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California EDUCATOR



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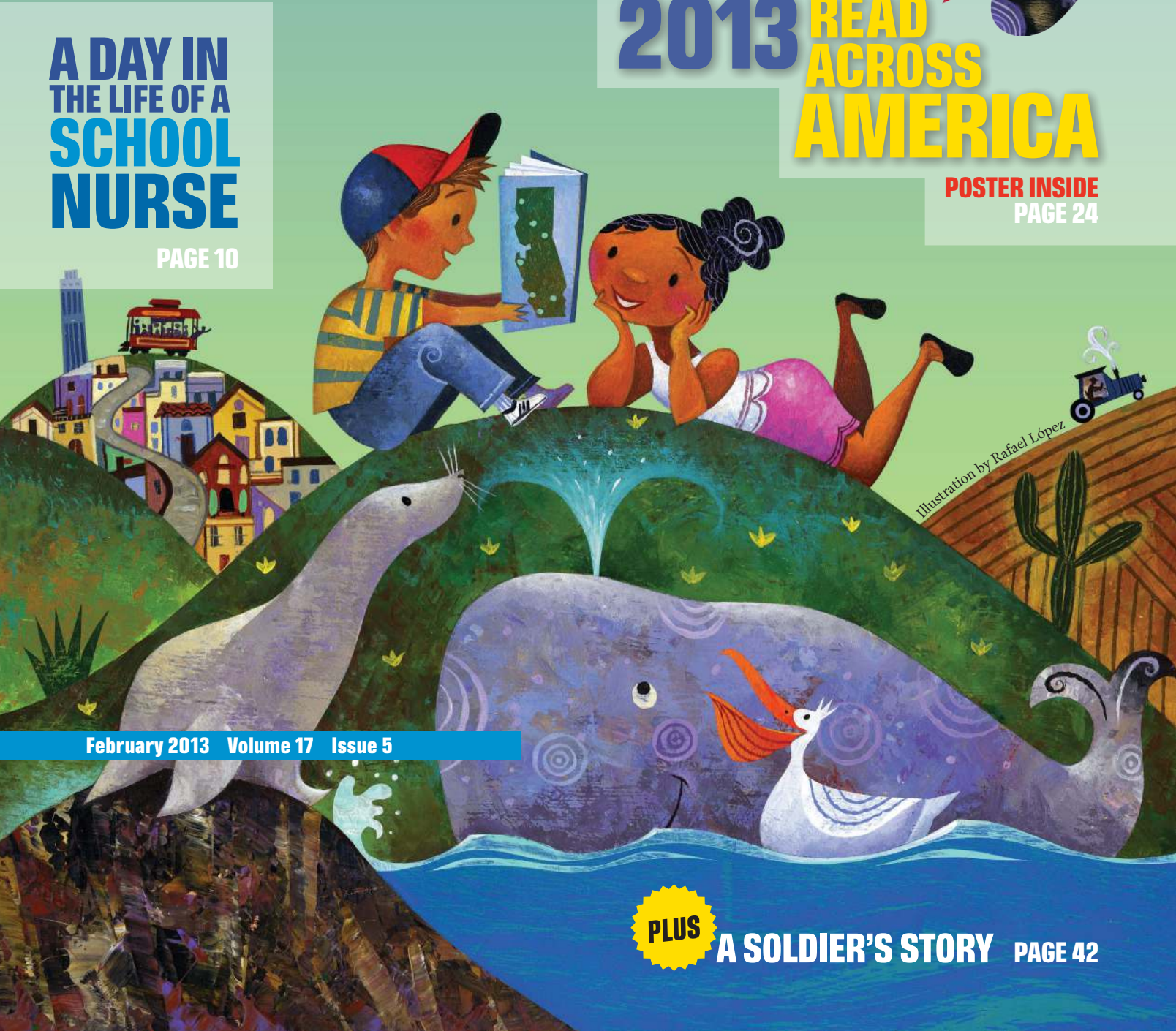


Illustration by Rafael López

February 2013 Volume 17 Issue 5

PLUS

A SOLDIER'S STORY PAGE 42

SCHEDULED COURSES:
NEW! Scheduled Classes coming to your area soon.

TEACHERS: BUILD YOUR SKILLS

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- **Math Is Not Only Numbers: Infusing Literacy and Brain Research in Teaching Math Concepts and Skills**
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- **Smart Use of Your Interactive Whiteboard in the Classroom**
- **Teaching Methods for Diverse Learners**
- **Teaching Positive Social Skills to Students**
- **Balanced Literacy in Action**
- **The Special Education Student in the Inclusion Classroom**
- **Making the Most of Web 2.0 in the Classroom**

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Do you need to make changes and improvements to your curriculum for the next school year? This course allows you to spend the time assessing what you want to keep, what you want to change and what you need to add to align your curricula with new standards. Taking the time to research, plan and organize new curriculum will tremendously benefit you and your students in the academic year.

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Prior district approval for salary advancement units is recommended and the responsibility of each student. **NOTE: One Semester Unit is equivalent to 15 hours of classroom contact time.**



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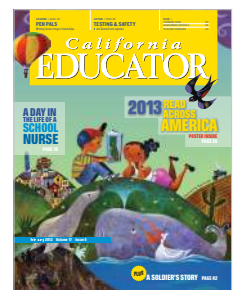
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ON THE COVER



Cover artwork adapted from *Our California*, illustrated by Rafael López.

Editor's Note



By Richard Crowson

“Wow! You really ARE a gifted educator.”

Mike Slater
San Ramon Valley
Education Association

“Well, at least there’s ONE perk to higher class sizes!”

Scott Moe
Lafayette Education Association

Congratulations to Scott Moe and Mike Slater, who each won \$50 in school supplies in the December/January caption contest. We appreciated all 235 entries received. Class size, grading schedules and administrator responses were the most popular topics. Read the top entries at cta.org/captions.

Based on your e-mails, readers enjoy the new features like the caption contest that have appeared since we started a redesign process last year. I’m glad you enjoy the “lifestyle” features like the healthy eating and dressing on a budget articles. You did not like the fonts in sidebars a few months back and scolded me for some of the content. Your opinion matters, and I welcome your feedback as we continue to experiment. The “new and improved” *Educator* will be unveiled in a few months.

We’re featuring the topics you’ve said are important. The Common Core article (page 20) will be the first in a series. School safety is addressed in several articles in this magazine. Remember, we invite you to suggest topics, too.

You and your colleagues do such amazing work in our schools. Enjoy reading about top teachers like I’Asha Warfield (page 14) and Jennifer Thomas (page 44). And see how Sgt. Jonathan Stamper’s time in Afghanistan impacts his teaching (page 42). Spend the day with a school nurse (page 10) and find out how a pen pal program meets writing standards (page 30). And don’t forget about Read Across America (page 24). The poster is gorgeous — please display it with pride in your classroom or school site.

Finally, please remember that you can read the *Educator* online at www.cta.org/educator. Be it online, on Facebook or in print, we’re doing our best to tell the amazing story of teaching and learning in California public schools — and your work to make it all happen.

Cynthia Menzel
Editor In Chief

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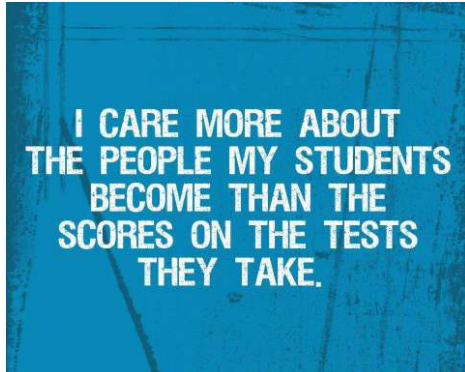
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TOP TWEET

@EricHeins We can break their haughty power, gain our freedom when we learn: That the union makes us strong.

MOST POPULAR FACEBOOK POST



January 3

2228 likes

1975 shares

16 comments

MORE TOP TWEETS

@CATeachersAssoc

Today @educationweek reported CA now ranks 49th in per-student funding, so it's good to see #cabudget proposal that begins to turn the tide.

@Gloria4Unions

Interesting that the states Michelle Rhee scores highest actually score lowest on the NAEP tests. Hmhmhm.

FAVORITE COMMENTS

Michelle Shipp-Schatz | Jan 22

30 kinders to 1 teacher in an extended day class. Fortunate to have parent volunteers in order to have some small group instruction. The increased class size has decreased instructional time and increased classroom management time. Most days I feel like I'm playing the arcade game Whac-a-Mole just trying to keep everyone on task. Class size makes a difference in student learning. Want to give me the resources to make me a better teacher? Give me fewer students!!!

Brynn Hoffman | Jan 27

It sure is refreshing to hear that someone in politics thinks well of teachers. It's been years. They have been using us for scapegoats for far too long.

Kathi Cohen | Jan 26

We teachers basically shut down all learning to administer standardized testing for one to two weeks each year. With furloughs and shortened school years there simply isn't enough time!

WHAT'S NEW AT CTA.ORG



ASSISTING SCHOOLS OF GREATEST NEED

CTA's Institute for Teaching is working with teachers, parents, principals and community members to improve schools. Read the latest newsletter. www.cta.org/iftnews



ICE RAIDS HARM STUDENTS

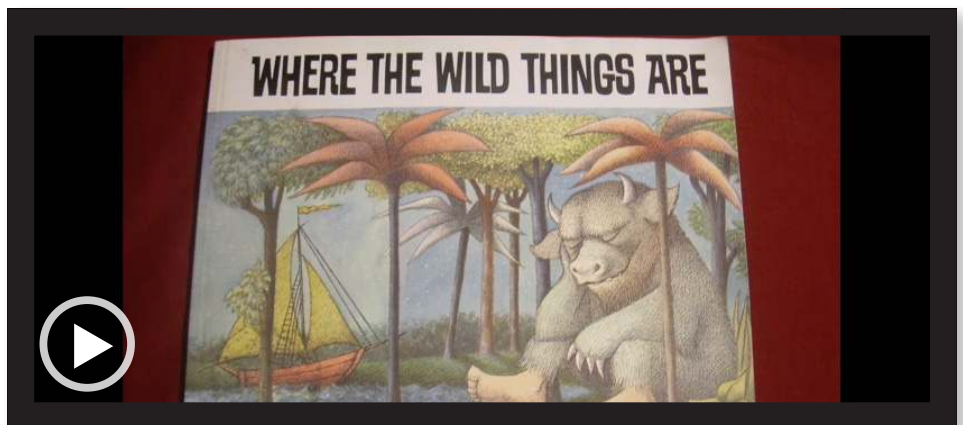
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids are damaging to children and families and are counter to CTA's mission to educate all students.

www.cta.org/humanrights



FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

In 1867, CTA won public funding for schools that taught nonwhite students. See our resources page to help honor African Americans during Black History Month and year-round. www.cta.org/blackhistory



VIRAL VIDEO

Where the Wild Things Are: Actor Christopher Walken reads the beloved children's book by Maurice Sendak and gives improvised descriptions of the pictures. www.cta.org/wildthings





Ask Dean

What can we do about school safety and meeting student needs?

Like many of you, I am an educator, a parent, and a grandparent. And like you, I watched in horror as the tragedy unfolded at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., in December. Other than shedding tears and issuing a statement of condolences and support, I felt helpless. I could only imagine how those parents who lost their children felt, and the families of the six adults as well. They were 3,000 miles away, but those educators are our colleagues.

And then it happened here in California, at Kern County's Taft High School on Jan.

10. This time it was a student with a shotgun, allegedly aiming for a classmate who had been a bully. Thankfully, there were no fatalities, but the incident left no one untouched. The intervention by science teacher Ryan Heber and campus supervisor Kim Lee Fields allowed students in the classroom to escape. I want to commend those two because their quick thinking and bravery prevented harm to more kids. The teachers, the administrators and the district reportedly did everything right — yet a student was injured, school was disrupted and the community was shocked and traumatized by the event.

And as I write this, a somber anniversary is being observed in Stockton, where 24 years ago, five children were killed and 29 others wounded by a gunman at Cleveland Elementary School. Some of our members and staff remember that all too well. There have been at least 10 on-campus shootings in California since then.

In the aftermath of nearly every incident, a national conversation emerged

about what to do to keep our schools and our communities safe from gun-toting assailants. The National Rifle Association proposed that teachers be armed to ensure a safe climate. Well, what teachers should be armed with are resources and tools to help students. CTA's State Council of Education voted to oppose the arming of non-law-enforcement education professionals and volunteers at schools just a few weeks ago.

Even the majority of NRA members favor background checks and sensible gun safety measures. We are discussing it, too. State Council delegates



What teachers should be armed with are resources and tools to help students.

voted to support Sen. Dianne Feinstein's Assault Weapons Regulatory Act of 2013, which regulates the availability of military assault-type firearms and high-capacity ammunition magazines.

Schools are a microcosm of society, and too often community violence flows onto our school campuses. We, as educators, may not know everything about preventing these tragic incidents. But we know more must be done. The State Council School Safety and Management Committee examined our policies a few weeks ago. And I know there may be some bills offered in this Legislature.

Our policies and actions strongly advocate ensuring safe and secure learning environments for our students. Our approach includes sensible gun safety recommendations focusing on measures

that really are preventive, increased access to mental health services, upgrading school facilities, expanding prevention programs and training for students and educators, and meaningful action to help decrease violence. Educators want and need continued training to help them spot potential mental health needs, bullying and high-risk behaviors.

Yet the public debate centers on guns instead of asking the question: Are we meeting the needs of our students in times of calm and crisis, whatever that crisis may be? Back during my days as a school counselor, I was rarely surprised when a chat with a troubled student de-escalated a tense situation.

It was not uncommon to hear later something to this effect: "Yo, Mr. V. That saved me from another suspension 'cause I was ready to mess him up."

And here we are, years later and last in the country in counselors per student. The bright hope I see is this can change as Prop. 30 money is infused back into schools. I welcome debates not about guns, but about what it takes to make sure our students' physical and emotional needs are met so they can be successful academically and in life.

**CTA President
Dean E. Vogel**

LETTERS & COMMENTS

Your opinions and letters are welcome.

So, too, are your photos of teaching, learning and association activities. There is a 250-word limit on letters and all letters will be edited. Photo identifications and permissions are required.

All materials submitted must include your name, address, daytime telephone number and email address. E-mail to editor@cta.org.



THANK YOU, CTA

I would like to thank CTA for giving me HOPE for my profession!

In the last few years I have seen my small necessary high school closed... then my small elementary school close. I have felt the intense scrutiny that teachers are under. As a result of school closures, I had to move in order to keep teaching in the district. I also fought off stage IV melanoma cancer MANY times. I have thought there must be an easier profession.

Then I get a copy of the December/January *Educator* and read "Be of good cheer: Glorious success stories." This is my 12th year and I cannot give up! I love teaching! I love watching children learn something new. Keep up the good work!

► Stephanie Bowen

Alpine County School Employees Association

CYNICAL CHILDREN?

In response to whether holidays should or shouldn't be celebrated in the classroom [December/January *Educator*], I think they should be celebrated.

Though I agree with Ms. Gooch, I think she's too focused on academics. We must have social-community building opportunities. Research shows that when students have fun in school and get to know each other, they do much better academically. In fact, I would say that the majority of the population learns more when things are relevant, engaging and thoughtful.

Remember what it's like to be a kid? The last thing we need are cynical children who will resent not participating in

or learning about holidays in the eighth grade. Just ask your students how they like not celebrating any of the holidays.

► Loreta Torres

United Educators of San Francisco

NOT A VALID EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY

I am writing in response to Janet Brunetti's column extolling the virtues of celebrating holidays in the classroom. She explains that her students write "friendly letters" to Santa at Christmastime, using a Polar Express mailbox that says "ho, ho, ho" encouraging the kids to believe that Santa's elves are collecting the mail.

I don't believe this is a valid educational activity in a public school. Christmas is a Christian holiday, whether the emphasis is on Jesus or Santa. It is not celebrated by Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, or other religious minorities. For children of religious minorities, this can create confusion and conflict for them and their families. Even if there is a choice to opt out, it forces children to hide or minimize their own identities in order to fulfill a classroom assignment and please the teacher.

I am a public school teacher and the parent of two children who attended public schools. As members of a religious minority, we do not celebrate Christmas and have to navigate this issue every year. I urge my colleagues not to put kids in a position that puts them in this awkward spot. There are many ways to have engaging seasonal lessons without infusing the classroom

with Santa, elves and candy canes. And don't get me started about the Easter Bunny!

► Dave Brodkey

Soquel Educators Association

FLIPPING RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES?

I find the flipping concept intriguing [December/January *Educator*]. My situation: A magnet school where students are bused in from up to 90 minutes away in our rural county. Buses arrive immediately before school starts and leave immediately after. I have many Title I students with no access to Internet at home. 50 minute class periods on unblocked days, 1 hour 45 minute blocks every other day on blocked days. Many students can't afford cellphones or other electronic devices. Only about 50 percent of my parents even have e-mail.

Does anyone have any suggestions about how I can implement flipping while providing a fair and equitable education for all my students? If so, please email me at knoble@portervilleschools.org. Eager to get started, but not sure how to overcome these obstacles.

► Kristy Noble

Porterville Education Association

FUN AND PUN OF FLIPPING

Flipping is a brilliant idea, but there are some challenges.

First, theory acquisition must be a fresh look at a new concept, or the extension of a previously encountered concept. Call it Finding Usable Nuggets,

LETTERS & COMMENTS

or FUN, if you will. Then there's Developing Problems Using Nuggets (PUN) that will draw students into the process. Some teachers complain about the FUN part of the lesson because they are developing elaborate teaching devices that will work outside the classroom, but for me the PUN is the most difficult part. How do I bring the sizzle, the "wow!" factor, the rich personal insights into the classroom for my students?

Another difficulty is assessment. Differentiation can be more difficult when the classroom activity is applied. What if a student does not do the FUN work and just attaches to another student? How do I fairly assess performance? How is that directly tied to transferable knowledge that can make students successful on those dreadful high-stakes tests?

Perhaps the greatest challenge is shifting the culture of the school community to make this learning happen throughout the school day. Certainly easier in a small school, but at my high school, if rigorous instruction is not the norm throughout the day, my students can "hold their breath" for 56 minutes and just decide they are no good at science. That harms them, limits feeder students to upper division courses, and is, perhaps, a subtle form of tracking that belies the belief that all students can achieve.

► **J. Barber-Doyle**
Montebello Teachers Association

REALLY?

My husband is a teacher and union member. We often enjoy the articles in the *California Educator* magazines he receives as part of his membership. For example, the article on instructional flipping discussed a strategy he has been interested in implementing in his classroom, and provided some resources to help.

However, the article about the wackiest gifts teachers received was highly inappropriate [December/January *Educator*]. What teaching magazine

uses words like "condom" (unless in a specific case of HIV or teen pregnancy prevention) and "vibrator"? My 10-year-old picked up the magazine because the title of the article looked entertaining, so he read it.

What were you thinking?

► **Rebecca Klempner**
Los Angeles

Editor's Note: Comments in the "Gifts" article were chosen from interactive conversations on CTA's Facebook page. While we regret any offense, the many positive responses thanked us for "real life" examples of humor.

RECYCLING GIFTS

Loved the list of unusual gifts. Mine was a Target gift card that had no amount left on it and a book her teacher last year had given her for Christmas. We are learning about recycling in science!

► **Jennifer Scoyni**
Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

The article "Your freedom of speech in the classroom" in the December/January *Educator* said teachers "can have a robust conversation on religious topics." Thank you for that. It is a sad day when teachers are afraid to talk about anything religious.

I appreciate this advice given by CTA's General Counsel Emma Leheny: "Be sensitive to students' personal beliefs as you construct lesson plans." Yes, this is so important.

We as teachers need to be sensitive to our student's beliefs, whether it's a belief in the tooth fairy or a belief in God. We as public educators have no right to change a child's beliefs.

► **Jennifer Warman**
Keppel Union Teachers Association



GRATEFUL FOR THE MLK SCHOLARSHIP!

Build character. Teach young minds to think and how to think. I've attempted to do this as a fifth-grade teacher for 12 years. However, being in the UCLA Educational Leadership Program has challenged my thinking and ignited in me a new level of servitude for children. Even in the little things...

Classes love their pizza parties. We decided to have a "Giving Party" where we researched and gave to charities.

The kids asked, "Do we still get pizza?"

"No," I replied. "Our pizza will be the joy of serving others!"

I wasn't sure how they would respond, but the kids gave three times the amount they would have brought for pizza. This is significant since I teach in a Title I school and many of my students are from lower-income families. I was so proud to see our class provide propane for families residing on an Indian reservation, funds for Hurricane Sandy relief, and funds for the community of Sandy Hook Elementary.

I spearhead a parent outreach effort we call Academic Empowerment Group to network with parents to help their children be more academically successful.

Now, CTA's financial generosity is helping me navigate my doctorate in education. My work is in African American college matriculation.

As it is, all my students have college aspirations. I hope my work will help students move from aspiration to attainment by high school graduation.

Comments by Lovell Devon Smith, a 2012 Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship recipient, expressing his appreciation at the January State Council meeting. A Santa Monica-Malibu TA member, he teaches at Will Rogers Learning Community.

Keep Black History Month in schools?

February is the time to study black history. Some individuals question whether Black History Month is the best way for students to learn about contributions of African Americans in our society. Here are two different viewpoints from CTA members.

YES, we should keep it

As an educator, I realize how important it is for kids to know their history. If we didn't have Black History Month, our contributions would be lost in the overwhelming curriculum put before our teachers and students. Black history might be overlooked, minimized or ignored. We would go backwards, I believe, regarding race relations, understanding and tolerance.

Black history is a part of American history and should be incorporated into regular history lessons, but I don't think we should give up the scarce opportunity to highlight the contributions of African Americans during February. All minority communities should be celebrated during the school year.

Black History Week began in 1926 and expanded to Black History Month in 1976. It grew from a week to a month because not enough black history was being taught. And it is still not being taught as much as it should.

Black History Month should continue because racism still exists. Just look at the presidential election. Much of the conversation did not center on Obama's qualifications; many racially charged comments surfaced. We need to get beyond that.

Black History Month is for every child. It teaches kids to respect each other and to see role models of all colors.



Demographics have changed in my community; I now have many Hispanics in my class, so I need to make sure they understand their heritage and the important contributions of Hispanics in our society.

I felt proud growing up in Los Angeles. Black History Month was a big deal at the predominantly African American elementary school I attended.

My teachers made sure we met important African American leaders in our community. Guests came out and talked to us about Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King. I have a picture of me in third grade with Jesse Jackson. We both had big afros.

Celebrating can take many forms. I write my own stage productions, and students dress up and play the roles of important African Americans like Ruby Bridges and Maya Angelou. My students look up current leaders like Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Toni Morrison and Oprah Winfrey. I was so excited to rewrite my script to include President Barack Obama.

Black History Month should be preserved. I am very excited about celebrating it with my students this month.

A member of United Teachers of Richmond, Robert Ellis teaches first grade at Washington Elementary School. He is the chair of CTA's African American Caucus.

NO, we should not keep it

Black history is American history, and it should be included year-round in school curriculum and not just one month out of the year.

American history should be inclusive of all cultures so we can minimize prejudice, racism, and ignorance. If we introduce more lessons about diverse cultures throughout the entire school year, we will increase tolerance, acceptance and understanding.

As a student in Chicago, I asked myself why my school designated just one month to celebrate black history. It didn't make sense. When the slave ships brought black slaves to work the land, their history also became the history of American culture.

African American history is a story about being robbed of one's culture and creating a new culture in a new land, which resulted in an extended family. Schools should tell the truth about our history — people were brought here for monetary gain. Many people benefited off the backs of African slaves, who were used to build empires. Research shows most Fortune 500 companies profited from the dubious beginnings of slavery.

I was teased during Black History Month. Other kids would say, "You came from slaves." My mother and father taught us that we came from royalty in Africa. We traced our lineage, and I became proud of my forefathers who helped to make me what I am.

My mother taught first grade for over 30 years. She did a great job of incorporating African American history into lessons year-round. She had pictures of African American folk heroes on her wall and books that discussed the achievements of African Americans at many levels.

Unfortunately, most textbooks today minimize the contributions of African Americans to society. But the historical contributions of African Americans have been monumental, and there needs to be a push to have that information incorporated into our books and curriculum.

Today, we are in the midst of history in the making. The first African American president is fulfilling a second term with a historic second win. American society is changing and becoming more inclusive and tolerant of race, ethnicity and gender. We still have some fights to fight, but opinions are changing!

A counselor/professor at Rio Hondo Community College, Julius Thomas is at-large director overseeing ethnic and racial issues and a member of the Rio Hondo College Faculty Association.





START HERE

MONTGOMERY HIGH SCHOOL 9:30 a.m.

A student has been burned on her arm by a chemical in science lab. She is holding back tears.

“Let’s call your mom,” says McGeough reassuringly, after rinsing the arm in water.

She calls the parent to explain the injury and asks the parent to call the doctor for follow-up. The parent agrees to make the call immediately; the student returns to class until her parent arrives.

10:30 a.m.

A boy comes in with a bleeding hand. He and his friend were horsing around and the friend punched him with his ring. McGeough demonstrates to her health technician how to treat and bandage the small wound.

“Should we bandage the other hand so you’ll have a matching set?” she asks the student, who laughs and momentarily forgets his discomfort.

11 a.m.

A student with Type 1 diabetes checks in to determine whether she has a handle on controlling her blood sugar and insulin. The girl says she checks her blood sugar before lunch and before a snack. Then she shows McGeough her fruit snacks and carbohydrates, needles for checking blood sugar, and insulin pump.

McGeough tells the girl she is



McGeough finds health insurance and dental insurance for students and their families, as needed.

“astute” at managing her disease and asks if she can use her as a role model with other diabetic students. McGeough promises to generate a care plan to follow at school. She reviews doctor’s orders and emergency glucagon use with the health technician should the student lose consciousness and be unable to inject herself.

A day in the life of a school nurse

Responsible for more than scraped knees

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN
PHOTOS BY SCOTT BUSCHMAN

She doesn’t wear white. And she doesn’t back off if she thinks a student’s health is at risk.

Meet school nurse Colette McGeough, who wears sandals instead of sturdy white shoes as she strides briskly through Montgomery High School in Santa Rosa. “Am I going too fast for you?” she asks in a lilting Irish accent. “I walk quickly when I’m putting out fires.”

There are many fires to put out when you are responsible for the well-being of 6,500 students. That is McGeough’s case-

11:30 a.m.

McGeough visits special education teacher Margaret Buhn, whom she recently trained to administer Diastat rectally for students with a seizure disorder. The Board of Registered Nursing says only school nurses should administer the drug. However, last year the governor signed SB 161, a bill that allows school employee volunteers to administer the drug with training from a registered nurse.

“We administered Diastat last Thursday behind a curtain and it went smoothly,” reports Buhn, an SRTA member. “We’re going to need to do it often, because another student with seizures joined the class.”



Colette McGeough is often the first line of defense for students lacking medical insurance.



Nurses like **McGeough** saves students' lives by connecting them to healthcare providers and requesting that certain diagnostic tests be performed.

load — the Santa Rosa City School District has 30 schools, 16,500 students and 2.8 school nurse positions. It is sometimes overwhelming, she confides.

The recommended school nurse to student ratio is 1 nurse to 750 students — and 1 nurse to 125-225 students with health problems, according to the National Association of School Nurses.

In her jurisdiction are 2,700 students with asthma, 40 students with Type 1 diabetes requiring insulin at school, 102 students with seizures, 100 students with heart conditions, 50 students with life-threatening allergies, and a large special education student population with many requiring daily medical procedures, emergency care plans and staff training.

▶ story continued on page 12

11:40 a.m.

McGeough confers with special education teachers and classified employees about a student who has become aggressive with ADHD medication. The teacher says the student used to sleep during class time and is angry that he is not allowed to sleep anymore. McGeough asks the teacher to document the change in behavior so it can be presented for medication evaluation. She promises to contact the parents and doctor with the information so they will be aware of the effects the medication has on the student.

11:50 a.m.

A student with special needs runs after McGeough and gives her a hug. "She is a wonderful nurse," the girl says. "The first time I ever hurt my kneecap, she was there for me. There was a lot of pain. Nurse Colette is the best. I want her to be in my wedding." "They love me here," McGeough says after the girl returns to class. "They know I support them and that when I get a case, I never let go of it until it is resolved. I will talk to their parents. I will talk to their doctor. I will do follow-up. I will call an interpreter. I will link them to resources if they don't have a primary care provider. Students know that they can count on me."

AN UNDISCLOSED SCHOOL SITE

12:25 p.m.

A teacher requests a child's skin condition be evaluated. There are numerous abrasions covering the student's arms and legs. McGeough privately assesses the student's condition and finds multiple lesions, most of them scabbed over. She is worried there is a staph infection, which could be dangerous and contagious. She informs the teacher that the child must be sent home until the wounds are evaluated by a doctor and possibly cultured.

1 p.m.

A student's TB test is positive. The student says she had a chest X-ray and spoke with her doctor, who promised to send the school a note stating she does not have TB. McGeough checks to see if documentation was received. It was not, so the nurse writes an "exclusion notice" stating that the student can only return to school with a doctor's note. The girl is dismayed, but agrees to go home and return to the clinic for the clearance note.

CALIFORNIA IS 45TH IN THE NATION FOR STUDENT-TO-NURSE RATIO, WITH JUST 3,000 SCHOOL NURSES SERVING 6.3 MILLION PUBLIC SCHOOL CHILDREN.

She performs vision, hearing and scoliosis screening, attends Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings for students with special needs, case-manages and evaluates health treatment plans, links families and students to community resources, and assists with medical insurance applications. She is often the first line of defense for students lacking medical insurance.

McGeough saves students' lives by connecting them to health care providers and requesting that certain diagnostic tests be performed.

One student whose recurrent fainting spells were blamed on heatstroke was diagnosed with a heart condition after McGeough wrote to the girl's doctor requesting certain cardiac tests.

Another student with severe stomach pains was found to have a rare and sometimes fatal disease after McGeough asked the girl's parents and doctor to re-evaluate. While school nurses save lives, they are an endangered species. California is 45th in the nation for student-to-nurse ratio, with just 3,000 school nurses serving 6.3 million public school children.

McGeough has worked in hospital emergency rooms and intensive care

units, but she loves being a school nurse best of all. She drives 90 minutes each way to work, but says it's worth it.

"It's amazing what you can see and achieve in a day," says the Santa Rosa Teachers Association member. "It's a wonderful job where you can make such a difference in a student's life."

Indeed, a typical day in the life of a school nurse is hectic, unpredictable and rewarding. 🎓

NUEVA VISTA HIGH SCHOOL

1:30 p.m.

McGeough visits the infant toddler program because staff asked her to check on a 2-year-old with a seizure disorder. The school has day care for babies while moms attend class. The baby's mother would like to go on a field trip with her classmates, but McGeough instructs the staff that only the parent may administer Diastat, according to doctor's orders, so options will need to be explored for the baby if "Mum" goes on the field trip.



2 p.m.

McGeough meets with teen moms to ensure all baby immunizations are on schedule. "What about you?" she asks one of the mothers. "Do you have health insurance?"

"No," says the girl. "Just my baby."

"I'll link you up to some insurance so that you can be healthy, too," says the school nurse.

"It's important for you to stay healthy so that you can take care of your baby."



**I AM
PASSIONATE
ABOUT MY
STUDENTS'
HEALTH AND
SAFETY.
I WILL DO
EVERYTHING
I CAN.
I HOPE IT IS
ENOUGH.**

Colette McGeough

MONTGOMERY HIGH SCHOOL

2:30 p.m.

It's time for an IEP meeting. Afterward, she will schedule staff trainings, make numerous calls to parents, doctors and the Public Health Department. Before she leaves, McGeough will find health insurance and dental insurance for students and their families, as needed.



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WM13-3021



BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

Three CTA members were among those recently named as the 2013 California Teachers of the Year: I'Asha Warfield, Sebastien Paul De Clerck, and Veronica Marquez.

"These wonderful teachers have shown the kind of skill, passion and dedication that exemplify the very best of the most important, most demanding and most rewarding profession there is," says state Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson.

Over the next few months, we will profile each of these outstanding teachers in turn.

I'Asha Warfield is a seventh-grade English teacher at Oakland's Frick Middle School. She works as a coach in the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program to help new teachers and is a consultant to the Bay Area Writing Project, which presents teacher trainings on secondary literacy with an emphasis on writing. Superintendent Torlakson describes this Oakland Education Association member as being "at the top of her game" in helping students master lessons. She will represent California in the National Teacher of the Year competition this year.



I'Asha Warfield
Frick Middle School
English, seventh grade

FAVORITE CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

I use Socratic seminar: discussion in which the leader asks open-ended questions and students listen closely to the comments of others, think critically for themselves, and articulate responses to the thoughts of others. It is a great way to put students in charge of their learning, teach facilitation skills and stimulate deeper understanding of text. I love Graffiti Board for students to synthesize and share their learning through words and images. I hang large pieces of papers on the walls. Each sheet is labeled with our lesson focus. For example, if we are writing a character analysis, each sheet bears a character's name. Each group of 3-4 students has about two minutes at each poster where each student "tags" the wall with words, symbols or pictures about the label. It is also a quick, formative assessment.

FAVORITE CLASSROOM RESOURCES

I love my Elmo document camera. It provides a way to do writing with students and model my thought

processes. And I love my flip-cam. I record my classes often. Students watch the recordings and, using a rubric, evaluate their learning. Likewise, I have had a group of teachers watch the recordings to evaluate my teaching.

FAVORITE INTERNET LINKS

I tend to search and find resources all over the Internet from the numerous teachers who share their practice online. Two sites I go to often are readwritethink.org and www.nsrffharmony.org (follow the links to "Protocols").

WORDS TO LIVE BY

Don't tell me what you believe. Tell me what you do and I'll tell you what you believe.

ON HAVING A MENTOR

My principal, Jerome Gourdine, is my mentor. More than mentoring me with instruction, he has helped me understand the developmental aspects of the middle school child, which has a profound impact on my practice.

FAVORITE BOOK FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OR CLASSROOM USE

50 Debate Prompts for Kids by Michael S. Dahlie and Patrick Daley; *Teaching Adolescent Writing* by Kelly Gallagher; *Mechanically Inclined* by Jeff Anderson.

WHY I STAY IN TEACHING

In college, I was overwhelmed with "saving the world." I concluded that there was no way that I could dramatically impact all the areas of our world in dire need of attention and solutions. Yet, I figured, if I work with an average of 125 students a year, I would create the capacity to effect change in 125 diverse areas. If I am able to spark curiosity and help each student discover one area in which they are passionate, the ripple effect would begin.

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Cynthia Noriega
 B.S. Child Development 2012
 Head Start/Preschool Teacher
 Plaza de la Raza



Proposed new budget reflects voters' will and boosts school spending by \$4.5 billion

BY LEN FELDMAN

Reflecting overwhelming voter approval of Proposition 30 in November, Gov. Jerry Brown proposed a 2013-14 state budget that would increase funding for K-12 schools and community colleges by more than \$4.5 billion, including \$1.8 billion in deferred funds owed from earlier years.

The proposed funding raises K-12 per-student spending by \$2,700. That means thousands of additional dollars for every classroom in the state.

The plan provides \$250 million in increases to each of the state's higher education systems, California State University and the University of California.

The governor's budget proposal was unveiled on Jan. 10, the same day Education Week released its annual ranking of the states, which found California had dropped two places to 49th in per-student funding as a result of years of cuts.

"It's good to see a state budget proposal that begins to turn the tide," says CTA President Dean E. Vogel. "After years of drastic cuts, it is time our students had a chance to focus on learning instead of having to face larger class sizes, fewer course choices, and fewer teachers in the classroom."

The recommended spending plan includes a proposal to change how funding is allocated to local school districts. The governor's "local control funding formula" provides additional resources to schools with students with greater needs, such as English learners and students from low-



CTA Board member **Toby Boyd** talks with Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) during a visit to the Capitol Jan. 29.

income homes. The budget documents do not fully detail how the new formula would work, and educators are concerned about how it may affect funding for all schools over time.

"We commend the governor for identifying class size as a funding priority, but the proposal still permits larger class sizes than the current legal maximum of 20 students," Vogel emphasizes. "We want to ensure the state has adequate resources to reduce class sizes to more teachable levels, especially in grades K-3, and to implement the new Common Core State Standards designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning."

Other concerns center on the overall structure of the new system and the nature and quality of the data that will be used to calculate appropriations. Educators want to ensure that the state does not move to a new funding formula before schools receive the funding they are owed from prior years, when cuts pared more than \$27 billion from public schools.

The governor's budget proposal is far different from the draconian spending plan he would have had to propose if Proposition 30 had failed. Without voter approval of that revenue measure, schools would have faced an immediate \$5 billion in cuts, including \$1 billion in additional slashes to the state's higher education institutions and further increases in tuition costs.

"Overall, thanks to California voters and Gov. Brown, the proposed budget is a good first step toward restoring much-needed

funding to our public schools and colleges," Vogel notes. "We look forward to working with the governor and all lawmakers on behalf of California's students and educators."

The governor's proposal now goes to the Legislature for review. The state constitution requires the state to have a final budget in place on June 30, the day before the start of the new funding year.

For more information and to stay

up-to-date on the budget and other legislation, go to www.cta.org/budget.

I WOULD PREFER TO TRUST OUR TEACHERS WHO ARE IN THE CLASSROOM EACH DAY, DOING THE REAL WORK — LIGHTING FIRES IN YOUNG MINDS.
GOVERNOR JERRY BROWN

Two-year session off to a good start

CTA takes on key issues

BY LEN FELDMAN

Things are looking up for the start of this two-year legislative session thanks to the hard work of CTA members and partners in passing Proposition 30. CTA representatives in the state Capitol will deal with key issues that have a direct impact on teachers and education support professionals.

THE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSAL TO REVISE HOW FUNDS ARE ALLOCATED TO LOCAL SCHOOLS. The local control funding formula aims to channel money into schools with students whose educational needs are more demanding to meet.

Educators want to see a balanced, data-driven process that reflects accurate information and accountability measures, along with class size reduction, professional development, home-to-school transportation, and adult education. One of CTA's goals is to make school districts whole, insuring they are paid back money owed for the last several years.

SEN. PADILLA'S NEW MEASURE TO CHANGE TEACHER DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES. Last year Sen. Alex Padilla (D-Pacoima) proposed a bill that undermines teachers' due process protections in a misguided attempt to enhance student protections against adult misconduct. Sen. Padilla introduced a new version of that bill, SB 10, which does nothing to improve student safety, and instead compromises due process.

CTA will again seek to craft an effective measure that does not create more problems than it solves. Last year CTA sought a way to speed up the legal process, while protecting the rights of the accused. CTA's goal is to keep students safe, maintain the integrity of the teaching profession, and protect educators' due process rights.

WANT TO KNOW
CTA'S TAKE
ON PROPOSED
LEGISLATION?

Check out cta.org/billpositions



Just so you know...

The legislative year at a glance

Just like the school year, the legislative calendar has set dates for action items.

THE BUDGET:

The process in finalizing a state budget runs from January through June each year. In early January, the governor proposes a draft spending plan. From then until May 15, lawmakers review and revise the proposal, which is contained in a budget bill introduced into each house. In mid-May, the governor issues an updated draft, based on more recent fiscal information. Under terms of the constitution, legislators have until June 15 to send the governor a final spending plan. He has until June 30 to sign it so that it will take effect on July 1, the start of the new fiscal year.

OTHER LEGISLATION:

Technically, lawmakers may introduce new legislation until Feb. 22 this year. (The effective deadline is earlier, because they have to send proposals to the Legislature's lawyers by Jan. 25 for the plan to be put in bill language.)

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW:

To become law, bills need to secure approval of committees in the house where they begin. (AB bills begin in the Assembly; SB bills begin in the state Senate.) If a bill is approved by the house of origin, it must secure approval of the other house in order to go to the governor for his signature or veto. Nonetheless, during the year, some bills are "gutted and amended," thereafter carrying provisions that may be very different from those in the original bill. While there are intervening deadlines for bills getting through committees, the last day the Legislature can approve legislation this year is Sept. 13.

STAY CONNECTED:

CTA communicates directly with members and association leaders through the weekly e-mailed Capitol Reporter, www.cta.org, text messages, Facebook posts and Twitter feeds, and through CTA member Legislative Contacts. Check in to the website regularly for updated bill information, analysis and positions. Reach out to legislators on the various issues by visiting www.cta.org/contactyourlegislator.

For more information on legislative communications, call (916) 325-1551.

Educators to legislators

Hats off to the six CTA members elected in 2012 to state and federal office! Their victories ensure educators have a stronger political voice.

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN
PHOTOS BY SCOTT BUSCHMAN



JOSE MEDINA, State Assembly District 61, D-Riverside, Riverside City Teachers Association

U.S. government teacher Jose Medina's students got a firsthand lesson in civics by volunteering to campaign for him. Some young campaigners were his former students at Poly High School, while others sat in his class at Lincoln Continuation School in Riverside last year. A longtime member of the Riverside Community College District Board of Trustees, Medina's leadership helped to expand job-training programs and upgrade classrooms and science labs.

One of the first things I'd like to do... is obtain funding for UC Riverside School of Medicine. It has been accredited, but now requires \$15 million in state funding. It will boost the economy and address the shortage of doctors in the Riverside Area. It will bring more diversity to the medical profession.

When teachers lobby legislators... They should convey exactly how legislative decisions will directly impact their classrooms. How will legislation affect class size? How will the budget affect the number of counselors at their schools? Provide something specific.



SHARON QUIRK-SILVA, State Assembly District 65, D-Fullerton, Fullerton Elementary Teachers Association

The former Fullerton mayor and city council member, Sharon Quirk-Silva stunned the incumbent with a come-from-behind win. She sent letters to the parents of her third- and fourth-graders in the gifted program at Richman Elementary School explaining that she was not leaving their children; instead, she would be looking out for them in Sacramento because education is her top priority.

My top goal... is providing access to community college and reinstating some of the classes that were closed. Students need to be able to get through community college in two years instead of three to five years. Students are languishing because they can't get the courses they need and aren't able to transfer. Students are losing hope and not moving forward. We've got to do better.

Being a teacher prepared me for this new role... Who better to fight for our kids, for a quality education, than a teacher who works every single day in the real world? When I go to Sacramento, I'll be doing what I've always done — meeting challenges head-on to find solutions. At my core I'm a problem solver. I'm not afraid to take on tough issues.

Advice for teacher advocates? Your first time visiting a legislator should not be your last; make sure it's the beginning of a relationship. Give legislators one or two specific things you would like to see happen. Write it down and give it to us so we can follow up. If you don't hear back in a timely fashion, follow up!



SHIRLEY WEBER, State Assembly District 79, D-San Diego, California Faculty Association

Shirley Weber senses a "new optimism" with the passage of Prop. 30, and now that she's a legislator, she wants to make sure that Prop. 30 goes to schools so people don't feel "tricked" again. Nothing is more important than closing the achievement gap, says Weber, who chaired the Africana studies program at San Diego State University and also taught at CSU Los Angeles and Los Angeles City College.

I'm looking for various ways... to improve inner-city school instruction. If we don't rescue inner-city public schools, we will lose that battle to charters. We need to improve the educational experience of every kid in the state. That involves a number of things including staff development and teacher training. We don't have time to waste, and there needs to be a sense of urgency.

I believe it's important... to have another CSU in the San Diego County area. We need to have one close to the border in the Chula Vista area and enough universities around the state to meet the needs of students who can't afford to go away to school. It might have been a deal breaker if I had to go away.

Education advocates should consider... that when they come to me with a problem, they also have a reasonable solution that will help solve the problem and at the same time not break the bank.



SUSAN TALAMANTES EGGMAN, State Assembly District 13, D-Stockton, *California Faculty Association*

Susan Talamantes Eggman decided to stop “feeling like a victim” and ran for the first government office available. Soon she was a Stockton City Council member. The economy tanked and Stockton was among the cities hardest hit by foreclosures, crime and unemployment. It strengthened her belief that education was the solution to many problems, including poverty. The devastating budget cuts at CSU Sacramento, where she was an associate professor of social work, led her to run for state Assembly.

Serving on the Stockton City Council... made me aware of the important role education plays in society. Explaining things to student interns helped me to be more intentional about my decisions and the thought that went into making them. It’s not about just what I can achieve personally; it’s about educating the next generation for leadership.

My top priority is... fixing the California State University system. It was terrible seeing students who needed my class being unable to add one more chair to an overcrowded classroom. Due to budget cuts, faculty had to teach things that were not their forte. I saw students staying in school longer and taking out extra loans to get the classes they needed.

What do you expect from lobbyists? I tell my students they need to know exactly what they are asking for and to tell a compelling story about what is needed. If they are telling a legislator that cuts are detrimental to mental health services, they need to show there are real consequences that will impact them personally if services are cut.



RAUL BOCANEGRA, State Assembly District 39, D-Pacoima, *California Faculty Association*

As a professor of urban studies and planning at CSU Northridge, Raul Bocanegra encouraged students to look at the past, present and future of Los Angeles when focusing on ways to improve the quality of life for residents. His ability to look at the big picture and visualize change helped him to win a seat in the Legislature by 17 points. He believes job creation and education are “one and the same” and says it will be his main focus in Sacramento.

Being in the classroom helped me prepare for this... There are a lot of similarities between professors and legislators. As a professor, I try to find a way to get through to my students and engage them in a subject. As a legislator, I’m trying to do the same thing with my colleagues and constituents, but this is a bigger classroom.

I was honored... to be named chairman of the Revenue and Taxation Committee, and honored that the speaker chose me to serve in this very important position.

One of the most important things... we will need to consider in this new era is changing the two-thirds majority to raise taxes. Now that Democrats have a two-thirds majority, it allows us to enact some progressive reform. It will be all about looking at the tax code and trying to make sense of it. The last time it was revised was 35 years ago.

Educators should talk with legislators... using electronic media, so we know what is happening in the classroom on a daily basis. Dialogue should not just be one time a year during Lobby Day. During my campaign, there was a lot of communication through Facebook, and it’s a great way to continue to engage and communicate with voters.



MARK TAKANO, Congressional District 41, D-Riverside, *Rialto Educators Association*

This Rialto High School English teacher and Riverside Community College District Board member is the first openly LGBT person of color elected to Congress. He served as the gay-straight alliance club leader, helping to protect teens from bullying. His students convinced him to run for office again after the passage of Proposition 8, which outlaws gay marriage.

Being a teacher... has prepared me for Congress because I have seen the shortcomings of federal policy. When it comes to No Child Left Behind, I would like to see other ways to think about teacher accountability besides test scores. I don’t really like Race to the Top, which incorporates standardized testing as part of teacher evaluations. I would like the first bill we take up to be the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Other goals I have... are initiating and expanding training programs to create jobs and improve the economy. Jobs are unfilled because people lack training to fill them, so workers are recruited from overseas or we have critical job shortages in fields like nursing. We need to improve career technical training opportunities for young people — and older people trying to retool careers.

It’s important for teachers to be advocates... because they are emblems of hope. Our voice is respected and our community wants us to step forward.

Advice for teacher advocates? Remind legislators of the important work you do and that education is an investment for the long term. It’s different from being a consumable luxury for the moment. Remind legislators we can’t afford not to invest in education. It’s our seed corn; we must protect it.

Common Core

What you need to know now

BY FRANK WELLS

A major shift in literacy emphasis and a stronger balance between mathematics procedural knowledge and understanding are key components of the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS). California will begin fully implementing assessments in the 2014-15 school year. The state is preparing for the transition and many districts are already gearing up, so CTA members are advised to become familiar with the coming changes now.

BACKGROUND

The new standards were developed based in part on work already done at the state level (California and Massachusetts were models), and were designed to meet college and career readiness standards adopted in 2009. Most states have adopted the CCSS, with only Virginia, Texas, Alaska, Nebraska and Minnesota not participating.

Developed through the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers with feedback from states, teachers, higher education, and the general public, the final standards were released on June 2, 2010. The California State Board of Education (SBE) adopted the standards with additions of its own two months later.

Aligning to college and workplace expectations, the new standards were based on evidence and research, include rigorous content and knowledge application through higher level skills, and are internationally benchmarked to prepare students to succeed in a global economy. College and career readiness are the overall focus even at the earliest grade levels.

While adopting 100 percent of the national standards, the SBE added an additional 15 percent that are specific to California. The language arts additions include formal presentations at all grade levels and penmanship in grades 2-4. Additional math requirements include probability and statistics, operations and algebraic thinking in grades 2-5, and shifts in grade level introductions to math concepts, moving some subjects earlier and others later. In January, the SBE voted

to eliminate California's controversial additional algebra requirement for eighth-graders, although students ready for that subject may still be able to take it.

LANGUAGE ARTS

With that in mind, the new English-language arts standards are significantly different, shifting to a much greater focus on informational text. Currently only 15 percent of text in elementary school is informational, yet that makes up 80 percent of the reading done in college and the workforce. Informational text is harder to understand, and students who haven't had enough experience with it run into problems after graduating.

The new standards will shift the informational/narrative percentages to 50/50 at the elementary level, 60/40 in middle school, and 75/25 in high school.

How students respond to text-based questions will also change, as there will be greater emphasis on providing evidence from reading to support their answers. Rather than simply being asked how they feel about what they have read or how an issue in the reading relates to their own lives, students will be pressed to present arguments justified by the text they have read.

For example, after reading Dr. Martin Luther King's "Letter from a Birmingham

Jail," under current practices students might be asked to write "about a time you felt something was unfair." More text-dependent questioning might ask, "What can you infer from King's letter about the letter he received?" The language standards also emphasize vocabulary development and collaborative discussion.

COMMON CORE AND TESTING

Although the specific content and assessment practices may be changing, what is generally measured and when remains governed by current No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top requirements. Students will be tested in both English-language arts and math in grades 3-8, and at least once in each subject area in grades 10-12.

Although most in the education community are supportive of the common national standards, they are not completely without controversy. As mentioned, five states have not adopted them. Some educators lament what they call a "one-size-fits-all" approach, a criticism also leveled against No Child Left Behind (NCLB), while others criticize what they see as a further shift away from local control.

TEACHERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO LOOK FOR GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS STUDENTS WILL NEED TO OVERCOME TO DO WELL UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM.

Most, however, view the move to the new standards as very positive, even necessary, and the initiative has received widespread support from leading education and business leaders. NEA Vice President Lily Eskelsen praised the initiative: "These standards have the potential to support teachers in achieving NEA's purpose of preparing students to thrive in a democratic society and a diverse, changing world as knowledgeable, creative and engaged citizens and lifelong learners."

Still, at least one aspect of the new assessments leaves some educators apprehensive. Moving from what are largely fill-in-the-bubble-style tests to computer or tablet based assessment assumes students are computer literate, and that's not always

the case. Scott Wells is a computer lab teacher in Long Beach Unified, a district involved in piloting the new standards. Of a recent field test of the new assessment system he reports, “A lot of kids spent most of the time trying to find the right letters on the keyboard.” He wonders if it makes sense to test students who can’t yet type fluently in this way.

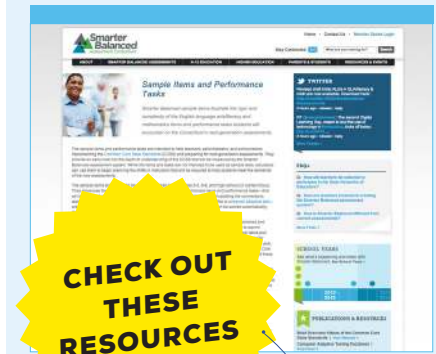
Other limitations of the new standards are by design. The CCSS do not define how teachers should teach, all that can or should be taught, or the nature of advanced work beyond the core. They do not prescribe interventions for students below grade level, the full range of support for students with special needs and English language learners, or even everything needed to be “college and career ready.”

CTA CAN HELP

CTA members can take steps now to be better prepared when the new standards are implemented. School staff should familiarize themselves with the new expectations of the CCSS. Grade level and subject area teams can start looking for areas of strength and alignment between current standards and the new ones.

Teachers are encouraged to look for gaps in knowledge and skills students will need to overcome to do well under the new system. Familiarity and preparedness now will help ease the transition to what could prove to be a powerful new opportunity for America’s students and teachers.

*Next month’s Common Core topic:
8th grade algebra.*



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Learning and sharing opportunities

FEBRUARY 22 APPLICATION DEADLINE

Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarships

Aimed at helping members of ethnic minorities in preparing for teaching-related careers in public education, the fund is supported by voluntary contributions from CTA members and the CTA Foundation for Teaching and Learning. An applicant must be a member of a defined ethnic minority group and an active CTA or Student CTA member, or a dependent child of a CTA member. Applications must be postmarked by Friday, Feb. 22, 2013. Find out more: www.cta.org/mlkscholarships



MARCH 22-24 CONFERENCE

Good Teaching Conference South

Los Angeles Airport Marriott

Eliminating pesky behavior (gimmick free), books to use across the curriculum, money management tips for educators, and using podcasts, screencasts and the Web are a few topics in this conference designed to support excellent teaching and learning practices for classroom teachers. Find various workshops in curriculum content areas for K-12 teachers and time to network and share ideas with colleagues and experts in the field. One-day pre-conference sessions on the Common Core State Standards, educator-led quality teaching and retirement planning are offered on Friday, at additional cost. Find out more: www.cta.org/conferences

FEB 28-MAR 1 CONFERENCE

CTA/NEA-Retired Conference

Hyatt Regency San Francisco Airport, Burlingame

"Protecting Your Future." If you are retired or are considering retirement in the next few years, you will benefit from this conference. The workshops cover a wide variety of topics, including attacks on public pensions, federal and California retiree issues legislation, CTA/NEA-Retired member benefits, and health care issues. The keynote speaker is NEA Executive Committee member Paula Monroe. Find out more: www.cta.org/conferences

APRIL 3 NOMINATION DEADLINE

2012 John Swett Awards

The story of public education in California deserves to be told. And those who tell it well deserve to be singled out for public praise. The 54th annual John Swett Awards for Media Excellence, which are CTA's highest honor for media professionals, herald outstanding coverage of public education issues in 2012. Newspaper, radio and television editors, reporters, producers, directors and bloggers are all encouraged to enter. Nominations may be submitted by April 3, 2013, by any CTA chapter (local affiliate) or Service Center Council. Entries are judged by panels of independent media professionals. Winners are awarded plaques at a special reception May 31 at State Council. A statewide CTA news release and full-page advertisement listing the winners in the *Columbia Journalism Review* give further recognition. Find out more: www.cta.org/awards

MARCH 1 EVENT

Read Across America

"Reading Takes You Places." Join CTA in the annual, nationwide celebration of reading. This year's featured book is *Our California* by Pam Muñoz Ryan, illustrated by Rafael López. Find out more: www.cta.org/raa



MARCH 1-3 CONFERENCE

Equity and Human Rights Conference

Hyatt Regency, Burlingame

"Leading the March Towards Equity and Human Rights for 150 Years and Counting." This is an ideal venue for finding and learning creative approaches to new and old challenges while collaborating with your peers and topic experts. Some 50 workshops will provide a greater understanding of diversity and equity issues. Find out more: www.cta.org/conferences

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2013 READ ACROSS AMERICA



Read Across America — Reading Takes You Places!

Help children discover that Reading Takes You Places by getting involved in Read Across America 2013!

► 2013 Book Selection — *Our California*

Surf waves in San Diego, climb Half Dome in Yosemite, or see the sights of San Francisco by cable car by opening *Our California*, the 2013 CTA featured book for NEA's Read Across America. Written by Pam Muñoz Ryan and beautifully illustrated by Rafael López, this book is a perfect way to help celebrate CTA's 150th anniversary. *Our California* is a wonderful way to show children the spirit of California as it highlights fun features or the historical importance of 14 California cities with colorful, evocative and eye-filling imagery.

Read Across America, celebrated this year on March 1, is a national day to promote literacy co-sponsored by CTA. "The more children read outside of school — regardless of their age — the better they do in school," says Kendall Vaught, CTA's Read Across America Committee chair.

► How are you celebrating?

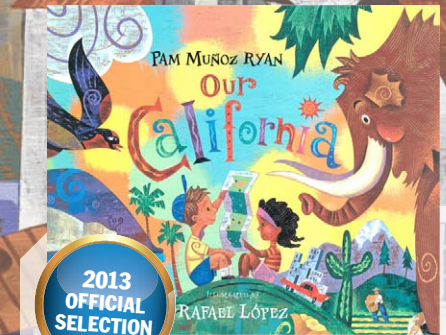
There are many ways to celebrate and plan a reading event! Here are a few ideas:

- Invite police officers and firefighters to read their favorite books to your school.
- Ask parents to volunteer to read in their child's classroom.
- Librarians can arrange special story hours.
- Practice dramatic readings with your students.
- Invite a local news anchor or even your mayor to read to your group.
- Ask your local bookstore to host a children's read-in.

► See the poster on the next page? Display it in your school!

► Cool Tools & Resources at www.cta.org/raa

- Bookmarks
- Certificates of Participation
- Coloring sheets
- Bookplates
- Poster
- Brochure
- 6 keys to helping a child become a good reader — multiple languages available



About the author

Pam Muñoz Ryan is a renowned author of several award-winning children's books. She has received the NEA's Civil and Human Rights Award. Learn more about her at www.pammunozryan.com.



About the illustrator

The artwork for this year's Read Across America was done by Rafael López, the illustrator of *Our California*. Read about how he got inspired for *Our California* at rafaellopezbooks.blogspot.com/2010/10/our-california.html.

READING TAKES YOU PLACES

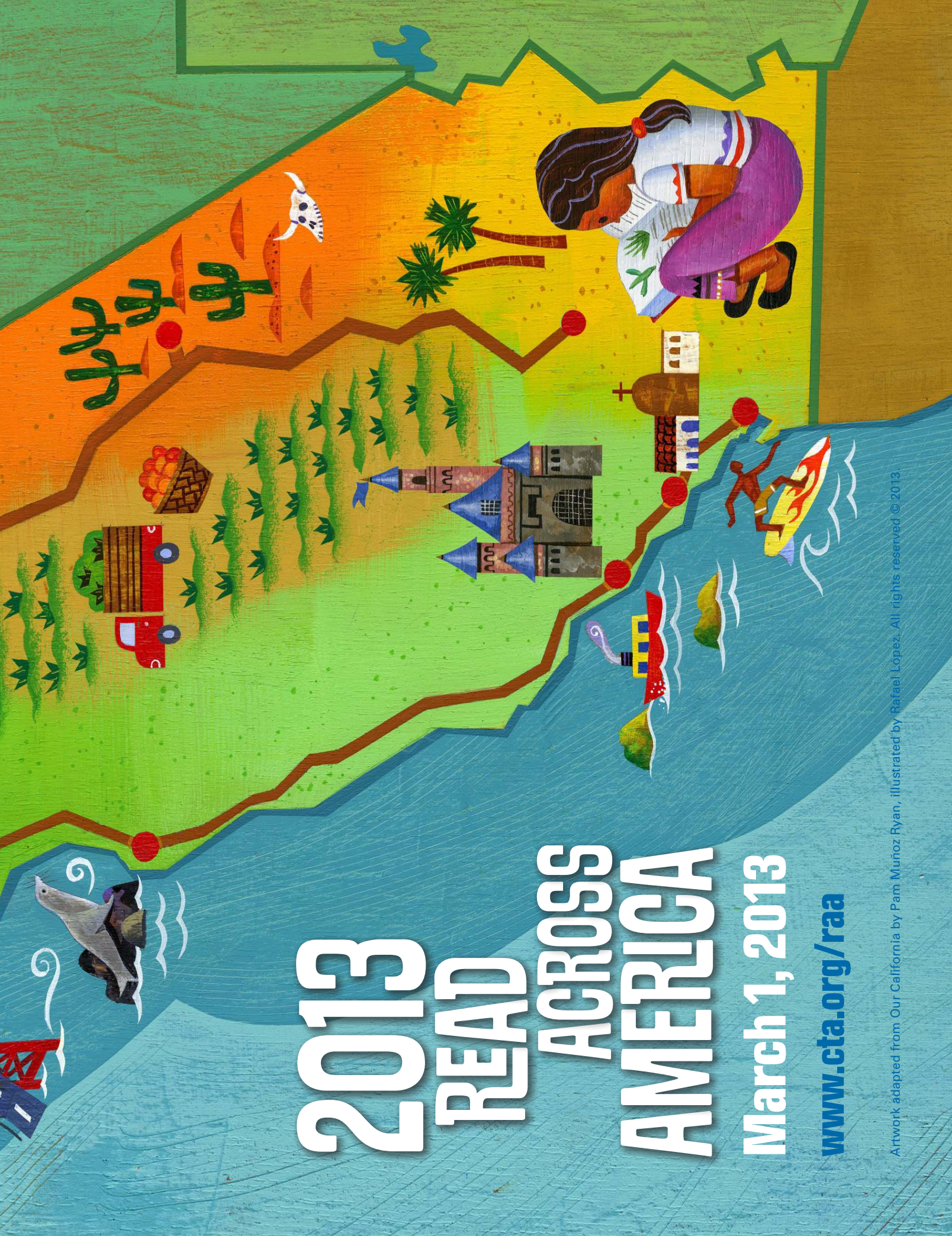


150
ANNIVERSARY

2013 READ ACROSS AMERICA

March 1, 2013

www.cta.org/raa





PLUS

Get this bookmark, resources and more at www.cta.org/raa!

READING TAKES YOU PLACES!

From “learning to read” to “reading to learn”

► Teachers KNOW!

Students who fall behind in the early grades have a harder time catching up. Throughout grades K-12, children are building upon their knowledge base and developing grade-level academic skills and understanding. Without a solid base, students struggle and lose confidence in their abilities. The first knowledge base is the ability to read.

Research shows learning to read early is fundamental to a child’s future academic success. A National Association of School Psychologists study found that retention in first grade is correlated more powerfully with reading skills than with IQ. This means many students are held back not for their intelligence level, but for their reading skills.

Third graders are not being taught how to read. They are expected to know the fundamentals of reading, and apply their reading skills across the curriculum. Third grade teachers use written text to teach math, history and science.

This shift from “learning to read” to “reading to learn” is extremely difficult for children who have not mastered basic reading skills. As they get older, struggling readers struggle academically. A recent study found 74 percent of third-graders who read poorly are still struggling in ninth grade, and high school graduation can be reasonably predicted by third-grade reading scores.

Only a generation ago, this did not matter as much as it does today, because the long-term economic effects of not becoming a good reader and not graduating from high school were much less severe.

Check out CTA’s keys to becoming a better reader at www.cta.org/raa.

► Want to read more? Check it out.

- **National Association of School Psychologists** (2011). White paper: “Grade retention and social promotion.” www.nasponline.org
- **J.M. Fletcher and G.R. Lyon** (1998). “What’s Gone Wrong in America’s Classrooms — Reading: A Research-Based Approach.”
- **National Research Council** (1998). “Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children.” www.nap.edu



Reading is an important learning tool

1. First-grade reading scores are fairly reliable predictors of future academic success.
2. By third grade, students are expected to know reading fundamentals and are no longer taught how to read.
3. Many students are held back not for their intelligence level, but for their reading skills.



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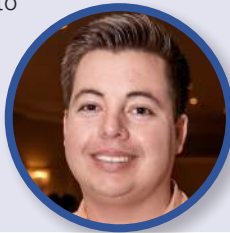
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What are the best ways to meet the needs of our GLBT students?

Members at CTA's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Conference in Palm Springs last month share their opinions.

Robert Rodriguez, *San Bernardino Teachers Association,*
MIDDLE SCHOOL RESOURCE TEACHER

When dealing with diverse students, try to discover your unconscious bias. Question yourself and reflect on perception versus reality. It's important to listen to your students and to be open. I believe that getting in touch with one's unconscious bias is a great thing for all educators, regardless of comfort level. It gives us room to grow.



Tricia Cowan, *Vacaville Teachers Association,*
HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER

I learned to create a safe space for students in my classroom. As an advocate for GLBT students, it's important to let other students know that it is inappropriate to make comments like "That's so gay" to other students. At this conference, I found the legal language to support that. And I realize how important it is to represent the GLBT community in my social studies curriculum. It's important to highlight the important contribution of GLBT leaders so students have positive role models in my class.



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*Dear Pen Pal, will you
be my friend?
Today we learned . . .*

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN
PHOTOS BY SCOTT BUSCHMAN



Stefanie Pechan

"Can we open them now? Can we please open them?" Stefanie Pechan hands out letters that have just arrived from pen pals in France to her fifth-graders. Some students are actually jumping up and down.



Leah Stewart and Andjela Rich read letters from France as Katie Hansen looks on.

“My students have been salivating all day, waiting for this moment,” laughs Pechan, a member of the Pacific Grove Teachers Association (PGTA) in Monterey County. “It’s like a Christmas present.”

In an era of texts, e-mails and social networking, teachers are pleased that students love receiving old-fashioned letters from pen pals. Perhaps it’s the anticipation of waiting for letters to arrive via snail mail and the human connection that only personal letters can foster.

In the initial letters, American children ask their pen pals a very important question.

“Will you be my friend?”

“Yes, we will be your friend,” the French children reply.

Students write about pets, sports, families, video games, music and favorite subjects in school. They don’t realize they are working on assignments that correlate with state standards.

The youngsters take their time and write carefully. They are reminded that as Robert H. Down Elementary School students they represent American students, so they do their best work.

Booth (left) and Evans.



A tale of friendship

“Having a pen pal changed my life,” says Michelle Evans, a first-grade teacher at H. Down Elementary School and fellow PGTA member. She was just 14 when a teacher asked her to correspond with a girl the same age from England. They two wrote back and forth, finding common interests and a deep admiration for Princess Diana.

“Sometimes it took months for a letter to arrive and it seemed like forever,” recalls Evans. “But we wrote to each other for years. Many of the struggles I went through in high school socially were things she also experienced. We reached out to each other and it helped us both grow.”

When Caroline Booth invited Evans to her wedding, she jumped on a plane. The two met at the airport for the first time, holding pictures of each other, crying. Since then, their families visit back and forth; they still cry during goodbyes.

“These days it is mostly Facebook, e-mail and Skype. It’s more rushed. But there was something special about those letters. There was the anticipation of waiting and pages and pages of letters that helped you get to know someone in a way that’s more intimate than phone calls or e-mail.”

Her students will soon correspond with students from England. Who helped her set up the pen pal program? The daughter of her childhood pen pal, Caroline Booth.

“Having a pen pal can change your life, and I hope it changes the lives of my students.”

Letters foster skills, understanding

A fun way to improve writing, penmanship, spelling, and reading, pen pals help students practice or learn a new language. Pen pals can be linked to social studies and geography. For example,



Min Kang, Nicholas Palmer and Reis Avila read a letter from a French pen pal.

each class sent a “gift” to the other — books about their countries — with maps, history and cultural factoids.

Pechan connected with Nicolas Drzewiecki, a fifth-grade teacher near Paris via forums.atozteacherstuff.com, a website for teachers. They e-mailed about lesson plans and goals they wanted students to accomplish. He wanted students to practice their English while she wanted students to learn French.

Drzewiecki’s students write in English and always include a list of French words with English translations. Pechan’s students retype the letters into Google Translate

(translate.google.com) and translate everything into French to learn the language.

“My main goal was honing students’ reading and writing skills,” says Pechan. “In this day and age where students are mostly texting and using e-mail, they don’t practice proper grammar or write in complete sentences. I wanted to put them in the role of an English teacher to reinforce their knowledge. And I wanted to foster an interest in social studies, including customs and traditions in other countries.”



Susan Levy

Her students were amazed that France doesn’t celebrate Halloween, so they described the holiday and sent pictures of pumpkins and ghosts. French children shared their holiday traditions in return. For example, on Christmas, French children put their shoes in front of the fire-

place in hopes they will be filled with gifts from Père Noël, or Father Christmas.

“It’s pretty exciting to talk to people who speak a whole different language,” says Logan Heywood. “My friend Marvin is teaching me French numbers.”

Angela Rich was pleased her pen pal enjoys cooking. “I want to become a pastry chef someday, and maybe I can go visit her.”

Students realize how similar they are despite living “worlds apart.”

“I hope they learn from each other and that some of the pen pals will evolve into lifelong friendships,” says Pechan.

Pen pals are role models

Sometimes pen pals aren’t across the ocean; they are right down the street.

Freshmen in Diane McEvoy’s English class at Calabasas High School write first-



Linking pen pal programs to state standards

Diane McEvoy's pen pal program meets ninth-grade language arts state standards:

- Demonstrate command of English grammar and conventions.
- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts.
- Produce clear, coherent writing.

Susan Levy's program meets these first-grade standards for writing and social studies:

- Select a focus when writing.
- Write informative/explanatory texts that name a topic, supply some facts about the topic and provide some sense of closure.
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- Print all uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Use common, proper and possessive nouns.
- Recognize the ways in which they are all part of the same community, sharing principles, goals, and traditions despite their varied ancestry; the forms of diversity in their school and community; and the benefits and challenges of a diverse population.

graders in Susan Levy's first-grade class at Chaparral Elementary School. The two Las Virgenes Educators Association members decided to start a pen pal program after Levy lost her job as a high school librarian and transferred to the elementary school.

"Over a glass a wine, we decided a pen pal program would benefit our students — and it'd be a good way for us to stay in touch," says Levy.

McEvoy's students write letters to their young friends about what they've been



Clockwise from top: **Diane McEvoy** reads a letter to Juliet Alpert. Troy Adler shares his pen pal's note with classmates. A student's letter to a pen pal.

doing, and often include funny drawings. Roman Williams, for example, drew a picture of himself looking stuffed after eating "yummy food" at a holiday meal.

"I love writing to Nick," says Williams. "It's a lot of fun and reminds me of myself when I was young. He says the same kinds of things I said at that age."

The letters are put into folders with photos of both pen pals on the cover. McEvoy delivers them to Levy a few blocks away. Both teachers read the letters aloud to the 6-year-olds.

"In the beginning, first-graders had to sound some of the words phonetically. As the year progresses, they formulate entire sentences," says McEvoy. "My high school

students are so impressed and proud to see how far they've come."

Her student Joe Wayne takes being a pen pal very seriously. "I am a role model," he says. "My pen pal looks up to me, and I feel responsible for that. I want to him to grow up and enjoy life and not to be cynical."

Vladimir Sergieiev, 6, always looks forward to getting letters. "I like everything about it," he says. "I can hardly wait to meet my pen pal."

Pen pals meet at the end of the year during a picnic.

"It's usually a tearfest," says McEvoy. "The older ones are usually crying. The little ones — well, they are just happy." 🎓



CTA grant sparks global studies, reinvigorates school

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN
PHOTO BY SCOTT BUSCHMAN

Second-grader Avary George lives in Grass Valley, a rural Northern California community that looks much like it did during the Gold Rush days. Though a small-town girl, Avary is an expert about rain forest critters, samba music and South American artwork. She sings in Spanish when she arrives home from school.

Her mother couldn't be happier.

"In just 18 weeks at school, my daughter has immersed herself in the art of South American countries," says Melissa George. "She's learning global awareness. She understands that there's a big world out there, that we live in a very small part of it, and that we are all part of something much bigger."

Avary attends Bell Hill Academy, a K-4 school that started a global studies program this year designed to promote respect for other cultures and the environment. Spanish instruction is offered to all students; some students are enrolled in a dual-immersion program and taught in Spanish 90 percent of the time. Each grade level learns about a different continent and explores the native cultures, environments and wildlife of that conti-

ment through music, artwork, pottery and other activities.

The program's enrichment classes were made possible through a \$20,000 grant from CTA's Institute for Learning, which offers a new approach to school change. Grants are approved for teacher-driven, strength-based programs based on strategies that are proven to be successful. Before the grant, Bell Hill students received no Spanish instruction. Grants allowed the district to hire two teachers fluent in Spanish.

The Grass Valley School District has seen declining enrollment and a significant change in school population in the last few years. During this time of change, Grass Valley Teachers Association (GVTA) members researched options that would positively impact students and support

teachers striving to be more creative in their teaching approach. They decided upon the global studies program.

"Parents love it," says GVTA member Rosanne Paul, a resource specialist and program coordinator. "Parents understood we wanted to prepare our students for the 21st century and global marketplace using critical thinking skills, collaboration and creativity."

A TYPICAL DAY

The first thing students see each morning is flags of other countries at the school entrance. It looks like a mini United Nations plaza. The school day begins with a walk around the campus to music from around the world. When the bell rings, students "freeze" and have to guess which country the music is from. The



Parent Bia Edwards, Avary George, Lori Imel and Rosanne Paul find Brazil on the globe.

school's "book in common" for all grades is *The Adventures of Mali and Keela* by Jonathan Collins, which highlights positive virtues from around the world, focusing on compassion, diligence and determination.

Students are establishing relationships with students at "sister schools" through the use of Skype. Second-grade teacher Lori Imel plans to have Avary and other students speak face-to-face with Brazilian students who speak Portuguese and some English.

"I want them to talk to my kids about daily life and what it's like growing up in Brazil," says Imel. "My kids are brainstorming about what kinds of questions to ask Brazilian students. Some social issues may come up in conversations that indicate poverty, and when we get off-line, we can discuss and compare our challenges and society to that of Brazil."

Imel met Bia Edwards, a native Brazilian who recently relocated from São Paulo to Grass Valley, at a local yard sale. The GVTA member discovered Edwards was a percussionist who owned Brazilian musical instruments, and asked if she would visit her class. Edwards has been volunteering in the classroom on a regular basis, helping students with Brazilian art and music projects — including teaching students how to samba.

"The global studies program has reinvigorated our school," says Paul. "Teachers and students alike are excited to come to school. I would have to say, at this point, the program is working wonderfully and teachers are beyond thrilled at the excitement and growth they are seeing in their students."

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Gov. Jerry Brown with CTA Secretary-Treasurer **Mikki Cichocki-Semo** and Executive Director **Carolyn Doggett**.

State Council takes on school safety, declares testing is not teaching

Surprise visit by Governor Jerry Brown

“Instead of arming teachers, California needs more school counselors, more access for students to mental health services, safer facilities, and more training for educators to spot the mental health needs of students and bullying or other high-risk behaviors.” So said CTA President Dean E. Vogel after delegates passed a new business item to oppose any efforts to arm educators across the state.

Taking a stand to make California’s public schools safer and even more secure, the State Council of Education voted to oppose the arming of non-law-enforcement educators and volunteers, and to support Sen. Dianne Feinstein’s legislation to ban military-style assault weapons.

The positions, made with the safety of students and all school stakeholders in mind, were voted on by the 760 delegates attending State Council in Los Angeles last month.

Noting that California ranks last in the nation in the number of counselors per student, Vogel said, “I welcome debates not about guns, but about what it takes to make sure our students’ physical and emotional needs are met so they can be successful academically and in life.”

Delegates also voted to endorse a National Resolution on High-Stakes Testing, noting the growing amounts of time, money and energy spent on high-stakes standardized testing do little to enhance teaching. Some delegates voiced concern about issues like narrowing of curriculum, teaching to the test, pushing students out of school and pressure from administrators for high test scores.

Discussing and voting on these actions, plus a surprise visit from Gov. Jerry Brown and hours of committee work on a variety of education issues, kept delegates busy all weekend.

Gov. Brown thanked CTA delegates and members, not only for their work in the election, but for making a difference in the daily lives of students.

“It’s the spark, the fire you light in students, that makes a difference. It’s not the program

sent to you by some national publishing company that’s going to make the difference. As a teacher, you have a lifelong impact on your students.”

CELEBRATING ELECTION VICTORIES

CTA members were successful in every proposition and measure CTA supported or opposed in the last election. The hard work of members, partners and volunteers was celebrated, especially the victories around Propositions 30 and 32.

“We sent a clear message to corporate billionaires ... that they weren’t as special as they thought,” said Vogel.

There was much discussion about the revenue that will be gained over the next seven years from the passage of Prop. 30.

“Prop. 30 certainly doesn’t solve all our funding problems, but it’s a great first step,” Vogel said. “It makes all the rallies and protests worth it. It shows what we can accomplish together. And now the Legislature can begin paying back the money owed to public education.”

That’s exactly what the state budget Gov. Brown proposed does, he added. The governor also wants to revamp California’s K-12 funding system. Under what he’s calling a “local control formula,” most categorical programs would be eliminated, and



Did you know?

State Council of Education...

- Is CTA's top governing body.
- Has committees ranging from assessment and testing to school safety, and from curriculum and instruction to professional rights and responsibilities.
- Does not consider an issue until it has been thoroughly reviewed and/or recommended by one of the 22 committees.
- Consists of delegates elected statewide, and you can get details from your locally elected delegate.



Delegates address State Council: Ramona TA President **Donna Braye-Romero**, Wendy Gallimore of Twin Rivers United Educators, and CTA Board member **George Melendez**.

that money would be consolidated into a base grant based on Average Daily Attendance.

Additional grants would be offered based on the number of English learners and economically disadvantaged students. This new formula would be phased in over seven years, but at present it's not clear how that phase-in would work.

"It's important to remember, however, that this is still just a proposal, and we'll be analyzing it more closely," he noted. "The Financing Public Education Committee has a lot to talk about."

CELEBRATING CTA'S PAST AND FUTURE

Delegates learned about CTA's history as plans for the sesqui-centennial (pronounced ses-kwi-sen-ten-ee-uhl) were rolled out. CTA was instrumental in major changes in California back in the day:

- Women had to quit teaching if they became married.
- Nonwhite students didn't have the same access to a quality education as their white peers.
- Educators did not have the ability to bargain collectively.
- For more on CTA's 150th anniversary, go to www.cta.org/150.

Each of the 22 State Council committees participated in discussions and work on CTA's strategic planning. "We're coming off a great election, but we can't rest there. We must continue to build for the future," Vogel said. "We want to ensure we are not only talking to ourselves, but also hearing from other partners about public education and how they view CTA."

Watch a video about members like high school teacher Dominic Dirkson on the planning: www.cta.org/talkaboutplanning.

All members and staff will have opportunities to participate in the strategic planning process.



State Council delegates...

- Re-elected Secretary-Treasurer Mikki Cichocki-Semo.
- Voted to oppose the arming of non-law-enforcement educators and volunteers on school campuses or at school-related functions.
- Voted to support Sen. Dianne Feinstein's Assault Weapons Regulatory Act of 2013, which regulates the availability of military assault-type firearms and high-capacity ammunition magazines.
- Voted to sign on to the National Resolution on High-Stakes Testing, which builds on the work of education historian Diane Ravitch and unites teachers and other school workers in a powerful statement that testing is not teaching. Numerous groups have already signed on to the resolution. (Visit timeoutfromtesting.org/nationalresolution.)
- Re-elected NEA Directors Colleen Briner-Schmidt (District 5), Sonia Martin-Solis (District 6/14), and Sergio Martinez (District 13), and elected Krista Patterson (District 4).
- Elected NEA Alternate Directors Ken Tang (Seat 2) and Erika Jones (Seat 3).
- Elected CTA/ABC Committee members Clete Bradford (District G) and Carole Bailey (District O).
- Took time in their committees to discuss CTA's strategic planning effort, including responding to several questions about the best ways to engage members. The yearlong strategic planning process — titled "Your Voice. Our Union. Our Future" — is about making sure CTA is positioned in the best possible way to help all students and educators succeed.

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Teamwork by Evergreen TA and Mt. Pleasant EA members (l-r): **Rachel McCauley** (MPEA), **Cindy Morici** (MPEA), **Janette Perla** (ETA). Photo by Lisa Kattenhorn.

Solidarity works

San Jose area teachers team up in contract fights

BY MIKE MYSLINSKI

Collaboration works in the classroom and on the picket lines, educators in two adjacent San Jose school districts are learning as they help each other organize to win difficult contract fights. They faced furlough days, health benefit cuts, the loss of teacher prep time — and the same divisive lawyer at their bargaining tables hired by both districts to fast-track their agendas.

“Thankfully, we are not in this fight alone,” says fourth-grade teacher Lisa Kattenhorn, president of the 136-member Mt. Pleasant Education Association (MPEA).

In recent months, MPEA members and their neighbors in the 585-member Ever-

green Teachers Association (ETA) held numerous joint protest rallies at school board meetings and community marches after school. After a hugely successful Jan. 16 joint protest, the Evergreen School District backed down from some of its worst proposals, says ETA President Brian Wheatley.

Despite Evergreen having budget reserves of about \$20 million, Wheatley says, the district demanded that teachers pay more out of pocket for health benefits by mandating a “hard cap” on costs that would freeze the district’s contributions at the 2011-12 levels. With the good news that ETA and MPEA were going back into negotiations at press time in late January, members were hopeful for progress and were glad to see the public demonstrations had made a difference.

“This has fundamentally reinforced to my members why you need to belong to a union,” says Wheatley, an elementary teacher. “My district has made significant movement. Things got better.”

Also standing side by side with Mt. Pleasant and Evergreen teachers at recent rallies were educators from four other nearby districts — Alum Rock, Franklin-McKinley, Berryessa and East Side Union High School District.

Details

Follow these stories and get bargaining updates at www.cta.org/bargainingupdates



RTA members attend a school board meeting. Below: **Andres Martin** holds a sign reading "Your children deserve the best!" Photos by Michael Stone.

Ramona teachers face huge salary cuts

BY MIKE MYSLINSKI

Teachers in Ramona Unified School District, San Diego County, are outraged that school officials seek the equivalent of 27 percent in salary or benefit cuts over three years, despite having five times more in budget reserves than recommended by the state.

Proposals for slashing health benefits and due process rights for educators and increasing class sizes prompted educators and parents to pack a Jan. 17 school board meeting.

RTA won't back down from opposing the district's onerous "last, best and final" contract proposals. "Let me be clear. We find the district's proposals to be absolutely unacceptable," said Donna Braye-Romero, president of the 260-member Ramona Teachers Association (RTA). And insulting, she added, because the harsh cuts

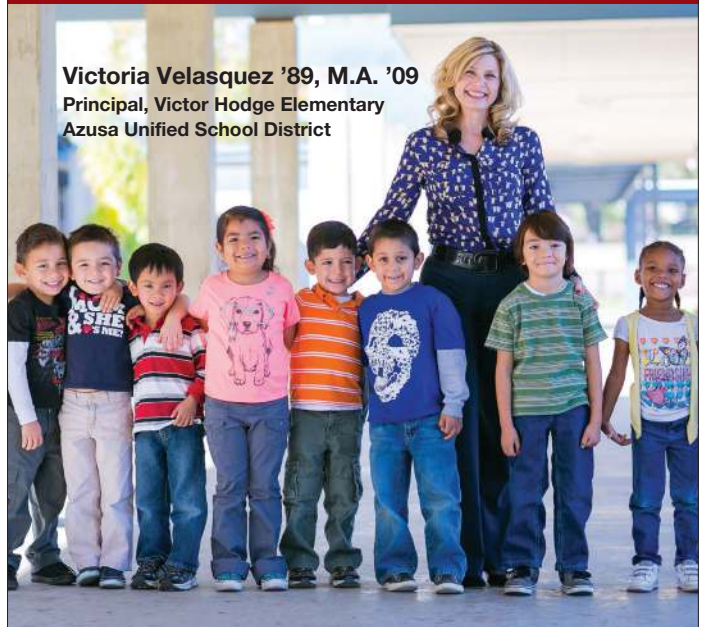
appear to be rooted in poor financing mistakes made by the district several years ago.

"Even though Ramona teachers bear no responsibility for the unwise expenditure for two new school sites several years ago, your proposals seek to rectify that fiscal mistake by breaking the backs of teachers financially — putting the entire burden on them. RTA has offered reasonable cuts in order to share the sacrifice, but how can it be fair to expect teachers to carry the entire load?"

"Instead of working against teachers, we urge you to work with us," she added. "Let's agree on a contract that includes shared sacrifice in the short term. Let's be a team that includes the entire Ramona education community, to unite around fixing an unfortunate past error and then move forward to a brighter future for our students and our town."



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No one thinks it's going to happen at their school — until it does

CTA and NEA are there to help

BY DINA MARTIN

Staff and students at Taft Union High School didn't think a shooting would happen on their school grounds, less than a month after a school shooting in Newtown, Conn., took the lives of 20 children and six adults. But it did.

"We've always felt very safe here and have had no difficulties on campus," says Claude Bradford, a counselor at Taft High and president of the Taft High Teachers Association. "It always happens 'some-where else.'"

But that's not what happened on Thursday, Jan. 10, when a 16-year-old student wounded a classmate with a shotgun and made heroes out of teacher Ryan Heber and campus supervisor Kim Lee Fields, who persuaded the shooter to relinquish his weapon. Heber suffered a minor pellet wound to the head. The suspect was taken into custody and the school was closed until the following Tuesday.

Although the heroics of Heber and Fields were praised by Kern County Sheriff Donny Youngblood, the science teacher has maintained a low profile since the incident and declined to speak further to the media.

"I'm not ready yet to talk about what happened in my classroom. I don't feel comfortable being called a hero. I'm just a teacher, a husband and a father to my two boys," Heber told the local ABC TV affiliate.

In many ways, everything was done right at Taft. Just that morning, teachers had discussed new lockdown procedures with their students in light of the killing spree in Newtown. A neighbor near the school saw the suspect carrying a shotgun and called 911. Video surveillance captured the suspect as he nervously entered the school and made his way to Heber's science class. More

than two dozen classmates were able to escape while Heber and Fields distracted the shooter. Students were taken into the school auditorium and released to the care of their parents.

When students returned to school, grief counselors and school psychologists from far and near were there to provide assistance — an offer that many accepted.

The school's teachers and staff were feeling the trauma as well, Bradford reports, and classroom work was given over to a day of talking with each other.

"Everyone is against violence in the classroom," Bradford says. "But what to do about it is the issue." A well-publicized proposal by the National Rifle Association to combat violence in schools by arming teachers with guns draws little enthusiasm from Bradford.

"It wouldn't have made a difference," he says. "Things like this happen in an instant."

Long time gun and school safety advocates, CTA and NEA took action offering assistance and resources (see sidebar). Taking a stand to make California's public schools safer and even more secure, State Council voted to oppose any efforts to arm educators across the state, and is supporting Senator Dianne Feinstein's legislation to ban military-style assault weapons (page 36). In addition, CTA offered advice and resources to leaders like Congressman Mike Thompson, from Sonoma County, who is the new chair of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force.

"We're going to have to make some changes here," Bradford adds. "Maybe that will be the good that comes out of this."

School is still the safest place

- Approximately 300,000 Americans are injured each year by guns.
- Approximately 30,000 Americans are killed each year by guns.
- Approximately 3,000 children/youth are killed each year by guns.
- Approximately 15 to 30 students are killed in school or on school grounds each year by guns. The number has been steadily declining over the past decade.
- **In other words, although children spend more than half of their waking hours at school, school deaths account for about one-half of 1 percent of gun-related children deaths in America.**

RESOURCES

- **CTA's Traumatic Events Assistance and Management (TEAM) Cadre**
Trained CTA staff are prepared to help members and staff deal with mental and emotional trauma associated with emergencies, from natural disasters to a death of a student. Contact your local CTA staff person for information.

HOT LINKS

- **Talking to children about tragedy**
www.neahin.org/blog/school-crisis-resources.html
Tips for parents and teachers to help children feel safe by establishing a sense of normalcy and security and talking with them about their fears.
- **NEA School Crisis Guide**
crisisguide.neahin.org/crisisguide
Resources for school teams on preparing for, reacting to, and responding to a crisis.

A bit longer for a bit less...

Pension reform impacts new, future teachers' retirement

BY DINA MARTIN

Although the governor's pension reforms that went into effect Jan. 1 spare current teachers for the most part, they have a major impact on new and future teachers who will find themselves working a bit longer for a bit less in retirement benefits.

"The die is cast, and we fear that introducing a two-tiered retirement system creates divisiveness in our schools," says Maggie Ellis, president of the Elk Grove Education Association and chair of CTA's State Council Retirement Committee. "Unfortunately, these changes also affect female teachers disproportionately as

women comprise 70 percent of the teaching force."

The California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013, AB 340 by Assembly Member Warren Furutani (D-Long Beach), contains provisions proposed by Gov. Jerry Brown to rein in the costs of public employee pensions. Those changes include capping benefits, lowering benefit formulas for workers hired after Jan. 1, 2013, and requiring future employees to begin paying half the cost of their pension within five years.

CalSTRS has a fact sheet, a summary and other items available on CTA's website that outline and explain the changes.

Despite the new changes, however, the most significant CalSTRS issue is closing a \$64.5 billion funding gap. Along with the Pension Reform Act, the Legislature approved Senate Concurrent Resolution 105, which is intended to address long-term funding needs during the 2012-14 session.

Meanwhile, CalSTRS officials are looking at various scenarios to close the gap. They say the total impact of new legislative changes may not be "fully realized" for decades to come, but they are hopeful funding issues will be addressed.

"We repeatedly informed the Legislature and the governor that

the pension reforms will not solve the long-term funding needs of CalSTRS," Ellis says. "It appears some legislators thought that these issues would be taken care of by the reform act."

The new law follows a year of political and legislative activity in which CTA worked in a statewide union coalition to prevent more onerous proposals while lessening the impact of others. In addition to its advocacy at the Capitol, CTA recruited retired members to participate in a number of "Pension Truth Squads" around the state to show how a secure retirement plan benefits employees and the state's economy.

"I have no doubt that the stories current retirees told legislators brought to light the truth about the retirement benefits received by the majority of teachers. Their pensions are fair and reasonable but far from extravagant," Ellis says.

THE NEW LAW FOLLOWS A YEAR OF POLITICAL AND LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY IN WHICH CTA WORKED IN A STATEWIDE UNION COALITION TO PREVENT MORE ONEROUS PROPOSALS WHILE LESSENING THE IMPACT OF OTHERS.

The changes in AB 340 will primarily affect future CalSTRS members

- **It requires equal sharing of pension costs** by asking new members to pay at least 50 percent of the normal ongoing costs of benefits or the current compensation rate. (Current members pay 8 percent in contributions, equal to 44 percent of normal costs. Fifty percent of the estimated normal cost of the new plan is less than 8 percent. Therefore, the new member contribution rate will likely be 8 percent, according to preliminary estimates.)
- **It places a cap on the compensation** allowed to calculate pension contributions. This will significantly affect members who earn above \$136,440 (the Social Security wage base) in 2013.
- **It changes the normal retirement age** from 60 to 62 and changes the maximum age factor from 2.4 percent at age 63 to 2.4 percent at age 65.
- **It extends the final compensation period** to three years for all new members.



Jonathan Stamper teaches his physics class about vectors during an outside activity.

A new scene for Sergeant Stamper

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN
PHOTOS BY SCOTT BUSCHMAN

When Jonathan Stamper hears complaints about working late or taking on additional duties, he chuckles to himself. These are good problems to have.

Just three months ago, this Palos Verdes Peninsula High School chemistry teacher was in Afghanistan dodging bullets and clearing explosive devices from villages. It wasn't his first tour of duty; there was a year's stint in Iraq before being redeployed less than a year later to Afghanistan.

The U.S. Army Reserve sergeant's six-month stint in Afghanistan was spent in the Civil Affairs Department, where he tried to imbue villagers with economic survival skills such as fishing, growing plants besides opium poppies, and distributing looms to women (via female soldiers) so they could clandestinely support themselves by weaving. He worked with U.S. and Afghan soldiers clearing IEDs (improvised explosive devices). He didn't engage in combat, but spent time in combat zones.

"It was tough and traumatic and there was always a sense of danger," he says.

Now that he's back in the classroom, Stamper doesn't sweat the small stuff. He opens his classroom blinds so he can drink in the sight of blue skies and trees, which seem miraculous after living in a dusty, dry environment. A newfound appreciation for education and freedom shapes the teaching of this Palos Verdes Faculty Association member in many ways.

I TEACH A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY...

because my lessons usually relate to survival or something I've used in the military. I discuss the need to get the job done right because it could mean life or death; to show your work when you submit answers; the importance of communication with other civilians. I worry more about safety: I tell kids to keep their goggles on and be careful around the flame. I care about them and don't want them hurt. Before, when kids asked dumb questions, it was irksome. Now I say, "Ask anything you want." I am more patient.

I VIEW LIFE DIFFERENTLY...

I drive slower and don't worry if I'm late. I'm not looking at my e-mail all the time. When my administrator wanted to come in and observe my class after I had just come back, I didn't panic. I thought, "Oh well, it will be fine, the sun will rise tomorrow."

I APPRECIATE EDUCATION MORE...

and feel a passion to tell kids how lucky they are to go to school. I talk about that girl who was shot by the Taliban because she wanted to go to school. To me, she's the ultimate hero, and I'd love to shake her hand. I've had a few young ladies in my class following that story, and they understand there are people whose lot in life is much worse.

ONE POWERFUL LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN AFGHANISTAN...

was putting on a burqa. It was such an icky feeling. I could just feel the oppression. I donated it to my school's drama department in case they need it for plays.

ANOTHER POWERFUL LESSON...

was seeing how family-oriented the Afghan people are and how much they love life. They love to eat, laugh and sing together. When a civilian was killed by an IED, the surrounding community came and adopted the kids within days. I was humbled to see such a sense of family and community spirit.

ONE LAST THOUGHT...

I value life so much. I've seen so much death and ugliness. I treasure my students. They are like my family. I'm so glad to be home.

Note: In every 2013 issue of the *Educator* we will be highlighting a portion of CTA's proud history in a timeline. Collect all 9 and put them together for a big look at all we've accomplished over the past 150 years. To get started just cut out the timeline from this page. Your next installment will be coming to you in March.



1913



Worker strikes abound across the United States. Woodrow Wilson takes office as president and appoints the first secretary of labor. The 16th Amendment establishing the federal income tax is passed.

And the Public School Teachers' Retirement Salary Fund, later to be called California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS), is created. The legislation was a result of a call by CTA's State Council for a pension system back in 1910.

Initially funded from 5 percent of inheritance tax revenues, the retirement system covered 120 educators and provided that a teacher with 30 years of teaching service (15 years in this state) would earn an annual retirement salary of \$500. The teacher's contribution during service was \$12 a year. No employer contributions were required.

Today, CalSTRS is the largest teachers' retirement fund in the country with a membership of 856,360 and assets of \$154.3 billion.

The retirement system was created amid a surging populist movement. Governor Hiram Johnson was the father of the ballot initiative, the recall and the referendum, all designed to give voters more power. He implemented worker compensation reforms, established working standards for women and children, provided free textbooks for students, and fought successfully to regulate the powerful corporate Southern Pacific Railroad.



1910

After filing for incorporation in 1907, CTA is consolidated into a statewide governance structure with four semiautonomous regional sections.



1911

Ella Flagg Young, the first woman president of the National Education Association (NEA), presides at the national convention in San Francisco.

1911

CTA leads state funding fight to establish community colleges. Free textbooks, printed at the state printing office, were provided at state expense for all pupils in grades 1 through 8, another CTA achievement.



1912

The first "continuing contract" law is passed, providing a teacher would be automatically reemployed unless notified otherwise by June 15.



1915

David Starr Jordan is the first Californian elected president of NEA; he presides at the national convention in Oakland.

'We are a family at CTA'

Leadership opportunities for ethnic minorities

Ethnic minority members who want to sharpen their leadership skills, network with colleagues and learn more about CTA so that they can advance their personal and professional goals have opportunities within CTA.

The Ethnic Minority Early Identification and Development Program (EMEID) asks for commitment of time, but the experience is "so worthwhile," says Margie Granado, EMEID Workgroup chairperson, noting that CTA is committed to seeing ethnic minority leadership numbers grow.

CTA advocates for our students and the profession, the Montebello Teachers Association member added. The "current class of 18 members is developing skills and expanding their knowledge about CTA, understanding the work we are doing. This involves connecting them with other members and teaching them what we know. It is much easier if you understand the organization and know who to go to for what."

Dorothy Kim, Associated Pomona Teachers, says she has encountered difficulties because of her ethnicity. "This helped me understand how to deal with that, and helped me focus on future goals." She credits her coach, Morgan Brown, for strengthening her leadership skills.

"I learned we are a family at CTA. I'd never grasped that before," says Gabriel Vega, Moreno Valley Educators Association. "Learning how the organization runs, and about contracts, makes me confident to teach how I want to teach, to not be afraid to think outside the box when it comes to my teaching."

Julie Timmerman, Vacaville Teachers Association, agrees. "Becoming a better leader helps me become a better teacher. I'm involved in language acquisition, and through CTA connections I'm meeting those who teach other languages," she says. "Everyone wants to help each other to be the best we can be, and to advocate for our kids better."


"This experience has been empowering because CTA does so much — there's a lot more than I thought!" says Marianna Aguirre, Tracy Educators Association. "Growing up, it was hard to get an education, coming from a farmworker family. I discovered, regardless of your background or ethnicity, there's a place for you within CTA."

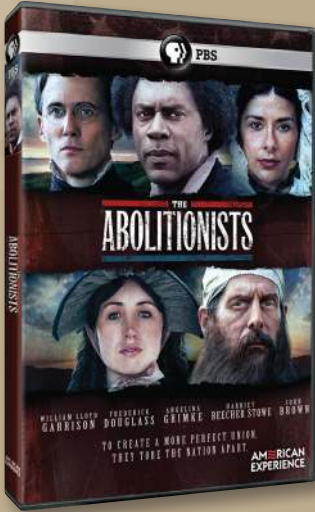
Interested in applying for EMEID?

CTA accepts up to 20 participants for each year. Since it started in 2006, 97 members have participated in EMEID. Find the application and program details at www.cta.org/emeid.



Inviting CTA members to participate in the Ethnic Minority Early Identification and Development Program are (left to right): **Marianna Aguirre**, Tracy EA; **Gabriel Vega**, Moreno Valley EA; **Julie Timmerman**, Vacaville TA; **Alina Gallardo**, Walnut Valley EA; **Simone Simmons-Deed**, Stockton TA; **Dorothy Kim**, Associated Pomona Teachers; and **Natalie Gaudinez**, Southwest TA.



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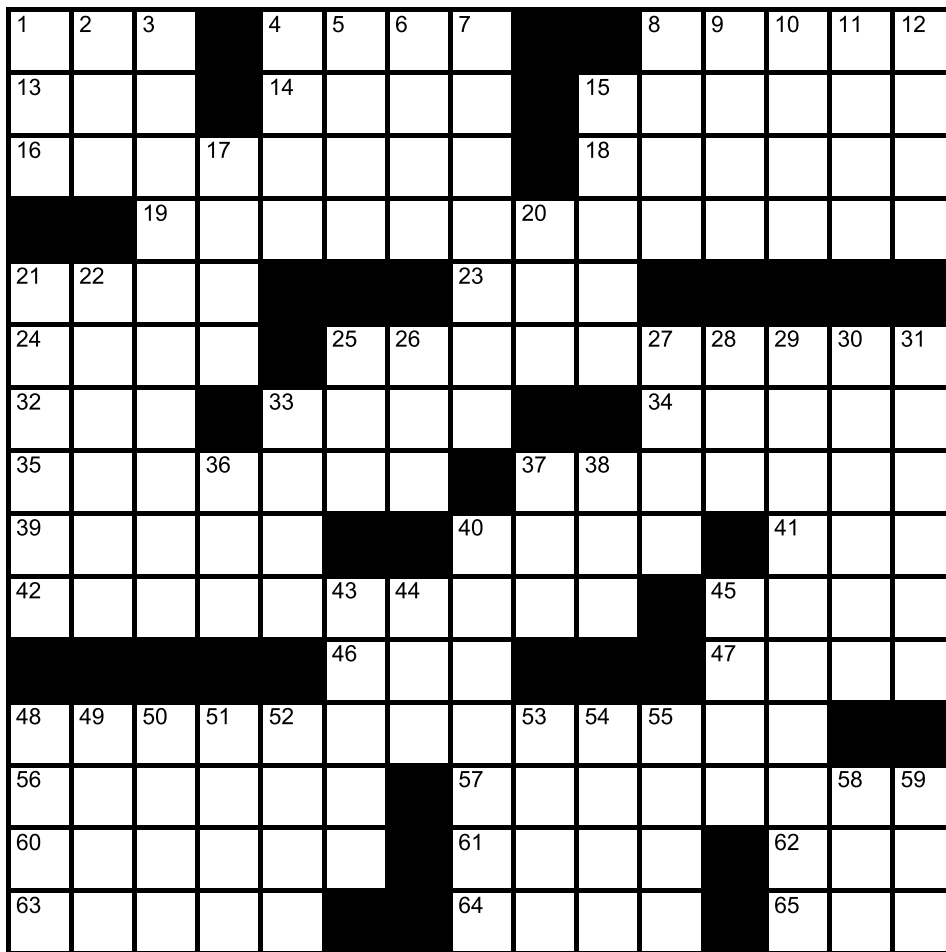
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Crossword Puzzle

BY CRAIG HAMILTON

Solution on page 22.



> Across

- 1 _____ de Janeiro
- 4 Gin flavoring
- 8 Works the field
- 13 Classified school staff, for short
- 14 Ripped
- 15 Large brown bear
- 16 Comes before
- 18 2001 title role for Audrey Tautou
- 19 With 48 Across, highly esteemed teaching credential
- 21 School group?
- 23 Exist
- 24 Shortly, to a poet
- 25 Cozy sweater
- 32 Shaq's alma mater
- 33 Naked
- 34 Word on the back of a buck
- 35 With 37 Across, CTA's executive director
- 37 See 35 Across
- 39 At just the right time
- 40 Dam in a stream
- 41 Vardalos of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding"
- 42 Cad
- 45 "Burlesque" co-star, 2010
- 46 Little lie
- 47 Catholic celebration
- 48 See 19 Across
- 56 CTA Board member José
- 57 Construction project on the Nile
- 60 The Desert Fox
- 61 Chow _____
- 62 Fraternity letter
- 63 Vocal cords, informally
- 64 HS students take them
- 65 11 Down

▼ Down

- 1 Agent
- 2 Neighbor of Syr.
- 3 Like some freely available software
- 4 "Leave in," to a proofreader
- 5 City near Stockton
- 6 Nabisco cookie
- 7 Catch in a trap
- 8 Grave
- 9 Prefix with logical
- 10 Oscar-winner Kedrova of "Zorba the Greek"
- 11 65 Across
- 12 Timetable, for short
- 15 Superman's birth name
- 17 "High Hopes" lyricist Sammy
- 20 Class that's endangered in many schools
- 21 Hawk trained for hunting
- 22 Bonkers
- 25 Scotland's longest river
- 26 Coffee dispenser
- 27 MIT grad, often
- 28 Eggy Yuletide drink
- 29 Impartial
- 30 Adorable ones
- 31 Orange dwarfs, to an astronomer
- 33 Ran
- 36 "_____ Town"
- 37 Playa _____ Rey (Los Angeles community)
- 38 Lubricate
- 40 Videoconferencing devices
- 43 Butcher's scraps
- 44 Nintendo game console
- 45 "Let's go!"
- 48 Complain
- 49 "The Time Machine" people of the future
- 50 Dudley Do-Right's org.
- 51 No longer wild
- 52 Bits of land in la mer
- 53 Sailing
- 54 Nincompoop
- 55 Fleming and McEwan
- 58 Polished off
- 59 Guy

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