

california educator

SEPTEMBER 2025 VOLUME 30 ISSUE 1

Vote Yes on Prop. 50

Unions lead the fight
to protect public education

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Back-to-School Issue

Defending Our Immigrant Communities

Educators organize
to protect students
and communities
from federal attacks

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How Sac City Teachers Built a Movement

A decade of work results
in a unified community and wins
for students, educators

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CTA ECONOMIC BENEFITS TRUST ANNUAL REPORT **PAGE 52**

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VOLUME 30 ISSUE 1



#WeAreCTA

OUR VOICE, OUR UNION, OUR PROFESSION

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

MAGAZINE

LIAR, LIAR

State GOP congressional reps lied to us and voted to cut essential services to families. We must hold them accountable. **PAGE 24**



THE BIG, UGLY BUDGET BILL

How Trump's budget bill benefits the rich at the expense of schools, families. **PAGE 30**

GET TO KNOW OUR UNION

Learn more about our union and how every member is critical to our collective power. **PAGE 44** cta.org

DIGITAL



VOTE YES ON PROP. 50!

Defend our democracy and ensure funding for public education and other services for our communities. Vote on or before Nov. 4. **PAGE 28**



cta.org/prop50

ORGANIZING TO WIN

Over the past decade, Sac City Teachers Assn. strategically built power — and a movement. **PAGE 34**



bit.ly/4m3jQHx

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

THE YEAR AHEAD

Conferences, trainings, notable events: Our "year-at-a-glance" can help you plan. **PAGE 9** cta.org/events

2025 LGBTQ+ ISSUES

CTA's 17th annual conference devoted to issues involving educators, students and community. Oct. 24–26.

PAGE 8 cta.org/conferences

SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE

CTA's four ethnic caucuses are the hosts; the theme is "And Still We Thrive: Meaningful Solidarity in Action."

Oct. 31–Nov. 2. **PAGE 8** cta.org/conferences

MEMBER BENEFITS

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On the first day of school on Aug. 14, UTLA members across all school sites welcomed all students. Story on Page 14.

September 2025



Defending Our Immigrant Communities

Educators organize to protect students and communities from federal attacks **PAGE 14**

GOP Reps' Betrayal

California's congressional representatives vote for draconian budget cuts — after many promised they would not.

PAGE 24



How Sac City Teachers Built a Movement

A decade of work results in a unified community and wins for students, educators.

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Cover: UTLA's Yolanda Vazquez, Christina Dan-Calin, Monica Hein and Tom Van Sciver welcome *all* students to Arleta HS in Van Nuys on the first day of school. Photos this page, from top: UTLA educators held #WelcomeBackLA events at schools on Aug. 14; Rep. Jay Obernolte promised to vote against cuts to education but broke his word; Sac City Teachers Assn. mobilized members and community to win big for students.



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)

DEFEND DEMOCRACY AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

*Vote Yes on Prop. 50 on —
or before — Nov. 4*

ON NOV. 4, California will hold a special election, and your vote matters.

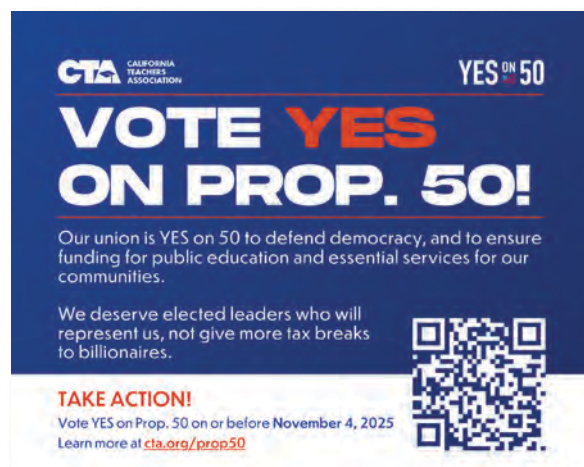
Proposition 50 — the Election Rigging Response Act — is California's bold response to unprecedented redistricting efforts led by Texas and other states working with the Trump administration. These efforts are designed to consolidate power and maintain control of Congress after the 2026 midterm elections — all to slash funding for public education, health care and essential services while providing tax cuts for billionaires. (See story on page 28.)

Why does It matter to union educators?

Congressional Republicans are attempting to rig elections specifically to cut funding for public education and services for our communities. Critical funding for special education, school meals for hungry children, and other essential programs have already been slashed and jeopardized. Now is the time for us to stand together and fight back against the nine members of Congress in California who threw our students under the bus and voted to cut critical funds for public education. (See story on page 24.)

Volunteer to win

Passing the Election Rigging Response Act will take a major effort. Our union has up-to-date volunteer opportunities — visit cta.org/prop50. Check out the Stop Election Rigging page at stopelectionrigging.com for more ways to take action. And tear out the mini-poster on the inside back cover of this magazine to post where all can see and take action.



GPO/WEP Repeal

I'm a second-career special education teacher. This year I enter my 29th year as an educator and will retire in June of 2026 at the age of 63. This would not have been possible without the repeal of WEP [Windfall Elimination Plan — part of the Social Security Fairness Act signed into law in early 2025]. I want to thank CTA for being part of the fight to repeal WEP. I would have had to work at least an additional three years. As a single woman having a secure retirement is of the utmost importance.

OPAL LYNN JOHNSON

Associated Pomona Teachers

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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.

Publication of advertising in the *California Educator* does not indicate CTA approval of the product or of the companies that purchase advertising.

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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.

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California Educator Volume 30, Issue 1, September 2025 *California Educator* (ISSN 1091-6148) is published in September, November, January, March, May and July by: California Teachers Association, 1705 Murchison Dr., Burlingame, CA 94010-4583. Periodicals Postage Paid at Burlingame, CA, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to *California Educator*, P.O. Box 4178, Burlingame, CA 94011-4178.

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Our Union Power Transforms Anger Into Action

AT A TIME when we are facing unprecedented attacks on public education and unions, I'm grateful to be in a union that gives us all a means by which we can make sense of the world and focus our collective power to meet any issue head on — with solidarity, strategy and with *ánimo* — soul.

In our union, we make the space to talk to each other and transform concerns into collective action, confusion to clarity, division to unity, despair to hope, and anger to action. We see this in how our locals, our members, are responding to students and communities in fear as ICE raids wreak havoc across our state. Folks are bargaining to protect students and families, working with allies and partners to help, and responding quickly to meet community needs (see our story on page 16).

We see this in how Sacramento City Teachers Association, for example, organized and built power over the past decade, resulting in a local with the internal and external strength to win solidarity with community, elect educator-friendly school board members and negotiate historic contracts (see page 34).

I know the anger that many of us feel remains. The truth is that there are more than enough resources in our state alone to fully fund public schools and Special Education and for every educator and student to have access to affordable health care and housing.

We must use our anger to fuel the work we do.

It's okay to be angry when so many of our districts are sitting on massive reserves while we fight layoffs, cuts and closures.

It's okay to be angry that in the wealthiest state in the wealthiest country too many educators can't afford to live in the communities they serve.

It's okay to be angry that public funds are being redirected to scale up ICE raids in our communities. One in five of our students lives with an undocumented family member. We teach in communities where once-vibrant neighborhoods are now quiet. Families, students and union members are harassed, detained and deported — many while following the rules.

And it's only just begun. That big ugly bill, one of the largest transfers of wealth from working people to the rich and

corporations, will supercharge these raids in our communities. Seventy-five billion dollars that was funding health care in poor and rural communities will now be directed to ICE over the next four years.

All nine of the California Republicans in congress voted for this bill. They are cowards who lied to our members when they said they wouldn't cut funds for health care that their constituents depend on. We must rally our friends, families and communities to vote YES on Prop. 50 on Nov. 4. Prop. 50 defends our democracy and ensures funding for public education and essential services for our communities.

Let's remember that those who threaten our democracy wouldn't be coming after us if they weren't afraid of our collective power. Why else would states like Texas redraw their congressional districts to maintain their majorities in 2026 if they weren't afraid of a backlash to these draconian cuts? Cuts and extreme policies from the Trump Administration are deeply unpopular and they know it.

With so much coming at us we do need to be flexible and nimble, and we mustn't despair.

Our union is how we take this chaos and turn it into a plan to win. It's how we will build a supermajority of chapters with the organizing structures and cultures needed for collective action. Our greatest resistance is building a stronger CTA — chapter by chapter, site by site, and member by member.

We will meet these challenges building our union, growing our skills, being focused and intentional with our power.

Not a single one of us is alone and whatever weight we carry, we carry together.

Onward.

David B. Goldberg

CTA PRESIDENT



David Goldberg



Bringing the Joy

AMID THIS FALL'S jam-packed work and life calendars, we have a heavy heart as many of our students, families and communities continue to be under siege.

Our stories in this issue lay out **the impacts of the recently passed federal budget bill** and how it hurts our schools and families while benefiting the rich (page 30), and how **California's GOP congressional representatives betrayed their constituents** — and lied to our faces — when they voted for the draconian budget cuts (page 24).

But union educators know how to find and bring joy, and take positive, effective actions to counter fear, chaos and injustice — and we chronicle this as well. Take a look at **"Educators Defend Our Immigrant Communities"** (page 14) for a few examples at how our members are fighting back and fighting forward to ensure students and communities are protected. From joyfully welcoming *all* students to schools and partnering with allies to support and educate communities, to building safety demands for families into bargaining platforms and setting up food drives and other essential services, educators are all in.

That's a good thing, because taking action is required on all fronts. **"Home Again: Creating Safe Spaces for Students"** (page 21) is not only about defending immigrant families, as critical as that is. Equally important is working to prevent school closures that harm students

▼ First day of school on Aug. 14; courtesy UTLA.



and neighborhoods, and understanding that educators must be in solidarity with their communities to be successful. Also, our battle to ensure stable funding for public education — in a state with the fourth largest economy *in the world* — means that we must be vigilant with district budget processes and push to extend vital Proposition 55 funding (see cta.org/Prop55Extension).

Look no further than Sac City Teachers Association to understand why strategically taking action — while maintaining educator joy and love for community — has resulted in a powerful movement that is a model for the nation. **"Organizing to Win"** (page 34) documents a decade-long effort by SCTA to build a unified, active membership; forge strong bonds with community; and win what its members deserve.

The work that you do, the values you hold, the joy that you bring every day in the face of grim realities — are incomparable. Thank you.

Katharine Fong

EDITOR IN CHIEF
editor@cta.org

TOGETHER, WE ARE

**UNION
STRONG!**

Our Union and You

Toward the back of this issue is "Union Strong!" (page 44), where you can learn more about our union and how every member has a voice. You are one of 310,000 California educators who belong to more than 1,000 local chapters. Get involved and make your voice heard! And meet CTA's leadership, including the board member representing your district.

SEPTEMBER 2025

CALENDAR

THE FALL CALENDAR:

Welcome Back!



TEACH THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Labor Day come and gone? NP! Lessons about workers rights and labor unions are more important than ever — issues such as fair wages and safe working conditions are ongoing battles — and are relevant all year long. Unions have made possible many employee benefits, including the 40-hour workweek, paid time off, sick leave and workplace safety, and continue to fight. Find resources at pbslearningmedia.org, zinnedproject.org and learningforjustice.org.

Your union has advocated for educators' (and students') rights since our founding in 1863 — years before the Labor Day holiday was established in 1894.

▼ Isabella Juarez-Padilla, Corona del Mar High School, National PTA 2024–2025 Outstanding Interpretation awardee for “Unapologetically Imperfect.”



The Arts: Essential to Education

National Arts Education Week is in September, but the arts' transformative powers can be celebrated yearlong. In addition to teaching the arts, let leaders and decision-makers know the need to support equitable arts access for students of all backgrounds. Learn more at americansforthearts.org.



International Day of Peace **SEPT. 21**

The International Day of Peace (“Peace Day”) is observed around the world each year on Sept. 21. Established in 1981 by unanimous United Nations resolution, Peace Day provides a globally shared date for all humanity to commit to peace above all differences and to contribute to building a Culture of Peace. Look for Peace Day activities in your own community and around the world at internationaldayofpeace.org/get-involved.





2025–26 Leadership Conferences

Aspiring and current chapter leaders can learn the ropes and increase skill sets at CTA leadership conferences. Details at cta.org/conferences.

Region 1 Leadership Conference

SEPT. 5–7 Hyatt Regency SFO, Burlingame. "Region 1 Leadership Toolkit: Essential Skills for Building a Coalition to Defend Public Education in a Time of Crisis"

Orange SCC Fall Leadership Conference

SEP. 6 Hilton OC/Costa Mesa

Region 3 Leadership Conference

SEPT. 26–28 Warner Center Marriott, Woodland Hills. "Together We Rise: Solidarity for Students, Educators and Communities"

Region 2 Leadership Conference

OCT. 3–5 Grand Sierra, Reno. "United with Purpose, Inspired by Action"

San Geronio SCC Fall Leadership and Social Justice & Cultural Equity Conference

OCT. 10–12 Rancho Mirage

High Desert SCC Fall Leadership

NOV. 21–23 Renaissance, Palm Springs

San Diego & Imperial SCC Fall Leadership Conference

DEC. 12–14 Renaissance, Palm Springs

Region 4 Leadership Conference

MARCH 6–8, 2026 Hyatt Regency La Jolla, San Diego.



CTA & Other Events

CTA Special Education Conference

SEPT. 12–14 Hyatt Regency SFO, Burlingame. Features sessions full of strategies, tips and proven research to help you support your exceptional students. ► cta.org/conferences

CCA Fall Conference

OCT. 10–12 Westin San Francisco Airport, Burlingame. Highlights bargaining skills and coordinating strategies focused on collective bargaining. CCA Fall Council, where budgetary changes and action on a variety of issues occur, also takes place. ► cca4us.org/conferences

LGBTQ+ Issues Conference

OCT 24–26 Hyatt Regency, Garden Grove. Sessions will focus on a variety of subjects affecting the entire membership and California's youth. ► cta.org/conferences

2025 Solidarity Conference

OCT. 31–NOV. 2 SFO Marriott, Burlingame. This conference is presented by CTA's four ethnic caucuses. The theme: "And Still We Thrive: Meaningful Solidarity in Action." Connect with educators

who share your passion for equity, diversity and social justice. You will gain practical insights and strategies to improve your teaching and advocacy skills. ► cta.org/conferences

Voluntary dues contribution

NOV. 1 OPT-OUT DEADLINE
Voluntary annual contributions by members support CTA Foundation's grants/scholarships and CTA's advocacy efforts. New members are automatically enrolled in the default contribution of \$5 for the CTA Foundation for Teaching and Learning and \$15 for advocacy. Members may change their allocation or opt out. New members have 30 days from the date of enrollment; previously enrolled members have a window from Aug.1 to Nov. 1. ► cta.org/contribution

American Education Week

NOV. 17–21 American Education Week is celebrated the week prior to Thanksgiving week and includes special days to honor parents, education support professionals and substitute educators.

▼ Participants in CTA Summer Institute's 2025 Communications strand.



The Year at a Glance

Locations are TBD except where noted. Visit cta.org/conferences for more.

2025

Region 1 Leadership Conference

SEPT. 5-7 *Burlingame*

Special Education Conference

SEPT. 12-14 *Burlingame*

Region 3 Leadership Conference

SEPT. 26-28 *Woodland Hills*

Region 2 Leadership Conference

OCT. 3-5 *Reno*

CCA Fall Conference

OCT. 10-12 *Millbrae*

San Geronimo SCC Fall Leadership and Social Justice & Cultural Equity Conference

OCT. 10-12 *Rancho Mirage*

State Council of Education

OCT. 17-19 *Los Angeles*

LGBTQ+ Issues Conference

OCT. 24-26 *Garden Grove*

2025 Solidarity Conference

OCT. 31-NOV. 2 *Burlingame*

High Desert Fall Leadership

NOV. 21-23 *Palm Springs*

New Educator Weekend (North)

DEC. 5-7 *Burlingame*

San Diego & Imperial SCC Fall Leadership Conference

DEC. 12-14 *Palm Springs*

2026

Issues Conference

JAN. 16-18 *Las Vegas*

State Council of Education

JAN. 23-25 *Los Angeles*

Good Teaching Conference (North)

JAN. 30-FEB. 1 *Burlingame*

New Educator Weekend (South)

FEB. 20-22 *Costa Mesa*

Read Across America

MARCH 2

Region 4 Leadership Conference

MARCH 6-8 *San Diego*

CTA/NEA Retired Conference

MARCH 12-13 *Costa Mesa*

Equity & Human Rights Conference

MARCH 13-15 *Costa Mesa*

Good Teaching Conference (South)

MARCH 20-22 *Garden Grove*

State Council of Education

MARCH 27-29 *Los Angeles*

California Day of the Teacher & National School Nurse Day

MAY 13 and **MAY 6**, respectively

CTA ESP Day

MAY 19

State Council of Education

JUNE 5-7 *Los Angeles*

NEA Representative Assembly

JULY 3-7 *Denver, CO*

Summer Institute

JULY 15-19 *Los Angeles*

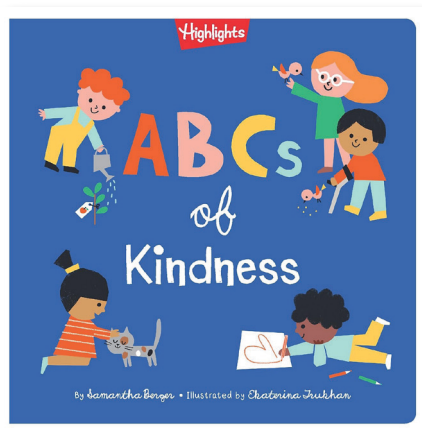
Presidents Conference

JULY 30-AUG 2 *Burlingame*

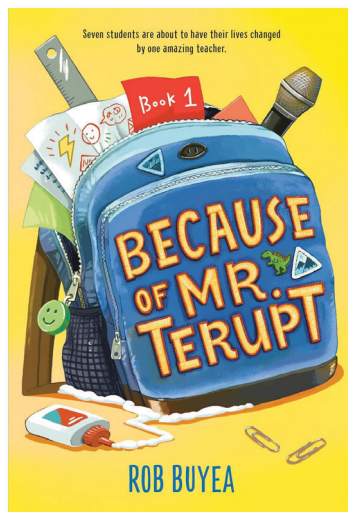
Fall for Books

GET STUDENTS READING with a few good — and teacher-vetted — books from CTA's California Reads. Find more recommendations at cta.org/careads. Members receive a 20% discount when they purchase through our partner.

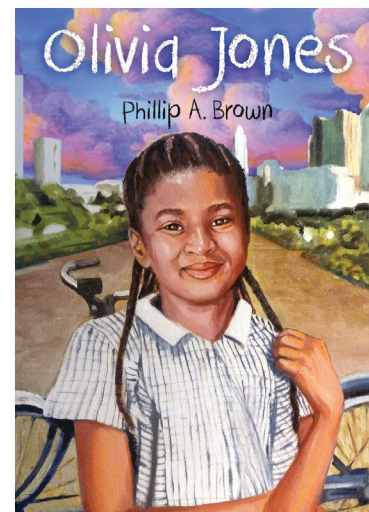
Compiled by Amy Peruzzaro.



The ABCs of Kindness (ages 2–5; by Samantha Berger, illustrated by Ekaterina Trukhan) encourages young children to be their best selves as they learn and grow in the world. The book showcases a diverse cast of children and demonstrates how simple acts of kindness — like helping with chores or standing up for what's right — build strong character. Ideal for a read-aloud.



From award-winning author Rob Buyea comes *Because of Mr. Terupt* (late elementary), a story of seven very different students who are starting fifth grade in Mr. Terupt's class. Their teacher helps them discover inner strength and unity despite their differences. But when a tragic accident befalls him, his students face their biggest test: Will they retain his critical lessons and their newfound bonds, or return to their old ways?



In *Olivia Jones* (ages 13–18; by Phillip A. Brown, illustrated by Wendell Wiggins) 11-year-old Olivia and her best friend Mo share a tragic bond as both lost their fathers in Vietnam. They embark on a journey after discovering that Mo's father is alive. Olivia hopes that finding his father will help her uncover the truth about her own. The story spans a single summer across Alabama, and weaves together history with the power of joining forces for good.

CELEBRATE
National
Higher
Education
Month!

OCTOBER: *Higher Education Month*

The month is a time to recognize the dedicated faculty, staff and graduate workers who fulfill our students' curiosity and ensure they can realize their dreams. For news about CTA's Community College Assn., see page 53.

▼ Pringle, second from right, Goldberg, center, and ATA President Ralph Hernandez (wearing a red tie) with ATA educators at a Dream Center; Pringle speaks to a student.



NEA President Pringle Visits Dream Centers

IN EARLY SEPTEMBER, NEA President Becky Pringle joined CTA President David Goldberg for a tour of the Food Pantry and Dream Centers operated by Alhambra Teachers Assn. (ATA) and Alhambra Unified School District.

At the pantry, Pringle announced a \$25,000 donation on behalf of NEA to support its work. The pantry holds distributions throughout the year to families and district staff who face food insecurity, a growing problem exacerbated by cuts to SNAP made by the Trump Administration.

"We hope that this small token of appreciation goes a long way towards meeting the food insecurity needs of the students, families and educators of the Alhambra community," Pringle said.

The tour included three Dream Centers at local high schools, where students, staff and community partners showcased programs that support student wellness, academics and family needs. The centers are safe respite from the chaos and uncertainty that ICE poses for students, many of whom are part of recent immigrant families from all corners of the globe.

"Today's visit is powerful testament to the work union educators do day in and day out with our students," said Goldberg. "Many of these programs and services, which are held in Community Schools, exist to meet the needs of the whole student. These places restore hope, dignity and the belief that a better future is possible."

▼ Strike school participants on the steps of Mission High School in S.F.



Strike School

In late August, United Educators of San Francisco and other Bay Area locals hosted a strike readiness academy at a local high school. Hundreds of educators from across the state came together to learn from each other, strengthen cross-chapter ties and build statewide organizing power as they kicked off the new year and continued support for the We Can't Wait campaign (wecantwait.info).

In attendance were members of Natomas Teachers Assn., Oakland Education Assn., Salinas Valley Federation of Teachers, San Diego Education Assn., San Jose Teachers Assn. Twin Rivers United Educators, United Teachers of Richmond, and Berkeley Federation of Teachers.

▼ Joy with students at her floral workshop at the Magnolia Agriscience Community Center (at Magnolia High). The bouquets are sold, used for community farm-to-table dinners or given to community members as gifts.



From **PATROL** *to Possibility*

How the Community Schools model transformed my purpose

By **Katrina Joy**

MY FIRST RADIO CALL as a police officer alerted me to a crime scene where a 16-year-old had been shot and killed by a rival gang member. In the moments that followed, I did not have the luxury of time to process the grief and tragedy of the situation. It was the first of many indescribably difficult situations I would face during my six years working in law enforcement. Too often, those situations involved children whose lives should have been full of possibility. Each time, I had to bypass my emotions so that I could do my job.

Later in life, those neglected emotions would resurface in a completely different context — a classroom full of students.

Working as a police officer taught me a lot about my identity and values. I worked alongside men and women who cared deeply about the communities they served and many of those partners are still dear friends who I consider family. At the same time, while I still believe police work to be an incredibly honorable service, there was often a tangible feeling of grief I felt in my work because any rehabilitation or proactive measures felt impossible; many of the radio calls I responded to required me to be reactive. I made space for this frustration while being exposed to hard truths about our

society and seeing more than someone could be expected to process on a daily basis.

Through the realities I absorbed, I quickly found my heart expanding for all those whose life paths didn't afford them opportunities to thrive. In particular, I felt drawn to youth who needed to be exposed to the open window of education and have someone walk next to them to show how they could let in the light that knowledge offers — the strength emerging in themselves grounded by their values.

The theme that surfaced was the desire to transform my personal mission from one centered on *help* into one of *hope*.

After a series of building events involving youth that caused my heart to beat for a different kind of purpose, I decided to resign from police work and become a teacher. But the impact of my years in police work gave me a unique lens when it came to teaching. I had seen decisions made that had challenging, sometimes fatal consequences, and I came into teaching caring less about test scores and more about how students could see themselves in the curriculum, their overall wellbeing and who they could become when engaged in a meaningful educational experience.

But an incident that occurred in the midst of my teaching career recalled many of the pained emotions I had experienced as a police officer.

Around the middle of my career, a student in my class who had recently graduated was killed by a gang member. He died protecting his brother. He was one of the kindest, most humble students I'd known. He was always the first to pick up my papers when they fell on the floor, and would hold the door open for others with no expectation of a thank you. He was the only student in my class who laughed at my horrible puns. In fondness, I gave him a nickname that stuck in our classroom and even on his football team.

His untimely death impacted me heavily, not only because of how unfair it was, but because much like what I experienced in police work, it was too late.

An internal question plagued me: *Could I have somehow prevented this?*

The tragedy of my student's death fueled me once again to view urgency in my interactions with students. Yet, I was also forced to accept that my power and influence were limited. At the time, although I still felt I could serve and help people, I was missing an important perspective that would blossom later in my career.

If we don't seek to understand our students as individuals, and if our students don't feel known and valued first, educational content becomes a brick we are throwing at a glass wall. I began to place content in the back seat in favor of "supporting the Whole Child" — a mantra that I did not know at the time was foundational to **the community schools model**.

The concept of the community schools model was transformative for me because the lens through which we view others (not just students) is asset-based. Instruction is focused on student voice and choice, civic engagement, culturally responsive teaching, social emotional learning and collaborative leadership. We believe that students, parents and teachers should all have a representative seat saved for them at the decision-making table. All of this results in students gaining confidence and establishing ownership over their educational experience. If we know our students first, we can give them an accurate depiction of their best selves;



Katrina Joy

"Becoming part of the community school family transformed the way I see others — and how I see myself. The community school mindset helped me turn my personal mission from providing help into one of spreading hope."

they then feel empowered to discover who they would like to become and how they can impact others.

Becoming a part of the community school family transformed the way I see others, and in turn, how I see myself. Importantly, the community school mindset helped me accomplish what I'd wanted to do since I first experienced a desire to work with youth: turn my personal mission from providing *help* into one of spreading *hope*. Rather than protecting or helping students, our job is to provide tools and create opportunities for them to feel empowered, independent and proud, so *they* can define success.

I have proudly held the position of Community School Teacher Lead for the past three years. When I compare myself today to who I was when I left police work, I am overwhelmed by the evolution that has taken place. I see students and youth differently. I see our community differently. I even see myself differently. Where fear previously crept in and wanted to swallow me whole during my attempts to protect students, I now choose to see courage, strength and glimmers of hope in who they are now, and who they can become.

Students need to have the space and confidence to explore who they are and feel valued. Only then will they have the freedom to make

decisions that will empower themselves and inspire others. Instead of responding to the sense of urgency to help, we can take bold steps of hope. We can walk alongside them while they lead the way, and if we are fortunate enough to witness it, we can watch them open new windows of hope to let that same light in for others. ■

Anaheim Secondary Teachers Association member and 20-year educator Katrina Joy was a Community Schools Teacher Lead and senior English/Google Project Management teacher at Magnolia High School. This year, she will be an Outreach Teacher at Katella High, another community school in the Anaheim district. Joy is a 2025 winner of NEA Foundation's Travelers Award for Teaching Excellence.



CTA & Community Schools

Our union is committed to helping grow and support California's community schools, a partnership with the state, school districts, students, families and communities. Community schools' democratic model of shared decision-making ensures all students' needs are addressed so they can thrive, and helps build power with community that leads to a more equitable society. Find information and resources at cta.org/communityschools.

▼ United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) members held #WelcomeBackLA events at schools across the district on the first day of school to reinforce their commitment to safe schools for all students and families.



Educators Defend Our Immigrant Communities

Organizing to protect students, families from federal attacks

By Julian Peebles

“AS SOCIAL JUSTICE union educators, it is part of our charge to make sure our students feel safe in our classrooms and our families feel safe coming to our schools and participating in our school communities,” says Kyle Weinberg, president of San Diego Education Association (SDEA). “We need to show we will not be intimidated by these threats from this federal administration, and we will stand up for our students because an injury to one is an injury to all.”

Since January, our immigrant communities, regardless of immigration status, have been under assault by federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, who have been profiling and accosting people in the streets — sometimes for simply having brown skin or speaking a language other than English — as part of President Trump’s cruel and aggressive immigration enforcement. Masked ICE agents have been

conducting raids at churches, in agricultural fields, at supermarkets and outside public schools — like in Los Angeles, San Jose and the San Diego area in August, when ICE agents accosted and harassed people while they dropped their children off at school.

Across California, educators and their local unions have stepped up to protest these actions in their communities and are working hard to ensure all students feel safe, supported and valued in classrooms.

“You have to be brave knowing that some people will not agree with you. Some members of our community and even some members of our union are in favor of ICE and what they’re doing,” says Emily Rogers, vice president of Glendale Teachers Association (GTA). “But we try to keep it centered on our students and their families and how this impacts them. We as an association are standing up for our students, our

▼ A press conference outside a Glendale hospital in July called on security agents employed by ICE to leave the hospital, where they were monitoring a woman who became gravely ill when she was detained.



"We're trying to protect our school communities and as teachers and as a union, we want to make sure we're doing our part."

—Glendale Teachers Assn.
Vice President
Emily Rogers

educators and our families. We're trying to protect our school communities and as teachers and as a union, we want to make sure we're doing our part."

Rogers spoke on behalf of GTA at a press conference outside Dignity Health Glendale Memorial Hospital in early July calling on security agents employed by ICE to leave the hospital, where they were monitoring a woman who became gravely ill when she was detained. Despite community objections, these ICE-contracted officers were stationed in the hospital around the clock, creating a hostile and frightening environment for her, other patients and hospital staff. Rogers says GTA will always rise to support and defend students and families from these and any attacks.

"We've been dealing with a lot of issues the last few years where our students were in danger, first from extremists and now from ICE," says Rogers, a 25-year French teacher. "We're part of the narrative that Glendale is safe for everyone and ICE has no place in our schools or our hospitals."



Emily Rogers

Supporting immigrant communities at the bargaining table

In San Diego, SDEA educators are building their demands for protections for immigrant students and educators into their current bargaining platform — making a number of proposals including a new equity article to

protect unjustifiably targeted students, dedication of a school district attorney to support and assist immigrant families, establishment of a school district hotline to support families with immigration concerns, and opening an immigrant community legal clinic at one of the district's community schools.

"When we say we're fighting for stability in our communities, it means we're fighting for stability in our schools where all students feel welcome and safe," says Weinberg. "The terror and disruption of ICE enforcement activities create an environment of instability. This is impacting students' mental health and ability to focus on learning, and that's why it's so important to make this a key piece of our contract campaign and what we do as union educators."

Earlier this year, SDEA printed and distributed "Red Cards" outlining the school district's policy and protections if ICE agents approach campuses. In August, educators participated in a non-violent direct-action training through their central labor council. Some SDEA members are also taking action with organizations like Unión del Barrio to defend families under attack, regardless of immigration status (see sidebar on Page 17). Weinberg says SDEA is working to be prepared for whatever comes, so they are ready when immigration enforcement escalates further in Southern California.

"We want to contribute to strengthening our



▼ San Diego Education Association (SDEA) held workshops at their annual Union Academy before the school year started to educate members about their rights and protections for their students and families.



“As union educators we know that we have the power to fight for what matters to us: Safe, stable, welcoming schools and communities, both within and outside the school doors.”

—San Diego Education Assn. President **Kyle Weinberg**

immigrant rights rapid response network. We’re inspired by UTLA (United Teachers Los Angeles) in collaborating with local community organizations like CHIRLA (the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights),” Weinberg says. “We want to partner with community organizations in San Diego to plug our members into larger efforts. We want to be able to serve that critical role.”

While Weinberg says SDEA has worked hard to ensure school district leadership prioritizes protecting students and communities, he knows direct action is needed to defend families under attack.

“We know that we *can’t stop* at policies on paper and a shared commitment to keep ICE off campus,” says Weinberg. “As educators, we know that what happens off campus impacts our school communities, too. As *union* educators we know that we have the power to fight for what matters to us: Safe,

stable, welcoming schools and communities, both within and outside the school doors.”



Kyle Weinberg

Supporting immigrant communities through education and partnerships

UTLA has been in constant action to defend and support Los Angeles’ immigrant communities since the inauguration, building on its work during the last Trump presidency. It has launched an education campaign on L.A. Unified’s sanctuary schools policy, and is building a structure to guide their immigration work and holding a variety of workshops to engage and inform UTLA members.

“We have educators in all eight of our areas who are participating in rapid response teams,” says Maria Miranda, UTLA vice president who is leading the union’s immigration defense work. “We held a training series in

Continued on Page 18

Taking Direct Action Against Injustice

"PEOPLE ARE BEING disappeared off the streets, from courthouses, work sites and school drop-off lines. When a member of our community is taken, their absence does not go unnoticed or unfelt by their families, friends, neighbors, customers, faith communities or schools," says an educator and SDEA member (name withheld for safety and security reasons). "Local community defense is necessary for building strong classroom communities and a safe and welcoming learning environment for all."

The San Diego educator witnessed ICE detentions nearly every day this summer, working as part of a grassroots group that supports people attending immigration court — informing them about the risks of detention at the courthouse, making emergency plans in the event of arrest and accompanying them inside the courtroom. With masked, armed ICE agents lining the court hallways waiting to detain people, the situation often escalated quickly and the fear and desperation were palpable.

"As a secondary-level educator, a case that stands out for me is when a woman and her teen daughter came to the courthouse looking for her husband, who was detained in their driveway as he left for work that morning. As the woman made phone calls to attorneys, I took their daughter to get a snack," the SDEA member says. "Sitting across from her, the 18-year-old looked as if she could be one of my students. She just had a few units to wrap up over the summer to get her diploma. But she said, 'I don't even want to do school anymore — how am I supposed to do school with all of this happening?'"

The educator says it's important to face the reality of the current situation and recognize that far more students will be impacted than we realize, pointing out that even in school districts that limit immigration agents' access to students, families are at risk of harassment by ICE during drop-off and pick-up, as happened in August throughout the San Diego area. They recommend that school districts provide resources for families to create emergency plans in the event someone is arrested (free plan available online at Immigrant Legal Resource Center). They added that other ways to help vulnerable and impacted families include informing them about the Caregiver's Authorization Affidavit and writing a support letter for those eligible for a bond hearing.

▼ Detention Watch Network poster.



**"Local community defense
is necessary for building strong
classroom communities and a safe
and welcoming learning
environment for all."**

For the new school year, the educator expects diminished attendance due to fear — and some students might never come back. They say it's important to offer virtual options when possible for meetings like IEPs and parent-teacher conferences to sustain home-school connections in ways that feel safe for families.

The SDEA member says to remember that you don't have to take on this work alone, with like-minded colleagues in your local union and many community organizations actively doing it for years, including Unión del Barrio, Detention Watch Network and NorCal Resist.

"When we fight together, we win. Work is always waiting for us, but none of us has to do it alone," they say. "Talk to your colleagues and other community members about a plan to collectively fight, resist and thrive."



Continued from Page 16

▼ In addition to welcoming all students (right), UTLA issued a series of demands to school district administration to create safe schools and support students, families and educators.

UTLA UNITED
TEACHERS
LOS ANGELES

UTLA stands united in our commitment to ensure LAUSD schools remain places of learning and safety — not hunting grounds for immigration enforcement and their tactics of harassment, family separation, intimidation, and hate.

We call on district officials and local leaders to immediately implement the demands we, alongside community advocates, have put forward to protect our students.



partnership with CHIRLA. We had a Know Your Rights session with all our members and then opened it up to the community. We had a family preparedness workshop, social emotional supports for students, and we also had teachers present their lesson plans on how to talk to students about what’s happening.”

At their summer leadership conference, UTLA held a series of workshops on immigration-related issues, training members on topics like building a sanctuary team at your work site, developing a safety plan and community self-patrolling. Miranda says UTLA is also working on a plan with community partner Reclaim Our Schools to mark a two-block perimeter around campuses before and after school to create a safe zone and ensure safe passage for students (a 15-year-old student with disabilities was mistakenly pulled out of his parents’ vehicle by ICE agents and detained at gunpoint outside a high school in August). This is in addition to a back-to-school campaign ([#WelcomeBackLA](#)) that reinforces that *all* students are welcome in L.A. public schools.

“As educators, we have deep roots in the communities we serve. Our families look up to us as anchors of our communities and we need to step up to that role and defend when they are under attack,” says Miranda. “It matters that we bring light to what is happening and call out what is wrong. If we have students being pulled out of our schools and feeling unsafe, we’re going to end up with empty classrooms and school closures and serious losses in our school communities. We need to make sure our students do feel safe and we have thriving schools.”

UTLA issued a series of demands to school district administration for the new school year, in addition to contract language proposed earlier this year, on creating safe schools and supporting students, families and educators. These include establishing safe zones around campuses and concrete safety plans, providing food and other basic items to affected families, providing virtual learning options to students who are afraid to attend school physically because of raids, and guaranteeing a pathway to a diploma for students who have been deported.



Maria Miranda

"If we have students being pulled out of our schools and feeling unsafe, we're going to end up with empty classrooms and school closures and serious losses in our school communities."

—UTLA Vice President **Maria Miranda**



Alex Vogel

"If there's financial hardship, food disparities and fear at home, that student isn't going to be able to learn. It's part of caring for the community and the people we serve."

—Whittier Elementary Teachers Assn. bargaining chair **Alex Vogel**, on WETA's response after ICE raids at neighborhood markets



Resources for Educators, Students and Families

OUR UNION BELIEVES immigration policies should guarantee human rights and protect the integrity of the family unit without discrimination; we support immigration policies that keep families together. Regardless of immigration status of students or their parents, every student has the right to a free public education free from harassment.

Visit CTA's webpage **Home Is Here: Supporting Immigrant Educators, Students and Families** at cta.org/homeishere for the latest information about current immigration policies and resources and guidance you can use.

You can also order Red Cards that outline our constitutional rights in multiple languages to help you and others defend yourselves against ICE actions, along with posters to express support for immigrants. All these resources can be ordered for free by any CTA member.

UTLA members have been outspoken in defending their immigrant students and communities. It's a personal fight for many, including Miranda.

"I grew up in the community where I taught for 23 years — I see myself in the students and I see my parents in the parents. When I was a child, I remember having to hide when immigration was going door-to-door and I can relate to the fear the community is feeling," Miranda says. "Working with other folks who have similar backgrounds and some who are DACA recipients — we're very passionate about this work. Seeing our students every day and knowing that their parents are bringing them to school with all these hopes and dreams being under threat is difficult, but it keeps us going."

Supporting immigrant communities in our neighborhoods

Miranda says it's important for educators to find what they are comfortable doing to support. Some of L.A.'s community schools

started delivering groceries to families who were afraid to leave their homes, which was a way to make an immediate difference. Middle school physical education teacher Alex Vogel did just that in early summer when ICE raids began occurring outside Latino supermarkets in Whittier, causing families to forego trips for groceries, out of fear of harassment based solely on the color of their skin and the language they speak.

"We were very concerned about the lack of food our students and families were going to have," says Vogel, bargaining chair of Whittier Elementary Teachers Association (WETA). "We knew there was going to be this fear in our communities and there were going to be food disparities."

Despite attempts to get school district administration and the school board to act, Vogel says nothing was done to support students and families, so he and three other WETA members (and two students) organized a food distribution, distributing four pallets of groceries to local families.

"Families were very grateful, and we had a lot of very



▼ WETA members and students distributed food to Whittier families in need.



positive interactions,” says Vogel. “We worked it out as a drive-through, so they would drive up and we would put food in their trunks. We did it in the school parking lot so that if ICE came, they couldn’t come in the parking lot because they’re not allowed on campus.”

Vogel says that this school year, WETA is organizing and planning on how best to collaborate with district admin, the school board and other organizations to help and protect their school community.

“This is what we’re here for — our students and families,” Vogel says. “If there’s a lack of stability in the family because of these outside pressures, then the child is not going to be successful. If there’s financial hardship, food disparities and fear at home, that student isn’t going to be able to learn. It’s part of caring for the community and the people we serve.” ■

Our Union Calls on Colleges to Stop Cooperating with Homeland Security

CTA State Council in early June took a stand against the targeting of college students for exercising their First Amendment rights and expressing political opinions. Our union is calling on all colleges to cease and desist from cooperating with Department of Homeland Security to deport students for their political views. This came in response to numerous international students nationwide being abducted and detained by ICE agents for their political views with the cooperation of the institutions they attend.

Ways to Support Our Immigrant Students and Families

“Start organizing. Focus on one aspect that’s going to meet the needs of the students with ICE raids happening. Is it providing food? Is it walking students to school bus stops safely? Anything you can do to support students, big or small, is important.”

—Vogel, WETA

“Partner with other unions who might have more resources than you, like NUHW and SEIU, to take action and make a bigger statement.”

—Rogers, GTA

“Ask your school board to adopt policy that establishes protections for our immigrant students and families. Reach out to local community organizations that have experience with immigrant rights defense and access to regional rapid response networks, so you don’t have to figure out everything yourself and can harness the resources that exist in our communities.”

—Weinberg, SDEA

“Advocate and support legislative work to protect immigrant communities. We need to make sure we have bills that protect our schools — even if schools in your area are not under threat, ours are, and we’re going to need support from folks to make those calls to our elected officials.”

—Miranda, UTLA

▼ This year's start of the new school year came with the usual excitement and anticipation, as educators create safe, supportive spaces for students and families under attack. Photo courtesy Alex Orozco.



HOME AGAIN:

CREATING SAFE SPACES AS NEW SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS

Organizing to protect our students and public education

By Julian Peebles

THE PROMISE OF another fresh year and all the opportunity it entails makes Back to School a special time for students and educators alike.

While the Trump Administration continues to slash funding for public schools, health care and food for our most vulnerable, educators continue to organize and fight back against the cruel immigration raids that are terrorizing our communities and the funding cuts that are impacting our schools.

“As educators, we see and feel the broader impact on our communities,” says CTA President David Goldberg. “When we start the new school year, how many empty desks will be in our classrooms? To know that a student has been separated from their family and sent to a detention center? Or are they too terrified to come to school? That’s not just heartbreaking — it’s enraging.”

Our efforts to build the safe, stable public schools that all students deserve continue in this new Gilded Age, where an austerity mindset is choking off vital funding for schools and other public services to provide tax cuts for the richest people

in our society. All year, educators have been stepping up from Los Angeles to Lake Tahoe to defend our students from Trump’s policies and ensure everyone feels safe, welcome and supported in our public schools.

“Teachers in struggle are also teaching,” Goldberg says. “With so much going on, it’s important to remain focused on our students and grounded in our collective work to help them learn, grow and thrive.”

School resumes this year with a lot of challenges and uncertainty, with federal funding cuts impacting our state budget and school districts’ ability to plan ahead confidently (see Page 30), as well as impacting our students and families who rely on services and programs that are being slashed or even eliminated. Our union continues to fight in the halls of our State Capitol to win the public education funding our schools need, with members and staff visiting lawmakers over the summer to talk about the state budget and other important issues.

Other important items this school year include:



▼ Southwest Teachers Assn. Educators, with parents and community members crowd a district meeting about school closures earlier this year.



KEEPING SCHOOLS SAFE SPACES

Since the beginning of the year, educators have been organizing to defend students, families and communities who have immigrated to the United States. From visible shows of support and community rallies in Alhambra, San Francisco and Santa Maria to printing and distributing more than 350,000 Red Cards outlining basic rights when approached by an immigration agent, to showing up to defend our friends and neighbors from raids in places like hospitals and agricultural fields, union educators are leading with our values and organizing against the threats.

Our union continues to work with state leaders to protect our schools and other spaces from immigration enforcement and to curb the growing, unchecked power exercised by Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents.

“When heavily armed federal agents — masked, militarized, dressed like extremist militias — target our communities, the trauma is real,” says Goldberg. “It impacts our students, their families and the educators who serve them.”

CTA Board of Directors member Maritza Ávila spent time this summer protesting at fields in Oxnard and Camarillo when ICE was raiding and abducting farmworkers. She says it’s important to speak out and take action for our communities and against hate.

“I didn’t grow up here, but I know what it’s like to belong to a place where people work hard and get pushed to the margins,” she said. “And I know this: No one should have to fear being taken for doing the work that feeds a nation.”

“Teachers in struggle are also teaching. With so much going on, it’s important to remain focused on our students and grounded in our collective work to help them learn, grow and thrive.”

—CTA President **David Goldberg**

FIGHTING AGAINST SCHOOL CLOSURES

Despite school reserves being at record highs and California now being the fourth largest economy in the world, many school districts chose to close schools last year, upending students and communities.

Last school year saw school boards vote to close neighborhood schools in Imperial Beach, Santa Rosa and multiple districts in San Jose. School districts considering closing schools must hold public meetings and processes before making any decisions. These meetings often begin early in the school year when educators are busy getting started with their classrooms.

Usually sparsely attended, crucial narratives start in these meetings that can be difficult to counter, so just being there and sharing what you see with colleagues and the school community can make a significant difference.

“The way to fight school closures is with the community it directly impacts — on the closure level and the receiving level,” said Cassondra Curiel, president of United Educators of San Francisco, which successfully fought off school closures last year. “We need to be in solidarity with our students, families and communities who are under attack.”

Some tips from members who went through closure processes last school year:

- Attend school closure meetings when you can, be present in the process, ask questions and share what you learn to keep people informed at your school site.
- Be the eyes and ears for your school community.

Protect School Funding

Prop. 55 Extension

\$10 BILLION IN FUNDING FOR
SCHOOLS & COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CONTINUES EXISTING TAXES ON THE
WEALTHY

FAILURE TO PASS EXTENSION WOULD MEAN
MASSIVE EDUCATION CUTS IN 2030

Overcommunicate about school closures with parents and families. Shine a light — schools close in darkness.

- Bring colleagues with you to organized actions with your local union.
- Don't accept the district's data or rationale at face value. Ask questions in public spaces about their assertions on the need to close schools. School closures hurt students and devastate communities — make the district show why it wants to resort to such drastic measures.

WORKING FOR STABLE PUBLIC ED FUNDING

Our union's fight continues for the stable funding our public schools and community colleges need and all students deserve — at local districts, in Sacramento and at the ballot box. This means tracking our school district budget processes and organizing to ensure that school boards are making the best decisions for our students and communities; sharing our stories with state legislators and asking them to support public education with their votes; and working to extend vital Proposition 55 funding that our schools and students rely on. (Visit cta.org/Prop55Extension for more information.)

Keep an eye out for Prop. 55 petitions circulating to qualify a ballot initiative to extend \$9 billion in crucial funding for California public schools. These funds come from a 2012 voter-approved tax (extended in 2016) on the wealthiest Californians (currently, couples making more than \$700,000 a year). Without an extension, these funds will expire in 2030, which would cause an immediate 15% hole in the state public education budget.

This would result in massive cuts in schools and community colleges statewide, with an estimated one in six educators facing potential layoffs. That's why extending this tax is so important, and why locals across the state are already sharing information about the issue and organizing to collect signatures.

"To ensure and secure the education of future generations, it's important that we maintain Prop. 55 funding," says Trina Gonzales-Alesi, president of Desert Sands Teachers Association (DSTA). "We're actively educating our members on the benefits and we plan to start a signature gathering campaign in the fall." ■

▼ Daniella Lefer and Jennifer Montalvo were LLEA co-presidents during the strike; Lefer continues to serve.



ORGANIZING CONTINUES FOR LOCAL AFTER STRIKE WIN

ONE OF OUR MOST compelling victories of last school year was Las Lomitas Education Assn.'s inspiring strike for fair compensation in the richest ZIP Code in the country. We caught up with LLEA Co-President Daniella Lefer to talk about what's happened since the strike and what's next for LLEA.

How was the working environment after the strike?

"Some administrators became more cautious or guarded in their communication. Others seemed more collaborative, at least outwardly. But across the board, the dynamic changed. We're being more intentional about holding leadership accountable, while also pushing for transparency and respect in day-to-day interactions. There was a feeling that management took us seriously (once the superintendent left) and was interested in our input."

What are your plans for the coming school year?

"We're back at negotiations, building on our momentum, with a full contract opening. Member engagement is a top priority, through organizing committees, stronger site rep networks and ongoing training with CTA. We'll be closely monitoring contract enforcement and pushing for better support in special education, watching carefully how management continues to reprioritize the budget in a way that is student-centered and protecting positions and programs. We will prepare early for the next bargaining cycle, this time with a much more activated membership.

"None of this is possible without the dedication and support of our CTA leadership, who has guided us every step of the way!"

▼ Rep. Jay Obernolte with CTA member leaders in April. Our delegation asked him to stand with students and families in his district. Obernolte promised he would vote against any cuts to education — but clearly lied when he broke that promise.



CALIFORNIA'S REPUBLICAN CONGRESSIONAL REPS VOTE TO CUT SERVICES TO FAMILIES

Despite severe pain to their communities, GOP electeds opt for draconian budget cuts and fall in line for billionaire tax breaks

By **Julian Peeples**

NINE CALIFORNIA REPUBLICAN members of U.S. Congress turned their backs on millions of children and families with their vote this summer to slash federal funding for health care and other basic services for our most vulnerable to pay for tax cuts for billionaires, corporations and the super-wealthy.

These Congress members voted to pass Pres. Trump's budget bill, which constitutes the greatest shift of wealth — from the working class to the richest Americans — in our nation's history. The impacts of the cuts to Medicaid funding alone (nearly \$1 trillion nationally over 10 years, according to reports) means about 3.4 million Californians, including many children, will lose health care coverage.

"We just witnessed one of the largest transfers of wealth from working people and those who rely on Medicaid to the rich and corporations via this bill," CTA President David Goldberg says. "Now, we have to hold these politicians in Congress accountable for voting to harm our students, families and communities."

The nine California republican Congress members know no

bounds when it comes to serving billionaires and corporations, literally taking food out of hungry children's mouths to give more to people who will not ever want for anything. Cuts of \$230 billion to School Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funding nationally will impact schools that rely on CalFresh for free or reduced-price meals, with some areas like Rep. David Valadao's Kings/Tulare county-area Congressional District losing both nutrition and grade level support.

"David Valadao voted to gut Medicaid and public education," said Jesse Aguilar, Bakersfield educator and CTA Board of Directors member. "He voted to take health care away from the people in his district and to stop feeding hungry children. He abandoned our neediest communities. Shame on David Valadao!"

California schools receive more than \$250 million annually in federal Medicaid reimbursements to fund school nurses, school psychologists, school counselors, speech language pathologists and other special education service providers. The recently approved funding cuts will mean fewer on-campus health

"We must hold these Congressional reps accountable for their votes to harm the residents in their districts. Union educators will never forget these shameless attacks on our people, our future and our democracy."

—CTA President **David Goldberg**

supports for students with chronic illnesses, trauma and mental health needs, especially in high-need communities. Research suggests that the amount given in tax breaks to just the top 5% of earners in California alone (making more than \$650,000 annually) would cover the costs to maintain SNAP and health care benefits for all current California recipients.

Our union led delegations to these elected officials this spring, visiting their offices and holding meetings to ask them to support our public schools, students and vulnerable communities. Our historic Fight For Schools campaign, culminating in five simultaneous rallies in May from the streets of San Francisco to the front door of Rep. Valadao's office in Hanford, called on the nine republicans to do the right thing, support their constituents and defend working people in their districts.

But the Republicans chose fealty to President Trump, corporations and billionaire donors over the health and welfare of the communities they were elected to serve. Despite massive negative impacts to residents in their districts, all nine voted Yes on Trump's budget bill, which passed by the thinnest of margins in both chambers of Congress and was signed by Trump on July 4.

"Our fight continues to defend our students and families under attack, protect vital federal funding for services our communities need, and to hold these Nasty Nine Congressional reps accountable for their votes to harm the residents in their districts," Goldberg says. "Union educators will never forget these shameless attacks on our people, our future and our democracy." ■

CONGRESS MEMBERS PRIORITIZING BILLIONAIRES OVER KIDS

Rep. Doug LaMalfa

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT (CD) 1 — CTA

members in his district requested a meeting multiple times; no response. From Northern California, LaMalfa is a climate change denier who consistently votes against environmental protections despite representing a wildfire-prone district. Rural families in his district rely heavily on MediCal and school-based health services. LaMalfa has often said he wants to "protect rural health care" and criticized policies that would "harm access for vulnerable families," but he voted to slash Medicaid — devastating rural hospitals and school-based services in his district and leaving vulnerable families hanging.

Potential Impact: \$3 billion cut to Medicaid funding over 10 years, 33,820 residents expected to lose health coverage.



Rep. Kevin Kiley

CD 3 —

Kiley gained attention a few years back opposing COVID-19 safety measures and railing against public education and labor unions. He champions school privatization efforts and voted for the massive cuts that will strain safety-net schools in Sierra and Sacramento suburbs. Kiley previously claimed he would oppose "any bill that jeopardizes health care for working families," but he voted YES on deep Medicaid cuts, including work requirements and block grants that will reduce coverage in low-income regions.

Potential Impact: \$2.5 billion Medicaid cut over 10 years, 18,940 projected to lose health coverage.



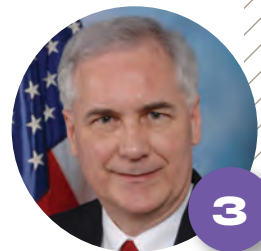
Rep. Tom McClintock

CD 5 — CTA *members in his district requested a meeting multiple times; no response.*

McClintock opposes nearly all federal social programs and environmental regulations, and has faced significant backlash from senior citizens and veterans in his community for deep cuts to the services they rely upon. He has long attacked immigrant rights and dismisses climate change.

Then: Promised he would fight to "protect vital services for seniors and children." **Now:** Voted for a budget that slashes health care access for exactly those groups.

Potential Impact: \$3 billion Medicaid cut over 10 years, 26,955 to lose health coverage.





Rep. Vince Fong

CD 20 — A newcomer who inherited Kevin McCarthy's old seat, Fong is closely tied to oil and big agriculture interests, showing little support for labor rights or public services.

Then: While campaigning, said he would ensure "budget discipline without hurting essential services."

Now: Supported sweeping cuts that reduce Medi-Cal access and support for public schools — especially in underserved Central Valley districts

Potential Impact: \$3 billion Medicaid cut over 10 years, estimated 30–40,000 to lose health care coverage.



Rep. David Valadao

CD 22 — Valadao reliably votes for tax cuts for the wealthy while slashing funds for public education. Since his district has the nation's highest Medicaid enrollment, the cuts he voted to approve threaten access to health care for families, including children.

Then: Stated he would "never support a bill that hurts my constituents who depend on Medi-Cal."

Now: Despite initial hesitation, he caved to pressure and voted for the budget bill.

Potential Impact: \$4 billion Medicaid cut over next 10 years, estimated 55K–70K to lose health coverage (highest nationwide).



Rep. Jay Obernolte

CD 23 — A wealthy tech entrepreneur turned congressman, Obernolte represents some of the most impoverished areas of California yet routinely votes to give tax cuts to corporations and billionaires while slashing health care and public education for thousands in his communities.

Then: Claimed in 2022 he would "protect access to affordable health care for families."

Now: Voted for Medicaid cuts that strip health and mental health services from students and families in high-need school districts.

Potential Impact: \$2.5 billion Medicaid cut over 10 years, 25K–35K projected to lose health coverage.

Rep. Young Kim

CD 40 — Kim only offered staff to meet with CTA members in her district. Kim supports economic policies that gut services in her community to provide tax cuts to the wealthy few, voted against abortion rights, and supports privatization of public education.

Then: Pledged to oppose Medicaid cuts and repeatedly emphasized she supports "safety nets for our most vulnerable" and "keeping kids healthy and in school."

Now: Voted for a GOP plan that guts those safety nets, reducing school-based supports like mental health counseling and special education services.

Potential Impact: \$2 billion Medicaid cut over 10 years, projected 15,315 to lose health care coverage.



Rep. Ken Calvert

CD 41 — Calvert only offered staff to meet with CTA members in his district. A long-time incumbent with deep ties to defense contractors and fossil fuel interests, Calvert has opposed LGBTQ+ rights for decades, backed Trump's agenda to expand vouchers and privatize education, and voted to overturn the 2020 election results.

Then: Stated in local town halls that he would not support "cuts to programs families rely on."

Now: Voted YES on the budget bill and its devastating cuts to Medicaid, which is a lifeline for school-based services in working-class communities.

Potential Impact: \$2 billion Medicaid cut over next 10 years, estimated 15K–25K to lose health coverage.





Rep. Darrell Issa CD 48 —

Refused to meet with CTA members in his district; his office staff locked their doors when our delegation showed up. One of the richest members of Congress, Issa has built a legacy of shame on anti-regulation, pro-corporate and anti-worker policies. He voted to give himself a massive tax break at the expense of his community.

Then: Claimed he supported “targeted reforms — not blanket cuts.”

Now: Voted for sweeping reductions to Medicaid that disproportionately harm working families and school districts.

Potential Impact: \$1.5 billion Medicaid cut over next 10 years, 10K–20K estimated to lose health coverage.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

IN APRIL, Capital & Main ran a story about the nine California Republican representatives who had voted earlier to advance the GOP’s budget blueprint. It noted that of the nine, Reps. Kim, Valadao and Calvert (clockwise from top in the story’s accompanying illustration) won their seats in 2024 by the narrowest margins — 11, 7 and 3 percentage points, respectively, and could be vulnerable to voter backlash in the 2026 election.



WHY THESE CUTS MATTER

School-Based Health Services:

California school districts statewide rely on more than \$250 million annually from Medicaid to fund school nurses, school counselors and other special education services. A 19% cut slashes vital funding by nearly one-fifth.

Children with Disabilities:

Medicaid reduction strains compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). With funding cuts, many districts won’t be able to provide legally required special education services unless they cut general education programs.

Food & Nutrition:

\$230 billion in School Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) cuts nationally will hit schools that rely on CalFresh to qualify students for free or reduced-price meals and families who rely on the program to feed their hungry children.

Health Care Coverage:

A projected \$28.4-billion Medicaid cut will strip coverage for approximately 3.4 million Californians.

Sources: Congressional Joint Economic Committee, California Department of Healthcare Services, U.S. Census Bureau, California Budget & Policy Center, Education Trust-West and Children Now, San Francisco Chronicle, Washington Post





"We are ready to do whatever it takes to stop this power grab and fight back against any and all attacks on our democracy, our students and public education."

—CTA Secretary-Treasurer **Erika Jones**

UNIONS LEADING THE FIGHT TO DEFEND DEMOCRACY

Redistricting: **Vote YES Nov. 4 to Protect Public Education**

By **Julian Peeples**

OUR UNION JOINED a broad coalition of labor and community organizations, state legislators, local elected officials and Gov. Gavin Newsom in support of the Election Rigging Response Act, the statewide ballot initiative on Congressional redistricting planned for Nov. 4.

In response to the ongoing erosion of our democracy and politically motivated gerrymandering in Texas, the CTA Board of Directors voted to join the crucial effort to stop Republican attempts to steal Congressional seats and rig the 2026 election.

"If this power grab goes unchecked, we will only see more drastic cuts to public education, health care and other critical services, and a further erosion of basic civil and human rights in our communities," CTA President David Goldberg says. "This is a direct and urgent attack on our democracy."

Gov. Newsom and California lawmakers called for a special election ballot measure this November that would redraw the state's congressional map to potentially gain five Congressional seats for Democrats. This initiative is a direct response to the recently approved redistricting in Texas, which is designed to add five Republican seats and help them maintain control of the House majority after the 2026 midterm elections.

CTA Secretary-Treasurer Erika Jones spoke at the governor's press conference announcing the ballot initiative, sharing why the Election Rigging Response Act is critical to fighting back against Washington politicians who voted to slash public education and harm California communities (see previous story).

"Of the nine Republican representatives in California — several refused to even meet with local teachers in their offices.

Some lied directly to our faces and promised they wouldn't vote for draconian cuts to our schools and our health care. Only to go back to D.C. to side with Trump and vote to harm kids and families here in California," Jones said.

"Given these extreme threats and these corrupt politicians who will throw their own communities under the bus, our union stands in full support of this ballot initiative. We are ready to do whatever it takes to stop this power grab and fight back against any and all attacks on our democracy, our students and public education."

Goldberg says our union will continue to organize to protect and defend our public schools in the face of numerous dangerous threats.

"Over the past several months, we have seen the Trump administration freeze funds for critical education programs, cut health care for millions of our students and their families, attempt to dismantle the Department of Education, and pass a new voucher program designed to destroy public education entirely. There have also been unprecedented attacks on our immigrant communities and our LGBTQIA+ students and families," says Goldberg.

"Every member of Congress who would be impacted by redistricting in our state has repeatedly sided with corporations and billionaires over our students and communities. They've made their priorities clear."

Visit cta.org/Prop50 for more information, resources and how you can volunteer on the Election Rigging Response Act campaign. ■

Enter for your chance to win \$2,500



Supporting California Educators Since 1950

You give so much all year long—now it's your turn. Provident Credit Union is celebrating educators with a \$2,500 giveaway! Whether you use it to recharge, plan ahead, or treat yourself, the choice is yours.

Before you enter, here's what you need to know:

- ✓ You **don't** have to be a Provident member
- ✓ You **do** have to be a CTA member
- ✓ Must be a California resident
- ✓ You can enter once daily through October 31st

Entry period ends 10/31. A winner will be selected on or about 11/14/2025.



[Contest Rules & Entry Form](#)

The Qualified Winner will receive one (1) \$2,500 deposit into the Qualified Winner's account with Sponsor ("Prize"). If the Qualified Winner is not an existing member of Sponsor, they have the option of receiving the Prize in the form of a check made payable to the Qualified Winner as set forth on the winning entry. Odds of winning depend on the number of Eligible Entries received during each Giveaway Period. One (1) grand prize winner.



How Trump's Budget Bill Hurts Schools and Families — and Benefits the Rich

Cuts to Medicaid, Migrant Education, food programs will have significant impacts By Julian Peeples

CALIFORNIA'S MOST VULNERABLE students and families will suffer from the effects of President Trump's budget bill, which cuts health care for millions and guts public services and resources to provide tax breaks for billionaires and corporations.

The bill, narrowly passed by both Republican-controlled houses of Congress and signed into law in early July, includes deep federal funding cuts that will cause deep harm to California's public schools, particularly those serving low-income communities. The most immediate threats come from reductions to Medicaid reimbursements, which many school districts use to fund essential student health services.

According to the California School-Based Health Alliance, the projected loss of more than \$1.2 billion in Medicaid funding over the next five years could put school nurses, school counselors

and behavioral health programs at risk — at a time when our students have a dire need for their support.

School districts across the state, from Los Angeles and Oakland to San Bernardino, Fresno and throughout the Central Valley, stand to lose millions in federal funding annually, with an estimated 3.4 million residents statewide expected to lose health care coverage due to the Trump Budget Cuts over the next 10 years. Additionally, threats to federal special education funding are forcing school districts to consider choosing between complying with federal law and cutting other programs and services.

"This budget is a direct attack on the very people our public institutions are meant to lift up. Instead of investing in our children's education, as well as in their health and their future, this law hands billions in tax breaks to the ultra-wealthy — while

“Instead of investing in our children’s education, health and future, this law hands billions in tax breaks to the ultra-wealthy – while pulling the rug out from under America’s students and families.”

—NEA President **Becky Pringle**

pulling the rug out from under America’s students and families,” NEA President Becky Pringle said. “This isn’t just a policy failure, it is a moral disgrace. Trump and congressional Republicans undermined our public schools and every student in them. When politicians in D.C. slash state funding, students in rural, suburban and urban communities alike bear the brunt of devastating cuts.”

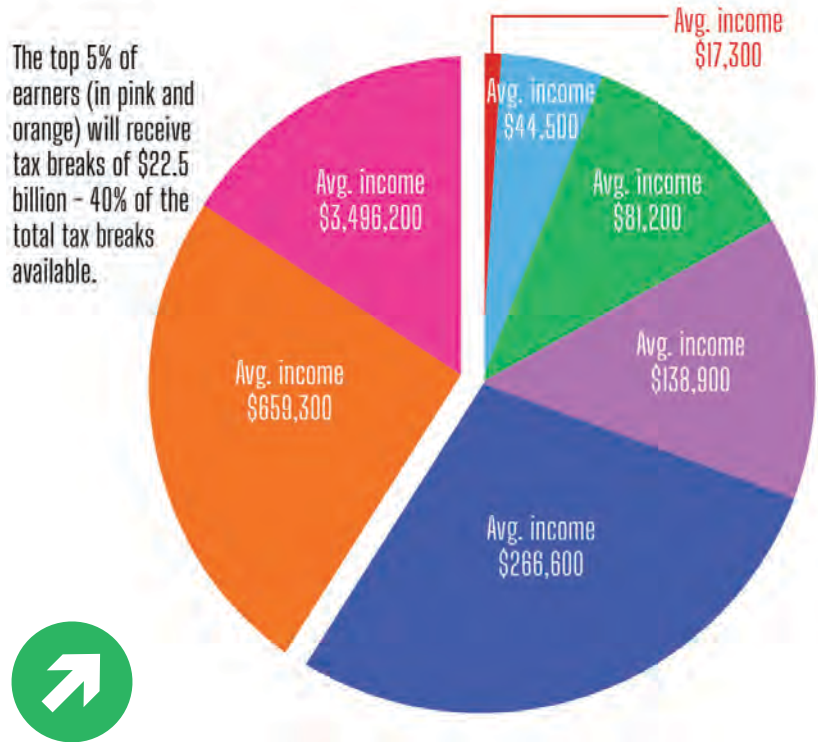
Funding released for migrant education, English Learner services

In late-July, after immense public pressure from educators, community, parents and students across the country, the Trump Administration released nearly \$6 billion in funding for public K–12 schools that it had frozen earlier in the month, just as it was set to be disbursed. The freeze was reportedly to review whether the programs complied with Trump’s extreme agenda. With California’s share estimated at \$1 billion, the move impacted school districts statewide, including programs critical for migrant students and English learners.

California was set to receive approximately \$120 million in Title I-C funding in 2024–25 for migrant education services, which includes after-school tutoring, family literacy and health services for

The Rich Get Richer

How the new budget’s tax breaks line up in California



The pink and orange segments show the top 5% of income earners in California, who will receive a disproportionate \$22.5 billion in tax breaks, or almost 40% of the total tax breaks of \$58.5 billion. By comparison, the lowest income earners, who comprise 20% of all earners, will receive 1%.

Source: Institute of Taxation and Economic Policy

Did You Know?

THE IMPACT OF the newly enacted federal budget bill gives vastly disproportionate tax breaks to the uber-wealthy. According to the Institute of Taxation and Economic Policy, the top 5% of earners in California alone (those making more than \$650,000 annually) will account for almost 40% of the tax breaks — a staggering \$22.5 billion.

Research by budget policy experts suggests that this amount could cover the federal costs to maintain SNAP and health care benefits for all current recipients in California. Trump’s Budget literally takes from the poorest to give to the richest.

For a detailed look at the budget impacts, read the California Budget & Policy Center’s July 2025 report at bit.ly/4i7i1ZG.



Budget Bill by the Numbers

\$28.4 BILLION:

Projected loss in Medicaid funding for California over the next 10 years, with **\$1 trillion** being cut nationwide.

3.4 MILLION:

Californians at risk of losing Medi-Cal coverage due to federal Medicaid cuts, including children, seniors and people with disabilities.

\$811 MILLION:

Federal education funding frozen for California schools in July, impacting summer programs, migrant education, and tutoring this summer. Almost all of the funds were released in late July.

1 MILLION+:

California English Learners who were at risk of losing critical language support and enrichment programs due to cuts to Title III funding. Almost all of the funds were released in late July.

\$2.8-\$5.4 BILLION PER YEAR:

California's anticipated loss in annual SNAP funding, putting more than 700,000 Californians at risk of losing critical food support.



children of agricultural, dairy and fishing workers. Funding for English language acquisition through Title III was also being illegally impounded. California received about \$157 million in 2024–25 for multilingual coaches, curriculum development and professional development for teachers supporting the state's 1.1 million English learners.

There were substantial impacts at the local level — Fresno Unified School District stood to lose more than \$7 million in federal funding for migrant and English learner programs, while Clovis Unified estimated a potential loss of \$2.2 million.

“Our students are going to be impacted by the political decision to weaponize funding,” CTA President David Goldberg said. “These are students in red and blue counties and rural and urban areas in every corner of California.”

Attorney General Rob Bonta announced in July that California was part of a coalition of state attorneys general filing a lawsuit to reverse the illegal impoundment of the funds.

“Taken together with his other attacks on education, President Trump seems comfortable risking the academic success of a generation to further his own misguided political agenda,” Bonta said. “But as with so many of his other actions, this funding freeze is blatantly illegal.”

Pringle says that educators across the country will continue to fight back against Trump's attacks on our public schools and communities and fight forward to protect our future and defend our democracy.

“Educators and parents will not stand by in silence as Trump terrorizes our communities. We will speak out, organize, and fight back because we know what is at stake,” Pringle said. “Our students deserve better. Our families deserve better. And we will not rest until every student, no matter their background or ZIP code, has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.” ■

“Our students will be impacted by the political decision to weaponize funding. These are students in red and blue counties and rural and urban areas in every corner of California.”

—CTA President
David Goldberg



Funding to assist English Learners

Title III-A is a component of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act). The budgeted \$890 million in Title III-A federal funding to local educational agencies (LEAs) provides support for English Learner and immigrant students in public and private schools and helps ensure they develop high levels of academic achievement. Funds are also used for professional development, family and community engagement and supplemental instructional materials.

California received \$157 million in Title III-A funding this year, according to the state Dept. of Education. "This money can make an incredible difference in helping teachers to learn how to teach kids English, and so we can support our kids so they can show up for school," said Jimmy Barbuto, a member of Oakland Education Assn.'s Newcomer committee.

"California has the largest population of English Learners in the country, and we must protect these vital services and funding that frankly isn't even close to enough as it is to meet the needs of our students and educators."

While this year's funding appears to be intact after being "frozen," Barbuto and other advocates say we must continue to push education leaders at the state and federal level to increase funding and invest in evidence-based language acquisition services.



Pell Grants evade major cuts, remain under threat

WHILE THE POPULAR Pell Grant program that helps an estimated 6.4 million American students in need (and nearly 1 million in California alone) escaped major cuts, Trump's budget bill freezes Pell Grant funding at current levels, effectively amounting to a cut in student aid — especially in conjunction with inflation and rising college costs.

Trump and the GOP-controlled Congress also eliminated the Pell Grant reserve fund, which was used to stabilize the program when necessary and opens the door for future eligibility cuts and award reductions. Critics say the issue isn't about dollar amounts, it's about priorities. Instead of expanding access to higher ed, the federal government is moving to restrict it, undermining public education and threatening upward mobility for millions.

"(Trump's budget bill) abandons students who rely on Pell to access college," says NEA President Becky Pringle. "It's a betrayal of opportunity."

▼ SCTA and SEIU Local 1021, representing the school district's ESPs, showed #SacCitySolidarity in 2022.



ORGANIZING *to Win*

How Sac City Teachers Built a Movement for Sacramento Students

By Julian Peebles

“WHENEVER WE’RE ABLE to improve our working conditions as teachers, we’re able to improve our students’ learning conditions,” says Sacramento City Teachers Assn. (SCTA) President Nikki Davis Milevsky. “That’s been a guiding value for our union throughout our fights, which keeps us grounded in why we’re all here: to support all Sacramento students.”

In late-June, SCTA won a historic contract that includes landmark language on artificial intelligence.

“It’s the first time in a generation that our successor contract was settled prior to the expiration of our current contract,” says Davis Milevsky, a school psychologist. “This victory was made possible by our deep organizing to build power at every site in the district.”

Setting the standard for local chapters in our union’s We Can’t Wait campaign and beyond, the win includes an 8.5% pay increase over two years, contractual staffing ratios to ensure students have the access they need to school social workers, school psychologists and speech language pathologists, and other contract improvements. In Spring 2022, SCTA went on an eight-day strike. Since then, wages have increased by 30%, with special

education staff salaries increasing by 38% and speech language pathologists by 46%. Substitute teachers, also represented by SCTA, are the highest paid in the nation.

It was the latest in a string of impressive wins for SCTA members, their students and Sacramento public schools, which has transformed Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) from a place that educators avoided to a real “destination district” — where SCTA has organized and won the highest educator pay in the county and a contractually guaranteed voice on nearly everything that impacts educators and students in SCUSD. SCTA’s story is a blueprint for locals on how to organize, build power and win real change that helps families and communities.

“What union members and parents have won in Sacramento is a powerful testament to what our organizing can achieve. If we can do it, every CTA chapter can.”

—SCTA President
Nikki Davis Milevsky

“What union members and parents have won in Sacramento is a powerful testament to what our organizing can achieve,” Davis Milevsky says. “If we can do it, every CTA chapter can.”

Sac City TA’s decade of determination for SCTA was built through the collective efforts of educators, the belief that better was possible and the commitment to make it so together, which permeated each of the following major milestones.

▼ SCTA's success over the past 10 years is rooted in inclusivity, transparency and solidarity with Sacramento students, families and communities.



How SCTA Members Built Their Power

2015

Expanding the Bargaining Team

The foundation of SCTA's success is a strong, well-tested site structure that ensures members are informed about important issues across the district and guarantees their voices are heard and valued at a union leadership level when important decisions are being made that impact everyone. This took shape in 2014 when Davis Milevsky and David Fisher were first elected as president and vice president, respectively, bringing an organizing mindset to the union and willingness to do things differently.

Up to this point, the SCTA Bargaining Team always had around five people at the table representing the voices of about 2,500 members. For the wage reopener bargain in 2015–16, Davis Milevsky and Fisher successfully proposed expanding the team to 20, inviting the executive board to join.

“This was a new approach, but we knew that having more people on the bargaining team would build our union,” Fisher says. “It increased representation and transparency in our bargaining process, and built trust among our membership, which has been the bedrock for all our progress.”

The bigger bargaining team was a success, with members feeling informed and heard, and even more members wanting to join the team and be at the table. When SCTA went into bargaining in 2016–17, the team had expanded to 70 members. This

helped create a structure where every site had a member who was on the bargaining team, connected to union leadership and part of the decision-making process, and could keep members at the site informed about important news and asks.

“It was the kind of structure we needed as we prepared to go on strike in 2017,” Fisher said. “And it helped create the energy and build the power we needed for the major fights ahead.”

2017

The Mayor & the Superintendent

When Superintendent Jorge Aguilar arrived in SCUSD in the 2016–17 school year with a lot of big words and lofty ideas, educators and the community were hopeful for stable leadership the district desperately needed. Instead, it was the start of a turbulent time where educators and community would go toe-to-toe with the superintendent, school board, mayor and the Sacramento political establishment to fight for the schools their students deserved.

SCTA organized as though they were going to go on strike from the very beginning of bargaining, creating strike teams and building kits to distribute to school sites. Up to that point, educators in Sac City were paid below average, while benefits were above average, compared to nearby school districts. When they went into bargaining, SCTA brought a lot



▼ SCTA leaders David Fisher and Nikki Davis-Milevsky



“A bigger bargaining team increased representation and transparency in our bargaining process, and built trust among our membership — the bedrock for all our progress.”

—SCTA 1st Vice President
David Fisher

to the table — including reducing class sizes, making staffing improvements and investing in special education — eventually winning a restructured salary schedule to address recruitment and retention issues, as well as a historic agreement that allows the union to prevent the district from requiring any testing of students not required by law.

“We have eliminated unnecessary testing — there’s no agreement like this anywhere in the country,” says Davis Milevsky.

During sometimes-contentious bargaining, then-Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg inserted himself into the process, helping to mediate the final deal on the eve of SCTA members going on strike (full story captured in this video at bit.ly/3HaYDxc). Just when it seemed like things might be turning the corner, Steinberg’s buddy Aguilar refused to honor the agreement he had just signed, with the school board closing ranks around their superintendent and the county office of education threatening to get involved. Suddenly, the power of the Sacramento political establishment was aimed at SCTA, and union educators organized to fight back.

“We were always on the defensive before, but we knew we had to go on the offensive to win,” Davis Milevsky says. “The next four years were trench warfare.”

2019 *The One-Day Strike*

Superintendent Aguilar’s continued belligerent behavior,

enabled by a complicit school board, resulted in repeated violations of SCTA’s contract and other agreements. The situation got so bad that Sac City educators held a one-day unfair labor practice strike in April 2019 to call attention to the ongoing violations of the contract and bad faith bargaining by Aguilar and the school board and call on them to obey the law.

“Honor our contract that provides resources and smaller class sizes for our students. That’s what we want,” Fisher said during the one-day strike. “We mutually agreed to a contract that meets the needs of our students. Aguilar, with the support of the board, is trying to break that agreement. We won’t break our promise to our students.”

The strike was featured on the national CBS Evening News that night, and the successful action was a good test of their structure, the commitment of their members and SCTA’s ability to turn out community allies and supporters.

“This unfair labor practice strike in the middle of our contract showed the power we have when we rise together for each other, our students and families, and for what’s right,” Fisher says. “This one-day strike helped us to realize our strength and focused our preparations to strike again for longer, if needed.”

2020 *Victory on Election Day*

SCTA leaders quickly realized they could only get so far with Superintendent Aguilar and a school board that refused to hold

▼ Thousands joined Sacramento educators on marches and rallies, like this one outside SCUSD headquarters.



◀ SCTA harnessed the power of their unity, winning in the streets, at the bargaining table and on Election Day.

It was a real moment of consciousness about our collective power and just how much we could accomplish together for our schools and students.”

2022

Strike: Eight Days of #SacCitySolidarity

The fight between SCTA and Superintendent Aguilar for the soul of Sac City Unified came to a head when educators walked out of their classrooms and onto picket lines for eight days of powerful solidarity. With Aguilar and district admin refusing to address a staffing crisis that saw 10,000 SCUSD students without a permanent teacher in their classroom every day, SCTA and SEIU Local 1021, representing the school district’s education support professionals, went on strike in Spring 2022.

The strike made national headlines, with massive marches in the streets of the state capital, a rousing appearance in the pouring rain by legendary organizer Dolores Huerta and the occupation of Aguilar’s office at district headquarters by parents demanding that Aguilar and admin negotiate in good faith with teachers to end the strike.

Through the power of the strike, educators won agreements that continue to help the district attract and retain the educators and school staff that Sacramento’s public school students need for success.

“From start to finish, our members have been united in the belief that schools should be adequately staffed with



him accountable, so they turned to the power of the ballot box to elect community leaders to the board who valued public schools and the educators who make them special. SCTA started in earnest with the 2018 school board election, which ended unsuccessfully but gave them important foundational experience they would lean into in 2020 when educators supported a challenger to the long-serving school board president (who was openly antagonistic to SCTA). To support the effort, the local voted to raise the contributions to their political fund from \$1 per member per month to \$4.50 (later increased to \$9).

While the well-funded war chest from Sacramento’s political establishment outmatched the grassroots effort of 2,500 SCTA educators and community, the latter pulled off a shocking upset on Election Night — with challenger Lavinia Grace Phillips winning by more than 14%. Also elected that night: SCTA-endorsed candidate Chinua Rhodes, a community activist who had worked cooperatively with SCTA in the past.

“This started the shift on the school board,” Fisher said. “Virtually every Sacramento political establishment figure was against us, including the Sacramento Bee, and we won anyway.

▼ SCTA-supported SCUSD School Board members Tara Jeane, Jasjit Singh, Lavinia Grace Phillips, Taylor Kayatta and Chinua Rhodes, after election day victory in 2022.



“Flipping the board was a big moment of change for our district and a huge victory for our Sac City Unified community. It was time to re-center our students and families in SCUSD’s decisions.”

—SCTA 2nd Vice President
Vanessa Cudabac

a teacher in front of every classroom,” Fisher said when SCTA won the tentative agreement. “We stayed strong, and as a result we now have a contract that will help us attract and retain staff and provide our members with modest raises.”

The contract win, negotiated by SCTA’s then-150-member strong bargaining team, rejected the district’s proposed take-aways on health insurance and included on-schedule raises for educators, off-schedule payments and health and safety improvements. The strike built a lively movement for public schools in communities throughout Sacramento, with parents in some neighborhoods taking active roles at daily pickets. Parents also lobbied their school board members to support educators — including local leaders in the making Jasjit Singh and Taylor Kayatta.

2022–2024

Flipping the School Board

Powered by the inspiring victory of #SacCitySolidarity in the strike, Singh and Kayatta decided to run against two incumbents on the SCUSD school board that fall. Along with educator and CTA member Tara Jeane, the three challengers had the potential to shift the power structure on the board. SCTA members put in the effort to make it so — walking every precinct and knocking on more than 44,000 doors in the three board districts to make sure voters knew that Jeane, Kayatta and Singh were the choice of Sacramento educators.

Election Day 2022 was a massive victory for SCTA and Sacramento public schools, grounded in the structures and organizing culture built over the previous seven years, with all three candidates winning election to the school board. This meant that SCTA had helped elect a majority of the school board and shifted

power in the district. Superintendent Aguilar was out of a job by the middle of the next year.

“Flipping the board was a big moment of change for our district and a huge victory for our Sac City Unified community,” says Vanessa Cudabac, the SCTA member (and now second vice president) who led the union’s political field operation. “Voters had finally had enough of a school board that rubber stamped an unpopular and ineffective superintendent, and they joined us in making the change our district needed. It was time to close the book on that chapter and re-center our students and families in SCUSD’s decisions.”

SCTA flexed its powerful organizing and political muscles again in 2024, supporting four candidates (Jose Navarro, April Ybarra, Chinua Rhodes and Michael Benjamin) for school board and winning all four — meaning that every current member of the SCUSD board is now supported by local educators.

“These victories were only possible through the efforts of the entire SCTA membership, who have been willing to make financial contributions to give educators a powerful voice in electing and holding accountable the leaders of our school district,” Davis Milevsky says. “So many members knocked on doors, made phone calls, wrote letters, attended meetings and did the hard work to help our candidates win — these wins belong to all of us.”

2025

Historic Contract Victory

SCTA continued the progress made following the 2022 strike and 2023 contract win, reaching agreement after five months of negotiations and before the previous contract expired for the first time in decades.

▼ From the video about the 2022 SCTA strike.



Major victories include:

- Wage increases that make Sac City educators the highest paid in the county and are intended to attract speech language pathologists, school nurses, school psychologists and other specialists.
- Contractual staffing ratios and overages for school social workers, school psychologists and school nurses.
- Additional staff for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) implementation at 10 elementary schools.
- Contractual guarantee that SCTA must approve any use of outside contractors to do any credentialed bargaining unit work.
- Addition of at least one reading intervention teacher at every elementary school and two at schools with more than 250 students.

Additionally, the union won landmark language on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in Sac City public schools — a contractual guarantee that AI “may not be used to replace bargaining unit work or perform bargaining unit work without the expressed written agreement of SCTA,” perhaps the first such contract victory and definitely the strongest for teachers unions nationwide.

“The contracting-out win doubled the amount of school nurses we have and reduced outside contracts by about \$25 million, which went back into the bargaining unit,” Fisher says. “Every victory has come with impacts that helped build our union. Our wins in ratios and caseloads for service providers meet national standards, ensuring our students have access to the services they need, provided by permanent Sac City educators who are invested in the success of every student in our district.”

“Our struggle persists for the resources and services all Sacramento students deserve,” Davis Milevsky continues. “With so many threats to our public schools, students and families, we must continue organizing and fighting to protect our communities and defend public education — at the bargaining table and in the streets, when necessary.” ■

BY THE NUMBERS

Sac City Teachers Association wins:

30%: Amount educator wages have increased since the 2022 strike.

\$137,839: Base pay for K–12 educator in SCUSD with 20 years experience

7 of 7: Number of SCUSD school board members endorsed by SCTA

500: Ratio of students to school psychologists, school nurses and school social workers by 2027–28

\$90: Daily overage penalty if ratios exceed 500-to-1 for the above service providers

\$418: Daily pay for SCTA substitute teachers by end of contract (99% of sub assignments filled districtwide)

83: Number of reading intervention teachers added in district elementary schools in accordance with SCTA's demands in fallout from 2022 strike

\$9: Amount donated per SCTA member per month to the local's political fund, which supports their extensive electoral efforts

24: Class size limit for SCUSD K–3 classes; intermediate classes are capped at 30 students; and core classes at the secondary level are limited to 32 students, by contract.

15: Caseload limit for elementary special day class (SDC) mild/moderate teachers. Secondary SDC mild/moderate limit is set at 16, while SDC moderate/severe is capped at 16.

2: CTA Human Rights Awards won over the past decade by SCTA, for their work to make SCUSD a Safe Haven District and efforts to promote civil and human rights awareness throughout the school district.



Keep up with SCTA by following their website at sacteachers.org or on Facebook/Instagram at [@SacTeachers](https://www.facebook.com/SacTeachers). Watch the short video about the 2022 SCTA strike at bit.ly/4fzln6D.



LEGISLATURE APPROVES STATE BUDGET, OUR FIGHT FOR SCHOOL FUNDING CONTINUES

Prop. 98 underfunded by \$1.9 billion By Julian Peeples

IN RESPONSE TO widespread advocacy and organizing efforts, legislators approved a State Budget that avoided most of the austerity cuts that would have hurt our state's most vulnerable. The approval rejected many of the governor's proposals to slash programs, relying on borrowing from other state funds to close a \$12 billion shortfall. Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the budget into law in late June.

This came after a May Revise from Gov. Newsom that painted a grim financial outlook, proposing a number of regressive changes and cuts to close the gap — including major cuts to Medi-Cal and higher education. Legislative leaders pushed back, refusing to balance the budget on the backs of California's most vulnerable.

"We will never waver in our commitment to all Californians," Senate President Pro Tem Mike McGuire and Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas said in a joint statement. "This budget fights to protect health care access for millions of the most vulnerable families, speeds up housing construction, and makes homes more affordable. It advances historic investments in CAL FIRE to make our state more fire-safe and prioritizes our kids and public schools."

Gov. Newsom's May Revise included more than \$4 billion less in guaranteed funding for K–12 public education than in January's initial budget proposal. The proposed Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) is 2.3%, down from 2.43% in January. The budget includes \$2.1 billion ongoing to support the full implementation of universal transitional kindergarten along with additional funding to lower student-to-teacher ratios in these classes.

Newsom also proposed \$1.7 billion in Student Support and Professional Development Block Grant funding to be used to address rising costs and statewide priorities, including professional development for educators on the ELA Framework and Literacy Roadmap and Mathematics Framework, as well as teacher recruitment and retention strategies.

"We remain determined to protect Prop. 98, the cornerstone to funding public education. We have the power and responsibility to lead the nation and prioritize investments in education, health care and public services over padding the pockets of billionaires and corporate CEOs."

—CTA President **David Goldberg**

Additionally, the approved budget underfunds Proposition 98 by \$1.9 billion this fiscal year, delaying payments until next July — a budgeting maneuver that creates uncertainty for local school districts in their planning and threatens the sanctity of the guaranteed education funding approved by California voters.

"We remain determined to protect Prop. 98, the cornerstone to funding public education," CTA President David Goldberg said in response to the May Revise.

"While Californians fight back against the Trump Administration's chaotic and extreme threats to our economy and our public institutions, we also understand we have the power and responsibility to lead the nation and prioritize investments in education, health care and public services over padding the pockets of billionaires and corporate CEOs." ■

LOCAL CHAPTER GRANT PROGRAMS

OUR UNION’S ORGANIZING PLAN has multiple opportunities for grants to help build strong local chapters and organize to win more funding for our schools and communities. Current opportunities are below and include local planning grants, local site visit grants, member engagement grants, and more. Visit cta.org/localgrants for detailed information and to apply.

LOCAL PLANNING GRANT ONE PER ACADEMIC YEAR APPLY ONLINE	MEMBER ENGAGEMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS BY FISCAL YEAR (SEPT 1-AUG 31)	LOCAL SITE VISIT GRANT ONE PER ACADEMIC YEAR APPLY ONLINE	LOCAL PRESIDENT RELEASE TIME FOR ORGANIZING APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR EACH SEMESTER IN SPRING AND FALL	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GRANTS APPLICATIONS BY FISCAL YEAR (SEPT 1-AUG 31)
- Provides financial resources to local unions to support the development of a Strategic Organizing and Member Engagement Plan - Strategic planning meeting to provide leaders time and space to develop plan for bargaining campaigns, school board elections, and other organizing opportunities. Local Planning Toolkit	- Support for local chapters for new or supplemental member engagement programs including recruitment and engaging new and existing members - Building capacity in high engagement strategies, identification of new leaders and building distributive leadership	- Provides member release time to local chapters to support worksite visits - Release time available for up to one day per actual worksite, max of 20 days - Grant funds cannot be used to cover existing release time - Member-to-Member outreach at worksites Site Visit Toolkit	- Release time for local presidents to lead and carry out a site-based organizing program in their chapter - Implement a written organizing plan that strengthens site-based organizing capacity and regular school site visits - Must attend an organizing training, kick-off meeting and follow up meetings - Required tracking, reporting and debrief	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT - Establish community engagement grant projects to work within your community to build meaningful relationships - Provides funds to assist local chapters; development of community engagement teams COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT - Provides funds to attend events for outreach to community groups
Release Time: - Release time to attend planning meeting OR Meeting Expenses: \$200 per elected Executive Board Member - Max. 10 - Meeting Room Rental, Lodging, Food, Auto (mileage), and/or Meeting Materials	Grants are funded by: 2/3 - CTA Funds 1/3 - Local Funds For chapters with 100 members or fewer, CTA will fund 100% of the approved grant	Maximum - Up 20 days Release Time District reimbursement with invoice Chapter reimbursement with invoice and proof of payment	Release time based on formula District reimbursement with invoice Chapter reimbursement with invoice and proof of payment	Provide flyers and/or documentation for community activities/event with applications Submit event donation requests, receipts and expenses for reimbursement

Prop. 55 Extension on the 2026 Ballot!

The campaign for the permanent extension of Proposition 55 — the California Children’s Education and Health Care Protection Act of 2026 — is moving ahead as planned.

Extending Prop. 55 is vital for preserving the resources we have and achieving more in the future. Without an extension, our schools will lose funding by 2030. Our union filed the ballot initiative in late August for the 2026 general election. Watch for petitions circulating in mid-November to gather the necessary signatures to qualify for the ballot and be sure to add your signature to the list. Our students and communities are depending on us to secure this continued vital funding. Stay tuned for further updates as our fight for school funding and fully funding Prop. 98 continues this fall.

Bargaining Roundup

Compiled by Julian Peeples



GLENDALE:

Pay and benefit increase after one day at table

Glendale Teachers Assn. members won increases to their wages and benefits after a single day of bargaining in spring. GTA won a 4.5% pay increase for the 2025–26 school year, health care savings (which paid for about half of the wage increase), and guaranteed prep time for service providers.

“Our success is the product of our collective efforts to build power, win a pro-educator school board majority, increase member involvement in our union and rebuild relationships with district leaders,” GTA Bargaining Chair Sarah Morrison said in a message to members. GTA will go back into bargaining this fall.



PORTERVILLE:

Educators organizing and escalating for better

Porterville Educators Assn. is in mediation after declaring impasse in May, following Porterville Unified’s continued lack of respect for its educators and students. After months of meetings and dialogue about safe and respectful working conditions and fair compensation, district admin imposed its last, best and final offer on PEA members — an offer that falls short of addressing members’ core concerns.

PEA continues to organize and fight for safe and stable school campuses, smaller class sizes, fair compensation and workplaces free of retaliation and intimidation. While the district has thus far dismissed or minimized these issues, PEA members are committed to the fight.

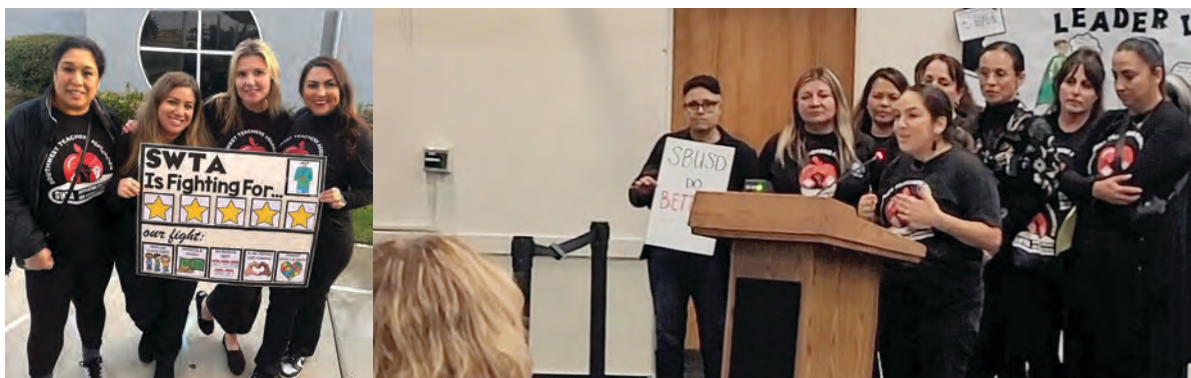
Keep up with PEA’s struggle by following them on Instagram at [@we.are.pea](https://www.instagram.com/we.are.pea) or visiting their website at wearepea.org.

MILLER CREEK:

Educators organize and win contract after mediation

The small but mighty **Miller Creek Education Assn.** organized and fought to win a 2.3% wage increase through the end of this school year and all increases to health benefits paid by the district. This victory came after a lengthy bargain, where MCEA and the district were released to fact-finding but were able to come to agreement during informal mediation.





PLACER COUNTY:

Huge victory nets back pay for educators

Powered by the solidarity of members, **Placer Assn. of Credentialed Educators** reached an agreement with Placer County Office of Education that will greatly improve members' retirement security. All members will now qualify for a 10% longevity salary increase at 15 years of service and 15% at 25 years. Additionally, all current retirees and those retiring soon will no longer face drastic reductions in their defined benefit payments due to a lowered highest salary calculation.

This win resulted in nearly \$300,000 in back longevity payments — with individual checks ranging from a few thousand dollars to almost \$60,000 for about half of PACE's 50+ members. The success has energized PACE members and demonstrated the power of their collective action.

SOUTH BAY:

Southwest teachers ramp up organizing in impasse

Southwest Teachers Assn. is at impasse with South Bay Union School District after months of bargaining with little movement on wages. In spring, SWTA won a tentative agreement on health benefits, increasing the district's contribution by \$1,000. SWTA and the district have made movement on most other articles but remain far apart on wages. This despite the district's massive reserves.

"SBUSD has amassed \$42.6 million in unrestricted reserves — it's unethical and irresponsible to hoard money earmarked for our students," says SWTA President Vanessa Barrera. "The school board must demonstrate the will to provide our South Bay students with the same high-quality education as their peers in neighboring districts by offering competitive wages and benefits that will attract and retain the dedicated professionals our students deserve."

SWTA is determined to secure a fair deal that respects both their work and the needs of their students. Members are actively organizing to support their bargaining team, working to rule every Wednesday and wearing black to show solidarity — with rallies planned outside a board meeting and mediation session in September.

"Between the increase in out-of-pocket health care, bills, rent, gas, childcare and lack of wage increase, I am starting to question whether I need a second job or even reconsider my profession," says SWTA member Liz Melendez, a third-grade dual language teacher. "I'm in the teaching field because it is my passion, not because of the pay, but how much humiliation do we need to tolerate when we have to consider a second job? We're professionals who work from a place of passion, and we deserve to be treated as such with a fair raise."

Stay informed about SWTA's struggle on Facebook at [@SouthwestTeachersAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/SouthwestTeachersAssociation).



MT. DIABLO:

Impasse declared, educators organizing to strike

Mt. Diablo Education Assn. members are preparing to strike after declaring impasse in April when school district administration made a low-ball offer that failed to keep up with inflation. Mediation between MDEA and the district started in June. MDEA is continuing organizing efforts, including escalating member actions and building up for a strike. MDEA members are currently working without a contract. Stay current with their struggle on Facebook at [@OurMDEA](https://www.facebook.com/OurMDEA).

TOGETHER, WE ARE

UNION STRONG!



ORGANIZING FOR POWER

Learn more about our union

All CTA members can vote for our representatives on the CTA State Council of Education, CTA's largest governing body. Every member can also vote for local chapter officers and delegates to NEA's Representative Assembly, which is the largest union governing body in the country.

In turn, the State Council representatives (almost 700 of them) elect our three state-level CTA officers and the CTA Board of Directors. Together, the state officers, the Board of Directors and State Council set CTA's priorities and goals.

At the national level, the NEA Representative Assembly delegates, the officers and the NEA Board of Directors do the same.

One strong union of 310,000 educators!

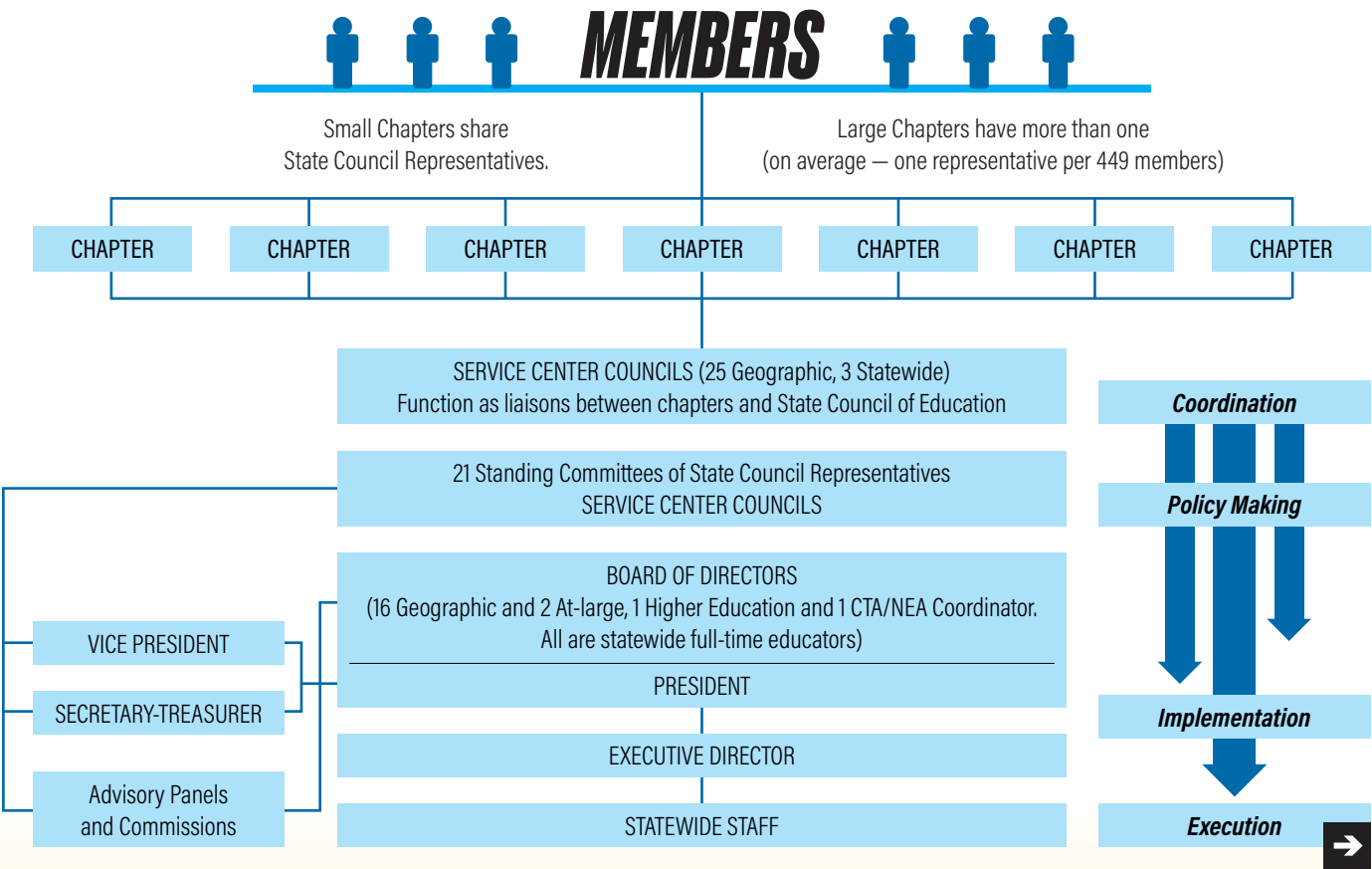
Together, we number 3 million members across the country. That's 310,000 just in California from nearly 1,100 chapters.

Everyone has a voice and critical role in our union. Individuals and all of the diversity we bring to our union are central to our collective strength — in local bargaining campaigns and solving issues at our worksites and all the way up to our advocacy in the state Capitol. Together, we are a force to be reckoned with.



Every member has a voice.

CTA's organization ensures that every member has a voice and a vote in determining our union's values, goals and leaders. CTA members built, maintain and enhance this structure to advocate for, support and defend the public schools our students and communities deserve.



Meet CTA Leadership

Our union's Board of Directors advocates for students, educators and public education

CTA LEADERS ARE ELECTED to advocate for our 310,000 members and for public education and the schools our students deserve.

The CTA Board of Directors oversees implementation of all CTA policies from the State Council of Education (CTA's top policy-making body). Board members serve on numerous committees and task forces within CTA and with state and local agencies.

The Board is composed of 23 educators, 16 of whom are elected from geographically drawn districts with 10,000 or more members. In addition, two At-Large Directors represent ethnic minorities statewide; one Director represents higher education members; and one seat is reserved for a California member of the NEA Board of Directors. The three Executive Officers bring the total to 24. (CTA's Executive Director also serves on the Board.)

Here is who represents you on the CTA Board (for full bios, visit cta.org/about-us/leadership):

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

David B. Goldberg **PRESIDENT**

Goldberg has spent most of his career as a bilingual teacher at Murchison Elementary in Los Angeles. His history of union activism includes serving as CTA Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer, two terms on the CTA Board and as treasurer of United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA). He comes from a long line of LA educator union leaders.

Goldberg is committed to democratic unionism, where members build capacity and power at their worksites to make positive change. He is dedicated to securing the full funding that California public schools deserve. He led CTA's 2020 effort to reform corporate property tax laws to fully fund public education and local services, and reverse decades of disinvestment in our communities. He sees advocacy for strong public schools as part of a larger struggle for social justice, with CTA leading the way in the movement for equitable opportunity for all. To that end, he is spearheading CTA's work with community schools throughout the state.

Fun fact: Goldberg is trilingual, including Spanish and American Sign Language.

Leslie Littman **VICE PRESIDENT**

Littman comes from a family of educators with her mom, uncles, aunts and cousins all being California public school teachers and CTA members. An educator since 1992, she taught AP U.S. history, economics and government at Hart High School in Santa Clarita. She previously served as CTA Secretary-Treasurer from 2019 to 2023 and on the CTA Board of Directors representing District I before that. Littman

served as Hart District Teachers Assn. president and vice president. As an elected representative to CTA's State Council, she served as chair of the Credentials and Professional Development and Elections committees. She also served as the Superintendent of Public Instruction's designee on the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing for eight years. Littman won the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence in 2011. She is dedicated to ensuring California educators have the tools and support they need to be the teachers all students deserve.

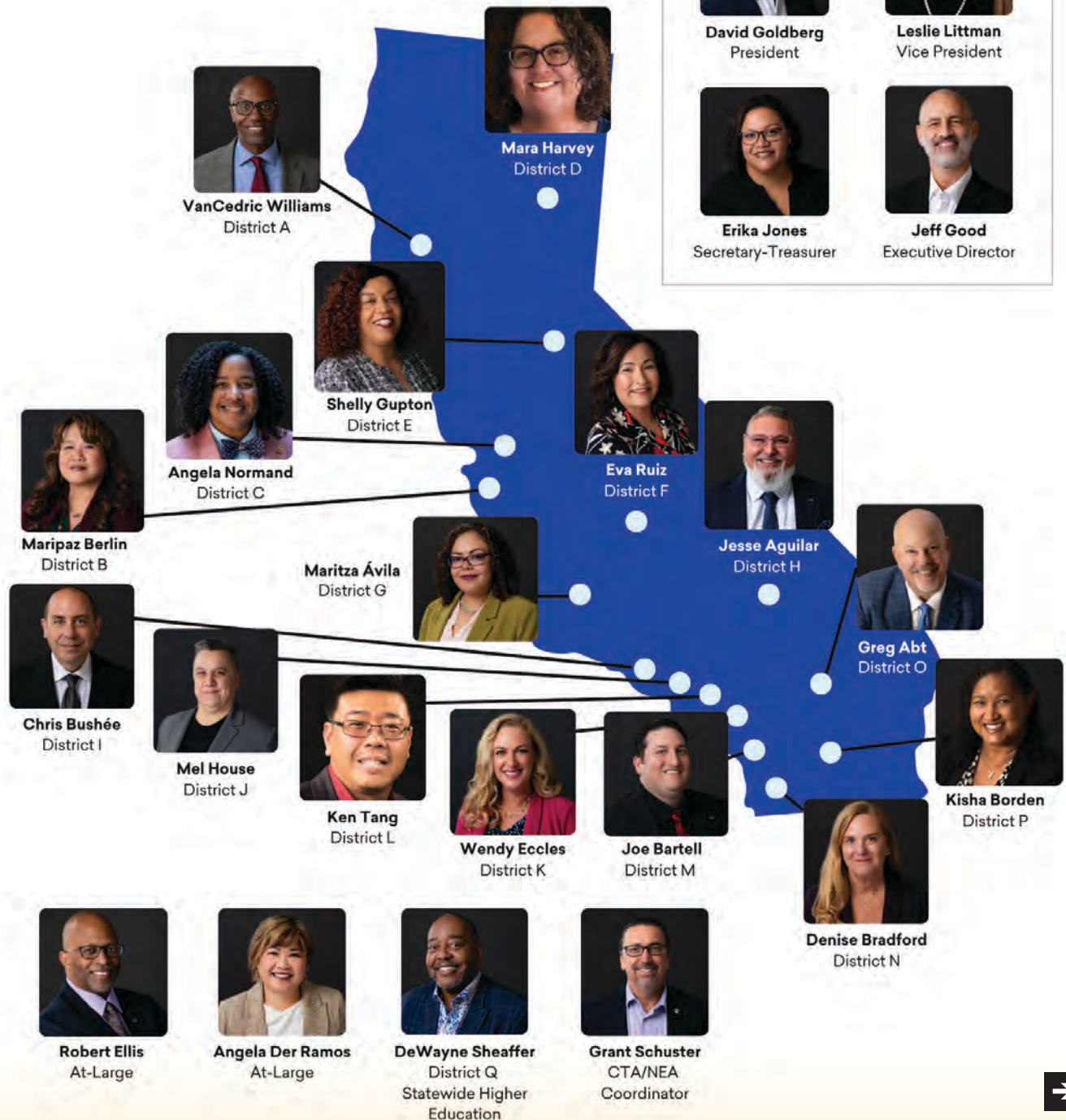
Fun fact: She has an adorable Yorkshire terrier named Poppy.

Erika Jones **SECRETARY-TREASURER**

Jones grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, and began her teaching career teaching kindergarten in Sun Valley, CA. She was elected Secretary-Treasurer in 2023 after serving eight years on the CTA Board. She is also a professional development trainer in classroom management, culturally responsive teaching, racial equity and supporting school communities, and lead on the re-creation of the CTA Cadre Training program. Gov. Gavin Newsom appointed her to the California Charter Schools Task Force in 2019; the group's work led to a series of successful bills to reform charter school law. Jones serves on the California Department of Education (CDE) Advisory Committee on Charter Schools and the CDE Foundation Board of Directors. As a State Council representative, she chaired the Civil Rights in Education Committee and served on the CTA strategic planning workgroup.

Fun fact: Jones is mom to a two-year-old and a key advocate in the fight for educators' paid maternity leave.

CTA's Board of Directors



BOARD MEMBERS

VanCedric Williams DISTRICT A

High school social science educator Williams represents 10 counties, 109 locals and 16,000 members. He is a United Educators of San Francisco member, where he served on the executive board and in numerous leadership roles. Williams was motivated to become a teacher to inspire achievement and success in youth, especially BIPOC and those in high-need communities. He was elected to the Oakland Unified school board in 2020 and reelected in 2024; his service has included the NEA Board of Directors, CTA State Council, and the CTA Budget and Adult, Career and Technical Ed committees.

Fun fact: Williams loves to garden, run 5Ks, travel with his partner and enjoy delicious meals out with friends and family.

Maripaz Berlin DISTRICT B

Berlin, an educator for almost 20 years, has served as president of the Oak Grove Educators Assn. and previously held multiple OGEA leadership roles. Berlin also served as Santa Clara Service Center chair and Women's Advocacy coordinator on the Equity Squad. She was a delegate to State Council and NEA RA for several years. An alumna of CTA's Ethnic Member Early Identification & Development program, Berlin received OGEA's WHO Award in 2018 and the State WHO Award in 2023. She co-authored resolutions on LGBTQ+ rights and a denouncement of hate crimes and bigotry against AAPI peoples for her school district.

Fun fact: Berlin enjoys visiting national parks and once hiked Half Dome in Yosemite.

Angela Normand DISTRICT C

A special education educator, Normand has been Teacher of the Year at Adams Middle School and a participant and trainer in CTA's Ethnic Member Early Identification and Development Program. As a member of Brentwood Teachers Assn., Normand served as site representative, vice president and NEA representative. Her focus included human rights advocacy — serving locally as a contact for LGBTQ+ and women's rights issues. She is serving her second term as Trustee Area 2 on the Alameda County Board of Education.

Fun fact: Normand's career in public education was preceded by 10 years in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Mara Harvey DISTRICT D

Harvey is proud to champion student voice, educator empowerment and the role of public schools in strengthening democracy. She became a high school social

science teacher in 2002 and earned her administrative credential and master's degree in School Leadership in 2016. She found her true calling in union work; her passion for advocacy led to her being bargaining chair, then president of Natomas Teachers Assn. Harvey has been a driving force in the community schools movement and helped the California Department of Education shape the Seal of Civic Engagement.

Fun fact: Raised in a bed and breakfast in the same area she now represents, Harvey spent her formative years meeting people from all over the world.

Shelly Gupton DISTRICT E

Gupton has advocated for students and public schools for a quarter century, teaching in Richmond and Pittsburg. She is a member of the Elk Grove Educators Assn., where she served on the executive board and as State Council representative. Her local advocacy was behind the creation of EGEA's Equity Committee. Gupton served on CTA's Diversity Advisory Panel for three years and served as secretary and a rep for at-large locals for the Capital Service Center. As a State Council delegate, she served on the Curriculum and Instruction and Representation committees. She was one of the first educator leaders in CTA's Instructional Leadership Corps.

Eva Ruiz DISTRICT F

Ruiz is a bilingual elementary teacher in Fresno. She represents CTA members in Stanislaus, Merced, Mariposa, Fresno and Madera counties, and served as Fresno Teachers Assn. president. She is a past FTA treasurer, negotiations team member, organizing committee activist and school site representative. The daughter of farm workers, Ruiz's CTA work includes serving on the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee, chairing the Health Benefits Advisory Committee, and serving as State Council delegate. She was a California delegate to NEA Representative Assembly (RA) and founding member of the CA Latina Democrats of Fresno County.

Fun fact: Ruiz was the first Latina president for FTA and CTA Board Member for District F.

Maritza Ávila DISTRICT G

Ávila's quarter-century public education career includes her role as Ethnic Studies educator/coach and reflects a steadfast commitment to educational excellence, advocacy and leadership. A champion of culturally relevant pedagogy and educational equity, Ávila won a 2021 CTA Human Rights Award. A member of Oxnard Educators Assn., she was a site rep for 10 years and State Council delegate who served on multiple committees. As NEA Director, she has participated in leadership development efforts and is vice chair of the

Hispanic Caucus. She is a two-time Education International (World Congress) delegate.

Fun fact: Ávila founded CTA's Zumba Caucus, integrating her passion for dance fitness with the education sector.

Jesse Aguilar DISTRICT H

Aguilar is a high school visual arts teacher in Kern County. He represents thousands of educators in Kern, Tulare, Kings, Inyo and Mono counties, as well as educators in the High Desert in L.A. County. Aguilar's service with the Kern High School Teachers Assn. includes vice president, bargaining and grievance chair, and member of the executive board. As a State Council delegate, he served on key workgroups dealing with teacher evaluations, the CTA Long-Term Strategic Plan, political involvement, and high school restructuring. He was also a CTA liaison to the California State Board of Education. Aguilar is an advocate of racial and social justice and has written articles and organized around those issues for years.

Fun fact: Aguilar is a huge political nerd and a three-time delegate to the National Democratic Convention.

Christopher Bushée DISTRICT I

Bushée is a high school chemistry educator whose union experience comprises decades of service as grievance chair, bargaining chair, political action chair, vice president and president of the Beverly Hills Education Assn. At regional and state levels, Bushée has held multiple leadership roles, including State Council rep, CTA/ABC (Assn. For Better Citizenship) committee member, Legislative Sub-Committee Co-Chair of Curriculum and Instruction and delegate to the NEA RA. Honors include CTA's Theodore Bass Memorial Teacher-in-Politics Award in 2009 and WHO (We Honor Ours) Awards in 2011, 2015 and 2016.

Fun fact: Bushée's wife Claudia is a longtime CTA-ESP member who assists teachers with special needs students.

Mel House DISTRICT J

House is a credentialed P.E. teacher currently with LAUSD's Physical Education Teacher Itinerant Program. They served on CTA's Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues Advisory and LGBTQ+ Conference planning committees and chaired the Equity and Human Rights Conference. A CTA State Council delegate for 13 years and NEA RA delegate for 15 years, House was also an active UTLA member. They served on the NEA Board of Directors for six years, the last four as CTA/NEA Coordinating Director. In 2015, they received both the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence and Global Learning Fellowship.

Fun fact: House dislocated their shoulder while underground at Mammoth Cave National Park.

Wendy Eccles DISTRICT K

Social studies teacher Eccles is a 22-year educator and member of NEA-Jurupa, where she served as president and held multiple leadership roles. She chaired the CTA/ABC Committee and San Geronimo Service Center Council, was president of Citrus Belt UniServ, was a State Council delegate for 12 years and NEA RA delegate for 15 years. Eccles also serves on the San Bernardino County Democratic Central Committee and California Democratic Party Executive Board. She was recently elected Secretary of the CADEM Labor Caucus. Her greatest honor is being mom to JJ, who just graduated from SDSU.

Fun fact: Eccles is an avid football fan and LA Rams season ticket holder.

Ken Tang DISTRICT L

Tang was six when he and his family fled Vietnam, eventually settling in Alhambra. He transformed the trauma, hunger, constant moves, language barriers and racial bullying into a call to service — pouring his life into education and social justice, advocating for students, families and teachers as a public school teacher, community volunteer and labor leader. Tang has served Garvey Education Assn. as president. He has been a State Council delegate, chaired the CTA Pacific Asian American Caucus and co-chaired the Racial Equity Affairs Committee. He served on NEA's Board of Directors and the Alhambra Unified school board.

Fun fact: Each year Tang and his students select a charity to support by raising awareness through activities and fundraisers.

Joe Bartell DISTRICT M

Bartell, a veteran instrumental music teacher, represents educators in parts of Orange and Riverside counties. He served for seven years as president of the Brea-Olinda Teachers Assn. and was also vice president and a member of the bargaining team. His many roles at State Council include serving as a delegate for five years, chairing the Legislation Committee and heading the CTA/ABC Committee for District M. Bartell received a WHO Award from his CTA chapter in 2009, and a statewide WHO Award in 2017. He was also honored in 2018 with the University of Redlands Alumni Educator of the Year Award.

Fun fact: A talented musician, Bartell plays the saxophone, flute and clarinet.



Denise Bradford DISTRICT N

A member of Saddleback Valley Educators Assn., where she held positions from site rep to president, Bradford has worked at all school levels including adult education, giving her a unique perspective of students and educators' changing needs and challenges. She has been an English Language Development specialist, student teacher mentor, Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment support provider, technology coordinator, school curriculum leader and member of CTA's Teacher Leadership Cohort and Instructional Leadership Corps. Bradford chaired the State Council Retirement Committee, leading to her election as California State Teachers Retirement System trustee, representing K-12 teachers.

Fun fact: Bradford was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to teach English in Vienna, Austria.

Gregory Abt DISTRICT O

Abt has more than a quarter century of experience as an educator. He currently teaches social science/history within the Special Education department at Beaumont High School in Riverside County. He served as site rep, vice president and seven years as president of Beaumont Teachers Assn. At State Council, Abt became vice chair of the Special Education Committee after serving as chair of the Legislation subcommittee.

Fun fact: Abt is an accomplished cook who owned a catering company for 13 years.

Kisha Borden DISTRICT P

Veteran elementary educator Borden grew up in San Diego, graduated from San Diego public schools, and began teaching in 1996 at a school not far from where she was raised — and where she still teaches. She served as a site rep for 10 years, and board member, treasurer, vice president and president of San Diego Education Assn. She served on SDEA's bargaining team and member engagement committee; for her activism, SDEA honored her with a WHO Award. Borden has served 12 years each as a State Council delegate and NEA RA delegate.

Fun fact: Kisha and her husband love to travel and have visited six continents.

DeWayne Sheaffer DISTRICT Q

Sheaffer has worked at Long Beach City College in the Counseling and Student Development department since 1996. He has served in several leadership capacities while at LBCC, including president of Long Beach City College Faculty Assn., and LBCC department chair, transfer coordinator and career services coordinator. His motivation to support and protect the collective bargaining process stems from an

early experience picketing at his father's workplace during a strike; he was inspired by employees doing all they could during negotiations, including going on strike, to ensure their voices were heard.

Fun fact: Sheaffer just completed 10 years as president of the National Council for Higher Education.

Grant Schuster CTA/NEA COORDINATOR

Middle school teacher Schuster is in his third year as CTA/NEA Coordinator and fifth year serving CTA on the NEA Board. He works to provide locals with access to the program, staff and monetary resources of CTA and NEA to support local organizing and coalition building. As president of Anaheim Secondary Teachers Assn. for six years, he built organizational power through strong school sites and relationships with students, parents and community. He helped the California Alliance for Community Schools organize its collective power to fight privatization and promote the reimagination of public schools.

Fun fact: Schuster can often be found at LA Kings hockey games or a goth music concert.

Angela Der Ramos AT-LARGE

Der Ramos is an elementary teacher and member of Alisal Teachers Assn. Her leadership roles have included NEA Board Director, CTA liaison to the State Board of Education, CTA Instructional Leadership Corps member, and CTA Human Rights Cadre trainer. Der Ramos was a former school board member for Salinas Elementary School District, and a current trustee for Hartnell Community College. Recognition for her service includes the State WHO Award, a CTA Communications Award for social media engagement, and a local Lighthouse Teacher award.

Fun fact: Der Ramos has more books and pets than she needs.

Robert Ellis AT-LARGE

Ellis has been an elementary teacher for over two decades and a member of the United Teachers of Richmond, CTA/NEA. He has served as an executive board member and vice president, and chaired the bargaining and organizing teams. He was elected to State Council for more than 18 years, where he chaired a policy committee and chaired the CTA African American Caucus. He served on the NEA Board of Directors. He is currently the Treasurer of the NEA Black Caucus and the vice president of the Bayside Council of PTAs. His honors include CTA's Lois Tinson Human Rights Award, and local and state WHO Awards.

Fun fact: Ellis is president of the Bay Area Girls Club.

We Are CTA

IN OUR UNION, WE FIGHT FOR THE SCHOOLS OUR STUDENTS DESERVE.

- ✓ **Join CTA** and our movement to strengthen public education for educators, our students, and our communities.
- ✓ **Organize and bargain** for a strong union contract, including your salary, benefits and working conditions. Our unity is critical to retaining and recruiting educators for years to come.
- ✓ **A voice** in pushing legislation to improve working and learning conditions across public education.
- ✓ **Every member can vote** on our union leadership within our chapter, and at our state and national unions, the California Teachers Association (CTA) and the National Education Association (NEA).
- ✓ **Representation** on matters pertaining to your collectively-bargained agreement.
- ✓ **\$1 million employment liability insurance coverage** for legal defense should you get sued.
- ✓ **Legal and/or professional services and advice available for:**
 - Due process and leave rights, layoffs and California Commission on Teacher Credentialing cases;
 - Certification and classification issues;
 - Discrimination under federal/state laws based on race, gender, age, etc.;
 - Discrimination based on union activity;
 - Retirement issues.
- ✓ **Access to professional and leadership development trainings and conferences** to support student learning, classroom management, social and emotional skills, special education, social justice and more.
- ✓ **Scholarships of up to \$5,000 a year** to continue your education or to support your children going to college.
- ✓ **Subscriptions** to the *California Educator* and *NEA Today*, our union publications.
- ✓ **CTA Death & Dismemberment Plan** (automatic benefit)
NEA Complimentary Life Insurance (automatic benefit)
CTA Disaster Relief Fund
CTA Classroom Setup Grant
- ✓ **Other Exclusive CTA and NEA Member Benefits programs:**
 - CTA Auto and Home Insurance plus CTA Voluntary Group Life/Disability Insurance
 - CTA Access to Savings: Travel, Entertainment and Purchasing Discounts
 - CTA 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan and financial tools and resources
 - Free Calm subscription for CTA Members
 - Financial services such as credit cards, credit union services, special mortgage and auto loan programs
 - Resources to Federal Student Loan Forgiveness Programs at CTAMemberBenefits.org/studentloan
 - Many more products, services and discounts negotiated on behalf of, and provided to, members only
- ✓ **Free webinars (MB4U)** to help members meet their financial goals and stretch their paycheck, learn more at CTAMemberBenefits.org.

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2023-24 SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT

For CTA 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, 2023 through August 31, 2024. 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, 2024 were \$47,957,989.

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, 2024, the premiums paid under such experience-rated contracts were \$47,797,780, and the total of all benefit claims paid under these experience-rated contracts during the plan year was \$37,560,449.

Basic Financial Statement

The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the plan, was \$176,395,176 as of August 31, 2024, compared to

\$171,216,677 as of September 1, 2023. During the year, the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of \$5,178,499. 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 \$60,746,627, including participant contributions of \$48,326,298, realized gains of \$192,753 from the sale of assets, earnings from investments of \$16,176,465 and other income of (\$3,948,889).

Plan expenses were \$55,568,128. These expenses included \$2,247,411 in administrative expenses and \$53,320,717 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 Plan Administrator Vicki Rodgers 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, N-1513, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20210. ■



CCA's New Leadership

Randa Wahbe and **Jon Ausubel** were recently elected president and vice president, respectively, of the Community College Assn. Their terms run for two years.

Wahbe is a dedicated educator, union leader and advocate for faculty equity. A full-time English professor at Cypress College since 2001, she has held numerous leadership roles on campus as well as within CCA and CTA; among them: She has served as an elected delegate to CTA State Council and the NEA Representative Assembly.

"As president, I'm focused on centering equity in everything we do, deepening member engagement, and advocating powerfully in Sacramento to ensure decisions being made are reflective of the lived realities on our campuses and the needs of our students," Wahbe said.

Born and raised in California as the eldest child of immigrants, Wahbe holds BAs in Anthropology and English, an MA in Comparative Literature, and an EdD in Curriculum and Instruction.

Ausubel has been a full-time English instructor at Chaffey College since 1998. He has served as Distance Education coordinator for the district and as director of the Milliken Planetarium. For the Chaffey College Faculty Assn., he has served as president, chief negotiator, PAC chair, membership chair, school rep, and continues to serve as grievance officer.

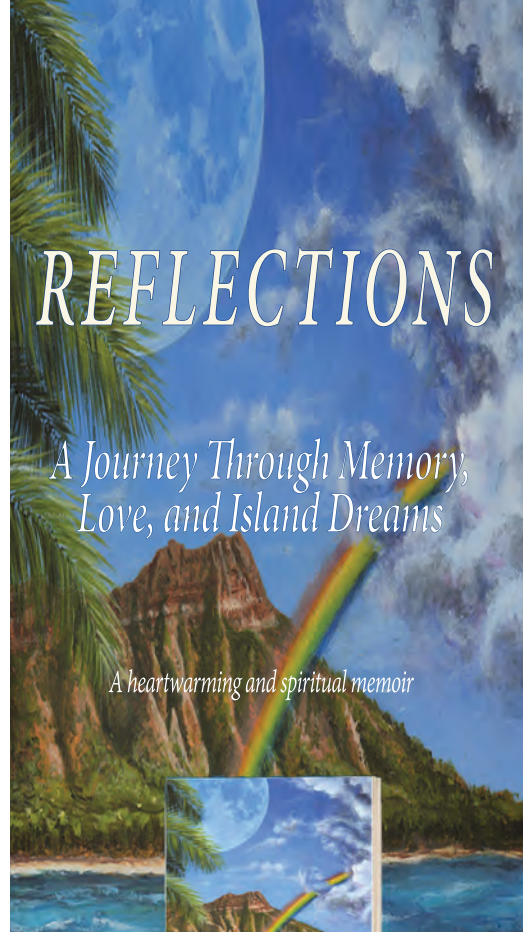
He is keenly interested in part-time issues and is devoting this part of his career to improving the working conditions of part-time faculty at Chaffey and statewide. Born and raised on Long Island, he holds a BA in English with minors in philosophy and astrophysics; an MA in English and a Ph.D. in American Literature and Semiotics. ■



Randa Wahbe



Jon Ausubel



A heartwarming and spiritual memoir



About the Book:

Set against the beauty of tropical and magical landscapes, *Reflections* shares personal stories, emotional truths, and timeless wisdom. Raquel

Ramsey has written a rich tapestry of lived experiences shaped by love, service, and cultural identity.

About the Author:

Raquel Ramsey is the widow of Col. Edwin P. Ramsey, a decorated World War II hero. She is a veterans' advocate, educator, and storyteller whose life unfolds from island roots to the halls of activism.

 Now available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and select bookstores

at: nadinebramsey.com



Practicing Self-Care with Your Kids



Encouraging self-care from a young age sets the foundation for a healthy, balanced lifestyle that will benefit your children throughout their lives. You can do this by creating a supportive environment and finding ways to make self-care a fun part of their routine. By integrating self-care practices into their daily routines, children can improve their overall wellbeing and develop resilience.



The Lady of Lionwood

Establish consistent bedtime routines to ensure your child gets enough rest. Limiting screen time before bed and reading a story together can prepare them for sleep.



See, Hear, and Feel

Introduce mindfulness exercises like yoga or meditation tailored for children. These activities can help your child develop focus, reduce stress, and improve overall mental wellbeing.



Balloon Breath

Teach simple breathing techniques to help your child manage stress and anxiety. Practice deep breathing together, especially during challenging times, to help them stay calm.



Bedtime Routine

Help your child learn to manage their time effectively by creating a daily schedule that includes time for homework, play, and self-care activities. Teach them to prioritize tasks and balance responsibilities with leisure activities.

CTA Members have free, unlimited access to Calm content



Activate your Calm Premium subscription today by scanning this QR code. See you in the Calm app, we're here for you!

For any questions please reach out to Member Benefits at CTAMemberBenefits@cta.org or call us at 650-552-5200





William Topa/Unsplash

Give your athletes a sporting chance with a Thomas R. Brown Athletics Grant

CTA members can apply for a \$1,000 grant from California Casualty for your middle or high school's athletics program. The California Casualty Thomas R. Brown Athletics Grant was established to provide support to public school sports programs impacted by reduced budgets.

Awards must be used to subsidize the sports program(s) identified on the grant application and cannot be used for individual student awards, construction projects, organizations whose primary purpose is fundraising, or other school programs.

Only one grant will be awarded per school per academic year and schools will not be awarded two consecutive years. (If your school is not awarded this year, your school will be eligible to apply again next year.)

Visit calcasathletics.com to apply; deadline is Jan. 15, 2026.

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DOUBLE CASH BACK OFFER

NEW OFFER

6% ~~3% CASH BACK~~
CASH BACK
for the first year
in the category of your choice

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PLUS A MEMBER-EXCLUSIVE

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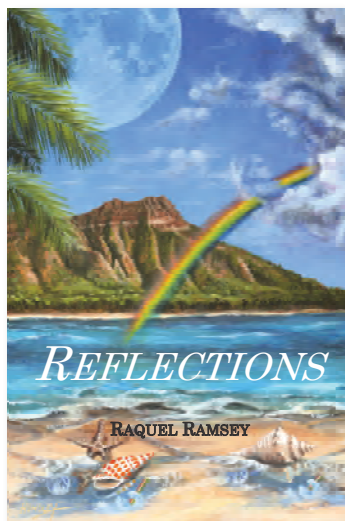
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Lit From Within

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

Compiled by **Amy Peruzzaro**



Honoring Legacies

CTA/NEA Retired member and former high school English and writing teacher Raquel Ramsey has written a new book called *Reflections*. The book contains short stories and poems with moral lessons and values of faith, hope, love and courage as exemplified by the lives of Ramsey's late husband Col. Edwin P. Ramsey, 26th Cavalry PS, who is buried in Arlington National Cemetery, sister-in-law Nadine Ramsey, WASP Pilot of WWII, and others who have enriched Ramsey's life in different ways. Divided into eight chapters, *Reflections* is ideal for high school readers to reflect on the people and experiences that have positively impacted their lives. Read about Ramsey's other works at nadinebramsey.com.



Restoring Galactic Peace

High School English teacher and Las Virgenes Education Assn. member Lance Novak has published his seventh novel, *Excelsior's Revenge: A Kabookian Chronicles Story*. The companion novel to his original *Miss Sophia Sanchez* series, Novak transports readers 30 years after Earth is liberated from the Leezhahi after a great battle. The galaxy enjoys a thriving economy and a flourishing new outpost, Umpt-chah Station. However, this prosperity is threatened when an unexpected force emerges close to Mars. Admiral Sophia Crawford, commander of the Mars Government fleet, must lead her troops into battle to defend Mars from this new enemy. The book explores themes of leadership and resilience.



Magic, Swords, Mystery

Napa Valley Education Assn. member and English Language Arts educator John Fultz has written *Immaculate Scoundrels*, which is the first novel of the *Scaleborn* fantasy series. The book introduces the ancient empire of Yhorom, setting the stage for a tale of warring factions and mystical pursuits. The characters are intriguing — Thold goes on a quest to pursue a mystical vision while Yuhai hunts for scaleborn wizards and witches. Their alliance to seek treasure in a haunted desert launches an expedition that will reveal horrors of history and unleash unprecedented power. A story for fans of all ages of the dark fantasy genre. Read about Fultz's other books at fultzauthor.com.

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



YES ON 50

VOTE **YES** ON PROP. 50!

Our union is YES on 50 to defend democracy, and to ensure funding for public education and essential services for our communities.

We deserve elected leaders who will represent us, not give more tax breaks to billionaires.



TAKE ACTION!

Vote YES on Prop. 50 on or before **November 4, 2025**

Learn more at cta.org/prop50



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