



September 30, 2025

## CTA-AE News This Month!

Hello CTA Aspiring Educators,

Como siempre, espero que ustedes y su familia se encuentren bien y con salud.

On September 20th and 21st, I had the privilege of witnessing something powerful: our statewide board stepping into action to coordinate our Fall Event, Bridging Gaps, Empowering California, taking place November 8th and 9th in Burlingame, CA. I left those meetings absolutely impressed by the commitment, creativity, and urgency our board brought to the table. This is not just an event, it is a call to action.

And action is exactly what this moment demands. This is why I was proud to work in conjunction with our REAC Directors to draft and release a statement that **unequivocally condemns the arrest, harassment, and intimidation of students, families, and their advocates by ICE and federal forces**. These acts are direct violations of human dignity, civil rights, and the fundamental right to education. As educators, we will not stand by while our communities are attacked, we will act.

It was also an honor to visit San Diego State University on September 24th, where I met with members to share about our statewide work, and together we launched the start of my Banned Book Raffle (congratulations again to the winners). To see future educators so engaged, ready to organize, ready to defend public education, and ready to uplift our communities was a reminder of why this movement is so urgent and so necessary.

Looking ahead, I invite you to join us on **October 21st at 5:00 PM** for a special Zoom Webinar as part of our Stronger Schools, Stronger California, featuring CCA President **Randa B. Wahbe** and CCA Faculty Equity and Diversity Committee Chair Edward Gomez. Join us to learn more about the Community College Association (CCA), its work with aspiring educators, and the journeys of remarkable faculty who found their path in community college teaching. [Register Today](#).

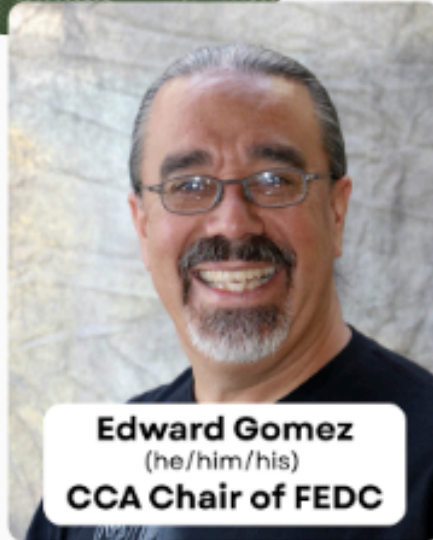
STRONGER SCHOOLS STRONGER CALIFORNIA STRONGER SCHOOLS STRONGER CALIFORNIA STRONGER SCHOOLS

# ORGANIZING TOGETHER

## A CONVERSATION WITH CCA



**Randa B. Wahbe**  
(she/her/hers)  
**CCA President**



**Edward Gomez**  
(he/him/his)  
**CCA Chair of FEDC**

Join us to learn more about the Community College Association (CCA), its work with aspiring educators, and the journeys of remarkable faculty who found their path in community college teaching.



**ZOOM WEBINAR**

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025  
@5:00 PM**

<https://forms.gle/oi7nFy9qXiv8LXLv9>



Our fight for Stronger Schools and a Stronger California is only beginning, and together we are building the power, the vision, and the solidarity to meet this moment head on.

I look forward to seeing you all in November!

Sí Se Puede,  
Gabriel Mendoza Jr.  
2025-2026 CTA Aspiring Educators President

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**Renew your CTA-AE Membership**

To all returning CTA-AE members, it's time to renew your CTA-AE membership for the 2025-2026 year! **The annual membership period runs from September 1 through August 31 of each year.** [Renew your membership here.](#)

CTA Aspiring Educators membership brings together like-minded people who share a passion for education. Membership offers opportunities to engage in personal and professional development, increase your voice and have a medium for social change – the ability to fight for what you believe in. As aspiring educators, we see issues in the education system, teaching practices, and obstacles to teacher preparation. Our union allows us to come together to work towards systemic change. We act as a collaborative community fighting for racial and social justice in our public school system.

Members of CTA-AE have access to the following benefits:

- Networking, leadership, training, and professional development opportunities
- Access to scholarships and grants from CTA specifically for CTA Aspiring Educators
- \$1 million in liability insurance, low rates on auto, homeowners/renters insurance

Check out the full list of member benefits and services on our [CTA-AE website](#).

If you have questions or concerns, email us at [cta-ae@cta.org](mailto:cta-ae@cta.org).

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## Save the Date for the CTA-AE Fall Event!

We are excited to share details about our CTA-AE Fall Event: **BRIDGING GAPS, EMPOWERING CALIFORNIA**

This event will be focused on developing advocacy to combat the issues that are taking place in our education system. How can we bridge gaps and empower California? By building community. Come connect with other chapters to gain perspectives and inspiration to grow your own chapters. Together, we can learn how we can uplift our chapters for positive/political change. During this event, we will provide you with the skills, resources, and information to support development— both at a professional level and at an advocacy level— at your local chapters for your aspiring educators. Register at the link below. We hope to see you there!

ASPIRING EDUCATORS

# BRIDGING GAPS, EMPOWERING CALIFORNIA



CALIFORNIA  
TEACHERS  
ASSOCIATION

**November 8th-9th, 2025**  
**Burlingame, CA**

Register here:  
<https://bit.ly/25FallEventReg>

Come connect with other chapters to gain perspectives and inspiration to grow your own chapters.



**Dates:**

Sat. Nov 8 - Sun. Nov 9, 2025

**Location:**

CTA Headquarters 1750 Murchison Drive, Burlingame, CA

**Registration:**

Link to register: <https://bit.ly/25FallEventReg>

**Deadline** to register: **Friday, October 13, 2025**

Scholarships to attend are available to CTA-AE members who are part of registered chapters. Contact your chapter advisor or chapter president to request a scholarship. The deadline to submit names of aspiring educators to receive scholarships to attend the Fall Event is Friday, October 3, 2025.

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## Chapter Development Updates

*By Queen Udofia, Executive Vice President, CTA-Aspiring Educators*

The 2025–2026 academic year is off to a powerful start for CTA-Aspiring Educators (CTA-AE)! I am honored to serve as your Executive Vice President, supporting Chapter Development and Membership Recruitment across two- and four-year colleges and universities. The following updates reflect the energy, commitment, and impact we are creating together.

### **Executive Leadership and Board Meetings**

Our first CTA-AE Board Meeting was held in person on August 16–17, 2025, at the California Teachers Association Headquarters in Burlingame, California. We reconvened at the same location on September 20–21 to assess progress and strategize for the year ahead.

The current CTA-AE Executive Board consists of our President and myself as Executive Vice President, while the Secretary-Treasurer position remains vacant. We are actively recruiting to fill this important leadership role. Despite the vacancy, our momentum has not slowed. In partnership with our regional leaders, we have made significant strides in chapter development and membership recruitment across campuses in the state of California.

### **National Engagement: NEA State Leaders Retreat**

On September 6 and 7, I had the distinct honor of representing the state of California at the first-ever **National Education Association (NEA)** State Aspiring Educator Leaders Virtual Retreat. Over two days, leaders from across the 50 states convened to sharpen strategy, deepen coalition, and strengthen our shared commitment to advancing educator leadership nationwide.

As part of the program, I was invited to present an overview of how CTA-Aspiring Educators in California structures, supports, and elevates emerging leaders within the profession. The presentation was well received and resonated beyond state lines, so much so that one of my remarks was later quoted and featured on the official NEA Aspiring Educators (@neaaspiringed) Instagram page. It was a powerful reminder of the reach and relevance of our collective work.

This experience was both humbling and energizing. It underscored how essential it is to not only be present in national spaces, but to meaningfully contribute to the dialogue shaping the future of education.

### **Chapter Development and Membership Engagement**

Our outreach has been both intentional and adaptive—blending grassroots engagement at pop-up events, one-on-one Zoom meetings, phone calls, text communication, and a consistent social media presence. The response from students and campus communities has been overwhelmingly positive, and early indicators suggest we may even surpass our ambitious membership goals this year.

This momentum is a powerful testament to the dedication of our leaders, many of whom are balancing multiple roles and personal responsibilities, yet remain deeply committed to advancing CTA-AE's mission: to build a strong, inclusive, and informed community of future educators.

### **Regional Highlights: Growth Across Campuses**

In my interim and additional role supporting **Region 3** (the Region 3 Director position is currently vacant), outreach has been initiated with several campuses, including:

- Pasadena City College
- California State University, Northridge (CSUN)
- California State University, Channel Islands
- Western Governors University (WGU)
- San Bernardino Valley College – engagement led by our CTA-AE President, with plans to recharter
- University of California, Santa Barbara

Meanwhile, in **Region 4**, re-engagement with the University of California, Irvine is well underway. CTA-AE President Gabriel Mendoza and Region 4 Director Giselle Reyes recently met with the Teachers of Tomorrow Board Officers on Tuesday, September 16, to discuss club charter at this campus. Southwestern College has also expressed interest in forming a chapter.

In even more exciting news from Region 4, Irvine Valley College has confirmed to me that a newly formed Executive Leadership team is in place for the 2025–2026 academic year and is currently awaiting official club ratification. On September 16, the campus hosted a Teacher Preparation Pathway (TPP) event, which I had the privilege of attending, welcoming esteemed guests from:

- Santiago Canyon College
- UCI CalTeach
- Saddleback College
- Cerritos College

TPP's mission to "create a supportive and accessible hub for teacher pathway students, guided by data and informed by student needs" directly aligns with the values we uphold at CTA-AE.

Regional Directors in **Region 1**, **Region 2**, and **Region 4** have also shared promising developments in chapter engagement. We look forward to highlighting their continued work in future updates.

### Chapter Roundtable Meetings

I am thrilled to announce the first **Chapter Roundtable Kickoff Meeting**, scheduled for **October 3, 2025, from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM Pacific Time**. These monthly virtual gatherings will serve as a collaborative space for chapter leaders to connect, exchange strategies, build community, and strengthen our collective impact.

Regional Directors are actively conducting outreach to encourage broad participation. **Follow us (@cta\_aspiringed) on Instagram and other social media platforms to access the official flyer, shared below.**



### Launching: The Udofia Legacy Leaders Interview Series

Beginning next month, I will be launching the Udofia **Legacy Leaders Interview Series**, an initiative dedicated to celebrating education pioneers whose leadership, dedication, and vision are shaping the future of the field. These interviews will highlight impactful biographies, offer powerful insights, and



inspire our aspiring educator community across the country.

### Final Thoughts

Whether you are a prospective chapter, a current leader, a member exploring your path, or a supporter of future educators—know that your voice and presence matter. Together, we are not just building chapters; we are building a national movement rooted in equity, excellence, and purpose.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the mission of CTA-Aspiring Educators. I am proud to serve alongside you and energized for what lies ahead.

**I am not here to fill a seat—I am here to move the room!™**

In solidarity,

**Queen Udofia**

Executive Vice President

CTA-Aspiring Educators

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## Get Your Chapter Recognized

As we transition into the new school year, **all existing AE Chapters will need to resubmit their Chapter Recognition paperwork.** Regardless if you are an established Chapter or just starting out, please check out the instructions below.

There are 5 easy steps to becoming a CTA-AE Chapter:

1. Fill out the Chapter Recognition Form below and at: <https://bit.ly/25-26ChapterRecognitionForm>;
2. Show proof of official club status on campus;
3. Show proof of elected leadership, ie: Chapter President;
4. Show proof of at least one advisor, ie: faculty in your campus School of Education; and
5. Share your governing documents, ie: Chapter By-Laws – we have samples you can use!

In addition to all the benefits of being a CTA-AE Member, recognized CTA-AE Chapters receive additional benefits.

Please see below for 5 reasons to become a CTA-AE Chapter:

1. Sponsorship to attend CTA-AE's events like our Fall Event on November 8 - 9, 2025 or Spring Event and Representative Assembly on April 18 - 19, 2026;
2. CTA-AE gear like t-shirts, tote bags, pens, pencils;
3. Access to scholarships and awards for school through the [CTA Foundation's Scholarship Programs & Awards](#);
4. Opportunity to meet with CTA-AE Chapters across the state and with [NEA Aspiring Educators](#); Members, and Chapters across the nation; and
5. Voting rights at CTA-AE's Representative Assembly.

Link to charter chapter: <https://bit.ly/25-26ChapterRecognitionForm>

If you are a member whose chapter has not yet been recognized, feel free to contact [cta.ae@cta.org](mailto:cta.ae@cta.org).

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## CTA-AE Chapter & Member Spotlight

**Spotlight: Sara Huerta (CTA-AE REAC Director) at Irvine Unified School District**

Sara Huerta recently began a new position as a classroom aide with the Irvine Unified School District, working as a paraeducator in the Essentials program, which supports students with special needs. As she spent time getting to know her coworkers, she quickly noticed a surprising trend: many of the classroom aides—despite being aspiring educators themselves—were unfamiliar with CTA-AE (California Teachers Association – Aspiring Educators). Recognizing a missed opportunity to connect these future educators with valuable resources, support, and professional development, Sara began developing an idea to raise awareness. She is currently working on creating presentations and informational flyers to share more about what CTA-AE offers and why it's such an important resource for aspiring teachers.

Sara shared her idea with one of her supervisors, who was already familiar with CTA and CTA-AE but admitted she had never considered that aides who are also students might not be aware of the union or its benefits. After a meaningful discussion, the two agreed that this was a valuable initiative and decided to collaborate on a strategy to reach more aides across the district. Their goal is to expand access to professional opportunities, resources, and networking for all aspiring educators within the Irvine Unified School District. Through this initiative, Sara hopes to empower more future teachers with the knowledge and tools they need to succeed—and to build a stronger, more connected educational community.

**Message from Giselle Reyes, Region 4 Director**

Hello Aspiring Educators! This is Giselle Reyes, your Region 4 Director covering areas in Orange, San Diego, Imperial, and Riverside! As the Fall semester begins, aspiring educators have begun building up their chapters at their campus, hosting elections, and have been establishing S.M.A.R.T goals for their on-campus initiatives. I am excited and looking forward to connecting with both returning and new chapters that are part of CTA-AE!

**Santa Ana College: Club Apple official board of 2025-26'****Cal State Fullerton: First Meeting of the Fall Semester!**





San Diego State University



**Message from Luis Tovar, Region 1 Director**

Hey Aspiring Educators! Luis Tovar, your Region 1 Director for the Bay Area and Northwest California here, as we start our fall semester, I hope we can all take a moment to look towards the UC Berkeley CTA-AE Chapter and their successful first meeting. Their executive board kicked off their year with an introduction to their executive board, their President Maya Mercado-Garcia and their role within the CTA-AE community. With their agenda including outreach into the greater Bay Area to support local school districts and build the professional skills of their members, the Berkeley chapter is coming back from summer stronger than before.

# AESAP

## INFOSESSION



JOIN US  
**SEPTEMBER 18TH**

RSVP FOR ROOM LOCATION!  
LINK IN BIO.

**INTERESTED IN CAREERS IN K-12 AND HIGHER  
EDUCATION? PASSIONATE ABOUT EDUCATION EQUITY?**

Come learn more about how you can get  
involved with UC Berkeley's first and only  
Education Pre-Professional Org on campus!

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## State Council Representative Updates

Hello CTA-AE Members!

We hope you all have had a wonderful start to your semester!

This month, the CTA-AE Statewide Board met, where State Council Representatives introduced the Statewide Board to Propositions 50 and 55.

Proposition 50 is an emergency response to partisan redistricting in Texas that allows California to temporarily redraw congressional districts to give students and teachers a fighting chance at the federal level. Districts would return to those drawn by an independent commission after the 2030 census.



You can view videos of CTA-AE Board members supporting Prop 50 [here](#).

Proposition 55, an extension to Proposition 30, seeks to secure the existing funding available to K-12 public schools and community colleges. A failure to extend this Proposition would lead to devastating cuts to our schools, leading to a loss of over \$9 billion in funding. As you all continue your academic year and begin to reconnect with your local Aspiring Educators' chapters, we urge all of you to keep this proposition in mind and begin to think about how we all can organize together to collect signatures to ensure this proposition is on the ballot next year.

On the weekend of October 17-19, State Council Representatives will be traveling to Los Angeles to set forth policy, develop legislation, and make recommendations in the general elections. As we prepare to be in our assigned council, we are excited to represent all of you in our voting. We are eager to bring back information on what we have accomplished so that you may share it with your Aspiring Educators.

In solidarity,

Your State Council Representatives: Sofia Reynoso Sandoval, Daniel Smothers, Madison Saldana

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## Elections Updates

Congratulations to our newly appointed statewide board members for the 2025-2026 term. We are thrilled to welcome these folks as they continue their aspiring educator journeys. We welcome their enthusiasm and leadership in this moment as we continue to fight for a great publication for every student.

- Helena Aredo (CSU East Bay) - REAC Director

# Get Involved!

Want to learn more about how you can get involved in the fight for strong public schools as a CTA-AE member?



[bit.ly/getinvovled2025](https://bit.ly/getinvovled2025)

Fill out the interest form to learn how you can get involved!

No experience necessary!

**SOLIDARITY**

**CTA - ASPIRING EDUCATORS**

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## REAC Director Updates

In response to the rise in attacks against immigrants across the United States, the CTA-AE Board adopted the following statement during the September CTA-AE Statewide Board Meeting. This powerful statement was crafted through the creativity, thoughtfulness, and critical insight of our REAC Director, who played a key role in shaping its message and impact.

1. Unequivocally condemns the arrest, harassment, and intimidation of students, families, and their advocates by ICE and state forces, recognizing such actions as direct violations of human dignity, civil rights, and the right to education.
2. Recognizes and urges the protection of aspiring educators, faculty, and students, especially immigrant and undocumented students, who face targeting or retaliation for standing up for justice.
3. Supports and encourages our student organizations to work in conjunction with their communities to ensure that all educational spaces remain safe, supportive, and free from fear.
4. Demands local, state, and national leaders end ICE and targeted enforcement and to create safeguards which protect the safety and integrity of our immigrant students, their families, and their advocates.
5. We would like to give you a quick update on the Resource Hub we mentioned in the last newsletter. The resource hub is still under development, and we plan on premiering this tool at the Fall 2025 Conference on November 8-9!




JK had the opportunity to attend CTA's Special Education Conference, where they had the opportunity to reflect, learn, and strategize with other educators around equity, accessibility, and the collective power in our schools and union. Keynote speaker, Jessee Goss, stressed the importance of documentation. Whether it's advocating for students, defending our rights, or navigating compliance, accurate and consistent data remains a powerful tool for us to have. She shared several resources and ideas, which will be going into the Resource Hub to be shared with everyone. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) benefits all students, and protecting IDEA and its funding is a fight for equitable education and a critical issue for everyone in public education. Use the QR code below to urge senators and representatives to fully fund IDEA.



## Fulfill the Promise of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Special education addresses our most vulnerable students' unique needs.

Urge your senators and representative to support the IDEA Full Funding Act (S. 2177/H.R. 2598) to give all students the support and attention they deserve.



Finally, one of the most important takeaways was the importance of making our union spaces more inclusive. In line with our CTA-AE mission, we are considering barriers, both visible and invisible, that may be preventing full participation and how we can begin to dismantle them. Feel free to reach out and call out any barriers to your participation in our union. Together, we can continue to build our union to be stronger, more inclusive, more informed, and more united than ever.

With love and solidarity,  
Elias Atunez, Jennifer Kay (JK Garcia), Sara Huerta

## NEA Aspiring Educators Updates

NEA is hosting a series of trainings on **Immigrant Rights**. Below, find a link to information about the entire series: [Training Series Immigrant Rights 9.9.25 FINAL.pdf](#)

[Register For Trainings Here](#)

**Here is an excerpt from the flyer (link above) about the trainings:**

*At this time of increased ICE presence and threats, and consequent chilling effects on students and families, we know many of our staff and members are working to figure out how to fight back for immigrant rights in their districts and states. Through sharing tactics, wins, and stories though, we don't have to re-create the wheel. NEA wants to share a training and organizing series for staff and members, "How to Fight Back for Immigrant Rights."*

*This training series is highlighting member and staff around the country that are doing incredible work in the schools and communities to stand up for immigrant rights. Through sharing their stories and tactics, members and staff can learn and be inspired to take tangible next steps for immigrant rights in their own school districts and states. The series includes one training and one organizing/open brainstorming session per month through November.*

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## Message from the CCTC Liaison

Hello CTA-AE Members!

My name is Lauren Winkel, CTA-AE's 2025-2026 CCTC Liaison! I am an undergraduate student in my senior year at UC Berkeley, studying history and geography, hoping to become a high school history teacher in the future.

As an aspiring educator myself, I am hoping to represent the voices and interests of aspiring educators such as myself in statewide conferences this coming year! I am incredibly honored and grateful for this opportunity to not only serve as a board member on the CTA-AE board, but also as a link between CTA-AE and the CCTC.



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## Message from the Communications Director

Hola CTA-AE Members!

I'm excited to share that over the weekend of September 20-21, I had the pleasure of meeting with all the board members — it was a great experience! The most exciting part of our meeting was planning the upcoming Fall Event Conference. I'm really looking forward to it, especially because recruiting members

from different colleges and universities is always a rewarding challenge.

I've also planned some fun and creative TikTok videos that will be unveiled during the conference. But for now, I'll leave you in suspense!

For our fellow chapters, please keep tagging us on Instagram [@cta\\_aspiringed](#) so we can see what you're up to and how you're representing. Don't forget to register for the Fall Conference! You can sign up here: <https://bit.ly/25FallEventReg>.

Looking forward to seeing everyone soon!



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