

california  
**educator**

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2017 VOLUME 22 ISSUE 1

**EVERYTHING**  
*you need to know*



**TIPS, IDEAS...**

Including:

Advice from the pros

New educator insights

Helping kids connect

Enhancing your best self

**...& RESOURCES**

Cutting-edge curriculum

Professional learning communities

Reimagining your classroom

...and much more

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*...to make this year your best*

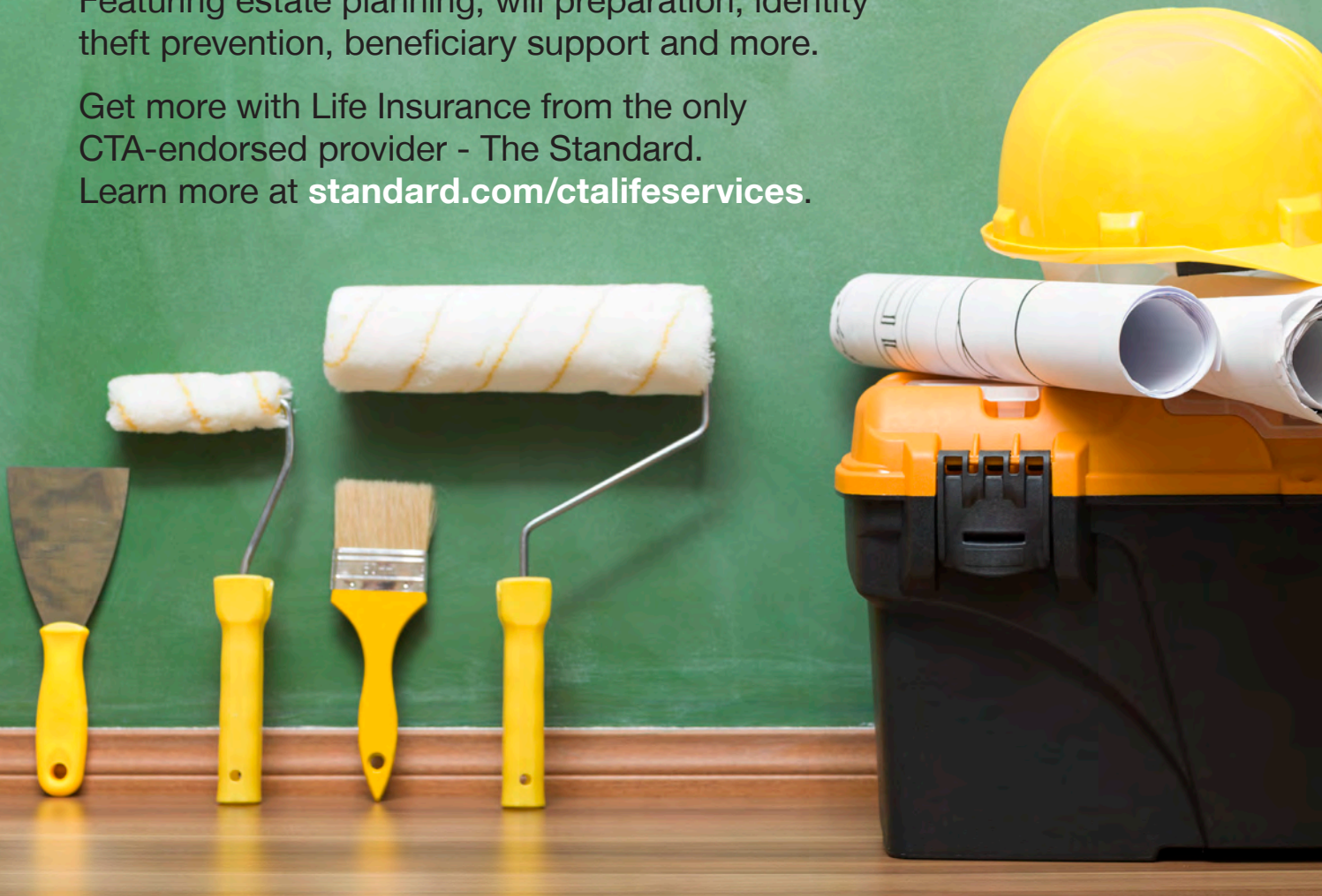


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# california educator

VOLUME 22 ISSUE 1



## #WeAreCTA

### OUR VOICE, OUR UNION, OUR PROFESSION

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

#### MAGAZINE

##### FIRST-YEAR REFLECTIONS

New educators on what they learned and the impact on their teaching. **PAGE 26**

##### PRIDE & RESPECT

ROTC instructor Pedro Martinez instills both in his students. **PAGE 15**

##### NO ONE EATS ALONE

Lunchtime isolation can be devastating. Some educators are changing that. **PAGE 32**

[f](#) [t](#) [nooneeatsalone.org](#)

##### PASSING PROBATION

Sage advice from both veteran and new teachers. **PAGE 28**

##### A REAL LIFE-SAVER

Saving a colleague's life is all in a day's work for Richard McDowell. **PAGE 68**

#### DIGITAL

##### LGBTQ+ PIONEERS

Sierra College oral history project captures activism.

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[f](#) [t](#) [bit.ly/2usdpbs](#)

##### A SITE TO SEE

Creating a new website? Start — and finish — here.

**PAGE 60**

##### DANCE, DANCE, DANCE

One district's upbeat music video is a model of welcome a year later. **PAGE 39**

[t](#) [bit.ly/2tkg4iD](#)

##### DIGITAL LESSON-SHARING

Open Educational Resources offer advantages for all, though challenges abound.

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[f](#) [t](#) [t](#) [y](#) [#goopen](#)  
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Get on NEA edCommunities for collegial connections.

**PAGE 46** [mynea360.org](#)

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Search all of NEA's professional supports content.

[supported.nea.org](#)

##### LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

Learn the skills, build your network to be a better chapter leader at CTA Region I, II and III conferences.

**PAGE 9** [cta.org](#)

##### GET A GRANT

NEA Foundation Grants for educators and students.

**PAGE 9**

[f](#) [t](#) [nea.org/grants](#)

#### MEMBER BENEFITS

##### STYLE & STUFF

Access to Savings has you and your classroom covered.

**PAGE 70**

[CTAMemberBenefits.org](#)

##### MAKE SAVINGS EASY

CTA's Retirement Savings Plan is a 403(b) with quality investment options, low fees and transparency.

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[t](#) [bit.ly/2vrHxoe](#)

##### AUTO & HOME INSURANCE

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**ABOVE:**  
The CTA delegation in a show of unity at the 2017 NEA Representative Assembly in Boston.



FEATURE

# Back to School

## Be Your Best This Year!



From Open Educational Resources and professional learning communities to tips from fellow educators new and seasoned, you'll find everything you need to make this a stellar school year. Our special section starts on **PAGE 19**.

- **THE PROFESSION** Teaching excellence, passing probation, new educator insights. **PAGE 20**
- **BRIGHT IDEAS** Inspiration and innovation from your colleagues. **PAGE 32**
- **LIFE HACKS** Take the plunge: Update your look. **PAGE 48**

**PHOTOS:** Top left: Ashley Cooper, Unified Association of Conejo Teachers, with students at lunchtime. Top right: Elizabeth Thompson, Fairfield-Suisun Unified Teachers Association, gets a makeover. Above, Chandra McPeters, left, mentors Melissa Johnson; both are Stockton Teachers Association members.

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**LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK.** We accept signed email and letters (250-word limit); we excerpt user posts from CTA social media platforms. Content subject to editing for clarity and space. Photos must have identifications and permissions. Opinions expressed by the writers are not necessarily those of CTA. [Editor@cta.org](mailto:Editor@cta.org); [#WeAreCTA](https://twitter.com/WeAreCTA)



### **Ukulele Teachers Rise Up**

Regarding "The Ukulele Gets Respect" (May/June 2017), Lauren Bowman is not the state's "only" ukulele educator. I can name hundreds of LAUSD teachers who teach ukulele in their schools.

I have been teaching ukulele in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) for 14 years. I teach students, educators and administrators how to play and teach ukulele. At LAUSD's New Teacher Institute, I teach new educators how to use ukulele in all aspects of teaching, regardless of grade level or curriculum area. So there are many of us teaching ukulele in classrooms across California.

But I'm glad to see your article. It furthers the cause!

#### **BARTT WARBURTON**

*United Teachers Los Angeles*

### **Peanut Free**

On behalf of over 1,500 school nurses, I am writing to express our concerns regarding "Peanut Free" (April 2017), about students with peanut and other significant allergies in the school setting. While we understand the intent of the article, we are unclear why this article was written without contacting the California School Nurses Organization, the only professional organization that supports the practice of school nursing in California.

Under California Education Code 49423, credentialed school nurses are designated as the "supervisor of health" on the school campus. School nurses obtain physician orders for

students with allergies and other health concerns, develop Individualized Health Care plans for students, work with parents to obtain appropriate medications to be administered to the student during the school day, train and educate school staff regarding management of all health concerns of students during the school day, and document the competency of staff identified and trained to administer medication in the educational setting.

#### **KATHLEEN FINNIGAN-RYAN**

*CSNO State President*

As a school nurse and fellow CTA member, I have concerns regarding "Peanut Free." There is no medical evidence that supports school sites attempting to be peanut-free to protect students with peanut allergies. Dr. Phillip Lieberman, an anaphylaxis expert, said at a National School Nurses Association conference that students do not benefit from being isolated at special tables in the cafeteria nor by preventing other students from bringing peanut products to school.

Anaphylaxis occurs from ingestion of an allergen, not by exposure. Best practice involves supporting all students in the event of an anaphylactic reaction by having a clear emergency plan in place in consultation with a school nurse.

#### **TONI McCALLUM**

*Vacaville Teachers Association*

### **Charter Schools**

About a year ago, I asked the head of the California Charter Schools Association if students had to be in school at a certain time. The answer was "No." I asked if students had to attend each school day. "No." I asked if students had to pass subject tests, as students in a regular school must. "No." I asked military recruiters if charter school students were accepted the same as full-time high school students. "No."

When people are hired for a job, they are expected to show up for work, each day, on time. Charter schools are a disaster for our workforce. The United States won WWII because our public schools prepared graduates to be successful. What made America the strongest nation was our public school system.

#### **GERALD HURLEY**

*Fortuna Union High School Teachers Association (retired)*

### **Corrections**

In "Let's Be Clear About Charter Schools" (May/June 2017), the quote in a caption for a photo of Clarissa Doutherd and Kim Davis (page 18) should have been attributed to Davis, not Doutherd.

In "Welcoming Walls" (May/June 2017), a photo caption mistakenly identified Marissa Brown, East Side Teachers Association, as Taunya Jaco. Apologies to both.



## CCTC Approved Reading and Literacy Added Authorization

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

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

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

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

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

[extension.ucsd.edu/education](http://extension.ucsd.edu/education)

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*California Educator* is published for the information and edification of CTA members. The editorial philosophy is governed by the policies of CTA. Articles and advertising reflect that philosophy. Letters to the editor may be sent to [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org).

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CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2017, to Aug. 31, 2018) are \$866, including a \$20 refundable contribution (see [cta.org/contribution](http://cta.org/contribution) for details). \$19.00 of CTA annual dues is designated for CTA/ABC political activities to support state and local candidates and/or initiatives, and \$5.00 of CTA annual dues is designated for independent expenditures, totaling \$24.00 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](mailto:editor@cta.org), [cta.org](http://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.

*California Educator* Volume 22, Issue 1, August/September 2017  
*California Educator* (ISSN 1091-6148) is published in August, October, December, February, April and June by: California Teachers Association, 1705 Murchison Dr., Burlingame, CA 94010-4583.  
Periodicals Postage Paid at Burlingame, CA, and additional mailing offices.  
POSTMASTER: Send change of address to *California Educator*, P.O. Box 4178, Burlingame, CA 94011-4178.





Eric Heins at CTA's 2017 Summer Institute

# CTA, Standing Strong

**IT'S A NEW YEAR!** Whether you're new to the profession or a veteran educator, the beginning of the year is always an exciting time — meeting students and colleagues, settling in, anticipating full and fruitful months ahead.

And as you welcome your students back to school, I want to welcome you. The work you do to make sure every student gets the public education they deserve is so important to the future of California. It's also part of CTA's legacy. Every generation of educators before us has faced some of the same challenges we face today: funding, class size, discrimination, a living wage. We are building on the rights and advancements they won since CTA's inception in 1863 by a group of educators wanting to raise a strengthened and united voice for education.

Led by John Swett, who served as California's fourth superintendent of public instruction, CTA's first legislative victory came in 1866. For the first time in the history of the state, every public school was made entirely free for every child.

Since then, CTA has been at the forefront of every improvement to public education in California. We helped create the UC and CSU systems, as well as the teachers' retirement system. We helped pass the first class size limitation measure in 1895, and the minimum school funding law in 1988 that continues to guarantee funding for schools and colleges.

CTA members are still leading the profession and working together to provide a quality public education to every student, regardless of their ZIP code. Together, we are standing up to those who want to profit from public education. They include the U.S. secretary of education, billionaire lobbyist Betsy DeVos, whose agenda is to defund, dismantle and privatize public education in our country and promote vouchers — a dangerous, retrograde idea that takes taxpayer dollars away from public schools to fund private and parochial school tuition. California voters have already voted down vouchers three times.



CTA believes every student has a basic right to a great public education. That's why we support the educators who are nurturing tomorrow's inventors, thinkers, artists and leaders.

We are committed to helping you be the best educator you can be. Throughout the year CTA offers a variety of professional development opportunities. We offer around 10 statewide conferences — including the increasingly popular Good Teaching Conference (we host one in Northern California and one in Southern California each year), the Human Rights Conference, Summer Institute, and our latest addition, the New Educator Weekend. That doesn't even include those available on the local, regional and national levels.

As an association, we want to make sure those new to the profession feel supported, encouraged and welcomed. Even if you've been a teacher for a while, like me, I bet you can remember what it was like to walk into your classroom the first time — how you felt with all those eyes focused on you. New teachers these days have the same trepidations we did when we were starting out. No one knows what works best in a classroom but a teacher. So if you have a new teacher on your hall, stop by and say, "Hey, welcome to the profession and to CTA!" Let them know that you are there for them if they have questions or just want to talk.

Let's make this our best year yet!

**Eric C. Heins**

CTA PRESIDENT

@ericheins

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Paraeducator Farah Ali's lunchtime club helps students feel included.



# Generosity of Spirit

*"When you learn, teach. When you get, give."*

**M**aya Angelou's lesson from her grandmother is surely embedded in the soul of every educator. How else to explain their infinite capacity to share of their knowledge and of themselves? They do this not only with their students, but with their colleagues, day in and day out.

This generosity of spirit is the hallmark of our Back to School Issue. On these pages, educators from all over the state share their best advice, tips, ideas, resources and wisdom to help you be a better, smarter, savvier educator.

**"Digital Lesson-Sharing"** (page 20), for example, looks at how Open Educational Resources (OER) — openly licensed digital assets for classroom use — are flourishing. Teachers who would pass their lesson plans to colleagues down the hall now share them on OER sites where educators around the country can adapt and use them. Our story explores the great boon that is OER, as well as its challenges and caveats.

In **"The Reimagined Classroom"** (page 36), educators show and tell how they've reconfigured spaces or modified instruction to meet 21st century student needs. Now that teacher Brynn Hutchison has lowered student desks and brought in yoga balls, she says "the kids are more engaged, there's more participation."

There's something for everyone in **"Tips From the Pros"** (page 40). Erinn Brennan welcomes students with a crossword puzzle featuring their names to show them "we are a classroom unit and need to work together." For Back to School Night, Pat Estarziau has children create clues for a scavenger hunt for parents. Christine Hester offers up what's in her "survival" tote bag, her go-to teacher shoes, and an easy, no-fail dinner recipe.

And Glenn Dumas starts class by asking which of his high school students need a boost, then telling them by name "Coach D loves you!" before introducing the day's lesson. "It is amazing the number of students going through trials and tribulations who need someone, anyone, to tell them they are loved," he says.

New teachers will want to read **"Reflections on the First Year"** (page 26), where new educators speak out on what they learned — in class and at CTA's New Educator Weekend — and its impact on how they teach. **"Making the Grade"** (page 28) is also geared for new teachers, with expert tips from colleagues for passing probation.

Newbies and vets alike will enjoy insights from the California Teachers of the Year in **"Great Expectations"** (page 23). These all-star educators have a common refrain: unwavering belief in

students' individual ability and growth, and boundless empathy.

Social isolation and rigid cliques during school lunchtime can have devastating consequences. But as **"Curing the Lunchtime Lonelies"** (page 32) describes, educators are helping students connect to one another and to school. Paraeducator Farah Ali started a lunchtime humanitarian club after her campus was rocked by incidents of racism. The club, she says, aims to create an environment "where people feel confident and develop a sense of self-esteem."

Social connections are important for educators, too, as well as caring for themselves — a message conveyed throughout this issue. One simple way to get a lift is to update your look; check out **"Marvelous Makeovers"** (page 48) to see how member and cosmetology instructor Cheryl McDonald freshened up a few colleagues, with general tips that you can follow, too.

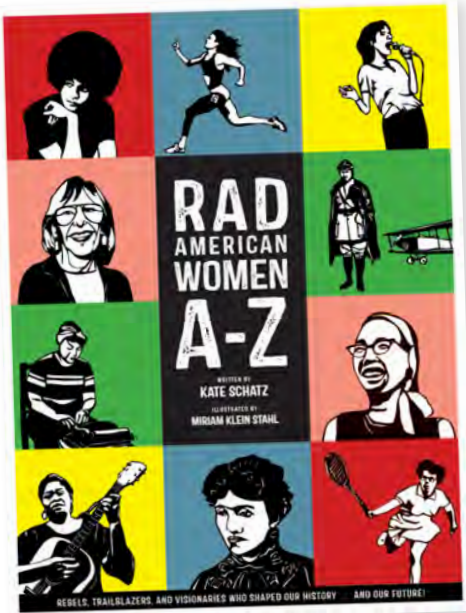
Welcome back!

**Katharine Fong**

EDITOR IN CHIEF  
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**All Year Long** With this issue, the *Educator* begins publishing every other month year-round. The schedule, along with the increased page count, will allow us to provide you with news, resources, ideas and engaging stories throughout the year. We're excited about the change. Let us know how we're doing at [editor@cta.org](http://editor@cta.org).

# Aug./Sept.



## Women's Equality Day

Aug. 26 commemorates passage of the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote, but also calls attention to women's continuing efforts toward full equality, and to those who have made a difference. It's a great teaching topic for all ages, and *Rad American Women A-Z* can help. In this 2015 book, A is for Angela Davis, the iconic political activist; B is for Billie Jean King, who shattered the glass ceiling of sports; C is for Carol Burnett, who defied assumptions about women in comedy; D is for Dolores Huerta, who organized farmworkers; and E is for Ella Baker, who helped shape the civil rights movement. You get the idea. Authors Kate Schatz and Miriam Klein Stahl, both from the Bay Area, followed up last year with *Rad Women Worldwide*.



## Labor Day

On Labor Day (Sept. 4) and every day, we celebrate the struggles, successes and hopes for a better future for America's working people. Teach students about labor in this country — including the history, the personalities, and contemporary issues and challenges. The American Labor Studies Center offers resources including videos and films, lesson plans, and primary sources for all grade levels; it even has content for educators who have limited time to incorporate the subject into their curriculum. See [labor-studies.org](http://labor-studies.org); for more resources, see [nea.org/labor](http://nea.org/labor) and [cta.org/labor](http://cta.org/labor).



## International Day of Peace

Mark the day, on Thursday, Sept. 21, with classroom, school or community activities that promote the ideals of peace, freedom and human dignity based upon genuine respect for an understanding of individual and cultural diversity. A few suggested activities:

- Compile a class library of peacemaker biographies; read and discuss their lives.
- Create, draw, write stories, poems and word puzzles about peace.
- Select a country with which students will share letters, art and media of themselves with other students.
- Start a peace garden or plant a tree.
- Begin a peer conflict resolution program.

More activities and information are available at [cta.org/peaceday](http://cta.org/peaceday).



The ESP Leadership Academy class of 2017

## ESP Leadership Academy

Education support professionals looking to grow into CTA leadership roles should apply for the 2018 ESP Leadership Academy, which helps participants understand CTA's organizational structure, communications and organizing projects specific to the interests of ESP members. Session 1 will be Feb. 2–4, 2018, in Burlingame. Session 2 will be April 6–8, 2018, in Los Angeles at CTA State Council. Those selected must commit to be involved for at least five years, and are reimbursed for travel, lodging, meals and fees. Check with your local president or CTA staff to begin the application process. Deadline to apply is Nov. 3.



# The year ahead

## INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP CORPS

**SEPT. 30** APPLICATION DEADLINE

ILC is recruiting teams for Phase 2 of its teacher-led professional development training program, especially educators from rural and geographically isolated areas. Apply online starting Sept. 1.

► [cta.org/ilc](http://cta.org/ilc)

## CCA FALL CONFERENCE

**OCT. 13-15** CONFERENCE

Marriott San Jose. The Community College Association's fall conference offers a variety of trainings, highlights members' accomplishments, and focuses on membership engagement.

► [cca4me.org](http://cca4me.org)

## NEA FOUNDATION GRANTS

**OCT. 15** APPLICATION DEADLINE

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.

► [neafoundation.org](http://neafoundation.org)

## VOLUNTARY DUES CONTRIBUTION

**NOV. 1** OPT-OUT DEADLINE

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.

► [cta.org/contribution](http://cta.org/contribution)

## AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

**NOV. 13-17** EVENT

American Education Week is celebrated the week prior to Thanksgiving week and includes special days to honor parents, education support professionals and substitute teachers.

► [nea.org/aew](http://nea.org/aew)

**SEPT. 15-17**

## REGION I LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

San Jose

**SEPT. 22-24**

## REGION III LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Costa Mesa

**OCT. 13-15**

## CCA FALL CONFERENCE

San Jose

**OCT. 20-22**

**JAN. 19-21, APRIL 6-8, JUNE 1-3, 2018**

## STATE COUNCIL OF EDUCATION

Los Angeles

**OCT. 27-29**

## REGION II LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Reno, Nevada

**DEC. 8-10**

## GLBT ISSUES CONFERENCE

San Jose

**JAN. 26-28, 2018**

## ISSUES CONFERENCE

Las Vegas, Nevada

**FEB. 2-4, 2018**

## GOOD TEACHING CONFERENCE NORTH

San Jose

**FEB. 9-11, 2018**

## CCA WINTER CONFERENCE

Los Angeles

**FEB. 23-25, 2018**

## NEW EDUCATOR WEEKEND

Location TBD

**MARCH 1-2, 2018**

## CTA/NEA-RETIRED ISSUES CONFERENCE

Torrance

**MARCH 2, 2018**

## READ ACROSS AMERICA

**MARCH 2-4, 2018**

## EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

Torrance

**MARCH 16-18, 2018**

## GOOD TEACHING CONFERENCE SOUTH

Garden Grove

**APRIL 13-15, 2018**

## REGION IV LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

San Diego

**APRIL 20-22, 2018**

## CCA SPRING CONFERENCE

Los Angeles

**MAY 9, 2018**

## CALIFORNIA DAY OF THE TEACHER

**MAY 22, 2018**

## CTA ESP DAY

**JULY 19-22, 2018**

## PRESIDENTS CONFERENCE

San Jose

**JULY 29-AUG. 2, 2018**

## SUMMER INSTITUTE

Los Angeles

## Leadership Conferences

### REGION I LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

**SEPT. 15-17**

Fairmont Hotel, San Jose

### REGION III LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

**SEPT. 22-24**

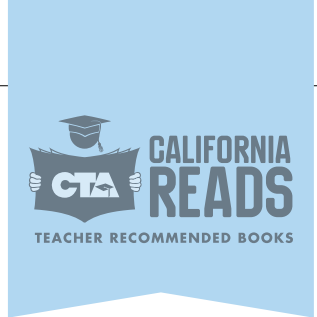
Westin South Coast Plaza, Costa Mesa

### REGION II LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

**OCT. 27-29**

Grand Sierra Resort, Reno, Nevada

Do you have what it takes to be an association leader? Learn the ropes or increase your skill set. ► [ctago.org](http://ctago.org)



California Reads-recommended books for fall include these titles.



# California Reads

**E** DUCATORS KNOW that reading is the foundation of learning, and must be highlighted year-round to make a lasting impression. CTA's California Reads program offers teacher-recommended book selections for all grade levels, all year long. For the full 2017-18 list, see [cta.org/californiareads](http://cta.org/californiareads); [#californiareads](https://twitter.com/californiareads). Among the books on deck for fall:

*Grand Canyon* (grades 3-5), written and illustrated by Jason Chin, explores the natural wonder through the eyes of a father and daughter as they hike and discover life present and past. Die cuts show, for example, how a fossil today was a living creature long ago, perhaps in a completely different environment. The book contains a spectacular double gatefold, a detailed map and extensive back matter.

In *The Hate U Give* (grades 9-12) by Angie Thomas, teen Starr Carter moves between her poor

neighborhood and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. She witnesses the fatal shooting of her friend Khalil, who is unarmed, by a police officer. In the aftermath, some say Khalil was a thug and drug dealer; others protest in the streets in his name. Starr is torn between her two worlds as she deals with speaking her truth while trying to stay alive herself.

The hero of *The Real Boy* (grades 6-8), by Anne Ursu, doesn't know where he came from; he just knows he's different. Oscar has deep knowledge of magical herbs and their usage, and when children start falling ill, he and his friend Callie try to solve the mystery. They discover a dark secret that may answer Oscar's questions about himself.

And *They All Saw a Cat* (pre-K, kindergarten), by Brendan Wenzel, shows youngsters the many lives of one cat, and how our perspective shapes what we see.





## Attendance Awareness

Students are more likely to attend school when they feel connected to caring adults who notice whether they show up. Educators, of course, are in position to build caring relationships with students and stress good attendance, which helps children do well in school and eventually in the workplace. (By middle and high school, poor attendance is a leading predictor of dropping out.) Attendance Awareness Month, in September, helps parents, educators and community work together on school attendance as an essential strategy for ensuring students are on-track to learn and succeed.

Attendance Works offers a toolkit for educators to “teach attendance.” It includes ways to:

- Emphasize attendance from Day 1, with sample letters and handouts in multiple languages.
- Use a parent-teacher conference to talk about attendance, with guidance on what to say, how to prepare, and more.
- Promote a culture of attendance all year long, with sample incentives, certificates, infographics.

For the full toolkit, see [attendanceworks.org](http://attendanceworks.org).

## English Learner Roadmap

In July, the State Board of Education approved the *California English Learner Roadmap* to help state school districts understand and educate the diverse population of students who are learning English.

About 1.4 million public school students, roughly one in four in the state, are classified as English learners. The Roadmap — the first new language policy adopted in nearly 20 years — removes outdated barriers to bilingual and multilingual instruction, and helps schools meet updated state and federal education laws and requirements.



Tom Torlakson

“The Roadmap will guide teachers and school districts all across California as they help students on their way to success in 21st century careers and college,” says state Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson.

The California Department of Education (CDE), with support from the Sobrato Family Foundation and the Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation, received input on the recommended policy from over 370 educators during public meetings. CTA State Council’s Language Acquisition Committee discussed the policy and provided feedback as well. CDE will develop guidance materials and resources for implementation of the policy, which will be Web-based and include successful practices that districts will contribute to and be able to share.

The Roadmap will also help schools comply with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act and California’s Local Control Funding Formula, both of which require specific assistance so English learners meet the same academic standards as other students.

For more, see [cde.ca.gov/sp/el/rm](http://cde.ca.gov/sp/el/rm).

## Headed to Mars

California Casualty brought some “Uptown Funk” to CTA’s Presidents Conference in San Jose in July. Lodi Education Association Vice President Aimee Ramsower was the lucky recipient of a pair of tickets to see Bruno Mars at the nearby SAP Center, courtesy of California Casualty, provider of the CTA Auto and Home Insurance Program. (See [ctamemberbenefits.org](http://ctamemberbenefits.org) for program details.)



Compiled by **Mike Myslinski**

## \$276 MILLION

Estimated annual cost to California public schools from bullying-related student absenteeism, the *Sacramento Bee* reported July 11, based on a study in the June issue of *School Psychology Quarterly*.

## 30

Number of gold, silver and bronze medals recently awarded to Moreno Valley Unified School District schools by the California Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports coalition for reducing student suspensions with alternative discipline, the *Riverside Press-Enterprise* reported July 21.

## 13.4%

The healthy return of the portfolio of the California State Teachers' Retirement System for fiscal year ending June 30, surpassing CalSTRS' 7 percent earnings target, the AP reported July 20.

## 6TH

World ranking of California's \$2.6 trillion economy in 2016, behind the economies of the U.S., China, Japan, Germany and the United Kingdom, according to a July 2017 report by the Center for Continuing Study of the California Economy. California is close to overtaking the U.K. for fifth place.

## 20.6%

Percentage of Californians living in poverty, the highest in the nation when factoring in cost of living, noted in online fact-checking site PolitiFact on July 14.

"We take them all. We love them all. We give the world the mothers and the fathers and the thinkers and the builders and the artists and the dreamers. We give the world the American Dream. We give the world the future."

—NEA President **LILY ESKELSEN GARCÍA**, in her July 2 keynote speech to the NEA Representative Assembly in Boston.

**"President Trump's proposed budget cuts could devastate summer learning and after-school programs. These proposed cuts are shortsighted, counterproductive and just wrong. As leaders, we should be searching for ways to help our students thrive, rather than blocking proven paths to success."**

—State Superintendent of Public Instruction **TOM TORLAKSON**, in a July 18 news release.

**"It's indicative of their inability to retain and recruit teachers. Other districts don't have the same difficulties. The fact that they have to do this is more or less a crisis of their own making."**

—Sacramento City Teachers Association President **DAVID FISHER**, quoted in the *Sacramento Bee* on July 16, making the point that if the Sacramento City Unified District's salaries were competitive, they would not have to be recruiting teachers from the Philippines.

**"This is a great reflection on the U.S. public school system. Every American should be proud — the U.S. is really leading the way."**

—**HADI PARTOVI** of Code.org, in a July 23 *EdSource* story about new College Board results showing significant increases in the number of female, Latino and African American students taking either the Advanced Placement computer science exam or a computer science principles exam this spring.

**"She needs to do right by students and educators, and not what's right by the corporate interests that are trying to make profits off of education."**

—Colorado Education Association spokesperson **MIKE WETZEL**, quoted in *Time* magazine on July 20 about a Denver protest by educators, parents and students against U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, before she spoke to the pro-voucher American Legislative Exchange Council.

QUOTES & NUMBERS



By @samdemuro

# WE MEME IT

If you ever want to know what a teacher's mind feels like, imagine a web browser with 2,879 tabs open. All. The. Time.



## Snapchat in Class



Snapchat, a light-hearted, fun tool to interact with others and tell a story, is the most popular social media platform among teens. It can be useful for educators, too. Some ways to incorporate it in and outside of class:

- Remind students of assignments and share relevant content. (One-way communication is allowed, so no need to add students for them to see your snaps.)
- Easily annotate text or draw on your snaps.
- Follow other snapchatting educators to grow your professional learning network and see how they use Snapchat.
- Model digital citizenship. (Some students use Snapchat to send inappropriate photos/videos because they can disappear after a short time.)
- Let students create content and teach you how they use Snapchat.

## Beating the Drum

In December 2014, the *Educator* featured James Van Buren, director of Grant Union High School's high-flying drumline. Since then, "Mr. V" and the 15-member drumline have traveled the world and performed on national TV — and the group is now led entirely by girls. Van Buren, Twin Rivers United Educators, also teaches at Grant High, located in one of Sacramento's more challenging neighborhoods. He's received kudos for helping change students' lives through the discipline of practice and performance, and dispelling crippling attitudes that impede success.

The drumline's current goal is to perform at Oprah Winfrey's Leadership Academy for Girls in South Africa. Watch their video message to Winfrey at [bit.ly/2uK6QBo](http://bit.ly/2uK6QBo).



James Van Buren with leaders of the drumline.

## connect with us!



#OurVoiceOurUnion  
#WeAreCTA

For our full social media directory, see [cta.org/social](http://cta.org/social)



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

@mr\_sanchez951  
@magacenas  
@only1latinastar  
@jessgirliegirl

Find CTA on Snapchat at [wearecta](http://wearecta).

## Snaps From NEA RA

Delegates have fun with CTA filters at July's NEA Representative Assembly in Boston.



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Martinez tells his students, "You must have pride in your country, state, community, school and yourself!"

# Pride and Respect

ROTC instructor Pedro Martinez instills both in his young charges

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin Photos by Scott Buschman

**W**HEN PEDRO MARTINEZ gives students their marching orders, the boys and girls fall into formation and march across the campus of Hawthorne High School. Their uniforms are impeccably clean and pressed, their expressions are solemn. When they skillfully toss and twirl their plastic rifles in the air, they catch them — in most cases without missing a beat. Martinez stands at the sidelines barking orders, wearing a Navy uniform and a proud expression.

Martinez, 62, has been teaching Navy Junior ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) classes for 14 years. He earned a special subject credential to teach ROTC from CSU Long Beach. The

former Navy man and UFW organizer is also active with his own union. He's vice president of the Centinela Valley Secondary Teachers Association and serves on CTA's State Council.

His students learn much more than military skills. They make underwater robots that can move objects through an obstacle course and enter them in competitions. They learn map, compass and shipbuilding skills. They built a miniature replica of the aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt* and entered it in a Memorial Day parade.

Their extracurricular activities include everything from entering ROTC competitions to studying cyber security, engaging in pellet

gun target practice, and performing at memorial services and veterans' events.

Sophomore Kevin Villalobos says some students enroll in ROTC because they think it will be an easy elective, but then find out it's anything but.

"This program is not easy. We work hard, and we have a strong work ethic. But like many things in life, it's worth it."

Javier Moreno, a junior, says the course helped him overcome shyness and develop confidence. "I speak out in my other classes and raise my hand now," he says.

The Navy pays for course materials and computers, and 50 percent of Martinez's salary.

"I want to instill pride in my students," says Martinez. "It's definitely part of my curriculum to explain that you must have pride in your country, state, community, school and yourself."

He is aware that some people object to ROTC classes and that critics believe their purpose is to recruit students into the military, which could result in death or injuries. But the military, he points out, can be a way out of poverty and offers money for college and training in specific areas such as electronics, engineering and cyber intelligence, which may lead to successful careers.

"Our ROTC classes are not there to recruit students," he says. "We are only there to train them in Navy curriculum. Very few of my students actually join the military."

Few may enlist, but most learn discipline that keeps them in line. To stay in his class, they must keep their grades up, stay out of trouble and be respectful.

"My approach is that if you want respect, you have to learn how to give respect. And my students know that if they want to be in my class, they have to perform well in all their classes."

The teacher they call "Chief" has clearly earned their admiration.

"I'm learning respect," says Izaak Lopez, a sophomore. "I've learned that I have to be presentable. I've learned maturity. I've learned commitment. I've become responsible."

Jessie Vales, a sophomore, says the ROTC class helps him do better in his other classes. "I've straightened up a lot," he explains.

Briyit Sandoval graduated last year and is considering enlisting in the U.S. Marines. "Because I am interested in the military, I thought, 'Why not take a class and see if I enjoy it?' I found that I did, and I looked forward to this class every day. It taught me honor, courage and commitment."

Students such as Lopez, Vales and Sandoval make their teacher proud. ■

**"My approach is that if you want respect, you have to learn how to give respect."**



## A Veteran Organizer

Pedro Martinez served in the U.S. Navy for more than 20 years, enlisting when he was 25 because he wanted to see the world. He has visited Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, Singapore, Iran, Bahrain, Croatia and Austria. He did not engage in combat, but he had a dangerous job working on his ship's boilers. At times crew members worried they might be targets — especially after the United States invaded Iraq in 2003.

Before all that, Martinez was active in the United Farm Workers' efforts to unionize. He grew up in Delano, the heart of the movement, and picked crops. One day he saw the foreman removing pro-UFW fliers from car windshields and throwing them into the trash. Martinez took them out of the trash and placed them back on the cars, telling the foreman he could do what he wanted on his lunch hour. He was cussed out and fired. So he went to work for Cesar Chavez.

"I used to go to the fields during grape season and deliver union materials," he says of that era. "I would go to farmworkers' houses and talk to them about how the union would benefit them and why they needed a contract. I did a lot of campaigning."

"It was a very emotional time and a part of history."





## Adam Holland on how the way he teaches has changed:

- **I tell students that challenges are not always bad.** I teach AP European History. During the year, so many kids wonder why they took such a difficult course, but at the end of the year or even years later, it all clicks, and they see that the challenging times were worth it. When we're going through those hard times, I tell them that I had cancer, and it was one of the greatest gifts I ever received. I truly mean that!
- **I want all students to know that I'm on their side and want them to have the best education I can give them.** To do well, they need to know they are supported and cared for. I teach students history; I don't teach history to students. It might be a subtle shift of words, but it's enormous when it comes to teaching. Students always come first in education.
- **I tell them that life doesn't always go as expected.** They're looking ahead, and the future looks so bright. They want to take on the world, and I love that passion. But I also want them to have realistic expectations. Like climbing a mountain, you don't jump from valley to peak at once. You take it a step at a time, and eventually with persistence and fortitude you get to the top.
- **I tell students they need to do something they love, and they'll never work a day in their life.** That's a big part of my own story. I wake up tired, but it is a joy to come to work each day, work hard with and for my students and staff, and go home tired. I am much happier than many who have so much more than I ever will. I love teaching.

# Lessons Learned

## Cancer teaches educator about life and living

By Adam Holland

**M**any say that teaching is a lifestyle, a hard life but a good life. The life of a true teacher is a distinguished one among so many occupations in this world.

But what happens when life interferes with our teaching lifestyle? In 2014 my life changed forever: I was diagnosed with brain cancer. While my private life was redefining itself in many ways, one area that wasn't being redefined was teaching.

For me, teaching and the classroom were wonderful diversions to my own personal fight for life, a reminder that the world was continuing on and that despite my cancer I still played a role in this world. I knew there were things in my life that were bigger than me, like my students, my school, my colleagues, and most of all my faith.

I waited until after my students took their AP European History exam to tell them. They were amazingly supportive. One of the most wonderful things they did was to write letters to me, laminate them and put them in a book.

In addition to daily encouragement, school staff gave me a bouquet of historical figures containing gift cards for meals, for when I would be too tired or sick to make dinner. Several were willing to give me their own sick time in case I needed to take an extended period of time off.

Thankfully, I didn't need it. But I will always cherish

how staff, students and students' families reached out to help me. I had always been told we were a family at West Ranch, and now I experienced it.

In the summer of 2014 I underwent



Adam Holland

*Continued on page 18*

two brain surgeries, and one of my greatest concerns was healing before school started. I didn't want to miss it at all. I even considered putting off the second surgery for a year so it wouldn't affect my students' education. A great group of people knocked sense into me, and I had the second surgery three weeks before returning to work in August.

Radiation and chemo were on the docket for the fall, and throughout it all I felt terrible and physically exhausted. I woke up each morning, went to work and did the best job I could. My colleagues and students inspired me to press on. That year I did not miss a single day because of how I felt, save one day when

**"I had always been told we were a family at West Ranch High School. Now I experienced it."**

I suffered some side effects from a spinal tap. Through it all I committed myself to my students and school.

As I recovered in 2015, I realized that my journey and what I had learned were not just for me. There were others on the journey — my parents, my friends, my faith family, my colleagues and my students. I wrote about this in what eventually became a book, *Anchored in the Storm*, as a way not just to share my story, but to encourage and inspire those who go through any type of suffering in life. It's been an incredible blessing for me to see and hear how one journey and experience can help others. My journey continues to this day.

One of the lines from the book is: "There are people who have literally poured so much into others, there is nothing left for the history books; they have given themselves away." Teachers do this on a daily basis, and I am proud to serve among so many wonderful educators. I am now so proud to be among the many cancer warriors out there. ■

*Adam Holland teaches social studies at West Ranch High School in Stevenson Ranch. A member of the Hart District Teachers Association, he is a National Board Certified Teacher and author of Anchored in the Storm (2016).*

*In 2016, former students of Holland created a short video about his story and book: [bit.ly/2sSfiyb](http://bit.ly/2sSfiyb).*

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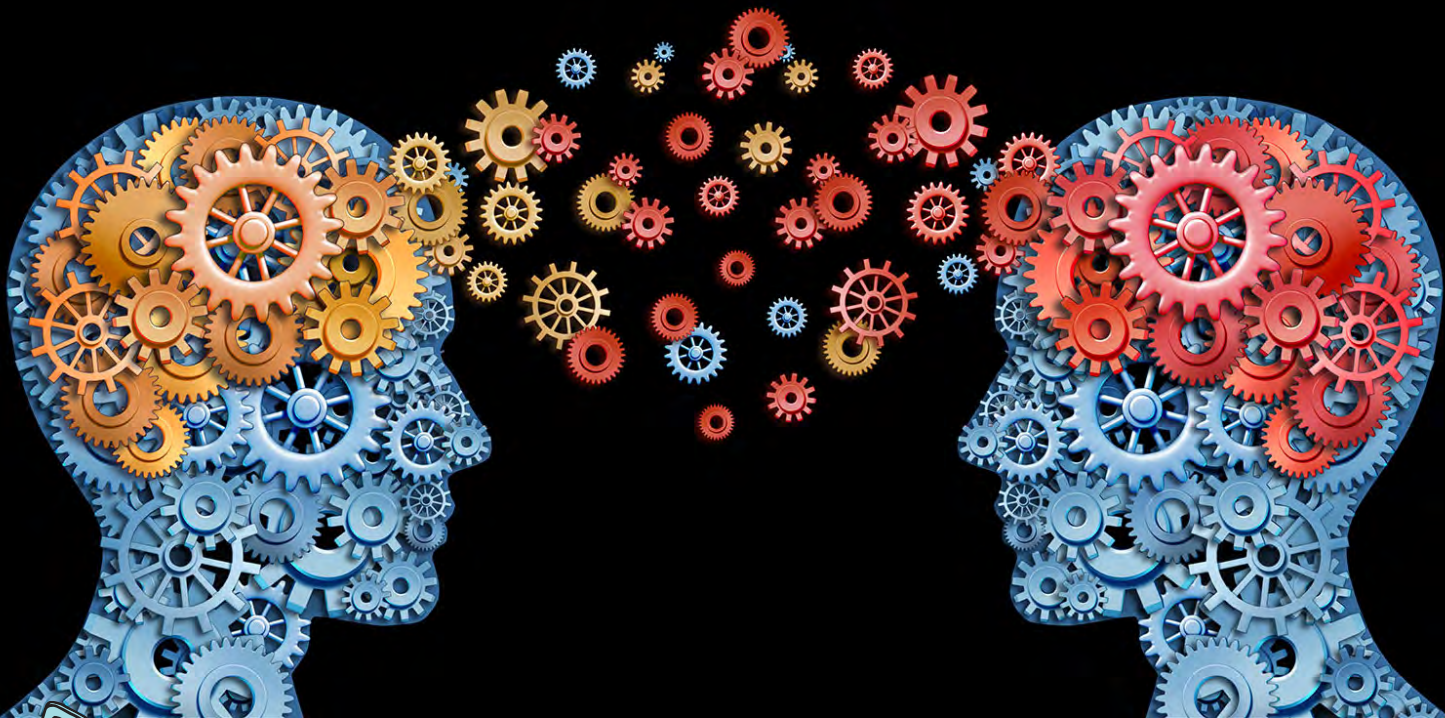
Tips, ideas & resources for:  
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And: Advice from the pros  
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Enhancing your best self







Ansonlobo/Wikimedia

# Digital Lesson-Sharing

The perils, pitfalls and rewards of **Open Educational Resources**

By Dina Martin

**E**ducators are known for their outsize capacity to give and share, and when it comes to lesson plans and curricula, teachers have generously shared with colleagues for centuries.

Sharing in the digital age means that myriad educators are now involved, and virtual marketplaces for Open Educational Resources (OER) — freely accessible, openly licensed text, media and other digital assets for classroom use — are springing up.

The promise of OER has been touted for some time. It taps into the collaborative brainpower, innovation and creativity of educators around the country and around the world. It ensures that teachers and students always have the most up-to-date and relevant content for little or no cost — which is particularly attractive to cash-strapped school districts. And OER can be customized and adapted to individual student populations and aligned to state standards.

OER can be found at various educational sites,

including [TeachersPayTeachers.com](https://www.teacherspayteachers.com), where educators post their work for colleagues to use (often for a fee). In recent years, high-tech firms such as Amazon and digital education companies have joined the fray. The U.S. Department of Education's #GoOpen campaign supports states, school districts and educators in using OER to transform teaching and learning.

## Challenges in finding quality material

But while OER may be a boon to education, for many educators, finding free, quality online curriculum requires tenacity, collaboration, increased staff development, and possibly new language in their collective bargaining agreements.

And that doesn't even include wading through the thousands of choices of online learning and research materials out there.

Many say it's the Wild West when it comes to selecting and vetting material.

“That’s exactly what it is,” says Oxnard Educators Association member Karen Sher, a seventh-grade teacher who is on special assignment as an instructional coach. “[OER] gives teachers more freedom, but it puts a lot on them in terms of research.”

Sher became a specialist in the Library of Congress’s OER after attending its summer institute several years ago, and vouches for the primary sources it makes available to teachers. While the Library of Congress may not be as well known as other OER sources, it offers a wealth of resources for educators, according to Sher.



Karen Sher

Sher asserts that regardless of the quality resources available online, “where the real magic happens is when teachers collaborate.”

Pia VanMeter, co-chair of the Curriculum and Instruction Committee of CTA’s State Council of Education and high school science teacher, would agree. When her district rolled out an open source math curriculum, it was a disaster because there was not adequate staff development.

“Teachers were working on the curriculum while trying to teach the curriculum,” says the Riverside City Teachers Association member. “Open source as an idea is great but you need to critically look at it and make sure it is aligned to standards.”

## Collaboration and staff development are key

The Cajon Valley Education Association (CVEA) has a joint curriculum committee with the Cajon Valley Unified School District to determine, among other curriculum decisions, the selection and uses of OER. The district is among those selected by the U.S. Department of Education as part of its #GoOpen initiative.

The committee’s work began two years ago when teachers started to question the superintendent’s “all in” campaign to include OER as part of its curriculum.



Christopher Prokop

“Our association began to ask, ‘What is that going to look like? Are we going to meet the requirements of Common Core? What about English learners? Who is going to create the curriculum?’” says CVEA President Christopher Prokop. “We became the adults in the room.”

Despite the early issues, teachers and the district are working together, and Prokop credits the district for wanting to “get off the textbook adoption merry-go-round” that is driven by big publishing companies. Teachers districtwide now have a modified Monday schedule that allows time for collaboration and staff development (including on OER) in teacher-driven meetings.



Pia VanMeter

All students are unique



## Where to Find OER

**FINDING AND VETTING** high-quality, standards-aligned Open Educational Resources (OER) can be challenging. Here are some expert recommendations:

**ck12.org** — An established resource offering full lesson plans easily incorporated into classrooms.

**edmodo.com** — An OER pioneer with a time-saving “Spotlight” search to find specific elements.

**opened.com** — This OER has an enormous range of assessments.

**gooru.org** — Provides both lesson plans and full courses that can be downloaded and used for free.

**curriki.org** — Another early OER resource that lets teachers easily share their own lessons.

**collaborationincommon.org** — An OER hub, along with many other resources for educators.

*Source: Elliot Soloway, International Society for Technology in Education*

**“Open source as an idea is great, but you need to critically look at it and make sure it is aligned to standards.”**

—PIA VANMETER, RIVERSIDE CITY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

**Know your OER objectives**

Angela Der Ramos, Alisal Teachers Association, is a member of CTA’s Instructional Leadership Corps and provides professional development at conferences and in her district. She is a big proponent of OER, especially to rethink some of the curriculum or standards she is required to teach. Still, she maintains using OER must involve good pedagogy, and teachers must be articulate about what they are doing, “particularly when they are going against the norm.”

Der Ramos runs “This Side of the Chalkboard,” a Facebook page where teachers can share techniques, strategies and lessons in using OER.

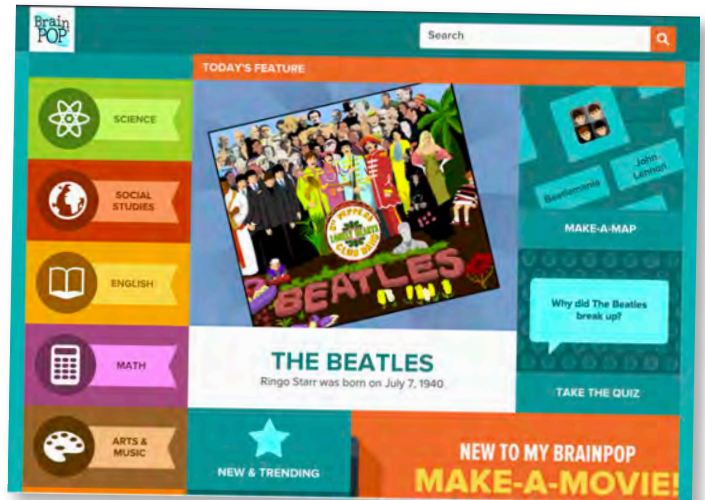
The fifth-grade teacher believes the mission of education is to produce literate critical thinkers who are steeped in social justice and have learned they have the power to make positive change. With this in mind, her OER sites include Newsela, which she uses to highlight current human rights abuses, and Teaching Tolerance, an educational resource from the Southern Poverty Law Center.

While Der Ramos particularly endorses teacher-generated material, she is hesitant to support the idea of “teachers paying teachers” for online content.

“I fault no teacher for trying to make money,” she says, “but my own philosophy is one of sharing.” ■



Angela Der Ramos



BrainPop

**Their Favorite Things**

**CTA MEMBERS** Angela Der Ramos and Karen Sher, and CTA staff consultant and edtech specialist Karen Taylor, have favorite sites for OER content as well as educator tips, including:

- BrainPOP**, [brainpop.com](http://brainpop.com)
- Edutopia**, [edutopia.org](http://edutopia.org)
- KQED Learning**, [ww2.kqed.org/learning](http://ww2.kqed.org/learning)
- Library of Congress**, [loc.gov/teachers](http://loc.gov/teachers)
- Newsela**, [newsela.com](http://newsela.com)
- Pinterest**, [pinterest.com](http://pinterest.com) (search for curriculum and lesson plan)
- Read Write Think**, [readwritethink.org](http://readwritethink.org)
- Rock Your World**, [rock-your-world.org](http://rock-your-world.org)
- Teaching Tolerance**, [tolerance.org](http://tolerance.org)
- Zearn Math**, [zearn.org](http://zearn.org)

Let us know your favorite sites at [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org).

*What to Consider With OER*

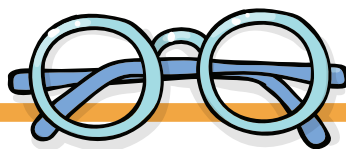
Use reputable sources and make sure the content you choose is aligned with standards.

Select content you can easily adapt and customize for your students.

Factor in time to adapt and customize, and time for you to become familiar with the content.

If sharing with colleagues, or school- or districtwide, ensure you have time to collaborate, prepare and learn together.





# Great Expectations

## California Teachers of the Year on ways to help all students succeed

**GREAT TEACHERS** not only help students learn 21st century skills, but also inspire young people in multiple ways. It could be with encouraging words, or challenging work that sparks creativity and critical thinking. When we asked several of the 2017 California Teachers of the Year their thoughts about teaching, a few other qualities stood out: Steadfast belief in individual ability and growth, and boundless empathy — often acquired through their own life stories.



### JENNY CHIEN

Vista Teachers Association, @ChienforSTEM

K-5 STEM teacher

Chien teaches fourth-grade broadcast journalism and runs a flexible learning space called the Design, Research, Engineering, Art, Mathematics and Science (DREAMS) Lab, where students learn to code and engage in design challenges.

Her parents owned a business, and as a child, she would often assist with basic finances. She believes this helped her excel in math at school. But she understood that other students needed time to process math concepts. "This experience grounds my passion for making sure that education is personalized for each child," she says, "so that academic paths are based on unique needs and focused on using strengths to address areas of growth."

**"Start with empathy. What is a problem to help with or solve? Students are incredibly creative and can offer unique ideas."**

#### **Her goal with the DREAMS Lab:**

My goal is to create a collaborative space for students to think critically, tap into their interests, foster their creativity and discover their passion. For example, in a fourth-grade game design challenge, students use their own interests and experiences to inspire their team to create an animated game. You see students who may not typically thrive in a traditional classroom utilize their strengths and take the lead.

#### **How educators can replicate the lab:**

Start with empathy. What is a problem to help with or solve? Then, gather Maker materials such as toilet paper rolls, cardboard and masking tape to design and build initial prototypes to address that problem. It could be as simple as a door being able to stay open. Students are incredibly creative and can offer unique ideas. They will start to put themselves in the situation of the needs of the problem. This process, the design thinking cycle, brings the compassionate perspective to engineering.

#### **Helping students create and produce a newscast:**

Broadcast journalism is about storytelling. It's important to talk to students about credibility in sources, especially with fake news trending. Digital citizenship is also a continuous discussion. The most important piece is to help students be curious about the world and be able to research that curiosity and tell the story in a way that engages your targeted audience.





←  
**CORRIE TRAYNOR**  
*Dry Creek Teachers Association*  
 Fifth-grade multisubject teacher

“When we teach children that mistakes are a part of the learning process, they learn how to problem-solve and never give up.”

Every year, Traynor shares her story of growing up with dyslexia and severe reading disability with her students. “This lets them understand that I truly understand what they are going through when they struggle,” she says. Her underlying message: “My students know they can all be successful if they work hard and persevere, and I will not give up on them.”

**Instilling perseverance:**  
 A teacher needs to gain students’ trust. I have found that once my students know and trust me, they will work harder and persevere through very difficult tasks and concepts. My classroom is a safe place where students can learn and grow as a community. A kid who does not feel safe and valued will struggle to learn.

**The value of mistakes:**  
 I find students are motivated with praise for what they have specifically accomplished, not by false praise. We celebrate mistakes and learn how mistakes help us to “grow brain.” When we teach children that mistakes are a part of the learning process, they learn how to problem-solve and never give up.

**Teaching students with learning challenges:**  
 We must believe that all children can be successful with our support, and always keep our expectations high. We need to teach each individual child the way that they need to be taught. It is at times a daunting task, but we cannot give up on those who need us the most.

**Advice to teachers who may be hitting a wall:**  
 Do not be afraid or too proud to ask for help. I could not do my job without my supportive grade-level, schoolwide and district PLC teams. Find a coach/mentor to help work through your struggles. Find what gives you strength to help you through the good and difficult times. I’ve found that reading current educational research or professional development helps me refocus on why I do what I do each year. Take care of yourself and not just everyone else.



↗  
**SHAUN BUNN**  
*Romoland Teachers Association*  
 Eighth-grade math teacher

Every year, Bunn returns to Cambodia, where he helps feed children — many of them off the streets. He and his family dodged bullets and land mines while fleeing the country’s civil war. They spent several years in a Thai refugee camp before settling in the U.S. Bunn grew up in poverty as an English learner.

He knows the power of personal stories, and weaves them into class time. Once a month his students have “community circle time,” where they can discuss anything, including personal problems at home and school, or what’s happening in the community. Bunn shares some of his own experiences as a way to engage and connect with his class.

**Being authentic:**  
 Be true to who you are. The students will get it right away if you’re not real. Be true but firm. Students will appreciate you, because most of our students need stability. Some do not have that guidance at home.

**Advice to new educators as an induction coach:**  
 For the first two years in your career, you will work harder than

For information on California Teachers of the Year, see [cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/ct](http://cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/ct).

**“Don’t give up. I promise you that everything will get easier, and the hard work is worth the rewards that you will receive.”**

you ever will, but once you get the management down and know what is expected of you, you will do just fine. Don’t give up. If this is truly your calling, just continue to go with it. I promise you that everything will get easier, and the hard work is worth the rewards that you will receive.

**What he learned as a new educator:**

I thought teaching was easy — as long as I knew the content, standing and delivering the content would be a piece of cake. But teaching is one of the most difficult jobs out there, because you shape the world on a daily basis. It is also one of the most rewarding jobs. You get to turn young minds into future doctors, lawyers, even teachers.

**How to build in students a love of math:**

Find different ways to help students understand math. Our students are our unknown variables: To understand them we must get to know them, peel off their layers one by one. Once you build that trust with your students, learning will naturally happen. Math will become enjoyable.



**ISELA LIEBER**

United Teachers Los Angeles, [iselal0130@gmail.com](mailto:iselal0130@gmail.com)

Ninth- and 10th-grade English, ESL and ESL science teacher



An immigrant who came to the U.S. with a seventh-grade education and little knowledge of English, Lieber strongly identifies with her students, leading by example and sharing her personal story. She sponsors SUCCEED, a student club that helps first-generation high school graduates, English learners and low-income students prepare and apply for college.

“We must believe in students’ ability and capacity for accomplishment and success,” Lieber says. “We teachers have to celebrate milestones with them, because sometimes nobody else does.”

**Why teaching is an act of social justice:**

So many educators use their influence to inspire students by showing them the options they have through education. For example, many of my students are new to the country and don’t know how to navigate different systems such as applying for college or financial aid, registering, taking the SAT. It is all about empowering students to follow a path that works for them, and teaching them to become their own advocates.

**Motivating students to succeed:**

I create a culture of acceptance, comfort, camaraderie and high expectations in my classroom. I make sure they know that education is power, and that by empowering themselves through it they can better themselves, their families, their communities and their country.

**Advice on teaching immigrant students and English learners:**

Continue to believe in these students — most want to learn, but may get frustrated by the language barrier. Remember that many arrived without a support system in place. It may be the first time they meet a parent, or see their parent, in many years. We as responsible educators need to place emphasis on their social-emotional needs.

**“It is all about empowering students to follow a path that works for them, and teaching them to become their own advocates.”**

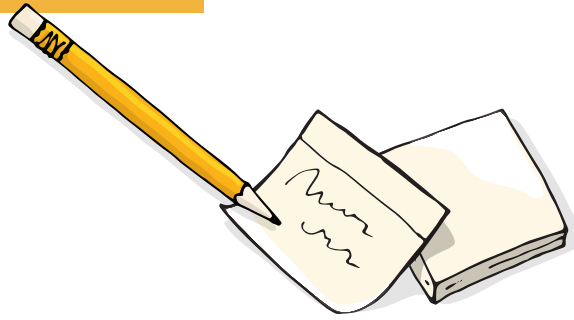
**Advice to educators on avoiding burnout:**

Take care of yourself both physically and mentally. Learn how to control your stress levels and manage your time. Sometimes it is OK to say no.

Also, we must learn to choose our battles. Many times we may be discouraged by the current political situation, budget cuts or the latest trend in educational reform. We cannot internalize these. We have to remember that our only constant is our classroom, our students, and the difference we make in their lives through our work, dedication and commitment to student empowering and success.







# Reflections on the First Year

New educators speak out on what they learned and its impact on how they teach *By Dina Martin*

**SEEING A CLASSROOM** through the eyes of a brand-new teacher happens just once, and it can be instructive. There are certain things new teachers can't experience until they are out of college and in the classroom. And then there's the knowledge they don't even realize they've picked up until the first year is under their belt.

We caught up with several newbies who attended CTA's first-ever New Educator Weekend in March. (Tailored to educators with five or fewer years in the profession, the event drew rave reviews from the hundreds of attendees and will be offered again in February 2018.) We asked what they learned from the conference, as well as from their colleagues and students in their first year, and its impact on their teaching.

**VANESSA D. KNIGHT**

*Central Unified Teachers Association*  
**K-6 Special Education**



The most important thing I learned is to stay student focused. Doing what is best for students is best practice, bottom line. There will always be challenges and difficulties with administration, budgets, district policies, legislation and so many other things. But when your focus is on students, you will have the motivation to deal with anything.

At the amazing New Educator conference, I learned that there are creative ways to engage students in STEM activities. The key is to encourage students to be creative, critical and experimental intellectuals. I also learned how to use social media to highlight what my local chapter is doing in our school district. That session inspired me to pursue the Communications strand at CTA's Summer Institute to advance my skills and help my chapter grow stronger!

**MICHAEL COVEY**

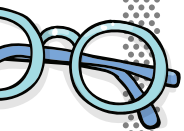
*Santa Ana Educators Association*  
**7-8 English Language Arts**



The most important thing I recognized is the vast and powerful network of individuals who truly care about education as a social institution. I have connected with educators at my site, at professional development conferences, and even using social media.

Based on what I've learned, I have focused on designing instruction to craft meaningful goals and experiences to benefit all students. For example, for National Poetry Month in April students did a culminating project where they analyzed a poem and sent a letter to the author. It went great. Students discovered the power of poetry and connected with writers whose words held real value and truth for each individual.

Afterward, I saw a tweet from New York educator Daniel Weinstein saying he does not pay attention to National Poetry Month and instead has students read and write poetry consistently from day 1 to the final exam. I reflected, and took this idea to my class. The response was immediate and forceful: Integrate poetry all year. Since then, I designed instruction that emphasizes poetry throughout the year.





**KRISTY GARCIA**  
*Association of  
 Colton Educators*  
**Second Grade**

There's quite a bit I've learned, including making use of lots of important classroom technology, like Class Dojo, and getting to know the students on a more personal level, which helps them enjoy school more. As part of the induction program, we're assigned a teacher mentor from another school. My mentor was amazing. I could contact her any time of the day. She would make suggestions for resources or things to try in the classroom.

At the New Educator Weekend, I went to a session where a leader talked about how everything needs to be scheduled. Kids need to get into a routine. So I implemented it. I was so motivated after that session. I used all the tips she gave us. Even the principal noticed and said how much improvement she saw.



**SHELBY LOFY**  
*Sanger Unified  
 Teachers Association*  
**1-4 Special  
 Education**

This year I've learned that collaboration is the most important thing. In special ed, it's especially necessary to work together. I work with speech therapists, psychologists and occupational therapists. Along the way, I've learned new strategies. It's something that school doesn't prepare you for. As an educator, you always have to push yourself to do more.

For example, a lot of my kids have trouble with their speech. A speech therapist and I noticed many were struggling to put words together. We pulled in visuals from the Picture Exchange Communication System, and students were able to show how they could put together a sentence.



**JULISSA PEREZ**  
*Bakersfield Elementary  
 Teachers Association*  
**Third Grade**

The most important thing I learned during the conference was classroom management strategies from Rick Morris, including his book, *The Big Book*, which I highly recommend. For a new teacher, classroom management is essential to create an effective learning environment.

For example, I learned the effectiveness of music cues as attention getters. Implementing this strategy during transitions has changed my world. Before, I felt like classroom time was wasted trying to get students' attention. After teaching my students to listen for the music cues, classroom transition time was smoother and quicker. It did take some modeling and practice, but it was well worth the effort. My tip is to implement one strategy at a time and be patient.



**MAIRA ROMO**  
*Caruthers Unified  
 Teachers Association*  
**First Grade**

I've learned it is very important to connect with other teachers. I use Twitter to show other teachers what my students are doing in my classroom and I also use it as a resource. I've gotten so many good ideas from teachers who live in different cities and different states!

The session about incorporating STEM in the classroom inspired me to implement project-based learning. What's cool is that I can tie multiple standards from different subjects into one project. For example, my students participated in an animal research project that combined science, ELA and technology. They did their own research and synthesized facts. They used Google Apps for Education to create their own website. They used Google Sheets and pixel art to create a diagram, and they also produced and created their own green screen YouTube video with five facts about their animal.



**JESS A. SANCHEZ**  
*Moreno Valley  
 Educators Association*  
**First Grade**

One of the most important things I learned at the New Educator conference was restorative justice practices. These strategies, to me, are essential to help create an inclusive classroom climate. I know the session was just an overview, so I took the liberty to buy the books that were recommended by the presenters, and they are now my summer reading!

In my classroom, I taught my students how to use "I" statements. Rather than tattling on their classmates, students were urged to state how they felt when someone was not kind to them. Even in first grade, students were able to make some mindful choices about how their behaviors can affect other students in the classroom.

**Calling All New Educators!** CTA's New Educator Weekend is a must for those with five years or less in the profession. Learn the latest in classroom management, pedagogy, and more. Meet and network with leaders and colleagues. Feb. 23-25, 2018 (location TBD); see [ctago.org](http://ctago.org) for details.





# Making the Grade

Tips for passing probation and surpassing expectations

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin Photos by Scott Buschman

Chandra McPeters, left, mentors second-year teacher Melissa Johnson; both are Stockton Teachers Association members.

**M**elissa Johnson feels right at home in her fourth-grade classroom at George W. Bush Elementary School. She's gotten much-needed support from colleagues — and positive feedback from administrators, who invited her last March to return for a second year, she says with a big smile.

Nonetheless, being a new teacher on probation can be “a little nerve-wracking,” admits the Stockton Teachers Association (STA) member. She's sometimes unsure of what to do, and there's constant pressure from working under a microscope. But she's developed strong classroom management skills that connect her to students, and has earned their respect with a program that rewards good behavior, based on the rules of baseball. (See page 30.)

Johnson is one of thousands of new teachers

required by state law to complete a two-year probationary period before earning permanent status. Many of these educators put their lives on hold — postponing wedding dates and delaying having children, purchasing homes or taking vacations until they achieve permanent status.

Probationary teachers lack the protections their colleagues with permanent status enjoy. Probationary employees may be let go — or “non-re-elected” — without due process or explanation during their first or second year. And if they change districts, teachers begin a two-year probation period all over again. The state doesn't keep track of how many teachers pass probation.

Non-re-election should not be confused with layoffs due to budget cuts. Such confusion occurred in Montebello Unified School District recently and resulted in a lawsuit.



The probationary period also differs from temporary status and being hired as a long-term substitute, both of which lack job protections.

Over the years, school management organizations have supported efforts in the state Legislature to increase the probationary period, a move CTA opposes. (See page 54 for details of the latest bills.)

CTA President Eric Heins says extending the probationary period is the wrong solution to support good teaching and learning. "As a state, we should be supporting teacher quality and attracting and retaining the best and brightest teachers for California students." He notes that 46 other states provide some due process rights to teachers on day 1, and this legislation "will aggravate the teacher shortage in California and will make it harder for new teachers to speak out for students."

Legislation has been introduced to extend the teacher probation period in California. CTA opposes extending the probation period, because it would make it more difficult to recruit and retain teachers. It would also keep teachers at a lower salary scale for longer and delay their eligibility for due process.

At some schools probationary teachers are supported, mentored and appreciated; at other sites support is lacking, and they can be assigned the most difficult students and classes as the "new person" despite their lack of expertise, say CTA members.

"Being a probationary teacher is challenging and at times overwhelming," observes Chandra McPeters, Johnson's mentor, who was active with the district's BTSAs (Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment) program for many years. "New teachers must not only learn to navigate the district's policies and procedures, but also master curriculum, establish classroom management strategies, stay organized and manage their time wisely. Some are taking classes and have family commitments."

In the following pages, McPeters and others share strategies to help new teachers pass probation and surpass expectations. Their stellar advice may even help permanent employees shine brighter.

**"As a state, we should be supporting teacher quality and attracting and retaining the best and brightest teachers for California students."**

—CTA PRESIDENT  
**ERIC HEINS**



**CHANDRA McPETERS**

**Reading specialist and mentor** at  
George W. Bush Elementary School  
*Stockton Teachers Association*

**\* Don't be afraid to ask for help.** Reach out to others, including your grade-level team members and veteran teachers on campus. Don't worry about being perceived as lacking knowledge, skills or background. You are at the beginning of your professional journey, and it's OK not to have all the answers.

**\* Take advantage of professional development (PD) opportunities.** Be strategic so that your PD is specific to your credential and the needs of your students. As part of your PD, visit other teachers who are willing to let you observe.

**\* Develop a classroom management system.** Set clear expectations. Model the behavior you expect in the classroom. Rather than calling these behaviors "rules," refer to them as classroom "norms" so students think of courtesy, staying in their seats, etc. as *normal* behavior.

**\* Be a team player, but don't volunteer for everything.** Agree to commitments you can handle, but don't overextend yourself. Say as graciously as possible, "I'd love to, but with my schedule I don't think I will be able to honor that commitment," if it is too much to handle.

**\* Collaborate with administrators about the evaluation process.** During the pre-observation meeting that takes place before you are officially observed in class, ask your administrator what standards they would like to see taught during the lesson and what skills they expect to see in your teaching. Discuss your strategies and lesson plans. An administrator's expectations may differ from what you think they are.





**LENA HUNT**

**Third-grade teacher** who just finished probation at Shasta Meadows Elementary School in Redding  
*Enterprise Elementary Teachers Association*

**\* Share your ideas with others.** Even if you are new, share what you know so your colleagues can value and appreciate you. I believe new teachers have a lot to offer.

**\* See your students as people.** Take time to build relationships with them. With so much pressure on academics, rules and regulations, don't lose sight of what is best for students.

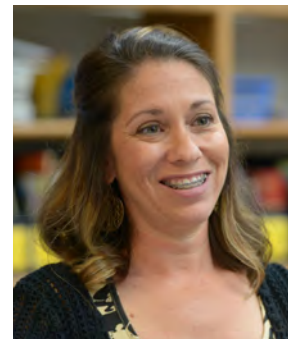
**\* Try to normalize the evaluation process.** There can be stress in knowing you are going to be evaluated, but try to see it as just another day in the classroom. If you normalize the experience, it's easier.



**MELISSA JOHNSON, second-year probationary teacher** at George W. Bush Elementary School and Stockton Teachers Association member, created a behavior chart based on baseball called "Batter Up." If students get strike one, they receive a warning. If there is a strike two, they lose recess. If there's a strike three, "You're out" and their parents are contacted. Students are rewarded for base hits, or doing what they are supposed to do. At the end of the day, if they have gotten all base hits, they receive a home run. If students get four home runs, they can join the Home Run Club and enjoy lunch with their teacher on Fridays.

**SHERRY TUGGLE**

**17-year educator** now on probation after switching to a new district, who teaches second grade at Shasta Meadows Elementary School in Redding  
*Enterprise Elementary Teachers Association*



**\* Communicate with students, parents, administrators and your support teams at school.** If you don't get out there and have conversations that are easy, you will struggle with the ones that are difficult.

**\* Show empathy.** Let others know how much you care about your students.

**\* Don't react defensively.** Assume that most of your colleagues and administrators are there to support you. Don't assume you are being attacked if someone makes a suggestion.

**\* Connect with staff.** Go to the lunchroom. Attend after-school functions and Christmas parties. Get to know your colleagues.

**Current Probation Legislation**

Lawmakers are working on several bills that could affect teacher probation periods. CTA opposes AB 1220, which extends probation from two years to three, does not provide due process, and offers teachers limited support. CTA supports AB 1164, which extends probation to three years and includes peer assistance and review (PAR) and other programs for coaching and professional development, as well as due process protections in the third year. For details, see page 54.



**ALEXANDRIA TUCKER**

**English teacher** for four years; just completed probation at Liberty High in Brentwood; served as a BTSA teacher during her second probationary year  
*Liberty Education Association*

**\* Be ready for random drop-ins.**

That way surprise “mini-observations” won’t throw you off balance. Strive to always have a lesson plan on paper or on your board, so you are seen as someone who is prepared and confident about what you are doing now and what you will do next.

**\* If they say “change it,” listen.**

If you are specifically told to do something differently, do not take it as a suggestion, but as a requirement.

**\* Don’t get too comfortable during your second year.**

During your first year, evaluators are looking to see whether you can handle the classroom environment. You have some leeway, and they know you are adjusting. In the second year, they are looking more closely at your pedagogy and procedures. Ultimately, it is the second year that determines permanent status.

**\* Remember, they hired you for a reason.**

It’s easy to feel stressed because everything you do is being scrutinized. But keep in mind they saw something in you that made them trust you enough to educate their students. Remind yourself: You were hired because they believe in you.



**JEANNA RUBLE**

**Fourth-grade teacher** at Raisin City Elementary School in her fourth year of teaching, hired as an intern  
*Raisin City Teachers Association*

**\* Be organized.** I like to use a color-coded system to help with small groups for math and reading. Find an organizational system that works for you.

**\* Simplify when possible.** You don’t have to grade every paper. I try to look at what standards and specific questions are really important, and prioritize student work rather than grading every single thing.

**\* Reflect on your lessons and classroom management.** There may be flaws and mistakes, but learn from them, recover, and take it step by step. Don’t beat yourself up.

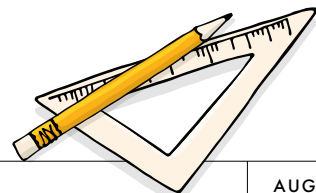
**\* Encourage communication with parents.** Let them know they are welcome in your class. At the beginning of the year, call to say something positive, such as “Your child completed all his assignments” or “Your child went above and beyond in being a good citizen.” Foster a collaborative environment so you are not just contacting parents when something is wrong.

*Sound Advice*

**New educators must focus on teaching and connecting with students and staying on top of their lesson plans while acclimating to a new school and colleagues. Being on probation adds to the pressure.**

Remaining professional in and out of the classroom is key to success, says CTA attorney Joe Colton. He offers specific commonsense advice:

- Communicate clearly. Listen carefully to what is asked of you; if in doubt, get confirmation.
- Be respectful. Do your best to get along with other teachers and administrators.
- Be conservative with social media. Think before you post.
- Inappropriate content should never be on your computer or electronic devices.
- Be careful about physical contact with students.





“It is making a difference. Students feel that teachers and other students at school care about them.”

—ASHLEY COOPER, UNIFIED ASSOCIATION OF CONEJO TEACHERS



Ashley Cooper started a No One Eats Alone program to make lunchtime a more positive experience.



# Curing the Lunchtime Lonelies

Inclusive mealtimes help kids connect with one another

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin Photos by Scott Buschman

Looking for a place to eat in the cafeteria can be nerve-wracking and at times excruciating for students who are not part of the campus social scene. For shy, bullied or unpopular students, lunchtime is typically the most painful part of the day. Such scenes are staples in pop culture depictions of high school (who can forget the heroine of *Mean Girls* eating lunch in a bathroom stall, or Hannah Baker dining alone in *13 Reasons Why*?). Feeling rejected and unconfident from these experiences can carry over into adulthood.

Lunchtime cliques divided along racial, religious or other lines create boundaries few dare to cross. This may intensify isolation, racism and intolerance on campus.

In the San Fernando Valley, teachers, education support professionals and students are working to change this. A few share tips to make lunchtime more inclusive.

Jada Gamble and Paula Mercado at a lunchtime ice cream social in Ashley Cooper's classroom.



Jaylynn Boyd



Sam Barton



Melissa Franco

## Start a 'No One Eats Alone' program

**ASHLEY COOPER'S** classroom at Thousand Oaks High School is more than just a place where students take health, biology and peer mentoring classes. It's also a place for students to make new friends during lunchtime. On any given day, 30 to 40 students find a safe haven in Room E7.

Cooper started a No One Eats Alone program at her school to make lunchtime less lonely for students who are socially awkward, new on campus or seeking a wider friendship circle. Several students volunteer as peer mentors, who help introduce students to others and socialize.

Recently Cooper received a letter from the mother of a ninth-grader who said her child usually came home from school in tears, and now walks through the door with a smile.

"It is making a difference," says Cooper. "Students feel that teachers and other students at school care about them. And we have noticed improvement in the classroom when it comes to behavior and grades. Students are happier overall."

A national organization, Beyond Differences, launched the No One Eats Alone program in

California in 2012. Today schools in all 50 states participate.

Starting a program was a natural extension of Cooper's peer mentoring class. Created after a student committed suicide, the program offers support to students struggling with loneliness, depression or anxiety. The goal is to make students feel welcome, rather than underscoring that they have nobody to eat lunch with.

Teens perceived as isolated by Cooper and the peer mentors are issued invitations to lunchtime events such as pizza parties or ice cream socials. For some, it is the first time they've been invited to anything in high school. The program has become so popular that students without invitations are showing up. Cooper believes a bigger venue will be needed soon.

"It's become an everyday program," says Cooper, who belongs to the Unified Association of Conejo Teachers. "Everyone is welcome — and we still issue invitations to those who are not feeling connected to campus."

Participants call themselves "The Lunch Bunch," and during a recent ice cream social,



there was plenty of laughter, visiting and good will.

“I didn’t know what to think when I received an invitation,” admits Rachael Hood, a senior last year. “But I thought, ‘Why not branch out a bit,’ and I came back every day. I made new friends. I’ve become a little more confident. I’ve become a little more comfortable.”

Madison Young, who began attending as a sophomore, says it is a relief to sit with others who aren’t going to judge her and people she can relax and feel “goofy” with.

“Joining the Lunch Bunch helped me meet others and come out of my shell,” says Sam Barton, who didn’t know very many people on campus when he enrolled as a freshman.

Peer mentors say they benefit just as much as those they invite. Cooper was surprised by this.

“Peer mentors are popular kids, but it’s come to light that they have just as many social insecurities as other students — they just mask it better,” Cooper says. “Everybody worries about what people think — especially with so much social media. I am so proud of their authentic compassion for others and their desire to support their peers.”

Peer mentor Melissa Franco says it has been a learning opportunity, and she has enjoyed getting to know others outside of her social circle.

“It feels like one big family hanging out for lunch.”

Peer mentor Jaylynn Boyd puts it in simpler terms.

“It just makes me feel happy,” she smiles.

For more information about the No One Eats Alone program, visit [beyonddifferences.org](http://beyonddifferences.org). See an example of the program’s icebreakers on the facing page.



“A lot of people have forgotten what it means to be human, so we formed a club to promote humanity and inclusiveness.”

— FARAH ALI, VENTURA EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION

## Start a Humanitarian Club

**WHEN INCIDENTS** of racism on social media rocked Buena High School in Ventura in January 2017, Farah Ali decided it was time to bring students together by forming a lunchtime club to explore differences in cultures, races and religions. The special education paraeducator joined forces with a colleague — college and career teacher Emmet Cullen — to create the Humanitarian Initiative Club, which meets Wednesdays during lunch.

The club includes students from diverse backgrounds, and has general education students as well as those with special needs.

Ali, who is Muslim, wants to make inclusion the new cool at school, because she feels the divisiveness on campus reflects the global situation in today’s political climate.

“A lot of people have forgotten what it means to be human, so we formed a club to promote humanity and inclusiveness. We make sure everyone has a voice on campus, so we can have an environment where people feel confident and develop a sense of self-esteem,” says Ali, a member of the Ventura Education Support Professionals Association.

“Regardless of who people are and what they look like, they will be treated with empathy, compassion and respect here,” says Cullen,



## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

No One Eats Alone ([nooneeatsalone.org](http://nooneeatsalone.org)) suggests a few fun games and icebreakers so students can get to know one another. For example:

### Toilet Paper Game

1. Ask each player how many squares of toilet paper they want, but don't tell them why. Set a limit from five to 50 and give them the requested number.
2. Go around the room and have each person say one thing about himself or herself for each square until they're finished. Everyone should say their name as the thing they share for the first square.

Left: Emmet Cullen and Farah Ali created the Humanitarian Initiative Club.

Below, students MacKenzie Pina and Olivia Velasquez in discussion at the club.

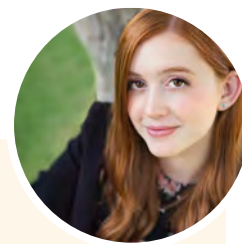


a member of the Ventura Unified Education Association. "Being humanitarians helps students connect to the world around us."

Club President Olivia Velasquez, a senior this year, says it offers more than a safe place to eat lunch. She believes the rich discussions will eventually help transform the overall school climate.

Senior Mackenzie Pina thinks the Humanitarian Initiative Club helps students feel more hopeful about the future.

"The world isn't all bad. But when bad things happen, it's what you hear about. One of my goals here as a student is becoming empowered to make changes in the world. I want other students to know that together, we can be that positive change." ■



## Need someone to eat with? There's an app for that

Sixteen-year-old Natalie Hampton knows what it's like to be lonely at lunchtime. At her old school, she was ostracized by her classmates and ate lunch alone every day. Often she would walk up to a table and ask if she could sit down — only to be rejected.

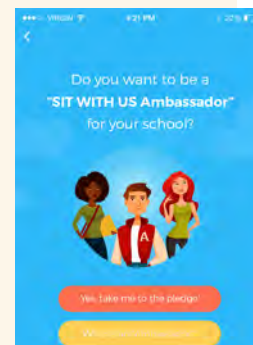
"It really impacted me," says Hampton, now a senior at Oakwood School in North Hollywood. "It was extremely embarrassing. It chipped away at my self-esteem and confidence."

At her new school, she made a point of asking others to join her if they were sitting alone. Some became her close friends. Then she was inspired to create an app called Sit With Us, which allows students to find welcoming lunch tables if they have nowhere to go. The app is free, and since its release in 2016 has been downloaded more than 100,000 times and used in seven countries.

Students sign up to be "ambassadors" and "host" a lunch. Others can see, in a discreet manner, who is hosting and choose a table where they will be welcomed. At her school, ambassadors span every grade level.

"I'd like to say it has impacted our school environment, and I do see fewer people sitting by themselves," says Hampton. "My biggest hope is that it will create a lasting impact and friendships, not only in my school community, but others."

To learn more about Sit With Us, visit Hampton's website, [sitwithus.io](http://sitwithus.io).





# The Reimagined

Meeting the needs of 21st century

**T**eachers are adapting their classrooms for the Knowledge Era. For some, that means creating a homier environment, where students are comfortable learning. For others, it's changing the core of what it means to be a teacher.

Here, educators talk about how they've modified their instruction and reshaped their spaces to meet 21st century student needs.

## Adapting the physical space →

Brynn Hutchison, who teaches a fourth- and fifth-grade combination class at Banyan Elementary School in Newberry Park, began to reimagine the physical space of her classroom after spotting ideas on Pinterest.

"First, I started taking legs off of desks to move them closer to the floor," says the Unified Association of Conejo Teachers (UACT) member. "We have 36 kids in fifth grade, and they are bigger, so classrooms can feel crowded. Lowering desks helped make the classroom feel huge."

Then, she added yoga balls because some nudgier students worked better on them, and brought in wobble stools, bean bags and video rockers. Generous parents purchased a standing desk and an adjustable table for her own use.

"It's the Starbucks Classroom," Hutchison jokes (see sidebar, facing page). "The kids are more engaged. When we read a novel, we have a discussion that lends itself to be more relaxed. There's more participation."

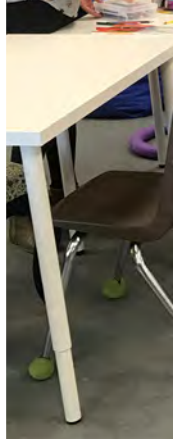
Hutchison had input from students along the way.

"They articulated how they need to sit. Some said they needed a yoga ball to bounce, others wanted a seat with no back. They were surprisingly self-aware," she says.

Three of Hutchison's colleagues who team-teach the same students reimaged their classrooms as well, and report positive results.

"Flexible seating gives them independence, ownership and responsibility," says Kim Tetzlaff, a UACT member who teaches science, math and social studies.

Tetzlaff's classroom furniture includes items from her garage and donations from parents and a DonorsChoose.org request.





# Classroom

students By Dina Martin



Brynn Hutchison and Kim Tetzlaff, below, with scenes from their classrooms, with flexible seating, reading nooks, etc.



**“The kids are more engaged. There’s more participation.”**

— **BRYNN HUTCHISON, UNIFIED ASSOCIATION OF CONEJO TEACHERS**

Her biggest surprise? Some of the seating, like yoga balls, requires students to pay more attention than before, lest they fall off their perch. And Tetzlaff says she makes more eye contact with students, since they can’t hide behind others.

*More examples on the next page.*

## The ‘Starbucks Classroom’

**IN 2015**, North Dakota educator and blogger Kayla Delzer wrote of her epiphany at a local Starbucks, where happy customers relaxed and worked in a variety of seating and table options. She thought her students could benefit from the same thing. In the real world, Delzer observed, people are responsible for their own learning, and giving students choices that suited their learning styles made sense.

She redesigned her classroom with mostly recycled and repurposed items to offer flexible seating and open floor space. Students decide where to sit every day, depending on their work and where they work best. Delzer said that students’ distracting behaviors have lessened while engagement and participation increased.

In a recent Edutopia story, she detailed how she makes her classroom work:

- ✳ Be aware of where students are working and their level of engagement at all times.
- ✳ House each student’s personal learning materials in bins in the corner of the room.
- ✳ Be open to removing much of the furniture.
- ✳ Make space for whole-group instruction. For Delzer, it’s the big rug in the middle of the classroom.
- ✳ Before allowing students to self-select seats, have them try all seating options for an entire day.
- ✳ Reserve the right to move students at any time if they aren’t fully engaged and able to work in their self-selected spot.
- ✳ Have more seating combinations than students in your classroom.





**↑ Real-life, real-time connections**

"The reimaged classroom is always evolving," says Heather Toll, an eighth-grade teacher at Green Valley Middle School and member of the Fairfield-Suisun Unified Teachers Association (F-SUTA). "It is more about the kids and less about me."



She has always allowed students to move around, as she does herself when she is employing QR codes, Apple TV and a smartboard.

"My kids have desks, but they can move their chairs around. Much of the time, they sit on the floor," she says.

Instead of prohibiting cellphones, Toll encourages students to use them in their assignments, along with Chromebooks. "Some kids can actually write essays on their phones. I see them pounding away on them," she says.

Her students have also taken to Twitter, which allows them a bigger audience. They respond to one another in Twitter chats, and often draw comments from parents or even district staff.

"They've learned that what they say is being seen by other people. They see things are more global than they thought," Toll says.

"Students need to have their own voice. I facilitate and guide them. Sometimes it's hard, but it's more collaborative. I find that kids will take leadership of the classroom."



**Technology transforms instruction**

For Toll's colleague, seventh-grade teacher Dalal Mansour, technology is the way forward.

"It lets me give students immediate feedback. Google Docs allows me to comment as they are writing. I've even been at a conference and still been able to leave comments on their work," says Mansour, also an F-SUTA member.

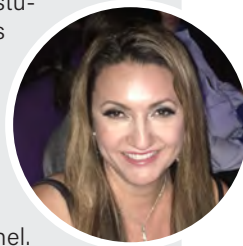
"I know which kids to target. I don't have to call someone up to my desk — it's more private."

Mansour says her students are more engaged in their assignments, and because the tools lend themselves to collaboration, they can work together on the same assignment at the same time.

She acknowledges that technology must be used correctly. "We need technology that transforms instruction. If we are just using it as a replacement for paper and pencil, it becomes a very expensive pencil." ■

**↑ An aspirational comfort zone**

"Reimagining class is a makeover of your everyday classroom to allow students to be comfortable," says Teresa Basin, fourth-grade teacher at Rail Ranch Elementary School in Murrieta.



This year, Basin was inspired by a former student now acting in *Bizaardvark*, a sitcom on the Disney Channel. Basin turned her class into "Basinwood," her own version of Hollywood.

"I want my students to know that if they can dream it, they can do it," says the Murrieta Teachers Association member.

Students each have their own star. A sign above the sink reads, "Each one of us has a little bit of gold inside of us." There is also a "Walk of Fame" with photos of students and their families.

"I spend more time with my kids than their parents do," Basin says. "School is a refuge for them. It's our home away from home."



Donna McCain, left, twirls, and food workers, below, rock out in the Cajon Valley Union School District dance video.



# Welcome Back!

Entertaining video sets rhythm for school year By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin

**S**taff in the Cajon Valley Union School District *dance dance danced* into the 2016-17 school year, thanks to a splashy music video that put smiles on the faces of students, teachers, classified employees, school board members and administrators. Check it out: [bit.ly/2tkg4iD](http://bit.ly/2tkg4iD).

The video, which went viral, shows school staff and board members preparing for the first day of school while boogying with abandon in the classroom, boardroom, print shop, fiscal services department, cafeteria and warehouse, and even on school buses and atop tables, to the beat of Justin Timberlake's "Can't Stop the Feeling."

Produced by Fe Fi Fo Films, the video was sent to principals and teachers throughout the district near San Diego, who shared it with students at the district's 26 schools. Some schools and teachers were inspired to create their own videos after seeing the district one, says Superintendent David Miyashiro.

"We aimed to inspire, encourage and truly welcome back our teachers and

staff to a new school year," says Miyashiro. "We were able to engage the entire district office staff, who work all through the summer to get our sites ready for the new school year, in a fun team-building event to show our teachers how much they care and support them."

Parents, students, former students and others raved about the video.

Chris Prokop, president of the Cajon Valley Education Association (CVEA), believes the video set a positive tone for the school year.

"The kids loved it, and the community really enjoyed it," he said. "Our district population has grown by hundreds of kids, so there's something to be said for it being successful."

Representing teachers in the production is Donna McCain, a seventh-grade English instructor at Hillsdale Middle School beginning her 21st year in the profession. She laughingly says she will be forever remembered as "the twirling teacher in the red dress."

The CVEA member just happened to be working during the summer on a blended

**"Every year is fresh for me. I just love going back to school!"**

—DONNA MCCAIN, CAJON VALLEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

learning program when the superintendent walked in and asked if she'd like to be in the district's back-to-school video.

"I knew how to dance and sing and twirl, so I said yes," says McCain. "And that's what happened in a hot classroom on a summer day. It was fun stepping out of the box and doing something I've never done before. Every year, as a teacher, I like to try something new."

Whether or not El Cajon plans another back-to-school surprise this year, McCain says, the first day of school is still magical for teachers as well as students.

"I love the anticipation. I love the excitement of meeting new people, seeing new faces and trying to remember everybody's name. Every year is fresh for me. I just love going back to school!" ■





# Tips From

CTA members offer up their best

**\* Welcome students and build community →**

**ERINN BRENNAN**, Shasta Meadows Elementary, Enterprise Elementary Teachers Association: "I always welcome students with a crossword puzzle made out of their names. It's my way of showing how we are a classroom unit and we all need to work together. It makes them feel welcome to see their names on the board — and everyone loves a crossword puzzle."



**\* Get your professional development on**

**JIM GOBLE**, Willow Cove Elementary, Pittsburg Education Association: "Find someone in your grade level at your school site or someone who has a ton of experience who is easy to talk to and you can be open and collaborate with. Try to get to know teachers at other sites in your district and collaborate with them over coffee. They can have a wealth of experience to pass on. At the same time, be open to passing on what you have learned to other teachers."

**MARY BERELSON**, Glenshire Elementary, Tahoe Truckee Education Association: "Copy someone who's already doing it right. If there is someone on your staff who you think is doing something more effectively than you are, be assertive and ask for help. Offer something in return. Emulate greatness. Make small steps in the right direction. Don't reinvent the wheel."

**\* Prep kids for the real world**

**GLENN DUMAS**, Rancho Verde High School, Val Verde Teachers Association: "To teach career readiness skills, I conduct business handshakes every day when I greet my senior students at the door: firm handshake, eye contact and a pleasant look!"

"I ask students to research careers that match their interests, and choose their 'dream job.' They then create a virtual résumé. I bring in community leaders and others to perform mock job interviews with each student as a part of their midterm. It's very intense! However, students immediately gain enough confidence to go out and easily obtain jobs within our community because of this experience."



# the Pros

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin Photos by Scott Buschman

## advice, insights and hard-earned wisdom



↑ **LENA HUNT**, Shasta Meadows Elementary, Enterprise Elementary Teachers Association: "I have a chart that provides activity choices for students when they complete their work early so they don't talk and distract others. This shows students there is always something to do."

**"Have a plan, but let inspiration interrupt. Let enthusiasm trump planning."**

—**MARY BERELSON**, TAHOE TRUCKEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

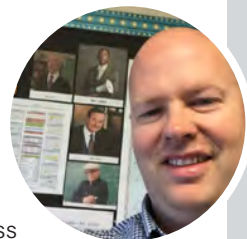
### \* **Manage class with class**

**GLENN DUMAS:** "I begin every class with the American Sign Language sign for 'I love you' as I ask, 'Does anyone need a little love today?' As students raise their hands, I tell each of them by name 'Coach D loves you!' before introducing the day's lesson. It is amazing the number of students who are going through trials and tribulations who need someone, anyone, to tell them that they are loved."



**JIM GOBLE:** "In a class of 34 students, learning names can sometimes take up to a month. However, I got into the habit of talking to each kid and saying their name out loud several times in the first week, and I tend to have names memorized in no time."

"Often, my shy and introverted kids are my smartest kids. So I like to brag about them to the class and then ask them to speak up and demonstrate how they came about finding the answer to a problem. After this, they tend to volunteer and participate more in class discussions."



**MARY BERELSON:** "Start the school day with some kind of check-in. In K and first grade, we do 'telling sharing,' a 10-minute around-the-circle active listening session where we connect with each other as compassionate humans. Sing songs — old ones, new ones, thematic ones. The ukulele is an easy-to-learn accompaniment instrument that is perfect for school."

"Have a plan, but let inspiration interrupt. Let enthusiasm trump planning. Teachers must model that learning is awesome. We should be demonstrating that life and learning are fun and purposeful. It gives students reasons to want to grow up and continue their learning."



## \* Field trips: Go to college

→ **SPENCER HOLMES**, Heritage High, Liberty Education Association: "Every year I take my entomology students to UC Davis. We cycle through four tours throughout the day: Bohart Museum of Entomology, the Museum of Wildlife and Fish Biology, a geology and paleontology tour, and a self-guided walk along Putah Creek. The first three are led by students ranging from undergrads to post-doctorate researchers.

"It's a great opportunity to see an amazing collection of 7 to 8 million insect specimens, see what opportunities exist for college students, and reinforce life science and physical science content that my students have learned throughout their high school experience."



**KIM ALLEN**, Temple City High, Temple City Education Association: "I take my career technical education classes on several field trips each year. I teach fashion and business with food. This year we went to Homeboy Industries, Los Angeles Trade Technical College, Woodbury University, and downtown LA to tour the fabric and garment districts. We have added more classes to create a pathway, and the field trips will continue to evolve."

### \* Build respect, handle defiance

**STEPHANIE GUINN**: "I call students 'sir' and 'ma'am' and try to establish a tone of respect from the start. More often than not, the kids will see I treat them with respect. I also try to use the phrase 'I need you to (fill in the blank with desired action)' when asking for a student to follow a rule or obey a request, instead of saying, 'Do it *now*!'"

**JIM GOBLE**: "My most defiant students usually just need a quick five-minute walk to the restroom to recharge. In fact, all students need this. So throughout my day, I schedule brain breaks where I put on a video with activities from Go Noodle, which has activities to stretch or dance, and they're only a couple minutes long. This usually helps my class recharge and get ready for the next activity."

### \* Classroom nuts and bolts

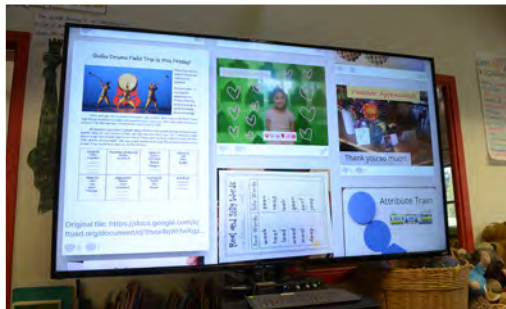
**CHRISTINE HESTER**, Liberty High, Liberty Education Association: "I clean my whiteboard with good old-fashioned water and old-school brown paper towels. They get my board extra clean without the stinky Expo spray smell. A cool DIY storage container for small school supplies is a cute spice rack — it's small, can be labeled, and the items can be sealed."

**MARY BERELSON**: "Keep your whiteboards white and shiny by first wiping clean with a regular whiteboard eraser to remove the majority of ink, and then use a little rubbing alcohol on a tissue to restore a like-new appearance. *Ta-da!*"

**JIM GOBLE**: "I build in about 15 minutes at the end of each day for the students to clean up their own desk area as well as the classroom. This creates ownership for our classroom. As they get good at it and faster, I start setting a timer. If they can get everything cleaned up in a certain amount of time, then I take them out to get extra PE minutes."

# \* Resources for inspiration, ideas

Mary Berelson, right, uses the Seesaw app shown below to showcase student work.



**JIM GOBLE:** “The absolute best website I have found is Pinterest. I freely admit that I steal ideas and modify them to use in my classroom! There are tons of anchor charts and lots of great ideas for teaching Common Core.

“Two of my favorite teacher-authors are Ron Clark and Rafe Esquith. I love their innovative approaches to teaching children. Dave Burgess, author of *Teach Like a Pirate*, is quite inspirational as well.

“With Google Classroom, I can set up five-minute quizzes, set up my gradebooks and give students assignments. I communicate with parents through Remind, which is great to just send quick reminders about homework and project due dates.”

**“I freely admit that I steal ideas on Pinterest and modify them to use in my classroom.”**

—**JIM GOBLE**, PITTSBURG EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

**MARY BERELSON**, recently named Elementary Teacher of the Year in Placer County, is a big proponent of Seesaw ([web.seesaw.me](http://web.seesaw.me)), which showcases and stores student work digitally in a class feed or blog format that is easily accessible by students and families. It has a built-in translation component so non-English-speaking families can communicate with the teacher and class, as well as assessment features.

“It provides parents a window into the classroom. It helps shy kids and ELD kids express themselves because they have to talk into a machine. Best of all, it’s free for teachers!” To find out more, see [goo.gl/rjQbkf](http://goo.gl/rjQbkf).

Her other tools and tips:

“Get Epic ([getepic.com/educators](http://getepic.com/educators)). It’s free for elementary school teachers and librarians and has unlimited access to thousands of high-quality books and videos. You can create unique student profiles and track students’ reading progress.

“ChatterPix Kids ([goo.gl/ljOd4r](http://goo.gl/ljOd4r)) gives your photos a voice. It can make anything talk — pets, friends, doodles and more. Students take a photo in the app, draw a line across the ‘mouth’ and record their voice speaking for the object.

“Streamline your computing life by going Google — Docs, Slides, Sheets, Forms, Classroom, Sites, etc. — and access files from any device. Use Google Photos. Set your iPhone to automatically upload all photos. You’ll be impressed with the little movies, shared photo albums, collages and animations automatically created from photos taken around the same time and in the same general place. Pretty magical!”



## ✳ Ingredients for the best Back to School Night



**PAT ESTARZIA**, George W. Bush Elementary, Stockton Teachers Association: "Have students send a handwritten letter to their parents inviting them to Back to School Night. It's more personal and you will increase attendance."

"Last year in my classroom, we talked and wrote about how we felt on our first day of school and drew a face to show emotion. Parents had to guess which face was drawn by their child. Kids got so excited to see their parents guessing, and parents had a lot of fun. Another year kids drew outlines of their bodies, and cut the outlines to decorate the chairs they sit in. Parents had to guess which cutout was their child."

"Have a scavenger hunt where parents hunt for interesting things in the classroom, such as books the children are reading, the work they have done, and the things they have learned. Have the children create the clues."

**STEPHANIE GUINN**, Modesto High, Modesto Teachers Association: "Lots of enthusiasm. Show the parents you love your job. Talk a lot. Answer questions. Emphasize you are on their side."

**JIM GOBLE**: "Be prepared to talk about your expectations, and have examples of student work and projects. Parents can see what you expect, and their children will work harder to meet those expectations. Make a packet of your rules, procedures and expectations, a calendar and a schedule with some pages for parents to take notes. I always do a PowerPoint and try to liven up the presentation with corny soundbites."



**CHRISTINE HESTER**: "In my tote bag I keep everything that I need for survival — my personal organizer, healthy snacks of nuts and fruit, a water bottle, teaching supplies, my keys, a pencil bag to give students pencils if they don't have them, USB drives, a folder with IEPs that's current for the week, and a folder with current lesson plans. And I always keep a marker in there."

"Cole Haan's Zerogrand Perforated Trainers are the best educator shoes. They are light, cute, easy on your feet, and make you feel like you are walking on air."

# \* Getting through the day



Christine Hester, left, keeps all she needs for survival in her tote bag; below, she shows off "the best educator shoes."



"My go-to healthy snack is a good granola bar, raw nuts and berries, or a nice piece of fruit (Cuties are my favorite — they are healthy, give you a little sugar, and you can write a message on them for your students or a colleague).

"Best dinner when you're tired and don't have time to cook is Trader Joe's Frozen Orange Chicken, with brown rice (also frozen) and green beans (inexpensive, healthy and quick). Or try One-Pot Pasta — I got the recipe online and my family praised me for days:

- 1 pot
- 1 package sausage (whatever kind you like)
- 2 cups fresh basil
- 2 to 3 cups grape tomatoes
- 1 onion
- 2 to 3 cloves fresh garlic
- 1 box spaghetti or angel hair pasta
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste

"Put everything in the pot combined with 4½ to 5 cups of water and bring to a boil until the pasta is cooked. Stir in Parmesan cheese."



## STEPHANIE GUINN:

"Best energy/health snacks are almonds and dark chocolate. Best shoes are Birkenstocks and Dansko. Exercise is the most energizing thing to do and makes all the difference in the workday. If you don't treat yourself as important, others may not either."



## ALEXANDRIA TUCKER,

Liberty High School, Liberty Education Association: "I always have a Teacher Emergency Kit on hand in case I need Band-Aids, tissues or sanitizing wipes in my classroom."





“The group is a great way for people to collaborate, and to share resources and ideas — nationally.”

—GABRIELA OROZCO GONZALEZ, MONTEBELLO TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

# Your Online Professional Learning Community

Get inspired and inspire others at NEA edCommunities

**W**ant to connect with educators who share your passion for teaching visual art? Need to commune with other new teachers? Are you an ESP with a hot topic for discussion?

NEA edCommunities is the place for you. The online professional practice and learning area lets educators share their strengths, exchange ideas and resources, create innovative materials and tools, and engage with others committed to improving student success.

- Free and open to all, it allows you to:
- **Connect** with colleagues across the country and with virtual learning events to expand your professional development opportunities.
  - **Collaborate** with other educators.
  - **Share** classroom-ready resources and assessment and instruction materials.
  - **Explore** new ways of teaching and learning that work for your students.

You can customize your NEA edCommunities experience by selecting topics that match your interests, such as professional practice or leadership. From there,

you can find relevant groups to follow. You can also start a group to advocate and collaborate on an issue that matters to your students and school.

CTA’s Gabriela Orozco Gonzalez, a member of the Montebello Teachers Association, oversees the thriving Common Core K-5 group, which she started four years ago. The group aligns with her interests and expertise. In addition to teaching, she presents on the Common Core with CTA’s Instructional Leadership Corps and at conferences, and maintains a blog devoted to the topic (Common Core Café, [commoncorecafe.blogspot.com](http://commoncorecafe.blogspot.com)).

Gonzalez finds that NEA edCommunities offers opportunity to expand on her work. “I started the group because there are always questions after I present that I can’t get to, and my blog doesn’t lend itself to collaboration,” she says. “The group is a great way for people to collaborate with me and with each other, and to share resources and ideas — nationally.”

She notes that the posts and discussions are broad, ranging from lesson and unit plans and cross-curricular

approaches to literacy to math manipulatives and getting your classroom ready for the year.

Just a few of the many other groups in the professional practice category:

- Digital Tools and Learning
- Gifted & Talented in the 21st Century
- Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Middle School Strategies
- National Board Certification
- Secondary Math 6-12
- The Power of Health and PE

Gonzalez thinks the advantages of NEA edCommunities are great and obvious. “It’s one of the largest professional learning communities for educators across the nation,” she says. “It’s a professional practice group where we connect and support each other, focusing on improving student success. This is something provided with our membership, and it’s free. We need to use all the resources we have out there.”

Join thousands of other educators on NEA edCommunities at [mynea360.org](http://mynea360.org). ■



# Works4Me!



## Practical tips from teachers just like you

**WORKS4ME HAS IDEAS** and tips for student success from educators all over the country. Part of NEA edCommunities, Works4Me encourages educator submissions, which are shared online and in a biweekly newsletter.

Recent newsletter offerings include mentoring first-year teachers, great virtual engineering field trips, and essential classroom management strategies from retired Iowa teacher Katie Ortiz (tweak for your grade level):

1. Teach people first, subject second.
2. Praise work and effort, not ability or intelligence.
3. Prepare well.
4. Show enthusiasm for learning.
5. Use mobility, proximity and facial expressions.
6. Know your triggers and disengage emotionally when your buttons are pushed.
7. Be what you want students to be. Teach behavior by modeling.

Details are online, along with many other tips. Sign up for the newsletter at [nea.org/works4me](http://nea.org/works4me). ■



### Need Support?

One of the easiest ways to search all of NEA's professional supports content is through [supported.nea.org](http://supported.nea.org). Use the search bar to find exactly what you're looking for.

# Road to Racial Justice

## A Free, Educational "Board" Game

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



Ages 13+ • CCSS-Aligned • Curriculum Included (Worksheets, Glossary, PowerPoint)

### Players will:

- Become more aware that racism exists in many everyday situations (interpersonal and institutional)
- Learn why the situations are racist (stereotyping, tokenism, cultural appropriation, etc.)
- Acquire tools to interrupt these situations in order to help create a more loving and just world

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

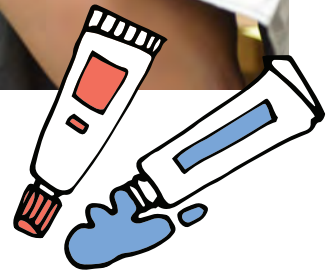
*"I learned that my whole life I have been treated a certain way by the people around me because I am white, which I had never really thought about before."* — White student player

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

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



Educators Elizabeth Thompson and Maggie Pat both chose to get purple highlights.



# Marvelous Makeovers

**T**HE RESULTS were nothing short of stunning when six CTA members enjoyed some pampering courtesy of the Solano Community College Cosmetology Department in Fairfield.

Cheryl McDonald, a member of the Solano College Faculty Association, and her students, who graduate in August from the cosmetology program, worked their magic with hair and makeup, resulting in striking transformations that will turn a few heads in the hallways come fall. Photos show the makeovers of these educators, who are beautiful both inside and out.





While Thalia Arroyo observes, Cheryl McDonald demonstrates technique on Keilani Carrasco.



## Who says back-to-school 'cool' is just for kids ?

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



### **KEILANI CARRASCO**

*Travis Unified Teachers Association*

This math teacher at Vanden High School is 50 and fit. She enjoys being outdoors and spending time with her two grown sons and grandchildren. She is chair of the math department and also union representative for her school.

#### **Her "before" look**

"My go-to look is a ponytail. I would prefer to look a little more polished. I'm thinking that if teachers act and look more professional, we'll be treated as the professionals that we are."

#### **Her "after" look**

Her hair was a mix of hues from covering the gray, so coloring restored its natural brown luster. A cut with additional layering — plus a curling iron — added gentle waves and volume. A light foundation to match her sun-kissed skin tone, purple shadow and eyelash strips were the finishing touches, creating a bouncy look to match her personality. "I feel like when I was young and made time for myself."







Maggie Pat gets the full-on treatment from Cheryl McDonald, Christina Olton and Sierra Anderson.

**Her “before” look**

“Since children, I’ve had the functional mom/teacher look with short hair and very little makeup. I wanted a new look that would be fun but professional, easy to maintain, and also inspire confidence. I want something to help me maintain my youth at 34 without making me look like I’m trying to be younger than I am.”

**Her “after” look**

Pat surprised herself by picking peekaboo purple highlights. With makeup to accent her cheeks, lips and brows, the look is both classic and classy. “It’s awesome, I love it a lot. The colors are subtle, but they pop.”



**MAGGIE PAT** ↘

*Valley of the Moon Teachers Association*

This fourth-grade teacher at Sassarini Elementary School in Sonoma is beginning her 12th year in the classroom. Working full time and caring for two small children is a juggling act most mornings with “getting the kids ready, throwing on clothes, grabbing coffee and running out the door.”



**CARLA ACCETTOLA** →

*Fairfield-Suisun Unified Teachers Association*

Accettola has been teaching 14 years, most recently as a special education math teacher at Crystal Middle School. At 40 she has one gray hair, which she can find without looking in a mirror and calls “a badge of honor.” She was nervous about a makeover, even though her motto is: “I’m a middle school teacher; nothing scares me.”

**Her “before” look**

“I’ve had the same haircut most of my life. But I’m ready for a change, because I have been through some life changes. My son was diagnosed with mild to moderate autism two years ago. I got divorced. And I completed my special education classes. Nobody wants to look like Viola Swamp or the ‘old’ teacher they had in school.”

**Her “after” look**

She is lucky to have dramatic eyebrows, which are the rage. But they needed definition, so they were waxed and plucked a bit. Her long hair was cut to shoulder length and layered to allow her natural curls to frame her face for a softer look. A side part accentuates her cheekbones, and a plum shade of lipstick highlights her full lips. “I feel a little overwhelmed. It’s different, but I like it a lot. I’m taking it all in.”



## CURLEY WIKKELING-MILLER ↑

*Solano College Faculty Association*

Yes, Curley is her real name, and it's a perfect fit for this cosmetology instructor at Solano and Laney community colleges. This is her seventh year of teaching after years of salon work. When preparing for a big night out, she sought help, of course, from her students. A bit of makeup turned her, in the words of one student, "from Plain Jane to Glamour Queen." She loves giving them practice. "I learn as much from them as they learn from me."

### Her "before" look

For years she fought her gray hair and dyed it dark, then decided it wasn't worth the battle. But her gray was patchy, so she went platinum and short, which is fun and easy to maintain. She only wears a bit of blush, powder and lipstick for daytime.



### Her "after" look

Earth tone foundation and powder makes her skin glow with vitality. Eye makeup and eyelash strips draw attention to her wide-set eyes. A bit of lipstick pulls it all together. "I love lashes; they always make me look better."



Carla Accettola has her long locks trimmed and layered by Naomi Pena.



**ELIZABETH THOMPSON**

*Fairfield-Suisun Unified Teachers Association*

Thompson is entering her fifth year in the profession and second year teaching special education at Fairfield High School. She co-teaches in different classrooms every period, so comfort is important as she scurries around campus. When she's not teaching, she's coaching her daughter's softball team.

**Her "before" look**

"When I was in college I would constantly change my looks. Once I became a mother, I didn't have time to care. With a mortgage and bills, we don't have as much money to spend on style upkeep as I would like. Usually I braid my hair on the way to school."

**Her "after" look**

She bravely allowed the stylist to chop off 8 inches in a bob that's longer in front, then received the balayage technique for highlights, with purple dye painted on to create a graduated, natural-looking effect, because she didn't want roots on top. After she shared her motto "Go big or go home," bright red lipstick was applied for a finishing touch. "I see an updated and fun look that is still respectable in the classroom," she said, before departing for a dinner date with hubby.

BEFORE



**JEFFREY KISSINGER**

*Solano College Faculty Association*

Kissinger has taught welding for eight years at Solano Community College, and enjoys growing his hair and beard every summer. Years ago, his hair reached his elbows, and he donated it to Locks of Love, a nonprofit that provides hair for sick children.

**His "before" look**

On the scruffy side, with beard and longish hair.

**His "after" look**

Neat and trim, with coloring on top hiding the gray and a bit of a pompadour with back angles. He's now clean-shaven, except for his mustache, resulting in a dapper look.

BEFORE



Dalila Duran and Cheryl McDonald discuss Jeffrey Kissinger's makeover.







Cheryl McDonald, Solano College Faculty Association, has been teaching aspiring beauticians for more than 20 years.

## Freshen Up Your Look

**COSMETOLOGY PROFESSOR** Cheryl McDonald strives to maintain a salon environment in her classroom, and she's so successful, it's difficult to tell the difference. She's been teaching aspiring beauticians for more than 20 years and has worked in salons.

"There are very few of us who wake up every day and want to go to work. I'm very lucky to get paid for doing what I love."

Solano Community College's two-semester program plus summer session covers physiology, anatomy and chemistry, so students understand how chemicals affect the body. Students practice cutting and coloring hair and caring for nails on paying customers. As graduation looms, many already have jobs lined up.

McDonald's style tips for educators and anyone who wants to look their best:

- Women's hair should be cut to be in harmony with the shape of their faces. Check out [thehairstyler.com/features/articles/hairstyles/the-right-hairstyle-for-your-face-shape](http://thehairstyler.com/features/articles/hairstyles/the-right-hairstyle-for-your-face-shape).
- Big bold brows and big eyelashes are in.
- Accentuate your best features with color, whether it's eyes, lips or brows.
- Get facials to keep skin looking younger.
- Visit your local community college cosmetology department for skin, hair, and nail care at bargain prices. ■



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CTA educators lobby lawmakers in July. At left, Linda Ortega, who teaches at El Monte Elementary in Concord, tells Sen. Scott Wilk (R-Antelope Valley) how her district's PAR program offers professional development through modeling lessons, observing instruction and feedback. (Photos: Seth Bramble)



Charles Shannon, teacher at Glorietta Elementary in Orinda and chair of CTA State Council's Civil Rights in Education Committee, speaks of the need for due process with Assembly Member Tony Thurmond. When he began teaching, Shannon was confronted by his administration for sharing with students that there are all kinds of nontraditional family structures.

# Legislative Update

## Action on Key Education Bills

**B**efore the state Legislature recessed for the summer, the Senate Education Committee took action on several key education bills.

CTA-co-sponsored **AB 699** by Assembly Member Patrick O'Donnell (D-Long Beach) unanimously passed the Senate Education Committee and is currently in the Senate Appropriations Committee. The bill prohibits discrimination based on a student's immigration status or religious beliefs and provides protections.

CTA-co-sponsored **AB 45** by Assembly Member Tony Thurmond (D-Richmond) also cleared the Senate Education Committee and is in the Senate Appropriations Committee. The bill focuses on providing affordable rental housing for educators in qualifying school districts.

**AB 1220** by Assembly Member Shirley Weber (D-San Diego) and **AB 1164** by Assembly Member Thurmond, both pertaining to probation periods for

educators, were made two-year bills. This action will allow the parties to negotiate within a longer time period.

CTA opposes **AB 1220**, which extends the probationary period from two years to three years, does not provide due process, and does not include support in years one or two of the probationary period, but only in year three. It also calls for setting up an Individualized Improvement Plan for educators, an unproven process in school districts, even though the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program already exists in state law and has been working in many districts.

CTA supports **AB 1164**, which extends the probationary period to three years while ensuring that:

- Due process protections are added to the third year while allowing the union and employer to bargain an alternative process
- The employer provides written notice

to the employee with specific reasons on what needs improvement in the third year.

- The employer refers the employee to a PAR program that has been collectively bargained, for coaching and professional development.

Thanks to the voices of educators lobbying lawmakers in the Capitol and on social media, Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco) withdrew CTA-opposed **SB 765**, which would require that before a school district sells or leases surplus property, it must first offer the surplus property to a charter school below market rate.

The Legislature reconvenes Aug. 21. ■

*For more about these bills and other education legislation, see [cta.org/legislation](http://cta.org/legislation).*



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Hemet educators and community members pack a school district board meeting.

# Bargaining Roundup

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

## Hemet Contract Puts Students First ↑

The **Hemet Teachers Association (HTA)** made retention of their local educators and student learning a priority in their latest contract settlement. After several state mediation sessions with Hemet Unified School District, assistance from CTA's Negotiations and Organizational Development Department, and member action at board meetings about noncompetitive pay and recruitment, HTA secured a two-year contract starting July 1 with a 3 percent wage increase that will help keep teachers in service in the Hemet community. "This outcome belongs to every educator who came to our organizing activities and refused to be devalued by a substandard offer," says HTA President William Valenzuela. "When we organize, great things happen."

Hemet Superintendent Christi Barrett says of collaboration with HTA: "We are thankful that the relationship between the district and HTA remained strong throughout the negotiations process. This resolution will allow us to remain focused on the most important work of the district, our students' success."

## San Bruno Educators Battle Turnover

With their salaries ranking at the bottom among San Mateo County school districts in a high-cost region, **San Bruno Education Association** members hope modest gains in a contract settlement ratified in June will help keep quality teachers in the classroom and improve student learning.

Turnover is high: About 50 educators have left the 2,700-student San Bruno Park School District over the past two years. After one year of difficult negotiations, the new pact gives teachers a 2.2 percent one-time bonus for last school year and a 1.5 percent raise for the 2017-18 school year. Administrators are enjoying an ongoing 3 percent raise. One administrator who was promoted got a 39 percent increase at the June 28 school board meeting, where new SBEA President Karen Byrne criticized the raise.

"If the district's true goal is to attract, develop and retain highly qualified teachers, how can the school board justify such a raise for yet another administrator?" Byrne asked. "When teachers are priced out and leave due to low pay, our students and community suffer."

## Calaveras: Reduce Class Size

The **Calaveras Unified Educators Association (CUEA)** has yet to reach a settlement with Calaveras Unified School District for the 2016-17 successor contract. In a fact-finding report released in June, the state-appointed auditor validated teachers' requests for lower class sizes and an increase in salary, but the district disputed the findings. While its reserves are growing and it did not claim an inability to pay, the district proposed to maintain the status quo in the contract. Teachers are willing to compromise, but absent a settlement, they may legally strike.

CUEA members say the district refused to deal with class size in transitional kindergarten to third-grade classes as required by state law, despite CUEA's repeated attempts to address the issue, even though the district has been accepting K-3 Grade Span Adjustment monies provided by the state to reduce class size.

Both class size reduction and a pay raise are to help attract and retain teachers in the district, CUEA President Lorraine Angel says.

"We don't want to strike, but we will for our kids," says Angel. "We want to settle this. Calaveras USD teachers are standing up for our students. Teachers are leaving our district, and that hurts our kids."

## School Safety an Issue for Fresno Teachers

In June, the **Fresno Teachers Association (FTA)** and Fresno Unified School District met but failed to reach agreement on a new contract.

"Fresno Unified failed their students and teachers by choosing to ignore key issues in bargaining, including class size, special education, and safety and discipline," FTA President Tish Rice told the *Fresno Bee* after the meeting.

Recently, incidents of student attacks on teachers have raised concerns about school safety. The district has proposed contract language that says teachers should immediately inform their supervisors of violent incidents, and supervisors and teachers together should notify the police.

In 2014, Fresno schools were among the first in the state to adopt restorative justice practices as a disciplinary approach. While FTA and CTA support such practices, teachers have raised concerns about the program's efficacy and whether educators have had adequate training.

FTA and the district have been negotiating for months and are headed to mediation.

## Manteca Gets Agreement

In June, the **Manteca Educators Association (MEA)** and Manteca Unified School District reached a tentative agreement that extends the contract for three years. MEA members approved the agreement July 13, and the district accepted it July 18.

The new contract includes an agreement to create a certificated nursing incentive program that allows qualified school nurses to apply for a \$10,000 loan to be applied to the cost of clearing their California School Nurse Services Credential. It also includes increases in salary and benefits, as well as an increase in pay for adjunct duties and coaching stipends.

MEA President Ericka Meadows is proud of educators' dedication and persistence. The process "has definitely solidified our unity, which is evident in their support of all of the organizing events we've been doing for the last several months," Meadows says. "Our educators have been committed to coming together and standing up for a fair contract." ■

By Cynthia Menzel, Mike Myslinski and Ed Sibby.  
**#OurVoiceAtTheTable**

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More than 250 participants with special needs competed in running and field events, as well as water challenges.



# A Win-Win

## Kaiser High's 'Splash and Dash' brings students, schools together

Story and photos by **Ed Sibby**

**E**ach May for the past five years, Fontana Teachers Association (FTA) member and Kaiser High School special educator Michael Giardina has coordinated “Splash and Dash,” a districtwide event that embraces disabilities and values student diversity.

Similar to the Special Olympics, Splash and Dash brings together all of Kaiser High’s students and educators, in addition to athletes from other schools, in an uplifting celebration. Its impact goes far beyond a single day to longer-term student relationships and achievement.

“Splash and Dash started at Kaiser as an event that adds the fun of water alongside educational components of living a healthy lifestyle,” says Giardina, known as Mr. G. “The event embraced the entire school community.”

This year, more than 250 participants with special needs — 20 classes from Fontana Unified School District’s seven high schools and transition programs (age 18-22) — competed in running and field events as well as water challenges, supported by more than 150 student volunteers and leadership groups from Kaiser High.

“The best of who we are was on display at Splash and Dash,” says Dinny (Diana) Rasmussen, an FTA member and Kaiser High counselor. “A regular education student struggling with depression ran joyfully alongside her friend with critical needs who could not contain her own happiness. A transgender youth helped his partners cross the finish line. A star athlete laughed uproariously as he struggled to keep up. Kindness won the day!”

Because of its size and scope, Splash and Dash has become one of the largest district special education events in California. And now Giardina and FTA are looking to expand it to other districts and chapters.

That makes sense to Leslye Mendoza-Lopez, a senior who volunteered for the day. “It was the best experience of my life,” she says. “Seeing how happy the teachers, peer tutors and staff made the students made me want to pursue a career as a special needs teacher. Splash and Dash is really something all schools should have because it motivates students and makes them feel proud of their accomplishments.”

Splash and Dash starts with the athletes’ welcome



Below, members of Kaiser High's Link Crew, which helped direct and assist during the day's events.



Athletes participate in a parade across campus on their way to the stadium.



**“Administration support and teacher buy-in is key. Ideas such as Splash and Dash that become realities showcase educators’ investment in education.”**

—MICHAEL GIARDINA, FONTANA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

at Kaiser High. They are cheered as they step off their buses by the Kaiser student “Link Crew” — trained ambassadors who help direct and assist during the day’s events. The crew escorts them to the auditorium, where they eat breakfast and hear presentations on health and nutrition.

Athletes next participate in a parade, each group preceded by their school banner. The Kaiser High School marching band provides musical accompaniment as they cross the campus. Teachers open classroom doors and students cheer as athletes make their way to the stadium. At the opening ceremony, the school’s JROTC, drumline and cheerleaders perform before competition begins.

“I had so much fun,” says Autumn Gilmore, an 11th-grader in Giardina’s class. “Helping with the preschoolers, the water activities, and watching Mr. G get soaked were my favorite parts. I also enjoyed all the student volunteers that helped and made it such a special day.”

As regular education student volunteers have become

more involved, Giardina has observed two substantial student benefits he did not foresee. First, removing barriers to interaction with special ed students has led student volunteers like Mendoza-Lopez to consider special education teaching as a career path.

Second, as regular education class mentors built friendships and increased interaction with special ed students, the latter’s verbal and auditory skills showed faster improvement.

Splash and Dash, in effect, has fostered a safe environment where stigma gives way to intellectual and emotional growth on both sides.

“It was a powerful realization to its original creators that a program built for students with special needs would create more lasting change to those who did not compete,” Rasmussen says. “By pulling down barriers that limit inclusion, all students in the district have benefited.”

For more information about Splash and Dash, contact Michael Giardina at [GiarME@fusd.net](mailto:GiarME@fusd.net). ■



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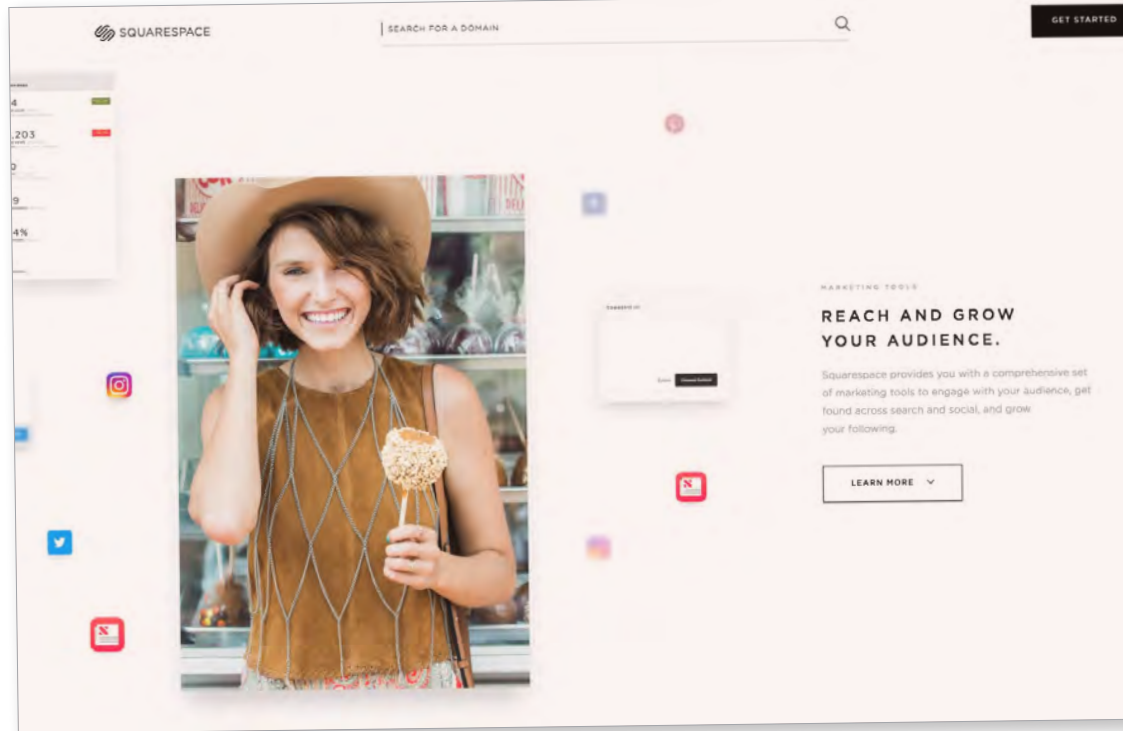
[Squarespace.com](https://www.squarespace.com)

**SKILL NEEDED:**

Beginner-Intermediate

**COST:** Free to try;  
paid plans

Although WordPress is the most popular website system in the world, it's not the only option. Squarespace separates itself from other low-cost website builders with its extremely easy-to-use drag-and-drop interface. Use one of their beautifully designed templates with hundreds of customizable features, and then style it to look any way you want.



# A Site to See

Creating a website has become much simpler — and more fun By Terry Ng

**USED TO BE** you had to know at least the basics of coding to get a website up and running. Now even those of us who would never be called tech-savvy can just choose a template, drag and drop the features we want, input a little content, and *voilà!* We're being a little flip here, but the truth is that creating a website or just a good-looking blog has become relatively easy. (Updating a site can still be challenging, however!) Here are our picks of the website builders out there.

## Website Essentials

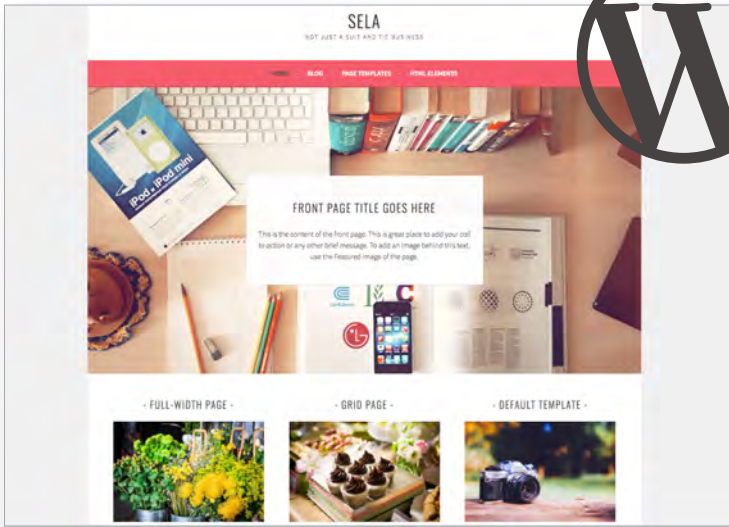


**Graphics: Canva.com**

Strong visuals are essential to every website, and Canva makes creating them a breeze. Use their drag-and-drop interface to create stunning professional-looking graphics. Many elements are free or available for a nominal fee.

**Domain name: Domains.google**

A custom domain name makes it simple for people to find you and helps you stand out on the Web. For example, if you're known as Zeta Education Association, you can choose ZetaEA.com (unless that name is already in use — Google Domains can tell you).



## WordPress.com

**SKILL NEEDED:** Beginner-Intermediate

**COST:** Free and paid plans

WordPress powers 28 percent of all the websites on the Internet, and there's good reason why. Their simple tools allow anyone to create a gorgeous website without any design or coding skills. This hosted version of the open-source software allows you to build a blog, a full website or a combo by choosing from hundreds of customizable themes.

## Webflow.com

**SKILL NEEDED:** Intermediate-Advanced

**COST:** Free and paid plans

If you're ready to take your Web design skills a step further, but you're not ready to write code just yet, give Webflow a try. Webflow gives you all the power of HTML, CSS and Javascript. But instead of writing code, you manipulate it visually. As you build your website and lay out your content, Webflow generates clean, semantically correct, standards-compliant code for your site.



## Fonts: Fonts.google.com

Got a good typeface? Google's free, open-source font directory is the best way to inject personality and performance into your website. Its extensive catalog features best-in-class fonts that are made for the Web and hosted on their blazing fast servers, helping your website run faster. And it's free.

## Analytics: Analytics.google.com

What posts were most popular with your members? Knowing your audience and what they want is an important success factor for any website. The best way to learn about your audience is through your website traffic stats, and Google Analytics provides all the info you need — for free.





# Narratives of Courage

Sierra College oral history project honors Sacramento LGBTQ+ pioneers

By **Cynthia Menzel** Photos courtesy Spectrum Archives

**JERRY SLOAN AND JERRY FALWELL** were best friends as classmates in the 1950s at Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri. Both became clergymen.

Flash forward to the 1980s as televangelist and conservative activist Falwell went on to become the Moral Majority leader and Sloan founded two gay churches. After hearing the hateful, vicious things Falwell said on his nationally syndicated TV show, Sloan showed up at a local Sacramento television show where Falwell was appearing. Sloan rose from the audience and confronted Falwell about the malicious statements made on TV.

“It’s an absolute lie,” Falwell shouted. “And I’ll give you \$5,000 if you can produce that tape.”

Sloan did. In what has become known as “The tale of the two Jerrys,” a municipal court judge, and later an appeals court, ordered Falwell to pay up after Sloan shared a tape of the broadcast. That was in 1984. Ultimately, the payment topped \$8,900, and Sloan used the funds to help start the Sacramento LGBT Community Center ([saccenter.org](http://saccenter.org)).

## Funding the oral history project

Sloan’s story and those of other Sacramento-area LGBTQ+ pioneer activists have been recorded and made into short videos through a Sierra College oral history project called “The Spectrum Archives: Narratives of Courage.”

Sierra College, located in Rocklin, Placer County, is one of three community

colleges statewide that have a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Studies Department. It offers an associate degree program with an interdisciplinary, multicultural major that emphasizes the history and culture of LGBTQ+ persons and covers the ways that sexual orientation and gender identity and expression intersect with ethnic, racial, socioeconomic and political identities.

Sierra College Faculty Association president and LGBT studies faculty member Johnnie Terry and colleagues had been contemplating a small-scale oral history project, one in which students could record their experiences at college. Terry had created an academic standing committee focused on retention of LGBTQ+ students and staff.

“We called it Spectrum because acronyms kept changing,” explains Terry, who was recently honored by the Community College Association. “There is a spectrum of orientations.”

Spectrum was working with the director of the college foundation, Sonbol Aliabadi, to raise startup funds for the project. Aliabadi arranged a meeting between Terry and her friend, former Assembly Member Dennis Mangers, dubbed by news media as the “Gay Godfather of Sacramento.” He helped the story take another direction.

Mangers, who was seeing his friends aging, pitched the idea of an oral history project featuring Sacramento-area LGBTQ+ pioneer activists.

“I went back to campus feeling like I met a truly great man,” says Terry.



Sierra College Faculty Association president Johnnie Terry

He contacted his colleague, instructor and videographer Angie Coughlin, who researched costs and wrote the proposal. Mangers provided funding to start the project.

## Neglected history comes to light

That was over two years ago. Today, students can take a one-unit LGBTQ+ narrative class and a videography class. Then they have the opportunity to participate in Interviewing LGBTQ+ pioneers in the Sacramento region. Coughlin works with advanced videography students who scan photos and articles for “b-roll” in the videos, and oversees the conversion of over 60 hours of raw footage into 15-minute short documentaries, or shorts.

Student intern Kate McCarthy became deeply involved in the project. McCarthy, who had been a K-12 teacher, retired six



LGBTQ+ pioneers honored during the premiere of "The Spectrum Archives: Narratives of Courage" last November.

years ago and decided to take one college class per semester. Her first class was Queer Theory, and that's how she met Johnnie Terry — and the rest is, well, history.

"From a teacher perspective, this is history that is neglected by the mainstream media," she says.

McCarthy took photos of the process, which can be seen on the group's Facebook page. She enjoyed watching the younger students interview the pioneers.

"They get so engaged with older people — it's a marvelous thing to watch," she says, adding that it's important to capture this history for the LGBTQ+ community and as a part of local history.

The project premiered in November, just days after the 2016 election. As people watched the video documentary, "you could feel the energy building, and the excitement," Terry

says. "There was crying, laughter, applause. It was overwhelming."

"The response thus far has been awe-inspiring and sparks dialogue, something akin to projects like the Japanese internment camps and veteran projects. Just the process of

capturing history for posterity enriches the people involved, and this product that can be accessed by generations to come," McCarthy says. "I've been lucky to do it."

The video will be presented at the CCA Fall Conference in San Jose, Oct. 13-15, and is viewable online at [bit.ly/2usdpbs](http://bit.ly/2usdpbs).

Meanwhile, the student-produced short

videos are being submitted to events such as the Sacramento International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. "It's great for students who make the shorts to win awards. Imagine how that'd help their careers," Terry says. ■

**"The response has been awe-inspiring and sparks dialogue, akin to projects like Japanese internment camps and veteran projects."**

—KATE MCCARTHY

Denny Mangers being interviewed for the Spectrum Archives.

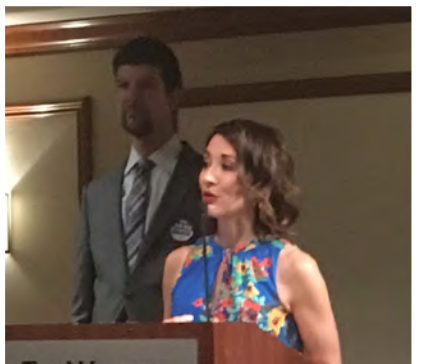


## Stories Told

In addition to Rev. Jerry Sloan, stories of the following individuals can be seen in the Spectrum Archives video documentary at [bit.ly/2usdpbs](http://bit.ly/2usdpbs).

- **LINDA BIRNER**, first woman publisher of an LGBTQ+ newspaper, *Mom Guess What* ([mgwnews.angelfire.com](http://mgwnews.angelfire.com)).
- **DENNY MANGERS**, former California legislator and adviser to former Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg.
- **TINA REYNOLDS**, community organizer best known for helping to overturn Proposition 8.
- **JOANNA MICHELLE MICHAELS**, transgender rights activist who won a precedent-setting discrimination lawsuit after leaving the military and now helps veterans obtain their benefits.
- **GEORGE RAYA**, longtime Latino/LGBTQ+ rights activist who was in the first group of gay leaders to be invited to meet with White House staff in 1977.
- **GARY MILLER**, Sacramento's first gay elected official, who still serves on the Roseville City Elementary school board.
- **ROSANNA HERBER**, activist and producer of the movie *The Last Laugh*.

For more information, see [facebook.com/TheSpectrumArchives](https://facebook.com/TheSpectrumArchives).



Mellisa Paul of KXTV ABC 10 (Sacramento) accepts award for "Teacher of the Month" series.



The *San Francisco Chronicle's* Nanette Asimov holds her awards for news and feature stories, with (from left) CTA President Eric Heins, VP Theresa Montaño, NEA President Lily Eskelsen García, CTA's Dixie Johansen and Mona Davidson, and Secretary-Treasurer David Goldberg.



Richard Bammer from the *Vacaville Reporter* won for weekly columns on vital education issues.

# Telling the Vital Stories

## CTA honors California education reporting with 21 John Swett Awards

Story and photos by **Mike Myslinski**

**IN JULY 2016**, California's Attorney General's Office announced a \$168.5 million settlement with K12 Inc., a for-profit online charter school operator accused of violating California's false claims, false advertising and unfair competition laws. The deal came three months after the *San Jose Mercury News* published a two-part investigation of K12, which received more than \$310 million in state funding over the past 12 years operating virtual schools for thousands of students.

This June, CTA honored Jessica Calefati, author of the investigative stories, with a prestigious John Swett Award for Media Excellence. She was one of 21 winners in the 58th annual CTA awards contest, chosen by an independent panel of media professionals and retired college journalism professors. The awards honored individuals, publications,

websites, and television and radio stations for outstanding achievements in reporting and interpreting public education issues during 2016.

"This year's winners clearly care about telling the vital story of public education in California," said CTA President Eric Heins at the awards reception at the June State Council meeting in Los Angeles. "With skill, compassion and creativity, these journalists showed the triumphs and struggles that educators celebrate or overcome in their schools across the state. Their outstanding media work deserves this special recognition."

The award is named in honor of the founder of CTA, who was California's fourth superintendent of public instruction and a crusader for public education. Links to the award-winning stories are at [bit.ly/2tzaEo9](http://bit.ly/2tzaEo9).



## Newspapers

**NANETTE ASIMOV**, *San Francisco Chronicle*, two awards: Her feature story concerned a baby girl abandoned at San Francisco State University in 1984 who overcame adversity and graduated from SFSU in 2016. Her news story revealed how UC Berkeley was reclassifying master's degrees from "academic" to "professional" to allow it to charge much more for the programs.

**JOYCE TSAI**, *East Bay Times*, two awards: Her investigative news story showed how educators are being priced out of Bay Area communities due to soaring housing costs. She also won for continuous coverage of education issues during 2016, including the departure of Oakland Unified School District Superintendent Antwan Wilson.

**JESSICA CALEFATI**, *San Jose Mercury News*, for investigative series on online charter school operator K12 Inc. in April 2016. (She now reports for the CALmatters online news site.)

**HAROLD PIERCE**, *Bakersfield Californian*, for a feature about how teacher Lisa Barton invests "heart and soul" in educating students at Berkshire Elementary in the Panama-Buena Vista Union School District.

**AUSTIN WALSH**, *San Mateo Daily Journal*, for continuous coverage of education issues last year, including how San Mateo County districts are offering innovative incentives to attract and retain educators.

**KRISTEN HWANG**, *Palm Springs Desert Sun*, for continuous coverage of education, including controversy caused when some students at Shadow Hills High School in Desert Sands Unified School District wore homophobic symbols at school, prompting outrage from the local LGBTQ+ community.

**RICHARD BAMMER**, *Vacaville Reporter*, for weekly columns about the value of early childhood education, why teacher workforce diversity is important, and the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, among others.

**KELLY CORRIGAN**, *Burbank Leader*, for a series of stories about a Burbank parent's allegation of bias by the Burbank Unified School District against her learning-disabled son.

**ESMERALDA FABIAN ROMERO**, *Hoy Los Angeles*, for a feature about proven benefits of early childhood education for Latino children with learning disabilities, and barriers Latino parents face in accessing information about programs.

**KRISTI MYLLENBECK**, *Cupertino Courier*, for a news story about disputes concerning attendance boundary changes for Lynbrook High School in the Fremont Union High School District.

**KEN EPSTEIN**, *Oakland Post*, for two stories about how charter schools impact neighborhood public schools such as Westlake Middle School in Oakland Unified School District when they use Proposition 39 to demand space on Oakland school campuses.

## Journals, Magazines, Websites

**SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC PRESS** for a package of stories about bilingual education in the San Francisco Unified School District.

**CAPITAL & MAIN** for a series of stories about the impacts of charter schools and privatization on the future of California public education in Los Angeles and statewide.

**ANNA CHALLET**, *Boom California* online magazine based at CSU Fullerton, for a feature on vital education services for youths sentenced to juvenile halls and other centers in the California juvenile court system.

**JOHN FENSTERWALD**, *EdSource*, for continuous coverage of education issues during 2016 including how CTA chapters mobilized in the face of legal attacks to weaken public employee unions (by targeting "fair share fees" that cover costs of union representation); and how some school districts are creating pay incentives to recruit veteran teachers.

## Radio

**ANA TINTOCALIS**, KQED Public Radio in San Francisco, for a story about the State Board of Education moving beyond test scores to use multiple measures to gauge student and school success in California.

## Television

**KXTV NEWS 10** (ABC) in Sacramento, for six profiles of local inspiring teachers from its ongoing "Teacher of the Month" series. Educators honored: Mary Hawkins, Carla Randazzo, Adam Shupe, Sara Lopez, Joel Francisco and Nancy Preto.

**DAVE ALLEY**, KCOY 12 (CBS) in Santa Maria, for an in-depth look at how and why teachers' salaries differ among Central Coast school districts, and how this affects the local teacher shortage.

**MELISSA CAEN**, KPIX 5 (CBS) in San Francisco, for a news story on how pro-charter school billionaires were pouring money into the Oakland Unified School District school board race to elect charter-friendly candidates.

Links to award-winning stories are at [bit.ly/2tzaEo9](http://bit.ly/2tzaEo9). For information on CTA's John Swett Awards for Media Excellence, see [cta.org/awards](http://cta.org/awards). ■

Burbank Teachers Association President Diana Abasta with Burbank Leader reporter Kelly Corrigan.



# 2015-16 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, 2015, through Aug. 31, 2016. 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, 2016, were \$38,995,922.

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, 2016, the premiums paid under such “experience-rated” contracts were \$38,995,922 and the total of all benefit claims paid under these contracts during the plan year was \$25,804,444.

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 \$89,826,625 as of Aug. 31, 2016, compared to \$83,281,188 as of Sept. 1, 2015. During the plan year the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of \$6,545,437. 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 \$48,487,333, including employee contributions of \$39,113,373, realized losses of (\$634,822) from the

sale of assets, earnings from investments of \$4,496,878, and other income of \$5,511,904.

Plan expenses were \$41,941,896. These expenses included \$2,078,993 in administrative expenses, and \$39,862,903 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:

- an accountant’s report;
- financial information;
- assets held for investment;
- 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.

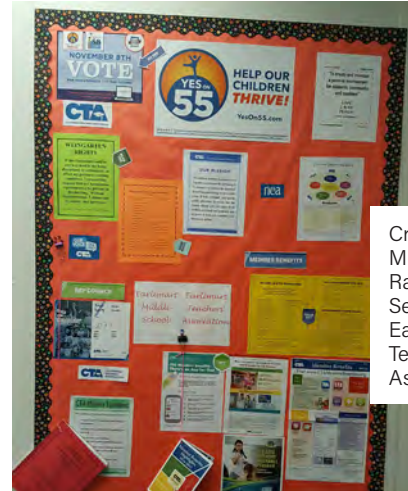
You also have the right to receive from the plan administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the plan and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the plan and accompanying notes, or both. If you request a copy of the full annual report 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. ■

Created by Fran Swanson, Woodlake Unified Teachers Association.



Created by Minervo Ramirez and Sesar Carreno, Earlimart Teachers Association.



Created by Rebecca Mexicano, Tulare City Teachers Association.



# Board Reward

Site reps recognized for bulletin boards that say it all

**CTA SITE REPS** — your union representatives on campus — voluntarily give their time to defend your rights, monitor and enforce the contract, advocate to improve your working conditions, and convey your concerns to chapter leadership. They also create and maintain a member bulletin board, with such information as names and contacts of chapter officers, a copy of the current contract, details of members' rights and benefits, and relevant activities, events and other news.

CTA's Kings/Tulare UniServ Unit (KTUU) takes bulletin boards at its sites one step further, with a reward program for boards that look good as well as keep members updated and informed all year long. Winners are eligible to receive prizes, including Kindle Fires. It's a good way to recognize hard work done by unsung heroes. A few samples from artful KTUU site reps are on this page. ■

CTA can send local chapters bulletin board kits for site reps including buttons (above), door signs and cards to hand out to members. Contact [lwilliams@cta.org](mailto:lwilliams@cta.org) for kits.



## Paper Trail

Winners of the Merced/Mariposa Teachers UniServ and Service Center Council WHO Awards received great community coverage from the *Merced County Times*, always nice to see.



# A Real Life-Saver

Bay Area educator adds to his awards shelf

**LAST YEAR**, Richard McDowell got a call from a distraught teacher upstairs at Galileo High School in San Francisco: A substitute teacher had fallen on the walkway and was bleeding. Because McDowell runs the school's Health Academy, which includes an emergency medical services class in its program, it's not unusual for students and faculty to turn to him if they can't reach the front office or find the nurse.

McDowell ran up, noticed the man had no pulse, and started doing hands-only CPR, considered as effective as mouth-to-mouth CPR in the first few minutes of sudden cardiac arrest.

He continued to do compressions even after paramedics arrived. Ever the teacher, McDowell pointed out to his students that the device

paramedics were inserting into the injured man's mouth to keep his airway open was the exact same device they'd been covering in class.

The man survived, and McDowell, a member of United Educators of San Francisco, was recognized in May by the city's Department of Emergency Management for his life-saving effort.

"The irony is that the year before, my students and I traveled to Sacramento to convince lawmakers to support an American Heart Association [AHA] bill to include instruction in hands-only CPR in any required high school health course," McDowell says. (The bill, AB 1719, passed and will go into effect next year.)

**On annual American Heart Association lobby day: "Students see how government works, how citizens take action. They work on their leadership and communication skills."**

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



Make life easy.



Richard McDowell receives the American Heart Association's 2017 Outstanding Advocacy Efforts Award. Credit: Lisa Meylor Botkin/AHA

Every year for nearly 10 years, McDowell has brought up to 70 students by bus to the state Capitol to advocate for AHA policies. In June, he received the association's Western States Affiliate 2017 Outstanding Advocacy Efforts Award, one of its top honors given to volunteers. "Hundreds of his students put a face to our issues, and are key to securing meetings with legislators," notes the AHA release.

McDowell says the annual trip is "golden." "Students get to see how government works, how citizens take action. They work on their leadership and communication skills."

McDowell has been an educator and Galileo teacher for 20 years, starting the Health Academy in 2001 to "create a pipeline from school to work, or a postsecondary program or college." Juniors and seniors learn about issues and careers in health science. The curriculum includes courses at City College of San Francisco and internships at California Pacific Medical Center.

McDowell has also been recognized by AHA for helping pilot a cooking nutrition class that brings in chefs to teach students how to make inexpensive, heart-healthy meals. The program has expanded to five other states and over 100 schools.

While his hands-on classroom contains everything from oxygen tanks to obstetric mannequins (to practice delivering babies), McDowell admits that his real-life life-saving feat had a big impact on his students. "It gave me cred for a couple of months." ■

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## Back to School in Style

Access to Savings has you and your classroom covered

**WANT TO GO** back to school in style and get your classroom looking good real quick? Need a deal on a new laptop or tablet, or on a few good books?

Let Access to Savings help. CTA members can take advantage of substantial discounts — up to 50 percent off — on clothes, shoes and accessories as well as personal services to make you look and feel your best. Plus, Access offers fantastic deals on electronics, school and office supplies, and books.

Here are a few examples of great savings waiting for you:

### Personal services:

- Relax with a massage and spa treatments at multiple spa locations.
- Stock up on cosmetics and beauty products at **Sephora**.
- Tame your mane with a haircut from **Supercuts**.

- Shoemaker **G.H. Bass & Co.** will give you 15 percent off your purchase of \$75 or more.
- **Nine West's** posh flats, sandals, clogs, boots and more are 20 percent off \$100.
- **TOMS Shoes'** comfy styles are a deal at \$10 off \$100 or more.

### Apparel, shoes and accessories:

- Save \$10 off \$60 at **Van Heusen**, maker of fine dress shirts for both men and women.
- Take \$10 off a purchase of \$100 or more at **Levi's Outlet Store** (in addition to denim, find capris, dresses and pants).
- **Target.com** has multiple offerings with \$5 off your \$50 purchase.
- **Kohl's** has basics such as socks and pajamas as well as professional wear at 15 percent off a purchase of \$100 or more.

### School and office supplies, books and electronics:

- Get your classroom ready for less with super discounts at such retailers as **Office Depot**, **Dell** and **Discount School Supply**. You'll be able to find everything you need from paper and pencils to arts and crafts, teacher supplies, electronics, and more.
- Save big on books, music and electronics at **Books-A-Million**, which will give you 20 percent off a purchase of \$40 or more.

Start saving now! Log in to [CTAMemberBenefits.org/Access](https://CTAMemberBenefits.org/Access).





# Where in the World...?

## Winners of our *Educators Are Everywhere* contest

**G**ive an educator a summer break, and they'll travel somewhere — to relax, work, learn. We received a robust response to our call to send in photos of you on break with your *Educator* magazines, and this year we noticed that more than a few members like to travel together. That proved to be the case with two of the contest winners, who each receive gift cards for school supplies. We also feature several Honorable Mentions. Keep an eye out for more educators with *Educators* in the next issue. Congratulations to the winners!

### Winners



#### **KIM READ-SMITH** ↑

*San Pasqual Elementary  
Teachers Association  
Humanities/VAPA instructor*

"On our annual pilgrimage to decompress, 10 teachers from Escondido went to Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Here we are about to go down the Snake River on raging rapids. Left to right are: Bonnie Blanton, retired; our river guide, Alex; Lisa Gangel, first grade; Francis Juarez, kindergarten; Nicole Marshall, kindergarten; Kim Read-Smith; Carol Schiefer, kindergarten; Kris McLaughlin, fifth grade; and Teri MacDonald, retired.

"We went because a family at our school offered us their ski lodge in Jackson Hole as a thank-you for teaching their children. Our group grows closer every summer and more united in our sisterhood. This bond helps us through the school year when life gets tough."



#### **RACHEL STAAB** ↑

*Glendale Teachers Association  
Special educator*

"Two of my colleagues and fellow GTA members and I went to Westhaven Children's Home near Montego Bay, Jamaica. We volunteered several days at this residential home for children and adults who have moderate to severe special needs. We played with them, sang to them, fed them, walked them around, and just gave them our presence. From left are Andrea Fay, speech-language pathologist; me; and Mary Ann DeWitt, school nurse at College View School."



#### **DARCY LONG** ↑

*United Teachers of Richmond  
Elementary technology coach*

"Here I am with in Zanzibar, East Africa, in front of Freddie Mercury's childhood home, known as 'Mercury House.' Next was an eight-day safari through the Serengeti and five days in Rwanda, tracking mountain gorillas in Virunga with two close friends. As a member of a nature journaling group, my purpose was to observe and document the flora, fauna and other surroundings through both scientific and artistic lenses — and to practice my drawing and watercolor painting. My time with this group was transformational. The consistent daily practice of being present with what was right in front of me changed how I see the world, literally. The most unexpected discovery was how gentle, kind and thoughtful the people of Tanzania were."

## Honorable Mention



**BENNY HEREDIA** ↑  
*Alhambra Teachers Association*  
**CTE, soccer coach**

"This summer I traveled to Barranquilla, Colombia, to visit family and relax. This particular trip took us to the countryside, full of lush greenery and tropical humidity. At a family gathering we celebrated to Afro-Caribbean drum music, typical of the region.  
 "The musical group pictured is all female, a first. They represent a breakthrough in the stereotype that such groups should be only male."

**NICOLE NADITZ** ↑  
*San Juan Teachers Association*  
**NBC French teacher**

"At the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages convention I won a raffle for two round-trip tickets to Paris. My mom and I went in June and added a trip to Luxembourg, which is where her paternal relatives emigrated from in the 19th century before settling in Iowa.  
 "This photo is with Steven Kennedy, my former student, who reached out when he saw on social media that I would be in Paris. It was my first time visiting Europe as a tourist; usually I'm either a chaperone for student trips or enrolled in a study program there to enhance my language skills and cultural knowledge.  
 "My mom and I explored southwest Luxembourg. It was meaningful to walk the streets of these villages, knowing our family had been there before."

**JACK HOLLANDER** ↑  
*Saddleback Valley*  
*Educators Association*  
**Civics and American government teacher**

"Here I am at Green Gables (inspiration for the *Anne* books by Lucy Maud Montgomery) in Cavendish, Prince Edward Island, Canada. I've wanted to visit Prince Edward Island ever since I read the *Anne* books.  
 "I also visited historic Fort Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island. The national park facility is set up as a French fort of 1745, including costumed soldiers and citizens. I found out that Alexander Graham Bell was born Canadian and had his summer (and retirement) home on Cape Breton Island; in fact, he was one of five pioneers who developed Canada's first airplane. Baddeck, Nova Scotia, is the 'Kitty Hawk' of Canada, and there is a Parks Canada museum dedicated to Bell and his wife, Mabel, in Baddeck."

**CHRISTY IRELAND** ↑  
*Vacaville Teachers Association*  
**Digital media teacher**

"I was on a trip to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, in June with three other educators from my school (one had to take the photo). Pictured left to right are Lindsay Wilson, me, and Gayle Morrison. This was taken right before our catamaran sail. We picked Cabo because of the beach, the price and location. I enjoyed relaxing and not being worried about work — and I got my first stamp in my passport!  
 "I teach introduction to digital media, so I am taking back to the classroom the variety of apps I used, such as Google Translate and Currency Converter."



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