

California EDUCATOR

California Teachers Association December 2010 • January 2011 Volume 15 Issue 4



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low-performing schools
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CalSTRS lowers rate of return
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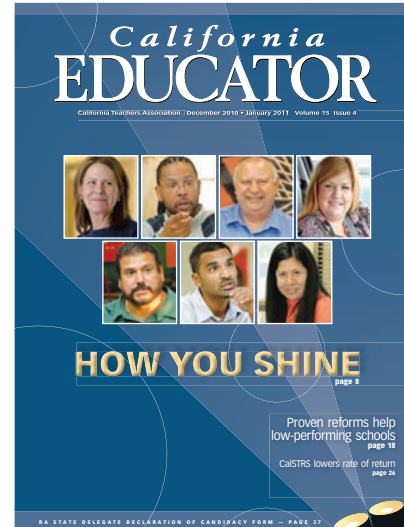


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Seven educators who bring their subjects to life — math, drama, auto shop, debate, employment training, sociology and family literacy — are among the many shining lights in the CTA family.
 Story on page 8.



¡Sí Se Puede! ¿Por Qué No?

BY CTA PRESIDENT DAVID A. SANCHEZ

I love the holiday season. While we're catching up with good friends, repeating old family traditions, and taking time to reflect on the years behind us, we also renew our focus and begin to hope and plan for a good year ahead.

Every day, CTA members are working to make things better for our students and our profession. And it's not the easiest thing to do, given our current economic climate. We already know that the fiscal forecast for next year is dismal. The state is facing a \$28 billion deficit. Governor-elect Jerry Brown convened a group of leaders from across the state to discuss the budget a few weeks ago. I attended to make sure our lawmakers know that public schools and colleges have endured a disproportionate amount — more than 50 percent — of the budget cuts in the past three years, totaling \$21 billion.

Our educators have been making sacrifices, too. The country's and state's economic woes have left many of our local school systems cash-strapped. Even those districts with rainy day funds are fearful to spend them, not knowing how much more rain lies ahead. Local chapters throughout California have stepped up to the bargaining tables this year with a clear understanding of what's possible, what's fair, and what's best for the learning and working environments of students and teachers. Educators have taken concessions when they were necessary and fought against them when they were excessive. This was the case for Capistrano teachers earlier this year, and it is the case right now for the La Habra Education Association. I joined LHEA members and their dedicated local president, Danette Brown, on the picket line recently to stand up against proposed permanent take-backs, to stand up for our teachers and our students.

And just a bit north in Compton, our teachers and students are under an attack from a different angle. A privatization-driven group known as the Parent Revolution has filed a petition to turn McKinley Elementary School into a charter school. This is the first use of the "Parent Trigger" law implemented last year by the Legislature, and chaos has ensued for this small neighborhood school. Many parents claim they were misled and intimidated into signing the

petition by the hired representatives of the Parent Revolution. There are a lot of questions surrounding this law and the petition filed at McKinley, and the Compton Education Association is working with CTA to make sure the law was followed, that parents weren't misled, and that the community knows the truth.

McKinley is actually a school that is a perfect example of how educational change can work when teachers, administrators and parents work together to best meet the needs of students. Although the Parent Revolution was able to target McKinley Elementary because it has not met the statewide API target of 800 out of 1,000 points, McKinley students have been making steady and significant progress for the past three years. And they have been making this progress since the implementation of CTA's Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA). McKinley is one of nearly 500 schools serving at-risk students that are receiving \$3 billion in additional resources over an eight-year period to lower class sizes, align professional development using student data, and create a collaborative approach to reform among parents, teachers and other local stakeholders. The good news is that McKinley's API score has risen more than 70 points in the last two years alone. With continued progress, and to the credit of McKinley's educators and the QEIA system, McKinley could be out of Program Improvement in the next few years.

The results McKinley is seeing from its participation in QEIA aren't unique. A recent research report shows that QEIA schools averaged nearly 50 percent greater growth in API scores than similar non-QEIA schools in 2009-10. Just three years into the eight-year program, we are already seeing promising results in closing the achievement gap.

It's this type of teacher-led reform effort that can transform our struggling neighborhood schools into thriving ones that serve all students and engage our communities. These efforts and results give me hope for the year ahead. Through collaboration, through working with parents and lawmakers as partners, we can build a better state for public education.

California EDUCATOR

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¡Sí Se Puede! [Yes we can! Why not?], words inspired by César Chávez,
¿Por Qué No? encourage us to remember that, together, we can achieve great things.



what's new at CTA.ORG



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Need a refresher on tidbits and facts about CTA? Check out the Frequently Asked Questions page to get answers from everything from benefits of membership to how policies are made at CTA.

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Create a cartoon concept

We invite members to send in cartoon concepts for future issues of the *Educator*. All we ask is that your ideas deal with current events in education and captions are no longer than one sentence long. Please send your cartoon ideas through mail, fax or e-mail.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I am proud that my union stood up for “tax fairness” in the last election. But I am discouraged by the extraordinarily shallow election analysis in the most recent *California Educator* (“2010 big election wins,” November), in particular around the defeat of Proposition 24.

“Unfortunately, CTA-sponsored Proposition 24 ... was rejected by voters.” That’s it, seriously? Why? Are California voters too conservative? Did we run a weak campaign? Were we just plain snookered by the Chamber of Commerce’s attack ads?

I can’t believe that leadership and staff haven’t spent days wrapping their heads around this loss. And how many times have I heard from CTA that members ought to be “part of the conversation”? We are asked to volunteer our time to get out the vote, but not to discuss the results in any meaningful fashion.

I believe California’s educators are more than intelligent enough for this

discussion. We should be spoken to like the adults that we are — many of us who have spent years engaged in local, state and national politics. In these dangerous times for public education, holding members at arm’s length is a recipe for weakness as a union and irrelevancy for the *California Educator*.

John Green

Castro Valley Teachers Association
(Letter sent through Facebook)

Editor’s note: Thanks, John, for your thoughtful letter. We went to press right after the election results came out. We would like to take this opportunity to provide some analysis. CTA has looked at the results of the election, exit poll data and post-election survey research. Voters here in California and throughout the country were and still are very concerned about the economy, jobs and taxes. In California, every statewide measure that

dealt with raising taxes, spending and borrowing was rejected. However, new research shows that with the election of a new governor, California voters are beginning to feel more confident. We’ll continue covering the political landscape in California in this *Educator*, and we encourage readers to share their thoughts.



Send us your comments

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UPDATE

Constructive discussion follows controversial documentary

In a high-profile panel discussion in Silicon Valley Dec. 14, CTA Vice President Dean Vogel continued the constructive criticism of the education documentary *Waiting for Superman* that was outlined in a package of revealing stories in the October *California Educator*.

The controversial film by Davis Guggenheim scapegoats teachers and their unions for the problems in public schools. Vogel told the panel it simplifies complex education issues and fails to include interviews with knowledgeable education experts like Diane Ravitch or Linda Darling-Hammond of Stanford University. Instead, billionaire Bill Gates and divisive former District of Columbia schools chancellor Michelle Rhee are allowed to paint a misleading picture

that leaves out the dedication of America’s educators.

“We didn’t see the teachers who are putting in extra hours above and beyond the duty day” to improve student learning, Vogel noted. He called for conversation and collaboration among all education stakeholders, including charter school advocates, instead of the divisiveness the movie has provoked.

Joining Vogel on the panel were Diane



Continued on page 38

ABOVE: CTA Vice President Dean Vogel makes a point about *Waiting for Superman* to John Danner, CEO of Rocketship Education charters (center), and Jim Lianides, superintendent of Sequoia Union High School District.

CTA photo by Mike Myslinski

calendar

jan 2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 14 <input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 14-16 <input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 21-23 <input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 28-30	Deadline for Human Rights Award nominations Deadline to enter César E. Chávez Awards program Issues Conference, Las Vegas Deadline for CTA Gold Award nominations Good Teaching Conference, San Jose Region III Leadership Conference, Torrance
feb 2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Feb. 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Feb. 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> Feb. 11-13 <input type="checkbox"/> Feb. 25-26 <input type="checkbox"/> Feb. 25-27	Deadline to apply for CTA Scholarship CTA State Council of Education, Los Angeles CCA Winter Advocacy Council NEA Pacific Region Conference, Portland, OR CLMS/CLHS Annual Conference North, Sacramento
mar 2011	<input type="checkbox"/> March 2 <input type="checkbox"/> March 4 <input type="checkbox"/> March 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> March 18-20	Read Across America Deadline to apply for MLK Jr. Scholarship Equity and Human Rights Conference, San Jose Good Teaching Conference, Orange County
april 2011	<input type="checkbox"/> April 1-3 <input type="checkbox"/> April 15-17 <input type="checkbox"/> April 30	CTA State Council of Education, Los Angeles CCA Conference/Spring Council and WHO Awards El Día de los Niños
may 2011	<input type="checkbox"/> May 1-7 <input type="checkbox"/> May 11 <input type="checkbox"/> May 11 <input type="checkbox"/> May 17	Teacher Appreciation Week School Nurses Day California Day of the Teacher CTA ESP Day
jun 2011	<input type="checkbox"/> June 3-5 <input type="checkbox"/> June 30-July 5	CTA State Council of Education, Los Angeles NEA Representative Assembly, Chicago
jul 2011	<input type="checkbox"/> July 18-22 <input type="checkbox"/> July 31-Aug. 5	Presidents Conference, Asilomar Summer Institute, UCLA

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SHINING

While the educational landscape can appear gloomy, CTA members are stars shining through the clouds. *Educator* staff writer Sherry Posnick-Goodwin travels the state all year going classroom to classroom to report on budget cuts and other struggles. Through it all, she sees CTA members doing good work every day.

This month the *Educator* presents profiles of seven members

who stood out in tough times. They include teachers, an education support professional, a college professor and a family literacy specialist. Like you, they strive to create a better world for their students. Like you, they are making a difference.

We hope that you see a bit of yourself in each of these stories. Thanks for all that you do and will continue to do. And keep your light shining.



LIGHTS

Rosa Hernandez
Literacy starts
in the **family**



Rosa Hernandez
Teachers Association of Long Beach



take English and vocational classes, and then join their children two mornings a week.

“My goal is to prepare students for kindergarten, but it’s also to empower these families,” says Hernandez. “Sometimes when children first arrive here, their self-esteem is low. But once they start working with their parents inside the classroom, their self-esteem becomes higher and they participate more. It’s the same with parents.”

Many family members that Hernandez has worked with have gone on to find jobs they enjoy, receive promotions, and successfully complete college courses.

“The first benefit is that my 3-year-old

“LET’S SING ‘EENCY WEENCY SPIDER’ in English, Spanish and Hawaiian,” says teacher Rosa Hernandez to her Head Start classroom filled with excited preschoolers and parents. Inside the colorful and welcoming environment, both generations settle down for a lesson. They start by making the hand gestures for spiders.

“Miss Rosa” then reads a book aloud, asking students and parents to repeat key phrases. She’s not just telling a story; she is modeling the way parents should be reading to their children at home, says Hernandez, who belongs to the Teachers Association of Long Beach.

Hernandez firmly believes that every child’s *first* teacher is a parent and that family literacy is a priority. Research and results at family literacy centers throughout the country show that working with multiple generations is the best way to lift up the entire family, according to the National Conference on Family Literacy.

The Head Start class, part of the Long Beach Family Literacy Program, shares a campus with the Long Beach Adult School, and the schools collaborate to promote family learning. Youngsters spend their days with Hernandez to prepare for kindergarten. The parents are required to attend the adjacent adult school, where they

ABOVE: “Miss Rosa” leads parents and students in song in a family literacy program in Long Beach.

BELOW: Nicole Farjas paints while her mother Azucena Cordova watches.



daughter, Adrian, is learning English,” says Enma Sandoval through an interpreter. “The other benefit is that I’m learning how to become a better mother.”

When story time is over, the youngsters are told to take their parents to play stations scattered throughout the classroom. “Show your mommy what you like to do,” Hernandez says as parents are pulled by the hand in different directions. Parents and children do word puzzles, hop on letters to spell words, match letters to pictures, and engage in other activities.

“For me, it’s great, because I hardly have any time at home to do these things,” says Angie Moreno, in the midst of playing blocks with daughter Itzel, age 4. “I am usually cooking and cleaning. The time we are spending here together will change her life, and these memories will stay with her. Here, she gets to be the ‘little boss’ and tell me what to do. Miss Rosa is a wonderful teacher.”

Hernandez is also an inspiration to parents because she was once in their shoes. She arrived in the U.S. as an immigrant unable to speak English, and enrolled her child in the Head Start program. She learned English, enrolled in college and earned a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education.

“I was lucky because I had a lot of wonderful people support me and guide me with the right tools to help me and my child to succeed,” says Hernandez. “And I’m trying to provide all the tools and guidance *these* parents need to succeed. Every day I greet parents with a big smile, call each of them by name and show them respect. I give them ideas that worked for me as a parent. I let them know that to raise these children, we have to work together. And when we are learning together, learning is better.” ❖



Kadhir Rajagopal Math made cool



Kadhir Rajagopal
Twin Rivers United
Educators Association

“I HAVE STUDENTS WHO HAVE failed all their lives,” says Kadhir Rajagopal, who is also known as “Dr. Raja.” “They come from poverty, broken families; they have incarcerated parents and other problems. But that doesn’t mean they can’t learn math.”

A member of the Twin Rivers United Educators Association, Dr. Raja inspired a math turnaround at Grant High School in Sacramento. His solution to students failing to understand math included developing a system called CREATE that uses repetition to teach concepts, staying active in class, immediate rewards for success, and employing tough love when students are slacking.

BELOW: “Dr. Raja” was selected as one of California’s Teachers of the Year for 2011.

Dr. Raja believes that learning has to happen in class. He doesn’t follow textbooks, assign homework or spend lots of time lecturing to his students. Without homework, he finds students are more willing to pay attention in class. If they have trouble, he will tutor them at lunch or after school.

This young, energetic teacher also succeeds by reaching students on *their* level. He is highly interactive and uses their vocabulary. “Oh, this is a hecka bad boy,” he says to his students of an equation while writing it on the board.

Mostly, Dr. Raja gives them what students of this generation crave — immediate rewards. If students raise their hand and correctly solve a problem in class, for example, 10 points are immediately added to their grade. If they answer a question right on the board, a piece of candy magically appears on their desk. If they need help, Dr. Raja is there. He

flies around the classroom at a frenetic pace, lavishing points, praise, rewards and help. It’s a lot of work, but he knows instantly whether his students get it. Mostly, they do.

To be certain his students have mastered certain concepts, every class has an “exit” assignment: a math problem based on the material covered in class. If they get the right answer, they pass the “exit” assignment. Students who didn’t understand the day’s lesson must stay after class or come in at lunchtime for extra help. The next step is that Dr. Raja will call a student’s parents or their coach in sports to make sure there are consequences. Every parent is on speed-dial.

“I’m a bulldog,” says Dr. Raja, somewhat ferociously.

“He called my dad,” agrees ninth-grader Hernan Espinosa. “He had me stay after school so he could help me. I didn’t know how to do this before, but now it’s easy for me.” ❖



Cynthia Siemsen

Sociology comes to life



Cynthia Siemsen
California Faculty Association

THE HOMELESS LINE UP OUTSIDE TORRES COMMUNITY Shelter in Chico. The door opens and Sharina Jackson, a student volunteer, greets a homeless man with a smile, a kind word, and basic necessities like soap and shampoo. She is joined by other CSU Chico students, all in their 20s, who also hand each “guest” plastic containers, not exceeding 25 pounds, which store most of their worldly goods.

Cynthia Siemsen, chair of CSU Chico’s Department of Sociology and a California Faculty Association member, proudly watches her students perform service learning that connects classroom learning with hands-on experience.

“This is a powerful way for students to learn sociology,” says Siemsen. “Every time students learn a theory, they have to analyze homelessness and/or mental illness in this class. They can understand firsthand, through volunteer work with the homeless, how this theory comes into play.”

At the end of the semester, each student writes a paper connecting their experiences at the shelter to what they have learned in class. Their papers reveal that volunteering at the shelter has made the course material relevant, deepened their understanding of theory, and even influenced their career paths in the nonprofit or social services sector. They are also proud to be part of a class that has contributed more than 350 hours of service to a worthy cause in their community.

The students’ T-shirts have a quote by sociologist C. Wright Mills on the back: “Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both.” They selected the quote because their perspective on society has changed dramati-

Armando Hernandez

Taking it on the road



Armando Hernandez
Montebello Teachers
Association

HIS STUDENTS ARE AN unlikely group of champions. Many are English language learners from East Los Angeles. Most are short of credits they need to graduate from Schurr High School in Montebello.

But when the high school students enroll in Armando Hernandez’s auto shop program, they get on track to graduate. They enter nationwide competitions to make cars run on green technology. And they beat students from top universities.

Hernandez, a member of the Montebello Teachers Association, teaches auto shop during the school day. But it’s his Transportation and Energy Program (TEP), an after-school vocational skills intervention program for struggling students, that’s getting attention while it prepares students for the future.

Hernandez, a member of the Montebello Teachers Association, teaches auto shop during the school day. But it’s his Transportation and Energy Program (TEP), an after-school vocational skills intervention program for struggling students, that’s getting attention while it prepares students for the future.

Every year, TEP students design and build an energy-efficient vehicle for the global Eco-marathon Americas contest sponsored by Shell. In 2008, his students designed a car that ran on liquid petro-

leum gas and won first place in that category at the event, outperforming teams of engineering students from UC Berkeley and Louisiana State University.

This year, students are hard at work



ABOVE: Luis Campos diagnoses a problem in Armando Hernandez’s award-winning auto shop program at Schurr High School in Montebello.

leum gas and won first place in that category at the event, outperforming teams of engineering students from UC Berkeley and Louisiana State University.

Hernandez encourages students to enroll in three nearby community colleges through a matriculation program

he has created. They receive credit for “dual enrollment” at both high school and college campuses.

Since he also graduated from Schurr High School, Hernandez feels an obligation to give back. “I was a struggling student myself,” he explains. “I was not on a track to graduate, and had to attend adult school. But I went on to be successful, and I was the first in my family to graduate from college.”

He credits his former auto shop teacher with giving him motivation. “He used to joke with me that someday I’d come back and teach auto shop. I said, ‘You’re crazy, I’d never want to do that.’”

Now it’s his turn to motivate others. “Mr. Hernandez is an inspiration to us,” says Chris Ortiz, a senior. “He prepares us for the outside world. When we go to competitions, people look at us like we’re a bunch of bad kids or troublemakers because we’re from East Los Angeles. But they stop looking at us that way when we beat them.”

cally from this assignment, which requires 10 hours of volunteering at the shelter. Students may balk at first, but many continue to volunteer long after their course requirement is fulfilled. They do laundry, serve food and help as needed.

Jackson expected to find the shelter depressing, but discovered that a sense of community bolsters the spirits of residents, who are permitted to stay 180 days. “They have a social life like a family,” she explains. “They come up with their own rules. They play ping-pong. They do magic tricks. And they all have different stories about how they came to be here.”

Siemsen says her students’ stereotypes about homelessness — especially the one that most homeless people are mentally ill — are shattered after working in the shelter.

“What I have learned most from this experience and from my teacher is compassion,” says Stephanie Brazil. “Dr. Siemsen is the most compassionate person I know. She cares about the homeless, and she cares about her students as people. She wants us to grow as people. And thanks to her, we are doing just that.” ❖



ABOVE: Sharina Jackson, a CSU Chico sociology student, greets guest James Cox as he checks in to the Torres Community Shelter in Chico.

Jamal Speakes Healing drama

Jamal Speakes
United Teachers
Los Angeles



DORSEY HIGH SCHOOL DRAMA TEACHER Jamal Speakes has created a high school musical, and it’s not something you’d see from Disney. The theme reflects a real issue students face in Los Angeles — violence between blacks and Latinos. It’s gotten rave reviews from the mayor of Los Angeles and the *Los Angeles Times*, and has been featured on CBS News.

“I lost a lot of students to gang violence, and it’s really devastating to see a kid on Friday and not see that kid on Monday,” says Speakes, a United Teachers Los Angeles member. “Year after year, it was part of the environment and the culture of the neighborhood. I felt like I had to do something.”

So he wrote the script for *Phi’la: The Musical!*, a story about an African American teenager who moves from Philadelphia to Los Angeles and falls in love with a Latina girl at his school. It is a modern-day *West Side Story* with plenty of hip-hop. It’s also somewhat autobiographical, as Speakes moved from Philadelphia to Los Angeles after college.

Some of his friends wrote songs for *Phi’la*, including Lindsay Walker, daughter of Brenda Russell, songwriter for *The Color Purple*, and Grammy-nominated musician Mike Jackson.

RIGHT: Mykell Richardson and Taylor Phillips-McKay.

When the show was performed at Dorsey in 2008, city leaders took notice and kicked in some in-kind funding. The following year he opened up auditions for *Phi’la* citywide. Students performed at Club Nokia in Los Angeles, and the city paid for 1,500 students to be bused in from throughout the area to see the show for free. That same cast performed in August this year at the NAACP Theatre Festival held at the Los Angeles Theatre Center.

The show is taking a hiatus while Speakes works to develop a script for a film based on the musical, as well as an educational component tied with school workshops. The drama teacher has founded the Speakes 4 Them Foundation to pay for an after-school arts program to help students deal with social, racial and prejudice issues.

“We’re focused on taking this to the next lev-

el,” says Speakes. “I’d like to see Hollywood Boulevard shut down and have this premiere at the El Capitan Theatre with a bunch of kids screaming and yelling. This appeals to kids, and they listen to the message when music is involved.”

Students say they are, indeed, listening.

“This show relates to Los Angeles youth today, because everybody knows somebody who has lost someone, or knows someone who has gotten shot due to gang violence. It’s sad,” relates Mykell Richardson, 17, an ensemble cast member. “The message of this show is that different ethnic groups can come together and get along.”

Speakes says that his cast members of African American and Latino students have become a family of sorts, which proves that they are more alike than different.

“Kids don’t just wake up hating each other,” says Speakes. “This type of behavior is learned from the older generation. I know this play isn’t an end-all, be-all when it comes to solving our problems, but hopefully it serves as a conversation starter for evoking change in our community.” ❖



Kimber Wilkinson Great job



Kimber Wilkinson
Ventura Classified Employees
Association

DESSIREE GARCIA WALKS INTO A supermarket with a résumé and a smile on her face. She asks for the manager, greets her with a handshake, and asks if there are any job openings. She is told that at the moment the store isn't hiring, and is encouraged to check back in a few weeks. She remembers the advice of her employment training assistant Kimber Wilkinson: Be persistent and be patient.

You wouldn't know it from looking at the poised 18-year-old, but Garcia has a learning disability. As a special education student in the Ventura Unified School

District, Garcia has struggled both inside the classroom and in the outside world. She desperately needs money and a job.

Wilkinson, who has driven Garcia to the store and to several other potential employment sites, teaches Garcia the subtleties of job hunting en route. A member of the Ventura Classified Employees Association, Wilkinson's goal is to help students like Garcia transition from the world of school to the world of work — and get their first paid job.

"I love these kids, and I love what I do," says Wilkinson. "They know that they can trust me not to give up on them. And when I see them in their uniforms hard at work, there is no greater feeling in the world."

Wilkinson drives Garcia to other stores where she's already applied, to re-

mind employers she's still interested. Sometimes Wilkinson accompanies her inside the business establishment, and other times she waits in the car and lets Garcia go solo. She helped Garcia put a résumé together, assisted with online job applications, and conducted "mock interviews" so Garcia is ready to answer tough questions. Wilkinson also talked with Garcia about grooming, hygiene and how to exude an air of confidence.

"I'm a really shy person, and I'm trying to come out of my shell," says Garcia. "Kimber has taught me a lot of things, like how to speak up. I am getting less nervous. I have never listened to anybody else the way I listen to Kimber. I know eventually I will find a job."

The students Wilkinson works with have disabilities including autism, Asperger's syndrome, mental retardation and emotional disturbance. Even in a good economy, it would be difficult for some of them to find employment. But despite these barriers, Wilkinson estimates she has found jobs for 60 students ages 16-22 over the past few years.

It doesn't happen overnight. First Wilkinson "gets all her ducks in a row" to match students with the type of work and environment they will enjoy. She assesses their capabilities, evaluates parental involvement, and determines what transportation is available for the students to get to work.

Mostly, says Wilkinson, she is teaching her students the art of "self-advocacy," or how to stand up for themselves in a world where they often face discrimination.

"We are always taught to not judge a book by its cover," says Wilkinson. "Yet we do it every day and don't realize it. Just because someone is a little different doesn't mean they can't be a great employee." ❖

BELOW: Employment training assistant Kimber Wilkinson (center), who works with special education students in Ventura Unified School District, watches as student Dessiree Garcia (right) introduces herself for a job interview.



Terry Colvin

Success needs no **debate**

THE PHRASES “DEBATE TEAM” AND “English language learners” are not usually paired together. But they are one and the same in the American Dream Debate Team at Arroyo High School in El Monte, which is flourishing under the stewardship of English teacher Terry Colvin.

Arroyo High School has many first-generation Latino and Asian immigrants, and many have been encouraged to join the debate team by Colvin, sponsor of the after-school group that meets four times a week. Not all of the group’s students are English learners, but many are. Most team members are low-income, says Colvin.

“Historically, debate teams have been the province of hyper-verbal, highly articulate students trained to compete in this elite circuit,” says Colvin, who was a journalist for more than two decades before becoming a teacher. “But here, we have taken the opposite tack. We believe that a broadly welcoming culture, in concert with explicit teaching and high expectations, succeeds with our students more than elitism.”

It has succeeded with Christian Lin-Cobos, a senior at the school. “I am an immigrant from Ecuador, and at first it was hard to speak English and to put things into coherent sentences,” he says. “But the debate team has helped me a lot with my English and greatly improved my chances for college. It’s helped me to speak better and allowed me to meet people. We have a lot of fun on the field trips.”

As for the field trips: Last year, students competed in 23 weekend tournaments. The team has reached the state finals five times within six years, and last year, team members finished in 18th place in two categories — dramatic interpretation and humorous interpretation — out of 256 competitors. The team won a Golden Bell Award from the California School Boards Association in 2008 for its work with English learners, and last year’s team president won a scholarship to Yale University.

“The results speak for themselves,” says Colvin, a member of the El Monte Union Education Association. “We looked at test data for English learners who had gone through the program and compared them to similar

students who had not gone through the program, and they scored about 20 to 30 percent higher than their peers on STAR testing. I’ve yet to see any student come through this program who didn’t graduate.”

Students say the skills they have learned will prepare them for college — and for life. They have learned to be articulate, to break down issues, to see both sides of a problem, and to conduct research to defend their arguments. During a recent class visit, teens talked about the pros and cons of dismantling nuclear weapons with ease.

“I was placed here by my counselor, and didn’t know what debate was until I got into the class,” recounts ninth-grader Sarah Lam. “At first I was shy, but now I’m talking a lot, which is good, because I’m planning on run-



Terry Colvin
El Monte Union Education
Association

BELOW: Jefferson Lau listens as Anthony Valentin Fuentes makes his argument in an exercise for the debate team at Arroyo High School in El Monte.



ning for school president.”

The program is open to students in grades 9-12, and team members say they feel like a family.

“It’s cooperative learning,” says Colvin. “Students work as a team. They are developing critical thinking skills. And they are having fun at the same time. I’ve had kid after kid tell me that they are different from when they first came in. Many are unsure of themselves in the beginning, and leave with confidence

and competence in the language. When you have a program that keeps teenagers after school so they can talk about social policy, politics, philosophy, morals and values, you’ve *really* got something wonderful.” ❖

For more information and curriculum for starting a debate team, visit the California High School Speech Association at www.cahssa.org.

'School Pride' comes to Needles

Story by Sherry Posnick-Goodwin

Much to the amazement of those who live and work in the small, rural town of Needles on the California-Arizona border, the town's high school was selected to receive a makeover on the NBC show "School Pride." When the announcement was made to students in the football field, they cheered wildly while news helicopters buzzed overhead.

In each episode of "School Pride," a design team helps a community fix up a dilapidated school.

The show has two criteria for selecting schools — a need for renovation and the community's passion and commitment to do the work. Needles High School fit both categories. The show's producers, who include Cheryl Hines of HBO's "Curb Your Enthusiasm," were also looking for a rural school, since many of the other makeovers were urban schools, such as Enterprise Middle School in Compton.

While professionals are in charge of

coordinating the renovation, the work is actually completed by volunteers. And Needles had plenty of those.

"We have a community of 5,000 people, and more than 1,000 people volunteered," says Needles Teachers Association (NTA) President Julie Rowan, a graduate of the high school. "We sometimes forget how much community support we have, and we learned that support was *huge*."

The event sparked school pride, with alums who had graduated decades before working alongside their kids. NTA members painted, moved furniture, cleaned, and did whatever was necessary.

"People who had never met each other had the opportunity to work side by side to



ABOVE: CTA President David A. Sanchez, and Needles Teachers Association President Julie Rowan wait at the community center for the big reveal.

improve the physical condition of the school," says CTA President David A. Sanchez, who stopped by and met with chapter leadership, administrators and community members involved with the project.

During the five-day project, Needles baked in heat that sometimes exceeded 115 degrees and experienced heavy winds. But that didn't wilt the enthusiasm of volunteers. CTA Board member Marty Meeden found scissors and cut his pants into shorts to make it easier to unload a truck, clean and move a barbecue, and do other tasks. Other CTA Board members volunteering in Needles were Theresa Montaña, Mary Rose Ortega and



LEFT: The hosts of NBC's reality show "School Pride" (left to right): Susie Castillo, Jacob Soboroff, Kym Whitley and Tom Stroup.



Photo by Marlene Karas/NBC

George Melendez.

The made-over Needles High School aired in the Nov. 12 episode and showed off new landscaping, a fresh coat of paint on the outside of every building, new carpeting in every classroom, and an outdoor mural of mustangs, the school's mascot. Microsoft contributed money for 40 computers to go in the school's new traveling computer lab. A student lounge was created with a big screen TV and study areas, providing a college-style atmosphere. The Regional Occupational Program (ROP) buildings were completely redone and now house a wood shop, a metal shop and an auto shop with

state-of-the-art equipment, including a new Chevy Camaro with diagnostic equipment for students to use. Even the "snack shack" got a facelift.

The school's poor outward appearance detracted from many of the positive things happening inside the campus, say NTA members. As a Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) school, Needles High School receives extra funding from the CTA-sponsored legislation, which has enabled it to reduce class sizes, increase professional development for teachers, and use data and benchmarks to improve academic achievement.

ABOVE: The enthusiasm was infectious as different generations helped make over Needles High School.

English teacher Tracy Hanline says, "What we did here was make the outside of the school match the inside of the school and the way we feel about our school." ❖



Watch CTA members lend a hand as Needles High School gets a makeover at nbc.com/school-pride/video.



CTA's Quality Education Investment Act gains steam



Photo by Dave Montley

Oakland educator Julie Palacios is rightfully proud of the academic progress her inner-city elementary school has made in the face of many challenges — and she's hopeful about its future.

Despite a lower-income student population and a campus in a high-crime part of Oakland, promising new data shows that New Highland Academy is making impressive gains because of proven reforms funded by the CTA-sponsored Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) of 2006.

"The smaller class sizes and collaboration time provided by QEIA are critical for us," says Palacios,

who is a member of the Oakland Education Association. "We have time to make decisions about professional development and how to deal effectively with the needs of all of our students."

New Highland Academy had an outstanding Academic Performance Index (API) growth of 108 points to 735 over the past two years, the time that QEIA has been fully implemented. The API is determined largely by test scores, and the highest possible API score is 1,000. The state has an API goal of 800 or above for all schools. Palacios feels that's within reach at New Highland, where two-thirds of the students are English language

LEFT: Students at John Muir Elementary in Merced excelled in the past two years because QEIA funding provided smaller class sizes and time for teacher collaboration. **BELOW:** This classroom bull's-eye shows the API goal of another QEIA school, Martin Elementary in Santa Ana.

learners, and about 85 percent qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

The scope of the landmark reform QEIA law is unprecedented. As a result of a settlement of a Proposition 98 dispute between CTA and Gov. Schwarzenegger in 2006, nearly 500 low-performing California schools with about a half-million students are sharing \$3 billion in extra resources over eight years. The funding goes for proven reforms such as smaller class sizes, more counselors, better training for teachers and principals, and allowing vital collaboration time to foster effective teaching practices.

Symposium sets the tone

Palacios was one of nearly 200 California teachers, education experts and legislative staff members who took part in a Nov. 30 CTA symposium on QEIA in Sacramento — the largest public education reform program of its kind in the nation.

"California has to stop playing the blame game with our public schools and start doing what's best for our children's future," CTA President David A. Sanchez told the crowd that

packed a hotel conference room. "We have a real opportunity to build on the right reforms that you will hear about today — proven reforms like smaller class sizes, better training and collaboration time for teachers, additional counselors and parental involvement."

QEIA's reforms are lifting up our at-risk students, he said. "And if early indications hold true, QEIA is an investment that will continue to generate benefits for these schools, communities and California well into the future."

State Superintendent of Public Instruction-elect Tom Torlakson, who authored the QEIA legislation, was loudly applauded when he asked the audience, "Isn't it time to put a spotlight on the positive things going on in California schools?"

He added, "Isn't it time we stop blaming teachers, and time to point to the success?"

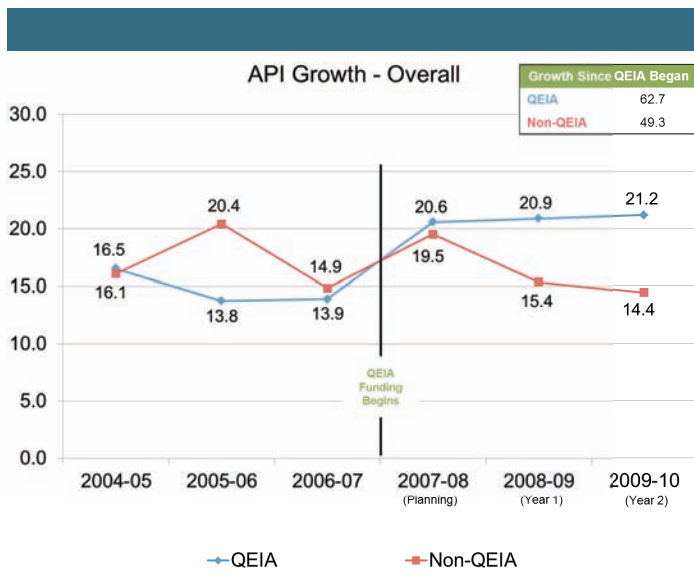
New research shows results

A new QEIA research report unveiled at the symposium highlights that success. It shows that this teacher-led reform law is helping to close achievement gaps and supporting at-risk students so they can make gains in the face of challenges from poverty, language and diversity.

For example, during the second year of QEIA implementation, the average API growth of QEIA schools was nearly 50 percent higher than that of similar, non-QEIA schools.

The report, "Lessons From the





ABOVE: Average annual growth in API scores: QEIA-funded schools compared with a group of similar non-QEIA schools. Source: "Lessons from the Classroom: Initial Success for At-Risk Students."

Classroom: Initial Success for At-Risk Students," went beyond test score gains and included 10 lessons learned from interviews conducted over four months at 22 QEIA schools by the independent research firm Vital Research of Los Angeles. (See sidebar to the right.) Courtney Malloy of Vital Research reviewed the gains made as a result of QEIA, and discussed what best practices can be shared with other schools, as shown by the ongoing QEIA research for CTA.

"We wanted to make sure that other QEIA schools — as well as a broader set of schools in the state — could learn from what's happening in QEIA," Malloy said.

The research report showed the sustained progress being made, measured by the state's growth on the state's API. Comparing QEIA schools to similar lower-performing schools, the research found:

- Smaller class sizes matter. School implementation plans were largely focused on class

size reduction, professional development, collaboration time and the adoption of curricular interventions.

- The reforms are working statewide. Since QEIA funding began in 2007, QEIA schools averaged a growth of 62.7 points in API growth, compared to 49.3 points in similar, non-QEIA schools.
- Poverty is being overcome. Socioeconomically disadvantaged students averaged a growth score of 63.6 points versus 50.4 points in non-QEIA schools since 2007.

The academic gains at QEIA schools come despite the challenges for these students. And the gains hold promise for closing the student achievement gap.

The new CTA research report includes six profiles of successful QEIA schools where principals, teachers and parents comment on how the program is helping students succeed.

"QEIA has made a huge difference" in lowering class

sizes, said fourth-grade teacher Rebecca Stewart at San Francisco's Miraloma Elementary, which has an API score of 865. "With 23 students in fourth grade, we actually have enough space to move around, to have diverse instruction."

Lessons from the classroom

At successful John Muir Elementary in Merced (API score 806), QEIA provides vital time for teachers to collaborate and share strategies, educator Teresa Pitta said. "Money matters when it comes to school improvement, and collaboration is critical."

Sacramento's Fairbanks Elementary in Twin Rivers Unified had a surge of 108 API points in two years to 754. QEIA keeps K-3 class sizes at 20 students or fewer while other schools see them rise, teacher Teri Leo said. "We're fortunate to not have 35 students in our classrooms."

And in Santa Ana's Martin Elementary (API score 779), where 76 percent of students are English learners, teacher Antonio Magaña is grateful QEIA is keeping his fifth-grade classes small.

"With smaller classes, I am able to pinpoint those students in need," Magaña said.

What's next for QEIA?

Another round of intensive training is set for CTA site contacts at QEIA schools: in Emeryville on Jan. 31; Santa Ana, Feb. 18; Pasadena, March 1. More training details are coming to this vital statewide network of CTA members stepping up to make the interventions a reality at their schools.

In the spring, CTA will be releasing a more comprehensive report that covers a broader

Continued on next page

Ten Lessons Learned

Based on interviews at 22 QEIA schools over four months by an independent researcher, these 10 "lessons learned" are education reform insights that all schools might learn from:

1 School goals for QEIA were consistent with the purpose and intent of the legislation.

2 School implementation plans were largely focused on class size reduction (CSR), professional development, collaboration time, and the adoption of curricular interventions.

3 Although somewhat challenging to implement and maintain, class size reduction enabled teachers to focus on classroom instruction.

4 Professional development decisions in higher API growth schools were made in collaborative teams with teacher input, leading to greater satisfaction among stakeholders.

5 Higher API growth schools had more focused professional development in core content areas.

6 Higher API growth schools used student data to guide professional development decisions.

7 Higher API growth schools engaged in more teacher collaboration to develop lesson plans, create common assessments, and analyze student data.

8 School site councils in QEIA schools are approving school budgets; influence on other decisions and stakeholder involvement varies considerably by school.

9 The exemplary administrator requirement has not been fully realized in QEIA schools.

10 QEIA has provided valuable resources during the state budget crisis, but schools are still facing financial challenges.

range of information sources on QEIA implementation and impacts. Beginning in February and continuing through June, additional in-depth case studies will be conducted at a diverse sampling of QEIA schools. This vital research is to provide a voice for stakeholders at QEIA schools. It will uncover promising practices that can be shared not only among QEIA schools, but with those schools which have not participated in the

program that is making a difference in classrooms across the state.

MIKE MYSLINSKI

WWW

To see the new 40-page CTA research report on QEIA progress, along with videos of teacher interviews, go to www.cta.org/Issues-and-Action/QEIA.

Educators discuss QEIA successes



CTA photo by Mike Myslinski

A highlight of CTA's Nov. 30 QEIA symposium in Sacramento was a panel discussion with teachers and a principal from successful QEIA schools across the state about the power of collaboration, smaller class sizes and targeted intervention.

A sampling of the panel's insights:

Mylene Keipp, instructional coach, Wilson Senior High School, Los Angeles Unified: "QEIA provides structures for collaboration."

Thanks to QEIA funding, her school's 2,200 students share eight counselors, meeting a QEIA requirement that each counselor must have a caseload of 300 or fewer students. Compare that to California's average ratio of 945 students to one counselor, the highest in the country.

Jesse Aguilar, teacher, East Bakersfield High School, Kern High School District: "We have more time to collaborate. It makes a big difference."

His high-poverty school, where two-thirds of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals, used the flexibility of QEIA funding to hire math and English literacy coaches, hold workshops for teachers, and launch a "cultures and expectations committee" to look at how to inspire students.

Small class sizes help all students learn. "Once the class sizes get so large, mostly you're dealing with behavior issues, and you're no longer teaching," Aguilar said. And getting teachers involved in designing professional developing is a "bottom-up" approach that empowers and inspires. "I think there's more buy-in."

Julie Palacios, teacher, New Highland Academy, Oakland Unified: "We have retained

ABOVE: Teachers sharing QEIA symposium success stories were, left to right, Laura Serrano-Durán, Jesse Aguilar, Mylene Keipp, Julie Palacios, Maria Euyoque-Garcia.

teachers because of the quality of the working environment, and the quality is because of QEIA."

While other inner-city Oakland schools are losing teachers, New Highland is not, Palacios said. Teachers at her K-5 campus get 90 minutes of collaboration time each week, and a full day every six weeks, with QEIA paying for substitute teachers while educators share strategies and analyze student data. Also, the school still provides music and art for a well-rounded education.

Laura Serrano-Duran, principal, Harborside Elementary, Chula Vista Elementary School District: QEIA success has "brought our community closer together, and our parents have become more involved because they are seeing the results."

She discussed the power of teamwork that QEIA harnesses. It's working. Her school's API growth was 55 points the past two years, for a current outstanding API score of 838.

Maria Euyoque-Garcia, teacher, Felton Elementary, Lennox School District, Los Angeles: "With QEIA, we get to do so many extra things at our school. It's really made all the difference for our students."

Felton's API score is 797 — after a sharp increase of 86 points the past two years. The emphasis is on making decisions based on student data, which is easier to collect with the smaller class sizes that QEIA funds, Euyoque-Garcia said.

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'Second opinion' protects Montebello health benefits

Many districts experience sticker shock on out-of-pocket health care costs as insurance rates continue to rise. The Montebello Teachers Association did something about it.

Two years ago, the Montebello Unified School District (MUSD) received through its insurance broker 2008-09 rate renewals for both Anthem Blue Cross and Kaiser Permanente. The quoted increases were a staggering 29.71 percent for all Blue Cross plans, along with a steep but more manageable 3.9 percent for Kaiser plans. The new rates would add an additional \$7 million in health costs to a district already grappling with the impact of state budget cut. Since the health benefit plans were capped, the new costs would all be passed on to employees.

Montebello Teachers Association (MTA) President Dianne GarciaStevens recalls the shock she felt when, as a member of the district's insurance committee, she was initially presented with the new rates. "Just the prior year our members had gone from zero out-

of-pocket costs to \$700 per month. Now they would be facing at an out-of-pocket cost of \$1,469 per paycheck," she says. "We knew the new rates would not be sustainable. We decided to find out if they were justifiable and what alternatives, if any, there might be."

They finally settled on CalPERS, a statewide pool that provides health benefits to all state employees, as well as to public agencies such as schools. In addition to offering coverage under the same Anthem Blue Cross and Kaiser networks that were previously available to MUSD employees, CalPERS would also provide options of two Blue Shield HMOs and an additional Anthem Blue Cross PPO that would offer significantly reduced costs.

To reach this solution, GarciaStevens presented the situation to CTA's Health Benefits Advisory Coordinating Committee, where she was coincidentally (and fortunately) a new member. The group immediately suggested that she ask the district to get a "second opinion" from consultants to the California Education Coalition for Health Care Reform (CECHCR) — a group CTA and other school labor and management groups had formed in 2005 to improve health care quality and reduce costs through education, training and advocacy.

The MUSD insurance committee was receptive to the idea of a second opinion by the CECHCR consultants. MTA and CSEA agreed to split the cost of the necessary investigation and analysis, and the district agreed to open all insurance information for the review. Time was of the essence, as any delay in finding a solution would by default put members under the newer expensive rates for the start of the 2008-09 year.

Despite some initial resistance from the district's insurance broker in providing all the necessary claims history information, the consultants were able to find some key reasons for the inflated renewal rates. First of all, charges for non-physician service claims like chiropractic and podiatry were far higher than expected and had not been monitored or shared with the district by the broker; in fact, the total utilization for all professional non-physician claims was 40 percent more than

the amount spent for all physician visits.

Another issue was the broker's failure to monitor potential abuses by out-of-network providers. Of the ten highest-paid non-network providers, eight were chiropractors and one was a physician who received exorbitant fees for treating just two claimants (the same physician had also been disciplined for fraudulent medical records, among other infractions).

The unusually high claims had been going on for two years, "It was extremely troubling that the broker had not alerted us to these issues, nor had worked to help us address those problems in a timely manner," says Garcia Stevens.

Although out-of-network issues and potential overcharging were a problem, the single largest factor in Montebello's increasing health care costs was that the district was in a stand-alone risk pool for its medical benefits. The CECHCR consultants strongly recommended that MUSD consider migrating the same or a similar plan to a larger risk pool. Several regional and statewide pools were considered, most of them offering plans through Anthem Blue Cross and Kaiser. However, most of those pools would have required too long for migration and implementation. Fortunately, CalPERS was able to provide a more immediate solution.

Throughout this process, MTA kept its members informed and held well-attended area meetings in which information and feedback about the benefits situation could be exchanged. Members understood and overwhelmingly supported the proposed change to CalPERS.

In the end, MUSD was able to save \$12.1 million on its 2009-10 renewal rates, with the new rate being actually \$4.9 million less than the previous year. The savings were generated without any significant changes to benefits, access or quality.

"Maintaining the best possible health plan has always been a top priority for our members," says GarciaStevens. "Getting a second opinion and joining a larger pool allowed that to happen."

FRANK WELLS

The Montebello story provides valuable lessons for other CTA chapters and local school districts.

- Make sure the district and employee groups are getting accurate and complete utilization information for each available plan from the district's insurance broker.
- Understand the broker's contract and financial incentives.
- If renewal rates seem high or unjustified, consider getting a second opinion.
- Make sure your plan is part of a pool large enough to spread risk and volatility.
- Get informed. Health benefits training is available through CTA and through CECHCR.

School pool option explored

Districts like Montebello, Stockton and others have been able to maintain top-quality health plans and save millions of dollars by migrating to larger shared-risk pools. What if school districts and their employees throughout California joined to create one of the largest pools of all?

That's exactly the possibility being explored by the California Education Coalition for Health Care Reform (CECH-CR), a coalition of public school labor and management groups. A 1.6 million-member "School Pool" could lower costs and improve benefits for public education employees and their families by increasing district leverage in purchasing and negotiating benefits coverage. The Mercer Report, a 2007 study authorized by AB 256, first explored this idea and found that a statewide pool in California

could save over \$401 million per year. Such a plan has proved successful in a number of other states.

However, the Mercer report also raises potential challenges for implementation in California and how it would impact local chapters:

- To be successful, participation by all education employees would be mandatory.
- If required, the inclusion of retirees could significantly impact the cost savings of the pool.
- In order to achieve reduced administrative costs, a school pool would need to be administered by a single entity, such as CalPERS or a similar institution.

The School Pool isn't a panacea to the health care crisis. Still, current health care cost increases are unsustainable if allowed to continue. While the typical increase for school districts in 2009 was 6 percent to 14 percent, some districts received rate increases as high as 40 percent for their plans. Those increases have caused employee contributions to soar as high as \$1,800 per month and have forced some workers to join the ranks of the uninsured. Much of this cost is spent on administrators for the plans and not on actual health care.



CTA Board member
Don Bridge

In fact, health care administration has grown by nearly 3,000 percent over the last 30 years, while the number of physi-

Continued on next page

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*The Wall Street Journal, 9 June, 2009

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cians has increased only slightly.

CTA Board member Don Bridge represents CTA in CECHCR and believes the School Pool concept has the potential to be a major improvement over the current scattershot and inefficient system. He says that member education and assurance that benefits would be maintained or improved would be key components in any changeover to the new system.

“Our goal would be to raise everyone up to the best possible assortment of plans and coverage, letting them keep or improve what they have now, while at the same time reducing costs all around,” says Bridge. “While any talk

about health benefits is bound to raise questions, when members hear this concept they are generally very supportive.”

Among the criteria CECHCR would require of a School Pool:

- The pool must provide a range of value-based and affordable plans that equal or exceed current offerings.
- Local control must be maintained over matters subject to collective bargaining.
- Plans must incorporate health promotion programs and incentives to improve health status.

- Governance of the pool must include representation of all funding stakeholders.

The School Pool is still conceptual at this point. If and when actual legislation is proposed, CTA would go through its normal member-involved process for determining its position. For more information on the School Pool and other school health care issues, visit www.ccscenter.org/cechcr.

FRANK WELLS

Look for additional health care news and for feedback opportunities on this issue at cta.org/issues/healthcare.

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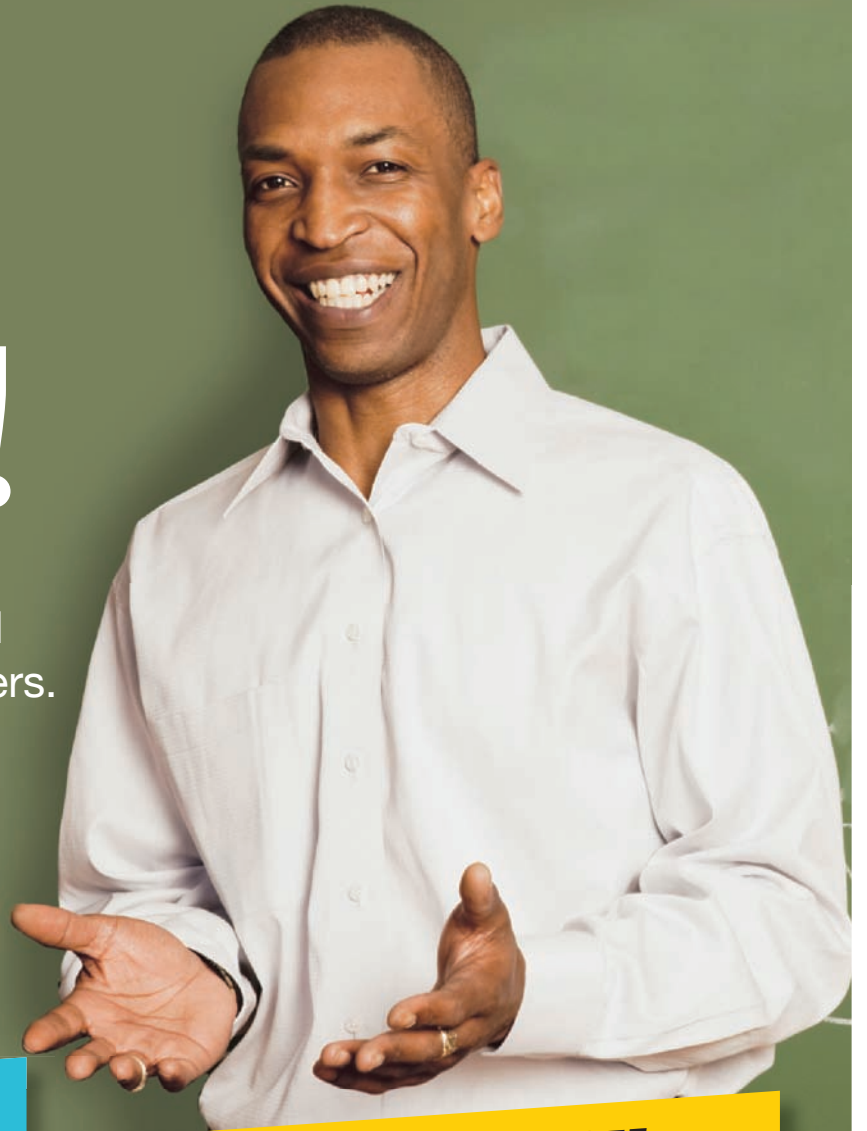
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Q&A

CalSTRS lowers rate of return

The governing board of the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS, the pension fund that provides benefits to retiring California educators) has made the decision to lower the rate of return from the current 8 percent to 7.75 percent — a decision that experts like CalSTRS Chief Investment Officer Chris Ailman and CalSTRS Deputy CEO Ed Derman believe will help stabilize the fund over the long haul. We spoke with Ailman and Derman to help CTA members understand the situation and what's being done to improve the position of the pension fund through these tough economic times.

CALIFORNIA EDUCATOR: What does the rate of return mean?

CHRIS AILMAN: There are two inputs into a retirement fund, contributions and investment earnings, and the Teachers' Retirement Board uses the rate of return assumption to set the average future earnings for investments over the next 30 years.

This is a difficult assumption to get right, but a key one to the health of the system, so the board looked at 120 years of past finan-

cial information and talked to many financial industry experts in the 10 months leading up to the recent changes.

In this case, the lowering reflects the recognition that CalSTRS investment returns will be more modest than the 9.1 percent that we've achieved in investment return annually over the past 30 years. Since 1995, our actuary has predicted an 8 percent return on investments, which would paint a rosy picture had it not been for the drastic economic downturn of 2008-09, which is forcing the hand of many a pension system, including CalSTRS, to downgrade its forecast of income from investments.

And because investment returns account for the majority of the income the system uses to pay benefits, it means there will be more pressure to make up that lower rate from the system's other sources of income — its employers, the state of California, and possibly even its members.

What amount will the rate of return be lowered from and down to?

ED DERMAN: The Investment Return Assumption, which we use

to plan our funding over the next 30 years, has been set at 8 percent since 1995. It was revised downward to 7.75 percent on Dec. 2, 2010.

CHRIS AILMAN: Keep in mind that while this is a forecast, year in and year out, our goal remains the same: to beat the markets and generate the highest return for the level of risk we're comfortable taking.

What effect do you feel lowering the rate of return will have on the fund short and long term?

CHRIS AILMAN: In the short term, the effect is very little, so we do not expect to make any changes to the current year investment plan. Our task now is to meet or exceed a 7.75 percent rate of return for the next 30 years, but for the investment staff, we know we still need to make an additional \$10 billion this year.

Long term, it does have profound impact. You have to realize it was a very difficult decision for the board. They reviewed this over 10 months. As I mentioned, there are just two inputs to a retirement fund — so if you expect less from investments, it puts more pressure on contributions. Since our rates are set by law, it raises the urgency for CalSTRS to work with the California Legislature, the governor and its members to develop solutions to contribution rates that everyone can accept.

We know it's very tough on teachers and the California education system, and the last thing anyone wants is higher contribution rates for the state, school

districts and educators. But the bottom-line lesson from the 2008 financial crisis and the first decade of the 2000s was that the overall cost to retire went up for everyone, teachers and the general public.

Will lowering the rate of return mean that teachers inevitably contribute more?

ED DERMAN: The lawyers who have reviewed this for CalSTRS have concluded that the contribution rates charged to existing members cannot be increased to pay for the benefits that are already in place. Therefore, existing teachers would not be called upon to contribute more to pay for the liabilities associated with the current benefit plan. Higher contributions can be imposed on new teachers, however, as well as employers and the state. If the rates don't change at all, CalSTRS will eventually deplete the trust fund and retirement costs would fall entirely to the state. The rates will need to go up for new members, because none of us can expect investment returns to generate a double-digit return for the next two decades. However, only the Legislature can increase contribution rates.

What is the amount of the unfunded liability?

ED DERMAN: We won't know the current unfunded liability until we complete the valuation — a snapshot of the health of the system — in the spring of 2011. If the new, reduced investment return assumption had been applied to the last valuation, it

Facts on CalSTRS changes

CalSTRS has lowered its expected rate of return from 8 percent to 7.75 percent.

What this means for the pension fund:

As the unfunded liability continues to increase, CalSTRS members, the California Legislature and the governor will need to develop solutions to contribution rates that everyone can accept.

would have increased the unfunded liability from \$41 billion to \$45 billion. CalSTRS is currently funded at the level it was funded in 1990.

Can you give us a simple analogy to explain the situation with the unfunded liability?

CHRIS AILMAN: The Investment Committee here at CalSTRS knows I love to use analogies, so let's use a mortgage. For all of us, the bank or mortgage company tells us how much we need to pay. In the CalSTRS case, the actuary tells us the rate, which we call the normal cost of the pension. However, since about 2000, we have been paying less than the required rate, in other words underpaying the mortgage bill. Since it's financed over 30 years that underpayment compounds to a big number. Looking at it today, the bank, or our actuary, says we need to pay more per month to pay off the mortgage and make up for the lost ground from the past few years.

When was the unfunded liability at its lowest?

CHRIS AILMAN: In 2000, CalSTRS had a \$1.9 billion actuarial surplus. In its 96-year history, CalSTRS has been fully funded only three years before the decade of the 2000s. The Internet bubble and 9/11 plunged the country into a major recession and the investment portfolio declined.

How do you get the fund back up to a respectable amount?

CHRIS AILMAN: Pension experts consider 80 percent funding to be a healthy level. This latest move puts CalSTRS at the 76.5 percent funding level, increasing the gap between the assets at hand and the pension obligation, which hasn't changed. Sure, that's below what's considered healthy, but it's not insurmountable. But it is important to remember that the specific funding level is not as important as having sufficient funds to be able to pay benefits into the indefinite future, and given our current assets and liabilities, that is not the case unless contributions are increased.

A pension plan should range between 80 percent and 100 percent to be considered a healthy plan — 90 percent would put us

right there. As mentioned before, there are just two ways to get there. One is bringing in more contributions, and obviously, that will take time. The other is through higher than expected investment returns. It's not insurmountable. We did it before, in the 1980s through the 1990s, with nearly double-digit average annual returns. However, the past 120 years of U.S. stock market history and our current environment tell us it is not reasonable to expect that pace of investment income to return. I want to point out that the current economic malaise is also not likely to persist for decade after decade. To make a higher than expected return we either take on more risk or find opportunities to generate profit that others miss. The board has already decided we don't want to take on more risk to try to earn a higher return. So the key to better results is to tactically manage the portfolio in the global market and find growth opportunities around the world. I think our

diversified portfolio will find pockets of opportunity as it has in the past. I wish I could tell you we can make it back to 90 percent funding as fast as we did in the 1980s to 1990s, but right now that is not very likely.

Is there a silver lining to all this?

CHRIS AILMAN: First of all, I'd like to remind our members that CalSTRS has been around since 1913 and survived the Great Depression without missing a payment, so we'll survive this crisis. I also want to assure our members that their defined benefit is guaranteed by both the California and U.S. constitutions as well as through case law. The state of California, as the system's guarantor, will be obliged to pick up the tab should all of the assets of CalSTRS be depleted. Finally, even though rates may go up, or new members may be faced with 401(k)-type defined-contribution plans or higher contributions, our current members can count on the defined benefit they signed up for.

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Carlsbad teachers provide leadership in shooting crisis



CTA photo by Kim Kelly

LEFT: First-grader Haley is comforted by trained therapy dog Anise from Hope Animal-Assisted Crisis Response.

down routine — run to the first open room at the first sign of trouble — many times. We are so thankful the children and our staff knew exactly what to do.”

The Carlsbad Unified Teachers Association quickly initiated a series of association-coordinated responses to the crisis led by President Sally Estep.

“I didn’t wait for the district to call me,” says Estep. “I called them, saying that we wanted to help. I knew that the district’s crisis plan resources and community support would be in play, but on behalf of CUTA and the California Teachers Association, we wanted to anticipate and fill in any gaps.”

At a districtwide crisis meeting held to lay out an ongoing response plan, Estep learned from trauma counselors with the Trauma Intervention Program that it was imperative that the students and the staff be integrated as quickly as possible back into their normal school environment. The big question, though, was how best to facilitate the return to their school routine without forcing them back into the scene of the trauma too quickly.

After hearing about the

“Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear,” reads a banner in front of Kelly Elementary School’s now placid student playground.

The quote reminds the school’s more than 500 students and their families, the 30 staff members who work at Kelly, and the nearby neighbors in Carlsbad, located in north San Diego County, of how their normal routines were interrupted by sounds of gunfire on the school’s playground at 12:10 p.m., Friday, Oct. 8. But it’s more than just a reminder of the traumatic event; it’s also an affirmation of the courageous response.

When a gunman police later identified as Oceanside resident Brendan O’Rourke, age 41, jumped the fence and began

firing pistol shots into the playground filled with the school’s students in grades 1-3 and their teachers and aides, the response was courageous, resolved and disciplined, instead of panicked and chaotic.

While three construction workers who had been laying tile for the school’s cafeteria renovation tackled the lone shooter, the students and staff immediately put the school’s well-honed emergency plan into swift action. Within three minutes of the first shot, all students and staff — including two-second grade girls who had both been wounded in their right arms — were safely locked down out of harm’s way. In another five minutes, police and other first responders were on the scene, arresting the gunman and securing the campus. The injured students,

whose wounds were not life-threatening, were promptly transported by helicopter to a children’s hospital in San Diego. Within hours, the students were reunited with their anxious parents, and the school’s staff were debriefed and allowed to go home.

California law requires schools to have safety plans, and the staff and parent volunteers at Kelly take the requirement seriously, practicing their earthquake, fire and lockdown drills religiously. “You can’t allow the drills to become an inconvenience,” says Principal Tessie Armstrong. “We had practiced the lock-



Taryn Webb,
Carlsbad Unified
Teachers Association

shooting, a CUTA member called Estep to suggest the services of the Hope Animal-Assisted Crisis Response organization (hopeaacr.org). Estep quickly contacted the group, learning that the national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization could provide teams of trained therapy dogs with trained counselor handlers to offer comfort and encouragement to those impacted by crisis. In coordination with Principal Armstrong and the Carlsbad Unified School District's crisis coordinator Keith Holly, Estep arranged to provide Hope teams at the school beginning the week following the shooting.

For a period of two weeks, the CUTA-sponsored Hope teams of dogs and handlers

were available during recess and lunch breaks to provide wordless warmth, quiet comfort and a brief respite for students and staff at the school. "The first day, the dogs and handlers were positioned in an athletic field nearby the playground shooting scene. But slowly and sensitively, they migrated, so that by the end of the day we had reclaimed our 'space.' It was magical," says Armstrong.

In addition to coordinating the Hope teams' visits, CUTA also worked with the school's PTA members, who provided breakfast for two weeks following the shooting incident. CUTA's Traumatic Events Assistance and Management Cadre staff provided backup and assistance to Estep and other CUTA members during the first days following the event, with periodic follow-up in subsequent weeks.

"It was amazing to see how our association stood up for us, making sure we got exactly what we needed," says Kelly third-grade teacher Taryn Webb.

Second-grade teacher Jana Scott says, "The association's support by providing the Hope teams was so thoughtful. The kids loved the dogs, and it made it so much easier for us to go back out onto that playground. I don't have words to express my thanks to Sally Estep and CUTA for helping make such a frightening experience more manageable."

BELOW: CUTA President Sally Estep (kneeling) rewards trained therapy dog Izzy after a hard day at work while Susan Harris looks on.

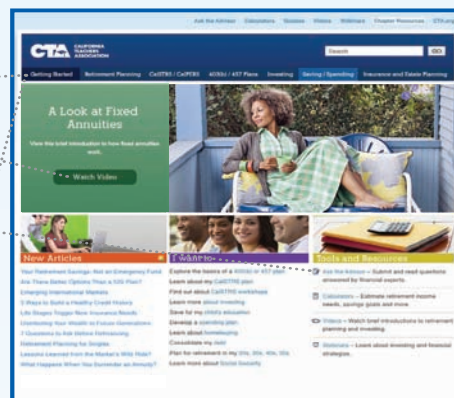


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La Habra strike ends in litigation

Although the 225 members of the La Habra Education Association called off their four-day strike and finally returned to their classrooms on Dec. 16, the fight is far from over with the La Habra City School District's superintendent and board of education.

"LHEA members returned to their classrooms with heads held high, knowing we took the high ground with our integrity and dignity intact," says LHEA President Danette Brown, who leads the teachers in the K-8 elementary district located in the north Orange County city of La Habra. "We had hoped to prevail through negotiation, but now we are seeking redress through litigation."

LHEA has filed legal motions against the district's surface bargaining, their refusal to provide the association legally required bargaining information, the unfair multiyear contract imposition, and the illegal withholding of teachers' salary related to

step-and-column and health benefits in the absence of a bargained contract.

CTA President David A. Sanchez wrote to LHEA members during their strike, "I hope you know that by standing up for your profession and by not allowing your superintendent and school board to bully you into subservience, you are perhaps teaching your students a lesson in fairness that they might not learn in any other way."

More than 90 percent of LHEA members walked the picket lines or refused to cross them on each of the strike's four days, and the number of La Habra students attending school during the strike shrank from about 80 percent the first day to barely 50 percent when the strike ended.

Parents and community members supportive of the teachers literally took over in a raucous six-hour Dec. 9 school board meeting, citing numerous instances of inappropriate



CTA photos by Bill Guy

behavior by the hired substitutes. The board acceded to the parents' demands that financial experts representing the board and CTA make efforts to craft a framework within which negotiations between the two bargaining teams might be possible.

Following lengthy talks between the financial analysts from Friday until nearly midnight on Monday, Dec. 13, both analysts agreed that their proposed framework offered parameters that should result in a settlement. Bargaining by the teams was set to start Tuesday, Dec. 14, at 3:30 p.m., and in a gesture of good faith, LHEA called off its strike and notified the district that teachers would return to their classrooms beginning Tuesday morning.

When teachers reported to

LEFT: President Danette Brown leads a march of striking LHEA members at a lunchtime rally on the strike's second day.

ABOVE: A reporter from Los Angeles TV station KCBS 2 interviews La Habra Education Association President Danette Brown (right) outside Imperial Middle School on the first day of the strike.

their work sites for duty, expecting to reunite with their students, the district literally and figuratively slammed the doors in their faces by illegally locking them out and directing them to sign a legal document promising that by gaining entry they were giving up all rights to resume their strike. CTA attorneys assisting LHEA advised the teachers not to sign the documents and requested an injunction from the California Public Employment Relations Board forbidding the lockout.

At the end of the school day on Dec. 14, LHEA members gathered outside the La Habra district office in a rally to cheer their bargaining team at the start of the planned negotiations session, joined by scores of parents and numerous Los Angeles



and Orange County area television mobile news crews.

“It was soon apparent after the bargaining session started that the district’s team had no intention of settling a contract based on the framework recommended by the financial experts,” says Brown. “Even so, LHEA’s bargaining team endured an almost eight-hour charade of repeated rejections and insulting, callous counter-proposals from the district before talks broke off.”

The district repeatedly rejected the framework recommended by financial experts representing both parties, instead offering punitive proposals unacceptable to the teachers. Rejecting the experts’ recommendation of standard, acceptable restoration language common in negotiated agree-

ments throughout the state, the district continued to insist on punitive language that would result in additional, permanent cuts for the teachers.

“After leading teachers, parents and the community to believe they would honor the recommendations of the financial experts they had suggested to help craft a mutual compromise, the district’s bad-faith bargaining was yet one more breach of public trust,” says Brown. “During the course of their sham bargaining, the La Habra City School District committed numerous grievances that LHEA can litigate, and that process is already in motion.”

Even though LHEA members reported for duty Dec. 14 and were willing to work the next day, the district directed the teachers to stay out of their class-

RIGHT: LHEA members Debbie Bitetto and Mindy Stolson walked the picket lines each day in the four-day strike with their colleagues at Las Positas Elementary School.

rooms again on Dec. 15, which cost an additional \$50,000 in unnecessary substitute pay.

On another front, LHEA is supporting efforts by an organized coalition of outraged parents and citizens to initiate a petition drive for school board member recall with the ultimate goal of ousting Superintendent Susan Belenardo from the district.

Sanchez urges CTA’s local chapters and members who have not already done so to contribute to the La Habra Ed-



ucation Association’s strike crisis fund. You can do so via PayPal at bit.ly/dRMFyj, or by check to: LHEA Strike Fund, NOCUT, 749 South Brea Blvd., Suite 42, Brea, CA 92821.

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ACTION

New governor, Legislature take first steps to bridge \$28.5 billion budget gap

California's governor-elect and new Legislature have already begun taking the first steps aimed at addressing California's budget deficit, which is now expected to hit \$28.5 billion in 2011-12.

Even before taking office on Jan. 3, Jerry Brown brought legislative leaders, fiscal experts, and other concerned Californians together for two town hall meetings. The first, held Dec. 7 in Sacramento, focused on assessing the scope, breadth, and causes of California's perennial budget shortfalls.

The second forum, which took place in Los Angeles on Dec. 14, gave Brown the opportunity to convene a meeting of public officials, educators and education supporters to plumb the unmet fiscal and other needs of California's public schools.

At the first meeting in Sacramento, budget experts sketched out how the state's unprecedented economic downturn was exacerbated by elected officials' inopportune decisions. These decisions include outgoing Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's first action in office, the slashing of the vehicle license fee, something experts had warned would cost the state billions over a few short years.

Fiscal experts in recent weeks have increased by more than \$2 billion their estimates of the size of the state's short-

fall. That increase is tied to decisions by Congress to allow the estates of wealthy taxpayers to pass along higher amounts of funds to their beneficiaries without taxation.

During the December budget forum, legislative leaders — Assembly Speaker John A. Perez and Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg — noted that state voters and elected officials will have to decide what kind of state they want and how they are willing to pay for it.

Fiscal experts projected that the state's deficit — pegged at \$20 billion annually — will likely continue into the foreseeable future without significant action by the governor and legislators to mitigate it. Solutions could include boosts in revenue or closures of corporate loopholes that are costing the state billions of dollars every year.

As virtually his last action before leaving office, Gov. Schwarzenegger in December called the Legislature into a special session to deal with the budget shortfall. The new Legislature, which was installed on Dec. 6, met for a single day, choosing instead to await the inauguration of a more education-friendly governor before they wrestled with the problem.

For his part, Brown called on the Legislature to have a new budget in place within 60 days of his budget proposal in

January, ahead of the official June deadline.

CTA President David A. Sanchez attended the Dec. 14 education forum and pledged that CTA and its Education Coalition allies will continue to fight to protect students, educators and public schools, which have already suffered cuts of more than \$21 billion over the past three years.

"Public education has suffered cuts that are unconscionable," said Sanchez. "We will press the governor and legislators to protect public schools from further cuts and to take

the necessary steps to provide schools with the funding they need to provide every student with the high quality education they deserve."

Brown is expected to release his preliminary budget proposal around Jan. 10. Lawmakers have until June 15 under provisions of the state constitution to send the governor a final budget plan for his review. The constitution requires the governor to sign the measure into law by June 30, the day before the start of the new fiscal year.

LEN FELDMAN



CTA photo by Bill Guy

CTA President David A. Sanchez and Vice President Dean Vogel join internationally recognized educational policy analyst and former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education Diane Ravitch, the keynote speaker at the Nov. 3 kickoff event for the San Diego Community Schools Reform initiative (SDCSR). SDCSR is a new grassroots school reform project led by a coalition including the San Diego Education Association, the San Diego Unified School District, the San Diego Organizing Project, and Equality Alliance. In his opening remarks, Sanchez pledged CTA's support and resources to help the initiative.

March 2 is Read Across America



Illustrations ©2009 and 2010 by Will Terry

If your favorite recipe calls for a pinch of adventure or a spoonful of excitement, you'll be ready to celebrate Read Across America in 2011. We're still "Serving Up a Good Book" with the spotlighted book *Armadilly Chili* by Helen Ketteman, and sharing good reads with good friends. Scoop up your favorite book and join in the fun for Read Across America Day on Wednesday, March 2.

Read Across America was established by NEA in 1997 as a day to celebrate reading, to mark how important it is to motivate children to become readers in order to master basic skills, and to encourage students to have a lifelong love for books. It's celebrated each year on or near March 2, the birthday of children's author Dr. Seuss.

This year's honorary California chairs will include the Food Network's "Outrageous Food" host Tom Pizzica,

"The Next Food Network Star" finalist Doreen Fang, and possibly other surprise guests. Also returning this year is children's book illustrator Will Terry, who



ABOVE: Mackie the bluebird and Taffy the horned toad help stir up reading fun for Read Across America.

created the art for *Armadilly Chili* and the original artwork for CTA members as part of the RAA celebration.

CTA members can access RAA art and materials through the CTA website at www.cta.org/RAA. In addition, books,

plush toys, stickers, pencils, chili mugs, rubber stamps and RAA T-shirts will be available for purchase at upcoming CTA conferences, as well as at our new CTA Read Across America Online Store at www.ctareadacrossamerica.com. New this year, and only available at conferences, will be a colorful, functional and fun apron.

CTA welcomes Souplantation to our family of partners, along with our returning partners: the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA), Barnes & Noble, the California Library Association, California Professional Firefighters, the California School Library Association, the Dodgers Dream Foundation, First Financial Credit Union, the Los Angeles County Fire Department, the Los Angeles Kings, Scholastic, See's Candies, and Will Terry.

SHERI MIYAMOTO



Shop early, shop often — but plan ahead!

- Remind your principal about the event and refer him or her to the CTA or NEA website (www.nea.org/readacross) for additional information and ideas. If March 2 conflicts with your school calendar, arrange your celebration for another day that week or even the week before or after.
- Consult your school librarian, who may have event ideas and resources to offer.
- Invite "guest readers" to visit your school and read to students. Visits from police officers, firefighters, radio and television personalities, athletes, political figures, and other community members can make a big impression on young people. Ask your guests to tell your students why reading is important in their lives and what their favorite books were when they were children.
- Share your plans with your colleagues. Pledge to participate on the NEA website and keep your local association office informed of what you're doing at your school. Let your local media outlets and education reporters know about your event.



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Heads up!

Deadlines

Candidacy for state delegate to NEA convention January 31, 2011

Candidates for state delegate to the Representative Assembly at the 2011 NEA convention in Chicago must file a declaration of candidacy by Monday, Jan. 31. For more information, see page 36.

Candidacy for CTA/NEA-Retired offices January 31, 2011

Candidates for CTA/NEA-Retired State Council representative for District 4 (serving one year to fill a vacancy) and CTA/NEA-Retired Minority At-Large Director must submit a declaration of candidacy by Monday, Jan. 31. For more information, see page 35.

Conferences

Equity and Human Rights Conference March 4-6, 2011 Fairmont, San Jose

The 2011 Equity and Human Rights Conference theme is "Leveraging the Power of Diversity to Create Change." This conference captures the essence of the mandate in CTA's Mission Statement: To ensure that the dignity and civil rights of all children and youth are protected and to secure a more equitable and democratic society. The conference offers a choice of 50 workshops in four time slots to enhance CTA members' understanding of the issues of diversity and equity. Highlights include the Human Rights Awards luncheon on Saturday and entertainment provided by students from local area schools at the Sunday brunch. For more information, visit www.cta.org/Professional-Development/Events/Conferences.

Good Teaching Conference South March 18-20, 2011 Hyatt Regency, Orange County (near Disneyland)

The CTA Good Teaching Conference, presented in Northern and Southern editions, is designed to support excellent teaching and learning practices for classroom teachers. Offering a variety of diverse workshops in curriculum content areas for K-12 teachers, the conference provides opportunities for professional development and offers time to network and share ideas with colleagues and experts in the field. More than 80 workshops are scheduled, including sessions on innovative educational best practices, technology, classroom management, and much more. Rob Black, the popular host of television's "Rob Black and Your Money," will present a bonus session Saturday morning on financial issues for educators. For more information, visit www.cta.org/Professional-Development/Events/Conferences.

Declaration of Candidacy

for CTA/NEA-Retired State Council Representative
and Minority At-Large Director

DEADLINE TO RETURN DECLARATION IS JAN. 31, 2011

Offices to be filled:

CTA/NEA-Retired representative to CTA State Council for District 4

Term: 1 year, beginning June 26 (filling a vacancy)

Requirements: A candidate must be a member of CTA/NEA-Retired and reside in the electoral district she/he is elected to represent.

CTA/NEA-Retired Minority At-Large Director

Term: 3 years, beginning June 26

Requirements: A candidate must be a member of CTA/NEA-Retired and be a member of one of the four recognized CTA ethnic minority groupings.

I am a candidate for the office of:

State Council Representative: District 4 County of residence: _____

Minority At-Large Director

I am: African American American Indian/Alaska Native
 Asian/Pacific Islander Hispanic

My contact information: (Please print)

Name _____

Home Address _____

City & Zip _____

() _____

Home phone _____

E-mail Address _____

Mailing Address _____

City & Zip _____

() _____

Cell phone _____

My campaign statement: As a candidate for CTA/NEA-Retired State Council representative or Minority At-Large Director, you may write a candidate statement of no more than 35 words, which will be included with the ballot. If more words are used, the statement will include only the first 35. Reference to ethnic minority identification will not be counted in the 35-word limitation.

Date _____

Signature _____

THIS FORM MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN 5 P.M. JAN. 31, 2011

Mail to CTA/NEA-Retired Elections, Attn: Human Rights/Community Outreach, P.O. Box 4156, Burlingame, CA 94011-4156. Candidates may wish to return this form by certified mail in order to get a receipt and ensure compliance with the deadline.

CTA/NEA-Retired to elect State Council rep and At-Large Director

Jan. 31 is the deadline to submit nominations for CTA/NEA-Retired State Council representative for District 4 and Minority At-Large Director.

Anyone wishing to run for a position should complete the Declaration of Candidacy form (left) and return it to the address on the form.

Terms, which begin June 26, are three years for Minority At-Large Director and one year for District 4 representative to fill a vacancy.

The ballot, including names of the candidates and their campaign statements, will be mailed to members in February. For more information, call (650) 552-5468.

Electoral districts

Following are the electoral districts for CTA/NEA-Retired.

RETIRED DISTRICT 1

Alameda	Napa
Contra Costa	San Benito
Del Norte	San Francisco
Humboldt	San Mateo
Lake	Santa Clara
Marin	Santa Cruz
Mendocino	Solano
Monterey	Sonoma

RETIRED DISTRICT 2

Alpine	Placer
Amador	Plumas
Butte	Sacramento
Calaveras	San Joaquin
Colusa	Shasta
El Dorado	Sierra
Fresno	Siskiyou
Glenn	Stanislaus
Kern	Sutter
Kings	Tehama
Lassen	Trinity
Madera	Tulare
Mariposa	Tuolumne
Merced	Yolo
Modoc	Yuba
Nevada	

RETIRED DISTRICT 3

Los Angeles	Santa Barbara
San Luis Obispo	Ventura

RETIRED DISTRICT 4

Imperial	Riverside
Inyo	San Bernardino
Mono	San Diego
Orange	

You can represent CTA at NEA's convention

On the facing page is the official Declaration of Candidacy form for state delegates to the 2011 NEA convention in Chicago.

Declaration of Candidacy forms for state delegates are also available on the CTA website (www.cta.org/racandidacy). They are not being circulated through any other

channels. Chapter presidents will not be distributing these forms to chapter members. It is the responsibility of each member wishing to run for state delegate to fill out the Declaration of Candidacy form that is printed in this issue (or photocopy) or downloaded from the website, and file it by the deadline.

Each candidate filing a decla-

ration form will receive an acknowledgment of receipt.

In order to attend the Representative Assembly, you must pay for your meals, hotel room and transportation for June 29-July 6.

The first caucus meeting is set for June 30, and the annual meeting of the Representative Assembly runs July 2-5. CTA will reimburse state delegates up to \$1,950 with appropriate receipts. If a delegate stays within the CTA meal allowance, shares a room with another delegate and purchases a super-

saver airline ticket (if applicable), the CTA reimbursement should cover delegate expenses.

In keeping with CTA's commitment to minority involvement, members who are ethnic minorities are urged to become candidates.

For more information, or if your chapter has not initiated an election by April 8, 2011, contact the Elections Committee through CTA Governance Support, P.O. Box 921, Burlingame, CA 94011-0921; (650) 552-5300.

CTA Service Center Council addresses

Service Center Council	Counties	Service Center Council	Counties	Service Center Council	Counties
ALCOSTA 2177 Diamond Blvd. Concord, CA 94520 (925) 676-2822	Alameda, Contra Costa	FRESNO/MADERA 5330 N. Fresno St. Fresno, CA 93710 (559) 222-6593	Fresno, Madera	SAN GORGONIO 735 Carnegie Dr., Ste. 240 San Bernardino, CA 92408 (909) 890-4520	Riverside, San Bernardino
BAY VALLEY 6095 Bristol Pkwy., Ste. 100 Culver City, CA 90230-6601 (310) 215-0326	Los Angeles	GOLDEN GATE 333 Hatch Drive Foster City, CA 94404 (650) 577-5150	San Mateo, San Francisco	SANTA CLARA COUNTY 34 S. Second Street, #206 Campbell, CA 95008 (408) 866-9494	Santa Clara
CAPITAL 4100 Truxel Rd. Sacramento, CA 95834 (916) 288-4923	Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Placer, Tuolumne, Yolo, Sacramento	HIGH DESERT 9329 Mariposa Rd., Ste. 105 Hesperia, CA 92344-8086 (760) 244-2239	Kern, Mono, Inyo, Los Angeles, San Bernardino	SERVICE CENTER ONE 3175-C Sedona Court Ontario, CA 91764 (909) 476-2367	Los Angeles, San Bernardino
CENTRAL COAST COUNTIES 928 E. Blanco Rd., Ste. 100 Salinas, CA 93901 (831) 783-3200	Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz, So. Santa Clara	IMPERIAL COUNTY 2419 La Brucherie Road Imperial, CA 92251 (760) 355-4600	Imperial, San Diego (Borrego Springs)	SIERRA 3409 Calloway Dr., #201 Bakersfield, CA 93312 (661) 587-1366	Kern, Tulare
CHANNEL ISLANDS 1930 Outlet Center Dr. Oxnard, CA 93036 (805) 485-1706	San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura	MERCED/MARIPOSA 510 W. Main St., Ste. E Merced, CA 95340 (209) 723-8871	Merced, Mariposa	SOUTHEASTERN 11745 E. Telegraph Rd. Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670 (562) 478-1346	Los Angeles
CHICO 1430 East Ave., #1 Chico, CA 95926 (530) 345-9743	Butte, Glenn, Plumas	ORANGE 281 N. Rampart St., Ste. A Orange, CA 92868 (714) 978-8861	Orange	STANISLAUS 3900 Mitchell Rd. Ceres, CA 95307 (209) 537-0702	Stanislaus
DELTA 7330 West Ln., Ste. 3 Stockton, CA 95210 (209) 478-6091	San Joaquin	REDDING 1430 East Avenue, #1 Chico, CA 95926 (530) 345-9743	Lassen, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity	TULARE/KINGS COUNTIES 301 W. School Ave. Visalia, CA 93291 (559) 733-7706	Tulare, Kings
FEATHER RIVER 950 Tharp Rd., Ste. 901 Yuba City, CA 95993 (530) 755-2082	Colusa, Nevada, Sierra, Sutter, Yuba	REDWOOD 4300 Redwood Hwy., Ste. 200 San Rafael, CA 94903 (415) 479-6616	Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, Solano, Sonoma	UTLA/NEA 3303 Wilshire Blvd., 10th Fl. Los Angeles, CA 90010 (213) 368-6266	Los Angeles
		SAN DIEGO 5333 Mission Center Rd., Suite 200 San Diego, CA 92108 (619) 683-3990	San Diego	HIGHER EDUCATION 4100 Truxel Rd. Sacramento, CA 95834 (916) 288-4900	2-year and 4-year colleges & universities

Declaration of Candidacy

For **State Delegate** to the 2011 NEA Convention in Chicago, IL

Name () _____
Day phone

Address () _____
Home phone

City, Zip _____
Social Security Number

E-mail _____
Gender: M F

I am a member of: CTA NEA _____
Chapter

Category:

- NEA Active (Non-Supervisory) Member (including Education Support Professionals)**
Send directly to your Service Center Council (see addresses on facing page).
- Higher Education Member (eligible to be in bargaining unit)**
Send to Community College Association, 4100 Truxel Rd., Sacramento, CA 95834.
- CTA/NEA-R Member (must be member of NEA-Retired)**
Send to CTA, P.O. Box 4156, Burlingame, CA 94011-4156.
- Student NEA**
Send to Student CTA Office, CTA, P.O. Box 921, Burlingame, CA 94011-0921.

Ethnic Grouping, Other Information:

I am: American Indian/Alaska Native Caucasian Hispanic
 African American Asian Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

I am a candidate for a local delegate position also. Yes No

If yes and I am elected to both state and local delegate positions, please check one:

- I will be a state delegate. I will be a local delegate.
- I will inform the Service Center Council of my choice.

Name _____
Service Center Council

Please give a brief biographical sketch of no more than 25 words. (If more words are used, the information that accompanies ballots will include only the first 25 words.) If you wish your ethnic grouping to be listed, this will not count as part of the 25-word limitation.

Signed

THIS FORM MUST BE FILED NO LATER THAN 5 p.m. on Jan. 31, 2011, at the office listed above. Candidates are urged to return this form by certified mail in order to get a receipt and ensure compliance with the deadline. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that this document is received by the due date and time.

Duties of delegates to Rep Assembly in Chicago

1. Each delegate will be expected to arrive in Chicago in time to ensure registering as an official delegate to the Representative Assembly (RA) with both the California delegation and NEA.

2. Each delegate will be expected to attend all caucuses of the California delegation. Normally, the caucus begins at 7 a.m. daily. Delegates must be registered with the California delegation to participate in the caucus. Delegates are expected to remain through the convention.

3. Each delegate shall attend all business meetings of the RA.

4. Each delegate is strongly encouraged to attend NEA budget committee hearings, resolutions committee hearings, bylaw committee hearings, speeches by prominent national figures, etc.

5. Each delegate should take into consideration CTA State Council and caucus policy when voting.

6. Each delegate is encouraged to participate fully in all activities of the California delegation.

7. Each delegate — state and local — will be expected to sit with his or her Service Center Council delegation on the RA floor or to inform the appropriate person where he or she will be seated. This is to ensure communication regarding RA business and/or personal emergency information of concern to the delegate, as well as to verify attendance.

I understand that, as a state delegate, my attendance is being directly funded, at least partially, by membership dues. I accept my responsibility to carry out the above specified duties.

Date

Signature

Update

Continued from page 6

Tavener, CEO of Summit charter schools, who is interviewed in the film; Sequoia Union High School District Superintendent James Lianides, who criticized the film's misrepresentation of Woodside High School in his district; Charles Weis, Santa Clara County superintendent of schools; John Danner, CEO of Rocketship charter schools; and attorney Ash Pirayou.

Filmmaker finally seeks teacher input

Davis Guggenheim, creator of the movie *Waiting for Superman*, announced last November in the *Huffington Post* that he wants to hear the opinions of teachers.

Teachers have responded to Guggenheim with usernames in comments on the *Huffington Post* and Facebook:

"This assumes that for every deadbeat fired, there is an excellent teacher waiting in the wings to be hired. That's not

the case. Every excellent teacher starts out as a struggling teacher like I was. These struggling teachers must be thoroughly trained and mentored before and during their first year. They must be given manageable class sizes and course loads, as well as time to collaborate with their colleagues. They need excellent textbooks and other classroom resources. They must be well-compensated so that quality talent is attracted. Teachers unions have an important role to play in advocating for teachers' rights and quality of life. *Waiting for Superman* suggests none of these." —Plektix.

"If teachers' opinions matter, why are they so absent in the film, and on the various panels you've participated in?" —David B. Cohen.

To see more replies, or write one of your own, visit huffingtonpost.com/davis-guggenheim.



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www.apu.edu/stories/ron

Ron Letourneau '88

Principal, Santa Fe Middle School, Monrovia, CA



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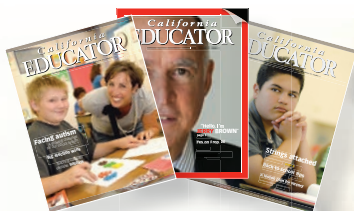
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If any of the stories in the *California Educator* pique your interest, let us know your thoughts and we may publish your letter. Please include your full name, local association and phone number or e-mail address in the event that we want to contact you.

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