

california educator

SUMMER 2026 VOLUME 30 ISSUE 5

SPECIAL ISSUE

**#UNION
STRONG**

2025-2026

**OUR YEAR
OF ACTION**

— and Wins
PAGE 6

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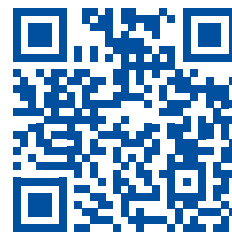
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california educator

VOLUME 30 ISSUE 5



#WeAreCTA

OUR VOICE, OUR UNION, OUR PROFESSION

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

OUR STATE BUDGET WINS

- Member organizing and actions results in public school employees now having up to 14 weeks of paid pregnancy leave. **PAGE 27**
- The Community Schools model is a proven success; the program is set to receive ongoing funding. **PAGE 28** cta.org/statebudget

ELECTION 2026

Our union endorses Richard Barrera for State Superintendent of Public Instruction and Xavier Becerra for governor. **PAGES 30–31** View other recommended candidates at cta.org/election

YES ON PROP. 3!

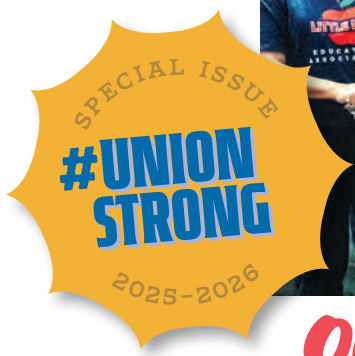
Don't let students and schools lose \$15 billion annually in funding — and suffer massive cuts in resources and staffing. Vote yes on Prop. 3! Find more, including a mini-poster, on **PAGES 40–41**. Get involved at [#YesOn3](https://cta.org/YesOn3)

DREAM BIG FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Help reclaim the future with a bold collective vision for public schools in California. We want to hear from you as — together — we develop a unifying framework to guide, anchor and strengthen our campaigns. **PAGE 39** bit.ly/4eZGbEA



Photos: Twin River United Educators, left, and Little Lake Education Assn. members on strike; story on Page 6.



OUR YEAR OF ACTION

Celebrating Our **#UnionStrong** Wins in 2025-26

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Our Fight for Health Care

Strikes, actions lead to big gains

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Our Union Wins Paid Pregnancy Leave

Our union fought for and won this State Budget milestone

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Photos this page: Little Lake Education Assn. and United Educators of San Francisco (UESF) members on strike earlier this year. Cover: UESF members and allies march to City Hall; photograph by Zoe Hertz, @zoziehertz.



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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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² All loans subject to credit approval. Other terms and conditions may apply. Visit providentcu.org for details.



Building Our Union Power to Win in November

When we fight, we win.

I've been saying this for a long time, and I'm not sure I've ever felt it more in our union than in this moment right now. This issue celebrates the power of us and our historic string of victories during the past year, including six major strikes across the state, huge wins on health care for thousands and organizing together to push back on austerity schemes at the local and state levels.

We made history together this year — from picket lines to the halls of the Capitol to knocking on thousands of doors to defend democracy. Our union is strong, and our students and communities are better because of it.

I'm excited to share that our fight to permanently maintain Prop. 55 funding for our public schools and community colleges has reached the next stage, qualifying for the November ballot and receiving a number: Proposition 3. I want to acknowledge everyone who organized at your worksites to gather signatures to qualify this crucial initiative. We did that together and it's going to take every single one of us to pass Prop. 3, starting this summer and until Election Day.

We will be organizing precinct walks in neighborhoods across the state to talk with voters about how Prop. 3 is a simple choice: Support students and public education or cut taxes for the wealthy. Failure to pass an extension would mean 1-in-6 educators statewide could lose their jobs, which is a catastrophe we cannot allow. Go to cta.org/yeson3 for more information and to volunteer to join the fight for YES on Prop. 3.

We'll also be talking to our neighbors and friends about our endorsed candidate for Superintendent of Public Instruction, Richard Barrera. With our support, he advanced to the November election where he will face off against a headline-chasing extremist who wants to ban books. We need a state superintendent who loves our public schools, every student attending them and their dedicated educators — and that person is Richard Barrera. I'm so excited to work together to propel him to victory this fall.

This summer, we continued our fight to defend voter-approved Prop. 98 funding, visiting politicians in the Capitol and their district offices to demand they fully fund Prop. 98. The final budget



passed by the governor and the Legislature in June continues to violate the state constitution by withholding \$3.9 billion in Prop. 98 funds. Our union will continue this fight, using every resource and option available. The final budget also contains several wins that were made possible through our collective action, the biggest of which is the inclusion of 14 weeks of paid pregnancy leave for all educators — a historic victory that our union has been fighting to win for some time now.

In June, we also began a visioning process for our union where we will be asking members across the state to share their vision for public schools. We know we will keep winning by organizing and campaigning together. It's time for us to reclaim the future with a bold vision for public schools in California. Our goal is to hear from at least 30,000 members, so stay tuned for opportunities to participate in this process.

Across our union, educators are organizing and winning in historic ways — committing to a shared vision for California public schools where all students are seen, supported and celebrated.

I hope you all have a restful summer and get ready for a busy fall continuing our fight for the public schools our communities need and *all* students deserve.

David B. Goldberg

CTA PRESIDENT

▼ Educators, parents and community packed the streets during the Twin Rivers United Educators strike. Photo: @movementphotographer



UNION POWER!

SPECIAL ISSUE
#UNIONSTRONG

2025-2026

Celebrating our **#UnionStrong** wins in 2025-26

WHAT AN AMAZING YEAR: Up and down California our members organized, rallied, stood firm at the bargaining table and took to the streets in massive numbers to win better teaching and learning conditions, more resources for our students and schools, and salaries and benefits that come closer to reflecting our value as professionals.

Most significantly, we mobilized each other *and* our communities in demanding what we need and what our students deserve. Allies including families and community partners stood shoulder to shoulder with us as we marched, voiced our concerns at school board meetings and town halls, created

compelling art and messaging, and supported often long and tense negotiations.

“This storm is driven by decades of disinvestment in us as workers and in our students,” said CTA President David Goldberg. “Our members are saying ‘we’re not taking it anymore.’ We’re going to keep the pressure up so that all of us get what we deserve and what our students deserve.”

The gains we made in the last year have been momentous. While much work remains, we take time to celebrate our victories in all regions of the state and acknowledge our union power. Onward!

Statewide power: On the following pages, we note our locals' fights and victories by region:



"Our actions have been electric. When we all fight back, there is no limit to what we can win."
—CTA President **David Goldberg**

REGION 1

▼ ACE educators taking action in March.



ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY EDUCATORS

After working without a contract and declaring impasse, ACE educators in March voted 95% in support of authorizing a work stoppage. Following mediation and fact-finding, ACE settled their contract, agreeing to a 2% salary increase. ACE is challenging the Santa Clara County Office of Education over the sudden leave of the ACE President in early March after a whistleblower complaint. It filed a Public Employment Relations Board complaint, citing retaliatory actions against leadership and bad-faith bargaining over special education cuts and layoffs. It launched a no-confidence petition against the SCCOE superintendent, citing union-busting and retaliation. ACE members and allies have packed school board meetings to demand transparency in the whistleblower investigation.



▼ Dublin educators took their belongings from their classrooms in advance of their successful strike.



DUBLIN TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

With the support of CSEA partners, families and community, DTA went on strike for four days in March and won guaranteed elementary counselors, smaller class sizes and caseloads, improved health care and a cost-of-living adjustment increase. These gains will make a significant impact on class sizes and the individual attention Dublin students deserve. "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 toward the schools our students deserve," said DTA President Brad Dobrzanski.

▼ SRTA educators outside of the April school board meeting.



SANTA ROSA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

In April 2026, more than 97% of the 800-member SRTA passed a vote of no confidence in the district and county education leadership after the school board approved a \$35 million fiscal recovery plan that will result in 120 layoffs and deep cuts to mental health support staffing and changes to special education services. SRTA members continue to demand that the board reverse the massive cuts that will harm students and schools.

▼ After a year of negotiations and a resounding strike vote, OEA reached a tentative agreement with Oakland Unified in late February.



OAKLAND EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

In early 2026, OEA organized members and community and mounted a strike threat through fact-finding, resulting in a historic settlement. Wins reflected district reprioritization of students and classrooms in their budget and included commitments to fully funded Black thriving and community schools.



SOQUEL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

SEA organized members, parents and community members to support district investment in its educators, as the cost of living in Soquel, located in the most expensive place to live in the country, has resulted in a huge retention problem. Educators in the Santa Cruz County local engaged the community with petitions and rallies, eventually forcing the district in February to commit to salary increases and improvements to skyrocketing health care costs.



▼ United PCS held a May Day rally to bring awareness to members' fight for a fair contract.



UNITED PCS

United PCS and the Pacific Collegiate School administration are currently at impasse following mediation sessions. Educators, who have been working without a contract, are fighting for a 3.5% retroactive salary increase for the current and upcoming school years. Due to lower pay and high burnout, the school faced a 34% faculty turnover rate. During a May Day demonstration, United PCS members presented the school board with an official strike petition.

▼ UESF members convey their message to their students, families, community — and the world.



▼ As far as the eye can see: UTR members and supporters on strike.



UNITED TEACHERS OF RICHMOND

In December 2025, 1,500-member strong UTR went on strike, the first in West Contra Costa Unified's history. At the end of the four-day walkout, members won an 8% raise over two years, 100% employer-paid family health benefits, increased pay for special education staff and strengthened protections for educators and student class sizes. "It's all about building relationships and having those 1-on-1 conversations," said UTR President Francisco Ortiz. "We wouldn't have been able to achieve our major collective victory if we hadn't done that hard work at the beginning, centered around member voice and ensuring that our messaging was clear, consistent and student centered."

UNITED EDUCATORS OF SAN FRANCISCO

UESF's 6,500 members took to the streets in February, the first strike in almost 50 years. After their 11-month campaign and four-day strike, educators won a historic two-year agreement, including raises for certificated and classified staff as well as paraeducators, fully funded family health benefits, additional support for special education educators — and sanctuary and housing protections for San Francisco Unified families. "The fight doesn't stop because we won — the fight continues because we won and it moves into the next phase," said Cassondra Curiel, president of UESF. "We all know what we need and it's our collective pressure that's been able to move the dial, and it's still not enough. We're not going to stop until the funding for public education is proportional to the level of respect for young people and our collective future."

REGION 2

▼ Unforgettable moment: NTA and TRUE members march in strike solidarity across Sacramento's Tower Bridge. Credit: @movementphotographer



NATOMAS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

After more than a year of bargaining, NTA's 650+ members went on strike in March for seven days, winning more than \$26 million in investments toward stabilizing the district's staffing crisis — which had left more than 800 students without a permanent educator. Included in these wins were a 5.25% salary increase over two years, a pathway to fully funded health care, more prep time, support to improve classroom safety, and increased pay for teachers with high special education caseloads and class size overages. "The key to winning was building a strong local union. It was not just a few of us who stood up — it was 97% of us who voted to go on strike," said NTA President Nico Vaccaro. "All our gains came from building the strength of our union."

▼ PCTA members and supporters advocate for students, schools at a February school board meeting.



▼ Striking TRUE members held firm for 12 days before agreeing to huge contractual gains with the district. Credit: @movementphotographer



TWIN RIVERS UNITED EDUCATORS

TRUE went on strike in March for 12 days, the longest teachers' strike in California since Oakland educators left their classrooms for 26 days in 1996. The 1,500-member local won ongoing fully paid health care; competitive salary increases of 7% over two years; a significant improvement to overage pay and sixth period pay, which will have lasting impacts on class size; improvements to speech language pathology pay scales; and improvements for early childhood education and adult ed teachers. "I'm hearing what an inspiration it was to see us hold the line and win," said TRUE President Brittoni Ward. "Winning this together and being an example for other locals across the state — If we can accomplish this, anyone can. Organize, mobilize and hold that line! This needs to be the standard we're working toward and it's really exciting."

PLUMAS COUNTY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

PCTA led a strong, community-driven "No Layoffs" campaign to protect educators and defend student learning after Plumas USD approved 32 layoffs in May. While the district is currently in state receivership, educators launched a petition and digital ad campaign calling on the state-appointed administrator to advocate for students by keeping teachers and instructional staff in schools instead of making these drastic personnel cuts. The community rallied together and the union grew in strength, united in their fight for schools.



▼ The educators of WSTA were ready to strike.



WEST SACRAMENTO TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

After negotiating for over a year, 96% of WSTA members voted to support a strike in February. But members' solidarity and willingness to strike had an impact at the bargaining table, and WSTA reached a tentative agreement in March that included a 9% wage increase over two years, fully paid Kaiser health care through June 2027, increased stipends and higher investment in special education staff.

▼ Karen Roberts, center, and Community College Assn. and Long Beach City Faculty Assn. officers and other supporters attend a hearing in 2024. The outcome: The CTA-backed lawsuit filed by Long Beach City College instructors Roberts and Seija Rohkea was able to expand to include multiple LBCC faculty; the 2025 landmark ruling has since impacted community college districts statewide.



▼ Roberts and Rohkea.



Statewide Victory

Parity for Part-time Community College Instructors

IN 2022, our union filed a lawsuit against Long Beach Community College District on behalf of two adjunct professors, members of the **Community College Association**, for violation of state minimum wage laws. The district only paid them for their hours spent lecturing in front of a class and not for hours spent grading, lesson planning and meeting with students. In February 2025, an LA County Superior Court judge issued a landmark decision ruling that because adjuncts are paid hourly and earn far less than exempt employees, they are *not* exempt and must be paid for every hour worked. The

LBCCD board agreed to an \$18 million settlement to compensate 1,450+ current and former adjunct professors for back-owed wages spanning a six-year period.

Following the legal victory, the **Certificated Hourly Instructors (CHI-CTA)** union at Long Beach successfully negotiated their salary schedule pay rates from a 42% parity factor to 51% (an average 9% pay increase). Because almost all California community college districts utilize the same hourly pay structures for adjuncts, districts statewide have been forced to proactively renegotiate contracts to avoid similar lawsuits.

Jessica Beard, Jackie Howard, Gabriella Landeros and Jonathon Mello contributed to this story. Additional reporting: Julian Peeples. Photo research: Amy Peruzzaro.

REGION 3

APPLE VALLEY UNIFIED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Low wages, increased cost of living, and larger class sizes were forcing many AVUTA educators to neighboring districts, yet Apple Valley Unified refused to address their issues. In February, 91% of AVUTA members voted to authorize a strike, with 78% voicing no confidence in the district superintendent. AVUTA achieved a tentative agreement later that month, with a boost in wages to improve educator retention, more affordable health care benefits and smaller class sizes.

▼ AVUTA members, joined by CTA President David Goldberg, at a school board rally in January.



▼ DUEA members were strike-ready in January.



DUARTE UNIFIED EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

After years without salary increases and with the lowest district health benefits contributions in LA County, and after more than a year of negotiating and mediation, DUEA educators were fed up. All 170 members participated in a strike authorization vote, which passed with 97% support. In January, DUEA reached a tentative agreement that included salary increases, improved district health benefits contributions and elementary prep time. DUEA also collected signatures from 86% of members in support of the Prop. 55 extension campaign. Chapter leaders have begun to train other locals in the San Gabriel Valley on organizing to win better agreements.

▼ LLEA President Maria Pilios (fist raised) led the local and its many supporters in a successful strike in April.



LITTLE LAKE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Parents and community came out in droves to support LLEA educators during their strike April 16–29, the first in 150 years. The 200-member local fought for and won 90% of health benefits, additional support for special education teachers and a growing population of students with special education needs, and no increase to class sizes, with each teacher receiving a \$1,000 bonus. To other chapters considering a similar action, LLEA President Maria Pilios advised, “Make sure you reach out to your communities because the school board knows we work for them, but sometimes they forget they work for the community. The parents were the driving factor in our fight.”



- ▼ The rally at LA's Grand Park in March drew 30,000+.
Credit: United Teachers Los Angeles



UNITED TEACHERS LOS ANGELES

The 150-member UTLA bargaining team met with the LA Unified district for more than a year to negotiate demands built from discussions at over 600 chapters across LAUSD. As negotiations escalated, UTLA members held school site pickets in September 2025. In November, UTLA, joined by SEIU Local 99, Teamsters, CSEA and Building Trades, held massive regional rallies in five locations; these and earlier actions forced the district to drop its proposal to pass health care costs onto employees. In January, UTLA members voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike, and in March 30,000+ UTLA, SEIU Local 99, and AALA Teamsters took over Grand Park alongside students, families and community to demand LAUSD invest in students, educators and staff or face a strike April 14. Faculty boycotts followed before an agreement was reached on April 12; it contains landmark wins on salary, staffing, special education, first-ever paid parental leave and more.

- ▼ WETA members tell the district what they want in November 2025, before reaching a settlement.



WHITTIER ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

After months of bargaining for fully staffed classrooms and a fair wage, in November 2025 WETA reached a tentative agreement with Whittier City School District. Highlights include special education class size caps and staffing ratios; one-on-one aides for students who need intensive support; a 2.5% ongoing salary increase; caseload caps for speech language pathologists, resource specialists, inclusion specialists and alternative and augmentative communication specialists; and language to ensure that teachers and students have support for their students' full day.



REGION 4

▼ CNTA members outside of a school board meeting in May.



CORONA NORCO TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

After years of interest-based bargaining, CNTA launched a member-led bargaining campaign this year to secure critical investments in the classroom. Through rigorous site-by-site organizing and highly successful structure tests, members are systematically building toward strike readiness. The school year culminated in a massive year-end rally of over 700 members and community, exceeding initial participation goals by 100% and turning out more than 20% of CNTA membership to fight for the contract they deserve. CNTA is currently in mediation with the school district, with the next session planned for July.

▼ CUEA educators in action in March.



CAPISTRANO UNIFIED EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

During the 2025–26 school year, CUEA proved that union power is built one conversation at a time. The chapter launched a site-by-site structured outreach campaign, conducting 1:1 organizing conversations across 22 secondary and alternative education sites and programs. With a new trackable outreach system, CUEA activated leaders who gathered critical member feedback to drive upcoming bargaining and organizing campaigns. This site-based organizing and infrastructure was key to CUEA's efforts to gather signatures for the Prop. 55 extension and resulted in an 82%-member participation rate with 1,571 signatures gathered. CUEA heads into the new school year ready to fight back and fight forward.



FONTANA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

FTA launched a successful site visit campaign, visiting 100% of sites and holding 1:1 conversations with nearly 900 educators. As a result, more than 30 new-member leaders were identified and recruited to chapter committees, and FTA will now have a rep at every site. Building on the success of the campaign, FTA is launching multiple site-based issues campaigns and integrating them into the work to pass a permanent extension of Prop. 55.



▼ SWTA held strike captain training in January.



SOUTHWEST TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

When their district refused to invest in students, despite hoarding budget reserves 15 times the state requirement, SWTA members, parents and students organized and mobilized. Facing stalled negotiations since May 2024, a staggering 98% of members voted to authorize a strike. That solidarity paid off. After 20 months of bargaining and a 20-hour fact-finding hearing, SWTA won a landmark contract in January that lowers class sizes, improves compensation, and delivers vital investments for special education.

▼ SVEA entered mediation with the school district in February but were unable to come to agreement and are now in fact-finding.



▼ SVEA members wrote postcards urging people to vote pro-public education.



SADDLEBACK VALLEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

SVEA is building member and community power in their fight for class size improvements. Member and parent engagement has been a key focus in this bargaining campaign; negotiations stalled after 14 months, leading to impasse, mediation and now fact-finding. SVEA has engaged hundreds of parents in the campaign, mobilized two big rallies in support of class size demands and used the campaign structures to sign up 77% of members on the Prop. 55 extension petition.



SAN DIEGO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

SDEA ended the 2025–26 school year with an overwhelming 93% of members voting to ratify a new contract, with 4,957 participating in the vote. This was the culmination of a bargaining campaign that launched in the fall of 2024, including rolling city-wide pickets in spring 2025, and held the line through a credible strike threat to address the district's special education staffing crisis. Members achieved big wins, including concrete fixes for SPED, a 5% pay raise, protecting fully employer-paid family benefits, a no-layoffs agreement, and protections for immigrant and LGBTQ+ students and educators.



EINSTEIN CHARTER EDUCATORS COLLECTIVE

For EEC members at Albert Einstein Academies, 2025–26 was a year of solidarity and progress, anchored by two big victories. Members defeated a decertification campaign with an overwhelming 85% vote of support. Building on that momentum, EEC secured its first contract following 18 months of relentless organizing, mobilizing and advocacy. This first contract delivers meaningful progress for both educators and students, featuring an average 8% salary increase, Just Cause protection with binding arbitration, a two-year probationary period, and shared decision-making.

▼ TVEA members canvass and door-knock in support of pro-union, pro-education candidates.



TEMECULA VALLEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Utilizing their site-based structures, 86% of TVEA members signed the Prop. 55 extension petition. Building on this momentum, TVEA formed a special education organizing team that launched a campaign to address long-standing safety and program issues. The campaign brought members and parents together to apply direct pressure on school board members and SPED program directors. TVEA's growing union power was visible at school board meetings, where attendance dramatically increased. TVEA then turned this engagement toward the ballot box and door-knocked 3,000 homes to elect pro-union, pro-public education candidates.

▼ United Educators of San Francisco members went on strike earlier this year and won fully paid health care.



Fighting for Fully Paid Health Care for *All* Educators

Across California, locals say “We Can’t Wait” and win

By Julian Peeples

“**YOU ALWAYS HEAR** other locals are fighting for similar things but being a part of the We Can’t Wait campaign, we saw it’s really true,” says Brittoni Ward, president of Twin Rivers United Educators (TRUE). “We were all fighting for our own contracts, but the common thread was health benefits. So many of us are suffering from these high-cost plans where the district isn’t putting enough in. I really do think we started a wave here and all our CTA siblings can see they can win this for themselves, too.”

When the campaign kicked off last February, the fight for safe, stable and fully staffed public schools included a demand for competitive wages and benefits. And with chronically skyrocketing out-of-pocket costs and the failure of educator pay to keep up with inflation, the issue emerged as a centerpiece of our union’s major local fights last school year.

In chapters across the state, increasing monthly premiums without similar bumps in pay or school district contributions to health care have been creating unsustainable

▼ Educators across the state are demanding fully funded family health care; at left, UESF educators on strike, and at right, a UTLA rally in late 2025.



conditions for some educators who have seen their costs balloon to more than \$2,200 a month to ensure their families have coverage. This is causing major churn in school districts with the highest impacts to educators — even causing many to consider leaving education altogether.

The pushback and demand for health care benefits was central to campaigns in local chapters including United Teachers of Richmond (UTR), who paved the way with their historic strike victories late last year, TRUE and Natomas Teachers Association (NTA), who were committed to striking to win better benefits, and West Sacramento Teachers Association (WSTA) who secured major improvements because they were also prepared to strike. Their district even admitted to feeling pressure to avoid a strike like neighboring districts in the Sacramento region.

“The fight for health care and other issues look different in every district but the common theme is we were all fighting for affordability,” says NTA President Nico Vaccaro. “Going on strike was tough but when we saw other people going on strike and

“We’re never going back into bargaining without being prepared to strike. Whether it’s health care or any other part of the contract, you must be ready to do it. We were never going to make progress in areas like health care if we were not prepared to strike.”

—Twin Rivers United Educators
President **Brittoni Ward**

winning, it really gave us the inspiration that we weren’t going it alone.”

WSTA President Doug Knepp says the fight of neighboring locals TRUE and NTA absolutely contributed to WSTA’s tentative agreement while his local chapter were preparing to strike. He says this year’s success shows that we can no longer accept excuses from ineffective politicians and that the path to the public schools our students deserve is through organizing and action.

“School districts love to triage problems so they take the burden off of state politicians. When we use duct tape and Band-aids to hold a broken system together, we are not able to hold our leaders accountable to fix the system,” Knepp says. “This system is broken and by pretending it’s not, it’s perpetuating this endless cycle of undervaluing the education of our children in this country.”

Starting Off Strong: Richmond Teachers Set the Standard

United Teachers of Richmond (UTR) President Francisco



Ortiz says educators in West Contra Costa Unified School District previously had fully paid health care benefits but lost them in a bargain some time ago. After UTR's proposal in their previous bargain was summarily rejected, Ortiz says he knew it was a priority for this year's contract campaign.

"I was confident that we would be successful because we had built the structures and I knew our members would come and show out," Ortiz says. "Fighting back for something we had and restoring it, especially with the increased cost of health care, is a huge win for us because that's going to be money in people's pockets."

Through the power of their five-day strike in December 2025, UTR won fully paid benefits for educators and their families by mid-2027 — helping to stem chronic churn that has seen teachers leave WCCUSD for districts that provide better benefits. Ortiz credits strong site-based organizing, brutal honesty and clear transparency with members for their success.

"The most important key was relentlessly saying what we were going to do and doing what we said — it might sound cliché but that's what it really is," Ortiz says.

Leading the first of six strikes by CTA locals this year, Ortiz says he appreciated joining locals' picket lines in Sacramento and Dublin to support and help keep the momentum going for the fight for fully paid health care.

"Lead with hope, believe in your members and trust in the process," he says. "Claim or reclaim your organizer voice — we're all organizers and we can't be afraid to change things!"

Historic Strike in San Francisco for Health Care Equity

For the first time since the union's founding in 1919, all United Educators of San Francisco members will have fully paid health care benefits, following their win secured through their four-day strike earlier this year. Their victory addresses ongoing increases in dependent health care costs for UESF members, which were eating up negotiated raises for educators with families and inequitably impacting paraeducators, some of whom were paying as much as \$1,600 a month for health insurance for their families.

"For some of our paras, that was a majority of their paycheck," says UESF President Cassondra Curiel. "We knew we had to go

after dependent health care so that any pay increase we won would be felt across the entire unit."

As part of their win, all health care premiums for dependent health care coverage will be decreased by 50% at the start of the 2027 school year — and in January, they will be completely covered. Curiel says this victory will impact UESF members in substantial ways, sharing that two married members of the bargaining team said they might now be able to afford to have a child.

"No matter the circumstances, UESF members will now be able to use their full paycheck to take on the challenges we all are under," Curiel says. "That is the most winning measure of this contract campaign."

Curiel says strong site structures were a big part of UESF's success at the table and on strike — with the local making a deliberate effort to establish a union-building committee at every school site to create teams and split responsibilities to pull off the actions needed at each to win collectively. A local rooted in transparency, UESF's bargaining and leadership teams provided consistent communication along

the way by email and video to allow members to access the level of information best for them. Curiel says UESF embraced organizer Jane McAlevey's approach to internal communications and achieving their goals.

"The level of understanding is equal to the level of participation and the level of participation is equal to the level of understanding," Curiel paraphrases.

This past year of educator struggle and triumph has been special, Curiel says, especially as part of the greater We Can't Wait campaign, joining locals across the state to create new, better standards for our public schools and students. Likening it to worker wins like the 40-hour work week and child labor laws, Curiel says We Can't Wait is an example of what we are capable of together even in these challenging times.

"For every inch we push on our own, we move leaps and bounds collectively — we're pushing a lot further than on our own, trying to claw back what should have been here the whole time," Curiel says, noting that the local fights are having statewide impacts. "As a result of this year-long We Can't Wait crusade we've been on, the governor's revised budget proposal is putting more resources into education — the amount of force

"Know your value, know you deserve this, that your work is important and your health is valuable. Teachers' well-being has a direct impact on students' experience — on how our students get what they deserve. Keep your eyes on the prize of fighting for full coverage."

—Soquel Education Assn.
President **D-R. Martin**

▼ Our union's 2026 report, "The State of California Public Schools," surveyed 2,000 of our TK-12 educator members and found that they consider health care to be a major issue — and that they are willing to strike to lower health care costs. See the full report at cta.org/document/the-state-of-ca-public-schools.

**THE 2026 STATE OF CALIFORNIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS REPORT**

**WE MUST COMBAT RISING
HEALTHCARE
COSTS**

A lack of affordable healthcare is a critical issue for educators.

1-in-3  delayed or skipped medical care to save money.

61%  of educators report concerns about affording healthcare costs.

REPORT

**WE CAN'T WAIT
FOR LOWER
HEALTHCARE COSTS**

3-in-4 educators feel that their out-of-pocket healthcare costs are too high, a five percentage point increase from last year.

72% say they are willing to strike to lower healthcare costs.

Rising healthcare premiums, increases to co-pays, and relentless attacks on Medicare and the Affordable Care Act by the Trump administration are intensifying this crisis.

from our school communities putting pressure on the state for more funding is making a real difference!"

Springtime Solidarity as Educators Fight for Health Care

In the beginning of March, three Sacramento-area locals stepped up their fight for health care, with TRUE and NTA going on strike and WSTA members voting to authorize one.

Some Natomas educators had been paying half of their monthly paycheck — \$1,800 — for health care for their families with a lot of educators just opting not to take the district's plan at all, according to NTA President Vaccaro. Their seven-day strike moved the district from 50% to a more than 90% contribution for a Kaiser family plan.

"Winning that shift to almost fully covered health care really sets us up to continue this fight for fully paid health care," Vaccaro says. "I don't think people realize how much health care impacts our educators until you see it in real time. Am I going to

pay for health care or am I going to pay for groceries? It's tough."

Vaccaro says NTA's fight was powered by strong member engagement and constant, clear communication with all members to ensure everyone understood what they were fighting for and why. He says it was very inspiring to be a part of We Can't Wait and the statewide movement for the safe, stable and fully staffed schools our students deserve.

"While you see the victories up and down the state, the fight is far from over," Vaccaro says. "You see the fight to defend Prop. 98, extend Prop 55, and improve public schools for everybody. It's going to take all of us fighting together to make real change for all of us."

In neighboring Twin Rivers, a hard-cap on district health care contributions meant some TRUE members were paying as much as \$1,600 a month for health care for their families — TRUE President Ward says that going into their 12-day strike, they were prepared to hold the line on fully paid health care to stop the ongoing educator retention crisis in Twin Rivers. The 

Into the Weeds: Health Care Improvements

Examples of 2026 contract language around health care benefits

Twin Rivers United Educators made health care central to their fight — and won big. Some locals, such as West Sacramento Teachers Assn., settled with their districts without having to strike; others such as Natomas Teachers Assn. walked out before reaching agreements that included improved health care coverage. Excerpts from a few locals’ new contracts:

Twin Rivers United Educators

ARTICLE 14 Benefits

- For the 2025–2026 and 2026–2027 school years the District will pay a contribution based on the cost of the Kaiser HMO plans for the 2025–2026 and 2026–2027 to cover all tiers (employee only, employee plus one, family) without contribution by employees.
- Beginning with the 2027–2028 year and thereafter, if the LCFF net increase in revenue is less than 1.5% from the prior Fiscal Year, then the parties will negotiate the cost share of any health benefits contribution level increase.

Natomas Teachers Association:

	2026 NUSD Contribution*	2027 NUSD Contribution*	2028 NUSD Contribution*
Family Coverage	\$2,583.18 monthly	\$2,735.14 monthly	\$3,039.04 monthly
Employee +1	\$1,987.06 monthly	\$2,103.95 monthly	\$2,337.72 monthly
Employee Only	\$993.53 monthly	\$1,051.97 monthly	\$1,168.86 monthly

Before the NTA went on strike, some educators had been paying half of their monthly paycheck — \$1,800 — for health care for their families. After the strike, NUSD (Natomas Unified School District) agreed to contribute more than 90% to the cost of a Kaiser family plan.

*For plan year 2026 (first full month after ratification of this agreement through December 2026) these amounts represent 85% of Kaiser high plan at all levels. For plan year 2027 these amounts represent 90% of the 2026 Kaiser rates, and 2028 represents 100% of the 2026 Kaiser rates.

West Sacramento Teachers Association:

- Starting January 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, the District will contribute to the medical insurance premium at the full amount of the Kaiser HMO plans to cover all Kaiser tiers (e.g., employee only, employee plus one, family). This contribution amount for Kaiser medical insurance premiums shall also be applied to other available medical plans.
- The District’s maximum contribution to the medical insurance premium shall be at the amount paid by the District as of June 30, 2027. Effective July 1, 2027, bargaining unit members shall be responsible for any cost that exceeds the District’s maximum contribution, based on the premium of the selected medical plan.

▼ Striking Natomas Teachers Assn. members, below, and Twin Rivers United Educators members, at right, demand fairness — and paid health care.



district superintendent resigned several weeks before the strike began. But after 13 months of non-existent negotiations and just four days into the strike, Ward says district administrators finally came to the table with an offer of fully paid health care.

“But it had a sunset date, so it would be fully paid for the moment, and we said that’s a non-starter,” Ward says. “It was devastating — at that point, I didn’t even know if we would be able to hold the line but of course, we did.”

On the eve of what would have been Day 13 of their strike, the two sides reached a compromise: fully paid Kaiser for educators and their families with no sunset, retroactive to the beginning of the school year. While it was a tough decision to let go of other parts of their proposal, Ward says it was worth it.

“We saw members getting thousands of dollars back. I got emails and calls from crying members,” Ward says. “A lot of our members couldn’t afford to take health care and now they can, which is going to make a huge difference. Our open enrollment meetings have been packed with interested folks.”

“Fighting back for something we had — fully paid health care benefits — and restoring it, especially with its increased cost, is a huge win because that’s going to be money in people’s pockets.”

—United Teachers of Richmond
President **Francisco Ortiz**

Ward says TRUE’s historic victory was powered by members who were committed to each other for better, explaining that they had prepared for the moment with a comprehensive site visit program, expanded bargaining team, regular communication and nuts-and-bolts structure building. Together, they showed that educators united with community are unstoppable, even against a seemingly immovable school board dead-set on

breaking the union.

In West Sacramento, WSTA members were ready to join NTA and TRUE on the picket lines, with members voting near unanimously to authorize a strike and negotiations slowing to a halt at the bargaining table. Meanwhile, WSTA members were struggling with exorbitant health care costs, with some educators paying more than \$1,700 a month for family coverage. While WSTA worked to educate the community about the issue, the school district and board seemed unconcerned — until they were, coming to an agreement before a strike that provides fully paid Kaiser health care retroactive to January.



“Winning fully paid health care had a transformational effect on our members. People were paying \$1,700 a month for health care and now have that money to put into their families, buy food and have a standard of living that wasn’t available to them before,” WSTA President Knepp says. “Our new teachers were making \$58,000 a year and health care was costing them \$17,500 — health care was putting them under the poverty line. It’s life-changing not to have to choose between burgers and band practice for your kids.”

Knepp credited the sudden movement on health care and agreement to the then-ongoing struggles in Natomas and Twin Rivers and the acknowledgement that indeed WSTA members were ready to join them to fight for what West Sacramento students and educators deserved. Ironically, WSTA didn’t initially include fully paid health care in their proposal, adding it when Gov. Gavin Newsom announced there would be more public education funding than expected. Knepp said it was a risk, but they decided it was worth it.

“In the end, everyone deserves to be appropriately taken care of in their work,” says Knepp. “All we’re asking for is to be compensated enough to take care of our families.”

Small Locals, Big Fights, Inspiring Wins

The Santa Cruz area is the most expensive place to live in America, which compounded matters when Soquel Education Association (SEA) members saw their health care costs jump by as much as 70% from one school year to the next due to a hard cap that sets the district’s health care contribution and forces educators to bear the burden of all increases. SEA President D-R. Martin says her insurance was set to increase from \$575 to \$940 a month, even with reduced coverage, a higher deductible and more expensive prescription costs.

“Some families are paying \$2,200 a month out of pocket and others have \$10,000 deductibles to pay less monthly,” Martin says. “Our thinking before was if we increased our salary structure, we could apply extra income to health care costs but we didn’t expect it to be so out of control like this.”

“Winning fully paid health care had a transformational effect on our members. People were paying \$1,700 a month for health care and now can put that money into their families, buy food and have a standard of living that wasn’t available to them before.”

—West Sacramento Teachers Assn.
President **Douglas Knepp**



With members suffering, SEA asked for a \$200 increase to their hard cap earlier this year — district admin responded with an offer of one-third of that and no salary increase. SEA members organized, rallying at board meetings and building a movement with their parents and community to keep SEA

educators in Soquel — eventually winning a 3% salary increase, a cost-of-living increase next year, a one-time bonus of \$2,500 and the \$200 increase to the health care cap. With health care costs anticipated to continue increasing, Martin says something must be done to stop Soquel’s educator retention crisis.

“When we did a survey in (the) fall, 47% said they were actively looking for other jobs, and we’ve lost a couple people already this year,” Martin says. “I hope that we

can put a spotlight on the importance of health care. We’re less than 100 members and I hope that other small locals look at what we’ve done and say ‘if they can put up a fight, so can we.’

▼ This page and facing page: LLEA members, as well as parents and community, called for improved health care benefits.



You can organize even if you're small — the organizing never stops and you build connections with your community and other unions. This is a big key to our success."

In Santa Fe Springs and Norwalk, the 200 members of Little Lake Education Association (LLEA) found themselves facing massive out-of-pocket cost increases after a new superintendent refused to honor past memorandums of understandings, reverting back to old contract language and imposing a mid-year and massive increase for out-of-pocket health care costs for employees. Many educators were facing monthly costs of \$1,400 and some even potentially paying a shocking \$2,600 a month, causing LLEA members to escalate their organizing and fight back. District administration agreed to offer more toward health care, but at the cost of increasing class sizes — a trade educators were unwilling to make.

"Every offer they gave us included throwing the kids under the bus, and we weren't not going to do that. We were not going to

treat our students as pawns," says LLEA President Maria Pilios. "Our school board dug in and told LLEA that the community would stand with the district, so we said 'ok, let's find out.'"

After an historic and inspiring 10 days on picket lines, LLEA educators had organized their community, captivated the hearts of the Los Angeles metropolitan area and inspired hundreds of thousands of members across CTA — and the superintendent and a school board member had resigned. LLEA won improvements to their health care benefits and immediate relief for educators — all without sacrificing class sizes to maintain student learning conditions.

"We're at a good foothold and we're looking forward to making even better strides in the next contract," Pilios says. "The biggest things we got out of

this is we learned how to stand up for ourselves, how to say no when we are being treated unfairly and finding out our parents love us as much as we love their children. We found our voice as a union." ■

"The biggest things we got out of this is we learned how to stand up for ourselves, how to say no when we are being treated unfairly and finding out our parents love us as much as we love their children."

—Little Lake Education Assn.
President **Maria Pilios**

Education Funding in the 2026–27 State Budget

By Julian Peeples



Prop. 98: Short-changing students by billions

THE GOVERNOR and State Legislature came to an agreement on a 2026–27 state budget that underfunds Prop. 98's public education funding guarantee by nearly \$4 billion. Violating that guarantee causes serious harm to public schools and contributes to overcrowded, under-resourced, destabilized classrooms.

CTA President David Goldberg expressed disappointment in the Prop. 98 actions of California politicians.

"At a time when both public schools and the voting rights of our communities face growing attacks from the federal government, California lawmakers should be standing up for our students and exercising the democratic principles that have made California the nation's progressive leader," Goldberg says.

"Ignoring the state constitution, the Governor and Legislature withheld \$3.9 billion from the voter-approved Prop. 98 public school funding minimum. This, while also proposing that the role of the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction — the role responsible for the California Department of Education — become an appointed position after millions already voted for candidates in the June primary."

Final Agreement Includes Major Victories for Our Union

THE FINAL BUDGET includes a number of major wins for our union, including paid pregnancy leave for all school employees and a "super" cost-of-living adjustment of 4.31%.

It also includes a \$2.4-billion increase in special education funding, \$1 billion for community schools and increased investment in expanding the teacher pipeline. Also included is funding for a historic victory after years of fighting — 14 weeks of paid pregnancy leave for educators.

"While there were some wins, California families are living in an era of unprecedented economic uncertainty," Goldberg says. "State leadership must prioritize efforts to increase revenue, especially when California boasts the fourth largest economy in the world, yet educators are forced to regularly fight back against layoffs and cuts to their health benefits. This creates classroom instability and hurts students. We are committed to continuing to fight alongside our communities for the fully funded schools California students deserve."

Highlights of the approved budget include:

- **Augmented Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)** — The budget approves an augmented COLA of 4.31%, which is 1.44% above the statutory 2.87% COLA and 2.01% above the 2025–26 COLA.
- **Paid Pregnancy Leave** — The budget provides up to 14 weeks of paid pregnancy disability leave for school staff starting Jan. 1, 2027. It is estimated to cost roughly \$218 million per year and school districts must use



Our Union Wins Paid Pregnancy Leave for Educators

IN A HISTORIC WIN, all California public school employees will be able to utilize up to 14 weeks of paid pregnancy disability leave starting Jan. 1, 2027.

"This is a transformational win for California educators and families," says CTA Secretary-Treasurer Erika Jones. "And it belongs to every single member who raised their voice!"

Paid pregnancy leave is a significant victory for our union, which we have been fighting for for several years. Huge numbers of our member educators organized and campaigned for this leave up and down the state. They gathered signatures, rallied and showed up at the State Capitol to testify and push legislators for support. Thousands of our members also shared their stories of the personal toll that having no leave took on them, their families and their careers.

funding from the augmented COLA to fund this additional benefit.

- **Special Education Funding Increase** — The budget provides \$2.4 billion ongoing Prop. 98 funding for special education base rate increases. These funds provide a per-student rate of \$1,340. The budget also provides an addition \$40 million for low-incidence disability services and \$40 million for the extraordinary cost pool.
- **Community Schools** — The budget provides \$1 billion in ongoing Prop. 98 funding for the California Community Schools Partnership Program for existing grantees or school sites with an unduplicated pupil percentage of 65% or above. Additionally, it codifies a framework to be adopted by the State Board of Education and updated every five years. The budget reappropriates \$84 million one-time Prop. 98 funds to be used for the State Transformational Assistance Center, Secondary School Redesign Pilot Program, and to develop and implement the community schools certification process.
- **Educator Workforce** — The budget extends the Student Teacher Stipend program with \$408 million, the Classified Employees Teacher Credentialing Program with \$10 million, and the Golden State Teacher Grant with \$10 million. It also allocates \$10 million to establish the

Bilingual Teacher Pathway Program and \$250 million for the Teacher Residency Grant Program. These allocations result in \$678 million total one-time Prop. 98 funds for educator workforce and teacher pipeline programs.

- **Discretionary Block Grant** — The budget includes \$5 billion one-time Prop. 98 funds for the Student Support and Professional Development Block Grant and allocates funds based on Average Daily Attendance.
- **Learning Recovery Emergency Block Grant** — The budget provides an additional \$757.3 million one-time Prop. 98 funds to augment the Learning Recovery Emergency Block Grant.
- **Literacy and Math Supports** — The budget provides \$350 million one-time Prop. 98 funds to extend the Literacy Coaches and Reading Specialists Grant Program, and an additional \$50 million for the Math Professional Learning Partnership.

See cta.org/budget for more information. And go to pp. 40 and 41 for details about and to join our critical **"Yes on Prop. 3"** campaign (formerly known as the Prop. 55 permanent extension) to keep \$15 billion in existing funding for our schools. ■

▼ Students at Magnolia High's Agriscience Community Center in Anaheim after preparing a community dinner; Magnolia is one of 13 community schools in Anaheim Union High School District.



▼ Pittsburg families and community partners at a lunch gathering at Martin Luther King Jr. Junior High; all 13 schools in the district are community schools and have been recognized for their students' academic gains.



Community Schools Work

The successful shared-governance model receives ongoing budget funding

OUR UNION'S WORK with community schools, in partnership with educators, families, communities, school districts and the state, has resulted in strong schools with engaged students that are the hubs of their neighborhoods.

Students at community schools across the state have made major strides academically and on social-emotional levels, according to a recent Learning Policy Institute study, including higher test scores and improved attendance. Both students and their families find supports at community schools that help them flourish, including mental and physical health services and resources, community assistance and educational offerings tailored to their needs.

The 2026–27 State Budget reflects community schools' essential place in education, with \$1 billion in ongoing funding to the California Community Schools Partnership Program. This funding will help maintain and expand the community schools model, rooted in shared decision-making among all stakeholders. Since the program's inception in 2021, about 2,500 schools, or about 25% of the state's campuses, have received grant funding. The new

funding means an additional 3,700 schools would be eligible for funding each year.

The new funding comes with strengthened, ongoing eligibility criteria; new accountability and oversight measures; enhanced systems of support, including technical assistance; and more money for planning and implementing of the community schools model, including professional development.

"Thanks to continued organizing and advocacy from educators across California, the State Budget now includes \$1 billion for community schools along with stronger accountability measures to ensure districts implement a true bottom-up, democratic school model," said CTA President David Goldberg.

"Our union has been proud to advocate for historic investment in this model that brings educators, parents, students, community organizations and administrators to the same table to make decisions about their school together. At a time when public education is under attack at the federal level, in California we are investing in models that work and organizing together for the schools our students deserve." ■

"At a time when public education is under attack at the federal level, in California we are investing in models that work and organizing together for the schools our students deserve."

—CTA President **David Goldberg**

Governor and Legislature Strip Authority from SPI

JUST WEEKS AFTER millions of Californians cast votes to choose our next State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Gov. Gavin Newsom and the State Legislature moved quickly to change who runs the California Department of Education.

A new Education Commissioner, appointed by the governor, will have the power and authority previously held by the State SPI. Voters have rejected four past attempts to remove or change the role of our elected State Superintendent. This time, Newsom and legislators torpedoed significant changes to the role and removed all authority through the budget process — removing important opportunities for the public and educators to weigh in with concerns and questions. The process was undemocratic and the end result removes critical checks and balances and threatens stability in our schools and classrooms.

Our union joined our partners in labor in calling on the chairs of the Assembly and Senate Budget Committees to reject this flawed plan.

The Legislature narrowly approved Newsom's proposal on July 1. Replacing the state superintendent of public instruction with a governor-appointed education commissioner will take effect on Jan. 15, 2027. Stay tuned for ongoing news on cta.org. ■



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Barrera Wins Spot in November Run-off

By Julian Peebles



WHEN WE VOTE, we win: Educators across California knocked on doors, talked with voters, and helped turn out the vote to power Richard Barrera into November's General Election as we work to elect him as our next Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Barrera emerged from a crowded primary field to secure his place in the Fall run-off as the clear choice our students and public schools need.

"This campaign has always been about bringing people together to

support students, educators and public schools. We're grateful for the support of voters across California and excited to continue sharing a vision that unites, not divides, our communities," Barrera said following the June primary. "The General Election will offer voters a sharp contrast between my vision of uniting all Californians for the benefit of students versus an approach that seeks to divide us."

As president of the San Diego Unified School Board for 16 years,

Richard worked with teachers to turn one of California's largest districts into one of the highest performing in the country. Now he will face off against a book-banning, headline-chasing extremist in November to be the head of California public schools.

This is a fight we cannot lose. "Richard Barrera advanced through this primary because he has shown a depth of commitment to public schools and working families for decades and California educators are confident that

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"Barrera will work to protect the future of public education in California, and ensure public schools are fully funded and accessible to everyone. The future of California is at stake in this election."

—CTA President **David Goldberg**

he will be victorious in November," said CTA President David B. Goldberg. "Barrera is the only candidate who will work to protect the future of public education in California, and ensure public schools are fully funded and accessible to everyone. The future of California is at stake in this election."

Our union's work to elect Barrera continues now and until Election Day — visit cta.org/barrera to find out how you can join our winning effort. ■

Xavier Becerra for California Governor

THE CTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS in June voted to endorse Xavier Becerra to be the next governor of California. Watch cta.org for ways you can support his campaign and ensure he wins for our public schools this November.

To learn more about our union's recommendation process, and to view our recommended candidates in the Assembly, Senate and Congress, along with our positions on qualified initiatives, visit cta.org/election. (These lists will continue to be updated as we approach the November 2026 election.)



Xavier Becerra

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▼ Left to right: ESP Board Liaison VanCedric Williams, CTA Staff Mark DeWeerd, CTA Staff Annie Ogata, Anthony Hernandez, Katie Wimbrough, Emberlinda Kelley-Arthur, Harrison Abt, CTA Staff Emily Nascimento, Brandon Hicks and Mily Lam.



ESP Leadership Academy — Class of 2026

CTA's ESP Leadership Academy hosts an annual training that focuses on leadership skills and tools participants can use to help their CTA chapters deal with current union and education issues. The academy is an opportunity for Education Support Professionals members interested in taking on leadership roles in their local; for more information, visit cta.org/esp.

California Immigrant Advocacy Group Receives NEA Award

Santa Rosa-based Vital Immigrant Defense Advocacy and Services — VIDAS — is the recipient of NEA's 2026 Rosa Parks Memorial Award.

The recognition is part of NEA's Human & Civil Rights Awards, bestowed annually at a gala dinner during NEA's Representative Assembly.

VIDAS' coalition of Latino activists, civic leaders and attorneys was founded in 2014 and provides trauma-informed immigrant legal advocacy and community wellness programs. Since then, its small office has expanded to five locations in the North Bay of the San Francisco Bay Area.

VIDAS' pro-bono legal professionals defend clients from deportation, have secured release for those unlawfully detained and challenged discriminatory enforcement methods. It has partnered with the ACLU to take legal action against entities who have denied basic civil liberties — and won. VIDAS' combination of strategic imparting the law in



their communities, and non-violent resistance, is changing the narrative of the current immigration crisis.

The compassionate and skillful work of VIDAS staff has impacted and continues to make an impact on individuals, families and communities.

As NEA notes, Rosa Parks' simple act 70 years ago on a Montgomery, Alabama, city bus transformed the world; "VIDAS is transforming the pathway to full rights and dignity for communities that truly make America great."

▼ Union educators and the Oakland community organized and defeated a school closure proposal in December 2024.



School Closures Are Not the Answer

A new Stanford University study finds that school closures, frequently justified as fiscal necessities for school districts dealing with budgetary challenges, do not improve districts' financial standing.

"The Fiscal Consequences of School Closures in California," published in May, analyzed school closures from public school districts in the state between 2011 and 2019. The study found that because shutting down schools causes significant enrollment drops, the reduction in building expenditures is canceled out by a proportional loss of state funding.

Research also found that closures can cause severe collateral damage such as lower student attendance, decreased graduation rates and destabilization of neighborhoods.

(Earlier research found that permanent closure of majority-Black schools disproportionately displaces communities of color and can accelerate neighborhood gentrification.)

Researchers suggest that districts — particularly large urban ones — prioritize revenue-generating measures rather than using closures as a primary budget-balancing tool. Read the full report at bit.ly/3T7QYFi.

▼ The 2026–27 CADRE trainers.



Human Rights Trainings for Members

CTA's Equity and Justice Cadre Training Program can bring specialized trainings to your local, service center or conference. The program offers trainings in six content areas:

- Transformative Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Racial Justice Advocacy
- Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) Leadership Advocacy
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer+ (LGBTQ+) Leadership Advocacy

- Women's Leadership Advocacy
- Disability Rights Advocacy

Cadre trainers are CTA members who are passionate about developing racial and social justice perspectives of other CTA members. They have strong facilitation and adult teaching and learning skills, and training and content expertise in racial and social justice issues. For more information and to schedule a training, visit cta.org/cadre.



Privatization, Disinvestment Go Hand in Hand

The Network for Public Education (NPE) has issued statehouse-by-statehouse report cards holding legislators accountable for how they treat public schools and the children who depend on them.

"Public Schooling in America: 2026 Report Card" evaluates states across four categories: privatization of public education, protections for homeschooled students, school funding and conditions for teaching and learning. California received a "C" grade.

NPE's report makes a clear case that the more states spend on privatization strategies, the less they invest in public education.

"The data confirm what we have long suspected: privatization and disinvestment go hand in hand," says Carol Burris, NPE executive director and report author.

In California, "homeschool" charter schools have been popping up with limited guardrails for how millions of education dollars are spent. "California classifies [these schools]

as non-classroom-based charter schools, [masking] the number of students who are, for all intents and purposes, homeschooled. These charter schools... compete for parents by offering educational funds that parents can self-direct for anything from sailing lessons to field trips to Disneyland — all paid for by taxpayers."

While California's non-classroom based charter sector includes different models including homeschool and virtual, the state does not track which schools offer which model, nor the number of students enrolled by program type.

Burris notes that the stakes have never been higher, with the One Big Beautiful Bill embedded with the first-ever national tax credit voucher program, while \$500 million in federal funding has been directed toward charter schools. Meanwhile, the U.S. Department of Education is being dismantled.

To read the report, visit inthepublicinterest.org/the-grades-are-in.

YOU PLAY, SCHOOLS WIN.

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SHARE YOUR SCHOOL'S LOTTERY STORY

calottery.com/who-benefits

▼ Panel at the CTA Special Education Conference in 2024.



CTA Conference Grants — Apply Now!

APPLICATIONS FOR CTA's Conference Incentive Grants for upcoming conferences are now open. The grants cover the cost of conference registration and travel and help members achieve professional development goals.

Applications are open for the following CTA Conferences:

2026 Special Education Conference

OCT. 2-4, 2026 Hyatt Regency OC, Garden Grove

Application deadline: Aug. 17, 2026

2026 LGBTQ+ Issues Conference

NOV. 6-8, 2026 Marriott SFO, Burlingame

Application deadline: Aug. 17, 2026

2026 New Educator Weekend — North

NOV. 13-15, 2026 Marriott SFO, Burlingame

Application deadline: Aug. 17, 2026

2027 New Educator Weekend — South

FEB. 19-21, 2027 Hilton OC, Costa Mesa

Application deadline: Nov. 9, 2026

For details and to apply, visit cta.org/grants.

▼ The Swett Awards were announced at June State Council.



John Swett Media Awards

CTA's John Swett Media Awards annually celebrate outstanding coverage of community and campaign issues that have impacted California's public schools, community colleges and the labor movement. CTA local leaders nominate works by journalists that are independently judged by a panel of media professionals.

The 2025 awardees:

Best Investigative Reporting

- Certificate of Merit — Jordan Georgeson, *Gold Country Media*

Best News Story or Series

- Swett Award — Justine McDaniel and María Luisa Paúl, *Washington Post*
- Swett Award — Jennah Pendleton, *The Sacramento Bee*
- Certificate of Merit — Sierra Lopez, *Bay Area News Group*
- Certificate of Merit — Joshua Silla, *San Gabriel Valley Tribune*

For the full list and links to the award-winning coverage, visit cta.org/awards.



JULY:

Disability Pride Month

One in seven, or 14%, of California public school students currently receive disability services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), close to the 15% nationwide. July is Disability Pride Month and the 2026 theme is "The World Works Better With Us" (per The Arc's National Council of Self-Advocates) — meaning that when people with disabilities are included, respected and supported, communities function better for everyone across schools, workplaces and public life. The month coincides with the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act into law on July 26, 1990.

WORLDS OF WONDER

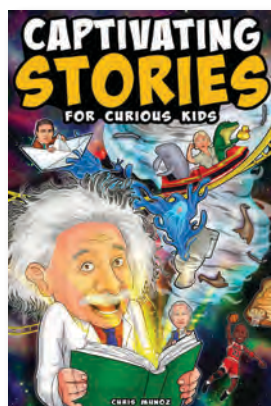
Compiled by Amy Peruzzaro



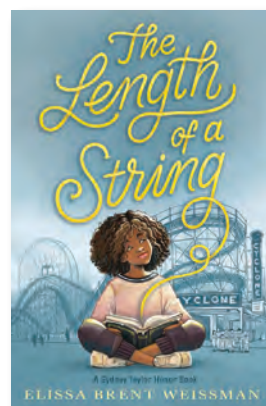
SUMMER READING — especially about the world and histories around us — is a perfect way to get students primed for the upcoming school year. Here are a few teacher-vetted books from CTA's 2026 California Reads — for the full list and past selections, visit cta.org/careads.



Lubna and Pebble (by Wendy Meddour, author, and Daniel Egneus, illustrator; pre-K–3) tells the story of Lubna, a young girl in a refugee camp who finds solace and companionship in a pebble. Pebble is always there to listen to her hopes and fears. When a lonely boy arrives to the World of Tents, Lubna must decide if friendship means giving up something precious to comfort someone who needs it even more. The picture book explores empathy, resilience and human connection during times of great uncertainty.



Why is there an island in Japan completely overrun by rabbits? This is just one of many questions answered in **Captivating Stories for Curious Kids** (by Chris Munoz; 7+ years). Perfect for children who love to ask “why,” each chapter presents a real-world mystery that encourages deep thinking and a love for learning. From moving desert stones in Death Valley to an immortal jellyfish, this book transforms complex ideas into accessible entertainment.



The Length of a String (by Elissa Brent Weissman; grades 5+) tells of Imani, an adopted Black girl who loves her family and Jewish community but longs to learn more about her birth parents. When Imani’s great-grandma Anna passes away, she discovers Anna’s old diary from when she was 12 and sent alone by her parents from Nazi-occupied Luxembourg to seek refuge in Brooklyn. Anna adapts to her own adoptive family as she details her new life in America. This shared family history allows Imani to see her family — and her role in it — in a new light.

Getaways at a Discount

Whether it’s a staycation, long weekend or full-blown getaway, CTA Access to Savings has you covered — even in the waning days of summer. Find special deals and discounts on everything from theme parks to hotels and rental cars to movie tickets and restaurants. And take advantage of the offerings to plan your fall and winter vacations too! ctamemberbenefits.org/access



Daniel Roe/Unsplash



The moment you feel
too busy for a break is
exactly when you
need it the most.

Calm



Activate Your Calm Account Today!

If you haven't activated your free CTA Calm account, it takes less than a minute. Visit CTAMemberBenefits.org/Calm. If you have any questions, call Member Benefits at (650) 552-5200 or email MemberBenefits@cta.org.

Managing Stress

How to achieve a calmer and more balanced state of mind

A STAGGERING 34% of adults say they're consumed by stress on a regular basis, making it harder for them to concentrate or make decisions. Chronic stress can have a significant impact on your quality of life as well as your physical health.

Effectively managing daily stress levels and reducing feelings of being overwhelmed requires proactive support and proven strategies, which can help you enhance your productivity, happiness and overall well-being. Even simple practices like adopting mindfulness techniques and focusing on your breathing can help reduce feelings of stress and worry and improve your health. Ready to feel better? Try these Calm resources:

- **Slow the Swirl in Your Mind** — In this 2-minute practice, Jay Shetty walks you through a guided breathwork exercise involving mindful finger movements so you can re-center yourself again.

- **Navigating Through World Events** — Tools to shift out of helplessness, feelings of being overwhelmed, and fear.
- **Soothing Your Nervous System** — In this 6-minute session with Mel Mah, she'll guide you through a breathwork exercise and movement practices to relax your nervous system fully.
- **Calm Conversations: Open When...** — Dr. Julie Smith's new book, *Open When: A Companion for Life's Twists & Turns*, offers research-backed strategies for overcoming life's toughest moments. In this conversation, Dr. Smith and Mel Mah discuss powerful skills to stay grounded and resilient in challenging times.

If stress is weighing you down, Calm can help. Start your journey toward greater peace with one or all of these resources in the Calm app.

2024-25 SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT

For California Teachers Association Economic Benefits Trust Member Welfare Benefit Plan

THIS IS A SUMMARY of the annual report of the California Teachers Association Economic Benefits Trust Member Welfare Benefit Plan, EIN 94-0362310, Plan 590, for period September 1, 2024 through August 31, 2025. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

Certain benefits are self-insured and claims incurred under the terms of the plan for such benefits are paid directly from the plan's trust fund.

Insurance Information

The plan has contracts with Standard Insurance Company to pay certain life insurance, temporary disability, long-term disability and accidental death & dismemberment claims incurred under the terms of the plan. The total premiums paid for the plan year ending August 31, 2025 were \$51,010,873.

Because they are so-called experience-rated contracts, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. Of the total insurance premiums paid for the plan year ending August 31, 2025, the premiums paid under such experience-rated contracts were \$50,600,872, and the total of all benefit claims paid under these experience-rated contracts during the plan year was \$40,472,434.

Basic Financial Statement

The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the plan, was \$180,020,683 as of August 31, 2025, compared to

\$176,395,176 as of September 1, 2024. During the year, the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of \$3,625,507. This increase includes unrealized appreciation and depreciation in the value of plan assets; that is, the difference between the value of the plan's assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year or the cost of assets acquired during the year. During the plan year, the plan had total income of \$63,130,785, including participant contributions of \$51,385,274, realized gains of \$25,450 from the sale of assets, earnings from investments of \$16,480,149 and other income of (\$4,760,088).

Plan expenses were \$59,505,278. These expenses included \$2,061,664 in administrative expenses and \$57,443,614 in benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries.

Your Rights to Additional Information

You have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, on request. The items listed below are included in that report.

- An accountant's report
- Financial information and information on payments to service providers
- Assets held for investment
- Transactions in excess of 5% of plan assets
- Insurance information, including sales commissions paid by insurance carriers

To obtain a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, write or call the office of California Teachers

Association in care of Vicki Rodgers, Plan Administrator, at 1705 Murchison Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010, or by telephone at (650) 697-1400.

You also have the right to receive from the plan administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the plan and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the plan and accompanying notes, or both. If you request a copy of the full annual report from the plan administrator, these two statements and accompanying notes will be included as part of that report.

You also have the legally protected right to examine the annual report at the main office of the plan (California Teachers Association, 1705 Murchison Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010) and at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C., or to obtain a copy from the U.S. Department of Labor upon payment of copying costs. Requests to the Department should be addressed to: Public Disclosure Room, N1513, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20210. ■

Our Vision For Public Schools

Add your voice to our story about the schools all students deserve

"It is time for us to reclaim the future with a bold vision for public schools in California."

—CTA President **David Goldberg**

Our Vision for Public Education

Share your thoughts and ideas By **Julian Peeples**

IT'S TIME TO dream big! Over the next few months, our union will build our collective vision for public schools as a unifying framework to guide, anchor and strengthen our campaigns.

The CTA Vision Project started at the June State Council of Education meeting, with hundreds of members sharing their dream for their own schools, classrooms and community colleges. Some ideas shared include fully funded schools, small class sizes, competitive wages, sustainable workloads and updated school facilities. Our union will also gather thousands more perspectives over the summer during Presidents Conference, at Summer Institute and through digital outreach.

Our union will continue to collect members' ideas at Regional Leadership and CTA conferences in the fall, along with local and regional focus groups to ensure all members have a chance to participate in developing our shared vision. The goal is to engage more than 30,000 members to gather input for this project by the October State Council meeting (Oct. 23–25) to articulate our shared vision for California public schools as we continue to fight for transformative revenue at the state level.

"Attacks on public education are attacks on the future of our communities, our schools and our students," says CTA President David Goldberg. "We know that we will keep winning by organizing and campaigning together. But it is also time for us to reclaim the future with a bold vision for public schools in California."

Stay tuned for more information on how you can be a part of the CTA Vision Project.

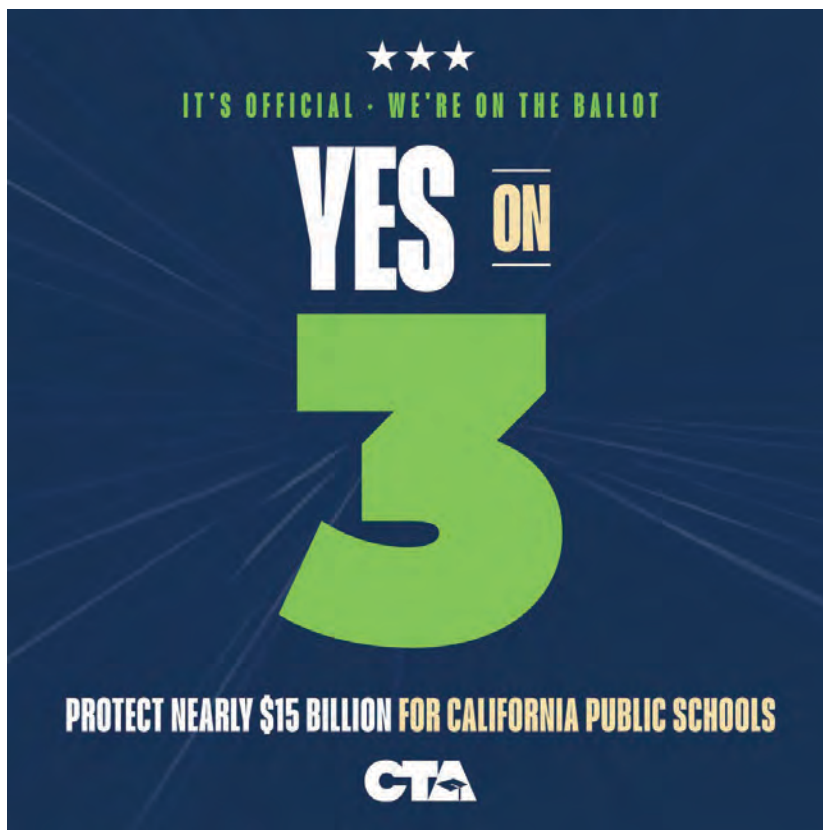


Dream Big!

Members who attended NEA Representative Assembly as CTA delegates in July 2026 were asked the following question:

You receive a letter from your future self. It describes the new state of public schools and education in California, after years of successful organizing and wins. What does it say?

Add your voice to the chorus of members: Use the QR code or visit bit.ly/4eZGbEA to share your vision for California public schools.



YES ON PROPOSITION 3!

Keep funding for our schools — and our future — intact

THE NOVEMBER 2026 ballot will include Prop. 3, The California Children's Education and Health Care Protection Act of 2026. Passing Prop. 3 is crucial to protect *existing* funding — almost \$15 billion annually — for our schools and students.

Prop. 3 keeps the wealthiest Californians paying their share so our public schools get the funding our students deserve. Without it, our public schools face a devastating 15% budget cut; 1 in 6 educators would face layoffs.

A year and a half ago, our union kicked off a campaign to permanently extend Prop. 55 — an existing tax on couples earning over \$700K annually that will expire in 2030. In the past months, CTA members gathered more than 180,000 signatures to qualify the measure for the November ballot. That measure is now Prop. 3.

Our union is already working hard on Get Out the Vote efforts to ensure it becomes law.

"We know that when we knock, we win. We need you to join us to canvass neighborhoods and talk to voters right now and all summer to ensure we pass Prop. 3," says CTA President David Goldberg. "Talk to a chapter leader today

to find out how you can be a part of this historic effort — our students are counting on us!"

The choice is simple: Continued resources for our K-12 schools and community colleges or a tax cut for the wealthiest Californians. We vote for our students — our future. Check out cta.org/YesOn3 for information, resources and shareables, and join us

"We know that when we knock, we win, and we're starting to canvass neighborhoods and talk to voters right now and all summer to ensure we pass Prop. 3."

—CTA President **David Goldberg**.

in the fight to fully fund our schools.

And post the mini-poster on the facing page to bring awareness to our campaign!

#YesOnProp3 cta.org/YesOn3

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING

TALK TO VOTERS!

Educators are the most trusted voice on public schools. Together, we can pass Prop. 3 and protect billions in public school funding for California students. Commit today to getting out the vote this fall to ensure victory this November!

Learn more and get out the vote



USE THE QR CODE TO SIGN UP
AND CANVASS

YES ON 3
CTA.ORG/YESON3

★ **VOTE YES ON PROP. 3 IN NOVEMBER 2026** ★



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