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California EDUCATOR

California Teachers Association April 2012 Volume 16 Issue 7

Green
the new color
of learning

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WOULD YOU KISS A PIG ?

CREATIVE FUNDRAISING

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Find the Day of the Teacher poster in the middle of this magazine.

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8 GREEN – THE NEW COLOR OF LEARNING

CTA members like Jason Heskett, whose students collect scraps for worm composting bins, find that green education benefits the environment, boosts student achievement and saves money.



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How would you put the fun in fundraising? Jeff Waugh, for one, has created mock companies run by his students at Milpitas High. They sell newspapers, pumpkins and flowers to raise money for school programs.

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ON THE COVER



► Niko Castillo learns about composting with worms at Walnut Grove Elementary in Pleasanton.

We can create a better California

LAST MONTH, while presiding at CTA's State Council of Education, I had the pleasure of meeting three of this year's California Teachers of the Year. As I listened to Rebecca Mieliwocki, who is also one of the four finalists for National Teacher of the Year, addressing our members, she reminded me of something important. She said, "As educators, we have a front row seat to the future." I've thought a lot about that since March. How she phrased the importance of the work we do really got me thinking about what our future could look like.

We have a clear picture of the past four years, but what about the next four? How will we ensure more opportunities for the success for our students, and how will we help put our state back on the road to recovery? I wish there was one easy answer, but there isn't. We have a lot of hard work ahead of us.

In addition to the work each of you does every day to challenge, educate and inspire students, we have to challenge, educate and inspire our fellow Californians this election year. We must lead the way to a better California and a better future. And Californians are looking to us to do just that. Research poll after research poll continues to show that teachers are some of the most respected members of their communities. When teachers talk, people listen.

And that's why I'm asking you to use your voice this campaign season to bring awareness to the issues facing your school and community. Speak up about how the Corporate Power Grab Initiative is designed to silence the voice of the middle class. Let your friends and neighbors know that if they take away your ability to advocate for your students and your profession, they are taking away the chance of a better tomorrow — for everyone.

When politicians want to raise class sizes to save money, we say no, our students deserve the chance to get the individual attention they need to succeed. When politicians label schools and students based on the results of one high-stakes test, we cry foul and make

sure they understand that our students are more than one test score. And when politicians cower to corporations seeking to profit from the "business" of education, we say educating students is our business and they need more resources, not less.

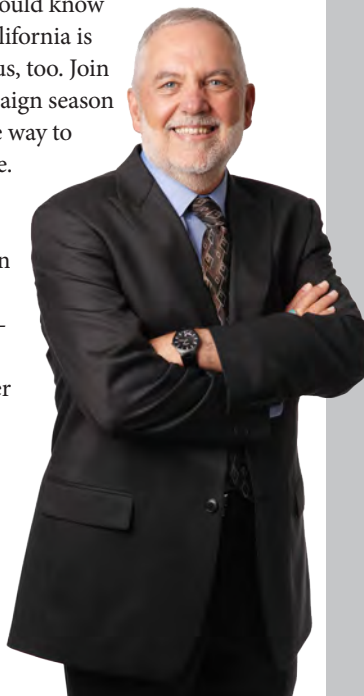
In fact, there's an important fact I'd like to share. California has the ninth-largest economy in the world but ranks 47th in the nation when it comes to per-pupil spending. It's hard to comprehend, right? But it's true. That's why we must also let fellow Californians know our schools and colleges need more funding. Luckily, the Schools and Local Public Safety Protection Act of 2012 is quickly making its way to the November ballot at the hands of a growing coalition. This new initiative is projected to bring in nearly \$9 billion annually to pay down the state's wall of debt and to provide specific, additional funding for schools, colleges and other essential services. This initiative also helps fix many of the structural budget problems that have kept California from rebounding as quickly as it should have.

These are just two of the important issues that voters are looking for our leadership on. There are also local, state and federal candidates and many local bond measures.

A front row seat to the future is an awesome purview, but with it comes awesome responsibility. We know our students count on us. You should know the rest of California is counting on us, too. Join me this campaign season in leading the way to a better future. Together, we can put California back on a well-paved road to recovery and help create brighter futures for all of us.

I'm asking you to use your voice this campaign season.

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Dean E. Vogel



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STAFF WRITER Sherry Posnick-Goodwin
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Avoiding burnout and staying healthy

Springtime often brings burnout, mentally and physically. Managing the stress of doing your job and having a life outside of school means managing time. Here are some quick tips from CTA.

www.cta.org/timestress

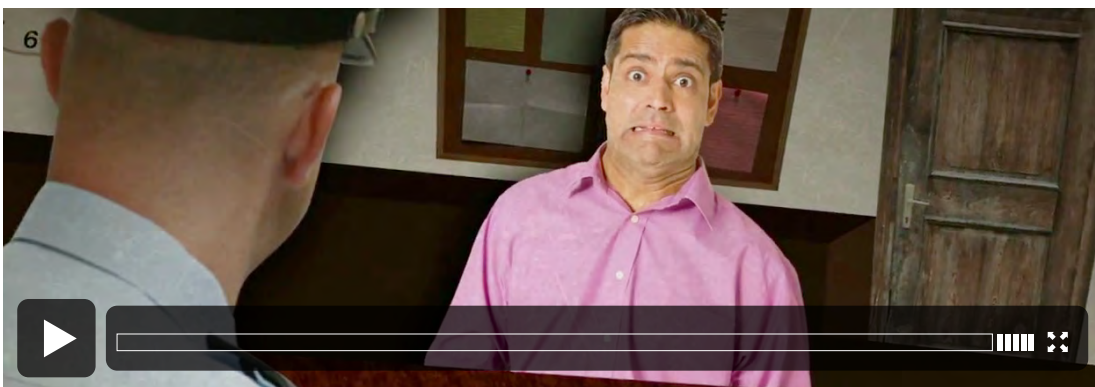


Reach out to your community

Community support is important, and not just during a crisis. You reach out every day through contacts with parents and students. Check out resources and develop your own community outreach program.

www.cta.org/outreach

▶ VIRAL VIDEO



The Hole: NEA's clever parody of a horror movie preview promotes a petition urging federal and state elected officials to close corporate tax loopholes.
www.educationvotes.nea.org/loopholes



MOST POPULAR FACEBOOK POSTS

6,691 likes, 2,400 shares

Dear Students,
I know when you're texting in class.
Seriously, no one just looks down at their crotch and smiles.
Sincerely, Your Teacher.

123 likes, 46 shares

"It is not enough to progress as individuals while our friends and neighbors are left behind." —Cesar Chavez



TOP TWEETS

@Dave_Orphal

I don't want a politician to tell me how to teach 5th grade better, I want to learn from other 5th grade teachers.

@L_Hilt

The best thing about being a teacher is it matters. The hardest thing is that it matters every day.



FAVORITE COMMENTS

Mandy Redfern

9:44 pm | 27 Mar

I teach because I cherish the opportunity to spend my day with 5-year-olds. It never gets old and every day presents new challenges.

Larry Allen

3:26 pm | 23 Mar

CTA is democratic, with a small D. CTA supports Republicans who support public education, historical fact. Unfortunately, the Republican platform is anti-public education and anti-union. Get them to change their platform and you just might see CTA supporting more Republicans. Your union needs your help.



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calendar

MAY 4

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Incentive grants for summer conferences

Members attending the Presidents Conference (July 23-27) and Summer Institute (Aug. 5-10) can apply for grants that cover transportation expenses and conference fees, including materials, meals and housing based on double occupancy. Specific grants are available for members of racial-ethnic minority groups, members from small chapters representing 100 or fewer members, members participating for the first time, ESP members, and for participants in the Emerging Leaders Track and the Member Benefits Strand.

For details: www.cta.org/conferences

MAY 22

EVENT

CTA ESP Day

In recognition of the vital contributions of education support professionals, CTA observes ESP Day on the Tuesday of ESP Week (May 20-26).

Find out more: www.cta.org/espday

JUNE 1

APPLICATION DEADLINE

NEA Foundation grant

The NEA Foundation has awarded more than \$7 million in grants over the past decade to educators and ESP, including many CTA members. Student Achievement Grants support initiatives to improve academic achievement. Learning and Leadership Grants support high-quality professional development activities.

The NEA website lists dozens of other grants and awards available to teachers and students.

Visit neafoundation.org and www.nea.org/grants/grantsawardsandmore.html.



The NEA
FOUNDATION



Find out more:

www.nea.org/teacherday

MAY 9

EVENT

California Day of the Teacher

2012 THEME:

California Teachers: Building a better state for public education.

Day of the Teacher arose out of legislation co-sponsored by CTA and the Association of Mexican American Educators. State Sen. Joseph Montoya (D-El Monte) wrote the bill, and it was adopted in 1982 as Senate Bill 1546. California has patterned its celebration after the traditional Día del Maestro festivities observed in Mexico and other Latin American countries. See the Day of the Teacher poster on page 20.

Download this poster at:

www.cta.org/dayoftheteacher

JUNE 5

ELECTION

State primary election

All candidates will appear on a single ballot, and the top two vote-getters will move on to the Nov. 6 general election regardless of party affiliation. No one can assume their candidate is a shoo-in — it is doubly important that educa-

MAY

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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JUNE

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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

MAY 8

EVENT

National Teacher Day

Teacher Appreciation Week — also known as National Teacher Week — is celebrated during the first full week of May. NEA observes National Teacher Day on the Tuesday of this week, May 8.



tors turn out and vote in this primary. See CTA's ballot recommendations on page 30.

VOTE 2012



For details: www.cta.org/primary2012



New!

Introducing the Clear Credential Program (Single and Multiple Subject)

The UC San Diego Extension SB 2042 Clear Credential program is designed for public, charter and private school teachers who are employed in a school or district that do not have an Induction program.

After completing the program, students can then initiate the formal recommendation to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

The new UC San Diego Extension Clear Credential Program is:

- 100% online.
- designed to meet the new standards defined by the CCTC.
- one of the first programs to be made available under the new CCTC standards.
- specifically designed to be completed within one year.
- UC San Diego Extension is now accepting applications for the new program.

To view credential requirements, the program FAQ and to download an application please visit our Clear Credential program page at extension.ucsd.edu/clearcredential.

UC San Diego Extension also offers accessible and affordable online programs for K-12 and Postsecondary Educators.

- New courses begin every month
- Most programs can be completed online within 1 year
- Interactive, Research-Based Programs with Practical Classroom Application

Programs include:

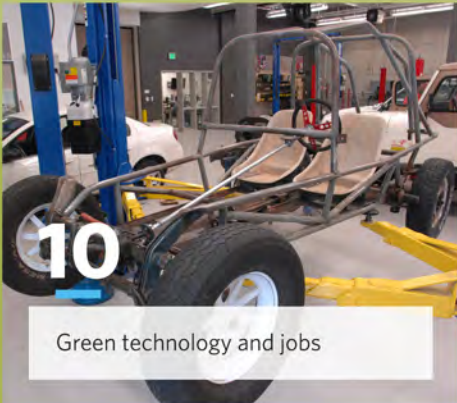
- CLAD Through CTETL
- CCTC-Approved Reading Certificate
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- College Counseling
- Gifted and Talented Education (GATE)
- Teaching Adult Learners
- Teaching Online
- Professional Development/ Salary Point Coursework

For more information, please contact Morgan Appel, Director of Education at: (858) 534-9273 or mappel@ucsd.edu

extension.ucsd.edu/education

WM12-3047

Green



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Green technology and jobs



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Kids blossom going green



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Green education helps schools



the new color of learning

Stories by **Sherry Posnick-Goodwin**
Photos by **Scott Buschman**

On April 22, more than 1 billion people around the globe participated in Earth Day. The following stories look at how some CTA members are going green in their classrooms and schoolyards and how it boosts students' academic achievement and how it boosts students' schools. They also offer resources and tips for going greener at your own school.

Worms aren't "yucky" to Cupertino High School students. The critters are lovingly tended to in compost bins, where they digest lunch leftovers and make fertilizer for an organic vegetable garden.

At Walnut Grove Elementary School in Pleasanton, the school's solar panels are incorporated into the curriculum, and students can view online — in real time — how much power is being produced at their school site.

In South Tahoe High School's auto shop class, students are converting a dune buggy into an electric vehicle and cooking up clean alternative fuel from french fry oil.

Environmental education is thriving at some California schools despite budget cuts. Whether it's worm bins, recycling, organic gardens or solar power, schools are finding creative ways to go green. In the process, students



The electric-powered dune buggy built by **Mike Patterson's** class may be the first one... ever!

learn about their world, respect nature, and become better prepared for the future.

Some associate the green movement with tree huggers, but it is important for everyone to be environmentally conscious, says James W. Reede Jr., an environmental science professor at CSU Sacramento and an electric transmission systems engineer at the California Energy Commission.



James Reede Jr.

"It's important to teach students about environmentalism so they will be well-rounded, will be sensitive to the world around them, and will know what they can do to make it better."

Students of all ages should understand the "damage we are causing to our planet," says Reede. "This past year the polar ice pack has shrunk to the smallest it's ever been. Polar bears are drowning. Our planet is heating up, and over the past 30 years 85 percent of glaciers in California have melted. Many creatures are moving to higher elevations because they can't stand the heat. Due to global warming, our sea level is rising. Some communities, such as Foster City, will be underwater someday."

The California Faculty Association member believes schools should embrace green technology, which he sees as the wave of the future. "Green jobs will offer our students wonderful opportunities, and schools should be preparing students for these jobs of the future."

Such jobs might include organic farming, building energy-efficient buildings, and manufacturing products that do not harm the environment.

Lean, GREEN learning machines

Students in Mike Patterson's South Tahoe High School auto shop class are converting a dune buggy from gas to electric power. It may be the first electric-powered dune buggy in existence.

Vocational education classes at the school have been emphasizing green technology and alternative fuel since 2008, says Patterson, a member of the South Tahoe Educators Association and chair of the Capital Service Center Council.

"We live in such an environmentally sensitive area in Lake Tahoe that we felt it was very important to give our students the skills and knowledge to maintain our lifestyles without destroying the beautiful environment around us," says Patterson. "The first thing students learn is the proper way of recycling waste materials, so hazardous waste is not created."

Jaqui Searight, a senior in his class, is proud to be on the cutting edge. "It's important to have green energy —



Carol Kato's students display magnets that remind families not to be an energy vampire.

and for schools to be thinking green,” she says. “It is definitely a way of helping the planet.”

In addition to learning how to work on electric and hybrid vehicles, students work with alternative fuel. Patterson recently obtained a device that will convert french fry oil, donated from local restaurants, into biodiesel fuel.

“There are better opportunities for students when they are learning green technology,” says Patterson. “My students will definitely have a leg up in the automotive industry.”

Worm poop

In Kathryn Peters’ class at Walnut Grove High School in Pleasanton, students study the “Four R’s”: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rot. The rotting takes place in worm bins where leftover lunch food is composted.

“Recycling food waste is so easy,” she explains to fourth- and fifth-graders during a Valentine’s Day lesson titled “I Love Worms.” “You are sitting next to rot now. And it doesn’t smell bad, does it?”

Students learn that worms like eating coffee grounds and egg shells, and go from making “worm poop” to fertilizer called “vermicompost.” Each student is handed plastic gloves, a pile of worms mixed with dirt from the composting bin on a paper plate, and a magnifying glass to study the process.

“It’s important to teach them about the environment in a way that is developmentally appropriate” because younger students could become traumatized to learn that global warming is causing polar bears to drown or increases cancer rates, says Peters, a member of the Association of Pleasanton Teachers (APT).

“You want to engage students and help them feel a connection so they will ask questions and consider the results of their actions. My intention is to make them become stewards of their environment. It’s wonderful, because students have a natural appreciation for being outside.”

PV on a Stick

The Walnut Grove district has solar panels on many buildings, and students can go to the school’s website and see in real time how much power is being produced and consumed. In 2008, the Pleasanton Unified School District became one of the first and largest school districts in the nation to go solar.

It began when the district mounted a 1-kilowatt solar cell on a pole in the playground. It’s called “PV on a stick.” The PV (photovoltaic) cell converts solar radiation into electric current using semiconductors. That performed well, so the district worked out a deal with

Honored prof preps kids for future jobs. No fuelin'!

Honeywell Building Solutions to develop and install solar panels producing 680 kilowatts of power in seven of the district's schools.

"When we talk about renewable and nonrenewable energy, it is something real to students," says Carol Kato, a science teacher for grades 1-5. "We've done experiments where we've had a blackout for one hour. Then we see on our computer how much electricity is needed just to have the lights come on. It's amazing to see that dip — and that's a great teaching tool."

Kato ties solar energy into the science curriculum whenever possible. In her classroom she has a scary-looking monster with a sign around its neck that reads, "Don't be an energy vampire." She uses the prop to emphasize energy-saving methods students can share with their families. For example, students put energy tips on refrigerator magnets at home to serve as reminders.

"My magnets say that you should turn off lights when you leave the room, not take long showers, only use the dishwasher when there are tons of dirty dishes, and put on a sweater instead of turning up the heat," student Josephine Lam says.

After lunch, Walnut Grove Elementary students don't dump garbage into a trash can and head back to class. Instead, students line up and carefully separate lunch remains into bins for paper, plastic, aluminum and wet garbage.

"More schools should do this," says Kato, also an APT member. "It makes kids think about the world they are part of and how they can contribute to making this a cleaner environment. Environmentalism becomes personal and makes a huge difference in how they think."

Kids blossom going GREEN

Meanwhile, at Cupertino High School, being environmentally conscious makes students feel better about themselves, says Jason Heskett, a special education teacher. His students, who have mild to moderate learning disabilities, recycle most everything. Students started with bottles and cans five years ago and expanded to include cell phones, printer cartridges, juice pouches, chip bags and food scraps from the culinary arts department and cafeteria. Used foodstuffs are put in a worm bin for composting to make fertilizer for the garden.



Professor John Frala may look like a mad scientist in this photo, but he received the prestigious Green California Community College Summit's 2011 Leadership Award in October. He was honored for his commitment to renewable energy. The Alternative Fuels Technician program coordinator, Frala is a member of the Rio Hondo College Faculty Association.

How have you contributed to the greening of the Rio Hondo Community College campus? >> I hold low-cost and no-cost workshops for the community and municipalities in our area by tapping into grants and local funding. We have a recycling program in place, and have qualified for a grant to install four charging stations on campus. We're working with the home energy program to install a wind generator and solar systems.

What are your students learning that will make the world a greener place? >> They are learning about our country's dependence on fossil fuels and how to get the most out of energy usage in our daily lives. I introduce students to how our political system helps fund changes and how to support legislation to help the environment. Students have so much power to institute changes in the environment by example, usage and speaking out.

How do your students make alternative fuels? >> The most interesting type of fuel students make is biodiesel from algae. The raw enzyme is placed in a 5-gallon container. Using a small pump, carbon dioxide is fed into the bottle along with compounding the light exposure with a plant grow lamp running on a small solar panel. After 10 days I add baking soda and let it grow. After 18 days I get enough algae to manufacture two gallons of biodiesel in the classroom environment. We have had our failures, but most of the time it works. Students like making oil from fryer oil from In-N-Out Burger because the engines we run smell like french fries.

James Athans, 14, says it makes him feel good to recycle cell phones, which otherwise might end up in the landfill, where the battery acid might cause harm to the environment.

Students also collect footwear for Soles for Souls (www.soles4souls.org), which distributes used shoes to disaster victims and poor people worldwide. Heskett's students have increased environmental awareness throughout the district, which now has solar panels, thanks to the passage of a bond measure.

"Students run their projects like it was a job," explains Heskett, president of the Fremont Education Association. "They maintain relationships with others by collecting items, documenting how much they collect, and keeping the school informed about recycling on our website [sites.google.com/site/mrheskettssite]. They even give presentations in the community. They learn to think beyond themselves. This program has helped them blossom as people."



Annie Turner

The color of SUCCESS

"We learn by doing," says Annie Turner, a member of the Atascadero District Teachers. "Our goal is to apply everything we are learning to the real world and make it relevant."

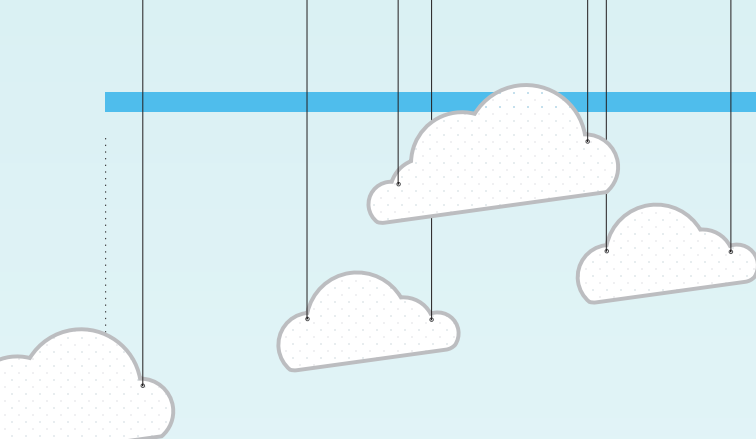
Turner is the coordinator of Atascadero High School's Green Academy in San Luis Obispo County, which offers core subjects with a "green twist" relating to the environment and sustainable energy, especially when it comes to math and science. Students call themselves the "Greenhounds," since the school's regular mascot is a greyhound. They tend an organic garden, compost and recycle, as well as do beach cleanup, creek restoration, and other environmental projects.

At-risk students were intentionally selected for the academy, which includes special education students, English learners, emotionally disturbed students, and others with an environmental interest.

"Our population is more diverse and more at risk than the high school overall, yet we have the most improved



Sunny Galbraith works with students who have the honor of hacking up apples and other garbage for worm composting.



GPA of students and test scores [compared with] other students at our school,” says Turner.

Numerous studies show that environmental education promotes learning and can actually raise student achievement because it promotes critical thinking and problem-solving.

According to www.classroomearth.org, “environmental educators often find that students who fail in a traditional school setting can succeed when the natural outdoor environment becomes the students’ classroom.”

It also encourages students to take long-term views and take action for the common good.

Environmental education also helps address “nature deficit disorder,” a condition linked to children spending so much time indoors watching television and playing video games, which can cause obesity, loneliness, depression, attention problems and isolation.

GREEN keeps district out of the red, promotes nutrition

While most school districts are cutting back, the Twin Hills School District in Sonoma County has added art, music and technology classes while maintaining small class sizes without layoffs. Part of the reason is the district’s commitment to sustainability.

The district runs on solar power, says Sunny Galbraith, a math, science and independent study teacher at Orchard View School. It installed electric vehicle charging stations in its parking lot, started a recycling program, and has composted 20,000 pounds of garbage over the past few years, she estimates.

“It’s a lot of work, but it’s worth it,” says Galbraith, a member of the Twin Hills Teachers Association (THTA). “The solar panels have saved a lot of money on our electric bills. We’ve been able to keep enrichment programs such as art, science and music.”

The district passed a bond measure to pay for solar panels, which were installed last summer. Three years ago Galbraith wrote a grant for a large organic school garden at Apple Blossom School, which is maintained by students.

Every day at lunchtime Galbraith and some of her students walk next door to Apple Blossom to help “composting teams” of elementary students, selected each week for the honor of hacking up apples and other assorted garbage for worms to eat. The students love it.

“It’s fun, good for the environment, and you get to smash stuff,” says fifth-grader Ryan Pearson enthusiastically.

“They absolutely love the garden,” says first-grade teacher and THTA member Meg Scherfee. “It’s a great teaching tool. We cook what we grow and measure ingredients for math. For science, we can study everything from insects to plant life to weather. During art, they sketch in the garden.”

Scherfee says she was pleasantly surprised to discover that the garden encourages students to eat their vegetables.

“If they plant something, they will eat it,” she says. “When we picked Swiss chard they looked at me like I was nuts, and the next thing you know they were chomping on leaves like lollipops and asking for seconds. This is why we have a garden.” 🌱

Going green boosts achievement

Did you know environmental education students...

- Performed better in reading, writing, math, science and social studies, according to a review of 40 environmental education programs in various states. (Gerald Lieberman and Linda Hoody, 1998, “Closing the Achievement Gap: Using the Environment as an Integrating Context for Learning,” www.seer.org/pages/GAP.html.)
- Outperformed traditional program students in reading, language arts, math, science and social studies, according to a study of STAR (Standardized Testing and Reporting) exam results in California. (State Education and Environment Roundtable, 2005, “California Student Assessment Project, Phase Two: The Effects of Environment-based Education on Student Achievement,” www.seer.org/pages/research.html.)
- Performed better in math, reading, writing and listening tests, according to a study of students in grades 3-10 in Washington state. The study also examined the key factors associated with the higher performance, including the use of natural areas, curriculum integration, strong teacher beliefs that the environmental education training was valuable, and support from administrators, parents and the community. (O. Bartosh, 2004, “Environmental Education: Improving Student Achievement,” unpublished master’s thesis, www.seer.org/pages/research.html.)

Tips for going green — CTA goes green, too

Little things can make a big difference, environmentally speaking, according to Angela Jensvold. “One of my classes convinced our school to change from paper towels to air driers. It made a big difference in paper and in trash,” she says. “Another of my classes convinced our school district to put aerators in the school faucets, which reduced water consumption. It was not expensive, and we are saving lots of money in our water bill.”

Jensvold teaches advanced placement environmental science and physics at Diamond Bar High School in Walnut Valley. Chair of CTA’s Green Caucus, the Walnut Valley Education Association member says caucus members’ influence prompted CTA to take a greener approach, too. Some conferences are now “paperless” with materials available online. Instead of bottled water, attendees are sometimes handed refillable CTA containers, which they



Angela Jensvold

are encouraged to bring to future CTA events.

Schools can and should do much more than they are doing to protect the environment, says Jensvold, noting that many schools don’t even recycle. “You don’t have to be a radical environmentalist to make a difference. My students do homework on the back of used paper. It can be as easy as that.”

By taking a broader approach, more can be accomplished, says Maureen Tracy, a teacher at Vallecito Elementary School in San Rafael. A “green team” liaison, Tracy works closely with fellow Dixie Teachers Association members Shahrzad Biddle and Rachel

Stone to lead students in working on energy and waste reduction for their school site.

“Green teams educate the student body through skits and videos about ways to recycle, to compost, and to make positive choices that reduce our carbon footprint,” she says.

“Lunchtime monitors — student volunteers — make sure students are disposing of their trash and food scraps correctly. They catch other

students being green and reward them with a coupon to win prizes at assemblies.”

The team recruits parent volunteers to bring bottles and cans to a recycling center. Last year they raised more than \$6,000, which was used by the PTA for field trips and scholarships.

Other ways to go green and increase awareness suggested by CTA members:

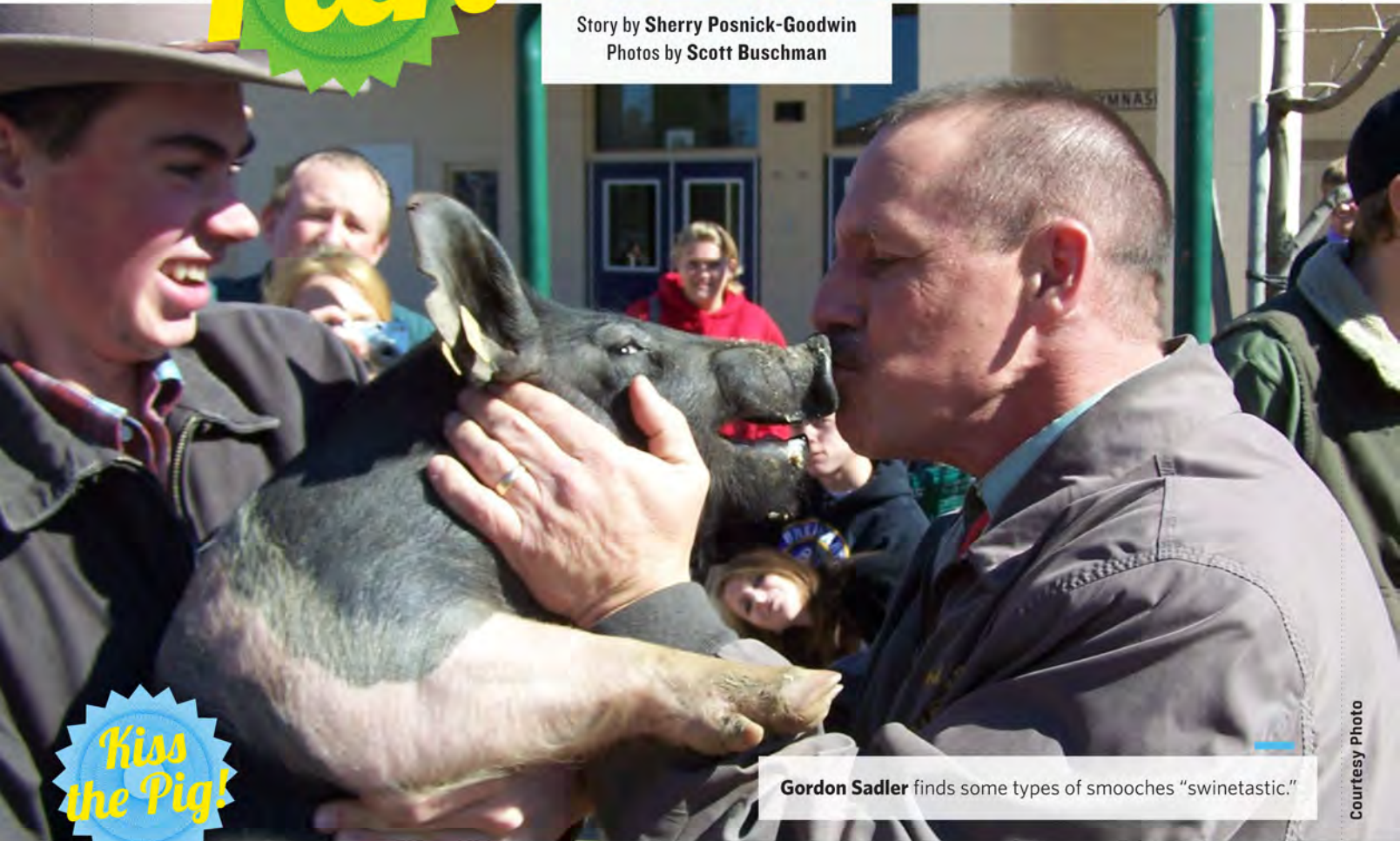
- 1 Start a worm composting bin in your classroom for lunch scraps.
- 2 Make all copies double-sided.
- 3 Organize students to collect classroom recycling if it is not already picked up.
- 4 Appoint someone to be the “watchdog” to obtain funding from green grants. Make plans in advance and know who you will partner with before looking at grants.
- 5 Visit the website Cool the Earth, www.cooltheearth.org, which offers a program that educates K-8 students about climate change and encourages them to conserve.
- 6 Assign service learning projects, where students improve the environment through actions such as creek restoration and recycling.



Catching and rewarding students being green and saving energy is a favorite activity of these two teams led by CTA members **Maureen Tracy** (standing, left) and **Shahrzad Biddle** (standing, right).

Fun DRAISING

Story by Sherry Posnick-Goodwin
Photos by Scott Buschman



Kiss
the Pig!

Gordon Sadler finds some types of smooches "swinetastic."

Courtesy Photo

When the going gets tough, teachers get creative

How far would you go to raise badly needed funds for your school? Would you audition for a reality show? Kiss a pig? Play cow chip bingo?

Squeezed by budget cuts, teachers are going above and beyond to provide the basics for students. Of course they should not have to do these things. Our state should be providing schools with enough money to educate children and prepare them for the future, which is why CTA is

backing an initiative to raise revenue for schools.

Until then, desperate times call for desperate measures, and we salute CTA members' creative spirit when it comes to raising badly needed money for their schools.

Puckering up to a pig is "swinelastic"



Math teacher Gordon Sadler has been the reigning champion of the "Kiss

the Pig" competition at Bret Harte High School in Angels Camp for the past three years.

Held annually to support the school's agriculture program, the event is organized by the school's Future Farmers of America chapter. It started in the '90s, took a hiatus for several years, and then returned when the economy tanked.

Students set up a "Kiss the Pig" jar in the classrooms of brave teachers

willing to participate, and then put money in the jars of teachers they would like to see “win.” The teachers with the most money in their jars are the winners. The first-place winner kisses a pig, the second-place winner kisses a goat, and the third-place winner kisses a chicken.

“It’s a kick,” says Roy Beck, agriculture teacher and Bret Harte Teachers Association (BHTA) president. “All the kids and staff come down to watch it.”

This year, Sadler came in second and kissed a goat for the first time. The first-place winner, an English teacher, chickened out and asked a student to kiss the pig in her place.

“I guess some teachers have kissing standards, but I don’t happen to have them when we’re raising money for the kids,” says Sadler, a BHTA member. “All in all, it’s swinetastic.”

Woodshop avoids chopping block



How much wood would a woodshop class sell, if students could sell wooden sheds and furniture?

Rob Leever, the shop teacher at Casa Roble Fundamental High School in Orangevale, asked students to build things that could be sold to help keep the program afloat. So instead of bookends and breadboxes for parents, his students create wooden sheds, Adirondack chairs and ottomans made to order. It has helped to offset the cost of materials for his class, since many families can’t donate money for materials during these tough times.

“Teachers have to be creative, because there’s no other way to survive,” says Leever, a member of the San Juan Teachers Association.

The oversize sheds sell for more

than \$2,000 each, which is less than they cost at major home improvement stores. They are so popular that Leever and his students can’t keep them in stock.

Leever says that when Regional Occupational Program (ROP) classes were eliminated, the school decided to absorb the cost of his class. So he is happy to do his share to keep costs down. After all, he jokes, wood doesn’t grow on trees.

“It’s high school, but it’s also a business,” says Leever. “It’s great to watch my students get an A and also make \$1,500 for the class.”

Leever has created a brochure to promote students’ handiwork and advertises their products on Craigslist. The district has filmed a video showcasing his marketing effort, which can be viewed at www.san-juan.edu/news.cfm?story=11204.



Rob Leever points to a connecting wall of the shed. His students earn good grades and learn jobs skills in his class.



Robbie Kreitz and **Charmaine Banther** are on an amazing race to raise funds for students' programs.

The Amazing Race

Forget about the not-so-amazing Race to the Top, where schools have to compete against one another for government money. Two CTA chapter presidents believe they have a better opportunity on "The Amazing Race," vowing to split the \$1 million grand prize evenly between their two schools if they win the TV competition.

New Haven Teachers Association President Charmaine Banther and Dublin Teachers Association President Robbie Kreitz auditioned for the reality show's upcoming season, which will begin filming in May or June. They haven't heard yet whether they made it to the next round, but they are not discouraged. They plan to go to the next 10 auditions wherever they are held, and won't give up until they become contestants on the show, which pits two-person teams against other teams on a trek around the world.

If selected, they will be the first teacher duo on the CBS reality show, and they won't keep a dime for themselves.

"Both of us are CTA presidents

who have survived pink slips and layoffs," says Kreitz. "After you've survived a crowded classroom of middle schoolers the first day back from summer break, a scavenger hunt in Bangkok sounds like a piece of cake."

Banther, a math teacher at James Logan High School, met Kreitz, a special education teacher at Wells Middle School, in 2010 while attending CTA's Presidents Conference at Asilomar. They got lost driving to their hotel in Monterey and decided they should audition for "The Amazing Race." Last December, on the spur of the moment, they jetted to Munich for a few days, where they shot their audition video and proved to themselves they are ready for the real thing. Kreitz will navigate and eat all of the "funky food" such as insects, while Banther will do all the driving and take on anything that involves height challenges.

The two have created a Facebook page ("Teacher Leaders Amazing Race Bid") and are encouraged by the support they have received from colleagues, friends, and the families of their students.

"We'll try anything," says Banther.

"It's all about raising revenue. It's all about the kids."

Mock companies raise real money

To help his special education students learn real-life skills, Jeff Waugh created mock companies for them to run at Milpitas High School. His students run a newspaper delivery service and operate companies selling pumpkins, wreaths and flowers to those at their school. While they are learning to count change and handle responsibility, they are also bringing money into school coffers.

"The revenue the companies bring in is a bonus," says Waugh, a Milpitas Teachers Association member. "I can pay for transportation to take them places such as the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, and special education dances at other high schools in Santa Clara County. We have also purchased materials for our classes."

Waugh, a fifth-year teacher who is hearing impaired, estimates that his students' business ventures have raised close to \$2,500 so far this year.

"These businesses give students

Jeff Waugh's class teaches math, business, writing and social skills.



Mock Companies

a focus. They are learning independence through something that is very hands-on and memorable. They are learning the skills to be successful at work,” says Waugh. “They also practice their writing skills by sending thank-you notes to all of their customers.”

Waugh says his district appreciates that he thinks outside the box. “I need the support of those around me to be successful,” he said. “It takes a village to do the kind of work I do in special education. The difference between sitting with a stack of worksheets and teaching students about money via social interactions where they are maintaining job responsibilities and selling items is tremendous.”

His next venture, the Flower Company, will have a community focus. Proceeds will support Camp Everytown, a program where Milpitas High School students experience group exercises about self-identity, racial, cultural and ethnic issues,

family relationships, gender roles and equality, peer relationships, and conflict resolution. (For more about the program, visit www.svfaces.org/educational-programs/camp-everytown-formerly-anytown.)

“The possibilities are endless,” says Waugh. “Right now, four companies are enough, but who knows what the future will bring?”

Cow chip bingo



Del Oro High School has found a way of turning cow chips into cash.

Every October, Del Oro school officials in Loomis, located north of Sacramento, mark a field into one-yard squares that are “sold” to members of the school community. On the night of the big football games, three cows are let loose on a field, usually at the start of the junior varsity game, and are given until the beginning of the varsity game to “mark” the squares.

“Everyone waits for them to poop,” explains Geoff Broyles, a physi-

cal education teacher at the school. “Then you find out who owns the square where the cow ‘marked’ and give away prizes.”

The event, sponsored by the Del Oro High School parents group in conjunction with school staff, raises about \$20,000 each year, which helps fund the school’s sports teams. “Each team sells tickets and receives a percentage of the profits,” says Broyles, an Associated Teachers of Placer member.

“Everybody walks up to the field and checks it out. It’s kind of a carnival atmosphere” with pop, popcorn and a barbecue, he adds.

The event used to be held right on the football field until the school bought synthetic turf. Now it takes place in another field close by.

“It’s definitely one of the things that makes us unique compared to other schools in the area,” says Broyles. “Nobody else does anything like it.”



Geoff Broyles



CALIFORNIA DAY OF THE TEACHER

MAY 9, 2012





California Teachers: Building a Better State for Public Education

CALIFORNIA
TEACHERS
ASSOCIATION



nea



CELEBRATE CALIFORNIA DAY OF THE TEACHER — MAY 9
www.cta.org/dayoftheteacher

Teachers work in public education to build a better California. Pull this poster out and hang it in your worksite. Go to CTA's website and download this poster, screen savers and resources to help celebrate teaching and learning in our state!

CTA EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS DAY — MAY 22
www.cta.org/espday

Don't forget to recognize the contributions of school support staff by planning a lunch or sending a thank you. CTA established this special day to honor those who play a vital part of the work that goes on every day in our schools.

For information about National Board Certification visit nbpts.org.

STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION

WHY? THE “BEST” EXPERIENCE THAT ACTUALLY ENHANCES TEACHING

“Students are the most important beneficiaries of teachers going through the process of achieving National Board Certification,” said 12-year veteran kindergarten teacher Alia Morales, a Corona-Norco Teachers Association member. “It helped me get to know my students on a more personal level and to work better with their families to support their children’s learning and educational development.”

Morales joined CTA colleagues at a groundbreaking event for National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs), local leaders

and interested CTA members. The one-day event, titled “Moving the Teaching Profession Forward Using the National Board Process,” was a workshop session presented before the Good Teaching Conference.

“To have CTA and my local union behind me is such a wonderful validation of my belief that National Board Certification is the best professional development to help educators improve student learning,” said Christi Van Wyhe, Vista Teachers Association. “An added benefit is that this critical component of increasing teacher effectiveness and increasing student learning is one on which teachers unions and school boards agree.”

The pre-conference session provided the opportunity to discuss the National Board Certification process and its potential for positively impacting school cultures, local professional development efforts, teacher effectiveness, student learning, and CTA leadership development.

“It was such a great experience to sit in a room with like-minded educators and to hear the changes they are actively making in their school and districts. The experience greatly expanded my concept of what might be possible,” said Karin Barone, who has taught fourth-grade language arts and fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade science for 11 years as a member of the Orange Unified Education Association.

Barone earned her NBC in November 2001, and is looking for opportunities in her district to build interest and support for others to go through the process.

What Is National Board Certification?

National Board Certification (NBC) is part of the growing school improvement movement that is advancing student learning, improving teaching and making schools better. Teachers who achieve National Board Certification have met high standards through study, expert evaluation, self-assessment and peer review.

An advanced teaching credential, NBC complements but does not replace a state’s teacher license and is valid for 10 years.

This past year, 384 educators earned National Board Certification in California, for a total of 5,291 since the program started.

National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) meet high standards based on what educators should know and be able to do. NBC is available nationwide for most pre-K–12 teachers.

Participant Susie Chow is the coordinator of United Teachers Los Angeles’ NBCT Support Network, a group of educators who provide mentoring and other support services to colleagues. “National Board Certification is the most rigorous and valid path toward raising the level of our profession because it assesses teachers on their pedagogy and content knowledge, enabling us to take charge of our professional practice and growth,” she said.

CTA AND BETTER TEACHING

The pre-conference session is one of several CTA-facilitated initiatives supporting National Board candidates and NBCTs to promote professional development and increase student achievement.

CTA’s Institute for Teaching has awarded grants for collaborative projects, including a \$6,600 grant to San Bernardino Teachers Association member Ashley Bettas to establish an NBC Candidate Support Program, and a \$6,000 grant to Oceanside Teachers Association member Jennifer Skellett for a project called TEAM (Teachers Enhancing Accomplished Methods). Both programs focus on networking and sharing expertise.

For more about any aspect of CTA’s support for NBC candidates or teachers, visit www.ctaipd.org.



Photo by Bill Guy

Joanne Murray (right) makes her point while Maggie Devlin listens. Both are from the Vista Teachers Association.

By Bill Guy

Student Success Task Force recommendations

► College faculty advocate for part-time students

LED BY THE Community College Association (CCA), faculty are mobilizing to fight legislative proposals that could shut the doors to higher education for hundreds of thousands of students.

Under new recommendations by the state-appointed Student Success Task Force, students with plans to transfer or obtain associate degrees or certificates would be given priority for registration and fee waivers to the detriment of students who are unable to attend college full time — largely the poor, ethnic minorities, students with disabilities and English learners.

“If we eliminate access to the most vulnerable students, our numbers may look better, but at what cost?” CCA President Ron Norton Reel says. “As faculty, we want our students to succeed. We also believe that if faculty members are allowed to determine what success is, the outcomes will be better than what is being proposed.”

At issue is the task force’s narrowed definition of “success” and whether it should be limited to those students who are able to get through college in a timely way.

Many faculty see the recommendations as an attack on the mission of California’s Master Plan for Higher Education, which opened the community college experience to all adults. As a result of the Master Plan, the California community college system provides 2.9 million students with basic skills education, workforce training, personal enrichment, and courses to prepare them to transfer to four-year universities.

While CTA’s legislative advocates work to change the bills, members of local community college chapters are educating their colleagues and students on their campuses.

Faculty from Gavilan College in Gilroy, for example, have been collecting signatures on petitions, posting on Facebook, and writing letters and opinion pieces in area newspapers. They provide resources on their website and have launched a YouTube video called “Real Student Success: Keep the ‘Community’ in Community College.”

In the video, history professor and Gavilan College Faculty Association President Leah Halper observes that in their

100-year-old history, “community colleges have developed into wonderful places that offer something for everybody,” from music classes for her 75-year-old father to AP classes for her 16-year-old niece. “We need community colleges to keep serving everybody. ... Let’s not start picking and choosing which people and which goals get addressed.”

Gavilan students also contribute their stories to the video. Some speak of the need to work while attending school, of child care needs that prevent them from attending full time, and of the time they need to study.

“I don’t think it’s fair to give any student an advantage in getting classes or being able to register, because all students are at a college to learn or to get their education,” says student Karla Perez Garcia. Garcia would like to earn her degree in two years but has to work full time and cannot fit the classes she needs into her schedule.

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

Halper compares the direction of the Student Task Force recommendations to No Child Left Behind.

“These bills are a college version of NCLB. Instead of test scores being the only judge of student success, in the college system it would be the number of certificates or degrees,” she says. “We all know numbers do not tell the entire story.”

Like many other faculty, Ron Norton Reel has plenty of examples of successful community college students who did not follow a prescribed path to higher education. He vividly recalls a student who enrolled in Reel’s speech courses at Mt. San Antonio College because he thought he might want to become an actor.

Anthony Zuicker never received his associate or bachelor’s degree, but he did go on to create the hit TV series “CSI” and its spin-offs “CSI: NY” and “CSI: Miami.” Yet Zuicker’s story would not fit the model of student success, Reel says.

Faculty members have also expressed concerns about returning military veterans who are expected to enroll in commu-

REAL STUDENT SUCCESS — Keep the COMMUNITY in Community College



Gavilan College professor [Leah Halper](#) and her students advocate for access to community colleges in a video, which you may find by searching YouTube using the title above.

nity colleges in large numbers. Although special programs are available to provide services, many vets will be unprepared to make the transition from active duty to become full-time students right away.

Instructors in English learner programs are worried about their students. Gavilan faculty member Kathy Baaumer explains, “The key to their future is education because [without it] they will be stuck working in minimum-wage jobs. For that education, they need to learn English first.”

CCA is also upset that the task force recommendations attempt to remove local control from the local boards of trustees of the 72 community college districts.

“It would empower the [California Community Colleges] Board of Governors, and by extension the chancellor’s office, with unfettered power to dictate the structure of community college education,” Reel says. “A one-size-fits-all approach does not serve local communities, nor is it accountable to local communities.”

CCA has provided a number of materials to help spread the word about this detrimental legislation. Visit www.CCA4me.org to download resolutions, background info and an extensive cost analysis of the proposed bills.

By [Dina Martin](#)

State Council supports new initiative 24
 Miramonte teachers 27

**In other action,
State Council:**

- Elected CTA Board members Don Dawson (District B), Elana Davidson (District F), Leslie Littman (District I), and Kendall Vaught (District M).
- Elected CTA/ABC Committee members Patrick Riggs (District A), John Lindner (District B), Mike Patterson (District D), Carlos Rico (District E), Loren Scott (District J-LA), and Barbara Franklin (District N).
- Approved candidate recommendations for the state Legislature and U.S. Congress for the June primary (see the list on page 30).

Get involved with CTA's campaign at www.cta.org/campaign2012.

STATE COUNCIL VOTES TO SUPPORT COMPROMISE TAX INITIATIVE

▶ *Saving jobs, preserving student resources are key*

CTA AND A GROWING COALITION are supporting the new version of the Schools and Local Public Safety Protection Act of 2012.

"We want to make sure our students, families and communities get resources they need," said CTA President Dean E. Vogel.

The new initiative represents a compromise between Gov. Jerry Brown's measure supported by CTA and the Millionaire's Tax Initiative sponsored by the California Federation of Teachers and the Courage Campaign.

CTA's State Council of Education confirmed support for the tax initiative, allocating up to \$9 million to support CTA's positions on the November ballot. After the vote, State Council members gathered petitions to take back to their chapters to gather signatures to put the tax initiative on the November ballot. Petitions are also available online for signatures.

Go to protectschoolsandpublicsafety.com/petition. See more on the tax initiative on the next page.

State Council members learned more about the Corporate Power Grab, ultimately deciding the initiative (the so-called "Stop Special Interest Money Now Act") is misleading, unfair and unnecessary. Noting that the measure benefits corporations and hurts middle-class workers and unions, State Council pledged to fight the measure.

Before the actual State Council meeting, the 656 representatives spent hours reviewing and deciding on a wide range of issues, including teacher evaluation proposals, common core standards, school funding specifics and bargaining issues. Issues are brought before the full council, if warranted, after thorough consideration by elected representatives.

By **Dina Martin**
 Photos by **Cynthia Menzel**



▲ California Teachers of the Year **Kenneth LaVigne** of Whittier Secondary EA (left), **Rebecca Mieliwocki** of Burbank TA (third), and **Shari Ann Herout** of Travis UTA (fifth) are congratulated by CTA President **Dean Vogel**, Secretary-Treasurer **Mikki Cichocki**, and Vice President **Eric Heins**. Mieliwocki is one of the four finalists for National Teacher of the Year.



THE SCHOOLS AND LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY PROTECTION ACT OF 2012

WHAT IS IT?

The Schools and Local Public Safety Protection Act of 2012 is a new compromise initiative that brings together the more progressive aspects of the Millionaire's Tax (sponsored by the California Federation of Teachers and Courage Campaign) and the more responsible structure of Gov. Brown's original tax initiative. This new initiative taxes the wealthy to provide billions for public schools and essential services, and helps close the state budget deficit.

WHAT ARE THE DETAILS?

The measure includes a nominal quarter-cent sales tax increase, which expires in four years, and increases in income taxes on the wealthy, which expire in seven years. Under the new proposal, income taxes would increase as follows:

- 1 percent on households earning \$500,000 to \$600,000.
- 2 percent on households earning \$600,000 to \$1,000,000.
- 3 percent on households earning more than \$1 million.

When passed, the measure will generate about \$9 billion a year for the state budget. Placing the money into the general fund ensures there will be money for schools, colleges and other essential services at the same time it pays down the state's wall of debt. In addition, it guarantees communities get

funding for the realignment of services approved by the Legislature last year. Paying for the realignment will free up about \$3 billion a year to be spent on higher education — CSU and UC — and other essential services.

WHAT IF IT DOESN'T PASS?

The California budget has suffered huge cuts in every program; from education to universities, from child care to seniors and from public safety to programs for the disabled and needy. This year \$4.8 billion in new cuts to schools and colleges are being proposed if this initiative doesn't pass.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Sign a petition today, tell your friends and neighbors about it, and learn more about tax fairness at www.cta.org/taxfairness.

THERE'S STILL TIME TO SIGN?

Not much, so do it today! Find the three easy steps to gather signatures and the online version of the petition at: protectschoolsandpublicsafety.com/petition.



▲ **Dina Luetgens** (Yuba City TA president) and **Susan Solomon** (United Educators of San Francisco secretary) review member suggestions on the teacher evaluation procedure.

► CTA Executive Director **Carolyn Doggett** discussed the role of women in labor history during her speech to Council. Doggett, who is the first woman to serve as executive director of CTA, said, "It is our responsibility to reach out to younger women, make them feel welcome in the union, encourage them to participate, and build new leaders. It is equally important that you reach out to young women of all colors. One person may not be able to change the world immediately, but our individual actions can make a difference one person at a time."



Photo by Dina Martin



▲ State Council honored CTA Education Support Professional of the Year **Robert Hill** of the Ventura Classified Employees Association, shown here being congratulated by NEA Director **Paula Monroe** and CTA ESP Issues Advisory Committee Chair **Doreen McGuire-Grigg**.



▲ **Kandi Nieto**, San Diego EA, and **Meritt Davies**, Lafayette EA, were all ears when it came to discussions about early childhood education.



▲ CTA members **Eleanor Evans** (San Diego EA), **Julie Nielsen** (Anaheim TA), **Bryan Blatte** (Newark TA), and **Sheen Yee Florence Flesche** (Bakersfield TA) review the state's Common Core Content Standards, which are intended to clarify what students are expected to learn.



▲ Innocent **Miramonte Elementary School** teachers who were hastily and improperly reassigned to other schools following criminal charges against one teacher shared their story. Front row: Joyce Berwanger, Tom Louie, Christine Chipres, Maria Peaza. Second row: Tom Vaughn, Andrea Shaffer, Rosalinda Aguilar, Blanca Gonzalez. Third row: Ingrid Villeda, UTLA/NEA Secretary David Lyell, UTLA Elementary Vice President Juan Ramirez, MJ Roberts, Maria Miranda, William Turner, Martha Gemme, CTA Board member David Goldberg, Luiz Lopez.



▲ **Robert Ellis**, United Teachers of Richmond, and **Judy Olson**, California Faculty Association, compare notes on teacher evaluation proposals.

Miramonte teachers share their story

► CTA presidents send letters of support

MIRAMONTE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL staff addressed State Council in March, describing their treatment amid allegations of abuse by a single individual. Since then, CTA President Dean Vogel and dozens of local chapter presidents wrote letters to LAUSD Superintendent John Deasy expressing their disapproval. They urged him to follow district policies and state law in dealing with abuse allegations and student safety, and to treat teachers with respect. (See more on this story on page 31.)

The following are excerpts from the teachers' statement, which was read by Maria Miranda.

We are the teachers from Miramonte Elementary School. ... We take our job as mandated reporters very seriously, and the safety of our students has always been our top priority. We feel that our students have endured a traumatic experience due to the alleged incidents and to the removal of the entire staff at their school.

Children were wronged, and teachers have been wronged as well. ...

We are under attack, vilified by both politicians and the media. This has become evident from the unfair treatment we have received from the Los Angeles Unified School District. We have been pulled from our classroom and students. Our futures have been put on hold.

We were removed from a nurturing educational environment and relocated to an unfinished high school without students. District personnel have told us they are making up the plan as they go along. While we have not been accused of a crime, we are being treated as though we are suspects or have already been found guilty of conspiracy. We have been told we cannot be around students or parents from our school community or any other school community within LAUSD.

On the evening of Feb. 6, we were informed by our superintendent, Dr. John Deasy, that we were to pack our personal belongings and vacate the campus. We were given two days to pack up our lives as educators. With each box we packed, we sealed our hopes and dreams of plans we had for our students. We packed our expertise and our chosen purpose in life.

We had one hour during the two-day packing process for a "seamless transition" to impart all of our knowledge of our students and educational plans to our replacement teachers.

Now Miramonte is being used as a model to create educational policies that negatively impact student achievement and the teaching profession throughout the state of California. We fear that this trend will spread. ... This is exemplified by pending California legislation to remove teachers based on allegations prior to an investigation and without due process.

By attacking our earned pensions and reviewing our personnel files, our district is intimidating and creating a culture of fear in an attempt to paralyze and silence our union. These arbitrary actions are directly affecting the union rights and civil rights of teachers. ... This puts the careers of all teachers in jeopardy and makes the future of public education uncertain.

We are here today to urge you to voice your disapproval before these practices become the norm.



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FIND A LOCAL SPRINT RETAIL STORE

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Existing customers, visit sprint.com/verify to add discount

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Learn about CTA's legal resources at www.cta.org/rifs.

20,000 RECEIVE 'PRECAUTIONARY' PINK SLIPS

► *Final cuts due by May 15*

ONE BAY AREA TEACHER was five months pregnant when she got her pink slip last month. A Sacramento educator got hers for the fifth frustrating year in a row. And notices went to 28 of the 29 teachers at Fay Elementary in San Diego City Unified, where the local chapter is challenging the district to stop unnecessary layoffs.

These are not the kind of teachable moments educators have in mind when they enter the profession.

Lives were put on hold as more than 20,000 teachers received precautionary RIF (reduction in force) notices — “precautionary” because some may be rescinded later on as budgets permit. School districts have until May 15 to decide on final cuts for teachers, counselors, librarians, and all certificated staff.

“When you issue thousands of layoff notices for educators, you are hurting students,” said CTA President Dean E. Vogel said. “When you continually lay off educators, you break the bonds of learning, and you send the message that education is not a priority in our state.”

The precautionary pink slips are a drastic reminder of how badly our public schools need more funding, Vogel added. That is why CTA is supporting the new version of the Schools and Local Public Safety Protection Act, a ballot initiative that would raise taxes on the wealthy to restore some funding to schools and local public services (see page 24).

California ranks 47th in per-pupil public education spending. Many district

budgets have been cut to the bone, Vogel said, and the “precautionary” pink slips are the fallout from more than \$20 billion in public education cuts to schools in the past four years.

THE BAY AREA

CTA held a news conference March 15 in Brisbane so Bay Area educators could share their stories. The 550-student Brisbane School District pink-slipped more than 25 percent of its 30 teachers, while the greater Bay Area was hit by more than 1,500 educator pink slips.

Teacher Cynthia Dalmacio spoke out about the wrong message being sent when a teacher like herself — with 16 years of experience — is getting a pink slip for the fourth year in a row.

“My three children attend our public schools, and I am now five months pregnant with my fourth child,” Dalmacio said quietly as TV news cameras rolled. “Students see me in tears at the end of each school year, and I know that affects them emotionally. But beyond that I worry, like so many pink-slipped teachers do, about how I will financially support my family.”

Similar frustrations were voiced by Pamela Sison, a pink-slipped educator in New Haven Unified in Union City. Speaking at a March 13 Education Coalition

news conference, Sison said “My pink slip was issued by our school board, but it was the result of poor decision-making in Sacramento. Union City is a working-class town, and our neighborhood schools are holding things together. My students deserve better, and so does my community.”

The 13,000-student district is racked by a \$10.7 million budget deficit. It issued 85 pink slips, including notices for all librarians. Another 32 New Haven classified employees are among the thousands of California education support professionals also facing dismissal due to state cuts.

“I have been teaching now for 25 years, and this is the worst I have seen the cuts,”



With her daughter Jessica at her side, Bay Area teacher Cynthia Dalmacio shares her story at a CTA news conference. Cynthia's baby is due in June.

said Charmaine Banther, New Haven Teachers Association president. “We are in shock here.”

LOS ANGELES

Imagine the chaos: a school district issues massive numbers of pink slips to close projected budget deficits.

Los Angeles Unified, the largest district in California and second-largest in the nation, rocked United Teachers Los Angeles members when the school board issued an unprecedented 9,500 layoff notices.

“This large number of layoff notices, if finalized, would destroy the district,” UTLA President Warren Fletcher warned the LAUSD School Board as hundreds of teachers, parents and students protested outside. He demanded that the district use \$180 million in newly available state funding to rescind more than 2,100 RIF notices.

The district responded by hiring a \$93,000-a-year social media director, which UTLA blasted in a flier to members as an example of LAUSD “sending a clear message to its employees that its priority and focus is not on the classroom but rather on public relations to fix its damaged reputation.”

A \$298 local parcel tax on the November ballot could repair some of the LAUSD cuts. See updates at www.utla.net.

SACRAMENTO

In Sacramento City Unified, first-grade teacher Kelly Ryan is tired of getting pink slips. Five years in the district have meant five layoff notices, said Ryan, who is on the Political Involvement Committee of the Sacramento City Teachers Association. Fewer teachers mean larger class sizes, she warns.

“Increasing class size at a time and in a district where many of our schools are already in Program Improvement further jeopardizes the opportunity for student achievement. We need to make decisions based on what’s best for kids. It seems that

we have lost sight of that priority.”

Ryan said the 48,000-student district adds to the confusion by not following seniority policies when it comes to rescinding pink slips. “Unfortunately, the district has a tendency to forgo the negotiated contract language around seniority and instead rehire teachers based on a unilateral, arbitrary decision process.”

Fighting nearly 400 pink slips is taking its toll on Sacramento district teachers, said SCTA President Scott Smith. “There is kind of a battle fatigue that sets in.”

SAN DIEGO

In San Diego Unified, the state’s second-largest district, the school board is demanding concessions from the 8,000-member San Diego Education Association before rescinding layoffs, but SDEA questions the budget data and worst-case scenarios that the district is using.

“The school board knows this system is broken. They also know that if 1,600 educators are laid off, they can’t open our schools next fall,” SDEA President Bill Freeman said. “We continue to call on the district to work with us.”

Precious Jackson-Hubbard, a former teacher of the year at Lincoln High School, received her third pink slip in six years. They devalue our skills, she said.

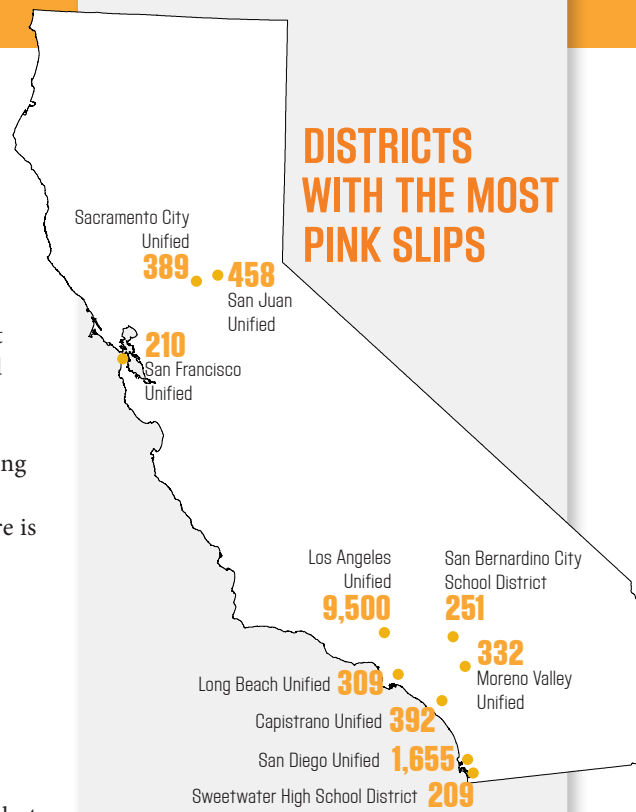
“My colleagues and my students value me, but not this district. You would think we would get used to this, but we don’t. You would think it hurts less, but it actually hurts more,” she said. “When I stop to think of the reality of what could be, that I could be out of work, it’s very scary.”

Jackson-Hubbard is the sole breadwinner. It’s not fair that cuts are forcing her to choose between taking care of her family and her students, who are like family to her as well, she said.

“We go into teaching because it’s our heart’s passion. But I really have to think about paying the rent now. It’s heartbreaking.”

By Mike Myslinski

DISTRICTS WITH THE MOST PINK SLIPS



Been RIF'd?

CTA is here to help.

Receiving a layoff notice (RIF or Reduction In Force) is without a doubt one of the most discouraging situations any educator can experience. If you are pink-slipped, you should immediately contact your local chapter and your primary contact staff (PCS).

Legal resources are available on the CTA website at www.cta.org/rifs. The Layoff Survival Guide is an excellent resource where you’ll find valuable tips and suggestions for coping.

Topics include:

- Everything you want to know about RIFs.
- Important instructions and answers to frequently asked questions.
- Notice of Defense and Request for Hearing forms.

Be assured that while you are coping with this difficult situation, CTA continues to fight for you. We are working tirelessly to restore budget cuts made to schools and to fight for adequate funding so that our schools can provide the top-quality education that our students deserve.

We go into teaching because it’s our heart’s passion. But I really have to think about paying the rent now. It’s heartbreaking.

Precious Jackson-Hubbard

CTA's recommendations for the June 5 primary election

► *Now more than ever, support and VOTE for CTA's recommended candidates.*

REMEMBER — your vote makes a difference. In California's "open primary" system, the top two vote-getters, regardless of political party, will move on to the November general election. Now more than ever we must elect lawmakers who will fund public schools and support teachers. Know that when you cast your vote for CTA-recommended candidates, you vote for those who will support teaching and learning issues.

STATE ASSEMBLY

AD 02	Wes Chesbro	AD 52	Norma Torres
AD 04	Mariko Yamada	AD 53	John Pérez
AD 06	Reginald Bronner	AD 54	Holly Mitchell
AD 07	Roger Dickinson	AD 56	Victor Manuel Pérez
AD 08	Ken Cooley	AD 57	Rudy Bermudez*
AD 09	Richard Pan	AD 61	Jose Medina
AD 10	Michael Allen	AD 62	Steven Bradford
AD 11	Patricia Hernandez	AD 63	Anthony Rendon
AD 14	Susan Bonilla	AD 64	Isadore Hall III
AD 15	Nancy Skinner	AD 66	Al Muratsuchi
AD 16	Joan Buchanan	AD 69	Julio Perez
AD 17	Tom Ammiano	AD 70	Bonnie Lowenthal*
AD 18	Abel Guillen	AD 78	Toni Atkins
AD 19	Phil Ting	AD 80	Ben Hueso
AD 21	Adam Gray		
AD 22	Kevin Mullin		
AD 24	Rich Gordon		
AD 25	Bob Wieckowski		
AD 27	Nora Campos		
AD 28	Paul Fong		
AD 29	Mark Stone		
AD 30	Luis Alejo		
AD 31	Henry Perea*		
AD 32	Rudy Salas		
AD 36	Steve Fox		
AD 37	Das Williams		
AD 38	Paul Strickland		
AD 39	Richard Alarcón		
AD 41	Chris Holden		
AD 42	Mark Orozco		
AD 43	Mike Gatto*		
AD 45	Bob Blumenfield		
AD 46	Andrew Lachman		
AD 48	Roger Hernández		
AD 49	Edwin Chau		

STATE SENATE

SD 03	Lois Wolk
SD 05	Cathleen Galgiani
SD 07	Mark DeSaulnier*
SD 09	Loni Hancock
SD 11	Mark Leno
SD 13	Sally Lieber
SD 15	Jim Beall
SD 17	Bill Monning
SD 19	Hannah-Beth Jackson
SD 21	Star Moffatt
SD 25	Carol Liu
SD 27	Fran Pavley
SD 33	Ricardo Lara
SD 35	Roderick Wright
SD 39	Marty Block

*Pending paperwork

To see CTA's candidate recommendations for members of Congress, visit www.cta.org/campaign2012.



As we head into campaign season, CTA is your go-to resource. Here are handy sites to find downloadable materials and to keep you updated.

Bookmark these sites!

CAMPAIGN 2012

www.cta.org/campaign2012



CTA'S FACEBOOK PAGE

www.facebook.com/californiateachersassociation



VOTE YES on Proposition 28

Term Limits Reform

This initiative changes the term limits of members of the state Legislature, which currently allow a legislator to serve two terms in the Senate and three terms in the Assembly, for a maximum of 14 years. Prop. 28 reduces the lifetime total to 12 years, but allows a legislator to serve in the Assembly, the Senate, or a combination of the two. While the overall limit would be reduced, a legislator could stay longer in one house and develop greater expertise within a policy area, which would make them more effective and more accountable to their constituency.

Lawmakers use Miramonte as excuse to take away teachers' rights

IN THE WAKE OF the Miramonte Elementary School sex abuse allegations, a trio of bills has been introduced that would take away rights from all California teachers. Under the guise of increased student safety, lawmakers and others are pushing legislation that will do nothing to make students safer than they are under current law, but will make teachers far more vulnerable to arbitrary or vindictive termination. This is nothing more than a diversion tactic to shift attention away from the fact that the administration at Los Angeles Unified School District didn't follow the current law.

Investigation into what happened at Miramonte has revealed additional cases at other schools, all tied to failures of administrative oversight and follow-through, and to the labyrinthine bureaucracy that sometimes strangles LAUSD. Superintendent John Deasy initially promised swift action to make sure both state law and district policies regarding employees accused of abuse were followed, then abruptly shifted attention away from the systemic failures that had put students at risk. He disrupted the education of Miramonte students by replacing the entire staff (teachers and support personnel against whom no allegations had been made) and began calling for legislation making it "easier to fire teachers."

Lawmakers, all too eager to join the superintendent in focusing on the wrong target, answered his call. But the three new bills by Senators Alex Padilla and Bob Huff and Assembly Members Steve Knight and Cameron Smyth would do nothing to make students safer. Under current dismissal law, school districts already have authority, and in fact are compelled, to immediately remove teachers facing a wide range of allegations from the classroom. A second fail-safe lies with the state's Commission on Teacher Credentialing, which suspends or revokes credentials of teachers accused or convicted of crimes or serious misconduct. Dismissal under those circumstances remains relatively cut-and-dried: Teachers without a credential or who have been charged with a serious crime cannot teach.

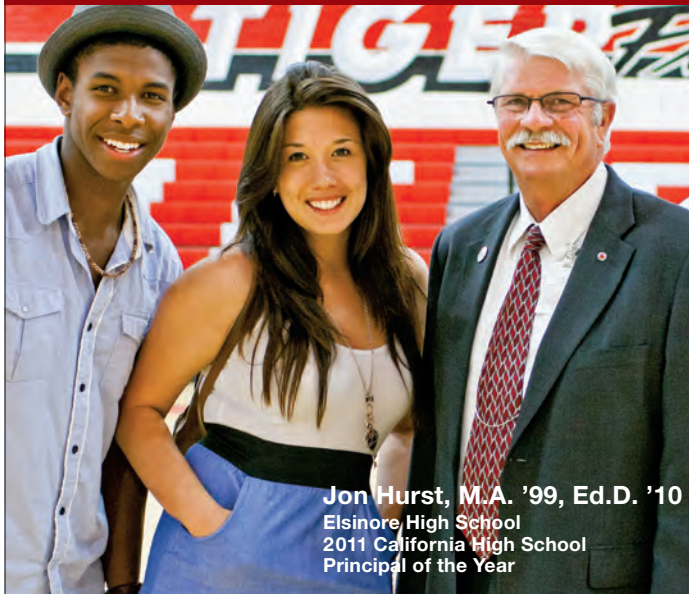
The current system was designed to place student safety first, but also to protect teachers from unfair or capricious dismissals. And when existing law is followed, both are possible. Teachers are often the first to speak out on school safety issues or to defend reforms like smaller class sizes and adequate resources. Stripping them of basic rights will make it far too easy for districts to go after whistle-blowers on trumped-up charges that wouldn't stand scrutiny or be allowed under the current law.

Instead of making students safer, these new bills take away teachers' rights to address concerns or respond to allegations.

AT PRESS TIME: CTA is meeting with Senator Padilla to amend his bill.

By Frank Wells

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Reloaded parent trigger misfires in Adelanto

ON MARCH 28, the Adelanto Elementary School District Board of Trustees unanimously rejected the resubmission of a “parent trigger” petition, saying pro-trigger organizers had failed to reach the simple majority threshold required by the state’s Parent Empowerment Act of 2009. The petition had been resubmitted by the pro-trigger organization Parent Revolution after its initial submission was rejected because of signature errors. Large numbers of rescissions by parents with second thoughts and still-invalid signatures again torpedoed the effort.

The rejection capped Parent Revolution’s second failed attempt to invoke the parent trigger law, which allows a majority of parents to impose one of five consequences on an underperforming school, based on Race to the Top guidelines. Parent Revolution’s first attempt in Compton was tossed out of court last year, with some parents saying they had been misled by organizers or did not fully understand what they were signing.

The Adelanto campaign was fraught with similar problems. Adding to the confusion was the fact that Parent Revolution had circulated two different petitions, using the trigger option to leverage for demands on the other petition.

The school board meeting brought a number of heavy hitters from outside Adelanto, including former state Sen. Gloria

Romero, author of the Parent Empowerment Act and currently the California director of Democrats for Education Reform, a pro-trigger organization. Romero flip-flopped on her earlier comments that rescissions should be allowed, and then back-pedaled from remarks criticizing Parent Revolution’s confusing two-petition strategy. Romero admitted to the school board she had never been to Adelanto before, and reminded them of the national implications of their decision and the importance of sending a message with their decision.

Board member Debra Jones responded, “I couldn’t care less if the world is watching or not. It is not my role to send a message on the nobility of any law. My duty is to obey the law and to listen to the voices in this local community, not the whole country. These parents, these stakeholders, we all have a vested interest in how these kids turn out.”

La Nita Dominique, president of the Adelanto District Teachers Association (ADTA), decried threats of costly further litigation and the destructive influence outsiders with an agenda have had on the community. “It saddens me. We have to live and work together here long after these other organizations are gone and long after the outsiders here tonight have driven back down the hill,” she told the school board.

Dominique urged the community to move forward with collaborative school improvement efforts ADTA was helping bring to the district, rather than create more division through the parent trigger.

By Frank Wells

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Stockton teachers win appeal

EVERYONE SHOULD BE treated fairly, and a teacher's job security should not be determined by how the employer says the position is funded. That thinking prompted the Stockton Teachers Association (STA), with CTA's help, to go to court in 2009 to protest the continuing abuse of the "temporary" classification of employees.

Some teachers employed in categorical programs may be entitled to probationary status, following a decision by the California Court of Appeal that limits school districts' rights to classify teachers as "temporary."

School districts statewide misclassify teachers as temporary, denying them due process rights and participation in RIF proceedings.

At issue is the fact that school districts statewide misclassify teachers, denying them due process rights and participation in RIF (reduction in force) proceedings. The Court of Appeal determined that, except in certain limited circumstances, teachers in a mandatory program with

federal or state funding should be classified as probationary staff, not temporary, thus affording them more job security.

There are two appropriate uses of "temporary" employment status: to replace a person on leave who will return; and where a teacher performs non-mandatory, categorically-funded or contract-funded projects, where the funding or contract will expire, and where the teacher is explicitly hired for the term of the contract or project.

By Cynthia Menzel

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Proposal increases retirement age

► *Governor's pension proposal pains members' pocketbooks*

AFTER NEARLY 34 YEARS teaching students with moderate to severe disabilities, Ukiyah special education teacher Deanna Willson looks forward to retiring someday soon. She can't imagine having to wait until she's 67 to do it.

Under Gov. Jerry Brown's pension reform plan, however, 67 would be the new retirement age for public employees in non-safety positions — employees like teachers and education support professionals.

Although the proposal won't affect Willson's retirement plans, she still can't fathom it for her or for newly recruited teachers. "When you've been doing this for 34 or 35 years, there's a lot of wear and tear on the body," she says. "I haven't had to lift kids for a few years, but I'm always bending up and down, pushing wheelchairs, helping them go to the toilet and assisting

them with eating. I think it would be difficult to do my job after age 60, and I'm in good shape."

Increasing the retirement age of public employees is one of several proposals the governor recommended in his pension reform package of last fall. CTA is working

Members will experience a significant reduction in their standard of living.

to improve the plan before it is voted on by the Legislature.

Talk to almost any educator these days, and they will scoff at the idea of raising their retirement age to 67.

"This is an extremely physical job," says Rebecca Margolis, a member of the South-

west Teachers Association in San Diego and, like Willson, a special education teacher. Margolis works with students with mild to moderate disabilities, some with autism and behavioral issues.

Education support professionals like Robert Hill, a carpenter and member of the Ventura Classified Employees Association, also see no rhyme or reason to the governor's proposal. Hill says the majority of ESP begin their job as second careers and can

only expect to receive a pension of \$1,400 to \$1,600 a month when they retire.

"They're talking about raising the retirement age to 67? When the average lifespan of a male in this country is 74, that would give me six to seven years to enjoy retirement," he says.

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Although the governor says that raising the retirement age will reduce the amount of time retirement benefits must be paid, there are other variables to consider. During a February Senate hearing, Ed Derman, deputy chief executive officer of the California State Teachers' Retirement System, testified that by making CalSTRS members work longer, the government can expect to see increased health care costs and disability benefits for older workers, which could offset savings the government might expect.

SOLVING THE ISSUE — OR CREATING A NEW ONE?

More importantly for CalSTRS members, under the governor's proposal in which two-thirds of their CalSTRS benefit would come from a revised defined benefit (pension) and one-third from a 401(k)-type plan, members will experience a significant reduction in their standard of living.

Derman testified that employees who spend a full 35 years in their career and retire at age 67 can expect an 18 percent reduction in retirement benefits under the governor's proposal. But employees who retire before age 67 would have their benefits reduced 40 percent and would receive just 35 percent of their final salary at retirement, rather than the 62 percent they would currently receive.

"Remember that CalSTRS members don't receive Social Security," Derman told the committee. "Essentially, that's it. And it's way below what a person could possibly expect to retire and maintain their standard of living."

Raising the retirement age can have other impacts as well. Some, like Maggie Ellis, chair of State Council's Retirement Committee, question whether raising the retirement age will skew the age of the entire teaching force. Those teachers will be at the top of the salary schedule, which

could also cause financial headaches for school districts.

"We want to create a natural attrition, where younger teachers replace those who are about to retire. But with this, we create older and older teachers," said Ellis. "Are we really solving the issue, or creating a new one?"

The governor also didn't consider the contributions California's retired teachers make to their local communities and the local economies. Not only do they contribute more than \$34.5 billion in economic output to the state each year, but retired teachers are the backbone of many communities, volunteering in community organizations, in schools, and on local boards. As one observer wryly pointed out, "Who do they think run the polls on Election Day?"

By Dina Martin

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It makes sense to use your senses to de-stress

THIS TIME of the school year sometimes causes job-related stress due to so much left to do and so little time in which to get it all accomplished. Stress is unavoidable — it is when it gets out of hand that problems can arise. One cause of stress is fatigue or overwork. Perhaps you can relate? There are simple ways to use your senses that can reduce your stress.

TOUCH

Wearing soft fabrics like silk or cashmere can actually lower blood pressure. Wearing comfy clothes, getting a massage, petting an animal, hugging a loved one or taking a warm bath or shower also releases stress.

SMELL

Stopping to smell the roses, literally, can be good for you. Scents like lavender, jasmine, sandalwood, green apple, orange and vanilla can actually have a calming effect, as can the aroma of baked goods, the fragrance of fresh flowers, or any scent associated with pleasant memories.

TASTE

Comfort food, in moderation, can be good for you and soothes frayed nerves. Wine and dark chocolate have antioxidants. Chocolate and other sweets have three pleasurable sensations — taste, smell and texture. Favorite childhood foods, creamy treats like pudding and ice cream, and high-fat foods that have phenylethylamine (PEA) are natural mood elevators.

SIGHT

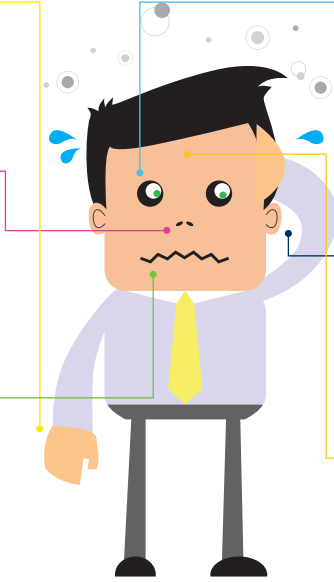
What you see can trigger tension. If your teenager is driving you crazy, pull out a baby picture. Pictures involving peaceful vistas in the great outdoors, billowing clouds, lush trees and shimmering lakes can reduce your stress. Seeing cool colors like blue, green or violet in pale hues, as well as earth tones like sand, beige and brown can be an antidote, too.

SOUND

Noise pollution can make you crazy — a voice can stimulate feelings of calm or crisis. Calming sounds include slow instrumental music, music with pleasant associations (lullabies or hymns), calming nature sounds, white noise and silence.

LAUGH

It's one of the healthiest antidotes. Listen to a joke, watch a funny movie, read a humorous novel or look at funny clips on YouTube. And remember, the next eight weeks will end sooner than you think!



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LESLIE YALE, Rock Star

BUILD AN ELECTRIC GUITAR to understand science, technology and engineering. That's how Leslie Yale, member of the South Humboldt Teachers Association, achieves rock star status when it comes to finding new ways of getting students excited about physics and chemistry at South Fork High School in Miranda.

"By building a guitar with me, they will be able to take what they have learned in the classroom about sound waves, electricity, motion, velocity and math, and apply that to the real world," says Yale. "It will be a pretty good bonding exercise, too."

She took a workshop on how to build electric guitars and use them as teaching

tools last summer at the College of the Redwoods in Fortuna. (For more information, visit www.guitarbuilding.org.) Working from instructions in a guitar-building kit, Yale built an electric guitar from scratch during the weeklong session. She plans to build another guitar with students in an after-school science enrichment program.

Yale says the experience of guitar-building was intense. "It put me in the position of thinking like a student in the classroom." Building a guitar requires using a drill press and lathe, plus soldering and computer-aided design (CAD).

"I have remodeled a bathroom and

fixed up things around the house, but this challenged me beyond my comfort level," she says. "At first I felt that it was beyond my capacity, but I achieved my goal because I believed in myself."

Yale and other teachers in the workshop collaborated on lesson plans to incorporate math, chemistry, physics and science lessons with guitar-building. They continue to share their lesson plans and results with students online.

Now that Yale has built a guitar, does she know how to play it? Afraid not.

"My son plays very well," she says. "And he says my guitar sounds beautiful."

By **Sherry Posnick-Goodwin**
Photo by **Scott Buschman**



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