

california educator

Back to
School
ISSUE

AUGUST 2015 VOLUME 20 ISSUE 1



WHAT I WISH I'D KNOWN

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YOUR OPINIONS AND LETTERS ARE WELCOME! There is a 250-word limit, and all letters will be edited. If you send photos or other materials, identifications and permissions are required. Letters must include your name along with your address, daytime telephone number or email address. Email editor@cta.org.

Genetically modified plants

The following is a response by my neighbor, Elizabeth Rintoul, to the profile of agriculture instructor Holly Egan in the *April Educator*.

Ms. Egan's role as adviser to her school's chapter of Future Farmers of America is to be applauded. But I disagree with her advice that "people shouldn't be scared of genetically modified plants."

In 2004 the National Research Council indicated that given the complexities and uncertainties of genomic processes, transgenics show greater risks of "unintended genetic effects" than other traditional forms of plant breeding. Genetic modification is not the equivalent of selective breeding; genetic modification involves creating entirely new combinations of genes.

Genetic modification as a technology fits the mold of other biotechnologies deployed under the firm guiding hand of corporations. GMOs follow the pattern of modification that has led to undesired and potentially disruptive consequences for biological and ecological processes.

As Swarthmore College philosophy professor Hugh Lacey asserts, GMOs must not be employed as magic bullet solutions for broader health or agricultural problems, because each magic bullet can engender new problems. It is often the case that potentially benevolent and "not for profit" uses of biotechnology are simply used as marketing for more lucrative and less healthful products.

Betty Brown, retired
Kensington



Update on pesticide safety

As the *California Educator* reported in April in a story titled "Hazardous Harvests" about pesticide use near California's public schools, the dangers posed to children from agricultural pesticides are well-documented and ongoing. We reported on a new state study documenting heavy pesticide use near many schools, and how low-income Latino students had the most exposure of all. CTA sent a formal letter to the state Department of Pesticide Regulations (DPR) demanding more safeguards, and teachers — especially those in Monterey County — were planning to testify at DPR

hearings around California about possible new regulations.

As an update, in late July, the state finished its hearings in five cities. Educators joined parents and community leaders in demanding larger buffer zones around schools and more restrictions on pesticides linked to cancer, learning disabilities and asthma. A draft of new state safety rules is due by the end of this year, and meaningful regulations are supposed to be implemented in 2017. We will continue to follow this story, as are activist groups like Californians for Pesticide Reform, which provides updates online at pesticidereform.org.

Remembering Chávez

What a great article (in March) on Gordon Williamson, the teacher who marched with César Chávez and taught three of his children in an after-school program. I admire that he continues to be an educator and serve our education system. My best wishes for continual success.

David Valenzuela
Los Angeles College Faculty Guild
(AFT Local 1521)

Educators Are Everywhere Contest Winners

We received numerous contest entries from intrepid CTA members who traveled the globe this summer, like Karin Sylvester McCarty, shown on the facing page in St. Petersburg, Russia. View our winners on page 57.





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Together,
we are the
strongest
voice for our
students



Eric Heins with **Janet Eberhardt**,
United Educators of San Francisco, a community
relations specialist and elementary adviser,
who is NEA's 2015 ESP of the Year
and CTA's 2014 ESP of the Year.



Meet Eric Heins,
CTA's new president,
on page 11.

The beginning of school has always been my favorite time of the year — even when I was a student. There was a unique excitement I got walking into school that first morning, seeing friends I hadn't seen all summer, meeting my new teachers, feeling nervous but optimistic about what the year would hold.

As an educator and your president, my feelings aren't that different as I look at the beginning of this school year. I'm excited about the year ahead of us and the work we will do to ensure all California students are getting the quality education they deserve.

I believe we are on the threshold of real and sustainable change in public education. And I believe with our collective power and engagement, we can be the drivers of the change we want for our students, our profession and our future. How will we do this?

We will support and train each other, ensuring the professional development we need to implement new standards is the professional development we get. That's what CTA is doing with the creation of the Instructional Leadership Corps. By partnering with the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE) and the National Board Resource Center, CTA is building a statewide network of accomplished classroom teachers and other education leaders laser-focused on improving student learning and professional practice.

We will do this by advocating for positive, strength-based and teacher-led innovation that focuses on student learning, as we do now through CTA's Foundation for Teaching and Learning.

We will make sure that policymakers understand our students are more than a test score. They are unique individuals with different learning styles, interests and motivations, and our job is to help them reach their full potential, which is not something that can be measured on a high-stakes test.

We will build strong local chapters by engaging members on important local issues and by partnering with parents and communities to support and improve neighborhood public schools.

We will develop collaborative networks among early childhood, K-12 and higher education in order to provide a more seamless education for our students.

And we will explore educational innovations around the globe, by forging relationships with like-minded educator unions and professional organizations in Canada, Finland and other countries.

We have a lot of work ahead of us, and a lot to be excited about. So as you begin this new school year, know that our union stands ready to help you create positive changes in your classroom, your school and your campus. After all, no one knows better what your students need than you do.

I look forward to serving as your president and representing you in Sacramento, in Washington, across California and abroad. And I look forward to working with you to make sure all of our students get the resources and opportunities they need to learn.

Together, we are the strongest voice for our students and for the future we want for public education and for California.

Eric C. Heins

CTA PRESIDENT

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CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2015, to Aug. 31, 2016) are \$829, including a \$20 refundable contribution (see cta.org/contribution for details). Up to \$18.40 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

1705 Murchison Dr., Burlingame, CA 94010-4583
650-697-1400; fax 650-552-5002; editor@cta.org, cta.org

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.

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Editor's
Note

Working with heart



I was touched by Northwood Elementary School teacher Gayle Young's response to what veteran educators wished they'd known on their first day of teaching (see story on page 20), particularly how attached she would get to her kids. "They become like your own when you see them every day 8 to 3," she says. "It's not just education. They leave footprints on your heart."

I was moved when Redding School District English Language Development coordinator Mark Kubisch, in our story on English fluency standards (page 44), said, "My English learners are hard workers and always give me 100 percent. They are doing their best to learn a new language and culture. We need to do our best for them."

Young, Kubisch and many others were great inspirations as I pulled together this issue. I was reminded again and again how educators do what they do with big hearts and total commitment to students. This passion is also very much on display in our story on a wonderful teaching residency program (page 24), modeled after medical residencies. One look at the engaged, animated faces of teachers and students says it all.

If the rest of us — read noneducators — are lucky, we, too, are in jobs where we work with heart and passion. I feel lucky: I am honored to join CTA as editor of the *Educator*, and honored to connect directly to you and your students. I'm excited to tell your stories with the same spirit and enthusiasm you demonstrate every day.

I'm also energized by CTA's mission and work, which new President Eric Heins outlines on page 5. There are critical issues before us, from the Supreme Court's decision on fair share fees (page 36) to California's increasing number of homeless students (page 48), now a staggering 310,000.

The latter, especially, is in stark contrast to my household, where my eighth- and fifth-grade daughters ready for the new school year. They're gathering up old and new school supplies, assessing the wardrobe situation, tossing ragged Converse sneakers for clean, crisp new ones. I'm grateful to be able to provide them their own beds and a roof over their heads. I can't fathom how homeless students manage to get by day to day, much less how already-stretched teachers make school a safe haven where they can learn and grow.

I'm eager to explore how educators, and our government and communities, continue to address this and other important issues. I'll look to you for guidance — from the heart as well as the head. I know you have much to say. Contact me at editor@cta.org.

Katharine Fong

EDITOR IN CHIEF



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The year ahead



SEPT. 18–20

Region I Leadership Conference
SAN JOSE

OCT. 9–11

Region II Leadership Conference
RENO, NEVADA

OCT. 16–18

CCA Fall Conference
SAN JOSE

OCT. 23–25

State Council of Education
LOS ANGELES

JAN. 29–31, 2016

APRIL 8–10, 2016
JUNE 3–5, 2016

NOV. 13–15

GLBT Conference
SAN JOSE

JAN. 15–17, 2016

Issues Conference
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

FEB. 19–21, 2016

CCA Winter Conference
MANHATTAN BEACH

FEB. 26–28, 2016

Good Teaching Conference South
GARDEN GROVE

MARCH 4–6, 2016

Equity and Human Rights Conference
TORRANCE

MARCH 11–13, 2016

Region III Leadership Conference
WOODLAND HILLS

MARCH 18–20, 2016

Region IV Leadership Conference
SAN DIEGO

APRIL 15–17, 2016

Good Teaching Conference North
SAN JOSE

APRIL 15–17, 2016

CCA Spring Conference
LOCATION TBD

JULY 21–24, 2016

Presidents Conference
SAN JOSE

JULY 31–AUG. 4, 2016

Summer Institute
LOS ANGELES

Honor Workers on Labor Day



Join The Laborhood
(thelaborhood.org),

a website and app where you can share stories, learn about challenges that workers face every day, and help make a change for the better.

Labor Day, celebrated on Monday, Sept. 7, is much more than the end of summer. Talk to your students about why we honor working men and women, and the value and dignity of work and its role in American life. The CTA and NEA websites have curriculum resources that offer background and historical information. Find out more: cta.org/labor and nea.org/labor



Lemlich, who led the largest strike of women workers in U.S. history.

In addition, younger readers will enjoy **Brave Girl**, by Michelle Markel, a 2015-16 California Reads recommendation. The picture book tells the real-life story of Ukrainian immigrant and garment factory worker Clara



2015–2016
CALIFORNIA
READS

TEACHER RECOMMENDED BOOKS

CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 29 *Application Deadline*

ESP Leadership Academy

A training for 20 education support professional members interested in chapter leadership roles. Session 1 is Nov. 6-8; Session 2 is Feb. 26-28. Both sessions are in Burlingame. Accepted participants are reimbursed for travel, lodging, meals and fees. Find out more: Email kmoriarty@cta.org or call 415-479-6616

OCTOBER 15 *Application Deadline*

NEA Foundation Grants

The NEA Foundation awards grants to educators: Student Achievement Grants support improving academic achievement; Learning and Leadership Grants support high-quality professional development activities. Applications are reviewed three times a year. Find out more: neafoundation.org

OCTOBER 16-18 *Conference*

CCA Fall Conference

DoubleTree by Hilton, San Jose

The Community College Association's fall conference focuses on members' accomplishments and membership engagement. Find out more: cca4me.org

NOVEMBER 1 *Opt-Out Deadline*

Voluntary dues contribution

Voluntary annual contributions by members support CTA Foundation's grants/scholarships and CTA's advocacy efforts. New members are automatically enrolled in the default contribution of \$10 for the CTA Foundation and \$10 for advocacy. Members may change their allocation or opt out. New members have 30 days from the date of enrollment; previously enrolled members have a window from Aug. 1 to Nov. 1. Find out more: cta.org/contribution



LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

SEPTEMBER 18-20

Region I Leadership Conference

Fairmont Hotel, San Jose

OCTOBER 9-11

Region II Leadership Conference

Grand Sierra Resort, Reno, Nevada

Do you have what it takes to be an association leader? Learn the ropes or increase your skill set. Find out more: www.cta.org/conferences



◀ **SEPTEMBER 15 TO OCTOBER 15**

Hispanic Heritage Month 2015: "Honoring our heritage, building our future"

Celebrate contributions Hispanic and Latino Americans have made to American society and culture. Hispanic/Latino students make up almost 53 percent of public school enrollment in California. The NEA website has resources to learn more, with lesson plans by grade level: nea.org/tools/lessons/hispanic-heritage-month.html. Also, *Viva Frida* by Yuyi Morales will entrance young readers with its dreamlike narration and sumptuous visuals. See other California Reads recommendations below.

Reading is the foundation of learning, and should be celebrated and promoted all year long. "California Reads" offers teacher-approved, quarterly book recommendations for multiple age groups, including adults.

A study from the National Institute for Literacy found that a person who is not at least a modestly skilled reader by the end of third grade is quite unlikely to graduate from high school. Teachers can help foster a love of reading in kids with these first-quarter titles:

Pre-K, Kindergarten *I Like Myself!* by Karen Beaumont

Grades 1-2 *My Name Is Yoon* by Helen Recorvits

Grades 3-5 *Brave Girl* by Michelle Markel

Grades 6-8 *Batman Science Series* by Tammy Enz and Agnieszka Biskup

Grades 9-12 *The Beginning of Everything* by Robyn Schneider

See cta.org/californiareads for the complete list of recommended books for 2015-16.

What's new at cta.org

cta.org/augustawareness

August is Family Fun Month

What better time than now to hang with someone from another generation. After all, National Kids Day and Senior Citizens Day both fall in August!

ctamemberbenefits.org

Resources for members

New 2015-16 Member Benefits publications are available for order and download (click on the "Tools & Resources" tab).

cta.org/legislation

Check the latest from the Capitol

Read about what's happening in the state Legislature — including the *Capitol News*, a listing of highlighted bills, and key issues.

cta.org/scta

Honoring our student counterparts

Members of Student CTA add to the strength and energy to our Association. Check out the new SCTA officers and executive board for 2015-16.

cta.org/mlkrecipients

Nearly 50 MLK Scholarship recipients

Dozens of CTA members and young people were awarded between \$1,000 and \$3,500 this year, thanks to CTA's Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Scholarship.

Top Tweet

Our favorite tweet of the month



@Lily_NEA

Unions are the birthplace of powerful women.

Video



Ready: In this short video, the National Education Association welcomes students and educators back to school and reminds us of the fruitful months ahead. nea.org/parents

Favorite comments

Belinda Stevens Hyde | APRIL 25

I just LOVE my job.

Adam Silver | AUG. 3

As we know, last month, the House passed an awful ESEA bill, the Senate passed one far from perfect. Members of both the House and Senate Education Committees will meet in the next few months to reconcile these flawed bills. Now, more than ever, our voice needs to be heard! Call, email, tweet these Members and let them know you want the end of high-stakes testing! They need to hear from experts — US!

Denise Shyffer | JULY 31

If only the USA would commit as much money to schools as they do to wars! Our schools need 21st century technology!

Meredith Beachly | JULY 27

We ARE one amazing union!

Cheryl Rios | JULY 31

I think many CTA members were duped into sympathizing with the voucher movement's cause of bringing more options and opportunity to poor students. Now, however, the veil has been lifted and we can all see clearly.

Kimberley Gilles | JULY 21

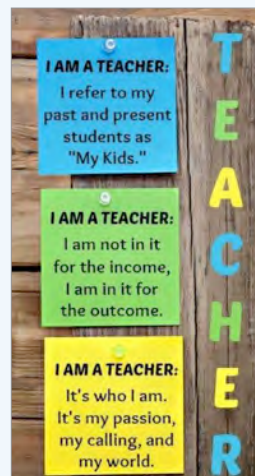
With this kind of [CTA] leadership, we can rock this state!

Kristin Balt | JULY 21

ALEC [American Legislative Exchange Council] is cancer to working people.

Most popular post

JULY 8 218 likes 15 shares



Dave White
My sentiments exactly!

Sabitha Chanduri
100% Agreed!!

More top tweets

@Lily_NEA (Lily Eskelsen García)
Unions are the birthplace of powerful women — the foundation of successful organizing.

@EllisMathEd
"It's so powerful to be involved in professional development that's done WITH teachers rather than TO teachers."

@Stephieand
Representing **@CATeachersAssoc** running to benefit kids track in Atlanta!

MEET

Eric Heins

**NEW CTA
PRESIDENT
IS READY
TO LEAD**

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin
Photography by Scott Buschman



WHEN ERIC HEINS VOTES AT A CTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING or meets with legislators to discuss education policy, one thought is always in the back of his mind: How will this affect my students? Will it be in their best interest?

The students he considers “his” are from Willow Cove Elementary School in Pittsburg, where he taught for many years before becoming a full-time education advocate. He can still picture their faces. Many of them were poor minority kids who faced huge challenges.

He recalls David, who entered second grade saying “I can’t read. Why should I pick up a book?” and six months



later shyly asked if he could read aloud because he finally “got it.”

He’ll never forget Angie, a girl who loved science and hated that her parents constantly fought. Heins taught her about famous female scientists, offering encouragement and extra resources. When her grades went up, Angie’s mother thanked Heins for being “a role model” and showing her daughter that men could be kind.

And there’s La Cretia, a motivated student despite challenging circumstances. Even after a social worker removed her from the classroom to take her into foster care, she insisted on turning in her assignments.

Heins hasn’t seen these students for a while, but they are never far from his thoughts. They are the reason why he’s on the road most days, advocating for public schools.

“Everything I do is about them — and students like them,” says the new CTA president. “It’s what makes me tick. It’s what drives me.”

The early years

Born in Holland, Heins moved to California at age 3 and still speaks fluent Dutch. His father was a Presbyterian minister; his mother, a nurse. He graduated from Schurr High School in Montebello.

“I was the biggest nerd, a complete dork,” laughs Heins. “My favorite thing was reading the dictionary and pouring over the

encyclopedia. I could hardly wait for the annual almanac to arrive. I would rip open the package and just start reading.”

While attending Orange Coast College, he studied music with Professor Richard Raub, who personified all the qualities of a great teacher.

“Mr. Raub conducted the choir,” recalls Heins. “He showed such a sense of commitment and determination and set such high standards for his students. He helped me to get through some tough times. He cared about his students. He was the kind of teacher I wanted to be.”

But at that time, teaching wasn’t his goal. Schools, he decided, had way too much bureaucracy.

After earning a bachelor’s degree in music from Chapman College in Orange County, he worked as a sales rep for a dress manufacturer, teaching piano lessons on the side. Two of his piano students were the children of Janet Green, a middle school English teacher in Tustin.

“She sat me down and told me how good I was with children. She said, ‘You know you hate your job. You should be a teacher.’ She convinced me to apply to the credential program at UC Irvine. It was the best decision I ever made. I never looked back. I can’t imagine what my life might be like if she hadn’t mentored me.”

Heins’ first job was teaching music when other teachers had prep time. He went from classroom to classroom, rolling a piano along.

“There were no electronic keyboards in 1990,” says Heins. “I pushed that piano up and down the hallway, with books on top of it.”

Things went pretty well for the new teacher, until he visited older students. “Remember, I am a dork who likes classical music,” he explains. “So I thought I’d play something hip for them. I played Diana Ross. Students just crucified me. One said, ‘Who’s that old lady? We want hip hop!’ I didn’t know hip hop from the man on the moon. I totally lost control of the class.”



Heins in his office at CTA headquarters in Burlingame.

“EVERYTHING I DO IS ABOUT MY STUDENTS. IT’S WHAT MAKES ME TICK. IT’S WHAT DRIVES ME.”

Eventually, he became an excellent teacher, and found being in the classroom a source of great joy.

“Seriously, teaching is the best profession there is,” says Heins, flashing a boyish grin. “It’s way better than anything — even being president.”

Heins went back to school for his multiple subject credential, worrying that music teachers would be the first ones pink-slipped during budget cuts. He earned his master’s degree in language and literacy education and his reading specialist credential from UC Berkeley, all while teaching second grade.

“I would teach all day and go to classes at night. I could go to class and say, ‘This is what happened in my classroom today,’ and we’d talk about it. It was wonderful. It was like therapy.”

It was before No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the age of testing, so Heins could be innovative. He taught a multiage classroom where students were grouped by ability rather than age. His classroom offered thematic, project-based learning.

“It doesn’t get any better,” he says of that era. “We met students where they were, not where we wanted them to be. We taught students based on their needs and focused on the multiple intelligences and unique ways that different students learn. It was an exciting time.”

Becoming an activist

A college professor at UC Irvine told Heins that it was his “professional duty” to join Student CTA. He enjoyed the social get-togethers and saw joining the union as a “defensive” move in case he ever needed help, doubting he ever would.

After passing his two-year probationary period in Pittsburg, Heins was asked to be a site rep by his union president. At his very first meeting, he was asked to be grievance chair.

“I said, ‘OK, what’s a grievance?’” Heins recalls. “That’s how ignorant I was.”

When a new superintendent began treating teachers unfairly, Heins became extremely busy.

“Before I was grievance chair, Pittsburg Education Association filed one grievance every two years. By the second year I was grievance chair, we’d filed almost 100.”

Heins was elected chapter president and also served as bargaining chair. He was the

strengthened his resolve and commitment to unionism and protecting the rights of workers.

During that period he attended a CTA conference, enrolling in a workshop about “hidden minorities.” It wasn’t planned, but in that session he came out as gay. Shortly thereafter, he came out to colleagues at school.

“It seemed very natural,” says Heins, who lives with his husband David in Southern California. “Without the support of



▲ Heins with second-graders at Bagby Elementary in San Jose, participating in Read Across America 2014.

immediate past president in 2000 when his chapter went on strike over health benefits, salary, and the district’s refusal to provide benefits for domestic partners.

“That strike may have taken 20 years off my life,” says Heins. “It was ugly and personal. A lot of what happened during that time drives my outlook on life and unionism. I can’t believe how many of our members stepped up to the plate. Our district thought we were apathetic. But they were wrong. We came together. We fought for what was right.”

Heins was involuntarily transferred to another school in a retaliatory move by his district. Nothing in his entire life has ever made him angrier. But it only

CTA, I probably wouldn’t have done it, although eventually it would have come out, because that’s who I am.” He became a CTA cadre trainer for LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual, questioning/queer, intersex, ally/asexual) leadership training, conducted “Breaking the Silence” workshops, and chaired the CTA Diversity Committee.

“As I became more of an activist advocating for LGBTQIA issues, I realized the values that I support are also the values CTA supports for social justice. As I learned more about the political process, I understood that if I believed in something that wasn’t policy, I could be the change to make it happen.” ➔



An inclusive leadership style

Heins describes his style of leadership as collaborative and inclusive, which are the same traits he admired in CTA leadership when he first became involved in the organization.

“The things we do collectively are so much more than we can do individually,” he says. “For me, it’s important to listen to dissenting voices.

For a long time I was a dissenting voice on LGBTQIA issues, so I know the difference between being listened to and being dismissed. I know what it’s like to have people pretend to listen to you. A dissenting voice is good because it makes you question your own position. If you were surrounded only by people who you think think like you, you’ll lose perspective.”

While California is now in a “good place” with much better funding than previous

years and a supportive governor and Legislature, CTA must be vigilant and proactive to ensure that the rights of teachers and labor unions are not eroded, which has happened in other states, he says.

With the Local Control Funding Formula, and with more classroom creativity taking place under the Common Core, teachers have an opportunity to take back the profession and do what’s best for students, says Heins.

“CTA IS NOT JUST REACTING TO CHANGE, WE ARE THE DRIVER OF CHANGE IN SCHOOLS. TOGETHER, WE ARE SHAPING THE FUTURE.”

“There were so many years under NCLB when we were told what to do — and it was the opposite of what we felt was right for students. Now, it’s as though CTA is on the precipice of unprecedented change. We are reframing and redefining who we are. It’s very exciting.”

The new president says he feels hopeful, excited and extremely proud to assume the top leadership position within CTA, representing 325,000 teachers, higher education faculty members, education support professionals, school counselors,

Newly elected CTA officers: Secretary-Treasurer David Goldberg, Vice President Theresa Montañó and President Eric Heins.

Heins’ leadership roles


- Immediate past vice president of CTA.
- Co-chair of the CDE Advisory Task Force on Accountability and Continuous Improvement, reviewing Blueprint 2.0, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson’s updated plan to provide children a world-class education.
- Chaired the CTA Quality Education Investment Act Workgroup, monitoring the program that provided \$3 billion for interventions at schools of greatest need.
- Chaired the CTA Teacher Evaluation Workgroup, which adopted new guidelines to strengthen the teaching profession.
- Represented the San Francisco Bay Area on the NEA Board of Directors.
- Member of the NEA Task Force on Accountability, helping define accountability in a post-high-stakes testing world.

school nurses, speech-language pathologists, and Student CTA members.

“So much is happening, it feels a little bit like the Wild West,” he muses. “We are doing away with one-size-fits-all education. CTA is not just reacting to change. Instead, we are the driver of change that is happening in schools. Together, we are shaping the future.” ■

INSIDE:

- 16** Tech Tips: Facebook
- 17** Quotes & Numbers
- 18** The Importance of School Attendance



Attendance Awareness Month encourages students and their families to

“Attend today, achieve tomorrow. Don’t let absences add up.”

See story on page 18.

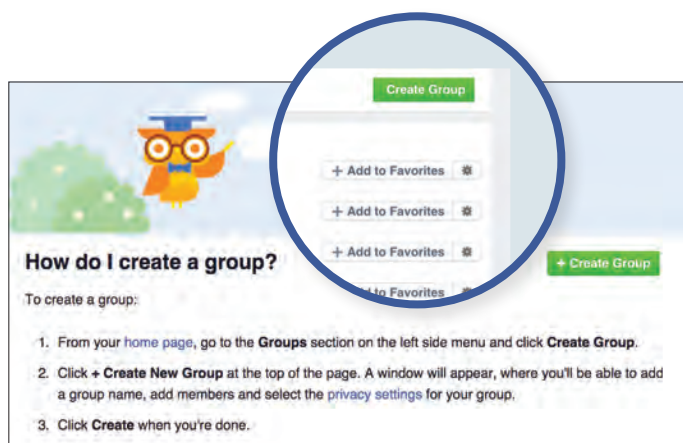




Making the most of Facebook

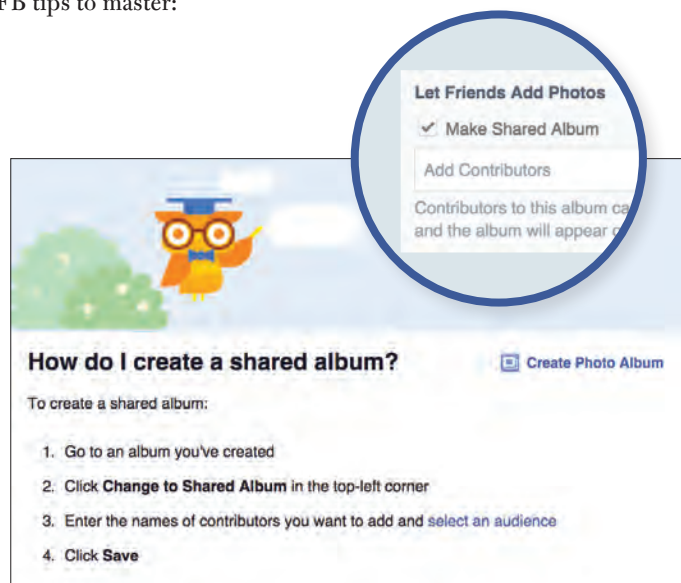
By Terry Ng

YOU ALREADY KNOW that Facebook is a great way to build and foster community. And while its simplicity is genius — posting photos and comments and “likes” and such is easy and fun — Facebook is also a powerful tool to organize and showcase events. Here are three useful FB tips to master:



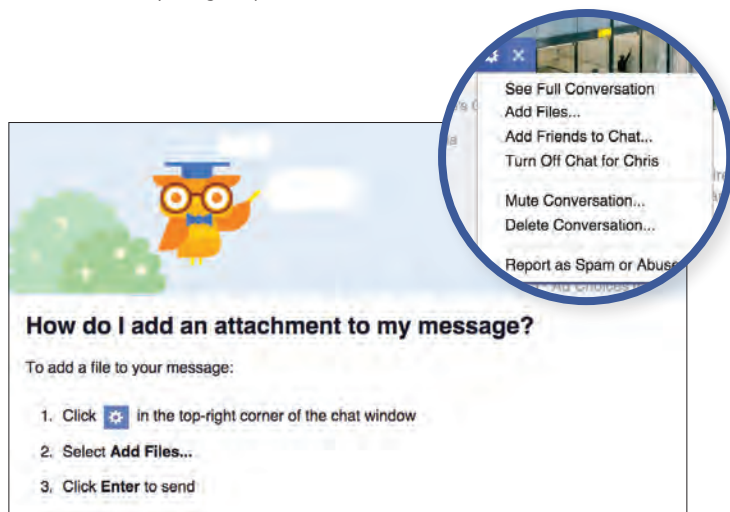
▲ Create a Group

Facebook Groups make it easy to connect with friends, family and co-workers. It's a dedicated space where you can share updates, photos and documents, and message other group members. Privacy options allow you to determine if posts are public or visible only to group members.



▲ Create a Shared Event Album

With Facebook, you can create a shared photo album where multiple people can upload photos. As the album creator, you can share access to as many as 50 contributors, who can each share up to 200 photos. Shared albums are great way to collect and organize photos from events like rallies to class field trips.



▲ Send Files Using Chat

Receiving and sending files through Facebook is simple and easy through their Facebook chat feature. While chatting with friends, you're able to send images, audio, videos, and even documents like Microsoft Word or PDF files.

Quotes & Numbers

WE COMB THE MEDIA DAILY for the best quotes and statistics about public education. If you discover a quote or stat you think we should highlight, send it along with your name to editor@cta.org.

Compiled by Mike Myslinski

"We have worked hard to move forward together in California in a gradual, sensible and collaborative way. I call this approach 'The California Way,' and it is paying huge dividends across the board. Blueprint 2.0 is the latest example of what The California Way can do."

—State Superintendent of Public Instruction **TOM TORLAKSON**, introducing his visionary "Blueprint for Great Schools: Version 2.0" in July, which can be viewed at cde.ca.gov.

"It's time to stop robbing our kids of the joy of learning. Test preparation is not thinking. We need to allow all students time for exploration, discovery and awe. We need to let them experience the wonder of learning. We need to empower them to find and fulfill their dreams!"

—CTA President **ERIC HEINS**, in his July 17 speech kicking off the annual CTA Presidents Conference in San Jose.

"I'm concerned that this board doesn't realize it has woken a sleeping giant. When a regular teacher like me is willing to go outside of her comfort zone and address you directly, that should also speak volumes."

—Desert Sands Unified School District educator **JAN EICKELMANN**, speaking at a packed July 21 school board meeting about teachers' struggle for a fair contract, as quoted in the *Desert Sun*.

"Countries that do the best job at educating their citizens — Finland, Korea, Japan, Singapore and Canada — do it with strong and equitable public school systems, not charter schools or private school vouchers. LAUSD needs a leader who believes in restoring and strengthening public education, which society counts on to develop citizens with the talent, skills and knowledge to sustain our democracy."

—Author **DIANE RAVITCH**, in a July 23 *Los Angeles Times* column about the kind of superintendent LAUSD needs in order to thrive.

"Not all those who wander are lost."

—Author **J.R.R. TOLKIEN**, in *The Lord of the Rings*.

*The
Numbers*

8th

World ranking of California's \$2.3 trillion economy in 2014, putting the state ahead of Italy, India and Russia, according to July data from the Center for Continuing Study of the California Economy in Palo Alto.

49th

California's ranking in the U.S. in economic well-being of its children, based on poverty, housing costs and other factors, according to the "2015 Kids Count" report issued in July by Oakland-based Annie E. Casey Foundation.

\$9 billion

Estimated annual state revenue for schools and other public uses that could be generated by closing Proposition 13 commercial property tax loopholes, according to the CTA-backed "Make It Fair" campaign coalition. Learn more: makeitfairca.com/faq.

\$15

Minimum hourly wage to be paid to University of California employees after a salary hike approved in July by UC regents is fully implemented over three years. UC becomes the first public university system in the U.S. to adopt a \$15 wage.

September is National Attendance Awareness Month

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT missing only two or more days of school in September is a warning sign that a student is likely to have serious attendance problems. More than 90 percent of students who typically miss four or more days

in September ultimately miss a month or more of the entire school year. Whether absences are excused or not, missing a month of school can result in students failing classes and dropping out.

Attendance Awareness Month, a nationwide initiative, directly addresses this problem. The California Department of Education (CDE) is urging teachers to prepare for the September Attendance Awareness Month Campaign by working with families and community partners to pay close attention to school attendance, and provide absentee students with extra interventions and support.

“Children will learn and succeed in the classroom when we remove barriers to attendance, establish good attendance patterns, and celebrate success in punctual and improved attendance,” says David Kopperud, education programs consultant, Coordinated Student Support Division, at CDE. “Teachers play a crucial role in promoting regular attendance and working with students, families, and community to intervene when students start missing school.”

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson is sending a letter to educators and families to promote the campaign, which offers strategies teachers can use to work with students and families:

- **Build relationships to encourage good attendance.** Students are more likely to go to school if they know someone cares whether they show up. Trusting relationships are also critical in encouraging students and families to seek help in overcoming barriers to attendance.
- **Learn about your school community.** Find out about the strengths of your school community and challenges facing families that might impact attendance.
- **Communicate the importance of attendance.** Talk with students and families about the importance of attendance and how they can get help when they need it.
- **Collaborate with colleagues to intervene when needed.** Alert school staff when a student misses school for more than one or two days, and learn about resources in the community to support families.

Many educators know these strategies and use them. But with a fresh school year under way, September is a particularly critical month to focus on attendance. For tips on interacting with families and more information, see awareness.attendanceworks.org. ■

WHAT WE CAN DO



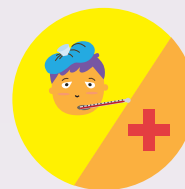
Engage Families

Many parents and students don't realize how quickly early absences can add up to academic trouble. Community members and teachers can educate families and build a culture of attendance through early outreach, incentives and attention to data.



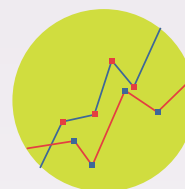
Fix Transportation

The lack of a reliable car, or simply missing the school bus, can mean some students don't make it to class. Schools, transit agencies and community partners can organize car pools, supply bus passes or find other ways to get kids to school.



Address Health Needs

Health concerns, particularly asthma and dental problems, are among the leading reasons students miss school in the early grades. Schools and medical professionals can work together to give children and families health care and advice.



Track the Right Data

Schools too often overlook chronic absence because they track average attendance or unexcused absences, not how many kids miss too many days for any reason. Attendance Works has free data-tracking tools.

Source: Attendance Works

Perspectives

**“It’s not
just
about
education.”**

These kids leave footprints
on your heart.”

GAYLE YOUNG

Northwood Elementary
School, Napa.

Story on page 20.

INSIDE:

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My First Day of School

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PE Part of
Common Core?

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Vincent Bernota



Words of
wisdom

What I wish I'd known my first day of school

Compiled by Sherry Posnick-Goodwin
Photography by Scott Buschman

REMEMBER YOUR FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL? To a youngster it meant back-to-school clothes, hoping for a nice teacher, and looking forward to seeing old friends. After weeks of summer vacation, returning to school was something to look forward to.

For educators, the first day of school can also be exciting and sometimes nerve-wracking, even for seasoned professionals. Along with a crop of new students, there often can be new curriculum, new standards, or sometimes a new administrator

with a different way of doing things. You may face new technology, be assigned to teach a different grade level — or even (gulp) a combination grade classroom.

To help prepare you for the big day, we've asked a few CTA members to complete the sentence: "What I wish I'd known my first day of school is..." You may have heard some of this sage advice before, but sometimes it's nice to be reminded. ■



Gayle Young
NORTHWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
K-1 teacher / 24 years
Napa Valley Educators Association

- Be really flexible, because you never know what will happen. Sometimes you need to stop, change your direction, and just go with the flow.
- How attached I would get to these kids. They become like your own when you see them every day from 8 to 3. It's not just about education. They leave footprints on your heart.
- Stock your classroom with Airborne (a teacher-created supplement to prevent colds) and lots of Kleenex. You'll catch every cold that comes by until you have immunity.
- Parents are just as nervous as you are when you first meet them, and they also worry about being judged.

Leslie Sandoval

LONE HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL

Science and leadership / 15 years
Bonita Unified Teachers Association



- What a huge support CTA can be, and how hard your union and chapter works to protect your rights. You may think, "Well, that's just the way it is." But sometimes, after you read your contract language, you realize it isn't supposed to be that way.
- Students respond better when they feel connected to you. They'll work harder. They'll try harder. Develop rapport by focusing on students' strengths.
- Compassion can be more important than rigidity. You never know what a child is going through, such as being in foster care or experiencing the death of a parent.
- Make friends with the people who work in the front office. They can be your best friends on campus. Understand they run the school. They are amazing.

Jared Rio

MERRILL WEST HIGH SCHOOL

Social studies / 10 years
Tracy Educators Association



- You don't have to create everything from scratch. Colleagues are willing to share.
- You don't have to grade every assignment. Or even collect every single assignment. Before I realized this, I had piles and piles of assignments, ranging from the "morning prompt" to "exit questions" (which a student must answer before leaving the class). It's about prioritizing.
- It's OK to say "I don't know" instead of always thinking you have to have the answer. I used to think I had to have an answer for everything. Now I'll say, "That's a great question, let's look it up." We're on a journey together; we're not machines.

Justin Yang

VALLEY VIEW HIGH SCHOOL

Second-year counselor and eighth-year teacher
Associated Chaffey Teachers



- Don't be afraid to be innovative. Try new things. Some will work and some won't, but it's important to see what works with your teaching style and philosophy.
- Make learning a game. People tend to be competitive by nature, and you can tie games into learning so it's more fun for students.
- Ask students to tell you what they know about something before you tell them what it is. It will make them feel part of the learning experience.

Ola King-Claye

RINCON VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

PE and history / 38 years
Santa Rosa Teachers Association



- Understand every day is not going to be perfect. Some days the kids are in La-La land. Read that poem by Paula Finn [see below] every day.
- Don't have a classroom that's just lecture, lecture, lecture. Hold meaningful discussions. Take kids to the library to do research. Encourage critical thinking.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it. Don't be afraid to tweak the way you teach. As teachers, we should strive to be lifelong learners.
- Remember that teaching is a wonderful journey. Enjoy the ride.

Today, and Every Day

by Paula Finn

*Treat yourself to the things that make you happy,
Give yourself permission to be wrong,
Applaud yourself for the smallest successes,*

*Forgive yourself for the greatest defeats,
Appreciate yourself for the efforts you have made,
The good you have done,
And the joy you have shared...
Accept yourself for what you are.
For what you are...
Is beautiful.*

Should PE be part of the Common Core?

YES

I think it's really important to bring PE into the Common Core and vice versa. PE has gotten pushed to the side for too long. The way we teach has changed a lot. It's important to be able to write across every subject. That's the way I was taught in school. And that's what the Common Core is about. To me it's about integrating subject matter. For example, we can throw the Frisbee and also explore the mathematical side of physics and Bernoulli's principle of flight.

Teachers in Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District are already integrating the Common Core across all subjects, including science, social studies and PE. Through the National Physical Education Standards, the kids are developing their own fitness goals and fitness plans, based on frequency of workout, intensity of workout and time spent on workout. So they are using writing skills to communicate their plans and math skills for figuring out their heart rate and maximum benefit. We do a lot of collaboration with other classes on these projects, and students do a lot of team building to problem-solve together, which is part of the Common Core.

Our PE students have trimester projects. For example, eighth-graders may write something about the heart, answering what risk factors are controllable and how to have a healthy heart. Sixth-graders may have a project on bones and seventh-graders on muscles.

Having PE as part of the Common Core helps students make better connections. For example, instead of them just running, it helps them to know why they are running. Physical exercise is very important. I tell my kids that it's important to learn how to read and write, but if they're unhealthy because they don't exercise, it won't help them much.

Are students shortchanged on physical exercise? I get that question all the time. Most of the reading and writing we assign is done outside of class. So no, they are not being shortchanged. They're running circles around other students.



Tracey Ayer, *Teachers Association of Norwalk-La Mirada*, teaches PE at Los Coyotes Middle School.

The Common Core State Standards

(CCSS) have been adopted by 45 states to prepare students for college and the workforce with skills that enforce critical thinking and solving real-world problems.

When it comes to incorporating physical education (PE) into the Common Core, however, some CTA members are on opposing teams.



NO

Many students are at a disadvantage as a result of not getting enough physical activity.

Child and adolescent obesity, as well as other health issues, are at an all-time high. Students need time to exercise and are required by the state to receive those minutes for physical activity. Common Core is being implemented in their academic classes, and students are more anxious and stressed than I have ever seen in my career. PE helps to alleviate some of the tension.

Students will definitely be shortchanged from those precious minutes of physical activity if they have to read and write in their PE classes. A well-rounded education should include a strong focus on physical activity. Studies show the more physically fit a student is, the greater chance they will have at academic success. For many students, PE is one of the only classes in which they excel. Taking that away would be detrimental to those students.

PE teachers are not adequately trained in the Common Core and are not credentialed to teach reading, writing and math. In addition, the California state standards for physical education would not be able to be taught to the best of a PE teacher's ability.

Whether or not to incorporate the Common Core was casually brought up to our department chair a couple of years ago. None of the PE teachers felt comfortable teaching CCSS, and all agreed that CCSS should not be taught in PE, as it takes away from the physical activity so many of our students desperately need.

The CCSS standards are meant for reading, writing and math across the curriculum and are supposed to help encourage critical thinking. This is good teaching. PE teachers are constantly working with their students on the importance of physical fitness, sportsmanship, teamwork and wellness. These skills are essential to a student's overall well-being, and PE teachers do not need to implement CCSS in order for their students to achieve success in said areas.



Wendy Eccles, *NEA-Jurupa*, teaches PE at Mira Loma Middle School in Riverside.



Member
spotlight

IN VINCENT'S WORDS:

There's no substitute for a good substitute... because teachers need someone they can trust when they can't be at school. I've impressed enough teachers with my professional credibility that many of them request me to cover their classes.

I don't like to hear that substitute teaching is baby-sitting... because you don't get called back every day for 16 years if you are just baby-sitting. My goal at the end of class is to have a stack of written assignments completed so a teacher can see what their students have accomplished.

A good sub... listens to students to see what their needs are and what they are capable of doing. I treat each student like they could be the next president of the United States. A good sub asks students what they are reading or if they've seen the latest movie and connects with them over real world events.

A teacher can help a substitute succeed... by leaving a detailed lesson plan that describes what they expect each student to accomplish when they are gone. Of course, if there is an emergency, it's up to the substitute to ensure the class has a productive day.

The best thing about being involved in my union... is helping other substitutes. If they have questions or are seeking benefits, I'm the go-to person. I love being a mediator. We recognize NEA/CTA Substitute Educators Day (the Friday of American Education Week) and celebrate with a night of festive comradeship.

The best thing about substitute teaching is... the variety of schools, students and classes. I learn something new every day. It's a big responsibility, and I take it seriously. I love the kids. They consistently impress me with how brilliant they are.

No Substitute for Vincent Bernota

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin Photo by Scott Buschman

WHEN STUDENTS SEE VINCENT BERNOTA walking the hallway, their eyes light up, hoping he's filling in if their teacher is absent. An audible groan goes up as he walks past their classroom door pretending he's going somewhere else, but then a cheer erupts when he turns around to unlock the door.

"Students are always happy to see me," says Bernota, "because of the freedom they perceive in the absence of their regular teacher."

He performs a few magic tricks, like pulling a quarter out of his ear and making a pen float in the air, and tells a few jokes to get the ball rolling before students settle down to work.

It's not easy facing new students, who often view a substitute as an excuse to behave badly. But in 16 years, he has never sent a student to detention or to the principal.

"I'm here to help, not discipline," asserts Bernota, who subs daily in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. "I consider myself a guest speaker who reviews material and teaches them about subject matter. I try to get students excited about learning and motivate them to do a good job."

He began subbing to earn extra cash while attending the University of Connecticut. He liked it so much that after earning his MBA at the University of Southern California, it became his career. He's never had his own classroom, although he's had assignments lasting up to three months. He renews his emergency permit annually.

Bernota went to his first union meeting to inquire about receiving health benefits. At that meeting, the regular representative for substitutes quit, and Bernota became the de facto rep. Ever since, he has been the substitute teacher representative for his chapter, the Santa Monica-Malibu Classroom Teachers Association.



Teachers in training

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin
Photography by Scott Buschman

Teacher **Anna Pepito**, above left, and resident **Ashli Duncan** at El Dorado Elementary in San Francisco last year.



How can low-income, high-poverty schools lure new educators during a teaching shortage?

Once hired, how can they be retained?

How can schools attract diverse teachers who reflect the community where they teach?

What are the best ways to support new teachers and help them thrive?

SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT (SFUSD)

found solutions to these questions by partnering with two Bay Area universities and the local teachers union to create a “residency” program that goes beyond typical preservice preparation.

In San Francisco, a unique partnership among the district, Stanford University, University of San Francisco (USF), and United Educators of San Francisco (UESF) created the San Francisco Teacher Residency (SFTR) program. It’s similar to a medical residency, where residents serve under an assisting physician and gain the training required to practice medicine, but teacher residents work under the supervision of a veteran teacher while training to become teachers of record in SFUSD.

The program has “graduated” 100 new teachers in the past five years. Of these, 96 percent are still teaching. That’s quite an accomplishment considering that nationwide, 20 percent of all new teachers leave the classroom within three years, and in urban districts like San Francisco, close to 50 percent of newcomers flee the profession during their first five years of teaching. Last year, 75 percent of the program’s residents were teachers of color, and 97 percent of program graduates were teaching in hard-to-staff schools or subject areas.

Ashli Duncan is a proud participant of the program. An African American, she reflects the student population at El Dorado Elementary School, where she was a resident last year in the classroom of mentor teacher Anna Pepito. Duncan has no doubt that she’s learned more than the first-graders she helped teach last year.

“It’s been an amazing experience,” says Duncan. “To stay with a class for an entire year and be part of their everyday learning was so valuable. I loved that





I was able to practice teaching instead of just reading about it. I discovered a lot of truths. I built a lot of connections. I learned how to create a sense of community in the classroom. At first I sat back and watched Anna, but it gradually became *our* classroom, and at some point, for a few days, it was *my* classroom.”

The program paid half of the tuition for Duncan, who is earning her M.A. and teaching credential at USF. She isn’t sure she could have done it by herself financially.

“Programs like this are important, because by investing in teachers, we are investing in students,” says Duncan. “They make it possible for adults to better themselves and the community at the same time.”

RESIDENTS BLOSSOM — AND PUT DOWN ROOTS

SFTR director Jonathan Osler says the program is based on a Boston residency program founded by Jesse Solomon, who taught him in eighth grade and was his favorite teacher of all time. Osler and Solomon are still in communication on how to best run residency programs.

In the SFTR model, which is part of the Urban Teacher Residency United Network, 24 residents are placed in the classroom of a “cooperating teacher” for an entire year in a school that serves diverse students, while taking tightly connected coursework from their university partners. Residents are enrolled

▲
Dayna Soares,
with Edwin
Rodríguez,
became a teacher
at Mission High
School after her
residency there.

Programs like
this are important,
because **by investing
in teachers,
we are investing
in students.**
ASHLI DUNCAN

either in a teacher preparation program at Stanford for math and science, or in a USF program for math, science, and Spanish bilingual or elementary education. Upon completion, residents receive their preliminary teaching credential. For Stanford students, a master’s degree is embedded in the program; USF students take coursework toward a master’s degree, finishing the final two courses post-residency.

Residents begin the year as observers, and gradually assume greater responsibility for the planning, instruction and assessment in the classroom. They attend weekly



Students Jairo Robles and Alexis Benavidez listen to resident **Linzy Binggang** at Mission High.



seminars on topics specific to San Francisco schools and students, and visit the classrooms of other educators, making “instructional rounds” to expand their understanding through observations.

Upon completion of the residency, new teachers are supported for their first two years of teaching through an enhanced Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) induction program. They are also offered employment contracts to teach in one of SFUSD’s hard-to-staff schools or subjects.

The residency program also offers support services for mentoring teachers, including release time, which Pepito

▲
Ariana Contreras, with T’Hea Vinson, became a teacher at El Dorado Elementary after her residency there.

found valuable for supporting Duncan. Although she worried about being a mentor at first, she loved it.

“Teaching side-by-side with Ashli has been a wonderful experience. We have learned and grown together,” says Pepito. “The kids benefited from having an extra caring adult in the classroom. Many said they enjoyed having two teachers. This program made me a better teacher. It helped me to refine and articulate my practice, by making me think about why I’m doing what I’m doing every step of the way.”

All residents make a commitment to teach in SFUSD for three years.

Linzy Binggang, who just ended her math residency at Mission High School, says the three-year commitment was a “selling factor” for her when she applied to be a resident. ➔

The Value of Mentors

92% vs. 84%

of teachers assigned a mentor their first year returned the next year.

of teachers not assigned a mentor their first year returned the next year.

86% vs. 71%

of mentored teachers remained on the job by the fifth year.

of unmentored teachers remained on the job by the fifth year.

Source: Study of teacher attrition by National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education; years studied: 2007-08 through 2011-12.

“I didn’t want to move here just to have to go back to Los Angeles,” says Bingcang, a Student CTA member and Stanford student. “This ensures that people stay and become part of the community rather than being an outsider who’s just passing through. I feel like they have made an investment in me. I feel like part of the San Francisco community.”



Kyra Bajeera

Kyra Bajeera just finished her first year as a teacher of record at Mission High School. The biology and precalculus teacher says her residency gave her the confidence she needed for going solo.

“I had mentors and people I could go to when I was feeling lost. I had a great support system. I could apply theory in a real-life setting. It was amazing, and I don’t think I’d be here without it.”

Dayna Soares, who became a teacher at Mission High School after finishing her residency in 2012, says the most valuable aspect was learning classroom management skills and how to foster connections with students.

“I think a residency is the best model there is,” says Soares. “I can’t speak to other models, but this makes the most sense for me.”

UNION SUPPORT IS CRITICAL

A recent report by CTA’s Teacher Evaluation Workgroup praised the “intensive support” of residency programs for producing new teachers who are fully ready to assume their professional responsibilities. The report calls for labor unions, higher education and school districts to partner up and create new residency programs to strengthen the profession.

The report found three components of preservice programs that distinguish residencies, even though those same components may be seen to a lesser degree in other preparation pathways. Those components are: partnerships, integration and intensive support.

San Francisco’s program has created a “win-win situation” for schools, teachers and students, says Dennis Kelly, immediate past president of UESF.

“At times we sit on opposite sides of the table,” he observes. “But we had a shared vision and willingness to work toward a common goal. People from the school district, people from universities and union leaders asked important questions such as ‘What does effective teaching look like?’ or ‘What is effective mentoring?’ or ‘What can we do to support teacher retention?’ It was exciting



San Francisco Teacher Residency director **Jonathan Osler** gets a hug from Leilani McGehee.

to collaborate on something positive like this — and something more school communities should consider doing. We are proud to be leading the way in San Francisco.”

UESF support is critical to the success of the program, says Osler.

“When residents come in knowing that the union is a key partner, they feel they are part of a professional network and they are supported,” says Osler. “On a practical level, the union has been very involved in helping us recruit new residents with social media and also through word of mouth.”

UESF also has helped with fundraising and was instrumental in helping the program win a big grant from NEA. Participants from SFTR have presented at NEA leadership conferences.

“It’s a powerful, transformative experience for teachers involved in the program to share their work with other teachers around the country,” says Osler. “We are very excited to share the good things that are happening in San Francisco.” ■

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Lounge Act

From drab to *fab* in El Monte

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin
Photography by Scott Buschman

LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO LOUNGE?

A place to escape the students, decompress and chat with your colleagues over a cup of coffee or a sandwich?

If you haven't visited your staff lounge before, it's easy to spot. It's usually the ugliest room on campus. It's probably stocked with mismatched, cast-off furniture and has walls of indeterminate color because the paint is so faded. Windows are framed by broken blinds or dusty old drapes. Suffice to say your typical staff lounge may have all the warmth and charm of a decades-old hospital waiting room.

Of course, looks aren't everything. A lounge can be warm and welcoming despite a lack of décor when it's filled with friendly colleagues willing to listen and laugh.

This year in Madrid Middle School, stuff in the lounge isn't scrounge. For the first time in decades, the school staff break room is pleasant, comfortable and attractive. The transformation occurred after the school won

a nationwide School Lounge Makeover contest sponsored by California Casualty, a company providing auto and home insurance to educators (including CTA members), firefighters, police officers and nurses across the country.

Naturally, the *California Educator* visited the El Monte school for the Big Reveal.



▲ Above, the new lounge at Madrid Middle School is relaxed and comfortable; at left, a "before" shot of the dining area.



with a “beachy” feel. So designer Briannon DuBois and account manager Marc Canady of EON Office got to work, transforming the setting from dreary to cheery. Staff were asked to steer clear during the three-week redeco-rating process.

Teachers and staff applauded the new lounge after the three-week makeover.

On the morning of the Big Reveal, 45 minutes before the morning bell, employees gathered outside the lounge eagerly waiting for the door to open. Mountain View Education Association members and classified staff confided they looked forward to finally having a pleasant place to seek sanctuary.

“I’m absolutely excited,” said Maria Lara, an English and history teacher. “It was looking drab in there and not very exciting. The drapes were the yuckiest color green.”

“I’m looking forward to spending some time there,” chimed in Susan Dluhy, who also teaches English and history. “Our other lounge was not in the least bit relaxing.”

Science teacher Tammy Capilla admitted she “peeked” during the redecorating process. Without divulging what she’d seen to curious colleagues, she assured them the lounge looked “pretty cool” and they would be pleased.

“I’m so happy,” shared special education teacher Dona Tully. “I love our school.

I love our staff. And I love that our principal Bonnie has done something so nice for us. What a wonderful parting gift! Our old staff lounge was incredibly dingy. It didn’t feel clean or welcoming. It wasn’t any place you’d want to be.”

California Casualty’s School Lounge Makeover contest started in 2011, and Madrid Middle School is the 10th winner, beating out 33,000 entrants. Past California winners are Quartz Hill Elementary School in Quartz Hill, Warner Middle School in Westminster, Sunnysdale Elementary School in Lancaster and Gilbert High School in Anaheim.

“I love that our principal Bonnie has done something so nice for us. What a wonderful parting gift!”



Principal

Bonnie Tanaka gets a hug from staff after winning California Casualty’s \$7,500 School Lounge Makeover contest.



And the winner is...

The jaws of Madrid Middle School employees dropped when they were informed they’d been selected winners of a contest providing \$7,500 for a school lounge makeover. Most didn’t know Principal Bonnie Tanaka had entered the contest on their behalf shortly before her retirement, because she wanted to do something nice for her staff to show appreciation for all their hard work.

After the April announcement, staff were asked what they wanted to see in their new digs. Most said they wanted something soothing, relaxing and comfortable,



▲ Above, **David Dorf, Jorge Ramos, Chris Jimenez** and **Herman Ruvalcaba** enjoy the new sitting area; at right, the revamped dining space.



“We came up with the idea after our field marketing managers visited schools to explain California Casualty benefits,” said Mark Goldberg, communications specialist for the company. “We saw terrible conditions in school lounges. We work closely with educators, so it is deeply gratifying to see smiles and excitement when they realize our company cares enough about them to do a makeover. We do it because we believe teachers are important.”

Two School Lounge Makeover contests are held each year, and winners are picked at random, with no purchase required.

‘Extreme makeover’ makes for extremely happy educators

The door finally opened and staff ventured into their new island-themed lounge, painted a soothing shade of light pink. The space had new meeting tables and chairs, comfy couches, bistro tables and ample seating. Black and white throw rugs brightened up the linoleum floor. Hand-me-down appliances were replaced by a new refrigerator, a microwave, toaster ovens and a coffee maker. The yucky green drapes were replaced with vertical blinds. There were succulent plants, artwork and floor lamps. It had the look and feel of, well, *home*.

Staff reacted with oohs, aahs and applause. Many took turns hugging Tanaka, who said she plans to return as a substitute teacher and visit them in the lounge during her breaks. Trays of celebratory snacks like cupcakes and muffins were quickly emptied. Happy school employees headed off to class.

“I hope you enjoy the room,” called Tanaka after them, looking teary-eyed. “You have a really hard job and deserve a really great place where you can come and relax.” ■

▶ Madrid Middle School teachers and staff react with smiles and applause at their stylish new digs.

Share your lounge act with the *Educator*

Is your staff hangout worthy of being a “lounge act” in the *Educator* because it’s unique or special in some way? Perhaps it has a pingpong table, a lending library or an interesting mascot? If so, we’d like to see it and possibly run a photo of your school hangout in an upcoming issue of the magazine. Please email a few high-resolution, in-focus photos of the overall room, plus close-ups of special features, to sgoodwin@cta.org with your name, the name of your school, your local chapter, and personal telephone contact information. It’s OK to include a CTA member or two in the photo.

Editor’s note: The deadline to enter the next California Casualty \$7,500 School Lounge Makeover contest is Oct. 2, 2015, with the winner announced in November. Complete rules and the entry form can be found at school loungemakeover.com. All members of a school are encouraged to enter to increase their chance of being picked.



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INSIDE:

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Friedrichs v. CTA, headed to the U.S. Supreme Court, jeopardizes our collective voice.
Story on page 36.



Educators respond

"We are disappointed that at a time when big corporations and the wealthy few are rewriting the rules in their favor, knocking American families and our entire economy off-balance, the Supreme Court has chosen to take a case that threatens the fundamental promise of America — that if you work hard and play by the rules you should be able to provide for your family and live a decent life.

"The Supreme Court is revisiting decisions that have made it possible for people to stick together for a voice at work and in their communities — decisions that have stood for more than 35 years — and that have allowed people to work together for better public services and vibrant communities.

"When people come together in a union, they can help make sure that our communities have jobs that support our families. It means teachers can stand up for their students. First responders can push for critical equipment to protect us. And social workers can advocate effectively for children's safety.

"America can't build a strong future if people can't come together to improve their work and their families' futures. Moms and dads across the country have been standing up in the thousands to call for higher wages and unions. We hope the Supreme Court heeds their voices."

▲ Statement by CTA President Eric C. Heins, NEA President Lily Eskelsen García, AFT (American Federation of Teachers) President Randi Weingarten, AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) President Lee Saunders, and SEIU (Service Employees International Union) President Mary Kay Henry, following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to review *Friedrichs v. CTA*.



The Case for Fair Share

Friedrichs v. CTA lawsuit jeopardizes our collective voice

By Katharine Fong

The U.S. Supreme Court will hear *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association* in its session next year, with a decision expected in June 2016. The lawsuit challenges CTA's right to collect fair share fees (the equivalent of union dues) from nonmembers to cover the costs of representation, such as negotiating contracts.

2013

TIMELINE

of the *Friedrichs* case

April 29, 2013

The Center for Individual Rights (CIR) files suit in a U.S. District Court on behalf of Rebecca Friedrichs and nine other California teachers and the Christian Educators Association International. The suit challenges CTA's right to collect fair share fees from nonmembers to cover the costs of representation.

While the suit concerns CTA and educators and their ability to advocate for students and schools, it has larger implications for all public employees.

“The people who come together in CTA are able to use their collective voice to stand up for their students and schools,” says CTA President Eric C. Heins. “Firefighters, nurses, first responders and others who come together in unions are able to push for better public services and better communities.

“The *Friedrichs* case is an attack on unionism, workers, their families and our future. We must all stick together to protect and build our future.”

Heins was one of several education and union leaders who issued a joint statement following the Supreme Court’s decision to accept the case on June 30. (See sidebar.)

The court will consider whether the First Amendment prohibits fair share fee arrangements in the public sector and, if not, whether these fees may be collected through an opt-out procedure.

What is fair share?

Fair share fees help ensure that all employees equitably share the costs of negotiated benefits. A fair share fee payer is a worker who chooses not to join the union, but is still fully covered by the union contract, with all its rights and benefits. The fair share principle ensures that these individuals do not get a “free ride” at the expense of the contributions of others.

Importantly, no educator is forced to join CTA. Members can opt out of having their dues money used for political pur-

were stronger then. Through unions, Reich says in his video “The Big Picture: Strengthen Unions,” workers had bargain-

“The decline of union membership has mirrored almost exactly the decline of the middle class. Strong unions mean a strong middle class, which means a strong economy.”

—ROBERT REICH, Professor of Public Policy and former U.S. Secretary of Labor

poses. Fee payers can submit an objection to the fee and receive a refund of the portion of the fee that does not support bargaining representation.

Full membership in CTA, however, has powerful advantages, including:

- Having a voice in the association.
- Adding strength to CTA’s collective voice in advocating for students, schools, and school employees.
- Access to professional development opportunities, scholarships and financial savings.
- Legal representation if you are treated unfairly or unjustly accused.

Strong unions benefit all

Strong unions benefit everyone. Professor of public policy and former U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich says that a prime reason America was “far more equal” in the 1950s and 1960s than now is that unions

ing power to improve wages and working conditions for everyone.

More than a third of all private-sector workers belonged to unions in the 1950s; that proportion has dropped to less than 7 percent today. “The decline of union membership has mirrored almost exactly the decline of the middle class,” Reich says. “Strong unions mean a strong middle class, which means a strong economy.”

Unions and workers are also weakened by right-to-work legislation, in which employees in unionized workplaces are not required to pay unions for the cost of representation. (California is not a right-to-work state.) The Economic Policy Institute published updated research in April of this year that showed union and nonunion workers in right-to-work states have lower wages and fewer benefits, on average, than comparable workers in other states. ■

2014

2015

Dec. 5, 2013

The District Court grants CIR’s request to enter judgment on behalf of the defendant unions, meaning the case proceeds to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals without discovery or a trial.

Oct. 3, 2014

CIR submits motion asking the 9th Circuit to promptly rule against *Friedrichs* so the case can move quickly to the U.S. Supreme Court. The court grants the motion on Nov. 18, 2014.

Jan. 24, 2015

CIR files petition asking the Supreme Court to review the case.

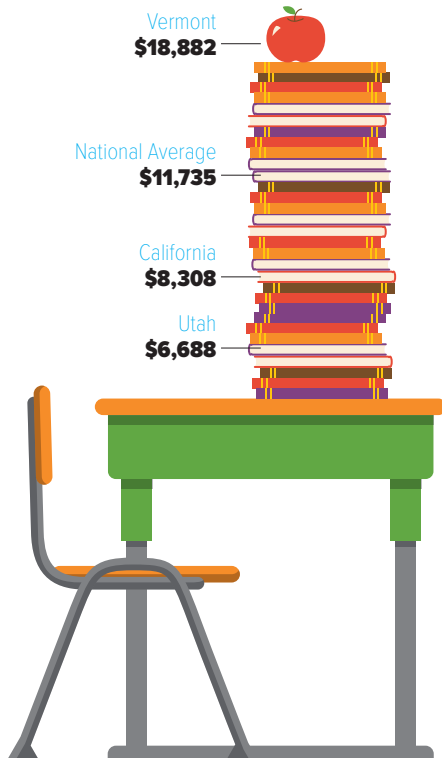
June 30, 2015

Supreme Court agrees to review the case in its session next year, with a decision expected in June 2016. Stay tuned...

California ranked

46th

In Per-Pupil Expenditures



Source: *Education Week*,
 "Quality Counts 2015"; illustrator:
 Kathleen Kowal

Educators
 press
 lawmakers on
 tax fairness
 measure

Legislative Update

By Len Feldman

State Budget: A Record Increase

THANKS TO THE EFFORTS of CTA members throughout California, the new 2015-16 state budget not only keeps the promise to California students, it also provides the single largest funding increase for public education in the history of California.

The spending plan proposed by Gov. Jerry Brown and approved by the Legislature will boost Proposition 98 guarantee funding for K-12 schools and community colleges by \$10 billion over the levels of just two years ago (see graph). The governor signed it into law on June 18.

The new education funding comes after years of devastating cuts in excess of \$20 billion that led to nearly 30,000 educator layoffs, larger class sizes, furlough days and cuts to vital programs.

"These major restorations to our schools and programs for our students would not have happened without our hard work in our communities to generate support for Proposition 30 in 2012," says CTA President Eric C. Heins.

The new CTA leader points out that schools are just beginning to recover from the years of funding reductions. The state still ranks only 46th among the 50 states in per-student funding, and it ranks dead last in the ratios of school counselors and librarians to students.

The budget adoption came just a few weeks after CTA mounted an intense member outreach effort in Sacramento. Educators from around the state met their lawmakers in the Capitol and shared with them personal stories about the

CTA IS URGING LAWMAKERS to pass Senate Constitutional Amendment 5, by state Sens. Loni Hancock (D-Oakland) and Holly Mitchell (D-Los Angeles). The measure, the Property Tax Fairness Amendment, would close a main tax loophole in Proposition 13, the property tax measure enacted in 1978.

SCA 5 would reassess a limited group of commercial property investors and corporations that have benefited from the loophole. These longtime landholders and competitors enjoy an unfair advantage by paying very low taxes on land that has increased in value greatly over the decades.

SCA 5 also provides tax relief for small businesses and protects homeowners, renters and agricultural land from any property tax changes. In addition, the bill sets up strict accountability requirements for the revenues generated by its provisions.

CTA supports SCA 5 because it will make the state's property tax system fair and create new revenues to help rebuild the state.

...CHARTER SCHOOLS...TAX FAIRNESS MEASURE...

unmet needs of their students and classrooms as a result of years of underfunding.

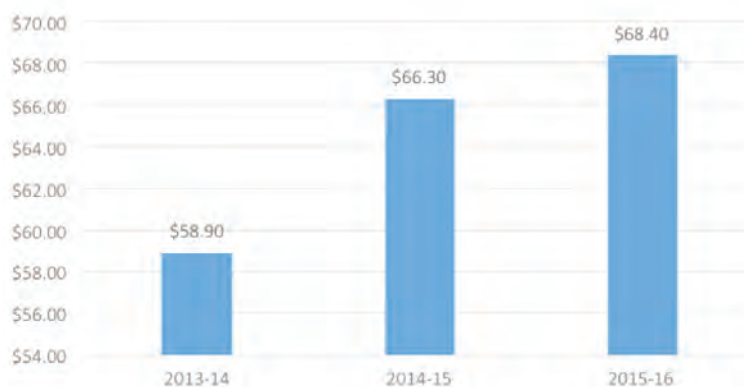
With some provisions of Prop. 30 set to expire at the end of 2016, Heins urges continued action. “We must keep pushing forward for our students and the education they deserve,” he says.

CTA is currently working in coalition with other labor unions and community groups to develop a funding initiative in time for the November 2016 ballot.

California State Budget: With the passage of Proposition 30 in 2012, this year’s budget:

- Increases K-12 ongoing spending by \$950 per student under the Local Control Funding Formula.
- Provides \$500 million to help districts support teacher preparation and induction programs, like Peer Assistance and Review (PAR).
- Provides more funding for adult education, career technical education and special education.
- Expands preschool enrollment by 7,000 children.
- Increases funding for community colleges, including money to reduce class sizes and hire full-time faculty.
- Provides an additional \$100 million for state universities — with no tuition hikes.
- Provides more Cal Grants to help middle-income families afford college.

State Education Budget: Proposition 98 Guarantee in Billions



Propositions 98 and 30

Prop. 98 is essentially a formula for calculating how much of the state’s revenue is spent on K-14 education. It’s complicated, but it works out to about 40 percent of the state’s general fund. The amount is guaranteed to be a minimum level of funding; the state can spend more on education if it chooses.

Prop. 30 temporarily raised taxes, thereby increasing the state’s revenue. An increase in revenue through Prop. 30 automatically translates into an increase in education spending through Prop. 98.

Source: California 2015-16 Enacted State Budget Summary

Charter school measures move

THREE CTA-CO-SPONSORED measures to increase charter school accountability and transparency have been approved by key legislative committees.

The Senate Education Committee recently approved AB 709 by Assembly Member Mike Gipson (D-Carson) and AB 787 by Assembly Member Roger Hernández (D-West Covina).

The Assembly Education Committee approved SB 322 by Sen. Mark Leno (D-San Francisco).

AB 709 would require charter school governing boards to comply with statutes that promote transparency and accountability to parents and the public in the operation of public schools and expenditure of public funds. These include conflict-of-interest regulations and open meeting and public record laws.

AB 787 would prohibit charter schools from operating as or being operated by a for-profit corporation. This will ensure that

charter schools will make their students’ interest — and not corporate profit — their focus.

SB 322 would prohibit charter school admissions criteria and preferences that are not permitted at traditional public schools. The bill will also protect student due process.

CTA charter school educators have been in the Capitol supporting the legislation. Recently, a number of educators at California Virtual Academies (CAVA), a network of online charter schools, held a news conference on the Capitol steps. Their testimony underscored how the for-profit status of the corporation running CAVA has harmed students by putting the focus on profits instead of student achievement.

All three measures are expected to see further action when lawmakers return in August from their summer recess.



MEET

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION CHAIR

Patrick O'Donnell

By Len Feldman

In November 2014, voters in the 70th Assembly District elected Patrick O'Donnell (D-Long Beach) as their representative. His district includes the cities of Avalon, Long Beach, Signal Hill and San Pedro. He chairs the important Assembly Education Committee.

A key member of the “legislative teachers’ caucus,” O'Donnell is a CTA member and has been a longtime classroom teacher and education advocate. As a teacher, he advocated in Sacramento for adequate school funding. He served as a Long Beach city councilman just prior to being elected to the Assembly.

O'Donnell was born in Long Beach, and graduated from CSU Long Beach with a degree in history and a master's in public administration. He lives in the Los Altos neighborhood of Long Beach with his wife Jennifer and their two daughters.

What did you do before becoming a lawmaker? ➡

I served as a classroom teacher for nearly 22 years. I taught middle school for 14 years and high school for just under eight years. Many of my students were English learners and came from low-income homes. I still consider myself a teacher; I am just not in the classroom every day.

What led you to run for office? ➡

I see my role in public office as an extension of my mission in the classroom — to help others, to provide a path for people to succeed, and to move America forward. I ran for state Assembly not to leave the classroom, but to bring my classroom experience to Sacramento and to give education a louder voice. We need a clear, rational voice that brings classroom teaching experience to the table when decisions are being made.

Who was the teacher who had the greatest impact on you? What key learning did you take with you from your contact with that teacher? ➡

That teacher would have to be Mrs. Wright. She was a wonderful lady and a great teacher who cared. Her interest and love for her students were great motivators. She was my third- and fourth-grade teacher. You wanted to succeed because you did not want to let her down, and she wanted you to succeed so you would not let yourself down.

What steps should the Legislature take to help schools succeed? ➡

There is not one single policy or switch to flip to make schools succeed. All schools are different, as are their students. Funding is an issue. California is currently 46th in the nation when it comes to per-pupil funding. Adequate funding means more school counselors, music and art programs, and much more. That's a good place to start. Further, we should not micromanage the classroom from Sacramento. I am a firm believer that too many laws are being proposed from people who have no classroom experience. Many of these proposed laws, although well-intentioned, would make educating our children much more difficult.

What are your goals for public education? ➡

My goal is for public education to march forward celebrating our successes while continuing to adapt to our current challenges. We must not be distracted by the fact that many in society expect teachers to solve every social problem our state faces. Public education is the glue that holds America together, and teachers are the heroes that make it happen.

What advice would you give educators about working with legislators? ➡

Get to know your legislators! Set up regularly scheduled meetings and find common ground with them. Invite a legislator into your classroom and show her or him what goes into a successful learning experience. Put party politics aside. And remember, Sacramento is full of well-funded advocacy groups that do not want to talk about the successes you are seeing in your classroom every day. However, if nobody is telling them anything else, they may not know anything else.

AROUND THE STATE

Oak Grove Educators Association in San Jose reinstated Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) and received a 4.5 percent salary increase. PAR programs are cooperative efforts by local unions and school districts in which teachers provide collegial support, assistance, and review to help other teachers improve instruction and student performance.

The **Sacramento City Teachers Association** worked with understaffed school counselors in advocating for students; this resulted in the district agreeing to add 10 counselors districtwide. Advocacy efforts throughout the LCAP consultation process by the **Anaheim Elementary Education Association** resulted in the district increasing the number of school nurses by 12, psychologists by two, and counselors by seven. Similar efforts by the **Anaheim Secondary Teachers Association** resulted in reducing the student-teacher ratio by 5.

The **Association of Colton Educators** approved a 2015-16 agreement that includes a 6.26 percent increase in the salary schedule, 15 additional release days, and an increase to coaching, activity program and extra time stipends. Also in Riverside County, the **Menifee Teachers Association**, despite an impasse declared by the district at the beginning of June, won a 5 percent raise retroactive to January 2015. The **Temecula Valley Educators Association** accepted a 3 percent salary increase effective July 1, with additional stipends for special education teachers.

Bargaining Update

See details of these stories at cta.org/bargainingupdates.



Photo by Bobby Yates

▲ GOAL ACHIEVED TO RETAIN QUALITY TEACHERS

After months of negotiations, the **Tracy Educators Association** and the Tracy Unified School District in San Joaquin County reached a tentative agreement while some 130 educators rallied in support of the teachers' bargaining team during a fact-finding hearing.

Teachers have been pressing district officials to invest Prop. 30 funds in classroom instruction, including hiring and retaining high-quality, experienced teachers. "Students are our priority, so it was time for the district to make teachers a priority," says TEA President Joe Raco. "We hope this contract will help recruit and retain our quality teachers."

The agreement provides a 7.5 percent increase for the 2015-16 school year. The ratification vote will occur when teachers return to school this month. TEA received a raise last year but prior to that had not seen an increase for more than six years.

COLLABORATION TIME IS KEY

To improve student learning and teacher training about the new California standards, Fremont Unified educators (Alameda County) negotiated 16 hours of collaboration time in new contract language ratified in June by members of the **Fremont Unified District Teachers Association (FUDTA)**.

In addition to a 5 percent salary increase and improving transfer language, the union won collaboration time that will be



paid at a teacher's (higher) per diem rate for doing 16 hours of work with grade level or department colleagues over the course of the coming school year.

Collaboration must be done in one of these areas: Professional Learning Communities, informing instruction, working on common lessons or assessments, aligning Common Core standards to curriculum resources, sharing best practices, or improving student engagement, says Sherea Westra, president of 1,600-member association.

"We are very excited that the work our members currently do together in collaboration for student success is being valued by the district," Westra says. "Creating time for teachers to work together to develop and grow as a team will only lead to greater strides in student achievement. The potential of what colleagues can do with this time is endless."

Read the innovative collaboration contract language at fudta.org.



▲ WILLING TO STRIKE FOR STUDENTS

A fight for additional preparation and instructional time for students took Desert Sands Teachers Association members in Palm Desert to the brink of a strike. Community organizing efforts and mass attendance at school board meetings helped achieve a tentative agreement in late July after nine months of bargaining.

The two-year deal includes increased professional preparation time from 30 to 120 weekly minutes, 10 additional instructional minutes, two paid professional development days, improved health care, an 11.4 percent salary increase, and a 1.5 percent special education stipend.

DSTA educators had been advocating for years for the prep and instructional time for students.

"Don't offer me a raise and tell me I have to work more hours," DSTA member Patricia Schoenfeld told school board members. "I already work more hours. I'm doing my part. I want you to do your part and be fair." ■

AROUND THE STATE

In Los Angeles County, **Certified Hourly Instructors at Long Beach City College** won a grievance providing a 2.7 percent salary increase retroactive to Nov. 1, 2014. The grievance alleged that LBCC failed to meet the "me too" requirement specified in a 2014 memorandum of understanding that linked part-time faculty percentage increase to that negotiated by full-time faculty.

The 2014-15 **Covina Unified Education Association** contract increased all high school and middle school athletic stipends and all elementary athletic and academic stipends by 20 percent retroactive to July 1. The 2015-16 contract allocates up to 80 athletic/academic activity stipend positions.

Unfair evaluations were removed from four members' personnel files, thanks to the **Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association** (San Bernardino County). The chapter filed a grievance for four members from the same work site, and it was settled at level 2.

When **Oakland Education Association** members and parents at Westlake Middle School (Alameda County) were told that a charter high school was to be colocated at their site, they took immediate action. Advocating to "move the adults, not the kids," OEA successfully rallied teachers, parents and the community to push the district to locate the charter elsewhere. In the same county, after the district declared an impasse in negotiations, the **San Leandro Teachers Association** settled for increased prep time, 5 percent salary increase, and other benefits.

Learning

INSIDE:

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Fluency in Flux

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Students



"My English learners are doing their best to learn a new language and culture."

**We need to
do our best
for them."**

MARK KUBISCH

English Language
Development coordinator,
Redding School District,
with student
Giselle Ortiz-Morales.

Story on page 44.



FLUENCY IN FLUX FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin
Photography by Scott Buschman



Student Raedyn Davis with **Mark Kubisch**, ELD coordinator at Redding School District.

WHEN RAEDYN DAVIS ENTERED second grade at Sycamore School in Redding, he was classified as an English learner (EL) and assigned to English Language Development (ELD) classes.

However, when Raedyn attended a different school the previous year, he was considered fluent in English, and did not take ELD classes.

Because Spanish is the primary language at home, Raedyn was tested for fluency when he enrolled in the Redding School District. Based on the results, he was reclassified by ELD coordinator Mark Kubisch.

Students are being classified as fluent in one district and EL in another more often than you would expect in California, which lacks uniform standards and criteria for determining fluency. Recent changes — and changes yet to come — could result in even more confusion when it comes to deciding who's fluent.

FIGURING OUT FLUENCY

Nearly 25 percent of students attending California's K-12 public schools are classified as ELs. This designation is supposed to last as long as the student needs

supplemental language support to succeed in schools. Some attain fluency quickly; others do not. If a student is an EL for six years or more, he or she may be called a “long-term English learner” (LTEL).

Before 1998, ELs, especially Latinos, were taught in their native language and transitioned to English. In 1998, Prop. 227 replaced most bilingual programs with English-only classrooms unless parents signed waivers.

Figuring out who is fluent and who isn't may seem easy, but it's not, say experts.

“Children develop playground language in English at a faster rate than academic English,” says Stockton Teachers Association member Homar Juarez, ELD coordinator at Stagg High School. “Teachers ask why a student is considered EL when he speaks English. But you have to look at a student's writing and comprehension skills. When learning English, speaking and listening skills usually develop first, and reading and writing skills come later.”

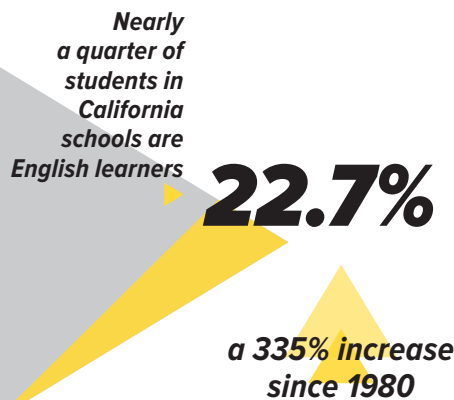
Some experts say it takes more than five years to become truly fluent, and even longer if students are living in poverty or are not literate in their native language. In California the length of time for a student to be “reclassified to fluent English proficient” (RFEP) varies widely. It takes over four years in San Francisco, seven in Hayward, and more than 10 in Oakland, observes the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

WHY THE CONFUSION?

In California, some districts rely heavily on language tests, while some depend primarily on classroom grades. In others, the biggest indicator of reclassification can be the teacher's opinion.

State Board of Education guidelines recommend districts establish “reclassification policies and procedures” based on:

- An objective assessment that includes, but is not limited to, the California English Language Development Test (CELDT).
- Teacher evaluation, including but not limited to mastery of curriculum.
- Parent opinion and consultation.
- Student performance on standardized tests in math and English, with students demonstrating the same basic skills as English proficient students of the same age.



Source: California Department of Education

TEST YOUR PROFICIENCY IN ACRONYMS

EL	English learner
ELD	English Language Development
ELA	English Language Arts
RFEP	Reclassified to fluent English proficient
CELDT	California English Language Development Test
ELPAC	English Language Proficiency Assessment for California
LTEL	Long-term English learner
SDAIE	Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English
CLAD	Crosscultural Language and Academic Development
B-CLAD	Bilingual, Crosscultural Language and Academic Development

A 2014 report by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), “Pathways to Fluency: Examining the Link Between Language Reclassification Policies and Student Success,” notes districts have “great latitude” in setting their own reclassification policies within the guidelines, and some have more rigorous requirements than others.

In the absence of the CSTs (California Standards Tests) during California’s transition to the Smarter Balanced Assessments, districts must select another measure for the fourth criterion, says the state. Some are using off-the-shelf tests, while others have created their own. Los Angeles Unified School District has crafted its own assessment to determine if students are ready for reclassification. In San Francisco, EL students can demonstrate proficiency by taking the Fountas & Pinnell reading assessment, the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), or the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE).

Big changes are coming. New ELD standards adopted by the State Board of Education in 2012 will be implemented, in line with the new state standards. A new English Language Arts/ELD framework was adopted by the state last year. A different, computer-based test will replace CELDT in 2017. After CELDT is given to students in the fall, the new English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC) will be administered in the spring, allowing more instructional time and coinciding with Smarter Balanced Assessments testing in core subjects.

SHOULD CONTENT KNOWLEDGE DETERMINE FLUENCY?

Some question whether passing math and English content tests — demonstrating the same basic skills as English proficient students of the same age — should determine fluency.

“They can pass the CELDT, but if they have haven’t met the criteria on the standardized test, they won’t be classified as English proficient,” comments Karen Cadiero-Kaplan, chair of English learner education at San Diego State University. “So they could be fluent, but are not reclassified because they have failed math or English.”



Karen Cadiero-Kaplan

As a result, she says, they may not have the same access to a full curriculum and electives as English-speaking peers. It also puts them at higher risk of dropping out, not meeting A-G requirements for University of California admission, or failing the California High School Exit Exam.

Cadiero-Kaplan, California Faculty Association, San Diego State University, also believes that many districts don’t have a “clear policy” on reclassification, even though it’s mandated by the state.

“You can go to one district and get three different answers on how students are reclassified,” she says.

The Local Control Funding Formula, which provides extra money to school districts for English learners, could be a “disincentive” for reclassification, some worry.

“Anything is possible when funds are involved,” says Cadiero-Kalan. “If a district has a clear policy about reclassification, that shouldn’t be an issue. But without a clear policy, things may happen that aren’t in the best interest of students.”

WHEN TO RECLASSIFY?

Cheryl Ortega, chair of CTA’s Language Acquisition Committee, believes some guidelines used to reclassify students can be subjective — especially parent consultation.

“If a school says to a parent, ‘Your child is doing well, we want to reclassify him as an English speaker,’ what parent is going to say ‘He’s not ready yet?’” asks Ortega, director of bilingual education for United Teachers Los Angeles. “Parents consider it an honor to have their child reclassified, and sometimes, frankly, don’t know what it takes to be reclassified. They may say ‘My child speaks English all the time’ but not understand that it’s the academic component that’s being measured, not speech.”

There are steps toward reclassification — promoting students to higher levels of ELD — and often there’s “pressure” to move children before they are ready, says Ortega.

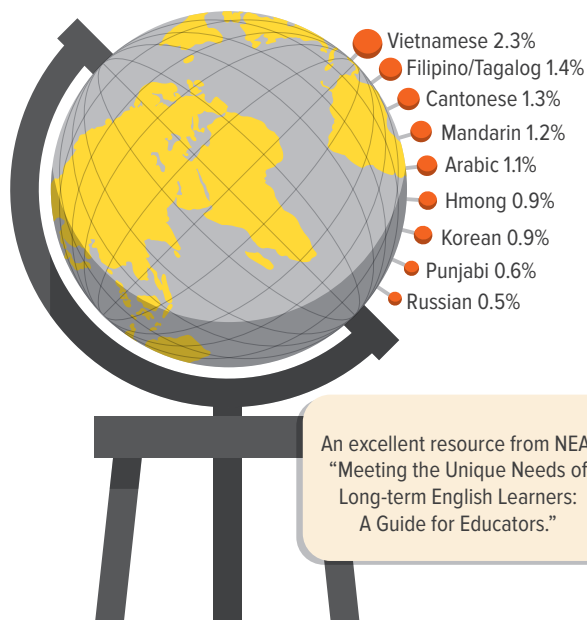
“There’s a big push to reclassify. Let’s say you have a second-grader who leaves in the summer, and he is labeled an ELD 3. That student comes back in the fall, and to everyone’s surprise, that child is now an ELD 4 and the teacher knew nothing about it. I’ve had a significant number of teachers tell me this magically happened over the summer and was determined by someone else,



Cheryl Ortega

Languages Spoken by English Learners

While 84.24 percent of English learners in California speak Spanish, there are also:



An excellent resource from NEA: “Meeting the Unique Needs of Long-term English Learners: A Guide for Educators.”



Homar Juarez, ELD coordinator at Stagg High School in Stockton, with Brianna Ayala.



The PPIC study released last year concludes that students should be reclassified sooner to avoid lagging academically. According to the study, students who started elementary school as ELs and were reclassified by fifth grade were among the highest-achieving students in their districts, even compared with native English speakers.

A study by Californians Together reports that three out of four ELs in grades 6-12 have been in schools for seven years or more and lack the English skills they need to succeed. These students are called long-term English learners (LTELs), a new term resulting from 2012 legislation, making California the first state having this designation.

Concern about EL students lagging academically has rekindled the debate over whether schools should return to bilingual education. The California Multilingual Education Act (Senate Bill 1174) is on the November 2016 ballot. If approved, it would repeal most of Proposition 227 of 1998, allowing non-English languages for instruction.

TIME FOR UNIFORM STANDARDS?

The PPIC calls for an end to the wide variations among districts in determining mastery of English, and demands that standards be uniform and simplified. Senate Bill 409 by Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León, which is

trying to rush students through the process. But if you reclassify students too soon, they don't get the services they still need."

Once a student is moved to a higher ELD status, they can't return to the previous level, says Ortega, because policy dictates that students may not move to a lower ELD status.

Jose Duran, ELD teacher at Buhach Colony High School in Merced and a member of the Language Acquisition Committee, thinks mistakes on reclassification sometimes happen if there is a "mismatch" between teacher and students.

"Sometimes, there isn't a cultural connection," says Duran, Merced Union High School District Teachers Association. "You have to connect with them culturally. You also have to sell them on education and the need to learn English. Some of these kids are disengaged with the school and don't feel a part of things. You can't just have them open their book to page 65 and expect them to learn."

pending, proposes to mandate statewide reclassification criteria, which teachers say would solve the problem. CTA has taken a "support" position on this.

Not everyone agrees on the need for uniformity. At the California Department of Education, Lily Roberts, interim director of assessment development, and Veronica Aguila, division director for English learners, say districts need "local flexibility" to determine fluency, and what works in one district may not be best in another. The state has received funding to study whether reclassification is working across the state.

Some CTA members say they would like a clear state policy on designating students as English fluent, since statewide standards are so variable.

"If you want to compare apples to apples, you need the same criteria," says Duran. "I believe we need uniform reclassification criteria across the state."

"Not having universal mandates or protocol is not beneficial for students, and makes it difficult for teachers," says Kubisch. "When it varies from district to district, some kids aren't getting the support they need and deserve."

EL students need encouragement, patience, support and resources, say teachers.

"My English learners are hard workers and always give me 100 percent of their effort," adds Kubisch. "They are doing their best to learn a new language and a new culture. We need to do our best for them." ■

Help for Homeless Students

Educators, districts step up efforts for growing numbers

By Katharine Fong

Photo by Scott Buschman



VERY LIKELY, you know a homeless student. You might not think he or she is homeless — until you notice they wear the same clothes every day, or are constantly tired or hungry, or suddenly fall behind in their studies.

Educators likely know a homeless student because their numbers keep climbing. Currently in California, there are 310,000 homeless students — the largest population in the nation and almost 5 percent of the state’s total public school enrollment. (Federal statistics show that nationwide, about 1.36 million homeless students are enrolled in school.)

Homeless students are defined by the federal government as those who “lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.” This includes students living in motels or hotels, doubling up with other families or living in shelters.

They are found all across California. According to KidsData, the counties with the highest percentage of homeless students are Santa Barbara (13.6 percent of public school enrollees), Trinity (10.8), Lake (10.7), Monterey (9.6), Nevada (9.6), Sierra (9.5), San Bernardino (9.0), Plumas (8.3), San Luis Obispo (8.0), and Santa Cruz (6.8). Los Angeles County has the most homeless students (67,301 in 2014), followed by San Bernardino (36,886).

PLANS TO MEET NEEDS

Educators need to be adept at identifying homeless students to help make sure they and their families get access to assistance, as well as to help improve their academic performance (see sidebars).

And now under a new law, California school districts must specifically address how they will help homeless students in their Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAPs). The law, signed by Gov. Jerry Brown in June, requires districts to outline specific ways they

will meet homeless students’ needs and set goals such as increasing students’ proficiency on state tests.

The federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act already mandates that test scores for homeless students be collected, but there is no requirement for school districts to do anything with the scores. California’s new law requires schools with at least 15 homeless students to report out their test scores as a “subgroup,” as they currently do with English learners, low-income students and foster youth.

“Most homeless students qualify as low-income,” says Shahera Hyatt, project director of the California Homeless Youth Project and author of a 2014 report that recommended homeless students be explicitly included in LCAPs. She notes that homeless students face specific obstacles that not all low-income students do — including unstable homes, lack of food, and transportation problems

Signs that a student may be homeless

The student is:

- Suddenly falling behind in school.
- Coming to school fatigued, hungry, or wearing the same clothes.
- Hoarding belongings.
- Having uncharacteristic discipline problems.

Source: National Center for Homeless Education

— so their situations go “above and beyond low-income. The new law is a step in the right direction.”

Hyatt notes that among the top 10 districts with the most homeless students, Long Beach Unified is the only one that tracked homeless students as a group before passage of the law.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT'S WORKING

Most districts completed their LCAPs for this year before the law went into effect. Even so, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), according to LA School Report, has earmarked \$1.8 million in its 2015-16 LCAP to help homeless students through its Homeless Education Program. The funds will be used to increase the program's number of counselors from seven to 19, and double the number of aides to four.

LAUSD's homeless student population is estimated at 16,000, so the additional staffing will help with outreach and training, particularly in identifying homeless students and handling individuals and families with sensitivity. It will also help move donated goods more quickly to those in need. “LAUSD does an amazing job of education awareness in schools and communities,” Hyatt says.

She points to several individual efforts that are helping bring attention to the issue. “Melissa Schoonmaker [LAUSD pupil services and attendance coordinator] makes shirts and bracelets to raise visibility.”

And in Santa Cruz County, where according to United Way 4,200 K-12 children are homeless, “Nohemi Macias [the county office of education's homeless student liaison] volunteers in the county's biannual homelessness census one night in June. She uses her experience to train school staff.” ■

For more resources, see the National Center for Homeless Education at center.serve.org/nche.

Tips on improving the academic performance of homeless students

- Provide clear, achievable expectations. Assemble a packet with information and expectations for each class.
- Offer tutoring. Thirty or 40 minutes a few times a week can dramatically increase a homeless child's achievement level.
- Be aware that each school move can delay academic progress and that many homeless students find it more difficult to engage and learn because of their prior negative school experiences.
- Be flexible with assignments. Projects requiring materials that students cannot afford might be difficult or impossible to complete, as can assignments to write about a summer vacation, conduct a backyard science project, construct a family tree, or bring in a baby picture. Instead, offer several alternatives from which all students can choose.
- Allow students to finish assignments independently or at their own pace.
- Create a portfolio to document the student's work, personal characteristics and preferred learning style. If the student must transfer, the portfolio offers the next teacher a quick, easy way to pick up where the former teacher left off.
- Rather than interpreting parental absences as a lack of commitment to their children's education, ask families what you can do to support an ongoing partnership. Phone conferences might be a good alternative. Initiating an interactive journal with the parent about what's happening at school and at home could help with teacher-parent dialogue.
- Offer after-hours (evening or Saturday) and off-site parent meetings.
- Talk with parents about class expectations and the challenges of changing schools midyear.

Source: National Center for Homeless Education



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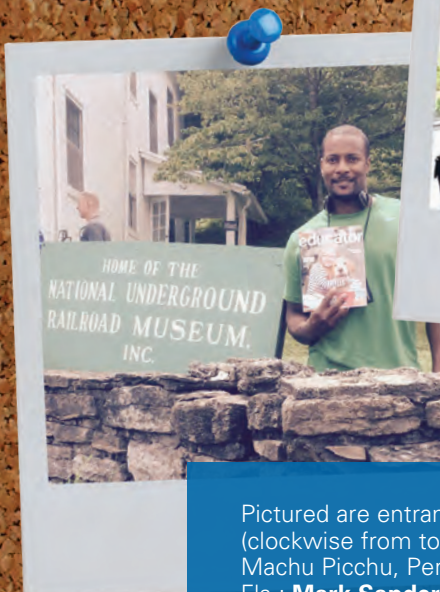
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- 57** Winners! *Educators Are Everywhere* Contest
- 59** CTA Economic Benefits Trust Annual Report



Pictured are entrants in our *Educators Are Everywhere* contest (clockwise from top left): **Alice Nishimoto**, Garvey EA, at Machu Picchu, Peru; **Nora Allstedt**, Exeter TA, in St. Augustine, Fla.; **Mark Sanders**, Corcoran FA, with his wife Cindy at Lough Rynn Castle in Mohill, Ireland; **Jennifer Cisneros**, Riverside City TA, in Philadelphia; and **Robert Moss**, San Bernardino TA, in Maysville, Ky. **See the winners on page 57.**





Winning Ideas

Institute for Teaching recognizes innovative initiatives

▲
Fontana High School teacher **Nicole Robinson**, pictured (third from right) with some of her students, created The Dance Collaborative, a winning grant project.



▲
Moreno Valley Math League, another grant winner, held its math finals earlier this year.

CTA'S INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING (IFT) has announced 2015-16 grants to educators for 39 projects that help create a school/community culture of success. The awards total \$493,910 — the largest single-year total since the grant program began six years ago.

Through various ways, the winning projects focus on how teacher-driven, strength-based change can improve the teaching and learning process. Nearly one quarter of the winning projects involve older students working directly with younger students. For example, Moreno Valley middle school teacher Deepika Srivastava and her colleagues created a program that allows their students (pictured at the 2015 Moreno Valley Math Finals) to not only learn, but also serve as math ambassadors to young students.

Similarly, the Dance Collaborative created by Fontana high school teacher Nicole Robinson (pictured with some of her students) not only supported the growth of her school's dance program but also strengthened community connections, since her students work with elementary school students.

The IFT Grant Selection Committee reviewed nearly 100 applications. Proposals were evaluated through IFT's Strength-Based Matrix for Creating a Culture of Success, based on seven factors:

- Focusing on the Future
- Strengthening the Work Ethic
- Expanding Family-School Relations
- Strengthening the Social Ethic
- Valuing Child Rearing Practices
- Encouraging System-Wide Thinking
- Moving to a Learning-Centered Environment

Liane Cismowski, IFT board and committee member, says that proposals have become more refined each year as awareness and understanding of the matrix have increased.

IFT grants up to \$5,000 for individual or \$20,000 for group projects. In six years it has awarded 167 grants totaling almost \$1.8 million.

Congratulations to the winners! For more on IFT and to apply for a grant, see teacherdrivenchange.org. ■

2015-16 IFT Grant Winners

Look for stories on these projects in upcoming *Educator* issues.

LOCAL CHAPTER/ASSOCIATION	NAME OF GRANT PROJECT	PROJECT COORDINATOR
Travis Unified Teachers Association	Foxboro Garden: Fox to Fork!	Jason Bundy
Sunnyvale Education Association	Lakewood Lion's Roar	Jonathan Lebowitz
Martinez Education Association	WeatherBug Weather Station	Jennifer DeWeerd
Mount Diablo Education Association	IHTA Sustainable Hospitality Pathway Development	Patrick Oliver
Association of Colfax Educators	DISCOVERY Club	Jodi O'Keefe
Chico Unified Teachers Association	C2: Creative Connections	Linda Elliott
Marysville Unified Teachers Association	Agriculture Literacy	Bonnie Magill
Twin Rivers United Educators	GLAD for the Arts	Julianne Neal
Willows Unified Teachers Association	River Jim's Adventure Education	William Shively
Fresno Teachers Association Edison High School	Robotics	Kyle Wiebe
Salida Teachers Association	King Author's Chair	Marilyn Farrens
Exeter Teachers Association	Kaweah High School Ag Program	Beth Micari
Lennox Teachers Association	Me and the World: Developing Intercultural Communication Competence in Bilingual Students	Elisa Lopez
Teachers Association of Long Beach	Mentoring Middle School Students in Robotics	Nancy Brown
Association of Colton Educators	High Performance Mathematics	Linda Faulk
Covina Unified Education Association	Robotics and Engineering	Andrew Frogue
Fontana Teachers Association	The Dance Collaborative	Nicole Robinson
Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association	GoFar: The Goodness of Fit and Readiness	Carlos Solis
Downey Education Association	Stauffer Enrichment Garden	Kat Clark
Teachers Association of Norwalk-La Mirada	The Spade Brigade Resiliency Garden	Lori Clock
United Teachers of Pasadena	Vertical Collaboration in STEAM	Carolyn Halpern
Fullerton Elementary Teachers Association	The Paw Press School Newspaper/ Newspaper Club	Ken Zeh
Garden Grove Education Association	Prepare/Care/Share: Using Engineering to Make Global Connections	Camie Walker
Val Verde Teachers Association	Agriculture Science	Stacie Wold
Huntington Beach UHSD Education Assn.	CIBACS: The Center for International Business and Communications Studies	Brian Boone
Oceanside Teachers Association	Learn to Grow, Grow to Learn	Christopher Hara
Oceanside Teachers Association	Student Ambassadors	Victoria Mossa-Mariani
Vista Teachers Association	RBV Robotics	Dadre Rudolph
Desert Sands Teachers Association	Growing Healthy Students	Patricia Schoenfeld
Moreno Valley Educators Association	Moreno Valley Math League (MVML)	Deepika Srivastava
Palm Springs Teachers Association	Follow Your Arrow	Bridgette Kennedy
Palm Springs Teachers Association	NGSS — STEM to STEAM	Judy Urrutia
San Bernardino Teachers Association	Growing Relationships	Cory Stufkosky
Victor Valley Teachers Association	Bio Garden Center	Jeffrey Voight
Imperial Teachers Association	Imperial Valley Discovery Zone	Dan Gibbs
San Diego Education Association	Babies and Beads	Stacy Williams
Southwest Teachers Association	Journey Along the Silk Road	Erin Major
Sweetwater Education Association	Five Corners of IB (5C IB)	Mary Doyle
CFA, CSU Northridge	Good Heart Chicano/a and Native Science Project	Rosa Rivera Furumoto



When and how to sign up for Medicare

National health insurance program helps seniors

WILL YOU CELEBRATE YOUR 65TH BIRTHDAY SOON — or did you already? If so, you should think about signing up for Medicare. Delaying your enrollment could cost you.

Medicare is the federal health insurance program for those 65 or older. Last month marked the 50th anniversary of Medicare. President Lyndon Johnson signed the landmark legislation on July 30, 1965, establishing national health insurance for seniors regardless of income or medical history.

▶ This year is
the 50th anniversary
of Medicare.



Prior to Medicare, only 50 percent of Americans 65 and older had health insurance, and more than a third lived in poverty. Today, the program covers more than 54 million people.

Medicare helps with the cost of health care, but does not cover all medical expenses or the cost of most long-term care. There are two main ways to get Medicare coverage — original Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans (see Part C below). The different parts of Medicare help cover specific services:

Part A (hospital insurance)

Part A covers inpatient hospital stays, care in a skilled nursing facility, hospice care and some home health care. Part A is “premium-free” to most people.

Part B (medical insurance)

Part B covers certain doctors’ services, outpatient care, medical supplies and preventive services.

Part C (Medicare Advantage plans)

Medicare Advantage plans are offered by private companies that contract with Medicare to provide you with all your Part A and Part B benefits. Plans include Health Maintenance Organizations, Preferred Provider Organizations, Private Fee-for-Service Plans, Special Needs Plans and Medicare Medical Savings Account Plans.

Part D (prescription drug coverage)

Part D helps pay for the cost of prescription drugs.

A Medigap policy, such as those offered through NEA Member Benefits, can help pay some of the costs not covered by Parts

A and B, such as co-payments, coinsurance and deductibles. Medigap policies are sold by private insurance companies and carry their own monthly premiums, in addition to the Part B premium. They are not needed by those who have a Medicare Advantage plan.

When and how to sign up for Part A and Part B

You can sign up for Medicare even if you are not ready to start receiving retirement benefits. You have a seven-month enrollment period, which includes the three months before you turn 65, the month you turn 65, and the three months following.

Educators (and covered spouses) who are still working and whose health insurance is covered through a group plan, however, can sign up for Part A and Part B anytime while they’re employed. They also have an eight-month special enrollment period to sign up after employment ends or the group health plan coverage ends, whichever comes first. (Note: COBRA and retiree health plans are not considered current employer coverage.)

Part A. You get Part A at no cost if you or your spouse (living, deceased or divorced) paid Medicare taxes during at least 10 years of work. You can sign up for Part A anytime after eligibility begins.

IMPORTANT: Check with your employer to make sure you have been contributing to Medicare (and if you did not earn Medicare through another employer or a spouse). Prior to April 1, 1986, public education employees in California participating in CalSTRS did not automatically contribute to Medicare. CalPERS school employees, however, do contribute to Medicare automatically.

Medicare resources

Get more information
and sign up:

- By phone: Call 800-772-1213 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. Those who are hearing impaired can call TTY 800-325-0778.
- In person: Visit your local Social Security office. (Call first to make an appointment.)
- Online: Go to medicare.gov, or go to socialsecurity.gov and search for Medicare.

Part B. Most people pay a standard monthly premium for Part B, which is \$104.90 in 2015. Some pay a higher premium based on their income or if they don’t enroll when they are first eligible.

IMPORTANT: If you did not sign up for Part B when you first became eligible and don’t qualify for a special enrollment period, you can only sign up during the general enrollment period Jan. 1 to March 31 each year; coverage begins July 1. Your monthly premium will go up 10 percent for each 12-month period you were eligible for Part B but didn’t sign up for it, unless you qualify for a special enrollment period.

NEA members age 65 and over (and spouses/domestic partners) who are covered by Parts A and B are eligible to enroll in any of the Medicare supplement plans (Medigap) through the NEA Retiree Health Program. In addition to providing the same options and benefits of other Medigap policies, the NEA plans offer discounts on dental care, chiropractic care, vision care, hearing care and vitamins. NEA also offers a group Part D program that provides prescription drug coverage.

NEA’s Member Benefits, in fact, has detailed information about Medicare and the enrollment process, so it’s a good place to start. Visit neamb.com. ■

SUMMER CONFERENCE WRAP-UP

Members, leaders come together to focus on action

CTA's summer conferences offer great opportunities to learn new skills, discuss key issues, network with colleagues and leaders, and map out the year — and beyond. These specialized gatherings are annual affairs, so plan ahead for 2016.



SUMMER INSTITUTE

CTA's Summer Institute at UCLA Conference Center Aug. 2-6 drew 1,000 educators from across the state. These chapter leaders participated in hands-on trainings and activities to help with day-to-day representation and support of members, and heard from leaders such as CTA President Eric Heins and Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom. Sessions led by content experts covered communications, instruction and professional development, community engagement, leadership, bargaining, school finance, health care benefits and issues, legal issues, and CTA member benefits.

Members hard at work at a Communications Strand workshop.



PRESIDENTS CONFERENCE

CTA's 61st annual Presidents Conference took place July 16-19 at the Fairmont Hotel in San Jose. It brought together new chapter presidents with seasoned veterans to discuss the importance of engaging local membership, ways to expand diversity, and their role in shaping the transformation of public education and their students' future. Trainings and workshops honed leadership and organizing skills.

Kristie Iwamoto, Napa Valley College Faculty Association, and **Elias Escamilla**, Mt. San Jacinto College Faculty Association.



NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

More than 7,000 educators from across the country gathered in Orlando, Florida, July 1-6 to attend the National Education Association's 94th Representative Assembly (RA). With this year's theme — "NEA: Unite. Inspire. Lead" — delegates took on complex issues including the future of testing and equity in education.

California sends about 900 delegates to the NEA RA each summer. CTA members help set NEA policy and chart its direction through their work on various committees, constituencies, caucuses and leadership groups.

California delegates at the 2015 NEA RA. Photo by Scott Iskowitz.



Educators Are Everywhere

Winners of Our Annual Photo Contest



▲ **Joanne Endo**, Moreland Teachers Association, and **Satomi Fujikawa**, CTA of Berryessa
 "We are in front of Castle Geyser in **Yellowstone** during one of its minor eruptions. This geothermal feature is right next to Old Faithful," they write. "Major eruptions only happen about once every 13 hours, so we were excited to be at the right place at the right time!"

CTA MEMBERS WERE EVERYWHERE this summer, including Portugal, Italy, Japan, Russia, Ireland, Florida, Alaska, and across California. Among other things, they did research for the coming school year, spent time with family, toured to raise funds for charity, and "stormed the Capitol" for public education. Many took their *Educator* along, and submitted outstanding photos and descriptions. We narrowed down entries to three winners, who each receive \$50 in school supplies. We're also planning a more extensive look at some of our entrants in next month's story, "What I did on my summer vacation." Congratulations to all!

Entries were judged based on location and identifiable icons, composition, photo descriptions, and humor. They can be seen at cta.org/educatorsareeverywhere.



◀ **Constance Bronder**, Palo Verde Teachers Association
 "I am in front of the O-torii gate in **Miyajima, Japan**. The O-torii is almost 50 feet tall and gives the illusion of floating in the water. Across the bay is Hiroshima, where the first atomic bomb was dropped. I'm really excited to open my students' eyes to new cultures and sights. Many of my students have never been outside of our rural town."

▶ **Albertina Silva-Costa**, Hilmar Unified School District Teachers Association, and **Manuel Costa**, Turlock Teachers Association
 "We traveled back to our roots in **Lisbon, Portugal**, and the **Azores Islands**, where we explored the country and felt like conquistadors, just like the Monument to the Portuguese Explorers behind us. The 25 de Abril Bridge reminded us of California's Golden Gate Bridge. We look forward to sharing our discoveries and treasures with our families, friends and students."





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*National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Digest of Education Statistics, 2011.

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2013-14 Summary Annual Report

For CTA Economic Benefits Trust Member Welfare Benefit Plan

THIS IS A SUMMARY of the annual report of the California Teachers Association Economic Benefits Trust Member Welfare Benefit Plan, EIN 94-0362310, Plan No. 590, for the period Sept. 1, 2013, through Aug. 31, 2014. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

Insurance Information: The plan has contracts with Standard Insurance Company to pay life insurance and long-term disability claims incurred under the terms of the plan. The total premiums paid for the plan year ending Aug. 31, 2014, were \$34,057,969.

Because they are so-called “experience-rated” contracts, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. Of the total insurance premiums paid for the plan year ending Aug. 31, 2014, the premiums paid under such “experience-rated” contracts were \$34,057,969 and the total of all benefit claims paid under these contracts during the plan year was \$26,355,394.

The Plan finances, to specified members of CTA, death and dismemberment benefits through the CTA Death and Dismemberment Plan, a health information and well-baby program, a consumer benefits education program, a retiree discount vision program, and an investment education program. These benefits are self-funded by the Plan and are not insured by an insurance company.

Basic Financial Statement: The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the plan, was \$85,607,392 as of Aug. 31, 2014, compared to \$78,543,582 as of Sept. 1, 2013. During the plan year the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of \$7,063,810. This increase includes unrealized appreciation and depreciation in the value of plan assets; that is, the difference between the value of the plan’s assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year or the cost of assets acquired during the year. During the plan year, the plan had total income of \$43,630,552, including employee contributions of \$34,163,083, realized gains of \$1,839,725 from the sale of assets, earnings from investments of \$6,683,224, and other income of \$944,520.

Plan expenses were \$36,566,742. These expenses included \$1,788,224 in administrative expenses, and \$34,778,518 in benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries.

Your Rights to Additional Information: You have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, on request. The items listed below are included in that report:

- 1) an accountant’s report;
- 2) financial information;
- 3) assets held for investment;
- 4) insurance information, including sales commissions paid by insurance carriers.

To obtain a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, write the office of Risk Management/Member Benefits, California Teachers Association [the plan administrator], 1705 Murchison Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010, or call 650-697-1400. The charge to cover copying costs will be 25 cents per page.

You also have the right to receive from the plan administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the plan and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the plan and accompanying notes, or both. If you request a copy of the full annual report from the plan administrator, these two statements and accompanying notes will be included as part of that report. The charge to cover copying costs given above does not include a charge for the copying of these portions of the report because these portions are furnished without charge.

You also have the legally protected right to examine the annual report at the main office of the plan (California Teachers Association, 1705 Murchison Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010) and at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C., or to obtain a copy from the U.S. Department of Labor upon payment of copying costs. Requests to the Department should be addressed to: Public Disclosure Room, Room N1513, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20210. ■

Word Scramble Answers

1. school 2. pencil 3. friends 4. teacher 5. student 6. office
7. tests 8. homework 9. gym 10. scissors 11. videos 12. ruler
13. classroom Phrase: It’s back to school time!

Word Scramble

By Terri Browne

Unscramble each of the school-related clue words. Copy the letters in the numbered boxes to the boxes below with the same number. Answers on page 59.

COHLOS

	5				

NEILPC

		10			

NEISRDF

		16	18			

RAHETCE

2				11		

DETUTSN

	7					15

FOECIF

8					

STSET

		3		

KHWOREOM

	13				12		6

MYG

		17

SIRCOSSS

		1					

DISVEO

					9

RUELR

		14		

SARSOOLMC

		4						



1	2	3

B			
	4	5	6

7	8

	9	10	11	12	13

	15	16	17

You can find more activities like this, as well as getting-to-know-you activities and teaching resources, in Terri Browne's complete Back to School Unit at [teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Back-To-School-Unit-September](https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Back-To-School-Unit-September). Additional classroom materials by Browne are available at [teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Tchrbrowne](https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Tchrbrowne).

30-10=20
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