

california educator

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2020 VOLUME 25 ISSUE 1

THIS IS GOING TO BE A
SCHOOL YEAR LIKE NONE OTHER

WE GOT THIS!

- Pro Tips: Be a better virtual teacher
- Flexible planning for all types of classrooms
- Building bonds with students online
- Tech recs for teachers
- Up your skill set with targeted trainings

Page 15

TEACHING ABOUT THE ELECTION

Page 48

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST STEPS UP TO LEAD

Page 13

ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS FOR ONLINE LEARNING

Page 56



CTA Economic Benefits Trust Annual Report – Page 64

Inside:

YOUR GUIDE TO MEMBERSHIP INCLUDING OUR 2020-21 AWARENESS CALENDAR

New Job. Fresh Start. Sweet Benefits.

You got the job – congratulations! Newly hired CTA members have an exclusive, limited-time opportunity to apply for CTA-endorsed Disability insurance and up to \$200,000 in Life insurance.

How sweet is that!

Disability insurance protects your paycheck if you're out of work due to an illness, injury, pregnancy or childbirth. Health insurance pays your doctor. Disability insurance pays you.

Life insurance protects your loved ones in the event of your passing. You also get additional features that you can benefit from now, and in the future at no additional cost.

To take advantage of these sweet benefits, apply within 180 days from starting your new job.



Enrolling is easy!
Visit standard.com/cta/newhire



For costs and further details of the coverage and this enrollment opportunity, including exclusions, any reductions or limitations and the terms under which the policies may be continued in force, please contact The Standard's dedicated CTA Customer Service Department at 800.522.0406 (TTY), 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Pacific Time, Monday through Friday. Standard Insurance Company, 1100 SW Sixth Avenue, Portland, OR 97204 GP190-LTD/S399/CTA.1 GP190-LIFE/S399/CTA.3 SI 20197-CTAvol (7/20)

california educator

VOLUME 25 ISSUE 1

Welcome Back to School!

In a year of
teaching differently,
we're here to help.

PAGE 15



#WeAreCTA

OUR VOICE, OUR UNION, OUR PROFESSION

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

MAGAZINE

CIVICS LESSONS

Teachers guide students in a complex time. **PAGE 48**

STUDENT CTA

New leaders talks vision, agenda. **PAGE 59**

LIT FROM WITHIN

New work by our talented members. **PAGE 63**



DIGITAL

ELECTION 2020

Every vote counts! Get info and check out CTA's recommendations on ballot initiatives and candidates.

PAGE 42

cta.org/election-2020

ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS

For students with disabilities in an online learning environment. **PAGE 56**

THE EDUCATOR ONLINE

We've got a new home! The *California Educator* is now part of the main CTA site — find the same great magazine content, plus the latest news.

cta.org/educator

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

DID YOU SAY TRAINING?

CTA supports you in all facets of distance learning, from building connection and culture to tools for peer and student collaboration. **PAGE 39**

cta.org/distancelearning

CTA CONFERENCES

A pandemic can't stop our gatherings to build leadership, skills. **PAGE 9**

cta.org/events/conferences

JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP

Connect with colleagues on "CTA Teaching, Learning & Life During COVID-19" to share strategies, advice and more.

MEMBER BENEFITS

YOUR MEMBERSHIP GUIDE

Everything you need to know to make the most of your union. **BACK SECTION**

SAVE MONEY RIGHT NOW

CTA's Access to Savings has hundreds of deals on both everyday stuff and big-ticket items.

CTAMemberBenefits.org

YOU'RE COVERED

Take advantage of special offers for members on auto, home and life insurance.

CTAMemberBenefits.org

Photo: Deposit Photos

BACK TO SCHOOL 2020

Class Act



We Got This!

This school year will be like none other.
We've got you covered:

- Welcome: Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond **PAGE 16** and California State PTA President Celia Jaffe **PAGE 17**
- Maintaining focus on students in challenging times **PAGE 18**
- Easily turn your classroom to virtual, in-person or blended **PAGE 24**
- Pro tips for distance learning **PAGE 26**
- Build a digital home base that puts students first **PAGE 30**
- How to bond with students online **PAGE 32**
- Educator-recommended apps, programs, gear **PAGE 36**
- CTA trainings and resources **PAGE 39**

Informing the Future

Educators provide civic guidance as election approaches

PAGE 48

CTA Membership Manual
BACK SECTION: Your guide to your union

DEPARTMENTS

In the Know

- 8 Calendar
- 10 News & Notes

Spotlight

- 13 **RIISING STAR:** Cecily Myart-Cruz

Advocacy

- 42 **CAMPAIGN:** Election 2020
- 45 **CHARTER SCHOOLS:** Call for moratorium on colocations
- 46 **BARGAINING:** Statewide roundup

Teaching & Learning

- 48 **CIVICS:** Teaching about the election
- 54 **FEEDBACK:** Reading the virtual room
- 56 **TECH TIPS:** Accessibility tools for online learning
- 57 **PANDEMIC:** Sausalito school reopens safely

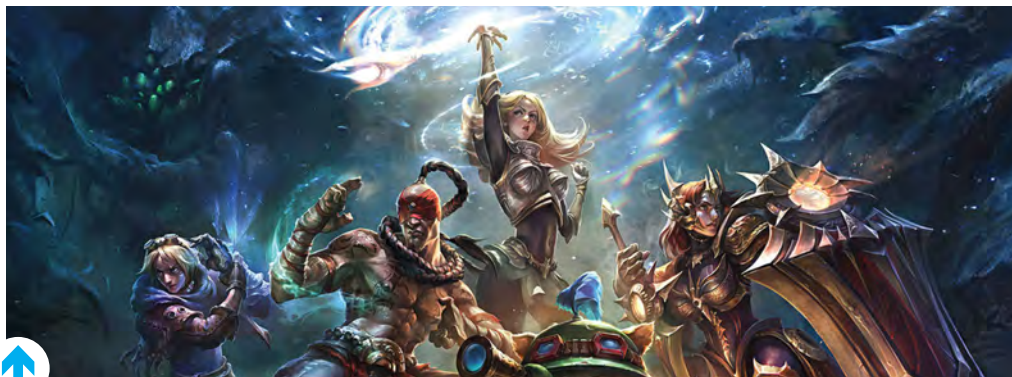
CTA & You

- 59 **STUDENT CTA:** New board members set goals
- 61 **STUDENT CTA:** Dreams of DACA, immigration reform
- 63 **LIT FROM WITHIN:** Works by our members
- 64 **REPORT:** CTA Economic Benefits Trust

Top left: Document camera lifhack by Alisal Teachers Association's Angela Der Ramos. At right: Government educator Liz Tanner, Campbell High School Teachers Association, in class. Cover: Deposit Photos



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



Get in the Educator!

We regularly publish members' opinion pieces and stories in print and online at cta.org/educator. Tell us about your experience with students, the art and science of teaching, and being an educator in these challenging times (no more than 650 words). We also welcome relevant photos and videos. Email editor@cta.org with "Your Voice" in the subject line.

Reigning Esports Champs

I read with great interest the esports article "Ready Player One: Esports in Schools" (June/July). I am also an esports manager. My teams play for North America Scholastic Esports Federation, and one of my League of Legends (LOL) teams has won the finals two years in a row. PlayVS is another league that my teams play for. They are a California Interscholastic Federation-sanctioned league, and my team has won their LOL tournaments both seasons this year.

In May 2019 my LOL team was invited to play in the first High School Invitational Tournament at the Riot Esports Arena in Los Angeles. They also won that tournament.

My district is also very supportive, and my co-adviser and I make every effort to provide a wide array of games for the students to play and compete.

MYRA DEISTER

Fullerton Secondary Teachers Organization

In Praise of Librarians

I am disappointed in not seeing any mention of certificated teacher librarians in the story "A New World for Student Support Services" (June/July). As awareness, utilization and understanding of teacher librarians decreases in California, our very existence is threatened. We are actually an active, versatile and resilient group who reinvent ourselves, particularly in the face of COVID-19.

During the shutdown, I Zoomed daily and transitioned our after-school tutoring sessions online. I pitched in for textbook return so I could see our seniors a final time, and I know many of my colleagues worked hard too! We have many great programs and ideas that dovetail specifically with our country's efforts to combat racism and ignorance, and only ask for small but frequent mention in our collective publication.

GAILYN MIRANDA

Twin Rivers United Educators

Correction

In our story "Black Lives Matter: A Summer Reading List" (June/July), we listed the wrong surname of the author of *I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness*. Her correct name is Austin Channing Brown.

connect with us

facebook.com/wearecta

[@WeAreCTA](https://twitter.com/WeAreCTA)

youtube.com/californiateachers

[@WeAreCTA](https://instagram.com/WeAreCTA)

[WeAreCTA](https://pinterest.com/WeAreCTA)

For our full social media directory, see cta.org/social. [#OurVoiceOurUnion](https://twitter.com/OurVoiceOurUnion) [#WeAreCTA](https://twitter.com/WeAreCTA)

EDITOR IN CHIEF Katharine Fong
STAFF WRITER Julian Peebles
CTA SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR Sam DeMuro
CTA WEB EDITOR Rachel Warino
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Craig Hamilton
WEB ASSISTANT Gladdie Cabral

CTA ELECTED OFFICERS

PRESIDENT E. Toby Boyd
VICE PRESIDENT David B. Goldberg
SECRETARY-TREASURER Leslie S. Littman

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Greg Abt, Jesse Aguilar, Joe Bartell, Gayle Bilek, Greg Bonaccorsi, Denise Bradford, Christopher Bushée, Jerry Eaton, Robert Ellis, Margie Granado, Shelly Gupton, Mel House, Erika Lynn Jones, Sergio Martinez, Angela K. Normand, Mike Patterson, Roberto Rodriguez, Eva Ruiz, DeWayne Sheaffer, Telly S. Tse

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Joe Boyd
ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Rebecca Zoglman
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER Jonathan Goldman
ASSISTANT MANAGER Claudia Briggs

CONTRIBUTORS

Scott Buschman, Stephen Harris, Gabriella Landeros, Cynthia Menzel, Terry Ng, Jay Ortiz, Sherry Posnick-Goodwin, Kim Sanford, Ed Sibby, Frank Wells

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 for all students; 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.

EDITORIAL INFORMATION

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.

Publication of advertising in the *California Educator* does not indicate CTA approval of the product or of the companies that purchase advertising.

For advertising rates and information, contact Carol Nettles, Advertising Sales Representative, AdBoom Advertising, 404-347-1755
carol@adboomadvertising.com

CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2020, to Aug. 31, 2021) are \$937, including a \$20 refundable contribution (see cta.org/contribution for details). \$22.09 of CTA annual dues is designated for CTA/ABC political activities to support state and local candidates and/or initiatives, and \$15.00 of CTA annual dues is designated for independent expenditures, totaling \$37.09 not deductible for income tax purposes. Please consult your tax adviser.

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

CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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

California Educator Volume 25, Issue 1, August/September 2020 *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.

nea

CTA



Shop for an
electric car
from the comfort
of your home.

CVRP has 3 steps for
finding the right model
for you.

Learn about rebates and other
cost-saving benefits at
CleanVehicleRebate.org/CalEd



Cap and Trade
Dollars at Work



CALIFORNIA
CLEAN VEHICLE
REBATE PROJECT



Courage During Crisis

CTA IS BASED on a simple premise: We are stronger together. This means supporting each other as educators to better challenge, inspire and motivate our students; rising together as association members to protect our rights; standing tall as leaders in our communities to advocate for the resources our schools need to succeed; and marching side by side in the **#RedForEd** movement to create the future our students deserve.

And this year, we learned that it also means fighting for our safety and the collective health of our students and communities in the face of a global pandemic. But taking action to defend

“Though we are diverse in so many ways, we share an important focus: the future and potential of our students, schools and communities.”

our students, our schools, and the shared values we hold dear is nothing new for CTA.

Since our founding in 1863, CTA has built a legacy of standing together and working for our members, our students, our craft, and the belief that public education is a cornerstone of American democracy. It's these shared values that unite us and make us strong.

While we are unified in our mission and voice, our differences are a major part of what makes us stronger together. Though we are diverse in so many ways, we share an important focus: the future and potential of our students, schools and communities.

It's in this spirit that CTA has approached the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on our lives, our students and our schools, summed up in one sentence from our July letter to Gov. Newsom and state leaders about the prospect of resuming in-person instruction: “Simply said, California cannot reopen schools unless they are safe.”

Along with your officers, Board of Directors and staff, I am working closely with the governor's office and state



Elizabeth Douglas Photography

Superintendent Thurmond to ensure that our voices are heard loud and clear when it comes to physically reopening our schools and community colleges. We say:

- The health and safety of all students and staff must be the top priority and guiding principle in all plans and decisions.
- Educators must continue to be part of the conversations, planning and decisions that impact students.
- Schools must be properly resourced to provide equitable and effective teaching and learning, with particular attention to the impacts on students of the digital divide and economic inequality.
- School districts must be adequately funded to be able to open safely, including sufficient personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, and other necessary supplies and modifications to protect students and educators.

Since the start of the pandemic, CTA has been helping prepare teachers for robust distance learning and supporting local chapters as they make plans to return to school. Our webinars and virtual conferences this past spring and summer have already provided quality training to thousands of members; more sessions are planned.

We are **#InThisTogether**, and together we will make it through this pandemic. I want to thank all of you for everything you've done and are doing to support our students while navigating this new normal. Your heroic efforts in the midst of madness illustrate that while school buildings closed in spring, the teaching and learning have never stopped. Be safe and well, CTA family.

E. Toby Boyd

CTA PRESIDENT

@etobyboyd



@teachcreatemotivate

A Class Act: You

MY DAUGHTER RECENTLY preregistered to vote in the November general election, when she will be 18. While I could swear I was reading *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* every night to her just yesterday, I'm feeling good about her ability to make informed choices on her ballot.

This is because her teachers have done a great job over the years of opening her eyes and her mind, guiding her to seek out the truth, question the status quo, and understand our political systems and structures. The government and social studies educators in our story "**Informing the Future**" (page 48) demonstrate how they provide such civic guidance to students — particularly relevant during this election year.

"My goal in the classroom is to teach students how to think, not what to think," says high school teacher Jayson Chang.

Andrew Schrock wants his high schoolers "to go on to vote and be good members of their communities. I want them to understand there's a process to make change in their community."

In the age of COVID, it's challenging for educators to teach such complex concepts — and even easier ones! — through a computer screen.

Our special **Back to School** section (starting on page 15) can help you navigate distance learning as well as a hybrid/blended classroom. We asked many of your CTA colleagues experienced in online education for their pro tips on teaching virtually, bonding with students you've only met digitally, recommended remote-learning apps and programs, and much more.

CTA has also stepped into the breach with training webinars and videos in distance learning at all grade levels and in multiple subjects. See "**Professional Practice at Your Fingertips**" on page 39 for some of these — and keep checking cta.org/distancelearning for updates. More trainings are being developed right now, based on your feedback and needs. Feel free to send your ideas to editor@cta.org, or post them in our Facebook group "CTA Teaching, Learning and Life During COVID-19."

We hope the information we offer on our website and in the *Educator*, and the community and networking opportunities we bring to members, are useful during a difficult time. In "**Distance Thoughts**" (page 18), Shannon Ladwig puts things in perspective, noting that *every* year educators are challenged with new schedules, new students, new programs — there's always something. And remaining connected with students is critical.

"While this challenge is like no other, the solution is the same, and we need to remember, we got this! So, connect with students and their families and get those Google Classrooms, Zoom meetings, and Remind Class Codes set up, because you are about to have the biggest impact on students this year, and they will remember you and this time forever."

We know a global pandemic won't stop you from teaching students with heart and soul. Thank you.

Katharine Fong

EDITOR IN CHIEF

editor@cta.org

Voting by Mail

DUE TO THE pandemic, all registered voters will receive a vote-by-mail ballot prior to the Nov. 3 general election. (In-person voting locations will still be available.) Your vote makes a difference! For deadlines and details, and CTA's ballot recommendations, see page 42 or go to cta.org/election-2020.





K-12 retirees.

50–80% savings¹

98% satisfaction²



When it comes to health plans, the math is simple.

Now more than ever, K-12 districts are looking for affordable, quality health care plans. UnitedHealthcare® Group Medicare Advantage PPO is a smart choice—offering significant savings compared to traditional plan options and backed by a comprehensive provider network with coverage nationwide.

Learn more at uhc.com/k12ca.

¹Based on actual results from conversions to group Medicare Advantage members using UnitedHealthcare and customer provided current cost data.

²UnitedHealthcare HouseCalls Member Survey data, January 2016–December 2017.

Insurance covered by or through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or its affiliates. Administration services provided by UnitedHealthCare Services, Inc. or their affiliates.

Not for distribution to retirees or beneficiaries.

© 2020 United HealthCare Services, Inc. EI20195066.1 8/20 20-162344

**United
Healthcare®**

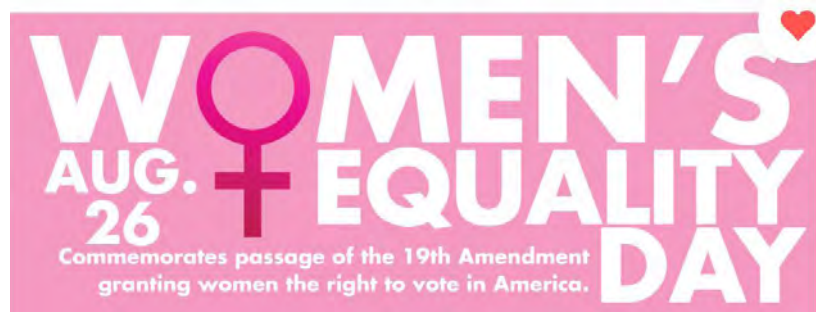
August / September 2020

CALENDAR



Honor Working People!

LABOR DAY, SEPT. 7, honors the struggles and achievements of working people and celebrates their contributions. CTA has been at the forefront of the labor movement since its founding in 1863, fighting for educators' rights and a quality education for all students. Labor unions like CTA are working people who unite to advocate for better pay, safer working and learning conditions, and decent benefits. Teach students about labor unions; go to nea.org/labor and follow the link for Labor Curriculum Resources.



Women's Equality Day: Are You Voting?

THE 19TH AMENDMENT, certified Aug. 26, 1920, guarantees all American women the right to vote. Achieving passage of the amendment took decades of agitation and protest, starting in 1868. Make sure you've registered to vote in the November general election; check out CTA's ballot and candidate recommendations at cta.org/election-2020. Celebrate Women's Equality Day on Aug. 26 and find resources to help grades K-12 learn about the suffrage movement at nea.org (search for "Women's Equality Day").



Stacey Ilyse Photography

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

IN CALIFORNIA, 39 percent of the population is Latinx; Latinx students make up about 55 percent of the state's 6 million-plus K-12 students. Educators can use Hispanic Heritage Month, Sept. 15–Oct. 15, to celebrate the histories, cultures and contributions of those whose ancestry traces back to Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America.

Trailblazing examples are numerous. Sonia Sotomayor, for one, is the first Hispanic and the third woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. Her book *Turning Pages: My Life Story* is a current CTA California Reads pick for grades 3-5. In it, she tells young readers how books helped her to connect with her family in New York and in Puerto Rico, deal with a diabetes diagnosis at age 7, and dream of a future for herself in which anything was possible. "Reading was like lighting candles, each book a flame that lit up the world around me." (For more California Reads recommendations, see page 10.)

Get additional resources and lesson plans, including primary sources, at hispanicheritagemonth.gov/for-teachers.



Day of Peace

Celebrate **United Nations International Day of Peace**, Sept. 21, by spreading compassion, kindness and hope in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Teach students to stand together against attempts to use the virus to promote discrimination or hatred. For ideas on student activities and involvement, go to internationaldayofpeace.org/get-involved.

CTA Communications Awards

OCT. 9 **NOMINATION DEADLINE**

The Communications Awards Program recognizes and honors CTA chapters, service centers and UniServs that communicate effectively with their members. ► cta.org/awards

CCA Fall Conference

OCT. 9-11 **CONFERENCE**

Hilton San Jose. The Community College Association's fall conference offers a variety of trainings, highlights members' accomplishments, and focuses on membership engagement. ► cca4us.org/conferences

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

Presidential Election

NOV. 3 **ELECTION**

Vote like your students depend on it. Get information on candidates and ballot initiatives, and volunteer to help CTA's campaign. Register to vote by Oct. 19. All California voters will be sent vote-by-mail ballots; if you miss or lose yours, you can request another vote-by-mail ballot by Oct. 27. ► cta.org/election-2020

American Education Week

NOV. 16-20 **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

CTA Events:

THE YEAR AHEAD

All conferences and meetings are virtual, except where noted.

Region I Leadership Conference

SEPT. 11-13, 2020

Region II Leadership Conference

OCT. 2-4, 2020

CCA Fall Conference

OCT. 9-11, 2020

State Council of Education

OCT. 23-25, 2020

JAN. 22-24, APRIL 9-11, JUNE 4-6, 2021

Location TBD (April and June)

LGBTQ+ Issues Conference

DEC. 4-6, 2020

New Educator Weekend South

DEC. 11-13, 2020

Issues Conference

JAN. 15-17, 2021

CCA Winter Conference

JAN. 29-31, 2021

Good Teaching Conference North

FEB. 5-7, 2021

New Educator Weekend North

FEB. 19-21, 2021

CTA/NEA-Retired Conference

FEB. 25-26, 2021

Equity and Human Rights Conference

FEB. 26-28, 2021

Read Across America

MARCH 2, 2021

Good Teaching Conference South

MARCH 12-14, 2021

CCA Spring Conference

APRIL 23-25, 2021

California Day of the Teacher

MAY 12, 2021

CTA ESP Day

MAY 18, 2021

Presidents Conference

JULY 15-18, 2021

Summer Institute

JULY 25-29, 2021

REGIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

Region I

SEPT. 11-13

Region II

OCT. 2-4

Do you have what it takes to be an association leader?

Learn the ropes or increase your skill set at a virtual leadership conference. ► cta.org



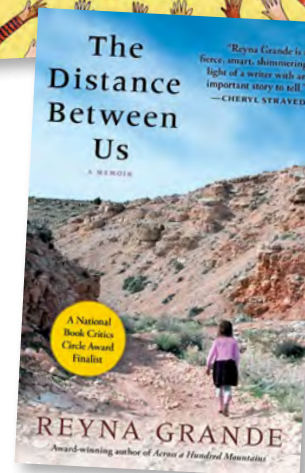
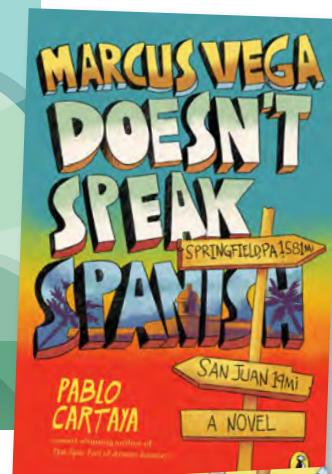
Best Books for Young Minds

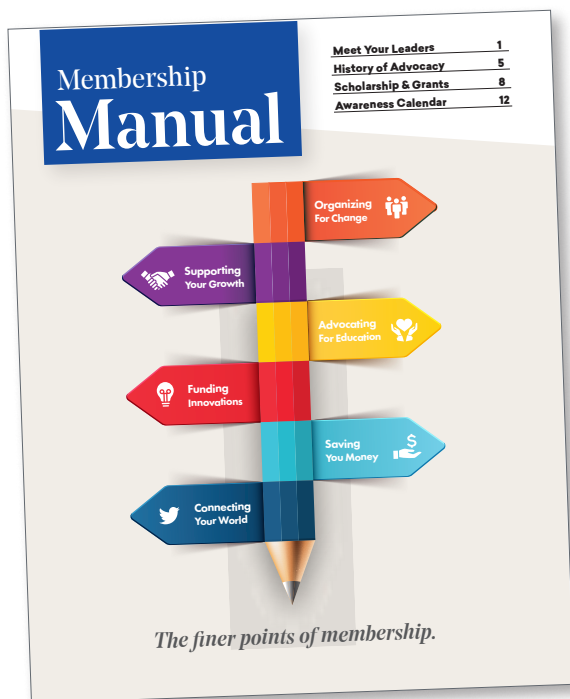
CTA'S CALIFORNIA READS supports literacy in the classroom and beyond all year long. Go to cta.org/californiareads for a list of teacher-recommended books for all grade levels that will inspire, challenge and enchant. Among them:

Marcus Vega Doesn't Speak Spanish (Pablo Cartaya; grades 6-8). After a fight at school leaves eighth grader Marcus facing suspension, his mom takes him and his brother to Puerto Rico to spend a week with relatives. Marcus knows that his father — who walked out of their lives 10 years ago — is somewhere on the island. He begins a search for his namesake, and what he discovers changes his life.

Don't Touch My Hair (Sharee Miller; grades 1-2) teaches the importance of asking for permission first. Wherever Aria goes, someone wants to touch her hair — a mermaid in the sea, monkeys in the jungle, and aliens in space. Finally, she's had enough!

The Distance Between Us (Reyna Grande; grades 6-8) is the author's story of being torn between two parents and two countries. Her parents cross the Mexican border in pursuit of the American dream; when her mother at last returns, Grande prepares for her own journey to "El Otro Lado" (The Other Side) to live with her long-absent father.





← Your Guide to CTA Membership

AT THE BACK of this issue is your Membership Manual, which explains everything you need to know to make the most of your union. From organizing for change to saving you money, from supporting your growth and development to funding educator innovation, CTA is here for you.

The guide is a keeper for those new to CTA as well as veteran members. You'll see how the union works and your vital role in it. You'll get a clear view of the many ways CTA advocates for students and educators and how you can both be a part of our work and take advantage of the many opportunities to advance the profession and improve your own practice.

Our Voice. Our Union. #WeAreCTA

CALIFORNIA CHARTERS DOUBLE-DIP IN PUBLIC CORONAVIRUS AID

CHARTER SCHOOLS — publicly funded but privately operated — received full public funding through the 2019-20 school year and will maintain the same funding for 2020-21. However, while many small businesses have struggled during the pandemic, charter organizations also applied for and received funding through the federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), leaving the public to cover the same bill twice.

In the Public Interest and Parents United for Public Schools in Oakland analyzed Small Business Administration data released in early July and found that California charter organizations received between \$240.7 million and \$565.6 million in PPP loans, *in addition to their full funding as public schools.*

"We have money for small businesses, we have money for schools," says ITPI senior policy adviser Clare

Crawford. "When they're using both sources for the same need, it's doing a real disservice to the community."

Specifically:

- 268 PPP loans were awarded to charter organizations representing a total of 420 charter schools.
- Only 35 percent of PPP loans to charter organizations benefited independently managed schools, while 65 percent benefited charter schools affiliated with charter school chains.
- Some chains accessed PPP funds by circumventing a rule disallowing application by entities with over 500 employees. For example, California's Learn4Life chain has 1,900 employees, but accessed up to \$51 million through 12 PPP loans to various business entities. Scandal-plagued Inspire Schools accessed up to \$29 million by



Bullis Charter School in Los Altos received as much as \$5 million in PPP loans.

applying individually for 11 different schools plus its parent organization, despite having 1,300+ employees.

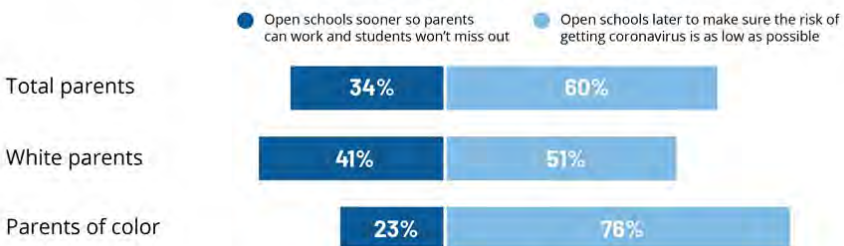
For more, including a searchable database of charter schools that received PPP loans, go to inthepublicinterest.org.

Most Parents Want to Wait to Open Schools

THE KAISER FAMILY

FOUNDATION'S latest nationwide tracking poll found that parents with children who normally attend school overwhelmingly prefer that schools wait to restart in-person classes to reduce COVID-19 infection risk (60 percent) rather than open sooner so parents can work and students can return to the classroom (34 percent).

AMONG PARENTS OF A CHILD WHO NORMALLY ATTENDS SCHOOL: Which comes closer to your view?



SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted July 14-19, 2020). See topline for full question wording.

KFF

Parents of color (76 percent) are even more likely than white parents (51 percent) to prefer that schools wait to return to in-person classes.

The findings, released July 23, may reflect a lack of confidence that schools have the resources to reopen safely. A large majority of the public (71 percent) says the public schools in their area need more resources to comply with

public health recommendations around reopening, and 66 percent of parents say the same thing about their own child's school.

"Most [parents] are erring on the side of protecting kids, teachers and families by delaying school reopening and keeping kids home," KFF President and CEO Drew Altman said.

For poll details, go to kff.org.

Thank you

for remaining committed to our students.

Thank you

for being resilient through all the changes in our education system.

Thank you

for showing our students what courage is in unsettling times.

THANK YOU, TEACHERS.

California Lutheran University

Graduate School of Education

CalLutheran.edu/ThankYou



Myart-Cruz addresses a crowd during UTLA's strike in 2019.

REACHING FOR THE STARS

Social and racial justice advocate Cecily Myart-Cruz steps into leadership role By Frank Wells

CECILY MYART-CRUZ was elected president of the 35,000-member United Teachers Los Angeles in February. The longtime educator and activist is the first woman of color to lead UTLA since its founding in 1970. She has played a key role in UTLA's organizing and actions in the second-largest school district in the nation, including the historic strike that saw more than 30,000 educators take to LA streets in 2019.

Recently, UTLA's advocacy helped persuade the LAUSD school board to cut its police budget by \$25 million and redirect money to school counselors and other school support services.

An ardent social and racial justice advocate, Myart-Cruz is chair of the NEA Black Caucus and has been a member of NEA's Peace and Justice Caucus and Hispanic Caucus, among others.

We checked in with the single mother and LAUSD parent as she assumed office in July. (This is an excerpt; for the full Q&A, see tinyurl.com/myart-cruz.)

Why did you want to become a teacher?

I wanted to change student lives and be involved with children. When I was in high school and college, I saw being a teacher or a child psychologist as an opportunity to make a real difference.

I taught first and second grade in Compton before coming to LAUSD as a fifth grade teacher and then as a second grade Intensive Academic Support teacher at Arlington Heights — right down the street from where I grew up. After a few years I ended up at Emerson Middle School teaching sixth grade English. Middle school has been my niche ever since.

In your experience, how important are teachers as role models?

My fifth grade teacher, Shelley Banks, was fantastic, a strong Black woman who really pushed us. She was tough — she didn't take any crap — but she opened her room at lunchtime and recess to help us. She was also big on critical thinking. She didn't just dump information into our heads, she taught us to think.

I do the same. I'm an unconventional teacher. The mandated textbooks generally gather dust on my shelf because I address the standards but work with a broader group of materials. I have kids keep journals and write down their thoughts. I have my kids read *To Kill a Mockingbird*. People say it's a 10th grade novel, but I say younger students get a lot out of it, and they empathize with Tom Robinson being accused of something he didn't do.

It really warms my heart when I hear from former students that I made a difference in their [lives]. With the recent uprisings I've been hearing [from them. One wrote:] "I saw your post about another student and just wanted to thank you for teaching us about racism and racial bias, ... sexual violence, classism, sexism, LGBTQ+ identities, privilege, and the immensely broken and outdated criminal justice system in the United States. Your class was one of the most influential I've ever taken — you shaped who I am as a person and a member of society." Those call-backs from former students are wonderful.

How did you get involved in the union?

I was an SEIU rep when I started as a classified teaching assistant in LA. During my second year teaching in Compton, somebody said I'd be great as a building rep. When I moved to LAUSD and joined UTLA, I started at a school with a real problem principal. She had been there nine years and had scared away employees. The environment was compounded by no books, no supplies. I knew I would need the union to help turn this around. I went to a union meeting, and several



“I’m interested in anything that will help make the world better for marginalized kids. If you fix things for them, you fix things for others.”

former Compton teachers, who gave me “the look” when they found out where I was teaching and who my principal was, told me to talk to a guy named [former UTLA President AJ] Duffy, if I wanted help changing that school.

I sought him out, and that encounter changed my life. He became a mentor. I know he was a controversial figure — he could be super brash. We worked together and got rid of that bully principal. He passed away last year, but he believed I could become president, and in his eyes I could be a great one. His advice to me was: “Give ‘em hell!”

But after that first meeting I became more active, moving from assisting our site chapter chair to being a chapter chair, then serving at just about every role and layer at UTLA.

What does it mean to you to be a woman of color and longtime activist leading UTLA at this time?

UTLA is 50 years old. Our profession is 70 percent women, yet we’ve only had three women presidents and none for three decades. So to be a woman and a woman of color is important, but I don’t collect titles, and it’s not the lens I see my role primarily through. The work speaks for itself.

But it is important, and when I stop and think about it, it makes it all that much more meaningful — especially when I think of my father, who is no longer here to see what I’ve become. He always told me, “You can reach for the stars, and you’ll catch them all.” So when I get racist email or hateful posts on social media, I don’t let it stop me. It lets me know I must be doing something right.

What do you hope to accomplish?

I want UTLA to look at issues through more of a racial and social justice lens. Just look at what is happening in our country and in the world now. The uprisings against police brutality are

exposing what has always been there. COVID-19 is exposing the harsh inequities for working-class people, and even more so for Black and brown people. We need to have courageous, difficult conversations, and we need to build and strengthen relationships with our communities that aren’t purely transactional. We need to listen, even when what people are saying is difficult.

What can educators do?

White educators can play a big role, especially in talking to other white educators. We have to look at policies and practices and update them to reflect reality. COVID has been horrible, but it has given us a forced opportunity to address some of the inequities built into our education system.

We all have a role to play. My UTLA colleague and CTA Board member Erika Jones and I have a “Black Lives Matter in Schools” workshop we’ve done across the nation. We have to all look at our own internal biases, and then do what it takes to end the school-to-prison pipeline that impacts so many students of color. Teacher prep programs need to better address these issues, and ethnic studies need to be a part of every new teacher’s background. The unions need to take the lead on all this.

Talk about UTLA’s recent push to defund or disband school police.

Students Deserve have been the real leaders calling for defunding. UTLA was proud to help them with this latest effort.

I want us to continue to work with students and community groups. We need to listen to our students and stop criminalizing behavior when we have much better ways to address the roots of those behaviors. And even if we can’t solve them right away, we can

still listen and acknowledge the lack of a meal or the home or homelessness situation that may be behind why a student just isn’t with it today.

Is any of your family involved in your work?

[Laughs.] Oh, they’re involved all right! My mom and 9-year-old son Giovanni come to every NEA RA. Gio’s first was when he was 7 or 8 months old. He’s been with me at rallies, during the strike — he leads chants! On one of his school field trips he was walking down the street with his class chanting, “We are the union, the mighty, mighty union!”

Are you active in other social justice causes?

I’m interested in anything that will help make the world better for marginalized kids. If you fix things for them, you fix things for others. A change is going to come if we continue the work of listening and seeing the absolute humanity in our students, and then do whatever it takes to lift them up and protect them. I was fortunate enough to meet the late Congressman John Lewis, who just passed. He advised us to get into “good trouble — get in the way — continue getting in the way.” I take those words very seriously. I have to. ■

CTA’s Work Toward Anti-racism → CTA’s

Human Rights Department, Service Center Equity Teams and Racial Equity Affairs Committee have launched a webinar series, “Tuesday Takeovers for Racial and Social Justice.” Topics include “**How To Be an Anti-racist Educator**” (Cecily Myart-Cruz was a panelist) and “**Talking About Color**.” All are welcome; go to cta.org/reac to view recorded webinars and find out more.



Welcome Back!

IN THIS YEAR of teaching and learning differently, one thing is certain: You will step up, as you always do, and put your all into nurturing and educating young minds.

We — and your colleagues — are here to help. On the following pages you'll find advice and insights from educators experienced in distance learning. From tips on remote instruction to forging relationships with students online to tech needs and training opportunities, we've got you covered.

INSIDE:

- **Welcome** from Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond and California State PTA President Celia Jaffe **PAGES 16 and 17**
- **Maintaining focus** on students in an uncertain time **PAGE 18**
- **Easily turn your classroom** to virtual, in-person or blended **PAGE 24**
- **Be a better virtual teacher** **PAGE 26**
- **A well-planned digital home base** puts students first **PAGE 30**
- **Bonding with students** you've never met **PAGE 32**
- **Educator-recommended** apps, programs, gear **PAGE 36**
- **CTA trainings and resources** **PAGE 39**

Class Act

BECAUSE OF YOU, WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER

Your heroic acts and sacrifice
are an inspiration to us all

By **Tony Thurmond**, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

WE ARE LIVING through one of the greatest challenges most of us will ever experience in our lifetimes. This global pandemic, seemingly overnight, turned our world upside down. You, our teachers, were thrust into the daily stress and uncertainty of navigating rapidly changing demands and circumstances, pulling even longer hours to learn new skills, worrying for your students, and scrambling to check on their welfare — all while striving to care for yourself and your loved ones.

On behalf of all Californians, I commend your daily resiliency and what all of you have accomplished to keep learning alive for students while your neighborhood school, a place of community and connection, closed its doors and turned off the lights. I am witnessing hardworking educators continue to bravely rise to this moment. All of us at the California Department of Education (CDE) see you, are inspired by you, and thank you for your courage and dedication as we work together to support our students when they have needed us the most.

Throughout it all, we have been leading honest and earnest conversations and working tirelessly to make sure that our students and educators have the resources and support they need

schools received access to the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) that was distributed in partnership with the Governor's



Tony Thurmond

"Nothing can take the place of you and your role in a young person's education, and it is impossible to overstate the impact you have on our state's 6 million students."

students and communities across California. Together, we will move forward stronger and more resilient than before. ■

to thrive — now, and in the difficult months ahead.

Since March, CDE has hosted more than 30 webinars focusing on the following subject matter areas: distance learning, special education, mental health, English learners, deaf and blind student and educator supports, and career technical education. Understanding that students, families and educators have experienced significant stress during this transition, our team has also coordinated virtual support circles for participants to share their experiences and connect with one another in an emotionally supportive environment.

We also have and will continue to advocate to make sure you have the resources and measures in place necessary to protect educators and students in the classroom. Over the summer, we worked to ensure the Governor's Office of Emergency Services and the Department of General Services — including no-touch thermometers for every school and child care facility, face shields for every teacher and child care provider, and more than 14 million cloth face coverings for staff and students. As reflected in our June guidance document for the safe reopening of schools, we have said from the beginning that we believe we can only resume in-person learning when we know it is absolutely safe to do so.

In addition to physical health, our preparations to resume learning must also prioritize social-emotional and mental health supports for all. There is no question that students and teachers alike have endured and continue to deal with the intense emotional distress exacerbated by this pandemic. Many have experienced disconnection and depression. There is no playbook for the circumstances we are living in, but I am committed to securing the supports you and our students need to address the trauma experienced during this pandemic. We can't forget that the health and well-being of our educators is essential for student success.

There is nothing that can take the place of you and your role in a young person's education, and it is impossible to overstate the impact you have on our state's 6 million students. What you accomplish every day inspires us all. Thank you for your strength, sacrifice, resourcefulness, and deep commitment to our

A CRUCIAL BOND

Partnership between parents and teachers is essential for students' well-being

By **Celia Jaffe**, President, California State PTA



Celia Jaffe

DID YOU KNOW that 2020 is the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 13 mission? The one made famous by the Tom Hanks movie with the oft-quoted line “Houston, we have a problem.” Well, this pandemic is certainly a problem. 2020 is definitely a year that will be remembered, in the world generally and in education particularly. Like those astronauts, our flight path has altered, and it takes all our coordinated efforts to bring us through safely.

The bond and partnership between parents/caregivers and teachers in service of all our state’s children has never been more crucial than now. As we go “back to school” with most students likely not actually going to school, strong lines of communication and unity of purpose between home and school will be the basis for success in public education. Our combined voices are powerful on issues of health and safety protocols at schools, adequate funding for public education during COVID-19, and science-based decision-making during changing, challenging conditions.

From California State PTA to the smallest of our local school PTA units, PTA leaders and members collaborate, cooperate and communicate with teachers constantly. Schools that are closely tied in with their community have more successful students because of that valuable partnership. Knowing about a student’s home life gives a teacher insight into how to relate to that young person. Similarly, when parents are aware of school expectations, policies and communication channels, they are better equipped to support their child’s education. Add supportive local businesses and neighbors and you have a whole community looking out for the well-being of its children and supporting their education.

In advocacy, the partnership of PTA parents and teachers for education funding has been powerful in the past, and we hope it will be this fall. For several years, equity in education and racial justice issues have been a growing focus in PTA, as one of the founding members of the California Equity Leadership Alliance. The ballot measure

in November on affirmative action [Proposition 16] is another shared issue.

Recently our PTA statewide association adopted a resolution — written last fall by a local PTA unit — that commits to advocate for increased funding for and education about chronic disease and injury prevention. California children who grow up in poverty, especially disproportionately impacted children of color, are more likely to suffer from chronic diseases and to have increased risk for chronic health conditions such as asthma and obesity into adulthood. Increased rates of illness and future risk for chronic disease among children create a financial burden for families, schools and the state, but prevention funding has been shown to make a difference.

In addition to praising all the great local partnerships and mutual advocacy work that PTA and CTA have shared over the years, I do not want to miss conveying a more personal message. I appreciate and admire more than I can say the true calling that brings wonderful people into the teaching profession. In any given year, the loving care and professional dedication teachers bring to their classrooms daily is amazing. My children learned from exemplary humans in California public schools, as did I, and our lives are better for that.

In the extraordinary year of 2020, the “Houston, we have a problem” year, I add to my well of gratitude because we are all operating in a changed world. Teachers and parents know both the difficulty and the importance of “getting it right” in these conditions while continuing to make learning happen. My thanks to each and every one of you for what you do. You mean the world to all our children. ■

“I appreciate more than I can say the true calling that brings wonderful people into the teaching profession.”

Class Act

DISTANCE THOUGHTS

Maintaining focus on students amid an uncertain future

By **Julian Peebles**



Morning Brew/Unsplash

PREPARING FOR THE new school year has probably never been more complicated. As the state continues to fight the growing COVID-19 pandemic, local associations and school districts across California are spending summer negotiating just what it will look like when instruction resumes next academic year. And while how best to maintain student and educator safety is an ongoing discussion, it appears certain that distance-learning will continue for most if not all school districts for 2020-21.

All of education jumped into the deep end of the distance learning pool last year when schools closed abruptly in response to the pandemic. We asked educators from a variety of disciplines to share some of the experiences and advice moving forward in a remote learning environment.

ESPS NEED A SEAT AT THE TABLE

KENDALL GRIFFIN

*Ventura Education Support Professionals Association
Ventura Adult and Continuing Education*

REOPENING SCHOOLS NEEDS to be a group and community effort, and those are the parties that should have input in the process. As an ESP, I know that we are left out of most, if not all, big decision-making discussions, but hopefully not this time. We ESPs will be implementing a majority of the critical processes in reopening schools — including transporting, greeting, feeding, advising, directing, and most of all cleaning!

Whether the plan is staggered/block scheduling, half-days or altered days, the most important step is to start this discussion with everyone. Stop laying off the people that we will need to implement this effort and make it work. I believe that we need teams of parents, ESPs, teachers and administrators by grade level and school site to break down what is needed and the steps to take to implement them.



Kendall Griffin

“Stop laying off the people that we will need to implement [reopening schools] and make it work.”

MEETING STUDENTS' SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL NEEDS

BARRY ROTH *San Juan Teachers Association
Encina Preparatory 6-12 High School*

BEING RESPONSIVE to our students' social-emotional needs has been very challenging during distance learning. Building relationships is embedded in how our teachers approach all aspects of our craft, but in this void it became glaringly clear that we would struggle to fully support our kids. It was and remains painful to acknowledge that.

School staff is adept at reading body language and listening for clues even in a short exchange, let alone what we learn through more extended in-person exchanges. Distance learning doesn't allow for this insight. Additionally, the consistent structure that school provides is grounding for many.

During distance learning or a hybrid model, some of the same structures can still play: consistent synchronous lessons, office hours and academic expectations, to name a few. Checking in directly with students via text, email or phone to let kids know that you care and are still there. Asking open-ended questions to allow them time to talk about how they're maneuvering through this. Open-ended questions on assignments can also work. When posting assignments, it's critical to include that you miss them, care about them, and are there if they need anything — you can't do this too much.

Providing students with resources and lessons around self-care and advocating for themselves and family and friends is key. For kids who were receiving services, we tried to keep counseling and groups going virtually; for those who weren't comfortable with this format, it's important to [remind them] that support is still available.

In the end, it's brutally hard, knowing that it's not as easy to provide support. So, we rethink, retool and find new ways.



Barry Roth

“When posting assignments, it’s critical to include that you miss them, care about them, and are there if they need anything — you can’t do this too much.”

LOTS OF RESOURCES FOR MATH, BUT DON'T FORGET FUN

TIFFANY SCOTT *Chula Vista Educators
Rogers Elementary School*

FOR DISTANCE LEARNING in spring of 2020, I taught fifth grade. My primary goal was to make it as “normal” as possible, so I planned activities similar to how we did things in the classroom. I met with my students on Microsoft Teams twice daily; however, some of my students had technology limitations and time restrictions, so I also recorded and uploaded videos for students to access at their convenience. I was also available to students throughout the day to meet on Teams if they needed more support.

For daily spiral review, I used Daily Math Practice, Grade 5 from Evan-Moor Corp. I scanned each week's packet into Teams and OneNote on Sunday nights. Students would put their responses into OneNote each day, and I would upload a key, record a solutions video, and provide feedback to their responses daily.

I also utilized the online program i-Ready, which provides standards-based video lessons and activities. The students had to be on for at least 20 minutes a day to work on their “My Path” (lessons planned for them based on their midyear assessment) and teacher-assigned lessons based on grade-level standards. Other online programs I had available to the students if they wanted were ST Math and Prodigy.

To have a little fun during this difficult time, I also incorporated some math brain teasers. We always did these live together, and the students really enjoyed them.



Tiffany Scott

“To have a little fun during this difficult time, I incorporated math brain teasers. We always did these live together, and the students really enjoyed them.”



PRIORITIZE COLLABORATION WITH JOURNALISTIC LEARNING

TAUNYA JACO

San Jose Teachers Association
Hoover Middle School

“When students are guided to learn based on their own curiosities, they learn to think critically, become more engaged, develop their communication skills, and build their confidence.”

I BELIEVE THAT every experience is an opportunity to learn. We as educators must model what it looks like to be a lifelong learner for our students. Nearly every family statewide has the means to access information online, which means that it is not up to me to impart knowledge, but rather to coach students on how to think critically about the world and navigate the overwhelming amount of information.

I found that one of the best techniques during this time of distance learning is to take a journalistic approach. Journalistic learning (journalisticlearning.com) can be used across content matter, and it empowers students to take the lead in their learning. It prioritizes inquiry, collaboration (even digitally), and requires students to



Taunya Jaco

produce a media project to show what they've learned. When students are guided to learn based on their own curiosities, they not only learn to think critically, but they also become more engaged, develop their communication skills, and build their confidence.

I recommend trying this approach with current events, which allows students the opportunity to process what's happening in the world around them as they are experiencing it. In my class, students also create their own online portfolios using Google Sites, showing off what they learned by publishing a blog on their website and then receiving feedback from their peers. The idea is to teach students how to ask open-ended questions so that they can lead their learning through inquiry, provide them with choice, allow them to investigate based on their interest, make connections, and then share their findings by publishing their work.

SUPPORT COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS' UNIQUE NEEDS

DOROTHY REINA

Riverside Community College District Faculty Association
Norco College and Victor Valley College

“There are two bits of advice I took to heart: Be flexible and don't expect perfection of yourself or your students.”

THE CLOSURE OF classrooms necessitated a quick reconstruction of classes and a move to online teaching. I was fortunate because I had already been teaching a combination of online and face-to-face classes. However, many of my colleagues were learning Canvas for the first time — and they had one week to learn it and make their classes student-ready!

But all my classes were impacted by the closures. Why? Because the lives of my students changed. The dual-enrolled high school students now had to migrate from one online class to seven or eight online classes. My other students had to juggle family, work, school, and now teaching responsibilities, since their children were also receiving their education via an online platform. In many cases, my students also found themselves having to work longer hours, especially those working in grocery stores, delivery services and the medical professions. The time they normally set aside for class no longer existed. In other cases, students found themselves out of work and wondering how they were going to survive.

There are two bits of advice I took to heart: Be flexible and don't expect perfection of yourself or your students. My original syllabus for each class underwent various iterations throughout the remainder of the course. Some assignments work great in a face-to-face setting, but don't translate well online. This is where flexibility came into play. In some cases, this meant extending deadlines for assignments, eliminating assignments or rewriting them to alleviate some of the stress students were experiencing.

In the end, how did we all fare? Well, there were some students who felt overwhelmed and made the decision to drop the class and take it when life became less stressful. For the most part, the students hung in there and made it to the end of the semester!



Dorothy Reina

THE WORLD IS YOUR STUDENTS' LABORATORY

STEPHEN GORGONE

*Santa Ana Educators Association
Santa Ana High School*

“We can have students investigate problems in their environments and develop ways of solving them without the need of the laboratory.”

SINCE ENGAGING STUDENTS with in-class labs, investigations and dissections is not possible in this environment, we are forced to find other ways. We could have students ask and investigate questions about phenomena in their surroundings while learning about themselves and their environments. Students can be asked to go on walks and observe phenomena or organisms from nature they did not notice before. We can have them investigate problems in their environments and develop ways of solving them without the need of the laboratory. We can help students design experiments they can run on their own with resources available to try and answer questions and solve problems in their environments.



Stephen Gorgone

We can also use Zoom or Google Meets to create community discussions and breakout rooms of small groups where students talk like scientists about what they are learning while they collaborate on their investigations and problem-solving. This allows the students to act, think and behave like scientists without the normal four-walled classroom we are so familiar with.



Shannon Ladwig

Authentic Connections Still the Core of Teaching

SHANNON LADWIG

*Hacienda La Puente Teachers Association
Newton Middle School*

WHEN MARCH 13 happened and suddenly my students were not returning to the classroom, I was not returning to the classroom, I was at a loss on what to do. But I knew I could not under any circumstances lose my connections, my relationships, with these kids. So before I started to create online lessons, I stuck with what I knew — connect and stay connected. Staying connected to students and families, providing strong online programs, recording lessons, and bringing in fun activities worked for my students.

CONNECT

My distance learning began with making sure all my students replied to Google Classroom. Getting them to do the work would become a challenge, but having them reply with a simple “I’m here” or “I’m connected” worked wonders. I made my first post like this on March 14 and sent home a Remind to parents. A few weeks after the shutdown, I noticed attendance dropping and incomplete assignments rising, so I posted a meme about how I felt regarding the pandemic and asked students to reply with a meme of their own using a free meme generator such as Imgflip, and guess what? Over 75 percent of my 140 students responded. Why? I think for the same reasons that students typically do well in class — they felt connected, interested, and it challenged them.

LET STUDENTS LEAD

Finding online sites/programs was not the challenge. Learning how to use and teach them was another thing. One takeaway is that many students at the middle school level need little direct instruction — they want to dive in and on more than one occasion they taught the teacher. Of course,



they received public shout-outs, which created more drive to be the first one to “get it” and share it with the class. We must be courageous enough to provide online programs to our students and know that we will learn this like we have learned every other platform, program, and new pedagogy that comes each year.

RECORD LESSONS

Recording lessons and then following up live on Zoom or through Google Classroom allowed me to teach a complete lesson while also allowing students to pause and rewind when necessary. Topics included the writing formats such as RACES, grammar, and pro/con articles. Have students do something while reading, i.e., highlight, annotate, answer questions in the chat bar (if using Zoom), stop and ask questions — the same strategies we would use in the classroom. Recordings were posted on Google Classroom with handouts or resources. Students were expected to watch the lessons and complete the work for the following Zoom meeting. During the Zoom meeting I would go over the assignment, answer questions, and give students the opportunity to discuss. Students who had questions prior to the Zoom meeting would ask them on the assignment thread.

“While this challenge is like no other, the solution is the same, and we need to remember, we got this!”

ONLINE PROGRAMS

Find online programs that will help you teach or grade or both. [I used] CommonLit, a free online literature/reading comprehension program. I assigned several articles/readings per week. There was a pattern — assign, instruct, and give feedback. I strongly recommend this program for the abundance of reading selections, multiple-choice questions, and the constructed response exemplar answers that are provided.

CHANGE UP

Like everything else, once the novelty of a new program wore off, I had to get creative. Cue the next new-to-me program, Flipgrid! The students loved it! This program allows students to record themselves and then post it on the Flipgrid site. They can view other students’ Flipgrids, comment on them, and even give stars (similar to likes on Facebook). Students wanted to make sure that their videos were worth watching, so they invested the time to think out their answers.

We have been challenged every year with new schedules, new students, new programs, and more. While this challenge is like no other, the solution is the same, and we need to remember, we got this! So, connect with students and their families and get those Google Classrooms, Zoom meetings, and Remind Class Codes set up, because you are about to have the biggest impact on students this year, and they will remember you and this time forever. ■



WHEN SHANNON LADWIG

noticed students’ attention flagging online, she posted the meme above, saying, “We are all having mixed emotions right now and can probably identify feeling like each of these characters... strong, weak, smart, not so smart, daring, shy, goofy, angry, joyful, sad, and happy.” She asked students to make a similar meme and most did; samples below.



Our members have heart

BACK TO SCHOOL MAY NOT BE THE SAME
BUT OUR DEDICATION TO **OUR MEMBERS** REMAINS

Adelanto Elementary School District • Alta Loma School District • Apple Valley Unified School District • Baker Valley Unified School District • Baldy View Regional Occupational Program • Barstow Community College District • Barstow Unified School District • Bassett Unified School District • Bear Valley Unified School District • Beaumont Unified School District • BestNet JPA • Brea-Olinda Unified School District • CAHELP JPA • Central School District • Centralia School District • Chaffey Community College District • CharterSAFE • Chino Valley Unified School District • College & Career Advantage • Colton Joint Unified School District • Colton-Redlands-Yucaipa Regional Occupational Program • Copper Mountain Community College District • Covina-Valley Unified School District • Cucamonga School District • East San Gabriel Valley Regional Occupational Program • East Whittier City School District • Encinitas Union School District • Etiwanda School District • Excelsior Charter School • Fontana Unified School District • Helendale School District • Hemet Unified School District • Hesperia Unified School District • Laguna Beach Unified School District • Lucerne Valley Unified School District • Morongo Unified School District • Mt. Baldy Joint School District • Mountain View School District • Needles Unified School District • North Orange County Regional Occupational Program • Ontario-Montclair School District • Oro Grande School District • Ramona Unified School District • Rialto Unified School District • Rim of the World Unified School District • Riverside Community College District • Riverside Unified School District • San Bernardino City Unified School District • San Bernardino Community College District • San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools • San Marino Unified School District • Santee School District • Savanna School District • Silver Valley Unified School District • South Pasadena Unified School District • Southern Kern Unified School District • Summit Leadership Academy • Victor Elementary School District • Victor Union High School District • Victor Valley Community College District • Westminster School District • Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District

California Schools JPA

RISK MANAGEMENT EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

csjpa.org | (909) 763-4900



READY TO ROLL

With flexible planning, easily turn your classroom to virtual, in-person or blended

By Katie Hicks, Sarah Schroeder

AS TEACHERS, we're planners — it's just who we are. Many school districts have announced they will be distance learning in the fall, but beyond that it's unclear. How do we plan when we don't know what to plan for?

There are a few things educators can do now, even after the start of the school year. First, remind yourself that you are resilient. Your students are resilient. Be confident that you can be present for your students no matter what. When you are intentional about building in flexible components from the start of the year, students' experiences will be better.

Then, set up your classroom to operate in all ways: face-to-face, remote, and blended (a combination of both). Know that you may use all these methods at some point this year.

Here is a guide.

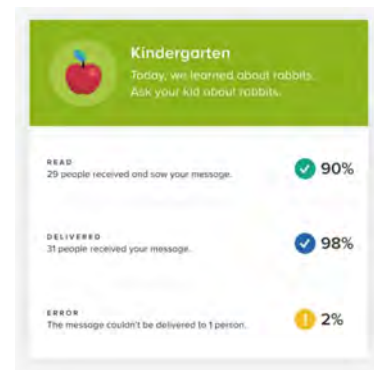
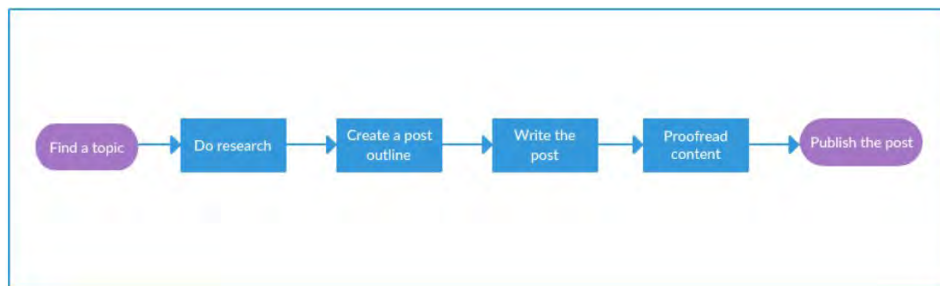
"When you are intentional about building in flexible components from the start of the year, students' experiences will be better."

BUILD A COMMUNICATION PLAN

Chances are that you experienced communication challenges at some point last year. Reflect on those challenges.

- **Write out a plan:** In stormy seas, your parents, students and colleagues will look to you to guide the ship into harbor.
- **Broadcast it:** Remind students and parents how and when you will be communicating. Your plan should set the foundation for all other communication.
- **Keep communication consistent:** Follow through with your plan. Initially, this may involve extra work. However, as soon as something changes, you'll be glad you made the effort.
- **Consider alternatives to email:** Text services like Remind limit characters and focus messaging. Also, texts are a lifeline for families who rely on mobile devices for access.

Process maps (example below by Creately) help with scheduling or learning and establish consistency for you and students. Text services such as Remind (right) help you connect with families.



“A discovery activity allows students to learn how to use a tech tool before tackling content learning and lets teachers set expectations from the start.”

ORGANIZE CONTENT

Keep in mind that your online learning environment should support your face-to-face instruction — and vice versa. When they complement each other, both are stronger.

Guidelines for instruction:

1. Organize content into chunks: units, modules, or weeks.
2. Create structure inside these chunks.
3. Keep the structure consistent.
4. Include all elements of instruction inside a chunk (pre-assessment, inquiry, instruction, practice, assessment).

Once your online content is organized, think about how you can combine online chunks with face-to-face instruction. In *The Perfect Blend*, Michele Eaton provides excellent daily and weekly checklists that work to keep students and teachers organized and bolster learning in both spaces.

CONSTANTLY EVALUATE YOUR TOOLBOX

After completing a chunk, reflect on the digital tools you used. Ask yourself: Did I have the right tools for the task? Were students able to meet instructional objectives?

When we use the wrong tool, we know immediately: The objective falls flat. When we use the right tool, the tool is invisible. It's easy and intuitive, and it enhances instruction.

Review your toolbox, deleting tools that don't work well for you and your students. Keep in mind that a tool that may be right for your colleague may not be right for you or your classroom — and that's OK.

PLAN ACTIVITIES TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS IN ANY SPACE

To help students build peer relationships online, give them a real reason to be present.

Build a positive classroom community by integrating digital citizenship lessons, and rework your online meetings to offer authentic learning experiences that build relationships. Assign team roles to engender a sense of purpose, and bring in guests to help students make real-world connections.

The best relational activities are ones that allow students

to shine as individuals. You might have students build an “All About Me” Pinterest board or Google slide and/or create a class scavenger hunt, and then review the results as a group.

DESIGN DISCOVERY ACTIVITIES FOR KEY TECHNOLOGY TOOLS

A discovery activity allows students to learn how to use a tool before tackling content learning and also allows teachers to have conversations about expectations from the start.

A discovery includes three parts: a teacher-led tutorial on how to use the tool, an outline of expectations for both students and instructors, and a low-stakes task in which students can practice using the tool.

Inside a discovery, make sure you allow room for conversation; in this process of students talking to each other and to you, you can preemptively solve any problems before deploying the tool.

If you don't know where to start, begin by listing the top three tools you use in your classroom. Next, plan a discovery for each tool. Then think about where you can embed your discoveries into your instruction.

CREATE ROUTINES THAT ARE CONSISTENT ACROSS ALL SPACES

Whether online or face-to-face, build a consistent routine for students with opportunities for choice and self-pacing.

Here's a routine for any environment:

1. Check announcements.
2. Complete morning check-in.
3. Open module and begin first task.

Once built, illustrate these processes with graphic organizers like process maps. Post these inside your learning management system (LMS) and physical classroom and attach them to announcements. Most important, minimize change as much as possible — students need consistency now more than ever. ■

This story originally appeared on [Edutopia.com](https://www.edutopia.com).



BE A BETTER VIRTUAL TEACHER

Tips for distance learning from a few pros

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin

BACK IN MARCH, educators had very little time to prepare for a huge shift. When the pandemic struck, they sheltered in place and switched to online teaching from home. Some made the transition easily. Others struggled, but valiantly stepped up.

This fall, most schools will continue to offer online classes — or a blend of distance learning and social-distancing classroom instruction. To help educators build upon their experiences and continue to foster student success, we asked six experts to share their best practices for online learning. They have presented at CUE (Computer-Using Educators) conferences and provided professional development to colleagues in this area. Here are their tips for staying organized, keeping students engaged, building relationships, and more.



KIM VOGUE

*Association of Placentia-Linda
Educators*

Fifth grade teacher at Van Buren Elementary, who served as an instructional coach for seven years. She is a Google Certified Trainer and has completed Leading Edge Online and Blended Teacher Certification and International Society for Technology in Education Certification.



BHAVINI PATEL

Palm Springs Teachers Association

Informational technology TOSA for Palm Springs Unified and former fifth grade teacher at Two Bunch Palms Elementary. She is a Google Certified Trainer and Apple Teacher, and has completed National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers (NETS-T) certification.

- **For productive Zoom classes**, start with teaching “netiquette” (see sidebar) and set high expectations. Students may need multiple opportunities to practice and positive reinforcement for successful online experiences. Break content into smaller chunks, and include multimedia in your instruction, just like in the classroom.
- **When it comes to fostering engagement**, I love that Zoom has the whiteboard feature to annotate on screen share. Zoom breakout rooms allow students to communicate and collaborate on projects. I like how the host (teacher) can jump in among the different breakout rooms during their Zoom session, to monitor student progress and answer questions.
- **It’s important to hold online office hours** for both parents and students. Using tools like Google Calendar or youcanbook.me for appointment slots makes the scheduling easy. It’s imperative to check in with students for their social and emotional needs. Parents can schedule appointments to discuss their own needs — including support with technical aspects or to discuss strengths and weaknesses their child is facing in relation to remote learning.

“Students may need multiple opportunities to practice and positive reinforcement for successful online experiences.”



Virtual Meeting Netiquette

HAVE YOUR STUDENTS follow simple guidelines to get the most out of Zoom or Google Meet classrooms:

- Find a quiet area, free from distractions and busy backgrounds, for your video conference.
- When you enter the video call (Zoom, Meet, etc.) always mute yourself. Keep your microphone on mute, if you aren’t talking.
- Think before you type or speak, just as you would in real life.
- Stay focused and engaged. Pay attention to your teacher or other students who are speaking.
- Display appropriate behavior and digital citizenship.

—Bhavini Patel

“Sometimes online, we tend to make every lesson about content or subject matter, but we should also have fun together.”

- **Build relationships.** Make sure kids have a way to communicate with you and feel supported and cared about. Sometimes online, we tend to make every lesson about content or subject matter, but we should also have fun together. Zoom can be their time to be social together. Ask them to “check in.” Play games with Quizizz or Gimkit.
- **Have an organized delivery system**, whether you are using Google Classroom or another learning management system. I use a weekly planner on Google Slides so I can lay out the scope of the week for students and parents. It avoids chaos when students can see what is expected during the week, and it helps teachers stay organized, too.
- **Keep it simple.** You don’t need to make it grandiose or complicated. Find that happy place where kids know what to do. There is a temptation to do full-on project-based learning. But ask yourself whether students have the resources at home to do that. Do they have a parent to help them? Keep it real. With online learning during a pandemic, there may be limitations.



ADAM JUAREZ
Cutler-Orosi Unified
Teachers Association



History teacher and tech integration coach for one middle school and two high schools in Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District. He is a Google Certified Trainer.

“When students speak about or listen to something before writing about it, you will see improvement in their writing.”

- **Help English learners** by using programs that emphasize speaking and listening. I use Flipgrid, so students can make videos of themselves. When they can speak about something or listen to something before writing about it, you will see improvement in their writing.
- **Try frontloading vocabulary for English learners.** This means teaching words and their meanings before students read them in a text. I use Quizlet for this, which is like digital flashcards on steroids; you can make interactive games that engage them. It gives them 20 minutes before we start lessons to get familiar with the words, and it's more fun than memorization. Also, for kids who have trouble pronouncing words, it includes a live review game that helps.
- **Encourage blogging.** Blogging with Google is easy for teachers to organize and manage. It allows kids to reflect and journal on what is happening around them during this odd time of life in a pandemic. It's an informal way of getting writing into the curriculum. It's a time stamp for teachers to see when a student is working and to see how things are going in their lives. And it's a way for students to share and feel more connected with each other, if they choose to share their blog with other students.

KYMBERLY TAYLOR
Moreno Valley Educators
Association



African American Parent Involvement Specialist for Moreno Valley Unified School District and presenter at the California Association of African-American Superintendents and Administrators conference on online learning.

“Changing the virtual background [on Zoom] is a way to create equity and not invade a student's privacy.”

- **Reach out to parents** through text, email or social media. Record and send lessons to them. Host a Zoom meeting for them. They need to understand the work their students are doing so they can help. If you can't connect with parents, reach out and ask if everything is OK. You may find that something happened in the home and that they need resources. Some parents have lost their jobs, and families need housing or food. The trickle-down effect of reaching out to parents, referring them to resources and letting them know you care also helps students.
- **Address equity gaps.** With online learning, the gaps are widening. We know many of our kids still do not have access to the internet, even though our district provides hot spots and Chromebook computers. Make sure students and their parents know how they can connect to these resources and take advantage of them. Be mindful that on Zoom you may be showing inequities in the home. Changing the virtual background is one way to create equity and not invade a student's privacy.
- **Help students who are struggling.** Don't give them excuses, give them resources. Virtual instruction can be impersonal, because you can't shake their hand or welcome them to your classroom. So do that personal touch virtually. Meet with them on Zoom or Google Meet if they need some extra help, which includes tutoring. Sometimes you have to go the extra mile.

MY NGUYEN

*Upland Teachers
Association*

Science teacher and
technology lead at
Upland High School.



**“If students
can’t be there
in real time, I
record myself so
they can watch
me teaching. The goal is fostering
learning and understanding.”**

- **Offer flexibility.** Some students work and take care of younger siblings. Some share a computer, Wi-Fi and internet. So teachers need more flexibility in distance learning than when students are in school full time. That might mean having Zoom time in the afternoon because older students sleep in. Or allowing students to take a picture with their phone of work they have completed with pencil and paper and sending it in. Or making sure that all of the things you post can be accessed on their phone, because not all kids have computers and printers.
- **Offer choices.** I use synchronous learning for direct instruction on Zoom, and asynchronous learning when I post assignments on Google Classroom, and students do it within a certain amount of time. If they can't be there in real time, I record myself so they can watch me teaching. The goal is fostering learning and understanding. You don't want to penalize students who can't attend. For asynchronous learning, I suggest making resources available for students to review and assess their understanding, such as videos, tutorials, self-assessing games (Kahoot!, Quizlet, Quizizz), virtual simulations, labs and readings.
- **Create a routine.** First, I check in with them and send positive messages. Then I play a short video where I taped myself or show them another video that applies to what we are learning. Then some reading. Then there's an application piece they can practice. I find a simulation or game or lab that allows practice. I host games on Kahoot! that are competitive and fun, to test their understanding. Kids need a routine for online learning just like in the classroom.

COREY COBLE

*Dry Creek Teachers
Association*



Seventh grade science,
history and STEM teacher
at Creekview Ranch
School in Roseville.

**“On social media and in
your professional networks,
don’t be afraid to ask questions
or see if someone else has done
the research.”**

- **Embrace spreadsheets.** It sounds geeky, but it is a very powerful way to keep track of information quickly and easily. You can use one spreadsheet to track participation, enter formative and summative data, and see where you need to focus your attention as a teacher. For me, it's a one-stop shop to put all my information in one place. It doesn't have to be fancy. Think of it as a checklist to keep track of your students and everything else.
- **Seek feedback from students.** I use Google Classroom and Google Forms to collect information from students and connect with them. First, I ask them how they have been and what they have been doing. Then I ask if they have been “getting it” when it comes to what I've been teaching. This feedback is very powerful, and you can target students to see if they need resources or extra help. With student feedback, you can evaluate your teaching and delivery of instruction.
- **Reach out to your network,** whether it's on Twitter, social media or your professional network at school. Don't be afraid to ask questions or see if someone else has done the research. Listen to podcasts. Sign up for short 45-minute workshops with CUE (cuel.org). Attend a virtual ed camp. But don't just listen and learn. Share, share, share. If you have an idea, put it out there! ■

ALL SYSTEMS GO

The right digital home base can keep students — and you — on track and on task

By **Sarah Schroeder**

WHEN REMOTE LEARNING hit, I was ready. My daughter had been in online school for three years. I teach technology integration. But during this time, our family struggled. I found that my son, a straight-A student in a traditional school setting, got distracted, lost track of assignments, and struggled academically.

So what happened? And what would help students like him? It seems to me that we teachers can use our learning management system (LMS) — Canvas, Schoology, Google Classroom, etc. — to build a digital home base for our learners. Grounding design in a delicate combination of empathy and simplicity, we can use our LMS to build community, increase usability, and keep everyone on track and on task.

Start with empathy

Empathy in design is crucial. No matter what we prefer as tool selection or ways to submit assignments, we must consider empathic, student-centered choices that we can make. In the end, student-centered design will make it easier for the teacher, too.

First, create a place that houses everything learners and families need. A checklist with links or a week at a glance on your home page or via email is a solid start, but shouldn't be all you offer. This spring, many learners and families had to visit multiple learning platforms, emails, websites and tools to find, complete and submit online activities. This proved exceedingly difficult for most, as did the lack of consistency from week to week.

Look at the online learning experiences you offer from



A digital week-at-a-glance can house everything students and families need. Credit: Slidesmania

the perspective of your learners. Are they simple, and do they make navigation easy? Do they support learning and build community? If you ask these key questions as you design, the experiences will be better for everyone.

A virtual bitmoji classroom by Kait C. at [WeAreTeachers.com](https://www.weareteachers.com).



Build community

A common concern is feeling disconnected in online learning. We don't want learners to feel like they are engaging with a computer. They are engaging with each other. With you. With content.

Use empathy in design to choose tools that build connection and integrate seamlessly into your LMS. For example, Edpuzzle, Pear Deck and Seesaw allow you to link to or embed your voice and interactive content into your LMS. Flipgrid lets learners reflect together and hear each other's voices asynchronously. Use discussion boards to field questions, allow peer review, and convert class discussion strategies to an asynchronous platform to deepen reflection.

Create an easy entry point in your online course that shows your personality and organizes resources for learners. This might include a Bitmoji classroom, clickable PDF, or interactive week-at-a-glance, all of which help direct learners to what is important.

If your district or school offers a template for your landing page, use it and personalize it for you and your learners. Add in regular communication about how to be successful and celebrate student wins here. And most important, be empathetic — understand that this is new for most, and flexibility is needed.

Practice good design

Keeping your home base simple decreases cognitive load and increases working memory. Design your online classroom to provide a single place for daily or weekly updates, learning materials, assignments, activities, meeting links, grades, feedback, and everything else they need.

Organize everything in clean, simple chunks with limited clicks so that everyone can quickly and easily see what's expected. Apply these design best practices to avoid barriers to learning:

- Use bullets and lists; avoid paragraphs.

- Pay attention to font legibility; avoid fun or fancy fonts that aren't readable.
- Limit the number of fonts; avoid using more than one font for headings and one for paragraphs.
- Use color for emphasis, but avoid having more than two text colors.
- Use contrasting colors; avoid light on light or dark on dark text.
- Use clean, simple page layouts; avoid mixing up your structure day to day.
- Use images that reinforce key concepts; avoid images that aren't meaningful.
- Use icons to reinforce key tasks; avoid clip art, patterns or backgrounds that distract.
- Limit navigation to a couple of clicks; avoid folders inside folders.

Commit to consistency

If your school offers templates for your LMS, embrace them. Talk with colleagues to build consistency across your team, building or district. Fewer questions and better demonstrations of learning will be the result, improving everyone's experience. Some guidelines for consistency: Repeat icons for learners to quickly see what they should do, create naming conventions for online folders (e.g., topic and date), and employ a small set of effective digital tools that are familiar to everyone.

Support learners

A well-designed home base can encourage students' confidence and autonomy. If everything they need is in one place, they will be able to find the help and support they need. This will also improve effort and help them stick with and complete tasks in the online and blended environment.

Consider providing students with more support by doing the following:

- Include school and district resources for families and students.
- Include supports benefiting all students, especially learners on IEPs and English learners.
- Prominently display goals and objectives.
- Provide alternatives to support individual differences.

Prioritizing student-centered design and leveraging your LMS as a home base are simple first steps to making sure that all learners can be successful, and that learning and community are front and center in our classrooms, no matter the learning environment. ■

This story originally appeared on [Edutopia.com](https://www.edutopia.com).



FORGING DIGITAL CONNECTIONS

Ready to bond with students you've never met? Read on.

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin



Kelcey Ellis

KELCEY ELLIS ALWAYS looks forward to meeting students on the first day of school. But this year will be different for Ellis, who teaches fourth and fifth graders with mild to moderate disabilities. Instead of greeting them at the door with a smile and personal interaction, she will begin the year online.

"Last year, when we transitioned to online learning during the pandemic, I had the benefit of already building strong rapport with my students," says Ellis, an education specialist at Jefferson Elementary School and member of the San Diego Education Association. "This year will be different and more of a challenge. But I am determined to build strong relationships with

new students so I'm not a stranger on a screen. I'm going to tackle this with love."

Ellis, like many CTA members, wonders how she can build relationships between herself and individual students online — as well as foster a strong relationship with her entire class. Also important to her is helping students connect to each other, by building community to decrease isolation.

In the following pages, we offer advice from CTA members who have been teaching online for years and have lots to say about forging connections from scratch with students ranging from kindergarten to college.



Jonathan Ausubel

JONATHAN AUSUBEL

*Chaffey College Faculty Association president,
Community College Association treasurer
English instructor at Chaffey College*

“I do anonymous surveys and ask students what is working well for them and what isn’t. I often take their ideas and incorporate them into instruction.”

—Jonathan Ausubel

- **Give students an unstructured place and time to meet.** I do this 10 minutes before class starts. It’s similar to students walking down the hallway and chatting before class so they can communicate with each other. From interacting within this space, they are more comfortable interacting together in class.
- **Ask thought-provoking questions.** Let’s say we’re reading “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe. I might ask: “Was the narrator insane at the time? Why or why not?” By asking a cognitive question they must respond to in writing, you can make sure that the whole class participates in every discussion, and that the students responding to their peers say more than “good job.” You can also tell a lot about individual students this way. Can they follow instructions? Do they have atrocious spelling and maybe dyslexia? Should they be referred for special services?
- **Ask for feedback and use their suggestions.** I do anonymous surveys throughout a semester and ask students what is working well for them and what isn’t. I often take their ideas and incorporate them into instruction. For example, if students say they are having trouble finding assignments, I will make them more conspicuous and let them know I appreciate their suggestion. It tells them: “You showed me a problem and I fixed it.” This makes for a stronger personal connection whether a student is 9 or 19.



Brianna Carroll

BRIANNA CARROLL

*California Virtual Educators United president
High school social studies teacher at California Virtual Academies*

- **Encourage office hours.** Some students won’t talk to teachers individually unless there is a reason, so give them a reason. Tell them to come in so you can grade their paper and go over the answers together. Offer extra credit for a few minutes of online help in an area they are struggling with. Let students know that you might be online, but you are *here* for them.
- **Sponsor fun activities.** Book clubs. Hobby clubs. Art clubs. Peer tutoring. Have students use the microphone to communicate with each other, in Zoom or other platforms in online rooms. Play games in programs like Kahoot! When learning is fun and collaborative, it builds relationships.
- **Make phone calls.** If someone is not responsive or engaging in the classroom, it’s best to check in by phone. Sometimes it’s better to call students and ask how they are doing, because doing all of your communication by email can lead to misunderstandings.





ANGELA BAUER YOUNG

California Virtual Educators United
Kindergarten teacher at California Virtual Academies

- **Reach out before school starts.** I send out postcards welcoming students to my classroom and letting them know we are going to have a fun year. Then I make an initial phone call to parents and ask to speak to their child. I ask how their summer was, if they have any pets, what their hobbies are, or what movies they like. I try to get to know a little bit about them so I can tie that into instruction when class begins.
- **Have students create posters or write profiles,** like “Hi, I’m Bob, my favorite food is hot dogs, I have four goats, and I like to play soccer.” Then I create a PowerPoint of what students have given me and show it on the first day of school so students can learn about each other.
- **Do fun things like “Pet Week”** where students can show their pets and talk about them online. Or they can share about their favorite stuffed animals and answer questions about them from other kids. Hold live dance parties on Fridays. Have virtual birthday parties. Or assign students jobs such as leading the flag salute, being the “weather person,” monitoring the calendar or “collecting” answers from everyone. These activities make students feel part of a community.

FOLA ODEBUNMI

United Faculty North Orange County CCD
Economics teacher at Cypress College

- **Welcome them warmly and set a positive tone.** I thank them for taking my class, acknowledge that COVID-19 creates many challenges, and let them know I understand they have a lot on their plate. I convey that we are all in this together. I tell them I am a grandmother, I’m good at listening, and that no question is stupid; the only stupid question is the one unasked. I let them know I’m collaborating with them so that they can reach their goals.
- **Encourage student-to-student communication.** At the beginning of each class, I encourage my students to introduce themselves and engage in a discussion with at least one other student on the class discussion board. I ask them to upload photos of themselves and connect with other students for extra credit. My goal is to create a classroom community through active participation.
- **Put them in groups.** I place students in groups of about six or seven. I will wait until after the first quiz. I don’t want to lump all the A’s together or all the C’s together. I want to mix them up so they can rely on each other and work on group projects. Sometimes students will say they are in an online class because they prefer working alone. I tell them I’m preparing them for the real world of business. They won’t be successful in isolation. They have to network and learn to get along with people. A tree does not make a forest.



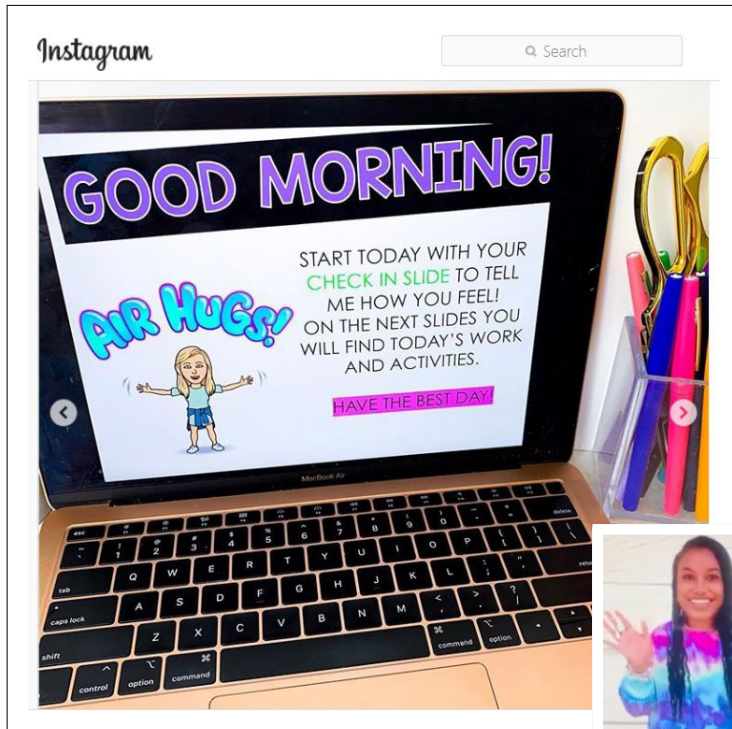
“I tell them I am a grandmother, I’m good at listening, and that no question is stupid; the only stupid question is the one unasked.”

—Fola Odebunmi

- **Provide feedback and encouragement.** If students did not do well on an exam, I tell them it’s not the end of the world and let them know there is online tutoring. I communicate with students who are doing well and say “great work.” If a student got a D on a test and then receives a B, I’ll say “fabulous” and congratulate them for improving. When my class is over, many students thank me for offering them encouragement. It’s a balancing act teaching online: You don’t want to overwhelm them. But you don’t want to leave them alone for too long. If you do, they may feel lost and alone. Staying connected is extremely important.

THINGS YOU ONLY SAY WHEN REMOTE TEACHING

@teachcreatemotivate



@learningwithlarkin



"It's hard to know if someone is in a seventh grade funk or something is really wrong, so I'm always checking in."

—Anna Cordero

ANNA CORDERO

California Virtual Educators United

Seventh grade math and history teacher at California Virtual Academies

- **Monitor interactions and behavior.** I keep binders for all of my students; it can be harder to keep track of everyone online. I might note that Suzy loves purple and use that in a lesson or connect with her by wearing purple. Or I may jot down that Johnny isn't talking at all. I might ask him to check in with me after class to make sure that everything is all right. It's hard to know if someone is in a seventh grade funk or something is really wrong, so I'm always checking in.
- **Use private messaging.** Let's say I'm doing a vocabulary lesson and see someone struggling. I can send them a private message and help them figure it out, or they can ask me a private question. It's a great way to build trust on Zoom or any live platform and help students keep up.
- **Create "community space" for students to share things.** You can ask simple questions like "What's your favorite snack?" to get discussions started. It paves the way for more meaningful discussions later, such as sharing that a family member is struggling with COVID or other challenges. In this way, students build trust and community with each other. They can also post artwork or poems to showcase their creativity.
- **Have hangout time.** My students and I go on virtual field trips and have movie afternoons. Last year students wanted to watch *Call of the Wild* together. They had to turn off their devices and I'd pause the movie and ask questions occasionally to make sure everybody was focused. It is a nice way to bond. ■



OKIOLCAM is the first document camera designed especially for educators.

TECH RECS FOR TEACHERS

Build your digital toolbox for distance learning

By **Julian Peeples**

WITH THE COVID-19 pandemic preventing safe in-person learning environments, educators across the state are looking for effective ways to engage students in the distance learning environment. No worries, we've got you covered.

We asked educators for their recommendations on the best websites, programs, apps and devices to build a digital toolbox and take distance learning to the fast lane. Here are the tools that rose to the top.



Classroom
Directions App



Random Group
Generator



Classroom
Music



Classroom Noise
Monitor



Think Pair Share



Random Student
Selector



Classroom Timer



Morning
Meeting App



ClassDojo: Build virtual classroom communities with ClassDojo, an app and website that connects primary school teachers, students and families. House all of your classroom tools in one place, give students a voice, and share special moments with parents. Various pricing and options, including a free version. [classdojo.com](https://www.classdojo.com)

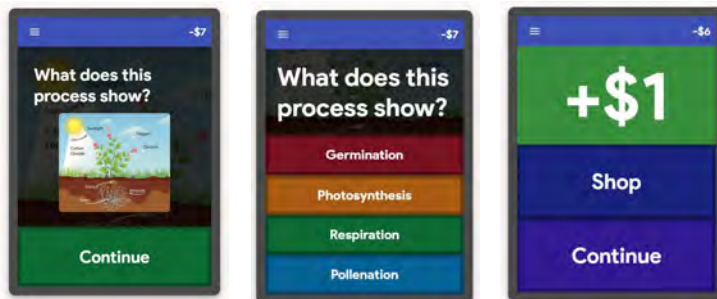
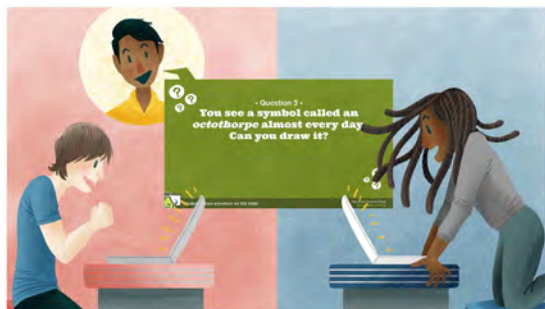
Desmos: With a slogan like “beautiful, free math,” Desmos is on a mission to help every student love learning math. With free online graphing and scientific calendars, and a variety of classroom activities to make numbers stick, this website and app also offers a middle school math program. desmos.com

Edpuzzle: Personalize video learning lessons by placing interactive content into videos from a variety of sources, including your own creations. Edpuzzle's interface allows educators to track student progress in real time. Free version available for educators and students. edpuzzle.com

Flipgrid: This video discussion platform allows students to engage with each other and the lessons, sharing their voices in videos they produce. Educators can create grids and add classroom topics like weekly reflections or book talks to spur student discussion and showcase what they're learning. Free for educators and students. info.flipgrid.com

Formative: This web-based student response and assessment tool was designed for teachers, providing the opportunity for educators to meet students where they are in real time. The browser-based platform works on any device and offers numerous options for individualized feedback. Basic versions are free, and premium and team options are available starting at \$12 a month. goformative.com

GeoGebra: Access online tools for graphing, geometry, 3D and more with GeoGebra, a suite of dynamic mathematics apps for teaching and learning math from middle school through college level. With more than 1 million free activities, simulations, exercises, lessons and games for math and science, GeoGebra brings together algebra, spreadsheets, statistics and calculus in one easy-to-use, open-source package. geogebra.org



↑ **Gimkit:** Created by a high school student, this gamification app allows educators to create quizzes and earn rewards to use in an in-game token economy. One interesting feature allows each student to contribute one question to a class quiz, giving them the chance to lead their own learning. Thirty-day free trial available, \$4.99 a month after. gimkit.com

InsightTimer: Don't forget to take care of you, too. Insight-Timer is a free, fun, connected way to support mindfulness breathing. Center yourself with more than 45,000 guided meditations. insighttimer.com

Kahoot!: Teach interactive lessons, collect student opinions, and foster creativity and teamwork through games on Kahoot! Create games in minutes, host live sessions, and assign student-paced challenges to enhance the distance learning experience. Pricing plans range from free to \$6 a month per teacher for the premium version. kahoot.com

Mote: This free Chrome extension allows users to add voice comments, emojis and other features to Google Classroom apps, Slides, Docs and Sheets. Quickly and easily make comments, and students will be able to listen to feedback in your voice! justmote.me

Mystery Science: Open-and-go lessons that inspire K-5 students to love science! Hands-on, NGSS-aligned lessons made by educators for educators. Free memberships available. mysteryscience.com

OKIOLAB: The first USB camera designed exclusively for education. Two different models of document cameras come with several dedicated apps and Google Chrome extensions, allowing seamless integration with many popular learning programs including Google Classroom and Flipgrid. okiolabs.com

← **Pear Deck:** Make Google Slides interactive using Pear Deck, billed as “the fastest way to transform presentations into classroom conversations.” This add-on enhances Slides presentations with the magic of formative assessments and interactive questions, as well as video, audio and animations. Basic version free, premium version available for \$150 a year. peardeck.com

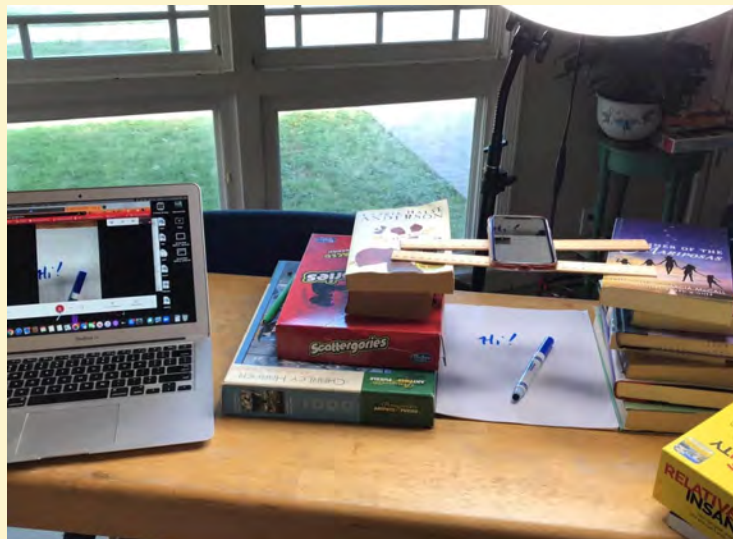


PollEverywhere: This web-based audience participation app allows educators to create polls for assessment to guide lessons, exam review, quizzes, team competitions and more. Students respond to these polls via text message, on the web or through Twitter — with the responses available real-time on the web or in a slide presentation. Free accounts with up to 40 participants available for educators. polleverywhere.com

Quizizz: Teach with easy-to-create quizzes that work on any device and gamify learning using Quizizz. Pick from millions of educator-created quizzes and live games that keep students engaged, or make your own. This free app is also fully integrated with Google Classroom, allowing educators to utilize it in conjunction with other tools. quizizz.com

Screencastify: This Chrome extension allows users to capture, record and share videos of their computer screens. These recordings can easily be shared via email, embedding code, YouTube and more. Free and premium versions available (full version is \$2 per month). screencastify.com

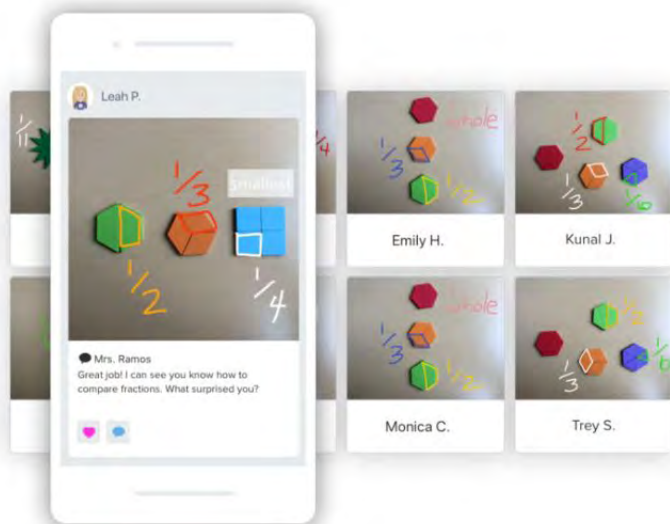
Angela Der Ramos' makeshift document camera setup.



Document Camera Lifehack

"After playing with a gazillion configurations, including using a clip-on document cam and an actual classroom doc cam, the easiest and most user-friendly setup was to have a computer for the class and rig an iPhone, using two stacks of books on either side of the projected page, two rulers across stacks, and balancing the phone on rulers."

—ANGELA DER RAMOS, *Alisal Teachers Association*



Seesaw: This website and app provides a simple way for educators and students to record and share what's happening in the classroom. Seesaw gives students an online journal to document their learning, be creative, and learn how to use technology, allowing them to customize it with photos, videos, drawings and notes. Basic version is free for educators and students with premium versions starting at \$120 a year. web.seesaw.me ■

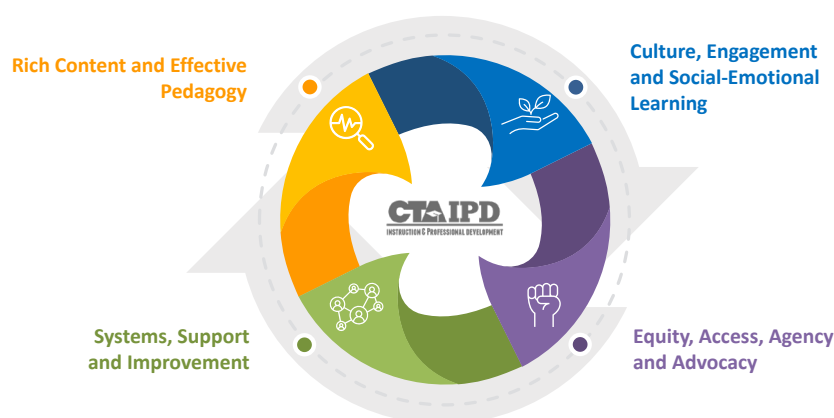
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Take advantage of CTA's wealth of resources to learn or refresh your knowledge of best distance teaching practices.

AFTER SCHOOLS CLOSED in March, CTA's Instruction and Professional Development (IPD) Department began offering webinars on best practices in distance learning and other digital teaching topics (see below). We asked webinar participants about additional training needs and gathered similar information from chapter leaders during CTA's Presidents Conference in July. With the results, IPD created four focus areas for a new distance learning initiative:

- Rich Content and Effective Pedagogy
- Culture, Engagement and Social-Emotional Learning
- Systems, Support and Improvement
- Equity, Access, Agency and Advocacy

DISTANCE LEARNING FOCUS AREAS



THE FIRST SERIES of webinars centered on these focus areas launched in early August and addressed subjects such as "Organizing Your Virtual Classroom" and "Building Connection and Culture." (Sessions offered separate tracks for elementary and secondary practitioners, as well as certificates of completion.) IPD is continuing to develop more essential trainings and resources throughout the fall — for the latest, go to cta.org/distancelearning.



More from CTA's Instruction & Professional Development



SPRING 2020 IPD webinars, most of them presented by experienced members, can be accessed at youtube.com/californiateachers; scroll down to the IPD playlist. Offerings include:

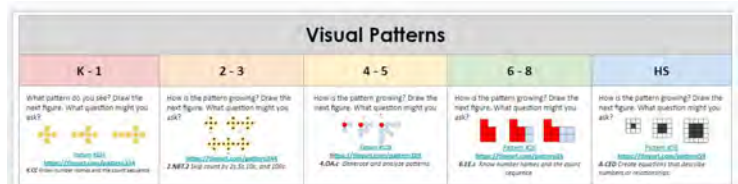
Distance Teaching and Learning

- Best Practices for Virtual Teaching, parts 1 and 2; *presenter: Nicole Piper*
- Elementary Classroom Management in a Virtual Setting; *presenter: Anna Cordero*
- Secondary Classroom Management in a Virtual Setting; *presenter: Anna Cordero*
- Teaching K-2 Virtually; *presenter: Angela Bauer*
- Virtual K-2 Lesson Planning; *presenter: Angela Bauer*
- Take Your K-2 Lessons and Move Them Online; *presenters: Angela Bauer, Karen Taylor*
- Online Math Assessments; *presenter: Amy Graza*
- 5-8 Middle School Math; *presenter: Lydia Catagna*
- Taking High School Math Online; *presenter: Andy Barrow*
- High School ELA Guerrilla Virtual Style; *presenter: Ian Jackson*
- K-8 Block Scheduling; *presenter: Anna Cordero*
- Teaching Reading Intervention Through Distance Learning; *presenter: Nicole Piper*
- Teaching Specialized Populations Virtually; *presenter: Anna Cordero*
- Teaching Students in a Mod/Severe Program — How To Set Up a Lesson; *presenter: Erin Brumm*
- Supporting SPED Students in General Ed; *presenter: Vicki Nelson*
- SEL in a Virtual Setting; *presenter: Will Henson*

CTA's Instructional Leadership Corps

ILC IS A CTA partnership with the National Board Resource Center at Stanford University and the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education. Its work is rooted in “teachers teaching teachers,” where educators (many of them CTA members) create and provide professional learning experiences to other educators and students. ILC offers a trove of useful webinar trainings focused on distance teaching and learning, a few of which follow (for the full list, see bit.ly/ILC-Webinars).

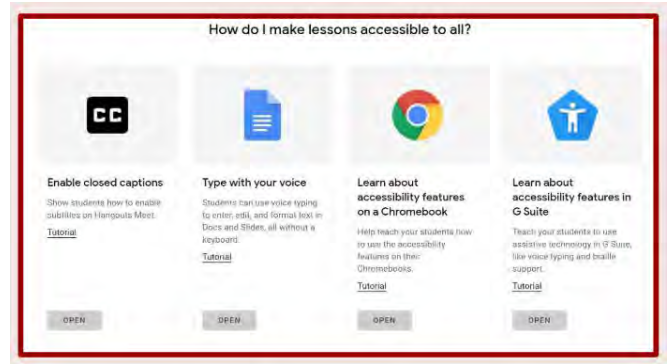
- Meaningful Mathematics in the Primary Grades in a Time of Distance Learning; *presenters: Claudine Phillips and Lita Rubio*
- MATHome: Making Everyday Counts!; *presenter: Ma Bernadette Andres-Salgarino*



Slide from “MATHome: Making Everyday Counts!”



Slide from "SEL in a Virtual Setting"



Slide from "Supporting SPED in General Ed"

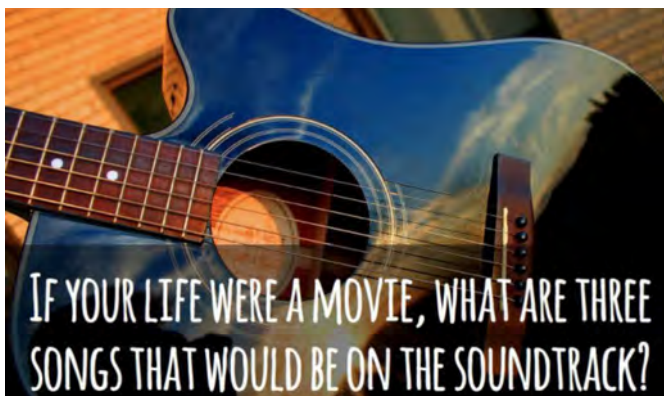
Additional Tools

- Communicating With Parents Virtually (secondary focus); *presenter: Anna Cordero*
- Communicating With Parents Virtually (elementary focus); *presenter: Anna Cordero*
- Transitioning From Brick & Mortar to Virtual Settings in the High School Special Education Programs; *panel discussion*
- Pear Deck 3 — ACT Math; *presenter: Kristan Morales*
- Using Nearpod (geared toward middle/high school); *presenter: Sophia Coria*
- Advice for Our New Normal: Using Zoom; *presenter: Jake Anderson*

- Remote Learning Easier With Google Classroom!; *presenter: Danesa Menge*
- Taking Care of Yourself in the COVID-19 Shutdown; *presenters: Angela Su, Karen Taylor*
- Video Tools (VideoNotes, pbslearningmedia.org and edpuzzle.com); *presenter: Karen Taylor*

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK!

Share your ideas on what professional practices work for you, or what your training needs are. Join our Facebook group "CTA Teaching, Learning and Life During COVID-19" to connect with colleagues now. (You can also email us at editor@cta.org.)



Slide from "Writing in History and ELA in a Time of Distance Learning"

- Reengaging Students to Encourage Attendance in Distance Learning (grades 5-12); *presenters: Myra Deister and Angela Stegall*
- Express Yourself! (through writing skills and art; grades TK-6); *presenters: Aba Ngissah and Tracy Doverspike*
- Writing in History and ELA in a Time of Distance Learning (grades 7-12); *presenters: Tanya Crawford and Mary Frances Spruce*
- Empowering English Learners Through the Lens of Universal Design for Learning; *presenters: Elizabeth Beltran and Brenda Nievas*
- Getting Through This Pandemic in a Healthy Way: Emotionally, Physically, Psychologically, and Spiritually; *presenters: Stephanie Guzman and Ed De La Vega* ■



VOTE IN SUPPORT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION, STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS

IN THIS YEAR'S general election, our lives and our future are at stake. It's clear we must help pass initiatives and elect lawmakers who support public education, students, educators and our communities. We must elect candidates and vote on propositions that advance equity and increase racial and social justice in our schools and communities.

It's going to take all of us working together to win — your vote makes a difference!

On these pages are our 2020 initiative recommendations. CTA makes recommendations on candidates and issues based on a transparent, democratic process (see sidebar). Check cta.org/election-2020 for a frequently updated list of recommendations, and find your personalized voter guide.

YES ON PROP. 16:

End the Ban on Affirmative Action

THERE HAS NEVER been a more critical time to reinstate equal opportunity as we chart a path forward to a stronger economic future for women and communities of color, and a California where Black Lives Matter and our systems are just. Pass Prop. 16 to:

- Ensure we can provide opportunity for good jobs, good wages, and quality schools for everyone
- Give everyone — no matter their racial or gender identity, or sexual orientation — an equal shot at success
- Start to fix wage discrimination (in 2020, women in California still earn only 80 cents for every dollar a man earns; women of color make significantly less)

Learn more at voteyesonprop16.org.



NO ON PROP. 20:

Early Release Rollback

TOO MANY RESOURCES

are invested in the lucrative prison-industrial complex that should instead be spent on rehabilitative/restorative programs in public schools. Prop. 20 adds crimes to the list of violent felonies banning early parole; recategorizes certain theft and fraud crimes from misdemeanor to felony; and requires DNA collection for certain misdemeanors. Join California educators to ensure social and racial justice permeate our governmental systems and structures. Our students and communities deserve an equal opportunity and fair opportunity. Learn more at noprop20.vote.





YES ON PROP. 15:

Schools & Communities First

FOR MORE THAN four decades, big corporations have not been paying their fair share in taxes, and funding for California's schools has fallen shamefully behind. California now has the most overcrowded classrooms in the U.S. and some of the worst ratios of students to counselors, librarians and nurses.

Homeowners, in fact, have borne the brunt of this unfair taxation.

Why did this happen? When Prop. 13 passed in 1978 to protect homeowners from erratic increases in their property tax bills, owners of commercial and industrial properties were able to take advantage of the same protections, and avoided paying their fair share for the public schools and local services that benefit all Californians. The result has been chronic disinvestment and underfunding, while corporations and wealthy investors benefit.

"This inequity as a result of corporate greed has had a catastrophic impact on our schools and communities, felt disproportionately in communities of color," says CTA President E. Toby Boyd.

Proposition 15 on the November

ballot would revoke Prop. 13's protection of business properties. Small business properties would be exempted, along with multiunit housing properties and agricultural land. All other business properties would be reassessed to current market value at least every three years.

Voting Yes on Prop. 15 will:

- **Reclaim** \$12 billion per year to fund world-class K-12 schools, community colleges and local communities.
- **Close** commercial property tax loopholes that corporations and wealthy investors use to avoid paying their fair share of property taxes.
- **Protect** all homeowners and renters by maintaining tax protections for *all* residential property.
- **Level** the playing field for all the businesses that already pay their fair share.
- **Ensure** strict accountability so that money goes directly to our schools and communities.

Yes on 15

SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES FIRST

Only **10%** of the biggest, wealthiest commercial properties will generate **92%** of the revenue

DID YOU KNOW?



- **Provide** one of the largest tax incentives in a generation to spur new investment in small businesses.

Prop. 15 ensures that our schools and communities come first — with the resources to educate all students and fund essential public services to support our families. Find out more and get involved at yes15.org.

NEW THIS YEAR: Vote by Mail

DUE TO THE pandemic, Gov. Gavin Newsom in May issued an executive order to mail a vote-by-mail (VBM) ballot to each voter prior to the Nov. 3 general election. (In-person voting locations will still be available.) There is no need to apply for a vote-by-mail ballot; any registered voter can vote by mail.

Ballots can be mailed in or dropped off in a number of ways. For details, go to sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-info. Important deadlines:

- Register to vote by Oct. 19; go to sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration.

- If you failed to receive or lost your vote-by-mail ballot, contact your county elections official by Oct. 27 to be sent another VBM ballot. After Oct. 27 you may present a written application in person to a county elections official.
- The VBM ballot must be postmarked on or before Nov. 3 and received by your county elections office no later than Nov. 6. You can also drop it off at your local polling place on Nov. 3 before polls close (poll hours are 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.).





NO ON PROP. 22: Slam the Brakes

Uber, Lyft and Doordash wrote Prop. 22 and paid to put it on the ballot for one reason: to boost their profits by continuing to unfairly deny their drivers wages, sick leave, workers' compensation and unemployment. It would allow these and similar companies to circumvent the law requiring them to treat their workers as employees rather than contractors.

Proponents say Prop. 22 is about your safety, but it actually weakens safety measures for riders and drivers. If companies truly wanted to help their drivers and the public, they'd be making sure workers have protective gloves, masks and equipment right now. Uber and Lyft also wrote in legal exemptions that eliminate required sexual harassment trainings and take away the right of drivers to file a sexual harassment claim.

Learn more at slamthebrakes.org.

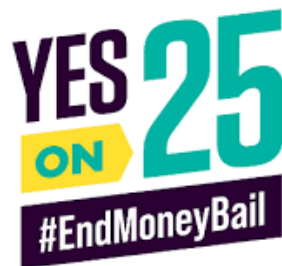


YES ON PROP. 25: Make California's Criminal Justice System Fairer and More Equal for All

Prop. 25 will replace a money bail system that unfairly grants freedom only to those who can afford it, including dangerous offenders, with a system that prioritizes public safety and justice. Supporting Prop. 25 means replacing a system that criminalizes poverty and race with an unbiased assessment of each person's individual risk to public safety.

The money bail system hits taxpayers where it hurts, wasting \$5 million dollars every single day just to keep nearly 50,000 people accused of low-level crimes locked up — simply because they can't afford to post bail.

Learn more at yesoncaprop25.com.



CTA's Recommendation Process Starts With YOU

1. CTA interview teams, comprising local leaders and members, interview candidates and evaluate them on various criteria, including their positions on education issues, their history of support for public education, and viability.
2. After the interviews, teams make their recommendations to state leaders. The CTA Board of Directors considers the recommendations and may approve them or make substitute recommendations.
3. The Board's recommendations are debated by CTA State Council of Education, CTA's highest decision-making body. State Council's 700 delegates vote on the recommendations.
4. Candidates who receive at least 60 percent of State Council's votes are recommended and supported by CTA.



CTA Calls for Moratorium on Charter Colocations

Shared campuses exacerbate health and safety risks

By Julian Peeples

KEEPING EDUCATORS, students and communities safe during the COVID-19 crisis is CTA's top priority as schools resume instruction statewide. Accordingly, our union calls for a moratorium on charter school colocations until the pandemic is over.

These colocations, as mandated by Proposition 39, require charter and district schools to share facilities, which often means rotating the use of schoolyards, gyms, cafeterias, athletic fields, libraries and other educational spaces. Shared-use agreements to allow new colocations will only cause more problems during an already challenging time for schools to safely reopen physically.

"As unionized charter educators, many of us have intimate knowledge of the challenges faced by charter schools," says Kyna Collins, chair of CTA's Charter School Advisory Committee. "We know that there is a lot of work to be done when it comes to charter accountability, and as educators, we want what is fundamentally best for all students. Expanding charter colocations is already destructive to the educational system, and during this time, it is dangerous and irresponsible."

Prop. 39 is a state law adopted by California voters in 2000 that requires school districts to make their facilities, classrooms and other spaces available to charter schools that serve students who reside in the district. This law has led to many unintended consequences over two decades with impacts on students and educators at colocated schools.

Colocations disproportionately impact students of color in many of our communities. Limited space means limited access to special education services and enrichment classes such as art and music. CTA leads the fight

El Camino Real Charter High School in Woodland Hills.
Credit: Salenology



for educational equity, and ensuring sufficient space for rich and full education experiences for *all* students is a principle we must defend.

And with a currently incurable, highly contagious virus spreading out of control, charter school colocations place these at-risk communities in even greater danger — threatening to undermine important safety protocols like social distancing, wellness screenings, contact tracing, and other standards recommended by public health experts.

"Under normal conditions, these colocations can impact the learning conditions at both district and charter schools," says CTA President E. Toby Boyd. "During this pandemic, such colocations are downright dangerous for students, educators and our communities. Our elected leaders at the local, county and state levels must act now to protect our collective health."

The Charter School Advisory Committee raised the issue in response to the growing health crisis and charter school educators' concerns that continued colocation during the pandemic poses a threat to students and their families. Additionally, with districts and educators juggling so much to address needs in this new normal,

competition for limited space should not distract from the shared responsibility of ensuring educational equity and keeping communities safe, the committee said.

"Charter educators are on the front line and active when it comes to organizing around charter issues," says Collins, a teacher at El Camino Real Charter High School and member of United Teachers Los Angeles. "We are a part of the union and are in the good fight with the rest of you to improve education for all students!" ■

"Expanding charter colocations is already destructive to the educational system, and during this time, it is dangerous and irresponsible."

—Kyna Collins, CTA Charter School Advisory Committee Chair

Bargaining Roundup

Compiled by **Julian Peebles**

WHAT WOULD NORMALLY be a time to rest and recharge has been filled with activity for local association leaders across the state standing together for their health and safety as school districts sought to resume in-person instruction despite the growing spread of COVID-19.

With guidance from CTA regarding the safe reopening of schools, locals statewide entered lengthy videoconference negotiations, ranging from collaboration and quick resolution to ensure the health of school communities to weeks of contentious meetings where educators pleaded with school district administrators to acknowledge the pandemic's threat.

In every instance, educators joined their voices to advocate for each other, their students, and the health of their communities.

LODI:

Educators organize to win safe options

Lodi Education Association members stuck together and rallied for their health and safety, leading to an agreement with Lodi Unified that will allow educators to provide distance learning instruction from their home or school site. Initially, the district sought to require educators to work from school sites, but LEA organized and rallied before a recent school board meeting to show their concern. This display of unity helped move the school board to make the right decision, allowing teachers, coaches, librarians, counselors, speech-language pathologists, psychologists, school nurses and program specialists the option to work from home or at their school site.



Lodi educators rally with social distancing to defend their health and safety.

NATOMAS:

Teachers rally around health issues

Natomas Teachers Association negotiated a number of safety and teaching provisions in their COVID-19 agreement with the school district. Their term starts Aug. 27 in a full distance-learning environment.

In addition to four additional paid days to prep for distance learning, Natomas teachers secured the option (but not requirement) to work out of their classroom, health safeguards including personal protective equipment and cleaning procedures, and assurances that educators will not be recorded without their permission during class sessions.

NTA will negotiate hybrid plans at a later date, based on state and county health guidelines.



Natomas teachers secured safety and teaching provisions.



UTLA inspired all with their unity in advocacy.

LOS ANGELES:

UTLA educators win fight for safety

United Teachers Los Angeles organized and won for the safe and healthy schools that LA students deserve. With COVID-19 cases increasing rapidly in Los Angeles County, UTLA members stood together and convinced the district to start the school year fully in distance learning. A few weeks later, LAUSD agreed to drop its proposal to require educators to teach virtually from their physical classrooms — after UTLA flatly rejected it as unsafe.

Some key highlights of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between UTLA and LAUSD: daily live interaction; an average school day from 9 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.; targeted small group instruction, as well as time to focus on social-emotional needs of students; opportunities for ongoing projects, small group work and independent work; office hours where students and families can connect with teachers; and a flexible work schedule for non-classroom educators and early childhood educators to meet the needs of students. A full list is available at utla.net.

"This agreement will be brought to life by educators, students and parents. This MOU is not an end point — it's a beginning," says UTLA President Cecily Myart-Cruz. "We must invest more resources to create healthy and safe schools and to build on this MOU with responsiveness to feedback from educators, parents, and students."



Fighting for what's right.

MILL VALLEY:

Pushing back to protect teachers and students

Mill Valley Teachers Association continues to negotiate details about the start of the new school year at press time. They held a social distancing rally in late July to stand in unity for their students.

MVTA is advocating for strong safety guidelines, a student-centered distance learning plan that reflects best educational practices and

recommendations from teacher working groups, and synchronous and asynchronous activities each day to support student learning.

Educators pushed back on the amount of screen time proposed by school district officials (over five hours a day), noting that it is not developmentally appropriate for the K-8 student population.

SWEETWATER:

Agreement protects student programs

AFTER NEARLY two dozen bargaining sessions and a year of negotiations, the Sweetwater Education Association has reached a tentative agreement with the Sweetwater Union High School District. The agreement protects students' access to vital programs by returning librarians to their sites part-time and reinstating three of the district's learning centers.

According to SEA President Julie Walker, the agreement was made possible because of the open dialogue between SEA and SUHSD leadership.

"I'm pleased our teams found a path to collaboration and compromise," she says. "We'll need that spirit of compromise to face future challenges."

By turning the focus toward a student-centered approach, the long-standing impasse was resolved. The tentative agreement, which reduces the work year by three days, will be cost-neutral and will allow valuable programs to continue.

SACRAMENTO:

Flexibility key to navigating current environment

Sacramento City Teachers Association reached an agreement with school district administration in July that postponed the scheduled early August opening of one of the district's dependent charter schools. School staff and parents organized to delay the start, and district officials listened, pushing back the opening by a month at New Joseph Bonnheim Community Charter School.

SCTA continued discussions about COVID-related issues, reopening, and working constructively with district officials to implement robust distance learning for all Sacramento City students.



Informing the Future

Educators provide civic guidance as election approaches

By Julian Peeples

I F I DIDN'T TEACH government, I would not talk about the election in my classroom," laughs Liz Tanner, a 22-year government educator and member of Campbell High School Teachers Association.

It's clear she's joking, but the sentiment is real. The current polarized political climate has left many avoiding the 2020 presidential election entirely. But with only 55 percent of eligible voters casting ballots in the 2016 presidential election and an increasingly disconnected electorate, many educators are doubling down on why our civic processes are so important.

"I consider my government class more of a civics class," says Jayson Chang, Santa Teresa High School government teacher and East Side Teachers Association member. "I can talk about how a bill becomes law, but students are so disconnected from that. So instead, we talk about what they can do to change something."

Chang is one of many social studies educators statewide engaging young people about the structure of our government

and how to navigate the political process to effect change. In the Digital Era, this civic guidance is even more critical, as young people are ill-equipped to deal with the world of "fake news" when left to their own devices. A recent Stanford History Education Group study saw more than 90 percent of high school students fail miserably in evaluating news sources on the internet, reinforcing that there is still

much work to be done in civic education.

"Kids are frustrated because they can't discern fact from fiction," says Travis Humble, seventh and eighth grade history teacher and member of Perris Elementary Teachers Association. "This material affects their everyday life and they're interested in it, and we need to support them."

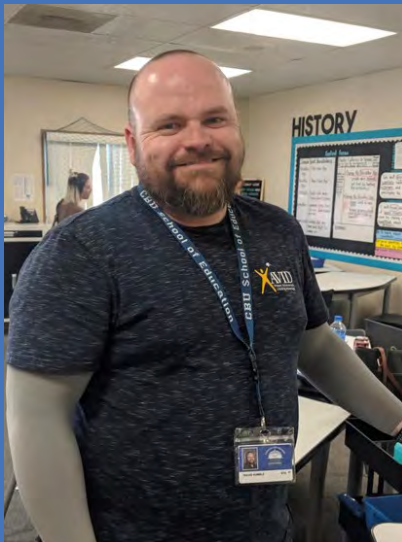


↑ Liz Tanner says the current political climate adds an 'air of the absurd.'



“Getting to the why question is so much more important than the what. Help students understand the why to support the what.”

—Travis Humble
Perris Elementary
Teachers Association



WHAT DOES GOOD CIVIC EDUCATION LOOK LIKE?

The Ronald Reagan Citizens Scholar Institute is a collaboration between Royal High School in Simi Valley and the nearby Ronald Reagan Foundation and Presidential Library that seeks to improve civic education for young people in the community. U.S. government teacher John Downey is an adviser at



↑ John Downey helps students learn democracy by letting them lead.

the nationally recognized institute, which builds civic knowledge and political engagement skills with unique, meaningful learning experiences.

“Students are better prepared to be good citizens — not just able to recite facts about how government works — and they’re doing things in their communities,” says Downey, a member of Simi Educators Association. “Students are leaving here engaged and ready to participate. I think that we’re *doing* democracy rather than just teaching it.”

Royal High students have regular audiences with candidates at every level of government, asking tough questions about controversial issues and learning firsthand about civic engagement. On one winter day, a local candidate for Congress gave a stump speech, while another event saw a candidate for sheriff field pointed questions about recidivism.

“It’s fun to be able to watch both students and candidates deal with that tension of asking difficult questions and answering them,” Downey says, noting that in-person interactions with candidates and leaders provide a powerful context for students. “We had a person who was running for city council, and

she came in reeking of cigarette smoke, and that had a major impact on students.” (These meetings are now being held virtually; for details on how the Citizen Scholars Institute will continue to operate during the pandemic, see page 53.)

Helping students to see how elections and politics impact their lives directly is a big part of the civic education process. As Chang leads his students through the complex world of political action committees (PACs), voting rights and the role of the media, he wants to give them the tools to be brave and responsible citizens — especially as some of them will be voting in this November’s presidential election for the first time.

“A good chunk of my class is focused on the media because so much of our views are based on the media we consume,” he says. “They need help sifting through the bias so they can make an informed decision on their own.”

Chang has his students complete a media bias project to help them be more critical of the information available online and identify erroneous and misleading stories, so they’re able to focus on issues that matter





↑ Empowering student voices is a crucial part of civics, Chang says.

“Look at the issues, not the person. All sides should be heard. My goal in the classroom is to teach students how to think, not what to think.”

—Jason Chang, East Side Teachers Association

this election and beyond. It’s even more important since many have a soundbite mentality toward current events, getting much of their information from headlines and social media. Tanner says this becomes apparent in the way her government students approach national politics as fodder for biting memes as much as for online petitions and social action.

“There’s an air of the absurd. Everything is a joke,” she says.

ELECTION 2020: ISSUES OVER CANDIDATES

Tanner says the presidential election was already garnering attention earlier this year when President Trump’s impeachment proceedings piqued her students’ interest to the point that they watched the live stream of the vote from the floor of the U.S. Senate. Rather than get caught up in the personalities, Tanner tries to focus her students on the political philosophies and ideologies at play, and how

they impact how people see the world and think our country should be run.

“We talk about how everyone thinks they’re right when it comes to politics,” Tanner says. “But why do they think this way?”

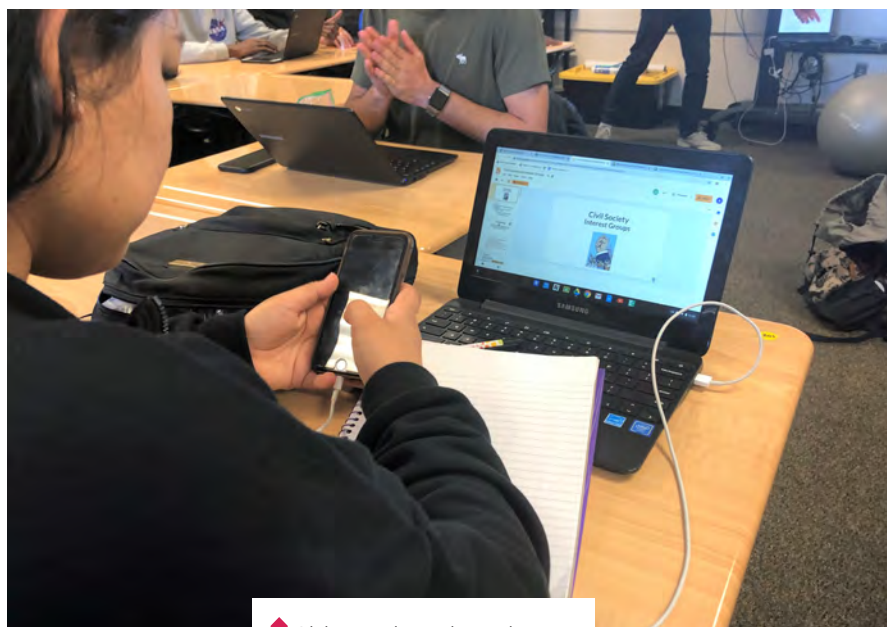
Humble’s middle schoolers understand the 2016 presidential election’s importance and are already developing their opinions about this year’s candidates. They understand that Americans have a history of not exercising their right to

Six Practices for High-Quality Civic Learning



1. **Classroom instruction** in government, history, economics, law and democracy.
2. **Discussion of current events and controversial issues**, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives.
3. **Service-learning** programs that provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction.
4. **Extracurricular activities** that offer opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities outside of the classroom.
5. **School governance** participation opportunities for all students.
6. **Simulations of democratic processes** for students to experience and learn from.

Source: *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* by the Annenberg Institute at the University of Pennsylvania



↑ Giving students the tools to navigate news online is key.

vote, he says, and are eager to be active participants in the electoral process — although sometimes that’s a bit daunting for early teens.

“I tell them, ‘In four years, you’re going to be able to vote,’ and their eyes get so wide,” Humble says. “It’s pretty cool to see them taking responsibility and tackling big issues on their own.”

While much of the attention is placed on the candidates, the issues are really what move young people to get passionate about politics, according to U.S. government teacher Andrew Shrock. The Simi Valley High School teacher says that while students get caught up in the horse race of the presidential election, critical issues like climate change are far more compelling than some old politicians.

“When we first started talking about the election, it surprised me that a lot of my students didn’t know any of the names of the candidates,” says Shrock, a member of Simi Educators Association.



Andrew Shrock

For Tanner’s students, some of the most controversial truths are also familiar ones. For example, when the 22-year female history teacher says, “Politics are a man’s world,” the outrage her students express upon learning that the United States has never had a female president is palpable. Tanner explores why this disparity exists, reading with her students a piece by cognitive linguist George Lakoff on gender roles and political ideology.

“It always surprises me how heated the conversation becomes when we talk about why we haven’t had a woman president,” says Tanner.

TEACH, DON’T PREACH

Teaching about politics, government and elections has always been tricky, but the current political climate has made it even more important for these educators to discuss the issues without including their own opinions. Humble says he tries to approach discussions



Teaching Tolerance



Resources for Supporting Digital Literacy

WADING THROUGH ONLINE misinformation, fake news and outright propaganda is difficult for most adults, even more so for young people. Here are some helpful resources to support and improve the digital literacy skills needed to navigate the 21st century political landscape.

Teaching Tolerance

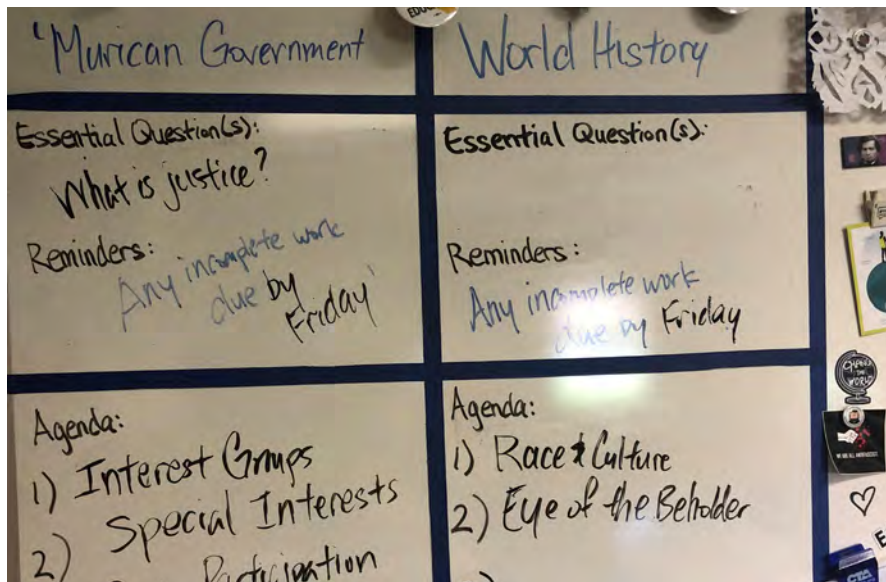
Teaching Tolerance’s Digital Literacy Framework offers seven key areas in which students need support developing digital and civic literacy skills, including identifying and verifying reliable information, privacy and security. tolerance.org/frameworks/digital-literacy

Common Sense Education

Common Sense has a robust digital citizenship curriculum free for download, including grade-specific interactive lessons and activities in topics including digital footprint and identity, cyberbullying, and media literacy. commonsense.org/education/digital-citizenship

Stanford History Education Group

Stanford has a variety of free lesson plans to help develop the skills needed to navigate the current digital landscape, including their Civic Online Reasoning curriculum, which focuses on evaluating the trustworthiness of digital content. sheg.stanford.edu



Giving students a safe space to examine difficult issues and express their opinions is a major piece of civic education.



Jayson Chang

with deliberate open-mindedness, facilitating discussion without making his thoughts the centerpiece.

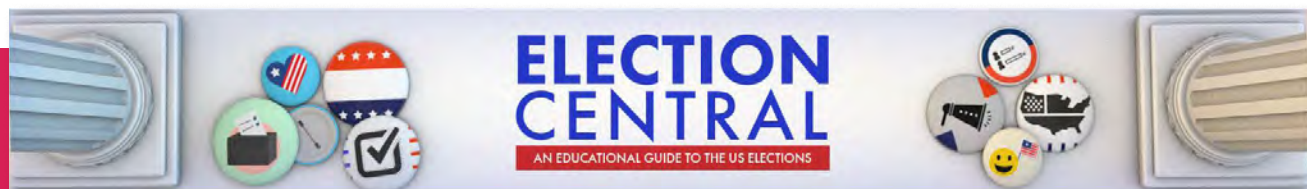
“My students don’t know my political standpoint,” Humble says. “My goal is not to get them to follow my way of thinking — I want them to follow their hearts. My goal is to teach, not to preach.”

Chang strives to provide a safe space for his students to express their opinions and examine controversial issues that they might not otherwise have a chance to discuss.

“All sides should be heard,” he says. “My goal in the classroom is to teach students how to think, not what to think.”

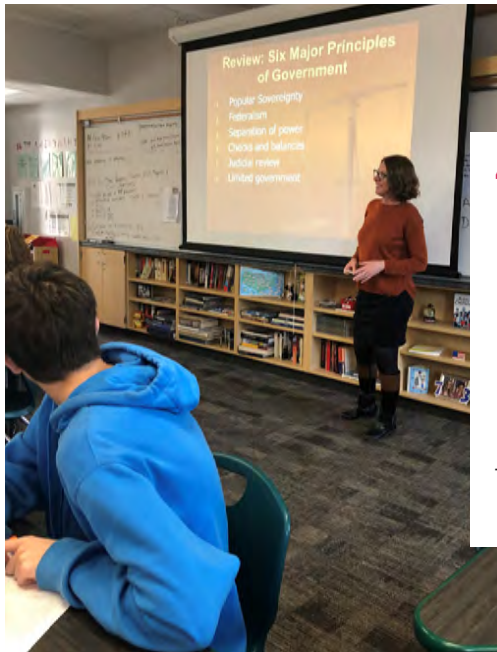
The ultimate goal, Shrock says, is giving students the tools they need to be good citizens and understand how the system works, and inspiring them to be brave to use their voices to make change.

“I want them to go on to vote and be good members of their communities,” he says. “I want them to understand there’s a process to make change in their community. And I believe in it.” ■



Election Education Programs Online

- PBS Learning Media’s **The Election Connection** has videos, activities and lesson plans about the history of elections, voting rights and how the presidential election works, including an interactive Electoral College map that allows students to predict their own scenarios. There’s even a youth media challenge for middle and high school students! pbslearningmedia.org/collection/election-collection
- C-SPAN Classroom **Campaign 2020** is a comprehensive home for presidential election information and teaching resources, including how the candidates compare on the issues, historical videos, and lesson plans on everything from candidate ads to foreign election interference. sites.google.com/view/c-span-classroom-campaign-2020/lesson-plans
- Gamify the election at **iCivics** election headquarters, which features election-focused civics games on the race for the White House, the duties and responsibilities of the president, and the fight against “fake news.” This free-with-registration site also features lesson plans, helpful infographics, and online “webquests” to connect civic concepts to the real world. icivics.org/election



"It always surprises me how heated the conversation becomes when we talk about why we haven't had a woman president."

—Liz Tanner, Campbell High School Teachers Association

Downey is an adviser with the Ronald Reagan Citizens Scholar Institute in Simi Valley.



Civics in the Time of COVID-19

JOHN DOWNEY won't let a pandemic stop his work as a civics educator and adviser at the Ronald Reagan Citizens Scholar Institute. The institute, a collaboration between Royal High School and the Ronald Reagan Foundation and Presidential Library, continues to offer students virtual opportunities to come together to discuss current events and relevant topics in politics and government.

"We feel strongly that our Citizens Scholar Institute needs to operate as close to normal as possible, for the sake of giving students the experience of community," Downey says.

To that end, he and other educators kept a brown bag lunch speaker series alive during the spring. "The highlight was a student speaker who lost her grandfather to COVID-19 and was able to speak about his very interesting life, her feelings about having to be isolated because of the positive tests of people in her immediate family, and the need for her student peers to be responsible to each other and take the pandemic seriously."

The series will start up again in the fall — virtually. "Our first speaker will be the newly elected Associated Student Body president giving a 'State of the ASB' address," Downey says. "Invitations to speak will go out to all of the local office seekers."



Support for Young Voters

Eligible 16- and 17-year-olds may now preregister to vote in California by visiting registertovote.ca.gov. Those who preregister will have their registration become active once they turn 18, the voting age.

Proposition 18 on the November ballot (ACA 4) would authorize an eligible California youth who is 17 and will be at least 18 at the time of the next general election to vote in any primary or special election that occurs before the next general election.



Reading the Room — Remotely

How to tell if students understand what you're teaching

By Youki Terada

TEACHERS ARE EXPERTS at reading nonverbal cues. Whether they see a confused look on a student's face or furtive glances that confess, "I don't know what we're doing right now," teachers effectively read the room to gauge how well students are following a lesson. A sea of blank stares is a signal that the teacher needs to explain a concept further.

"Some people read books. I read people," writes Vicki Davis, a teacher and IT director in Albany, Georgia. "I read the thousand tiny microexpressions that reveal the little things that make a big difference in our bondedness of being teacher and student."

Reading the virtual room

In a virtual classroom, much of this information is lost. Does a student look confused because they don't understand

the material, or because they can't figure out how to unmute themselves in Zoom? Is eye contact meaningful when there's no way to tell if the student is watching funny videos instead? If a student can't hear the teacher, saying "speak up" won't solve anything until someone determines the source of the problem.

There are additional limitations to online environments. Teachers can't pace around the room to check student work and progress. If a student is experiencing network or video lag, they may not feel comfortable asking the teacher to pause while they resolve their technical issues. And there's little a teacher can do if students are distracted by siblings or a TV playing in the background.

Teachers are typically familiar with using student feedback to improve instruction — commonly known as

formative assessment. But they tend to focus on how well students understand the material, not how well they can access the material. The distinction is important, according to the authors of a 2019 study, who interviewed eight award-winning instructors of online courses and found that they frequently gathered data on how well their courses were administered "to identify what was working or not."

"An important element in the development of an award-winning course was the way in which instructors had collected data on the course or engaged with existing evaluation data, reflected on how to improve the course, and made improvements," explain the authors of the study.

Teachers of high-performing online classes, in other words, read the virtual room and collect feedback not just to gauge how well students understand the

Read the virtual room and collect feedback to gauge how well students understand the subject matter, and to identify obstacles preventing their full participation.

subject matter, but also to identify any obstacles that may be preventing them from being able to fully participate.

Importantly, the researchers noted that the instructors “emphasized their use of data for continuous improvement” as well as their use of surveys as a “helpful feedback tool, and the usefulness of such data for immediate and remedial action, unlike the end-of-semester data.”

You don’t have to build your own survey to gather this kind of data. Here are a few examples that cover technology access, student participation, and ways to support students during the pandemic:

- The Making Caring Common Project at Harvard University has a five-question COVID-19 Check-in Survey focused on student wellness.
- EduCause, a technology-focused nonprofit, has a longer survey on the transition to remote learning. It’s geared toward higher ed but can be adapted for K-12 schools.
- In May, the Hawaii Department of Education administered a 29-question survey — and published results with insight into what supports students need.
- The Center on Reinventing Public Education at the University of Washington, Bothell, analyzed seven national K-12 student surveys and identified key areas, from student concern about falling behind to “distractions, lack of motivation, and lack of social connections” as major challenges to online learning.

Reviewing these surveys, I’ve identified a set of questions that are commonly asked (see sidebar).

It may help to clearly identify that the purpose of the survey is to collect feedback on how well students are able to participate in online learning so that they understand that they won’t be graded or

suffer consequences if they point out any problems. Questions around technology access should be asked regularly, to ensure that any issues are quickly addressed. Ask the broader questions, such as those around voice and participation, early enough in the school year — within the first month or two — to be able to help any students who may be falling through the cracks.

Survey tools

For real-time feedback while on a video conference (like Zoom), you can do a quick check-in to see if students have any questions or problems. A handy feature is nonverbal feedback. It lets participants display an icon — such as “raise hand” or “thumbs up” — next to their name. Before you launch into a lesson, you can ask your students to give a thumbs up if they’re ready to start, letting you quickly gauge if they need more time to get their audio set up or log in to the learning management system (LMS), for example.

Turning to formative assessment of content, Laura Thomas, who directs the Antioch University New England Center for School Renewal, suggests using tools like Padlet or Google Forms to create exit slips to quickly collect student feedback at the end of class. A low-stakes approach keeps the workload manageable for teachers while giving concise, actionable feedback that can identify which students need extra support.

If you’re working within an LMS, Sarah Schroeder, an instructional designer and professor at the University of Cincinnati, recommends using built-in tools like discussion boards to field questions. Apps like Edpuzzle, Pear Deck and See-saw can integrate seamlessly into most

Ask Your Students

YOU CAN IDENTIFY what’s working or not for students in a virtual classroom by posing a few questions. These can be part of a larger survey to get a sense of how students are doing and whether they are learning what you expect them to learn.

- How comfortable do you feel using technology for our virtual classroom? (You can use a Likert scale here, with a score of 1 being “not at all comfortable” and a 5 being “very comfortable.”)
- Have you encountered any technical issues, such as not being able to connect to the internet or not being able to hear me or other students talking?
- Are assignments clear? Are you able to access them?
- Are you having any trouble finding assignments, links to articles, or other documents online? Is the virtual space well organized?
- Do you feel like your voice is heard?
- Do you feel like you belong in our virtual classroom?
- What can I do to improve our online classroom?

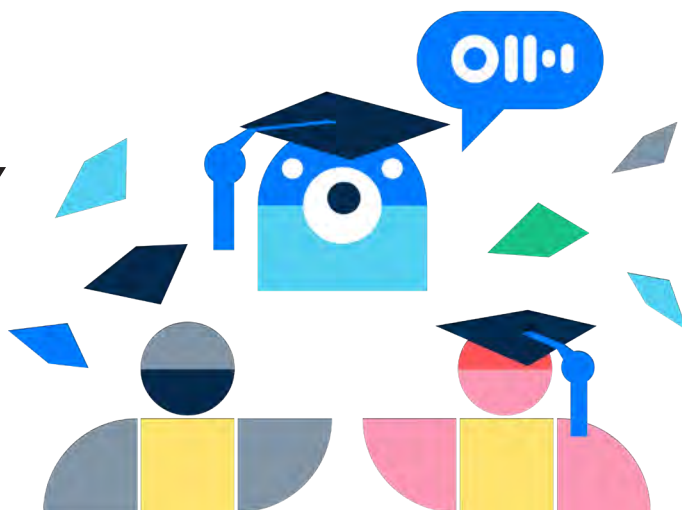
LMSs, making it easier to collect feedback within a lesson — a key consideration that puts students’ learning experiences front and center.

“Flipgrid is a fantastic oral communication application that is easy to use,” writes high school English teacher Kyleen Gray. The popular video-sharing platform lets teachers pose a prompt that students can respond to through a short video — making it a valuable tool to collect feedback in an informal, interactive way. Research suggests that Flipgrid can boost students’ feelings of connectedness in an online classroom, increasing their willingness to ask for help. ■

This story originally appeared on [Edutopia.com](https://www.edutopia.com).

ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS FOR ONLINE LEARNING

By Cynthia Menzel



THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC has brought the issue of helping students with disabilities, including those who are hard of hearing, blind or even colorblind, to the front of the class. As we make a massive shift from brick-and-mortar classrooms to virtual ones, providing live closed captioning, transcriptions of lectures, and visuals presents many challenges. Educators are finding creative ways to support all students in this new setting. Here are few tools used by David Hurst, College of the Sequoias.



CAMTASIA

A screen recording and editing program, it has a PowerPoint plug-in that can convert a presentation to video with your voice-over. It handles closed captioning easily, though the software itself has a bit of a learning curve. Cost: \$170 with the education discount. Note: This is not a subscription, so you own the software and can install it on two computers. [techsmith.com/video-editor](https://www.techsmith.com/video-editor)



OTTER

An audio recording app for cellphones and tablets that works on all platforms. Otter instantly transcribes and saves the transcription with time stamps, and it can distinguish between different speakers. Transcriptions can be edited online or downloaded as a text file for editing or conversion to a caption file. The free account allows for up to 600 minutes per month of recording. otter.ai



KANOPY

A video subscription platform with content from public and educational institution libraries. The videos are already closed-captioned, and there is a broad range of educational content on the site that works seamlessly for students. Educators can urge their district to purchase access; access might also be available from the local public library if they have a subscription (as in Fresno County, for example). kanopy.com



SCREENCAST-O-MATIC

Similar to Camtasia; it integrates with Canvas. It is the basic of the basics with a free version that allows for screen recording. The cheapest paid version is only \$20 per year and lets you add in captions, narration and music. screencast-o-matic.com/education

Have tools you'd like to suggest or highlight? Email suggestions to editor@cta.org.



A volunteer works with Bayside students over the summer. Photo by Julia McEvoy in an original KQED story and reused with permission.

A Test Case

How a Sausalito school safely reopened during the pandemic

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin

Should schools reopen or not?

It's the biggest hot-button education issue today as the pandemic rages on. The reopening of schools has been called the "linchpin" of restarting the economy, because parents can't work if their children are not in school. School employees worry about their own health and keeping their families safe. Meanwhile, COVID-19 cases are soaring.

All California schools closed in mid-March and finished out the year with distance learning only. Except for one: Bayside Martin Luther King Jr. Academy, a Title I school located in Marin City, an unincorporated community of Sausalito where many of the students are poor and live in public housing.

(Disclaimer: The *Educator* is not advocating that all schools reopen by telling this story. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to teaching in a pandemic.)

LIKE ALL SCHOOLS, Bayside closed after a statewide shelter-in-place order was issued by Gov. Gavin Newsom. The K-8 school, which last year had 16 teachers and approximately 120 students,

transitioned to online learning. But some of the students were having difficulty engaging, especially those who lacked the parental support that helps foster success in learning online.

In a pilot project approved by the

Marin County Health Department, the principal asked if any Sausalito District Teachers Association (SDTA) members would like to return voluntarily. Three said yes. Parents of struggling students were asked if they would like their children to return, and 27 students signed up.

"I wanted to come back," says SDTA member Brandon Culley, who taught a fourth and fifth grade combination class. "I really missed the students and wanted to get back to the classroom."

Culley is 46, in excellent health, and doesn't have children, which factored into his decision. "But I totally understand and support the decisions of my colleagues not to go back. Many of them are in a higher-risk category and have children or



are taking care of their parents. It's a very personal decision."

The school reopened its doors May 20 and closed for the summer June 11. Because of the small student-teacher ratio, there was true social distancing — 6 feet apart — which will likely be impossible to replicate in regular classrooms with 20 or more students. Students arrived at staggered intervals and lined up 6 feet apart on taped markings. As they entered the schools, their temperatures were taken and sanitizer was squirted into their hands. Desks did not have partitions, but everybody wore masks.

The school was open from 9 to noon daily. Students were handed a bag lunch as they exited the building. Students were grouped by grade levels, with seven to 10 students per classroom. At first, students were quiet, shy and somewhat intimidated by all the protocols in place, says Andrea Keenan, a TOSA (teacher on special assignment) who decided to return and support the students and teachers on-site while continuing her distance learning programs.

"Things were not normal," says Keenan, a member of SDTA. "It felt weird, and students were nervous. But then it got better. These kids are super social and know each other well from living in this tight-knit community. They were very happy to see each other."

Keenan says she wanted to return because she missed having a sense of normalcy in her day and missed the kids.

"Yes, it was scary," she admits. "Thank goodness nobody got COVID, because I wouldn't want to live with that. But I felt confident because there was going



Brandon Culley

to be social distancing and stringent safety procedures were in place. The cleanings that took place were scheduled and posted. Back then there was very little COVID in Marin County, so I felt secure that what we were doing was OK."

(Since then, COVID-19 has risen dramatically in Marin County, due to the transfer of COVID-infected inmates from Southern California prisons to San Quentin Prison. The inmates infected others, including staff who circulated throughout the Marin community.)

"I think it shows returning to school is possible," says Keenan. "It requires a lot of patience and planning"



Andrea Keenan

"I felt confident because there was going to be social distancing and stringent safety procedures were in place."

—Andrea Keenan, Sausalito District Teachers Association

Culley says it was good practice for Aug. 19, when the school is planning to reopen on a larger scale while offering distance learning for some students.

"We are still going to have to figure out how to do lunches. And how to read aloud and do 'pair shares.' We are going to need more guidance on what's OK and what's not. But I think we will be able to move forward with the plan we have in place."

That plan includes hiring more teachers to reduce the ratio of students to teachers; converting the multipurpose room, music room and art room to classroom space so students can do social distancing; and keeping students in cohorts throughout the day. Bathrooms will need to be designated and usage scheduled, as much as possible.

"We are a smaller school, so it's easier for us to do this," says Keenan. "These are very difficult times. Everyone is trying to do what is best for our students, ourselves and our communities." ■

Looking at the Future

The new Student CTA board speaks out

By Cynthia Menzel

WE SPOKE WITH a few members of the new Student CTA Executive Board as they set SCTA and individual goals and prepared to enter the teaching profession: Communications Editors Ariana Avila and Haley Castello, President Viridiana Castro Silva, Secretary-Treasurer Jessica Chamness, Southern Regional VP Selaima Tamotuu, and Central Regional VP Tristan Wieser.

First things first. What attracts you to the teaching profession?

AVILA: Teaching is a profession that teaches all professions. It's a gift to be in children's lives every day.

CASTELLO: My goal is to be involved in underserved communities because teachers did that for me. There are so many brilliant students, and I can't wait to work with them.

CHAMNESS: Making a positive impact on students' lives like my teachers did for me. To pay it forward. Both of my grandparents were teachers, too. It's just something I've always wanted to do.

TAMOTUU: In high school I had a crazy teacher who was so passionate about her job — she inspired me. I want to be crazy and out of this world, just like her.

WIESER: One person can do so much, and we can have an impact on history if we apply ourselves. That's why I teach.

CASTRO SILVA: I've wanted to be a teacher since I was 3, and that hasn't changed. The time I've spent in the classroom is rewarding.

As a board, you have “distributive leadership.” What does that mean?

CASTRO SILVA: It means all board positions have equal value. We need everyone



Ariana Avila



Haley Castello



Jessica Chamness

to run SCTA. While I was elected president, I'm not the face of SCTA. We all are SCTA. We enjoy being part of our union family, CCA and CTA, knowing we can go to them if we need any help.

CHAMNESS: As a board we are not afraid to make a stand and make change. We're not afraid to do the right thing, even if it is difficult.

What are your visions for racial and social justice, in SCTA and the larger world?

AVILA: Social justice is our focus, and it won't be complete in a year. An important board objective is dismantling white supremacy culture and institutional racism. It's a long journey — reshaping the education system, adding equity to every part of a student's journey.

TAMOTUU: SCTA has a direct mission to call out racism and help educate about such behaviors. A fish doesn't discover water. It lives there. We are equipping our members and ourselves with tools to grow in our field of study. If we don't address racism now, future generations will be in a constant cycle. It has to break at some point.

CASTELLO: This is not just a trend for us. We'll keep on, and we hope to see more SCTA members involved.

CHAMNESS: We'll continue to educate ourselves and others on racial and social injustice so we can interact better with our students and with each other.

WIESER: [We are] encouraging civic activism, especially with November elections. Protests and statements are meaningless unless our members are at the ballot box each election. In six



“An important board objective is dismantling white supremacy culture and institutional racism. It’s a long journey — reshaping the education system, adding equity to every part of a student’s journey.”

months I hope all members wear “I voted” stickers and have an impact in their communities.

CASTRO SILVA: As a “DACA-mented” educator [see following story], I believe those who are able to vote must exercise that right and get rid of these injustices for future generations. ... Social and racial justice means teaching real history, not just Eurocentric versions. It means closing achievement gaps and not racially targeting students.

After hearing SCTA member issues, you set up a COVID-19 relief fund that provides cash for members struggling to live in a pandemic. Talk about that.

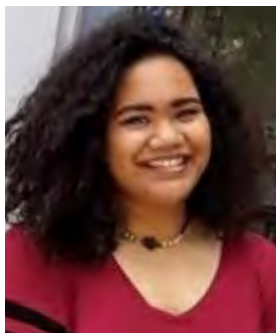
WIESER: The grants reimburse for CSET or CBEST, or certificate clearance classroom observation hours. Grants lessen the financial burden in some small way.

CASTRO SILVA: Testing grants help members getting ready for the profession, dealing with the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA), and students having credentialing issues during COVID.

How has COVID affected your training and your teaching?

TAMOTUU: My teacher training has been a roller coaster. It doesn’t hinder my aspirations, but I worry it may discourage others, forcing them to put dreams on hold. Students like to engage and participate; I see that with my younger siblings who are still in school. It’s hard to motivate students from a distance.

AVILA: It’s hard to learn and teach through a screen. The transition was a struggle.



Selaima Tamotuu



Tristan Wieser



Viridiana Castro Silva

CASTELLO: I interned with a teacher/mentor and helped older teachers not used to using technology. I was happy to do that — discovering apps, getting students talking and participating, learning to embed websites.

CHAMNESS: For me, the best way to learn is in the field directly helping students. COVID does not allow observation hours. ... We’re at a disadvantage.

WIESER: COVID made me think about ways to assess students’ knowledge — who missed class and how do you help keep up with learning?

CASTRO SILVA: My undergrad program fit OK online. Others had student teaching hours that did not meet requirements for credentials, which brings the equitable teaching lens into perspective. Being forced to transition in a short amount of time brought out inequalities for students. ■

For more information about Student CTA, go to cta.org/studentcta.

Using NEA resolution documents (showingupforracialjustice.org/white-supremacy-culture-characteristics.html), SCTA Executive Board members have been educating themselves and systematically looking at characteristics of white supremacy culture and how they manifest in SCTA. Board members say understanding those characteristics helps them not perpetuate the culture, allows for distributive leadership, and makes them better educators and advocates.

Making the Dream a Reality

DACA student and new Student CTA President Viridiana Castro Silva

As told to **Frank Wells**

Viridiana Castro Silva was elected president of Student CTA in April. A liberal studies major at CSU Sacramento, she is entering her senior year and plans to pursue a master's degree in education before beginning her teaching career.

Castro Silva is undocumented, and since 2012 has been a beneficiary of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. She is a vocal supporter and activist for the program and DACA students. (President Donald Trump rescinded the program for new applicants in 2017; in June the U.S. Supreme Court found that the administration handled the rescission incorrectly and has temporarily reinstated DACA.)



MY PARENTS AND I came here from Mexico to Sacramento in August 2002. I had just turned 6. After we came here my parents set up a house-cleaning business. My dad eventually started working in food prep for various coffee shops, then worked building custom closets.

My parents knew school was important. I remember them taking me around to check out five or six public schools and asking me what I did or didn't like about each one.

Her immigration status and its impact

When other people asked my family [why we didn't go back to Mexico to visit], the cover story was that it was for monetary reasons. The real reason was that reentry here was a barrier.

In the Latinx community we're told not to tell anybody because of the huge risk involved and someone might use that information in a malicious way. By the end of second grade I was recruited as an office translator for new Spanish-speaking students and their parents. They would tell me their status but in kind of a coded way — kind of the same way my parents answered similar questions, so I was able to infer their status.

An educator who made a difference

I didn't really know English when I got here. My parents even drilled into me the bus route — where to get on, get off and so



on — because I wouldn't be able to communicate if there was a problem. But my first grade teacher Miss Keaveney was amazing. She constantly worked with me to make sure I understood everything. She was fantastic in getting me to fluency.

Aspiring to teach, becoming an advocate

I've wanted to be a teacher since I was 3. I understood some of the implications of being undocumented, and I saw doing well in school as a way to get into college. The end goal was to be a teacher, and to do that I needed to go to college.

I was always a quiet advocate for immigrant rights, but it wasn't until I got into college that I really became a loud social justice advocate and started working to make sure that kids like me who came later didn't have to remain quiet about their status and constantly worry about [it].

In my last year at American River College (ARC) I had a campus job at the UndocuScholar Resource Connection. I helped other students with DACA applications, financial aid, in-state tuition, legal resources, applying to college.

The DACA effect

For the longest time I thought I couldn't go to college. That's a common misunderstanding in the undocumented community. But in California there's legislation like AB 540 (2001) that allows in-state tuition at colleges and universities for undocumented students. So that was one hurdle I eventually realized I could overcome. But I still knew teachers have to have background checks, and that I would need a social security number, so I became more aware that there were still huge obstacles.

In June 2012 President Obama issued the DACA executive order. I remember crying because I realized: "I'm going to be able to work. I'm going to be able to



teach. I'll be able to work with kids and do the thing I'm really passionate about." I was starting junior year of high school, and my whole future looked brighter.

The rescission in 2017 paused new applications, but I was able to renew a third time. Because I had been able to renew, I felt I needed to be a voice for those who were at greater risk.

Getting involved with Student CTA

One of my ARC professors, Julie Klier, had a deal where one of the textbooks we needed for her class cost \$30 — the same as Student CTA membership — and if we joined Student CTA she would lend us the book for the semester. She also talked about the union and encouraged us to get involved in the on-campus club. I saw it as an opportunity to meet other people

"I need to be a voice for those who are at greater risk. We need to ensure that students in school today have the same opportunities I do."

going into education who might have a social justice focus.

I went to my first statewide Student CTA event and was blown away. The Social Justice Symposium was amazing. Hearing [Tony Thurmond] speak was inspiring. I ran and was elected vice president in 2019, and in April I was elected president.

The Supreme Court's DACA decision in June

I was getting a million texts from family and friends — I had gotten up early to hear the decision. I started crying again because I was so happy. And it was the

same week as the [Supreme Court's] LGBTQ+ decision, so it was a huge rush having those two decisions in the same week.

But I also realized the Trump administration could try again. That's why the next election is so important.

DACA allows those of us who qualify to work here; there are many people who don't qualify and who deserve equal treatment. We need immigration reform. We need to ensure that students in elementary and high school today have the same opportunities I do. There's so much that immigrants go through just to work and live safely that someone born here doesn't even have to think about.

What are teachers supposed to tell their students — "You won't be able to get a job"? "You're going to have to leave"? This election is really make-or-break for many immigrants. ■

THE CTA® CASH REWARDS VISA SIGNATURE® CREDIT CARD



1% CASH BACK
everywhere,
every time

2% CASH BACK
at grocery stores and
wholesale clubs

3% CASH BACK
in the category of
your choice, like
Online Shopping

Earn 2% and 3% cash back on the first \$2,500 in combined grocery store/wholesale club/choice category purchases each quarter, then earn unlimited 1%.

Plus, a **\$200 Amazon.com Gift Card Bonus**
after you make at least \$500 in purchases within the first
90 days of account opening (students not eligible)

APPLY TODAY: call 1-888-758-7946 or visit newcardonline.com Mention Priority Code NAABDL

For more information about the rates, fees, other costs and benefits associated with the use of the credit card, call the toll-free number above or visit www.newcardonline.com. Residents of the US and its territories only. See full disclosure for details.

This credit card program is issued and administered by Bank of America, N.A. Visa and Visa Signature are registered trademarks of Visa International Service Association, and are used by the issuer pursuant to license from Visa U.S.A. Inc. Bank of America and the Bank of America logo are registered trademarks of Bank of America Corporation.

Often educators' creativity spills over into a book, blog, app or other work. We're happy to showcase members' talents.



Laurie and Matt Save the World

Teacher Saves World is a new podcast from wife-husband team Laurie and Matt Jones. Its goal is "education for teachers and parents that are trying to save the world, one teenager at a time," with episodes that explore issues such as the most important year of high school and top concerns for hybrid classrooms. Both Joneses are 20-year educators and members of Tulare Joint Union High School Teachers Association. Find it at teachersavesworld.com/podcast.



High School Hero's Journey

Matt Jones has also written a new book, *Trajectory: The 10 Challenges of High School That Shape a Teenager's Future*, which details how high school is an intentionally designed Hero's Journey that all teenagers go through, with 10 challenges aimed at developing vital aspects of their character before they head out into the wilderness of adulthood. He decodes the playbook used by the most successful students, and gives parents and teachers proven, field-tested strategies to help their emerging adults step up and grow up. On Amazon.



Critical Thinking About Movies

Prolific author and Burbank Teachers Association member Mike Kimmel has published a new book, *Six Critical Essays on Film: A College Guide for Film Appreciation*. Intended to help high school, college and adult school learners, it grew out of Kimmel seeing technically oriented students struggle with essay writing. He breaks down popular movies into their component parts so students can hone critical thinking skills to approach films in the same way they evaluate similar processes in the hard sciences, economics, finance or engineering. On Amazon.

GOT SOMETHING FOR these pages? Send details to editor@cta.org with "Lit From Within" in the subject line. We lean toward new(ish) work that can be used in the classroom.

2018-19 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, 2018, through Aug. 31, 2019. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

Insurance Information

The plan has contracts with Standard Insurance Company to pay certain life insurance, temporary disability, long-term disability, and accidental death and dismemberment claims incurred under the terms of the plan. The total premiums paid for the plan year ending Aug. 31, 2019, were \$42,857,855.

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, 2019, the premiums paid under such “experience-rated” contracts were \$42,857,855 and the total of all benefit claims paid under these contracts during the plan year was \$25,371,267.

Basic Financial Statement

The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the plan, was \$125,537,653 as of Aug. 31, 2019, compared to \$116,124,989 as of Sept. 1, 2018. During the plan year the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of \$9,412,664. 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 \$55,168,290, including employee contributions of \$42,923,393, realized gains of \$230,111 from the sale of assets, earnings from investments of \$1,692,615, and other income of \$10,322,171.

Plan expenses were \$45,755,626. These expenses included \$1,890,625 in administrative expenses, and \$43,865,001 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, contact the office of the California Teachers Association, in care of Carole Anne Luckenbach (the plan administrator), 1705 Murchison Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010, or call 650-697-1400.

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.

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 N-1513, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20210.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13)(PRA), no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The Department notes that a Federal agency cannot conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. See 44 U.S.C. 3507. Also, notwithstanding any other provisions of law, no person shall be subject to penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if the collection of information does not display a currently valid OMB control number. See 44 U.S.C. 3512.

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average less than one minute per notice (approximately 3 hours and 11 minutes per plan). Interested parties are encouraged to send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Attention: Departmental Clearance Officer, Room N-1301, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20210, or email DOL_PRA_PUBLIC@dol.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1210-0040.

OMB Control Number 1210-0040
(expires 06/30/2022)

Membership Manual

<u>Meet Your Leaders</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>History of Advocacy</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Scholarship & Grants</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Awareness Calendar</u>	<u>12</u>



The finer points of membership.

Whether you're just starting out, preparing to retire, or somewhere in between, a career in public education can seem like a labyrinth to navigate on your own. Luckily, you don't have to. #WeAreCTA and we've got your back.



Organizing For Power

DID YOU KNOW?

California is home to the fifth-largest economy in the world, more than 10,500 public schools and 9 million students.

Strength in Numbers

Did you know you're the engine that (em)powers CTA? But not just you. We're all in it together.

Just by being a member, you're helping teachers all across California negotiate smaller class sizes and safer working and learning conditions. Your membership is helping an education support professional in another district bargain a living wage and a veteran educator retire with dignity. And your membership adds to our power to secure and share cost savings through the CTA and NEA Member Benefits programs.

And collectively, as one voice, we've made a lot of important changes through the years — at the local school board, at the California State Capitol, and in the halls of our nation's Capitol.

CTA is a representative democracy.

As a CTA member, you get to vote for someone to represent you on the CTA State Council of Education, CTA's largest governing body. You also vote for your own local chapter officers and delegates to NEA's Representative Assembly, which is the largest union governing body in the country.

The 731 State Council representatives, in turn, elect the three state-level CTA officers and the CTA Board of Directors. Together, the state officers, the Board of Directors, and State Council set CTA's priorities and goals.

At the national level, the NEA Representative Assembly delegates, the officers, and the NEA Board of Directors do the same.



E. Toby Boyd

PRESIDENT
Kindergarten Teacher
Elk Grove Education Association



David Goldberg

VICE PRESIDENT
Bilingual Teacher
United Teachers Los Angeles



Leslie Littman

SECRETARY-TREASURER
History Teacher
Hart District Teachers Association



Joe Boyd

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Former Educator
Longtime Organizer

Out of many, one!

Together, we number 3 million members across the country. That's 310,000 just in California from nearly 1,100 chapters.

At the same time, it all comes down to you. As a member-driven organization, you decide, well, everything! From the trainings CTA offers to what we fight for at the Capitol, you steer CTA's course.

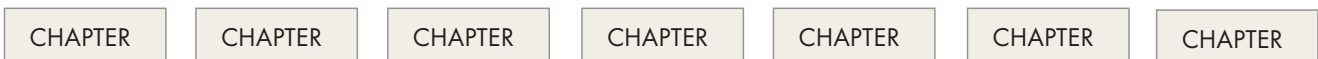


This is what it means to be member-driven.

Every member has a voice.

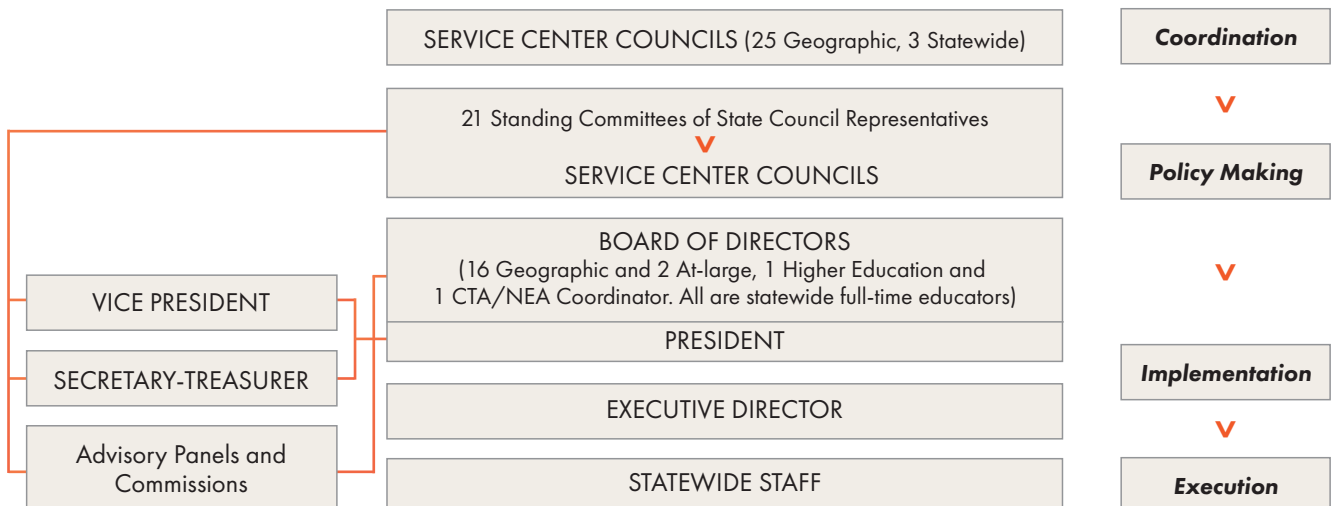
CTA's organization ensures that every member has a voice and a vote in determining our union's values, goals and leaders. CTA members just like you built, maintain and enhance this structure to advocate for, support and defend the public schools our students deserve, and focus on the needs of educators working hard to make a difference in classrooms.

MEMBERS



Small Chapters share State Council Representatives.

Large Chapters have more than one (on average — one representative per 449 members)



Since 2014, the Instructional Leadership Corps has served over 120,000 educators representing more than 2,000 California public schools in at least 504 districts.



Supporting Your Growth

Building Your Skills

CTA offers top-notch professional development opportunities designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Whether it's attending one of our conferences, participating in a training or workshop, or applying for a scholarship or grant, CTA can help you be the best educator you can be!

Events & Conferences

Our statewide conferences deliver knowledge and skills for CTA members on a variety of topics including teaching and learning, racial justice and equity, LGBTQ+ issues, education advocacy, new and veteran educator issues and regional conferences. When you attend a CTA conference, you experience engaging workshops and sessions, perspective from some of the best content experts and thought leaders in public education, and opportunities to network with colleagues.

Innovations in Student Learning

CTA members are at the forefront of innovative ideas for student learning and transforming the profession. Here are a few ways:

Instructional Leadership Corps: Educators, statewide are improving teaching and providing educator-led professional development.

Institute For Teaching: Members can receive grants for innovative ideas whether, in one classroom or school wide.

Think Tanks: Members come together to discuss and collaborate on critical educational issues.

Learn more at cta.org/IPD

The Instructional Leadership Corps

In 2014, CTA partnered with the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE) and the National Board Resource Center (NBRC) at Stanford to launch the Instructional Leadership Corps (ILC). The partnership has built a successful statewide network of professional development offerings created by and for educators, all designed to enrich teaching and learning.

The project is currently deepening investments in existing communities and expanding into rural and geographically isolated sites to sustain partnerships that support our educator-led model of ongoing learning.

Learn more at cta.org/ILC





LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND
California State Board of Education President

“The ILC gives teachers a renewed sense of collegiality, purpose, and common mission that reaffirms their professional identity, keeps them engaged in their work, and gives them a sense of responsibility that extends well beyond their individual classrooms.”



You can learn virtually, too!

Need distance learning instructional strategies and other resources? You can find digital resources, upcoming webinars, and recorded materials on distance learning at cta.org/IPD.

Can't make it to one of CTA's conference in person? Just visit cta.org/VirtualPass and browse through our catalog of past conference workshops.

Conferences

When you attend a CTA conference, you experience engaging workshops, perspective from some of the best content experts and thought leaders in public education, and opportunities to network with colleagues. The skills and information from our conferences can be immediately applied to your role as an educator and local leader.

**2020
2021
OFFERINGS**

Community College

October 9-11, 2020
January 29-31, 2021
April 23-25, 2021

Student CTA Events

November 7-8, 2020
April 24-25, 2021

New Educator Weekends

December 13-15, 2020 (South)
February 19-21, 2021 (North)

LGBTQ+ Issues

December 4-6, 2020

Issues

January 15-17, 2021

Good Teaching

February 5-7, 2021 (North)
March 12-14, 2021 (South)

CTA/NEA-Retired

February 25-26, 2021

Equity and Human Rights

February 26-28, 2021

Presidents

July 15-18, 2021

Summer Institute

July 25-29, 2021

Visit cta.org/conferences for and changes to dates and schedules .

From the streets of Los Angeles to the steps of the State Capitol, educators across California rise together as part of the national #RedForEd movement for public schools.



Advocating For Education

Building a Better State for Public Education

Since our founding in 1863, CTA has built a legacy of standing together and working for our members, our students, our craft and the belief that public education is a cornerstone of American democracy.

It's these shared values that unite us and make us strong, as 310,000 CTA members from El Centro to Eureka and everywhere in between stand ready to support each other, fight for our students and defend our schools and community colleges.

While we are unified in our mission and voice, our differences are a major part of what makes us stronger together. Though we are diverse in so many ways, we share an important focus: Advocating for our students, schools and communities. Ensuring that there is a place for everyone in CTA is a value that requires a solid foundation and structure built to be inclusive and equitable, so that every member is seen and heard.



Guided by our values and powered by our solidarity, CTA continues our mission for even greater successes in the years ahead. We will continue to fight for seats at the table in our local communities and the State Capitol to let our voices be heard and work with elected officials who believe in our vision for strong, vibrant public schools that serve all students.

When CTA stands tall for a brighter tomorrow, there's nothing that can stop us. Because together, We Are CTA.

Learn more about our issues at cta.org/TakeAction

157 Years of Advocacy...a small sampling

CTA is founded by Superintendent of Public Instruction John Swett with fewer than 100 members, all male.	CTA's first legislative win establishes free public schools for all California children—including schools for students of color.	CTA wins state Supreme Court ruling on "fair dismissal" law.	CTA leads state funding fight to establish community colleges. At CTA's urging, free textbooks are printed and distributed at state expense.	California State Teachers' Retirement System is created by legislation after CTA State Council calls for a statewide teacher pension system in 1910.	CTA wins legal victory when state Supreme Court rules that a school board cannot fire a female teacher simply because she married.
1863	1866	1890	1911	1913	1927



Leaders & Advocates

As a longtime primary educator and advocate, I know for nearly 160 years CTA has paved the way for social justice, equity, and fairness in public education.

Craig Hardesty, PRESIDENT
Perris Elementary Teachers Association

Establishing a professional relationships with the administration levels the playing field, and they understand the value of our input and how critical our jobs are in the success of our students.

Deisy Bates, 2020 ESP OF THE YEAR
Association of Educational Office and Technical Employees

With lawmakers in Sacramento determining the financial future of our public schools, particularly during uncertain economic times, it is critical educators and students have a strong advocate in their corner. CTA is that advocate.

Gayle Bilek, CTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Tempeleton Teachers Associaiton

Throughout our history, it's always been members like you working together with other members that make substantive gains for students and educators possible.

Robert Rodriguez, NEA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
San Bernardino Teachers Association



Our Advocacy Road Map

CTA's structure and our agenda, long-term plan and policies are contained in this Organizational Handbook. This handbook is our road map, providing the vision and path to accomplish the important work we do. For 157 years, educators have crafted, molded and shaped bylaws and policies to help build our association into the powerful voice for educators we are today. Our agenda and goals are rooted in policies developed by our State Council of Education and set forth in this handbook.

More at cta.org/OrgHandbook

Go to cta.org/history for the Big List.

CTA is one of a few organizations in California to protest internment of Japanese Americans at the beginning of World War II.	CTA sponsors Prop. 3, which guarantees schools \$120 per student in funding from the state and a minimum teacher salary of \$2,400.	CTA establishes schools for children of migrant workers and leads the authorization of bilingual instruction classes for English learners.	CTA-sponsored Rodda Act passes making K-14 school employees the first public employees in California to win collective bargaining rights.	CTA drafts and wins passage of Proposition 98, which guarantees a minimum portion of state money to fund K-14 education.	CTA wins Class Size Reduction law for K-3 classrooms
1940	1946	1967	1975	1988	1996

Fighting for Justice

CTA has a legacy of fighting for justice – for our members and students and for the shared values we hold dear. This starts with representation on the job, when members are treated unfairly, or members are standing up for students being treated unfairly, or management is pulling something funny. Sometimes these issues require additional expertise, and CTA has an experienced team of attorneys who provide legal advice and assistance to protect the rights of our members and defend our students.



Advocating For Education

The shared belief that a better world is possible has guided our union since our founding, when a small group of teachers successfully established free public schools for all children in California—including schools that educate students of color. During our 157 years, CTA has fought for justice in our schools and communities—leading efforts to outlaw child labor and enact other legal protections for children; vehemently opposing the internment of Japanese Americans at the beginning of World War II; fighting for the rights of immigrant families to pursue the American Dream, and declaring without exception that Black Lives Matter.

CTA’s legacy of fighting for justice and progress informs our efforts as we work for a brighter tomorrow.

Read up on the issues we care about at cta.org/Our-Advocacy.

We’re still advocating!

CTA defeated initiatives that would have cut school funding, destroyed teachers’ due process rights and silenced the voices of public employees.

2005

CTA authors the Quality Education Investment Act to help schools that serve higher percentages of low-income students and English learners to close the achievement gap.

2006

CTA leads fight to pass Proposition 30, generating \$42 billion for public schools and local services over seven years.

2012

CTA helps pass landmark accountability and transparency reforms to charter school laws.

2019

Know Your Rights

Thanks to years of strong union advocacy, California educators have certain rights guaranteed by law on the job.

CTA
MINI GUIDE

Teachers’ Rights



Download this mini guide to your rights at cta.org/YourRights.

Welcome All Students

Social justice for all begins with a free, quality public education. For that to happen our students need to feel welcome in schools and seen by their educators.

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE



For resources, videos, posters and shareables to create welcoming learning environments for all students visit cta.org/SocialJustice

Listen up:

Back in our day...

Visit the CTA Oral History project, cta.org/OralHistory to listen to the voices and memories of our CTA members. Knowing where we’ve been helps us shape our future.



Funding Innovation



Teacher-driven & Strength-based

Through special programs, research, conferences, networking, the mobilization of teachers, and community-based coalitions, the Institute for Teaching (IFT) seeks to advance public education and promote the common good of our students and communities. That's all.

IFT found that school change must include two key factors: It needs to be teacher-driven and it should be based on what is working and successful in our schools and classrooms.

Innovation Grants

One of the ways IFT helps struggling students and schools is by awarding innovation grants directly to CTA members and local chapters. To date, CTA members have funded 313 grant projects totaling more than \$3.5 million.

All CTA members are eligible to apply for an Educator grant (up to \$5,000) or an Impact grant (up to \$20,000). To learn more about everything IFT does and the grants offered, go to cta.org/IFT.

Scholarships & Awards

CTA grants scholarships and awards to educators and members of the community who promote quality public education and impact their students and community. Has your chapter produced exceptionally effective communications? Know a colleague who actively works for social justice and human rights? Those are just a few of the awards we offer. We also award educational scholarships to help support CTA members and their families throughout the academic year.

Here's a sampling.

CTA scholarships for members and dependents, including:

1. Scholarships up to \$5,000 each for dependent children of CTA members
2. Scholarships up to \$3,000 each for members

LGBTQ+ Safety in Schools Grant & Scholarship Program in Honor of Guy DeRosa

Up to \$2,500 to support groups, projects and presentations that promote understanding of and make schools safe for LGBTQ+ persons; scholarships up to \$2,500 for LGBTQ+ members pursuing careers in public education.

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Scholarship Program

Scholarships up to \$6,000 (for both members and dependents) to encourages students of color to become educators, school nurses, school counselors or school therapists.

César E. Chávez and Dolores Huerta Education Awards Programs

Awards for essays or artwork are up to \$550 each for both student and sponsoring teacher who demonstrate an understanding of the vision and principles of César Chávez and Dolores Huerta.

**2020
2021
OFFERINGS**

Visit cta.org/scholarships for more.



Connecting Your World

Staying Informed

Sometimes you just want to turn the page and learn about what's going on with public schools and colleges.

Don't miss CTA's award-winning publications that spotlight important issues in our public schools and community colleges, as well as amazing members that go above and beyond to reach students. CTA's official magazine, *California Educator*, is published every two months, mailed to all members and updated regularly at cta.org/educator.



Get social, connect with educators and take the movement digital!

The world interacts on social media and CTA members are there. And it's not just sharing memes and pictures of food. CTA members are talking about some major issues on CTA social media pages and in online groups—engaging in dialogues and sharing resources about equity, social justice, classroom techniques, distance learning, education trends, and ways to get connected with CTA and the movement for the schools all students deserve.

Join the conversation using the hashtag **#WeAreCTA** to connect with educators from CTA and beyond to discuss education, share teaching and learning tips, and take the fight for public schools digital.

www.CTA.org



And don't forget our home on the web, the newly redesigned cta.org, which makes it easier than ever to find educator resources and information about upcoming CTA events, conferences and professional development opportunities.

Updated and upgraded in 2020 with more to come in the months ahead, cta.org is a one-stop shop for all things CTA.

Whether you're looking for news about public schools, information about our goals for the coming election, or want to help advocate and take action for our students, you'll find what you need at cta.org.

Printed four times a year, CCA Advocate is the official publication of the Community College Association, CTA's affiliate union representing community college faculty and educators across the state.

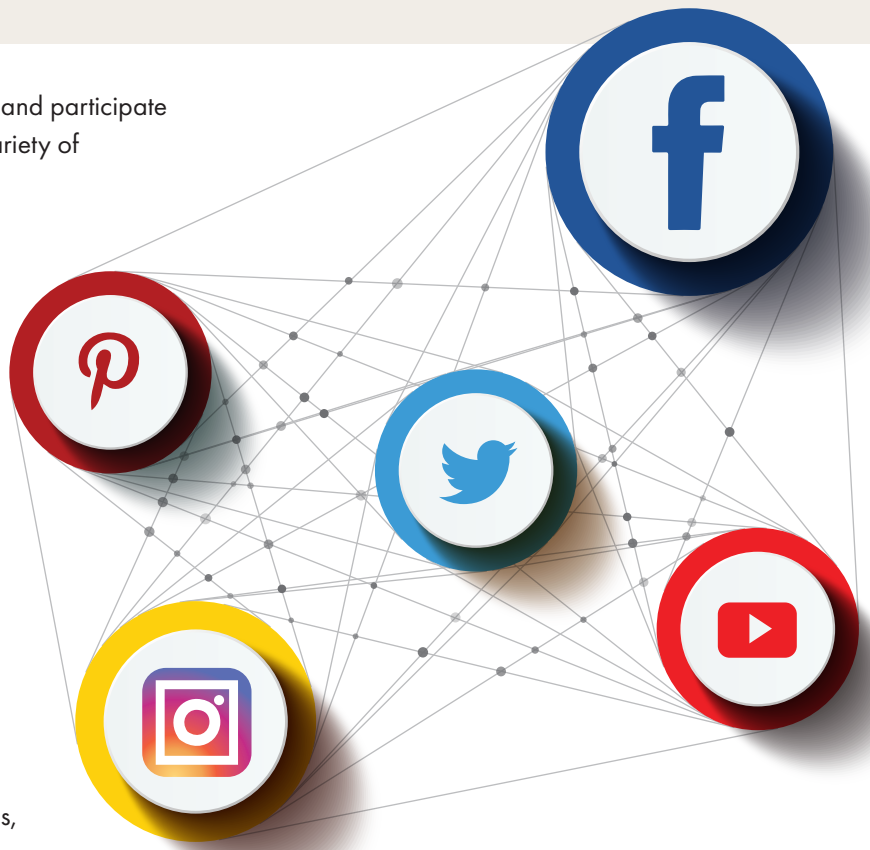
Visit CTA's main Facebook page (**@WeAreCTA**) and participate in more than 15 Facebook groups focused on a variety of education topics.

Follow breaking news that impacts CTA members and discussions about important education and social issues on CTA's Twitter page (**@WeAreCTA**).

And don't miss our Instagram stories and posts (**@WeAreCTA**) sharing the beauty of our craft and our union, since we all know a picture is worth a thousand words.

Browse our curated boards and pins on Pinterest (**@WeAreCTA**) and get resources to use in the classroom and beyond.

On our YouTube channel, you can find dozens of IPD webinars and trainings on a variety of topics, in addition to CTA ads, videos of events and other informative and interesting items.



Learn more at cta.org/social



For Educators ▾ Our Advocacy ▾ Get Involved ▾ Events & Training ▾

Educator Resources

- [Member Benefits](#) →
- [Leader Resources](#) →
- [Events & Training](#) →
- [Issues We Care About](#) →
- [News & Media](#) →
- [Get Involved](#) →
- [CTAInvest](#) →

[More Resources](#)

Staying connected to your profession and colleagues is important, and CTA's digital platforms make it possible. Like and follow us today and we'll see you online!

And if you need help while on cta.org, BUZZ, our answerbot, is here.

CTA/NEA Member Benefits

We stand union-strong with CTA's 310,000 and NEA's 3 million members to negotiate exclusive programs designed just for educators. Our programs can give you and your family peace of mind and add value to your membership.



Saving You Money

Unique Benefits and Savings

CTA/NEA Member Benefits programs are designed exclusively for educators. These quality programs offer competitive rates, excellent customer service, and have been vetted at the highest level with continued monitoring and advocacy. Whether you are trying to save money on your back-to-school supplies or looking for ways to protect yourself and family with insurance solutions or your financial future with retirement savings, we have you covered. We and our endorsed partners are ready to help and support you with new virtual resources.

By combining the discounts from your CTA and NEA Member Benefits programs, you have a long list of programs and savings available to you.

A Handful of Benefits

For a complete list of the discounts and resources, visit our websites:

CTAMemberBenefits.org
neamb.com
CTAinvest.org

If you have any questions:
memberbenefits@cta.org
(650) 552-5200

Benefits You Can Count On

CTA Access to Savings offers numerous discounts on everyday and major purchases, travel, and entertainment.

CTA Group Voluntary Life and Disability Plan through The Standard, protecting your loved ones and income with additional Student Loan and Cancer benefits.

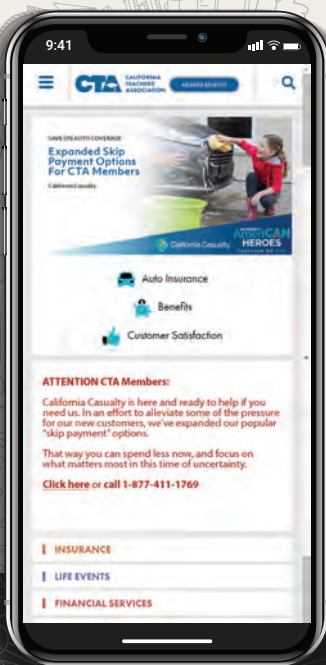
Auto, Home/Renters Insurance through California Casualty offering preferred rates and unique educator-specific benefits.

Exclusive member discounts on home mortgages and auto loans through Provident Credit Union and a Super Reward Checking Account.

Student loan forgiveness resources, including NEA Student Loan Forgiveness Navigator powered by Savi.

And don't miss...

CTA Retirement Savings Plan, the only 403(b) plan endorsed by CTA and created using a fiduciary standard of care, which means it has your best interests in mind. More at **CTAMemberBenefits.org/rsp**.



Download the 2020-2021 Member Benefits Highlights for a complete look at the program.
cta.org/MBHighlights

2021
Calendar



Awareness Events

Black Business	Hispanic Heritage (Sept. 15 to mid Oct. 15)	National Breast Cancer International School Library LGBT History National Bullying Prevention	American Indian Heritage Movember		National Mentoring	Black History	March Women’s History California Arts Education Music in Our Schools Youth Art	School Library Celebrate Diversity Child Abuse Prevention Autism Awareness	Better Speech and Hearing Mental Health Awareness Asian American/Pacific Islander Heritage	LGBTQ+ Pride	
AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL
1	1	1	1	1	1 New Year’s Day	1 School Counseling Week	1 School Social Worker Week	1	1 International Workers Day	1	1
2	2	2 Day of Nonviolence	2	2 Special Education Day	2	2	2 Read Across America	2 Autism Awareness Day	2	2 Alice Piper Day	2
3	3	3	3 Election Day	3 Day of Special Educator	3	3	3	3	3 Teacher Appreciation Week	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4 National Teacher Day	4	4 Independence Day
5	5	5 World Teachers’ Day	5	5	5	5	5	5	5 Cinco de Mayo	5 World Environment Day	5
6	6 National Read a Book Day	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6 Children’s Mental Health Day	6	6
7	7 Labor Day	7	7	7 Inclusive Schools Week	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8 International Literacy Day	8	8	8	8	8	8 International Women’s Day	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9 Mother’s Day	9	9
10	10	10	10	10 Human Rights Day	10	10	10	10 Dolores Huerta Day	10	10	10
11	11	11 National Coming Out Day	11 Veterans Day	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
12 International Youth Day	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12 CA Day of the Teacher School Nurse Day	12	12
13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13		13	13
14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	13	14 Flag Day	14
15	15	15	15	15	15	15 Presidents’ Day	15	15	14	15	15
16	16 Mexican Independence Day	16 World Food Day	16 School Psychology Week	16	16	16	16	16	15 Armed Forces Day	16	16
17	17 Citizenship Day	17	17 American Education Week	17	17	17	17	17	16 16-22 ESP Week	17	17
18	18	18	18 NEA ESP Day	18	18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	18 Japanese Americans Internment	18	18 Admin. Professionals Week	17	18	18
19	19	19 Multicultural Diversity Day	19	19	19	19	19	19	18 CTA ESP Day	19 Juneteenth	19
20	20	20 Mix It Up at Lunch Day	20 Substitute Educators Day	20	20 No Name-Calling Week	20	20	20	19	20Father’s Day	20
21	21 International Day of Peace	21	21	21	21	21	21	21 Admin. Professionals Day	20	21	21
22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22 Earth Day	21	22	22
23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23 Global Youth Service Day	22 Harvey Milk Day	23	23
24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	23	24	24
25	25 American Indian Day	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	24	25	25
26 Women’s Equality Day	26	26	26 Thanksgiving Day	26	26	26	26	26	25	26	26 Disabilities Act (ADA)
27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	26	27	27
28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	27	28	28
29	29	29	29	29	29		29	29	28	29	29
30	30	30	30	30	30 Fred Korematsu Day		30 Arbor Day	30 El Día de los Niños	29	30	30
31		31		31	31		31 Cesar Chavez Day		30		31
									31 Memorial Day		



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 FOR ALL STUDENTS. **TO ENSURE THAT THE HUMAN DIGNITY AND CIVIL RIGHTS OF ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE PROTECTED.** **TO SECURE A MORE JUST, EQUITABLE, AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY.**

This is why CTA stands.

When you stand with us, you stand up for California's people.



#WeAreCTA
cta.org



A great state needs great public schools. Starting back in 1863, the California Teachers Association made shaping those schools its main focus.

We've fought for books, funding, and a whole lot more. There's still more to do. Every day is an opportunity to make our schools better and brighter.

Outspoken and out to make a difference since 1863.

After 155 years, here's what we know: Our public schools are made stronger each and every day by those who believe in and fight for them. That's why we'll never give up, throw in the towel, or relax our guard. Because the public needs public schools.

EDUCATORS

Create Your Professional Growth Path

**CHOOSE FROM HUNDREDS OF CONVENIENT COURSES OFFERED
IN VARIOUS FORMATS TO ENHANCE YOUR TEACHING SKILLS**

FEATURED SERIES

Remote Teaching and Learning Series

Strengthen Your Remote Teaching and Student Learning with Best Practices and Resources

USD's Division of Professional and Continuing Education has selected various courses to support educators to facilitate the transition to the remote classroom. This series offers effective teaching practices and valuable resources that support maintaining high-quality teaching and continued student learning. Whether it is to optimize technology in your remote teaching, or to create effective curriculum in the online format, or as simple as creating efficient habits for teachers and students, these courses will help you and your students reach their goals!

All courses are taught in flexible and convenient Online Self-Paced format, and available in various unit options (1 to 3 units). See each course for unit value.

➔ **View our course offerings now!**
Visit SanDiego.edu/EducatorsPrograms

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

VARIOUS FORMATS

Independent Study:

These courses offer flexibility and the ability to complete a course faster or slower than a traditional live course. Our courses deliver the same high-quality content and expert instruction as traditional, "face-to-face" courses.

Online Self-Paced:

Offering you the perfect blend of accessibility, convenience and flexibility for you to control your learning pace. You will use course textbooks, manuals, assignments, digital tools, and exams to learn and earn credit.

Online Fixed-Date:

This format offers a convenient, yet rigorous style of learning that allows you to structure your education to suit your schedule. Online courses have fixed start and finish dates, but as an online student, you will have access to your digital classroom at any time.

Classroom:

These courses are offered in a traditional classroom where you can connect with your instructor and classmates in a live setting. This learning environment facilitates communication on a given subject in real time, enables immediate feedback, and fosters interaction with the instructor and like-minded classmates.

WIN A JEEP® COMPASS!

KEEP ON
COURSE
Giveaway!



We know that current events have you driving less,
and Keep on Course has a different meaning as educators across the nation
transition their school community to online. You've got a lot going on right now...
and we believe you deserve a new vehicle now more than ever.



Take this moment to dream a little
and **ENTER TODAY:**

WinAJeepCompass.com/CTA

