, the peak year. Surveys have found that aspiring educators are disinclined to pursue a teaching career when they know they will not make a living wage, that their health care coverage will be inadequate, and that their schools lack the necessary staffing and resources

▼ UTR members went on strike to demand fully staffed schools, among other things.



▼ UTR Organizing Chair and lead plaintiff Sam Cleare



Qualified Teachers in Every Classroom

Legal victory in West Contra Costa County upholds landmark case

THE FIRST-EVER lawsuit filed to enforce the landmark 2004 *Williams v. California* settlement resulted in a victory for students, parents and educators in West Contra Costa County in late March.

In *Cleare v. West Contra Costa Unified School District*, the California First District Court of Appeal found that WCCUSD failed to carry its burden of demonstrating it had exhausted all available options to fill teacher vacancies. The *Williams* guarantee, of a qualified teacher in every classroom, remains the law.

The ruling reverses a 2024 Contra Costa Superior Court decision that had excused the district’s illegal staffing practices on the grounds that a statewide teacher shortage made compliance “impossible.” The appeals court rejected that reasoning, making clear that districts must show they have done everything available to them before claiming they cannot comply with the law.

“The WCCUSD community has faced negligence for too long,” said Sam Cleare, lead plaintiff, United Teachers of

Richmond (UTR) organizing chair and educator in WCCUSD. “By breaking the law, the district has stolen educational opportunities for thousands of children. This is a crucial step to holding our district leadership accountable and providing every child everywhere with an educator in the classroom.”

The *Williams v. California* settlement requires the state to ensure all public school students have equal access to instructional materials, safe/clean facilities, and qualified teachers. It resulted in nearly \$1 billion in funding for school repairs and materials and established a formal complaint process for deficiencies.

Cleare v. WCCUSD was filed in July 2024 by civil rights law firm Public Advocates, a lead counsel on the *Williams* case, and pro bono counsel Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP, on behalf of six educators, parents and staff at Stege Elementary, Helms Middle and John F. Kennedy High schools. Students at these schools — who are disproportionately Black, Latinx and from lower-income families — had endured years of rotating, uncertified substitutes while WCCUSD



employed scores of fully credentialed administrators and some teachers in non-classroom assignments and never pursued other available certification options, including last-resort state waivers.

“California law mandates the District’s duty to fill every classroom with a permanent and qualified teacher for the school year,” the court wrote in its judgment.

“This ruling is a victory not just for the students in West Contra Costa Unified, but for every student in California who is owed a qualified teacher,” said Karissa Provenza, Public Advocates staff attorney. “For over two years, I watched the district consistently fail its most marginalized students with little regard — and then kick the can down the road and ask to be excused for it. The court agreed that ‘delay

is not a real option when the quality of children’s education is at issue.”

The decision has statewide significance. No other California school district had taken the position that a teacher shortage excuses years of failing to provide students with a certificated teacher, per the law. A ruling in WCCUSD’s favor would have opened the door for districts across the state to abandon California’s more than 20-year *Williams* guarantee.

UTR President Francisco Ortiz has said that this year the district had about 140 substitute teachers.

“It’s validating that after so many years of us sounding the alarm and really trying to bring attention to the

district to actually make this a priority, that the court is in agreement,” Ortiz told Richmondside. “It’s a good victory for our students and for the rest of California.”

“By breaking the law, the district has stolen educational opportunities for thousands of children. This is a crucial step to holding our district leadership accountable and providing every child everywhere with an educator in the classroom.”

—United Teachers of Richmond Organizing Chair
Sam Cleare

SANTA ROSA TEACHERS:

No Confidence Votes in District Leadership

THE 800+ MEMBERS of Santa Rosa Teachers Association (SRTA) have no confidence in Santa Rosa City Schools leaders and the Sonoma County Superintendent of Schools, as the school board recently voted to decimate student support services, make sweeping program changes and deep job cuts to solve the district’s financial problems.

SRTA members rallied before an April 22 school board meeting, calling on the school board to reverse the massive cuts. While district leaders are touting their draconian approach, SRTA leaders say the move will lead to the educational ruin of the 12,000-student district.

“They are harming the students and harming the schools and acting like this is a win for the city,” SRTA President Kathryn Howell told the Santa Rosa Press-Democrat. “Reverse the cuts before they do more harm, before they drive more students away, before they force more families out of the district.”

The votes of no confidence in the Santa Rosa interim superintendent, school board president and county superintendent come after a board approval of a \$35-million fiscal recovery plan that will result in 120 layoffs, the dismantling of mental health support staffing for students and a reconfiguration of special education. Last year, the board voted to lay off 150 educators and close six schools by this June. —*Julian Peeples*

▼ Educators and supporters outside of the school board meeting in Santa Rosa.



BARGAINING ROUNDUP

Compiled by **Julian Peeples**

LAGUNA BEACH UNIFIED FACULTY ASSOCIATION

LaBUFA members rallied with their CSEA colleagues to fight back against a Laguna Beach School Board that is blaming educators for the district's mistakes and the school board's failure to lead.

Following the discovery last summer that the district had made an error implementing a negotiated health benefit cap, the district unilaterally backstopped costs over the cap, and board members began blaming the LaBUFA and local CSEA presidents for the error and publicly demanding "the unions" cover the costs. LaBUFA president Scott Wittkop (pictured at a LaBUFA rally in tan cap) has been harassed by board supporters; the CSEA president is being investigated for a fabricated issue.

LaBUFA members have responded by organizing and standing with each other and their supporters as they demand better from the district. In April, they mobilized! Four hundred teachers, classified staff and students held a "One District, One Community" rally outside of a school board meeting, garnering attention in the Los Angeles Times and Orange County Register.



ROCKLIN TEACHERS PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION

In January, RTPA reached agreement for the 2025–26 and 2026–27 academic years. This followed mediation and a fact-finding report process that had previously reached an impasse.

What RTPA members won:

- 2% on-schedule raise effective July 1, 2025
- 2% on-schedule raise effective Feb. 1, 2026
- \$1,000 off-schedule payment
- Equivalent to the cost of 1.2% salary to be added to the Health and Welfare Cap effective July 1, 2026
- .3% on-schedule raise effective July 1, 2026
- 1% on-schedule raise effective Feb. 1, 2027
- Annual stipend of \$2,500 for BCLAD or bilingual certificate
- Annual signing bonus of \$5,000 for all fully credentialed (preliminary and clear) Special Education educators
- Limited reopeners for 2026–27 include a TK/K MOU; prep time; MOU on elementary music; and evaluation
- Reduced adjunct duty and committee work hours
- Limited parameters and the number of in-person staff meetings, including the joint development of the staff meeting calendar
- Established a joint safety task force to address safety concerns in classrooms

SIERRA COLLEGE FACULTY ASSOCIATION

Earlier this year, SCFA members won a three-year agreement and the following victories:

- 3.3% effective March 1, 2026
- One-time, off-schedule payment of \$1,900 for FTF/LTT's and 2.4689% for active status part-time faculty
- Salary schedule restructure to the part-time faculty and full-time faculty overload salary schedule
- Parity language to define the part-time teaching faculty workload at 75% of a full-time faculty workload. SCFA is committed to fighting for equal pay for equal work, for part-time faculty and full-time overload work.
- An across-the-board increase to all salary schedules equal to the same percentage of COLA received by the district effective July 2, 2026
- Established a Part-Time Healthcare MOU for medical, dental and vision coverage reimbursement





WINTON TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Members of WTA in Merced County won a two-year agreement that included the following victories:

- 3% salary schedule increase
- Removal of waiver of rights, including no strike clause and communication limits with school board
- Substantial changes to association rights and district rights, all in favor of WTA

ASOCIACIÓN DE MAESTROS UNIDOS

In April, the members of AMU won a landmark agreement for this school year and averted a strike by being strike-ready and getting through a 17-hour mediation session. Powered by an unprecedented level of member engagement, unity and collective action, AMU members won:

- 3% on-schedule raise retroactive to July 1, 2025
- Reduction of the work year by four days
- Changes to evaluation process, including preserving ability to bargain future changes based on member feedback

KENTFIELD TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

In March, the Marin County-based KTA settled with Kentfield School District, winning a two-year agreement that included the following:

- 3.5% on-schedule raise
- Additional 1.5% on-schedule raise if the district's parcel tax is approved by voters
- Employer will pay all health increases for employee +1
- All sick days are no-tell days
- Kindergarten class sizes improved to 22-1



ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY EDUCATORS

Members of ACE are taking a vote of no confidence in the Santa Clara County superintendent for his failure to lead with attentiveness and respect, devastating cuts that decrease services to students and communities and stalled labor negotiations, which are now in fact-finding. At the same time, the COE is retaliating against the ACE president for speaking out against his failed leadership and considering a strike. ACE members held numerous rallies this spring. Keep up with their struggle at acesantaclara.com.

▼ Barrera has a record of working with educators and prioritizing classroom teachers' needs.

A Fighter for Public Education

CTA endorses Richard Barrera for Superintendent of Public Instruction



BY LISTENING TO and working alongside educators and prioritizing the needs of classroom teachers, and by listening to students and community, Richard Barrera has helped transform San Diego Unified School District into one of the highest-performing districts in the country.

Now running for California State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) and endorsed by our union, Barrera's vast experience as president and trustee on the SDUSD school board and as a labor and community organizer before that should serve him well on the statewide stage.

He views the SPI role as an organizer who builds coalitions between educators, parents and local school boards to create solutions. The local level, he says, is where the most impactful education decisions are made.

"The way that I would perform the role as state superintendent is to not be spending a lot of time in Sacramento," he told one news outlet. "It's to be out, building relationships with local communities, helping them imagine what's possible and bringing together coalitions that can actually move things and make real progress."

His work in San Diego and with the San Diego Education Association (SDEA) was key in our union's decision to recommend him as SPI.

"His solidarity and deep commitment to public schools have achieved lower class sizes, created opportunities for more bilingual instruction, and expanded science and career pathways in San Diego and beyond," said CTA President David Goldberg,

"Barrera's solidarity and deep commitment to public schools have achieved lower class sizes, created opportunities for more bilingual instruction, and expanded science and career pathways. His leadership proves that when you partner with educators, students win."

—CTA President **David Goldberg**

"His leadership proves that when you partner with educators, students win."

CTA Board Member Kisha Borden, former SDEA president, says that "Richard was a true partner and co-architect of the transformation of San Diego schools. Under his leadership, rooted in the belief that educator working conditions are student learning conditions, we raised base pay by over 40% while protecting fully paid family health benefits. Together, we also transformed over 50 schools into community schools which depend on shared leadership that includes educators, families, administrators and the community."

The statewide direct primary election, which includes the SPI, takes place on June 2.

Experience with community and union work

As the son of immigrants, Barrera grew up understanding that public schools are the great equalizer in American society. He also understood that unions provided work with dignity and were a pathway for many to achieve success in life.

In San Diego, he worked with residents of high-poverty neighborhoods to improve affordable housing, access to living-wage jobs and civic participation. He spent years organizing domestic workers, health care workers and nurses fighting for economic and social justice. As a leader of the San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council, he led the effort to increase the minimum wage and provide paid sick days to over 200,000 San Diego workers. →

▼ In February, Barrera spoke at CTA's Political Academy in Garden Grove.



Richard Barrera

Age: 61

Residence:

A first-generation San Diegan whose father was born in Colombia and grandparents came through Ellis Island.

Education:

Attended San Diego public schools; bachelor's degree in history from UC San Diego; master's in public policy from Harvard University.

Family:

Married, two sons — both graduates of SDUSD schools

What friends say:

In a Voice of San Diego story in 2016, colleagues said he possesses a near-photographic memory, famously rarely carrying a pencil or taking notes because he remembers everything.

After seeing firsthand how public schools shaped the futures of the communities he served, he ran for the San Diego Unified School Board in 2008 with a goal that every child would have access to the same opportunities he had. During his 18 years on the board, student test scores have risen, graduation rates have increased, and the achievement gap has narrowed.

Barrera has noted that this success is based on pulling together and listening to the right stakeholders. “What we’ve built has been a model of a district that listens to the people who are closest to our kids — our educators, our parents, our students — and we have made significant progress on issues that school districts should be working on,” he said in a news story.

His coalition-building skills have led to the successful passage of four school bonds totaling \$11.5 billion — helping to ensure educators have the resources and support they need, create state-of-the-art campuses and make SDUSD the first district in the state to guarantee transitional kindergarten for every four-year-old. (See SDUSD budget priorities on the next page.)

Informed by his experience and what works, Barrera’s ambitions for SPI are centered on educator-led change, expanded funding and community-based solutions.

A statewide vision for fully funded schools

Since July 2024, Barrera has also served as a senior policy adviser to current State Superintendent Tony Thurmond’s Initiatives Office, which oversees the Whole Child Division, including school-based health programs and advisory councils for parents and students. This role has connected him with statewide education policy and work on issues like chronic absenteeism and affordable housing on school district land.

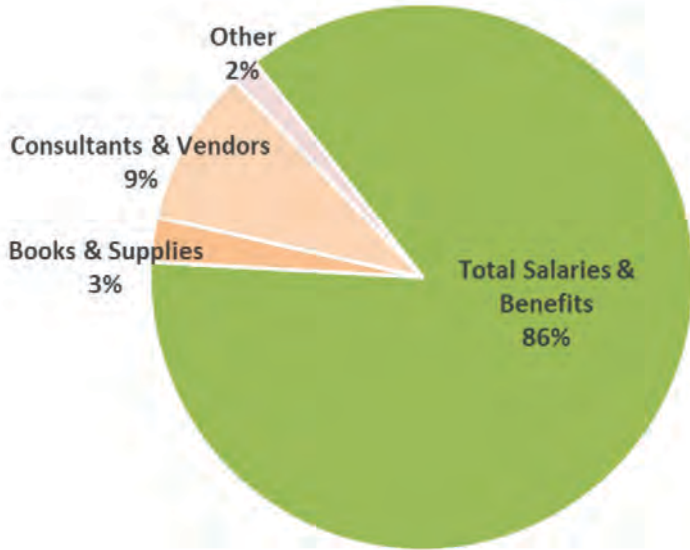
His platform for SPI reflects both his local track record and

a broader statewide vision. He supports local control of school districts, the use of formative assessments throughout the academic year, and ethnic studies, among other issues.

As SPI, Barrera has stated he will “help local communities organize and pass their own school funding measures while leading a statewide effort to increase education funding and reinvest California’s wealth into its public schools.” He has also said that he will work with districts on strategic plans to improve student achievement, strengthen teacher support and expand access to critical resources.

“The solutions aren’t in Sacramento,” he said. “They’re in our classrooms, our communities, and the hands of the educators and families who know what our students need. I’m not here to push top-down mandates. I’m here to organize, build coalitions, and fight for the resources and support that schools across the state deserve.” ■

San Diego Unified Budget Prioritization 2024/25



District Invests in Educators, Students

San Diego Unified School District is California's second-largest district, serving more than 121,000 K-12 students with a highly diverse population, including 60+ languages. Highlights: 90% graduation rate, 22:1 student-teacher ratio, and a 59.4% free or reduced meal eligibility rate.

SDUSD's investment in educators and students, and corresponding rise in student outcomes that are among the best in the country, serves as a model nationwide. Its priorities are reflected in the budget: 86% of the 2024-25 budget went to salaries and benefits, vs. a growing increase in districts that spend far less on educators and far more on outside contractors and other services.

Source: CDE Standardized Accounting Code Structure Data



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▼ Tom Steyer joined UESF educators on strike earlier this year.



A Governor for Working People

CTA endorses Tom Steyer for California’s top job

OUR UNION’S Board of Directors voted to recommend Tom Steyer in California’s 2026 gubernatorial primary in mid-April.

Steyer has promised to reform Proposition 13, which caps property tax rates that finance public schools and other government services. Reform would primarily impact corporations in the state, forcing them to pay their fair share and dramatically increasing funding for our schools and communities.

Steyer has been “a champion for holding corporations accountable and closing the corporate tax loopholes that leave hardworking Californians behind and our essential public services without vital revenue to benefit the wealthy few,” said CTA President David Goldberg,

“He also walked the picket lines with educators on strike in San Francisco earlier this year, showing a depth of commitment to educator unions we expect from all elected leaders.”

“We deserve a governor who has the courage to hold corporations accountable, tackle the affordability crisis and ensure California students and communities have access to quality public schools.”

—CTA President **David Goldberg**

During the March strike by United Educators of San Francisco, Steyer noted “When teachers are undervalued, students pay the price. I stand firmly with our educators in demanding fair pay, stable working conditions, fully funded health care, strong special

education support, living wages and housing security. Their struggle must be a wake-up call to our leaders: California must invest more in our schools.”

The top two vote-getters for governor in the June 2 Primary Election will face off in the General Election in November.

In addition:

At March State Council, delegates voted to endorse Tom Umberg for the 4th district Board of Equalization, and previously endorsed Richard Barrera for State Superintendent of Public Instruction (see story on page 49).

Note: CTA’s recommendation process is continuing; for the latest updates, see cta.org/our-advocacy/election-2026.



California Primary Election June 2, 2026

- The last day to register to vote for the June 2, 2026, Primary Election is **May 18, 2026**.
- All California active registered voters will receive a ballot for the June 2, 2026, Primary Election.
- County elections officials will begin mailing ballots by May 4, 2026.
- Secure ballot drop-off locations open on May 5, 2026.
- Ballots can be dropped off at a drop-off location, county elections office, or returned by mail.
- The first vote centers open for early in-person voting in all Voter's Choice Act counties on May 23, 2026.
- In-person early voting locations throughout

- California will be open on Saturday, May 30, 2026.
- June 2 is the last day to vote in person or return a ballot by 8 p.m. Polls are open 7 a.m.-8 p.m. Vote-by-mail ballots must be postmarked no later than June 2. If mailing on Election Day, get a hand-stamped postmark from a postal employee inside a U.S. Post Office.

Source: California Secretary of State; for more information, visit sos.ca.gov/elections.



CTA, NEA Leaders Elected and Recommended

The results of elections held at March 2026 State Council are below.

Elected by acclamation:

CTA Board of Directors (term of office: June 26, 2026–June 25, 2029)

- **DISTRICT A**, VanCedric Williams
- **DISTRICT E**, Shelly Gupton
- **DISTRICT K**, Wendy Eccles
- **DISTRICT N**, Denise Bradford
- **AT-LARGE**, Angela Der Ramos

CTA/ABC Committee (term of office: June 26, 2026–June 25, 2029)

- **DISTRICT G**, Joel Block
- **DISTRICT H**, Andrew Ramirez
- **DISTRICT I**, Mark Norberg
- **DISTRICT O**, Anthony Garcia

Elected by ballot:

NEA Board of Directors (Sept. 1, 2026–Aug. 31, 2029)

- **DISTRICT 1**, Naqiba Gregory
- **DISTRICT 12**, Dr. Laurie Crawford

In addition, Council approved the following CTA Board-recommended candidates for the following NEA offices:

- **Princess Moss** for NEA President
- **Marisol Garcia** for NEA Vice President
- **Robert Rodriguez** for NEA Secretary-Treasurer
- **Shannon McCann** for NEA Executive Committee
- **Cecily Myart-Cruz** for NEA Executive Committee

Per-Pupil Spending Rises – But Can Improve

OUR UNION'S relentless fight — for years — to increase state education funding and per-pupil spending is making an impact. A late 2025 report, "Making the Grade," by the Education Law Center finds that California has jumped to 13th in the nation in per-pupil spending.

As of 2022–23, the latest year for which comparisons are available, California spends \$19,894 per student annually. (Number one is New York, which spends \$29,440 annually.) California was ranked 28th as recently as 2021–22; it has been moving up steadily since ranking a dismal 50th in 2010–11 during the Great Recession.

Our union has been key in advocating for increased funding — particularly as the Golden State's economy has improved to currently being the fourth largest *in the world*. With the wealth in our state, we should be first in the nation in student spending. The power we have in our union is behind the increases in student spending; we must keep building union strength in every local chapter and every worksite.

Other highlights in the report include data showing California's average cost-adjusted teacher pay is near the top — a reflection of our union's successful efforts to win professional wages for educators. But context is needed: The skyrocketing cost of living here and outrageous health care costs negate any salary advantage we might have.

Finally, the number of teachers relative to students in California is near the bottom of the nation. This is no surprise to educators, as class sizes continue to be a massive detriment to giving students the attention and time they need.

There is much work to be done to address these issues, and as always our union is committed to the fight. For the full report, visit edlawcenter.org.

Keep Public Funds in Public Schools

PUBLIC EDUCATION is the backbone of our democracy, yet the national tax-credit voucher program created by H.R. 1, the budget reconciliation bill passed last summer, threatens to undermine it. This program is designed to divert billions of taxpayer dollars away from public schools and into private and religious institutions.

This program offers a dollar-for-dollar tax credit of up to \$1,700 per year, far more valuable than the usual deduction for charitable contributions. This allows individuals to bypass funding public infrastructure and give the money to an intermediary organization, which then funnels the money to private and religious schools. If this program launches as scheduled on Jan. 1,

2027, the consequences will be devastating for the 90% of American students who rely on public education.

How the program threatens our communities:

- Rural impact: In areas where 20% of our students live, public schools are more than just classrooms — they are vital economic centers. Losing this funding could cripple local economies.
- Loss of rights: Students with special needs lose critical legal rights and protections under the Individuals with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act when they move from public to private schools.
- Erosion of quality: Diverting billions to unaccountable private entities weakens the quality public education that our students need and deserve.



Tell Congress to repeal the national tax-credit voucher program before it takes effect: Contact your representative and urge them to support the Keep Public Funds in Public Schools Act. Go to bit.ly/4eS2Mo2 or use the QR code to take action now. —Amy Peruzzaro

▼ CTA Board Member Jesse Aguilar, NEA Director Rafael Gonzalez and CTA/ABC Committee Member Ed De La Vega stand in front of the Alice Piper statue.



▼ Runners brought lunch for educators at Mammoth Elementary.



▼ Photos below: The Mono WHO Awards celebration in Mammoth Lakes.



High-Level Connections

THE 182-MILE Inyo-Mono Run in the Eastern Sierra is an annual event that brings together our union members from 10 High Desert locals along with chapter and CTA leaders and staff.

This year's run took place April 21-24. Runners visited multiple school sites along the way, bringing lunch to educators as well as CTA informational materials. These included handouts on our union's work and mission, professional development opportunities and member benefits. About 400 educators in total joined to break bread and connect with colleagues, as the 18 runners hit almost every site of the locals in the area.

About 400 educators took the opportunity to lunch and connect with colleagues.

Big Pine High was one of the stops. The school was where 15-year-old Paiute student Alice Piper was denied entry due to her race. She successfully sued the district in 1924 to integrate classrooms and allow indigenous students to attend. In June 2014, a statue outside Big Pine High marked Piper's contributions to improving educational equality for Native Americans in California. June 2 is now Alice Piper Day.

The 2026 run coincided with local We Honor Ours (WHO) celebrations. Bishop TA, Inyo County TA, Owens Valley TA and Southern Inyo TA handed out awards on April 22, and Mammoth EA, Mammoth ESP and Mono County Office of Education EA followed suit the next day. (Big Pine EA, Round Valley EA and Eastern Sierra TA round out the 10 locals.) Congrats to all!

The 2026 run coincided with local We Honor Ours (WHO) celebrations. Bishop TA, Inyo County TA, Owens Valley TA and Southern Inyo TA handed out awards on April 22, and Mammoth EA, Mammoth ESP and Mono County Office of Education EA followed suit the next day. (Big Pine EA, Round Valley EA and Eastern Sierra TA round out the 10 locals.) Congrats to all!

ACCESS TO SAVINGS:

Enter to Win a \$5,000 Trip

IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES: As a CTA member, you're eligible to participate in the CTA Access to Savings travel contest. The winner will receive up to \$5,000 in travel reservations.

Deadline to submit your entry is Sept. 4, 2026. To participate follow these steps:

- Sign up for cta.enjoymydeals.com if you haven't already.
- Log in and visit cta.enjoymydeals.com/travel March 4 through Sept. 4.
- You are now entered to win. Earn more entries by visiting daily!



You can submit maximum one entry per day. The winner will be notified via email and phone by Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2026, and must respond by Sept. 16, 2026, or an alternate will be chosen.

Travel reservations of up to \$5,000 booked as a single transaction must be made from the current inventory on the CTA Access to Savings website. All travel must be booked by Dec. 31, 2026, for travel dates on or before Dec. 31, 2027.

Full terms and conditions are at cta.enjoymydeals.com/travel. Good luck!

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Invest in the schools our students deserve

Celebrate 2026 California Day of the Teacher, National School Nurse Day and CTA Education Support Professionals Day

ALL STUDENTS deserve a well-rounded, joyful education in well-resourced, safe and stable schools. This means access to qualified educators, counselors, nurses and mental health professionals for every student. This also means smaller class sizes and caseloads, and pay and benefits for educators that match the essential role they play in our society.

To achieve these conditions, our union is fighting to fully fund our schools — *now*. After decades of disinvestment, we simply can't wait any longer. We are demanding that our legislators and policymakers invest in the schools our students deserve.

"We Can't Wait!" is the ongoing campaign to make this happen. It is the theme of the enclosed poster honoring the 2026 California Day of the Teacher (May 13), National School Nurse Day (May 6) and CTA ESP Day (May 19).

Here are a few ways you can celebrate at your school:

- Put up the 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**.

▶ This year's poster has been front and center at many of our locals' actions in the past months.

The We Can't Wait campaign has seen educators and many of our locals involved in strikes and other actions to win the public schools our students deserve. Art has been central to these beautiful and powerful actions.

The poster is by Sacramento-based artist **Franceska Gamez**. "When we invest in teachers and schools, we are nurturing possibility, imagination and the future we all share," Gamez stated regarding her poster art.

Gamez is one of several artists who have created artwork for the We Can't Wait campaign. Their visuals are being used to support educators as they demand meaningful change for their students and schools. To view and order campaign posters, visit wecantwait.info. And check out cta.org/dayoftheteacher and cta.org/espdays to celebrate each other!





DAY OF THE TEACHER • MAY 13, 2026
NATIONAL SCHOOL NURSE DAY • MAY 6, 2026
CTA ESP DAY • MAY 19, 2026



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WE CAN'T WAIT!





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