



california

# educator

♥  
*Cupid in the Classroom*  
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## LOOKING AT **LAB** SCHOOLS

*Innovative teaching for lifelong learners of all ages*

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## READ ACROSS AMERICA

*Teacher-recommended books*

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## MORE ON COMMON CORE

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**PLUS**

**PREGNANT TEACHERS GIVE NEW MEANING TO "LABOR HISTORY"**

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## Lab schools have innovation down to a science

"Lab schools" or "professional development schools" offer great opportunities for teaching and learning. Discover three lab schools where participants are lifelong learners, ranging from university professors and college students to pre-K-12 teachers and their pupils.

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FEATURES

## Cupid in the Classroom

In honor of Valentine's Day we highlight stories of CTA members who found love at school... and are living happily ever after. Shared values around teaching and learning brought some co-workers together, while others found the love of their life at a union meeting, making the phrase "together is better" more than an organizing motto.



Siriana Thampi waters sprouts at a lab school in Fullerton.







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# What's in store for education in 2014?

With the beginning of 2014, my hopes are higher than ever for CTA members and our ability to effect positive change in our public schools. Right now, California's schools and colleges are beginning to restore critical programs and provide the resources that educators need to help students learn — after years of bare-bones budgets. It was our tenacity in electing Governor Jerry Brown in 2010, and in passing Proposition 30 and defeating Proposition 32 in 2012, that has led us to this point in time.

The momentum continues. Last month, the governor unveiled his proposed state budget, which would provide \$10 billion in new funding for K-12 schools and community colleges. This includes \$6 billion to eliminate all deferral payments to local school districts and colleges, as well as \$244 million for the CSU and UC systems of higher education. Additionally, the governor committed to working with all parties to stabilize the teachers' retirement system.

This infusion of money for education never would have happened without thousands of CTA members who mobilized to pass Prop. 30 in 2012. And we are all thankful for that effort.

Yes, during the past few years we've been reminded about the true value of organizing, leading the profession, empowering our members, and engaging our communities. Not surprisingly, these are goals that have emerged as part of CTA's long-term strategic planning.

For more than two years, we've been asking you how your union could better help

you, your students, and the profession. More than 30,000 of you weighed in, and your feedback was used to create CTA's strategic plan, called "Our Union, Our Future." Since the plan was introduced last October, CTA has held a number of telephone town hall meetings. Again, more than 30,000 of you participated, and your engagement in the plan and commitment to your students came through loud and clear.

Together, we will lead our profession and promote a teacher-led, student-centered transformation — all the while building a brighter future for our students and building public support for public schools and colleges.

This is our time. It's our time as educators to unite around common goals, to work with parents and community groups, and to drive the education agenda in California. And we can only achieve success by working together. This strategic plan recognizes that the mission of CTA is carried out by building a strong union on the foundation of educators who are active and engaged in their local schools, their local associations, and their local communities.

And it is the crescendo of all of our voices that will make this plan a success — ultimately building a better foundation for the health of our communities and the viability of public education.

This is our time!



**Dean E. Vogel**  
CTA PRESIDENT



## DEAN ON THE ISSUES

The governor's proposed budget will help our public schools and colleges continue to heal after years of devastating cuts. As we heal our schools, we heal our communities."

"CTA will continue to fight to ensure we have qualified and experienced teachers in the classrooms whose rights are respected as set forth by law, and not subject to arbitrary and capricious behavior or favoritism."

"The Quality Education Investment Act demonstrates CTA's support for our students of greatest need, and that discoveries at QEIA schools can offer ideas for Local Control Funding Formula spending by school districts that must target the same at-risk students."



Do you have an issue or topic you'd like Dean to address? Let us know. Email [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org).



# THANK YOU!



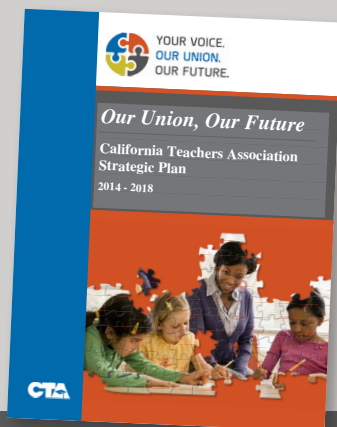
Over 30,000 members participated in the CTA Telephone Town Halls on January 7.

## THE TOPIC?

CTA's proposed Strategic Plan for the coming years. There were great questions and discussions about CTA's future.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

The CTA State Council of Education is taking action on the proposed Strategic Plan at the January meeting. Get an update on the Strategic Plan, plus what happened at State Council, at [cta.org](http://cta.org).



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- Teaching Adult Learners
- Teaching Online
- Professional Development/ Salary Point Coursework

### For More Information

Please contact Morgan Appel, Director of Education at: (858) 534-9273 or mappel@ucsd.edu

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

*Who's your favorite U.S. president?*

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*Abraham Lincoln*

### CTA ELECTED OFFICERS

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*Rutherford B. Hayes*

*She hasn't been elected yet*

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CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year, Sept. 1–Aug. 31, are \$826, including a \$20 voluntary contribution (see [www.cta.org/contribution](http://www.cta.org/contribution) for details). Up to \$18.40 of CTA annual dues is designated for CTA/ABC political activities

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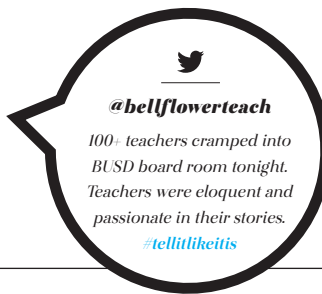
### MISSION STATEMENT

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



## #CTATopTweet

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



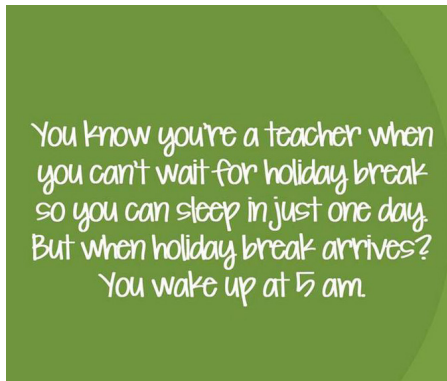
### Viral video 🎥



**...Said No Teacher Ever.** In this humorous video, you'll hear "I'm so overpaid," "Don't you love standardized testing?" and other unlikely comments.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXFSSwisAM8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXFSSwisAM8)

### Most popular post 📌



November 22 👍 407 likes ✉ 293 shares

### Favorite comments 💬

**Andrea Tocci** | Jan 12

I loved the Good Teaching Conference. I loved the idea of the Sound Project 2014 with Rick Morris. Mary Patterson's workshop on Common Core comprehension was amazing. I also love the app that was provided to us. Thanks to everyone for making this event happen.

**Sue Gamm, Susie Walker** | Dec 28

There's lots of money being spent outside of the classroom, but the classes are bulging with kids. Class sizes increased when we had budget troubles in the last few years. Now that districts seem flush with money, the district offices are in good shape, lots of building is going on, but class sizes are higher than ever!

# What's new at cta.org

1

### [cta.org/blackhistory](http://cta.org/blackhistory)

#### February is Black History Month

See our resources page to reflect on the history, and honor the tremendous contributions of African Americans.

2

### [cta.org/commoncoreseminars](http://cta.org/commoncoreseminars)

#### Common Core and Beyond

CTA offers one-day seminars on implementation of the standards and the new timelines for assessments. Sign up for extensive practice in varied areas of Common Core.

3

### [cta.org/board](http://cta.org/board)

#### Introducing the BOD

Want to "meet" your representative on the CTA Board of Directors, and other Board members? See their photos and bios on the BOD webpage.

4

### [cta.org/helpcenter](http://cta.org/helpcenter)

#### Have questions?

"How does CTA make policy decisions?" "How do I get legal representation?" "Where's the nearest CTA office?" Contact the Help Center via our online form.

5

### [cta.org/ift](http://cta.org/ift)

#### IFT Grant Program = Success!

CTA's Institute for Teaching grant recipients have done some pretty cool things, like the Green Jobs Program, the Algebra Success Academy, the California School Garden Network, and more.

### More top tweets 🐦

**@mrmicahali** | Jan 11

Perplexed. Differentiate instruction, yet standardize tests. Oxymoronic! Toxic stress on teachers & students!

**@jadedtattoo13** | Jan 10

California teachers appreciate Gov's commitment to public education and to repaying the billions of dollars cut from our schools. [#cabudget](#)

**@dyannalyoung** | Dec 9

YES to public schools where local solutions and student-centered approaches are favored over top-down strategies that don't benefit ALL.



DEPARTMENTS

## Know & Tell

Know & Tell introduces useful and fun tips and provides the latest on scholarships, grants and resources.

## Perspectives

Perspectives amplifies members' voices and includes the ever-popular Point/Counterpoint series, plus guest columns, and book and movie reviews.

## Advocacy

Advocacy showcases the great work of CTA members in the bargaining, member rights and legislative arenas.

## Learning

Learning highlights members' best practices and practical advice and showcases education trends.

## CTA & You

CTA & You covers all things CTA, including events such as State Council, trainings and conferences, plus member benefits and services.

# The Courtship of Eddie's Father

**THAT'S HOW A FRIEND** described a parent-teacher conference when a third-grader pointed to a gentleman and said, "Do you want to marry my dad?" Do you remember the 1970s sitcom featuring young Eddie, who hopes to find the ideal wife for his widower father and a great mom for himself? I've seen it in reruns, of course. In my friend's case, she met her future husband at a union meeting. My mom and dad started "courting" at school. Friends have found their children at school, adopting or fostering students. Valentine's Day isn't just for couples, in my book. Enjoy reading what happens when Cupid comes to the classroom on page 10.

Our work is like a courtship. Organizing, networking and building relationships to make positive change is part of our history. In 1975, for example, two friends fought for maternity leave rights. Their story on page 39 gives a new meaning to "labor history."

Naturally, we come together to help students succeed. I LOVE reading about members who are helping immigrant students survive and thrive in a melting-pot type of school in Modesto (page 44). Another excellent example is on page 24: Fullerton, Long Beach and Vista teachers, students and college faculty are taking teaching and learning to a whole new level at lab schools.

It's time for Read Across America, so your colleagues are sharing their expertise and recommending books through CTA's California Reads program. Read all about it on page 48. And local educators share their classroom expertise and experience serving on school boards. On page 32, see how locally elected educators in Richmond, Merced, West Sacramento and Buellton work their dual roles.

Speaking of extracurricular activities, I'm bummed about the 49ers loss, but a Suisun City member's side job as statistician for the NFL team is enlightening (page 17). And meet a history and economics teacher whose students started a new business giving guided tours in San Jose (page 22).

There is something for just about everyone in this month's magazine, including great resources such as CTA's new Common Core spiral progressions (page 43) and the latest on school funding. CTA's State Council of Education is meeting as we go to press. Remember, you can get the latest updates on CTA events and public education issues at [www.cta.org](http://www.cta.org). As always, let me know what you think of this magazine, and if you have story ideas to suggest.

**Cynthia Menzel**  
EDITOR IN CHIEF  
[editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org)

### Read about the rest of the story online!

Go behind the scenes and read how CTA freelance photographer Scott Buschman helps students and teachers feel at ease to get the great photos you see in this magazine at [blog.cta.org](http://blog.cta.org). Find additional photos from stories at [cta.org/educator](http://cta.org/educator).



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### Learn more about Common Core

I support the Common Core State Standards because they simplify what I need to do with kids down to the power standards and learning progressions. There were too many standards before to realistically be able to help kids master. Now there are fewer, so there are things I no longer need to teach, freeing me up to go deeper with literary analysis, persuasion, language, etc. I have more elbow room for project-based learning and for a wider variety of assessments to help gauge how my kids are doing.

As for the connection between the standards and assessments, I am aware of what the assessment will look like and what my kids will need to be able to do to be successful. Thus, I structure all my lessons and activities around the standards, which will give them plenty of practice and exposure to similar kinds of

thought processes and tasks. We will do all kinds of different things in my classroom; all of it prepares them for the tests they'll take at year's end.

I don't do any test prep other than teaching kids good test-taking skills. I don't give practice tests. I do talk to them as we move through units about how they may be tested on things and what to expect, but that's it. When you give kids a wide variety of tasks to do, alone and with peers, and hold really high standards for their thinking and their work, they do great on any test you give them.

### REBECCA MIELIWOCKI

*Burbank Teachers Association*

touch with the changes and cycles in education (after 30 years of primary grade teaching and five years of retirement).

### STELLA HAWKINS

*Arcata*

### Correction

An article on state legislation in the November 2013 *Educator* incorrectly attributed AB 484 to Assembly Member Joan Buchanan. Assembly Member Susan Bonilla authored AB 484, which shelved the state's high-stakes test to make way for the new assessments.

### Keep in touch

I really enjoy your magazine. It helps me stay in

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# Love at SCHOOL

## Will you be mine?

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

*Lingering looks in the library... long goodbyes in the hallway... rumors in the cafeteria...*

**WE'RE NOT DESCRIBING TEENAGERS** or a romance novel. Nope, we're describing educators struck by Cupid's arrow, who found love with a colleague when least expected.

It wasn't always love at first sight. However, discovering shared values around teaching and learning brought some co-workers together at school, while others found the love of their life at a union meeting, making the phrase "together is better" more than an organizing motto.

So this month, in honor of Valentine's Day, we bring you stories of CTA members who became families... and are living happily ever after.



## STEVE AND ELDA STROBELE

♥ **STEVE AND ELDA HAD BEEN DATING** for a while and felt it was time to let the principal know so it would finally be out in the open.

"I said, 'Dr. Grant, I want to let you in on something. Elda and I are dating,'" Steve remembers. The principal stared at him with a deadpan expression.

"No kidding," she said, rolling her eyes.

They had tried to keep it on the down low, but everyone — including students and parents — had picked up on the supposed secret that wasn't.

It started when Steve saw Elda stroll into the library of Studebaker Elementary School in 2004.

"I said to myself, 'Wow, who's that?'" recalls the fifth-grade teacher and Little Lake Education Association president. "I was absolutely captivated."

"I thought he was arrogant," says Elda. "He was very confident with a kind of cocky attitude. I liked the way he looked, but I remember thinking, 'He walked in here like he owns the school.'"

Months later he talked her into joining the school's bowling team. She went to his 40th birthday party at the ESPN Zone, and when everyone else went home, they took a stroll along Downtown Disney.

"She was quite the Disney fan," recalls Steve.

"Behind that tough guy façade, he was a really a teddy bear," she says.

They got married in 2006. Her engagement ring is shaped like Mickey Mouse with diamonds for ears. Nobody was more excited about the nuptials than their students. The couple now has 5-year-old twins who attend Studebaker.

"Our secret for happiness is brutal honesty and open lines of communication," says Steve. "We talk about everything whether it's pleasant or not, because keeping secrets is bad medicine."

"We go home, talk about our day and know what the person is feeling instantly," says Elda. "Working together gives us that commonality. And being attracted to each other doesn't hurt either."

## TONI AND JOHN BRYANT

♥ **MEET TONI AND JOHN BRYANT**, Thermalito Teachers Association, whose soap opera courtship had a happy ending. But for a while it was touch and go.

Their classrooms were next to each other at Nelson Avenue Middle School in 1994. They were assigned to work together as team teachers.

Toni came from an elementary school background before teaching middle school, and took an artistic, creative and sometimes unorthodox approach. John had previously taught at the high school and believed in a more structured environment, which Toni found somewhat "rigid" and inflexible.

During a joint PE square dancing activity, Toni decided to incorporate a lesson about prejudice and made blue-eyed students go to the back of the line and made brown-eyed children her temporary focus. John didn't approve, so he took his students and marched out of the gym in mid-lesson. He tried to talk later; she locked him out of her classroom. Things got even worse when he abstained from voting to fund her pet project on the school site council, "blindsiding" her.

## JOHN AND JESSICA PETERSEN

♥ **WHEN THE NEW SPANISH TEACHER** walked into a faculty meeting 14 years ago, social studies teacher John Petersen was instantly smitten. Jessica didn't even notice he was in the room.

"I was really nervous, fresh out of college, and didn't even see him," she says.

John, Association of Rowland Educators president, escorted the newest teacher — and chapter member — to her portable classroom so she wouldn't get lost.

"I didn't think about him for two more seconds," Jessica says. "I had a class to get ready."

But he couldn't stop thinking about her. When his chapter readied for a possible strike, he saw her number on the phone tree and thought about calling. He chickened out.

Faculty got together for pizza after a Friday night football game, and he struck up a conversation. She didn't remember him, but thought he was funny and laughed at his jokes.

"Oh my gosh, he was cute," says Jessica.

They kept their romance secret, figuring "there's enough drama in high

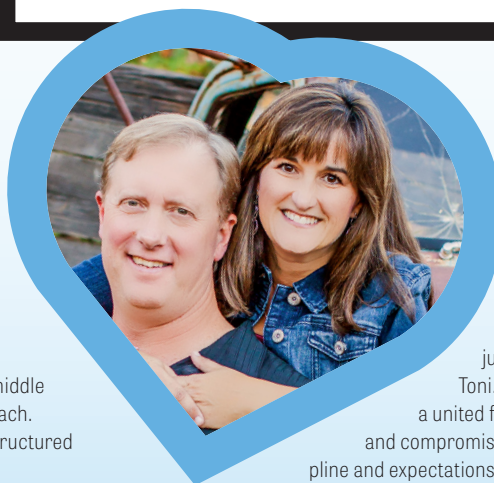
school," says John, who planned an elaborate proposal in the wine country. Before he could pop the question, she turned to him and said, "So let's get married." On their wedding day the priest had an emergency and canceled. They went to the rectory and woke up another priest taking a catnap.

"He agreed to help us. A funeral procession waited outside with the coffin just so he could perform our wedding," laughs John.

Today they have two children. They still laugh at each other's jokes and go to Friday night football games.

"I knew she was a keeper when she said she couldn't decide what movie to watch — *Animal House*, *Caddy Shack* or *The Blues Brothers*," says John.

"We're polar opposites," says Jessica. "Sometimes we can't agree on anything. But he's the love of my life."



Finally the feuding teachers were sent to the principal's office to hammer out their differences.

"We were fighting about our kids, just like people do in a marriage," says Toni.

"We had to learn how to be a united front, which clearly we were not, and compromise on differing teaching styles, discipline and expectations. It was hard."

They learned how to work together as a team and married in 1998. They have three daughters and still work together.

"It's not perfect. We still have our ups and downs," says John. "I wouldn't trade it for the world."

PHOTO BY PARK AVENUE PHOTOGRAPHY





## BETH AND LUIS PEREZ

♥ **"HE WAS VERY, VERY HANDSOME** and pretty quiet, so I assumed he had a girlfriend," says Beth, who teaches history.

"I didn't know her name, but I knew she was involved in the union," says Luis, a Spanish teacher. "She gave a presentation on union activism."

The two met at a CTA SPARKS workshop for newer teachers, designed to "ignite passion for the profession" and spark heightened awareness of the benefits of CTA membership. They ended up in the same activity group, cooking risotto in a kitchen at the Culinary Institute of Monterey. Needless to say, sparks ignited between them in the kitchen.

At that time, they both taught in Fremont, she at Hopkins Junior High School and he at Washington High School. Both Fremont Unified District Teachers Association members admit wine was flowing freely in the kitchen that night. Beth spilled to friend Brannin Dorsey (who was then vice president) that she found her fellow chef to be, well, hot. The friend, in typical junior high school fashion, told Luis that Beth thought he was cute, causing much embarrassment all around.

Luis called Beth days later and suggested they recreate the meal at his place. Beth showed up with the recipe and ingredients. She was shocked to find that he only had "one sad pan with a missing handle" and a kitchen that was barely functional. Nonetheless, the meal turned out fine.

After dating five years, they wed in June. "We are working toward a functional kitchen, and in the midst of a remodel. We cook together a lot," says Luis.

Last year, he joined her at Hopkins Junior High. Having a spouse at the same school site, they say, always provides a topic of conversation and instant support system.

"We are both still involved in the union," says Beth. "I'm a union rep and he's an alternate. And we shall be involved in our union — as long as we both shall teach."

PHOTOS BY TERRY WAY PHOTOGRAPHY

## A DIFFERENT KIND OF LOVE

♥ **MONIQUE SEGURA WILL NEVER FORGET** the moment in 2000 when tiny Vanessa walked into her classroom for a "kindergarten interview" accompanied by her foster mother.

She melted.

"Vanessa could not hold a pencil. She could not cut with scissors, and was terrified of the classroom restroom," recalls Segura, Orcutt Educators Association president. "She had been in foster care for six months with her older sister Melissa, while her younger sister Marissa had been placed in a separate home because all three girls were too difficult to handle in the same home."

Segura knew deep down inside that Vanessa needed her help. And she knew that she needed Vanessa, too. Her husband Jose, president of the Santa Maria Elementary Association, agreed that the couple had enough love in their hearts to help Vanessa and perhaps her sisters as well.

By April 2001, Vanessa and her older sister Melissa were living with them as foster daughters. Melissa had a difficult time telling the truth, trusting her new family and struggled with her academics and social behavior at school. Both girls missed their little sister.

Marissa joined them in June 2001. She was then 4, not potty trained, and had a vocabulary of just 50 words. She was angry and scared, and experienced night terrors. It was suggested that she, diagnosed with attachment disorder, would need to be placed in a special education living situation eventually.

Monica and Jose adopted all three girls, who were ages 4, 6 and 7.

"We knew these girls had come from a rough beginning, and the odds were against them in so many ways," says Monique. "I often looked at my girls as having a dark cloud above their heads and each time they overcame a challenge or obstacle, the cloud would slowly get chipped away. The key to chipping away that black cloud was changing their environment."

Melissa is now 19 and a student at Allan Hancock College. She received \$6,500 in scholarships after graduating from Orcutt Academy High School last year. Vanessa, 18, is a high school senior who participates in the school's dance and drama productions and works hard to be successful at school. Marissa, 16, is a sophomore who plays the piano and volunteers at the animal shelter.

"Our students come from such a wide range of experiences, and we have the power to show them what a happy, healthy environment looks like," says

Monique. "I know we cannot all adopt our most needy students, but we can make a difference in their lives by offering them an environment that can foster learning and happiness."



PHOTO BY  
LUIS ESCOBAR



# Know & Tell

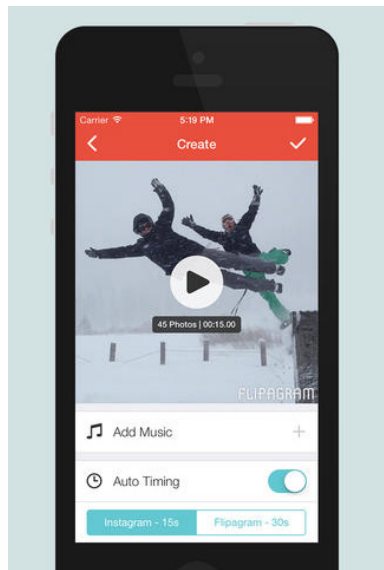
Grants, awards, contests, resources and tips to share



**Moonlighting as a statistician** for the San Francisco 49ers **has its perks.** Sure, you meet players and can get NFL stuff. For this CTA member, it means enhancing his teaching.

FAIRFIELD-SUISUN UNIFIED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION'S **JEFF KRANZ** SHOWS STUDENTS HOW MATH IS A PART OF THE SPORT THEY WATCH ON TELEVISION. READ MORE ON PAGE 17.





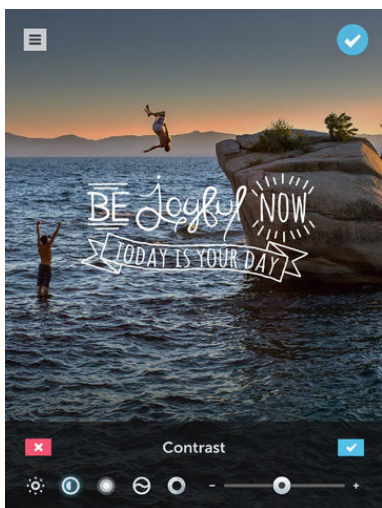
**FLIPAGRAM APPLICATION**

**Flipagram** makes it easy to create beautiful short videos from your camera photos. You can even add titles and add music to your slideshow using a song from your own library. **Price: Free**



**OLLOCLIP 4-IN-1 ACCESSORY**

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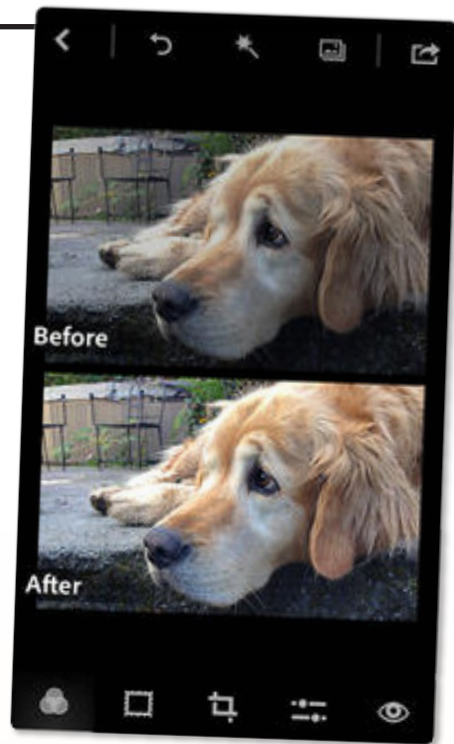


**PICLAB HD APPLICATION**

**PicLab HD** is a nifty app that can be used to create inspiring images by adding text, artwork, light leaks, textures, grains, photo filters, adjustments, and much more. **Price: \$1.99**

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**Photoshop Express** puts the power of the desktop software into the palm of your hands. Edit and share photos virtually anywhere. Touch to crop, rotate, adjust color, and add artistic effects. **Price: Free**

**KOGETO DOT ACCESSORY**

Snap the **Kogeto Dot** on your iPhone to capture fully interactive 360-degree panoramic videos. **Price: \$40**



# Best Smartphone Apps and Accessories to Buy *\*in 2014*

BY TERRY NG

**IF YOU'RE LIKE** most smartphone owners, you use your smartphone's camera as your primary photo and video capturing tool. With some additional apps and accessories, you can turn your device into a mobile photo and video studio.

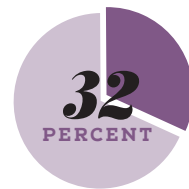
# Did you know?

IF YOU DISCOVER research you think we should highlight, send it along with your name and local chapter to [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org).

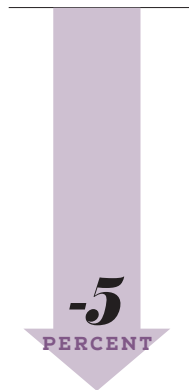
BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN



**Recess, in many schools, may soon be a thing of the past.** Since the 1970s, *Science Daily* reports, schoolchildren have lost nearly 50 percent of their unstructured outdoor playtime. **Thirty-nine percent of first-graders today get 20 minutes of recess each day — or less.** By contrast, children in Japan get 10 minutes of play each hour. Prolonged confinement in classrooms diminishes children's concentration and leads to squirming and restlessness. And boys appear to be more seriously affected by recess deprivation than girls. "Parents should be aware," warn two university researchers, "that classroom organization may be responsible for their sons' inattention and fidgeting and that breaks may be a better remedy than Ritalin."



Black Californians have the lowest college graduation rate among all ethnic groups and are less educated than their parents, according to the **Campaign for College Opportunity, a group calling on state lawmakers to help African Americans.** Among the findings of a new study: **32 percent of black Californians who attended college dropped out, more than any other group.** Black students are underrepresented in the University of California and California State University systems and are overrepresented at expensive, for-profit colleges. The group called on state lawmakers to create a statewide plan to set specific goals for improving college-going success for African American students.



More and more college admissions officers "Google" an applicant (29 percent) or visit an applicant's Facebook or other social networking page to learn more about them (31 percent). The percentages are at their highest levels yet, according to Kaplan Test Prep's 2013 survey of college admissions officers. When Kaplan first began tracking this issue in 2008, barely 10 percent of admissions officers reported checking a Facebook page. **Despite the growth in online checking, however, there's been a dip — to 30 percent in 2013 from 35 percent in Kaplan's 2012 survey — in the number of admissions officers reporting that they're finding something that negatively impacted** an applicant's admissions chances. In a separate survey of college-bound students, more than three-quarters said they would not be concerned if an admissions officer Googled them.



Wealthy parents are more likely to make cookies for bake sales, volunteer in classrooms and be involved in their children's schools than lower-income mothers and fathers, reports EdSource. And 39 percent of parents with incomes greater than \$100,000 said they were very involved in their children's schools, compared to 24 percent of parents making less than \$30,000. **Two-thirds of parents said time and work schedules were obstacles in participating at their children's school.**



## TIPS TO INCREASE PARENT INVOLVEMENT:

- 1 Communicate with parents** using a variety of methods ranging from phone calls to email, fliers or meeting face-to-face.
- 2 Host events and activities** that bring parents into the school, such as Family Literacy Night, spaghetti dinners or other events that make parents feel welcome and wanted, being flexible to allow for working schedules.
- 3 Let parents know you consider them to be "partners" in their child's education.** Numerous studies show that children are more likely to succeed when parents and teachers work together.







The  
Numbers

19.1

PERCENT

The healthy gains made on the investments of the \$181 billion California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) for 2013, as reported in January.

810,864

L.A. RESIDENTS

The number of Los Angeles residents (46 percent) who earn less than \$15 an hour and who comprise the working poor in that high-cost city, according to a new study conducted by the Economic Roundtable and funded by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor.

50<sup>th</sup>

PLACE

California's ranking in per-pupil funding among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, based on 2010-11 school year data and adjusted for cost-of-living factors. Reported in the January *Education Week* "Quality Counts" study, which also said California is \$3,523 below the national average in education spending per student.

24.8

PERCENT

Percentage of U.S. teenagers between the ages of 12 and 15 who engaged in the recommended 60 minutes of daily moderate-to-vigorous physical activity in 2012, according to new data from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

# Quotes & Numbers

WE COMB THE MEDIA DAILY for the best quotes and statistics about public education. If you discover a quote or stat you think we should highlight, send it along with your name to [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org).

**"I do think this is the year for the raise for our teachers. ... This is the year to concentrate on that commitment."**

—**SANDRA FEWER**, newly elected president of the San Francisco Unified School District school board, quoted in the Jan. 16 *San Francisco Chronicle*.

**"If you combine rigor and imagination, if you combine flexibility with guidelines and some reasonable accountability, we'll get the job done. So, good luck! I'm very excited. I'm bullish on California's schools."**

—**GOV. JERRY BROWN**, testifying during the marathon Jan. 16 State Board of Education hearing in Sacramento on new Local Control Funding Formula regulations to better help our low-income students and English learners.

**"The governor's proposed budget will help our public schools and colleges continue to heal after years of devastating cuts. As we heal our schools, we heal our communities."**

—CTA President **DEAN E. VOGEL**, responding to the governor's spending plan, unveiled in January, which includes \$10 billion in new funding for K-12 schools and community colleges.

**"It's time to come to our senses and place education back into the hands of the only people who actually know how students learn: teachers. They have their ears to the educational ground and know the students."**

—**PETER W. COOKSON JR.**, principal researcher at the American Institutes for Research and sociology teacher at Georgetown University, in a recent *Education Week* essay about the need for more equity in public schools.



*Jeff Kranz shows his students how math is a part of the sport they watch on television.*



## CTA MEMBER TACKLES MATH USING HIS NFL CONNECTIONS

BY CECIL CONLEY

● **JEFF KRANZ HAS BEEN** playing the field and his wife knows all about it. Even his sixth-grade students at Crystal Middle School in Suisun City are hip to his extracurricular activities.

Kranz abandons his wife whenever there's a San Francisco 49ers home game. The veteran math teacher puts his skill with numbers to good use as a statistician for the National Football League team.

His wife, Laura Rodriguez, understands. She realized long ago that statistics are a Kranz family trade, and Sundays in the fall are for football.

Both Kranz and his wife, who teaches

fifth grade at Laurel Creek Elementary in Fairfield, are members of the Fairfield-Suisun Unified Teachers Association.

### *Like father, like sons*

His father, the late Richard Kranz, was a sportswriter who moonlighted as a statistician with the Oakland Raiders. He compiled statistics at several Super Bowls, often bringing his children. Kranz attended five Super Bowl matches.

Kranz's brother David followed in his father's footsteps and recruited Kranz to be a number cruncher for the 49ers. David lives in Sacramento, so he drives and stops

in Vacaville to get his brother. The Sunday commute will be farther next season, now that the 49ers have left Candlestick Park and moved to Santa Clara.

The two will be on the road shortly after sunrise, and Kranz hopes to get home "by halftime of the night game." That means Rodriguez has the day to herself, and she "makes the most of it," he says.

Kranz, who also attended Giants games at the stadium before the baseball team moved to AT&T Park in 2000, has many fond memories of his days at Candlestick Park and is sad the stadium is being sacked.

"I can't believe they're going to tear



down a perfectly good stadium. It has its shortcomings, but I'm going to miss Candlestick," Kranz laments. "It's hard to imagine they're going to blow that place up."

What Kranz will not miss are the meager accommodations the statistics crew had to endure at Candlestick. He sat on a wooden stool with his head brushing against the ceiling of the press box. Climate control was an issue with the season kicking off in the warmth of summer and ending in the winter chill.

"We would go from sweating to freezing," jokes the 26-year teaching veteran. "By the end of some games, my feet were bricks of ice."

### Practical use of math

Kranz is no stranger to cold weather. He was raised in Chicago as a Bears fan. His

football allegiance has been divided since being hired by the 49ers in 1996, two years after their fifth Super Bowl victory.

In those days, Kranz taught at Dan O. Root Elementary in Suisun City and would bring items from 49ers games such as souvenir programs and calendars to his students. The children had an NFL connection. They also learned

the practical use of math when Kranz explained the statistics he compiles during a 49ers game.

The tools of Kranz's trade are a simple pencil and sheets of paper. He is the "low-tech guy" of the 49ers statistics crew, compiling a hard copy just in case of a computer crash or power outage. Kranz is responsible for checking statistics entered into the computers to ensure their accuracy. "I double, triple and quadruple check," he said. "If

there is a mistake, I get to be the bearer of bad news."

Kranz handles offensive statistics such as first downs, third-down conversions and time of possession. He asks his students questions like: If Frank Gore gains 74 yards on 11 rushing attempts, what is the average per attempt? He shows them how math is a part of the sport they watch on television.

Now at the middle school, Kranz still teaches math, but misses the outside time he had with students.

"I got to know the kids. I would go out with them at recess to pitch kickball or shoot baskets. Now the kids come and go. You don't know them as well," he says and smiles. "It's harder to be cool."

*A freelance journalist, Cecil Conley is the office manager for the Fairfield-Suisun Unified Teachers Association.*

**"IF THERE IS  
A MISTAKE, I'M  
THE BEARER OF  
BAD NEWS."**

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# Perspectives

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



**How did a handful of students and a teacher**, long on enthusiasm but short on capital, **fund a start-up?** The answer emerged when they discovered that San Jose was the only major city in the country without a daily walking tour.

THE ADVENTURE BEGAN WHEN A STUDENT ASKED EAST SIDE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION MEMBER **GREG ADLER** WHY DON'T YOU START A BUSINESS? ADLER, HERE WITH STUDENTS HAFID ALFONSO AND MATT PEYTON, SHARES HIS STORY ON PAGE 22.



# Should schools drug-test students?

## NO

From instilling core values to delivering a hot breakfast, it seems like every year California's educators are asked to perform another job that was once the responsibility of parents. Adding drug testing to that list is a terrible idea.

The whole notion of voluntary drug testing is a farce. Parents who "volunteer" their children are simply forcing them to participate, while those who leave it up to the kids are putting them in a Catch-22. Refuse and everyone will assume they're on dope. What choice do kids have but to knuckle under?

Whether or not school-administered drug testing violates a student's privacy rights is a matter for the courts, but it clearly undermines the parent-child relationship. In addition to creating an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust, it essentially tells the child, "I don't care enough about you to confront this issue myself." Outsourcing your child's substance-abuse problem to the local school district isn't going to win you Parent of the Year.

What it will win you is a whole lot of cheating. When Huntington Beach High allowed parents to enter their kids in a lottery for random drug testing, the *Orange County Register* reported that about one in 10 responses showed obvious signs of tampering. If Lance Armstrong can fool the world's top scientists for the better part of a decade, what chance do cash-strapped schools and overworked parents have against an army of tech-savvy, determined teens?

So, do we give up and let the kids light up in the quad? Of course not.

There is one group on campus that should be acting like the police: the police. When a student is suspected of being under the influence, law enforcement should administer a drug test on the spot. If it comes back negative, there's no harm done. If it comes back positive, the parents should be given the results — and the bill.

**BRANDON CRIST** is a member of United Teachers Los Angeles.



Some communities, including Newport Beach, Shasta and Huntington Beach, have "voluntary" drug testing of students as a deterrent to substance abuse. In Huntington Beach, for example, high school parents are asked to sign forms allowing their children to be tested, and 10 students are picked at random per month.

The testing is done by a private company and paid for by a parent club, and results are given to parents, not the school. Students are not forced to comply. The policy went into effect after a student overdosed on heroin.



## YES

In some schools, drug testing may be necessary when drug use is rampant among students. It is a way of changing the student mindset so they understand that drug use is not acceptable.

Having such a drug testing policy could potentially deter students from trying drugs if they think they might be tested. It could also be a way to help students deal with peer pressure, since they could save face with their peers when they refuse to take drugs because they might be tested at school. Drug testing should be combined with education about drug use and the short-term and long-term effects that drug use can have.

Drug testing should require parental consent, but be mandatory for students whose parents give consent. I think this is a good way for parents to send a message to their children that drug use will not be tolerated. I also think it is a way for parents to gain information about their children's drug use that they might otherwise not be aware of.

I have not talked directly to any student regarding their feelings toward the policy, but I have read negative comments from them on Twitter. They feel that it creates a "prison" atmosphere, and that the school is treading on their civil rights.

However, I do not believe that drug testing violates students' civil rights if the parents have given their consent. Parents should be able to make important decisions regarding their children's health, and this would include decisions regarding drug testing.

We have fewer drug cases than before drug testing was implemented, but no evidence that this is directly correlated to the drug testing policy. However, parents and the community are positive about drug testing. They feel that our policy shows that Huntington Beach High School is trying to make a difference in decreasing student drug use.

**MIMI WOOD** is a member of the Huntington Beach Union High School District Education Association.

# VALENCIA DAVIS FOSTERS CONNECTIVITY ON CAMPUS

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

*"We build too many walls and not enough bridges."*  
Isaac Newton

## TEACHER. COACH. MENTOR. ADVOCATE.

Valencia Davis wears lots of hats at Loara High School. Most have to do with building bridges between diverse people, helping others make difficult transitions, and fostering connectivity on campus.

As a "lesson design specialist" the world history teacher is helping colleagues transition from current standards to the Common Core. She also provides professional development in SDAIE (Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English) strategies for teachers to help not only English learners, but all students who are struggling with oral and written language.

As co-adviser of the Bridges Program, she encourages students to have a "voice" and become a part of their school community. Bridges is a nationally recognized program serving Orange County schools for over 20 years to build campus environments that are respectful of diversity, where all students, staff and parents feel safe, welcome and respected.

Even if fellow teachers don't always agree with what students have to say, she encourages students to speak their minds.

A few years ago, students waged a schoolwide campaign about "preferential treatment" for some students when it came to turning in assignments late, bathroom passes, etc. The student-led campaign brought faculty, parents, administrators and classified employees into a broad discussion about equity issues and increased awareness on campus about preferential treatment.

Equity is an important issue to Davis, who grew up in an Arkansas household that emphasized helping others. Success, she says, depends upon the opportunities people receive in life, which may not always be fair or equitable, even if they have access to the same things.



## *In Davis' words:*

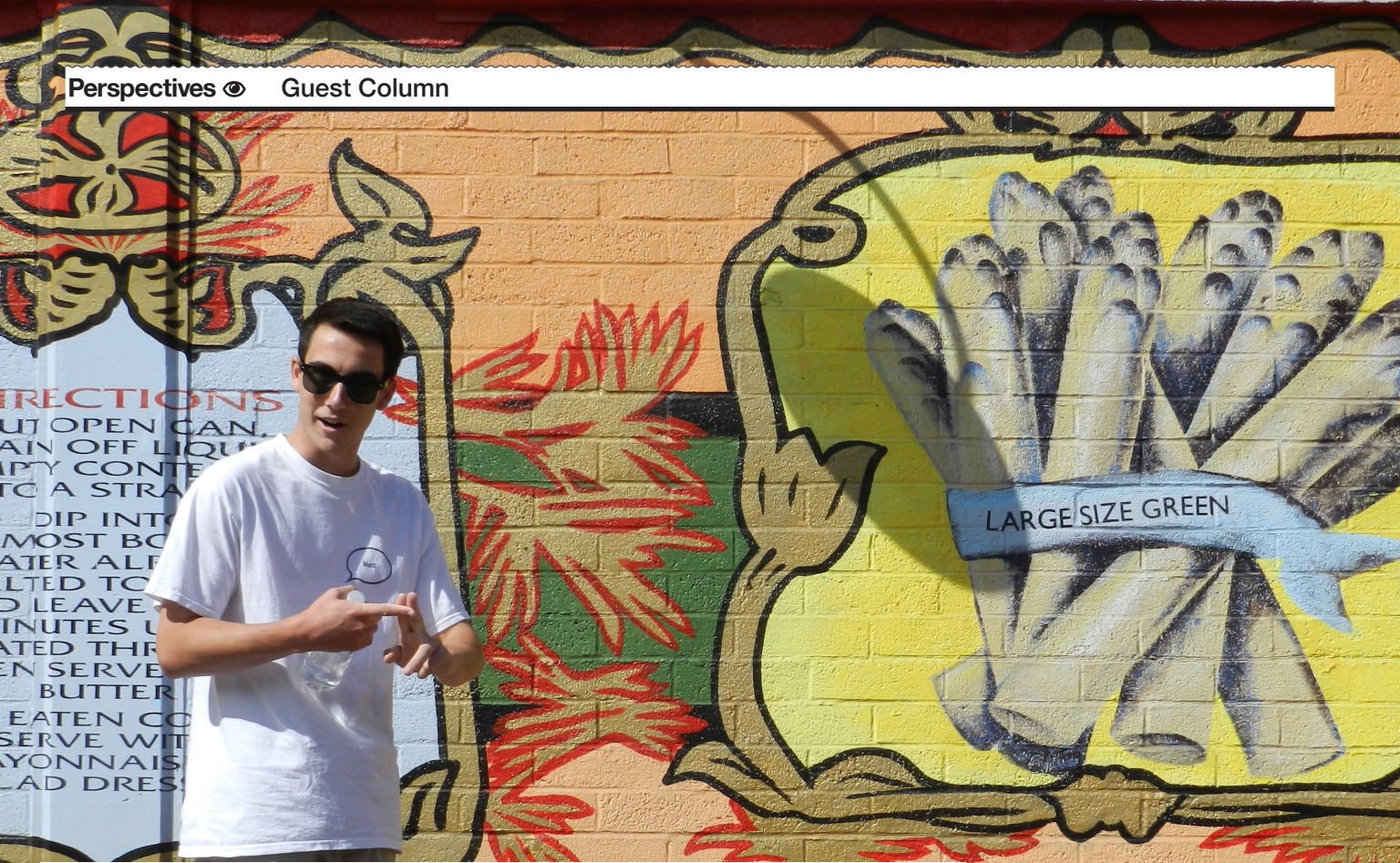
**People often confuse the words equality and equity...** and think these words can be used interchangeably. But they are different. Equity is fairness, and just because children attend school doesn't mean the education they are receiving is equitable. When you take into consideration things like poverty and language barriers, you can see that one-size-fits-all doesn't fit when it comes to education. It might be equal but it's not equitable. Some schools have a great deal more resources than others.

**I am most proud of my students...** when they open up bridges of communication and understanding. I have seen band geeks invite a greaser or someone different into their clique. It's wonderful to see them understand that we're all Saxons [the school mascot]. One time many of them nearly left school to join a protest about immigration, but instead they decided to organize a protest on campus. They increased awareness on our campus instead of feeding into media sensationalism about immigrant students and valuing education. That was a moment when I looked at them and said, "Wow!"

**People shouldn't be frightened of the Common Core because...** the standards emphasize the skills students need to demonstrate understanding of the content. The standards are concise and provide learning progressions from one grade level to the next. For the first time, all disciplinary areas play an important role in developing students who are both college and career ready. We will produce literate students who are effective in communicating, solving problems and working collaboratively. In the end, our students will become innovators ready to embrace their futures in the 21st century.

**My philosophy is that...** I can effect change one person at a time, whether it's an adult or a student. I believe that we can all move from being good to being great. I never see students — or adults — as a finished product. We are all where we are in this moment, and we can all move and transition into something better if we have the support to do that.





From an econ class to real life

## Students “walk the talk” as downtown San Jose tour guides

BY GREG ADLER, EAST SIDE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

TAKE THE TOUR  
*Agricultural history is the topic of this “walk & talk” by Matt Peyton.*

**ON A SATURDAY EVENING** I find myself in downtown San Jose, listening to a teenage tour guide recount the infamous St. James Park lynching. Matt Peyton describes the kidnapping of Brooke Hart, heir to a family fortune, hinting at the gory details of a murder that enraged a mob and led to a double lynching. I watch the audience react with disbelief to his lyrical account. However, I am smiling as I think back a few months, when this same youth privately admitted to me that he was afraid of public speaking. Matt is one of a handful of students who are benefiting in numerous ways from joining me in the adventure of starting San Jose Walks & Talks.

It was a comment from the back of my economics class, “Mr. Adler, why don’t you start a business?” that put this student entrepreneurship project in motion. Already aware that students were having difficulty finding jobs in a fragile economy, this comment stuck with me. But realistically, how were

a handful of students and a teacher, without any capital, going to fund a start-up? The answer emerged when we discovered that San Jose was the only major city in the country without a daily walking tour. This was just the low-investment business model that a group of students, long on enthusiasm but short on funds, were looking for.

The first students I recruited for this project were excited about taking our first business trip, until I revealed the destination: the local library. The librarian treated them like historians arriving to do archival research, and the students quickly began to sift through the stories of San Jose’s beginnings. While every history teacher hears “Why do I have to learn this?” to my relief



I soon heard kids saying “You’ve got to read this!” or some variation, over and over again. Students becoming interested in history was just the first of many unexpected benefits of this student-run business.

The next step to get San Jose Walks & Talks off the ground was organizing into marketing and finance teams. A group of students was soon dispatched to the Small Business Administration for tips on accounting and grant writing. Other students approached the downtown business and neighborhood associations to introduce the concept of San Jose Walks & Talks. The wide range of resources available in our community was becoming apparent to these student entrepreneurs. My school lunch break was now frequently interrupted by some team member bursting in to announce whom they had met or what idea they had dreamed up.

After several months of tour research and community outreach, our student webmaster employed Google Earth and Google Maps to determine the final routes for tours, which now included art, music and even a ghost

story. We were ready for our debut. I passed out the T-shirts bearing our signature cartoon bubble logo, which was naturally a student-created design. The first few tour efforts fortunately were in front of an audience of forgiving family and friends, as we untied some tongues and mastered the art of walking (backward) and talking.

Regardless, in my mind San Jose Walks & Talks was already a success. At some point, one student turned to me and said, “This isn’t work, Mr. Adler. I look forward to coming out here.” These kids, with a little guidance, had really created something they could be proud of.

Now at the end of a tour, I listen in to Michaela Allen, another student guide, as she is wrapping up. Her last words about how this job has opened her eyes to the city she lives in are drowned out by a loud round of applause. It is a typical ending to a tour that usually includes sincere compliments and occasionally some nice tips. At this point, I think even the teenagers have grasped that more valuable than the money is the empowering experience of having an audience of adults hanging on your every word. It has given them a confidence that will lead to continued engagement with their community as they look to volunteer, build their networks, and emerge as a source of leadership in our city.

**“Mr. Adler, why don’t you start a business?”**

## “La Verne provided the tools to make me an effective educator.”

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# LAB SCHOOLS

## HAVE INNOVATION DOWN TO A SCIENCE

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

**IF YOU ARE A FAN** of the Emmy Award-winning show “Grey’s Anatomy,” you know it is set in a university “teaching hospital,” which provides education and training to future and current doctors, while offering patients the latest cutting-edge treatments in life-and-death situations.

Serving a similar function for educators instead of doctors are “teaching schools” with university ties. They’re facilities where all participants are lifelong learners, ranging from university professors and college students to pre-K–12 teachers and their pupils. Known as “lab schools” or “professional development schools,” these campuses offer opportunities for:

- Future teachers who want to apply theory to real classrooms.
- CSU professors who want to keep up with what’s happening in pre-K–12 schools to keep instruction relevant.
- College researchers who need a facility to observe students for studies about learning and behavior.
- K-12 teachers seeking new ideas from university professors and the next generation of teachers while sharing their own expertise.
- Children who benefit from *all of the above* in a dynamic, cutting-edge environment.

Many former lab schools stopped operating in this mode, trading innovation for pacing guides under NCLB. A few remain, and it is hoped more will flourish in this new era of local control as educators think outside the box and take advantage of an amazing resource — higher education — available in their own backyard. Here’s a look at three lab schools that have innovation down to a science.

*Play teaches thinking skills, as Amelie Castro and Gus White discover (right). Meanwhile, Kate Ha and Siriana Thampi work together on indoor plants.*







Find “behind the scenes” photos from each of the lab schools at [cta.org/educator](http://cta.org/educator).



## The CDES Lab School

**ASSOCIATIONS INVOLVED:**

UNITED FACULTY OF NORTH ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT  
CALIFORNIA SCHOOL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION  
CALIFORNIA FACULTY ASSOCIATION, CSU FULLERTON



### THE MISSION OF LAB SCHOOLS:

- Preparation of new teachers.
- Faculty development.
- Inquiry directed at the improvement of practice.
- Enhanced student achievement.

*Source: National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)*

**PRESCHOOLERS ARE SO USED TO** adults observing them that they hardly take notice of them at Fullerton College’s Child Development and Educational Studies Lab School.

“Adults with clipboards taking notes become like furniture as the children go about their busy day,” says Tom Chiaromonte, who jointly oversees the “demonstration” early childhood program with Patricia Green Pappas.

The early childhood education professors, members of United Faculty of North Orange County Community College District, hold lecture classes on site. For the “lab” part of their courses, college students walk down the hall to classrooms to observe children engaged in learning activities and play — and try out various teaching strategies, working under the supervision of college faculty and Lab School teachers. ▶



*"It's a constant learning experience," says student Monessa Hernandez, here with Tom Chiaromonte and Patricia Green.*



The school's philosophy is based on the Reggio Emilia Approach developed in Italy, which promotes nature-based learning and a constructivist curriculum determined by children's interests.

"Nothing is prepackaged. We have evolving curriculum that changes regularly," says Chiaromonte of learning activities that include "art in the atelier," music, gardening, cooking, and construction in the building studio.

At one time there was a special room with a one-way mirror for adults to observe children, but that was turned into a room for children to experiment with light and shadow.

"The benefit to college students is that our lab is part of our department and a place where they can take what they learned from theory to application to practice," says Pappas. "It helps us turn out successful teachers. Some school districts have told us that

we produce the most effective teachers they've had."

"I think it works out very well," says Monessa Hernandez, a Fullerton College student who plans on teaching preschool. "It's a constant learning experience."

Lab tech and California Mentor preschool teacher Karin Pavelek enjoys teaching both children and college students simultaneously. She doesn't mind explaining things as she goes along, because there is no better preparation for teaching preschool than hands-on practice, says the California School Employees Association member.

*"Without schools like these, it would be difficult for researchers to get our work done," says CSU professor Kate Bono.*

CSU Fullerton child studies associate professor Kate Bono received permission to observe children for a study on the role that language and speech play in a preschooler's "self-regulation," defined as the ability to control one's behavior or emotions in response to situational demands that influences academic success.

"They were very accommodating and supportive of the research I conducted here," says Bono, a California Faculty Association (CFA) member whose own children attended the Lab School. "Without schools like these, it would be difficult for researchers to get our work done."







*"Visual literacy" is modeled by CSU San Marcos literacy professor **Laurie Stowell** in the classroom of **Dayna Shanahan**.*

*Having college students as role models helps children see higher education as something that's important and obtainable, says **Laura Guyse**.*



lesson is modeled by CSU San Marcos literacy professor Laurie Stowell in the classroom of Dayna Shanahan.

Second- and third-graders play a theater game called Zip Zap, which helps them distinguish between fact and opinion, while CSU San Marcos arts professor Merryl Goldberg demonstrates a way to incorporate the arts into everyday curriculum for teacher Laura Guyse.

At Foothill Oak Elementary School, learning has become fun again, thanks to partnerships with local universities. Vista Teachers Association members say the collabo-

**FOURTH-GRADERS MAKE ICE CREAM** in the school yard with the help of UC San Diego students. Furiously shaking plastic bags of milk, they discover salt lowers the melting rate of ice as their teacher, Erin McIlroy, watches.

Second-graders gather around iPads to see their school on Google Maps. As the view from above gets closer and closer, they understand the perspective of an astronaut or a bird looking down. The "visual literacy"



## **Foothill Oak Elementary School**

VISTA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION  
CALIFORNIA FACULTY ASSOCIATION, CSU SAN MARCOS

**ASSOCIATIONS INVOLVED:**



*Youngsters like Renee Williams and Emily Hilarios perform hands-on experiments observed by college students, who work under the supervision of CSU professors.*



ration with CFA members and UC professors has infused the campus with new vitality and creativity and provided strategies for transitioning to the Common Core.

The transformation coincided with the arrival of Principal Erin English. She came to Foothill Oak, which has mostly English learners, after years of working in a wealthier district. She saw wonderful teachers at her new school, but little in the way of resources to help them grow as professionals. So she decided to take advantage of “free” professional development by partnering with local colleges. At first staff were skeptical, but most have embraced the change.

The school has several programs with universities: UC San Diego’s environmental engineer program called Global Ties, where university students work with fourth-graders on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics); the CSU San Marcos DREAM Project, which pairs arts professors with teachers; a PE program run by a professor in the CSUSM kinesiology department; and a CSUSM program where future teachers mentor and tutor migrant students. The school had its highest number of “proficient” and “advanced” third-graders since 2004 due to college mentorships.

“My kids are engaged,” says McIlroy, whose students are part of the STEM program. “They are working with future scientists who are smart and amazing. I’m by no means an expert in science and engineering, so I’m learning right along with them.”

“I love having Cal State professors share the knowledge and research of what they know,” says Shanahan. “Sometimes we get a little overwhelmed and a fresh perspective is helpful.”

Having college students as role models helps children see higher education as something that’s important and obtainable in their future, adds Guyse.

From a college instructor’s point of view, Foothill Oak is also a gold mine.

“It grounds me in the reality of what’s going on in schools, because otherwise we’re a bit removed from it,” says Goldberg. “It provides me a chance



*“My kids are engaged,” says Erin McIlroy, here with CSU students Vinay Venkatesh, Ambuj Punn, Victoria Jann and Tu Lan. “They are working with future scientists who are smart and amazing.”*

to see what teachers are thinking about and how they are implementing the Common Core. It’s important to understand what’s happening today, as we train teachers for the future.”





*While children blow up balloons, like Connor Aguirre is doing, theory becomes a reality they can see and touch and understand.*

## Kettering Elementary School

**ASSOCIATIONS INVOLVED:**

TEACHERS ASSOCIATION OF LONG BEACH  
CALIFORNIA FACULTY ASSOCIATION, CSU LONG BEACH

**UNDERGRADS FROM CSU LONG BEACH** hope the second time is the charm when it comes to teaching science lessons to elementary students. They presented original lessons to Kettering students a few months ago in small groups, and discovered (surprise, surprise!) that things don't always go as planned. So now they are back, with modified lessons, to try again with a different group of students.

Some college students teach youngsters the difference between solids, liquids and gas. Others teach about electricity. All incorporate state science standards for each grade, says CSU Long Beach science coordinator Tim Williamson, CFA. ▶





Youngsters perform hands-on experiments under the supervision of college students, who work under the supervision of CSU professors while Teachers Association of Long Beach (TALB) members look on and offer advice and encouragement as needed.

While children pour water into containers, blow up balloons and watch lightbulbs turn on after hooking wires to batteries, theory becomes a reality they can see and touch and understand. Researchers might describe what's taking place as a series of experiments resulting in positive outcomes shown by students' skyrocketing science scores.

*"My students now understand that for children and teaching, there's a fine line between cognitive understanding and being entertained," says Susan Gomez-Zwiep, here observing students with Tim Williamson.*

The future teachers then go in the library to "debrief" about what went right or wrong. Some admit that they were thrown by the inclusion of students with special needs, but were able to scaffold instruction and switch gears.

"It was a great experience," says Hai Bui. "I can't wait to have my own classroom. It really boosted my confidence."

Having the opportunity to try out theory in an actual classroom is priceless, say professors.

"You can't teach this stuff," says Susan Gomez-Zwiep, a professor at the university's Science Department of Education and CFA member. "My students now understand that for children and teaching, there's a fine line between cognitive understanding and being entertained."

Kim Watten, Kettering teacher and TALB member, loves having university visitors. "We see creative things that we might want to try. Sometimes I'll think, 'Wow, I never thought about teaching it that way.'"

Amy Valinsky-Fillipow of Kettering believes the program helps TALB members stay fresh, especially since funds for teacher training have evaporated.

"Just because I've been teaching for 16 years doesn't mean I can't learn something from these young people," she says. "When someone fresh comes in who is excited and motivated, it's the perfect opportunity for me to get new ideas and use that as a springboard to grow."

Williamson says the program provides "tons of reflection" at all levels of the teaching profession.

"You might say our partnership is a win-win situation for everyone."




Amy Valinsky-Fillipow



# Advocacy

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

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a brown cardigan over a striped shirt and a grey skirt, stands with her hand on her hip in front of a yellow school bus. The bus has "SCHOOL BUS" written on its side and a license plate that reads "1189106".

Taking their expertise to a new level, **CTA members serving on school boards use their expertise to decide school policies** on class size and student progress. They are responsible for budgets, curriculum, employee contracts, and hiring and firing staff — including administrators.

MERCED CITY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT **DORA CRANE**'S GOAL ON THE MERCED UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD WAS TO GET THE SCHOOL BUSES ROLLING AGAIN. NOW HER PRIORITY IS GETTING THE TECHNOLOGY NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS. TURN THE PAGE TO FIND OUT HOW.



*Elaine  
Merriweather  
was instrumental  
in helping bring  
transitional  
kindergarten to  
the district.*

# Teachers win public confidence —

and school board seats

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

**Y**

**OU DON'T HAVE** to be an expert on what's happening in public schools to run for a seat on the local school board. But it helps. And nobody is more of an expert than a local educator elected to the job.

CTA members serving on school boards use their expertise to decide school policies on class size and student progress. They are responsible for budgets, curriculum, employee contracts, and hiring and firing staff — including administrators. They work with school staff and community members to create a “vision” for a school district and help implement that vision.

Sometimes they make difficult decisions. Better than anyone, they understand exactly how budgets affect classrooms. They know what resources teachers and classified employees need to get the job done. And they provide firsthand experience and a teacher voice that is often missing in policy-making.

(Note: It is illegal for teachers or other school employees to run for the school board in the district where they are employed. But there is no conflict of interest to run for a seat in a district where you reside.)





## **FIGHTING FOR SAFETY, EQUITY AND THE “WHOLE CHILD”**

**AS TREASURER OF** United Educators of San Francisco and a member of the CTA Budget Committee, **Elaine Merriweather** knows a thing or two about finances. So she didn't believe it when administrators told board members it was necessary to lay off 40 employees in the West Contra Costa Unified School District to keep the district afloat. She cast a “no” vote, but layoffs happened anyway.

Before working at UESF, she was a pre-kindergarten teacher for 20 years. With two grown children who went through the school system and one in high school, she has a “vested interest” in Richmond schools and was elected to the board three years ago. Her first priority is increasing safety in a district challenged by gangs and crime, which made headlines nationwide a few years ago when a girl was brutally attacked outside a school dance. She belongs to the district's safety committee, which she says is looking for “real solutions” such as increasing campus security officers, providing supervised after school activities and reducing suspension and expulsion rate by improving overall school culture.

Other priorities are closing the achievement gap, making early childhood education more available and improving communication between schools and parents via town hall meetings on topics such as the transitioning to the Common Core State Standards.

***I am most proud of*** being instrumental in helping bring transitional kindergarten to the district. I advocated for it and the board listened. I pleaded that we need to invest in our younger children and we piloted a transitional kindergarten back when few districts were doing it. We were ahead of the curve. We now have 13 transitional kindergartens, and I was instrumental in making that happen.

***I am still concerned*** about poverty. Our children come to school with so many needs. If they are hungry or they have a toothache, they cannot focus. We expect teachers to teach them, but sometimes they need outside resources to help them physically and mentally. That is why the full-service community school model is important.

***As a teacher serving on a school board*** I have more insight. I think more about the whole child. I feel that because teachers have students as their whole focus, we know what's best for them when it comes to being successful in school. Teachers on school boards may not make everyone happy, but in the end we do what's right for children.







*Getting the technology to implement the Common Core State Standards is a priority, says **Dora Crane**, with bus driver **Gina Sanchotena**.*

## **TEACHER KEEPS WHEELS OF THE BUS GOING ROUND AND ROUND**

**WHEN TRANSPORTATION CAME** to a screeching halt in the Merced Union High School District nearly a year ago, **Dora Crane** vowed to get the buses rolling again. The physical education teacher at Tenaya Middle School in the Merced City School District ran for a seat on the high school board. She talked about only one issue — transportation. Campaign signs had a picture of a big yellow bus next to her name.

"It really affected kids when they cut \$1.2 million from transportation," says Crane, who is also the Merced City Teachers Association president. "We have low-income kids; 87 percent of them are on a free or reduced lunch. Their parents make minimum wage. If they didn't live five miles from school, they couldn't take the bus. It broke my heart to see kids walking miles to school in the pouring rain or in 105-degree heat."

She encouraged parents to come to meetings to talk about the transportation problem. She rang doorbells. She went to every organization in town "from Democrats to Tea Party people" to make her case and unseated the incumbent, whom she describes as a "big fish" in town. Shortly thereafter, bus service resumed.

"I was surprised when I won, and I didn't really expect to unseat the incumbent. But my message was clear: What we were doing to these kids was absolutely wrong."

**Being a teacher, CTA chapter president and school board member** is a very exciting time for me. Serving on the school board is a big responsibility. I tell people, "Just because I'm a teacher, don't expect me to vote for you every time." I may vote a certain way, but I still expect you to shake my hand at church on Sunday. I have to do what's best for the district.

**My goal on the school board** is to first figure out how the Local Control Funding Formula will affect us. Once we predict what money will be coming our way, we need to get all the stakeholders together in a room — parents, teachers, administrators and students — to decide what our priorities are. One priority will be getting the technology we need to implement the Common Core State Standards.

**Winning the election was possible** because of all the trainings I've received from CTA about getting people and stakeholders to help you. I was supported by all of the local CTA chapters and also by the California School Employees Association for classified employees. I think they underestimated me. But they shouldn't have, because CTA taught me a lot about campaigns and winning elections. The CTA way is "organize and mobilize." That's how I won.

## **PROVIDING A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE IN BUELLTON**

**WHEN SEVERAL TEACHERS** in Buellton Union School District asked **Ken Stevens** to run for school board, he said yes and ran unopposed.

"It's a small town of 4,000 people. I have kids in the school district. I was happy to bring a teacher's perspective to the school board," says the math teacher at La Colina Junior High School, who serves as bargaining chair of his local, the Santa Barbara Teachers Association.

A teacher's perspective provides a sense of reality when it comes to planning new projects.

"We're putting money into technology and the Common Core. At my own school we had iPads and big-screen TVs, but the wireless network never worked, so we couldn't use any of it. If we are going to put money into technology, we have to make sure an infrastructure and support system is first in place. I want to make sure we don't have the same problems in Buellton. A teacher may have a different view on something like construction projects. Board members may think construction in the parking lot will not affect teachers and students, but they haven't taught with it going on and don't understand how noise and debris can affect classrooms. Teachers can see the big picture — as well as the small details that affect school employees on an everyday basis."



**One of my goals** is to address frustration among Buellton teachers because they have gone more than five years without a raise while their medical costs are going up. I have brought it up at meetings that at some point, people working in the school district need to get a raise.

**My most difficult decision** was voting for RIFs [reductions in force]. It was the elimination of two positions, which may not sound like much, but it was difficult. I knew the district had done due diligence and that it was necessary. I pushed not to keep those RIFs in place if the money came back. One person returned and one didn't. It was hard. The teachers affected came to a meeting to plead their case. It's tough because I've been on the other end.

**The best way teachers can advocate before school board members** is to stick to the facts. It's not that emotion isn't important, but when a school board member is listening to 10, 15 or 30 people who are impassioned, what might change their mind is the presentation of factual information about how a decision could impact students.

*Ken Stevens' teacher perspective provides a sense of reality when it comes to planning new projects.*



PHOTO BY JOHN HOUCHIN



*Sarah Kirby-Gonzalez wants to cultivate teacher choice when planning curriculum.*

## RESPECTING THE VOICE OF TEACHERS

**Sarah Kirby-Gonzalez** thought she might run for the school board in the distant future. But when someone from the Students First organization campaigned for a seat on the Washington Unified School District School board in West Sacramento, she filed immediately. Corporate-funded "reform" groups like Students First, run by Michelle Rhee, former chancellor of schools in Washington, D.C., blame teachers and unions for problems in education as part of their advocacy for the privatization of public schools.

"I didn't want my daughter to go to school in a district where the teacher voice is not respected," says the fifth-grade teacher at Mather Heights Elementary in Folsom-Cordova Unified School District, where she was voted 2011 Teacher of the Year. "These folks have alternative motives, such as using test scores to evaluate schools and teachers. That's just not the real world as I see it."

The Folsom-Cordova Education Association member was outspent 2-to-1 by opponent Francisco Castillo, who was endorsed by the mayor. Kirby-Gonzalez was supported by Sacramento area teacher and labor unions and won every precinct.

"This wasn't just about me," says Kirby-Gonzalez, who has a 2-year-old child and a baby due in February. "It's about the idea that a group like Students First can be beat by people with a positive message. It felt good going door to door, having conversations with people who really do respect teachers. And it felt good to have all that hard work pay off."



Sarah Kirby-Gonzalez

**As a school board member, I am proud of** improving conditions to accommodate nursing mothers at school. A teacher was told she couldn't come to work because she needed to express milk every three hours. The district told her it was "unreasonable." When I was told we couldn't accommodate this situation, I said, "Yes we can," and called our district lawyer to make sure we were following the law and accommodating our nursing mothers.

**One of my goals is** to step away from Open Court, which is scripted learning and is not going to prepare kids for the future. I want to cultivate teacher choice when planning curriculum and making decisions in the classroom.

**When it comes to funding** I try to get other board members to see we need to invest wisely and not just throw money at things. I voted no on spending thousands of dollars to hire outside consultants to provide professional training on things I know we can easily do internally. It's insulting when you have very capable teachers within our district that can provide this and we can pay them. The district is going to spend \$60,000 on an anti-bullying program. I let the administration and board know we should look at how other districts are doing a good job changing the culture of schools without spending huge sums. I'm very frugal. After all, I buy my own pencils.





## Meet an advocate:

# CTA-RETIRED MEMBER AND ASSEMBLY MEMBER JOSE MEDINA

COMPILED BY LEN FELDMAN

♥ **VOTERS OF CALIFORNIA'S** 61st Assembly District (including Riverside, Moreno Valley, Perris and Mead Valley) elected Jose Medina to represent them in November 2012. Medina is a member of the growing “teacher caucus” in the Legislature. For more than 35 years, he taught high school in the Riverside Unified School District. A proud member of the Riverside City Teachers Association, he served as a CTA State Council of Education member prior to his election to the Jurupa Unified School District Board of Education and then the Riverside Community College District Board of Trustees.

### ***What did you do before becoming a lawmaker?***

I was a teacher for 35 years, starting from kindergarten through community college. I was a member of the Riverside City Teachers Association and a representative to CTA's State Council. I taught various subjects, including Spanish, history, government, economics, and Chicano and ethnic studies. The most rewarding part of teaching was seeing students blossom and move forward with their goals. It is a pleasure to stay in touch with my students and be able to see them grow.

### ***What led you to run for office?***

As a teacher, I saw the importance of the political process and education. The decisions made in Sacramento have a direct effect on the districts, schools and classroom. I have a passion for education as both a K-12 teacher and community college trustee. I wanted to bring my experience and focus on strengthening education. I believe that government can have a positive effect on members of the community and the state overall.

### ***Who was the teacher who had the greatest impact on you?***

I have had many great teachers. One who comes to mind is Mr. William Gansen, my government and economics teacher during my senior year at Cristobal High School in Panama. He made government and economics interesting and challenged us to think critically. I appreciated the way he incorporated current events into his teaching and truly valued his students' opinions. Mr. Gansen was not afraid to tackle controversial issues, and as I stepped into my first political science class in college, I remember thinking he had prepared me well. He taught “outside of the box” and was not afraid to be different.

### ***What steps should the Legislature take to help schools succeed?***

The Legislature needs to help teachers and schools succeed with implementing the Common Core State Standards by providing them with resources, allowing teachers more freedom to teach and less teaching to the test. I am pleased with the direction of the new Local Control Funding Formula because education decisions made at the local level and closer to the classroom tend to fare better.

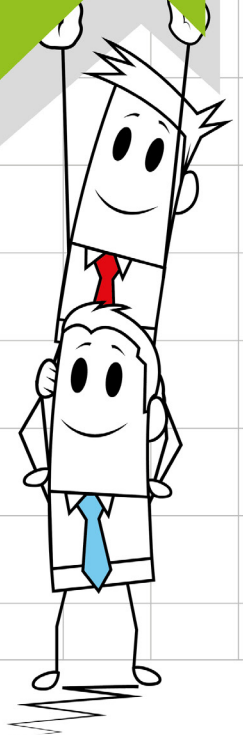
### ***What are your hopes or goals for public education?***

Public education is the backbone of our country. The public school system has often been a ladder to success, especially for immigrant students, and I want to see it continue in that role. I want to strengthen the public education system and give teachers the dignity and respect they deserve. I spent my teaching career in the public education system, and I value the experiences I gained.

### ***Any advice for teachers?***

My advice to teachers is to never lose sight of the impact you have on your students. We must always keep this in mind. That said, educators should build a relationship with their legislators. Let them hear from you. Express your concerns and suggestions. A great idea would be to invite your legislator to your school and classroom. Let your voices be heard.

# GOVERNOR ALLOCATES BILLIONS IN EDUCATION FUNDING — PROP. 30 FUNDS HELP OUR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES HEAL



BY CLAUDIA BRIGGS

## GOOD NEWS GIVES US HOPE FOR A HEALTHY FUTURE

On Jan. 9 *Education Week* released its annual Quality Counts report card, which looks at various factors and grades the states accordingly. It should come as no surprise that after years of devastating cuts to our schools, California was nearly at rock bottom. Yes. You read it right. The state ranked 50th in per-pupil spending, out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. That is how bad things had gotten right here in our state.

You see, *Ed Week's* report card used data from 2010-11, the most recent available, to determine the ranking. According to the report, California spends \$3,500 less per student than the national average and

### GO ONLINE

Go to CTA's website for the latest on what's happening in the Legislature and to sign up for the legislative e-newsletter, *Capitol News*.

[www.cta.org/legislation](http://www.cta.org/legislation)



\$11,000 less per child than the top-ranked state of Wyoming. Had we not worked hard to pass Proposition 30 last fall, and if we didn't have a governor truly committed to providing an equitable quality public education for our students, we would be headed for complete devastation.

The next day, Jan. 10, Gov. Jerry Brown released his proposed annual budget. He announced the state's revenues are much higher than projected, the state's debt was being slashed, and our schools and colleges would see an additional \$10 billion in much-needed funding, including \$6 billion to eliminate all deferral payments to school districts and colleges, plus \$244 million for CSU and UC.

The average increase for K-12 school districts will be 10.9 percent. Only once in the past 30 years has public education received an increase of more than 10 percent.

"California teachers appreciate the governor's continued commitment to public education and to repaying the billions of dollars that had been cut from students, schools and colleges," says CTA President Dean E. Vogel. "Governor Brown's proposal will help our public schools and colleges continue to heal after years of devastating cuts. As we heal our schools, we heal our communities. This budget will allow local school districts to continue to restore critical programs and provide the resources that educators need to help students learn."

**Making  
sure  
educators  
have a secure  
retirement  
is critical to  
attracting  
and keeping  
quality  
educators  
in the  
profession.**

*Dean E. Vogel*

You may be wondering what this means for you. Well, it means a lot.

It means that through the newly adopted Local Control Funding Formula, for which regulations were recently adopted by the State Board of Education, districts will be getting more money to work with. And those with students who need more resources to educate such as English learners, students living in poverty, and foster children get additional funding through supplemental and concentration grants.

It also means that decisions about how this money will be spent will be made locally and with your input. It's now up to educators, school districts, parents and communities to weigh in on what's most important for students and how exactly to make sure they get what they need.

CTA's budget specialists will continue their analysis of the budget, and your State Council members will have many conversations in the weeks and months ahead on all proposed legislation.

"CTA continues to review the details of the governor's budget plan, including a rainy-day fund proposal, and the impact it will have on school funding," says Vogel. "We look forward to working with the governor and the Legislature on this state budget, as well as a plan to address the CalSTRS shortfall. Making sure educators have a secure retirement is crit-

## GOOD NEWS ABOUT PROP. 98

**PROPOSITION 98 GUARANTEES** a minimum level of funding for public schools and community colleges that at least keeps pace with growth in the K-12 student population and the personal income of Californians and at best increases the amount schools receive.

Several factors are used to set the minimum funding level, but the most important are the annual changes in statewide K-12 student attendance, per capita personal income, and per capita General Fund revenues. (The General Fund is the state's largest pot of money and is not dedicated to one specific program.)

The Proposition 98 funding level for 2014-15 is estimated to be \$61.6 billion. This is an increase of \$6.3 billion over the previous year. Increases of \$1.8 billion for the 2012-13 budget and \$1.5 billion for 2013-14 give total prior-year increases of \$3.3 billion. Combining all these increases provides the Prop. 98 funding level a total increase of \$9.7 billion over three years for K-14 education.

The governor's office is proposing a constitutional amendment to create a mechanism to help smooth year-to-year school spending to prevent damage caused by cuts. The amendment will not change the overall guaranteed level of funding for education. CTA is reviewing and analyzing the specifics of the proposal.

ical to attracting and keeping quality educators in the profession. The state must ensure the retirement commitments made to our hard-working teachers."

### WHAT'S NEXT?

Our work is cut out for us. It's a critical time to be aware, informed and active as important decisions are made. The tide will start to turn with the increase in education funding, and our schools and communities will start to heal. Students will be able to focus on their success in school. Educators will focus on student success. But we must be vigilant and ready to fight for what's right.

In future editions of the *California Educator*, we will look more closely at the CalSTRS unfunded liability, which has been recently grabbing headlines.

# A picture speaks 1,000 words

1975 photo of San Jose strike puts teacher maternity rights struggle in focus

BY MIKE MYSLINSKI

♥ **THE PHOTOGRAPH OF** two pregnant Bay Area teachers on strike in 1975 gives a whole new meaning to the term “labor history.”

The photo, taken during a strike in the Mount Pleasant Elementary School District over maternity rights and other issues, shows the two friends smiling and standing proudly with their handmade picket sign in front of the CTA Mt. Hamilton office in San Jose. The sign is a pointed message to the school board about the need to settle the strike: “I hope the board delivers before I do!”

Today, as retired educators Susan Meschi and Sandi Martin reflect on the photo, the memories of that walkout and its issues remain vivid and personal.

“At the time, it was just the right thing to do,” Martin says. “There are some things that you just have to take a stand over.”

Meschi agrees. “You’re not doing it just for yourself, you’re doing it for everybody. You want to change something permanently.”

She adds that the sign was meant to lighten things during the turmoil. “We just thought of a sign that would make people laugh.”

## Union pioneers

They don’t think of themselves as union pioneers, but they were.

Educators were tired of school district disrespect. Maternity rights were sketchy. Strikes flared around California.

There wasn’t even a state law allowing collective bargaining for teachers at the time. Gov. Jerry Brown signed the landmark Rodda Act on Sept. 22, only

a few weeks after the Mount Pleasant strike ended, but it would not take effect until the following year.

In the mid-1970s, Mount Pleasant and nearby school districts had policies that required pregnant women to take maternity leave if they were “showing” and therefore a distraction, recalls retired CTA organizer Jim Essman. He says

the districts wouldn’t allow teachers to use sick leave as part of their maternity leave.

“At that time, you couldn’t use your sick leave,” Meschi says. “You could have your six weeks, but you couldn’t use any of your sick leave after that. So you had to come back in six weeks or be paid nothing. It wasn’t fair.”

Essman coordinated the Mount Pleasant strike in 1975 and a simultaneous one in nearby Berryessa Union School District. He says nearly all of



*Maternity and parental leave rights are a reality thanks to CTA advocates like Susan (Weld) Meschi and Sandi (Harmening) Martin.*



Susan Meschi



Sandi Martin

the 120 Mount Pleasant members walked picket lines in a tremendous show of solidarity. “It was a pretty amazing time, all that was going on.” (Listen to Essman talk about the strikes on the CTA oral history page at [www.cta.org/oralhistory](http://www.cta.org/oralhistory).)

One victory of the strike was that sick leave was allowed to be used for maternity leave. The new collective bargaining contract later allowed some district teachers to be paid retroactively for additional unpaid maternity leave they took beyond six weeks that they felt was necessary for their health and families, Meschi remembers.

## Maternity rights today

Pregnancy and parental leave rights for public school employees are protected today by



layers of state and federal law, and by CTA collective bargaining agreements, which vary somewhat by school district.

Up to four months of pregnancy disability leave is allowed, and any sick leave that has accumulated can be used to assure that leave is paid leave. Once sick leave is exhausted, a teacher can also obtain extended sick leave, often referred to as differential leave pay, for the remainder of a pregnancy disability leave.

To help verify your many maternity and parental leave rights, check with your local primary contact staff or your union contract. Or go to this CTA website: [ctainvest.org](http://ctainvest.org). Click on the “Insurance and Estate Planning” tab, then find the column marked “Disability and Long-Term Care Insurance” and click on the “Pregnancy and Parental Leave Rights” tab.

**Looking back**

Essman had the 1975 photo of Meschi and Martin in his archives. He thinks it was taken by a CTA Communications staff member.

The two women, then named Susan Weld and Sandi Harmening, gave birth later that year.

“That photo brought back a flood of memories,” says Martin. Her son, Ryan, is happily married today with three children and works as a hair stylist in South Carolina. She also has twin daughters, who live in Oklahoma.

After the strike, Martin became a union site representative for the Mount Pleasant Education Association, then moved on to other Bay Area districts. She retired from teaching after 25 years and lived in Switzerland for a time before settling in her

“dream house” in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Meschi’s son, Paul, works today as a surveyor. He and his siblings live in Santa Cruz County, near where she resides on three pastoral acres in Boulder Creek. She taught for 14 years in Mount Pleasant, and then 20 years in Boulder Creek.

The photo led the two mothers to reflect on their days of union activism.

**“IT WAS JUST THE RIGHT THING TO DO.”**

SANDI MARTIN

.....

“I think unions are important, definitely,” Meschi says. “It’s good to have backing. You’re stronger as a group.”

“I think that you have a bigger voice in numbers,”

Martin says. “You need to have a voice, especially as a group. I believe in unions. I think you’re stronger united. You have to have some kind of empowerment.”



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\*National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Digest of Education Statistics, 2011.

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# Learning



Members' best practices, teaching ideas and education trends

Truly a melting pot, **Modesto's Language Institute (LI) serves new arrivals to the United States.** Students, most of whom escaped civil wars and persecution, are taught English based on ability rather than age or grade.

MODESTO TEACHERS ASSOCIATION MEMBER **AMELIA HERRERA-EVANS** DESCRIBES THE KEY TO SUCCESS AS "SCAFFOLDING INSTRUCTION LIKE NOBODY'S BUSINESS" AND DEVELOPING CARING RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS. READ MORE ON PAGE 44.





**BEDROOM MAPS**

In order to reinforce map skills, my students write a detailed description of their bedrooms, including shapes, sizes, colors and directional relationships between objects in their rooms. After a few lessons on maps, keys and symbols, the students create an aerial view map of their room.

I display each bedroom map on a large bulletin board. In the center of the bulletin board I place a zip-lock bag containing the children's descriptions. During free time, the children can take out a description and try to match it to a map on the board. If the work was done accurately, the challenge shouldn't be too difficult.

—**STELLA BLOCK**, third-grade teacher

**CALMING DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS**

I often write notes to whichever child is nearest to me, asking him/her to give directions to the class. I found that some of my loudest, most disruptive kids were the ones who had the most control over the other students. It wasn't the end of the disruptive behaviors by any means, but it did give me a lot of insight into the kids. I was able to ask them for help later in different situations, and they were happy to use their influence with other kids.

I did use other strategies throughout the course of the semester, but this was a strong one. Often, I would announce that I was going to give special help — then I'd speak very quietly. Try turning off half of your lights or turning them all off and opening the blinds. This gives me a bit of a headache, but my kids seem to be calmer.

—**BARB B.**, Works4Me reader

**A LEFT-HANDED SOLUTION**

I am left-handed, so I'd end each day with an enormous black and blue smudge down my hand from writing on the overhead projector. I no longer have this problem since I started leaving a lightweight work glove next to my projector. Whenever I start notes with my students, I put on the glove. It looked pretty silly the first day or two, but we just laughed about my appearance, and now even my students will put on the glove when they write at the overhead.

—**ANDREW MITCHELL**, ninth-grade math teacher

**5-MINUTE DIAGRAMS**

Our curriculum includes drawing diagrams — parts of a leaf, rock cycle, layers of the sun, etc. As a quick review we do an activity I call "Five by Five." The students work in groups of five. When I ring a bell, the first student begins to draw and label the diagram. After one minute I ring the bell again, and the first student passes the paper to the next student. Students offer encouragement and helpful hints, but only designated students may work on the diagram during their minute. The process continues for five minutes. The table with the best diagram gets a small prize.

This is an effective review. It is quick, nonthreatening and fun. For the teacher, it doesn't require any preparation or grading! The technique works for almost any grade or subject matter.

—**ANONYMOUS**, Works4Me Reader

# WORKS4ME

[www.nea.org/Works4me](http://www.nea.org/Works4me)

 **EXPERIENCE MATTERS**, especially in the classroom.

If you haven't discovered the clever, useful tips from NEA colleagues on Works4Me, here's a quick sample.

Do you have teaching tips to suggest?

Send them to [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org).


**BATHROOM DUCKIES**

I got tired of my students taking the bathroom passes to the bathroom and accidentally dropping them in the toilet or the sink, so I borrowed this idea from a fellow teacher. Our school doesn't require that the kids have a hall pass. When a child needs to leave, the boys put a little blue plastic duck and the girls a green one on their desk. (The color of the ducks matches the beginning letter of boy/girl.) There is only one of each duck, so there won't be a party in the restroom. I can see at a glance if someone is gone and if it's a boy or a girl. —**JENNIFER LITCHENBERG**, second-grade teacher

# A new resource from CTA

## *Understanding the Common Core State Standards*

BY BILL GUY

 **HOW WOULD YOU LIKE** to see the California Common Core State Standards in an easy-to-follow progression, beginning with kindergarten and continuing to 12th grade, in a format that shows what students should know at their current grade level, which specific skills should already be mastered, and where the skills they are learning in their class will lead in subsequent grades?

You've got it at [www.cta.org/IPDSpirals](http://www.cta.org/IPDSpirals).

In August 2010, California joined 45 other states in adopting the California Common Core State Standards for K-12 public school students, which include standards for English-language arts and literacy in history, social studies, science and technical subjects (CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy).

Influenced by the work of noted education author Doug Reeves, CTA's Instruction and Professional Development staff created visuals of the standards, called spiral progressions, to better understand the structure and content of each of the standards.

Spiral progressions are available for all the content areas and include anchor standards that can help prepare students for college or career readiness.

For details on the standards themselves, go to the California Department of Education website: [www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc](http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc).

RL.5	Reading Standards for Literature (RL): Standard 5	=
RL.5.11-12 Grade 11-12 students	Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.	+
RL.5.9-10 Grade 9-10 students	Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.	+
RL.5.8 Grade 8 students	Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.	+
RL.5.7 Grade 7 students	Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.	+
RL.5.6 Grade 6 students	Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.	+
RL.5.5 Grade 5 students	Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.	+
RL.5.4 Grade 4 students	Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.	+
RL.5.3 Grade 3 students	Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.	+
RL.5.2 Grade 2 students	Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.	+
RL.5.1 Grade 1 students	Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.	+
RL.5.K Kindergarten students	Recognize common types of texts (e.g., storybooks, poems, <b>fantasy</b> , <b>realistic text</b> ).	+

### GO ONLINE

#### High-quality professional development, anyone?

An important aspect of implementing the Common Core State Standards is high-quality professional development. There are vendors approaching your school district that may or may not meet your needs. Who's providing your professional development for new math practices, thematic teaching, project-based learning and close reading? There's no easy answer, but CTA can help. Simply contact your CTA reps. Here are a few resources that CTA uses.

- Writing Project available through the University of California — [centerx.gseis.ucla.edu/writing-project](http://centerx.gseis.ucla.edu/writing-project)
- Expository Reading and Writing Course through California State University — [calstate.edu/eap/englishcourse](http://calstate.edu/eap/englishcourse)
- UCLA Curtis Center for Mathematics and Teaching — [curtiscenter.math.ucla.edu/continuing.shtml](http://curtiscenter.math.ucla.edu/continuing.shtml)






## HELPING IMMIGRANTS IN THE MELTING POT OF MODESTO

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN



Nahreen Sampour explains, through an interpreter, that she has missed seven years of school. She was raised in Iraq, where 75 percent of girls drop out by the end of primary school. Her family fled to Syria to escape the bloodshed, and found themselves in the midst of civil war. Eight weeks ago she landed in Modesto, where the 17-year-old enrolled in the Language Institute (LI) for new arrivals.

 **SOME OF HER CLASSMATES** are also from the Middle East; others come from Mexico, Guatemala, Thailand, India and other countries. She sits at a table giggling with new friends she has made.

Diversity rises to a whole new level at the LI, with 172 students representing 31 countries who speak 16 languages. Many have witnessed war, murder, kidnapping, and persecution for being an ethnic minority. Some students have parents who worked for the U.S. government.

The LI helps newly arrived immigrants acquire the oral language skills and literacy needed to be successful in this country, and assists in the acculturation process which is often so overwhelming for teens adjusting to American society, says Lindsey Bird, a history teacher who helped create

*Lindsey Bird is one of three teachers who helped create the program, which allows students to complete a fifth year of high school and take mainstream classes when they are ready.*



the program. She and three other Modesto Teachers Association members work at the institute, which allows students to complete a fifth year of high school and take mainstream classes when they are ready. Located at Davis High School, the LI also has a middle school component at Roosevelt Junior High.

Surrounded by farmland in the Central Valley, Modesto was made famous decades ago in the film *American Graffiti* for its culture of cruising. Today, it's a popular destination for those who have made long voyages before arriving on American soil.

"We always knew we had a large Spanish-speaking population, but we had not anticipated the large number of war refugees," says Bird. "Our large Assyrian community has led to Modesto becoming a significant resettlement area."

Students are taught in sheltered English based on ability rather than age or grade. Some exit the program after just one year; others stay much longer. The immersion classes have four "tiers" of instruction, and teachers are aided by education support professionals who speak Spanish, Chinese and Arabic. Instructors use lots of visuals and dramatic interpretation in class. For example, to show the meaning of the word "exit," MTA member Amelia Herrera-Evans runs out the door repeatedly.

"Someday, I'll win an Emmy for best actress," jokes the English language development teacher, who feigned sickness several times during a lesson to demonstrate the difference between healthy foods and unhealthy ones. "They arrive here with zero English, and to see them succeed is really cool."

She describes the key to success as "scaffolding instruction like nobody's business" and developing caring relationships with students.

The strategies are paying off: Students' California English Language Development Test (CELDT) scores have gone through the roof, and California Standards Test (CST) scores show substantial improvement after a year. Graduation rates have risen dramatically, and most graduates enroll in Modesto Junior College. Five of last year's graduates were accepted at four-year universities. Davis High staff have hosted visitors from other school districts who are interested in trying out this model.

### *A population with high needs*

"When I first came here, I felt alone," recalls Mirna Esho, 19, who arrived from Iraq three years ago. "I couldn't speak to anybody. But when I came to the Language Institute, it wasn't scary. I learned government, math, biology and English. I made friends."

She is now on track to graduate in May and helps other new arrivals feel at home. Adjusting, she says, was a challenge.

The needs of LI students can differ from other English learners. For example, many lack a basic comprehension of American culture, so the program's "acculturation component" helps students understand things such as holidays, birthday parties, banking, transportation systems, and how to behave in school, such as being quiet when the teacher is talking.

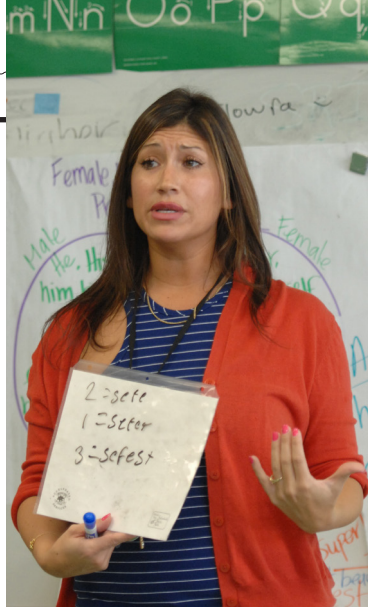


Some don't understand the Roman alphabet or phonemic awareness. Others have huge gaps in their education and cannot comprehend simple math or science. Interestingly, most are technologically savvy and enjoy social networking.

In addition to adjusting to a new culture, students must adjust to cultural differences with each other. Some have never attended class with students of the opposite sex and don't realize boys and girls can have platonic friendships. Some exhibit behaviors that are acceptable in their own culture, but may be considered sexual harassment in the U.S. Staff are often called upon to set things straight.

"They are not just learning how to be American," says Bird. "They are learning to live in a diverse country. They are learning how to be tolerant and accept each other's cultures. We have to teach some of them how to be empathetic. They must learn that everyone has the freedom to be different. Many come from places where everybody looks the same and is supposed to think the same — or they are persecuted for it."

As students let down their guard, they share stories about traumatizing events. One student from Mexico was kidnapped by a drug cartel member who held an AK-47 to his head. Female students crossing the Mexican border confide they have been sexually abused by "coyotes" (smugglers). One student from the Middle East saw his girlfriend get into a car that exploded before his eyes. Another says his father played dead so he wouldn't be shot by terrorists.



Students may not have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, but 85 percent of LI students probably have some form of PTSD, say staff, who refer their families to social service agencies and counselors that can provide psychological help. However, families often don't take advantage of these opportunities, since mental health counseling is frowned upon in many cultures.

"We give them the opportunity to talk or write about their experiences and express what they have been through, which can be unofficial therapy," says Bird. "We ask them to use their experiences as a vehicle of empowerment — and to honor their families for the sacrifices they've made, by plugging into education and seizing the opportunity given to them."

### *A sense of belonging*

"It's like family," says Imraz Gill, a student who arrived from India a year ago. "Everybody is learning English. We can have conversations and learn from each other."

The majority of students feel a sense of family in the LI, says Herrera-Evans.

"They sense our love for them and how much we want them to succeed. They know we are there for them. I love my job. Teachers here find endless rewards on a daily basis."

Students may have diverse backgrounds and languages, but share a common bond — a strong desire to succeed academically and build a better life in America.

Franklin Rodas, who arrived six months ago from El Salvador, believes he's on the path to success.

"I have learned a lot at the Language Institute. And I will learn more."

Nahreen Sampour, who missed seven years of school, is looking forward, not backward.

"I want to learn," she says. "I want to be something in the future."



Students raise response cards to answer a question in **Amelia Herrera-Evans'** class (pictured above). Graduation rates have risen dramatically, and most graduates enroll in Modesto Junior College.



# CTA & You

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



Read Across America is March 3. CTA is piloting **California Reads, which offers teacher-recommended books** for four age groups. Invite your local community to reading events!

CTA PRESIDENT **DEAN E. VOGEL** MODELS READING TO CHILDREN EARLY AND OFTEN. TURN THE PAGE TO READ MORE!





*California*  
**Reads**  
*Teacher Recommended Books*

## It's that time of year again — Read Across America!

BY TIFFANY HASKER

➤ **READ ACROSS AMERICA** is a national day celebrating reading — this year on Monday, March 3 — sponsored by NEA and CTA, along with many of the country's leading literacy and youth groups.

The more children read, the better they read. And the more they read outside of school, the better they do in school. Therefore, this year the Read Across America committee is piloting a project called California Reads, working closely with the California School Library Association, to expand our current day of reading celebration to a yearlong promotion of reading for all ages. Rather than just one day and just one book, California Reads offers teacher-approved quarterly book recommendations for four age groups.

### *Everyone can celebrate!*

One of the goals of the California Reads program is to involve our local communities in reading events (see sidebar), and there are many ways to celebrate! Invite police officers and firefighters to read their favorite books to your school. Parents can 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. The list is endless!

### *Resources!*

Make sure to check our website for resources to help you celebrate, such as downloadable posters, bookmarks, certificates and parent tips. Here you'll also find lesson plans, activity guides, videos and book reviews for the four recommended books. Go to [www.cta.org/californiareads](http://www.cta.org/californiareads) for more information.

## Recommended reading from California Teachers

PRE-K-GRADE 2

### *The Day the Crayons Quit*

By Drew Daywalt, Illustrated by Oliver Jeffers

Poor Duncan just wants to color. But when he opens his box of crayons, he finds only letters, all saying the same thing: His crayons have had enough! They quit! Crayons have feelings too!

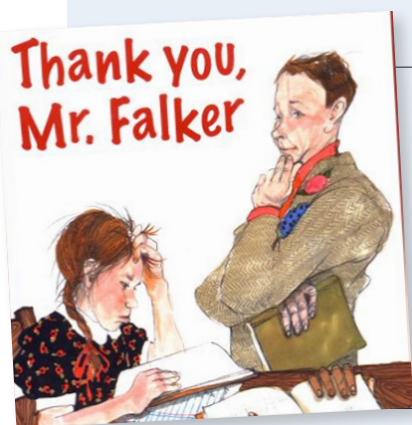


GRADES 3-5

### *Thank You, Mr. Falker*

by Patricia Polacco

This autobiographical story is the author's personal song of thanks to teachers like Mr. Falker, who quietly but surely change the lives of the children they teach.

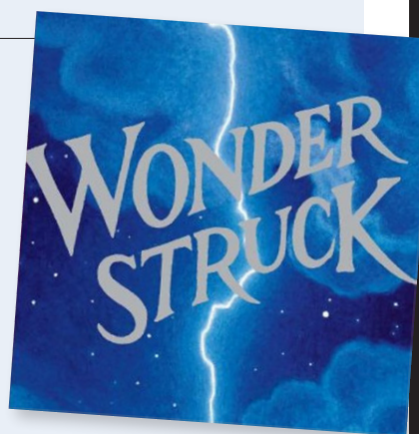


GRADES 6-8

### *Wonderstruck*

by Brian Selznick

Ben and Rose wish their lives were different. Ben longs for the father he has never known; Rose dreams of being an actress. This highly illustrated novel weaves together their stories, set 50 years apart, which take them on a quest and lead them to a common place. (Review by Mike Heyl, reading specialist and Read Across America committee chair.)



GRADES 9-12

### *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*

by Benjamin Alire Sáenz

Ari is an angry 15-year-old loner with a brother in prison, but when he meets Dante and they become friends, Ari starts to ask questions about himself, his parents and his family that he has never asked before.



## Bringing reading out into the community

BY ALICIA GARCIA

TO HELP PROMOTE reading in our local community, we worked with our partners from the 2012 Campaign and joined Calipatria's annual "Christmas in the Park" by hosting a reading event using one of the California Reads recommended books: *The Day the Crayons Quit*. Volunteers from the American Legion Women's Auxiliary Post read to eager children from all over Imperial Valley who came to take part in the festivities.

After listening to the book, some children insisted their friends or siblings come and listen to the funny story about the naked peach crayon. Imperial County Teachers UniServ and the Calipatria Unified and El Centro Secondary teachers associations donated hundreds of boxes of crayons as giveaways for the young audience, who drew pictures about the book while waiting for Santa to arrive.

The volunteer readers loved the story and experience so much, they said they planned to buy the book for their grandchildren as Christmas gifts and wanted to know when they could volunteer for the next reading event. In fact, it was such a success and everyone had so much fun, we are planning to do it again next year. One of the volunteers, Marcia Carter, is a retired special education teacher and a Calipatria school board member, while another volunteer, Virginia Amadon, worked as a paraprofessional at the elementary school for over 20 years.

Alicia Garcia, Calipatria Unified Teachers Association, is a third-grade teacher at Fremont Primary School in Calipatria.



# Calendar

See our upcoming events at [cta.org/calendar](http://cta.org/calendar)

Register Now at  
[www.cta.org/conferences](http://www.cta.org/conferences)

## Seminars: Common Core and Beyond

Get extensive practice on standards in the areas of curriculum, literacy strategies across the content areas, technology, assessments, and performance tasks. Learn the latest about implementation of the standards and the new timelines for assessments in these seminars. Cost: \$25 for members; \$75 for non-members. If you can't attend, register for the Virtual Pass and participate online.

<b>FRIDAY, FEB. 7</b>	Pasadena
<b>FRIDAY, MARCH 14</b>	Anaheim (Good Teaching Conference)
<b>SATURDAY, APRIL 5</b>	Stockton
<b>SATURDAY, MAY 3</b>	San Luis Obispo

## FEBRUARY 7 *Application Deadline* **HURRY**

### CTA Scholarships

2014 CTA Scholarship program applications must be postmarked by Friday, Feb. 7. There are up to 35 scholarships of \$5,000 for dependent children of CTA members, plus one scholarship for a dependent child attending a continuation high school or alternative education program. There are up to five scholarships of \$3,000 for CTA members completing college coursework, and up to three scholarships of \$5,000 for Student CTA members. Find out more: [www.cta.org/scholarships](http://www.cta.org/scholarships)

## FEBRUARY 7–9 *Conference*

### CCA Winter Conference

Hotel Maya, DoubleTree by Hilton, Long Beach  
"CCA: The Winning Score." The Community College Association's winter conference will focus on bargaining. Find out more: [www.cca4me.org](http://www.cca4me.org)

## FEBRUARY 21 *Application Deadline*

### Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarships

These scholarships aim to help members of ethnic minorities in preparing for teaching-related careers in public education. An applicant must be an active CTA or Student CTA member, or a dependent child of a CTA member. Find out more: [www.cta.org/mlkscholarships](http://www.cta.org/mlkscholarships)

## FEBRUARY 27–28 *Conference*

### CTA/NEA-Retired Conference

Marriott Hotel, Irvine  
"Making the Most of Retirement." If you are considering retirement or are retired, you want to attend. The workshops cover a wide variety of topics. Find out more: [www.cta.org/conferences](http://www.cta.org/conferences)

## FEBRUARY 28–MARCH 2 *Conference*

### Equity and Human Rights Conference

Marriott Hotel, Irvine  
"POWER UP! Harnessing Community Partnerships to Access an Equitable Future." Some 38 workshops covering topics promoting diversity, reducing racism, addressing women's issues will provide a greater understanding of diversity and equity issues. Find out more: [www.cta.org/conferences](http://www.cta.org/conferences)

## MARCH 3 *Event*

### Read Across America

Read Across America is a national day celebrating reading, sponsored by NEA and CTA. CTA's program, California Reads, offers teacher-approved quarterly book recommendations for four age groups (see page 48). So plan local reading events on March 3 — and throughout the year! Find out more: [www.cta.org/raa](http://www.cta.org/raa)

## MARCH 7 *Application Availability*

### Ethnic Minority Early Identification and Development Program

EMEID identifies ethnic minority members who are interested in expanding their roles in the organization. Once accepted in the program, participants are paired with a coach who assists them in defining goals and identifying appropriate steps to achieve those goals. Program details are available online March 7. The application deadline is May 2. Find more: [www.cta.org/emeid](http://www.cta.org/emeid)

### Crossword solution

A	F	A	R		C	A	R	S		D	A	S	H					
C	O	M	E		U	F	O	S		O	D	E	O	N				
I	C	E	S		P	L	O	T		G	R	A	T	A				
D	I	S	T	R	I	C	T	S		T	E	L	L	Y				
					O	D	I	E		P	A	N	S	Y				
					S	I	G	N		O	R	T	E	G	A			
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## CALSTRS ANNUAL RETIREMENT PROGRESS REPORT GOING PAPERLESS

**EACH FALL**, the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) provides its members with an annual account statement, called the Retirement Progress Report. The report provides an overview of your CalSTRS benefits and account activity for the previous fiscal year.

In 2014, CalSTRS will begin delivering all Retirement Progress Reports exclusively through its secure member website, myCalSTRS, unless you request to continue receiving it by mail. This change is due to recent legislation, AB 989, and will conserve environmental resources while reducing costs. Your report, as well as all past reports as far back as 2002, will be available to view at your convenience on myCalSTRS.

***If you don't already have a myCalSTRS account, it's easy to register:***

1. Go to [myCalSTRS.com](http://myCalSTRS.com).
2. Select Register Now and begin the guided process or watch the myCalSTRS Registration Guide presentation for step-by-step instructions.

***If you would like to continue receiving your report by mail, beginning Feb. 1, 2014,*** you can change your delivery preference by one of the following methods:

1. Log in to [myCalSTRS](http://myCalSTRS.com) and go to Settings, then Your Profile. Scroll down to the Preferences section and select Edit link next to the Notifications. Select the Retirement Progress Report check box to receive your report by mail.
2. Download the online Retirement Progress Report Delivery Preference form at [CalSTRS.com/forms](http://CalSTRS.com/forms) or call 800-228-5453 to request a form to be mailed to you. Contact Center agents are available 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Pacific Time), Monday through Friday.

**MAIL** your completed form to:

CalSTRS  
P.O. Box 15275, MS 81  
Sacramento, CA 95851-0275

**FAX** your completed form to 916-414-5474.

**HAND-DELIVER** your completed form to a local CalSTRS benefits counseling office. For a listing of offices, visit [CalSTRS.com/localoffices](http://CalSTRS.com/localoffices).

CalSTRS must receive your request by June 16, 2014, to ensure you receive your 2014 Retirement Progress Report by mail.

For additional information, visit [CalSTRS.com/retirement-progress-report](http://CalSTRS.com/retirement-progress-report).



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# Which credit card is right for you? *Or your kids?*

↗ **HOW DO YOU FIND** the right credit card for you given the many choices available today? What advice can you give your kids who are getting their first credit card? Here is a list of some things to consider for a card that fits both your lifestyle and your finances.

## FIRST, WHAT TYPES OF CREDIT CARDS ARE AVAILABLE?

Get started by learning about the different types of credit cards:

- **Standard credit cards** typically have lower credit limits and fewer benefits than premium cards and are designed to provide basic credit card services.
- **Premium credit cards**, such as platinum cards, offer higher credit limits and usually have extra features, including product warranties, purchase protection, travel insurance and emergency services.
- **Rewards credit cards** offer rewards based on the amount of your purchases. Rewards can include cash, travel and gift cards. Some offer a combination of these. Standard, premium and even private label cards (department store cards, for example) may also offer rewards.
- **Private label credit cards** can offer special deals but can only be used at one or a few stores.
- **Affinity credit cards** show your support for a group or cause such as a charity, a college or a sports team. In some cases, contributions are made to the group when you use the card.
- **Secured credit cards** often require a security deposit that becomes the credit limit for the account. They can be used just like any other credit card, and they can help build your credit because your payment history is reported to the major credit bureaus.

## NEXT, HOW ABOUT CREDIT CARD RATES, FEES AND FEATURES?

Rates and fees are an important part of the decision process. The law requires that this information be clearly displayed in a comparison box or chart in the Credit Card Agreement, on the credit card site or in the mail promotion. And you'll want to know about any special features that might help with your decision.



Information you need to know about credit card rates, fees and features:

- **Annual fees** are included with some cards, so make sure you understand this when you compare benefits.
- **The annual percentage rate (APR)** may be different for purchases and other types of transactions. It is important to note the APR for the types of transactions you'll be making with your card. The APR for purchases determines the cost associated with not paying your balance in full each month. If you make cash transactions, such as balance transfers or ATM withdrawals, there are costs associated with these transactions whether or not you pay your balance in full each month.
- **Additional fees and penalties** include transaction fees and late fees. Being aware of the service costs for certain types of transactions, as well as what happens if you pay late or miss a payment, will help you avoid these fees.
- **Rewards**, discounts, warranties and rebates can be deciding factors in choosing a card. Make sure you understand any limitations associated with the stores or products included in these offers, or restrictions related to how rewards can be redeemed.
- **Security features** like fraud protection are available on some cards. Read the details of your card agreement to learn the rules and determine if you are liable for fraudulent purchases.



### NOW, HOW WILL YOU USE YOUR CARD?

Ask yourself a few key questions about your spending habits:

- **Do I plan to use my card for everyday purchases?** If so, consider a rewards credit card that lets you earn rewards for your purchases to use toward cash back, gift cards or other benefits based on how much you spend.
- **Will I pay off my balance, or will I carry a balance from month to month?** Paying your balance off every month will save you money on interest. But if you don't think you'll be paying it off every month, be sure to find a card with a low APR — you'll save money that way. Depending on the balance you carry, the interest rate may be less important than rewards, benefits and perks.
- **Do I travel often?** Many rewards cards let you earn air travel, upgrades, cruises or vacations. You may also get complimentary travel and car-rental insurance and other travel-related perks.
- **Am I an emergency-only credit card user?** Consider a card with no annual fee.
- **Am I looking for deals?** See if your favorite store has a card for faithful shoppers, or check out cards that offer shopping discounts.

GO ONLINE

### Searching for the right card?

CTA provides a credit card that meets your needs and provides cash back on gasoline and groceries.

Check out CTA Member Benefits at

[www.ctamemberbenefits.org/creditcard](http://www.ctamemberbenefits.org/creditcard).

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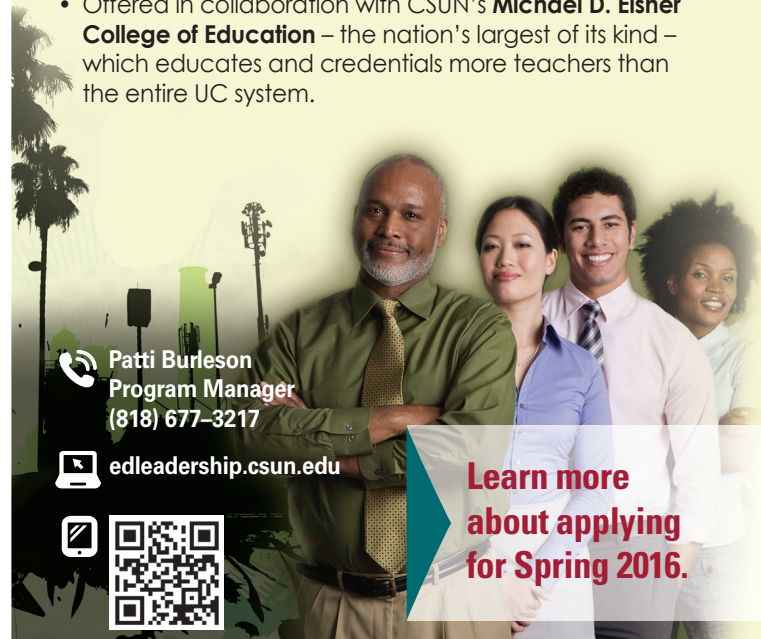
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# What did you learn at CTA's Good Teaching Conference?

The CTA Good Teaching Conferences are designed to support excellent teaching and learning practices for classroom teachers. Here's what members learned at the conference held last month in San Jose.

PHOTOS AND COMPILATION BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN



## COMPREHENSION

**TERRY CARLFELDT** *Tracy Educators Association, seventh-grade social studies teacher*

I learned that every 20 minutes I need to break up the lesson a bit and use some different approaches to get kids to comprehend the idea. I learned from Grace Dearborne in the "50 Ways to Leave Your Lecture" workshop that research shows kids need to get out of their seats about every 20 minutes to stay engaged. That's what research shows about the brain and learning. I can hardly wait to go back to school and use the great stuff I learned!



## STRATEGIC PLAN

**ISAMAR VAZQUEZ** *Student CTA, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo*

I attended the session on CTA's Strategic Plan. I didn't know that such a plan existed. I was very interested in the things that CTA is trying to achieve, especially when it comes to increasing diversity. People in the audience brought up the fact that minorities are not as involved in the profession as we want them to be. I'm glad CTA has a plan to guide us in the future.



## COMMON CORE

**LISA HOWE** *Amador County Teachers Association, fourth-grade teacher*

In the session about drawing to bring out the best in the Common Core, I learned that children use their imagination to process information and that by using imagination in our teaching, children can grasp the concepts that we teach. Drawing is something that everyone can do. Yes, everyone. It's a way that everyone can remember concepts. Through pictures, we remember things more than just reciting lists of words. I'm very excited about what I learned. I'm going to try it all.



## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

**MAI XIONG** *Weaver Teachers Association, kindergarten teacher*

I learned lots of new techniques for classroom management. It was very engaging. One thing I'm going to try is having students put clothespins in a bin when they are finished with their work. That way I'll know who's done with their work and which students are still working. I LOVE this conference!



## TECHNOLOGY

**MARIA MACK** *Lodi Education Association, computer teacher*

The technology workshop was very good. I learned about some teaching tools and apps that I will take back. One is voki.com, where a virtual teacher gives instructions. I think my students will really get a kick out of it Monday when they walk into class and get their instructions via an avatar. I always enjoy coming here, because I can get so much information and use it the very next day in my classroom.

# CTA Issues Conference: Be the Change



Michael Flores-Castaneda

↑ **CTA'S ISSUES CONFERENCE** provides an opportunity for rural, urban and ESP members throughout the state to learn, share, strategize and unite together to determine the future of public education. CTA members form the planning committee, which is chaired by Michael Flores-Castaneda.

“The committee’s intent is to explore issues impacting public schools and to find the commonality for educators,” Flores-Castaneda says. An elementary special education teacher from Arvin, a small local outside of Bakersfield, he represents 20 local chapters at

State Council. “I’m mindful that smaller chapters don’t have the resources, the people and the situations — the exposure to CTA that larger chapters have.”

“Regardless of the size of a local chapter or what your role is, we are one education profession,” he adds. “While the conference provides time for specific rural, urban and support staff issues, the workshops are general enough to encompass all the issues facing all professional educators.”

Have a topic suggestion? Email [issuesconference@cta.org](mailto:issuesconference@cta.org).

## What was your “aha!” from the Issues Conference?



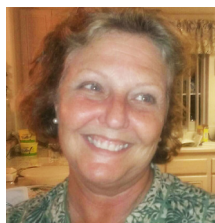
**ARNETT CARL DUNCAN** *Rialto Education Association*

I enjoyed the discussion after the screening of *Inequality for All*. The growing wealth and income gap between the wealthy and the rest of us was the theme of the film. The progressive tone of the discussion was expected. However, the proactive ideas coming from my fellow teachers were refreshing. Some saw applications for the classroom, while others shared ideas for mobilizing local units. An “aha!” moment came when it was suggested that the film could be used in a screening to bring together community partners and stakeholders. Such an idea advances the strategic focus in the CTA Strategic Plan.



**JOHN HASCHAK** *Willits Teachers Association*

My favorite sessions were “Inequality for All — Investing in Our Future” and “Becoming Tech Savvy.” From the first session, it is clear that each of us needs to be proactive in protecting not just our members and students but also our communities from the forces acting against our shared interests. From the second, there are so many cool tech tricks and apps that can enhance the classroom. The Issues Conference has trainings that are inspirational, practical and relevant to all members.



**WENDY HOLMES** *San Bernardino County Teachers Association*

Yikes! Some of the 11 reasons a district can fire a teacher are ridiculous. I think teachers should be aware those reasons are out there and protect themselves, particularly when using social media.

I was flabbergasted to learn about the corporate attacks on public education. I knew nothing about this ALEC group [American Legislative Exchange Council] or the fact that many of our politicians send their children to private schools by a 7-to-1 ratio. Wow! It is crazy that some people think public education should cease to exist. They seem to believe in the “olden days of serfs and slaves” — keep the masses uneducated, poor, and totally reliant on the wealthy tyrants.

Teachers should be aware that while many of the issues seem to be politically driven, they do affect all of us. Collectively, we as professional teachers are strong and need to be involved in safeguarding the right of education for all.



# Crossword

Solution on page 50.

## ACROSS

- 1 Miles away
- 5 2006 Disney-Pixar movie
- 9 Track meet event
- 13 Arrive
- 14 Roswell sightings
- 15 Ancient Greek theater
- 17 Puts finishing touches on a cake
- 18 Secret plan
- 19 Persona non \_\_\_\_\_
- 20 With 54 Across, 17 things the CTA Board represents
- 22 Actor Savalas
- 23 "Garfield" pooch
- 24 Variety of violet
- 25 Accept a contract
- 28 CTA Board member Mary Rose
- 30 Top stories
- 32 Took a load off
- 33 Org. for Nancy Lopez
- 37 With 39 Across, what a straight line from Eureka to San Diego would cross, for CTA
- 39 See 37 Across
- 41 Author of "How Children Learn"
- 42 38 Down chaser
- 44 Parody
- 45 CTA Board member Washington
- 48 Trueheart of the comics
- 49 CTA Board member Michael
- 51 Diplomat's asset
- 53 Rain source
- 54 See 20 Across
- 59 Zoo heavyweight
- 60 He brings flowers on Valentine's Day
- 61 Crossword hint
- 62 Big name in printers
- 63 49 Down
- 64 Alien-seeking proj.
- 65 "Auld Lang \_\_\_\_\_"
- 66 Future DA's exam
- 67 Cheese in a Greek salad



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59						60				61				
62						63				64				
	65					66				67				

BY CRAIG HAMILTON

## DOWN

- 1 Low-pH compound, in chemistry
- 2 Convergence points, in geometry

- 3 Iowa college town
- 4 Take five
- 5 Valentine's Day matchmaker
- 6 Result of a 1955 union merger
- 7 Cheering section
- 8 Former trans-Atlantic fliers
- 9 Rover's identification
- 10 It may give you a rush
- 11 California Coast denizens
- 12 With passion
- 16 Dissenting vote
- 21 Veg-O-Matic maker
- 24 "For \_\_\_\_\_ sake!"
- 25 Normandy battle site
- 26 "\_\_\_\_\_ never fly!"
- 27 Valentine card enclosure, perhaps
- 29 Road surfacing material
- 30 Backrub response
- 31 Bolivian capital
- 34 Pea holders
- 35 Wildebeests
- 36 Venomous snake
- 38 42 Across prey
- 40 Really irk
- 43 Giggles
- 46 Foiled
- 47 About 30 percent of Africa
- 49 63 Across
- 50 \_\_\_\_\_-turvy
- 52 Pizza part
- 53 "Evita" role
- 54 Former Lt. Gov. Maldonado
- 55 Bay Area school, a world leader in health sci.
- 56 TV series set in William McKinley High School
- 57 Jabba the \_\_\_\_\_
- 58 2006 law that settled CTA's lawsuit against Gov. Schwarzenegger

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