

# california educator

APRIL 2017 VOLUME 21 ISSUE 7

California Day of the  
Teacher poster  
INSIDE BACK COVER

## PEER REVIEW

### Makes a Comeback

Teachers guiding teachers to success  
is a win-win for everyone. PAGE 22

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### WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

#### MAGAZINE

##### HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS

Eight extraordinary individuals honored as CTA's 2017 Human Rights Award winners.

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##### FROM SOUP TO NUTS

Schools, educators cope with dangerous food allergies.

**PAGE 22**

##### ALTERNATIVE DISCIPLINE

Benefits to restorative practices, but a need for training and infrastructure.

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##### LA PROMESA

Unique high school program gives students STEM teaching experience. **PAGE 33**

##### HUNGRY IN CLASS

How do you deal with a big barrier to learning? **PAGE 38**

#### DIGITAL

##### MAY 1: DAY OF ACTION

Join CTA's Statewide Day of Action to show support for the public education all students deserve. [f](#) [t](#) [i](#) [v](#)

[cta.org/forallstudents](http://cta.org/forallstudents)

**#WeAreCTA**

##### DAY OF THE TEACHER

Get ideas to appreciate and celebrate your school's teachers on May 10.

[cta.org/dayoftheteacher](http://cta.org/dayoftheteacher)

**#DayoftheTeacher**

##### BILLS WE STAND BY

Current legislation that CTA supports, and why. **PAGE 28**

[cta.org/legislation](http://cta.org/legislation)

##### "WE LOVE YOU NO MATTER WHAT"

Watch Santa Rosa High School teacher Will Lyon read his poem declaring love and acceptance for all students.

[bit.ly/20gPqXe](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bit.ly/20gPqXe)

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

##### PROUD, UNITED, ENGAGED

Hurry to sign up: CTA's Joint Ethnic Caucus Issues Conference, May 5-7. [cta.org](http://cta.org)

##### SUMMER TRAINING

CTA's Summer Institute, at UCLA July 30-Aug. 3, covers everything from instructional practices to coalition-building. [cta.org](http://cta.org) **#CTASI**

##### NEA FOUNDATION GRANTS

NEA members can apply by June 1 for teaching and professional development grants. [neafoundation.org](http://neafoundation.org)

##### RACIAL & SOCIAL JUSTICE

NEA conference in Boston aims to grow the education justice movement. June 28-29. [nea.org/racialsocialjustice](http://nea.org/racialsocialjustice)

#### MEMBER BENEFITS

##### THE RIGHT PLAN

Protect yourself, avoid pitfalls when choosing a retirement savings plan. **PAGE 47**

##### VACATION FOR LESS

New travel tool at Access to Savings can save you big bucks. **PAGE 46**

##### CTA AUTO & HOME INSURANCE

Educators receive unique benefits, special discounts, superior customer service. [ctamemberbenefits.org/auto](http://ctamemberbenefits.org/auto)

##### CTA REWARDS CREDIT CARD

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*Above, the 2017 graduates and trainers of CTA's Education Support Professionals Leadership Development Academy, in Los Angeles in March.*



## FEATURE

### PEANUT FREE

It's a balancing act: Schools, educators must protect students with life-threatening food allergies while not excluding them and accommodating all students. **PAGE 16**

## FEATURE

### PAR MAKES A COMEBACK

Peer Assistance and Review programs nearly succumbed to Great Recession budget cuts. They're coming back strong, serving as quality professional development and investment in teachers. **PAGE 22**



**COVER:** Julia Wright, Downey Education Association, coordinates her district's PAR program.

#### THIS PAGE:

Left: Chesnie Henry, Nai Mani Turay-Bennett and Camille Pyska eat at the peanut-free table at Cobb Elementary School in Middletown. Right: California Teachers of the Year Shaun Bunn, Corrie Traynor, Jenny Chien Anderson and Isela Lieber.



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**YOUR OPINIONS ARE WELCOME!** We accept signed email and letters (250-word limit); we excerpt user posts from CTA social media platforms. Content subject to editing for clarity and space. Photos must have identifications and permissions.  
[Editor@cta.org](mailto:Editor@cta.org); [#WeAreCTA](https://www.facebook.com/wearecta)



## Embracing the Gender Spectrum

*Our March cover story "Embracing the Gender Spectrum," which focused on how educators can become knowledgeable and sensitive about the gender spectrum in their teaching and student interactions, drew quite a bit of feedback from various perspectives. Highlights:*

I enjoyed the article. It was thoughtful, reasonably complete, and informative.

The one omission I noticed was discussion of transgender educators. We exist and can be instrumental as positive role models for all the students we touch. We also face unique challenges both within and outside our schools. I hope that these issues can be explored in a future article.

### GEORGIA LYLE

*Hart District Teachers Association*

To tell a normal, healthy biological girl that she is a boy is exactly like telling

an anorexic girl that she is fat. It is both untrue and destructive.

There are those who deny the historical fact of the Holocaust of the Jews and Armenians. There are those who deny the atmospheric fact of climate change. There are those who deny the biological fact that there are only two genders: male and female. Cases of genital malformation due to hormonal or genetic disorders are referred to as intersex, but this is not a third gender.

Ninety percent of children with gender dysphoria grow up to be homosexual. Their confusion is not with gender, but with sexuality. A boy who likes to wear dresses is not a girl. Girls who enjoy masculine activities are not boys. Being homosexual or dressing in nonstandard ways is perfectly fine, but it has nothing to do with a child's gender.

All children should be safe, and this means that no one has the right to invade the privacy of other people in situations where gender segregation exists for real and good reasons. Biological males should not be allowed on all-girl sport teams. Biological girls should not be allowed in the boys' locker room.

### RAY SHELTON

*Glendale Teachers Association*

As a retired teacher, I appreciated the article relating to gender inclusive schools.

At the beginning of each school

year, my students decided upon how to line up properly before the start of class, at recess, lunch and P.E. Although I suggested numerous ways to form lines, they always wanted to be in lines with boys and girls. We tried birth days, shoe colors, etc., but they always lined up with a boy line and girl line.

I do take issue with page 42: There are "Dump DeVos" signs, while on the opposite page there is a "Hate Free Zone" article. I find this to be hypocritical.

I suggest CTA give DeVos an opportunity to show her worth. I also find it hard to believe CTA stood silent while the Obama Department of Education did very little to improve the education our children so importantly deserve but didn't receive.

### RALPH E. SPENCE

*Teachers Association of Norwalk-La Mirada (retired)*

## Picture This

Henry Ralston, Hanford Elementary Teachers Association, with CTA President Eric Heins at the Good Teaching Conference South in March. Henry was a lucky winner and got invited to sit at the president's table during the luncheon.



## CONTEST: Educators Are Everywhere

Traveling this summer? Shoot a photo of you with your *Educator* wherever you land for vacation, research or professional development and send it to us for our annual contest. Three winners will receive a gift card for school supplies, and we'll showcase many more online and in our August Back to School issue. Send to [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org) with Educators Are Everywhere in the subject line.

# Teachers See the Possibilities

In Jennifer Swanson's high school English class, seniors master material that prepares them for college and careers, gaining writing and communication skills to benefit them throughout their lives.



Arroyo High School, Expository English Class, Teacher: Jennifer Swanson '96, M.A.Ed. '99

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### School of Education

[apu.edu/explore/education](http://apu.edu/explore/education)



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# california educator

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CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2016, to Aug. 31, 2017) are \$843, including a \$20 refundable contribution (see [cta.org/contribution](http://cta.org/contribution) for details). Up to \$18.62 of CTA annual dues is designated for CTA/ABC political activities to support state and local candidates and/or initiatives and is not deductible for income tax purposes.

Subscription to the *California Educator* is \$10 per year, available to persons or institutions not eligible for CTA/NEA membership.

#### CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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#### MISSION STATEMENT

The California Teachers Association exists to protect and promote the well-being of its members; to improve the conditions of teaching and learning; to advance the cause of free, universal, and quality public education; to ensure that the human dignity and civil rights of all children and youth are protected; and to secure a more just, equitable, and democratic society.

*California Educator* Volume 21, Issue 7, April 2017

*California Educator* (ISSN 1091-6148) is published monthly except December, February, June and July by: California Teachers Association, 1705 Murchison Dr., Burlingame, CA 94010-4583. Periodicals Postage Paid at Burlingame, CA, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to *California Educator*, P.O. Box 4178, Burlingame, CA 94011-4178.

nea

CTA





# We've Always Been Advocates

**W**e're coming toward the end of the year. Many of you are in the middle of testing, which always takes a toll on students, teachers and education support professionals. As May approaches and many students anxiously wait for college acceptance letters, graduation day is within reach. It's a milestone students and parents have been waiting for and educators have been preparing their students for since they entered kindergarten.

This time of year reminds me why I love being an educator and why I'm proud to belong to a profession and a union of champions for all students. As an education community, we've all had a role in shaping our students' futures.

We are not only educators, but also strong and vocal advocates for our students. It's always been a natural role for educators and a driving factor of why CTA was founded over 150 years ago. Since the beginning, our advocacy has been student-centered. In 1866, our first legislative victory resulted in free public education for all students, including schools educating African American students. In 1967, 101 years later, our efforts led to establishing schools for children of migrant workers and offering bilingual instruction classes for English learners. Add another 50 years, and CTA and our members are still standing up for the rights of all children.

This May 1, educators, students, parents and community members take a stand to reclaim their neighborhood public schools as safe zones for all students — regardless of their ethnicity, immigration status, identity or orientation. CTA declared May 1 as a Statewide Day of Action so that parents

don't fear sending their kids to school and students can feel the support of their community. Leading this day at public schools across California, educators send a clear message that all students matter and all students deserve a quality public education.

The advocacy work we are doing right now to make sure all students can learn in a safe environment, to engage parents and local communities, and to keep funding for public education from being handed over to for-profit charter management companies is very much part of CTA's mission.

Educators' work and determination through the years have helped take California from those early pioneering days to its place in the world today, ranking as the sixth-largest economy. That spirit and determination are still alive and helping educators lead the way in communities across the state in a new era of local control. Through the Local Control Funding Formula, additional funds are delivered to districts serving students who need more help, and local stakeholders have a say in designing the best educational opportunities for their students.

This is a new concept in education funding that recognizes what we've always known: A one-size-fits-all, top-down, rigid education policy will not bend to meet the students who need more of our care, attention and resources to reach their full potential. While there are stumbling blocks, and in some cases roadblocks, CTA members are using the opportunity to engage their communities and have real conversations about what local students deserve (such as smaller class sizes, college and career pathways, and well-rounded

## WE BELIEVE:

BLACK LIVES MATTER  
WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS  
NO HUMAN IS ILLEGAL  
SCIENCE IS REAL  
LOVE IS LOVE  
KINDNESS IS EVERYTHING



Poster from CTA's Social Justice Toolkit at [cta.org/forallstudents](http://cta.org/forallstudents)

programs that include music, art and PE).

In many locations around the state, CTA's advocacy agenda, titled "The Public Education All California Students Deserve," is being used to begin those conversations. This year the agenda inspires our theme for California Day of the Teacher.

You've accomplished so much this year and left lifelong impressions on students. In addition to CTA's Statewide Day of Action, May brings us Day of the Teacher on May 10 and Education Support Professionals Day on May 23. These awareness holidays give us a chance to pat ourselves and our colleagues on the back for the good work over the past year, and remind us that together we shape the future of this state, just as we have been doing for the past 154 years.

Thank you so much for all you do to make sure all students get the public education they deserve.

**Eric C. Heins**

CTA PRESIDENT  
[@ericheins](https://twitter.com/ericheins)

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CTA 2017 Human Rights Award winners. Standing: George Melendez, CTA Secretary-Treasurer David Goldberg, President Eric Heins, Vice President Theresa Montaño, Jared Rio and Kim Geron. Seated: Marty Meeden, Naomi Violet Forsberg, Reagan Duncan, Oscar Ramos and Betty Robinson-Harris.

Editor's  
Note

## Peerless Advice

Many of us find it intimidating to be evaluated by peers — those who know what we do and, often, how it can best be done. The flip side is that peer advice and support can strengthen our skills and our networks, and make us better equipped to do our work.

That's the concept behind Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) programs, described in our story "**Peer Assistance Makes a Comeback**" (page 22). After nearly succumbing to Great Recession budget cuts, PAR programs are now included in many locals' bargaining agendas, and educators are happy to have them.

Why? As many educators know, PAR is a win-win. A Harvard University Graduate School of Education project found that PAR helps new and struggling teachers succeed, increases retention, and promotes a culture focused on sound teaching practice. PAR professionalizes teaching by allowing teachers to be responsible for mentoring and evaluating their peers.

Sometimes PAR can be perceived as a negative, and it can be difficult or embarrassing to ask for help. "I tell [other educators] to have an open mind," says Oakland Education Association member

Vu Nguyen, who went through the program. "For me, PAR was a blessing."

Our other feature story, "**Peanut Free**" (page 16), looks at rising food allergies and how educators are coping with them. It's a tough balancing act: Schools and educators must protect students with food allergies, while accommodating those who enjoy foods that trigger allergies. They must also create an environment where children with food allergies are not excluded or blamed.

Teachers Association of South Pasadena member Julia Johnson believes the peanut-free policy at her school helps *all* students develop positive character traits. "Our students here are learning tolerance, empathy and compassion," she says.

Also teaching and modeling tolerance, empathy and compassion are **CTA's 2017 Human Rights Award recipients** (page 44). These remarkable educators demonstrate courage and activism every day in the classroom and in the community. Kim Geron advocates for immigrants and the undocumented; Reagan Duncan assists women in need; Naomi Violet Forsberg creates safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students; George Melendez, a CTA Board member, champions Native American culture; Jared Rio pushes for peace and human

and civil rights; and Betty Robinson-Harris promotes equal rights and students' social-emotional growth.

Oscar Ramos, the son of migrant farmworkers who toiled in the fields as a child, now works with the immigrant students and families he knows so well. And Marty Meeden, a CTA Board member, has long been a fearless advocate for cultural awareness and all students of color. Meeden is also this year's recipient of NEA's Leo Reano Memorial Award for his work to enhance the education of American Indian/Alaska Native children and youth.

And speaking of honorees, we meet up with Teri Roots, **CTA's Education Support Professional of the Year** (page 43). Known for growing leaders in the Ventura ESP Association, where she is president, Roots makes it a goal for her chapter to reach out to its nearly 800 members every year — to listen, engage and connect.

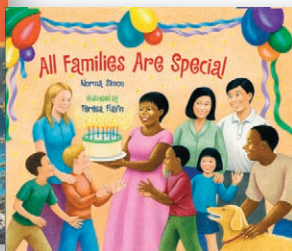
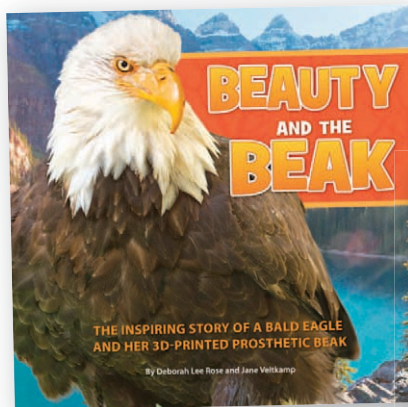
That is what educators do, in a nutshell, with one another and with their students. Our hats are off to you.

**Katharine Fong**

EDITOR IN CHIEF  
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Photo by Mike Myslinski



## Our Place in the World

Students will love these [#californiareads](#) book selections for spring and summer 2017.

Beauty is the wild bald eagle that made headlines when she received a 3-D–printed prosthetic beak after her own was shot off by a poacher in 2007. *Beauty and the Beak* (grades 3-5), by Deborah Lee Rose and raptor specialist Jane Veltkamp, shows the spirit and courage of this bird and America's national symbol

— saved from extinction by environmental conservation. It also details remarkable advances in 3-D printing and prosthetics that have given Beauty, and other animals and humans, a new life. The book's summer release celebrates the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Endangered Species Act.

In *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces* (grades 9-12), by Isabel Quintero, high school senior Gabi Hernandez chronicles experiences in her life and those of her friends and family in her journal: struggles with body image, growing up Mexican-American, teen pregnancy, drug addiction, rape, coming out, first love, and death. As she

tries to figure out her place in the world, Gabi meets every challenge head-on, writing with raw humor and honesty.

In *All Families Are Special* (pre-K, kindergarten), by Norma Simon and illustrated by Teresa Flavin, Mrs. Mack tells her class she will soon be a grandmother, and students eagerly talk about their own families: Sarah's sister Rachel was adopted from China; Christopher's parents are divorced, but they're still a family, and he and his brother split their time between two homes; Nick lives with his parents, five siblings and grandparents; and Hannah loves to garden with her two moms.

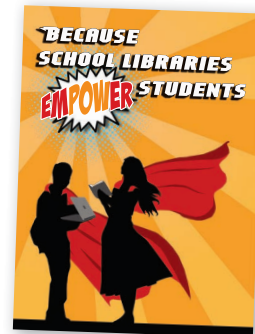
See [cta.org/californiareads](#) for more teacher-recommended book selections.



## Love the Library

Every April, school librarians host activities to help their school and community celebrate the essential role that strong school library programs play in transforming learning. Sponsored by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), this year's School Library Month national spokesperson is Northern California author Andy Weir, who says the library was his refuge when he was bullied in high school. AASL praises the main character in Weir's best-selling book, *The Martian*, for his creativity and perseverance (qualities librarians try to instill in students) as he fights to survive on Mars. The 2017 theme is "Because School Libraries Empower Students."

Read more at [ala.org/aasl/slm](#), and use [#slm17](#).



## Time to Appreciate Educators

Educators' impact on students extends far beyond the classroom and can last a lifetime. Coming up is that time of year to let yourself bask in a little well-deserved attention. May 7–13 is Teacher Appreciation Week, May 9 is National Teacher Day, May 10 is California Day of the Teacher and also School Nurse Day, May 21–27 is Education Support Professionals Week, and May 23 is CTA ESP Day.

California Day of the Teacher arose from legislation co-sponsored by CTA and the Association of Mexican American Educators in 1982. This year's theme is "**California Teachers: Advocates for the Public Education All Students Deserve**" — find the poster inside the back cover. For ideas on how to celebrate, see [cta.org/dayoftheteacher](#).





Educators, parents and students at Glen Park Elementary School in San Francisco demonstrate their support for public education and safe schools for all students in January.

## STATEWIDE DAY OF ACTION MAY 1

On May Day, CTA leads a day of action at local school sites to support safe, inclusive schools for all students and to stand against attacks on public education and immigrant rights. Chapters and members will hold actions with parents and community members at their local school sites. Actions may include “walk-ins,” unveiling new safe zone policies and resolutions, taking the pledge to support the public education all California’s students deserve, and hosting community meetings. For action ideas and resources, go to [cta.org/may1](http://cta.org/may1). Show and tell us what you did: [#WeAreCTA](https://twitter.com/WeAreCTA) [#WhyIPledgeforEd](https://twitter.com/WhyIPledgeforEd).

## CCA SPRING CONFERENCE

APRIL 21-23 CONFERENCE

Marriott Manhattan Beach. The Community College Association’s spring conference highlights advocacy and features the presentation of CCA’s WHO (We Honor Ours) Awards. ► [cca4me.org](http://cca4me.org)

## SCTA MARCH FOR EDUCATION

APRIL 22 ACTIVISM

DoubleTree Santa Ana. Student CTA will march for accessible quality education at 1:30 p.m. as part of SCTA’s Rep Assembly. ► [facebook.com/studentcta](https://facebook.com/studentcta)

## EMEID LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

APRIL 28 APPLICATION DEADLINE

The Ethnic Minority Early Identification and Development Program identifies ethnic minority members who want to expand their roles in CTA. Participants work with coaches to define and achieve goals, and attend the Emerging Leaders track at Summer Institute. Applicants notified by May 19. ► [cta.org/emeid](http://cta.org/emeid)

## IFT GRANTS

APRIL 30 APPLICATION DEADLINE

CTA Institute for Teaching’s grant program demonstrates what teachers can do when they have the freedom to create and invent. CTA members can apply for strength-based Educator Grants up to \$5,000 and Impact Grants up to \$20,000. ► [teacherdrivenchange.org](http://teacherdrivenchange.org)

## EL DÍA DE LOS NIÑOS

APRIL 30 EVENT

El Día de los Niños (Children’s Day) is a traditional festival in Latino culture. Many public libraries have events to promote literacy on this day. ► [dia.ala.org](http://dia.ala.org)

## JOINT ETHNIC CAUCUS ISSUES CONFERENCE

MAY 5-7 CONFERENCE

Marriott Manhattan Beach. “Be Proud, Be United, Be Engaged for California Public Schools.” Open to all CTA members, the conference offers a wide variety of workshops on the issues of diversity and equity and how to advocate for change. Hotel cut-off date is April 21. ► [ctago.org](http://ctago.org)

## NATIONAL TEACHER DAY

MAY 9 EVENT

National Teacher Day is on Tuesday of National Teacher Appreciation Week (May 7-13). ► [nea.org/teacherday](http://nea.org/teacherday)

## CALIFORNIA DAY OF THE TEACHER

MAY 10 EVENT

“California Teachers: Advocates for the Public Education All Students Deserve.” Check out resources on our website and honor your school’s educators in style. ► [cta.org/dayoftheteacher](http://cta.org/dayoftheteacher) [#DayoftheTeacher](https://twitter.com/DayoftheTeacher)

## SCHOOL NURSE DAY

MAY 10 EVENT

Since 1972, National School Nurse Day has honored school nurses on the Wednesday of National Nurse Week (May 6-12). ► [schoolnurseday.org](http://schoolnurseday.org)

## CCA SOCIAL JUSTICE FORUM

MAY 13 FORUM

Hyatt Regency Los Angeles International Airport. “The Force Awakens: Inclusion in Education and Justice for All.” The Community College Association is sponsoring a dialogue on social justice, seeking common ground among CCA members of all political persuasions. ► [cca4me.org](http://cca4me.org)

## CTA ESP DAY

MAY 23 EVENT

Recognize the vital contributions of education support professionals during ESP Week (May 21-27). ► [cta.org/esp](http://cta.org/esp)

## NEA FOUNDATION GRANTS

JUNE 1 APPLICATION DEADLINE

The NEA Foundation awards grants to NEA members. Student Achievement Grants support improving academic achievement; Learning and Leadership Grants support high-quality professional development. Applications are reviewed three times a year. ► [neafoundation.org](http://neafoundation.org)

## Fit for Life

A recent study found that an hour of running adds seven hours to your life. Think of all the things you could do with that extra time!

The truth is, any regular physical activity that raises your heart rate is good for you. May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month — reason enough to get out from behind that desk. Kids aren't the only ones who need to get in shape. Get in the habit of doing what moves you, from brisk walks to cycling to jumping rope. It's about time.



## BETTER COMMUNICATION

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month, a time to raise awareness about communication disorders. A communication disorder, according to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, is an impairment in the ability to receive, send, process and comprehend concepts or verbal, nonverbal and graphic symbol systems.

The disorder may be evident in the processes of hearing, language or speech, and it may range in severity from mild to profound.

**A few ideas to raise awareness among students:**

- Discuss what makes for effective communication. What words come to mind when you think of communication? Create a word cloud to display in the classroom.
- Ask students to illustrate by hand or digitally why communication is important or what communication means to them.
- Hold a communication-themed scavenger hunt.

For more ideas and information, see [asha.org/bhsm](http://asha.org/bhsm).

## Be Proud, Be United, Be Engaged



## Joint Ethnic Caucus Issues Conference

Want to know more about issues facing our ethnic minority communities, and how to advocate for change? Then get over to CTA's third Joint Ethnic Caucus Issues Conference, May 5-7, at the Marriott Hotel in Manhattan Beach.

The conference is open to all CTA members. Its theme, "Be Proud, Be United, Be Engaged for California Public Schools," reflects the strength of diversity in promoting the quality of life for everyone.

NEA Vice President Becky Pringle, near right, and CTA Vice President Theresa Montaño are keynote speakers.

Workshops include "Talking About Color," involving techniques and strategies to facilitate conversation about race, socio-economic status, gender and politics; and "The Welga Project," which gives K-12 teachers an overview of Filipino-American contributions to the Grape Strike of 1965 and provides curricular materials for educators, now that California mandates the teaching of this history.

Learn more or register at [ctago.org](http://ctago.org).



## Your Fave Field Trip?

What makes for a great, even magical field trip? It could be an awesome museum outing, teaching while tide-pooling, a special visit to a hospital, theater or tech company, or some other unique learning experience.

For an upcoming *Educator* story, we want to know the best field trips you've taken with students — with photos, if possible — and what made them so memorable. Send to [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org) with Field Trip in the subject line.

Note: Parents must have signed a media release form for their child's photo to appear in the *Educator*. Write to [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org) to request a release form in English, Spanish or Hmong.





By @samdemuro



## ESSENTIAL ESPS

NEA's animated video "Education Support Professionals: Meeting the Needs of the Whole Student" ([youtu.be/ACnG64L6jjs](https://youtu.be/ACnG64L6jjs)) shows how ESPs make a difference in the lives of students, as seen through the eyes of middle schooler Sofi.

From custodians and food service workers to paraeducators and bus drivers, ESPs are critical members of the education workforce and ensure student success from preschool through college. Seventy-five percent of ESPs live in the communities where they work.

## Meme of the Month

To the world  
you may be just  
a teacher but to  
your students  
you are a HERO!  
∞

## New Educator Weekend Rocks!

CTA's first-ever New Educator Weekend took place in March. Geared toward educators with five years or less in the profession, the conference was a rousing success, judging by member feedback. Attendees networked, noshed, and picked up tips on everything from classroom management to teaching with tech. **#CTANEW**



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# Quotes & Numbers

Compiled by **Mike Myslinski**

THE  
NUMBERS

*"Union labor feeds, nourishes and educates our students. Union labor keeps our campuses clean. Union labor provides additional academic support when it is needed, and union labor makes sure students are safe, day in and day out. Union leaders and labor are 'betraying' nobody. Union leaders and labor have helped create thousands of student success stories."*

—Santa Ana Educators Association President **BARBARA PEARSON**, in a March 31 *Orange County Register* column refuting a school board member's claim in the paper that the teachers union somehow caused pink slips in the Santa Ana district.

*"I think the system actually works very well."*

—CTA President **ERIC HEINS**, in an April 5 KQED public radio interview about CTA opposition to AB 1220, a misguided bill to extend California teachers' probation period from two to up to five years.

*"It's critical in this climate that California schools reassure their students, parents, educators and local communities that schools welcome everyone regardless of immigration status."*

—State Superintendent **TOM TORLAKSON**, in his April 5 news release about a visit to Sacramento City Unified School District to praise its student "safe haven" program.

*"We're going to spend a lot of money and a lot of expertise, we're going to have great talent when it comes to education."*

—Pro-charter President **DONALD TRUMP**, speaking at an April 4 town hall for business leaders. However, his proposed federal budget for 2018 would cut education funding by about 13 percent.

*"You always want to believe in yourself and I did, and I won."*

—Fifth-grader **HAYDEN CLARK**, after her Los Cabos shrimp cocktail took first place among students in grades 3-5 in the Romoland School District's Second Annual Future Chefs Cook-Off on March 29, as reported in the *Riverside Press-Enterprise*.

447

California charter schools that have opened since 2002 in places that already had enough classroom space for all students, according to a new report, "Spending Blind: The Failure of Policy Planning in California Charter School Funding," by In the Public Interest ([inthepublicinterest.org](http://inthepublicinterest.org)).

\$200 MILLION

Tax dollars and tax-subsidized funding to California's 161 worst charter schools (the bottom 10 percent, as ranked by the California Charter Schools Association) over the past 15 years, according to the same report.

75

Number of California public school districts asking improper citizenship-related enrollment questions about students, according to a study by alarmed civil rights lawyers, reported by the *Sacramento Bee* March 31.

5

Number of vital after-school programs at four Fresno Unified high schools and one middle school that will remain open, the district announced, regardless of Trump's budget proposal to kill the nationwide program funding after-school opportunities, the *Fresno Bee* reported April 4.

40,000

Estimated number of U.S. farms still using the pesticide chlorpyrifos, harmful to children attending schools near crop fields. Salinas teachers and community activists held a news conference on Cesar Chavez Day (March 31) to demand California ban the chemical, which was banned in household products in 2000.





Sergio Hernandez, right, works with student Jose Mandujano.

# In the Trades

Educator builds skills and confidence in construction class

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin Photos by Scott Buschman

**SERGIO HERNANDEZ** takes hands-on learning to a new level in a class called Construction Worker. Some students work on masonry, glazing, carpentry, electrical installation, plumbing, roofing and tiling. Some read blueprints. Others build scale-model houses.

The students are building up their job skills and sampling different types of work so they can decide what areas they might want to specialize in, and be prepared to enter the unionized trades. They are also learning safety on the job, because working in construction can be dangerous.

“For many of my students, the class is just the beginning of their career education,” says Hernandez, who chairs the Adult Education Committee for United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA).

A construction worker has many

educational career paths from which to choose. He or she can learn the trade on the job, attend vocational school, or obtain a bachelor’s degree in construction engineering technology. Workers often start as unskilled laborers to learn the basics of the trade, then refine their skills by learning a specialized construction craft, such as floor and wall installation.

Construction jobs are plentiful, pay well and provide great benefits, says Hernandez, who has taught the course for seven years at the Slawson Occupational Center in Bell.

“College is great, but it’s not for everyone. Sometimes individuals don’t really know what they want to do — or they have an innate sense that they want to get their

life started *now*. There are so many opportunities in the trades, and most students have never heard of them, so why not introduce them to this world of opportunity?”

That includes working in HVAC (heating, ventilation, refrigeration and air-conditioning), pipe fitting, and other avenues where students can become paid apprentices and work their way into a journeyman position offering good pay and benefits.

For many years, Hernandez was in the trades himself. He worked as a glazier, responsible for cutting, installing and removing glass. He also had his own construction business.

“Spending years in the construction industry was very rewarding,” he says.

**“I love what I do. Every night when I go to sleep, I feel like I’ve changed the world.”**



"I learned from very competent journeymen not only about construction, but how to be professional and conduct myself. After a time, I wanted to give back to the industry that treated me so well, and decided the best way to do that was teaching."

Hernandez encourages his students to seek union jobs. He believes the best workers are union because they are professional and well-trained. He takes his class on tours of union apprenticeship training centers on a monthly basis.

While some businesses think hiring non-union workers saves money, Hernandez believes the opposite is true. Non-union workers don't have the same high level of training, he explains, and turnover is high because they leave for better-paying jobs.

"Unions are a great partner with industry. Industry sets the standards, and unions

train their members to meet those industry standards and go beyond. The real beneficiary of that is business owners, because they can compete globally."

Being part of a union family during his construction years led Hernandez to seek involvement and form strong bonds with UTLA members when he became a teacher.

**"Students enjoy victories when their hands and minds are working together to build something."**

"UTLA is an extremely professional organization consisting of men and women who are putting out their best efforts and answering to a righteous calling in life. When I went to State Council, I thought it was the best thing since sliced bread. It was

organized, focused, democratic, supportive, and it gets down to business."

The biggest reward is seeing students becoming more competent and confident in their abilities.

"People walk through this door from a variety of backgrounds, and they all have doubt and uncertainty about their future. Then they gain confidence to go out into the community and find a job. Students enjoy victories when their hands and minds are working together to build something."

Many students discover the class leads to a career path and future they never thought possible.

"It can lead to them entering one of the trades, buying a home and being able to care for their families. Many of them move on to accomplish great things. I love what I do. Every night when I go to sleep, I feel like I've changed the world." ■

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# A GREAT RIDE

My short, happy years in the classroom By **Linda Young**

**MANY EDUCATORS ARE** passionate about teaching and love all children. I was one of them, never having anticipated early retirement at the age of 56. After all, I had only entered the profession at the age of 40.

There were so many memorable students along the way. The ones I remember most are those who overcame the greatest number of obstacles and still managed to learn. I wanted to pocket these brilliant children and take them home with me.

Of course, teaching is not for the faint of heart. My class makeup over past years included children with difficult home lives and students with ADD, ADHD, Asperger's, moderate to severe dyslexia, visual processing problems, oppositional defiance, and severe allergies to just about everything from peanuts to the grass field outside. But a really great teacher feels compassion, empathy and understanding for all children. I always operated under the assumption that all children, no matter how difficult or trying, were inherently good.

I found that teachers are baby sitters, managers, judges, referees, nurses, psychologists, police officers and performers. Why performers? Because the teaching you do had better be on par with someone performing on "American Idol" or doing standup at the Comedy Club to engage these young, active minds.

And I loved it. The most joy came from the "aha!" moments when a lesson just clicked and students really got it. I felt joyful when my students modeled great citizenship and were respectful and thoughtful, even when they didn't have the highest test scores. I knew in my heart that they would be fine future citizens.

Outside of school, there wasn't a committee I didn't sit on, an in-service I didn't present at, and a workshop or conference I didn't attend and pay for out of my own pocket. At school, I would be there until 6:30 some nights, compiling the most wonderful lesson plans, mentoring

a new teacher, attending some kind of meeting, or redecorating my room so it looked straight out of a Martha Stewart magazine.

Then one day, out of nowhere, life's harsh realities hit and left me with a neurological pain disorder. (Additionally, my husband, a 35-year educator, had been fighting Stage 4 cancer for the past nine years.)

My days away from the classroom increased. I could no longer sit cross-legged on the carpet with my students, or dance throughout the classroom, or stand on a table to get their attention. I could no longer have students chase me around the grass field; no longer jump rope, kick a ball, or join them at volleyball.

Yet my sense of humor remained intact, my classroom management skills never waned, and I could still give unconditional hugs and compliments to both struggling and successful students.

Now that I'm gone from the classroom, I miss students' creative exploration, their high level of engagement and curiosity, their ability to laugh at my pathetic jokes, and their quizzical looks when they didn't quite understand where I was headed — although they knew it was going to be a fun ride.

I learned so much from the teaching profession. As I look back, my advice to new teachers is to find your own fulfilling, self-gratifying experiences, inside and outside the classroom. Pace yourself, be flexible and cooperative, listen actively to others, and be considerate of those who came before you. Veteran educators are tireless in their efforts to provide quality education to students. They are vast storehouses of information, and they are some of the best mentors you can possibly find. ■

*Linda Young taught grades 1-3, including multiage and combination classes, at Burbank Unified School District. She retired in 2015.*

**"I always operated under the assumption that all children, no matter how difficult or trying, were inherently good."**



## Schools react to a rise in peanut and other food allergies

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

**I**t's everyone's responsibility to keep second-grader Camille Pyska safe at Cobb Elementary School in Middletown, including the principal, teachers, cafeteria workers, custodians and students. Everyone does their part to make sure Camille avoids exposure to peanuts, because she can get extremely sick from eating them, touching them or sitting next to someone eating them.

Arroyo Vista Elementary School teacher Jill Reddy at her classroom door, with its "Peanut-Free Zone" sign.







Camille Pyska, center, at Cobb Elementary School; below, her teacher, Judy Heywood, points to the classroom EpiPen.



“It’s sometimes scary. You have to be very, very careful.”

—JUDY HEYWOOD, Middletown Teachers Association

**ACCIDENTAL CONTACT** can happen. Last summer, not at school, Camille accidentally put her elbow on a dot of peanut butter that had fallen out of somebody’s sandwich. She had a severe reaction. Peanut dust is also hazardous. Ripping open a bag or cracking open a shell in her vicinity could send Camille to the ER.

“Her peanut allergy is in the highest category of severity,” says her mother, Jessica Pyska, who works at the school as a garden coordinator and helps monitor Camille’s safety. “We’re lucky that everyone here is very supportive.”

Camille’s teacher, Judy Heywood, keeps two EpiPens handy in her classroom and

has been trained to use them. She informs students and parents that her classroom is a peanut-free zone.

“It’s sometimes scary,” admits the Middletown Teachers Association member. “You have to be very, very careful. One morning I accidentally took a bite of something with peanuts, and I washed my face and rinsed my mouth out and made sure she wasn’t close to me.”

Heywood reminds students to brush or rinse after eating peanuts and check their clothing for any smears of peanut product, and suggests that just to be on the safe side, they use alternatives such as almond butter or “sun butter” from sunflower seeds. She

reminds them food sharing is against the rules for safety reasons.

## FOOD ALLERGIES ARE ON THE RISE

Camille is among the 8 percent of children in the U.S. with food allergies. Of these, 40 percent (including Camille) have a severe reaction known as anaphylaxis, where blood pressure drops and airways constrict. Symptoms may include hives, swollen tongue and vomiting. Sometimes families aren’t aware their child has a food allergy; about 20 percent of severe allergic reactions at schools happen to children who have never been diagnosed before, according to EdSource.





Above, Cobb Mountain Elementary aide Caroline Garcia wipes down a table after lunch. Jessica Pyska, left, works at Cobb, where she can help monitor daughter Camille's safety.

Increasing numbers of children are allergic to nuts, milk, wheat and other substances, reports the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Researchers can't say why food allergies are rising. Some believe environmental factors or processed food is to blame.

It can be a balancing act for schools to protect students with food allergies from danger, while accommodating students who enjoy foods that trigger allergies. It's also important to create a school environment where children with food allergies don't feel excluded or blamed for restricting food choices of others due to a condition that's beyond their control, and ensure they are not bullied. A 2010 study in *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology* reported that 35 percent of children over 5 with food allergies have endured bullying directly related to their condition, such as being threatened with foods that trigger reactions.

Holidays and special events are also a challenge for schools, especially Valentine's

to be peanut-free, but labels show warnings such as "may contain peanuts" or "produced in a facility that uses peanuts."

Being constantly vigilant about reading labels and checking ingredients with cooks is critical to averting tragedy, such as when 13-year-old Natalie Giorgi died in 2013 after taking a bite of a Rice Krispies treat made with peanuts. The event occurred at the city of Sacramento's Camp Sacramento, whose operators had been informed of Natalie's life-threatening condition beforehand.

Some schools in the U.S. have cracked down on peanuts, sparking what the media have dubbed "peanut wars." For example, three years ago in Michigan, parents claimed their children's civil rights were being violated because the school prevented them from bringing peanut butter sandwiches to campus to accommodate a child with an allergy. The case went to

Day, Halloween and birthday parties. Chocolate, candy and other foods may appear

federal court, which upheld the decision of the school to go peanut-free.

When Camille enrolled as a kindergarten at Cobb Elementary, there was discussion of going peanut-free. Some parents reacted with a bit of "pushback," recalls her mother.

The school reacted swiftly by informing parents there was a student with an allergy whose safety came first. "It is not a choice," read the Allergy Alert sent by the school. "This is a life-threatening condition."

It was eventually decided that all rooms would be peanut-free except for the cafeteria, which has a peanut-free table. After lunch, students scrub their hands vigorously on outdoor washing stations, so they don't leave any trace of peanut butter residue or crumbs on desks or play equipment. Cafeteria tables and benches are scrubbed with bleach, dish soap and warm water.

"My husband and I agree with the decision not to make it a peanut-free campus, because it tends to build a sense of false security," says Pyska. "My daughter is building her autonomy and learning how





Patti Conger, at left and below, manages food and nutrition services at Portola Elementary in Ventura and follows a strict protocol to protect students.



**“We don’t want any kids to feel isolated, different or singled out.”**

—**SUSAN HULS,**  
*Teachers Association  
of South Pasadena*

## EDUCATOR TIPS FOR MANAGING FOOD ALLERGIES

- Work with parents, the school nurse and other staff to determine if modifications are needed to make sure students with food allergies are safe and able to fully participate in school activities.
- Designate allergy-friendly seating arrangements at lunch and snack time.
- Avoid the use of allergens in class projects, parties, holidays, celebrations, arts, crafts, science experiments, cooking, snacks or rewards.
- Use non-food incentives for prizes, gifts and rewards.
- Include information about children with food allergies when giving instructions to substitute teachers.
- Have children wash their hands before and after handling or eating food.
- Determine if the intended location for a field trip is safe for students with allergies.
- Avoid ordering food from restaurants and bakeries, because food allergens may be present but unrecognized.
- Have rapid access to EpiPens and consult with your school’s emergency response team for protocol if an allergic reaction occurs. Practice and have a plan in place.

to be vigilant and live with this. Living in a bubble will not serve a long-range benefit for her.”

### HOW SCHOOLS MEET SAFETY STANDARDS

Since 2015, state law has required schools to stock EpiPens. Older students may carry their own. The EpiPen has a spring-activated needle and can be administered in the thigh through clothing. In addition to school nurses and health aides, one or more volunteers — including teachers, classified employees and others — can

be designated by schools to receive initial and annual refresher training on their use, which includes recognizing symptoms of anaphylaxis, administering injections, understanding whether to use an adult or junior EpiPen, and emergency follow-up procedures such as calling 911. Sometimes symptoms go away, then return a few hours later.

Prevention strategies in school lunchrooms also help avoid allergic reactions, says Patti Conger, manager of food and nutrition services at Portola Elementary School in Ventura.

“Food service protocol for students with food allergies needs a good communication system starting with parents,” says Conger, a member of the Ventura Education Support Professionals Association. “It is imperative that parents report a food allergy to their school’s health technician, and that there is a doctor’s report on file with the health office at school. This information must be passed on to the food and nutrition manager so we can put an alert in our scanning system. This alerts us each time we scan that child’s name so we can ensure what we are serving that day is safe



Students eat lunch at Arroyo Vista Elementary School.



**“Our students here are learning tolerance, empathy and compassion. The most important thing is that other kids feel comfortable and safe.”**

—**JULIA JOHNSON**, *Teachers Association of South Pasadena*



Chesnie Henry and Nai Mani Turay-Bennett eat with Camille Pyska at the peanut-free table in Cobb's cafeteria.

for the student. We will provide substitute meals when needed. Our department can provide for gluten-free, dairy-free and peanut-free, etc. Portola Elementary has a peanut-free table.”

Conger and other staff have received training for EpiPens. She believes it would also be a good idea for all staff and students to learn more about what they can do to keep students safe through prevention, and understand why it's so important for everyone to be on board.

“Knowledge is key to everything, including safety. For me, there's nothing more important than kids' safety.”

## BEYOND A PEANUT-FREE TABLE

Fourth-grader Madeline Wong and her sister Delaney in kindergarten don't have to sit at a special table during lunchtime at Arroyo Vista Elementary School in South

Pasadena. The entire school has been declared peanut-free to accommodate them and others with peanut allergies.

“This is a school that really cares about everybody,” says Madeline. “I think being in a school that's peanut-free is easier and nobody has to worry.”

It's unknown how many schools have gone this route, but Arroyo Vista staff believe it is a safer and less confusing than having peanut-free tables. At least 20 students have food allergies throughout all grade levels.

In 2004 a student suffered a serious allergic reaction at the school and died despite the efforts of school staff to save her. It was never determined which food caused anaphylaxis or how exposure occurred. After the tragedy, Arroyo Vista became peanut-free and received nationwide attention for making the switch.

“It's not a perfect system,” says kindergarten teacher Laura Ishibashi. “But it's the best we can do. Sometimes kindergartners will have something questionable in their lunch and ask, ‘Is this OK?’ They can't read the package themselves, but they are diligent.”

EpiPens accompany students on field trips, and destinations are checked in advance to make sure nobody will be exposed to allergens. Staff have been trained in EpiPen use. Chocolate candy is not allowed on campus, just to be safe.

But accommodating the needs of students with peanut allergies is about more than safety, say Teachers Association of South Pasadena members on-site. It's also about being inclusive and



Madeline Wong, allergic to peanuts, is happy Arroyo Vista Elementary is peanut free.



Kindergarten teacher Laura Ishibashi says her students are diligent about keeping Arroyo Vista free of peanut products.



Nicole and Noah Ibarra

welcoming to students who are diverse in a different sense.

“Our children take the importance of this to heart,” says kindergarten teacher Jill Reddy. “They know their friends won’t get sick, and they feel positive about it.”

“We don’t want any kids to feel isolated, different or singled out,” says third-grade teacher Susan Huls.

Fifth-grade teacher Julia Johnson believes the policy helps students develop positive character traits. “Our students here are learning tolerance, empathy and compassion. Going without peanuts is not a big deal for them. The most important thing is that other kids feel comfortable and safe.”

## RESEARCH PROVIDES HOPE

When Noah Ibarra was 1, his mother introduced him to new foods, including a dab

of peanut butter. His face and lips swelled and he cried out in pain, so she rushed him to the hospital. She was told by the doctor that the first reaction is usually less severe than subsequent reactions.

The family lives in Brisbane without a peanut-free school in the vicinity, and Nicole Ibarra worries what will happen when her son, age 20 months, attends public school.

“As a parent, you just want your child to have a normal, healthy experience growing up and not feel like an outcast,” says Ibarra, who works in the mental health field. “You don’t have a separate table for students with ADHD, other disabilities or behavioral problems, but kids with food allergies are singled out. Other parents don’t get it and complain about the inconvenience of having to pack a lunch without peanut butter, but it’s really a small request to go without something that might kill another kid.”

Research offers hope for prevention and managing the condition. New guidelines from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases recommend giving small doses of food with peanuts to infants, in consultation with a pediatrician, to prevent allergy. In a recent Stanford University clinical trial, peanut-allergic individuals were given increasing amounts of peanut powder that desensitized some to the allergen. Those who experienced success were asked to eat a small number of peanuts every day for the rest of their lives.

Treatment with oral immunotherapy actually changed the DNA of patients’ immune cells, and future studies will show whether the DNA change will be passed along to their offspring.

“I’m hoping there will be a cure someday,” says Ibarra. “But until then, we need to be very, very careful.” ■



Pairing ideas for your own lunch, or to let parents know a few alternatives to the PBJ

Cashew butter and apple butter

Cream cheese and jelly

Tahini and tomato jam

Almond butter with stronger berry jellies like raspberry, or with pumpkin butter

Source: [Food52.com](http://Food52.com) (which also has instructions to make your own nut butters without a recipe)



# PEER REVIEW MAKES A COMEBACK

Consulting teacher Monica Rasmussen, left, with new teacher Peter Limata, who volunteered for the PAR program at his Oakland school.

## PAR programs let teachers help teachers succeed

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin Photos by Scott Buschman

**J**ulia Wright decided to make a career change in 2004. She went back to college and earned a special education credential, switching from an elementary teacher to a resource specialist.

But special education was harder than she anticipated. Strategies and classroom management skills that worked well with mainstream students didn't always apply; she was drowning in paperwork; and it was difficult to coordinate with other teachers when she pulled students from their classrooms for extra help.

"I guess you could say I was struggling," says Wright.

She entered her district's PAR (Peer Assistance and Review) program. PAR's mentor teachers gave her extra attention and feedback. She observed other special education teachers in their classrooms. Instead of feeling like she was drowning, she felt as if she'd been thrown a lifeline.

Budget cuts forced her district to eliminate PAR a few years later. But last year, after more than a decade, it was brought back. Coordinating the program is none other than Wright, who loves "paying it forward" as a consulting teacher on special assignment.

"I'm super excited we brought this back," says the Downey



Education Association member. “Providing teachers help they need is the best thing for our district. It can really make a huge difference. It did for me.”

## INVESTING IN TEACHERS

PAR is re-emerging as a priority in California, thanks to the Local Control Funding Formula, which allows districts to apply funds where they are needed the most. When districts fund PAR, they are investing in teachers by providing them with quality professional development, which in turn benefits students. PAR not only boosts teacher retention during an epic teaching

shortage, but attracts new teachers who see the additional support as a safety net, say participants in a 2012 study by Harvard Graduate School of Education’s Project on the Next Generation of Teachers. The cost is between \$4,000 and \$7,000 per participant, according to the study.

Beverly Hills is one example where PAR made a comeback. After starting in 2000, it was eliminated a few years later, then reinstated in 2012.

“I think it’s a good thing for teachers,” says Beverly Hills Education Association President Telly Tse. “It offers a way for teachers to get assistance and work with colleagues to achieve their goals for improvement in a way that is fair. I’m very happy it has come back to our district.”

PAR provides educators who are struggling an opportunity to improve by working with exemplary “consulting teachers” — sometimes called support providers — who provide intensive professional development through modeling lessons, observing classroom instruction, and providing feedback. The program is discreet; participants are usually unknown to other staff members at school sites. Most teachers exit PAR after a year.

While teachers unions partner with district administrators to coordinate PAR, the program is based on the premise that teachers know best when it comes to helping their colleagues master curriculum, technology or classroom management skills.

When legislation was enacted in 1999 to fund PAR programs statewide, the goal was to help permanent teachers whose evaluations were unsatisfactory. However, some districts, through collective bargaining, expanded the program’s scope to include new teachers and self-referrals. For a decade, PAR programs blossomed. But in 2009, when categorical funding was cut, PAR programs withered and died.

Nonetheless, PAR has remained high on CTA’s priority list, and is tied to the organization’s long-term strategic plan in the areas of “transforming the profession” and “member engagement.”

CTA President Eric Heins encourages CTA chapters to re-establish PAR or expand the scope of existing programs to strengthen the profession.



Beverly Hills Education Association President Telly Tse, pictured with Marla Weiss, thinks PAR is “a good thing for teachers.”



“WE’RE HOLDING PRINCIPALS ACCOUNTABLE TO HELP TEACHERS. HAVING THEM DO WHAT’S NECESSARY TO HELP TEACHERS WASN’T ALWAYS THE CASE, SO WE BARGAINED FOR IT.”

—JULIA WRIGHT,  
DOWNEY EDUCATION  
ASSOCIATION





“PAR is the way for teachers to lead professional improvement,” says Heins. “PAR programs continue to be a vibrant and effective way to help teachers enhance their skills.”

## THE GOVERNING PROCESS

Programs are governed by a PAR panel consisting of teachers and administrators, usually with a one-teacher majority. The panel develops an action plan for teacher improvement and assessing participants’ progress. Most gain new skills that improve classroom performance and confidence. In rare cases, an educator may leave their district or the profession.

“Overall, it’s an extremely fair process,” says Wright.

In some districts, PAR is purely supportive and confidential; in others, it is evaluative, which means it can be used as part of a teacher’s evaluation. It all depends upon the collective bargaining agreement in place. In some districts, participants are referred solely by administrators; in others, teachers may

Participants listen to a San Juan Unified School District presentation on a new teacher evaluation system that includes PAR.

“**PAR IS THE WAY FOR TEACHERS TO BE RECOGNIZED AS THE TRUE LEADERS IN THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY’S EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE PROFESSION.**”

—CTA PRESIDENT  
ERIC HEINS

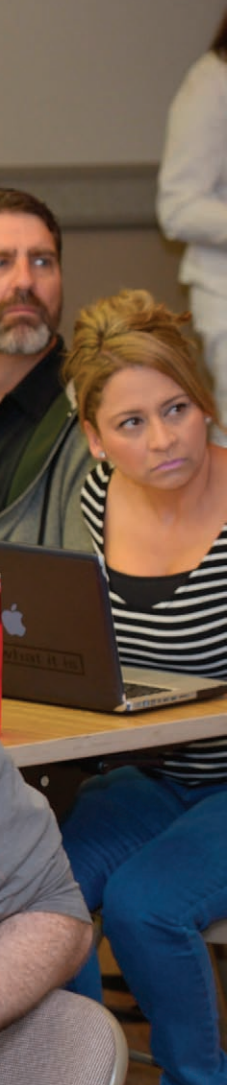
self-refer, which is what Wright opted to do. Some PAR programs have expanded to include new teachers in need of mentoring.

Years ago, Downey’s program was only supportive, Wright says, but now it is evaluative, and it “has teeth.” However, this is offset by additional responsibility put on administrators to supply resources and materials teachers need to improve, such as grade-level books, curriculum and technology.

“We’re putting this on a whole other level — holding principals accountable to help teachers,” says Wright. “Having principals do what’s necessary to help teachers wasn’t always the case, so we bargained for it.”

When her chapter resurrected PAR last year, it sought help from San Juan Unified School District in Sacramento, which has had a thriving program since 1999 (see story, facing page). Downey teachers observed San Juan Teachers Association members in action, and borrowed components they thought would work best for them. ➔





SJTA President Shannan Brown, left, looks on as support provider Cheryl Dultz talks about her role in the PAR program.

## TEACHERS ARE PART OF THE SOLUTION

**T**he San Juan Teachers Association (SJTA) and San Juan Unified School District's PAR (Peer Assistance and Review) program is considered a national model. SJTA President Shannan Brown says approximately 40 districts have sought advice about how to make PAR work uniquely for them.

Recently, the district included PAR in its new evaluation system as part of the Center for Teacher Support (CTS). CTS also governs the district's induction program, which helps new teachers clear their credentials. Consulting teachers work both with newbies and veterans.

San Juan offers two PAR options:

- Teachers can self-refer for peer assistance without review, and receive assistance from consulting teachers until they feel it is no longer necessary. It's not part of the evaluation process.
- Struggling teachers are referred to PAR by their administration.

In the latter, when they go before the CTS panel — accompanied by a union representative — they are given the opportunity to present evidence if they believe the referral

was made in error or they feel they are being harassed. If the panel determines this not to be the case, an individualized improvement plan is created by the referred teacher and assigned consulting teacher.

Every six weeks the referred teacher meets with the panel for a progress check and to ensure the teacher's administrator is providing resources needed for improvement.

In the majority of cases, so much progress is made during one year that PAR is no longer needed, says Brown. In some instances, a second year of PAR can be recommended. If progress is not achieved, the panel can recommend the participant exit from the program, which might lead to their leaving the district. That has happened twice in the last six years.

Some assert it's not a teacher's place to evaluate a peer, but Brown believes otherwise.

"Teachers must be part of the solution. Our goal is to help

teachers be better at their jobs and grow as professionals. However, not everyone can teach. If you believe anyone can be a teacher, what does it say about our profession?"

For one veteran SJTA member, PAR rejuvenated a career that might have otherwise been cut short due to an inability to integrate technology into curriculum under the new standards.

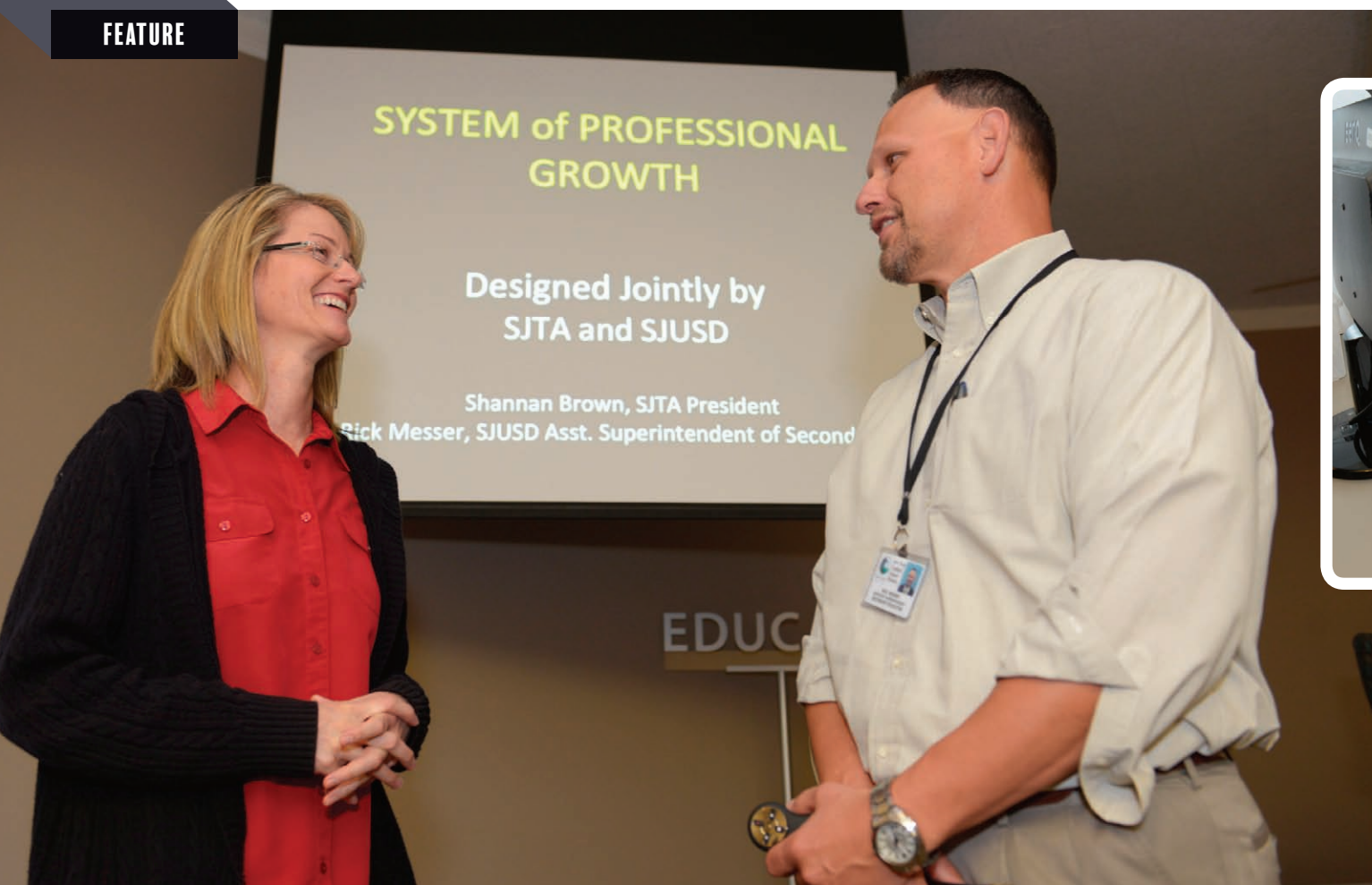
"After decades of teaching, everything from grades to lessons needed to be created

online and my confidence took a dive," admits the teacher. "I had a laptop and didn't know how to turn it on. And at the time I was too embarrassed to ask for help."

A year of discreet assistance from support provider Cheryl Dultz changed things. "I went from being scared to someone who enjoys other people visiting and observing my classroom. Cheryl didn't look at what I was doing wrong. She looked at what I was doing right and asked me to build on that. It was beautiful."

**"TEACHERS MUST BE PART OF THE SOLUTION. OUR GOAL IS TO HELP TEACHERS BE BETTER AT THEIR JOBS AND GROW AS PROFESSIONALS."**

**—SHANNAN BROWN,  
SAN JUAN TEACHERS  
ASSOCIATION  
PRESIDENT**



## REMOVING THE STIGMA

Despite accolades for PAR, it is often viewed as a vehicle to eliminate “bad teachers” instead of a program to help struggling teachers thrive and remain in the profession.

The Oakland Education Association (OEA) has worked hard to change teachers’ perception of PAR from being negative and punitive to something that is positive and supportive, says President Trish Gorham.

OEA and the district spread this message via fliers and multiple email blasts to let teachers know confidential coaching is available for veteran and new teachers who self-refer into the program. Another way to communicate that PAR is committed to helping teachers is by encouraging those who have been through PAR to discuss their experiences with peers at staff meetings and union gatherings.

One of these is OEA member Vu Nguyen. For 16 years he’s been a math teacher at Oakland High School. Last year he began teaching computer science and engineering. The new courses, and adjusting to the new state standards, created

SJTA’s Shannan Brown and SJUSD Assistant Superintendent Rick Messer presented the new evaluation system that includes PAR.

“MY CONSULTING TEACHER HAS HELPED ME FIND MY TEACHER VOICE. I AM TAKING A MORE DELIBERATE APPROACH TO CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND PREPARING LESSONS.”

—PETER LIMATA,  
OAKLAND  
EDUCATION  
ASSOCIATION

difficulties for him in the classroom, and he was referred to PAR.

“My consulting teacher, Hope Tollefsrud, gave me honest feedback about the things I needed to improve on. Instead of so much direct instruction, I needed to have students collaborate as a group. I came to see that I was nervous to let students work on their own because I wanted to be in charge of everything. I had to learn how to let go so students could solve problems on their own and think for themselves.”

At first he was reluctant to talk about PAR with colleagues, but it’s gotten easier. “I tell them to have an open mind. For me, PAR was a blessing.”

Oakland created its PAR program in 2001. When hard times hit, it stayed alive, but just barely. “Our program was greatly diminished, but we hung on valiantly,” says Gorham.

Over the past three years, PAR has expanded to include new teachers dealing with the pressures of teaching students severely impacted by poverty and often trauma.





Above and right, consulting teacher Hope Tollefsrud with Oakland High School teacher Vu Nguyen. After teaching math for years, Nguyen struggled when he began teaching computer science and engineering. The PAR program "was a blessing."



The program has a new evaluation system successfully bargained by OEA. The committee can recommend a "successful exit" from the program, an "unsuccessful exit," or an extension of the teacher's time in PAR.

One teacher who is finding success is Peter Limata, a new teacher at Emerson Elementary School who volunteered for PAR.

"It helps to have an extra set of eyes in the room," says Limata. "My consulting teacher, Monica Rasmussen, has helped me find my teacher voice. I am taking a more deliberate approach to classroom management and preparing lessons. Monica also asks my opinion and makes me feel part of the whole decision process."

Sometimes, laughs Limata, he also has an extra set of ears in the classroom. That's because occasionally he wears an earpiece while teaching, and Rasmussen whispers suggestions into a microphone that only he can hear, based on her observations from the back of the classroom.

Recently, she was so pleased with his teaching that she fought back tears of happiness. "You've got this," she whispered into his earpiece. "I'm so proud of you. You've got 100 percent student engagement."

Sometimes students notice he's receiving classroom coaching. He explains that just like them, he is also a learner.

"I tell them that just as they are striving to be better students, I am trying to be a better teacher for them. It's always a good thing to get some extra help if you need it." ■

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# Legislative Update

Bills to keep charter schools accountable and accessible, eliminate guns from campus, and create affordable housing for educators make their way through the state Legislature.

## CTA CO-SPONSORED CHARTER SCHOOL LEGISLATION

The original intent of charter school law was to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, students and community members to establish schools that operate independently from the existing school district structure, as a way to:

- Improve student learning.
- Increase learning opportunities for all students, especially those identified as academically low-achieving.
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers.
- Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices within the public school system.
- Hold schools accountable for meeting measurable student outcomes.

A petition to establish a charter school must be signed by a specified number of teachers or parents in the district.

As charter schools expanded in California (there are now more than 1,200, with 56 opening in 2016-17 alone), many departed from this intent. Increasingly, charter schools are operated by large private management organizations where important decisions are frequently made without sufficient oversight, far from the school communities they are meant to serve.

CTA is co-sponsoring three charter school bills making their way through the Legislature. These bills are aimed at ensuring charter schools are transparent and accountable to local school districts, and provide fair access to all students.

CTA, which represents over 7,000 charter school educators, believes that educators' working conditions are students' learning conditions, and that charter schools should be held to the same standards as other public schools. For more information on these bills and other legislation co-sponsored and supported by CTA, see [cta.org/legislation](http://cta.org/legislation).



### AB 1360: EQUITY AND STUDENT ACCESS AT CHARTER SCHOOLS

Authored by Assembly Member Rob Bonta (D-Alameda), AB 1360 prohibits discriminatory admissions practices and ensures due process in pupil discipline at charter schools.

Charter schools are part of the statewide public school system, and must have nondiscriminatory admission policies, as well as suspension and expulsion policies that guarantee all students appropriate due process rights. The ACLU and Public Advocates, AB 1360 co-sponsors, recently issued a report finding that one in five California charter schools utilizes discriminatory admissions requirements.

AB 1360 clarifies that charter school admissions policies must not limit access to groups such as low-income students, English learners and special education students. The bill also clarifies that charter school suspension and expulsion procedures must comply with federal and state constitutional due process requirements, including fair notice and an opportunity to be heard.





Sen. Tony Mendoza, at right, listens to parents and educators discuss the challenges facing teachers working in for-profit charter schools, at a lobby day in 2015.



### **SB 808: LOCAL CONTROL AT CHARTER SCHOOLS**

SB 808, authored by Sen. Tony Mendoza (D-Artesia), requires that all petitions to establish charter schools must be

approved by the school board of the school district in which they are located.

School boards are elected to make decisions in the best interest of the communities they serve. By summarily overruling rigorous evaluations of charter petitions by local school boards, county and state education officers are undermining the practice of local control, where districts develop priorities and plans with input from all stakeholders including parents, students, teachers and community members.

The local school board is best equipped to make decisions regarding education programs and needs within its jurisdiction. Local school districts should have the authority to authorize locally controlled charter schools, as well as hold them accountable.

## **CTA-supported legislation**

**AB 410** by Assembly Member Sabrina Cervantes (D-Corona) prohibits school districts from charging new teachers for induction programs that provide additional training, mentoring and other support. Current law lets districts charge up to \$3,500 such programs. [Note: On April 5, referred to suspense file; may come back later.]

**AB 424** by Assembly Member Kevin McCarty (D-Sacramento) eliminates the option for school districts to authorize select staff members to possess firearms within a school zone.

**SB 562** by Senators Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens) and Toni Atkins (D-San Diego) creates a single-payer health care system that would pay for coverage for everyone in the state.

For other legislation co-sponsored by CTA, see next page.



### **AB 1478: ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY AT CHARTER SCHOOLS**

AB 1478, authored by Assembly Member Reggie Jones-Sawyer (D-Los Angeles), expressly states that

charter schools and the entities managing charter schools are subject to the Brown Act (open meetings), the Public Records Act (open books), and two laws preventing conflicts of interest, the Political Reform Act of 1974 and Government Code Section 1090.

This bill would require charter school governing boards to comply with laws promoting transparency and accountability to parents and the public in the operation of public schools and expenditure of public funds. It does not ask more from charter schools than is asked of traditional public schools.

More than \$80 million of waste, fraud, and abuse of tax dollars has been documented in California's charter school environment, which has ultimately hurt our students and communities. Too much is at risk when our students are counting on sound financial decisions that will ensure they get the quality public education they need and deserve.

AB 1478 prohibits charter school board members and their immediate families from financially benefiting from their schools. Public schools' conflict of interest laws and disclosure regulations should apply to charter schools that receive public funds.

## Other legislation co-sponsored by CTA





**AB 43** by Assembly Member Tony Thurmond (D-Richmond) imposes a tax on businesses contracting with a state prison, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and the Department of General Services providing a state prison with goods and services; establishes in the State Treasury and continuously appropriates the generated revenue to provide services to prevent people from being incarcerated and early intervention programs.

**AB 45** by Assembly Member Thurmond requires the California Housing Finance Agency to administer a program to provide financing assistance to a qualified school district and to a qualified developer for the creation of affordable rental housing for school employees, including teachers.



**AB 52** by Assembly Member Jim Cooper (D-Elk Grove) creates a standard orientation for California's public employees with employee organization participation (to include sexual harassment, workplace violence, whistle blower protections, and disaster and emergency procedures).


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**AB 699** by Assembly Member Patrick O'Donnell (D-Long Beach) prohibits discrimination based on a student's immigration status and provides protections by monitoring whether districts are adopting anti-bullying procedures and policies based on immigration status; prohibiting school officials from collecting information about the immigration status of pupils or their family members; and prohibiting an ICE officer from entering a school site without receiving approval from a principal or district superintendent to ensure legal compliance.



# BARGAINING ROUNDUP

Details of these stories at [cta.org/bargainingupdates](http://cta.org/bargainingupdates)



Photos: Simone Cranston

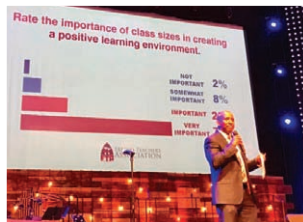
## FRESNO EDUCATORS HOLD COMMUNITY SUMMIT

More than 1,000 people attended the first-ever Fresno Education Summit on March 28 and shared their opinions with **Fresno Teachers Association (FTA)** leaders and school board members about what they want in a superintendent (to have significant classroom experience), retaining teachers, and creating the best learning environment. The event was recorded live at [facebook.com/fresnota](https://facebook.com/fresnota).

A panel of Fresno Unified School District board members and FTA President Tish Rice fielded questions from parents, teachers and community members in a public town hall meeting.

"Tonight's discussion is about how to set up our educators and students for success," Rice said. She invited school board members to attend another smaller meeting with community members on April 25.

FTA and the district are still at the bargaining table. While FTA helped oust former superintendent Michael Hanson, some of his proposals are still on the table. FTA does not agree with, for example, a proposed 5 percent raise that is contingent upon evaluations and educators putting in more time. Teachers have been working without a contract since June 30, 2016.



## TEHACHAPI FIGHTS UNFAIR WORKDAY DEMAND

The **Tehachapi Association of Teachers (TAT)** continues to put pressure on the Tehachapi Unified School District to settle a fair contract and avoid a strike. In late February, TAT members rejected a tentative agreement that would have extended the elementary school day by 40 minutes (the equivalent of 18 additional work-days) with no commensurate salary increase. Tehachapi salaries already lag significantly behind those of neighboring and comparable districts.

TAT Co-Presidents Joan Cooper and Tracey Cunningham praise the union's solidarity and the support the secondary teachers have shown for their colleagues. "Our members are standing strong against this ridiculous and unfair one-size-fits-all approach to our professional day," says Cooper. "Tehachapi is already at the bottom in salary comparisons to similar districts, and now the district wants to impose a ludicrous increase to the work year with no benefit to students and no compensation increase to make up for it. TAT members are demanding respect and to be treated as professionals, and they are rejecting an approach to preparation with no educational basis."

A fact-finding hearing, the final step before a possible strike, is scheduled for April 17.



Photo: Arleigh Dean Kidd

## SACRAMENTO CITY TEACHERS AT IMPASSE

After Sacramento City Unified rejected teacher proposals to lower class size, provide more arts and music, and provide student support in the form of nurses, psychologists and social workers, the **Sacramento City Teachers Association (SCTA)** declared impasse and headed to mediation April 9.

More than 1,000 educators rallied at the March 17 school board meeting to urge the board to effectively put its money where its mouth is.



Photo: Courtesy SCTA

Photo: Courtesy SCTA



"The district is in the best financial position in its history, with over \$98 million in reserve," says SCTA President Nikki Milevsky. "But our students go without credentialed teachers because the board refuses to invest in our kids. We're coming together to ask Superintendent José Banda and the board to put our kids first."

SCTA leaders have started an online petition urging the district board to work with teachers to make Sacramento City a "destination district" in California. Go to [sacteachers.org](http://sacteachers.org) to sign the petition.

## ALUM ROCK CONTRACT TO STEM TURNOVER

After one long year of difficult negotiations in a district with high teacher turnover due to low pay, the **Alum Rock Educators Association (AREA)** reached a contract agreement in March.

As a motivation to lower class sizes, Alum Rock Union School District will have to pay teachers slightly more if class sizes rise above 24 students in all transitional kindergarten to third-grade classrooms. Students who have been affected by the district's shortage of speech therapists will benefit from the settlement, which raises therapists' salaries to the same as school psychologists' to ease the shortage.

The contract provides raises of 8.25 percent over two years, along with a one-time bonus this year of 3.5 percent off the salary schedule. That will help the San Jose district recruit and retain teachers more effectively.

"Being able to attract and retain our teachers prevents turnover and is a direct benefit to our students," says AREA President Jocelyn Merz, noting that about a third of the district's teachers have less than five years of experience. AREA's 600 members ratified the contract with a 99 percent yes vote.

AREA held four major job actions and rallies during months of negotiations, and was successful in gaining support from parents and the community.

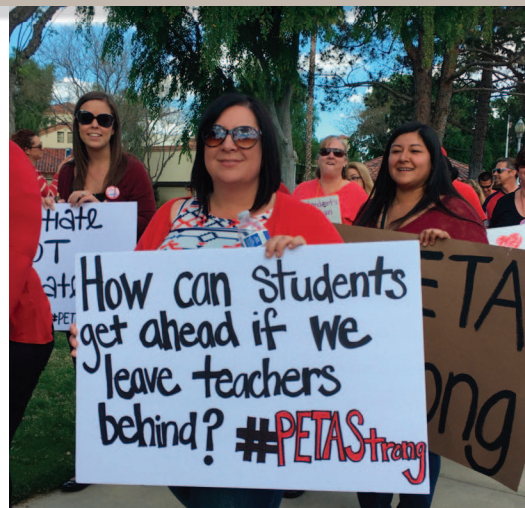


Photo: Ed Sibby

## PERRIS TEACHERS RATIFY CONTRACT

After months of organizing at school board meetings and marches with parents and other community members, members of the **Perris Elementary Teachers Association (PETA)** overwhelmingly ratified a contract settlement that keeps outstanding teachers in the community.

In 2017-18 the Perris Elementary School District calendar will increase from 184 to 185 days — time allocated for professional development and instructional improvement to benefit students. Teachers will be compensated with a 0.54 percent increase to the salary schedule for the added workday.

PETA also won an across-the-board salary increase of 5 percent retroactive to July 1, 2016, and an additional 2 percent retroactive to Jan. 1, 2017. A final 1 percent increase will be effective in July.

## CALAVERAS AT IMPASSE OVER CLASS SIZE

**Calaveras Unified Education Association** declared impasse and is going to fact-finding over class size. Kindergarten classes currently have 32 students, and all classes continue to grow because fewer teachers are choosing to work in Calaveras Unified School District.

Last year, CUSD lost 14 teachers, not counting retirees; many were replaced with interns. Teachers say students' education is being compromised: CUSD cannot attract and keep quality teachers because salary and benefits are not competitive, so students are being taught by underqualified teachers and substitutes.

By Cynthia Menzel, Mike Myslinski, Ed Sibby and Frank Wells. [#OurVoiceAtTheTable](https://twitter.com/OurVoiceAtTheTable)





Maggie Swarner,  
center, with students  
Chloe Khoury and  
Elizabeth Escalona.

# La Promesa

Unique program promises new and diverse teachers

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

**IN SPANISH**, La Promesa means “the promise.” It is also the name of a Calistoga High School course that provides students with real-life teaching experience that could lead to careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education.

Maggie Swarner, who teaches the two-semester class, believes the promise is also about the program’s commitment to diversifying and strengthening the teacher pipeline during an epic teacher shortage in a state where 73 percent of students are people of color, compared to 29 percent of teachers.

Swarner’s students learn how to develop lesson plans and try them out on youngsters in nearby elementary schools under the supervision of their regular teacher. They also serve as mentors and role models to youths at the schools, where they serve as teachers in training.

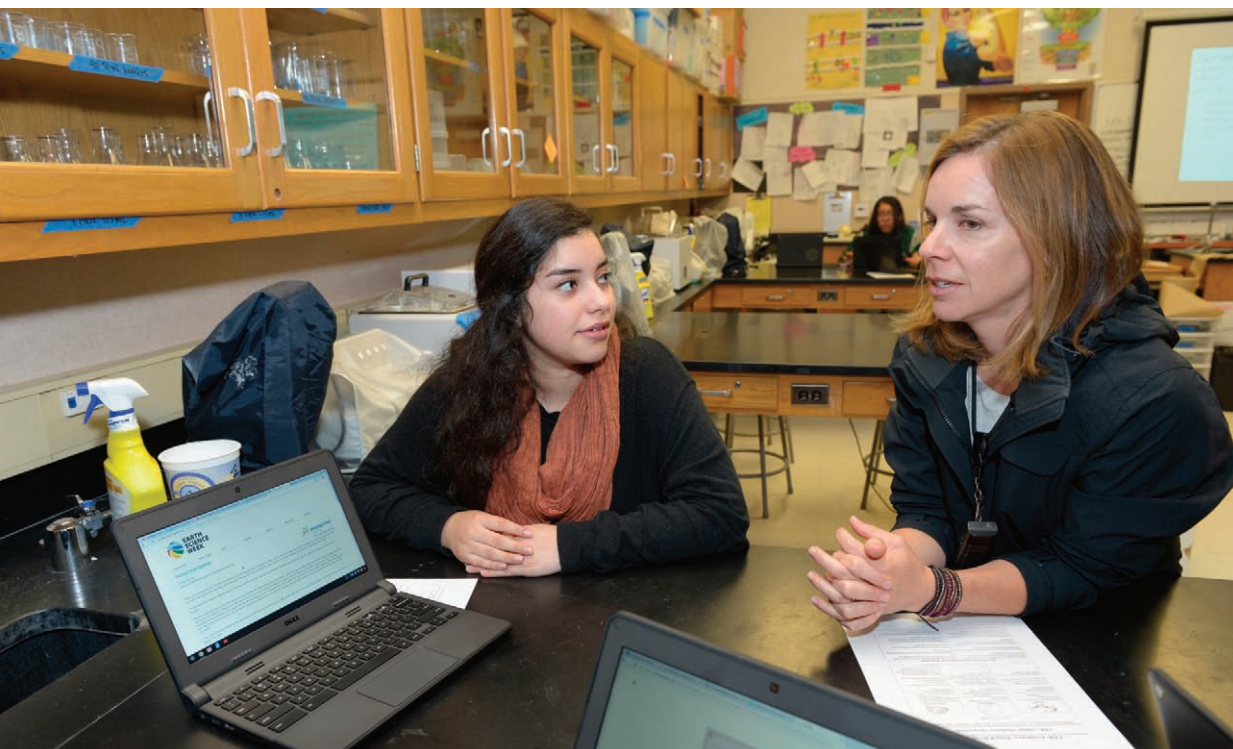
During a recent class at the high school, students

are working in groups to create lessons about the environment based on the Next Generation Science Standards. One ambitious group decides they will ask kindergartners to keep a weather journal based on their observation of weather patterns throughout the school week, and write and draw their observations.

“We should make them cut out the clouds with scissors so they can develop their fine motor skills,” suggests a student. Another recommends a “word wall” with “weather words” attached that youngsters could place on a background to improve their reading comprehension and vocabulary skills. The group decides the youngsters would also enjoy a “wet activity” such as creating clouds from shaving cream or making snow from ice.

“I’m very proud of these students,” says Swarner, a member of Calistoga Associated Teachers. “They





Maggie Swarner discusses Earth Science Week with student Beatriz Ayala.

are really interested in engaging younger students and want their lessons to go well. I wish I had the opportunity for something like this when I was younger.”

Calistoga may be a resort town best known for hot springs, mud baths and massages, but many students are Latino and come from poor families who work in the town’s service industry. Some La Promesa students will be the first in their families to graduate from college.

La Promesa starts them on that path: They earn three units of credit from Sonoma State University, which partnered with Calistoga Joint Unified School District to develop the program and train high school teachers for the class. Carlos Ayala, dean of Sonoma State’s School of Education, was instrumental in setting up the program. There is also a program called La Promesa–Future STEM Educators at Elsie Allen High School in Santa Rosa, and it may start at another area high school soon.

For teens pondering a teaching career, La Promesa offers a real look at the job and hands-on experience. Some find teaching is not what they expected and focus elsewhere. Others say they love working with children and are considering careers as speech therapists, physical therapists or pediatricians. And for

some, the experience inspires a passion to become teachers and earn their credential.

Teaching is fun, say students, but classroom management can be a challenge.

“When kids started crying, I didn’t know what to do, and it scared me,” says Chloe Khoury. “I’m still working on it.”

Getting children’s attention is also challenging, notes Jessica Lopez.

“You want them to listen and you want to respect them, but sometimes you have to raise your voice a little bit, without yelling, so they know you’re serious about it.”

Some La Promesa students have worked in special education classes to develop an understanding of students with special needs. A few were

hired as interns in the district’s summer Bridge Program, which helps prepare preschoolers for kindergarten.

“I didn’t realize this going in, but a lot of my students are learning ‘soft skills’ along the way, including how to dress and behave professionally and present themselves for the job market,” says Swarner, who observes and evaluates her students in the elementary school setting. “It’s a great experience if they decide to become teachers — or for any career they choose in life.” ■

**“Students are learning ‘soft skills’ along the way, including how to dress and behave professionally and present themselves for the job market. It’s a great experience if they decide to become teachers.”**

—**MAGGIE SWARNER**, *Calistoga Teachers Association*



## A TALE OF TWO SCHOOLS

Carlos has a heated argument with his parents before leaving for school, so he's running late. Let's see the difference that restorative policies and practices can make.

### RESTORATIVE PRACTICES-BASED EDUCATION SYSTEM

### ZERO-TOLERANCE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Carlos arrives at school.

Teachers and administrators welcome him and his fellow students as they enter.

He is greeted by metal detectors and a police search.

His Teacher waits until after class to speak with Carlos to learn more, and sets up a meeting with his school counselor.

Carlos is late to first period class.

His teacher scolds him in front of the class. Carlos talks back, and is given a detention.

Student peer mediators and support staff intervene, have the students sit down together, and de-escalate the situation.

Carlos gets into a minor altercation in the cafeteria.

Later that afternoon...

Carlos and the other student agree to help clean the cafeteria during a free period. Carlos meets with his counselor and parents after school to help resolve the conflict at home.

A school police officer detains and arrests both students.

Carlos is held in a juvenile detention facility all afternoon, missing school. He now has an arrest record and is facing suspension.

Illustration of the difference between a system using restorative practices and one using zero tolerance. Courtesy NEA

# A Better Way

## Alternative discipline keeps students accountable and in school

Since January 2015 when AB 420 took effect, school districts no longer have the authority to issue both in-school and out-of-school suspensions to K-3 students for disruption or willful defiance, and no student can be expelled for disruption or willful defiance. (Teachers still have the right to remove any child from their classroom.)

The movement away from harsh discipline policies and toward positive discipline and accountability approaches is aimed at keeping children in school.

Growing research shows that suspensions are ineffective. Students who are suspended return to school less connected and further behind academically. Suspending or expelling students from school doesn't hold them accountable.

Further, studies have found that students in certain ethnic and racial groups are more likely to be suspended

and disciplined more severely than other students for the same offenses.

The issue is also social and economic. School suspensions increase dropout rates and cost the state billions of dollars, according to a report released in March. Researchers at UCLA and UC Santa Barbara studied a single cohort of California 10th-grade students and found that those who were suspended had a 6.5 percentage point drop in graduation rates, reducing their lifetime earnings and increasing their risk of crime and health issues. The dropouts will cost California about \$2.7 billion in lost income and taxes, and increased crime and welfare expenses, over the lifetime of the cohort.

Increasingly, school districts in California have been turning to alternatives to suspensions, such as restorative justice and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The new California School



Dashboard requires districts to include their suspension rates as one of the indicators by which they're assessed.

## CTA survey finds work to be done

While AB 420 is set to expire in July 2018, extension bills and related legislation have been introduced this year.

To find out how educators view and are handling the implementation of AB 420 and alternative discipline practices, CTA conducted an online survey from May to December last year; nearly 3,500 members responded. The majority of respondents were K-12 educators, from districts large and small, rural, urban and suburban.

The survey results indicate that implementation of the new law has gotten off to a rocky start, and lack of support has left many educators frustrated.



Ola King-Claye, Santa Rosa Teachers Association president, whose district is using its LCAP to focus on and fund restorative practices.

Among the survey highlights:

- Respondents cited PBIS, referral, classroom management and restorative justice as the most common new approaches to student discipline.
  - Many respondents expressed the need for more training, staffing and funding to successfully implement an alternative discipline program.
  - A large number indicated they had received little or no training in alternative discipline practices.
  - Many cited a need for better administrative support and communication, as well as more parent accountability.
  - Almost two-thirds of educators said their ability to exercise their right to remove students from the classroom has not changed.
- "While California students' suspension and expulsion rates have fallen dramatically over the past three years, many problems with AB 420's implementation are due to lack of training and proper support," says CTA President Eric Heins. "This includes schools' setting aside space and staff that can deal with students who are temporarily dismissed from class, and better district communication with educators, parents and community."
- "Keeping students in school and reducing suspension rates is the right approach, but educators must have the support and resources needed to run effective programs. Clearly, there is more work to be done."

## Using the LCAP for restorative practices

Many districts are using their LCAP to place specific focus on restorative programs and practices. A 2016 analysis by the nonprofit organization "Fight Crime: Invest in Kids California" examines LCAPs of the state's 50 largest school districts, which represent over 40 percent of the state's public school students. Among other things, the study finds that in the second year of the local control program (2015-16), 84 percent of the districts' LCAPs included evidence-based discipline strategies such as restorative justice, PBIS and social-emotional learning, an increase from 70 percent in the first year (2014-15).

During the 2011-12 school year, Santa Rosa City School

## Moving Forward: Extending AB 420

AB 420 sunsets in July 2018. New bills such as SB 607 by Sen. Nancy Skinner (D-Berkeley) were introduced this year to extend the law and address concerns raised by educators and other groups. CTA is working with lawmakers to make a number of changes:

- **Adequate and appropriate funding** to implement program requirements of the law.
- **Appropriate professional training** in alternative discipline that is ongoing and systemic for all educators.
- **Adequate and appropriate staff** to support the programs and help protect teachers from additional workload requirements.
- **Better administrative support.**
- **Educator involvement in the decision-making process** regarding alternative discipline approaches, including involvement by the local CTA chapter.
- **Sharing of district suspension/expulsion data** and district intervention responses with educators.
- **Continued protection of a teacher's right to suspend** from the classroom.
- **Availability of a variety of alternative programs** and interventions.



**"Keeping students in school and reducing suspension rates is the right approach, but educators must have the support and resources needed to run effective programs."**

—CTA President **ERIC HEINS**



A scene from a Restorative Resources video, "Restorative Justice in Schools," focusing on restorative practices in Santa Rosa schools. Watch the video at [bit.ly/2oaYPkK](https://bit.ly/2oaYPkK).

District had the fourth-highest per capita suspension rate in the state. Its current LCAP includes a three-year plan to train all its educators in restorative practices, hire 10 restorative practice specialists to address discipline issues, and fund the hiring of family engagement facilitators. The plan has a specific goal to reduce suspensions and expulsions for Latino students, who have a disproportionate rate of suspension compared with other students.

Now in year 2 of the plan, about a third of the district's school staff have gone through training, including workshops at the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles and, in collaboration with the Santa Rosa Teachers Association (SRTA), "Unconscious Bias" training presented by CTA.

## A work in progress

It's a work in progress, says Ola King-Claye, SRTA president and a physical education and history teacher at Rincon Valley Middle School. "It used to be if a student threw rocks in the playground, they were suspended for two days," King-Claye says. "With restorative justice, we're making kids responsible for their actions. We try to talk it through — 'Why did you throw the rock and break the window?' Sometimes it works, not 100 percent."

"Not everybody is happy, especially those who haven't had training" she adds. "There's no relief. For example, with the new system, some of our students who would go to county schools [when they were suspended or expelled] are back in our schools. We're hoping that by year 3 all schools and educators will be trained, and we'll have a better handle on the situation."

Stockton Unified School District, according to the Fight Crime report, specified in its LCAP that it would continue

## Restorative Practices

Research has shown that punitive zero-tolerance approaches to discipline, such as suspension and expulsion, do not prevent or reduce student misbehavior. In fact, they have negative impacts on learning.

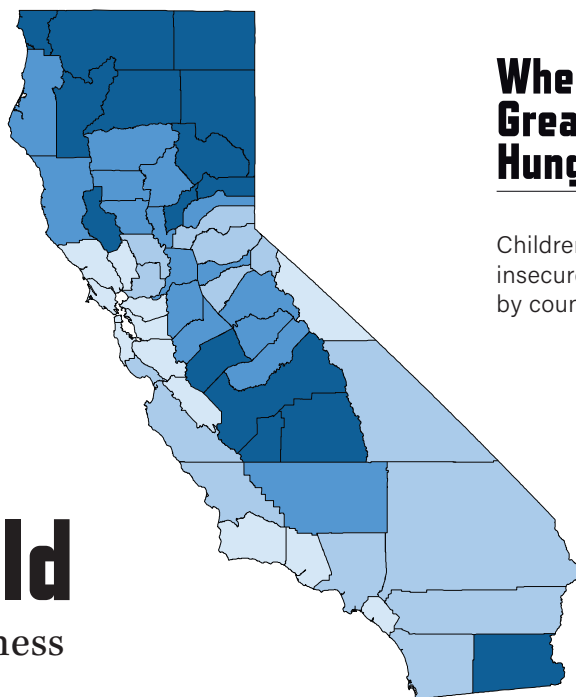
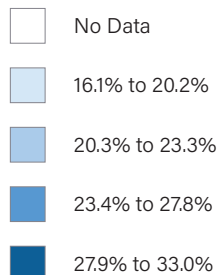
By contrast, restorative justice focuses on repairing harm to relationships instead of assigning blame and dispensing punishment, and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a systemic approach to create and maintain a positive school environment so all students can succeed academically and socially. Other restorative practices similarly focus on keeping students in school.

NEA partnered with the Advancement Project and others on a toolkit to guide educators titled "Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships & Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools." Get it at [bit.ly/1fKne1A](https://bit.ly/1fKne1A).

to invest in PBIS for students, including \$105,000 for a classroom management trainer, \$25,000 for training for school sites, \$100,000 for curriculum, and \$15,000 for progress monitoring. Irvine Unified set a goal in its LCAP to increase the number of schools that achieve an 80 percent score on PBIS site assessments.

ACLU Northern California praised several other district LCAPs with a focus on alternative discipline, including Santa Ana Unified, Azusa Unified and Berkeley Unified.

As implementation of AB 420 continues to be refined, and as training, staffing and funding are incorporated into LCAPs and educators get the support they need, more students will receive a quality education in a safe, nurturing environment. ■



## Where the Greatest Hunger Is

Children living in food insecure households, by county

Sources:  
Feeding America,  
"Map the Meal  
Gap 2016" (data);  
Kidsdata (map)

# The Hungry Child

## Food insecurity and school readiness

By Dina Martin

One in four children in California faces food insecurity, and no one knows that better than educators. They've seen how it plays out in their classrooms and schools.

Although recent media attention has focused on the rising number of college students who are food insecure, hunger has an even greater impact on children, because children are still growing. Studies have shown that children who are malnourished have:

- Poor social functioning.
- Poor math scores.
- More tardiness.
- More grade repetition.
- More absenteeism.
- More anxiety.
- More aggressive behavior.
- More visits to psychologists.

Children's HealthWatch reports that food insecurity is tied to iron-deficiency anemia in young children, which negatively influences development of basic motor and social skills. "Food insecurity predicts poor performance during a child's first years at

school, which has implications for future academic success."

Dorothy Chen-Maynard, coordinator of the Nutrition and Food Sciences Program in the Department of Health Science and Human Ecology at CSU San Bernardino, agrees and adds that hunger can also have devastating effects on older students.



Dorothy Chen-Maynard

"Obviously, sustained hunger affects brain development in the first five years," says Chen-Maynard, a California Faculty Association member who serves on CTA State Council's Student Support Services Committee. "Studies show that high school students — 15- and 16-year-olds — have more depressive disorders and more suicides," linked in part to hunger and poverty.

Joleen Carlson, child nutrition services director who oversees the kitchen in the 1,000-student Clement Middle School in Redlands, has witnessed the impact of hunger on students.

"It shows up in the way they behave. They are often tired and cranky. Many don't get

to school on time or have a lot of absences," says Carlson, of the Redlands Education Support Professionals Association.

## Schools try to cope

Carlson's school attempts to address the issue by offering breakfast and lunch, as well as supper to students in the after-school program. The breakfast service offers cereal, a hot item, pastry or yogurt parfait before school. Students in the after-school program may receive a bagel, an "uncrustable" sandwich or pizza, along with fruit and milk to see them through the school day. It's not unusual for school counselors to send students down to Carlson during the day for something to eat.

Although schools in California provide breakfast and lunch to qualifying students, the school breakfast program has remained underutilized, largely because it is often offered before school starts. As a result, some 2 million of the state's most vulnerable students start their day without breakfast. Organizations that fight child hunger, including Share Our Strength and California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA), maintain that



“breakfast after the bell” programs are the most effective way to reach the most students.

CFPA is sponsoring SB 138 by state Sen. Mike McGuire (D-Healdsburg) to broaden the reach of school meals. The bill would allow paperless enrollment for school meals, enabling the state to enroll even more students in the program. In so doing, the state’s public schools can receive an additional \$370 million in federal reimbursements that would allow many high-poverty districts to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision, entitling them to serve all students free meals. CTA State Council voted to support the legislation at its March meeting.

Many schools throughout the state have already implemented successful breakfast-in-the-classroom programs. Armona Elementary School in the Central Valley received a grant to serve its students free breakfast after the bell. The morning meal is likely to consist of a hot item like a breakfast burrito, as well as fruit, juice and milk.

“I notice I have fewer tardies and absences, so the children are more present,” says Betsy Howland, a second-grade teacher and member of the Armona Teachers Association.

Howland can easily spot students from food insecure families.

“Last year, I had a child who could eat four of those burritos,” she says. “I would say the breakfast program is helping. Lots of our families can’t afford protein or fruit, so they load up on carbs.”

## Learning while eating

Still, teachers have to balance students’ nutritional needs with instruction time.

“Breakfast in class is an issue. It occurs

during instructional time, so there is expectation we will be teaching,” Howland says. “But eating is such a social activity. Students can be distracted.”

The breakfast-in-the-classroom program feeding 290,000 students a day in the Los Angeles Unified School District has been hailed as a national model. United Teachers Los Angeles members, however, have had to overcome problems including vermin and wasted classroom time, since the program was introduced in 2012.

Even with the best programs, providing meals in schools doesn’t always translate to meals in the students.

“A lot of schools don’t give students enough time to eat,” Chen-Maynard says. “Children may have a half hour, and much of that time

is spent standing in the lunch line. By the time they get their lunches, they have to scarf them.”

In response, some schools set up tables at the cafeteria door with fresh fruit and healthy snacks that students can grab and go. Others may have healthy snack food carts available in the hallways. And some work with food banks to host on-site food pantries for families.

“Many districts are doing a good job,” Chen-Maynard says. “Near me, the Yucaipa School District negotiated with local farmers to get more fresh fruits and vegetables into the schools. Of course, schools don’t always have the personnel to clean and prepare farm-fresh produce.

“The sad thing is that many school districts don’t have dietitians on staff, or dietitians who can work with the school nurses. We need to have more food professionals so we can provide nutrition education and work to provide healthier choices. I urge teachers to advocate for districts to hire a dietitian.” ■



Joleen Carlson

## Snacks Without Shame

In her 2016 book *I Wish My Teacher Knew*, third-grade teacher Kyle Schwartz writes about how her school and district dealt with the problem of hunger as a barrier to learning. With hungry kids in her class, she had to figure out ways to make healthy snacks available while not calling attention to, and inadvertently shaming, individuals.

“I started a food drawer,” writes Schwartz. “I keep it stocked with snacks I buy myself or friends and family donate. I let my students know they can take what they need, no questions asked. My students are stealthy about it and grab food without my even noticing.”

She adds that there are many iterations of the food drawer. “There are millions of teachers who have stepped in and fed hungry students, a fact that makes me proud of my profession. We truly are first responders. Many teachers ensure that food is available for their students when they need it, because a hungry student is not a student who can learn at his or her best.”

## Data Points

- Percentage of U.S. children living in food insecure households: 21
- Percentage of California children living in food insecure households: 23
- Percentage of educators who say students regularly come to school hungry due to lack of food at home: 73
- Average amount teachers spend each month on food for students: \$37

Sources: Kidsdata, June 2016, using 2014 data; Share Our Strength, 2013 “Hunger in Our Schools” survey

# STORAGE SOLUTIONS

Why you should be using the cloud By Terry Ng

**W**ould you like to have access to your photos, videos, music and files from anywhere in the world, and on any device? Then cloud storage is what you're looking for.

Storing your data in the cloud has many advantages over the local hard drive attached to your computer, including being able to view your files from any smartphone, tablet or computer that's connected to the Internet. First, cloud storage generally offers much more storage than on your computer or external devices. Second, you'll no longer need to carry an external hard drive to have your most important files with you, or worry that you forgot your USB thumb drive at home.

Cloud storage also acts as a backup for your files in case your phone gets lost, or your computer hard drive crashes. Cloud storage solutions like Dropbox, Google Drive and OneDrive constantly keep your files in sync with their data

servers, ensuring you'll be able to retrieve a file even if you accidentally delete it. There are even settings that will allow any photos taken from your phone to be automatically backed up on the cloud.

Another highly useful cloud storage feature is the ability to share documents with others, and work collaboratively through the Web on them. For example, many educators use Google Drive's G Suite with their students to share and edit documents, spreadsheets and forms. It's easy to work together on finishing important projects, and to see edits being made in real time.

If you're an iOS user, iCloud has the added benefit of keeping all your Apple devices in sync, making every photo you take or every song you listen to available from your iPhone, iPad or Mac. It even has a "lost mode" that will help you find your Apple device in case it goes missing.

Here's how the major cloud storage providers compare:

	FREE PLAN	PAID PLAN (1 TERABYTE*)	COLLABORATION TOOLS	SUPPORTED OPERATING SYSTEMS	
	<b>DROPBOX</b>	2 gigabytes	\$10/month or \$100/year	Dropbox Paper	Windows, Mac, Linux, Android, iOS, Windows Phone, BlackBerry, Kindle Fire
	<b>GOOGLE DRIVE</b>	15 gigabytes	\$10/month or \$100/year	G Suite	Windows, Mac, Android, iOS
	<b>ICLOUD</b>	5 gigabytes	\$9.99/month	None	iOS, Windows
	<b>MICROSOFT ONE DRIVE</b>	15 gigabytes	\$7/month or \$70/year	Office 365 Personal	Windows, Mac, Android, iOS, Windows Phone

\*For comparison only; other plans are available.



Senate president pro tem and former CTA staff Kevin de León thanked members for all they do for California's children, and promised that the state will hold firm on our values and protect the right of every child to a quality education.



Teri Roots, 2017 Paula J. Monroe ESP of the Year, center, with CTA officers Theresa Montaño, David Goldberg and Eric Heins.

# MAKING IT THE BEST OF TIMES

## State Council highlights from March 2017

**A**t CTA State Council's March meeting, CTA President Eric Heins drew a comparison between Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* and the current political environment in our country, and encouraged CTA members to work in union to make it the best of times.

"Educators have always worked together to achieve amazing things and overcome obstacles on behalf of our students, our communities and our profession," Heins said. "And that's not going to stop."

Heins noted the challenges, including the current White House administration's proposed education budget, which cuts more than \$9 billion from schools and colleges, and its threat to withhold federal dollars from cities providing sanctuary to immigrants. Both would have a tremendous impact on California students, communities and schools.

Specifically, the proposed education budget:

- Includes a 13.5 percent cut to education, rolling back federal education funding to 2002 levels, despite having

8.6 million more students in our classrooms.

- Includes \$250 million for a new private school voucher program, and a \$168 million increase for corporate charter schools.
- Calls for eliminating \$2.3 billion for professional development, teacher training and class size reduction.
- Eliminates \$1.2 billion from after-school programs, and slashes grant aid for low-income students to attend higher education.

"This budget is designed to siphon money away from neighborhood public schools and give it to unregulated corporate charters and private schools," Heins said. "CTA is not going to stand by and watch our students be targeted, our schools be defunded, and our progress be threatened."

Educators are encouraged to reach out to their congressional representatives and ask them to vote no on this anti-public education budget — it is wrong for students and educators, and wrong for taxpayers.

"We are engaging our members," Heins said. "We



are organizing with our communities. And we are building relationships, awareness and unwavering support with those who share our values and believe that all students deserve a quality education.”

Heins urged members to hold firm to CTA’s values of inclusion and diversity and let these values guide us in the days ahead. The sentiment was echoed by Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León as he stopped by to thank educators and double down on California’s commitment to be a state where immigrants are welcome and safe.

Heins spoke of CTA’s Statewide Day of Action on May 1. The day is an opportunity for educators to connect with their communities to ensure public schools

welcome and include all students, provide safe learning environments for all students, and serve as centers of communities with community input. (See sidebar on this page.)

At a forum later that day, attendees heard from several colleagues about their plans for the Day of Action.

The next day, CTA Executive Director Joe Nuñez spoke of the importance of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), and how the LCAP, in particular, can be used to engage members and communities.

Regarding the LCFF’s weighted allocation of funding based on student needs, Nuñez said, “We will follow the intent of the law. School districts have the obligation to engage educators, parents and communities in the development of their Local Control and Accountability Plans.”

He noted that the California School Dashboard, the state’s new accountability system that goes beyond test scores and includes multiple measures, rolled out earlier in March. CTA provided key input for the dashboard, as Eric Heins is co-chair of the California Department of Education’s Alliance for Continuous Improvement, which helped shape the dashboard and is part of an ongoing effort to create a groundbreaking, holistic review of a student’s learning environment. ■



Colleen Briner-Schmidt addresses State Council.

## May 1 Day of Action and Pledge for Ed

May 1 is CTA’s state-wide Day of Action.

This is a day of

resistance to the dismantling of public education, and a day for standing up for students and the idea that free public education is a basic civil right.

CTA is asking chapters and members to organize walk-ins at their school sites that bring together students, parents, teachers and community members to show a united front against hatred, ICE raids, privatization, and any actions or policies that harm their students.

Chapters and members can go to [cta.org/may1](https://cta.org/may1) to access event ideas, tools and resources, including fact sheets, posters, fliers in various languages, and links to the Day of Action Facebook group, as well as CTA’s Social Justice Toolkit ([cta.org/forallstudents](https://cta.org/forallstudents)).

Members can go to either site to “Pledge for Ed” — to join us in professing unwavering support for all students, vigilance in making schools safe zones, and persistent advocacy for the public education all California students deserve.

**WE WILL  
NOT BE SILENT.  
PUBLIC EDUCATION  
IS A CIVIL RIGHT!**

**#CTADAYOFACTION**

**CTA** CALIFORNIA  
TEACHERS  
ASSOCIATION

CTA STATEWIDE DAY OF ACTION

## In Other Actions, State Council...

- Reviewed, debated and voted on 231 bills. More than 160 of them received a “support” or “oppose” position or made the “watch” list. See CTA’s ongoing positions on these bills at [cta.org/billpositions](https://cta.org/billpositions).
- Honored the California Teachers of the Year.
- Honored Teri Roots, the 2017 Paula J. Monroe ESP of the Year (see page 43).
- Asked members to take the Bilingual Teacher Survey, which addresses the acute shortage of bilingual teachers, at [svy.mk/2nZUVLh](https://svy.mk/2nZUVLh). CTA and Californians Together are working together to lead a policy agenda to tackle the issue.
- Heard member Colleen Briner-Schmidt bring the history of women’s suffrage to life and give a stirring call to action for modern-day women and men to stand up for women’s health care and pay equality.



She's Got

# GAME

## Teri Roots Is CTA's 2017 ESP of the Year

**TERI ROOTS** is on a mission to make sure education support professionals have a voice and get the recognition they deserve.

To that end, the vivacious president of the Ventura Educational Support Professionals Association (VESPA) tirelessly advocates for her members, impressing upon her district and community how essential ESPs are in nurturing the whole child.

"We work with kids and have an impact on them in some way," Roots says, "from human kindness to showing you're there for them no matter what, such as the school bus driver who is often the first and last person kids see every day."

Roots, who is the Paula J. Monroe CTA Education Support Professional of the Year and was honored by President Eric Heins at the March State Council meeting, also understands the importance of training and grooming new leaders among VESPA members. Every year, she sends members to CTA's ESP Academy, NEA's ESP Conference, and other leadership conferences and workshops. To ensure that their conference experience is successful, Roots travels, eats and attends sessions with them. She uses the group time to plan how to share and implement the new ideas they've heard.

In addition to learning new skills and expanding their networks, members "have made a connection, and get more involved in the union," Roots says. Plus, the conferences "give them a taste of what's out there, give them ideas."

Member engagement and connection is key. Roots, who has been VESPA president for 10 years, asks her directors to reach out to every member at least once a year — an effort to listen to and understand their needs. In fact, of the nearly 800 ESPs served by VESPA, only four are not members. "Sometimes it's just having a conversation," she says. "You really need to get out there and talk to people directly, to hit every member with a one-on-one."

Roots and VESPA have a close relationship with the Ventura Unified Education Association. She and VUEA President Chip

Fraser have interviewed candidates for the school board, with VESPA making equal recommendations. They've taken school board members to breakfast together. The locals jointly held a community town hall meeting.

Community is also key. A recent event that engaged both members and community was "Pillows for Pediatrics." During the holiday season a member sewed donated fabric into pillowcases, with tags that said "With love from VESPA." Pillows enclosed in the pillowcases were then delivered to pediatric wards in local hospitals.

Kids are a special focus for Roots. When she has downtime, she can usually be found with her granddaughters, ages 2 and 7, at Disneyland, a water park or a beach, with her husband in tow. She has raised three children.

But free time is scarce. At CTA State Council, Roots is on the ESP Issues Advisory Committee, which makes recommendations to the Board of Directors to strengthen the rights and roles of ESPs. She has also served as NEA ESP-at-Large. Because of this experience, she thinks all ESPs are concerned about the same issues.

"We always seem to be the first people who lose hours, days, positions," Roots says. "We are furthest away from classroom. It's a conversation I'm constantly having with the district. My board tries hard to show the district how important it is to have us. I tell members, 'Bring your A game, be professional and confident, and do the best job you possibly can. Show 'em what you've got.'"

Teri Roots has showed us what she's got, and we're in awe. Congratulations! ■



"I tell members, 'Bring your A game, be professional and confident, and do the best job you possibly can. Show 'em what you've got.'"

## HONOR EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

Education Support Professionals Week is May 21-27; CTA ESP Day is Tuesday, May 23. It's a time to recognize the contributions of ESPs — equal and essential partners in our students' public education. See [cta.org/esp](http://cta.org/esp) for resources and ideas.



## CTA's 2017 Human Rights Award Winners

**E**ight inspiring and dedicated educators from across the state are this year's recipients of the annual CTA Human Rights Awards.

"The passion and sense of justice and community involvement that these educators all show inspire them to make a difference far beyond their classrooms," says CTA President Eric Heins. "We honor their special work and dedication with these awards."

The awardees were recognized March 4 at a luncheon at the CTA Equity and Human Rights Conference in San Jose.

Photos by Mike Myslinski



**KIM GERON**, who teaches American politics, public policy, and race and ethnic politics at CSU East Bay, received the CTA Pacific Asian American Human Rights Award. He is known in the East Bay for his role in getting New Haven Unified School District to rename Alvarado Middle School as Itliong-Veracruz Middle School after two labor leaders well known in the local Filipino-American community. The New Haven district is the first in the country to name a school after Filipino Americans — as a statement about courage, equality and human rights. Geron, a California Faculty Association member, continues to advocate for immigration rights and rights for undocumented students.



**MARTY MEEDEN**, a Palmdale Elementary Teachers Association (PETA) activist and CTA Board of Directors member, received the CTA Member Human Rights Award. Meeden is a fearless advocate for cultural awareness and all students of color. His impact on the Native community has been dramatic, and he has worked tirelessly to develop and implement community-based activities involving CTA members, students, parents and other educational stakeholders. He has created educational materials and curriculum on minority issues and second language learners. Meeden is also the recipient of NEA's 2017 Leo Reano Memorial Award, which recognizes his lifelong work to enhance the education of American Indian/Alaska Native children and youth.



**OSCAR RAMOS**, who worked in the fields with his family from the time he was 7 years old until he was legally able to work on his own, received the CTA Cesar Chavez "Sí Se Puede" ("Yes, We Can") Human Rights Award. Ramos' family moved from city to city until they settled in a labor camp in Hollister, and took part in protests led or supported by Cesar Chavez in Hollister, Salinas and Watsonville. Ramos graduated from UC Berkeley in 1996 and is a member of the Salinas Elementary Teachers Council. Now teaching mostly farmworkers' children, Ramos was the subject of a 2011 profile in the *New York Times* and was featured in the 2015 PBS documentary *East of Salinas*. He has made it his life's mission to help migrant students and families reach their dreams.



**REAGAN DUNCAN**, a teacher in Vista Unified School District in San Diego County, received the CTA Women's Issues Human Rights Award. What started last year as her Facebook post grew into a national effort to provide vital supplies to homeless women. Duncan mobilized friends and colleagues to fill donated purses with items such as socks, hygiene products, soap, shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrushes. The idea spread to New York and Washington state via social media. Duncan's class also filled about 150 backpacks and purses with school supplies and women's supplies to distribute to local shelters. A veteran political activist, she's vice president of the Vista Teachers Association and a delegate to CTA State Council.



**NAOMI VIOLET FORSBERG**, a paraprofessional educator and member of United Educators of San Francisco (UESF), received the CTA Leadership in Lesbian and Gay Human Rights Award in Honor of Nancy Bailey. At her large, urban comprehensive high school's Wellness Center, she provides safe spaces for all students. She facilitates support groups like the Young Men's Health Group and the QGroup, which is a confidential support group for LGBTQ+ students. She co-created the QGroup's curriculum four years ago, and it's now being implemented in more than 10 schools. Forsberg also coordinates schoolwide events, and brings community-based organizations on campus to further create safe, inclusive spaces.



**JARED RIO**, a veteran Tracy Unified School District teacher and Tracy Educators Association activist, received the CTA Peace and Justice Human Rights Award. Rio educates students about the history of human rights in a course he developed that stresses our responsibilities to help others, and to promote and protect one another's human and civil rights. His student-centered work included raising money and food for the homeless and leading tours of food pantries so students can understand and seek solutions to the problems of homelessness. During Rio's International Day and Week of Peace, students signed a petition calling on Congress to end the conflict in Syria and ease the refugee crisis, and created "peace murals."



**BETTY ROBINSON-HARRIS**, an early childhood educator in San Francisco Unified School District, received the CTA Human Rights Award in Honor of Lois Tinson (past president of CTA). She is a role model dedicated to promoting equal rights and opportunities as an educator, trainer, mentor and union activist with UESF. Her work includes creating projects and curriculum that highlight African American history and developing trainings and programs for colleagues and the communities they serve. She has made the social and emotional growth of her students a top priority and has touched thousands of families during her teaching career.



**GEORGE MELENDEZ**, a member of PETA and the CTA Board of Directors, received the CTA American Indian/Alaska Native Human Rights Award in Honor of Jim Clark. A teacher in the Palmdale School District, he is an unwavering champion of the values and teachings of Native American culture. He is a leader of the American Indian/Alaska Native Caucus at CTA State Council of Education, where he was instrumental in CTA's recognizing Oct. 12 as Indigenous Peoples' Day. Melendez is dedicated to making CTA members more aware of the rights, issues and concerns of Native Californian students in our public schools.



# CTA & You member benefits

## Ready, Set, Travel!

New, money-saving travel tool at  
Access to Savings

**SUMMER WILL BE** here before you know it. For CTA members, it's a well-deserved break to do what you never have time for during the school year — such as travel!

New to CTA Member Benefits' Access to Savings program is the My Deals Travel search engine. Save up to 81 percent on hotels, car rentals and travel packages worldwide. The My Deals Travel engine guarantees that you won't find lower rates anywhere else.

Where can the Access to Savings My Deals Travel site take you? Perhaps to New York to take in a Broadway show or admire the view from the Empire State Building. Maybe to Paris to sip coffee at a sidewalk café, the Eiffel Tower in the distance. Or you could head to a beach somewhere with nothing but sunshine and the sound of the waves on the shore. The possibilities are endless.

There's no better time to plan your summer trip. Check out



Access to Savings My Deals Travel today to start saving. Log in at [CTAMemberBenefits.org](https://CTAMemberBenefits.org), click Enter, click Travel, then click the My Deals Travel banner at the top of the page. Happy travels!

*CTA Member Benefits seeks to enrich the lives of all CTA members and their families by offering programs and discounts, such as Access to Savings, designed to save you money and increase your spending power. From big purchase items to smaller items and everything in between, you can get your money's worth for being a CTA member. Visit [CTAMemberBenefits.org](https://CTAMemberBenefits.org). ■*



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# The 403(b): Buyer Beware

*Protect yourself (and your money) when considering retirement savings plans*

By Dina Martin

**A**s a busy third-grade teacher with little time to think about financial investments, Angelia Brye-Jones was excited to sign up for a new 403(b) savings plan during a lunchtime presentation at school last year. In addition to the free lunch, the enrollment came with a \$100 gift card, just for switching to the new plan.

It seemed a no-brainer. After all, Brye-Jones knew that her pension wouldn't cover her entire salary when she retired, and she knew that she would need additional savings. She also knew that one of the best ways is a 403(b) plan, which is available to educators in public schools and colleges. In addition to retirement savings, the plan provides immediate tax breaks.

What Brye-Jones didn't know was that her new plan would cost her thousands of dollars in excessive investment fees over the years, plus an added \$8,000 to \$10,000 in surrender fees if she wanted to switch to a different plan.

"I was crushed. They made it seem so great. I just wasn't knowledgeable about all those fees," says the Sacramento City Teachers Association member.

Brye-Jones isn't alone. An analysis by Aon retirement consultants found that the millions of people enrolled in 403(b) plans



403(b) plan is a IRS

may be losing nearly \$10 billion each year in excessive investment fees, according to a report in the *New York Times*.

It wasn't until Brye-Jones participated in a CTA retirement workshop that she learned "retirement specialists" are making large commissions selling high-fee plans that are complicated and hard to understand, even for educators.

## High fees, large commissions

"There are many vendors in the lunchroom or on campus that sell teachers 403(b) plans that pay commissions or have surrender fees, and these are not disclosed up front," explains Carole Anne Luckenbach, manager of CTA Risk Management/Business Initiatives and Development. "Our members think that because the plans are approved through a payroll deduction, they are endorsed by the district."

Districts are indeed responsible for the 403(b) programs they offer. As plan sponsors, districts must ensure the program follows all the IRS rules, just like a private-sector employer. However, districts are not required to vet or review any fees or product offerings, such as high-fee annuities or mutual funds that carry front-load fees up to 5.7 percent, says Luckenbach.

**"We want to make sure our members have a dignified, financially secure retirement. That's why CTA created a best-in-class plan."**

—CTA President **ERIC HEINS**



# CTA & You

## member benefits



After a lunchroom presentation at school, Angela Brye-Jones signed up for a retirement plan with excessively high fees. She has since switched to a CTA-endorsed plan with low fees and transparency.

Unlike private-sector employees with 401(k) plans, employees of public schools, universities, nonprofits and religious organizations must instead rely on 403(b)s, which are not subject to the stringent regulations that 401(k)s must meet. Some CTA members who are state and government employees are instead eligible for a 457 plan, similar to a 403(b) plan.

The *New York Times* performed a valuable service last fall by publishing a series on 403(b)s that revealed numerous horror stories in which teachers were paying ridiculous amounts in fees and commissions. One New Jersey teacher, for example, paid more than \$15,000 on an \$87,000 account over eight years. The series of articles, as well as a number of lawsuits against private universities including Cornell, Northwestern and the University of Southern California for offering plans that charge excessive 403(b) fees, has prompted the Securities and Exchange Commission to consider offering fiduciary training to school districts on the matter.

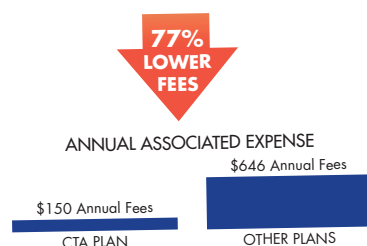
## Supplement your pension

Although Brye-Jones was locked into her new plan, she

### HOW DO WE STACK UP?

A 30-year-old educator with an account balance of \$50,000 would pay \$150 annually in fees to invest in the 2050 Target Date Fund ("TDF") offered by CTA. This is 77% lower than the \$646 average annual fee to invest in a 2050 TDF listed on 403bCompare.com.\*

\*Fees referenced include management and administrative/custodial fees.



### CTA RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLAN VS. OTHERS

- 30-Year-Old with a starting balance of \$50,000
- Works for 35 more years, and contributes \$100 per month
- Earns an average annual return of 7%

#### CTA RSP



\$ 679,489

#### Others



\$578,730

CTA RSP fee assumptions are based on flat administrative (\$16.25) and custodial (\$3.25) fee amounts charged quarterly. Others administrative/custodial fee assumptions are calculated as average of the products listed on 403bCompare.com that offer a 403(b) product with a target date fund investment option.

## The CTA Retirement Savings Plan

The plan tailored for CTA members offers:

1. **High-quality investment options** recommended and monitored by independent investment consulting firm RVK, based on each fund's performance track record, fees and stability. Investment choices are available for members of different ages and with different levels of comfort with investing.
2. **A focus on what's right for you**, because plan representatives are salaried, not paid on commission.
3. **Fiduciary standards** to ensure that all recommendations and plan decisions are made solely in the interest of plan participants.
4. **Low transparent fees.** You pay a flat annual record-keeping fee of \$65 and \$15 for custodial account services. In addition, you pay asset-based fees for the available mutual funds listed at [CTAMemberBenefits.org/rsp](http://CTAMemberBenefits.org/rsp). Any additional fees are clearly identified in the annual fee disclosure statement and on the CTA Retirement website, [CTARetirementPlan.org](http://CTARetirementPlan.org).
5. **Resources** to help you make informed decisions, including the CTA Retirement Plan Center toll-free at 855-604-6222, [CTAinvest.org](http://CTAinvest.org), and the CTA Member Benefits Department at 650-552-5200.

was able to stop making contributions to it and has since signed up for the CTA-endorsed Retirement Savings Plan, which was developed in response to requests from members and is offered in the majority of school districts in the state. The CTA plan features low fees, complete transparency and easy investment options (see sidebar, this page). She is now back on track, contributing the maximum amount to her retirement savings.

The contributions that Brye-Jones makes will definitely help fund her



retirement. She has learned that on average, CalSTRS members (retiring at age 62 after more than 25 years of service) receive a pension benefit that replaces between 50 and 60 percent of their final salary. CTA members in the CalPERS system receive 30 to 39 percent of their final salary, although, unlike the majority of CalSTRS members, they also receive Social Security benefits.

Most financial experts suggest you'll need at least 80 percent of your pre-retirement income in retirement.

"We want to make sure our members have a dignified, financially secure retirement," says CTA President Eric Heins. "But they can't do it with their pension alone. That's why we created a best-in-class plan with high-quality investment options, very low fees, complete transparency and no conflicts of interest."

There's a reason Heins proudly promotes CTA's Retirement Savings Plan. It took several years to develop and had to overcome numerous obstacles by companies, agencies and vendors threatened by the lower fees, transparency and high-quality investment options.

John Haschak, an elementary school teacher and president of the Willits Teachers Association, was the first to sign up for the CTA plan last year, and his wife was second. Having had a lunchroom experience similar to Brye-Jones', Haschak was *so* ready to sign up for the plan after learning about it in a CTA retirement workshop.

"It's a totally great thing for our members," Haschak says. "A lot of our members don't know about investing and don't want to have to check their investments on a daily basis. I check on it once in a while, but I don't have to be vigilant. I think it's really one of the great services CTA is doing." ■

## Resources

- Explore the basics of 403(b)s: [CTAinvest.org/home/403b-457-Plans.aspx](http://CTAinvest.org/home/403b-457-Plans.aspx)
- CTA Retirement Savings Plan, a best-in-class plan developed for CTA members: [CTAMemberBenefits.org/rsp](http://CTAMemberBenefits.org/rsp)
- CTA's Savings, Investment and Retirement website, with everything you need to know, including the latest information, tools and resources: [CTAinvest.org](http://CTAinvest.org)

## Savvy Planning

Employees of public schools, universities, nonprofits and religious organizations can save for retirement with 403(b) plans, which supplement your CalSTRS or CalPERS pension. Some CTA members who are state and government employees are eligible for a 457 plan, similar to a 403(b) plan.

### What are 403(b) and 457 plans?

A 403(b) plan is similar to a 401(k) plan in the private sector. However, 403(b) plans are exempt from ERISA, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, which more stringently regulates 401(k)s. Government 403(b) plans, including public schools, are covered by state laws or less rigid federal securities regulations.

A 457 plan is similar to a 403(b) plan, but is intended for state and government employees.

### Why Do I Need a 403(b) Plan?

Your pension will not replace 100 percent of your pre-retirement income. On average, CalSTRS replaces 50 to 60 percent of pre-retirement income. CalPERS replaces, on average, 30 to 39 percent of pre-retirement income, but its members earn Social Security. To close the gap, you will need to contribute money to a supplemental savings plan such as a 403(b) or 457 plan.

### What are the tax benefits of 403(b)s and 457 plans?

The money you contribute to a traditional 403(b) or 457 plan is subtracted from your paycheck before federal and state income taxes are deducted. Example: If you are in the 25 percent federal tax bracket and 8 percent California income tax bracket and contribute \$100 in a pay period, that doesn't reduce your take-home pay by \$100. Instead, the \$100 contributed to your account could reduce your take-home pay by just \$67.

### What is CTA's 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan?

Introduced in 2016 after several years in development, the CTA Retirement Savings Plan was designed with our members in mind, to help them save money and be better prepared for retirement. The plan offers high-quality investment options, low fees, complete transparency and no conflicts of interest.

### Does my district offer the CTA Retirement Savings Plan?

Before you can participate in the plan, the CTA Retirement Savings Plan must be added to your district's list of approved vendors. You can check on that at CTA Member Benefits' website at [CTAMemberBenefits.org/rsp](http://CTAMemberBenefits.org/rsp), by logging on to the CTA Retirement Plan Center website at [CTARetirementPlan.org](http://CTARetirementPlan.org), or by calling the CTA Retirement Plan Center toll-free at 855-604-6222.

## Vote for the All-Stars

CTA members are finalists for teaching award

For the past seven years, Provident Credit Union has partnered with Comcast SportsNet to sponsor the All-Star Teacher Award, awarding over \$200,000 to California schools.

The award recognizes five teachers from Northern and Central California at the middle and high school levels. This year the five finalists, selected from over 150 nominations, are all CTA members and will be honored June 28 prior to the Giants vs. Rockies baseball game at AT&T Park in San Francisco.

The top winner is chosen by the public. You have until June 1 to visit [csnbayarea.com/ast](http://csnbayarea.com/ast) to place your vote and view profiles of the nominees. The more votes a teacher receives, the greater their chances to win. Votes for each teacher can be cast once a day, each day until June 1.

In addition to receiving a \$20,000 donation to his or her school, the winning teacher will be accompanied by a select Giants player



Cindy Gershen



Alia Ghabra



Joseph Manluco



Andrew Lee Seike



Dale Waldo

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Addresses racism and white privilege through critical thinking, social analysis, and team-based discussion.



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- Learn why the situations are racist (stereotyping, tokenism, cultural appropriation, etc.)
- Acquire tools to interrupt these situations in order to help create a more loving and just world

*“...your game was a remarkable tool. What better way to suggest critical thinking and generate deeper awareness of U.S. culture’s white racial frame?”* — Kevin Cummins, High School Teacher, Albuquerque, New Mexico

*“I learned that my whole life I have been treated a certain way by the people around me because I am white, which I had never really thought about before.”* — White student player

*“...I appreciate the realistic/practical action-based solutions presented in the game.”* — African American student player

FREE DOWNLOAD at [www.roadtoracialjustice.org](http://www.roadtoracialjustice.org) Created by Kesa Kivel



for an on-field presentation. Although there is only one grand prize, each finalist will be recognized and their respective schools will receive a \$5,000 donation.

Good luck to all finalists!

- **CINDY GERSHEN**, Mt. Diablo Education Association; Mt. Diablo High School, Concord; grades 9-12 nutrition, culinary arts, tourism, sustainability.
- **ALIA GHABRA**, Oakland Education Association; Alliance Academy, Oakland; sixth-grade English language arts/history and computer science.
- **JOSEPH MANLUCO**, CTA of Berryessa; Piedmont Middle School, San Jose; sixth-grade science.
- **ANDREW LEE SEIKE**, Fremont Education Association; Lynbrook High School, San Jose; ninth-grade literature and 11th-grade AP language and composition.
- **DALE WALDO**, Folsom-Cordova Education Association; Folsom Middle School, Folsom; grades 6-8 Project Lead the Way and exploratory technology.

*CTA-endorsed Provident Credit Union is a sponsor of the All-Star Teacher Award. To learn more about its services for CTA members, see [CTAMemberBenefits.org/Provident](http://CTAMemberBenefits.org/Provident) or call 800-632-4600. ■*

## The 2016 All-Star

Last year's winner of the Comcast SportsNet All-Star Teacher Award was Scott Krijnen, San Jose Teachers Association. Krijnen teaches over 550 students in nine orchestras at Castillero and Redwood middle schools. He also performs as a chamber musician and conducts orchestras throughout the Bay Area.

"Receiving the CSN All-Star Teacher Award was an opportunity to recognize the incredible community of parents, students, teachers and administration that we have at Castillero Middle School," he says. "It was wonderful to have a platform to celebrate not only the importance of free and public education, but the power and necessity of the arts."

Watch a video in which Krijnen describes how the \$20,000 award assisted Castillero and offers tips for this year's finalists at [csnbayarea.com/video/advice-2016-all-star-teacher-scott-krijnen](http://csnbayarea.com/video/advice-2016-all-star-teacher-scott-krijnen).



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UC San Diego Extension offers the CCTC Approved Reading and Literacy Added Authorization (previously referred to as Reading Certificate) which is a comprehensive program of study that provides students with a solid foundation in the research and methods of reading instruction.

The Reading and Literacy Added Authorization program is geared towards teachers with the potential to become leaders and mentors in the area of reading. It will provide educators with the right tools to improve student achievement.

### Program Highlights:

- The program provides participants with the skills to develop a research-based program of reading instruction for implementation in their own classrooms or as a resource for other classroom teachers
- This certificate is aligned with the requirements and standards established by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC).
- **100% online**

To view credential requirements, the program FAQs and to download an application please visit our Reading Instruction at [extension.ucsd.edu/teachreading](http://extension.ucsd.edu/teachreading)

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- Interactive, Research-Based Programs with Practical Classroom Application

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- Teaching Online Certificate
- Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Professional Certificate
- Professional Development/Salary Point Coursework

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

W115-3045



Left, Selma High School world team members Merijah Morales, Gracie Figueroa, Alleida Martinez. Above, a winning team.

# Selma Girls Take It to the Mat

*High school wrestlers are state champs*

By **Cynthia Menzel**

**SHELBY ZARATE** was a sophomore when she decided to try something new. Wrestling is not what most girls would have thought of, unless you attend Selma High School.

“It helped me become who I am today,” Zarate says, noting she lost 60 pounds while on the team. “It boosted my self-esteem. I learned to never give up.” The 2015 Central Section Champion and two-time state qualifier is now a sophomore at San Francisco State University.

Coach Sam Lopez, Selma Unified Teachers Association, credits high standards, a supportive and respectful school culture, and history for the team’s success — in addition to hard work, sweat and determination, of course. The Selma High School Lady Bears captured a second straight California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) state team title this year, an impressive feat since the tournament started in 2011. The team is expected to win state next year, too.

Located in a high-poverty school district 20 miles south of Fresno, Selma has rich wrestling history. Girls grew up watching their brothers, then their sisters, wrestle. Two girls participated on the team in 2009. This year 28 girls are on the team. Many are state and national champions, including three who represent the United States on the world team. Selma girls are now being offered wrestling scholarships to college.

Selma was one of the first girls wrestling teams in the state and the first program to provide stipends for coaches. Lopez oversees the program. His coaching colleagues are former students and community members.



Sam Lopez

## 2017 Selma High Girls State Placers

- **Gracie Figueroa**, State Champion (three-time champion; third in world)
- **Alleida Martinez**, State Champion (three-time champion; third in world)
- **Merijah Morales**, Fourth Place
- **Melanie Mendoza**, Fifth Place
- **Alexis Morfin**, Seventh Place

Coaches: Sam Lopez (teacher of record), Joey Areyano, Andy Munoz, Jose “Pepe” Mendoza, Ernie Escalera

California Interscholastic Federation,  
[cifstate.org/sports/girls\\_wrestling](http://cifstate.org/sports/girls_wrestling)

Girls compete against girls; practice is coed. Students are expected to work out, eat “clean” — healthy eating with no extreme dieting — and achieve academically. “Our kids have the highest GPA in the county,” Lopez says. “Character is important in our program — win or lose. We are providing life learning situations.”

Wrestling helped him succeed back in the day. “It kept me in education,” says Lopez, who admits he wasn’t a good student. A coach convinced the former 94-pound, 4-foot-11 New Yorker to join during his first year at Valencia High School in Placentia. He was the first in his family to graduate from college.

“All kids are looking to be part of something,” Lopez says. He invites students who are not on the team to come in after school and work out with the team. “It’s better to be in the gym than on the streets.” It also gives him a chance to remind them about their homework. ■



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*Prior district approval is highly recommended and the responsibility of the student if using course units towards salary advancement, credential renewing, and/or recertification. Not all courses may qualify in your local school district.*



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for all students, and teach-  
ers being leaders of the pro-  
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Illustration by Cliff Mills



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