

california educator

DECEMBER 2014/JANUARY 2015 VOLUME 19 ISSUE 5

Drumroll, please!

Mr. V and his drumline are
a thundering success

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Spreading the word
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5 apps help you
keep your
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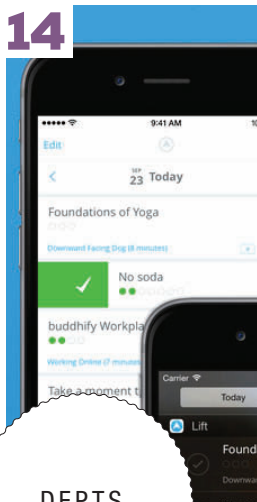
Teacher bloggers like Martha Infante are getting their voices heard. You can start a blog, too!



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

Our instruction changes lives

Something occurred recently that changed my impression of a relationship that I had with a student's parents.

This particular student was prone to violence, hitting, punching, and disturbing children's play. In class, he was articulate, outspoken and occasionally defiant. One day he attempted to slam the door on a couple of my first-graders' fingers. I quickly reacted and moved him out of the way, preventing injuries, and I took him to the office.

That evening I received a phone call from the parent asking me about incident. After the call, I felt the parents had disapproved of my interactions and our relationship was ruined.

Fast-forward to 2014. On Election Day I was precinct-walking in my former school's neighborhood and came upon the student's mother. She shared that he had just started his freshman year in college, he was interested in journalism, and he attributed his love for writing to me because I taught him to take writing

seriously and fostered such a loving environment. I was stunned, as the perception I had carried with me all these years was that I had established a fractured relationship with this family and student.

Later that evening, as I was poll-checking, in walks the father. He said that I was one of the best teachers his son ever had, and that the reason for his success was the strong foundation I had given him in first grade.

The rewards in our profession are often not reaped immediately, but rather appear in subtle ways and miraculously surprise us. I know that we make a difference, but we don't always hear how our instruction changes the lives of our students. It is so nice to be told when this occurs.

ANN KATZBURG
President, San Ramon Valley Education Association

Editor's Note: Read more stories shared by CTA members about their memorable students on page 15.

Hour of Code includes 'computer bug'

I saw the article on Computer Science Education Week in the November *California Educator*. All teachers are on board for Hour of Code at Glenmoor Elementary School in Fremont.

A motivated parent who is a computer engineer has recruited 19 other volunteers to work with students in the school computer lab over two days. This is a great school-business partnership. The principal plans to dress up as a "computer bug" one of the

days. Plans also include decorating the school computer lab.

I am very proud of Glenmoor, the hard-working teachers and staff, the supportive parent community, and the reason the adults care so much, the amazing students!

JOHNNA LAIRD
Fremont Unified District Teachers Association



Fires all over

What a surprise to receive my *Educator* with a picture of the Courtney Fire burning on the shores of Bass Lake. Our cabin is at the top of the ridge above the lake and narrowly escaped the inferno with minor damage. Thirty homes and cabins burned down in our neighborhood, displacing families with children attending schools in the Bass Lake Joint Unified School District and Yosemite Unified School District.

ALIDA IMBRECHT
Sacramento (retired)

Editor's Note: Families were impacted statewide by wildfires between May and September. The November cover photo, taken at Bass Lake by Darvin Atkeson, showed the magnitude of the fires. There are several fundraising efforts for those who lost homes. The photo above (courtesy of Sierra Star) shows Oak Creek Intermediate students and faculty who raised \$1,500 for student Dakota Klapproth (third from left). An Oakhurst Area Fire Relief account has been set up at Yosemite Bank to raise funds for those involved in the Junction and Courtney fires. Other ways to donate: Visit the disaster relief page at www.redcross.org or email membership@cta.org for the CTA Disaster Relief Fund.

Correction

Sen. Ricardo Lara's first name was inadvertently misspelled in a profile in the October *Educator*. We regret the error.

This has been a busy year for my local chapter, and we've done a lot of things that mirror the CTA long-term strategic plan adopted last January. Can you tell us what impact the plan is having in its first year?

Great question! Development of the long-term strategic plan has been one of the most exciting and important projects CTA has worked on since I became president. As we move ahead with its implementation, I'm thrilled at the extent to which the plan priorities have shaped the CTA agenda over the past 12 months, how quickly this large organization has been able to realign its focus, and how much of that focus has a direct and positive impact on students.

I'm also pleased you've noticed things going on in your local that reflect the plan priorities. The plan is not a top-down one. It was developed reflecting the input, views and priorities of thousands of CTA members. It's been gratifying to see so many CTA chapters embracing the plan and hitting the ground running to implement it locally.

One of the plan's focus areas, advocacy on education, has been especially evident this year. CTA and our local chapters have taken the lead on supporting and implementing the state's new Local Control Funding Formula, and many have reached

out to parents and community groups (another plan focus area) to help empower them in influencing school district funding priorities. The new formula has the same philosophy as CTA's highly successful school improvement program, the Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA), which recognizes that students in different neighborhoods have different challenges, and that funding all schools equally isn't really fair. The new formula, like QEIA, helps ensure that resources directed toward a student's success aren't determined primarily by his or her ZIP code.

CTA continued to take the lead on helping educators implement the new state standards. Recognizing that this transition will only be successful if it's educator-driven, we continued large-scale training with local chapters and school districts. For the fourth year in a row, our CTA Summer Institute IPD strand was packed with hundreds eager to learn and share successful instructional strategies.

I'm really excited to announce the Instructional Leadership Corps, a joint effort of CTA, the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE), and the National Board Resource Center at Stanford University. Corps members (currently 160 teachers and 24 administrators) are orchestrating professional development about Common Core and the Next Generation Science Standards, and will train other teachers to do the same, building local instructional and leadership capacity to support new instructional practices.

This kind of educator-driven leadership is an example of what works and will really improve student achievement. It's in stark contrast to "blame teachers first" solutions offered by the corporate reformers behind the *Vergara* lawsuit stripping educators of due process, or "parent trigger" laws that ignore real issues in attempts to privatize our schools.

Social justice issues are another strategic focus area where CTA and our locals



All of a sudden the stars are lining up. It's a focus on teacher quality and the dynamics of teaching and learning, and everyone wins, especially students."

"Together is how we make schools work wonders. With ongoing collaboration and commitment, we will continue to improve our schools in these times of exciting transformation, rejuvenation and reward."

are making a difference. CTA was proud to be part of successful efforts to raise the minimum wage for hotel workers in Los Angeles, a campaign that will help lift many of our students out of poverty. This fall's Degrees Not Debt program raised awareness and offered solutions to skyrocketing college debt, which keeps higher education out of reach for too many students and disproportionately affects students of color.

The strategic plan is directing every aspect of CTA. It's taking an organization that has been very good at what we do, and making us even better. I encourage every member to read the plan at www.cta.org/ourfuture. Think about ways it can help make your local chapter stronger and more successful. By working together, we can ensure all California students get the education they deserve.

Dean E. Vogel
CTA PRESIDENT



Do you have an issue or topic you'd like Dean to address? Let us know. Email editor@cta.org.



CTA Journalism Contest

WE'RE HAVING A JOURNALISM CONTEST in order to promote and highlight the outstanding work and creativity of student journalism programs throughout California.

HERE'S HOW IT'LL WORK:

1. Interested public high school journalism programs will submit one spread that showcases teaching and learning in the school. This may include a teacher or group of teachers and their work with students individually or as part of a program.
2. All entries received will be posted online at www.cta.org. The winning entry will be published in the May 2015 California Educator (circulation 325,000) with a story about that journalism class.
3. Deadline to enter is 5 p.m., March 2, 2015. There is no charge for submitting an entry. One entry per journalism class.
4. Each entry will be submitted electronically as an attachment to an email sent to editor@cta.org. Each entry must be submitted with the following information:
 - Name of school and journalism class.
 - Local CTA chapter.
 - Town or city.
 - Journalism teacher.
 - Names of students who worked on the layout.

Please include the school's name in the name of the PDF (example: AnytownHigh-Journalism1.pdf). An entry must be one PDF file containing a double-page spread of two 8-by-10-inch pages, preferably combined into one 16-by-10-inch sheet. If you are using InDesign, you can set the export options to combine spreads automatically. Please try to reduce the file size as much as possible.

5. All complete entries received by the deadline will be judged by the CTA Communications Committee and professional journalists. The winner will be determined based on content, writing, photography and layout design.

Go Online



cta.org/journalismcontest

Find contest rules and an online interface that provides an alternative way to submit your entry.



The CLAD Through CTCL Program

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california educator

WHERE'S THE MOST UNUSUAL PLACE YOU'VE SPENT NEW YEAR'S EVE?

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CTA WEB EDITOR	Tiffany Hasker	→	
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT	Craig Hamilton	→	<i>On a junk in the Hong Kong harbor</i>
WEB ASSISTANT	Gladdie Cabral		

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

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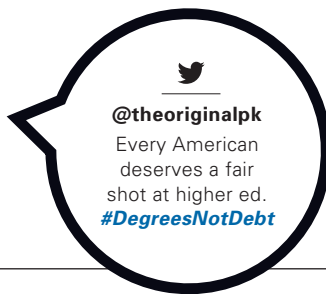
MISSION STATEMENT

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

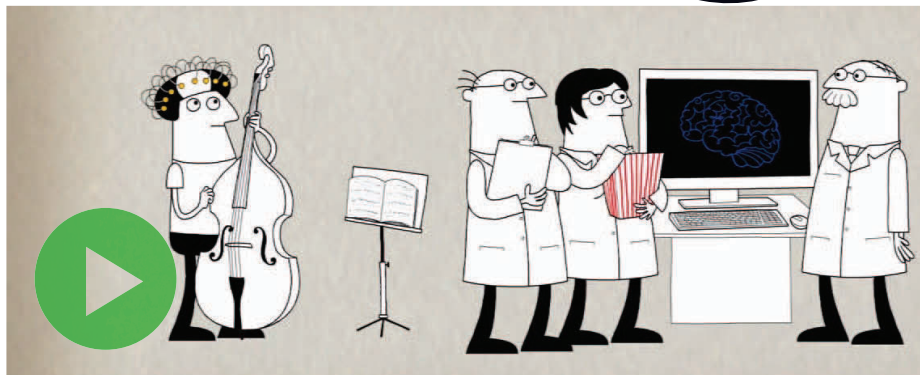


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Use this hashtag in your tweets and we'll select our favorites for each issue of the *California Educator*.



Viral video 📺



How playing an instrument benefits your brain: It benefits in lots of ways, as explained in this animated video from TED Ed.

trendinghot.net/what-playing-a-musical-instrument-does-to-your-brain

Most popular post 📱



NOV 10 👍 70 likes 📧 39 shares

More top tweets 🐦

@jfenster

CTA aims to reach 50K teachers in 3 yrs with training in [#CommonCore](#).

@JenniferDeWeerd

Excited to be part of CA teachers corps for coherent PD in new standards.

@adrianachavira

Requiring mandatory donations of time, money or goods is illegal in California's public schools.

@christinaixel

Students need to know their stories are taken seriously. They need to know their voices will be heard.

Favorite comments 💬

Joanne Sheehan Lindevald | NOV 25

I wake up in the middle of the night sometimes, unable to go back to sleep. My nonverbal special education students often have no one but me to speak up for them. Some of them are surrounded only by people who are paid to be with them (including me). They truly have no family and no voice — those are the ones I am always worried about — so vulnerable.

Wendi Smith | DEC 1

Glad to see CTA taking the lead and not sitting back waiting for school districts to provide the much-needed professional development!

Paul Delgado | NOV 30

I wish we would find a way to get rid of the testing. I'm OK with CCSS. The testing is what puts a damper on it!

Dyanna Young | DEC 2

When my Dad was dying of cancer in 2005-06, one of my students' mother was dying too. His mother was farther along, and he would come to school and tell me what to expect next. We would cry together, tell stories and support each other. When it was getting close to the time for his mother's passing, all of his teachers gave him independent work, had him stay home and spend time with his mom. The next year, he received the honor roll. He requested I attend with him as the teacher who made the greatest impact in his life. He told me that every time he saw me, he saw his mom, because I understood what he was going through.

What's new at cta.org

1

www.cta.org/ilc

Teachers teaching teachers

Members of the Instructional Leadership Corps are transforming the profession by preparing fellow educators to meet Common Core State Standards and sharing best practices.

2

www.cta.org/neagrantsawards

Excellent educators: It's nomination time!

It's not too early to submit nominations for an NEA Award for Teaching Excellence, which honors members who promote greatness in teaching and advocacy for the profession.

3

www.cta.org/mission

What CTA is all about As CTA moves forward with its strategic planning process, we're focused on our goals to improve teaching and learning.

4

www.cta.org/affiliates

Is your chapter's website listed?

CTA has a page on its website where we list all the local chapter websites we're aware of. If your site is not there, let us know by writing webmaster@cta.org.

5

www.cta.org/winterholidays

Say hello to the holidays! Find the background on a host of family traditions comes to mind, including Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. Happy holidays, all!



“Olive! Olive, the other reindeer!”

The kids and parents laughed so hard they snorted. I'd been asked to name all of Santa's reindeers, which I recited perfectly, I'm sure, and was informed I'd forgotten one.

“Which one?” I asked, mentally running through the list again. The answer prompted peals of merriment that were contagious. I grinned, remembering the book and movie about the dog who wanted to join Santa's reindeer team. I'd been talking to the parents about books, noting that CTA members recommend books for all levels of readers four times per year through our California Reads program (page 16). They were somewhat surprised CTA does that.

And I was surprised they were surprised, because CTA does good things like that year-round in schools. And since 'tis the season for do-gooders to do good deeds (say *that* three times fast), I will note that Student CTA members put smiles on the faces of children by delivering 58 Christmas trees and gifts to needy families at Rio Vista Elementary School. For many, those may be the only gifts they receive this year. Donations were coordinated through the SCTA chapter at CSU Fullerton.

The one that brings tears to my eyes is what students in Lancaster are doing for a vet paralyzed in Iraq (facing page). They're building him a “smart house” and raising funds for construction! Our students are amazing that way, don't you think?

As you can tell, this issue is full of good news. Enjoy reading about colleagues who teach in “paradise” — otherwise known as Catalina Island (page 36). That they commute by boat or helicopter is something else, though. And I love the glowing reviews autistic students in Bakersfield are getting for teaching their peers about solar power (page 46). In this magazine, we're not the only one sharing the good news. Check out how teacher bloggers (page 18) are promoting what's best for schools and best teaching practices.

It's easy to be positive when writing about all the good that you do in our schools and our communities. So as we celebrate the season, please take time to celebrate *you*. Because of you, California's high school graduation rate topped 80 percent. Kudos to you! Our students' reading scores are rising faster than anywhere else in the country. Perhaps kids are getting help reading from the likes of Olive — and Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen and Rudolph.

Happy holidays!

Cynthia Menzel
EDITOR IN CHIEF
editor@cta.org

P.S.: Journalism teachers! Showcase your students' good work by participating in the CTA Journalism Contest. Check out the details on page 5.



CLASS PROJECT TO PROVIDE NEW HOME *for injured vet*

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin

ON HIS 21ST BIRTHDAY in 2007, Specialist Jerral Hancock (above center) was trapped in a tank that exploded into flames after it ran over a bomb on a street in Iraq. The explosion left him paralyzed from the chest down, missing his left arm, with partial use of his right arm and burns covering 30 percent of his body. Hancock was trapped in the tank for 90 minutes, while his fellow U.S. Army soldiers attempted to rescue him.

J

ERRAL HANCOCK RETURNED home to Lancaster, a town in the High Desert, where he received a hero's welcome, rode in parades, and tried to rebuild his life. But things got worse, not better. His marriage ended, leaving him to raise his two young children (now ages 7 and 10) while living in a mobile home so narrow he can't maneuver his wheelchair. The veteran has compared his living situation to imprisonment. His mother and stepfather are his full-time caregivers, and live in the mobile home across the street.

However, better days — and increased mobility — are on the horizon for Hancock, thanks to the generosity of Lancaster High School students and their history teacher, Jamie Goodreau, whose mission is to raise enough money to build Hancock a new home that will be accessible. The students have already raised more than \$420,000 toward the \$500,000 project, which broke ground in May.

Hancock believes his new home will greatly improve his quality of life. "The biggest change will be an independence I haven't had since the accident," says Hancock. "The new open layout of the house will make it worth getting out of bed on days I'm just chilling at home. As of now, I just have a trail I can go through, and I can't even get to my kids' rooms. Just being able to hang out and play with my kids in their own rooms is a big deal. I don't think that can be understood unless you've lived through it."

Operation All The Way Home

It all began in May 2013 when the students met Hancock at their spring community project, Pride of the Nation, an Armed Forces Day dinner, dance and tribute ceremony hosted by the U.S. history students for the community at the Antelope Valley Fairgrounds. The students invited Hancock to visit Goodreau's history classes and tell his story.

"There are no words to explain the impact he had on my students," says Goodreau, Antelope Valley Teachers Association. "His story challenged my



"We don't have to wait for them to grow up to become civic leaders," says Goodreau of her students. "They can do that right now."

students on so many levels. He talked about his physical challenges, his physical pain and his road to recovery. He talked about the challenges of trying to provide for his kids. It gave my students a whole new perspective about life."

His mother and stepfather dropped him off at the school that day, six years to the day after his accident. The students later learned that it was the very first time since the accident that Hancock had ventured anywhere alone.



Jerral Hancock, shown here with **Jamie Goodreau**, says he is humbled by the students for taking on such a monumental project.

The students discussed how they could support Hancock and his family. Upon discovering that they lived in a crowded mobile home, the students decided that Hancock's greatest need was a home meeting his health and mobility needs. From there they voted, finalized the details of their new project, and called it Operation All The Way Home (OATH). They announced their grassroots effort to the community on June 14, 2013.

Their mission was to raise funds and break ground for construction of a new home within one year. The students accomplished their mission with the groundbreaking ceremony taking place on May 6, 2014. The construction of Hancock's new "Smart Home" is currently under way.

The students held yard sales and pizza nights. They sold T-shirts and refrigerator magnets. Their efforts ignited the community. Businesses offered discounts on building supplies, and a construction contractor offered to volunteer on the project. An architectural firm created the blueprints, and a real estate agent waived





Jerral Hancock gets support from actor Gary Sinise, who brought his Lt. Dan Band to play a community concert, with all the proceeds going to Hancock's new house.



The students have already raised more than \$420,000 toward the \$500,000 project, which broke ground in May.

her fee. Dozens of businesses and organizations gave financial donations. Inmates at the local prison sold their artwork and donated the proceeds to support the cause.

"The community response here has been overwhelmingly positive and affectionate toward Jerral," says Goodreau. "Everybody wanted to see him in a better situation."

The biggest boost came from actor and humanitarian Gary Sinise, best known for his portrayal of a veteran with disabilities in the movie *Forrest Gump*. Sinise heard about the project and came to Lancaster High School to meet the students and Hancock. After praising the students for their efforts, he donated \$60,000 to the cause and announced that he would bring his Lt. Dan Band, in which he plays bass, to the Antelope Valley for a community concert, with all of the proceeds going toward the new Hancock home.

Hancock is enormously grateful for all the support.

"I am humbled by the students and Mrs. Goodreau for taking on such a monumental project that has never been done or attempted to my knowledge," he says. "I am completely honored by the huge response and support of my community. People continue to show up to fundraisers and have supported me. I've met a lot of great folks along the way. I want to sincerely thank all the students and adults who have helped out with OATH and its fundraisers."

Nothing is impossible

For students involved in the project, it has been an incredible learning curve.

"I learned that nothing is impossible," says Martin Gonzales. "If you set your mind to accomplishing something, no matter how big or small it may seem, it is doable. In this case, I learned that if a bunch of teenagers are willing to build a house, we could do it. OATH has changed me for the better. It taught me to

become more aware of our veteran community, and that it's time we gave something back."

"This has changed my perspective of retired or active duty military personnel and what they have to go through when they return to civilian life," says student Rachel Hewitt. "It has taught me to value the sacrifices they make to keep our country free."

"This experience has helped me be more mature," says Tia Phillips. "It taught me that I can be a leader."

The history teacher is proud to see students leading the way in Lancaster. Project-based learning, community service, and honoring veterans have been a class tradition for the past 15 years in Goodreau's classes.

Operation All The Way Home is now a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, and will continue after Hancock's home is complete. OATH will continue as a youth-driven organization that will assist veterans and their families, while empowering students through hands-on experience, learning lessons about leadership, community service and civic responsibility.

"These kids are actually leaders in our community," says Goodreau. "We don't have to wait for them to grow up to become civic leaders. They can do that right now." ■

Go Online



For more information or to make a donation to help the students bring Jerral Hancock "all the way home," visit www.OperationAllTheWayHome.com.

Know & Tell

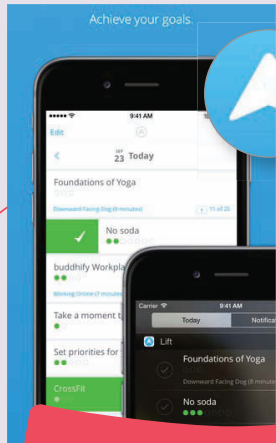
Grants, awards, contests, resources and tips to share



“All he needed was for someone to tell him, ‘You can do it!’”

THAT’S HOW **JADE MATTHEWS**, TRAVIS UNIFIED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION, DESCRIBES A STUDENT WHO SURPRISED HER. REMEMBER “THAT” STUDENT? THE ONE WHO MADE YOU PROUD TO BE AN EDUCATOR?

PERHAPS HE SUCCEEDED AGAINST ALL ODDS. PERHAPS SHE TAUGHT YOU SOMETHING. READ MORE STUDENT STORIES ON PAGE 15.



REACH YOUR GOALS:

Lift

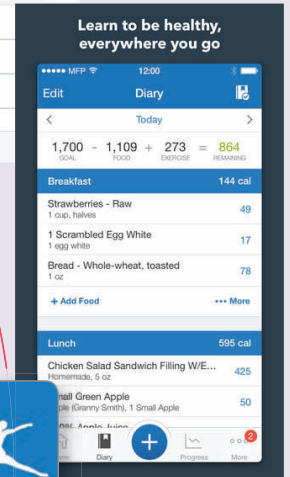
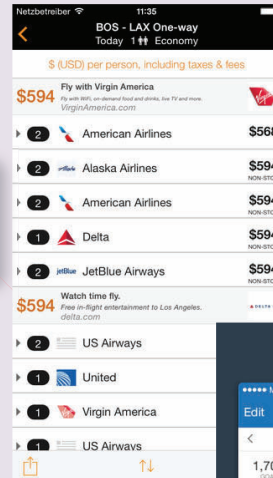
Lift helps you put your goals into action. Stay on track with peer coaching, and record your progress with an easy check-in system.



TRAVEL MORE:

Kayak

Kayak will help search for the best deals on your next travel destination. Use its smart travel search for hotel, flight and car bookings. It even has a currency converter.



LOSE WEIGHT AND GET FIT:

MyFitnessPal

MyFitnessPal is an easy-to-use calorie counter with over 4 million foods in its database. Use it to keep track of your food intake and exercise, and watch those extra pounds fall off.

5 APPS

to help you keep your New Year's resolutions

By Terry Ng

ANOTHER YEAR MEANS another set of New Year's resolutions. There's just something about this time of year that makes us want to better ourselves, but it can be quite difficult to follow through on New Year's resolutions, especially without any help or support. Luckily, technology exists in the palm of our hands now to help us achieve our goals. Try these five (free) mobile apps to help you stick to your resolutions and make your goals a reality.



LEARN SOMETHING NEW:

Snapguide

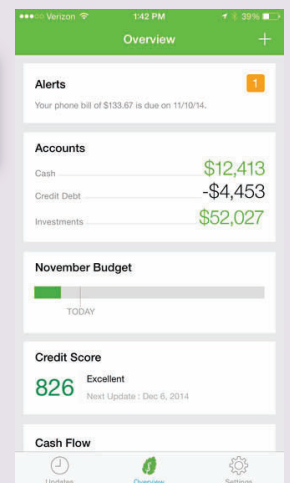
Snapguide is a simple way to discover new things to cook, build, wear, play, and more, with step-by-step how-to guides.



SAVE MONEY AND DECREASE DEBT:

Mint

Mint pulls in your personal finance accounts and investments information to one place. Making it simple to track your spending, create a budget, get bill reminders, and save more money.



About my student...

REMEMBER “THAT” STUDENT who impacted you personally? Who surprised and delighted you, and made you proud to be an educator? Perhaps he succeeded against all odds. Perhaps she taught you something. Here are a few tales shared by members. If you’d like to share about “that” student, please email editor@cta.org.



My first year of teaching sixth grade I was told, “Good luck with that kid.” He sure did test me the first couple of months, trying any and every way to get out of doing schoolwork and goofing off in class.

I had a heart-to-heart with him, and told him I saw something in him. I set up a behavior chart with him and did after-school intervention. Our Title I teacher put him in her reading group. She was resistant at first, but I assured her he was turning his behavior around.

By the end of the year, he had pretty good relationships with his peers and the staff. The following year, when the California Standards Test scores were released, he came back to my class out of breath to tell me that he had received a proficient in both English language arts and math. This was a big deal, because previously he had scored below basic!

I run into him often. He is an honor roll student and is confident. He understands that when school gets hard, he just needs to work harder. All he needed was for someone to tell him, “You can do it!”

JADE MATTHEWS

Travis Unified Teachers Association

The first day in class, Noreen was part of a raucous group of four students who were enjoyable but disruptive. I did my best Stern Teacher routine to quiet them down, and was surprised at the end of the period to find a note of apology Noreen left on my desk. She

subsequently shone brightly in my American literature class and served as my TA in her senior year. I have gotten to know her family and have been invited to her church functions over the years.

DENNIS KELLY

United Educators of San Francisco

He was “That Kid.” The one in the hall every day, in trouble again, leaning against the lockers, shoulders down. And I thought, “Oh man, I hope I don’t get that kid in my class!”

Sure enough, his name was on my class list one year. That first day, I stood at the door greeting everyone. Rob walked right up to me and stared into my face defiantly. His first words were, “I prayed all summer I wouldn’t be in your class!” You can imagine how taken aback I was.

The miracle was that we found we shared a goofy sense of humor. It didn’t take long until we bonded. Yes, he was a challenge. But he did not spend one day in that soul-sucking hallway.

Fast-forward many years. I was teaching at another school when I looked up and saw Rob, leading a class of first-graders to the library. He had become a teacher! And yes, I had to remind him of that first day of fourth grade. We hugged, and I knew that bond we shared was still there.

RUTH McLEAN ELLER

Cupertino Education Association

He was in my fourth-grade class, on the autism spectrum. He struggled academically and socially. His tender heart and gentle ways bonded us immediately. I would get daily hugs, and our class would do honorary ninja kicks when he had an academic success!

In February, my appendix ruptured, and I suffered complications. I was out seven weeks. One evening, I received an email from my student’s mom, begging me to call. Since I had been sick, he felt sick and wouldn’t go to school. She finally got it out of him that he was afraid I was going to die. I called him immediately and assured him I’d be back with hugs and ninja kicks!

Throughout his elementary years he always stopped to give me a daily hug in the hallway. When he went to sixth-grade camp, he told me I wouldn’t see him for four days, so he gave me an extra hug for each day to make up for it!

He is now successfully attending seventh grade, and I get updates from his younger brother, who is in my class currently. But when he can, he comes by to give me a hug! That’s what it’s all about — loving these kids!

AMY BROWNFIELD

Selma Unified Teachers Association

California Reads

Recommended books for winter reading

Reviews by Janet Robertson, *chair*,
and Tiffany Hasker, *staff liaison*,
CTA Read Across America Committee

TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS are literacy experts. With that in mind, we offer this quarter's book recommendations from the CTA Read Across America Committee. The reviews include the books' Accelerated Reader (AR) reading levels, where available.



PREKINDERGARTEN

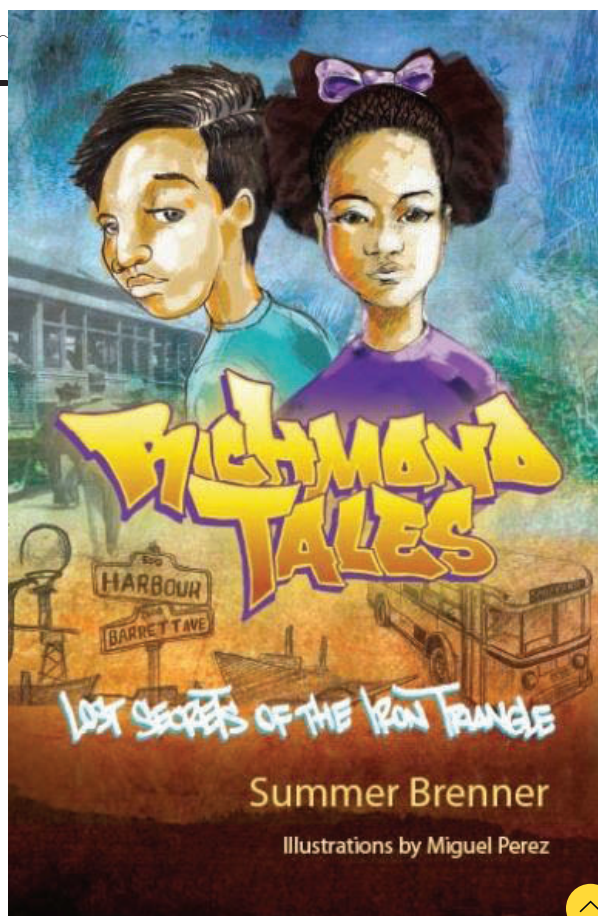
One by Kathryn Otoshi

One is a simple but beautiful book that has a powerful and uplifting message about bullying and standing up for oneself and others. The award-winning book is about colors and numbers. Red bullies Blue, and although the other colors do not like what they see, they don't speak up. Number One comes along and shows all the colors how to stand up together against Red. *One* is basic for preschoolers, but contains a message that resonates with children of all ages — maybe even adults!

AR level 2.2.

Go Online

Are you using these recommendations in the classroom? If so, email us at editor@cta.org! We'd love to feature your good work in this magazine and on our blog. And if you're looking for lesson plans or other resources to go with these book recommendations, take a look at cta.org/californiareads, where we've amassed a collection of classroom resources.

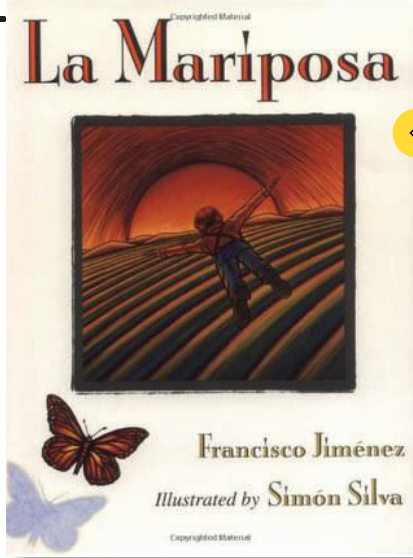


GRADES 6-8

Richmond Tales: Lost Secrets of the Iron Triangle by Summer Brenner, illustrated by Miguel Perez

Brenner's place-based novels for young readers are full of landmarks local kids know and character types they have been exposed to. Through magical time travel, two children are transported to different times in the history of the city of Richmond, California, starting with the Native Americans who lived there first, through the early settlement and the World War II era. The story foresees a hopeful future that the children themselves can create. A wonderful, readable tale for all age groups. (Note: Brenner's latest novel, *Oakland Tales*, is equally as interesting and is being used in Oakland classrooms. Get companion curriculum at cta.org/californiareads.)

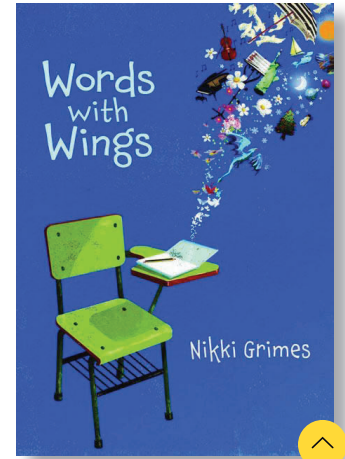
No AR listing.



GRADES K-2
La Mariposa by Francisco Jiménez,
 illustrated by Simón Silva

It is Francisco's first year at school in an English-speaking classroom. He knows a few words of English, but he understands little of what his teacher is saying. During the school day, he is intrigued by a caterpillar that sits in a jar next to his desk, and decides to devote all of his energy to learning how a caterpillar turns into a butterfly. This story addresses the struggles English learners face while they are learning a new language. It also shows how imaginative children can be and how we can incorporate what they are interested in into the curriculum.

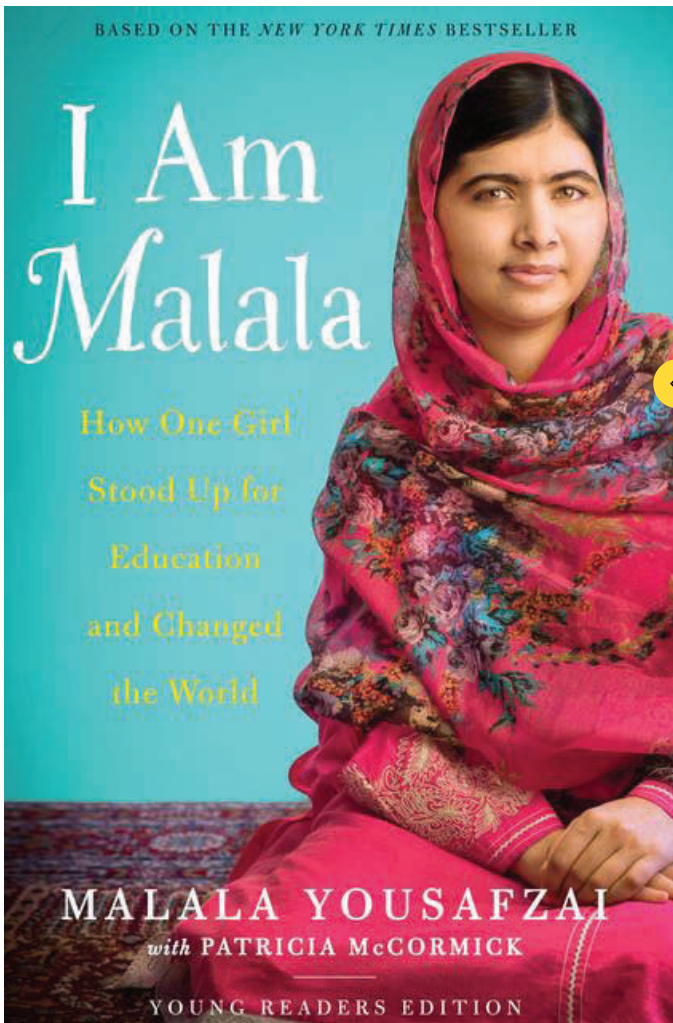
No AR listing.



GRADES 3-5
Words with Wings by Nikki Grimes

Poetry is the perfect format for this short story about a girl with a vivid imagination. Gabriella is heartbroken when her parents split up and she is forced to move away from her old neighborhood and best friend. She starts at a new school, where she has trouble concentrating. Her teacher soon recognizes her special qualities and comes up with an inspired idea to encourage Gabby and the other kids in the class to use their imaginations. Perfect for reading aloud, *Words with Wings* takes the fears and hopes of one child and spins them into a story for children of all ages.

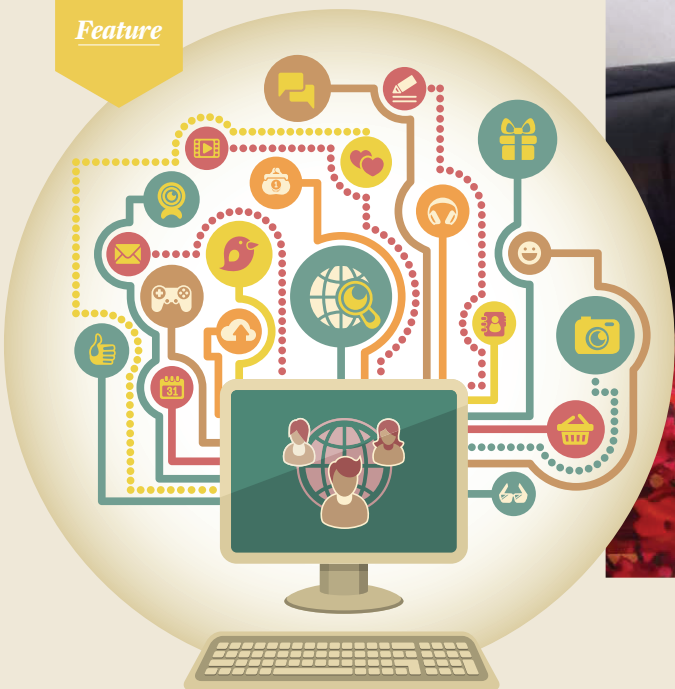
AR level 4.3.



GRADES 9-12
I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World by Malala Yousafzai

Winner of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize, young Malala Yousafzai inspired a groundswell of support around the world for girls' right to education. The Young Readers version is gripping and occasionally hard to read, given the violent subject matter, but it is told in a voice that is easy for young people to latch on to. Though some young readers may not know much about Pakistan or the Taliban, Malala gently explains very complex situations in a way that's easy to follow. This book details Malala's life before the shooting, her recovery, and her new life in Britain, inviting young readers to count their blessings and think about other people in the world who would love to enjoy some of the liberties we often take for granted.

AR level 7.1.



FOR TEACHER BLOGGERS,

The globe's the limit

LOOKING FOR A FORUM to share best practices with fellow educators? Want to reflect on a lesson and see if others can relate or offer suggestions? Seeking a way to offer a view of classroom life, show off a nifty bulletin board, or communicate about technology, the Common Core and other topics with the outside world?

If so, blogging is a terrific way to extend your voice and influence beyond the four walls of your classroom. All it takes is time, a platform and some blogged determination to create interesting material.

Here are some CTA members who blog on various topics.

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin

Martha Infante, *United Teachers Los Angeles* @ dontforgetsouthcentral.blogspot.com

"Poverty kicked my ass growing up," says Martha Infante. Her blog *Don't Forget South Central* is a constant reminder of challenges faced by those in South Central Los Angeles, an inner-city neighborhood where she teaches history at Los Angeles Academy Middle School. This no-holds-barred blogger blasts her district's former superintendent John Deasy, as well as LAUSD's decision to choose iPads over hiring teachers and counselors in schools. She takes on "reformers" who seek to privatize public education. Her focus on equity includes poverty, students with special needs, school funding and fair treatment for teachers. With more than 100,000 hits on her blog, including followers from Europe, Israel and Russia, she defines her audience as members of the general public, who deserve to know what is happening in schools, and politicians, so they can make better decisions.

I STARTED BLOGGING BECAUSE... we lost 23 teachers at my school in 2009, and I felt blogging was a form of activism that allowed me to bring to the public's attention what a devastating impact layoffs were having on schools such as mine.

MY DISTRICT'S REACTION... I do not have conversations with administrators about my blog. I make it clear that I blog on my own time. I've gotten nothing but positive responses from parents, because they want the same things that I do, such as more resources and more equity.

BLOGGERS I FOLLOW INCLUDE... José Vilson, an "Educolor" activist from New York who blogs from the perspective of a teacher of color (www.edutopia.org/users/jose-vilson), and Sabrina Stevens, a teacher in Washington, D.C., who blogs about education policy (www.sabrinastevensshupe.com/blog).

Check out cta.org/blog



Starting a blog

By Tiffany Hasker

If you're just starting out and not sure how comfortable you are in the Web publishing world just yet, go with a free service like Wordpress.com, which will do most everything for you except write your posts. You'll need to create a Web address for your blog, pick your blog's theme design, and then get started writing. It really is that easy!

FIVE BLOGGING MUSTS:

- Be of value.
- Find your niche and stick with it.
- Display professionalism.
- Keep confidential information confidential (especially important when blogging about students).
- Keep it current.

YOU'VE GOT YOUR BLOG STARTED

Now that you are ready for the world to actually see it, you'll need to promote it. This is fairly easy to do because of social media. Create a Twitter account and tweet your posts using a hashtag (example: [#education](https://twitter.com/education)) that is related to your topic, so your tweet will be seen by a broader audience. Share your blog posts with your Facebook friends and ask them for feedback. The more your friends are invested in the success of your blog, the more likely they are to promote it for you to their friends.

Always remember, this is *social* media. You'll also want to connect with other education bloggers, ask them for feedback, and share with their followers, and you should do so in return as well.



PHOTO BY SCOTT BUSCHMAN

Alice Mercer, *Sacramento City Teachers Association* [@mizmercereublogs.org](https://mizmercereublogs.org)

Alice Mercer's blog *Reflections on Teaching* is often deeply personal and other times political or professional. It manages to be profound. In one posting, the sixth-grade teacher at Hubert Bancroft Elementary School shares conversations with her son, who is on the autism spectrum, on what it's like to be black like his father and face racism. In another, Mercer takes on Sacramento's "first couple," Mayor Kevin Johnson and his wife Michelle Rhee, who are charter school advocates. Other posts examine classroom life, lesson planning, best practices and the challenges of Common Core. With about 700 followers (some from India and Singapore), Mercer admits she is "bluntly honest" and blogging helps her get through difficult times. "It helps me reflect," she says of sharing her thoughts with the world. "We all have long, dark nights of the soul."

BLOGGING ALLOWS ME TO... reflect on my teaching and get feedback from my peers. It allows me to share best practices and classroom tips. It allows me to be part of a solution because when I write about problems, I offer solutions.

MY STRANGEST BLOG EXPERIENCE... was in the middle of a political battle and getting a comment on my blog about how rotten teachers are, and knowing who it was — a former student from a local high school. I wrote to that person and said, "I know who you are, and you have broken your teacher's heart."

MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE BLOGGERS IS... set a schedule, whether it's every week or every other week. Be aware your words are public and you represent teachers. Be professional. Check spelling and errors. If you write about students in your class, do so in a very general way so nobody is identified. You don't want parents asking, "Why are you writing about my child?"



Glenda Anderson, *Butte County Teachers Association*
 @atclassroom.blogspot.com

She works in a remote rural area, but thanks to her blog, Glenda Anderson is a worldwide resource for information about “assistive technology” who helps people with disabilities ranging from cognitive problems to physical impairment live independently and succeed academically. The former special education teacher turned “education assistive technology specialist” averages 25,000 hits a month on her blog, *Glenda’s Assistive Technology Information and More*, sometimes receiving 900 hits a day. Being a “constant researcher” in the field of educational and assistive technologies has earned her followers in the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, Russia and the Philippines. Advertisers pay to appear on her blog, which has been going strong for seven years.

I STARTED BLOGGING BECAUSE...

I was giving the same information out over and over again and realized I could make my life easier if I could pull it together and say, “Here’s my blog, and you’ll find that information.” Blogging is a way to organize the numerous resources I need at my fingertips and a way to keep other teachers in the loop about providing the best products, strategies and services to better the lives of those with disabilities.

IN THE BEGINNING...

I was told not to use Butte County Office of Education on my blog, but now my county has begun to realize it is a powerful resource, and my blog is now linked on our county website.

MY ADVICE FOR BLOGGERS IS...

decide what you want your focus to be, and follow that focus. Decide who you want your audience to be, and write for that audience.

Educator takes blog on the road

Palo Alto High School English teacher David Cohen is finding plenty to blog home about. The National Board Certified educator is taking a year’s sabbatical to blog about what’s happening in classrooms throughout California. With a desire to focus on positive things in public schools, he plans to visit 50 schools in a year.

A longtime blogger, Cohen’s work has been admired by education expert Diane Ravitch, who has written of him in her blog: “Unlike the ‘reformers,’ David is not looking for failure. He is looking for success and knows he will find it and document it. He is a gifted writer.”

The former associate director of Accomplished California Teachers (ACT) — a teacher leadership network under Stanford’s National Board Resource Center — is spending the year visiting inspiring teachers he met through ACT, Twitter and CTA networking opportunities. He is documenting his odyssey in an *Education Week* blog, *Road Trips in Education* (blogs.edweek.org/teachers/road-trips-in-education/2014/09), and his personal blog (dbceducation.com/about). He’ll return to Palo Alto as a classroom teacher next fall and self-publish a book about his experiences.



On this day, Cohen is visiting fellow blogger and social studies teacher Karl Lindgren-Streicher at Hillsdale High School in San Mateo. The two connected on Twitter, follow each other's blogs, and meet occasionally with other teachers to chat about the profession over a glass of beer.

Lindgren-Streicher, San Mateo Union High School District Teachers Association, expresses thoughtful opinions in *Student Centered History: Technology and Critical Thinking* at historywiths.blogspot.com on topics ranging from managing expectations to pedagogy, technology and teacher tenure.

"Karl has influenced my thoughts on teaching," says Cohen, who sits unobtrusively in the back of the class to observe. "I admire him because he spends a lot of time thinking about ways to put students in charge of their own learning. This classroom, like most I walk into on an average day, has good things happening."

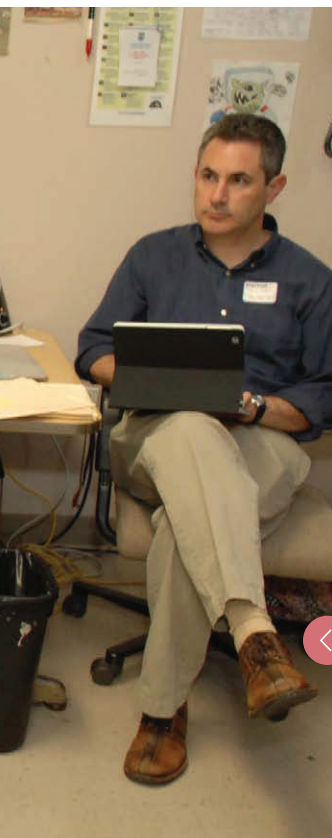
That's why this Palo Alto Education Association member decided to focus on the positive.

"Negative stories don't motivate positive changes. That's why I want to tell positive stories."

Highlights for Cohen thus far have included visits to Los Altos High School and Graham Middle School in Mountain View, which are piloting a program using Chromebooks; Crenshaw High School, an inner-city school in Los Angeles; and 2012 National Teacher of the Year Rebecca Mieli-

wocki, Burbank Teachers Association, who amazed him with her ability to meet the needs of every child in her class. A visit to Brentwood Science Magnet School in Los Angeles, which he attended as a youngster, evoked nostalgia, especially when his former sixth-grade teacher, now retired, stopped by.

"Wherever I go, I am impressed by people's knowledge and creativity," says Cohen. "I'm definitely feeling optimistic and energized."



← **Karl Lindgren-Streicher** works with a student while **David Cohen** observes and takes notes for his blog. Photo by Scott Buschman.



↑
Kathie Yonemura, *United Teachers Los Angeles*
@triedandtrueteachingtools.blogspot.com

New to the scene is Kathie Yonemura, who started blogging in July. This fourth-grade teacher blogs anonymously "as a teacher in Southern California." A classroom veteran of 27 years, she recently created her *Tried and True Teaching Tools* blog about topics ranging from behavior management to classroom resources to Common Core lessons to Pinterest boards. She has no idea how many people follow her and believes her audience consists of mostly other upper-grade teachers.

BLOGGING IS BENEFICIAL BECAUSE...

it forces me out of my comfort zone and challenges me to get tech-savvy. It's helped me organize my thoughts and store materials and information. It's reinvigorated my career. It's made me stop and think what I could be doing differently. In the blogging community, I found a wonderful group of like-minded colleagues who are motivated to keep up with the latest educational research and determined to improve our teaching methods.

MY ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING BLOGGING...

is just enjoy it. Don't be hard on yourself. The first few months I was comparing myself to others and frustrated with what I didn't know. Now I try to enjoy sharing what I know without worrying about what others think.

Go Online



Following bloggers is an excellent way to stay current, share experiences and reflect on your own teaching strategies and political views. There's no shortage of excellent bloggers to follow. See "25 Brilliant Teacher Blogs Worth Following" at www.edudemic.com/best-teacher-blogs.



Protect what matters to you.

You do a lot of things for a lot of people. But while your students count on you to teach, your family depends on you for just about everything else. That's why it pays to protect their way of life with CTA-endorsed Life Insurance from The Standard. It can help pay for the things your loved ones might need in the event of the unexpected — like car payments, college tuition, the mortgage and more. Get the confidence that comes with knowing you've protected their future so you can focus on being your best today. Learn more at CTAMemberBenefits.org/TheStandard.



For costs and further details of the coverage, including exclusions, any reductions or limitations and the terms under which the policy may be continued in force, please contact Standard Insurance Company at 800-522-0406 (TTY).
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Perspectives

Members' opinions and practical advice, plus guest columns and reviews



Mr. V's instruments of success.

THE STUDENTS IN THE GRANT HIGH SCHOOL DRUMLINE ARE GOING PLACES, PERFORMING FOR CELEBRITIES, ON NATIONAL TELEVISION, AND IN THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. ON PAGE 26, MEET THEIR TEACHER, **JAMES VAN BUREN**, WHO HIMSELF HAS OPENED FOR THE LIKES OF B.B. KING AND THE COMMODORES.

Should cellphones be allowed in class?

SOME EDUCATORS INSIST students “keep ’em in the backpack” or threaten to confiscate them. Others see them as a “learning tool” that helps students stay engaged and focused. We’re talking cellphones, of course, and their usage in schools. Dialed in on the issue (remember those days?) are two CTA members with opposing views on the subject.

YES Technology is a whirlwind that is sweeping through education, and arguments against the use of cellphones in the classroom are already passé. Students no longer have “cellphones.” They have smartphones (minicomputers!) they carry with them everywhere. These devices have become an integral part of adolescent life, and rather than trying to stem the tide, we should welcome the energy they can capture and use them to invigorate our classrooms.

Last year I was part of a pilot for BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) on my campus. Student use of cellphones has always been part of my repertoire despite “no cellphones allowed” policies. With BYOD, however, smartphone use has become the rule instead of the exception.

My students suddenly have access to all the tools that many professionals take for granted. Their smartphones have become their go-to device for research. Google Calendar replaces the school planner for recording homework. Students can easily record data with a click of their camera. Instantaneous answers to questions during class discussion are possible with a “Will someone Google that, please?”

My classroom use of smartphones also saves money and resources as the number of paper copies have dropped. Students just check the “Google Doc” or download the PDF.

Another benefit I have noticed is that inappropriate classroom use (i.e., texting) is less of a problem as kids find positive uses for their “toys.” There are ways to use that shiny new S5 that won’t get them in trouble. My students don’t want to risk losing this privilege.

Smartphones have become more than just a link to social media and instant messaging, and if the phones are out for some specific purpose, illegitimate use becomes more obvious and easier to prevent.



Smartphones are another tool that students have access to, and one that many of them have already mastered. There are a multitude of apps and sites available that help students become responsible for their own learning.

Maybe the question shouldn’t be “Are smartphones allowed?” but rather “What new device is going to replace them?”

TOD CRITCHLOW, *Vista Teachers Association*, is a Madison Middle School science teacher.

NO Cellphones are a huge distraction at school. Because they’re always on social media, kids don’t interact anymore; they just text each other. Even if they’re sitting together at a table, they’re on their phones. Because of cellphones, kids lack social skills and can’t converse with one another. Shy kids stay shy because of cellphones. And if you’re always on your phone, you aren’t pushed to go outside of your comfort zone.

I think they can be a learning tool, but I don’t think they should be used as a classroom learning tool. It’s too hard to monitor what students are doing on their phones. It’s too tempting for a student to switch over from doing something educational to texting or putting something on Twitter. Students should pay attention to the teacher, eyes in front, and it’s hard to do that when you’ve got your phone out.

Our school has a “no cellphone” rule during instructional time. Even if kids leave class to go to the restroom, they’re not allowed to be on their phones. Sometimes we’ll take their phones away and put them in the office until after school. At the end of the day, there are lots of cellphones in the office.

Cellphones at school can be used for bullying. I’ve had girls take pictures of other girls in the locker room and post them on social media, which is horrible. Kids post things on Twitter or Tumblr or Facebook to spread rumors. And sending provocative photos out to others is another distraction we don’t need at school, in my opinion.

Cellphones can also be used for cheating. Kids will take pictures of a test and send to their friends in the next period. And cellphones are hurting students’ grammar, because thanks to texting, students can’t spell “you are.” It’s always “ur.”

I’m tech-savvy. I know parents need to communicate with their children before and after school. But other than that, there’s no reason for students to have their cellphones out during the school day.



CAROL PEEK, *Ventura Education Support Professionals Association*, is a Buena High School campus supervisor.

Making BOLD dreams a reality for girls

Member supports education in Butte County and South Africa

By *Deanna Alexich*,
Butte County Teachers Association



Deanna Alexich with students Ayanda Mqadi and Khosi Snehlanhla Khumalo, and colleague Gugulethu Radebe.

My goal was to facilitate a global connection between the U.S. BOLD Girls and the newly launched South African BOLD Girls program.

The first stop for the EdTech team was in Ladysmith at the South African Extraordinary Schools Coalition. The SAESC schools are high-quality, achievement-oriented schools that provide disadvantaged learners across South Africa with the opportunity to prepare for success in higher education and work.

The team then traveled to Durban, a coastal city in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, to visit the Inanda Seminary, a boarding school for girls, grades 8-12. The teacher interns, led by a dynamic young woman, Gugulethu Radebe, enthusiastically shared that they wanted to implement the program — and they did!

We arrived in Cape Town on National Women's Day, Aug. 9, commemorating the day in 1956 when women marched in Pretoria to protest the apartheid Pass laws.

By the end of the tour, four schools expressed interest in launching the BOLD Girls program. Currently, the Inanda Seminary has 30 girls in the BOLD program, and the Leap Schools in Cape Town and Johannesburg are launching programs at the beginning of their school year, January 2015.

We have formed a closed group on Facebook, the BOLD Global Network page, for participants and facilitators in the U.S. and South Africa. The BOLD Global Network is a forum to share articles, projects, assignments and insights relating to the empowerment of girls and women.

The goal for 2015 is to return to South Africa to facilitate a BOLD Girls South Africa Summit, which will provide opportunities for facilitators, interns and teachers to build their individual programs to address the specific needs of their communities.

I came to South Africa to support young women in achieving their life dreams through the BOLD Girls program. It was there that my own dream emerged as a reality. ■

IN AUGUST, the EdTech Summit South Africa 2014 tour gave me the opportunity to share the Becoming Our Life Dreams (BOLD) program, which encourages girls “to continue with higher education, pursue professional career opportunities, and explore endless possibilities” and supports “personal growth: building self-esteem, relationships, and physical and emotional wellness.”

As the lead facilitator of this new program, I had no idea when I wrote the vision statement that I would fulfill my own passion to support the dreams of young women, both in my own teaching community and in South Africa.

BOLD Girls evolved as a pilot program funded by the Butte County Office of Education in fall 2012. It is now being implemented in several BCOE schools.

Our goals are aligned with those of many South Africa schools that seek to empower all young people. Attending college was once unlikely for young black South Africans, but a movement to revolutionize education in South Africa is becoming a reality. EdTech South Africa is bringing free technology workshops to educators throughout South Africa so they can train students to compete and prepare for higher education and careers in an ever-expanding global economy.

The EdTech team, led by Karen Kirsch Page and Siobhan Thatcher, consisted of educators from the U.S., Croatia, and various regions of South Africa. We presented workshops on technology use in the classroom so participants could broaden their teaching practices and gain experience collaborating with a global team of educators who are dedicated to sharing knowledge in technology, social justice issues and best teaching practices.



Go Online

Contact Alexich at dalexich@bcoe.org

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Blog: edtechsummitsouthafrica.wordpress.com

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Mr. V marches to the beat of a different drummer

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin

THEY CALL HIM “MR. V,” which stands for his last name, Van Buren. But the V could easily stand for other words — such as *vital*, *visionary* and *versatile* — when it comes to describing the music teacher at Grant Union High School in Sacramento.

In addition to music, James Van Buren teaches earth science at the inner-city school. He has also taught math. Before that, he was a cop and a professional saxophone player who opened for many famous musicians including B.B. King, Average White Band and the Commodores. But these days he’s best known for leading the Grant High School Drumline, which has become a thundering success.

His students will travel to Washington, D.C., in July to perform for President Obama in the National Independence Day Parade. Robin Roberts of “Good Morning America” is flying them to Los Angeles to have them perform for a celebrity party she is throwing. They have played with members of the Sacramento Philharmonic

Orchestra and at numerous charity events. And they are being paid to perform at numerous California venues.

Go Online



The drumline needs help to raise \$100,000 to go to Washington. To help them meet their goal, online donations may be made to www.youcaring.com/other/drumline-to-the-d-c-/192707.



IN MR. V'S WORDS



WHY IGNORE COMPETITIONS? We don't have time because we're trying to make money. They want to charge us \$84 to enter a competition and give us a trophy? We don't need a trophy. We need drumsticks. We need shoes. We are totally funded by the activities and performances we do. So it makes no sense to compete.

HOW DO YOU RELATE TO YOUR STUDENTS? I grew up just like them in a low-economic, crime-infested area of Colorado. I am a product of the same type of environment, so I understand. They are fascinated by me because I can play any instrument, and they know I've been in bands. They know I can walk into any nightclub with a saxophone or horn. I listen to all music, and anything they want me to play, I can play it. They like the fact that I can take a song on the radio and play it in five minutes.

ARE YOU STRICT? Yes. I tell them to get respect, they must earn it. I tell them we are all poor individuals, and the one thing we have of value is our word, and that once people cannot trust you, you lose all respect. It's very important to me that students keep their word. I also don't want to hear profanity. I don't want negativity. I say, "If you don't like what's happening here, bounce. You don't have to be here." It is not about the individual, it's about team spirit. I tell them, "If you want to be part of something that is bigger than you, and want to be a positive force, you are welcome here."

IS IT TRUE YOU TURNED DOWN PRESIDENT OBAMA'S INVITATION AT FIRST? Yes, I did. [Laughs.] We were nominated to play for the 2012 presidential inauguration, and we got a Dear John letter that turned us down. I didn't like that. So when we were invited to perform in July, I turned it down. I was at a meeting with colleagues who said, "You got an invitation to perform for the president and turned it down? You need to reconsider." So I called back the selection committee, and three weeks later, we were the official representative of California for the Independence Day Parade.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT YOUR "LINE" OF WORK? I love the students. They are incredible. I'm impressed with their ability to respond in positive ways to what the drumline has to offer. I love my job. Sometimes I have to pinch myself, because I'm getting paid to do this. It's the best gig there is. ■

Business, you might say, is booming.

"We may not be the best, but we are the busiest," says Van Buren, Twin Rivers United Educators. "All you have to do is look at our calendar. Last month we had more than 30 gigs. We're walking on clouds right now."

The drumline was founded in 2008 with zero money. It does not participate in competitions. It's too busy performing. It was voted the top performing band in Sacramento.

During a practice session, it was difficult to distinguish Mr. V from the students. He's a small man with a no-nonsense manner who occasionally breaks into a big smile. He keeps the students in line, musically and behavior-wise, in a neighborhood where there are many distractions.

"Yes, we have a challenging population," says Van Buren. "Any time you walk outside the doors, you are presented with some kind of incentive to do something wrong. Some of my kids are in jail right now. But when they are in the drumline performing three gigs in one day, it takes up a lot of their time. I have three or four students in colleges right now, and some of them received full-ride scholarships because of the drumline."

Mr. V agreed to answer a few questions for the *California Educator*, and he answered them in rapid-fire sentences without missing a beat.

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Advocacy

News from the legal, legislative, bargaining and education policy fronts



Community support makes a difference.

ANNOUNCING A CONTRACT SETTLEMENT, UNITED EDUCATORS OF SAN FRANCISCO PRESIDENT **DENNIS KELLY** (CENTER) THANKS THE THOUSANDS OF PARENTS WHO SUPPORTED TEACHERS DURING THEIR 10 MONTHS OF CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS. ALSO AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE ARE UESF EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT **SUSAN SOLOMON**, SUPERINTENDENT **RICHARD CARRANZA**, AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION. FIND DETAILS PLUS MORE BARGAINING NEWS ON PAGE 35.

PHOTO BY MATTHEW HARDY

UNITED EDUCATORS
OF SAN FRANCISCO



Michael Martinez (left), Migrant Education program coordinator in the Butte County Office of Education, and **Jacob George**, president of the Lassen County Special Teachers Association, provide compelling testimony in support of CTA-co-sponsored legislation by Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez (D-San Diego), at podium.

Over the past two-year session that ended in August, CTA, pro-education public officials, and educator allies made some very important gains.

“Now more than ever, it is important for each and every one of us to know and understand what is going on in Sacramento, and how policy decisions impact the valuable work we do in the classroom and at our work sites,” notes CTA President Dean E. Vogel, a kindergarten teacher. “Educators know firsthand how important it is for parents and communities to be involved in the education of our students. The beauty of it is that we are not alone. We are 325,000 voices strong, and we are ready to advocate powerfully and effectively for our students, our colleagues, and our public schools.”

With CTA’s support, the Legislature and Gov. Jerry Brown approved the landmark reconfiguration of public school funding that provides additional money for students whose needs require more funds to educate — those eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, English learners and foster youth. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is also based on local decision-making involving the input of educators, leaders, parents and communities. Underwritten by voters’ passage of Proposition 30, schools and colleges are getting an additional \$10 billion a year. CTA worked with the Legislature and the governor to streamline teacher discipline and dismissal procedures.

New legislative year set to start

Backward glance: CTA won key victories during two-year term

By *Len Feldman*

NEWLY ELECTED AND re-elected members of the state Senate and Assembly returned to the Capitol on Dec. 1 for a one-day session to organize the houses and get ready for the new session that begins in January.

Lawmakers reaffirmed their selection of two new leaders, both of whom recommitted themselves to supporting public education.

Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León (D-Los Angeles) and Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins (D-San Diego) stressed the importance of enhancing public education for all students and ensuring that higher education is affordable. Leadership’s recommitment paves the way for legislative action that will begin on Jan. 5, 2015.

The new procedure preserves educators' due process rights while providing quicker resolution to charges. Students, teachers, and the community benefit from the changed process.

At the same time, CTA and its supporters secured approval for legislation to strengthen penalties for administrators who fail to take steps to protect students. These penalties can include criminal prosecution for district officials who fail to take steps already required by law.

CTA's efforts in the state Capitol also helped set aside the requirement that students take outmoded state tests not aligned to the new curriculum standards. As a result, schools have been field-testing and implementing new computer-assisted evaluations of student learning that are tied to the Common Core State Standards.

Equally important, CTA's efforts in the state Capitol blocked the passage of a number of onerous and

Assembly Member Joan Buchanan (D-Alamo), right, talks to a team of CTA members about efforts to secure passage of CTA-backed legislation during a 2014 member lobby day.



punitive proposals aimed at educators in particular and working women and men in general, including attempts to eliminate due process and making student test scores the driving force in teacher evaluations.

Chances are some of these attacks will resurface in the coming session. With the same resolve and commitment, we can together, once again, preserve the integrity of our professional rights, provide students with the one-on-one interaction they need to succeed, and ensure every student a caring, qualified and committed educator. ■

Next session's priorities

Here are some key issues the Legislature will be dealing with beginning in January:

- The funding and oversight of adult education programs.
- The rights of charter school employees to organize and to have a voice in educational quality issues.
- Transparency and fiscal and academic accountability at charter schools.
- Long-term funding for public education and other vital public services.

Restore multilingual education on 2016 ballot?

SB 1174, a measure that aims to give parents, students and teachers the flexibility to use students' native languages to help them master English, was signed into law.

The bill, put forth by state Sen. Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens) with the support of CTA, puts on the November 2016 ballot the California Multilingual Education Act. The initiative would repeal many elements of Prop. 227, the CTA-opposed ballot measure voters approved in 1998.

The new initiative, if approved by voters, would allow schools to use culturally appropriate and research-driven methods other than just "English-only immersion" to help students who speak limited English become language-proficient.

The initiative capitalizes on the growing recognition among California voters that helping students gain fluency in two or more languages is important to supporting their success in an increasingly diverse nation and world.

"Given the diversity of California, the vast body of research on the benefits of language-immersion programs, and the growing popularity of multicultural programs, clearly public perception has changed on the value of these programs," Sen. Lara said.

Despite this changing climate, opponents of the ballot measure are pledging to work against its passage.

Ron K. Unz, the entrepreneur who underwrote and pushed voters to approve Prop. 227, is adamant that the current law remain unchanged.

While CTA supported SB 1174, CTA's State Council of Education will review and vote on whether to support the California Multilingual Education Act.

FOR TEACHERS, BY TEACHERS

Preparing the next generation of teachers

CTA'S TEACHER EVALUATION WORKGROUP has been examining the best preparation practices for the next generation of California's teachers. In last month's "Teacher pipeline" series we reported the release of the workgroup's report "Teacher Preparation and Early Career Support." We asked members of the workgroup to share their take on where CTA is heading in supporting tomorrow's educators.

Here are the comments of Leslie Littman, CTA Board member, Hart District Teachers Association; Jesse Aguilar, Kern High School Teachers Association vice president; Bev Bricker, Palm Springs Teachers Association; and Rosalinda Quintanar, California Faculty Association, San Jose State University.

Q: *Do you think this report outlines and promotes a more comprehensive approach to teacher education?*

QUINTANAR: CTA's approach includes teacher preparation and different pathways into teacher education, alternative certification, teacher residencies, early and continuous career support, and issues in credentialing policy. Is it ambitious? Yes! As educational experts, we realize that piecemeal approaches are not the answer to the many facets of teaching.

AGUILAR: The report makes the bold statement that teachers unions should be involved in the cultivation and support of new teachers. Educator voices should be included *and* should be at the forefront of building a new teacher

workforce, with our teachers unions leading the charge. It's time we take charge of our own profession, rather than ceding the responsibility to those who have no relevant experience or contextual understanding about classroom dynamics and classroom environ-

ments. CTA is advocating that those who are closest to the students — the ones who are in the classroom teaching every day, the ones with the most teaching experience — be the ones that shape our profession of teaching.

LITTMAN: It takes time to develop the skills necessary to be a successful classroom teacher, and each step of the preparation pipeline builds on the previous steps. Instead of treating each step separately, this report discusses all stages of becoming a teacher as one continual process.

BRICKER: This is one of the first steps taken by CTA that is guided by the long-term Strategic Plan that State Council adopted last year. This report empowers teachers. Instead of waiting for policymakers to create and set the state's educational path, this report provides a decisive path constructed by teachers for teachers.

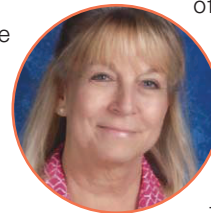
Q: *In your opinion, what is the new or more unusual part of the report?*

AGUILAR: The boldest idea reflected in the report is the notion of profes-

sional capital. Instead of focusing on individual teachers, the report asserts that we should be focused on building and cultivating the teaching profession as a whole. Improving teaching and learning by advocating for a collective approach to teacher development is something new and demands the inclusion and active participation of practitioners.

BRICKER: The idea of residency is not often seen in California. The concept is that veteran teachers truly support and guide new teachers through a mutually beneficial partnership between teacher education programs, practicing teachers, schools and districts, and teachers unions. Residencies have three components: partnerships, integration and intensive support.

QUINTANAR: Teachers as the driving force in setting policy for the education of our children. CTA is built upon teachers' expertise — but we are going a step further. This is a call for teachers to lead, not behind the



scenes, but as a recognized force that can influence pre-service education, induction, and the early career stage in our profession. It is a call to recognize the professional capital of teachers as culturally responsive practitioners, as researchers of their own teaching, as advisers to credentialing policy, and importantly, key players in designing assessment. CTA recognizes how vital it is to prepare linguistic and culturally responsive teachers whose goal is to promote social justice.

Q: What role should local associations play in this?

AGUILAR: Local associations should make efforts to bargain language that puts educators at the center of teacher induction and early career support. They should be creating opportunities to collaborate with their new teachers and look for ways to support those teachers through the bargaining process or outside the bargaining process. Local associations should not be relegated to issues of working conditions, salary and benefits. They should be seeking meaningful input and active participation in areas such as professional development, mentoring, and creating school climates conducive to teaching and learning.

LITTMAN: Associations should play an active role in developing and implementing any early career support plan in their district, from developing the program, selecting those individuals who will provide support for the new teachers, to monitoring the program, setting aside funding for the program, etc.



QUINTANAR: All teacher education programs are required to have an advisory committee that is composed of school administrators and teachers. Serving on advisory committees is a great way to provide feedback, which

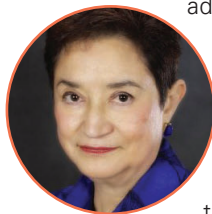
is taken very seriously. This level of involvement requires continuous conversations by teachers and other educators regarding the opportunities and challenges our profession offers.

BRICKER: Local associations would become partners by ensuring all new teachers are assigned mentor support.

Q: What's next?

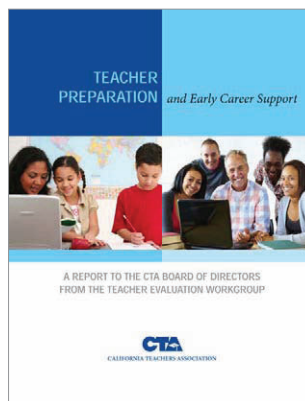
BRICKER: I would love to see CTA move to be a provider of induction for our newest teachers. Induction providers must be authorized by the state, and currently these organizations range from county offices of education to universities to individual school districts. I think it would be intriguing for our new teachers to look to their union to complete the final requirement for a teaching credential. It would mean that CTA becomes as strong professionally as we are politically, allowing us to dramatically impact our profession. It only makes sense to have those in the field, our own CTA members, who are making pedagogical decisions, be the ones who guide new teachers as they enter the profession.

QUINTANAR: CTA has made great advances in retaking the profession and advancing teachers' expertise in thinking about the agencies that are involved in education. I find it surprising that we have to explain CTA's role in making it happen to other educators. The question becomes: How do we make it known to the public how much CTA is doing in enhancing the profession and developing teachers' knowledge? As a minor



example, a professor mentioned she attended a professional development meeting at a local school. She was impressed with the support CTA had given to make the meeting possible. She mentioned, "We need to broaden our perspective of what unions are. Few people realize that CTA is involved in professional development and many other social agencies."

AGUILAR: This work builds on the Teacher Evaluation Framework, which CTA has already developed, and fits within the existing effort to implement the long-term strategic plan that State Council adopted last year. This is one example of how the effort to *transform our profession* — as called for by the strategic plan — can be accomplished. CTA made a commitment to expand outreach to all members, not just ones interested in advocacy, and to develop leaders who can lead the profession of teaching



from a practitioner perspective. Other efforts, such as CTA's partnership with Stanford University in the development of the Instructional Leadership Corps, and the CTA Educator Think Tank, all fit into this new effort. CTA should expand these projects, facilitate local union efforts to expand educator voices in their prospective districts, and fight for legislation that puts educators at the center of the decision-making process in regard to public education.

LITTMAN: CTA should find those chapters that have strong support programs in place and highlight them for other chapters as a starting point for them to develop their own. Each district has different needs and should adopt a program or plan that best meets the needs of their teachers. CTA also should work to make sure that early career support is provided to new teachers free of charge. ■



Meet Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez

By Len Feldman

VOTERS IN CALIFORNIA'S 80th Assembly District, which is located in and around San Diego, elected Democrat Lorena Gonzalez to represent them in 2013. She serves on key committees whose actions affect immigrants, working women and men, and children, including the Assembly Education Committee.

The daughter of an immigrant farmworker and a nurse, she is a proud product of San Diego public schools. She earned her bachelor's degree from Stanford, her master's from Georgetown University, and her law degree from UCLA. Before becoming a lawmaker, she served as CEO and secretary-treasurer of the San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO, the first woman and person of color elected to head the Labor Council. Gonzalez is a single mom of two children.



WHO WAS THE TEACHER WHO HAD THE GREATEST IMPACT ON YOU? Mr. Jim Downs, the 12th-grade AP, International Baccalaureate, world government and history teacher at Vista High School in northern San Diego County, had the greatest impact on my K-12 education. Mr. Downs taught me it was OK to stand up for what I believed, even if I stood alone — as long as I was prepared with the arguments to support my position. I still appreciate his occasional email or note.

WHAT DID YOU DO BEFORE BECOMING A LAWMAKER? I worked as a community organizer and a labor leader. I also served as a senior adviser to former Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamante.

WHAT LED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE? I wanted to continue my advocacy for working people by focusing on legislation to protect workers, expand educational opportunities, and rebuild the middle class. We need more policies in our state that lead to more jobs and better jobs, and a better life for all Californians.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION? I hope we can strengthen and improve the opportunities for English learners and ensure proficiency for every single child. I also think we need to return to strong Regional Occupational Programs and vocational education programs so that all options, including apprenticeships and college, are available to all children.

WHAT SHOULD LAWMAKERS DO TO HELP SCHOOLS SUCCEED? We need to create adequate funding for our schools and invest more in teacher training. We also need to put an end to the culture of test-driven standards when it comes to our children's education.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE EDUCATORS ABOUT WORKING WITH THE LEGISLATORS? Let your love of children shine through. ■

BARGAINING UPDATE

Compiled by *Mike Myslinski*

UESF GETS NEW CONTRACT United Educators of San Francisco members ratified a contract that includes a 12 percent raise over three years for 6,000 teachers, paraprofessionals, and other educators.

This settlement is one of the largest for any urban school district in California, and is one step toward helping teachers to afford to live in expensive San Francisco. The agreement includes 150 minutes per week of duty-free prep time for elementary school teachers, and major increases in maternity/paternity leave for all members.

More than 70 percent of SFUSD's paraprofessionals, who have worked at least eight years in the district, will receive an additional step increment of 3 percent, bringing their three-year increase to 15 percent.

UESF President Dennis Kelly thanked the thousands of parents who supported teachers during the negotiations. "This contract is just the first step in our ongoing advocacy for stable schools that meet the needs of all students, rooted by teachers who live in the communities we serve."

BIG VALLEY TEACHERS GET HEALTHY AGREEMENT In rural Lassen County, teachers in the Big Valley Joint Unified School District settled a contract in November that provides 10 percent in raises over two years and improves health benefits.

Thanks to the work of the Big Valley Teachers Association, teachers in rural Bieber will enjoy a 7 percent raise this school year and an increase of \$1,000 in what the district pays for health benefits. Next school year, a 3 percent raise kicks in, and another \$1,000 is added to the district's benefits cap.

Support for teachers from the superintendent helped to make negotiations a success.

SOLIDARITY PAYS OFF IN SAN JOSE A strong show of community solidarity is paying off for the East Side Teachers Association in San Jose. A huge protest by teachers, parents and students at the Nov. 20 school board meeting resulted in breakthroughs in contract talks.

"Teachers deserve a fair raise after many years of sacrificing increases to help the district," says ESTA President Marisa Hanson. "The district now has a reserve of nearly 19 percent, amounting to more than \$50 million that should be spent on student programs and compensation." Teachers



ESTA President **Marisa Hanson** is flanked by students, parents and community members holding signs supporting their teachers. Photo by Timothy Ballejo.

got only a 1.95 percent raise last year — their first raise in five years.

Pressured by the November rally, school board President J. Manuel Herrera promised that soaring class sizes will be fixed next semester. The district agreed to pay teachers penalty pay because the district went over contractual class size limits at the end of the semester, and agreed to a plan to prevent classes from exceeding contract limits next school year.

"Students are tired of large classes and getting their schedules changed," says Hanson. "They support teachers and have asked the district to negotiate fairly."

COLTON EDUCATORS MAINTAIN CLASS SIZES, ENJOY SECOND RAISE Not only did the 1,150-member Association of Colton Educators maintain class sizes at the current maximum of 24 students for prekindergarten and grades 1-3, but for the second time in 2014, they secured a raise for this school year. The latest 2.1 percent raise, retroactive to July 1, was ratified Nov. 20 by the school board and came about because the district honored an agreement to provide raises based on a negotiated formula.

The formula says educators' salaries must equal 64 percent of the budget, and new audit data in October showed that meant a 2.1 percent raise was due. They earned a 2.72 percent raise in the spring, which took effect July 1.

"Working with the district, we were able to get another raise for our members, which is also a win for our students because turnover is less when teachers are paid more," says ACE President Robert Lemoine. ■

➔ See what's happening statewide at www.cta.org/bargainingupdates



Feature

TEACHING IN PARADISE



a beautiful challenge



By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin

*Twenty-six miles across the sea
Santa Catalina is a-waitin' for me
Santa Catalina, the island of romance
—Hit song from The Four Preps, 1958*



W

ITH ITS BEAUTIFUL beaches and palm trees, Catalina has a vibe more Caribbean than California. It's a friendly place where everyone says hello. Golf carts outnumber cars, and buffalo roam the countryside.

CTA members say it's easy to love teaching in "paradise," but one needs a sense of adventure, true grit and the willingness to live on a remote desert isle or to commute 26 miles across the sea.

Educators brave rough waters, isolation, swarms of tourists and long days to get to Avalon School. The K-12 school has 632 students and is located in Avalon, the main town.

A one-room schoolhouse on the other side of the island closed recently when the population went from

six to two students. Teacher David Morse recalls that visitors barged into the building thinking it was a tourist attraction. They were surprised to learn it was an actual school with real students. He is heartbroken that it closed, but now is teaching at the main school.

So what's it like teaching in paradise?

Catalina is a paradox as well a paradise. The tourists are wealthy, but many students are poor and English learners, with parents working service jobs. Teachers are welcomed warmly into the community, but sometimes feel as though they are living under a microscope. (One comments, "Have a drink at the local pub, and it's all over town.") It's friendly but sometimes lacking in





boundaries; parent-teacher conferences occur spontaneously in the town's grocery store or coffee shops.

"You have to be a certain type of individual to work here," muses special education teacher Mary Jane Maxwell, one of the Teachers Association of Long Beach (TALB) members at the school. "You need a sense of wanderlust. You must have flexibility and a sense of adventure."

Getting here is half the fun

Tina Newhard rushes to make the 6:15 a.m. ferry. She has one shoe on and carries the other, hobbling up the gangplank.

"I can't believe that today, of all days, my alarm didn't go off," she says breathlessly as the boat departs from Long Beach. "This never happens to me."

She's one of about a dozen teacher commuters on the early morning ferry. Some sleep, draped in coats or blankets. Others grade papers and sip coffee. Several commute daily; some stay on the island a few days a week. The round-trip fare, \$54 per day for "regulars," is paid for by Long Beach Unified School District.

Newhard, a fourth- and fifth-grade combination class teacher, wakes up at 4 a.m., drives 20 miles to the dock in Long Beach, finds parking and boards the ferry to Avalon. From there, it's a mile walk to school. Islanders, driving by in golf carts, ask her and other teachers trudging up the hill if they want a ride. Unless it's raining, Newhard likes the exercise. She catches the 3:45 p.m. ferry home most days.

Newhard vacationed on the island as a child and vowed that one day she would come back and teach here. She says the 70-minute boat ride beats LA freeway traffic any day. But some days are easier than others.

"In rough seas they cancel the boat, and then we have to make a decision: Do we want to go to San Pedro and get on a helicopter at our own expense, or take a personal day? Most of us take a personal day?"

Missing the early boat means taking a helicopter to avoid being late. The flight costs \$125. The landing pad is further from the school than the dock, so they hail a taxi.



Anita Rockwell, art teacher and liaison to the conservancy, draws the "most visible landmark" on the island, the Avalon Casino.

"We have more students going to four-year colleges than we did a decade ago," says **Joanel Huart**.



"Yes, I demoted myself," says former administrator **Eileen Torres-Zeller**, cheering at a rally. She now teaches sixth- and seventh-grade English and intervention classes.

Certain events (prom, back to school night, homecoming) require that teachers

stay late, which usually means missing the last ferry to the mainland, which departs at 7:30 p.m.

"When that happens, teachers will spend the night at a hotel or on somebody's couch," says Maxwell, who stays on the island weekdays.

And then there's the "schlep" factor, as teachers bring supplies to and from the island. Some have been involved with a recycling fundraiser and transport carts with plastic and aluminum containers from school to ship to shore to recycling center.

“The most challenging part of the job is probably the commute — and I don’t just mean the boat ride,” says Lynda Muenzer, a technology teacher who started the recycling program. “It is not easy to wrap things up at the end of the day when students come by for after-school help or there are still piles of papers to be corrected and prep work for the end of the day. Sometimes I can work on the boat, but I have to

students are sent to classrooms wherever there is room if their own teacher can’t come to work.

David Markowitz, here with Cesar Silva, teaches music and runs the island’s radio station, which serves as a training ground for students.

Avalon teachers are very, very versatile.

For example, Finley and Jacob Bowker both teach high school math classes and AVID classes, and serve as the high school running coaches.

David Markowitz teaches music and also runs the island’s radio station, which serves as a training ground for students. That and his connection to the island’s cable TV station allow students

to be hosts on island radio and TV, and learn skills like writing, editing and video production, which connect them to the outside world.

Becky Davidson teaches kindergarten and is also a part-time psychologist at the school.

“The trick here is that everybody wears lots of hats,” she muses. “You sign up for that when you come to teach here.”

Eileen Torres-Zeller was the assistant principal of the school for seven years, but decided to teach sixth- and seventh-grade English and intervention classes when her child was born.

“Yes, I demoted myself,” says the island resident, who laughs that teachers are now more receptive to her ideas because



be careful because I get motion sickness from reading while the boat is rocking.”

Living on Catalina is also an adventure, say residents.

Math teacher Frances Finley, who lives on the other side of the island where the Two Harbors School closed, has a one-hour drive on dirt roads through buffalo country to get to school. Her commute is so tough, she stays in town during the week, renting a room from another teacher.

For resident teachers who were laid off, it’s akin to being marooned. Trisha Brown lost her job three years ago due to budget cuts, and nearly lost her home to foreclosure and her health from the stress. She was ecstatic to be rehired this year.

“I am thrilled to be back,” says Brown, who is trying to catch up on Common Core and other things. “You have no idea how happy I am.”

Educators wear many hats

Teachers never know who they might have in their classroom if rough seas cause the ferry to be canceled, because



Becky Davidson

she is “one of them” instead of an administrator.

Most high school classes average 15 students. All secondary teachers are expected to sponsor clubs, and most educators are happy to go the extra mile because they care deeply about the students and the community.

“Sometimes, you will see teachers holding study sessions at night so students can get help,” says Finley. “That’s just the culture of our school, where teachers help students and try to be more accommodating. We are one big family here.”

Students say they also feel a sense of family.

“The teachers are great and are here to help you succeed with whatever you need,” says Jonathan Luna, a junior, who has spent his life on the island. “It’s a great place where everybody wants to be friends.”

An “aloha” spirit on Catalina

“This is the most generous community I’ve ever come in contact with,” says Maxwell. “I’ll be carting a suitcase off the boat, and perfect strangers offer me a ride. When somebody gets sick — whether it’s an adult or child — the whole town gets involved. Five years ago a boy died, and the Hispanic community stepped up and paid for that kid’s funeral. Two years ago one of our kids head-butted an opposing player during a football game and he became disabled, and the entire community rose up to help the opposing team’s player. If something happens to you, this is the community where you want to



There couldn't be a better place to teach marine biology, says **Devi Nathan**, here working with Azariah Dominguez on an assignment.

be. It doesn't matter who you are — the caring and help extends across all racial groups and income levels."

Davidson loves the fact that teachers know generations of families on the island and are a strong part of the Avalon community.

"It's a blessing, not a curse," she says. "A strength of our school is having ties that can't be denied."

Morse believes students benefit from seeing teachers outside of the classroom.

"Most kids only see their instructors at school. But here, it's different. Everywhere I go, it's 'Hi, Mr. Morse!' I like being recognized and seen mowing the lawn or riding a skateboard. There's a realism here that is healthier than the other model where students only see a teacher at school."

Catalina as a living classroom

There couldn't be a better place to teach marine biology, says Devi Nathan. Last spring, on the ultimate field trip, students snorkeled with researchers on Catalina. Students have also been guests on the Yellow Submarine, one of Avalon's tourist attractions. Whenever Nathan needs live plankton for students to study under a microscope, she asks the Harbor Patrol to tow a net behind the boat and meet her at the pier with samples.

School librarian Donna Sharpe is married to Peter Sharpe, a biologist and expert on the American eagle and the effects of DDT on the species. Students observed him swooping on a rope attached to a helicopter to pluck eagle eggs from a nest, because the shells were too damaged from pesticide to withstand the weight of a mother eagle sitting on them. He swapped the eggs with phony eggs, brought the real ones back to a hatchery until they were stronger, and then replaced the phony eggs with real ones so they could hatch.

"You might say that our school is located in an opportunity-rich environment that lends itself to science curriculum," says Nathan.

The school has a partnership with the Catalina Island Conservancy, which protects 88 percent of the island. The W.M. Keck Foundation awarded a \$200,000 grant to the conservancy to initiate NatureWorks, a program





◀ “The most challenging part is probably the commute,” says **Lynda Muenzer**, here with Miriam Carrillo. “Sometimes I can work on the boat, but I have to be careful because I get motion sickness from reading while the boat is rocking.”

offering students hands-on curriculum about ecology and the environment — as well as a pathway to ecotourism and conservation science jobs and internships.

“We are very excited,” says Anita Rockwell, art teacher and liaison to the conservancy. “Literally, the island can be the classroom. After all, we live in paradise. Providing students with fieldwork to study our island’s ecology with a STEM approach to learning will bring a greater awareness to the vital role students will play as the future caregivers of this island.”

Fostering connections in a remote locale

Alicia Chavez talks to 11th- and 12th-graders about what it’s like to go away to college. The San Diego State University student is visiting Joanel Huart’s AVID class at her former school.

The students have lots of questions: Do you get homesick? Do you like your roommate? Where do you study?

While many students have the option of living at home and attending a local college, Avalon students must move away for college. Many will be the first in their families to attend college and are nervous about moving to the mainland.

“Financially, it’s a bigger challenge for our students, because they will have to make a home for themselves and leave a tight-knit community where they know every single person,” says Huart. “Our kids live in a tourist destination and begin working at a young age to help support their families. We drive home the point they need to save for college, too. Our AVID classes have helped improve the college-going culture, and we have more students going to four-year colleges than we did a decade ago.”

◀ Students play tug-of-war during a rally.

The community offers many scholarships, and students know their teachers are “rooting” for them to go to college and be successful. AVID students go on lots of field trips to college campuses and are encouraged to check out smaller universities where they might feel at home.

Another challenge of island living is playing sports. Coaches must be willing to commute across the water for competitions. Sometimes, by the time Avalon students arrive, they may be feeling seasick. The same is true of visiting teams, jokingly referred to as the “home field advantage” by locals.

Avalon students may be isolated, but they are smart and confident, say teachers proudly.

“Our students grow up in a community where they meet tourists from all over the world and are comfortable speaking to adults they don’t know,” says Torres-Zeller. “On the island, there’s a freedom to be who you are in your own quirky way. That will definitely be an advantage for our students when they venture out into the world someday.” ■





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Learning



Members' best practices, teaching ideas and education trends

Students are seen in a different light when they teach their peers.

JOSE RODRIGUEZ VALENZUELA AND MARQUEZ BONNER, MEMBERS OF THE FALCON AUTISTIC SOLAR TEAM (FAST), TEACH STUDENTS ABOUT SOLAR POWER AT INDEPENDENCE HIGH IN BAKERSFIELD. THE FAST MEMBERS AND THEIR TEACHER, **KEVIN CROSBY**, ARE RECEIVING GLOWING ACCOLADES NATIONALLY. READ ALL ABOUT THEM ON PAGE 46.



gramMARCH

Rosemead teacher takes on texting-style grammar

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin



IF SO, IT'S TIME for your students to step up and take the GramMARCH challenge, which means that for the entire month of March, students must write everything out in full sentences and use complete words, without such references as OMG, LOL or TTYL. Your students may respond with "LMAO," but don't let that stop you.

The gramMARCH challenge, created by Heather Shotke, Rosemead Teachers Association, asks students to consider the three P's in March — Pause, Ponder, Prose — before writing or typing full sentences. The challenge applies to all forms of written communication including class assignments, emails, tweets, Facebook posts, Instagram captions, and yes, even texting to friends.

Shotke, a Muscatel Middle School English teacher in Rosemead, came up with the idea last year to improve her students' writing skills, after she noticed abbreviated language migrating from the screens of smartphones to the pages of her students' schoolwork — even in formal essay assignments.

"I was appalled," says Shotke. "Kids are using text language in their academic work, and they think it is acceptable because that is how they are communicating with their friends on social media. It worries me they could not differentiate between a formal school assignment and a text to a friend."

The graduate of the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Southern California, thinks students are not the only ones at fault. Society has become too accepting of this new shorthand, she asserts, noting that many

adults have adopted this "lax" method of prose.

Last March her school held a gramMARCH assembly. Through word of mouth, social media and her website, www.grammarch.org, the idea caught on in other schools

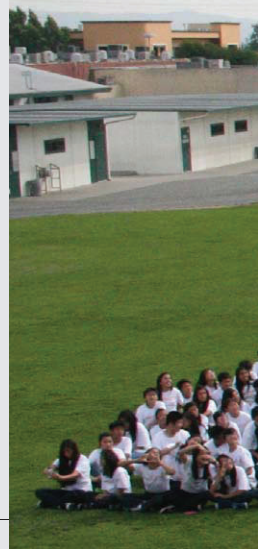
throughout the country, including some in Washington, D.C., Dallas and New York. Stories about gramMARCH appeared on radio and TV stations not only in California, but on the East Coast. Nate Berkus, an interior designer and television personality featured on "Oprah," publicly embraced the cause.

Instead of blaming technology for ruining communication, Shoke decided to use social media as a means to reach out to students and improve their communication skills. She created a Facebook page, an Instagram profile and a Twitter handle to spread the word about gramMARCH.

The gramMARCH challenge struck a nerve with many teachers and other grammarians who believe "enough is enough" when it comes to lax language and putrid prose gaining acceptance. Shotke realized how widespread the problem was when admissions officers at college campuses shared with



Heather Shotke with seventh-graders **Julissa Romero, Natalie Catalan, Sophia Busanez Ramos and Lily Moreno.**





Students form an M for March to show their support for using proper grammar during the month.

her that this writing style extends to essays of college applicants.

“I want students to know there’s a time and place for that kind of language,” says Shotke, who made the challenge mandatory for her students. They groaned initially, but she pointed out that writing without thinking often leads to trouble. To make it fun, she created online contests — with prizes such as gramMARCH T-shirts — for all students who signed up to participate via her website. While online donations were encouraged, Shotke ended up paying for most of the prizes herself. Participation is free.

Take the challenge

Here’s one of the contests: Post a word that is a noun, verb and adjective. Use the word in three different sentences showing your understanding of its meaning in all three forms of speech.

“The gramMARCH challenge is designed is to make the shift back to intelligent communication. We forget that what we post, text, email and share is the first impression we make on the world. I ask my students to consider this: What is your writing saying about you?”

She decided that gramMARCH should last for an entire month, in hopes it might stick.

“Anecdotally, it takes 30 days for something to become a habit. And after 30 days, it’s surprising how easy proper communication becomes.”

For students, it was not exactly easy.

“There were many obstacles I faced during gramMARCH,” shares Sabrina Hsia in an essay written in April. “I would abbreviate words such as ‘you’ and ‘are.’

Punctuation was another difficulty I encountered because I would always forget to add periods or commas. GramMARCH got easier over time. As they say, practice makes perfect.”

In addition to better grammar, gramMARCH prompted Hsia to consider whether what she was writing was appropriate.

“Before gramMARCH, I typed without thinking and would never make any sense in my messages,” she confides, adding that her friends were surprised by her new style of communication, and thought at first that she sounded like a “robot” in texts and emails.

Cindy Phung says gramMARCH helped her to see “flaws” in her writing.

“I noticed some words I was having trouble spelling and how many words I spelled incorrectly. So I wrote slower to make sure my writing was spelled properly. I had to proofread everything I wrote or typed before sending it or posting it to social media sites. I sounded more official and intelligent every time I wrote accurately.”

Parents were on board with the program.

“They thought it was funny and were very much into it,” says Shotke. “It improved dialogue in families. Children began critiquing parents’ grammar, which was interesting. Many parents said that they were happy that gramMARCH encouraged students to use technology in a way that provided a fun learning experience.”

Shotke says this year’s gramMARCH will be more of a student-run event, and that students are taking ownership of the program via social media. College students have asked to act as “gramMARCH ambassadors” and visit middle schools and high schools to encourage teens to sign up.

Last year’s event had a lasting effect on some students.

“When kids see a misspelled sign or something, they will show it to me,” says Shotke. “What’s really funny is that eighth-graders on campus are now warning seventh-graders: Watch what you write. Watch your spelling. Think about your grammar. GramMARCH is coming soon.” ■



Taste test: **Kevin Crosby** shares fresh bread baked in the solar oven.

Solar program for autistic students gets glowing reviews

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin

Joselyn Bermudez warns onlookers that it looks like child’s play, but it produces powerful heat.

“If I touched the oven, I would burn my fingers,” she says. “It gets 350 to 400 degrees pretty quick.”

The lesson on solar power ends, and everyone receives a piece of bread. Along with chewing and lip smacking, there is talking and laughing. That’s the best part of the program for teacher Kevin Crosby, who knows that in addition to communicating science knowledge, his students are gaining valuable skills in communicating with peers.

Glowing accolades

It all started during a science lesson in 2010. Students were given solar-powered Lego kits, and most didn’t think it was a big deal. But when they took their projects outside and saw them move after a few minutes in the sunlight, students lit up with excitement.

“At first they didn’t make a connection, but once the things they built started moving without any batteries, it was mind-blowing for them,” says Crosby,

A WILLINGNESS TO SHARE expertise about harnessing the sun’s energy has given students with autism a chance to shine at Independence High School in Bakersfield.

Meet the Falcon Autistic Solar Team (FAST), where students teach their peers about photosynthesis, electricity and green forms of energy. The club, named for the school’s mascot, consists of teens with moderate to severe disabilities on the autism spectrum.

The teens have problems communicating with their peers and expressing their thoughts and feelings. For some, eye contact is difficult. However, when they are excited about a certain subject, their communication skills improve dramatically.

Today, the subject they are excited about happens to be solar power.

It’s a sunny, warm morning in Bakersfield, where the temperature is often in the triple digits. FAST members pass out bracelets to the general education students gathered around them for an impromptu science lesson. The beads on the bracelets turn different colors in the sunlight. The audience oohs and aahs at the display. But the demonstration is just warming up.

After a few more minutes in the sun, several solar-powered Lego creations — including a car, a Ferris wheel, a doll house and a windmill — begin to light up or move. The delicious smell of bread wafts out from a solar-powered oven. FAST students offer explanations and answer questions from fellow students.

“I like the solar house,” says Marquez Bonner, 17. “Simple solar panels mounted on the roof of the house create electricity which power appliances plugged into the electrical outlet.”



Jose Rodriguez Valenzuela and Aaron Chambers compare notes on solar Lego projects.

Kern High School Teachers Association. “They realized the solar panels were converting radiant energy into electricity.”

The students were so jazzed, they formed FAST. They received a “Bright Ideas” grant of \$2,500 from PG&E





Joselyn Bermudez, Brandon Lake and Jose Rodriguez Valenzuela demonstrate their solar projects.

for hands-on scientific experiments and equipment, including kits for converting hydrogen into electricity as an alternative energy source.

FAST members enjoy visiting mainstream students in elementary schools to extoll the virtues of solar power. They like watching youngsters' excitement at seeing solar power in action.

"FAST puts our kids in a leadership role," says Crosby. "They get up in front of an audience as an expert on something. It gives them something to be proud of and a sense of accomplishment. It's a chance to work on their social skills and public speaking. Some of my kids are very social, but others don't know the different rules for talking to people. FAST helps them learn these rules."

Crosby has received some glowing accolades. In 2012, he was named Teacher of the Year for the national Kids in Need Foundation and received CTA's Physically/Mentally Challenged Students' Issues Human Rights Award. In 2013, he was one of six finalists for national Teacher of the Year contest co-sponsored by People magazine and Kellogg's Frosted Mini-Wheats.

Crosby's students traveled to Washington, D.C., and received the President's Environmental Youth Award in 2011. They also formed the Falcon Coffee Company, a vocational program where students learn math and social skills through preparing and selling coffee on school day mornings.

Crosby believes that it's not only FAST members who benefit from these interactions. Those who come into contact with them are also better off from the experience.

"Others start to see my kids in a little different light," he explains. "They see that they are people. They see that they have a lot to share. This is the best part of my job and gives me something to look forward to throughout the year." ■

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CTA & You

Member-driven actions, conferences, benefits and all things CTA



The Instructional Leadership Corps: Teachers teaching teachers.

CTA MEMBERS ARE TEAMING UP WITH STANFORD UNIVERSITY EXPERTS FOR A THREE-YEAR PROJECT DRIVEN BY A CORPS OF 160 CLASSROOM TEACHERS AND 24 EDUCATION LEADERS AND ADMINISTRATORS. AS EXPLAINED BY CTA PRESIDENT **DEAN VOGEL** AND STANFORD PROFESSOR LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND ON PAGE 52, EDUCATORS ARE CREATING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MATERIALS TO SUPPORT THEIR COLLEAGUES IN IMPLEMENTING THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS AND THE NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS.

Making a difference doesn't stop at school boundaries for CTA members and leaders

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT and coalition building are priorities in CTA's long-term strategic plan. Local chapters like these are taking the lead and making that plan a reality.



Palm Springs High School Ballet Folklorico dancers perform at the Project 2 Inspire parent graduation ceremony.

Project 2 Inspire parent graduates Maria Manriquez and Maria Ester.

Palm Springs: Working with “inspiring” parents

By Ed Sibby

“GOOD RELATIONSHIPS DON'T just happen, you have to work at it, and we are all working at it,” says Palm Springs Teachers Association President Mark Acker. That mindset prompted Palm Springs teachers to develop Project 2 Inspire, a program that helps bilingual parents to be more involved in their children's schools.

PSTA used a CTA Institute for Teaching grant to partner with the California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE) to provide a series of three 10-week modules for parents on topics such as understanding how the school system works, education funding, and how to get the most out of a parent-teacher conference. Palm Springs Unified School District (PSUSD) joined the partnership,

which increases the number of sites offering the trainings.

As a parent and president of the Palm Springs chapter of CABE, Maria Manriquez believes the increased contact and involvement is inspiring. “When we have regular communication with our teachers at their sites and in their classrooms, we have more confidence in how to interact effectively in our role as parents,” she says. “Our children then feel more connected to the school when they see their parents interacting with both teachers and administrators. Parents have seen an across-the-board improvement in their children's academic performance as a result of the program.”

Fifty-six parents, some with their children, graduated and were honored at a Dec. 2 reception, which featured the Palm Springs High School Ballet Folklorico dancers. Says Acker, “When parents and teachers work together, kids win.”

Vallejo: Free school supplies for students

By Mike Myslinski

VALLEJO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION members give free school supplies purchased by teachers to needy students of all ages. The inspiring October event is known as the Helping Hands project. We discussed the project with VEA President Sheila Gradwohl.

Q: This Helping Hands project has been organized in Vallejo for six years now.

Yes. We have a lot of students who come to school without the proper school supplies. We decided to give back to our community by providing free supplies. We buy supplies and team up with the local library, and they donate books. Then students come out and pick out their supplies and books that are appropriate for their grade level. And they take everything home to keep. This past October we ended up helping about 1,000 kids. Our Vallejo Education Association pays for it all, and this year we spent about \$8,000. We pass out a flier to every student to let them know this is happening. Students are to bring the flier with them. Books, crayons, notebooks, pens, colored pencils, it's all spread out on tables, and students pick out what they want. All Vallejo students can come, all grade levels. They come in, get the free school supplies, and they leave with a smile.

Q: This project helps your chapter create good will?

It's wonderful. We were in the process of contract negotiations while the last event was going on, and we had most of the students come with their parents. We got a chance to talk to them. They thought the school district was putting this on, but they learned that, no, it was the teachers themselves. We get a lot of support from the parents based on this event. It's amazing.

The parents thank us, the students thank us. We

got some news coverage, we were in the local newspaper again, and the TV news has come out in past years.

Q: Why is giving back to the community so important for educators?

Some people think that the teachers are separated from the community. Our community does have a high poverty rate, and we want to show that we are part of the community, even if not all of our teachers live here. This is our community. This is where we choose to be. This project is a commitment we make, and one that we've kept. It really is an awesome feeling to hand those supplies out to the students.

Q: How would a CTA chapter go about doing this?

Every summer we go ahead and put it into our chapter budget for the year so we know how much we will be spending. A couple of months beforehand we start figuring out how much the supplies will end up costing. We also need to find our locations to hand out the supplies, because we do not hold these events at school sites. We used the library and the local Omega Boys and Girls Club this year. And then we recruit our teachers to show up and help. Teachers we don't usually see at union functions will show up to hand out the supplies. ■

Nearly 1,000 students received supplies this year, thanks to VEA members.



Teachers teaching teachers

Innovative CTA-Stanford project enriches instruction and learning

By Mike Myslinski

EDUCATORS ARE TRANSFORMING the profession by preparing one another to handle the new Common Core State Standards and sharing best practices. After all, professional educators know best what works in the classroom to reach all students.

With strategic partnerships and new approaches to professional development, CTA is at the forefront of teacher-driven education strategies that will benefit all schools and all students. The Instructional Leadership Corps (ILC) is one such groundbreaking project.

CTA members, including National Board Certified Teachers, are teaming up with Stanford University experts for a three-year project driven by a corps of veteran classroom leaders. The main goal is to provide professional learning opportunities and expertise to educators statewide to enrich instruction and foster deeper student learning with the new academic standards.

From an applicant pool of nearly 600, the selected 160 teachers and 24 education leaders and administrators are creating professional development strategies and materials to support their colleagues in learning about and implementing the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards. This first cohort of leaders, who receive an annual stipend of \$2,000, are orchestrating professional learning about the standards, and will train other teachers to do the same, building local instructional and leadership capacity to support new instructional practices.

Over three years, the project will ultimately engage more than 50,000 California teachers and administrators in professional development.

The ILC is a joint effort of CTA, the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE), and the National Board Resource Center at Stanford University. The project is funded by the S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation, the Stuart Foundation, the National Education Association, and the California Education Policy Fund.

“This groundbreaking partnership is about CTA members at their best — transforming our profession by strengthening instruction and curricular content, and reclaiming our role in designing and developing effective learning methods

for each other and our students,” says CTA President Dean E. Vogel. “Not enough people are really qualified to be out there teaching teachers. Who better to train than the best and the brightest among us?”

“New education standards have the potential to help propel students toward greater college and career readiness, but only if they are implemented with adequate resources and preparation,” says Linda Darling-Hammond, Stanford University Charles E. Ducommun professor of education and faculty director of SCOPE. “Ultimately, it is our teachers who will be responsible for their success. The ILC enables teacher leaders to create meaningful professional learning opportunities that will help their colleagues to make the instructional shifts required by the new standards.”

Teaching under new standards

The ILC team will grow the ability of local educators to enrich instruction in their schools and create professional learning experiences for colleagues to improve teaching under the new standards. Five project goals are to:

- Grow a statewide corps of accomplished teachers and site-based leaders who will serve as instructional leadership consultants who can build a culture of professional learning and coherent instructional improvement.
- Develop and deliver subject-specific professional development training to teachers statewide in math, English language arts, and science.
- Design and deliver professional development focusing on sustainable school conditions for continuous learning to principals, their district supervisors, and school leadership teams that include teachers. The goal of this professional development is to establish workplace conditions so that all teachers in a school district can learn how to connect instruction to the performance-based deeper learning expectations of the new academic standards.
- Coordinate with CTA, county offices of education, the California Department of Education, school districts and other regional and statewide entities to build an infrastructure to sustain continuous instructional capacity development over time.
- Create digital learning modules in the second and third years of the project of subject-specific, grade-level instructional sequences aligned to particular standards, and address the critical role of site leaders in supporting continuous learning in and from the use of these modules.

Much groundwork has already been done. During a two-day October training in Los Angeles to ramp up for their duties, ILC members learned from fellow educators, Stanford professors and ILC project coordinators about instructional shifts needed for the new standards in English language arts

Go Online



For more information and news coverage about the Instructional Leadership Corps, go to www.cta.org/ilc.

Sharing project ideas on science literacy are ILC members **Toby Spencer** and **Phe Bach**, San Juan TA; and **Holly Sowers**, **Robert James** and **Ellen Raco**, Tracy EA.



and literacy, English language development, math, and science.

The corps participants engaged in discussions and workshops to master four domains covering knowledge of students and their needs, strong content knowledge, instructional strategies and ways to connect instruction to expectations for student learning.

The ILC structure is based on extensive research that shows that instruction improves and students benefit when schools provide high-quality, sustained professional learning, and teachers learn from school leaders, experts, mentors and peers.

Educators driving the profession

This is a new direction for CTA because “it’s the first time where we as teachers are forming groups to help other teachers with curriculum and instruction,” says Jeff Orlinsky, a 28-year high school science teacher in Downey Unified School District. “What makes this ILC approach unique is that there are a lot of really outstanding teachers who never know how to get their ideas to the rest of their peers. This project is helping other teachers share their ideas.”

It’s like a movement, says Montebello Unified second-grade teacher Gabriela Orozco Gonzalez, an expert on the standards who blogs about them at commoncorecafe.blogspot.com. A 15-year classroom veteran, she already has a workshop on the standards set. “The teachers who are part of this movement are accomplished, we really understand content, and we can write curriculum,” she declares. “The project helps build my credibility with my district.”

In the Santa Rosa City school district, it was a natural for Assistant Superintendent Diann Kitamura to join the ILC project, along with three district teachers. Her district already has a collaborative network project for implementing Common Core standards that includes 50 teachers from every school site. “We have created professional development of teachers teaching teachers. It works. So when ILC came along, it made sense to join. We want to learn how to gain new ideas and best practices to share with our teachers and administrators.”



ILC “Corps Advocates” come together to assess professional development needs in each region. From Region IV: **Al Rabanera**, Fullerton Secondary TO; **Pia Van Meter**, Riverside City TA; and **Nelida Rubio**, Associated Calexico Teachers.

San Jose’s low-income Alum Rock Union School District has had a somewhat scattered approach to training about the standards, says third-grade teacher Nate Dawson, who has a dozen years in the classroom. He looks forward to being part of a project that will expand the reach and goals of ILC to thousands of teachers.

“We really have to get it up to scale, we have to stretch it out beyond the group we have now,” Dawson says.

“I really think it’s a great chance to work with other teachers to share real professional development with each other, instead of having to go through professional development that doesn’t treat us as professionals.”

Dayton Gilleland is superintendent of the Washington Unified School District in the city of West Sacramento. His district has one teacher on the ILC team and is working to build a district team to accomplish the ILC goals. He liked what he saw during the convening at CTA headquarters of administrators and chapter presidents who are not on the ILC team but can use and support the project to greatly enhance professional development.

“We always talk about improving our collaboration and working collectively, and this gives some structure to that. There seems to be a lot of support, with both Stanford and CTA involved to make this happen,” he says. “We’re learning to do things differently and more effectively for the sake of kids. And that’s the compelling piece, I think, behind the work here. It’s really focusing on improving instruction for the sake of learning, and that’s what we’re really all about. Common Core reflects that as well.” ■



EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Support staff from Castro Valley, Hayward, Union City, San Lorenzo, Redding, Palo Cedro, Yucaipa, Beaumont, San Francisco, Corning and Newark developed leadership and advocacy skills, learned communications strategies, and studied the rights and responsibilities of union leaders during a three-day conference.

Shown are graduates of the academy: (standing) **Laura Parra, Perry Davis, Andrew Gross, Chris Goniea, Anne Lomax, Alexander Nguyen, Deisy Bates, Sally Balentine, Steven Feller, John Havard and Cynthia Aranda**; (kneeling) **Raelynn Gatchell, Toni Feller, Kym Thomas, Kimberly Galeano, Nicole Valle, Nancy Vaughn and Rosemary Vasquez.**



ctago.org

CTA OFFERS OUTSTANDING conferences throughout the year to provide members with skills, knowledge and expertise to make things better for students, colleagues and public schools. One of the cool things about the conferences is the CTA GO app, which provides everything members need to know about the event. Agendas, presentations, calendars, maps and event information are all available at the tap of your cellphone. Better yet, ctago.org/virtual-pass members have live and archived access to the best sessions from CTA conferences, like the ones on these pages.

ETHNIC ISSUES CONFERENCE



MARIO MORENO,
San Joaquin Delta College Teachers Association
"This is my second CTA conference. My interest is to understand my students better and become a better teacher. I am also interested in becoming more active in CTA."



SAYURI SAKAMOTO,
Oakland Education Association
"I think the networking is the most valuable thing. I've done some community organizing on education and youth issues but haven't delved into the union world. There's a lot of overlap. I would like to be more involved in the union and help bridge that gap."



KIBY McDANIEL,
El Monte Teachers Association
"It is good to learn from other teachers here about how cultural issues affect my students. I'm bringing back information to my colleagues about how to involve the community to make our schools even more successful."



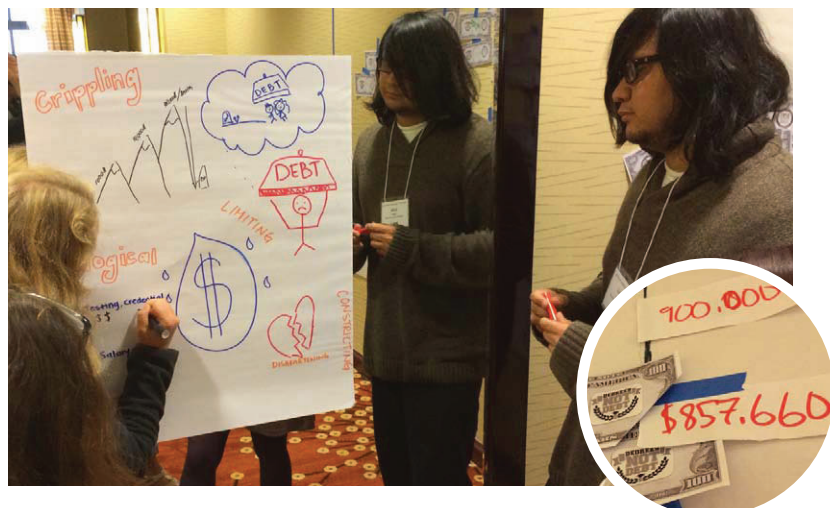
GLBT ISSUES CONFERENCE

In addition to learning about unconscious bias, bullying, and legal issues faced by gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students and educators, members heard from traveling artist and photographer iO Tillett Wright, here giving resources and suggestions to **Kimi Rodriguez-McSwain**, Southwestern College Education Association. Wright discussed the Self Evident Truths project, which will feature photos of 10,000 people in the USA who identify as anything other than 100 percent straight. The purpose, she said, is to support, celebrate and learn about differences to make a world where all kids can be safe. She has taken 8,468 photos in 77 cities. In 2016, the 10,000 portraits will be spread on the lawn in front of the Washington Monument. For more, go to selfevidentproject.com.



STUDENT CTA

"The Relevance of One" was the theme of the Student CTA Fall Leadership Conference. A hot topic was NEA's Degrees Not Debt campaign; students voiced their concern that oceans of debt will sweep many young people like themselves out of the teaching profession. The accumulated debt of the students attending was nearly \$858,000. They created "graffiti walls" about the impact of unreasonable debt on students. To see what CTA is doing, go to cta.org/degreesnotdebt.



CTA Service Center Council addresses

You can represent CTA at NEA's convention

ON THE FACING PAGE is the official Declaration of Candidacy form for state delegates to the 2015 NEA convention in Orlando, Florida.

Declaration of Candidacy forms for state delegates are also available on the CTA website (www.cta.org/racandidacy). It is the responsibility of each member wishing to run for state delegate to fill out a Declaration of Candidacy form and file it by the deadline. You must use the Declaration of Candidacy form that is printed in this issue (photocopies are acceptable) or downloaded from the CTA website.

Each candidate filing a declaration 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 30–July 7.

The first caucus meeting is set for July 1, and the annual meeting of the Representative Assembly runs July 3–6. 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 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 March 30, 2015, contact the Elections Committee through CTA Governance Support, P.O. Box 921, Burlingame, CA 94011-0921; 650-552-5300.

Service Center Council	Counties	Service Center Council	Counties	Service Center Council	Counties
ALCOSTA 2177 Diamond Blvd. Concord, CA 94520 925-676-2822 925-676-2915 (fax)	Alameda, Contra Costa	GOLDEN GATE 1705 Murchison Dr. Burlingame, CA 94010 650-552-5561 650-552-5023 (fax)	San Francisco, San Mateo	SERVICE CENTER ONE 1333 S. Mayflower Ave., Ste. 150 Monrovia, CA 91016 626-357-2095 626-357-2451 (fax)	Los Angeles, San Bernardino
BAY VALLEY 6095 Bristol Parkway, Ste. 100 Culver City, CA 90230-6601 310-215-0326 310-215-0341 (fax)	Los Angeles	HIGH DESERT 9329 Mariposa Rd., Ste. 215 Hesperia, CA 92344-8086 760-244-2239 760-244-1665 (fax)	Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Mono, San Bernardino	SHASTA CASCADE 760 Cypress Ave., Ste. 301 Redding, CA 96001 530-243-5623 530-243-5813 (fax)	Lassen, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity
CAPITAL 4100 Truxel Rd. Sacramento, CA 95834 916-288-4925 916-288-4912 (fax)	Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Tuolumne, Yolo	IMPERIAL COUNTY 2419 La Brucherie Rd. Imperial, CA 92251 760-355-4600 760-355-0906 (fax)	Imperial, San Diego (Borrego Springs)	SIERRA 3409 Calloway Dr., #201 Bakersfield, CA 93312 661-587-1366 661-587-1365 (fax)	Kern
CENTRAL COAST COUNTIES 928 E. Blanco Rd., Ste. 100 Salinas, CA 93901 831-783-3200 831-783-3211 (fax)	Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz	MERCED/MARIPOSA 510 W. Main St., Ste. E Merced, CA 95340 209-723-8871 209-723-9598 (fax)	Mariposa, Merced	SOUTHEASTERN 11745 E. Telegraph Rd. Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670 562-478-1359 562-478-1432 (fax)	Los Angeles
CHANNEL ISLANDS 1930 Outlet Center Dr. Oxnard, CA 93036 805-485-1706 805-485-1658 (fax)	San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura	ORANGE 281 N. Rampart St., Ste. A Orange, CA 92868 714-978-8861 714-978-2423 (fax)	Orange	STANISLAUS 3900 Mitchell Rd. Ceres, CA 95307 209-537-0702 209-537-4049 (fax)	Stanislaus
CHICO 1430 East Ave. #1 Chico, CA 95926 530-345-9743 530-345-1839 (fax)	Butte, Glenn, Plumas	REDWOOD 4300 Redwood Hwy., Ste. 200 San Rafael, CA 94903 415-479-6616 415-479-6435 (fax)	Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, Solano, Sonoma	TULARE/KINGS 301 W. School Ave. Visalia, CA 93291 559-733-7706 559-739-7863 (fax)	Kings, Tulare
DELTA 7330 West Ln., Ste. 3 Stockton, CA 95210 209-478-6091 209-478-5923 (fax)	San Joaquin	SAN DIEGO COUNTY 5333 Mission Center Rd., Ste. 200 San Diego, CA 92108 619-683-3990 619-683-3994 (fax)	San Diego	UTLA/NEA 3303 Wilshire Blvd., 10th Fl. Los Angeles, CA 90010 213-368-6259 213-251-9891 (fax)	Los Angeles
FEATHER RIVER 950 Tharp Rd., Ste. 901 Yuba City, CA 95993 530-755-2082 530-755-0641 (fax)	Colusa, Nevada, Sierra, Sutter, Yuba	SAN GORGONIO 430 E. Vanderbilt Way San Bernardino, CA 92408 909-890-4520 909-890-2461 (fax)	Riverside, San Bernardino	HIGHER EDUCATION 4100 Truxel Rd. Sacramento, CA 95834 916-288-4921 916-288-4911 (fax)	2-year and 4-year colleges and universities
FRESNO/MADERA 5330 N. Fresno St. Fresno, CA 93710 559-222-6593 559-222-9827 (fax)	Fresno, Madera	SANTA CLARA COUNTY 4810 Harwood Rd. #100 San Jose, CA 95124 408-266-1321 408-266-7893 (fax)	Santa Clara		

Declaration of Candidacy For State Delegate to the 2015 NEA Convention in Orlando, Florida



Duties of delegates to Rep Assembly in Orlando, Florida

Name	Cell phone
Address	Home phone
City, Zip	CTA/NEA Member ID Number
Personal email address	Gender <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
I am a member of: <input type="checkbox"/> CTA <input type="checkbox"/> NEA _____ Chapter	

Category:

- NEA Active (Non-Supervisory) Member (including Education Support Professionals)**
Send or fax directly to your Service Center Council (see addresses and fax numbers 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/NEA-Retired, c/o CTA Region I Office, 1705 Murchison Dr., Burlingame, CA 94010.
- 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 or plan to be a declared candidate for a local delegate position also.
 Yes No

If yes and you are elected to any delegate position (state, local, or both state and local), you are responsible for informing the Service Center Council of your choice by April 8, 2015.

 Name Service Center Council

Please give a brief biographical sketch of no more than 30 words. (If more words are used, the information that accompanies ballots will include only the first 30 words.) If you wish your ethnic grouping to be listed, this will not count as part of the 30-word limitation. Please print.

 Signed

1. Each delegate will be expected to arrive in Orlando 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

THIS FORM MUST BE FILED NO LATER THAN 5 p.m. on Jan. 30, 2015, at the appropriate 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.

2015

CALENDAR

JANUARY 6 *Nomination Deadline*

CTA Human Rights Awards

These awards promote the development of programs for the advancement and protection of human and civil rights within CTA. Any active CTA member, chapter, caucus or Service Center Council may nominate a member, chapter or Service Center Council.

Find out more:

www.cta.org/humanrightswards

JANUARY 9 *Entry Deadline*

César E. Chávez Awards

The César E. Chávez Memorial Education Awards provide recognition for students who submit visual arts projects or written essays (no biographies) that show understanding of César Chávez's vision and guiding principles. Winners will receive recognition and up to \$550 for both students and sponsoring CTA members. Submitters of a group entry (up to three students) will share the prize. Find out more:

www.cta.org/scholarships

JANUARY 16–18 *Conference*

Issues Conference

Rio All-Suite Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada

"Embracing Challenges and Shaping Our Future." This conference offers urban, rural and ESP educators an opportunity to learn and network about issues such as Common Core implementation, the Local Control Funding Formula, health care and retirement.

Find out more:

www.cta.org/conferences

JANUARY 30 *Filing Deadline*

Candidacy for NEA state delegate

Candidates for state delegate to the Representative Assembly at the 2015 NEA convention in Orlando, Florida, must submit a declaration of candidacy. See pages 56-57. Find out more:

www.cta.org/racandidacy

FEBRUARY 1 *Application Deadline*

NEA Foundation grants

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

Find out more: neafoundation.org

FEBRUARY 6 *Application Deadline*

CTA Scholarships

The 2015 CTA Scholarship Program offers up to 34 scholarships of \$5,000 for dependent children of CTA members, plus one \$5,000 scholarship for a dependent child attending a continuation high school or alternative education program. There are up to five scholarships of \$3,000 for CTA members completing college coursework, and up to three scholarships of \$5,000 for Student CTA members. Applications must be submitted online by Feb. 6.

Find out more:

www.cta.org/scholarships

FEBRUARY 6–8 *Conference*

Good Teaching Conference North

Fairmont Hotel, San Jose

The Good Teaching Conferences support excellent teaching and learning practices for K-12 teachers. They offer a variety of workshops in curriculum content areas, provide opportunities for professional development, and allow time to network with colleagues and experts. Find out more:

www.cta.org/conferences

FEBRUARY 20 *Application Deadline*

Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarships

Aimed at helping members of ethnic minorities in preparing for teaching-related careers in public education, the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Scholarship Fund is supported by voluntary contributions from CTA members and the CTA Foundation for Teaching and Learning. An applicant must be an active CTA or Student CTA member, or a dependent child of a CTA member.

Find out more:

www.cta.org/scholarships

FEBRUARY 20–22 *Conference*

CCA Winter Conference

Hyatt Regency Mission Bay, San Diego

The Community College Association's winter conference is dedicated to enhancing bargaining skills and coordinating bargaining strategies with other locals throughout the state. Bargaining teams are encouraged to attend.

Find out more: cca4me.org

Extra credit solution (page 60)

K D A T M O T U X X Y D N W Y
O V U J N O H T A R A M K E Q
F L A N G U A G E W L Y N M J
S X Y L C O R E N E P O I U O
S P W D U N T E S I M O R E P B
E H I I Y N A I R G K I D Q H
R E T T U L C E D H D O T O T
T M R L N R I U L T D K M N Q
S O O F E H N M A C N G O S L
E V S X T V R G A F I N D D W
D V E L K B A A D F Z S R G C
K X A I O I E R A O C R U O P
L E S S N S L D T G Z Z U M L
H C Q V J J E S E C L Z T S R
C G Z Z H O P P E Y S U G V T

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Declaration of Candidacy for CTA/NEA-Retired Positions

Deadline to return declaration is January 30, 2015

OFFICES TO BE FILLED:

Interim State Council Representative for District 3*

TERM: From confirmation of this election through June 25, 2015.
 REQUIREMENTS:
 A candidate must be a member of CTA/NEA-Retired and reside in District 3.

State Council Representative for Districts 1-4*

TERM: 3 years, beginning June 26, 2015.
 REQUIREMENTS:
 A candidate must be a member of CTA/NEA-Retired and reside in the district he/she is elected to represent.

Ethnic Minority At-Large Director

TERM: 3 years, beginning June 26, 2015.
 REQUIREMENTS:
 A candidate must be a member of CTA/NEA-Retired.

**Eligible candidates who reside in District 3 are permitted to run for both offices.*

I AM A CANDIDATE FOR THE OFFICE OF:

Interim State Council Representative for District 3
 County of Residence: _____

State Council Representative:
 District 1 District 2
 District 3 District 4
 County of Residence: _____

Ethnic Minority At-Large Director
 I am: African American
 American Indian/Alaska Native
 Asian/Pacific Islander
 Hispanic

MY CONTACT INFORMATION: *(Please print)*

Name _____	
Home address _____	Mailing address _____
City & Zip _____	City & Zip _____
Home phone _____	Cellphone _____
Email _____	

MY CAMPAIGN STATEMENT: 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. 30, 2015.
 Mail to CTA Region I, CTA/NEA-Retired Elections, 1705 Murchison Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010. **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 hold elections

Jan. 30, 2015, is the deadline to submit nominations for Interim State Council Representative for District 3, State Council Representatives for Districts 1-4, and Ethnic 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 at the bottom of the form.

If you are a resident of District 3, you may run for both Interim State Council Representative expiring June 25, 2015, and State Council Representative beginning June 26, 2015.

The ballot, including names of the candidates and their campaign statements, will be mailed to members in February. For more information, call CTA/NEA-Retired at 650-552-5561.

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 | |

What's your New Year's resolution?

Statistics show there are 10 things we resolve to do every New Year's Eve: Lose weight (again), exercise, quit smoking, learn something new, get out of debt, spend more time with family, reduce stress, drink less, volunteer, and eat healthier. You'll find these words hidden here, going left, right, up, down, or diagonally. Good luck — with the puzzle and your resolutions for 2015! The solution is on page 58.



K D A T M O T U X X Y D N W Y
 O V U J N O H T A R A M K E Q
 F L A N G U A G E W L Y N M J
 S X Y L C Q R E N E P O I U O
 S P W D U N T E S I M O R P B
 E H I I Y N A I R G K I D Q H
 R E T T U L C E D H D O T O T
 T M R L N R I U L T D K M N Q
 S O O F E H N M A C N G O S L
 E V S X T V R G A F I N D D W
 D V E L K B A A D F Z S R G C
 K X A I O I E R A O C R U O P
 L E S S N S L D T G Z Z U M L
 H C Q V J J E S E C L Z T S R
 C G Z Z H O P P E Y S U G V T

AGAIN
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 DEBT-FREE
 DECLUTTER
 DE-STRESS
 DIET
 DRINK
 EXERCISE

FAMILY
 FIND
 HEALTHIER
 JOB
 LANGUAGE
 LEARN
 LESS
 LOSE
 MARATHON

MONEY
 MUSIC
 PLAY
 PROMISE
 QUIT
 SAVE
 SMOKING
 SORT
 TIME

TRAVEL
 VOLUNTEER
 WEIGHT



Healthcare Choices Are Within Your Grasp

Introducing the CSEBA Marketplace, an
Online Healthcare "Exchange" Built
for Schools by Schools



Choose between
**Bronze, Silver,
Gold** and
Platinum tiers.

The CSEBA Marketplace allows public school and community college districts the ability to offer employees freedom of choice in selecting quality, affordable healthcare from a known and trusted source throughout California. And we are proud to be the first member driven entity to offer an Exchange-like product with both Anthem Blue Cross



We Service
California
To Its Core

and Kaiser Permanente* as its choice providers. All medical plans are offered online in a tiered format enabling individual employees to compare affordable plans and options before they "click."

Your district will benefit by working with a non-profit organization, jointly managed by labor and management. Your employees will benefit by the consumer friendly approach and simplicity of choices in the CSEBA Marketplace. Just choose between **Bronze, Silver, Gold** and **Platinum** tiers.

Jump into our pool and contact us today
for a quote or more information!
www.csebjpa.org or call (909) 763-4900



California Schools
Employee Benefits Association

  **California Schools Employee Benefits Association**

*New Kaiser Permanente plans will be available July 1, 2014. The plans offered through the Marketplace all meet or exceed the minimum essential benefit requirements under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Rate cuts,



not cut-rate.

California Casualty Offers Savings That Won't Cost You.

With our new LOWER RATES and BIGGER DISCOUNTS on bundled Auto and Home Insurance policies, you can protect what's important to you *for less*.



Don't get burned with cut - rate insurance that will cost you at the time of a claim.

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or visit www.CalCas.com/CTA