

# California EDUCATOR

California Teachers Association April 2011 Volume 15 Issue 7

**IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, WE'VE SEEN \$20,000,000,000 IN CUTS TO SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES. 40,000 EDUCATORS HAVE BEEN LAID OFF. CLASS SIZES HAVE SOARED. ENTIRE ART, MUSIC AND P.E. PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED. COLLEGE TUITION HAS MORE THAN DOUBLED. SO FAR, LAWMAKERS REFUSE TO VOTE ON TAX EXTENSIONS THAT COULD SPARE OUR STATE FROM DEEPER CUTS. WE ARE IN A STATE OF EMERGENCY. YOU CAN HELP. GET INVOLVED. SPEAK UP. TAKE ACTION BEFORE AND DURING MAY 9-13.**



FIND OUT HOW ON **PAGE 8**

#### Also in this issue

Social media in the classroom **Page 12**

Plagiarism is on the rise **Page 24**

# Where do California teachers go when it's their turn to learn?



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# APRIL 2011

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**California schools are facing a state of emergency. Find out about CTA's action plan for May 9-13.**  
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# ¡Sí Se Puede! ¿Por Qué No?

BY CTA PRESIDENT DAVID A. SANCHEZ

Every day that I visit schools in California, I'm reminded of how far you go for your students. In the face of the biggest economic downturn since the Great Depression, you do what you can to soften the blow for your students — you provide school supplies, you incorporate an art assignment into a history lesson, you make sure students clean up after themselves, you make sure they eat even if they forgot lunch money. Many of your students will never fully comprehend the impact state budget cuts are having on their education and school experience. But you do, and parents and the public need to know as well.

As our lawmakers continue to disagree over the state budget, we know that our students' futures and the future of our state could be the collateral damage. That's why, since February, we've been encouraging all lawmakers to pass Governor Brown's balanced budget proposal, combining \$12.5 billion in cuts and \$12.5 billion in tax extensions. (These are *not* new taxes, and no one will pay any more in taxes than they do now.) The gridlock in Sacramento has resulted in legislators missing every deadline possible to put the tax extensions on a June ballot. So now our schools and colleges have to plan for next school year expecting the worst. This is no way to run the state budget. We are constantly living in a state of emergency, and it has to stop.

California legislators have an awesome responsibility to the people of this state that is not being fulfilled. They have already made additional painful cuts to programs and services, but have failed to extend current revenues just to keep our state afloat. CTA's State Council of Education has developed a bold plan of action called "State of Emergency" that responds to the current reality as well as the more than \$20 billion in cuts our schools and colleges have endured for the past three years. While this plan is part of CTA's overall goal of promoting tax fairness and securing stable long-term funding for public education, we have a very clear and immediate objective: for lawmakers to extend current taxes in order to prevent deeper cuts to schools, colleges and other essential public services.

We are not in this alone. Our partners in the Education Coalition and the labor movement are supportive of our efforts and eager to join in

our weeklong escalation of activities. Here's what has been planned so far. The week of May 9-13 has been chosen for a statewide week of action. Each day of the week will be devoted to a different type of activity. To make it easy to remember and to plan locally, we are using the acronym L.E.A.R.N.:

- Monday's activities will be Legislative in nature.
- Tuesday's will focus on reaching out to Every parent.
- Wednesday, Day of the Teacher, is for Appreciating educators and allies.
- Thursday is for promoting Revenue extensions and tax fairness.
- Friday, it's Not business as usual, and you are encouraged to attend one of six major rallies around the state.

In addition to our local focus on L.E.A.R.N. activities, CTA members will also be taking their voices to the state Capitol for the entire week. Beginning on Monday, May 9, CTA member volunteers will be involved in daily sit-ins in the Capitol and teach-ins on the Capitol lawn. Members will be there to tell legislators how important it is to extend tax revenues, to share stories about what budget cuts have done to their neighborhood schools, and to demand action that will help — not hurt — the future of our state. This activity will continue until Friday, May 13, when we will join together in solidarity in six rallies around the state to call for passage of tax extensions.

I invite you to get involved. Be a part of this movement in your local. Talk to your friends, family and neighbors and ask them to join you. Contact your local president to find out how you can help. Visit [castateofemergency.com](http://castateofemergency.com) for resources and an opportunity to share ideas. And prominently display your "State of Emergency" window cling that you can find in this magazine.

We can't sit back and let the inaction of our elected officials continue to hurt our students and the future of our state.

## California EDUCATOR

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**¡Sí Se Puede!** [Yes we can! Why not?], words inspired by César Chávez,  
**¿Por Qué No?** encourage us to remember that, together, we can achieve great things.



# what's new at CTA.ORG



## The truth about teachers' retirement

Teachers and public employees are being scapegoated for problems caused by Wall Street, and pensions are being used as a wedge issue to divide working class Americans. We set the record straight!

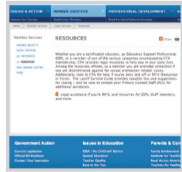
**[cta.org/retirement](http://cta.org/retirement)**



## We Are One

In the face of mounting attacks on public employee unions, workers in California and across the country display solidarity on April 4, the anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

**[cta.org/we-are-one](http://cta.org/we-are-one)**



## Legal assistance for RIF notices

Receiving a RIF (reduction in force) notice is an unnerving experience. The CTA Legal Department has developed online resources to help members facing layoffs. Log in to the Legal section for assistance.

**[cta.org/RIFs](http://cta.org/RIFs)**

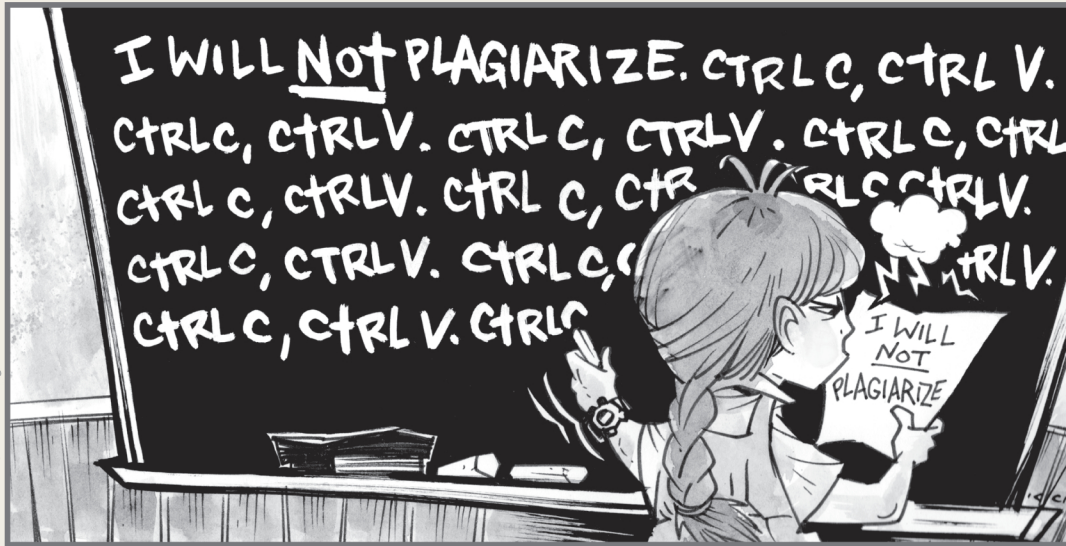
For additional Educator content, look for our web exclusives at [cta.org](http://cta.org)

## Create a cartoon concept

We invite members to send in cartoon concepts for future issues of the *Educator*. All we ask is that your ideas deal with current events in education and captions are no longer than one sentence long. Please send your cartoon ideas through mail, fax or e-mail.

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Dave Crosland, hiredmeat@gmail.com

# LETTERS

## TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

First, I want to say thank you for a timely and much-needed article on GLBT safe zones for students (March). However, I must point out that a critical element in creating safe zones was overlooked, and that is the education support professionals (ESP) who work at every school and every site.

I am a parent of a high school student who was being so severely bullied that I had to not only change her school but her district as well. While her bullying was not GLBT related, it had a profound impact on her and our family. It is my experience as a long-term educator and as a parent that most bullying occurs outside of the classroom. Often it is in the hallways during passing period, on school grounds at lunch, on the playground, on the sports fields, in the cafeteria, and a host of other places where students are not under a direct watchful eye.

ESP are *everywhere* in the district and on school sites in direct contact with students. I have heard stories from my ESP colleagues about the efforts they have made to curb bullying and other student issues. These include bus drivers, workers in the cafeteria, para-professionals in the classroom, security on the campus, office staff, custodians and maintenance workers all over the campus, and the list goes on. Often, though, ESP are not provided the training and even more importantly the support to recognize GLBT bullying and what to do about it. Every bit of training I have ever received on GLBT bullying has been through my union, not my district. Also, it is important to remember that often ESP have approximately one-third of the legal protections teachers do. Yet time and again, as professionals, my colleagues

stand up and do the right thing.

My daughter at her old school had a safe zone with a wonderful teacher who took her in every day at lunch to protect her while I tried to get the school to do the right thing. She now has awesome security staff, cafeteria workers, office staff, and teachers who provide her a safe zone at her new school. I am thankful for that.

ESP, teachers, and all educators are in this together to provide a safe environment for all students. As a member of CTA's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Issues Advisory Committee, I understand all too well how extra vulnerable our GLBT students and families are.

*Jolene E. Tripp*

*President, Redlands Education Support Professionals Association*



Dear Editor,

I was appalled when I pulled the March issue of *California Educator* from my mailbox. Devoting the cover and most of the issue to creating a bully-free "safe zone" in every school seems inappropriate as we sit watching a disaster unfolding before our eyes in Sacramento. Be-

ing distracted by championing too many issues is an ongoing problem for CTA and many local chapters. The primary function of a union is improving the working conditions, benefits, and wages of the people it represents.

*Justin Knight*

*Corona-Norco Teachers Association*

Dear Editor,

As a member of the first class to attend Hanford West High School in the '60s, I am extremely proud of the GSA. I am especially happy to see that being gay

has been "normalized." When I attended, being gay was not something I would ever have admitted, but these students just consider that their right is to be respected. I can't tell you how happy that makes me! Thank you for sharing this.

*Philip Madruga*  
*AFSCME member*

Dear Editor,

The March edition of *California Educator* came emblazoned with a teacher lovingly "holding" various students in her arms. "Is your school a GLBT safe zone?" was the leading article.

I would hope that *all* schools are a "safe zone" for *all* students. I know that there are stories of GLBT students being wronged because of sloppy administration. There are also stories of other students being harassed, victimized and mistreated.

I know that GLBT students feel "oppressed" and mistreated. I know that some of these students have felt that the only way to relieve the depression they find themselves in is to take the route of suicide. This is a horrific statistic. *Any* student, *any* human being who feels it is necessary to take that route needs our love and care, *before* they get to that point.

Our schools should be a safe haven for *all* students, but our schools should *not* be used as a political hammer to push the agenda of any one group, in this case, the radical and in-your-face agenda of the GLBT forum. Public discourse is needed. The rights of *all* students to be safe within the walls of our schools are of highest priority. But an agenda that pushes itself on our children in the name of being "tolerant," while being intolerant of anyone who speaks in opposition, is *not* needed.

*Rich Warren*  
*Victor Elementary Teachers Association*

# calendar

<b>apr 2011</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> April 29      Deadline for summer conference incentive grants <input type="checkbox"/> April 29-May 1      Joint Ethnic Caucus Issues Conference, <b>Manhattan Beach</b> <input type="checkbox"/> April 30      Deadline to apply for IFT grants <input type="checkbox"/> April 30      El Día de los Niños
<b>may 2011</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> May 1-7      Teacher Appreciation Week <input type="checkbox"/> May 9-13      "State of Emergency" Week of Action <input type="checkbox"/> May 11      School Nurses Day <input type="checkbox"/> May 11      California Day of the Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> May 15-21      Education Support Professionals Week <input type="checkbox"/> May 17      CTA ESP Day
<b>jun 2011</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> June 3-5      CTA State Council of Education, <b>Los Angeles</b> <input type="checkbox"/> June 30-July 5      NEA Representative Assembly, <b>Chicago</b>
<b>jul 2011</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> July 18-22      Presidents Conference, <b>Asilomar</b> <input type="checkbox"/> July 31-Aug. 5      Summer Institute, <b>UCLA</b>

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“We haven’t had a **GATE [Gifted and Talented Education] program since 2008**. Class sizes in K-3 have increased to 25 students per class and will be going up to 30 next year. **We haven’t had any field trips since 2008**. We no longer have assemblies. We have no funding for after-school tutoring. **Our intervention aides have been cut**. Our site office staff **has been cut**. Maintenance has cut back. We haven’t had any furniture replaced for the past several years. **And our library books are wearing out.**”

by Dina Martin

This is how fifth-grade teacher Danielle Stighans describes the impact of budget cuts on Kendrick Elementary in Bakersfield. That’s why Stighans, co-president of the Greenfield Educators Association, will be urging the 400 members of her chapter to participate in CTA’s “State of Emergency” week of action May 9-13.

Greenfield is not alone. School districts throughout California are eroding in all sorts of ways. It’s going on three years that California’s schools have been drained of the resources they need to carry on. In that time, \$20 billion has been cut from state public education funding and 30,000 teachers have been laid off. This year, another \$2

billion to \$4 billion may be cut, forcing another 20,000 teachers to leave the profession. In addition, more than 1 million students are losing up to five instructional days as districts struggle with their budget shortfalls. As an entire generation of students goes without the educational opportunities they deserve, some California lawmakers are still hijacking the state budget process by refusing even to vote on the tax extension portion of Gov. Brown’s budget package.

“We are living in a state of emergency,” says CTA President David A. Sanchez. “We need to take bold action that sends a crystal clear message to Sacramento. We aren’t going to sit back while the negligence of some lawmakers bankrupts our schools, closes our parks, abandons our sick and elderly, and puts entire communities at risk.”

### CTA declares ‘State of Emergency’

For the past four months, CTA and its Education Coalition allies — administrators, school boards, school staff and the state PTA — have urged the state Legislature to adopt the budget proposal presented by Gov. Brown in January. Be-

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Print materials from the “State of Emergency” website:** [castateofemergency.com](http://castateofemergency.com).
- **Share materials with your friends and colleagues.**
- **Use posters, fliers, buttons and other resources to get everyone informed and on board.**
- **Use e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, etc. to reach as many people as possible.**
- **Work with your local chapter to plan a community event.**
- **Find more information and resources at [castateofemergency.com](http://castateofemergency.com).**
- **Post your messages on CTA’s Facebook page:** [facebook.com/californiateachersassociation](http://facebook.com/californiateachersassociation).





## CTA members take action at the Capitol and throughout California

**At the Capitol:** In a bold move to pressure lawmakers to pass the tax extensions our students and state so desperately need, CTA members are taking to the Capitol. During the week of May 9-13, members will be holding daily sit-ins to raise lawmakers' awareness of the need for immediate action on tax extensions. There will be lobbying in the lobby and teach-ins on the lawn, but most importantly, educators will be front and center fighting for their students.

**Throughout the state:** To help local chapters organize and focus their events, State Council adopted the **L.E.A.R.N.** acronym, which provides a guide to activities. Here are suggestions for activities day by day:

cause the governor inherited a \$25 billion budget deficit when he took office this year, he proposed \$12.5 billion in cuts to existing programs, along with a ballot measure that would allow voters to extend four temporary taxes to provide the remaining \$12.5 billion. The Legislature approved the cuts, but could not come to agreement on placing the tax extensions on the ballot.

"Unfortunately, the Legislature has not been able to overcome partisan bickering in order to work together for the greater good," Sanchez says. "And now it's time for us to take some bold actions. We aren't going to sit back while the negligence of some lawmakers bankrupts our schools, closes our parks, abandons our sick and elderly, and puts entire communities at risk. CTA has declared a 'State of Emergency,' and we are asking everyone to participate in events the week of May 9-13 designed to urge all lawmakers to pass the proposed tax extensions."

Set forth by CTA's State Council of Education at its April meeting, the plan includes activities building from a week of sit-ins at the state Capitol to a massive "Not business as usual" mobilization on Friday, May 13, in which educators will participate in six major regional rallies.

It's anticipated that other groups will

MONDAY

9

L

Choose from a number of **LEGISLATIVE** activities.

- > Role Reversals: Ask legislators, administrators, etc. to teach for a day.
- > Picket/rally in front of legislators' offices. > Encourage people to participate in letter-writing campaign by offering raffle tickets.
- > E-mail members of Congress to pressure state legislators.

TUESDAY

10

E

Reach out to **EVERY PARENT**.

- > Phone calls and letters home to parents. > Hold "Grade-ins" in local malls to show the work of educators continues after the last bell rings. > Organize parent visits to classrooms so that they see the realities of class size. > College faculty can organize a teach-in.

WEDNESDAY

11

A

**APPRECIATE** Educators and **ALLIES**.

- > On Day of the Teacher, join with PTA and other parent and community groups to thank educators. > Make this a day of "Positive Action." Coordinate blood drives, organ donor signups, etc. > Have public employees line the local main street to show support for public employees. > Meet with local chambers of commerce to talk about how cuts are hurting schools.

THURSDAY

12

R

Promote **REVENUE** extensions and tax fairness.

- > Ask each district to come up with "worst case scenario" budget and share this with everyone. > Have math teachers doing simple math lessons to show the consequences of budget cuts. > Educate members about the need for Tax Fairness. Utilize [cta.org/taxfairness](http://cta.org/taxfairness).
- > Focus on how much money has gone to bail out Wall Street and big corporations.

FRIDAY

13

N

It's **NOT BUSINESS AS USUAL**.

- > Every educator brings at least one friend to a regional rally.
- > Encourage mass participation of all college students at CTA rallies local to them. > Caravan to regional rallies. > Include voter registration drives at rallies.



# STATE OF EMERGENCY

TAKE ACTION

CALL 1-888-268-4334  
E-MAIL YOUR LEGISLATOR

be participating in the rallies and events, including members of the state-wide Education Coalition, nurses, fire-fighters, other labor unions, and faith and community groups.

These “escalating” activities are likely to include calls and visits to targeted legislators in critical areas; walking neighborhoods; educating members and the community about tax fairness; and attending the rallies at the end of the week.

“You may not be able to do everything, but we certainly encourage you to do what you can,” Sanchez says.

Although the governor is still hoping to place the tax extensions before the voters, CTA fears such an election will come too late, and is now asking the Legislature to pass the extensions without affirmation by the voters — something certainly within the lawmakers’ powers and duties.

“Just because there isn’t going to be a June election, doesn’t mean lawmakers are off the hook. They still have a state budget to pass and a responsibility to do the job they were elected to do,” Sanchez says.

“They have a responsibility to our kids, to our public schools and to the future of our state. They have cut \$12 billion from the budget, and now it’s time to finish the job,” he says. “Forget the election. Lawmakers need to do what’s right and pass the tax extensions, period.”

### CTA’s State Council develops plan

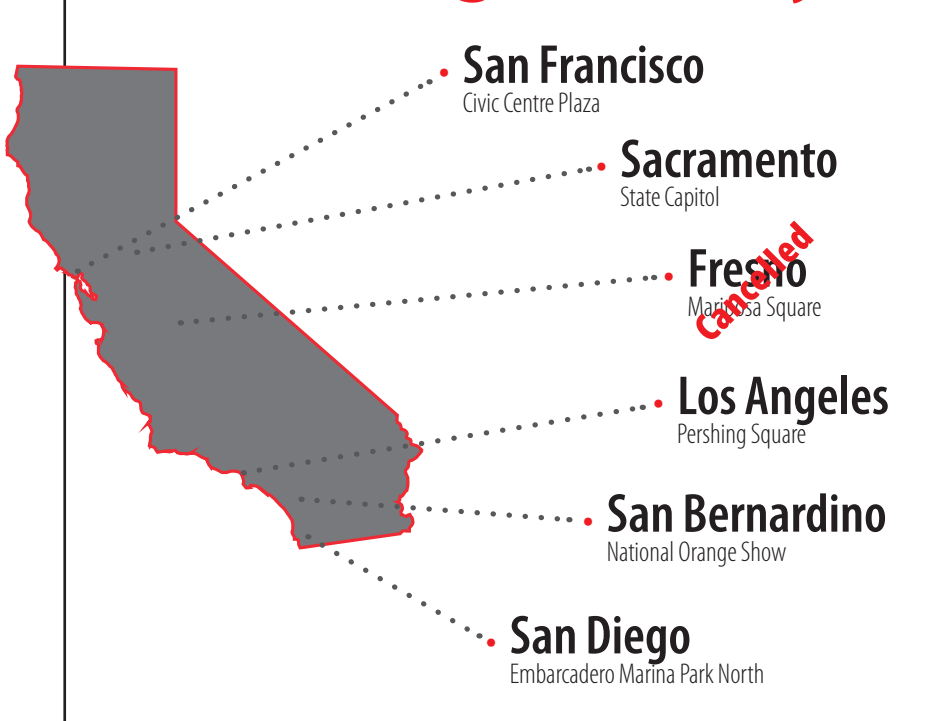
CTA’s State Council devoted much of its April meeting to developing a plan of action. Committees spent part of their meetings brainstorming possible events for the week in May. What resulted were lots of ideas which will be available to organizers of the activities.

Council adopted the acronym **L.E.A.R.N.** as a way of organizing activities for the week. On Monday, May 9, the focus will be on **LEGISLATIVE** activities; on Tuesday, May 10, members will be asked to reach out to **EVERY PARENT**; Wednesday, May 11, is California Day of the Teacher, a time to **APPRECIATE** educators and **ALLIES**; Thursday, May 12, will be the day to promote the need for **REVENUE** for schools, and to educate our members and the community about tax fairness. Finally, Friday, May 13, will be the day of **NOT BUSINESS AS USUAL**, when educators will gather for rallies in Sacramento, the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, Fresno, Inland Empire, and San Diego. In addition to local L.E.A.R.N. activities throughout the state, CTA retired and student members are meeting to develop complementary plans of action.

### Higher education takes a hit

K-12 schools aren’t the only area of education that will be affected by the budget cuts. Community colleges and universities are slated to be cut by \$1.4 billion — community colleges by \$400 million, and the UC and CSU systems by \$500 million each.

## Attend a Regional Rally



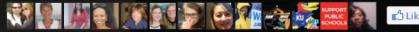


# STATE OF EMERGENCY

Resources Share Your Ideas State of Emergency Events

After 3 years of massive budget cuts (\$20 billion from education alone), California is in a **State of Emergency**. The Legislature's failure to protect basic, essential services is destroying our future.

Join us May 9-13 to demand lawmakers pass the tax extensions to prevent deeper cuts.



- Resources
  - Blog
  - Share Your Ideas
  - Submit Events
- Contact Lawmakers  
1.888.268.4334

**Week of Action**  
You can help. Get Involved. Stand up. Speak up.

L	E	A	R	N
May 9	May 10	May 11	May 12	May 13

In the community colleges, reductions would include doubling of student fees, elimination of all sports, and reducing the number of CalGrants available to low-income students.

Community colleges, currently facing \$400 million in cuts, would find themselves in a much deeper hole if the tax extensions are not passed.

“It’s a devastating blow to community colleges and to our students,” says Community College Association President Ron Norton Reel. “If we don’t find a solution, we are looking at denying access to more than 400,000 students. That’s unimaginable.”

California’s community colleges turned away 140,000 students during the last school year, and it’s estimated that twice as many have been turned away this year.

Even now, almost half of the students who were able to enroll in the colleges reported they were unable to get the courses they needed because classes were full, according to a survey conducted by the Pearson Foundation. That’s twice the rate of the rest of the nation.

Students and faculty in the California State University system are also up in arms. More than 10,000 students and faculty participated in rallies, marches and sit-ins on the 23 campuses of the CSU system in a “Day of Class Action” on April 13. The rallies were coordinated with other protests around the nation over cuts to colleges.

“We’ve been carving away and carving away and carving away,” says Lillian Taiz, president of the California Faculty Association. “The path we are on is almost suicidal for the state.”

Without passage of the tax extensions, cuts will mean soaring tuition, fewer classes, and limited space for students.

## Visit [castateofemergency.com](http://castateofemergency.com)

CTA is launching a new website to compliment your local organizing efforts and to provide you with the resources you need to plan and implement successful local activities to engage your community in our fight to keep deeper cuts away from our students.

- YOU CAN**
- Download resources
  - Share your event ideas
  - Submit events
  - Interact on Facebook
  - Join the Twitter feed ([#stateofemergency](https://twitter.com/#stateofemergency))
  - Provide feedback on the blog updates

## Activities have already begun

Read about them on [castateofemergency.com](http://castateofemergency.com)



Photo by Siobodan Dimitrov

At California State University, Northridge, students participate in the April 13 Teach-Out for Quality Public Higher Education. Students and staff rallied, marched and held a sit-in in the university president’s office.



CTA photo by Mike Myslinski

The “State of Emergency” campaign came to Main Street in Santa Clara on April 14. Silicon Valley teachers, parents and labor leaders held a news conference on Main Street to dramatize that their urgent demand for state lawmakers to extend some temporary taxes.

# Facebook.us

Benito Mussolini's Profile

home search browse invite help logout



## Benito Mussolini

Sex:	Male
Birthday:	July 29, 1883
Hometown:	Flori, Italy
Relationship Status:	Married to Rochelle Mussolini and Italy
Interested in:	Women
Looking For:	Rebuilding the Roman Empire
Political Views:	Fascist
Religious Views:	Roman Catholic



"We become strong, I feel, when we have no friends upon whom to lean, or to look to for moral guidance."

### Status

October 31, 1936  
I completely protected my country to its fullest by uniting with Germany. Don't you dare disagree!!

### Friends



Francisco Franco

Hideki Tojo

Adolf Hitler

Miklós Horthy

### Photos



Groups  
Anti-communism  
Axis Powers  
Fascism  
Totalitarianism

### Causes

Ending Communism  
Ending Democracy  
Ending Private Thoughts

### Information

Activities:	Loving Italy Forcing others to love Italy Murdering people who don't love Italy
Interests:	Singing Thinking of ways to control and create fear amongst the people Controlling my people
Favorite Books:	<u>Fascism and Totalitarianism: The Ideal Government</u> <u>Julius Caesar: What He Did Wrong</u>
Favorite Quotation:	"We are today decided to face all the risks and sacrifices of war."
About Me:	I fought in World War One in order to protect Italy until the war was over. Once the Allied powers decided not to give my country a promised piece of land, I decided to take action against this horrible wrong doing to my beautiful country, Italy.



"All within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state."

### Education and Work

College:	Military
Employer:	Himself
Job:	Head of Government
When:	1883-1945
Where:	Italy

### Wall

	Franco wrote on December 8, 1941 "Hang in there, Il Duce. At least Hitler still has your back."
	Hitler wrote on December 10, 1941 "Following your ideas and I am forcing people to do what I say... Heil Hitler!"
	Tojo wrote on December 15, 1941 "Nothing's better than Fascism..."



"It's good to trust others but, not to do so is much better."

# social learning

## Facebook and Twitter change how we teach



**LEFT:** World history teacher Ali Eeds works with student Amanda Hesterman on a social networking assignment.

Story by **Sherry Posnick-Goodwin** • Photos by **Scott Buschman**

**BENITO MUSSOLINI'S STATUS UPDATE** on *facebook.us* — dated Oct. 31, 1936 — shows the Italian World War II leader smiling, confident and totally unaware that he will be executed.

“I completely protected my country to its fullest by uniting with Germany,” he shares on his profile. Among “activities” he lists is murdering people who don’t love Italy. His “friends” include Adolf Hitler. He belongs to “groups” that favor fascism and totalitarianism. His profile, created by Vacaville High School sophomore Jennifer Daugherty, isn’t your typical high school report. But she was thrilled to be given the assignment of creating a faux Facebook page of Mussolini because it appealed to her love of social networking. “It was the

best assignment ever,” says Daugherty.

World history and AP art teacher Ali Eeds created her own *facebook.us* “web-site” with Microsoft Word because her school, like many K-12 schools, does not allow access to real social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter due to concerns it could be a learning distraction and violate student privacy. It’s a dilemma, since incorporating social networking allows teachers to meet students on their level, build on their technology skills and prepare them for the future.

As a compromise between safety and students’ love of social networking, CTA members are creating in-school versions of social networks or using sites that can be contained for their class, such as School

Loop, Ning, Edmodo and Schoology. Others use Facebook or Twitter cautiously. And they are discovering that social networking, once viewed as a colossal waste of time, greatly enhances teaching, learning and professional development.

“I love it because my students are learning and having fun,” says Eeds, who has been teaching for six years. “They can be creative, and it gives them a little free rein. For example, one student had Stalin post a comment on Roosevelt’s page saying, ‘When this war is over, I get dibs on Eastern Europe.’ Before, students had trouble understanding the alliances. But now they can see why certain leaders were ‘friends’ during the war and why, after the war, what held them together was over.” The



**LEFT:** Eeds finds students are more engaged when they use Web 2.0 tools like social networks.

Vacaville Teachers Association (VTA) member says she created the facebook.us template and put it on a shared drive because she couldn't afford to purchase a program intended for schools.

### Helping students stay connected

Down the hall from Eeds is Spanish teacher Donald Lopez, a 25-year classroom veteran who admits that he was initially skeptical about social networking with his students. "TMI [too much information] at your fingertips can be a blessing and a

curse," says the VTA member. "But now I try and use social networking as much as possible. The kids buy into it, and it's given me a second wind. It's reinvigorated my teaching!"

Lopez's Advanced Placement (AP) classes have their own website for blogging and a discussion group called GASS, for Gramática Avanzada Super Sofistica, or Super Sophisticated Advanced Grammar. The site was created with School Loop, a website system available to K-12 public schools for free. Creating a social networking site with a humorous name for students to communicate with one another in Spanish has increased their proficiency and created a sense of community, says Lopez proudly.

"Through the School Loop site, my students have access to writing prompts for AP tests," says Lopez. "They practice, share their writing and receive feedback from other students. They comment on each other's grammar, writing styles and punctuation. Students become peer mentors and show other students what good writing is. Sometimes kids listen to each

other more than the teacher."

His students say social networking makes them feel more connected to school — and each other.

"We all talk to each other and help each other," says Raul Lopez, a sophomore. "If someone does something wrong on an essay we tell them how they can make it better or word it differently."

Grace Daniel, a senior, describes the social networking site as a "friendly atmosphere" where students don't have to worry about being judged harshly by their peers.

But social networking among students is not always friendly, notes Jeff Russell, a sixth-grade English teacher at Marshall Middle School in San Diego. He discovered that two students were bullying others on a social networking site he set up to promote online discussions, "peer editing" of papers and writing exercises. When he found out, Russell tweaked the Schoology program to create a new category giving student offenders limited access: They could read and turn in assignments online, but no longer post comments to others — with the exception of posting comments to the teacher.

"There is always temptation and the worry of distraction with social networking," says Russell, who belongs to the San Diego Education Association. "Sometimes you have to pull students aside or send them private messages so they understand what's appropriate — and what isn't."

Overall, Russell believes, the benefits of social networking outweigh the problems, and he encourages teachers to set up online groups for the classes they teach.

"I have had a lot of success in getting students to communicate with each other on group projects like creating wikis [web-



**LEFT:** Klarissa Ligon (left) and Jennifer Daugherty make a history project dynamic by using technology.



sites that allow the creation and editing of any number of interlinked webpages via a Web browser],” he relates. “Sometimes students don’t want to share things out loud, but will post them online, which brings them into the classroom discussion if they are shy. It makes the class much more inclusive. The best part is that students have 24-hour access to their grades and can contact me if they have any problems.”

Eventually, says Russell, he would like to see more schools allow Facebook and Twitter, so teachers can fully incorporate social networking into curriculum, to prepare students for the world of work. “Someday the stigma of having students

as ‘friends’ on Facebook will go away,” he believes.

Laurie Scheibner, a seventh-grade teacher at Alder Creek Middle School in Truckee, communicates with students on Facebook, but it’s a separate account set up just for students, since she wants to keep her personal life (and personal Facebook account) separate from her school life. (For guidelines about cyber safety with students from CTA’s Legal Department, see page 16.) The Tahoe-Truckee Education Association member decided to set up an account just for students, since they were

already communicating with one another on Facebook and constantly asking her to be their “friend” online. Her student account has highly restrictive settings and is used outside of school, since her district has banned Facebook on school computers along with most social networking sites, although teachers can request access to YouTube for special occasions.

“In middle school, it’s really important to have a personal connection with kids, so you can snag them in when they are falling behind,” says Scheibner. “Facebook allows me to have a better relationship



**ABOVE:** Raul Lopez follows Spanish teacher Donald Lopez’s instruction.

**RIGHT:** Middle-school student Jada shares with her class through online collaborative work.

## 10 ways to Incorporate Social Media in the classroom

- 1 Have students create a mock Facebook page for a literary character or historical figure.
- 2 Have them follow someone on Twitter who’s famous or a political figure and ask them to write about what they learned.
- 3 Ask students to tweet imaginary conversations between literary figures such as Romeo and Juliet.
- 4 Create a social networking site just for your class so students can collaborate on assignments, study together or edit each other’s work in a constructive manner.
- 5 Connect with other classrooms elsewhere in the world. Encourage students to practice a foreign language with children from a class in another country.
- 6 Use Skype to take “virtual” fieldtrips.
- 7 Create a community blog and share it on Facebook to tell what your class is learning and doing.
- 8 Promote community service projects through Facebook to help students get engaged in fundraising or community awareness.
- 9 Ask students to study social media and its impact on the world.
- 10 Talk to students about how to use social media sites in a responsible way. Remind them that what they put in cyberspace stays there forever.

Taken from 100 Ways to Use Social Media in the classrooms, [onlineuniversities.com/blog/2010/05/100-inspiring-ways-to-use-social-media-in-the-classroom/](http://onlineuniversities.com/blog/2010/05/100-inspiring-ways-to-use-social-media-in-the-classroom/)

# Legal advice on using social media



by Brenda Sutton-Wills

It's as if you had three wishes. You wish that there was a way to easily reach your students once they leave your classroom for the day. You wish that your students would be more responsive and open in responding to your communications. Finally, you wish that you could reach students in their comfort zone. Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites have potentially granted all of those wishes — especially if you are teaching students with easy access to technology.

In order to get the most out of social media, there are a few best practices and precautions to keep in mind:

- **Keep a separate account for your classroom communications.** While it does seem magical to suddenly be in touch with your best friend from third grade and your long-lost college roommate, you do not want your students to be privy to this part of your life.
- **Along those lines, your seemingly private communications are not private.** Be intentional about the privacy settings on your account. Frequently monitor your settings to restrict access to your professional page so that you have “closed” communications with your classroom. Although this is not “private,” it is more professionally appropriate. Also, be prepared to respond to “friend” requests from the parents of students who visit your class page. Have a set and published policy about this, and don't make choices on the fly.
- **Allowing students to post directly to your wall is like allowing them to write in Sharpie on your whiteboard when you aren't in the classroom — only worse.** Students can and do post to social media sites from their cell phones. By the time you get to your page, truly permanent damage will be done. You can disable this feature through privacy settings on Facebook.
- **Your social media record will last longer than those “temporary” bungalows erected in the 1970s.** You cannot erase your social media record. It's possible to subpoena an archive of all your posts and all posts made to you.
- **Always be aware of the unintended audience.** Your separate account can still affect your career. What you post there can be published and re-posted to other sites. There is always a danger of the content being transferred out of context.
- **Keep it professional.** To be certain, your sense of “free speech” and privacy are not ways to gauge whether your social media content is appropriate. While, in some circumstances, off-campus speech can have more First Amendment protection than on-campus speech, courts have noted that technology has practically eliminated classroom borders. “Off campus speech can become on-campus speech with the click of a mouse,” according to *Doninger v. Niehoff* (2d Cir. 2008). Courts have considered some Facebook and YouTube posts on-campus speech, with diminished First-Amendment protections. As courts develop the definition of on-campus speech as it relates to the Internet and social networking, keep in mind that your influence and accountability as a teacher extend to where students access technology. In this sense, off-campus behavior and documentation on social networking sites can be problematic.

Social networking grants a potentially efficient and agile way to communicate with students. Be certain to develop a professional protocol that includes common-sense barriers and protections in working with youth online, and social media can fulfill all of your wishes for a powerful communications tool for educators.

*Brenda Sutton-Wills is a CTA staff attorney. She recently gave a presentation titled “Hearing Secrets That You Keep: Is There Any Such Thing as Electronic Privacy?” at a Los Angeles County Bar Association Labor and Employment Law Symposium. The CTA Legal Department is available to train chapters on this topic.*

with them. Occasionally they ask me about homework, but usually they share their ski videos and fun photos and let me know what their weekends are like. It also increases instructional time, because they don't have to each spend five minutes telling me what they did on the weekend.”

On this particular day, Scheibner's school is closed for a snow day due to severe weather conditions. She observes that some schools in the Midwest are using social networking sites like Facebook to communicate with students and give them assignments during snow days — an idea that could eventually snowball throughout the rest of the country, much to the dismay of students.

## Preparation for the future

Mirna Jope's media class at Encina Preparatory High School in Sacramento created a public service announcement (PSA) video that shows how swearing in class can be hazardous to your grades. The video not only is shown schoolwide, but is also posted on YouTube (“Encina Broadcast #31”) and linked to from Facebook. The school does not allow Facebook on its computers, but community members nonetheless look to the school's unofficial Facebook page to find the entertaining videos.

Jope hopes that eventually schools will be more accepting about social networking sites. She predicts that they will follow the path of cell phones, which were initially banned at most secondary schools and are now often allowed to be carried turned off and only used during lunchtime.

“Social networking sites are a good tool for teaching students about digital citizenship,” she says. “We need to teach them to be careful about the persona they present online, and you can't overteach that. If we don't tell them how to use social networking sites responsibly, who will? We really need to engage students through their interests and passions, and there's nothing like social networking to open the world up to them.”

At the college level, most professors are free to incorporate social networking sites





**ABOVE:** Sixth-grade English teacher Jeff Russell tells his students about appropriate behavior online. **RIGHT:** Students actively participate when lessons meet them on their level, and they learn about the tools of their generation.

into their curriculum. Bey-Ling Sha, a journalism and media studies professor at San Diego State University whose students specialize in public relations, *requires* some of her students to follow her on Twitter. It makes sense, she says, since employers expect students to have social networking skills. Over the course of three semesters she has accumulated more than 457 followers. She tweets or re-tweets to her students about job announcements — one student was hired at VH1 after a tweet — as well as links to PR tips and professional articles. Sometimes she tweets about her personal life with reflections about her roles as a parent and active member of her children's PTA.

"The hardest thing about incorporating social networking in the classroom is the difference between personal and professional use," says Sha, a California Faculty Association member. "My students can follow me on Twitter only with permission, which

keeps things professional. But I also want them to connect with me and see me as a person." (Her Twitter handle is @DrSha.)

Clearly her students are connected with her. On this particular day, she sends out a tweet from her office asking students to drop by, and within five minutes some have made their way across the large campus to her door. While she waits, she glances at her computer to read some of their tweets.

"Awww," she says happily, noting that one of her students has participated in a Twitter Follow Friday tradition and recommended her as someone others should follow. "Awesome," she tweets back. "Thanks for #FF"

Pat Foughty, a graduate student who heeded her tweet, says following his professor on Twitter is time well spent.

"I enjoy her insights, and she's plugged into organizations that are helpful for my academic or professional use," he says. "It's helpful now, and will also be helpful in the future."

### **The new face of professional development**

Adina Sullivan, a fourth-grade teacher at San Marcos Elementary School, follows



500 people in the education community on Twitter. The practice helps her try out new ideas in her classroom, grow as an educator and gain instant support from colleagues she has never met.

"Teaching is not an easy thing to do," observes Sullivan, a member of the San Marcos Education Association. "From Twitter, teachers find new ways to help each other. I was working on a hybrid learning project this week, a combination of online and face-to-face instruction, and I put out questions to my social network. Within minutes I had people sending me links to different resources. It was so much

easier than researching it only on my own.”

Social networking has opened up the world to educators in terms of professional development. Teachers, who often feel isolated in their classrooms, can connect with one another in a revolutionary way and improve their craft — and it’s an alternative to one-size-fits-all professional development that has been the standard of many school districts.

Twitter is the social networking site of choice when it comes to professional development. The reason is that educators can share noteworthy news, plug real-time events or invite participants to join online conversations or webcasts. Some have compared Twitter to a giant conference that is always taking place. (For more information, see “Twitter education chats”

below and find CTA at [twitter.com/cateachersassoc.](https://twitter.com/cateachersassoc/))

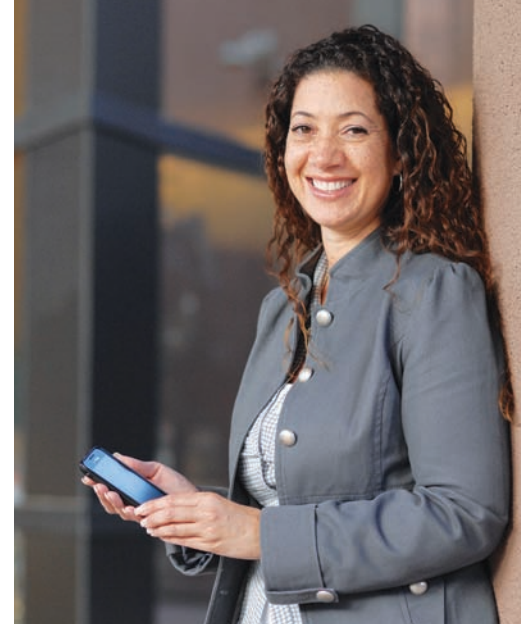
Sullivan says the best thing about social networking is receiving ideas and support from teachers she might otherwise never encounter.



Bey-Ling Sha

“You can’t attend every conference, so this is a great way to expand professional learning,” she says. “With Twitter, you might start by following an expert you’d never have the nerve to talk with face to face, and pretty soon you are colleagues sharing ideas back and forth. I have found it’s a great way for teachers to collaborate, push each other and

question each other. It’s a way to see outside one’s grade level, school site and district. I guess you could say that for me, it’s a window to the world.”



**ABOVE:** Fourth-grade teacher Adina Sullivan finds professional support from the social networking site Twitter.



## Twitter education chats

The social networking phenomenon Twitter can become your own personalized learning network. You can gather a group of colleagues and throw out questions to them. They’ll respond in real time. You can also join chats for educators. These groups generally have a live chat once or twice a week; times shown are Pacific Time.

- General education chat: #edchat  
Tuesdays, 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Chat for science educators: #scichat  
Tuesdays, 6 p.m.
- Chat for new and pre-service teachers: #ntchat  
Wednesdays, 5 p.m.
- Chat for parents and teachers: #ptchat  
Wednesdays, 6 p.m.
- Chat for math educators: #mathchat  
Thursdays, 4 p.m.; follow-up Mondays, 12:30 p.m.
- Chat for arts educators: #artsed  
Thursdays, 4:30 p.m.
- Chat for educators teaching in the elementary level: #elemchat  
Saturdays, 2 p.m.
- Chat for music educators: #musedchat  
Mondays, 5 p.m.
- Chat for ELL educators: #ellchat  
Mondays, 6 p.m.
- Kindergarten chat: #kinderchat  
Mondays, 6 p.m.

If you’ve registered for Twitter, you can use [tweetchat.com](https://tweetchat.com) to participate in chats. For example, to participate in the #edchat discussion, go to [tweetchat.com/room/edchat](https://tweetchat.com/room/edchat). For additional information about these and other chat hashtags, see [cybraryman.com/chats.html](https://cybraryman.com/chats.html).

This list was recommended by Edutopia.org, an online resource for innovative ideas in education. Learn more about how to use Twitter at [edutopia.org/blog/twitter-expanding-pln](https://edutopia.org/blog/twitter-expanding-pln).

## skype™ in the classroom

by Sherry Posnick-Goodwin

Skype ([skype.com](https://skype.com)) is an online service that provides free phone and video communication over the Internet, and “Skype in the Classroom” is a community of educators who use Skype to hear and see one another on computers across the globe ([education.skype.com](https://education.skype.com)). The service has provided second-grade teacher Jennifer Auten with opportunities to bring guest speakers into her classroom at Montclair Elementary School. The Cupertino Education Association member signed up for Skype’s pilot project in January, and continues to use the service now that it has launched nationwide.

“I was interested in Skype because I thought it would give my students a great opportunity to connect with people they wouldn’t normally connect with, and they could learn about things from conversing with actual people instead of just from textbooks and paper and pencil assignments,” says Auten. “I think it provides exciting learning tools for students in a medium they are very comfortable with.”

Among the recent “visitors” on Skype were Mona Kerby, an East Coach author who answered questions from students about her book *Owney, the Mail-Pouch Pooch*, and a nutritionist from Santa Clara University, who enjoyed a lively discussion with students about healthy eating habits. One of Auten’s students — who is going to Australia for an extended visit — will be “skyping” classmates and reporting on cultural and environmental differences in that country while he’s away.

Eventually Auten hopes to connect with other teachers and classrooms around the globe. Using the website, teachers can create profiles that describe their classrooms and teaching interests, and search a directory of teachers all over the world by student age, range, language and subject.

“I highly recommend it as a great teaching tool,” says Auten. “It’s free; there’s no cost involved. I have a MacBook computer with a built-in camera, and I just connect it to a projector, which projects the video image on a white board.”

# Taking a virtual trek

story by Sherry Posnick-Goodwin

Anne Marie Wotkyns joined a seven-week science expedition in Antarctica last December to research ways of measuring climate change — but she didn't leave her students behind. Through her blog, fourth-graders at Monlux Magnet Elementary School in North Hollywood kept up with her adventures, which included encounters with extreme weather, penguins, seals, orcas and more.

“Via social networking, my students were allowed to travel to a place people seldom get to visit — and set their sights on something they can do in the future as scientists,” says Wotkyns, a member of United Teachers Los Angeles. “They were exposed to wonder and amazement through following me on my blog, and it was much more interesting than just hearing about my trip after the fact. I had classrooms from all over the United States following me on my blog journal, which had photos and stories posted every other day.”

Wotkyns was one of a dozen educators selected by PolarTREC (Teachers and Researchers Exploring and Collaborating) to participate in hands-on field research in the polar regions. PolarTREC is managed by the Arctic Research Consortium of the United States and funded by the National Science Foundation for the purpose of bringing K-12 educators and polar researchers together. Wotkyns was the only teacher aboard the Swedish icebreaker Oden with an international team of researchers as it traveled the Amundsen Sea on the western part of Antarctica, where ice can be over 2 meters thick. On the continent, the ice can be two miles thick.

“We were studying science related to climate change and the Antarctic habitat,” she says. “Our team was looking at ways to more accurately measure sea ice remotely instead of being on the ice. We studied ways of using photography and EMI [electromagnetic induction] or using sound waves to measure the thickness of the ice by comparing the density of water to the ice.”

Being in such a remote area presented challenges when it came to staying connect-

ed with her students, but she managed. Her substitute teacher and others were steered to a website that gave a GPS location of her ship. She sent “status updates” on Facebook to notify followers on teacher listservs that her blog had been updated at [polarrec.com/expeditions/oden-antarctic-expedition-2010](http://polarrec.com/expeditions/oden-antarctic-expedition-2010). She encouraged those receiving updates to notify parents, teachers and others interested in science to follow her. And she conducted live webinars for her students — and those at other school sites — accompanied by conference calls.

“Technology allowed more real-time interaction,” she says. “If students couldn't be with me, this was definitely the closest they could be. I had a ‘question and answer forum’ so they could post their questions to me and I could get back to them within a day.”

Wotkyns, a science teacher, was named a Presidential Awardee for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching in 2006. She received the Steve Allen Excellence in Education Award in 2007, and renewed her National Board Certificate in 2008. She was selected to visit Antarctica from a pool of teacher applicants nationwide. It was an experience that she calls life-changing.

“I was within a meter of Adélie penguins and emperor penguins,” she relates. “Without land predators, they weren't afraid of us. The Adélies were curious, and the emperors were ambivalent. We saw many leopard seals and orcas. It was amazing.”

She brought along the class mascot, a stuffed animal named Pascy the Penguin,



Photo by David Prado

**ABOVE:** Fourth-grade teacher Anne Marie Wotkyns traveled to Antarctica in December, and brought her class along through her blog.

and was amazed when it was picked up and carried around by real penguins, who thought it was a baby chick. She shared this encounter on Facebook and YouTube. She also brought flags of various schools for the journey, to be photographed and then returned to their rightful owners. Upon her return, one of the Swedish researchers came to visit her classroom.

“Schools have limited field trips these days, so technology can be a great way to open new doors for students,” says Wotkyns. “I think it's wonderful when teachers can go out and experience science in the field and bring it back to their students through social networking.” ❖





# Great Teaching Lasts a Lifetime

Day of the Teacher: May 11, 2011



# When pink slips hit

by Mike Myslinski

## History of the pink slip

The threat of layoffs that California educators face every spring from March 15 to May 15 has its roots in laws created 80 years that were actually intended to protect teachers, not torment them.

Those harrowing dates were meant to give teachers enough warning to plan ahead. Preliminary pink slips must be issued by March 15, and school boards must make final layoffs by May 15.

Prior to 1930, school districts could fire teachers for virtually any reason — even for getting pregnant. So the Legislature enacted protections. The Education Code and other state laws changed in 1929, when districts were restricted somewhat on RIFs (reductions in force).

Ever since the Great Depression, a RIF could be made for only two reasons: because of declining student enrollment as measured by average daily attendance (ADA), or because a district wants or needs to eliminate a particular kind of service.

California's public schools expanded steadily from the 1940s to the 1970s. Generally good economic times, increasing student populations and greater property tax revenues meant that school districts had no reason to reduce staffing levels. That all changed with the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 and its negative impact on school revenues, and with the various economic crises of the past three decades. The past three years alone, the state has lost more than 30,000 teachers as state education cuts soared.

This year, California's dire budget deficit led to more than 20,000 preliminary pink slips issued by the March 15 state deadline, and it's feared that fewer pink slips will be rescinded this year due to the severity of the budget crisis. School districts must make final layoff decisions by May 15 without having all the data they need to plan. The orderly use of seniority for these layoffs, along with the placement of those laid off at the top of rehire lists, is spelled out in Education Code sections 44955 and 44956.

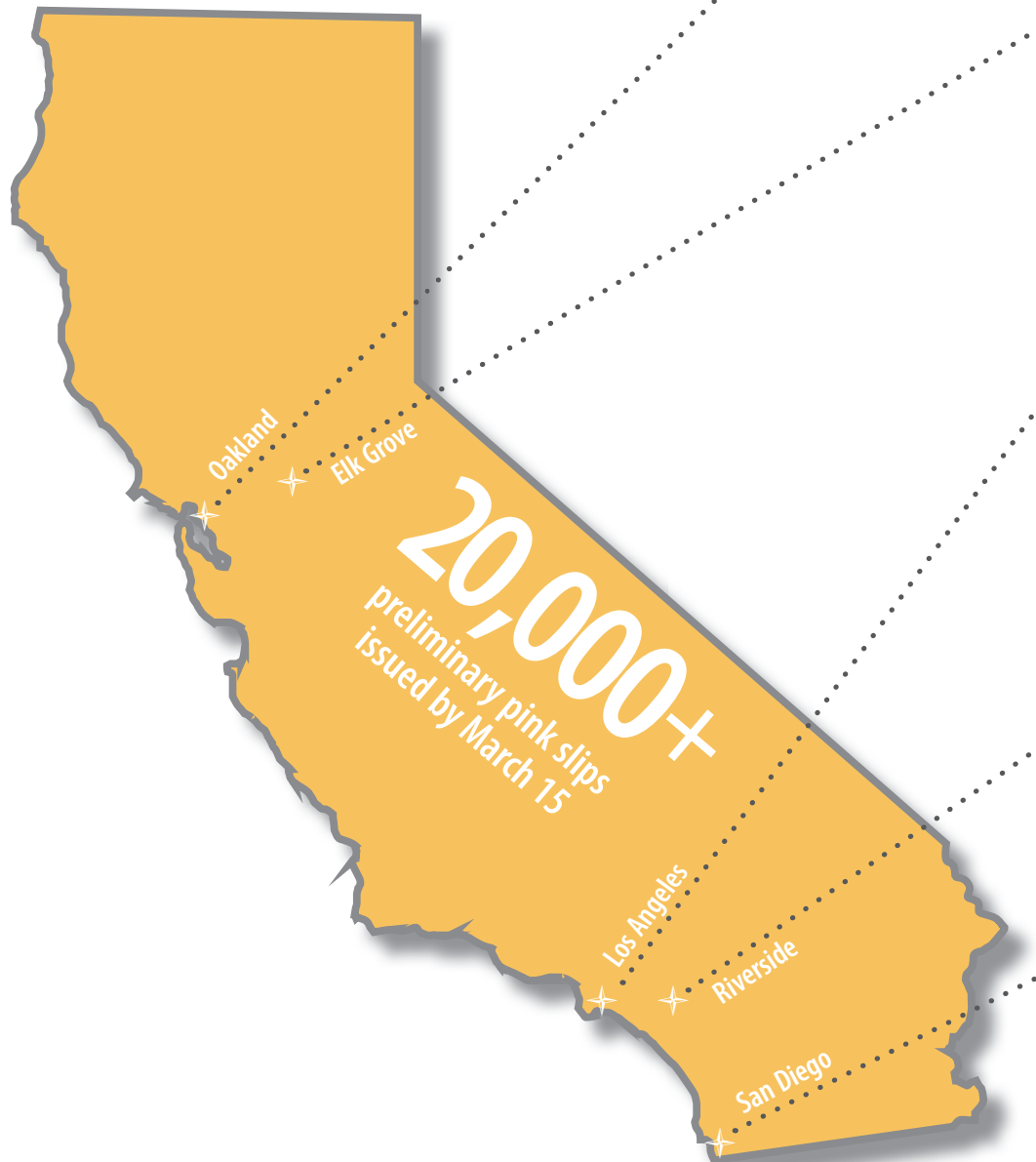
### FOR THOUSANDS OF CALIFORNIA TEACHERS THIS SPRING, LIFE IS ON HOLD.

More than 20,000 educators received preliminary pink slips by March 15. The state budget crisis may mean a significant percentage of those pink-slipped will lose the jobs they are so passionate about, says CTA President David A. Sanchez.

“Unless the Legislature acts to extend taxes to keep the limited revenues we have, we fear more educators will not be back in the fall,” Sanchez says. “Time is running out.”

CTA members who are education support professionals require only 45-day notice before they can lose their jobs. That bad news is likely to come by mid-May, says Doreen McGuire-Grigg, chair of the ESP Issues Advisory Committee. “Unfortunately, we are at-will employees and can be let go at any time with just the 45-day notice,” she says. “We are not optimistic.”

Behind the pink slip numbers are the worried voices of so many educators. Here are just a handful from around the state whose lives are on hold.





**Lissette Averhoff, Oakland Unified:** Even cancer couldn't stop her dedication to her fifth-grade students. But seeing the stark layoff notice — one of 540 issued to Oakland Unified teachers — made her pause. "It was hard because it's such an impersonal letter," Lissette Averhoff says. The letter makes no mention of her hard work. Diagnosed with breast cancer in March 2009, she scheduled her surgery during that summer to avoid missing the students she inspires and nurtures. Having to leave early some days for chemotherapy and radiation treatments, she would come in on Saturdays to make up time. If she loses her job, her students will lose a bilingual role model with 12 years of overall teaching experience (the past five in the district) and a mentor who takes students on weekend field trips and cares enough to start a special group to help students worried about the transition to middle school. Students and parents are taken aback by the pink slip. "The parents are outraged" and agree with her that the district must find a way to save teachers' jobs, she says. Her students are so proud of her that when a reporter from the *Oakland Tribune* was on campus for an unrelated story, Averhoff's students stopped the reporter and advised her that Averhoff's pink slip is the real news.



**Jason Allen, Elk Grove Unified:** Coming from a family of educators, Jason Allen is passionate about teaching and thought he could stay working in the classroom as a permanent career. Not any more, not after being pink-slipped five of his eight years in Elk Grove Unified, which issued layoff notices to more than 800 educators this year. "I always had this vision that I would be able to teach forever," he says. "Now I can't assume I'll be a teacher next year." His third-grade students at James McKee Elementary are worried they will lose him. "A lot of my students, sadly, are aware of the tight budgets. They are asking me if I'm going to be coming back."



**Monica and Rigoberto Iñiguez, Los Angeles Unified:** They just bought their first house together after years of scrimping and saving. Now they are two of the 4,500 educators who received pink slips in Los Angeles Unified as the nation's second-largest school district grapples with a staggering \$408 million deficit. And they are nervous. It was the third time for Monica, a fourth-grade teacher at Noble Elementary, where about half the educators in the heavily Latino North Hills neighborhood got layoff notices. But it was the first pink slip for her husband Rigoberto, a PE teacher at nearby Vista Middle School. "We just closed escrow on our house," Monica says. "We've been saving for many years. It's been very stressful for us." The couple's plight made national news in a March 31 *Education Week* story about how the "pink slip purgatory" has made teachers frustrated and fearful across the country, deeply affecting faculty morale. The couple is thinking about their son, 3, and 8-month-old daughter, and about missing their students at their respective schools.



**Adrienne Fraire, Alvord Unified, Riverside:** "It is my dream to teach," she says with quiet enthusiasm. "And I am going to keep fighting for this job." If she loses the fight, her students at Loma Vista Middle School will have lost a veteran who makes a difference. She is one of about 40 district teachers to get a pink slip this spring, despite having nine years of teaching experience, the last five in the district. Her impact is well-known. During her time at the district's Norte Vista High School, where she taught AP government and the yearbook class, and led a program that took low-income students on trips to Europe, the students voted her teacher of the year. She holds a master's in education technology in the classroom and is bilingual. Yet this is the third year in a row she has been hit with a pink slip — which comes as she also copes with a divorce. Two of her three children are still at home, so the financial uncertainties are difficult to handle right now. "It cuts into your motivation at school," she says. "It saps you. You don't know if you're going to have a job or not."



**Juliet dela Paz, San Diego Unified:** Her work day as a school nurse can include dialing 911 to save a student's life, or helping students through seizures and worse. As California's public school nurses continue to be laid off at alarming rates, she has treasured her rare status of being assigned to one San Diego neighborhood elementary school to care for students. A Registered Credentialed School Nurse assigned to Field Elementary in the Claremont Mesa neighborhood, Juliet dela Paz used to cover four schools in San Diego Unified, but now has 270 students who depend on her skills, of which 20 are medically/physically challenged. She has a bond with all students and families that's profound. "I am honored to be their nurse. The relationships I have with the families are everything to me." The district angered educators this spring by issuing more than 1,300 pink slips for educators, which could reduce the nursing staff by about a third, from 160 to about 110. The district's ratio of nurses to students would drop from about one nurse for 825 students to 1:1,200. "My concern is that these ratios will be unsafe." The district is the state's second-largest with about 132,000 students. She notes that California's ratio of nurses to students ranks 42nd in the nation at 1:2,187, according to the National Association of School Nurses, which recommends a school district ratio of 1:750 for safety reasons. Dela Paz hopes to still have her job when she receives her master of science in nursing on May 20 at San Diego State University.

# Plagiarism confronted

Teaching the consequences of copying

Story by **Sherry Posnick-Goodwin** • Photos by **Scott Buschman**



**BEFORE ASSIGNING TERM PAPERS FOR** literature composition class at Gavilan College in Gilroy, Steve Schessler takes time to discuss something that has tormented teachers from the beginning of time — or at least the beginning of homework assignments. The subject he broaches is plagiarism, and a show of hands reveals that his students are not exactly clear on the concept.

Schessler, a member of the Gavilan College Faculty Association, is not surprised. In his past four years as a college professor, he has been alarmed by the increase in students who copy and paste information from Web sources into their papers without proper attribution — sometimes without

even bothering to remove hyperlinks, which show up in blue.

Plagiarism is defined in the *Collins English Dictionary* as “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one’s own original work,” and it is on the rise. *The New York Times* reports a “disconnect growing in the Internet age” as concepts such as intellectual property, copyright and originality get clouded. Music file-sharing, Wikipedia and Web-linking have given students the notion that they are freely entitled to anything in cyberspace, writes *Times* reporter Trip Gabriel in an article, “Plagiarism Lines Blur for Students in the Digital Age.” Surveys

from 2006 to 2010 by Donald L. McCabe, co-founder of the Center for Academic Integrity and a professor at Rutgers University, reveal that 40 percent of 14,000 undergraduates admitted to copying a few sentences in written assignments, and that the number of students who believe copying from the Web constitutes “serious cheating” has declined during the past decade.

Schessler makes it clear to students from the beginning that plagiarism won’t be tolerated.

“Any time you use someone else’s words, you need to let me know whose ideas they are and where they come from,” he says. “You need to give credit to the original source, and there’s a reason why we cite everything.”

Students soon learn the reason: Schessler uses an online service, *turnitin.com*, that scans for plagiarism by comparing student papers against all published materials and previously submitted papers in the website’s database. Schessler shows students on an overhead projector how Turnitin raises “red flags” by highlighting phrases that appear to be plagiarized. He then demonstrates how to cite sources based on the *MLA Style Manual* published by the Modern Language Association of America, commonly used in schools. He tells students that if they deliberately plagiarize, they will fail his class.

Carlene Barros, a world history teacher at Crawford CHAMPs (Community Health and Medical Practices) High School in San Diego, also has seen an increase in plagiarism. Sometimes students plagiarize from the Internet; sometimes they plagiarize from each other; and sometimes they submit research papers without documenting their sources. When it happens, she tries to make it a teachable moment.

“You discuss it,” says Barros, a San Diego Education Association member and a



**ABOVE:** Gavilan College student Lucia Leal takes in a lesson about plagiarism.

**LEFT:** High school world history teacher Carlene Barros has seen a rise in students copying other people’s work.



*“Any time you use someone else’s words, you need to let me know whose ideas they are and where they come from.”*

*Steve Schessler,  
Gavilan College Faculty Association*

20-year teaching veteran. “You explain the importance of completing assignments, engaging in the writing process, taking notes and documenting evidence so it doesn’t happen again. I want students to understand the concept of authorship and ownership and academic honesty and integrity.”

Students sign a form at the beginning of the year that they are aware of the rules about plagiarizing and are aware of the repercussions, which include receiving no credit for the assignment and a lowering of their overall grade.

To reduce the chance of students committing plagiarism, Barros asks to see students’ note-taking and rough drafts. She also assigns topics that require students to be critical thinkers.

“If the topic is too broad and isn’t specific enough, you’re more likely to find plagiarism involved,” Barros explains. “Instead of saying ‘What was the French Revolution?’ you might ask them to explain ‘How did Enlightenment philosophy shape the policies of the French Revolution?’”

Eighth-grade English teacher Hiroko Nicksch does not use Turnitin at Miller Middle School in San Jose. But she warns students that the local high school uses the website, so they better get used to doing the work themselves. When she suspects a student may be plagiarizing, she uses Google to search for some of the phrases to determine whether or not it’s original work. It can be a slow, painful process, but she says it’s important to take the time to check.

“I’m apparently the Big Bad Plagiarism Police teacher,” says Nicksch, a member of the Cupertino Education Association. “Word

has gotten out, so plagiarism is dwindling in my classroom.”

She believes students plagiarize for different reasons. “Some students are doing it because it’s the easy way and they are dishonest,” Nicksch says. “Some students don’t know better and think that if they change something a little bit, it’s not really plagiarizing. For many students it’s about procrastination and running out of time.”

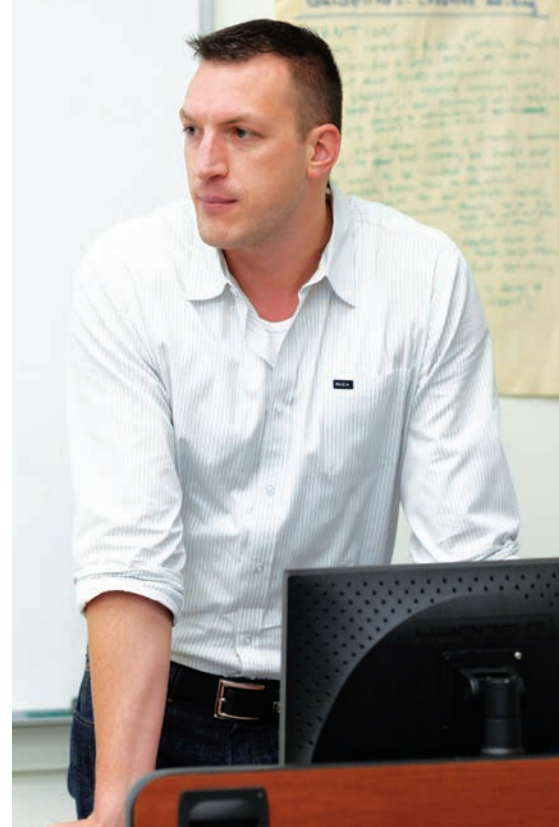
Eighth-grader Nitya Mani agrees with her teacher’s assessment. “A lot of students are really busy with extracurricular activities and are really frenzied about grades and maintaining straight A’s. When you start an essay at 12 o’clock at night, you can get tempted. Even if students aren’t *trying* to plagiarize, what you see as the end product can be very close to the beginning product on a website.”

In Nicksch’s class, Mani and her fellow students work on their research papers in class. Some write down quotes from books on index cards and rewrite the information in their own words on the back of the card. Others work on searching for information and writing proper citations for it.

“It’s easier for me to do research this way, because on my own it would be a little bit more confusing,” says eighth-grader Daniel Vahabi, taking a break from his Lewis and Clark citations.

For Nicksch, it’s about the process as well as the product.

“I want them to understand that as a teacher, I need to see how *they* write — not how someone else writes,” says Nicksch. “I tell them I don’t care if they can’t write something perfectly, and that if they knew how to



**ABOVE:** College literature teacher Steve Schessler tells students they will fail his class if they deliberately plagiarize.

write perfectly, they wouldn’t come to my classroom. I let them know that plagiarism doesn’t help me to do my job — and it doesn’t help them either. I want them to understand that it’s wrong, and that they are stealing someone’s intellectual property.”

Sue Thompson, coordinator of the library systems at CSU San Marcos, was so

## Top 5 ways students plagiarize

- 1 Buying, stealing or borrowing a paper.
- 2 Hiring or asking someone else to write a paper.
- 3 Cutting and pasting information from the Internet.
- 4 Copying information from a source without citing that source.
- 5 Using the source too closely when paraphrasing.

*From Sue Thompson, California Faculty Association,  
CSU San Marcos.*



**LEFT:** Eighth-grade English teacher Hiroko Nitsch warns students that plagiarism will not be tolerated as they move through school, or in her class.

concerned about the plagiarism upswing among students that she developed a website devoted to prevention ([library.csusm.edu/plagiarism](http://library.csusm.edu/plagiarism)). The California Faculty Association member began developing the website in 2003 after learning that some faculty members were afraid to assign term papers because they were worried about plagiarism.

“The website took the better part of a year and lots of research,” says Thompson, who is in charge of library technology at the university. But it was well worth it: San Marcos pro-

fessors and teachers from other schools throughout California refer their students to the site, which has pages titled “What is Plagiarism?” “How to Avoid It” and “How to Credit Sources.” Especially popular with educators is a multiple-choice test students can take to make sure they truly understand what plagiarism is.

**RIGHT:** Students learn to appreciate the value of original work.

“Turnitin doesn’t catch everything, because students at our university have access to 60 databases with hundreds of thousands of journals in them,” says Thompson. “It can be a tool, but it’s important to have students think beyond legalistic terms. We want students to think about being good participants in the ‘intellectual neighborhood’; the importance of giving other people credit for their ideas; and to realize that by doing so, they can become better writers themselves.”



## Top 10 things teachers can do to prevent plagiarism

- 1** Educate yourself and students about what plagiarism is. Some good resources are “Plagiarism Prevention for Students” ([library.csusm.edu/plagiarism](http://library.csusm.edu/plagiarism)) and [plagiarism.org](http://plagiarism.org).
- 2** Implement an academic integrity policy at your school and have students sign a form acknowledging there are consequences for plagiarizing. Spell out what the consequences are. Students will become stakeholders — and if a parent complains about a disciplinary action, the form will show their child knew he or she was breaking the rules.
- 3** Beware of “Frankenstein papers” where information seems to have been cut and pasted without any continuity or flow.
- 4** Ask your school to consider subscribing to Turnitin ([turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com)), a website where students submit their papers online to be scanned for possible plagiarism.
- 5** If you don’t have access to Turnitin and suspect plagiarism has occurred, take key phrases and look them up with a search engine to see what comes up.
- 6** Be leery of language or word usage that does not sound like it came from a particular student.
- 7** Discuss the concepts of authorship, intellectual property and stealing the work of others in terms of right and wrong.
- 8** Assign topics that are narrow, not broad, and have students answer questions that require critical thinking skills. Make the topics interesting, so students want to do the work.
- 9** Don’t assign a paper and wait for the final version. Check the work in progress, including research notes, bibliographies, outlines and rough drafts. Have portions of the paper due at regular intervals.
- 10** Require informal oral reports of students, asking them to describe their research and writing process.

Sources: CTA members interviewed for this story; [plagiarism.org](http://plagiarism.org); “Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for Research Papers” ([virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm](http://virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm)); and “Put an End to Plagiarism in Your Classroom” ([educationworld.com/a\\_curr/curr390](http://educationworld.com/a_curr/curr390)).

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## Lessons learned at the Good Teaching Conference

It's not often you see teachers skating around a room on paper plates, throwing cylinders and beach balls into the air, reciting the alphabet in sign language, and high-fiving strangers. But all of these things could be observed at CTA's 59th annual Good Teaching Conference the weekend of March 18 at the Hyatt Regency Orange County.

The event, attended by 1,100 CTA members who consider themselves lifelong learners, offered an array of cutting-edge classroom techniques in workshops taught by teachers, professional trainers and CTA staff. Workshop topics included strategies to help English language learners and close the achievement gap, how to stop campus bullying, techniques for increasing parent participation, helpful hints to improve physical education, science

**RIGHT:** Teachers practice giving encouraging high fives.

experiments from "Dr. Flubber," American Sign Language, and much more.

"I love this conference," enthused Andrea Davis, a sixth-grade teacher and member of the Victor Elementary Teachers Association. "It gives me immediate ideas so we can enhance what we're doing with new energy and new style. When you see what other people are doing and having success with, it adds value to what you're doing."

Among the workshops she attended was "Helpful Hints to Improve your Physical Education Program," where presenter Carrie Flint, an adaptive PE teacher and member of the Lawndale Teachers Association, scooted



around on paper plates to show teachers one method of keeping students physically active and healthy in an exercise she invented called "glide and slide," before engaging participants in a toss-the-beach-ball game that incorporated the physical education standards.

Also being tossed by teachers were "flying cylinders of science" in the workshop "Easy and Exciting Science Experiments" conduct-

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ed by retired educator George Lightholder, aka Dr. Flubber. Participants created the paper aircrafts and were shown how to toss them around “tubes of air” to demonstrate the concept of aerodynamics.

“I teach earth science, and little tricks like these are fun for kids at the beginning or end of a lab as attention grabbers,” said Bill Gardenhire, a member of the Sierra Unified Teachers Association.

Meanwhile, in a session called “Rebels with Applause: Brain Compatibility Approaches for Motivating Reluctant Learners,” education consultant Grace Dearborn demonstrated specific “brain-based” strategies for improving the achievement of students who have the hardest time paying attention and doing their work. Strategies included ways of making classes meaningful, engaging students and offering them encouragement with “gentle” high-fives, which teachers practiced on each other, gently.

“I have a few students who are not always engaged and not always listening,” said Nora Ayala, a member of the Southwest Teachers Association and third-grade teacher, who high-fived Erin Arredondo, an Irvine Teachers Association member and high school science teacher.

Laura Parker, a Tustin Teachers Association member at the workshop, said it was exciting to receive the most up-to-date information on brain research and have the instructor link it to specific achievement strategies.

“I’ve heard wonderful things about this conference for years, and this is the first time I’ve come,” said Parker. “It’s very exciting and motivating.”

Inside the “Basic American Sign Language and Games” workshop, teachers practiced letters of the alphabet and basic

words like “nice” and “name,” with the help of Breanna Andrews, a San Bernardino Community College Association member. Participant Michael Lee, a member of the Sulphur Springs District Teachers Association, said he planned to use sign language in his general education second-grade classroom to help students focus and increase their overall language comprehension while Katherine Jordan, a member of the Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association, thought it might help her pre-kindergarten class of English learners become fluent.

New this year was a section called “Outliers of Love: Teen Dating Violence,” conducted by Sheri Dorn, an English teacher and member of the Upland Teachers Association.

“It was a good session,” said Rosario Cortes-Quiñones, a high school counselor and member of the Rialto Education Association, who decided to take the workshop because she has encountered victims of teen violence at her school. “There were many things talked about that I could relate to, and it’s important to recognize the signs of teen violence and understand how to deal with it.”

The conference, held annually in Northern and Southern editions, allows teachers to earn professional growth hours and university credit for participation. You can find registration info beginning in September at [cta.org/conferences](http://cta.org/conferences). You can also apply for a grant (limited number available) or apply to be a presenter.

“It was a very well-organized conference,” said Gardenhire, the science teacher from Sierra Unified. “It’s nice to get treated like the professionals that we are, and I feel positively rejuvenated by the experience.”

SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

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# Who's competing for \$100,000?

"This... is... the 'Jeopardy!' Teachers Tournament!" With that, the familiar voice of veteran announcer Johnny Gilbert kicks off a series of 10 shows airing for two weeks in May that will feature teacher contestants from across the country, three of whom are CTA members. The tournament comes on the heels of the recent battle pitting all-time champions Ken Jennings and Brad Rutter against Watson, the IBM supercomputer developed to compete on the show (Watson won).

So who are the CTA members vying for a \$100,000 grand prize? Let's meet our three contestants.

Burlingame Education Association member Charley Tinkham is an eighth-grade history teacher at Burlingame Intermediate School. "The good folks at 'Jeopardy!' have been awesome," he says. "I got the call in front of my students. They're excited, and they got to participate in a taped greeting that will air on the show." While like any contestant he would prefer to win, Tinkham says, "I really just want to represent the teaching profession well."

Kern High School Teachers Association member Viki Radden is an English teacher at South High School in Bakersfield. A fan of the show for 25 years, she says persistence is the key to getting chosen as a contestant. "I tried 15 years ago when it was a pen-and-paper mock test and didn't make it. I tried online again, did well, and was invited last year to audition." Radden says being on the show has been "the experience of a lifetime."

Santa Ana Educators Association member Judd Hess teaches English at Godinez Fundamental High School. He says his wife and



Photo courtesy of Jeopardy! Productions, Inc.

son also love the show. When asked why teachers often do well, he says the show requires general knowledge of all kinds. "I was really impressed by the all the other contestants," he says. "Talking to them, it was obvious they are all very good teachers."

The three CTA members are competing against 12 other educators from across the country. Maggie Speak, a contestant coordinator for the show, says teachers are among the game's most skilled players. Other professions that do well are lawyers, foreign service officers, and bartenders. During the taping, Speak acts as a kind of den mother to the contestants, keeping them at ease as they get ready to play before the cameras and the audience.

Host Alex Trebek and announcer Gilbert began their run together on the show 27 years ago, and both men still project genuine enthusiasm and affection for the show. The game's format, in which contestants are told "answers" and must answer with correct "questions," has become ingrained in

American popular culture, along with its instantly recognizable theme music. During breaks in taping, Trebek talks with the studio audience and tells them this is the first new competition the show has introduced since Kids Week was introduced over a decade ago. "We all can remember a teacher who made a difference in our lives," he says, speaking fondly of teachers he had growing up in his native Canada.

Prior to taping, contestants play a mock game onstage so that they can get used to viewing the large answer board and practice buzzing in with a response. (If contestants buzz in before Trebek finishes reading the answer, they are locked out for a second while the system resets.)

On rare occasions taping is halted when a contestant comes up with an unexpected answer (or rather, question) — a misspoken fictional character's name, or an alternative response that may still be valid. A team of judges consisting of show writers and researchers huddles together and

**ABOVE:** Three CTA members competed in the "Jeopardy!" Teachers Tournament. Featured left to right: Judd Hess, Santa Ana Educators Association; Viki Radden, Kern High School Teachers Association; host Alex Trebek; Charley Tinkham, Burlingame Education Association.

quickly does additional research if necessary. Once a decision is made, the show picks back up seamlessly with no indication to the viewer that there was an issue. "We want to make sure we're fair to every contestant," says Gilbert. "We want to get it right — and if we miss something or we make a wrong call that would affect the outcome, we'll bring that contestant back."

Every teacher will go home with at least \$5,000. The champion and runners-up will win \$100,000, \$50,000, and \$25,000 respectively. So who will be the big winner of the "Jeopardy!" Teachers Tournament? *The answer is...* tune in beginning May 2. Check local listings for times and broadcast channels.

FRANK WELLS

# Top education official impressed by QEIA

It was a federal fact-finding mission with a lot at stake for at-risk students when Jo Anderson Jr. visited California. Anderson is a senior adviser to U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan who looked at six at-risk schools in late March to explore whether the CTA-sponsored Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) program could become a national model to turn around struggling schools.

The landmark 2006 legislation established the largest school reform program in the nation. It provides \$3 billion over eight years for proven reforms at 500 low-performing California public schools serving nearly a half million students. The schools benefit from smaller class sizes, better training for teachers and principals, and more counselors.

During his March 28-29 fact-finding tour, Anderson explored why many California QEIA schools are thriving. He was impressed by what teachers can achieve when provided with essential resources, a collaborative framework in which to work and innovate,

and fair accountability for results — all hallmarks of the QEIA program. Anderson agreed that no other state has made this kind of sustained commitment to helping persistently low-achieving schools.

“From what I’ve seen and read,” Anderson said, “there are a number of themes [in the QEIA program] that are nationally recognized that are key to improving instruction with schools that have high poverty impacting the kids.” He praised the “remarkable” long-term nature of the program and the amount of funding involved, but was concerned that the state budget crisis might undermine some progress.

Teachers, parents and administrators spoke passionately about the positive results from QEIA resources providing smaller classes, more collegiality and trust, and local input for developing better professional development for educators. The program’s flexibility supports the use of professional learning communities, where teachers at



CTA photo by Mike Myslinski

**ABOVE:** Jo Anderson Jr., a senior adviser to U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan, shakes the hand of teacher Renee Manrique as he tours Oakland schools.

QEIA schools craft different methods of collaborating and supporting one another.

In Oakland, Anderson met with several teachers at high-poverty schools and listened to their success stories. He shook the hand of Oakland Unified teacher Renee Manrique as her colleague David Norris explained what was going on in his vibrant fourth-grade classroom at ACORN Woodland Elementary, a new school in a high-crime area.

This school’s strong parental involvement and smaller class sizes made possible by QEIA have translated into a strong Academic Performance Index (API) score of 807 in a high-risk student population.

Anderson also met with teachers at Oakland’s New Highland Academy, where the API score rose 100 points in two years to 735. Enrichment classes help students thrive, and music teacher Jean Cameron White told Anderson that, thanks to QEIA, the school’s success has “restored my faith in what a school can be.”

Anderson ended his tour with visits to QEIA schools in Santa Ana (Fairhaven Elementary in Orange Unified), Fullerton (Valencia Park Elementary, Fullerton School District), and Anaheim (Sycamore Junior High School, Anaheim Union High School District).

He said he will ask Secretary Duncan to tour QEIA schools as well. CTA representatives on the tour included Secretary-Treasurer Gail Mendes, CTA Board members Eric Heins and Jim Rogers, and local chapter presidents and field staff.

MIKE MYSLINSKI

*Parents say QEIA creates a school atmosphere that helps their children learn. Read more in the next magazine.*

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## UCLA study: California public schools in free fall

A study released in March by the University of California, Los Angeles, supports CTA's declaration of a "state of emergency" for public schools. For the past several years UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education and Access (IDEA), in partnership with UC/ACCORD, has produced an annual report on learning conditions and educational outcomes in California's public schools. Last year's report highlighted how the major economic downturn has further damaged the state's already weakened educational infrastructure. This year's report, "Free Fall: Educational Opportunities in 2011," focuses on high schools and concludes that things have only gotten worse.

Based on a survey of nearly a quarter of the state's high school principals, and on follow-up interviews with 78 of them, the report's core findings include:

- California high schools are providing less time, attention and quality programs. As a consequence, student engagement, achievement, and progress to graduation and college are suffering.
- School reform has all but sputtered to a halt due to staff cutbacks and the elimination of time for professional development.
- Even as declining budgets

impact high schools across the state, inequality is growing across and within schools.

- California's high schools face growing demands from families experiencing economic crisis that point to the interrelationship of California's education and social welfare budgets.

Schools have seen their staffing, supply, and other budgets decimated. The report quotes a Los Angeles County principal: "In the last two years, because of the fiscal crisis and budget cuts, I am down eight teachers. ... I'm down six counselors. I'm down 10 clerks. I've lost all my security. And I almost lost my nurse and my school psychologist. ... They gave us a new budgeting thing this year, and it allowed me to flex some things. It wasn't enough, though. And so I drained the instructional materials account to zero — zero — to keep people working."

The report cites statistics that California ranks 43rd in per-pupil expenditures and 49th in student-counselor ratio. And it ranks dead last in secondary student-teacher ratio. "We're at or near the bottom compared to other states, which are also slashing their education budgets," says CTA President David A. Sanchez. "California was behind when the economy was

good; now it's just that much worse."

While nearly all California public schools are suffering greatly, the report concludes, the impact on students has not been equal. In some cases, more affluent communities have been able to volunteer extra funding to protect local school programs. High-poverty schools raise only \$1 for every \$20 raised by more middle-class or affluent schools.

This disparity is hurting students who need the most extra help. Without additional community support, higher-poverty schools are the first to cut field trips, athletics, art and music supplies, and even books. And despite research that points to the benefit of extending learning time to closing the achievement gap, budget cuts have pushed schools in the opposite direction. Half the principals interviewed said they had reduced their school year since 2008, and 65 percent had cut back or eliminated summer school.

Students suffer in more indirect ways as well. Teachers have less time to improve their skills. Almost all the principals surveyed said budget cuts have stalled reform and professional development. Teachers have less access to outside experts, less time for collaboration, and less time to learn from veteran teachers.

The report notes that students are facing a double economic hit, both at school and at home. While the economy and California's unfair tax structure have led to massive education cuts, the impact of the economy on their families' incomes has further jeopardized their education. Underemployment makes it harder for families to pay for college. And even if they can afford it, prospective students are faced with more cutbacks at California's universities and colleges. Seventy-eight percent of the principals surveyed blamed the economy for fewer graduating seniors moving on to four-year universities and colleges.

The report praises the superhuman efforts of many principals and teachers who work tirelessly and do the best they can with what they have. It notes that many work 12- or even 15-hour days. But the report concludes that "relying on heroic acts creates a patchwork of low and high quality educational services. At worst, it leads to frustration, resentment, and burn-out." Instead, researchers call for efforts to stem California's educational free fall, starting with the need for state residents to understand the connection between opportunities, learning, and budgets.

The full report can be accessed online at [edopp.org](http://edopp.org).

FRANK WELLS

# ACTION

## State Council declares 'state of emergency,' plans bold action

The state budget crisis was very much on the minds of delegates and CTA President David A. Sanchez when State Council met in Los Angeles April 1-3.

"We are in a state of emergency, and we need to take bold action that sends a crystal clear message to Sacramento," said Sanchez.

The delegates agreed and put forward a plan to wake up lawmakers. For details, see "State of Emergency" (page 8).

### CTA leadership team elected

Eric C. Heins and Mikki Cichocki were elected vice president and secretary-treasurer of CTA, respectively. Along with Dean E. Vogel, who was elected president of CTA at Council's February meeting, they will begin their terms of office June 26.

Heins currently represents District C (Contra Costa County and part of Alameda County) on the CTA Board of Directors. A resident of San Francisco, Heins has taught elementary school in the Pittsburg Unified School District for 20 years and is a member of the Pittsburg Education Association. He has served as a CTA Board member for four years.

Cichocki (pronounced "chuh-husky") is also a member of the CTA Board of Directors, where she has represented District O (parts of San Bernardino and Riverside counties) for almost nine years. A resident of Riverside, she

**RIGHT:** CTA President David A. Sanchez introduces Miguel Ruiz (left), CTA Education Support Professional of the Year, to Council.



CTA photo by Dina Martin

is a youth services teacher in San Bernardino City Schools, and has served as president of the San Bernardino Teachers Association. She has a daughter, Olivia.

### Doggett talks about attacks on middle class

On Sunday, the day before the anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., CTA Executive Director Carolyn Doggett used her morning address to talk about how some of the things King strove for are eroding today.

She made note of a few inequities:

- The average CEO earns 185 times more than the average worker.
  - The richest 5 percent of Americans claim nearly 64 percent of the nation's wealth, while the bottom 80 percent hold just 13 percent.
  - The corporate share of our nation's taxes has fallen from 30 percent of all federal revenues in the mid-1950s to 6.6 percent in 2009.
  - General Electric, which had a profit of \$14.2 billion, paid zero taxes in 2010.
- "At the same time, 14 million

**RIGHT:** Dean E. Vogel (left) will begin his term as CTA president June 26. State Council also elected Eric C. Heins (middle) as vice president and Mikki Cichocki (right) as secretary-treasurer.



Photo by Marc Stemberger

Americans are without a job," Doggett said. "Child poverty rates and homelessness are at an all-time high. Students can't afford to go to college, and public schools are shutting their doors. This is not the America I want for my nieces and nephews."

Doggett summoned the words Dr. King said to sanitation workers

in Memphis:

"You are reminding the nation that it is a crime for people to live in this rich nation and receive starvation wages." "The best anti-poverty program for a worker is a union." "Now our struggle is for genuine equality, which means economic equality. For now we know that it isn't enough to inte-

grate lunch counters. What does it profit a man to be able to eat at an integrated lunch counter if he doesn't earn enough money to buy a hamburger and a cup of coffee?"

She continued: "We are under attack like never before. The sharks are circling and waiting for us to flounder. It is why we must continue to have a strong CTA. A strong voice for our students... for our schools... for our colleges... our union... and our future."

DINA MARTIN

## In other action, State Council:

- Elected Greg Bonaccorsi as NEA Director, District 3; and re-elected Elizabeth Ahlgren as NEA Director, District 10.
- Did not make a recommendation between Len Paolillo and Earl Wiman for NEA Executive Committee Member, as neither received 60 percent of the vote.
- Gave a standing ovation to three of the five California Teachers of the Year: Beverly Gonzalez, a fourth-grade teacher, member of the Baldwin Park Education Association; Darin Curtis, an eighth-grade physical education teacher, member of the Lakeside Teachers Association; and Jennifer Kelly, an eighth-grade physical science teacher, member of the Middletown Teachers Association.
- Also gave a standing ovation to Miguel Ruiz, the 2011 CTA Education Support Professional of the Year, who is vice president of the Redlands Education Support Professionals Association and a warehouse delivery worker for the Redlands School District.
- Heard a presentation on pensions from Maggie Ellis, chair of the State Council Retirement Committee, and received a new brochure. (See [cta.org/pensionbrochure](http://cta.org/pensionbrochure).)

# CTA presses lawmakers to approve tax extensions

When legislators missed a deadline for putting a tax extension measure before the voters in June, CTA quickly switched to Plan B. CTA has begun pressing lawmakers to approve the temporary tax extension themselves to stave off another \$12.5 billion in budget cuts, including \$2 billion to \$4 billion in additional slashes to schools.

"Failing to extend the temporary taxes will deal so much additional damage to our students, our schools, our members, and our state that we cannot afford to wait a moment longer," declares CTA President David A. Sanchez. "We are calling on lawmakers to pass an extension of the temporary taxes."

"Schools have already lost nearly \$1,900 per student, and the cuts that will occur without the tax extension will mean that school funding will have been cut by more than \$18 billion," Sanchez adds. "Parents, students, educators, and school employees will not stand for that outcome."

Schools have been decimated by cuts that have resulted in

swollen class sizes reaching as many as 40 students in core subjects, the elimination of school nurses and counselors, and the cancellation of art, music, and other subjects that help keep students in school.

More than 20,000 certificated educators and many more education support professionals and other school workers have received layoff notices. Districts must send final layoff notices to certificated staff by May 15.

The Legislature has already adopted by a majority vote a contingency budget that includes \$12.5 billion in cuts and assumes voters will approve a temporary tax extension worth another \$12.5 billion. State law allows the Legislature to approve a budget on a simple majority vote, but lawmakers must secure a two-thirds supermajority in order to extend taxes or generate other revenues.

Gov. Jerry Brown sought to expedite the budget process by urging lawmakers to have a new, balanced spending plan in place within 60 days of the start of his administration. The governor's proposal was based on legislators'

sending a tax extension ballot measure to the voters for their action in June, prior to the July 1 start of the new state fiscal year.

While all Democratic lawmakers in both houses supported the tax extension ballot measure, the governor and legislative leaders were not able to persuade just two Republican lawmakers in the Senate and two in the Assembly to support the tax extension.

Gov. Brown called off the talks with five Republican legislators who could have provided the needed votes when they engaged in regressive bargaining, bringing a wide range of anti-educator and anti-union proposals to the table. These last-minute add-ons would have gutted educator pensions and undermined other vital protections.

With the refusal of Republican lawmakers to provide the needed votes for the tax extension, the Legislature and the governor are working against the budget deadlines set by the state constitution. Under its terms, the Legislature must send the governor a spending plan by June 15. The constitution gives

the governor until June 30 to sign the final spending plan, which takes effect the next day.

The next major step in the process should come around May 10, when the governor is expected to release his updated revenue and expenditure estimates — the "May Revision." In a normal year, this revision marks the beginning of a frenzied sprint toward a final spending plan.

This year, CTA and its Education Coalition partners — together representing more than 1 million parents, students, educators, school employees, administrators and school board members — are redoubling their efforts to protect school funding. CTA will address the "State of Emergency" with a series of actions — including ones taking place at the state Capitol — designed to keep pressing legislators to provide schools with the desperately needed funds to prevent the massive layoffs and program disruptions that are sure to follow another \$12.5 billion in cuts.

LEN FELDMAN



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## Heads up!

### Conferences

**Presidents Conference  
Asilomar Conference Grounds,  
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July 18-22, 2011**

This conference brings together chapter presidents from across the state for five days of instruction ranging from time management to the president's role in negotiations. For more information, visit [cta.org/conferences](http://cta.org/conferences).

**Summer Institute  
UCLA (De Neve Plaza and Sunset  
Village)  
July 31-Aug. 5, 2011**

The premier workshop of its kind, CTA's Summer Institute offers sessions in a variety of areas that assist chapter leaders in the day-to-day representation and support of members, and features hands-on activities to hone the skills needed to meet the challenges of the coming year. Sessions include strands/tracks on Communications, Instruction and Professional Development, Emerging Leaders, Bargaining, School Finance, Health Care Benefits and Issues, Legal, Member Benefits, and Community Outreach. For more information, visit [cta.org/conferences](http://cta.org/conferences).

### Deadlines

**Incentive grants for summer conferences  
April 29, 2011**

Small chapter and minority incentive grants are available for the Presidents Conference (July 18-22) and Summer Institute (July 31-Aug. 5). Apply by Friday, April 29. Each grant pays for transportation expenses and the conference fee, including materials, meals and housing based on double occupancy. Minority incentive grants are offered to members of racial-ethnic minority groups to encourage minority leadership within the association. Small chapter incentive grants are awarded to chapters that represent a unit of 100 or fewer members for collective bargaining. In addition, Summer Institute offers incentive grants for participants in the Emerging Leaders Track and the Member Benefits Strand. The Presidents Conference offers additional grants for first-time participation (available to new participants from a chapter of 1,000 or fewer members) and first-time chapter participation (available to participants from a chapter of 150 or fewer members that has not previously participated). You can register for summer conferences and apply for incentive grants online at [cta.org/conferences](http://cta.org/conferences).



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