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**educator**

DECEMBER 2017 / JANUARY 2018 VOLUME 22 ISSUE 3

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TECHIES  
COACHES  
MENTORS  
LIT LOVERS  
& MORE**

**ISSUE**

➤ IT ALL BEGINS ON  
PAGE 21

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# california educator

VOLUME 22 ISSUE 3



## #WeAreCTA

### OUR VOICE, OUR UNION, OUR PROFESSION

#### WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

## MAGAZINE

### WATER GUARDIANS WIN

Guided by their STEM teacher, young girls expand award-winning project into conservation law. **PAGE 16**

[YouTube](#) [Instagram](#) [drpstem.com](http://drpstem.com)

### SHOW & TELL

San Bernardino's demonstration teachers' best practices. **PAGE 39**

[Facebook](#) [YouTube](#)  
[tinyurl.com/demoteacher](http://tinyurl.com/demoteacher)

### TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION

Grappling with an important, sensitive topic. **PAGE 51**

[tinyurl.com/teachreligion](http://tinyurl.com/teachreligion)

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Five exceptional educators. **PAGE 62**

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [cde.ca.gov](http://cde.ca.gov)

### PENSION PLAN BENEFITS

Not only are they good for you, they help schools recruit, retain teachers.

**PAGE 67** [nirsonline.org](http://nirsonline.org)

## DIGITAL

### CALIFORNIA EDUCATOR WEBSITE

*Educator* content and much more. Don't miss our GIF contest!

[californiaeducator.org](http://californiaeducator.org)

### WHAT'S YOUR REALITY?

Students can explore new worlds with virtual or augmented realities. **PAGE 34**

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Brush up on social media, photography and other skills.

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

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Study the African American experience in WWII. **PAGE 56**

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [YouTube](#) [tinyurl.com/electronicfieldtrip](http://tinyurl.com/electronicfieldtrip)

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From outer space to inside the human anatomy, all without leaving class. **PAGE 58**

[App Store](#), [Google Play](#)

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### WE'VE GOT ISSUES

CTA's Issues Conference for rural, urban, COE and ESP educators. Jan. 26-28 in Las Vegas. **PAGE 9** [ctago.org](http://ctago.org)

### GOOD TEACHING TIMES TWO

CTA's Good Teaching Conference North is Feb. 2-4, and GTC South is March 16-18.

Sign up! [ctago.org](http://ctago.org) #CTAGTC

### FUNDS TO STUDY

CTA has scholarships for you, your children and Student CTA members. Deadline is Feb. 2. [cta.org/scholarships](http://cta.org/scholarships)

### EQUITY & HUMAN RIGHTS

CTA conference March 2-4 in Torrance. [ctago.org](http://ctago.org) #CTAEHR

## MEMBER BENEFITS

### HIT BY DISASTER?

CTA's Disaster Relief Fund, funded by members, offers assistance to those who need it.

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### EAT, DRINK & BE MERRY

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### NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Learn about investing, estate and retirement planning, insurance and more. [CTAinvest.org](http://CTAinvest.org)

#### ABOVE:

Innovative educators showcased in this issue: From left, Chris Collins, Emalyn Leppard, Dave Menshew, Meagan Kelly, Paul Garrison, Reta Rickmers, Noni Reis and Courtney Coffin. Stories start on page 21.



# THE INNOVATION ISSUE 21

## On the Leading Edge

- ▶ **Innovators in Our Midst** A salute to eight educators who routinely exceed what is considered possible and extend the limits of the learning landscape for their students. **PAGE 21**
- ▶ **What's Your Reality?** Alternate realities — virtual, augmented, mixed — have become powerful tools for the classroom. **PAGE 34**
- ▶ **Show and Tell** San Bernardino's demonstration teachers model lessons and share expertise and ideas with their colleagues. **PAGE 39**

**PHOTOS:** Above, students of Modesto science teacher Dave Menshew prepare to solve a "crime." At right, new teachers Carly MacLeod and Isaura Ramirez-Villa talk about what they've seen and learned in a San Bernardino demonstration class.



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



## As the World Warms

Thank you for your very informative article on the importance of teaching climate change impacts (October/ November). It is important that even as we communicate the magnitude of the problem, we give our students a sense of hope and concrete examples of progress in the transition away from fossil fuels. Otherwise we run the risk of triggering despair and disengagement.

Two resources that have been a much-needed source of hope for me:

*Climate Action* newsletter highlights progress being made around the world, and Citizens' Climate Lobby is a nonpartisan organization whose mission is to build the political will for a livable world. Their monthly meetings make me more knowledgeable about the collective efforts of folks to push for solutions, and their trainings have helped me and my students engage with elected officials.

### ISABELLE TERAOKA

*Whittier Secondary Education Association*

I was disappointed but not surprised after reading "Hot Topic." [In describing the thrust of Al Gore's documentary *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*, you write:] "The perils of climate change can be overcome with human ingenuity and passion." No. It's too late.

The question now is what to tell the kids. As a kindergarten teacher, I don't know what the answer is to that question. Can't tell them, "We're doomed. We have no future." It may very well be the best thing is to keep telling them, "The perils of climate change can be

overcome with human ingenuity and passion." It is clear at least that that is and will most likely continue to be the collective choice.

### MALCOLM WAUGH

*Emery Teachers Association*

It is a shame that you have chosen to reject real science in favor of the Global Warming Hoax. With this kind of reporting, I expect your next issue to reject evolution.

Sea levels are not rising, 97 percent of climate scientists do not believe in global warming, the ice sheets are not melting. CO<sub>2</sub> is not a pollutant; it is plant food. A warmer world is a wetter world. Deserts would retreat; forests and jungles would expand. During the Age of the Dinosaurs, the world was ice free — and living organisms did just fine.

We all should hope for global warming.

### RAY SHELTON

*Glendale Teachers Association*

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

## CTA Grant Helps After Disaster

We lost the Hidden Valley Satellite School in Santa Rosa during the urban wildfires in October. Fortunately, with the help of a CTA grant, I was able to purchase much-needed supplies, like a classroom rug, to help my students feel adjusted and safe in their new school and classroom.

When faced with creating a new classroom in two weeks, you quickly realize how much time, effort and money goes into the process. Thank you so much for helping me restore mine and allowing my students to stay with me, after the traumatic events we all endured.

### HEIDI FACCIANO

*Santa Rosa Teachers Association*

For information on CTA's Disaster Relief Fund, and more on the North Bay wildfires, see page 64.





## CCTC Approved Reading and Literacy Added Authorization

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

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

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

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CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2017, to Aug. 31, 2018) are \$866, including a \$20 refundable contribution (see [cta.org/contribution](http://cta.org/contribution) for details). \$19.00 of CTA annual dues is designated for CTA/ABC political activities to support state and local candidates and/or initiatives, and \$5.00 of CTA annual dues is designated for independent expenditures, totaling \$24.00 not deductible for income tax purposes.

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

### CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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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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# Proud and Grateful



**COURAGE IS A WORD** I associate with many of the educators I've met or worked with over the years. It comes in many forms — whether it's the quiet courage of a teacher enduring a personal struggle or health crisis, who still comes to school each day and continues to give all for her students, or the bravery of an educator who stands up to a bullying administrator or takes a stand with the union for better teaching and learning conditions.

Courage of a more urgent sort was on display in November when the unthinkable happened at Rancho Tehama Elementary School in Tehama County. In the morning, as students were being dropped off before school, staff members heard distant gunshots and immediately put the campus in lockdown. Brave teachers and education support professionals quickly ushered kids and parents into classrooms and locked the doors behind them.

While the lockdown was happening, a rifle-wielding gunman, who had earlier killed his wife and three neighbors and was shooting from a stolen pickup truck as he drove, crashed his vehicle through a school fence and gate, got out, and began firing shots indiscriminately at doors, windows and buildings, spraying classrooms with bullets, and trying to jimmy his way through locked doors. Frustrated by the successful lockdown,

the gunman continued his rampage off campus until he was killed by police. When it was all over, five people were dead, including the gunman, who had a history of mental illness. Three students were among the injured.

There were many stories of bravery that morning. While rushing students to a classroom, the school's head custodian peered around a corner and drew the attention of the shooter, becoming a target himself as the kids rushed to safety. Fortunately, the gun jammed. The school secretary, after ushering kids to safety, monitored classrooms and maintained communication with district officials as the crisis unfolded.

Fortunately, school shootings are extremely rare. Kids are still safer in schools than just about anywhere. But the fact that it happens at all is every educator's worst nightmare. Since Columbine, lockdown drills have become more common in schools across the country. Ironically, such drills are less common at schools in rural areas like Rancho Tehama. Despite that, the selfless and quick action of the school's staff saved many lives that day.

Drills are necessary, yet no one knows for sure how they'll act during the real thing until it actually happens. The staff at Rancho Tehama showed the nation the stuff educators are made of. They

Eric Heins in solidarity with Calaveras Unified Educators Association members during their recent strike. Photo by Cynthia Menzel



showed that students are our first priority, even when our own lives are under threat. This was bravery of an extraordinary kind, a drive to put students first that is in the hearts of thousands of CTA members. There is never a day that I am not proud to be an educator, and I was never prouder than I was after learning of the life-saving response of that school staff. Educators have always been, and continue to be, my heroes.

I'm not only proud, I'm grateful. I'm finishing this column the day before Thanksgiving, and I'm reflecting on the countless large and small examples of self-sacrifice and bravery educators exhibit on behalf of their students.

Thankfully, most of us will never face a situation like Rancho Tehama, but the daily courage and caring of teachers and education support professionals is something everyone should be thankful for. I know I am, and I want to thank each of you for all you continue to do for California students.

**Eric C. Heins**

CTA PRESIDENT

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One of many posters made by students at schools affected by the North Bay fires in October. Credit: Mike Myslinski



imagine teaching history without including it," says David Fulton, a social studies teacher and Fairfield-Suisun Unified Teachers Association member.

And finally, do not miss "**Union Community Spirit Rises**" on page 64. The North Bay fires in October killed 43 and destroyed thousands of homes and other structures, including schools. Scores of educators and an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 students were affected — and still are. Despite their personal losses, many of these educators and CTA members rose immediately to help and heal their communities.

While amazing, innovative ideas that spring from the minds of educators are rightly praised, the love and compassion from their hearts is even more awe-inspiring and appreciated.

**Katharine Fong**

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# The Innovator Within

**IN MARCH**, researchers at the University of South Florida (USF) published a report on the process of innovation and characteristics of innovators, including problem solving, motivation, creativity, curiosity, risk-taking, a positive attitude, persistence, passion and vision.

The educators we showcase in our annual Innovation Issue certainly demonstrate these traits. Dave Menshew turns his classroom into a CSI lab, engaging rapt students in forensics and biotech to solve simulated crimes. Google Innovator and middle school teacher Meagan Kelly thinks learning for educators should be customized, just as it is for students, and designed a guide for teachers to transform their lessons through technology. Art educator Reta Rickmers has her students market and sell their work, an interdisciplinary exercise that teaches artistic creation, persuasive skill and economics. See "**On the Leading Edge**" (page 21) for other impressive innovators.

The good news out of the USF report is that everyone possesses at least some innovative characteristics (and there are ways to awaken and cultivate them).

But we knew that. All educators are innovators, since they think on their feet, work relentlessly to keep 25-plus young minds engaged, and often make do with limited resources. Passion and vision kick in, too. Science and engineering teacher Susan M. Pritchard tells how

she guided a group of La Habra middle school girls to a national award-winning conservation project that expanded into a new state law ("**Watch Out for the Water Guardians**," page 16). High school media maestro John Dalton overcame severe health challenges to become an Alameda Teacher of the Year and launch public TV stations where his students can gain real experience ("**A Media Master**," page 19). More and more teachers are embracing virtual and augmented realities that immerse students in new worlds ("**Alternate Realities**," page 34).

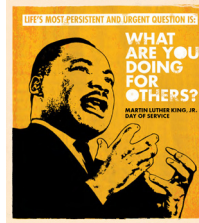
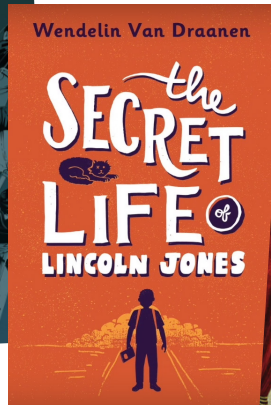
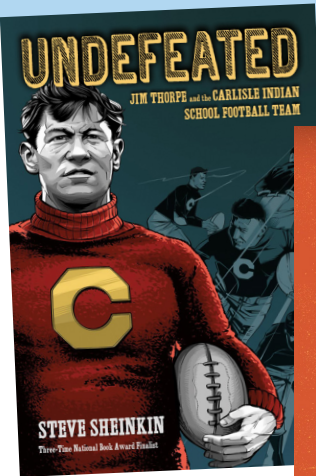
It's not just students who benefit from innovative educators. "**It's Show Time**" (page 39) describes how San Bernardino Unified School District identified 34 (and counting) excellent "demonstration teachers," who open their classrooms to model lessons and share expertise and ideas with colleagues. The program has met with accolades from both sides.

The outstanding educators recognized as the **2018 California Teachers of the Year**, of course, possess many if not all of the qualities that are hallmarks of innovation. Read about them on page 62.

Another must-read is "**Teaching About Religion**" (page 51) — *not* the same as teaching religion. Teaching facts about belief systems of various religions is essential to understanding human culture. "Religion has influenced how we behave and what we value. I couldn't

## The Educator's New Website!

**WE'RE EXCITED** to introduce a new way to interact with CTA's most engaging content: [californiaeducator.org](http://californiaeducator.org). The site contains the latest *Educator* articles, as well as news and relevant stories. It's a great visual experience whether read on your desktop, tablet or smartphone. And you can easily connect with us to give feedback and submit and share content. Tell us what you think, at [californiaeducator.org/contact](http://californiaeducator.org/contact) or via [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org).



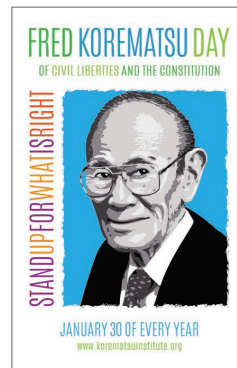
Source: Scholastic

### Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Jan. 15

Looking for lesson plans focused on King and his work, or for content you can use during Black History Month in February? Stanford University's Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute provides document-based K-12 lesson plans and online resources ([kinginstitute.stanford.edu/liberation-curriculum/lesson-plans](http://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/liberation-curriculum/lesson-plans)). Scholastic has new, curriculum-focused service lessons for grades 9-12 ([scholastic.com/mlkday](http://scholastic.com/mlkday)). And NEA offers classroom resources to help students put King's life and impact in perspective ([nea.org/tools/lessons/mlk-day.html](http://nea.org/tools/lessons/mlk-day.html)).

### Fred Korematsu Day, Jan. 30

Officially recognized by California in 2010, Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution is the first state-observed day in U.S. history named after an Asian American. Born in Oakland, Korematsu was 23 when he refused to go to the internment camps for Japanese Americans in 1942. Arrested and convicted of defying the government's order, he appealed his case all the way to the Supreme Court. Several states now commemorate his birthday, Jan. 30. See



[korematsuinstitute.org/fredkorematsuday](http://korematsuinstitute.org/fredkorematsuday).

### Go Global

Cultivate global competence skills and build lesson plans to share with educators around the world with the NEA Foundation Global Learning Fellowship. Active NEA members who are current K-12 classroom teachers are eligible to apply; the fellowship offers 12 months of professional development and a nine-day international field study. Deadline to apply is Feb. 5. See [neafoundation.org/global-learning-fellowship](http://neafoundation.org/global-learning-fellowship).

# Good Reads

**A FEW 2017-18** book recommendations from California Reads: *Undeclared: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team* (grades 6-8), by Steve Sheinkin, tells of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School's football team, a national powerhouse during the early 20th century. And no wonder: The federally funded boarding school for Native Americans boasted now-legendary student athlete Jim Thorpe and fabled coach Pop Warner. The book also looks at the U.S. government's violent persecution of Native Americans and Carlisle's mandate to erase Indian cultures. The obstacles that Thorpe and his fellow students overcome, both on and off the field, will move and inspire young readers.

*The Bear and the Piano* (pre-K, kindergarten), by David Litchfield, is a story of friendship. A bear cub finds a piano in the forest and learns to play it, delighting his friends. He's excited when he is invited to the city to share his sounds. But should he leave his friends to follow his dreams?

The 11-year-old protagonist in *The Secret Life of Lincoln Jones* (grades 3-5), by Wendelin Van Draanen, retreats into the stories he writes, for good reason: He and his mother just fled her abusive boyfriend and now live in poverty, kids at his new school make fun of his Southern drawl, and he must spend most of his time at the nursing home where his mother works. Lincoln slowly realizes who the real heroes in his life are and that "real folks around me had stories I'd been completely blind to."

For more teacher-recommended books, see [cta.org/californiareads](http://cta.org/californiareads) ([#californiareads](https://twitter.com/californiareads)).

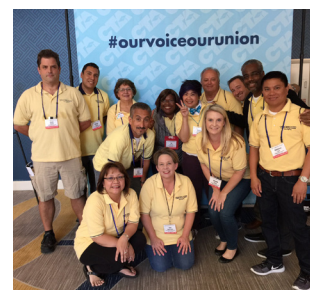


Alan J. Daly

**Come Together, Right Now** CTA conferences are a great way to hone your professional skills. The **Issues Conference**, Jan. 26–28 in Las Vegas, features dynamic sessions for rural, urban, county office of education, and ESP educators. Keynote speaker Alan J. Daly, from UC San Diego's Department of Education Studies, will present "Better Together:

The Power of Networks for Leveraging the Collective Potential." Hotel cut-off: Jan. 3.

The **Good Teaching Conference North**, Feb. 2–4 in San Jose, offers a plethora of peer-to-peer workshops on curriculum content areas for K-12 teachers, as well as the annual **Teacher Innovation Expo** hosted by CTA's Institute for Teaching. Hotel cut-off: Jan. 25. See [ctago.org](http://ctago.org).



Group hug at 2017 GTC North

### CTA HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS

#### JAN. 8 *NOMINATION DEADLINE*

These awards, in a variety of categories, promote the development of programs for 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.

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

### CTA STATE GOLD AWARDS

#### JAN. 12 *NOMINATION DEADLINE*

Recognize persons and organizations whose leadership, acts and support have had a positive impact on public education in California. Any CTA member or affiliate may nominate.

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

### CANDIDACY FOR NEA STATE DELEGATE

#### JAN. 31 *FILING DEADLINE*

Candidates for NEA RA state delegate must submit a declaration of candidacy. See page 70.

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

### NEA FOUNDATION GRANTS

#### FEB. 1 *APPLICATION DEADLINE*

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

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

### CTA SCHOLARSHIPS

#### FEB. 2 *APPLICATION DEADLINE*

The 2017-18 CTA Scholarship Program offers up to 35 scholarships of up to \$5,000 for dependent children of CTA members, including one for a child attending a continuation high school or alternative education program; up to five scholarships of up to \$3,000 for CTA members completing college coursework, including one for an ESP member; and up to three scholarships of up to \$5,000 for Student CTA members. ► [cta.org/scholarships](http://cta.org/scholarships)

### NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK

#### FEB. 5-9 *EVENT*

"School Counselors: Helping Students Reach for the Stars." Celebrate your school counselor! They make unique contributions to education and can have tremendous impact on students' academic success and career plans.

► [www.schoolcounselor.org/nscw](http://www.schoolcounselor.org/nscw)

### CCA WINTER CONFERENCE

#### FEB. 9-11 *CONFERENCE*

Hyatt Regency LAX, Los Angeles. "Bargaining and Representation: The Building Blocks of a Strong Union." Bargaining teams are encouraged to attend the Community College Association's winter conference.

► [cca4me.org](http://cca4me.org)

### MLK SCHOLARSHIPS

#### FEB. 16 *APPLICATION DEADLINE*

Aimed at helping members of ethnic minorities prepare for 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. Award amount: up to \$4,000. ► [cta.org/scholarships](http://cta.org/scholarships)

### NEW EDUCATOR WEEKEND

#### FEB. 23-25 *CONFERENCE*

SFO Marriott Waterfront, Burlingame. CTA conference for educators in their first three years. Details on page 10. Hotel cut-off is Feb. 7. ► [ctago.org](http://ctago.org)

### CTA/NEA-RETIRED ISSUES CONFERENCE

#### MARCH 1-2 *CONFERENCE*

Torrance Marriott South Bay. Learn how CTA/NEA-Retired is working to protect your future and maintaining a constant watch on federal legislation that affects retirement benefits. Stay connected, be protected, and enjoy great benefits. Hotel cut-off is Feb. 14.

► [ctago.org](http://ctago.org)

### EQUITY & HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

#### MARCH 2-4 *CONFERENCE*

Torrance Marriott South Bay. This conference affirms CTA's mission to protect the civil rights of children and secure a more equitable, democratic society. Speakers and workshops provide members with a greater understanding of diversity, equity and social justice. Hotel cut-off is Feb. 14.

► [ctago.org](http://ctago.org)



## SCIENCE STAR

Elementary science and technology teacher Kathryn Peoples was recently named one of 10 STEAM Stars by the Lawrence Hall of Science, Amplify Education, and the National Science Teachers Association. A Unified Association of Conejo Teachers member and teacher leader with CTA's Instructional Leadership Corps, Peoples is passionate about science and creating curriculum for the Next Generation standards.

"Science is the perfect vehicle for integration, depth and complexity, inquiry, differentiation, and engagement," Peoples says. "Every day I get to see 'aha!' moments and know that I am helping students become thinkers and problem solvers."

Peoples and the other STEAM Stars were honored in November at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. Congrats!




## New Educator Weekend

**IT'S BACK!** The New Educator Weekend, geared for those in their first three years of teaching, is a new type of conference for CTA members. In addition to plenty of time to connect with colleagues, its workshops and trainings are everything new educators need, with topics such as:

- Classroom management
- Navigating IEPs
- Working with colleagues, administration and parents
- Common Core, state standards, assessments and pedagogy

Come early on Friday for a free pre-conference session tailored to educators' professional and personal lives with topics such as understanding your contract and financial planning. Check out what participants said last year at **#CTANEW**, such as:



**Deanna @WhyThisPath** · Mar 12  
**#CTANEW #WeAreCTA** Creating relationships around our craft: supporting kids. Lifetime friends. This is what it's all about. [@EricHeins](#)

( Feb. 23-25, SFO Marriott Waterfront, Burlingame (hotel cut-off is Feb. 7). Register at [ctago.org](http://ctago.org): \$49 members, \$10 Student CTA, \$250 nonmembers. Connect with **#CTANEW**. )

## The Promise of Free Community College

**ASSEMBLY BILL 19**, the California College Promise, is now law. Authored by Assembly Member Miguel Santiago (D-Los Angeles), the bill allows first-time, full-time students to attend their local community college free for the first year.

The name and program are modeled after the Long Beach College Promise, which began in 2008 to help Long Beach Unified School District graduates attend Long Beach City College and CSU Long Beach. Similar programs are now in place in other cities. (In February 2017, San Francisco announced that City College of San Francisco would offer free tuition for city residents.)

The earliest the free tuition for all community colleges could go into effect is fall 2018, provided the Legislature budgets some \$31 million to pay for the expected 19,000 additional students who would take advantage of the tuition waiver.



FOR CTA MEMBERS ONLY

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- Up to 30 percent off Harry & David gift baskets.
- Up to 30 percent off Dell and Lenovo electronics, free shipping on Skullcandy.com's earbuds and headphones, and 10 percent off plus free shipping on OtterBox phone cases.
- Up to 50 percent off Office Depot's computers, accessories and more.
- Up to 25 percent off AMC Theatres tickets, up to 30 percent off Cinemark Theatres tickets, and up to 30 percent off Regal Entertainment Group tickets.
- Staying home? Rent a Redbox DVD or Blu-ray Disc and get one free for the first night.



Log in to the member savings program through [CTAMemberBenefits.org/Access](http://CTAMemberBenefits.org/Access).

## LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE



**THE 25TH ANNUAL** writing competition Letters About Literature, sponsored by the Library of Congress and coordinated statewide by the California School Library Association, lets students in grades 4-12 write reflectively and compete for a prize at the same time. To enter, students choose a book, story or poem that made an impact on them, then write a letter to the author — living or dead — explaining how it shaped their perspective on the world or themselves.

Entries must be postmarked by Jan. 12, 2018. Letter writers are judged in three groups according to grade level, and the top letters in the state advance to the national level. Details and a free Teaching Guide are available at [read.gov/letters](http://read.gov/letters).



## CTA's Advocacy Agenda

CTA's Advocacy Agenda — 10 initiatives that lead to the public education all students deserve — has a new look. See [advocacyagenda.cta.org](http://advocacyagenda.cta.org) for the colorful infographic that you can easily share with parents and on social media. The agenda, based on education research, was created with the input and expertise of thousands of educators across the state.



## A SPORTING CHANCE

**NEED FUNDS** for your school's sports program? Public high and middle schools should apply for a 2018 Thomas R. Brown Athletics Grant from California Casualty. Awardees can score up to \$3,000.

Last year, 10 California schools received grants to purchase such items as new helmets for softball and baseball teams, and new uniforms for soccer and track teams.

The grant is named for California Casualty Chairman Emeritus Tom Brown, who understands that "valuable sports lessons teach pride and confidence and lead to success in the classroom and community."

See [calcasathleticsgrant.com](http://calcasathleticsgrant.com) to apply. Deadline is Jan. 15, 2018, for consideration for the 2017-18 academic year. Winners are announced in April.

## Instructional Materials for History and Social Sciences Approved

**THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION (SBE)** has approved instructional materials for teaching California's groundbreaking History-Social Science Framework in grades K-8.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson says the materials will give students a broader, deeper and more accurate understanding of history and the social sciences, provide them with current research, and equip them with the critical thinking and research skills to make up their own minds about controversial issues.

"They update the teaching and learning of history and social science and convey important new information

about the challenges and contributions made by individuals and ethnic groups, members of the LGBT communities, and people with disabilities," Torlakson says.

The new materials follow guidelines established by the FAIR Education Act, which requires including contributions of various groups in the history of California and the United States, such as Native Americans, African Americans, Mexican-Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, European Americans, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans, persons with disabilities, and others.



The materials also include a focus on civic engagement, which encourages and prepares students to be informed and involved in their local communities. All of the materials will be on display at January State Council and at CTA's Good Teaching Conference South for educators to review. More information is at [cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr17/documents/nov17item18.doc](http://cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr17/documents/nov17item18.doc).

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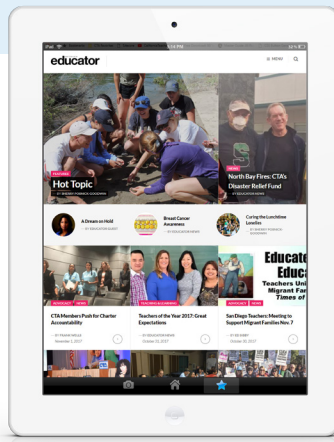
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## CaliforniaEducator.org Caption Contest!

Head to [CaliforniaEducator.org](http://CaliforniaEducator.org) and find "Fun" under the Topics tab to create your own caption for this GIF. Enter as often as you wish until Jan. 20, 2018. The funniest or most original caption writer will win CTA swag and bragging rights. And check the site regularly for more contests.

By @samdemuro



## Twitter Does a 280

The 140-character social media platform has officially doubled the character limit to 280. Some pros and cons of the change that educators should keep in mind:

### Pros

- **MORE USERS** — Those constrained by 140 may now jump in. More users = more chances to meet people and increase your following!
- **CREATIVITY** — More ways to make your tweets stand out. For example, using spaces to break up text can add a different look to your tweet.
- **FEWER ABBREVIATIONS** — No more scratching your head trying to figure out acronyms or awkwardly shortened words.

### Cons

- **LOSES INTEGRITY** — 140 made Twitter unique, and getting your message out in 140 is a specialized skill set.
- **BORING TWEETS** — We may see tweets that could have been more concise and readable. More space may make users lazier and less witty.

## ACRONYMS TO KNOW

Keep on top of what the kids are saying:

**AMA** – Ask Me Anything

**CYF** – Check Your Facebook

**F2F** – Face to Face

**IDC** – I Don't Care

**MTF** – More to Follow

**QOTD** – Quote of The Day

**TIL** – Today I Learned

Compiled by **Mike Myslinski**

**46%**

**Decrease in California student suspensions** from 2011-12 to 2016-17, due to educators using more effective discipline, the California Department of Education announced Nov. 1.

**\$190,000**

**Value of cash grants** that the CTA Disaster Relief Fund had provided by mid-November to 109 North Bay educators who lost homes or were otherwise impacted by the catastrophic October wildfires. Many more grants are still being processed. See coverage of CTA's response to the wildfires on page 64.

**146**

**Estimated number of Sonoma County teachers** who lost their homes in the October fires, in addition to at least 1,300 students who lost housing, according to the Sonoma County Office of Education.

**500**

**Number of days without a contract** reached in November by frustrated educators in two CTA chapters, the San Mateo Elementary Teachers Association and the Oceanside Teachers Association. SMETA reached a tentative agreement Nov. 30.

**\$3.2 BILLION**

**Additional funding that California public schools and community colleges can look forward to** in the 2018-19 school year under Proposition 98 minimum guarantees (a 4.3 percent increase), thanks to a robust state economy, the state Legislative Analyst's Office predicted in a Nov. 15 report.

**"I am proud California continues to lead the nation by teaching history/social science that is inclusive and recognizes the diversity of our great state and nation. Students will benefit enormously."**

—State Superintendent of Public Instruction **TOM TORLAKSON**, in his Nov. 9 news release on the State Board of Education adopting K-8 instructional materials aligned with the state's groundbreaking History–Social Science Framework. See story on page 12.

**"WE'RE JUST A FEW YEARS INTO THIS. I THINK IT'S PROFOUNDLY IMPORTANT TO SUPPORT THIS EFFORT."**

—Lt. Gov. **GAVIN NEWSOM**, praising the state's innovative Local Control Funding Formula, which supports low-income students, English learners and foster youths, quoted in a Nov. 7 EdSource article.

**"Gavin has long supported increased funding for education and is committed to making investing in students a top priority as governor."**

—CTA President **ERIC HEINS**, quoted in an Oct. 21 *Los Angeles Times* story about CTA State Council recommending Gavin Newsom for governor. See CTA candidate recommendations on page 43.

**"Thank you, CTA! I'm excited & humbled to get to work with California's teachers to ensure every California student gets a great education."**

—Assembly Member **TONY THURMOND**, in his Oct. 21 tweet reacting to his recommendation for state superintendent of public instruction by CTA State Council.

**"I love teaching and I love teaching you."**

—Huntington Beach science teacher **GREGORY GARDINER**, at an Oct. 31 student assembly in his honor at Edison High School, after being named one of five 2018 California Teachers of the Year. He was quoted in the *Orange County Register*, which described his Innovation Lab as a "hands-on STEM teaching and project-based learning space." See the Teachers of the Year story on page 62.

QUOTES & NUMBERS



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# WATCH OUT FOR THE WATER GUARDIANS

Students expand award-winning project into new conservation law

By Susan M. Pritchard

**T**wo years ago, six students from Washington Middle School in La Habra heeded my call to enter a national contest to identify an environmental issue and develop a plan to address it. This smart, all-female team named themselves the La Habra Water Guardians. They came up with a project to conserve water at our school. Under my guidance, they put in long hours of STEM-related research, experimenting and writing up their results after school and on weekends. They emerged victorious as first-place winners in the 2015-16 Lexus Eco Challenge, earning cash prizes for college (see sidebar, facing page).

Four of the original six Water Guardians carried the project even further, as they moved on to high school. Angeline Dequit, Jessica Gallegos, Skye Lim and Fiona Paredes, now sophomores, went on to propose legislation that expanded on their project. They just celebrated passage of Assembly Bill 1343, the Go Low Flow Water Conservation Partnership Bill, in July.

This came together because of their hard work and worthy cause — and because of networking and making connections. The Water Guardians' experience, which continues today as they help implement their legislation, is a powerful lesson in learning, connecting and making an impact.

## Reducing water usage in schools

AB 1343 aims to reduce water usage in schools and educate students about water conservation. It encourages collaboration between school districts and their water suppliers: Districts use the suppliers' conservation expertise to develop curriculum for their students, and water companies give rebates to districts to replace high-flow devices with low-flow fixtures. Since nearly 67



Educator and Water Guardians adviser Susan Pritchard, Jessica Gallegos, Skye Lim, Fiona Paredes, Angeline Dequit, and Assembly Member Phillip Chen.

percent of California's K-12 schools have toilets using 5 gallons per flush, replacing these with low-flow versions alone will save the state over 20 million gallons of water — *per day*.

But before the legislation came to pass, the Water Guardians had to muster support for their middle school project, called the Water Conservation Master Plan. They met with key school and community members. They sponsored a water-themed school dance that raised more than \$600 to help implement a campus drought-resistant garden, part of their plan. They met with the La Habra City School District board.

We all began to realize that the plan had broader applications. At the end of 2015, the Water Guardians started to speak to various organizations, beginning with one-on-one meetings in my classroom lab. These meetings were inspired by my experiences as a teacher member of the California Council on Science and Technology's California Teachers Advisory Council (CCST's CaTAC).



At left, Vanessa Canchola, Dequit, Assembly Member Cristina Garcia, Lim, Gallegos, Alma Spicher and Pritchard. Below, the Water Guardians are honored by La Habra City Council.



**“The team practiced often my long-learned adage: Take a ‘no’ and change it into a ‘maybe’ or a ‘yes’ through compromise.”**

CalTAC, on which I served from 2007 to 2011, is all about making connections between the classroom and the world of public and education policy. The relationship I developed during that time with the office of then-Assembly Member Bob Huff and his director, Tim Shaw, enabled us to get the Water Guardians the attention they deserved.

The team met with Shaw and gave him a strong presentation, which led to many more. They began to write a legislative proposal that could work statewide. With the blessings of the school board and superintendent, they wowed the city council, the Rotary Club, the Lions Club, the Metropolitan Water District Water Quality Control Board, the Whittier League of Women Voters, Assembly Member Cristina Garcia and her FIGs (Fellows in Government Program students), and the Cal Poly Pomona School of Engineering.

The Water Guardians were honored by the city council, and local water company President Jim Byerrum contributed \$5,000

to their plan. The Cal Poly students helped with water calculations for the proposal. The state Legislature presented the team with proclamations of recognition and achievement.

### **Lessons in getting a law passed**

Despite these and other accolades, we were not able to make headway with the proposal. But the team practiced often my long-learned adage: Take a “no” and change it into a “maybe” or a “yes” through compromise.

In early 2017, I took a chance and wrote a heartfelt plea to Assembly Member Phillip Chen. I explained the Water Guardians’ passion and commitment, and asked for consideration to be made for their proposal.

Nearly a week passed, when I received an amazing email from his office stating that he and his staff were not only interested, but had researched the viability of the proposal with local water companies and had decided to put forth a placeholder bill

## **A WINNING PLAN**

**IN AUGUST 2015**, Washington Middle School STEM teacher Susan Pritchard urged students in all her classes to consider entering the national Lexus Eco Challenge. Six took her up on it. Conscious of California’s ongoing drought, Vanessa Canchola, Angeline Dequit, Jessica Gallegos, Skye Lim, Fiona Paredes and Alma Spicher looked at the school’s water use and devised plans for drought-tolerant landscaping, drip irrigation, and watering two days instead of three. They also recommended getting low-flow toilets and automatic faucets.

The Water Guardians, as they named themselves, said these changes could reduce Washington’s water use by at least 30 percent.

With Pritchard as their adviser, the team also designed an “e-packet” — a tool to distribute educational ideas on water conservation — available online for international audiences. Their project won the Middle School First Place Prize in the 2015-16 Lexus Eco Challenge, which came with cash prizes for college.

## “The Water Guardians have blossomed into confident ambassadors of water conservation for our great state. I could not be prouder.”

prior to the February deadline for this year’s legislative actions. I remember being beyond excited when I shared the news with the team.

Their work on the proposal went into high gear. Their energy level never diminished.

In April, Chen and one of his staff met in my classroom with the Water Guardians, two school board members, our superintendent and the school principal. The team shared their ambitions and family history with the legislator, and he did the same with them. I am privileged to have witnessed all parties’ grace and passion.

Chen agreed to support the proposal, and introduced the legislation in the

Assembly. Jessica and Fiona testified before the Assembly Education Committee in Sacramento on behalf of the legislation. The bill also had to work its way through several other Assembly and Senate committees.

AB 1343 passed the Assembly on May 4, and the Senate on July 3. On July 21, AB 1343 was signed into law. To the best of our knowledge and research, this bill is the first ever in the history of California to be a K-12-proposed piece of legislation that is now a law.

It has been an incredible journey of learning, diligence, determination, humility and the power of team effort. The young girls I first worked with in 2015 have grown and matured into

amazing young women. They have blossomed into confident ambassadors of water conservation for our great state. I could not be prouder.

What is the team doing now? Well, they have not yet gone to Disneyland, but they are hard at work creating curriculum for the After School Water Guardian Conservation Clubs they want to support in our local schools. ■

*Susan M. Pritchard, La Habra Education Association, is a National Board Certified Teacher of science and engineering at Washington Middle School in La Habra. To learn more about the Water Guardians, see [drpstem.com](http://drpstem.com).*

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# A Media Master

## *John Dalton inspires students, love of filmmaking*

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

**WHEN ASKED** what he likes best about what he does, it takes John Dalton a few moments to gather his thoughts, because there are so many things he loves about teaching Digital Filmmaking 1 and 2 at Alameda High School.

“I love helping young adults express themselves using video and multimedia technologies. I love helping them tap into their creativity, and helping them explore college and career opportunities. I love igniting a spark in them so they can explore their creative instincts and not be judged. This job makes you feel validated. What could be cooler?”

His enthusiasm and dedication earned him the title Alameda Teacher of the Year in 2014-15. At that time, he told local media, “I couldn’t feel more ecstatic, honored and humbled. It’s unbelievable. It’s really the students that got me here, and this affirms I’m doing something right by them. My students have been amazing — and they continue to inspire me.”

Students are also inspired by Dalton. In addition to being dedicated, charismatic and enthusiastic, he has overcome enormous challenges. When he was a teenager, he came down with a bacterial infection that nearly killed him and required amputation of both legs, his right hand, and his left fingers down to the knuckle. But Dalton never let his physical challenges define him.

The doctors were able to create a space between Dalton’s first two hand bones so he could hold items and even resume playing the bass guitar. His band is named Angry Amputees (although Dalton is the only one) and has traveled the world. One of their songs was featured on the soundtrack for the video game Tony Hawk’s Underground, which won an MTV Video Music Award for best soundtrack. The band is now planning a reunion tour.

Film became a passion for Dalton. In college he would write short stories in margins and then visualize them as scenes. He took a screenwriting class, and even now, his favorite part of filmmaking is screenwriting and editing.

Dalton started out as a media consultant at Alameda High School in 2007, and became a full-time instructor in 2008, teaching TV/media, digital filmmaking and multimedia arts, as well as the school’s AVID program. Long an advocate of career technical education (CTE), he has worked to align his TV/media program with Laney College’s film and video classes to create a smooth transition for high school students seeking



**“I love helping young adults express themselves using video and multimedia technologies. I love igniting a spark in them so they can explore their creative instincts and not be judged.”**

to further their studies. He recently created an advanced digital media film class and has applied for his classes to be “a-g” certified (eligible toward university admission). Dalton also developed, launched and now manages the public-access television stations NextGen TV Channel 29 for Alameda Unified School District and the city of Alameda.

The school community can stay tuned for some exciting changes, says Dalton.

“We’ve had architects look at my classroom over the last week, and using city of Alameda funds matched with state funding, the room will be converted into a public-access TV station managed by the city. My classroom will move next door. And a work experience program will launch for advanced students



looking to get a foothold in the industry, whereby they can be hired (with pay!) directly into the newly created Community Media Center.”

His advice for surviving an era of CTE cutbacks is simple, but it’s worked:

their productions in class, often collaboratively, have won awards at local film festivals. Dalton says he is extremely proud of the films they create.

He describes his teaching style as a mix

Dalton’s classes in TV/media, digital filmmaking and multimedia arts are very popular with students. He is also planning a work experience program for students at a new community media center situated next to his classroom at Alameda High School.

“Make your class so popular that the district wants to keep it, and recruit students of all ages.” Recently his digital filmmaking program was expanded to neighboring Encinal High School.

Several students whom Dalton has instructed to “go make a movie” and who edit

of being “loose, interactive and academic,” and comments, “You have to keep students on point, because it’s easy for them to get distracted in this kind of class. You have to keep them in the zone.”

Students love his positive energy and use words like “passion,” “expertise” and “dedication” to describe Dalton, who is vice president of the Alameda Education Association.

“Entertainment is something big in my generation, and I love learning how to do it in ways that are advanced,” says Kahlim Davis. “Our teacher really knows his stuff. I’m looking forward to making movies in this class that will tell stories of my generation in interesting ways.” ■

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In Dave Menshew's forensics class, Isaac Duarte and Elizabeth Figueroa inspect fingerprints on glasses as they try to solve a "crime."



ON THE

# LEADING EDGE

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

Educators have always been resourceful and responsive to the varying needs of students — adapting lessons, searching for the right texts and tools, conjuring creative scenarios where students can explore and learn. In this sense, innovation is simply what you do every day.

**THERE ARE ALSO** growing numbers of educators who go beyond “routine” innovation, exceeding what is considered possible, and extending the limits of the learning landscape. We salute a few such innovators in this, our third annual Innovation Issue.

Chris Collins, for example, knowing the intense connections kids make through team sports, created an athletic league for his continuation high school students when he found out there was no reason not to. Courtney Coffin jumped on Chromebooks accidentally delivered to her classroom to teach her special ed students how to blog, send and receive emails, and

communicate in multiple other ways. Emalyn Leppard oversees the school garden — and now uses its bounty for monthly dinners prepared in a revamped home ec classroom by students and their families, whose live cooking demos showcase native foods and culture.

“People can share a piece of themselves that wouldn’t happen in an ordinary classroom,” says Leppard.

Innovators such as Leppard and the others we highlight on the following pages share themselves — their knowledge, passions and personalities — in novel and nurturing settings to stir students’ imagination and spark new ideas.



# DAVE MENSHEW

## Bringing CSI to the Central Valley

Modesto Teachers Association **HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE TEACHER** Modesto Unified School District

**T**he outline of a body. Bloody footprints and shoe. Hair strands in a comb. A single earring on the floor.

It's eerie discovering their classroom has been transformed into a gruesome crime scene, but students take it in stride.

Science teacher Dave Menshew asks them to figure out what happened to "Matthew," a spoiled and unpopular young man who went missing after a wild party at his beach house and who later turned up dead. They review a list of possible "suspects," don lab coats and goggles, then form groups to solve "The Case of the Missing Millionaire," based on clues scattered around the lab.

Making science come alive through simulated pop culture scenarios is something Menshew has been doing for over a decade, as founder of the Forensics and Biotech Academy at Enochs High School in Modesto. Designed to stimulate

student interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), the four-year high school program may be the only one of its kind in the nation, says Menshew. Initially, 156 students enrolled; now it's close to 400.

"I think my classes are novel; they are not like other science classes," says the Modesto Teachers Association member, who was raised in Modesto. "My students are doing really advanced stuff."

Indeed, they are. Each year the Hitachi Corporation loans the program a \$73,000 scanning electron microscope so students can study different types of evidence including fingerprints, hair, fibers and blood. Students also do DNA amplification using polymerase chain reaction (PCR), a technique used to copy a segment of DNA across several orders of magnitude into thousands to millions of copies. Since 2014, the program has had a highly equipped educational PCR lab,

with each of its 10 lab stations featuring mini thermal cyclers linked to HP laptops for real-time experimental display.

Recently, Maya Lim, co-inventor of a new desktop 3-D bioprinter, delivered the first such unit in the Central Valley to Menshew's classroom. Students use the printer to print bacteria, algae, proteins and food base materials.

Menshew also uses zombie simulations to study blood-spatter disease. In 2014, his students were invited to CSU Stanislaus to share their forensic activities at a public science outreach event. They set up classrooms as postapocalyptic scenes, with "zombies" prepared by professional makeup artists. The event attracted hundreds of visitors and engaged learners of all ages, and has been repeated at other outreach events.

To qualify as a California Partnership Academy program, 51 percent of the Forensics and Biotech Academy students





Menshew's students don lab coats and goggles to study the "crime scene" for clues and evidence.

**"SCIENCE IS AMAZING,  
BUT IT CAN ALSO BE  
EXTREMELY SUBJECTIVE.  
EVEN THE BEST  
FORENSICS IN THE  
WORLD IS JUST A GUESS."**

are considered "at risk," and Menshew understands this population well. Prior to teaching, he volunteered at a local juvenile justice facility to shift the path of offenders to jobs and careers. He found it so fulfilling that he sold his retail corporation (with sales in excess of \$7.5 million annually), entered the teaching profession, and never looked back. That was nearly 25 years ago.

His program shows excellent results. Students score higher on standardized tests in multiple subjects compared with their same-school, district and state peers. According to state data, 78 percent of students in the program were found to be "advanced" or "proficient" in 2013.

His students share their knowledge by teaching lessons at neighboring elementary, middle and high schools. And Menshew recently created "Cocina Ciencia," which teaches Latina mothers

how to perform science experiments in the kitchen with their students.

As for what happened to Matthew? "I never say who done it," says Menshew with a smile. It's mostly about the process, not the product, he explains, and this way he can reuse the simulation on a different class. He isn't surprised that student groups analyzing the same evidence reach different conclusions about who is the murderer.

"There's no right or wrong," says Menshew, who is currently studying for a doctorate in education in organizational leadership at Brandman University. "It's just like a real crime, where everything is a guess and you can get everything right and go to court and someone could walk. Science is amazing, but it can also be extremely subjective. Even the best forensics in the world is just a guess."



Kelly's class often starts with student teams solving math problems in a game she created.

## MEAGAN KELLY

*Taking tech to the next level*

*Hesperia Teachers Association*  
**SEVENTH-GRADE MATH TEACHER; AVID COORDINATOR; SCHOOL SITE TEAM TECH LEADER**  
*Hesperia Unified School District*

If you Google Meagan Kelly, you'll find a Google expert. She's doing amazing things in her classroom at Cedar Middle School to foster student engagement, as well as helping colleagues transition to a high-tech world.

You'll also discover she was one of 36 participants from around the world selected for the Google for Education Certified Innovator program. Applicants were chosen based on professional experience, their passion for teaching and learning, their innovative use of

technology in school settings, and their potential impact on other educators.

Learning she would be part of the #LON17 cohort was “one of the most exciting moments of my career — actually, one of the most exciting moments of my life,” says the Hesperia Teachers Association member.

The London gathering in April lasted just three days, but it launched a yearlong program where participants are assigned a Google coach/mentor to assist them with their vision to change education. Kelly’s project, called BoostEDU, will launch later this year and is designed to guide teachers step by step in transforming their lessons through technology that engages students.

Before becoming a Google Innovator, she was a Google Certified Educator/Trainer. Through numerous conversations with teachers, live and on Twitter, she became aware that educators need more support integrating technology in their classrooms. Some are confused

**“YOUR COMFORT ZONE IS YOUR DANGER ZONE. TEACHERS MUST KEEP LEARNING, GROWING AND MODELING THIS BEHAVIOR IF WE EXPECT STUDENTS TO DO THE SAME.”**

about how to use technology creatively, she observes, while tech-savvy teachers are eager to take tech to the next level.

“Because of this, I wanted to develop a program to personalize professional development for teachers, the way we personalize learning for students,” explains Kelly. “I wanted educators to see that incorporating purposeful technology for students is not difficult. It’s not impossible. If anything, it’s fun and exciting to transform and redesign classrooms.”

BoostEDU has four basic steps:

- Find an original lesson, activity or project you’ve done.

- Complete a self-assessment of the project based on a 21st century learning model, such as SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification and Redefinition), which helps teachers convert content from outdated to modern delivery methods.
- Create a new lesson through a self-guided, inquiry-based process.
- Receive feedback on your new lesson from an online community.

Kelly has already created a BoostEDU website to help educators accomplish this. It has assessment tools, lesson design formats and crowd-sharing options to guide teachers in transforming lessons into 21st century learning experiences.

Strategies include incorporating Google Docs, Google Sheets and Google Slides into the classroom, which are respectively word processing, spreadsheet and presentation apps, all part of

Google’s free Web-based office suite. Another favorite is the Kami markup tool for students, which she calls “a great resource for viewing, annotating, sharing and collaborating on

PDFs and documents within the Chrome browser.”

Last year, she “flipped” her classroom using EDpuzzle, a program that allows users to select a video and customize it by editing, cropping, recording audio, and adding questions to make an engaging presentation or lesson; and Screencastify, an extension for Google Chrome that allows educators to record their screen activity for creating tutorials, etc. Her students now view lessons at home on their devices, and spend class time collaborating on creative projects.

“I love my flipped classroom, and

Meagan Kelly with the tools of her trade.



students love it,” says Kelly. “Before, homework was always an assignment with a set of problems. Students would often struggle on the assignment and come into class confused and frustrated. Why not leave more time in class for practice, project-based learning, and fun activities that will excite and engage students?”

She begins some classes with Break-out EDU Digital activities where student groups collaborate to solve math problems in a game Kelly created, such as unlocking virtual “locked” boxes by providing correct answers to math questions, based on clues she provides.

“It’s fun,” says student Abigail Sicairos. “It encourages us to work together and work harder.”

Recently, Kelly built curriculum to support The Stock Market Game ([stockmarketgame.org](http://stockmarketgame.org)), where students invest virtual money and track it throughout the school year. The program teaches valuable math and life lessons.

“I love coming up with new ideas to support both students and teachers,” says Kelly, who shares tips at numerous conferences as well as on Twitter, her YouTube channel and her blog. “I firmly believe your comfort zone is your danger zone. Teachers must keep learning, growing and modeling this behavior, if we expect students to do the same.”

You can visit Kelly’s blog, [i♥EDU \(i-heart-edu.com\)](http://i-heart-edu.com), or her YouTube channel ([bit.ly/2gkknX9](http://bit.ly/2gkknX9)).



Leppard tests a water sample from the fish pond with Linda Tran and Ventura Arreola.



# EMALYN LEPPARD

*Health and wellness maven*

San Diego Education Association

**GARDEN HEALTH AND WELLNESS COORDINATOR AND STEAM RESOURCE TEACHER**

San Diego Unified School District

**“[OUR FAMILY DINNERS ARE] A WAY FOR OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY TO SHARE A PIECE OF THEMSELVES THAT WOULDN’T HAPPEN IN AN ORDINARY CLASSROOM.”**

**W**hen Emalyn Leppard walks by, students sometimes toss their junk food into the trash cans. When she sees that, the teacher knows she is making a difference.

Leppard founded the Comprehensive Health and Wellness Program at Montgomery Middle School in 2015 to help students and families make healthy choices. Aside from encouraging a healthier lifestyle, the program fosters a strong sense of community through fun activities and a shared purpose.

“Studies show that today’s young people are the first generation whose members are dying from preventable diseases including heart problems, arterial sclerosis and diabetes,” says Leppard, a San Diego Education Association member. “Studies show they may even have shorter lives than their parents. I’m doing whatever I can do to change that. I want my students to have a different mindset and understand they are what they eat.”

The school’s garden, which she has overseen since 2005, is the crown jewel of the program. Students grow herbs, fruits and vegetables that are served in the cafeteria





Students created a Zen garden in a corner of the larger garden. Leppard tests out the steps.

as part of the Garden to Café program in San Diego Unified School District.

Last year's grant from CTA's Institute for Teaching has taken the garden to a higher level at Montgomery, a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) magnet school where Leppard is Garden Health and Wellness coordinator.

The school's home economics room, which had fallen into disrepair, is now spruced up and used by eighth-graders she dubs the "Power Rangers," who cook healthy meals using food from the garden. Before the cooking classes started, she applied to Lowe's for a grant, and the home improvement giant donated three ovens, a dishwasher and a refrigerator.

Leppard organizes monthly "family dinners" with live cooking demonstrations that include garden foods accompanied by lively discussions about native foods and culture. Recently a Vietnamese family demonstrated how

to make spring rolls, and attendees found them delicious.

"It's a way for our school community to share history, culture and a meal together," says Leppard, a STEAM resource teacher and 2010 San Diego Unified Middle School Teacher of the Year. "People can share a piece of themselves that wouldn't happen in an ordinary classroom. It has strengthened school and community relations and is fostering a positive, forward-looking culture of healthy living on and off campus."

One teacher uses the garden for science lessons to study such things as photosynthesis, composting and soil testing. A math teacher

has students use the garden to calculate space for crops and measure how much fertilizer or water to add.

Recently an aquaponics component was added to the garden, teaching students how to raise tilapia. While there has been much talk of making fish tacos, the students became attached to the fish as pets. So for now, they are off-limits for eating.

Because stress relief plays an important role in overall wellness, students created a Zen garden in a corner of the garden.

"This is a place where students can relax and be at home with their thoughts," says student Ventura Arreola. "Plus, it's a nice place to hang out."

The focus on wellness and gardening has changed the school culture, observes Leppard. "More people are paying attention and asking how they can get involved. We're sharing more, and we've become closer. I love the cultural shift."



# NONI REIS

*Working toward cultural competency*

California Faculty Association  
**PROFESSOR OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**  
 San Jose State University

**LONG BEFORE** "cultural competency" became a priority in public schools, Senorina (Noni) Reis was busy creating multicultural, relevant curriculum to help culturally and linguistically diverse students succeed. Decades later, she's still at it.

Schools have made strides, but there are times Reis still has to convince educators that it's necessary to incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy into classroom materials and instructional strategies. Not so long ago, some may recall, students from other cultures were seen as having "deficits" that needed to be overcome for assimilation.

Fortunately, thanks to the efforts of Reis and other social justice activists, that kind of thinking has been replaced



Reis with several of her graduate students at San Jose State University.

with the goal of achieving cultural competency, based on the philosophy of building on students' cultural strengths to promote their achievement and their sense of well-being in the world.

"I have an unwavering belief and philosophy that cultural relevance must happen if equity is our goal," says Reis, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at San Jose State University. She incorporates this philosophy in teaching graduate students as well as in research on social justice leadership. "As teachers, we need to be activists and not perpetuate the status quo. We must be agents of change when it comes to improving education for all students."

The California Faculty Association member knows a thing or two about organizing and change. As a teenager, she helped United Farm Workers in Salinas Valley with its organizing efforts.

Reis taught preschool, kindergarten and first grade, and was an elementary school principal. She has been a mentor teacher and lecturer in the credential

program at UC Santa Cruz. She has also been a BTSA (Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment) provider and helped create the first unit for that program about equity and multiculturalism in schools — one of her proudest achievements.

During three decades of developing instructional programs to help educators effectively teach English learners, she led the development of several state and national curriculum and coaching programs, including with the California Department of Education and NEA.

Her most recent contribution has been through the Instructional Leadership Corps. ILC, a CTA project in partnership with the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education and the National Board Resource Center at Stanford University, is at the forefront of educator-driven professional development to benefit all schools and students.

Reis' involvement with ILC includes working with teachers in the local regions, and with CalTeach interns. She created a series of ILC lessons designed to help teachers implement the new

standards, "Building Blocks for a Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," which she presented at CTA's Summer Institute in August. The three building blocks are:

- **Vision** — Implementing your vision for a culturally relevant pedagogy with challenging curriculum. This might include providing an interactive learning environment or having students collaborate at tables instead of sitting in rows.
- **Curriculum approaches** — Levels for multicultural education include language development, contextualization, challenging activities, and instructional conversations. The highest level takes a social justice approach, where students address issues within their own community, such as recycling or DACA.
- **Pedagogy** — The delivery of rigorous, culturally responsive lessons that address the sociopolitical context of schools. The goal is to engage students through dialogue and encourage them to use questioning to foster critical thinking skills.

"Seeing teachers embrace and implement these changes for the good of their students is my biggest reward," says Reis.

**"I HAVE AN UNWAVERING BELIEF AND PHILOSOPHY THAT CULTURAL RELEVANCE MUST HAPPEN IF EQUITY IS OUR GOAL."**





# COURTNEY COFFIN

*Empowering students with challenges through tech*

*Escondido Secondary Teachers Association* **SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER** *Escondido Union High School District*

**“WE OFFER HIGH EXPECTATIONS, AND THEY MEET THEM. THESE ARE THINGS THEY WILL BE ABLE TO DO THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES.”**

**IN COURTNEY COFFIN’S** special education classroom, students with moderate to severe disabilities are blogging and sending and receiving emails. It began when Chromebook computers were accidentally delivered to Coffin’s classroom. And she didn’t send them back.

She expected her students with moderate to severe disabilities at Orange Glen High School would make good use of them. She wasn’t disappointed.

Coffin isn’t surprised that technology opens doors for students, by allowing them to communicate with one another and the world. Technology also prompts students to become more excited about learning and more focused. For example, students recently used their laptops to follow along with their teacher’s

PowerPoint presentation on the Seven Wonders of the World.

Coffin has fought to obtain communication devices for students unable to speak, and some of her students finally found their voice.

Maria uses a DynaVox speech generating device. “I want to buy a white prom dress with silver shoes,” she says, smiling from ear to ear.

The device allows educators to preprogram words that students can string together through touching the screen to create sentences and express themselves. Maria loves to tell people “You’re crazy” while laughing with good humor.

“Maria likes attention and socializing and talking about things that are important to her, like we all like to do,” says Coffin.

Devices are also preprogrammed with images for food and drink, social expressions like “What’s your name?” and “Hello,” and pictures of activities they would like to do and facial expressions to



Coffin helps student Madori sign in so she can do her English lesson.

communicate feelings. There is even a photo of a bathroom so they can communicate personal needs. Email addresses are preprogrammed into their computers so they can communicate with their

teacher, parents and friends throughout campus.

Being able to say “I’m hungry,” “What’s for lunch?” or “I like that” makes her students feel empowered and much happier.

“We have students with really challenging behavior issues,” says Coffin. “But better communication has helped with these challenges.”

She tailors curriculum and devices to meet the needs of individual students. For example, a student who has only the use of her elbow can communicate with an iPad Pro pencil and joystick, which Coffin obtained for her. The student immediately asked when she would be able to take a nap and have her hair done. Other students have special apps on their computers that convert text to speech and emails.

“We offer high expectations for students, and they meet them,” says Coffin, who teaches all academic subjects and life skills such as cooking. “These are things they will be able to do throughout their lives.”

Coffin uses video and YouTube to celebrate her students’ victories and individuality, showcasing their creativity and desire for independence. Students send parents screenshots of their work to show off their progress. (For a video of her classroom, visit [bit.ly/2kUw5No](http://bit.ly/2kUw5No).)

When word spread about the amazing things happening in Coffin’s room, others came in to observe. Many said they were surprised Room 200 seemed more like a typical classroom than a special education environment.

“Visitors walk in and say, ‘It’s really different in here,’” laughs Coffin, a member of the Escondido Secondary Teachers Association, who received the 2016 Inspire Award from her district. “Hopefully, it will be this way in all special education classes one day.”

Garrison surrounded by students participating in his Shakespeare and rock ‘n’ roll after-school program.



# PAUL GARRISON

## *Much ado about something*

Hayward Education Association  
**SIXTH-GRADE TEACHER**  
Hayward Unified School District

### THE BARD and rock ‘n’ roll?

To get his students excited about William Shakespeare, Paul Garrison has them perform a complete Shakespearean production accompanied by live rock ‘n’ roll songs. Some students are actors; others are musicians and vocalists.

It’s a lot of work, but no one doth protest too much. Students, in fact, love it.

Garrison, a sixth-grade teacher at Ruus Elementary School in Hayward, started the after-school program for fifth- and sixth-graders seven years ago after hearing about a similar program in Southern California. Last year, CTA’s Institute for Teaching gave him a grant to support his innovative program, which has also received support from the Hayward Education Foundation.

“It’s funny, because I’ve heard that kids today can’t relate to Shakespeare, but his themes are actually very relatable,” says the Hayward Education Association member. “When we performed *Much Ado About Nothing*, kids could relate to one of the characters making a big deal about something that was not necessarily true, which happens all the time on social media. This year we are doing *The Tempest*, where a lot of





## MONEY TO FULFILL YOUR DREAMS

**SEVERAL EDUCATORS** featured in this section received grants from CTA's Institute for Teaching in support of their innovative projects. If you've got a great idea for your students, IFT wants to hear from you!

The deadline for 2018-19 grant applications is April 30, 2018. All active, dues-paying CTA members, including pre-K-12 teachers, certificated support staff, ESP members and college instructors, are eligible to apply. The selection committee looks for projects that improve student achievement, address needs of diverse or at-risk students, and have multiple partners/stakeholders, along with applicants who can manage the project and share learnings with colleagues.

Apply at [teacherdrivenchange.org](http://teacherdrivenchange.org). Get IFT input on your application and hear from grant recipients at the Teaching Innovation Expo prior to CTA's Good Teaching Conferences North and South; see [ctago.org](http://ctago.org) for dates.

Garrison says students can easily relate to characters' problems and issues in Shakespeare's plays. Music, of course, helps.

the characters find themselves trapped or stuck emotionally. It's not difficult to get my students to relate to these things."

Music helps. For the upcoming production of *The Tempest*, an accompanying song will be Nick Lowe's "Cruel to Be Kind," which reflects the struggle of a character who owes his life to someone, and then is called ungrateful for wanting his freedom.

The group of 25 to 30 students rehearse four days a week for 90 minutes at a time. Garrison teaches guitar and drums before school, and has former students teach keyboard to other students, many of whom have never played a note in their lives before signing up.

"There really isn't one type of student who participates," says Garrison. "We've had some wonderful actors who can speak super well, and others who you can barely hear and understand. We've had amazing musicians perform a full concerto on their own, and some who can barely play two notes in a row. We've had English learners — one of them was a lead character last year. The great thing is



Paul Garrison

**"IT TEACHES SO MANY THINGS. STUDENTS LEARN LANGUAGE, MUSIC, TEAMWORK, FOCUS, DISCIPLINE AND PRACTICE. IT BUILDS THEIR CONFIDENCE."**

that there's something for everyone, and all students can contribute and be part of a team, whether it's performing, working the sound and light system, or dancing"

Last year, student Isabella Barron

wrote a letter thanking him for the experience that transformed her life.

"It's hard to let go of something that has changed everything about me. I will miss Room 26 and Shakespeare. But as Dr. Seuss says, 'Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened.'"

The program is very popular, but Garrison recalls that when he first suggested it, others looked at him askance.

"They thought combining Shakespeare and rock was *interesting*. But it teaches so many things. Students learn language, music, teamwork, focus, discipline and practice. They understand Shakespeare better for their PSAT and SAT. It builds their confidence."

Garrison is excited as work gets under way for *The Tempest*, a story of reconciliation and forgiveness that is especially timely in today's climate. Students will perform their production multiple times at the end of the school year.

"I'm very proud of my students," he says. "And if Shakespeare were here today, he'd think what we do is pretty cool."





Reta Rickmers looks on as students Lily Vang and Nicole Clemons work the sewing machine. Below, vinyl stickers made by one of her students sold out in a day.



# RETA RICKMERS

*Blending art and commerce*

Chico Unified Teachers Association **HIGH SCHOOL ART TEACHER**  
Chico Unified School District

*Get a job. Make some money. Learn what it's like in the real world.*

Teens constantly hear this advice from their parents, but seldom in relationship to the arts, where “starving” is often associated with the word “artist.” Art teacher Reta Rickmers sees things differently.

In an experiment at Pleasant Valley High School in Chico last year, Rickmers asked her students to form teams — or work solo if they liked — to design and pitch workable, salable and creative business ideas. They had to develop a business plan, budget and logo, all of which were presented to an “entre-board,” an advisory board of local entrepreneurs who offered advice and opinions. Students then had to

create art products and sell them.

“As an artist who sells my artwork, I wanted my students to see being artistic as a way of making money,” says Rickmers, a member of the Chico Unified Teachers Association. “I believe in students’ can-do spirit and their ability to take matters into their own hands.”

Students were given start-up funds, which they had to pay back, but they were allowed to keep the profits. They designed and created their handiwork during class. Some made jewelry. Others made scented bath bombs, keychains, stickers, candles and soap. Some students hand-painted various items such as pots for plants, light switches and purses from thrift shops.

Her program, which she dubbed ARTrepreneurs, received a one-year grant from CTA’s Institute for Teaching. She admits that in the beginning, she had no idea how her “grand experiment” would turn out. It exceeded all her expectations.

Most students sold their artwork and made a profit at a crafts fair and in shops. The student who earned the most made vinyl stickers, which became a hit with high school and college students who plastered them on water bottles and laptops. The student found a company willing to print 100 of them for \$100, sold them for \$3 apiece, and ordered hundreds more after selling out in a day.

“It was great to see the kids being so innovative,” says Rickmers. “They learned that when you work hard and have a good work ethic, it pays off. They



learned you need to have good ideas and be creative. Some of the students didn't have good ideas, and when they didn't make money, they learned some important lessons."

**"THEY LEARNED THAT WHEN YOU WORK HARD AND HAVE A GOOD WORK ETHIC, IT PAYS OFF."**

Unlike in the real world, the few students who did not make money did not have to pay back the loan. But they had to prove they

did not make a profit. While teaching real-world lessons is important, so is having a heart and empathy, says Rickmers.

Afterward, many of her students said the experience was life-changing.

"They realized the importance of having a business plan, collaborating with team members, and self-reliance," she says. "They learned to take feedback from adults, because they had to pitch their ideas to local entrepreneurs before they started. If students received negative feedback, they had to modify their plan or change it. Everything they learned was connected to the real world. It was different than just showing up for class. They put their products out there for people to buy — and were thrilled when people did."

Student Vanessa Kim, who painted purses, said, "I learned that money goes quick, and the public is very picky. I definitely felt that I got a chance to experience what the marketing world is like."

This year Rickmers will have her students produce a fashion show of wearable art and create the couture from recycled materials such as used clothing, plastic, cardboard and tinfoil. The runway show, scheduled for spring, will be called "Phoenix," because the materials students use will rise from the ashes.

"Trying innovative things keeps my job fresh and exciting," says Rickmers, a teacher of 28 years. "For me, the best part is not knowing how it will all turn out."



# CHRIS COLLINS

*Continuation students get a league of their own*

Center Unified Teachers Association **SCIENCE, HEALTH AND PE TEACHER** Center Joint Unified School District

**W**hat's the secret to getting continuation school students to work harder and improve attendance? Chris Collins, a science, health and PE teacher at McClellan High School in Antelope, Sacramento County, found that one solution is to let them play team sports, just like students in comprehensive high schools.

Continuation students are typically those who can't succeed in regular high school due to attendance, behavior and academic issues. Most of their time is spent pursuing credit recovery so they can receive a diploma. Sports teams — a great motivator for students at traditional high schools — are usually lacking at continuation schools.

But that changed at McClellan when Collins decided his students deserved a league of their own. Initially, the idea came from them, says the Center Unified Teachers Association member.

"My students wondered why continuation students were not allowed to play sports," he recalls. "And they discovered there was nothing prohibiting it at all."

This realization led Collins to contact other continuation schools in Sacramento, Placer and Nevada counties to form a fledgling basketball league called the Alternative Athletic League in 2015-16. After a successful nine-week



Above, Chris Collins coaches students before a game. At right, he gives direction to a player during the break. “When they do well in sports,” he says, “kids start to believe they aren’t bad, and that ... they have intrinsic value and something to offer.”



season, he received a grant from CTA’s Institute for Teaching, which paid one-time costs for equipment and uniforms so the league could expand to include flag football, volleyball and softball. All sports are coed.

At first Collins wasn’t sure how students would respond when given the chance to play ball.

“We have kids who battle depression and anxiety,” he says. “Some are parenting themselves. We have one who is currently living in a car with his grandmother. They have bad habits and defense mechanisms that can get in the way. Our students have both fear of failure and fear of success.”

Despite significant challenges, many students signed up. But the league’s success, Collins explains, is due to coaches taking a different approach.

“Unlike teams at comprehensive high schools, anyone with good attendance and grades can play. And if they cuss or act out, they don’t get cut from the team. They are told to sit down, and then we figure out how to get them back on the field. We understand that these kids don’t always have the best social skills. Our goal

is to let them know we value them. We correct the action and value the child to get them back in the game.”

During a break from coaching an all-day flag football tournament at Roseville,

**“WE UNDERSTAND THAT THESE KIDS DON’T ALWAYS HAVE THE BEST SOCIAL SKILLS. OUR GOAL IS TO LET THEM KNOW WE VALUE THEM.”**

Collins says he isn’t at all surprised that team sports positively impact students beyond the playing field.

“Attendance has improved. Students put out more effort to keep their GPA up so they are eligible to play. And it has fostered connections and relationships between students and teachers.”

Shon Davis, a junior, considers Collins a role model. “He cares about us and tells us the truth, even if it’s not pretty. He’s taught us how to come together as a team. I feel more motivated.”

Junior Destiny Ramsey says playing flag football and other sports makes

her feel a sense of community. “I’m having fun and enjoying the connection with everyone on the team. I enjoy this program because it feels like family.”

Collins says the league is changing the way his community views continuation students — and the way students view themselves.

“Sometimes these kids are vilified,” he explains. “But when they do well in sports, success leads to more success. Kids start to believe they aren’t bad, and that they can learn things. They understand that they have intrinsic value and something to offer, like every human being.” ■

**KNOW AN INNOVATOR?**

**WE’RE ALWAYS** on the hunt for educators doing extraordinary work. If you know someone like this, send us their name and a summary of what they’re doing at [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org).



At Santa Rita Elementary, Avneesh Lande tries to grab “Earth” using mixed-reality technology from zSpace.

## ALTERNATE REALITIES:

# THE FUTURE IS HERE

*Virtual, augmented realities are tools for the classroom*

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

**FOR SECOND-GRADERS** at Shasta Meadows Elementary School in Redding, it’s time to swim with the sharks. The youngsters ooh and aah as the megamouth shark glides by, and then scream in excitement when the great white shark makes an appearance.

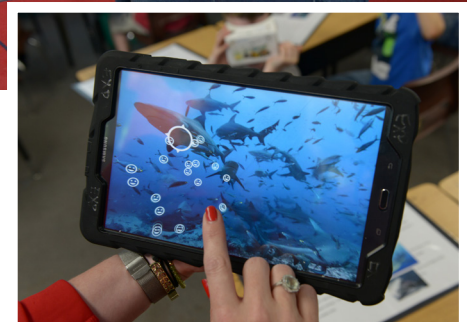
“Oh no, we are about to get eaten!” a student squeals.

The excitement is genuine, but the danger is not. The students are sitting safely in their seats, wearing “glasses” that look like cardboard boxes, immersed in a

virtual reality experience with their teacher and expedition guide Aimee Howland, president of the Enterprise Elementary Teachers Association. Technology coach Mark Lewin, also a member of EETA, assists so things run smoothly.

The Google Cardboard glasses provide students with a 3-D perspective and a 360-degree view of the underwater scene controlled by Howland on her Android tablet. This virtual field trip is fun but also educational, as students

Shasta Meadows Elementary teacher Aimee Howland guides her students as they “swim” with sharks.



**“WHEN YOU CAN MOTIVATE THEM WITH ENGAGING TECHNOLOGY, IT MAKES TEACHING REALLY FUN.”**

—AIMEE HOWLAND, ENTERPRISE ELEMENTARY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

learn about the life cycle of various shark species. Afterward, they write essays about the ocean’s most fearsome creatures and use their math skills to calculate the measurements of sharks.

“It’s a STEM [science, technology, engineering and math] lesson for them,” says Howland. “The kids are excited. When you can motivate them with engaging technology, it makes teaching really fun.”

“It’s amazing,” says student Nathan Jourdan. “It’s like you are really there.”

“I think it’s awesome,” exclaims classmate Maddie Lacinola. “It blows my mind.”

### **Beyond fun and games**

Virtual reality (VR) has long been part of video games, but developers have expanded to educational realms in recent years.

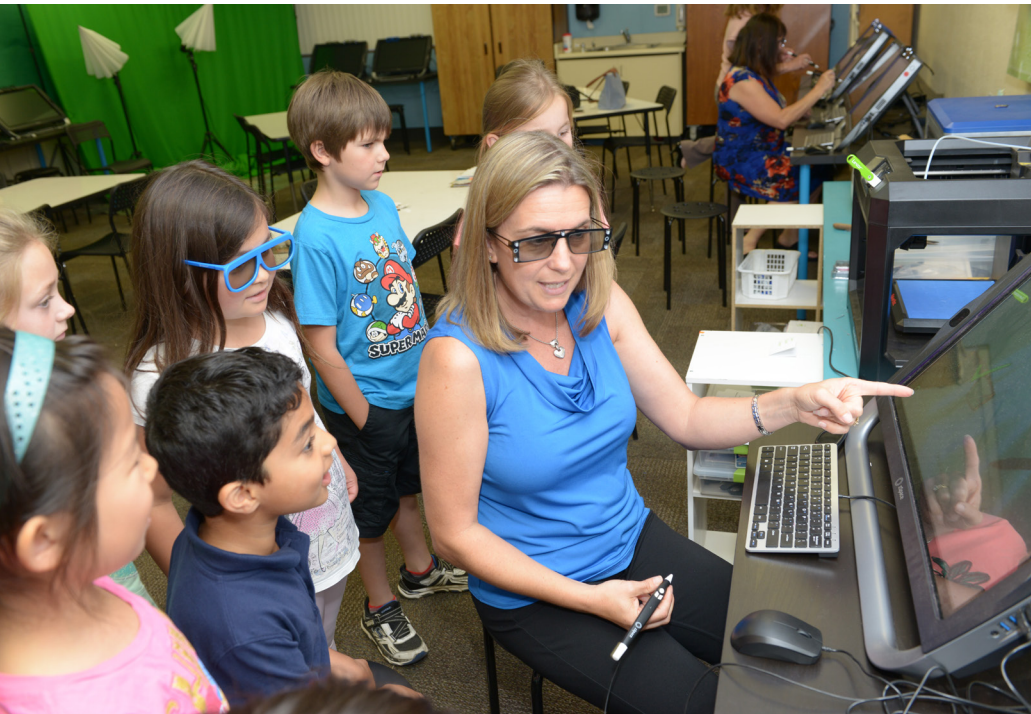
According to EdSource, there are more than 400 educational VR expedition or field trip options, including college and career tours.

In VR, participants wear a headset connected to a computer. Three-dimensional images are displayed on a screen inside the headset, and users control movement around the virtual environment with a handheld device — or with head or body movement. In some cases, the user can influence the environment. For example, a door may open if a user waves their hands, and a dinosaur might open its mouth if the user moves toward it.

The technology allows students to travel the world, visit distant planets, and draw shapes and structures in 3-D to help them better understand math. Some biology teachers are opting to replace animal dissection with VR because it isn’t messy and doesn’t traumatize students, allowing them to see a beating



Santa Rita Elementary STEM teacher Kelly Rafferty shows students how to work the special glasses and stylus.



Shasta Meadows Elementary STEM coach Mark Lewin with the Google Cardboard setup.



**“ [THIS] TECHNOLOGY MAKES SCIENCE COME TO LIFE IN THE CLASSROOM. IT HELPS STUDENTS STAY FOCUSED AND GIVES A SENSE OF PLAY — AND PURPOSE — TO WHAT THEY ARE DOING.”**

—KELLY RAFFERTY, LOS ALTOS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

heart and blood flowing through arteries that can't be viewed in dissected subjects.

Another technology, augmented reality (AR), brings virtual objects into the real world. AR lets students get up close to view a meteorite or a strand of DNA, for instance, which appears amid the real desks and students in the classroom.

These technologies increase comprehension of things that may be difficult to explain. For example, they can help students grasp how electrical current flows when they switch on a light. For students with special needs, VR and AR can provide opportunities they may otherwise not experience, such as diving into the ocean or climbing a mountain.

While they won't replace field trips or lab experiments, VR and AR can be a great supplement for educators and have limitless potential.

A 2016 study released by Samsung Electronics America finds that only 2 percent of teachers have used VR. But that may change as it becomes more accessible through Google and

other companies. Howland believes that as the Next Generation Science Standards are fully implemented — and software companies align their products to match the new standards — VR may become commonplace.

“The future is here,” she smiles.

### **Companies offer educational VR**

Google's VR system, dubbed “Cardboard,” is easy for teachers to utilize. It's part of Google's Expeditions Pioneer Program, which offers virtual journeys to more than 100 destinations, accompanied by educational content developed in partnership with organizations like PBS, the American Museum of Natural History, the Planetary Society, and the Wildlife Conservation Society. Expeditions kits (for 10, 20 or 30 students) include Cardboard viewers and Android phones for students and teacher, a teacher-operated tablet, and preinstalled software that keeps viewers synced together. You can buy a kit or build your own, to use along with an app from the App Store or Google Play.

San Francisco State University research shows that playing VR games offers exercise benefits.

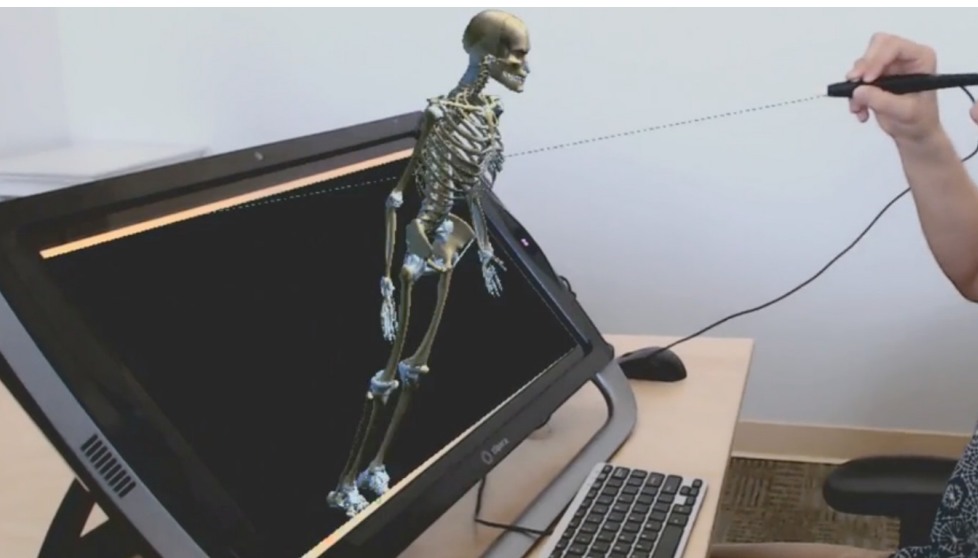


## WHAT'S YOUR REALITY?

**Virtual reality:** An umbrella term for all immersive experiences, which can be created using real-world content, computer-generated content, or a hybrid of both.

**Augmented reality:** An overlay of virtual content on the real world. A virtual dinosaur may appear to be in the classroom — but it can't eat a real student or physically interact with real objects. Think Pokémon GO or Google Glass.

**Mixed reality:** A merging of real and virtual worlds to produce new environments and visualizations where physical and digital objects coexist and interact in real time. Microsoft's HoloLens, which allows you to engage with holograms while anchored in your reality, is an example.



Technology from zSpace combines VR and AR to let students see and manipulate 3-D objects.

This fall, as part of the program, Google is introducing its AR component to classrooms, and is asking interested teachers and schools to sign up.

Other companies offering VR, AR and 3-D systems for schools are Sony, Samsung, Oculus (owned by Facebook) and Amazon. Lifelike (pronounced “lifelike”) offers more than 1,000 3-D images of plants, animals, and natural features like volcanoes and rivers. Students can click on a subject, zoom in, turn it around and examine it closely layer by layer.

Costs vary. Some apps are low-cost or free, but the equipment — headsets, earphones, etc. — can run anywhere from a few hundred dollars to \$1,000 per set. Some schools use funds from their Local Control Funding Formula to update technology programs, or grant money to purchase equipment. In Los Angeles, for example, a teacher received a grant to purchase two Oculus

VR sets costing approximately \$600 each on Amazon, which allow students to walk through buildings they've designed and view their work in immersive 3-D.

### 3-D pilot program

Inside a Los Altos classroom, students put on a pair of 3-D glasses to look at a computer monitor, and with a stylus pen in hand “pick up” the Earth from the screen, spin it around and examine the water cycle in 3-D. They watch in amazement as water evaporates from the surface of the earth, rises into the atmosphere, cools and condenses into rain or snow in clouds, and falls again as precipitation, refilling rivers, lakes and the ocean. Students zoom in and out to see phenomena such as snow melt and even tiny beads of water condensation.

The students at Santa Rita Elementary School are using



zSpace, an interactive and immersive 3-D platform. The Silicon Valley company, whose hardware, software and educational content combine virtual and augmented reality (see sidebar, page 37), has a partnership with Los Altos School District and is piloting this technology at Santa Rita.

“There are many activities in zSpace that give students a chance to manipulate scientific experiences that cannot be replicated in the classroom,” says STEM teacher Kelly Rafferty, a member of the Los Altos Teachers Association.

Students have been using zSpace to learn about the circulatory and respiratory systems over the last couple of years. It allows them to see inside a 3-D heart to learn how the valves work, and see the size and location of veins and arteries. They are able to feel the heart pumping through the stylus in their hand. The program is so advanced that even heart surgeons at nearby Stanford University are using it for training purposes.

“ZSpace is technology that makes science come to life in the classroom,” says Rafferty. “It helps students stay focused and gives a sense of play — but also purpose — to what they are doing.”

## VR helps students stay fit, too

While most assume youth immersed in virtual worlds are couch potatoes, a San Francisco State University professor believes that VR is a tool that can promote physical fitness in students.

In the first study of its kind in the U.S., the university’s Department of Kinesiology has researched the metabolic energy expended by students playing VR games and found they indeed offer exercise benefits and may be the wave of the future. While games on devices such as Wii promote physical fitness, they are viewed on a screen and do not immerse players in virtual worlds.



Marialice Kern

“We absolutely see VR exercise as something for PE classes,” says Marialice Kern, department chair and California Faculty Association member, who is leading the study. “The work we’ve been

doing for the last eight months shows you can get great exercise with VR and get as much of a workout as any conventional exercise if you choose the right games and play with interest and vigor.”

Kern and fellow researchers studied heart rate and oxygen consumption to determine how many calories were burned in subjects performing such activities as boxing in a virtual ring, dodging colorful orbs to a musical beat, and playing other games that immerse students in a 3-D world. The university collaborated with the newly established VR Institute of Health and Exercise, founded by a Silicon Valley entrepreneur to create VR

A volcano “explodes” in Google’s augmented reality video.



## GOOGLE EXPEDITIONS

**VR:** Google Expeditions VR kits (for 10, 20 or 30 students) include Cardboard viewers and Android phones for students and teacher, a teacher-operated tablet, and preinstalled software that keeps viewers synced together. You can buy a kit or build your own, to use along with an app from the App Store or Google Play. A kit for 10 students and the teacher is \$4,000 at Best Buy and other outlets. See [edu.google.com/expeditions](http://edu.google.com/expeditions) for more information.

**AR:** Google is introducing its Expeditions Pioneer Program for AR in schools now. The technology maps the physical classroom and places 3-D objects such as tornadoes and skeletal systems within that location. Students can walk around the objects, get in close to spot details, and step back to see the full picture. To sign up, go to [edu.google.com/expeditions/ar](http://edu.google.com/expeditions/ar).

exercise ratings that will eventually be published online.

When asked if immersing students in individual virtual worlds could be isolating — or dangerous if they bump into one another — Kern replies that eventually students will be able to play “virtual team sports” in school such as capture the flag or flag football.

“All it takes is that everybody on one team has their headset plugged into one computer,” she says. “The technology and the games are already here.” ■

See video of Aimee Howland’s class using VR to explore the world of sharks at [tinyurl.com/VR-Enterprise](http://tinyurl.com/VR-Enterprise). See our recommendations for VR apps to try with students in **Tech Tips** on page 58.



Demonstration teacher Yas-Meen West works with her students as new teachers observe.



# IT'S SHOW TIME


*San Bernardino demonstration teachers share exemplary practices with colleagues*

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

**Y**as-Meen West is teaching sixth-graders how to find the least common multiple in a math class at Cesar E. Chavez Middle School, but her lesson is accomplishing much more. She is also teaching new teachers how to integrate technology with the new standards, foster student engagement, and reinforce positive behavior.

With 34 students at their desks — and 11 teachers sitting on the sidelines — West has two audiences packed into a single room, plus a reporter and a photographer. Teaching in this environment is a balancing act, but she doesn't miss a beat.

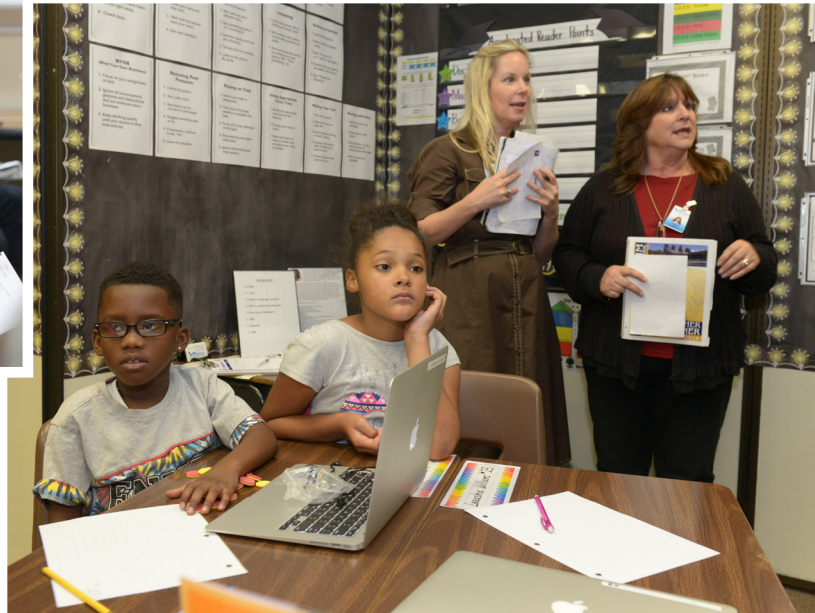
Fun, interactive exercises on the Smart Board actively engage students and stimulate frenzied notetaking by the adult observers. After some collaboration time for problem-solving, West praises students who come up with the correct answers, and offers encouragement to others such as “Thank you for trying” and “Thank you for being a risk-taker.” It's her way of letting new teachers know it's OK to take risks and try something new in their classrooms.

West is one of 34 “demonstration teachers” sharing exemplary teaching practices with colleagues in San Bernardino City Unified School District's 50 

Induction mentor Kim Campbell, left, with new teachers Gabby Rodriguez and Carmen Sterling observing class.



Above, Morgan Pellettera, lead teacher for San Bernardino's Demonstration Teacher Program, and James Hasset discuss West's lesson.



Students Cordell Hadnot and Leeashia Williams in Tracy Diekmann-Acuña's classroom. Induction mentor Krista Richardson and Jacqueline Lauer observe in back.

elementary schools, 11 middle schools, 10 high schools and four adult or alternative schools. The thinking is that the traditional professional development model — lecture and demonstrations — pales in comparison to seeing the real thing with students.

"I love it," says West, a San Bernardino Teachers Association (SBTA) member. "I wanted to help adults, but I didn't want to leave the classroom to become a coach. For me, being a demonstration teacher is the best of both worlds."

### Opening the classroom doors

Teaching often occurs behind closed doors in isolation from other adults. And teacher coaching is often done in private. Throwing open the classroom doors and inviting everyone in is something that rarely happens. In fact, it can make some teachers nervous.

But San Bernardino educators are determined to change that mindset.

"We realized that observing other teachers makes everyone a better teacher," says Morgan Pellettera, SBTA member and lead teacher for the Demonstration Teacher Program (DTP). "We

have all these amazing resources right in our own backyard — teachers, with a passion to share their skills and knowledge of Common Core State Standards [CCSS] and Next Generation Science Standards [NGSS] instruction. It makes sense to take advantage of all that expertise."

Krista Richardson, an induction mentor for the district and SBTA member, says the new teachers are indeed learning from the experts every time they walk through the doors of a demonstration classroom.

"New teachers sometimes struggle with just getting students to sit down and line up without talking," she explains. "They think they are the only ones who are struggling. But when they see how other teachers are creating a positive environment and staying organized, it's really helpful."

The DTP is a collaboration of SBTA members, CSU San Bernardino College of Education faculty, and the district, whose director of employee development, Mary

Pierce, set things in motion for the program to launch in 2014.

Beginning with just eight demonstration teachers, the program has expanded to 34. Teachers must apply to be demonstration teachers. The rigorous process includes an interview, observation, and a recommendation from the teacher's evaluator or principal to the superintendent.

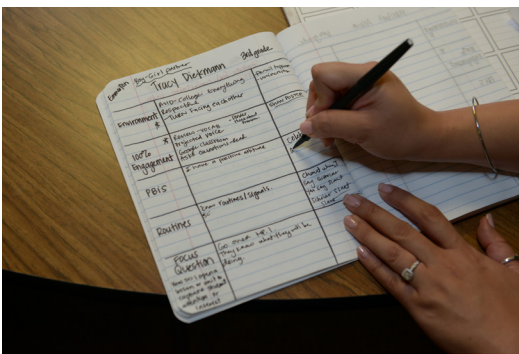
Once selected, they continue to teach their current classes, but are available for individual or group teacher visits, followed by a question and answer session. Demonstration teachers are considered "teaching program specialists," and receive a 5 percent salary increase. The district hires substitute teachers to take over for the classes of observing teachers.

Some of the demonstration teachers, including Pellettera, have been involved with CTA's Instructional Leadership



**“OBSERVING OTHER TEACHERS MAKES EVERYONE A BETTER TEACHER. WE HAVE AMAZING RESOURCES WHO HAVE A PASSION TO SHARE THEIR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE. IT MAKES SENSE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THAT EXPERTISE.”**

**—MORGAN PELLETTERA, SAN BERNARDINO TEACHERS ASSOCIATION AND LEAD TEACHER IN THE DEMONSTRATION TEACHER PROGRAM**



San Bernardino County Teacher of the Year and demonstration teacher Tracy Diekmann-Acuña.

Notes taken by an observing teacher in Diekmann-Acuña's class.

Corps (ILC), a project in partnership with the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education and the National Board Resource Center at Stanford University. ILC is at the cutting edge of teacher-driven professional development. Pellettera is also a National Board Certified Teacher, and is supporting a group of demonstration teachers who are working toward that goal.

Since 2015, teachers and principals from every site have participated in districtwide “Instructional Rounds,” focusing on best practices in demonstration classrooms. More than 750 educators, including new and veteran teachers, have visited the classrooms to learn and observe.

### Videos expand audience

To share examples of good teaching with a wider audience, the DTP films lessons. The district hired an instructional videographer, who produces about 15 videos per year, each between three and nine minutes.

So far there are more than 65 videos, several of which are featured on the California Department of Education’s website as an exemplary resource for teachers. They are also being used by AVID in their professional development conferences. The videos have had nearly 130,000 views and have been shown in 49 countries.

The online videos and word of mouth have prompted other districts to visit San Bernardino. Some districts, such as

Ontario-Montclair, have expressed interest in implementing a similar program.

In addition to modeling lessons and starring in videos, demonstration teachers present at conferences, use social media to increase awareness of DTP, share and publish lesson plans, and provide in-service training to keep colleagues abreast of new CCSS and NGSS developments. The district also provides each demonstration teacher with \$2,000 a year to spend on the conferences of their choice, so they can stay at the forefront of educational best practices.

It’s a big responsibility but worth it, says demonstration teacher Tracy Diekmann-Acuña, a third-grade teacher at Emmerton Elementary who was recently named San Bernardino County Teacher of the Year.

“Unless you try to do something beyond what you have mastered, you will never grow,” says Diekmann-Acuña, an SBTA member. “Being a





Student Vladimir Leiva Rivas is ready to answer a question in Diekmann-Acuña's class.

## THE DEMONSTRATION TEACHER PROGRAM

SEE A SHORT VIDEO on the program, which includes interviews with three demonstration teachers including Tracy Diekmann-Acuña, at [tinyurl.com/SBDemonstrationTeacherProgram](https://tinyurl.com/SBDemonstrationTeacherProgram).

For videos of demonstration teachers conducting lessons, see [vimeo.com/sanbdocityschools/videos](https://vimeo.com/sanbdocityschools/videos).

Diekmann-Acuña explains a lesson to students while new teachers look on.

**“UNLESS YOU TRY TO DO SOMETHING BEYOND WHAT YOU HAVE MASTERED, YOU WILL NEVER GROW. BEING A DEMONSTRATION TEACHER IS NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART. BUT I HAD SOME INCREDIBLE MENTORS WHEN I BEGAN MY CAREER, AND I WANTED TO PAY IT FORWARD.”**

—TRACY DIEKMANN-ACUÑA, SAN BERNARDINO TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

demonstration teacher is not for the faint of heart. At times it can be uncomfortable. But I had some incredible mentors when I began my career, and I wanted to pay it forward.”

### Visiting teachers debrief

West’s lesson on least common multiples comes to an end, and the visiting teachers gather with her and their induction mentors to review what they observed.

“I really like the way Yas-Meen incorporates technology into the lesson,” comments Gabby Rodriguez, a second-year sixth-grade teacher at Gomez

Elementary School. “I want to use technology as openers in my lessons.”

Carmen Sterling, a second-year sixth-grade teacher at Muscoy Elementary, says she loves the routine students follow.

“The kids come in and know exactly what to do,” she says with admiration. “I love how she does call and response with claps to keep them engaged and focused, and she broke up the technology part of the class with table talk and collaboration to check their understanding.”

Nubia Ortega, a second-year fourth-grade teacher at Hunt Elementary, says she admires the “student growth mindset”

that motivates students to keep trying for the right answer.

“I love how she encourages risk-takers and makes them feel comfortable. I will be doing that in my classroom.”

For West, having visitors around keeps things interesting and makes her job more rewarding.

“Hearing them say ‘Thank you’ and hearing that I’ve helped them makes everything worthwhile.” ■

## CTA's primary candidate recommendations

**IN OCTOBER**, CTA State Council of Education voted to recommend candidates for key statewide offices in the 2018 election, including governor and state superintendent of public instruction (SPI). This year all offices are up for election, including state Senate, Assembly and local school board seats.

“Who wins these races and their views on public education will have a direct impact on students and educators,” says CTA President Eric Heins. “To fight the attacks on public education that are coming from multiple fronts, we need leaders, we need champions, and we need allies.”

California's top two primary system applies to statewide constitutional, legislative and congressional races. The top two vote-getters advance to face off in the general election. In the SPI race only, a candidate who gets more than 50 percent of the vote in the primary wins office outright.

CTA teams interviewed and evaluated candidates for each office over a two-day period in a democratic and member-driven process (see sidebar, page 45). In the months ahead, the *Educator* will present more information about CTA-recommended candidates and their platforms.



### Gavin Newsom for Governor

Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom has long been a strong supporter of public schools, colleges, students and educators. He shares the core values of CTA members and educators across the Golden State who believe in the mission of providing a quality, well-rounded education to all students. Every student deserves the same opportunity to achieve success regardless of ZIP code, background, where they come from or who they love. Newsom supported CTA-backed state propositions that increased the state income tax on the wealthy to generate billions for public education.

Newsom's top priorities are education, economic development, protecting the environment, and social justice. Educators support his vision of creating more full-service community public schools. Like CTA, Newsom opposes the privatization of public education and the proliferation of charters, especially those run by private management companies that want to profit off our kids. He considers community colleges “the backbone of our economy” and supports two years of free community college tuition to help drive our economy, reduce student debt, and create better pathways to quality jobs.



Creative Commons

### Tony Thurmond for Superintendent of Public Instruction

As a state Assembly member, school board trustee and city councilman, Tony Thurmond has served in elected office for more than 12 years. As a social worker, he is also a respected leader of nonprofits for youth and a champion of disadvantaged students. At every step, he has kept California's kids as his top priority.

He passed legislation to provide millions of dollars to school districts to keep kids in school and out of the criminal justice system. He's fought for money to ensure that California youth in foster care can go to college. He is an advocate for affordable housing for teachers and other incentives to attract and retain quality educators. He is fighting to shift \$450 million from our criminal justice system to early education and after-school programs. He's working to expand school-based health, mental health and social service programs, and support students who are homeless or hungry, or have experienced trauma.



**Your questions answered:** Have a question for or want to know more about Tony Thurmond? We'll ask for you when we interview him for an upcoming issue. Let us know at [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org).





**CAMPAIGN  
2018**



**Ed Hernandez for Lieutenant Governor**

State Sen. Ed Hernandez has a proven track record in both the California Assembly and Senate of supporting students, educators and public education. The first in his family to graduate from college, he believes an education is the greatest equalizer in our society, and is an advocate for reinvesting in our pre-K-12 public schools, community colleges and public universities. He unequivocally supports increased accountability and transparency in California's charter schools. *Photo credit: Flickr/Ed Hernandez*



**Scott Svonkin for Board of Equalization District 3**

Los Angeles Community College (LACC) Trustee Scott Svonkin is known in Los Angeles as an advocate for students, educators and working families. He is familiar with K-12 and higher education issues, and supports fairness and equity in state tax structures.



**Ricardo Lara for Insurance Commissioner**

State Sen. Ricardo Lara has been a steadfast partner and advocate for students and educators. In 2016, CTA worked in partnership with Lara to pass Proposition 58 to repeal bilingual education restrictions in California public schools.

He is the only declared and viable candidate for insurance commissioner — the office that would work most closely on regulating insurance companies and health plans — and is dedicated to a thoughtful, inclusive conversation on how to achieve universal health care and ensure student health.



**Connie Conway for Board of Equalization District 1**

Former Assembly member and Republican minority leader Connie Conway believes in working closely with all community stakeholders. During the interview, she committed to talking through education issues before making recommendations or decisions on the Board of Equalization.



**Xavier Becerra for Attorney General**

Attorney General Xavier Becerra has a long-standing commitment to, and passion for, students, educators and families across California.

He became California's attorney general in January 2017 after more than two decades of service in the U.S. House of Representatives, where he was elected to chair the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. Becerra was the first Latino to serve on the powerful Ways and Means Committee, fighting for a fairer tax code and trade laws, and working to protect Social Security and Medicare.

He believes in protecting the right of educators and all workers to come together to negotiate proper learning and working conditions. He also believes California's charter schools must be held to the same accountability and transparency standards as traditional public schools.

**Board of Equalization Districts 2 and 4**

CTA's team met with two candidates for District 2: state Sen. Cathleen Galgiani and San Francisco Supervisor Malia Cohen. Both demonstrated a core understanding of education and tax issues, and both have worked with CTA. The member-driven process led to a neutral recommendation in the primary race.

CTA made no recommendation for Board of Equalization District 4.



### **Fiona Ma for State Treasurer**

Current Board of Equalization member Fiona Ma is the only declared and viable candidate for the office of state treasurer. She is a lifelong champion for public education and has experience on financial, budget and investment issues that make her highly qualified for this position. She supports a defined-benefit retirement system for all educators, and as state treasurer will sit on both the CalSTRS and CalPERS boards.

## **CTA'S RECOMMENDATION PROCESS**

**CTA INTERVIEW TEAMS**, comprising 30 CTA leaders and members from throughout the state, interview candidates and evaluate them on a variety of criteria, including:

1. Their position on and vision for K-12, community college and higher education issues.
2. Their historical support for public education, students and educators, including education funding, budget stability, safe schools and campuses for all students, collective bargaining, educator professional rights, charter school accountability, and equal access to higher education.
3. Their viability for success in the office that they are seeking.

After the interviews, teams make their recommendations, and the CTA Board approves to send forth to State Council (800 delegates), who then debate and make final recommendations.

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## Bills Signed Into Law

### **AB 1360: Ending Student Discrimination**

CTA-co-sponsored AB 1360, by Assembly Member Rob Bonta (D-Oakland), prohibits discriminatory admissions practices and allows due process in student discipline proceedings at charter schools.

"Educators applaud this major step toward ending discriminatory admissions practices and unfair suspension and expulsion policies in California's charter schools," says CTA President Eric Heins. "This legislation was truly a community effort to protect students with disabilities, English learners, low-income children and students of color from being denied access to charters."

### **SB 285: Union Strong**

SB 285, by Sen. Toni Atkins (D-San Diego), makes it harder for public agencies to discourage their workers from belonging to unions. Prior to this new law, public employers were barred from using state funds to assist, promote or deter union organizing. SB 285 strengthens the law by making it clear that not only do public employees have the right to form a union or engage in union activities without interference, they also have the right to become members or remain members of a union without intimidation or coercion.

### **AB 20: Review of Dakota Access Pipeline Investment**

AB 20, by Assembly Member Ash Kalra (D-San Jose), requires the state's two largest pension systems to submit a report on investments in the Dakota Access Pipeline. It also requires the boards of administration of CalSTRS and CalPERS to review and consider factors related to tribal sovereignty and indigenous tribal rights as part of the boards' investment policies related to environmental, social and governance issues.

The law highlights a core debate over how large institutional investors like CalSTRS and CalPERS can influence companies to be better social actors. Kalra says AB 20 "speaks to our shared goals of decreasing dependence on fossil fuels and respecting the sovereign rights of Native American Tribes and indigenous communities."

### **SB 54: Sanctuary State Under Attack**

Signatures are being gathered to try to overturn California's new "sanctuary state" law by Sen. Kevin de León (D-Los Angeles).

CTA-co-sponsored SB 54, which was signed into law in October and is set to begin Jan. 1, 2018, ensures that no state or local resources are diverted to help the federal government carry out mass deportations, and that schools, hospitals and courthouses are safe spaces for everyone in our communities.

But a referendum on SB 54 was cleared in late October to gather signatures. Proponents must collect at least 365,880 signatures from registered voters by Jan. 3. The referendum would then qualify for the November 2018 ballot, where voters will be asked whether to uphold SB 54.

If that is the case, the new law would be placed on hold pending the outcome of the vote.

Read the *Educator's* story on California charter schools (May/June 2017) at [tinyurl.com/Californiacharters](http://tinyurl.com/Californiacharters).

**LET'S BE CLEAR ABOUT CHARTER SCHOOLS**

Not all charter schools are created equal — especially these days. Some are student-centered and deserve our support. Others are profit-driven and are failing our students and our state.

By Sherry Penick-Gardner  
Photos by Scott Buchman

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- Improving: 22
- Engagement: 22

**When California** became the second state to pass legislation to allow charter schools, it was intended to allow greater flexibility for educational innovation. The intent of the Charter Schools Act of 1992 was to provide opportunities for teachers, administrators and community members to establish schools that operate outside of existing school district structures. This flexibility would be a way to improve student learning, because having opportunities for all students, encourage innovative teaching methods, create professional opportunities for teachers, and provide parents and people with learning options for their children's education. Since then, charter schools have expanded in California there are now more than 1,000, with an opening in 2016. And the original intent often takes a backseat to economic considerations. Increasingly, charter schools are operated by large private management organizations whose primary motivation is to maximize shareholder investment, far from the school communities and students they are meant to serve.

## Charters Out of Bounds

In October, California State Auditor Elaine Howle issued a report finding that some school districts use exceptions in state law to authorize taxpayer-funded charter schools that operate outside of their geographic boundaries. This has “allowed districts to increase their enrollments and revenue without being democratically accountable to the communities that are hosting the charter schools,” Howle wrote in the accompanying public letter.

The report says these charters are inadequately monitored, both financially and academically. As a result, students at three of the schools featured in the report have suffered: Their charters performed far worse on state standardized tests than comparable schools, and two closed because of financial difficulties, forcing 500 students to find new schools.

A year ago, the state Legislature requested that Howle look into three districts known to have charters outside their geographic boundaries: Acton-Agua Dulce Unified, Antelope Valley Union, and New Jerusalem Elementary. But since the state does not keep a list of charter locations, there is no way to know the total number of charters located outside their authorizing district’s boundaries.

CTA-co-sponsored **SB 808**, which would require that all charter schools be located in the school district where they are authorized, is currently stalled in the Legislature.

## The Education Civil Rights Alliance

In November, a group of organizations that are committed to protecting the legal rights of marginalized students, including NEA, civil rights and advocacy organizations, and government agencies, launched the Education Civil Rights Alliance (ECRA).

In announcing the launch to state affiliates, NEA President Lily Eskelsen García noted that “members are standing up as never before to ensure that every student, regardless of ZIP code, race, religion, gender, national origin, immigration status, disability status, sexual orientation or gender identity

## California Virtual Academies Must Pay \$2 Million to State

**THE CALIFORNIA VIRTUAL ACADEMIES** and three Insight Schools of California (together CAVA) must remit nearly \$2 million to the California Department of Education (CDE) in improperly used Common Core education funds.

This and other actions required by CDE stem from an audit conducted by the State Controller’s Office and commissioned by CDE. The July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2016, audit was released in October.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson says CDE is also asking CAVA for a new audit of its average daily attendance (ADA) records, and additional documentation regarding oversight fees, pupil-teacher ratio, progress of students age 19 to 22, memorandums of understanding, and organizational independence.

ADA is the most important factor in determining the amount of state funds each school receives.

The audit found that attendance records were not adequately supported for 12 to 15 percent of the students sampled. This could mean that attendance records may be insufficient for 1,500 to 1,900 of CAVA’s nearly 13,000 students.

CAVA operates taxpayer-funded online charter schools in 45 of 58 California counties. While each school’s charter is authorized by a local educational agency and governed by a separate board of directors, the schools operate collectively by sharing teachers, administrators and some costs. CAVA schools each contract with K12 Inc., which provides curriculum, management, accounting, operational and record-keeping services. To avoid conflicts of interest, CAVA and K12 must be independent organizations.

The state audit, however, determined that CAVA was not organizationally independent from K12. See the audit at [sco.ca.gov/pubs\\_special.html](http://sco.ca.gov/pubs_special.html).

has access to a great public school.” ECRA, she said, brings together more allies than ever in that work.

ECRA’s mission is to create the largest compendium of legal resources about students’ civil rights for public use; bring widespread attention to violations of students’ civil rights around the country; use the resources of ECRA member organizations to pursue impact litigation across the country; and share best practices, strategies and model policies with fellow member organizations. See more at [edrights.org](http://edrights.org).



# The Case for Unions

## Why our collective voice matters

**UNIONS SUCH AS** CTA use their collective voice to advocate for policies that benefit all working people — like increases to the minimum wage, affordable health care and great public schools. It’s pretty simple, really: When union membership increases, living conditions of working people and their families improve. The same is true of the reverse.

The decline of unionism over the past 50 years has been a major driver of income inequality. The U.S. Supreme Court’s expected decision in the coming months in *Janus v. AFSCME* (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) could further accelerate the country’s economic disparities, and further rig the economy against working people and the middle class by striking at the freedom of working people to come together in strong unions.

In fact, as former U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich points out, the decline of America’s middle class mirrors almost exactly the decline of American labor union membership, which has weakened from more than a third of all private-sector workers in the 1950s to less than 7 percent today. As a result, the bargaining power of average workers is

pretty much nonexistent. (Public-sector union membership was 10 percent in the 1940s, peaked at 39 percent in 1994, and is currently 34 percent.)

Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve’s Survey of Consumer Finance finds roughly 38 percent of America’s wealth is now controlled by the top 1 percent of earners.

“A decision in *Janus* to strip public employees of their collective bargaining rights in the workplace moves us further in the wrong direction,” says CTA President Eric Heins.

In the *Janus* case, to be argued before the high court in early 2018, Illinois child-support worker Mark Janus contends that his free speech rights have been violated because he must pay agency fees to a union that, among other things, negotiates wage contracts and working conditions on his behalf. In 2016, the

Court affirmed the constitutionality of current law regarding fair share fees in a nearly identical case — *Friedrichs v. CTA* — in a four-four decision.

If the Court rules in favor of Janus and against public-sector unions, says news and investigative reporting outlet Capital & Main, right-to-work forces will have fulfilled a

cherished goal: to weaken the nation’s public employee unions.

Heins agrees. “Their goal is no secret: They want to use the Supreme Court to take away the freedom of working people to join in strong unions. Why? Because

unions give us power to speak up for our students, families and communities.”

### An Opportunity to Act

But Heins says *Janus* also presents an opportunity for CTA and its chapters to fully engage educators in CTA’s purpose and mission.

No other organization exists to protect California’s children the way CTA does — in the classroom and beyond, says Heins. By reaffirming and communicating these shared values, CTA can continue to be a strong, effective advocate for students.

CTA can also continue to advocate for educators and working people, including women and communities of color who have been systematically disadvantaged due to discrimination and prejudice.

Heins says that taking action now is critical to communicate and demonstrate support for all working people as well as public education and our students. Specifically, we need to:

- Speak up to tell colleagues and fellow Americans what *Janus* is really about and the threat it poses to our families, public services and communities.
- Make clear our positions on social media, op-eds and other platforms.
- Remain steadfast and committed to the work of CTA and other unions, because it will continue.

“For 154 years, CTA has been standing up for working people, our students and the communities we serve,” Heins says. “No court case will stop our determination and advocacy for our students and our profession.”

For detailed information about *Janus*, its impact and ways to take action, see [cta.org/janus](http://cta.org/janus). And to see all that CTA has done for students and educators for the past 154 years, see [cta.org/150](http://cta.org/150).

**“They want to use the Supreme Court to take away the freedom of working people to join in strong unions. Why? Because unions give us power to speak up for our students, families and communities.”**

—CTA PRESIDENT ERIC HEINS

**15+**

**Number of legal challenges** to fair share fees besides *Janus* currently being litigated in courts across the country.

# CTA Files Amicus Brief in DACA Lawsuits

**CTA HAS JOINED** 14 other educational entities and organizations to file an amicus (friend of the court) brief on behalf of plaintiffs in lawsuits filed in federal court against the Trump administration's decision to rescind DACA.

The coalition includes NEA, the California School Boards Association, the California Faculty Association, numerous individual school districts, county offices of education, unions and other organizations.

DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) is a federal policy created in 2012. It allows young undocumented immigrants who have come to the United States as minors to apply for renewable two-year periods of deferred action on

deportation. California has about 220,000 of the country's 800,000 DACA recipients (also called Dreamers), who have been able to live, work and study in the U.S.

DACA is set to terminate on March 5, 2018. Lawsuits opposing the decision to rescind and requesting a preliminary injunction have been filed by plaintiffs including the University of California, the city of San Jose, and several states including California.

The amicus briefs by CTA and other organizations are very specific regarding education and the "serious harm" caused by rescinding DACA to students, schools and educators. For example, the brief that CTA and others filed in support of the University of California states: "DACA

gives young people a reason and an opportunity to succeed in school. By taking away the prospect of advanced learning and gainful employment, DACA rescission will rob society of the contributions of motivated, invested DACA recipients.

"DACA recipients who have already completed their studies will lose the ability to obtain legal employment, squandering not only their own hard work, but the resources that their schools and teachers have invested in them. The end of DACA would also deprive school districts of qualified teachers and mentors, diminish diversity in the teaching corps, and destabilize school environments."



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## 1ST CONTRACT

**CAVA: Charter Educators Authorize Strike**

California Virtual Educators United (CVEU), which represents 450 teachers at California Virtual Academies (CAVA), voted in November to authorize a strike after trying to negotiate their first contract with CAVA administration for more than a year.

CVEU has been working to address teacher and student turnover by raising CAVA's shockingly low salaries and ensuring a manageable student-teacher ratio that supports quality instruction and learning. CAVA contracts with national online, for-profit charter giant K12 Inc.; hires instructors at low pay to teach as many students as possible with low overhead; then funnels California taxpayer funding back to K12 investors and executives in Virginia to pay for management fees, technology and other services.

"Our members are deeply dedicated to the over 10,000 students we serve," says CVEU president Brianna Carroll. "We are working to negotiate changes that will benefit our students and stop the high turnover that is enriching an out-of-state, for-profit company at the expense of better quality teaching and learning, and adequate resources for the kids best served by an online model."

K12 and CAVA bitterly fought the unionization of CAVA teachers and their representation by CTA. In 2016, CAVA agreed to a \$168.5 million settlement with the California attorney general over concerns related to business practices, student performance, and use of public funds. In October 2017, CAVA was required to pay back nearly \$2 million in Common Core funds to the California Department of Education based on ongoing problems with the reporting of attendance, teacher-pupil ratios and student progress.

# Bargaining Roundup

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



Calaveras educators march arm in arm. Credit: Jim Schlotz



Crossing the road. Credit: Cynthia Menzel

**Calaveras: Strike Settled**

After a four-day strike in October, **Calaveras Unified Educators Association** (CUEA) members reached agreement with Calaveras Unified School District. Teachers are pleased they achieved contract language that will help decrease class size and create safe schools, and made changes to the salary schedule that will help attract and retain qualified teachers.

"Our students will greatly benefit from the class size reduction we've negotiated," says CUEA President Lorraine Angel. "Safer classrooms and smaller classes will give us more one-on-one attention for increased learning."

The deal includes a restructured salary schedule specifically designed to attract new teachers to Calaveras. All told, teachers will see a 2 to 6 percent raise.

Angel expressed gratitude to the Calaveras parents and community. "We saw how much this community values and supports its teachers. That means the world to us and strengthens our resolve to make Calaveras an even better school district as we move forward."



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

### San Francisco: Agreement Reached

At press time, the 6,200 educators and paraeducators represented by **United Educators of San Francisco (UESF)** were voting by mail to ratify their strong tentative contract agreement reached Nov. 4. It includes an 11 percent raise and 5 percent in bonuses and ongoing add-ons — including putting a parcel tax on the June 2018 ballot.

“This enormous victory was the outcome of an intensive UESF organizing campaign, and outreach to parents and community,” says UESF President Lita Blanc.

The agreement includes enhanced language on working conditions such as improved protocols around school safety and student discipline, and prioritizing professional development in key areas such as restorative practices and cultural competency. It also establishes parent participation in joint union-district committees. Details at [tinyurl.com/uesfrelease](http://tinyurl.com/uesfrelease).

### Sacramento: Strike Averted

On Nov. 7, the 2,800-member **Sacramento City Teachers Association (SCTA)** reached agreement with the Sacramento City Unified School District, averting a strike that had been scheduled for the following day. “We were prepared to go on strike to ensure our students have qualified educators in every classroom,

resources they need, and programs that will pave the way to their success,” says SCTA President David Fisher.

Highlights of the agreement include curtailing unnecessary testing and creating a committee to develop the best methods of monitoring student progress; an up to 11 percent salary increase over three years to help recruit and retain educators; working with Sacramento’s mayor, other unions and community-based organizations to pass a 2020 ballot measure to fund arts, music and restorative practices to enrich students’ academic and cultural experiences; and an improved process for hiring and transferring educators. Details at [tinyurl.com/saccityrelease](http://tinyurl.com/saccityrelease).

### Williams: Contract Settlement

After a year of negotiations and impasse that nearly led to a strike, **Williams Teachers Association (WTA)** members reached agreement in early November with Williams Unified School District, Colusa County, and held a ratification vote soon after.

The two-year contract, also approved by the school board, includes a restructured salary schedule that will help attract and retain qualified teachers, as well as changes to the work year, hours and length of workday, and other teaching and learning conditions. WTA President Tony Hermann says WTA educators were particularly appreciative of parents and community during negotiations.

### Chula Vista: Still No Contract

Despite a promise two years ago to bargain in good faith and put students first, Arnulfo Manriquez, CEO of the Metropolitan Area Advisory Committee (MAAC), which operates the MAAC Community Charter School (MCCS), hasn’t come through. **MCCS Education Association** members at the public high school still have no contract.

MCCS educators work mostly with English learners and students who are dealing with many social issues, and say that the school, located in Chula Vista, San Diego County, needs to settle a fair contract to help retain and recruit qualified educators, keep class sizes small, and support safe schools. They picketed and rallied at the annual chapter recruiting fundraiser in mid-November to increase awareness of their plight and pressure Manriquez to settle.



MCCS Education Association members hit the streets in June.

### San Mateo: Agreement Reached

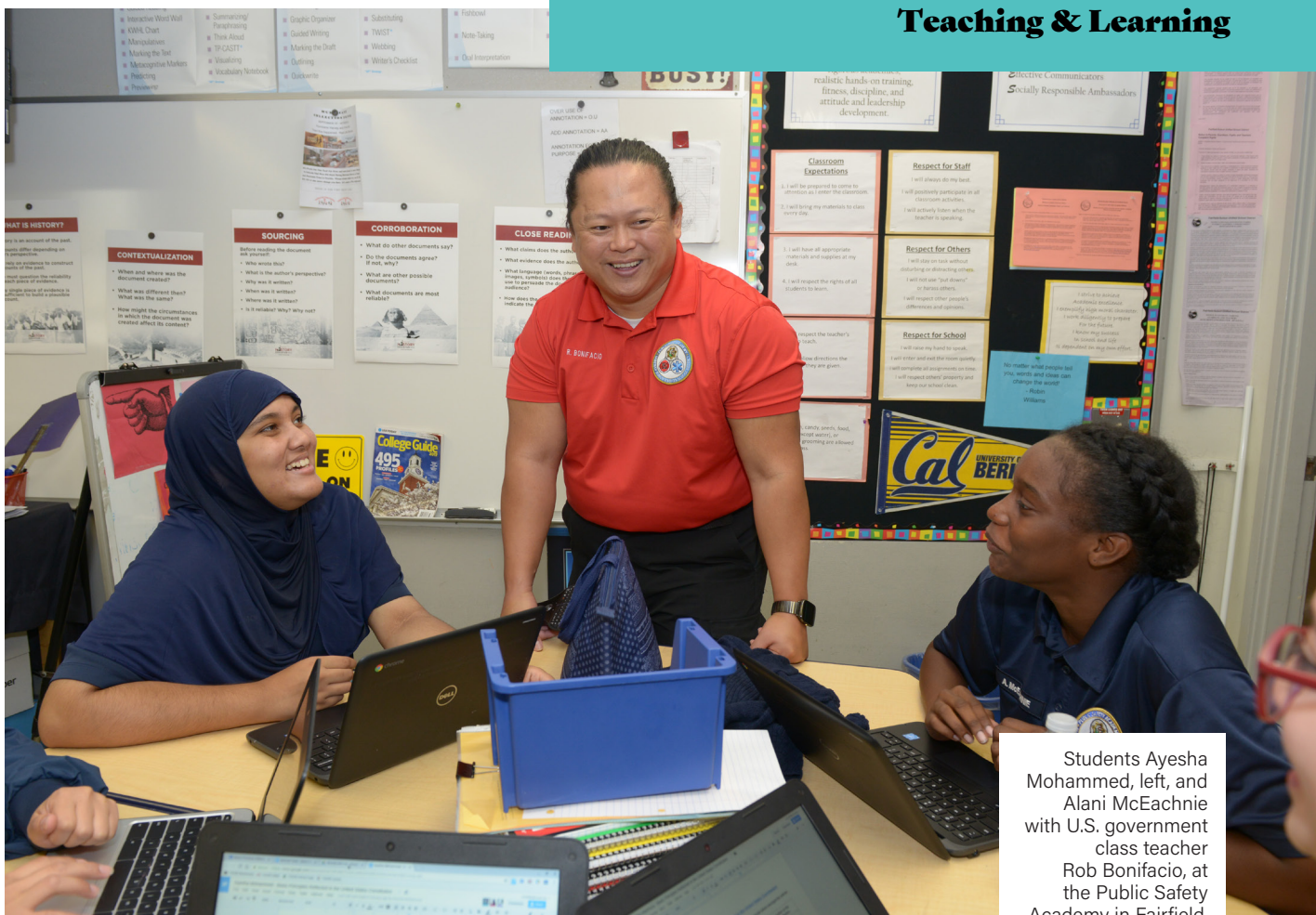
After more than 500 days without a contract, **San Mateo Elementary Teachers Association (SMETA)** members reached a tentative agreement Nov. 30.

They had packed a San Mateo-Foster City district school board meeting in early November to demand respect, smaller class sizes and a fair contract settlement. Contract talks had dragged on for more than a year, despite the district ending the 2016-17 school year with \$64 million in reserves, and educators’ starting salary ranked 17th among neighboring school districts.

At press time, contract details were going out to SMETA members, and a ratification vote was planned Dec. 7-15.

Cynthia Menzel





Students Ayesha Mohammed, left, and Alani McEachnie with U.S. government class teacher Rob Bonifacio, at the Public Safety Academy in Fairfield.

# Teaching About Religion

*Educators grapple with important — and sensitive — topic*

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin Photos by Scott Buschman

“**H**ow did Christianity help shape the foundation and development of the early United States?” asks David Fulton, a social studies teacher at Green Valley Middle School in Fairfield.

“Americans felt it was their God-given right to have independence,” replies eighth-grader Parisa Samadi, citing a sentence in the Declaration of Independence that the “Creator” grants Americans inalienable rights.

The Fairfield-Suisun Unified Teachers Association (F-SUTA) member is discussing the “Great Awakening,” which was a series of emotional religious revivals across the American colonies in the late 1730s and 1740s. Religion has been a driving force throughout American history, says Fulton. He notes that women demanding equal rights have used the argument that all people are

equal in God’s eyes, and that religion continues to influence U.S. history.

For many years his school always put up a Christmas tree, but several years ago staff decided not to, to honor the separation of church and state.

“I don’t have any problem with that,” says Fulton. “We have Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus and Jews, and I can see why the district doesn’t want to appear to endorse one religion over the other.”

His students may not have a Christmas party at school, but they enjoy learning about the major religions of the world and are extremely inquisitive, he comments.

“Religion has influenced how we behave and what we value, and I couldn’t imagine teaching history without including it.”

At Green Valley Middle School in Fairfield, Deago Tabangcura, Brandon Smith and Rylie Dombrowski discuss a lesson in David Fulton's social studies class.



Ben McLeod/Flickr Commons

## Separation of church and state

Two years ago, a teacher in the Central Valley was accused of handing out “Bible Cookies” to students. The story went viral, and the school community was up in arms.

Eventually, the cookie story crumbled. The cookies were not Bible-shaped — nor did they contain Bible verses. They were store-bought cookies the teacher’s wife donated to the school-authorized Christian Club, which the teacher, a CTA member, advised. He was later vindicated.

Yes, religion in public schools is a sensitive and hotly debated issue.

The First Amendment reads in part: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Today that clause is associated with the separation of church and state. The challenge for schools has been to balance that separation with religious freedom, which can be a fine line.

The U.S. Supreme Court protects students’ individual rights to pray, wear religious symbols and express their religious beliefs at school, yet prohibits such practices if they are perceived as disruptive, discriminatory or coercive to peers who don’t share the same beliefs. Prayer at public school graduation ceremonies and sporting events has been eliminated for creating a coercive environment.

### Can schools really teach about religion?

It’s a common perception that schools are not allowed to teach about religion, says Fulton, but students have been studying religion’s role in the historical, cultural, literary and social development of the U.S. and the world for decades. And in today’s divisive world, increasing understanding about world religions has never been more important.

Teaching students about religion in an objective, balanced and factual manner has been incorporated into California’s History–Social Science (HSS) Content Standards since 1998, and is also part of the new HSS Framework, points out Juliana Liebke, a social studies curriculum specialist for San Diego Unified School District, who says people are constantly surprised by this.

**“As a teacher, you have to have balance, and you want to be fair. You want all students to feel safe and to feel comfortable.”**

—AYISHA BENHAM, UNITED TEACHERS OF RICHMOND

“Teaching *about* religion is not the same as teaching religion, because we are not proselytizing. We are just teaching facts about belief systems of various religions, to understand how the narrative of world history has unfolded,” says Liebke, San Diego Education Association. “But you have to walk a fine line. We can’t tell the students what they should believe. But we answer their questions and make it clear to

students that they can ask whatever they want, although not all of their questions can necessarily be answered.”

For example, a student can ask whether Christians, Jews and Muslims believe in God and receive an answer. If a student asks Liebke if she believes God exists, she will say, “My personal religion is not for

Ayisha Benham sends a letter to her students' parents explaining what she will be teaching, to prevent "misconceptions."



## The Pledge of Allegiance

In 1943, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that "the First Amendment prohibits public schools from forcing students to ... say the Pledge of Allegiance." The words "under God" were added to the pledge by Congress in 1954. Several unsuccessful challenges to reciting "under God" have been made. Most schools in California encourage students to recite the pledge every morning but do not require it.

In 1963, the Supreme Court outlawed mandatory Bible study courses in schools, but ruled that schools may teach objectively *about* religion — as opposed to teaching religious indoctrination — in history classes and "Bible as literature" classes.

Under the federal Equal Access Act of 1984, public schools that allow extracurricular clubs must also allow extracurricular religious clubs, such as the one with the cookie controversy. In 2001, the Supreme Court ruled that public schools must allow outside religious groups to use their facilities during nonschool hours if they provide the same use to other organizations.

President George W. Bush's controversial faith-based executive order allowed religious groups to apply for federal grant money for social or educational services in after-school programs. President Obama left the initiative in place, but made changes to prohibit discriminatory hiring practices in these organizations.

## Science-based curriculum, with a caveat

Early in this decade, schools in California and elsewhere sought to teach a doctrine called "intelligent design" that is a form of creationism. A series of lawsuits challenged the right of schools to do so, and today scientifically verified curriculum is

the focus of the Next Generation Science Standards.

Despite this focus, educators should always be respectful of students' rights and beliefs. In 2009, a teacher in Orange County was found to have violated the First Amendment when he spoke negatively about creationism to a student in his classroom who held strong religious beliefs.

In June 2017, the Supreme Court ruled that a Missouri church preschool was entitled to a grant from a state program to improve its playground. The ruling found that denying funds to religious groups to be used for secular purposes such as a playground violates the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of religion.

Education experts, including analyst and author Diane Ravitch, have criticized the decision to force the public to pay for religious schools, saying it violates the Constitution and widens the opening to vouchers, which funnel public money to private schools, including private religious schools. This is something U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos has set as a goal.

Many schools today steer clear of religious holiday references, citing the "winter" break and avoiding references to religious celebrations, instead focusing on multiculturalism to be more inclusive of diverse populations.

It should be noted that faith-based organizations can be great allies to public schools, offering supplies, tutoring and mentorships for students. Some CTA chapters, such as Associated Pomona Teachers, engage in community outreach with faith-based organizations on a regular basis to promote socially progressive issues, including equity and providing adequate funding for public education.


discussion here, and it's up to you to decide whatever you believe."

## Religions studied in order, not priority

Under the standards, students begin studying about religions and their impact on world and cultural history in middle school. Sixth-grade students study early humankind, and "analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures" of the civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Kush, the Ancient Hebrews, Greece, India, China and Rome.

Examples of students' study of Ancient Hebrew religious structures include describing "the origins and significance of Judaism as the first monotheistic religion based on the concept of one God who sets down moral laws for humanity" and "how the ideas of the Hebrew traditions are reflected in the moral and ethical traditions of Western civilization" (standard 6.3).

Students may be asked to "explain the major beliefs and practices of Brahmanism in India and how they evolved into early Hinduism," and they may study "the life and moral teachings of Buddha and how Buddhism spread in India, Ceylon, and Central Asia" (standard 6.5).

During the study of the Roman Republic, the HSS standards call for students to "note the origins of Christianity" 

Social studies curriculum specialist Juliana Liebke says educators who teach about religion “are not proselytizing.”

including “the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth as described in the New Testament” (standard 6.7).

In 2016, the State Board of Education adopted a new HSS Framework to provide guidance on implementing the standards. It added content on Sikhism to the chapter on seventh-grade curriculum, “World History and Geography: Medieval and Early Modern Times.”

Students, says Liebke, are encouraged to read primary sources, which may include excerpts from the Hebrew Bible, the Christian Bible and the Quran.

## Religion and civil liberties

High school students in In Rob Bonifacio’s U.S. government class at the Public Safety Academy in Fairfield are knowledgeable about their constitutional rights — which includes freedom of religion. Sometimes students discuss what it means for a school to ask for a “moment of silence,” or if students should be compelled to say “under God” when reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. (For legal answers, see sidebar on page 52.)

“A good number of students feel that no one should be forced,” says F-SUTA member Bonifacio, who says teachers must be sensitive to the beliefs of all students, including atheists, and not let their own biases show.

His students discuss U.S. Supreme Court cases that cover civil liberties and religious freedom, and appreciate that as Americans, they have the right to worship — or not worship — as they please.

As his school becomes more diverse, the halls are no longer decked. Out of deference to Native Americans and indigenous people, Thanksgiving is now called “Turkey Day” in his classroom. He comments that younger students at his school are no longer taught that Christopher Columbus “discovered America,”



**“Teaching about religion is not the same as teaching religion, because we are not proselytizing. We are just teaching facts about belief systems of various religions.”**

—JULIANA LIEBKE, SAN DIEGO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

but instead that he enslaved Indians to convert them to Christianity.

“We’re very secular in that regard and try to make sure we don’t put any religion on a pedestal as we become more inclusive,” says Bonifacio. “That way we are not just a school, but a family.”

## Parents may need explanations

Fulton and Liebke say that some parents have expressed concern upon learning seventh-graders study about Islam.

When educators explain it is part of a continuum of studies about many religions’ influence on history, culture and the arts — and necessary to enhance students’ understanding of the world — most parents seem to understand. (Islam is included in HSS standard 7.2.)

“It opens up discussions about our differences and how to respect those differences,” Fulton says. “I have Muslim students who feel that Islam has been wrongly associated with terrorism. Presenting facts avoids having people in one religion being painted with a broad brush.”





**“Religion has influenced how we behave and what we value, and I couldn’t imagine teaching history without including it.”**

**—DAVID FULTON, FAIRFIELD-SUISUN UNIFIED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

## **Guidelines for Teaching About Religion**

- The approach is academic, not devotional.
- Educators strive for student awareness of religion, but do not press for student acceptance of any religion.
- The class educates about religions, but does not promote or denigrate any religion.
- The school may inform the student about religious beliefs, but does not seek to conform a student to any particular belief.
- Students should not be put on the spot to explain their religious or cultural traditions, or asked to be a spokesperson for his or her religion.

*Source: National Council for the Social Studies*

Liebke explains to parents: “It is necessary for children to understand our world and the people in it before they grow up and cast their votes and make decisions about the world.”

Ayisha Benham sends a letter to parents of her 12th-grade American government class and her ninth-grade cultural geography elective at Sylvester Greenwood Academy School in Richmond at the beginning of the year. She believes the letter, which explains how and what she will be teaching about religions, helps prevent misconceptions.

### **Providing a global perspective**

Benham, a member of United Teachers of Richmond, takes pride in not presenting information in her class from a Western point of view when it comes to how religion, race and culture have influenced politics and culture. But she keeps a small Christmas tree on her desk every year to maintain holiday cheer.

“As a teacher, you have to have balance, and you want to be fair. You want all students to feel safe and to feel comfortable.”

Sometimes students learn that others have been persecuted by religious zealots, or that certain religious groups have not given women equal rights. But what may seem to

be repressive in one culture may not be viewed that way in another, students discover.

Recently, she asked a Muslim student (privately, without pressure) if he would explain why Muslim women wear a hijab to cover their hair. He agreed and explained to classmates that in his culture, wearing a hijab was a source of pride for many women, including his mother. Benham says she and her students learned a great deal, and many changed their perspective.

She recently went to a training called “Faith to Face,” a program that connects students in the classroom of one country with students in another to discuss how their cultural beliefs impact their lives

During the training, students from America discussed with students from a Middle Eastern country how they show appreciation and give thanks. Americans described Thanksgiving and stuffing themselves, while the Middle Eastern students spoke of Ramadan and fasting.

“It was interesting to see two cultures giving thanks in very different ways,” she laughs. “And it was a valuable opportunity for interesting discussions in the classroom.” ■



Student Maceo Carney interviewed Betty Soskin about African Americans' experiences in World War II.

# Lessons in Civil Rights During WWII

*An electronic field trip brings vivid local stories to life* By Dina Martin

**AS A YOUNG** African American woman living in Oakland during World War II, Betty Soskin learned firsthand about the racial discrimination black Americans faced then. Now, at age 96, serving as a docent and park ranger at the Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park in Richmond, Soskin has the insight and wisdom to put it into perspective.

She does just that in *Fighting for the Right to Fight: African American Experiences in WWII*, an “electronic field trip” sponsored by the National WWII Museum. The 50-minute program, which will be live-streamed Feb. 22, is designed to bring out important issues from the war years to students in their classrooms — warts and all. For African Americans, the war was another turning point in civil rights history.

“The state of the union was very different than it is

now,” says Soskin, who worked as a clerk in the segregated boilermakers union during the war era. “Looking back, I’ve become aware that some change is immediate, some takes decades, some is generational. I’ve lived long enough to learn that change comes in cycles.”

The WWII Museum’s presentation begins with a recorded interview of Soskin by Maceo Carney, a freshman student at Jefferson High School in Daly City. Later, in another recorded segment, Carney explores the Port Chicago Naval Magazine on Suisun Bay, where the worst home front disaster of the war took place.

## A learning experience

Interviewing Soskin about conditions during the war and learning about the incident at Port Chicago made an impression on Carney. He says the experience made

An African American Women's Army Corps unit during World War II. Photo courtesy National Archives



## Sign Up for the Field Trip

*Fighting for the Right to Fight: African American Experiences in WWII* is a 50-minute program produced by the National WWII Museum that will be live-streamed Feb. 22, 2018. It explores how African Americans pursued a double victory during the war, one over the enemy abroad and the other over discrimination at home.

Stories of struggle, setbacks, triumphs and heroism of brave individuals who changed history come to light as student reporters examine artifacts from the museum and travel to California to learn about the injustices in a segregated military at the site of the deadliest munitions disaster during the war. The "electronic field trip" — which can be streamed directly into your classroom — includes both live and recorded segments.

Your students will come away with a new understanding of how the pursuit for both victory and equality shaped the story of World War II and transformed the United States for decades to come.

There are two showings on Thursday, Feb. 22: at 7 a.m. and 10 a.m. Pacific Time.

The New Orleans-based National WWII Museum previously hosted two other electronic field trips, one about Pearl Harbor and one about how students helped win the war. Both are on the museum's website. More information and registration are at [tinyurl.com/electronicfieldtrip](http://tinyurl.com/electronicfieldtrip).

him realize a few things about being a young African American male in America today.

"I learned that I come from a strong heritage, and that despite segregation and discrimination, still we rise," he says. "The way African Americans were treated in the military then was inhumane and unjust. It showed the ugly side of the military. But the fact that it is being talked about now shows we can learn from those mistakes."

Despite the positive takeaways, learning about Port Chicago was sobering. It remains sobering for Soskin as well.

She remembers well the day of July 17, 1944. Since there were no recreational options for African Americans in the segregated military, she and her then-husband, Mel Reid, had opened their apartment in Berkeley that Saturday to entertain "colored" servicemen on their weekend leave. That evening, after a number of the young men bid their goodbyes and returned to Port Chicago, two ships loaded with munitions for the Pacific theater blew up, killing 320 military and civilians. Of those, 200 were African American servicemen, including the young men who had been at Soskin's apartment earlier that day.

**"Some change is immediate, some takes decades, some is generational. I've lived long enough to learn that change comes in cycles."**

—**BETTY SOSKIN, U.S. PARK RANGER AND UNION VETERAN**

### Protest and a fight for exoneration

A month later, 50 men — called the "Port Chicago 50" — led a protest over unsafe conditions and lack of on-the-job training for their mission. For their action, they were convicted of mutiny and sentenced to 15 years in prison and hard labor, as well as a dishonorable discharge. Forty-seven

of the 50 were released in January 1946; the remaining three served additional months in prison. In 1999, one of the men accepted a pardon from President Bill Clinton; the others refused, insisting on full exoneration. Today, families and descendants are still fighting for posthumous exoneration for the Port Chicago 50.

Though Soskin has been a lifelong witness to racial discrimination, she recognizes that these periods usher in rapid change as well. The tragic incident at Port Chicago, for example, may have hastened the executive order by President Harry S. Truman on July 26, 1948, to fully integrate what had been a segregated military.

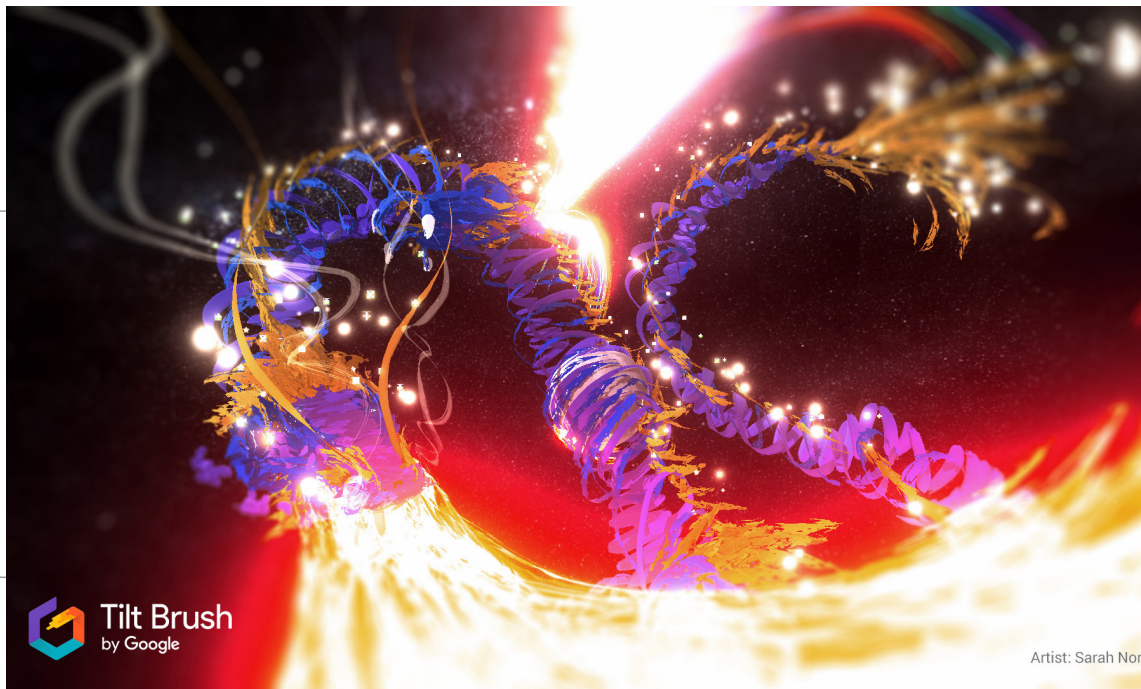
The arrival of Soskin's family in Oakland predates the great migration of African Americans who came to the West Coast during the war for jobs in the military and naval shipyards. She observed that the dramatic increase of the black population during that time

meant that racial segregation arrived here as well.

"But it was also a period when we fought back, just as we have resisted discrimination ever since slavery," Soskin says. "These periods of chaos became opportunities to redefine our democracy." ■

### TILT BRUSH

Paint life-size 3-D brush strokes, stars, light, and even fire. Students will experience painting in a completely new way.  
[tiltbrush.com](http://tiltbrush.com)



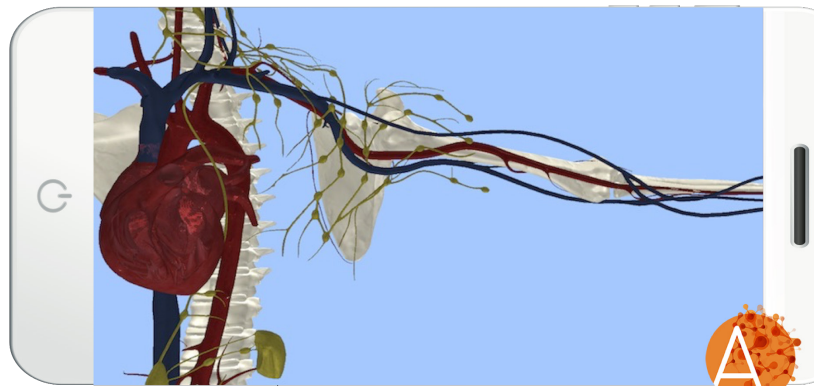
Artist: Sarah Nor

# NEW WORLDS TO EXPLORE

## Virtual reality apps take students almost anywhere

By Terry Ng

**W**ithout ever leaving the classroom, you can have students explore the depths of the ocean and outer space, time-travel to key events and sites from the past, and bring science to life. Virtual reality (VR) apps let you step into places, roles and experiences that were previously impossible. Here you'll find a few recommendations.



### ANATOMYYOU

Students become part of the human anatomy in an immersive way, being able to navigate along anatomical structures: circulatory, respiratory, digestive, urinary, lacrimal and female reproductive systems.

[anatomyyou.com/en](http://anatomyyou.com/en)



## VIRTUALSPEECH

Students can practice public speaking, interview skills, networking and mindfulness, with photo-realistic VR environments to train in. [virtualspeech.com](http://virtualspeech.com)



## INCELL

Students learn through this action racing game with a bit of strategy and biology thrown into the mix in a rare and highly unusual micro world of the carefully recreated human cell. [luden.io/incell](http://luden.io/incell)



## TITANS OF SPACE

Students learn about the solar system with an in-depth tour of planets and a few stars. With great music and entertaining visuals. [titansofspacevr.com](http://titansofspacevr.com)

**ALL OF THESE VR APPS** are on the App Store and Google Play, and require VR gear such as Google Cardboard. See more information about Google Cardboard and Expeditions on page 38.



## 1 PRESIDENT HEINS TALKS MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

CTA President Eric Heins made membership engagement the focus of his speech, talking about how we all have a role to make sure new members feel welcome and supported. He encouraged delegates to reach out to young educators: "There is no other organization that exists to protect California's children the way we do — in the classroom and far beyond. We have to share that story. We have to let that story catch fire in the hearts, minds and souls of California educators." He encouraged members to keep their head up in these difficult times and not give up!

## 3 SUPPORT FOR FIRE SURVIVORS

In a tremendous show of support for the more than 100 members and their families who lost their homes in the North Bay fires, Council delegates and colleagues contributed more than \$7,100 in five hours to add to the relief fund. See our story, and how to help, on page 64.

# CTA State Council

## *Top takeaways from the October 2017 gathering*

**THE AGENDA** was packed with important topics and tasks, as we face impending challenges in the courts, at the ballot box and in the Capitol. The theme was "Engaging Our Members" — critical for CTA and its allies to continue to be forceful, effective advocates for students and for our profession. Much of the discussion and presentations focused on engaging a new generation of members and involving more educators in CTA's work on social justice and education issues.

## 2 TOP-TWO PRIMARY SYSTEM LEADS TO OCTOBER RECOMMENDATIONS

With all statewide offices up for election, and considering how California's top-two election system works, Council decided to get involved in races earlier, especially the race for state superintendent of public instruction, which could be decided in the June primary. The governor's race could well be decided by then, too. Council recommended Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom for governor, state Sen. Ed Hernandez for lieutenant governor, Assembly Member Tony Thurmond for state superintendent, and incumbent Xavier Becerra for attorney general.

There are also state Senate, Assembly, and local school board seats in play. Who wins these races and their views on public education will have a direct impact on students and educators. See CTA's candidate recommendations starting on page 43.

## 4 BREAST CANCER PRESENTATION

The women of the CTA Board of Directors gave a moving presentation on breast cancer awareness, recognizing the courage and spirit of colleagues who had or are battling the disease, calling on all women to arm themselves with knowledge and take quick action if needed, and reminding everyone of the CTA and chapter communities that stand ready to help.



From CTA video, left to right: Gayle Bilek, Kendall Vaught, Terri Jackson, Elana Davidson, Leslie Littman. See video at [tinyurl.com/CTAbreastcancer](http://tinyurl.com/CTAbreastcancer).

## 5 IMMIGRATION FORUM

The Immigration Forum examined DACA students' families' and educators' rights, and discussed how chapters' awareness of immigrant rights helps engage their members in social justice work and ways to move forward.

Heins spoke before the forum began about the need for educators to get involved. "This isn't extra to our work, this *is* our work," he said. "The attack on DACA students and educators is nothing short of immoral. If we don't stand, who will?"

The forum was moderated by Charles Shannon, chair of Council's Civil Rights in Education Committee. Panelists included CTA Vice President Theresa Montaña, Javier Gutierrez (Alhambra Teachers Association), Taunya Jaco (San Jose TA), Christine Benson and Louise Williamson (National City Elementary TA), and Ignacia Rodriguez from the National Immigration Law Center.

Watch the video at [tinyurl.com/CTADACAforum](http://tinyurl.com/CTADACAforum). Read about CTA's amicus brief filed on behalf of plaintiffs who have filed lawsuits against rescinding DACA on page 48. To make your classroom safer for all students, find CTA's Social Justice Toolkit at [cta.org/forallstudents](http://cta.org/forallstudents).

## 10 COMMUNICATIONS WORTH CELEBRATING

CTA's Communications Awards are designed to encourage chapters, service centers and UniSerts to communicate with their members as well as to recognize and honor those who are communicating regularly and effectively. The 2016-17 winners:

### Newsletters and Newspapers

- 500–2,999 members: Temecula Valley Educators Association
- 3,000 members or more: United Educators of San Francisco

### Special Membership Communications

- Temecula Valley Educators Association, "A Year in Review of TVEA"
- Val Verde Teachers Association, Membership Campaign

### Communications to Parents or Community

- Claremont Faculty Association, Epic Awards Event
- United Educators of San Francisco, "UESF: Who We Are, What We Fight For"

### Digital Media Award in Honor of Ralph J. Flynn

- 500–2,999 members: Temecula Valley Educators Association, [tveducators.org](http://tveducators.org)
- 3,000 members or more: United Teachers Los Angeles, [utla.net](http://utla.net)

### Social Media Engagement

- Val Verde Teachers Association

### Memorial Award in Honor of Jose Colmenares

- Val Verde Teachers Association, VVTA Connected phone app

Student CTA members with postcards they wrote to new members.

## 6 MEMBER ENGAGEMENT EXPO

At the CTA membership engagement expo, delegates picked up the latest membership engagement materials, learned how CTA360 helps locals manage their member information, and discovered how CTA Member Benefits can aid in recruiting and maintaining happy members. They also wrote postcards welcoming new members to CTA.



Susan Green

## 7 PRESERVING NATIVE CULTURE

Delegates celebrated Native American culture with a presentation by storyteller and Native American advocate Jacque Nunez. Using artifacts and stories, she talked about the power of preserving Native culture, and the importance of understanding indigenous tools, games and clothing. Her "Journeys to the Past" ([JourneysToThePast.com](http://JourneysToThePast.com)) program takes students into the lifestyle of the California Indian, in particular the Acjachemen Nation, which once flourished in Southern California.

## 9 CTA HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS

Delegates were reminded that the deadline for nominations for CTA Human Rights Awards is Jan. 8, 2018. The awards promote the development of programs for the advancement and protection of human and civil rights within CTA. Along with chapter and Service Center Council categories there are nine individual member award categories. See [cta.org/humanrightsawards](http://cta.org/humanrightsawards) to nominate.

## 8 SUNDAY MORNING JOE

Drawing from the latest book he's reading, *On Tyranny* by Timothy Snyder, CTA Executive Director Joe Nuñez addressed Council on Sunday and reminded us, "It is institutions that help us preserve decency." In the current political climate, Nuñez said, the mission of CTA to defend and protect public education for children is even more important.

# EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATORS

## California's 2018 Teachers of the Year

Five extraordinary educators and CTA members have been named as the 2018 California Teachers of the Year.

In announcing the winners on Oct. 11, state Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson noted that the educators have made a great impact in their schools and communities.

"These teachers are deeply committed, hardworking and creative," Torlakson said. "They help students find their inner strengths and achieve their dreams, while inspiring, challenging and supporting them every day. They represent the best of their profession."

Torlakson will honor the winners, finalists and semifinalists at a gala in Sacramento Feb. 12, 2018.

### BRIAN McDANIEL

*Palm Springs Teachers Association*

**MUSIC, BAND AND CHOIR**

*Painted Hills Middle School*

Brian McDaniel had to overcome poverty and homelessness in his life, which no doubt helped him understand some of the problems his students face. Besides teaching them about music and theory, he is their advocate, academic coach, mentor, counselor and friend.

"He is our role model and champion," say students Brandon Ulin, Painted Hills band president, and Kathyne Whalen, choir president. "He understands our issues because they were once his. He helps us with family issues, insecurities, bullying, and always finds a way to make us feel better."

McDaniel has been teaching instrumental and vocal music for 11 years, including two years at Painted Hills. He leads The Regiment, a combined band and choir program where every member is challenged to rise above expectations and cultivate an attitude of gratitude and a heart of service.

He also serves as director of bands and choirs at both Painted Hills and Bella Vista Elementary School, and is an adjunct professor at Brandman University, School of Arts and Sciences.

Torlakson has nominated McDaniel as California's candidate to compete against other state nominees for National Teacher of the Year.



**"An outstanding teacher is an earthquake looking for every opportunity to burst through the surface and change the world. [That] teacher can generate countless aftershocks long after they've passed on."**

### JAIME BROWN

*San Diego Education Association*

**INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE  
ENGLISH AND FILM STUDIES**

*San Diego High School  
of International Studies*



**"My personal mantra:**

**'Kodomo no tame ni' — 'For the sake of the children' in Japanese. Teachers can serve as powerful linchpins of support and compassion for our students. Why do we do what we do? Kodomo no tame ni."**

Jaime Brown, a 14-year teacher, says she has been shaped by many positive teachers, but she also experienced racism and prejudice from one teacher. Both experiences helped her find her own voice to speak out against preconceptions and injustice, and make certain her students are able to stand up for themselves.

Her rigorous and demanding courses offer group discussions where students can share their feelings and concerns. Principal Carmen García says, "Jaime embodies a 'You can do it and I'm here to support you' attitude by ensuring students have a voice in their education. She understands the immense pressure they are going through, and reminds them that their success, through perseverance and diligent practice, is around the corner."





**KIRSTEN FARRELL**  
*United Teachers Los Angeles*  
**SPORTS MEDICINE**  
 Venice High School

**“I have taught future doctors, physical therapists, athletic trainers, and paramedics. Because of what has happened in Shop-6 at Venice High School, someone’s life will be saved.”**

Growing up in a military family and constantly moving from place to place has given Kirsten Farrell a special understanding of the importance and stability that a teacher can provide to students. She credits her outstanding fifth-grade teacher for inspiring her to become a teacher.

Farrell has been teaching for 21 years, the last 15 at Venice High, where she is the lead for the Sports Medicine Academy. As an ROCP career technical education teacher, she provides students with hands-on skills and experiences that can be transferred to careers and college. She’s also a nationally certified athletic trainer and leads a team of student trainers who know CPR and emergency action plans.

Student Gia Perrone says, “From giving someone a place to heal to a place to feel welcome, we always know we can count on Ms. Farrell.”



**GREGORY GARDINER**  
*Huntington Beach Union High School District Educators Association*  
**AP AND SAC ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES AND BIOLOGY**  
 Edison High School

**“My challenge to my colleagues all across America is this: Join me. Innovate. Sustain. Connect. Together, we can improve education for all our students. And our students will change the world.”**

A science teacher for 18 years, Gregory Gardiner teaches AP classes and started an environmental science program at Edison for students with special needs. He is a founding member of the Academy of Sustainability and Engineering, a group of science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) courses that is now a model for the district.

He’s been instrumental in creating an innovation lab where students can have hands-on experiences, problem-solve, and build sustainable systems applying STEAM concepts. Lab projects include aquaculture breeding programs for tilapia and a remote-controlled hydrogen fuel cell car project.

Edison High colleague Elliot Skolnick says of Gardiner, “There is nothing he will not do to help a student or cause reach their potential.”



**ERIN OXHORN-GILPIN**  
*Castaic Teachers Association*  
**FIRST AND SECOND GRADE**  
 Northlake Hills Elementary School

**“Teaching is an ever-evolving profession, requiring teachers to embrace change and a growth mindset. I never lose sight of what is best for my students.”**

Erin Oxhorn-Gilpin, an 11-year teacher, uses creativity and hands-on lessons to teach her students the basics of reading and writing. One example is a unit where students learn about snails via a picture book, snail races and snail mail. Her young charges organized a fundraiser for the local animal shelter, donating the money raised, and learning how they could continue their partnership.

“It is that ‘moving forward’ attitude that makes her one of the best teachers ever,” says Castaic Union School District Assistant Superintendent Janene Maxon. “Erin is always reflective, always thinking of ways in which to improve, planning next steps for our students’ continued progress.”

## The California Teachers of the Year Program

Presented by California Casualty and the California Teachers of the Year Foundation, the program began in 1972 to honor outstanding teachers. County offices of education nominate educators through their county-level competitions. A state selection committee reviews candidates’ applications and conducts site visits to evaluate teachers’ rapport with students, classroom environment, presentation skills and teaching techniques. Teachers are interviewed by the California Department of Education. The state superintendent then selects awardees. For information, see [cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/ct](http://cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/ct).

# Hope and Healing

*In the aftermath of North Bay wildfires, CTA educators step up to lead and help*

Photos, text and video by **Mike Myslinski**



Santa Rosa Teachers Association President Will Lyon, right, and SRTA activist Paul Drake in the donation center Drake started to help fire victims recover from devastating damage, like that in the city's decimated Coffey Park neighborhood, above.

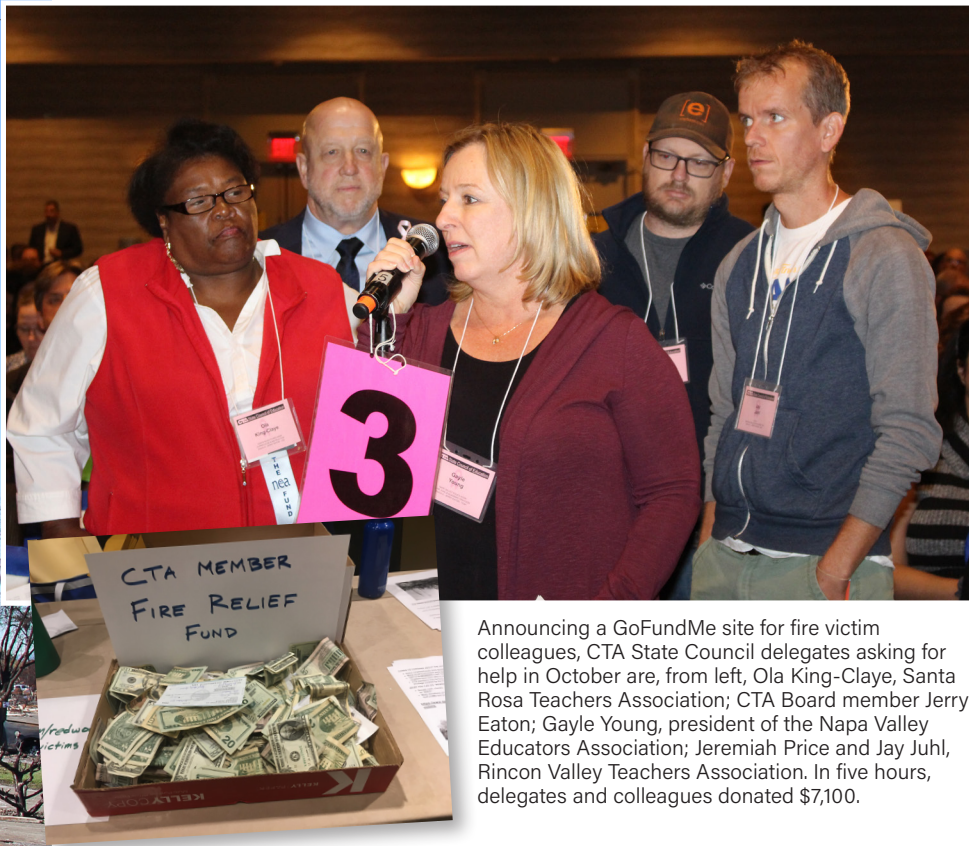
**T**heir acts of kindness and solidarity will be helping to heal their students, families and communities for months and years to come.

In the aftermath of the horrific North Bay wildfires in October, second-grade teacher Paul Drake launched a donation center run by teachers and parents for families of his hard-hit Hidden Valley Elementary School in an empty storefront in downtown Santa Rosa.

The center's mission quickly expanded to help scores of families at many Santa Rosa schools. Educators and other volunteers worked countless hours, handing out free clothing, bicycles, canned food, blankets, bedding, plush toy animals, books, coffee makers and much more. Truckloads of donations arrived from the Bay Area, Santa Cruz, Eureka, Reno and Southern California.

Drake and many other CTA members went to extraordinary lengths to help and comfort students and families. This doesn't surprise Santa Rosa Teachers Association (SRTA) President Will Lyon, whose district, Santa Rosa City Schools, suffered severely.

"Teachers get into the profession because they like to help people. They're problem-solvers, and they're results-oriented. They couldn't help but shine," says Lyon, an English teacher at Santa Rosa High School. "They stood up and helped because they had a need in their souls to help their kids and their community."



Announcing a GoFundMe site for fire victim colleagues, CTA State Council delegates asking for help in October are, from left, Ola King-Claye, Santa Rosa Teachers Association; CTA Board member Jerry Eaton; Gayle Young, president of the Napa Valley Educators Association; Jeremiah Price and Jay Juhl, Rincon Valley Teachers Association. In five hours, delegates and colleagues donated \$7,100.

## How to Help and Get Help

The North Bay October wildfires burned 245,000 acres and claimed 44 lives, with 23 fatalities occurring in Sonoma County. Some 100,000 people evacuated. Santa Rosa alone lost 3,000 homes. Entire neighborhoods were decimated.

Many educators suffered losses. CTA has set up a comprehensive page with resources for those affected, and information on making donations to help. See [cta.org/firesupport](http://cta.org/firesupport).

By mid-November, the CTA Disaster Relief Fund had provided more than 109 grants of up to \$3,000 for impacted educators — at least \$190,000 in relief — with some CTA locals providing more. The Santa Rosa Teachers Association continues its fundraising for educators in the Santa Rosa City Schools district, raising more than \$35,000 so far on its YouCaring site, and pairing impacted teachers' "wish lists" with donors online. The CTA Redwood Service Center Council's fundraising site is taking donations until Dec. 31 and will provide cash help for teachers in the eight counties it represents, including fire-damaged Sonoma, Napa, Mendocino and Lake counties.

### CTA chapters mobilize

As the holidays approach, the work to rebuild lives and regain normalcy in the burn zones is far from over.

Times are hard for North Bay educators and students who lost their homes and family memories in the devastating wildfires, among the most destructive and deadly in California's recent history. In Sonoma County alone, at least 1,298 students, 146 teachers and 89 support staff lost homes, the county office of education says.

In their education communities across several counties, many teachers continue to shoulder the healing process at their schools. The burned region's spirit was seen in student-made signs on school campuses declaring: "The love in the air is thicker than the smoke." Rising from the ashes of destroyed houses and a few lost schools is a union community spirit that's making a difference.

CTA and its chapters have been visible and active. Lyon says a sampling of the SRTA activists who stepped up

includes English teacher Trish Terrell (on the chapter's grievance committee), who coordinated obtaining and distributing 900 donated backpacks filled with school supplies to 23 school sites; Margie BradyLong (treasurer), a math teacher who took the lead on doing paperwork for countless CTA and SRTA grants to members and retired teachers; and Micah Carlin-Goldberg (webmaster), sixth-grade teacher and a social media force, filling the union's website ([WeAreSRTA.org](http://WeAreSRTA.org)) with fire and donation news.

In mid-November, Drake, the educator who launched the donation center, announced an "adopt a family" program where donors are filling the specific needs of more than 80 families at Hidden Valley School, where he says about a quarter of the 600 students lost homes, in addition to six teachers and support staff. Its Satellite School serving 80 kids was destroyed. (Learn more at the donation center's website: [sites.google.com/srcs.k12.ca.us/hiddenvalleyschoolsdisaster](http://sites.google.com/srcs.k12.ca.us/hiddenvalleyschoolsdisaster).)

"It's just important to me and to all of

us to do everything we can to support these families that are such a huge part of our lives," Drake says. "They've gone through such a trauma here."

Educators statewide are pitching in, as did many at October's CTA State Council in Los Angeles. After hearing teachers from the burn zones announce the Redwood Service Center Council GoFundMe account, delegates and colleagues donated \$7,100 in five hours. "We stand with you and your families," CTA





## Video Interviews

**SEE ZOE MILLER** describe the night she evacuated, Paul Drake talk about his donation center, and Will Lyon point out what's left of a Santa Rosa neighborhood at [tinyurl.com/CTA-wildfire](https://tinyurl.com/CTA-wildfire).



Zoe Miller points to where her home once stood; Miller in her Piner High School class in Santa Rosa, post fire.

President Eric Heins vowed.

One of those who asked for Council's help that day was Napa Valley Educators Association President Gayle Young. Her chapter made sure the three local teachers who lost homes each received \$1,000 from NVEA soon after the Atlas Fire hit that area, which shut down the district for two weeks.

In several school districts, special catastrophic fire leave banks and relaxed personal leave rules were negotiated by union teacher leaders and CTA staff so educators could have more paid time off to deal with rebuilding their homes and disrupted lives.

### Disaster grants help out

Many displaced Santa Rosa-area teachers applied for CTA Disaster Relief Fund grants as they balance classroom duties and tending their disrupted lives.

Zoe Miller, who lost her house, used part of her \$3,500 emergency grants to buy clothes and shoes immediately, since she had little time to pack as her family fled the fires at her home that frightening night of Oct. 8.

She gently welcomed her Piner High School students back after the fires shut down district schools for nearly three weeks. "They saw me as the teacher I was before the fire, which is what I wanted to achieve," she says. "It's easy to say it's going to be OK, but it's not going to be OK right away. It's going to take a long time."

One of the few things she grabbed as she fled her home was students' ungraded homework, because grades were due soon. "I thought I probably should get this done for the kids."

For Nancy Blair, some of the money went for a down payment on a used truck to replace the family's 2008 Toyota Sienna that burned at her Mark West Estates home in Santa Rosa. "That was wonderful. It was extremely helpful."

Around 1 a.m. that hot Oct. 9, she escaped in a second car with her husband, twin 10-year-old boys, two dogs, her cellphone and some medicines. "We thought we had more time."

Like many North Bay educators, she was given a list of her students at Rincon Valley Middle School who had lost their homes. Not all kids were open to talking

about it right away. "It's delicate territory. You don't want to upset anybody." Some students gave her gift cards.

Lesley Van Dordrecht and her husband had minutes to flee their home in the pulverized Coffey Park neighborhood, which lost more than 1,000 houses overnight. She planned to bank her CTA disaster grant for rebuilding costs.

After teaching 24 years at Mark West Elementary in the Mark West Union School District, she had lots of school memories in the house. "I had just taken home all my memories. It was a big box of photos from my whole career."

Her first day back to school helped her heal. "The school is here for me. The teachers. Everybody is helping everybody. I just can't wait to feel normal again."

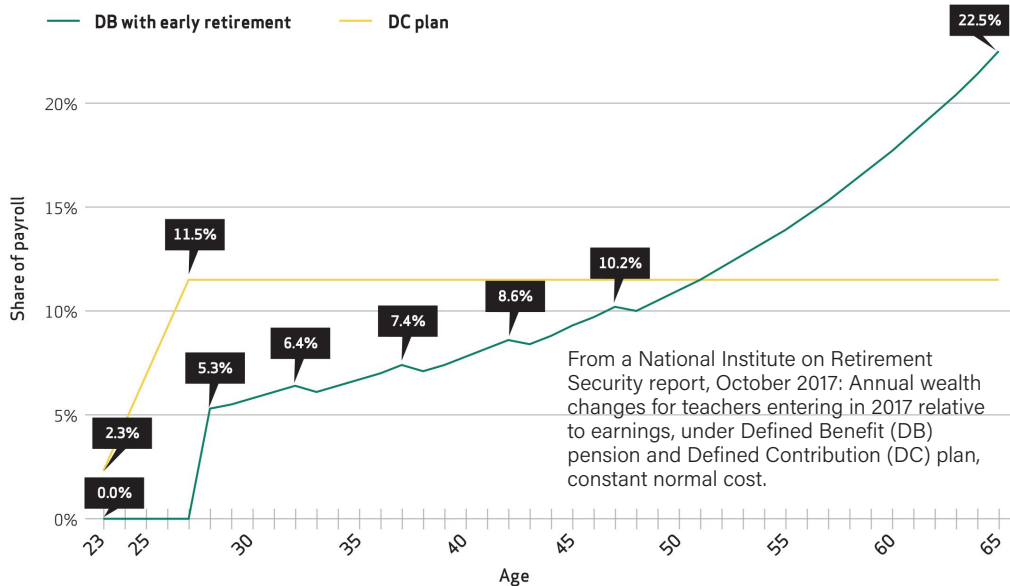
Kindergarten teacher Cati Day lost her dream house.

With its sweeping views of oak trees and green valleys on a hilltop above Santa Rosa, the 24-acre property was a dream come true for Doug and Cati Day, who both teach at San Miguel Elementary in the Mark West district.

Her family was never in danger, staying in their smaller second home in Santa Rosa by chance the night of the fires, but frantic calls from friends in the burning hills after midnight ended any hope for their custom-built house of 13 years.

"It was the Christmas house, the Thanksgiving house, the staff party house," she says. "The property is still incredibly beautiful and inviting. The house is gone. The buildings are gone, but the property is still in our hearts, and we're going to rebuild." ■

See [californiaeducator.org](https://californiaeducator.org) for additional photos and coverage.



## CalSTRS

Most K-14 educators in California belong to the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS), the second-largest public retirement fund in the country. Over the life of their careers, CalSTRS members contribute about 10 percent of their monthly salary to help finance their retirement. Employers and the state also contribute, while the returns garnered by CalSTRS' investments do the rest. CalSTRS benefits, along with savings and supplementary 403(b) retirement plans, all contribute to a secure retirement for California teachers.

Defined-benefit payments also have been a powerful economic engine in California's 58 counties and have a trickle-down effect on the local, state and national economies as well. Several counties depend almost entirely on the spending of retirees. And thousands of jobs have been created due to the economic activity of retirement benefit plans.

In recent years, public employee pensions such as CalSTRS have come under attack, largely by Wall Street. The elimination of public pension systems would be a huge boon for financial planners and companies that stand to invest that money while making profit off the fees they can charge individuals. Also, without institutional investors like CalSTRS — the biggest champions of regulatory and executive compensation reform of the financial industry — there would be little oversight of corporate behavior and no guarantee that money would go back into state and national economies as it does now.

# Pension for Retention

New study finds pension plans help recruitment and retention **By Dina Martin**

**A**t a time when pensions for teachers are under attack, a national study has come out affirming that defined-benefit plans not only benefit teachers and schools, they make good public policy.

"This latest study really reconfirms what we've known for a long time. Pensions earned over three decades, while modest, are an important part of teacher compensation. Secure retirement benefits help teachers stay on the job and help us keep experienced teachers in our schools," says Jennifer Baker, CTA's retirement legislative advocate.

This latest report from the National Institute on Retirement Security, "Win-Win: Pensions Efficiently Serve American Schools and Teachers," re-emphasizes the importance of a defined-benefit plan — a pension — as an incentive for teachers

to stay in the profession. With a growing shortage of teachers, pensions are a significant factor in recruiting new teachers and retaining experienced teaching staff.

"This financial incentive is all the more important given that wages have eroded for teachers, which makes it harder for schools to keep experienced teachers," says report author Christian Weller, professor of public policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston. "Schools and students benefit because teachers become better at their jobs with more experience."

Teachers in the United States are paid on average as much as 60 percent less than similarly educated professionals across the globe, which is why it's crucial they have a sound retirement plan.

A defined-benefit plan is a retirement plan sponsored by the employer, where employee benefits are calculated using a

Continued on page 69



## DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY

For CTA/NEA-Retired Officers, State Council Representatives,  
And Ethnic Minority At-Large Director

**Deadline to return declaration is January 31, 2018**

**CTA/NEA-RETIRED OFFICES TO BE FILLED:**

<p><b>PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY-TREASURER</b></p> <p><b>Term:</b> 2 years June 26, 2018–June 25, 2020 <b>Requirements:</b> Must be a member of CTA/NEA-Retired</p>	<p><b>STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE</b></p> <p><b>Term:</b> 3 years June 26, 2018–June 25, 2021 <b>Requirements:</b> Must be a member of CTA/NEA-Retired <b>AND</b> must reside in the electoral district (see list at bottom right)</p>	<p><b>ETHNIC MINORITY AT-LARGE DIRECTOR</b></p> <p><b>Term:</b> 3 years June 26, 2018–June 25, 2021 <b>Requirements:</b> Must be a member of CTA/NEA-Retired <b>AND</b> must be a member of an ethnic minority group as defined in the CTA bylaws</p>
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**I AM A CANDIDATE FOR THE OFFICE OF:** (Please select one)

<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>STATE OFFICERS:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> President <input type="checkbox"/> Vice President <input type="checkbox"/> Secretary-Treasurer</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> District 1    <input type="checkbox"/> District 3 <input type="checkbox"/> District 2    <input type="checkbox"/> District 4</p> <p>County of Residence _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>ETHNIC MINORITY AT-LARGE DIRECTOR:</b></p> <p>I am: <input type="checkbox"/> African American <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic</p>
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**MY CONTACT INFORMATION:** (Please print)

Name (as it should appear on the ballot)	CTA ID
Home Address	Mailing Address
City & Zip	City & Zip
Home Phone	Cell Phone
Email	

**MY CAMPAIGN STATEMENT:**

You may write a candidate statement **of no more than 30 words**, which will be included with the ballot. If more words are used, the statement will only include the first 30. Reference to ethnic minority identification will not be counted in the 30-word limitation.

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Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**This form must be received no later than 5 p.m. on January 31, 2018.**  
Mail to CTA/NEA-Retired, c/o C4OB, P.O. Box 921, Burlingame, CA 94011-0921.  
**Candidates may wish to return this form by certified mail in order to get a receipt and ensure compliance with the deadline.**

### CTA/NEA-Retired to elect Officers, State Council Representatives, and Ethnic Minority At-Large Director

Jan. 31 is the deadline to submit declarations for CTA/NEA-Retired officers, State Council Representatives and Ethnic Minority At-Large Director.

Anyone wishing to run for a position should complete this Declaration of Candidacy form and return it to the address at the bottom of the form.

Terms, which begin June 26, are two years for state officers and three years for State Council Representatives and Ethnic Minority At-Large Director.

The ballot, including names of the candidates and their campaign statements, will be mailed to CTA/NEA-Retired members in February.

For more information, call 650-552-5439

**ELECTORAL DISTRICTS**

Following are the counties in each electoral district for CTA/NEA-Retired:

<b>District 1</b>	
Alameda	Napa
Contra Costa	San Benito
Del Norte	San Francisco
Humboldt	San Mateo
Lake	Santa Clara
Marin	Santa Cruz
Mendocino	Solano
Monterey	Sonoma
<b>District 2</b>	
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	
<b>District 3</b>	
Los Angeles	Santa Barbara
San Luis Obispo	Ventura
<b>District 4</b>	
Imperial	Riverside
Inyo	San Bernardino
Mono	San Diego
Orange	

# Pension

Continued from page 67



## CTA DIRECTORIAL DISTRICTS

formula that factors in length of employment and salary history, among other things. Research finds that pensions:

- Create meaningful incentives for effective teachers to stay on the job. The longer a teacher stays on the job, the larger the annual retirement benefit they earn each year.
- Benefit student performance and the U.S. education system, because experienced teachers are more productive and effective.
- Boost retirement incomes among lower-income and middle-income teachers. Automatic participation in a pension means that highly unequal tax incentives for retirement savings have only a limited impact on teachers' retirement savings.
- Deliver lifetime income benefits more efficiently than defined-contribution retirement accounts, like 401(k)s. Each dollar saved in a defined-benefit pension provides nearly twice the amount of retirement income as money invested in an individual savings plan because of lower costs and sharing key risks.

The report can be found on the NIRS website ([nirsonline.org](http://nirsonline.org)).

NEA has also made three important fact sheets on pensions available for members. They can be downloaded at [nea.org/home/31934.htm](http://nea.org/home/31934.htm).

- “New Educators: Three Things You Need to Know Now About Retirement!”
- “The Intersection of the Teacher Pipeline, Pensions, and Teacher Retention.”
- “Pensions Work Best for Our Schools, Communities and Educators.”

For more about pensions and retirement planning, see [CTAinvest.org](http://CTAinvest.org). ■

AGUILAR* (H)	3,011.26
ALCALÁ (O)	3,306.57
BILEK (G)	5,298.21
BONACCORSI (B)	2,117.42
BOYD (E)	4,081.93
DAVIDSON (F)	3,087.64
DAWSON (N)	4,148.10
EATON (A)	3,878.01
FREEMAN* (At-Large)	2,620.71
GOLDBERG	2,912.89
GRANADO (L)	4,064.37
GREEN (Q)	4,747.11
HEINS	5,884.46
JACKSON (C)	1,803.77
JONES (J)	2,455.30
LITTMAN (I)	3,651.17
MARTINEZ (K)	5,068.19
MEEDEN* (At-Large)	4,809.52
MELENDEZ* (H)	3,254.83
MONTAÑO	4,397.41
PATTERSON (D)	5,268.95
RODRIGUEZ, ROBERT†	3,313.03
RODRIGUEZ, ROBERTO (P)	3,694.18
VAUGHT (M)	2,610.19
WASHINGTON (At-Large)	2,085.30

†CTA/NEA Coordinator

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Q (Higher Education) – Statewide  
Two At-Large Directors – Statewide

## CTA Board Expenses

Amounts represent a monthly average for fiscal year 2016-17. During the reporting year, the normal and statewide activities include CTA Board meetings, State Council, Service Center Council meetings, Equity and Human Rights Conference, Good Teaching Conferences, various task force meetings, and other business-related functions. Some differences in expenditures may be due to the widely varied geographical sizes of directorial districts, distances traveled for Regional, Service Center and other meetings, and the varied number of functions CTA Directors are responsible for attending. Expenses of Board members with partial-year service are averaged based on months served and delineated with an asterisk.

# You can represent CTA at NEA's convention

**ON THE FACING PAGE** is the official Declaration of Candidacy form for state delegates to the 2018 NEA convention in Minneapolis, MN. Declaration of Candidacy forms for state delegates are also available on the CTA website ([www.cta.org/racandidacy](http://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.

Service Center Councils will begin accepting state delegate Declaration of Candidacy forms on Jan. 4, 2018.

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 29–July 6.

The first caucus meeting is set for June 30, and the annual meeting of the Representative Assembly runs July 2–5. CTA will reimburse state delegates up to \$2,000 with appropriate receipts. If a delegate stays within the CTA meal allowance, shares a room with another delegate and purchases a super-saver airline ticket (if applicable), the CTA reimbursement should cover delegate expenses.

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

For more information, or if your chapter has not initiated an election by March 23, 2018, contact the Elections Committee through CTA Governance Support, P.O. Box 921, Burlingame, CA 94011-0921; 650-552-5300.

## CTA Service Center Council addresses

Service Center Council	Counties	Service Center Council	Counties	Service Center Council	Counties
<b>ALCOSTA SCC</b> 2177 Diamond Blvd. Concord, CA 94520 925-676-2822 925-676-2915 (fax)	Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano (Benicia)	<b>GOLDEN GATE SCC</b> 1705 Murchison Dr. Burlingame, CA 94010 650-552-5571 650-552-5023 (fax)	San Francisco, San Mateo	<b>SERVICE CENTER ONE</b> 222 E. Huntington Dr., Ste. 208 Monrovia, CA 91016 626-357-2095 626-357-2451 (fax)	Los Angeles, San Bernardino
<b>BAY VALLEY SCC/CTA</b> 6095 Bristol Parkway, Ste. 100 Culver City, CA 90230-6601 310-215-0326 310-215-0341 (fax)	Los Angeles	<b>HIGH DESERT SCC</b> 9329 Mariposa Rd., Ste. 215 Hesperia, CA 92344-8086 760-244-2239 760-244-1665 (fax)	Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Mono, San Bernardino	<b>SHASTA CASCADE SCC</b> 760 Cypress Ave., Ste. 301 Redding, CA 96001 530-243-5623 530-243-5813 (fax)	Lassen, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity
<b>CAPITAL SCC</b> 4100 Truxel Rd. Sacramento, CA 95834 916-288-4925 916-288-4912 (fax)	Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Tuolumne, Yolo	<b>IMPERIAL COUNTY SCC</b> 2419 La Brucherie Rd. Imperial, CA 92251 760-355-4600 760-355-0906 (fax)	Imperial, San Diego (Borrego Springs)	<b>SIERRA SCC</b> 3409 Calloway Dr., Ste. 201 Bakersfield, CA 93312 661-587-1366 661-587-1365 (fax)	Kern
<b>CENTRAL COAST COUNTIES SCC</b> 928 E. Blanco Rd., Ste. 100 Salinas, CA 93901 831-783-3200 831-783-3211 (fax)	Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz	<b>MERCED/MARIPOSA SCC</b> 510 W. Main St., Ste. E Merced, CA 95340 209-723-8871 209-723-9598 (fax)	Mariposa, Merced	<b>SOUTHEASTERN SCC</b> 11745 E. Telegraph Rd. Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670 562-478-1359 562-478-1432 (fax)	Los Angeles
<b>CHANNEL ISLANDS SCC</b> 1930 Outlet Center Dr. Oxnard, CA 93036 805-485-1706 805-485-1658 (fax)	San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura	<b>ORANGE SCC</b> 281 N. Rampart St., Ste. A Orange, CA 92868 714-978-8861 714-978-2423 (fax)	Orange	<b>STANISLAUS SCC</b> 3900 Mitchell Rd. Ceres, CA 95307 209-537-0702 209-537-4049 (fax)	Stanislaus
<b>CHICO SCC</b> 1430 East Ave., Ste. 1 Chico, CA 95926 530-345-9743 530-345-1839 (fax)	Butte, Glenn, Plumas	<b>REDWOOD SCC</b> 4300 Redwood Hwy #200 San Rafael, CA 94903 415-479-6616 415-479-6435 (fax)	Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, Solano, Sonoma	<b>TULARE/KINGS SCC</b> 301 W. School Ave. Visalia, CA 93291 559-733-7706 559-739-7863 (fax)	Kings, Tulare
<b>DELTA SCC</b> 7330 West Ln. Stockton, CA 95210 209-478-6091 209-478-5923 (fax)	San Joaquin	<b>SAN DIEGO COUNTY SCC</b> 5333 Mission Center Rd., Ste. 200 San Diego, CA 92108 619-683-3990 619-683-3994 (fax)	San Diego	<b>UTLA/NEA SCC</b> 3303 Wilshire Blvd., 10th Fl. Los Angeles, CA 90010 213-368-6259 213-251-9891 (fax)	Los Angeles
<b>FEATHER RIVER SCC</b> 950 Tharp Rd., Ste. 901 Yuba City, CA 95993 530-755-2082 530-755-0641 (fax)	Colusa, Nevada, Sierra, Sutter, Yuba	<b>SAN GORGONIO SCC</b> 430 E. Vanderbilt Way San Bernardino, CA 92408 909-890-4520 909-890-2461 (fax)	Riverside, San Bernardino	<b>HIGHER EDUCATION CCA</b> 4100 Truxel Rd. Sacramento, CA 95834 916-288-4921 916-288-4911 (fax)	Community colleges
<b>FRESNO/MADERA SCC</b> 5330 N. Fresno St. Fresno, CA 93710 559-222-6593 559-222-9827 (fax)	Fresno, Madera	<b>SANTA CLARA COUNTY SCC</b> 4810 Harwood Rd., Ste. 100 San Jose, CA 95124 408-266-1321 408-266-7893 (fax)	Santa Clara	<b>HIGHER EDUCATION CFA</b> 1110 K Street Sacramento, CA 95814 916-441-4848 916-441-3513 (fax)	4-year colleges and universities



## DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY For State Delegate to the 2018 NEA Convention in Minneapolis, MN

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:  CTA  NEA \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter

Service Center Councils will begin accepting state delegate Declaration of Candidacy forms on Jan. 4, 2018.

**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 CCA Member** (eligible to be in bargaining unit)  
Send to Community College Association, 4100 Truxel Rd., Sacramento, CA 95834.
- Higher Education CFA Member** (eligible to be in bargaining unit)  
Send to California Faculty Association, 1110 K St., Sacramento, CA 95814.
- CTA/NEA-Retired Member** (must be member of NEA-Retired)  
Send to CTA/NEA-Retired, c/o C40B, P.O. Box 921, Burlingame, CA 94011-0921.
- Student CTA** 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 13, 2018.

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.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

**THIS FORM MUST BE FILED NO LATER THAN 5 p.m. on Jan. 31, 2018**, 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.

### Duties of delegates to Rep Assembly in Minneapolis, MN

1. Each delegate will be expected to arrive in Minneapolis, MN, 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

# Oh, What a Year!

## Highlights of *Educator* coverage in 2017



**JANUARY/FEBRUARY:**

Our annual Innovation Issue featured extraordinary educators, including one who revamped district libraries into Maker spaces and another who helps guide African American boys to manhood. We also looked at the San Ramon school community's fight against hate, and hunger on college campuses.



**MAY/JUNE:**

Not all charter schools are created equal. Some are student-centered and deserve support, while others shortchange students to make profits. In addition to multiple stories on charters, we offered some commonsense solutions to close the accountability loopholes.



**MARCH:**

"Embracing the Gender Spectrum" examined the range of gender identities and expressions and how educators deal with situations where gender plays a central role — whether in curriculum or schoolyard bullying. We also looked at a high school program that teaches search and rescue skills, and how students can recognize fake news.



**THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR:**

Our Back to School issue was jam-packed with tips, ideas and resources for the classroom and personal and professional development. The October/November issue caught up with educators' challenges in teaching climate change, and the ongoing success of CTA's Instructional Leadership Corps, where teachers train teachers.



**APRIL:**

Peer review programs fell victim to budget cuts during the recession, but are now back, allowing teachers to help teachers succeed. We also looked at how schools and educators are coping with a rise in food allergies, and pitfalls when it comes to choosing a 403(b) retirement savings plan.

## New! [CaliforniaEducator.org](http://CaliforniaEducator.org)



**HAPPY 2018!**

Check out the brand new digital *Educator*. It has all the great content found in print as well as essential education and CTA news in between issues, in a visually striking and responsive format. Read it on any device, and tell us what you think: [californiaeducator.org](http://californiaeducator.org). (Be sure to find "Fun" under the Topics tab to enter our caption-writing contest!)

# Strong Leaders Transform Schools

At the growing Eastvale STEM Academy, high school students build knowledge in medical science and engineering within an innovative learning community guided by Kim Lu Lawe's leadership and vision.



Eastvale STEM Academy, Medical Biology Class, Director: Kim Lu Lawe, Ed.D. '16

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Southern California

Now enrolling for three start dates each year.  
Apply by **April 4** and join us next summer!  
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Azusa Pacific's School of Education prepares educators like Kim to see and cultivate the potential in every student. Graduates go on to make a lasting difference as creative, collaborative professionals and dedicated advocates for those they serve.

Advance your calling with a master's or doctoral degree, credential, or certificate from a top Christian university and join a mentoring community of educators who will help you make an even greater impact.

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