

california educator

FEBRUARY 2016 VOLUME 20 ISSUE 6

WE LOVE
EDUCATORS

Thanks for
supporting
students and
your union

KEYBOARDING
MAKES
A COMEBACK

PAGE 43

IS **TRAUMA**
A DISABILITY?

PAGE 40

Forever Young

Veteran educators on
staying fresh and passionate
about their work

PAGE 20

PLUS

JAMES FRANCO

ACTOR, AUTHOR TEAMS UP WITH
HIS FAVORITE TEACHER TO LEAD
FILM WORKSHOP FOR TEENS

PAGE 24



Thank You

– two little words that mean so much!
Yet, not heard enough.

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Forever Young

How veteran educators stay fresh and vital year after year.

Features



Fifth-grade teacher Carla Dickerson has taught for 31 years and is enjoying it more than ever.



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CNN Gift Set

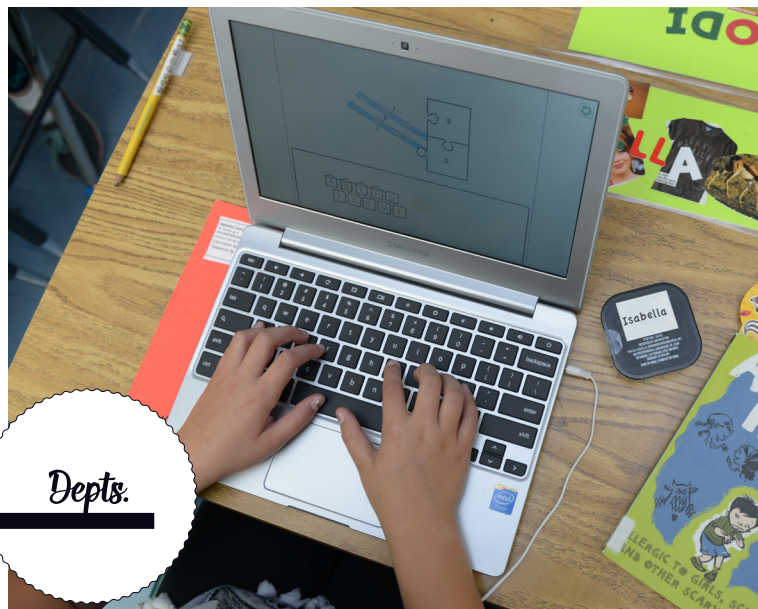
TV production class puts donated CNN news set to good use.

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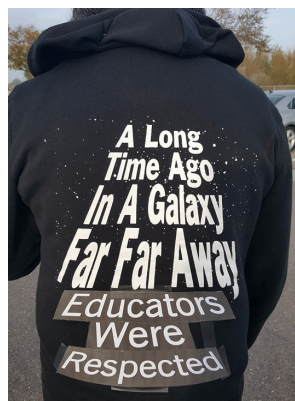
Making Movies

Celebrated high school journalism teacher Esther Wojcicki and her star pupil — none other than James Franco — team up to lead a filmmaking workshop for teens. How cool is that?

Video: Franco explains how great teachers have influenced him. See cta.org/james_franco



Depts.



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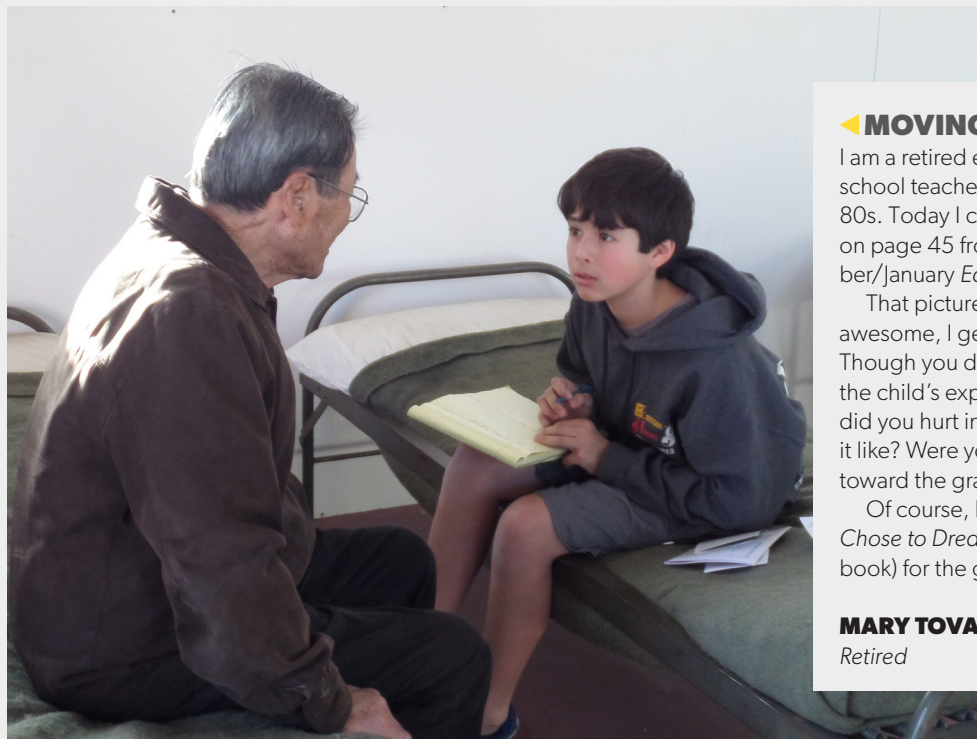
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YOUR OPINIONS AND LETTERS ARE WELCOME! There is a 250-word limit, and all letters will be edited. If you send photos or other materials, identifications and permissions are required. Letters must include your name along with your address, daytime telephone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



MOVING PICTURE

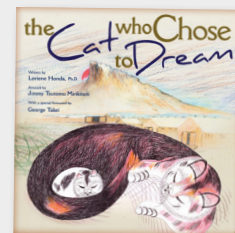
I am a retired elementary school teacher in my middle 80s. Today I cut out a picture on page 45 from the December/January *Educator* to save.

That picture is so poignant, so revealing, so awesome, I get tears in my eyes every time I see it. Though you don't see the older gentleman's face, the child's expression says so much. "Grandfather, did you hurt in that internment camp? What was it like? Were you cold?" The tenderness he feels toward the grandfather is palpable.

Of course, I'm buying the book (*The Cat Who Chose to Dream*, a California Reads recommended book) for the great-granddaughter, and one for me.

MARY TOVAR

Retired



ADDRESSING THE TEACHER SHORTAGE

We have created the situation that exists now through shortsightedness and an overemphasis on creating the "perfectly prepared teacher." Seriously — do I really need a single subject credential to teach middle school history or language arts? The paperwork and class size overload for special education scares off all but the hardest souls (and God bless each and every one of you wonderful people!).

For the rest of us, the No Child Left Behind years left a legacy of mistrust of the profession in general. My husband and I have four adult children, and not a single one of them will consider going into teaching after years of hearing what has happened in my schools. If you want well-trained, excellent teachers, then you need to treat them as the well-trained professionals they are!

DEB ADAMS BEHM

Alvord Educators Association



At left, Halle catches up on a past issue.



READER CONTEST: THE PETS OF CTA

You know this is one you can't pass up. We're looking for **special photos of members and their best friends**, be they dogs, cats, birds, fish, reptiles,

amphibians, potbellied pigs, gerbils, arachnids — you get the idea. Show us your good side in two or three portraits or action pics, and you'll be eligible to win a \$50 gift card for school supplies.

Photos should show both member and pet, though we will consider pets alone. Be sure to put "Pets of CTA" in the subject line and include your name, your chapter and your pet's name. Enter by March 25. We'll pick three winners based on creativity, photography and animal magnetism. And we'll run a gallery of entrants in our May issue.



Protect what matters to you.

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



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GP 190-LIFE/S399/CTA.3 SI 17311-CTAvol



Reagan Duncan and Maya Walker with Eric Heins in front of the Supreme Court. For background and details about *Friedrichs v. CTA*, see cta.org/friedrichs.

Persistence and Leadership

ON JAN. 11, I had the rare opportunity to attend a session of the U.S. Supreme Court and listen to oral arguments in the *Friedrichs v. CTA* case.

CTA needed to be in that room, because they were talking about all of us. I wanted to look those justices in the eye, so they knew the decision they make is going to impact real people.

It was an intense experience. I was seated a few feet from Rebecca Friedrichs, the Orange County educator from whom the case gets its name. I wish she had a better understanding of what the results of this case could mean for our students, our families and the disappearing middle class in America.

As an educator, it's your right not to agree with your union on every political position. And it's your right not to join. No one is forced to join the union, even though the union is required by law to represent nonmembers in contract-related issues.

But it's an entirely different thing to try and strip away the rights of educators to come together and bargain the best learning and working conditions for neighborhood schools.

That's what this case is about. It's about weakening our voice as we advocate for our students, profession and communities.

It was very hard for me to sit passively by during the proceedings, because they were all talking about you and me, our students and our 325,000 colleagues. There were times when I wanted to jump up and scream, "No! You have it all wrong!"

While I was in the courtroom screaming on the inside, there were more than 500 educators, other union members and community activists screaming loudly outside — including CTA members Reagan Duncan, a first-grade teacher in Vista, and Maya Walker, an education support professional from Hayward.

Since that day, there have been reports about how the justices may rule, and how the ruling may affect us. The truth is, we don't know what to expect until they rule.

Regardless of the outcome, we'll continue to do what we've

president's message

always done: advocate for students and educators of California!

We will keep speaking out against corporate greed and those seeking to turn schools and colleges into profit centers instead of institutions of learning.

This is ultimately about social and economic justice, something that we are sorely lacking right now.

Last month, as the elite met at the World Economic Forum, news stories reported that the combined net worth of four U.S. billionaires is almost as much as the total wealth of the bottom

40 percent of all U.S. households. That's four people earning the same as 128 million people. That's outrageous! Economic justice, wealth disparity, and living wages are on the minds of many Americans right now.

They were on my mind as I stood on the steps of the Supreme Court looking at the U.S. Capitol. Beyond it lay the National Mall and the Lincoln Memorial, where Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech more than 50 years ago. I was struck by how long these issues have been around.

I can't help but think that King would have been proud of us as we stood on the Supreme Court steps, supporting students of all colors and families struggling to make a better life.

While we must work together with other labor unions to continue raising the banner of economic justice, we must also celebrate hard-won victories — as in December, when the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law.

After 14 years of the test-and-punish regimen of the No Child Left Behind Act, the new law gives all students a real opportunity to succeed by moving education decisions back to states and local school districts, just as we did in California with the Local Control Funding Formula.

ESSA allows states to limit time spent on standardized testing, so students have more time to learn and teachers have more time to teach. It decouples test scores from high-stakes decision-making and eliminates ranking schools based on test scores. It eliminates and actually outlaws mandating that teacher evaluation be tied to student test scores.

Dr. King once said, "We must come to realize that human progress does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and persistent work of individuals." What are we, but the union of persistent individuals? Our colleagues and working Americans in the rest of the country are looking to us for persistence and leadership. We will not let them down.

Eric C. Heins

CTA PRESIDENT
@ericheins

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Matt Biers-Ariel, Scott Buschman, Len Feldman, Stephen R. Harris III,
Cynthia Menzel, Mike Myslinski, Terry Ng, Jay Ortiz, Ed Sibby, Frank Wells

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CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2015, to Aug. 31, 2016) are \$829, including a \$20 refundable contribution (see cta.org/contribution for details). Up to \$18.40 of CTA annual dues is designated for CTA/ABC political activities to support state and local candidates and/or initiatives and is not deductible for income tax purposes.

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

CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

1705 Murchison Dr., Burlingame, CA 94010-4583
650-697-1400; fax 650-552-5002; editor@cta.org, cta.org

MISSION STATEMENT

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

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What's Your Story?

MUCH OF WHAT educators do is help students find their voice. That is, you go beyond instilling received wisdom to help develop students' sense of self and draw out their ability to observe, assess, and express their own thoughts and opinions. You help them tell their story, and undoubtedly derive great satisfaction in the process.

But what of *your* voice? Educators are often so selfless and busy that in the nonstop daily hustle of teaching and paperwork and grading — and having a personal life! — their own expression gets buried. Your thoughts and opinions, your stories, take a back seat to other demands.

The *Educator* wants to change that. Tell us stories about your experience — your classes, your students, your life. Our new section, aptly titled “Your Voice,” debuts on page 18 with a gem of an essay detailing how one high school English teacher finally fostered a love of reading in a class of tough customers (see box).

Also in this issue are several features that will brighten any winter day. In “Forever Young” (page 20), veteran educators reveal secrets to staying fresh and vital year after year. “Every day I decide I’m going to be happy,” says Darla Dreesen, who has been teaching art for almost four decades. “I’m in charge of my own happiness. I have even told a few students that nothing is going to make me mad, and my goal is to stay happy and joyful.”

Our story “Making Movies” (page 24) spotlights the one and only James Franco, who has teamed up with Esther Wojcicki, his celebrated high school journalism teacher, to lead a filmmaking workshop for teens. Franco extols the virtues of project-based learning, which he first experienced under Wojcicki.

Don’t miss “Is Trauma a Disability?” (page 40), which looks at how growing up in a violent, disruptive environment can traumatize students and affect their learning and behavior. Several educators have joined a federal class-action lawsuit against Compton Unified School District to demand that traumatized students be provided the same services and protections given to other students with disabilities.

And keyboarding makes a comeback! “Not All Thumbs” (page 43) explains why knowing how to type has become essential. Students take online assessments to measure knowledge of the Common Core State Standards; tests include essay questions and tasks that are harder for those who lack keyboarding skills.

Finally, we hail the 2016 California Teachers of the Year (page 52) for their innovative work and the way they connect with students. We loved hearing their stories. Now we want to hear yours.



Your Voice

Have something to say about your students, and the art and science of teaching? Tell us a story that illustrates your experience or opinion, and it could be published in “Your Voice.”

See our first entry on page 18: Educator Matt Biers-Ariel tells of a student named Victor who, after being told he had a D, “raised his arms and hollered, ‘Yes!’ A D is a pass, and that was good enough.”

“Victor is in a class with lots of Victors,” Biers-Ariel continues. “Think *Lord of the Flies*. This particular class is rowdier than my others in the same proportion that the football team is rowdier than the chess club.”

Send no more than 650 words to editor@cta.org, with “Your Voice” in the subject line. Submissions are subject to editing for clarity and space.

Katharine Fong

EDITOR IN CHIEF

editor@cta.org

Read Across America

If someone had taken
that book out of my hand
said, *You're too old for this*
maybe

I'd never have believed
that someone who looked like me
could be in the pages of the book
that someone who looked like me
had a story.

—Jacqueline Woodson, *Brown Girl Dreaming*

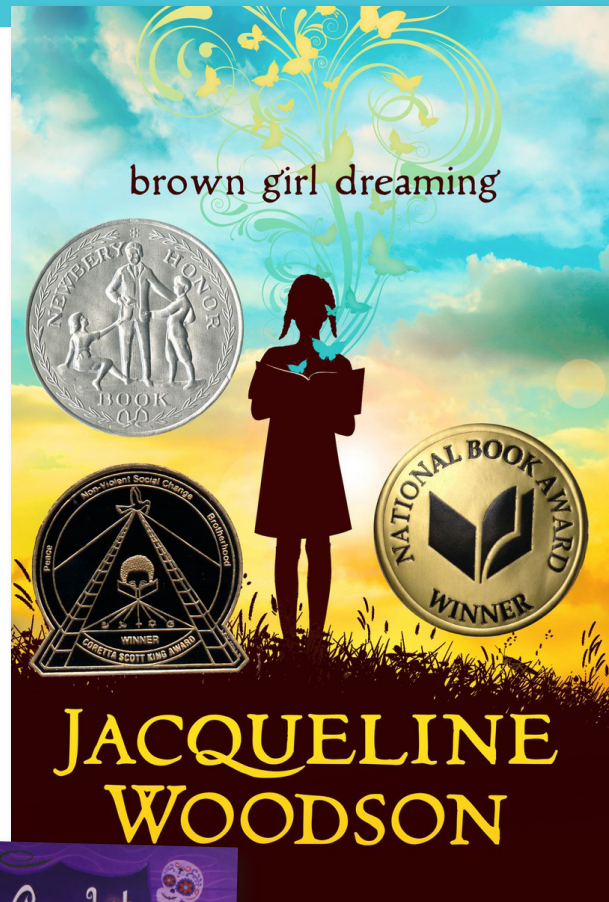
GET READY FOR Read Across America on March 2. Sponsored by NEA, the day is marked by special events where students, educators and community come together to spread the joy and excitement of reading to children of all ages.

CTA's **California Reads** program is part of Read Across America, and among recommended books this spring are *Rosita y Conchita* by Eric Gonzalez and Erich Haeger (grades 1-2) and *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson (grades 6-8).

Rosita y Conchita, a picture book with rhyming text in English and Spanish, tells the story of twin sisters reaching out to each other on the Day of the Dead. Through humor and love, readers learn about the holiday's significance and the meaning behind the various offerings on the altar Conchita builds for dearly departed Rosita, who tries to find her way back to her sibling for one day.

National Book Award winner *Brown Girl Dreaming* is the author's story of growing up in South Carolina and New York, and feeling "halfway home" in each. Through powerful poems, an African American child in the 1960s and '70s finds her place in the world.

See cta.org/raa to download bookmarks, posters, certificates in English and Spanish and reading tips for parents in eight languages. Check out cta.org/californiareads for more recommended books. **#ReadAcrossAmerica**



**Be Our
Valentine**

Happy Valentine's Day to
educators everywhere!

FEBRUARY 19 APPLICATION DEADLINE

Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarships

Aimed at helping members of ethnic minorities in preparing for teaching-related careers in public education, the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Scholarship Fund is supported by voluntary contributions from CTA members and the CTA Foundation for Teaching and Learning. An applicant must be an active CTA or Student CTA member, or a dependent child of a CTA member. Past recipients have received up to \$6,000.

► cta.org/mlkscholarships

FEBRUARY 19-21 CONFERENCE

CCA Winter Conference

Manhattan Beach Marriott

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

► cca4me.org

MARCH 3-4 CONFERENCE

CTA/NEA-Retired Conference

Marriott Hotel, Torrance

Make the most of retirement! Learn how CTA/NEA-Retired members are working to protect and enhance your future. Stay connected, be protected, and enjoy great benefits.

► ctago.org

MARCH 4-6 CONFERENCE

Equity and Human Rights Conference

Marriott Hotel, Torrance

This conference affirms CTA's mission to protect the civil rights of children and secure a more equitable, democratic society. Speakers and workshops provide members with a greater understanding of the issues of diversity, equity and social justice. Registration deadline is Feb. 17. ► ctago.org/#CTAEHRC16

MARCH 11-13 CONFERENCE

Region III Leadership Conference

Warner Center Marriott, Woodland Hills

"Leaders of Tomorrow: A Brighter Future." CTA's future depends upon continuous identification and training of local leaders. ► ctago.org

MARCH 11-13 CONFERENCE

Sacramento Political Academy

Red Lion Woodlake Hotel, Sacramento

Participants learn strategies for success in local elections. Registration deadline Feb. 18.

► regonline.com/2016politicalacademysacramento

MARCH 18-20 CONFERENCE

Region IV Leadership Conference

Sheraton San Diego

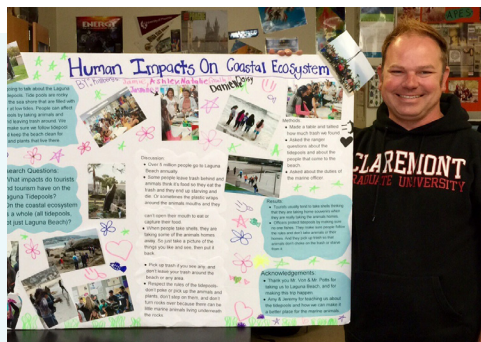
"Our Locals, Our Classrooms, Our Communities, Our Union." Provides leadership skills and knowledge, with a focus on organizing and member engagement. ► ctago.org



Walk In!

Join the nationwide **Walk-ins for the Schools All Our Children Deserve** on Feb. 17. **The Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools** is mobilizing parents, educators, students, school staff and community in dozens of cities across the country to gather in front of schools that morning and walk in together. The positive action reclaims our schools and communities and shows support for quality public schools.

Each school can focus on local issues. In Los Angeles, in addition to tailoring walk-ins to the needs of more than 70 schools, UTLA will call on communities to invest in public education and push back against billionaires such as Eli Broad who want to take over public schools. (Above, UTLA members at a recent Walk-in.) Schools in San Diego will focus on opting out of high-stakes testing. For more information and to organize your school's walk-in, see reclaimourschools.org.



Drew Potts, teacher at Ocean View High School, helped his students share their love of science with local elementary students. He is one of several IFT grant recipients who will present at the expo.

FEBRUARY 26-28 CONFERENCE

Good Teaching Conference South

Hyatt Regency Orange County

The Good Teaching Conferences support excellent teaching and learning practices for K-12 teachers. They offer a variety of workshops in curriculum content areas, provide opportunities for professional development, and allow time to network with colleagues and experts. Registration deadline is Feb. 11.

Preconference event on Friday, Feb. 26: **IFT Teacher Innovation Expo**, sponsored by CTA's Institute for Teaching. Engage with teacher-driven, strength-based innovation. See project presentations by IFT grant recipients. Gain insights into the IFT grant selection process. Registration is free. ► ctago.org/#CTAGTC16



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For the latest news and stories,
see cta.org/blog.

WHAT'S NEW AT CTA.ORG

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

KEEPING KIDS HEALTHY

Vaping is the latest thing getting the attention of youth. Check out info on e-cigarettes and other issues affecting our kids.

cta.org/newsroom

IT'S IN THE NEWS ROOM!

Did you know you can find CTA's press releases, blog posts and other media coverage all in one place? Yes — the News Room!

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

ENGAGING, COLLABORATING AND SHARING

CTA's website has a resource-rich section where educators can get tips and tools to help navigate their day. Check out the Member Engagement Center!

cta.org/awareness

BLACK HISTORY MONTH AND...

Find information and resources for Black History Month in February, and check out the other Awareness Holidays we celebrate year-round.

Video



Union Strong: CTA members (such as Dustie Barger, above) speak about why the union is important to them, from its role in "making sure students receive the best education by educating and empowering educators" to promoting "unity... with common goals and interests."

► youtube.com (search for "union CTA members speak")

Social Buzz

How should school performance be judged? The State Board of Education may replace the three-digit Academic Performance Index with a "dashboard" of measurements highlighting school performance. Educators feel strongly about this, as Facebook responses show:

KEN JOHNSON

Teachers know who needs the extra help and enrichment without looking at the data because we *know* the kids. Any data, whether it is attendance or graduation rates or test scores, will target schools in poor neighborhoods. We need to stop punishing schools because they have poor kids.

MICHAEL DELMAN

How do I think school performance should be judged? By the achievement of students who apply themselves throughout the year. Effort is the biggest factor in a learner's education.

SARAH KANG

I think that's a good thing. Move away from scores to authentic feedback just like we're asked to do for our kids.

DAVID CAULKINS

It's a good idea if it sticks. Let the schools determine what's working and what's not.

KATIE BURNETTE

Whatever it is, it will mean even more work for teachers (yes, I am a teacher) who are already drowning in paperwork, ridiculous mandates, and useless spreadsheets we have to enter data into!

CARRIE WEBB PATINO

The only thing testing is good for is giving colleges and parents a comparison of how their student is doing compared to other children. It's important to have that other piece of information from an independent party.

REBECCA McALARY

Let teachers teach, and let children learn. Let's put the joy back into the education model and back into the schoolhouse, folks!

PAUL DELGADO

How about "support" us and quit trying to "judge" us!



HOLLY ROBINSON AUGUSTINE

At some point, the changes they keep making on tests, grading and content the kids are supposed to learn will be so far removed from basic skills that everything will be halted and started from scratch. *Nothing* can be accomplished without basics. All the rest comes from that.

EILEEN BROWN

Let's focus on how the most vulnerable children are cared for and supported. What resources are in place? How well are different groups integrated? How much prep time do teachers get?

JENNIFER KAY LACKEY SANFACON

Yes, API is too simplistic.

KAREN RABONE

Data, data, data. I'm so sick of data. Let me teach.

Know&Tell

INSIDE:

- 12 Tech Tips:**
Top sites to learn to type
- 13 Quotes & Numbers**
- 14 Your Whole Life:**
Teachers get a tax break, tips for a good night's sleep

Let me show you
basic moves.

Ready to rock
along the home



Dance Mat Typing, pictured above, uses colorful graphics and song and dance to teach young children today's all-essential keyboarding skills. See story on page 12.





No More Hunt-and-Peck

Go online to teach students to type

By TERRY NG

TEACHING STUDENTS to learn to touch-type on a keyboard has never been easier. There's a plethora of online websites that feature exercises to gradually build up their skills from tapping a few keys to total keyboard mastery. We've picked out a few that can help get your students' fingers flying across the keyboard in no time — for free. (See related story on page 43.)

Dance Mat Typing

Dance Mat is an interactive game from the BBC, with different levels that focus on specific keys. Cartoon animals are the “teachers.” After each successful level, students are rewarded with a song and dance. bbc.co.uk/guides/z3c6tfr

Keybr

Keybr uses your students' test results to automatically generate typing lessons matching their skills. Instead of repeating random letters, students type readable and pronounceable words for better learning. keybr.com

Nitro Type

Nitro Type is an addictive, multiplayer car racing game where typing speed and accuracy are the keys to victory. Once students have mastered the “home row” keyboard basics, Nitro Type can provide incentives to continue to practice and build their words per minute. nitrotype.com

TypingClub

Teach students to touch-type using the correct fingers. Beginners' typing speed will reach 10 to 12 words per minute rather quickly, but even more advanced typists will learn and improve. TypingClub's School Edition also provides a way to keep track of your students' progress and create new lesson plans. typingclub.com

46TH

Ranking of California nationally in per-pupil state funding, as of 2013, according to *Education Week's* annual "Quality Counts" report released on Jan. 7. California had the same dismal ranking last year.

\$3,451

How far California is below the national average for per-pupil spending, according to the same *Education Week* report.

\$10,000

Signing bonus amount offered by the Soledad Unified School District in Monterey County to math and science teachers, due to California's teacher shortage.

13.9%

Decline in the number of California students expelled during the 2014-15 academic year. The number of students suspended declined 12.8 percent compared with the year before, the California Department of Education announced Jan. 13.

\$10.3 BILLION

Amount of student fees and subsidies spent on U.S. public university sports programs since 2010, as cited in the February issue of *Harper's*.

Quotes & Numbers

Compiled by MIKE MYSLINSKI

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.

"The vastly more important issue in this case is whether the Supreme Court will undermine the ability of unions to effectively represent all of their workers at the bargaining table. The court should refuse to do so and reaffirm the *Abood* decision."

—*Los Angeles Times* editorial on Jan. 11, calling on the U.S. Supreme Court to reject the *Friedrichs v. CTA* lawsuit to ban Fair Share fees and uphold the 1977 *Abood* ruling allowing the fees.

"The *Friedrichs* case is fundamentally about something we teach our students every day: fairness. Since 1977, *Abood* has provided a fair compromise. The court should preserve *Abood*, and fairness for students, educators and the middle class."

—CTA President **ERIC HEINS**, in his Jan. 11 *San Francisco Chronicle* commentary about the anti-union *Friedrichs* lawsuit.

"The damage from potentially eliminating Fair Share fees isn't limited to students and schools. Any decision in *Friedrichs* will apply not just to teachers, but to all government employees, including firefighters, nurses and social workers. Essentially, taking away Fair Share fees would have broad consequences affecting all public service workers, their communities and the middle class at large."

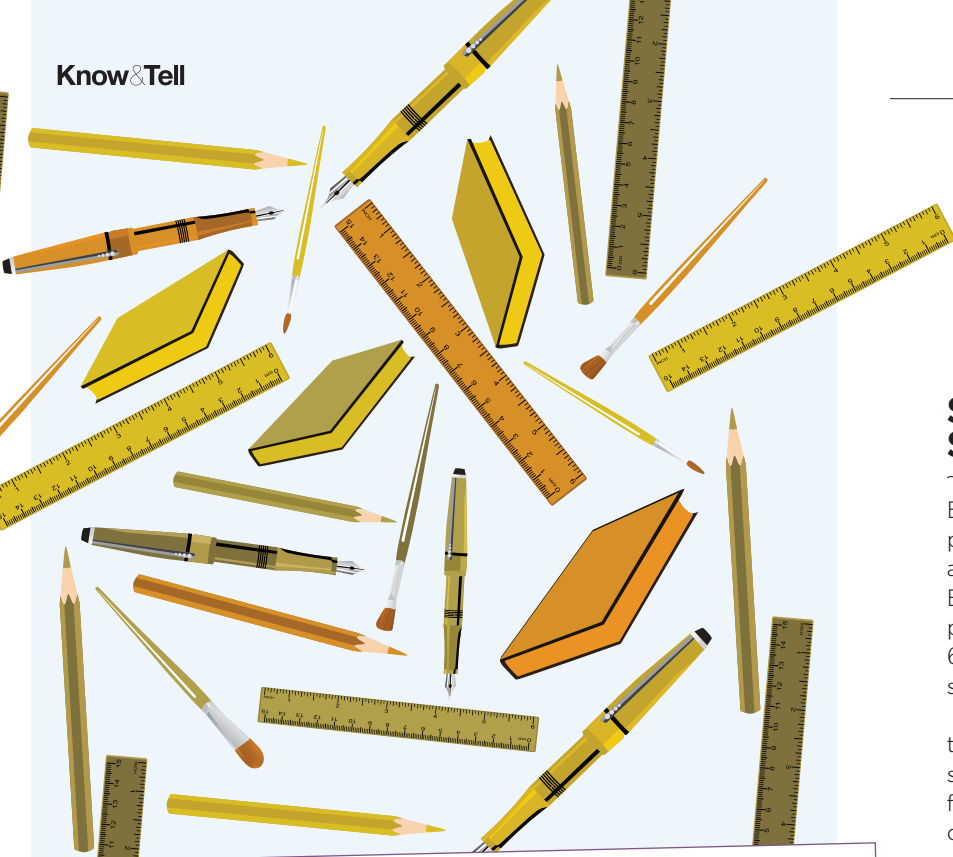
—**LINDSAY BURNINGHAM**, president of the San Diego Education Association, in her Jan. 23 opinion piece in the *San Diego Union-Tribune*.

"Our analysis shows California on a trajectory that, if left unchecked, will likely result in increased teacher shortages and greater inequities among students in different communities."

—Stanford professor **LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND**, lead author of the new report "Addressing California's Emerging Teacher Shortage: An Analysis of Sources and Solutions," as quoted in the Jan. 21 *Monterey Herald*.

"One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings."

—**CARL JUNG**, Swiss psychologist and author.



YOUR WHOLE LIFE

Tips and trends for a smarter, healthier you

Tax Break for Teachers

The average U.S. teacher spends about \$500 of their own money on classroom supplies each year, and one in 10 says they spend more than \$1,000 each year, according to the National School Supply and Equipment Association.

You can recoup some of your costs from Uncle Sam, now that Congress — at the urging of NEA and other education advocates — has voted to permanently extend the **Educator Expense Deduction**. This tax benefit allows K-12 teachers to take an “above the line” (non-itemized) deduction for unreimbursed classroom expenses, with the \$250 yearly maximum indexed to inflation starting in 2016 (meaning the 2015 tax year).

The tax break also expands the list of deductible items to include professional development expenses.

NEA Member Benefits urges educators to keep receipts or a careful log for this deduction and other tax benefits.

For additional insights from NEA Member Benefits on educators and their taxes, see bit.ly/1F5edkh. Topics include:

- Income from outside work such as a summer job or tutoring
- Other unreimbursed employment expenses
- Continuing education



Sleep Problems — Solved

Educators are among the most sleep-deprived workers in America, along with pilots and physicians. A survey conducted by Ball State University researchers found 43 percent of teachers sleep on average only 6 hours or less each night. And 64 percent say they feel drowsy the next day.

Getting enough zzzz’s is critical to maintain good health and effectively educate students. Here are common sleep problems facing educators, and potential solutions, courtesy of NEA Member Benefits:

Problem: You have trouble turning off your brain and falling asleep.

Solution: Don’t use bedtime as a time to stress about the coming day or week. Instead, experts suggest scheduling “worry time” during the day, and then turning your attention to something visual (and calming) that doesn’t involve thoughts or words.

Problem: You fall asleep, but within minutes or hours, you’re tossing and turning all night long.

Solution: Establish a relaxing bedtime routine — anything from a warm bath to meditating — and make your bedroom a work-free zone (no grading papers in bed!). Experts advise not to eat late in the day or consume caffeine after noon. Turn off the computer, cellphone and television at least an hour before turning in.

Problem: You seem to sleep through the night, but you’re still dragging the next day.

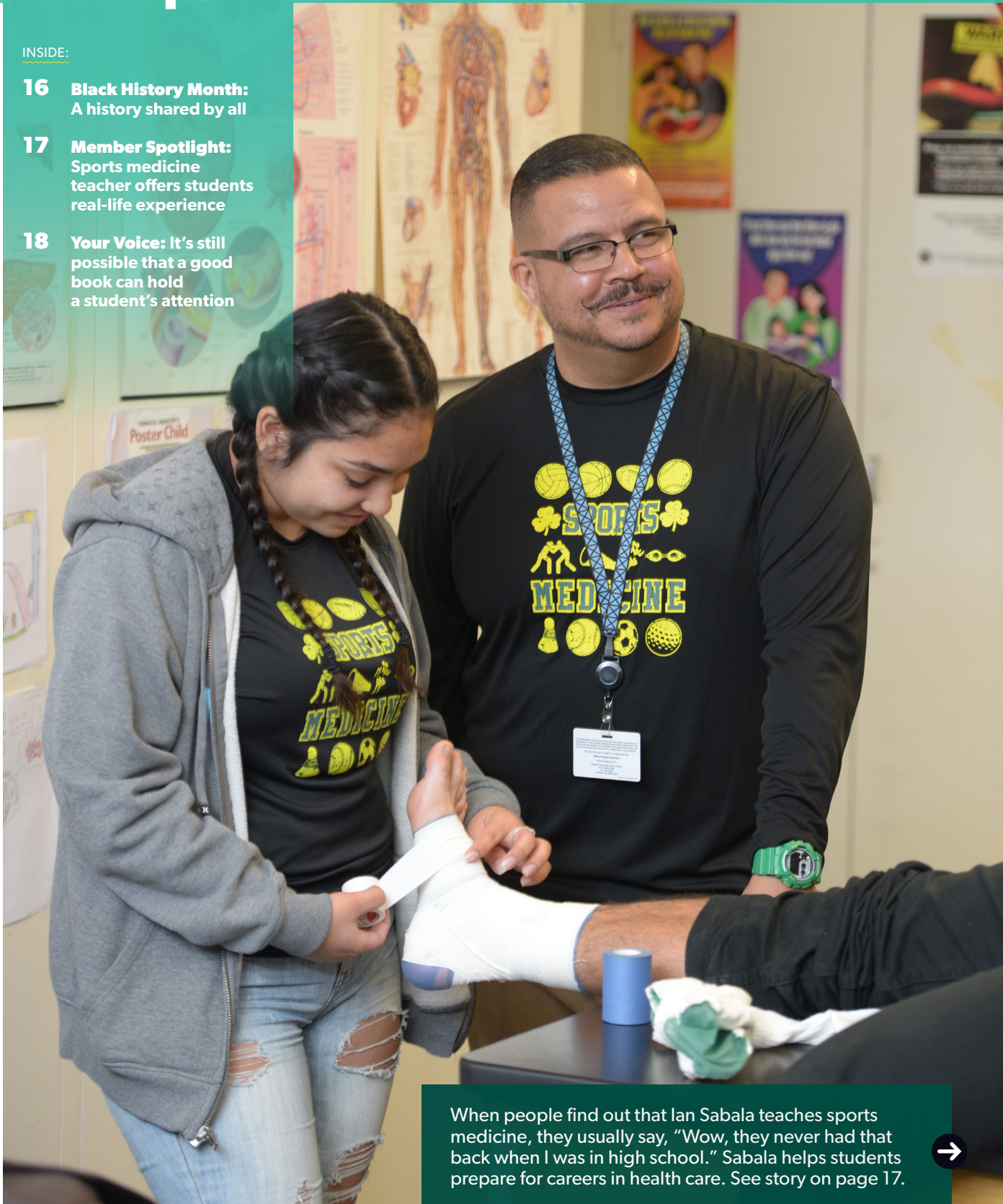
Solution: Try to pinpoint what’s causing the problem (uncomfortable mattress? stiff sheets?), and in the interim, go for brisk walks outdoors: Sunlight suppresses the body’s release of the sleep hormone melatonin. Plus, fresh air helps you stay awake and energized.

If you’re suffering from persistent sleep problems, visit your doctor to check if there’s a medical issue, such as sleep apnea. For more sleep tips, see bit.ly/1ZpTq1u.

Perspectives

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possible that a good
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a student's attention



When people find out that Ian Sabala teaches sports medicine, they usually say, "Wow, they never had that back when I was in high school." Sabala helps students prepare for careers in health care. See story on page 17.



A Shared History

Black History Month is for all of us

THERE HAVE BEEN calls over the years to abolish Black History Month (as well as other race- and culture-specific months). As recently as January, actress and Fox News commentator Stacey Dash said that Black History Month should be eliminated, arguing that it is counter to American values of inclusiveness and integration.

Most educators would agree that black history is part of American history and should be incorporated into the curriculum year-round. But Black History Month affords an opportunity to focus with more depth on history, events, people and culture in a way that informs, brings awareness — and instills pride. As such, it is a period during the school year that helps underscore every individual's contribution to, and connection with, our country's history.

"I appreciate all cultures throughout the school year," said George Mejia, Corona-Norco Teachers Association, responding to our Facebook query on how educators approach Black History Month.

"During February, I enjoy teaching a unit on Martin Luther King Jr. and Jackie Robinson."

"I teach black (and Mexican, and Native American, and Chinese, etc.) history throughout the year because black history is American history," said Vanee Smith-

"The single most powerful word in our democracy is we. We the people. We shall overcome. Yes, we can. That word belongs to no one. It is owned by everyone."

President Barack Obama

Matsalia, San Bernardino Teachers Association. "However, we celebrate African American culture in February."

Caitlin Dennehy, a New Jersey educator who teaches a predominately black class of middle school students, told MSNBC that the month offers a break from textbooks that largely focus on "dead white males." "I don't think black role models are as predominant as they should be" in curricula, she said. Black History Month is "useful in introducing conversations about where history has brought us and how we see racial dynamics in our community today."

Black History Month, and similar months, can help unify students and communities. For lesson plans and

Teaching About Black History Month

How can educators make sure students get the most out of black history and Black History Month? The Southern Poverty Law Center adapted the following suggestions of do's and don'ts from Pat Russo, professor in the curriculum and instruction department at SUNY Oswego. For detailed text, see tolerance.org/article/dos-and-donts-teaching-black-history.

Do:

- **Incorporate black history year-round**, not just in February.
- **Continue learning.** Explore multiple resources to provide an in-depth and thorough understanding of black history.
- **Reinforce to students that black history is American history**, relevant to all students.
- **Relate lessons to other parts of your curriculum.** By the time February comes around, the context of the struggle for civil rights and social justice should be familiar to students if you have already addressed such issues across the curriculum.
- **Connect issues in the past to current issues** to make history relevant to students' lives.
- **Include the political and social context** of the community's struggle for social justice.

Do not:

- **Stop your "regular" curriculum**, to do a separate lesson on Rosa Parks, on the Civil Rights Act or on Martin Luther King Jr. This trivializes and marginalizes anything you are teaching, making these leaders a token of their culture and ethnicity.
- **Decontextualize heroes or holidays**, separating them from the larger social movement or historical place.
- **Focus on superficial cultural traits based on stereotypes.**
- **Talk about black history in solely "feel-good" language**, or as a thing of the past.
- **Limit the presentation to lectures and reading.** Allow students an opportunity to discuss and reflect.
- **Teach with little or inaccurate information.** Review resources to make sure they don't promote a Eurocentric perspective, which may misrepresent historical figures and social movements.
- **Shy away from controversial, ambiguous or unresolved issues.** Share the real-life experiences about racial realities in developmentally appropriate ways.

resources that cover a variety of subjects and can be adapted to fit multiple grade levels, see cta.org/awareness and nea.org/tools/LessonPlans.html. ■

Scott Buschman



A Dose of Real-Life Experience

“WRAP IT UP,” Ian Sabala tells his students.

In most classes that means finishing up an assignment, but in this case students are just getting started — using elastic bandages to wrap imaginary sports injuries. They are practicing on classmates so they’ll know what to do should they encounter real-life injuries on the playing field or elsewhere.

“Go from big toe to little toe and lay down an anchor strip,” says Sabala, who teaches sports medicine at Kennedy High School in La Palma.

This Anaheim Secondary Teachers Association member has been teaching sports medicine for 15 years, helping to prepare students for careers in health care. For years he taught sports medicine while serving as the school’s athletic trainer, but now he’s in the classroom full time, also teaching physiology and anatomy.

Sports medicine classes, more common at college than at high school, are growing in popularity. His class has a waiting list and is in the process of becoming an A-G course. Students become certified in CPR and learn how to use a defibrillator. They are also trained to recognize concussions and other debilitating injuries. They frequently observe and assist the school’s athletic trainer when players are injured during practice or competitions.

In Ian’s words:

Sports medicine changes how you view sports...

because I can’t watch a game like a normal person. I watch a game with the anticipation that something bad will happen. It’s stressful, because I can’t just watch a football game and enjoy it. I’ll see a tackle and wonder, “What could happen after that?”

People constantly confuse...

athletic trainers with personal trainers — but there are major differences. Personal trainers work in gyms, wellness centers and other locations, working with clients to achieve fitness goals. They may not necessarily have certification or state licensing. Athletic trainers work with schools or professional sports teams or in a physical therapy setting, and have a bachelor’s degree in athletic training from a school accredited by the National Athletic Trainers Association. They must pass a comprehensive exam for their credential. Athletic trainers coordinate with physicians and other health care professionals to prevent, diagnose, treat and rehabilitate physical injuries.

Students benefit from access to cadavers...

because they learn so much about anatomy. It’s much better to learn from a cadaver than from an anatomy app on an iPad or computer. When I was a student at Corona High School, I went on a field trip to the same place to see cadavers for anatomy and physiology class. It changed my life. That’s when I knew I wanted to pursue a career working with the human body.

My students put their knowledge to use...

everywhere. About five years ago, when a grandfather of one of the opposing team members went into cardiac arrest in the stands, they knew to grab the red box and run with me to assist with defibrillating him three times before the EMTs came. And he made it.

My favorite part about this job...

is seeing the direct impact I have on kids and knowing they loved my class enough to pursue a career in the medical field for the rest of their lives. Many of my students were so passionate about this class that they were inspired to become athletic trainers, EMTs, personal trainers, firefighters, physician assistants, nurses or doctors. It’s awesome to make a difference.

Sports medicine students can’t be queasy around blood or injuries. So during the first few classes Sabala shows gross injury photos to determine whether they’ll be able to handle the subject matter. He doesn’t want to scare them away, but he knows that the class can be too intense for some students. That’s especially true when it comes to field trips to the Southern California University of Health Sciences in Whittier to examine dissected cadavers and learn more about the human body. — *Sherry Posnick-Goodwin*

A Miracle in English 12

By MATT BIERS-ARIEL

EARLIER IN THE YEAR, Victor stayed behind after class to ask about his grade. For someone doing well, I love to be the bearer of good news. But there was no joy to report to this young man. Though I knew his grade, I turned to the computer and brought up the gradebook, hoping the delay might soften the blow. He stood nervously as I announced, “Sorry, Victor, you’ve got a D.”

Instead of begging for an extra credit assignment or whimpering, “I’ll be grounded till 2017,” Victor raised his arms and hollered, “Yes!”

A D is a pass, and that was good enough.

Victor is in a class with lots of Victors. Think *Lord of the Flies*. This particular class is rowdier than my others in the same proportion that the football team is rowdier than the chess club. Once a month, the boys play the [male appendage] game. One student whispers, “[male appendage].” His competitor whispers it louder. They go back and forth, each time a little louder, until “[male appendage]!” is screamed across the room. I yell. They laugh.

Once while I was working with a small group, there was cheering from the other side of the room as two boys were arm wrestling. I rushed over. Instead of being chagrined at being caught, the winner held out his open palm and smiled, “C’mon, Biers, let’s go!”

One may wonder why so little learning takes place given that I use research-based pedagogy, and the “you-must-go-to-college-to-succeed-in-life” mantra has been hammered into their heads by every teacher starting in kindergarten. While there are many reasons for the lack

of learning including poverty, language barriers and dysfunctional families, it’s impossible to tease out a single

culprit. But forget all that. They don’t learn because they don’t read, and they don’t read because paper books can’t compete with the electronic hegemony of YouTube and Facebook. This is old news.

Out of desperation, I laid out a selection of classic novels from *The Catcher in the Rye* to *The Stranger* and gave a quick overview of each. “Pick a book. We’ll be reading every day for 15 minutes.” They laughed. Victor said, “I’ve never read an entire book in my life.” “No way,” I replied. He smirked in that way that said, “Way.”

On the first day, a third of the class read, a third pretended to read, and a third did nothing but whisper things like “[male appendage]!” and “Big!” They knew the experiment would end like my other failed teaching attempts. But week 2 rolled around, and each class started with, “Take out your novels,” and each day a couple more kids got beyond page one. By week 3, when the 15 minutes were up, they asked for more time. Victor was well into *Lord of the Flies*.

A miracle.

Even in our day of ubiquitous Internet and incessant texting, it is possible that a good book can still hold a student’s attention if given the time and space. I tell my colleagues only half-jokingly that out of all the workshops on lesson planning and all the times burning the midnight oil trying to come up with lessons that capture the students’ attention, the most successful lesson with my class of Victors is: “Take out your book and read.” A book provides a respite from the yoke of being perpetually wired. The psyche breathes a sigh of relief during SSR (Sustained Silent Reading).

The satisfaction of watching them read is sublime. The only thing that could top this would be if Victor were to finish *Lord of the Flies* and reflect, “You know, Biers, this book sounds kind of like us.”

If that were to happen, I’d give him an A. ■

Matt Biers-Ariel teaches English at Winters High School and is president of the Winters Area Education Association. When not teaching or unionizing, he writes books.



Matt Biers-Ariel

Your Voice

“Your Voice” is for you. Have something to say about your students, or the art and science of teaching? Tell us a story that illustrates your experience or opinion, and it could be published here. Send no more than 650 words to editor@cta.org, with “Your Voice” in the subject line. Submissions are subject to editing for clarity and space.

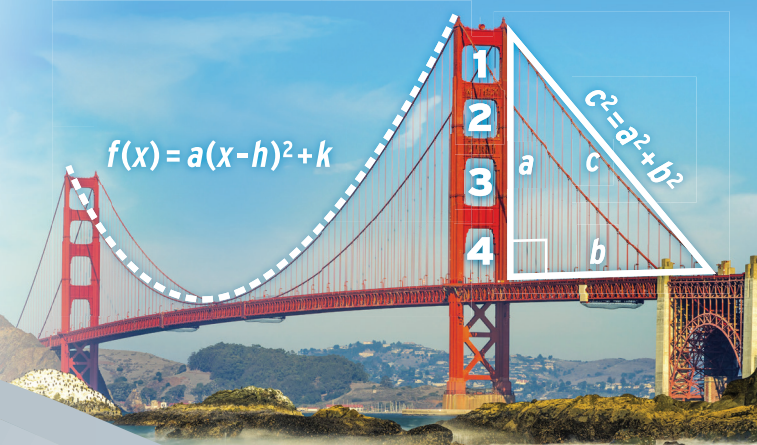


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Forever Young

How educators stay fresh after decades in the trenches

By SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN
Photos by SCOTT BUSCHMAN

*May your hands always be busy
May your feet always be swift
May you have a strong foundation
When the winds of changes shift
May your heart always be joyful
And may your song always be sung
May you stay forever young*
—Bob Dylan

SOME EDUCATORS, like fine wine, become better with age. After 20 or 30 years, they are still joyful, optimistic and continuing to evolve as teachers.

What's their secret?

We talked with a few veterans who shared how they stave off burnout and cynicism. There's no magic bullet; each has found a unique formula to stay fresh and vital.

← **Hillary Pedrotti** ENGLISH TEACHER *Liberty Education Association*

An English teacher at Heritage High School, Hillary Pedrotti has been teaching nearly three decades in the Liberty Union High School District in Brentwood. She also is technical director for the school's theater department, overseeing the building of sets, costuming and makeup. And, oh yes, she's the president of her union, mentors a student teacher, and has been involved with BTSA (Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment) and other school activities. "Perhaps it's just my ADD talking, but after all these years, I still enjoy coming to work every day," says Pedrotti, 50, who talks a mile a minute and darts across her classroom like a hummingbird.

Have a thick skin: I think some teachers take things way too personally. They obsess over

things and don't let it go. Let things roll off your shoulders or laugh about it. There will always be something from administration that may be stressful, but don't let that keep you from enjoying your work and your students.

Try something new: I'm a lifelong learner. For example, I decided to take on technical theater. I had no idea how to do it, but figured I'd learn as I go along. It's been reinvigorating.

Give yourself a pat on the back: People don't say thank you very often, so you have to take appreciation where you can get it. Sometimes I'll get a note from a kid at the end of the year that says "Thanks." You know that you are doing a good job. So let your sense of satisfaction come from within.



Carla Dickerson
FIFTH-GRADE TEACHER
Ravenswood Teachers Association

She tried to leave. But her heart remained in East Palo Alto. Part of the reason Carla Dickerson continued teaching there is that her father always encouraged her to give back to the community where she grew up. Ms. D, as she's known at Belle Haven Elementary School, has taught in the Ravenswood School District for 31 years. East Palo Alto is a low-socioeconomic community with many challenges, but she likes teaching where

she is needed most. Dickerson is 55 and enjoying herself more than ever. And while she may be a veteran, she views herself as a work in progress.

Think positive: I don't like to be around negative people, because it drains your energy. I like to keep it positive and offer encouragement to others. I tell my students to persevere and follow their dreams and not be deterred if things don't go right. I ask them to think about what they can do to fix something and turn a mess into magic. I try to do the same for me, too.

Stay involved: I've been a member of the executive board, treasurer and membership chair of my union, and now I'm a site rep. Being involved in the union keeps you

feeling energized. I love being able to help other teachers and explain that yes, we can make it through this.

Embrace change: I avoid burnout by working closely with colleagues and collaborating with them. Sometimes teachers can be a little bit resistant to changes at first, such as Common Core. But when you work together, you can move forward and push through it by brainstorming.





Teacher Experience Matters

Classroom veterans *do* make a difference in students' lives. *Education Week* recently reported that new studies positively link teacher experience with student achievement and other benefits for students, including decreased absenteeism and better behavior.

John P. Papay, assistant professor of education and economics at Brown University and co-author of one of the studies, found that teacher quality develops over time and teachers improve their ability to boost student achievement by 40 percent between their 10th and 30th year for reading and math, based on test scores.

Students with teachers with years of experience had lower rates of absenteeism and better behavior. Researchers attribute this to veteran teachers being better at motivating students and classroom management, resulting in better attendance and fewer disciplinary problems.

"In all, the new studies paint teacher quality as a mutable characteristic that can be developed, rather than a static one that's formed in the first few years on the job," states *Education Week*. "That's a welcome change for the 3 million-member National Education Association, which has long concluded that teacher experience matters and should be considered in determining pay and promotions."



Lanny Lowery

ENGLISH TEACHER

Rohnert Park-Cotati Educators Association

At 68, Lanny Lowery is frequently asked when he plans to retire. He says he's taking it a year at a time, because he doesn't feel his age and his job doesn't feel like work. It seems like yesterday when he began teaching at Rancho Cotati High School, but it's been 35 years. His first teaching gig happened when he was still in high school; he took over a "hoodlum" class that a new teacher had fled in tears. Soon he had things under control and was reading *The Odyssey* aloud to students. The way he sees it, teaching allows him to be paid for talking about things he loves: good books. He has sent only one student to the principal's office during his entire career. There is one thing he is retiring from, however, and that is being on his chapter's bargaining team for more than two decades.

Remain cheerful: I told myself I wouldn't be that older teacher who was grumpy and hanging on until retirement. I believe that every period of every day I ought to be smiling and laughing, so I always tell a joke or two.

Be active: I enjoy running and bicycling to stay fit. I did competition running for a long time. I also enjoy mentoring new teachers at Sonoma State University. It keeps me energized, and I feel I'm making a difference.

Don't stress: I try not to worry about test scores or the Common Core or other things. In the end, I do what's best for kids. But every year I try to improve what I'm doing. I am always striving to be better.



Mary Ambriz

SCHOOL OFFICE MANAGER

Redlands Education Support Professionals Association

You might say her desk is the command center of Mariposa Elementary School. Stationed outside the principal's office behind the front counter, Mary Ambriz organizes office operations and procedures, greets visitors, handles correspondence, oversees supply requisitions, and performs other essential tasks to keep the school running smoothly. Despite constant interruptions — children with runny noses needing tissues, parents bringing in forgotten lunches, ringing phones — Ambriz always has a smile. At 61, she is taking on new challenges and excited about what life has to offer.

Keep on learning: I got a little sidetracked when I had children, but I always wanted to earn my degree. I graduated in 2013 from the University of Redlands with a degree in business administration. My youngest son and I graduated on the same day from the same school. The most important thing I learned in college is how to get people to work together toward a common goal so they can become a winning team.

Have a sense of humor: So many funny things happen every day. It's OK to laugh out loud.

Maintain a balance: I love reading. I quilt. I meditate every day. I am very involved as a volunteer in my community. My husband passed away suddenly more than a year ago, and the support I received from my community has been absolutely amazing. It's something I am very grateful for.

Darla Dreesen

ART TEACHER

Associated Calexico Teachers

She's been teaching art for nearly four decades and sees teaching as an art form, too. She created her own A-G art appreciation class at Calexico High School, which includes reading and writing about art, as well as creating art with pastels, ink and charcoal. "I love my job," says Darla Dreesen, 60. Art, she explains, is everywhere, including candy wrappers, buildings, flowers, and of course museums. Her students just need a little encouragement to look around — and away from their phones — to see it.

Choose happiness: Every day I decide I'm going to be happy. I'm in charge of my own happiness. I have even told a few students that nothing is going to make me mad, and my goal is to stay happy and joyful.

Savor the moment: I like to stand outside my room and just say good morning to people. This campus has 2,600 kids, and they all know me because they walk by my classroom. Joy can be found in everyday things.



Photo courtesy Darla Dreesen

Enjoy small victories: Kids will come into my art class and say "I can't do it," but obviously everybody can create art. I had one student who swore he couldn't draw, but he turned out one of the best tessellations (a pattern of shapes that fit together perfectly) that I've seen in 39 years.



James Franco and Esther Wojcicki review work by students, who are creating a film based on a book by Franco's mother, Betsy (at left, with hat and scarf).

Making Movies

High school journalism teacher Esther Wojcicki and star pupil James Franco team up to lead a filmmaking workshop for teens. How cool is that?

By SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN
Photos by SCOTT BUSCHMAN

HE'S A FAMOUS ACTOR, filmmaker, author, Academy Awards host and Oscar nominee. He's also a Ph.D. student at Yale University with two master's degrees. And now he's a teacher at Palo Alto High School.

Yes, we're talking about James Franco, whose latest role as high school teacher is drawing rave reviews from aspiring filmmakers enrolled in Franco's Film Workshop, which has been meeting in the school's

media center on weekends since September.

Franco partnered with noted educator Esther Wojcicki, his beloved former journalism instructor at Palo Alto High, to create the course. He says he's thrilled to be back at his alma mater and loves being in the classroom.

CNN's cast-off set finds new home with TV production class

If the background looks familiar in our photo of a television production class at Fallbrook High School, there's a reason: It's the actual set that Piers Morgan used to anchor his show from CNN each day.

Making excellent use of the celebrity news set now is teacher Ashley Scibilia, who was featured on CBS after the school acquired the set for TV technology students.

"It's really cool," says Scibilia, a member of the Fallbrook High School Teachers Association. "It makes everything feel much more real in a strange way."

How did Fallbrook, a rural town in northern San Diego County, acquire a TV set from the leading source of 24-hour TV and online news?

The broadcast journalism course is a career technical education class, explains Scibilia, and the class adviser, Fallbrook High School graduate Ryan Promack, worked for CNN. When he shared that the set would be trashed after Morgan's show was canceled in 2014, Scibilia's predecessor, Fritz Schattschneider, asked if CNN would donate it. The broadcasting giant said yes.

CNN transported the set, worth approximately \$100,000, from Los Angeles to the school.

"It was a huge blessing," says Scibilia, a graduate of California Institute of the Arts, a college created by Disney that teaches film, video and character animation. "Once we got the set, it changed everyone's attitude. Suddenly we were in a professional setting, not just a class."

The set has rooms for video recording and editing. The



Ashley Scibilia, above left, with students on the set. At left, student Madison McCarty works Camera 3.

control room has switchboards and camera monitors. There's even a greenroom where guests wait for interviews and a classroom where

students discuss filming and editing. A student broadcast is shown three days a week on campus and posted on YouTube.

Students take turns using different equipment and being newscasters. The class covers video, audio, lighting, scriptwriting and studio productions. Viewing the beehive of student production activity, it's easy to forget you're at a high school. And that's how the cast and crew like it.

"The responsibility is very nice," says junior Brian Rucker, the technical director working the switchboard to make sure the camera angles are spot on. "It's an important job, and it's preparing me for what I'd like to do, which is being a film director."

Warner Throop, also a junior, shares that being a director, newscaster, floor manager and more has given him the ultimate confidence. "I can do anything," he says, while switching the view from camera to camera.

"It's a lot of fun," says freshman Madison McCarty, one of several female students in the class, who is working Camera 3. "I love it. Everything is going on at once — and we're right in the middle of it." —Sherry Posnick-Goodwin

"I obviously love teachers," says Franco, who drinks nonstop cups of coffee during the daylong class, appearing very much the disheveled artist in a baseball cap and a sweater that seems to have strands of hay attached. "Now I'm a teacher. It's an amazing experience to be working with talented young people."

His students are in the midst of creating a movie that will premiere next spring, based on the novel *Metamorphosis*, written by his mother, Betsy Franco, with illustrations by his brother, Tom Franco. The storyline depicts teen struggles with drugs, family expectations, sexual orientation, fitting in with peers, ➔

The storyline of the student film is topical for teens, depicting struggles with drugs, family expectations, sexual orientation, romantic relationships and other subjects.

romantic relationships, self-flagellation and other subjects. Tom and Betsy, who live nearby, are classroom volunteers, so it's truly a family affair.

During a recent class, students show their test shots on a large screen, while Franco watches comfortably from a beanbag chair. After viewing scenes written, directed, filmed and edited by students, Franco praises their efforts and offers constructive criticism on plot, dialogue, camera angles and authenticity. In a scene depicting pot smoking, for example, he urges them to use rolled-up paper rather than vegetable chips as props.

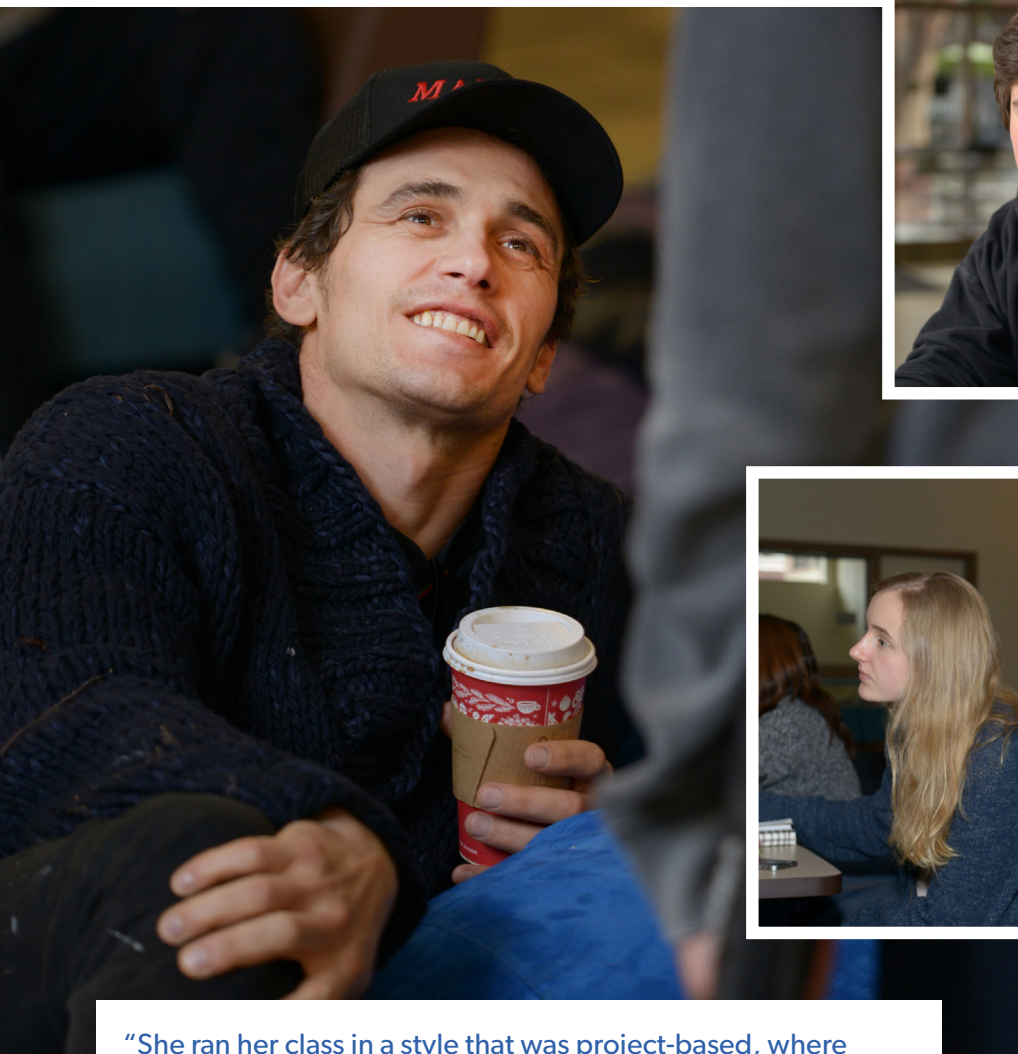
For the students, who are drawn from high schools throughout the Palo Alto Unified School District, it's the experience of a lifetime to have someone with so much expertise and extreme coolness offer advice about filmmaking.

"I was dying to get in," confides Gabe Cohen, a sophomore. "I am really happy to be a part of this. James Franco is a very nice teacher. He's very cool. He insisted that we call him James and not Mr. Franco. It doesn't feel as though he's a celebrity."

Having a superstar as a teacher took some getting used to, admits Cohen, a fan of Franco's films, which include *The Interview*,

127 Hours, *Milk*, *Pineapple Express*, *Oz the Great and Powerful*, *Spring Breakers*, *This Is the End*, and *Palo Alto*. The latter depicts the stress of young people living in the affluent community, which has suffered a high teen suicide rate attributed to extreme parental pressure to succeed.





Gabe Cohen, left, was initially intimidated by Franco's celebrity, but is "getting used to it."



Sadie Fearon and Dylan Griffith in class.

"She ran her class in a style that was project-based, where students were the editors of the paper. We ran everything. After I began teaching, I made all my classes project-based. I treat my students like adults and give them the power to create. I'm guiding them, rather than dictating or lecturing."

James Franco on how *Esther Wojcicki's teaching style* influenced his own

"At first I was like, OMG, it's James Franco!" Cohen recalls. "But now I'm getting used to it — and it's a little less scary."

Franco was a bit nervous too at first, says Wojcicki. But he's developed "excellent" classroom management skills and a knack for connecting with students.

She had no inkling he was destined for a great career in the

entertainment industry, because he was shy in high school.

"But I do remember that he was really extremely smart, creative and a risk-taker," says the Palo Alto Education Association member. "He has taken risks with many of the things he's done in films, and he's taking a risk by teaching. But he's

always wanted to do things that aren't traditional, because they are important to him. James has done some amazing things, and I'm super proud of him."

It should be noted that Wojcicki is a star in her own right. She was the 1990 Northern California Journalism Teacher of the Year and the California Commission on Teacher



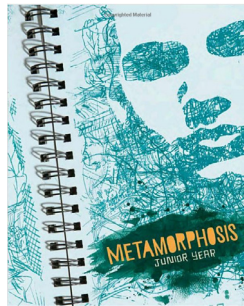


"He's taking a risk by teaching," Wojcicki says of Franco. "But he's always wanted to do things that aren't traditional, because they are important to him."

Credentialed 2002 Teacher of the Year. A former writer for the *Los Angeles Times* and other publications, she has run the school's journalism program since 1984, taking it from a tiny one-paper operation to one of the largest and best programs in the nation. Her recently published book, *Moonshots in Education* (with a forward by Franco), explores blended, project-based learning. With husband Stanley Wojcicki, former chair of Stanford University's physics department, she raised three accomplished daughters: Anne is co-founder of 23andMe, a personal genetics company; Susan is CEO of YouTube; Janet is assistant professor of pediatrics at UC San Francisco.

"Woji," as she is nicknamed, inspired Franco to teach in Palo Alto and at UCLA, which he attended for a year before dropping out to pursue acting. His teaching style is modeled on the way Wojcicki taught her journalism class when Franco worked at the school newspaper.

"She ran her class in a style that was project-based, where students were the editors of the paper," recalls Franco with admiration. "We ran everything. After I went to college and then graduate school and began teaching, I made all my classes project-based.



The cover of *Metamorphosis*, the book by Betsy Franco.

I treat my students like adults and give them the power to create. I'm guiding them, rather than dictating or lecturing."

When he first told Wojcicki he wanted to teach at his alma mater, she told him to get a teaching credential. Franco says he didn't have time to enroll in a teacher prep program and also make movies. So Wojcicki came up with a creative solution: She offered to be the teacher of record, which means she is responsible for the procedural operations of the class, while he teaches.

When the course was first announced on social media, more than 500 Palo Alto teens competed for 40 available slots, submitting essays on why they should be accepted. Those who didn't make it were allowed to enroll free in an online film course offered by Cinequest — a San Jose nonprofit that has partnered with the district's Paly Media Arts Booster program.

"I'm learning a lot," says Sadie Fearon, a senior at Gunn High School. "He's obviously very thorough when he goes through our work, and he gives us very good advice."

Eva Stoneburner, also a Gunn senior, says Franco's insights have influenced her to watch movies in a whole new light. Now she is looking beyond storyline to cinematography.

"I was incredibly surprised to get into this program," says

Student Film Wins Award

*"The teachers have put a lot on my tray.
The rest is up to me — I'm on my way."*

"On My Way" is the name of a short student-created film about the journey from prekindergarten to college. The three-minute movie, completed in 2014, won first place at the California Student Media Festival last June, and was broadcast on PBS in the fall.

The adorable animated tale of school life is told in rhyme from a child's point of view. Third-graders from Rio Vista Elementary School created the artwork and poetry, working side by side with high schoolers from Cathedral City High School, who handled the animation and film production. Both schools are part of Palm Springs Unified School District.

"It was really cool to have multiage collaboration, and very exciting to have our hard work pay off by winning first place and being shown on PBS," says Matthew Cauthron, who teaches the digital imaging pathway in the Digital Arts Technology Academy, a career technical education program at the high school.



Guy Haberman

Cauthron's students worked one-on-one with students of third-grader teacher Guy Haberman. Both educators are members of the Palm Springs Teachers Association.

The teens coached the younger students on how to outline the story and illustrate it. The animation is a combination of drawing and paper cutouts. "On My Way" looks at friendships, the pressure of testing and goal setting, among other things.

"It was really fun working with third-graders, letting them choose what they wanted to do and helping it come to life on the big screen," says Ambriel Styve-Hector, now a senior at the high school. "I felt really proud when everything came together."



Matthew Cauthron, above left, with Cathedral City High School students who helped make the animated short "On My Way."

At first the little ones were shy around the teens, but the two generations soon bonded. The high schoolers say that in addition to learning about filmmaking, they learned about patience and the importance of mentoring.

"It was an experience I will cherish forever," says senior Norma Vazquez.

"My students are now in fifth grade, and they still like watching the film," says Haberman. "The story is about growing up and getting older, and it's still very relevant to them."

See the film at bit.ly/1Tla4rC.

Stoneburner. "I don't often put myself out there to do cool things. But this has shown me that anything is possible and that if I put my mind to something, I can achieve it."

For Franco, teaching is a way of giving back to the community where he grew up — and also an escape from the pressures of stardom.

"It's great. I get my mind off myself once in a while," he says with a boyish grin. "It's a real relief." ■

Video

James Franco explains how great teachers have influenced him, and how teaching lets him give others the same opportunities he was given.

cta.org/James_Franco

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Advocacy

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Statewide advocacy activities



Supporters of educators' right to come together to advocate for their students gathered on the steps of the Supreme Court on Jan. 11, the day oral arguments in *Friedrichs v. CTA* were heard. See story on page 35. Photo by Patrick G. Ryan





LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



GOVERNOR'S BUDGET:

\$5.4 Billion More for Schools

But report finds California still ranks
46th in the nation in per-pupil funding

By LEN FELDMAN

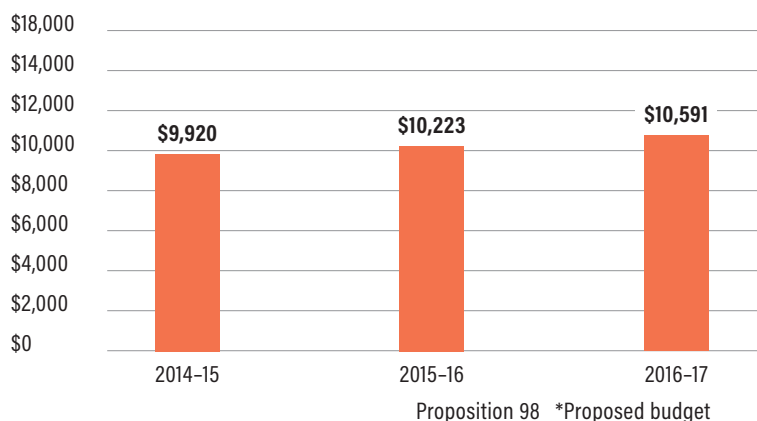
GOV. JERRY BROWN has proposed increasing funding for public education by more than \$5.4 billion in the 2016-17 state budget.

His proposal would spend more than \$72 billion of the \$123 billion general fund budget on California's schools and colleges.

The state's Proposition 98 K-12 per-pupil funding would rise to \$10,591 — up \$368 from the current year and an increase of nearly \$3,600 compared with 2011-12.

Much of the funding for the new education spending proposals results from Proposition

California K-12 Per-Pupil Spending



Source: California Department of Finance (dof.ca.gov)

In Gov. Brown's proposed budget, the state's Proposition 98 K-12 per-pupil funding would rise to \$10,591 in 2016-17, up \$368 from the current year and an increase of nearly \$3,600 compared with 2011-12. See explanation of Prop. 98 funding in chart on next page.

"We are moving in the right direction, but with Prop. 30 set to sunset at the end of 2018, it's critical that we continue our investment in all California students by temporarily extending the tax increase on the wealthiest Californians."

Eric Heins
CTA president

30 revenues and other state income flowing in from a recovering economy. (Prop. 30 was passed by voters in 2012. It increased personal income taxes over seven years for California residents with an annual income over \$250,000, and increased the state sales tax by 0.25 percent over four years.)

Indeed, Brown noted in his State of the State Address in January

that the strong economic recovery and passage of Prop. 30 has allowed a 51 percent increase in overall education spending from a low of \$47.3 billion in 2011.

"It's been nearly four years since voters passed Prop. 30 to pay back schools and colleges the \$50 billion lost during the recession," says CTA President Eric Heins. "Educators are

Budget Highlights

Major elements of Gov. Brown's proposed budget:

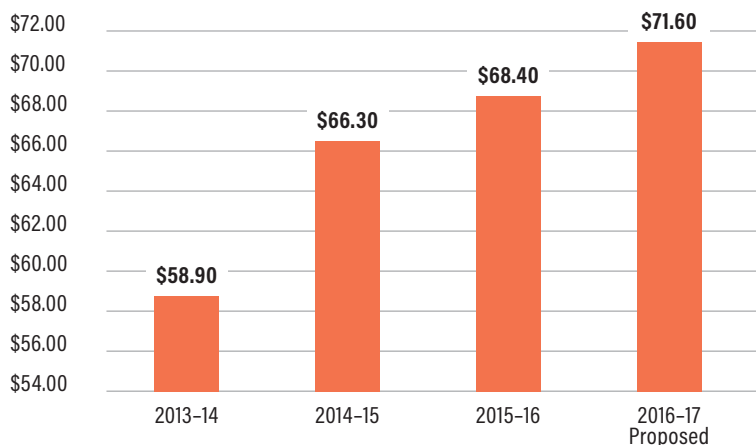
- With settle-up payments and adjustments due schools from prior years, K-14 spending increases by \$5.4 billion.
- An allocation of \$2.8 billion for the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), an amount equal to 5.4 percent growth in spending.
- \$1.2 billion to school districts in one-time discretionary funding.
- \$61 million to cover projected charter school student enrollment increases.
- \$22.9 million for a 0.47 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for categorical programs not covered by the LCFF.
- \$300 million for one-time funding for career technical education (CTE) competitive grants, with priority given to the establishment of new high-quality CTE programs and dropout prevention.
- Consolidation of the current funding for the State Preschool Program, transitional kindergarten, and the Preschool Quality Rating and Improvement System grant into a new block grant program that totals \$1.6 billion.
- For community colleges, \$114.7 million in general purpose apportionments, equal to a 2 percent increase in per-student funding.
- A 0.47 percent COLA to community colleges at a cost of \$29.3 million.
- \$283 million for deferred maintenance and \$200 million in increases for the Strong Workforce Program at community colleges.

For more information on the proposal's details, see cta.org/budget.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Prop. 98 Guarantee in Billions



Prop. 98, approved by voters in 1988, guarantees a minimum level of funding to be spent on K-14 education. The 2016-17 budget plan pegs the Prop. 98 funding level at \$71.6 billion.

encouraged to see the governor use his proposed state budget and revenues generated by Prop. 30 to continue paying back schools from the years of devastating cuts — especially those serving our most at-risk students.”

Heins says that Prop. 30 funds are being used to restore art, music and PE programs, reduce class sizes, hire more counselors and nurses, prioritize student learning over testing, and make it easier to attend a California college. But he notes that an *Education Week* report released in January still ranks California a dismal 46th in the nation in per-pupil funding.

“We are moving in the right direction now, but with Prop. 30 set to sunset at the end of 2018, it’s critical that we continue our investment in all California students by temporarily extending the tax increase on the wealthiest Californians,” Heins says. “Otherwise, beginning in 2019, we could create a \$5 billion sinkhole in annual funding for schools and colleges. That’s \$5 billion less each year for lowering class sizes, providing a well-rounded education, supporting teacher development, and keeping libraries open.”

The governor’s spending proposal now heads to the Legislature for review. In mid-May, Gov. Brown is scheduled to release a May Revision, an updated budget proposal that will be based on newer estimates of revenues and expenditures. The release of the revision will accelerate legislative deliberations in advance of the June 15 deadline for lawmakers to send the governor their budget version. The state constitution gives the governor until June 30 to sign the budget bill into law.

In the months ahead, CTA representatives will be working with Gov. Brown and the Legislature to maximize funding for K-14 schools. ■

Top 10 States in Per-Pupil Spending

State	Per-Pupil Expenditures, Adjusted for Regional Cost-of-Living Differences (2013)	Rank (2013)
Vermont	\$18,853	1
Alaska	\$18,565	2
New York	\$17,291	3
Wyoming	\$17,256	4
New Jersey	\$15,511	5
Connecticut	\$15,340	6
New Hampshire	\$14,502	7
Maine	\$14,310	8
District of Columbia	\$14,087	9
Rhode Island	\$14,071	10
California	\$8,216	46

Education Week’s annual “Quality Counts” report, released in January, found California ranked 46th compared with all other states in per-pupil spending. The report analyzed 2013 data, which was the latest available. Each state’s figures were adjusted for regional cost-of-living differences. California’s adjusted figure for 2013 was \$8,216 — or \$3,451 below the national average and \$10,637 less than Vermont’s, the highest in the nation. For the past seven years, California has consistently ranked near the bottom of the chart.



Reagan Duncan, first grade teacher at Vista, speaks to the crowd in front of the Supreme Court in support of educators' right to advocate for students. Photo by Patrick G. Ryan

Standing Strong

Friedrichs v. CTA rests in the hands of the Supreme Court

The Facts About Fair Share Fees

No one is required to join a union, and no one is required to pay any fees that go to politics or political candidates.

But...

By law, unions must represent and bargain for every worker, whether they join the union or not.

ON JAN. 11, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Friedrichs v. CTA*.

The case threatens educators' ability to be an effective voice for their students and bargain for smaller class sizes, safer schools, and better learning environments.

More broadly, *Friedrichs* seeks to overturn nearly 40 years of precedent and further tip the balance of influence to corporate special interests, ultimately making things worse for all unions, as well as the working families and communities we serve.

CTA President Eric Heins was in the chambers during the arguments. He described the proceedings as "intense," and said he was proud to represent more than 325,000 colleagues and members from California.

"It was good to look at them square in the face as the justices asked their questions," Heins said, "so they knew we're not some disembodied union in the abstract, but we're

teachers, speech therapists, librarians, school bus drivers, secretaries, counselors and psychologists. We're real people, and the decisions that they make impact real people and the education of the students that we care and work so hard for."

CTA was joined by many supporters, many of whom rallied on the steps of the Supreme Court.

Among them was Reagan Duncan, a first-grade teacher in Vista. "My right to advocate for my kids is truly what is being threatened here," she said. "I see every day how collective bargaining is benefiting my students. Through my union, we have been able to bargain contracts that provide smaller class sizes, which allows us to provide more one-on-one instruction time and individualized attention to ensure our students succeed."

Duncan was joined by Maya Walker, a library technician at Hayward High





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

extension.ucsd.edu/education

School. “Corporate special interests behind this case want to manipulate the rules in their favor and make it harder for us to stand together and fight for what’s right for our students and our families,” Walker told the crowd. “We will not be silenced!”

The *Friedrichs* plaintiffs seek to overturn common-sense jurisprudence established in *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education* in 1977, which allows states and localities the freedom to choose whether all public employees should pay their fair share for the employment representation they receive. Since all workers (union members or not) enjoy the benefits, job security and other protections that a union negotiates, it is only fair that they all contribute to the cost of securing those benefits and protections.

The court has until June 30 to issue its decision. Heins said CTA’s work would proceed as usual. “We are going to continue to do what we always do — and that is to work for the students in California,” he said. “We are going to continue to build a new accountability system, and work with our management partners on our labor-management collaboration initiatives that are going on around the state. That’s not going to stop.” ■



CTA and union supporters outside of the Supreme Court, where oral arguments for *Friedrichs v. CTA* were heard in January. For background and details about the case, see cta.org/friedrichs.
Photo by Patrick G. Ryan

Bargaining Roundup

Details of these stories at
cta.org/bargainingupdates

Jim Boling



◀ SOUTHWEST TEACHERS STRUGGLE FOR STUDENT RIGHTS

It's no surprise that teachers in the **Southwest Teachers Association** (SWTA), San Diego County,

have put students first at the bargaining table. They are negotiating improved access to counselors and nurses, smaller class size, and time to develop well-planned curricula.

SWTA President Lorena Garcia explains, "We have been at the table since May 2015, and we will continue to make student learning conditions our priority." She says that increasing salaries will be necessary to attract and retain the best educators in a time of growing teacher shortages.

But despite having a reserve fund in excess of six times the state-required amount to be set aside for economic uncertainties, South Bay Union School District responded to SWTA proposals with disinterest. Instead, SBUSD informed SWTA it was at an impasse with the chapter and requested that a state mediator be appointed.

In January, SWTA members, parents and community members took to the streets for a two-mile March for Students. Then, at the SBUSD board meeting, board members tried to silence the approximately 275 in attendance, stating that the meeting was "to conduct the business of the board and not a public meeting."

Garcia says SBUSD board members' actions make it difficult for all. "Such detachment shows a dangerously dismissive attitude toward the community that typically produces poor results for all stakeholders."

SWTA leadership says it will continue to focus on improving students' learning conditions and achievement by negotiating for resources students and educators need.

CHARTER SCHOOL VICTORY

On Jan. 11, after more than a year of bargaining, members of **Family Partnership Charter Teachers Association** unanimously ratified a three-year agreement that calls for an 8 percent on-schedule increase in the first year.

Negotiations had stalled over proposals by the charter's executive director that included off-schedule pay boosts tied to unreasonable attendance and testing goals, and a 30-minute extension to the work day. In December the atmosphere at the bargaining table changed when that director resigned and was replaced by an interim administrator who came to

the table with far more reasonable proposals and a stronger sense of trust in teachers.

The small nonprofit charter operates several sites along the Central Coast; its teachers have been represented by CTA since 2009.

FPCTA president Michael Brajkovich credits member and parental support for the association team, as well as the better atmosphere dealing with the new administrator. "We gained better mutual trust with the new leadership," he says. "And our members showed that this really mattered to them by showing up at governing council board meetings and talking to parents."



▲ RIVERBANK TEACHERS PUSH FOR EXCELLENCE

More than 60 teachers and supporters crowded into the Riverbank Unified school board meeting on Jan. 19 to protest the district's refusal to support educational excellence. Instead, teachers contend, district officials are inflating the district's reserve slush fund. Educators with the **Riverbank Teachers Association** are angry and frustrated over disrespectful treatment at the bargaining table and the lack of teacher involvement in education decisions. They told the board, "We believe our children and our community deserve better. Teachers deserve better."

Riverbank Unified School District, Stanislaus County, budgeted to raise its reserves to 30 percent, a \$1.6 million increase. A 3 percent reserve is required by the state. In addition, RUSD saw an 11.5 percent, or \$30 million, increase in funding because of the state's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), which calls for new monies to be spent in the classroom. The district salary offer is 3 percent plus extra time worked each day, extra days worked each year, and extra meetings to attend on their own time each month — resulting in a pay cut for teachers.



SANTEE EDUCATORS REACH AGREEMENT

After months of negotiations and a successful Rally for Students at the Jan. 19 Santee school board meeting, the **Santee Teachers Association** (STA) and Santee School District reached a mediated settlement that will help keep outstanding teachers in the community.

Their successful agreement reflects a continued focus on student improvement by compensating teachers for state-required certificates that improve teacher effectiveness, changing the work year to facilitate teacher professional growth activities, and adding stipends for activities that teachers perform outside the school day, such as sixth-grade camp.

Teachers will receive a 4 percent increase for 2015-16, and an additional 4 percent increase for 2016-17. The agreement also addresses the issue of substandard health care benefits by adding \$600 to their benefits cap in 2016, and an additional \$1,200 in 2017. STA had raised the concern of teachers leaving the district for better pay and benefits elsewhere.

At press time, passage was widely anticipated at the ratification meeting on Jan. 28. STA President Lori Meaux and SSD Superintendent Cathy Pierce said in their joint release, "Today we found common ground. Now is the time for all of us to reach out and work together to build an even stronger learning environment for our students!"

SAN LORENZO EDUCATORS WANT FAIR TREATMENT

Their ongoing fight for fair pay, lower class sizes, health benefit equity and fair treatment has brought educators in the San Lorenzo Unified School District to the brink of a possible strike.

A vote taken in mid-January in this 10,000-student district in the East Bay overwhelmingly authorized leaders of the **San Lorenzo Education Association** (SLEA) to call a strike if necessary, after the impasse process is fully exhausted. A neutral Public Employment Relations Board appointee serving as a fact finder has until mid-February to issue a nonbinding report to attempt to settle the year-old bargaining dispute. After the impasse process ends, educators could consider the strike option.

Numerous informational pickets have been staged before and



▲ SAN DIEGUITO FACULTY ASSOCIATION APPROVES CONTRACT

San Dieguito Faculty Association (SDFA) members overwhelmingly approved a contract with the San Dieguito Union High School District, San Diego County, and it was ratified by the school board.

"SDFA leaders are proud that we could bring such an outstanding new agreement to our members that is, once again, a direct result of our constructive, interest-based collaborative working relationship with our District," said SDFA in a bulletin to members. "This new agreement provides the financial security, health benefits, and contractual language stability that our members deserve, and achieved without engaging in the adversarial negotiations and counterproductive conflict seen in so many districts. [It] also provides the budget certainty and security for our district's current and future financial planning."

Among the contract highlights are a 7 percent salary increase retroactive to July 1, 2015, a 5.5 percent salary increase in July 2016 for the 2016-17 school year, and improved health benefits.

SDFA members celebrate their agreement with members of the school board.

after school over the months, while more than 1,000 parents and other supporters signed petitions given to the school board in December demanding fair raises for educators and lower class sizes for students with special needs.

"This strike vote and our picketing is a reaction to the indifference shown by Superintendent Fred Brill and the school board majority to educators and parents," says Donna Pinkney, president of the 580-member SLEA. "We don't want to strike, but at this point all options are on the table if we don't reach a settlement during the impasse process. Teacher turnover hurts students, and teachers are leaving this district for more pay and respect in neighboring districts."

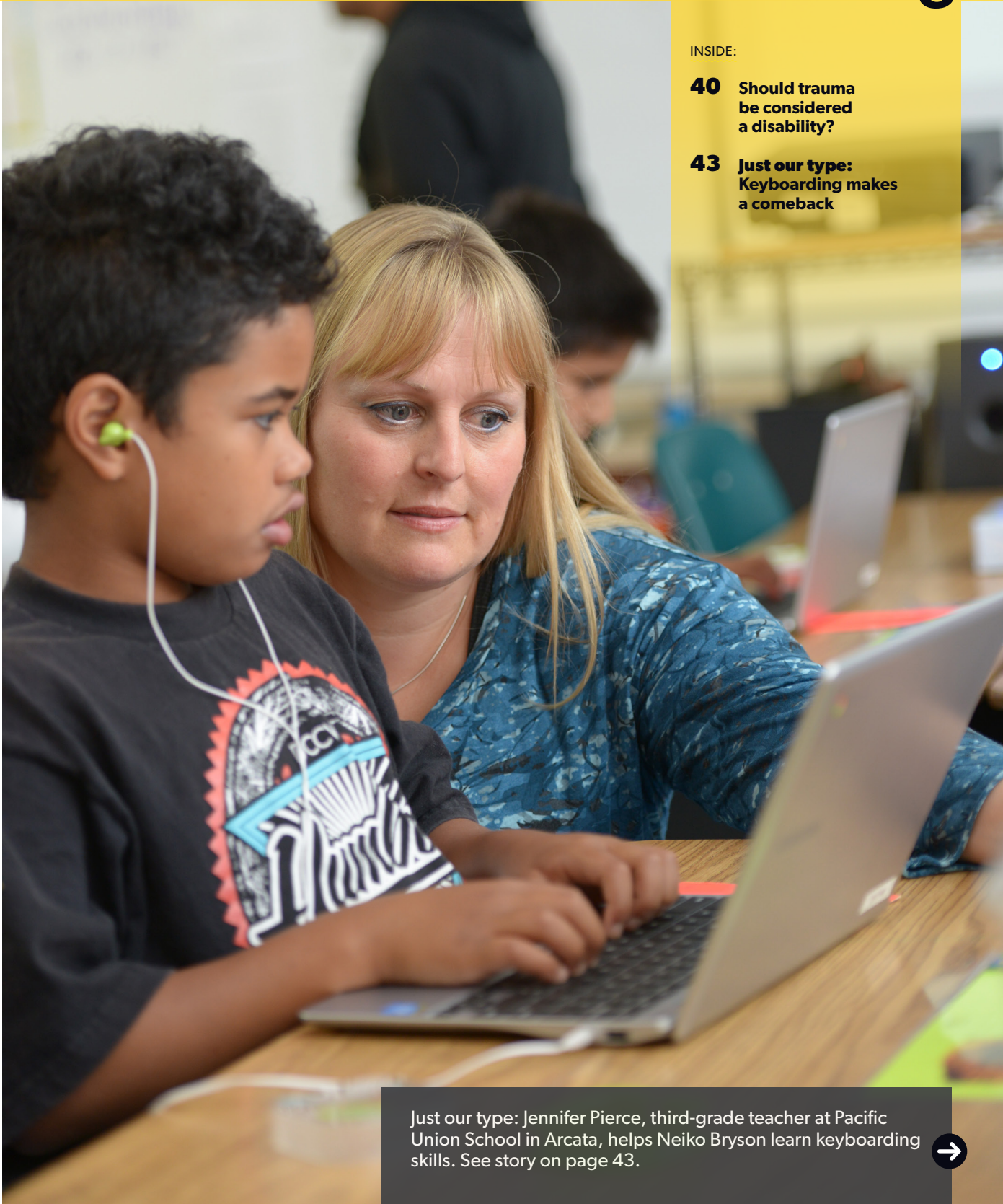
Educators are asking for a 6.2 percent salary increase and health benefits parity with administrators, but the district is only offering a 1.5 percent salary schedule increase. San Lorenzo educators are among the lowest-paid in Alameda County.

Learning

INSIDE:

40 Should trauma be considered a disability?

43 **Just our type:** Keyboarding makes a comeback



Just our type: Jennifer Pierce, third-grade teacher at Pacific Union School in Arcata, helps Neiko Bryson learn keyboarding skills. See story on page 43.





Is Trauma a Disability? Teachers say growing up in a violent, disruptive environment affects students just as much as other disabilities

By SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN Photo by SCOTT BUSCHMAN

Armando Castro took his students on a field trip one day, and out of the corner of his eye he saw that they were comparing bullet wounds. The Chavez Continuation High School teacher was shocked to discover that four of the 15 students on the outing had been direct victims of gun violence.

Castro learned that being shot at, jumped, beaten or threatened is for many students “just another day in Compton,” a Los Angeles County community with a murder rate that is five times the national average (the poverty rate is double the national average).

Many Compton students, after experiencing and witnessing horrific acts of violence, become extremely traumatized and can’t focus in school, say Castro and other teachers. Some act out and become violent at the slightest provocation, in a fight-or-flight response

similar to soldiers with post-traumatic stress disorder. Others self-medicate with drugs or alcohol.

But instead of being offered counseling or other services, students are often sent to schools such as Chavez, which Castro calls the “end of the line” for those who have difficulty succeeding in regular school.

Frustrated by a lack of resources to assist these students (and a lack of training for school employees to help them), Castro joined with others in a federal class-action lawsuit filed in May 2015 against the Compton Unified School District. The groundbreaking suit, *Peter P. v. Compton Unified School District*, demands that districts provide students who are traumatized with the same services and protections they provide to other students with disabilities.

If successful, the suit would require the government to

Strategies for teachers

When you see a student start to get a “deer in the headlights” look, turn red and clench their fists, breathe more rapidly, begin moving because their body is getting ready to run or react, or burst into tears, they may be suffering from complex trauma. Ways to help:

- 1. Recognize that a child is going into survival mode and respond in a kind, compassionate way.** You might say “I see that you’re having trouble with this problem” or “You seem like you’re getting kind of irritated,” and offer choices of things the child can do, at least one of which should be appealing to them. This will help them gain a sense of control and agency and feel safe.
- 2. Create calm, predictable transitions.** Some teachers play music, ring a meditation bell or blow a harmonica to signal it’s time to transition. The important thing is to build a routine around transitions so that children know what the transition is going to look like, what they’re supposed to be doing, and what’s next.
- 3. Praise publicly and criticize privately.** Point out what the student is doing really well: “Wow, I love how you sat at your desk for a whole five minutes,” or “Thank you for helping your classmate.” When you need to redirect the behavior, do so privately and in as calm a voice as possible.
- 4. Adapt your classroom’s mindfulness practice.** Mindfulness is a great tool for counteracting the impact of trauma. But it can also be threatening for children who have experienced trauma, as the practice may bring up scary and painful emotions and body sensations. To help them adapt:
 - Tell students that they can close their eyes or look at a spot in front of them so that no one feels stared at.
 - Instead of focusing on how the body feels, have students focus on a ball or other object they’re holding in their hands.
 - Have them focus on the sounds in the room or of cars passing outside the classroom — something external to the body.

Adapted from Greater Good Science Center, UC Berkeley

recognize “complex trauma” — or repeated exposure to violence, neglect or pain — as a protected disability under the Americans With Disabilities Act. Schools would have to accommodate those impacted by trauma under section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act. It’s the same law that requires schools to build ramps for students in wheelchairs and provide services for students with special needs or learning disabilities.

The goal of the lawsuit, which was filed by Public Counsel, a Los Angeles pro bono law firm, and Irell & Manella LLP, is for schools to focus less on punishment, such as suspension and expulsion, and more on keeping students in school by meeting their psychological needs.

While a victory in the case would directly benefit Compton’s low-income, high-crime minority neighborhoods, it could have an

“The impact of trauma is a disability in the school setting when it comes to how students learn and function. It’s hard to concentrate when you are worried about getting jumped or whether you will have food over the weekend.”

Armando Castro

Chavez Continuation High School

impact far beyond. It could affect millions of students and force districts to hire more counselors and provide training for staff on research and strategies to help students who are traumatized.

MEETING ALL STUDENTS’ NEEDS

Castro says that if such intervention measures were in place, there would be fewer students enrolled in continuation school or dropping out.

“In many instances, the impact of trauma is a disability in the school setting when it comes to how they learn and function. It’s hard to concentrate when you are worried about getting jumped or whether you will have food over the weekend.”

Compton Unified is understaffed when it comes to meeting the needs of its students. It employs fewer than 25 psychologists and counselors in a district of nearly 25,000 students, according to news.vice.com. Nearby Beverly Hills High School, with 1,800 students, employs nine counselors and a psychologist — more than what all three high schools in Compton have combined.

Along with Castro, plaintiffs in the suit include two other Compton Education Association members, Rodney Curry and Maureen McCoy, and several students whose identities are being kept secret because they are still in the Compton school system.

Also a plaintiff is Kimberly Cervantes, a former student of Castro who graduated last year, who says she witnessed the deaths of two fellow students while in middle school. Another plaintiff, listed as 15-year-old Phillip W., says he witnessed his first murder at age 8, has since witnessed more than 20 shootings, and was hit in the knee by a bullet in 2014.



The lawsuit is winding its way through the court system, and if both sides fail to come to an agreement, it could result in a trial. Efforts by the district to have the case dismissed were unsuccessful. In October, U.S. Judge Michael W. Fitzgerald ruled that students growing up in poor, crime-ridden neighborhoods *can* be considered disabled, but it does not *guarantee* disability.

The district's attorney, David Huff, argues that labeling traumatized students as disabled stigmatizes them as having a physical or mental handicap under federal law. He also says it would be an unfunded mandate that the district can't afford.

However, proponents argue students who are traumatized deserve equal access to an education and can only do that by having their needs met. They argue that a legal victory would save money in the long run by helping keep kids in school, teaching them needed career and life skills, and among other things disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline.

“THE CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUE OF OUR TIME”

Not a great deal of research has been done about students who suffer from complex trauma. Researchers have found degrees of trauma, and say that students may be on a spectrum to indicate levels of functioning similar to students with autism. A new study found that kindergartners with traumatic experiences struggle more in school and exhibit social problems, aggression and difficulty concentrating.

Most studies have focused on those who have survived wars. In these, imaging software shows that trauma changes the structure of the brain, stunts the receptors that help regulate stress, and floods the brain with chemicals that interfere with short-term memory.

New research on childhood trauma from Marleen Wong, associate dean and clinical professor at the USC School of Social Work, shows similar results from students in gang-infested, violent neighborhoods, which she calls “devastating.” Her 2003 study of thousands of sixth-graders in South and East Los Angeles found that nine out of 10 had witnessed or experienced violence

and had lower reading scores, higher absenteeism and other problems.

“This is really the civil rights issue of our time for our children and their futures,” Wong said to the *Los Angeles Times*.

While she was director of mental health, crisis intervention and suicide prevention for Los Angeles Unified School District, Wong co-created a group therapy program for students exposed to trauma that became a national model. The program incorporates relaxation and problem-solving techniques and is used in conjunction with a mental health screening survey, which helps schools know what their students are experiencing and address specific needs.

The lack of funding, however, often constrains similar efforts.

For 20 years the state funded a program that provided mental health services to K-3 students struggling with symptoms related to trauma, but the \$15 million per year program was shelved four years ago due to funding cuts, despite findings that nearly 80 percent of children receiving services showed improved social skills and behavior. Now Attorney General Kamala Harris and legislators are sponsoring AB 1644, which would restore funding to the School-Based Early Mental Health Intervention and Prevention Services Support Program and extend application to students in prekindergarten and transitional kindergarten.

Castro says that his district once had anger management groups and programs for substance abuse, but these services are no longer provided. However, once the lawsuit was filed, his district held a “token trauma training” that described what trauma is, but offered no strategies for educators to help students suffering from trauma, he asserts. Another training has been scheduled.

He believes the district is using money as an excuse for failing to provide badly needed services and resources for students, and that funding would likely be found if it was made a priority.

“Schools need to be the leaders in helping these kids,” says Castro. “And if schools can’t help them, who can? Where else can they go? It’s up to us to meet the needs of every child in our school system.” ■

“Schools need to be the leaders in helping these kids. If schools can’t help them, who can? Where else can they go? It’s up to us to meet the needs of every child in our school system.”

Armando Castro
Chavez Continuation High School



Sheri Irion of El Portal Middle School supervises students as they practice typing. Students cover their hands with file folders so they can't peek at the keys.

Not All Thumbs

Students learn the essential skill of typing

By SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN
Photos by SCOTT BUSCHMAN

MANY YOUNGSTERS CAN text like the wind, post photos to social media while skateboarding, and play video games at warp speed. But when it comes to sitting down at a traditional keyboard and using all 10 digits, they may resort to hunt-and-peck. Like some things in life, keyboarding requires practice and patience.

Josh Miller is practicing, and he can now type 18 words per minute (WPM) at an 80 percent accuracy

rate with proper finger placement. He wants to increase by two WPM each week. The sixth-grader is feeling more confident, and doesn't need to look at his fingers when typing. During class, he and other students cover their hands with a file folder so they can't peek.

"It's hard because the faster I go, the worse my accuracy," sighs Miller, a student in Sheri Irion's keyboarding class at El Portal Middle School in Escalon.



“But learning to type is important. It will benefit me in the future when I’m at college or at work. It’s something I need to know.”

Keyboarding makes a comeback

Keyboarding is once again a priority in many schools. That’s because students are taking online assessments to measure their knowledge of the Common Core State Standards. Tests include essay questions and performance tasks that are more difficult for those lacking keyboarding skills.

Schools in San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles, Santa Ana, Garden Grove, Humboldt County, Fresno and Visalia offer keyboarding classes. But they differ from those their parents took, where a teacher stood at the front calling out “FJFJ.” Today’s teachers can choose computer programs that gently walk students through the process, showing them exactly where to place their fingers and providing instant feedback. With some programs, keyboarding is a game where students compete against one another.

While keyboarding is making a comeback in many schools, it’s not happening everywhere. Some CTA members posted on our Facebook page that they wish it was available to prepare students not just for testing, but for the job market. Some shared a selfish

“Typing is a life skill. Students are expected to use this skill on a national test. The lack of keyboarding skills is just another social inequality.”

Annette Villanueva-Lowe

Hacienda La Puente Teachers Association



Jennifer Pierce
uses the program
Keyboarding Without
Tears in her class.

reason: It’s easier to read student work that’s typed.

“Typing is necessary,” says Annette Villanueva-Lowe, Hacienda La Puente Teachers Association. “It’s a life skill. And all students are expected to use this skill on a national test. The lack of keyboarding skills is just another social inequality.”

Some schools ask students to learn keyboarding on their own time. Evergreen Teachers Association member Cheryl Connolly says, “We don’t have time to teach this, but it’s needed, especially due to the Smarter Balanced test. I told my parents at Back to School Night to get their kids on a program.”

Others believe classroom instruction is needed, because it’s too difficult to learn on your own, even for the text-me generation.

“I would definitely be interested in seeing how fast my students text compared to typing,” muses Irion, Escalon Unified Teachers Association. “It’s too bad they can’t text on the standardized tests. When it comes to learning keyboarding, most kids have a good attitude and realize it’s something they are going to need, especially when they have term papers in high school and college.”



High school teacher LaShon Tilmon says keyboarding has become a fundamental prerequisite for academic and professional excellence.

A different type of learning

Escalon sixth-grader Alexis White likes typing letters, but says it's tough to type the numbers, because her fingers have to stretch so far. Recently she gave up the "ghost" in TypingClub, the program that Irion's class uses, where transparent ghost hands show students where to place their fingers. She now types on her own — scary, but a big step, says White.

In Typing Club, sentences appear on the computer screens and students follow along. The program measures speed and accuracy, and students can tell how they are doing right away. If the letter is green, it's correct. A red letter indicates an error.

Anthony Barajas has several red letters. But he is determined to do better. He admits that he didn't want to take keyboarding at first, but his mother talked him into it.

"She said it would be good for me," he says, rolling his eyes in frustration.

Some students are already using their new skills for homework

Learn to Type

- **TypingClub**, typingclub.com: The school edition (free and paid versions) allows you to customize lessons, track multiple classes and monitor students' progress.
- **Keyboarding Without Tears**, hwtears.com/kwt: K-5 curriculum includes "computer readiness" and "digital citizenship" components.
- **Nitro Type**, nitrotype.com: Students compete in real-time typing races with one another or with typists around the world while improving skills.

For our picks of top typing websites, see Tech Tips on page 12.

assignments and other communications. For example, E.J. Lewis likes typing so he can email his big sister, who's away at college.

In Jennifer Pierce's third-grade classroom at Pacific Union School in Arcata, students use a program called Keyboarding Without Tears, designed for K-3 students. During a recent visit, students appeared to be having fun and nobody was crying. Students were impressed to hear Pierce tell them about a girl their age in Idaho who can type 125 WPM.

"It's amazing how quick they can get," says Pierce, Teachers Association of Pacific Union. "It's an important skill to have in your professional life. How would

you feel if every time you wrote one or two words your pencil snapped and you had to sharpen it? It's the same as stopping to look at the keys."

Back when Pierce was a teen, her mother said if she wanted to take an art elective in her freshman year, she'd have to teach herself how to type over the summer. So Pierce bought an old-style flip book and did drills for a half hour every day until she was up to speed.

"It was one of the best things I ever did," she says. "It's funny, because many high schools stopped making keyboarding a requirement, while at the same time creating more computer labs and trying to gain more access to technology for students. How can we embrace more technology without making sure students can use it effectively? I think in our excitement to use computers and the Internet, we lost sight of some of the basics."



Getting competitive

Students race against the clock to see who can type the fastest at Carter High School in Rialto. Actually they are racing against one another and using Nitro Type, a competitive typing game that's being played in LaShon Tilmon's keyboarding class.

Tilmon keeps track of who's the fastest and most accurate, and posts the constantly changing winners on the board. Students look up from their work often to cheer and groan at the results. They are clearly having fun while learning new skills.

"It's an adrenaline rush," says Hannah Arreguin, a freshman who recently boosted her speed from 30 to 45 WPM. "I like it."

Paola Gutierrez, a freshman who types 50 WPM, says the competition has motivated her to try harder. "You get all this excitement and want to win so bad."

Tilmon, Rialto Education Association, is a stickler for proper finger placement, correct sitting posture, precise finger key-strokes and shift techniques.



LaShon Tilmon's keyboarding class.

"Keyboarding has become a fundamental prerequisite for academic and professional excellence," says Tilmon, who also teaches digital media presentation and Web design. "Learning to keyboard efficiently provides students with a great attention span to confidently complete their work, work smarter and faster, and produce better quality assignments — as well as prepare for the 21st century workforce."

She is glad to see it becoming more of a priority in schools.

"I've overheard students telling their peers that they were going

to practice keyboarding over the weekend just so they can increase their speed and accuracy. But it's mostly to compete and beat their peers. That's fine with me. I challenge my students to compete against themselves, the computer and anyone who's faster so they'll learn this important skill." ■



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CTA&You

INSIDE:

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Steve Seal, United Teachers Los Angeles, and Lori Regalado, Redlands Education Support Professionals Association, served on the planning committee of CTA's Issues Conference, which took place in January. For conference coverage, see page 48.



Keeping It Relevant

CTA's Issues Conference informs and inspires

Story and photos by CYNTHIA MENZEL

THE CTA ISSUES CONFERENCE, held in Las Vegas in January, provided the opportunity for some 815 educators from rural, urban and education support professional local chapters to learn, share, strategize and reconnect with colleagues.

The theme was “We Are CTA — Strengthening Our Voices Through Advocacy, Organizing and Inspiration,” and members heard from CTA President Eric Heins and keynote speaker Dana Goldstein, author of *The Teacher Wars*, among others.

Both spoke on fighting economic and social injustice — a critical issue in education today and a core focus of CTA’s mission and strategic plan. Goldstein, whose best-selling book chronicles the history of public education in America and why it’s such an embattled profession, told the *Educator* in a recent interview that expectations of teachers are unrealistic. “We expect them to close socioeconomic gaps,” she said. “When it turns out that teachers alone can’t close gaps as quickly or completely as we hoped, disappointment sets in.”

She added, “This doesn’t mean we can’t expect a lot from teachers; for example, it is crucial that teachers work for social justice. But we can’t become overly focused on teachers to the exclusion of other solutions. To do so shows a failure of political will and a lack of understanding of the social science and economics of poverty.”

In his speech, Heins touted Gov. Jerry Brown’s proposed 2016-17 state budget, which boosts education spending by \$5.4 billion and includes specific provisions for low-income students. Heins credited Prop. 30, which CTA members supported and worked hard to pass, with supplying much of the needed revenue. “Prop. 30 continues paying back schools for years of devastating cuts — especially those serving our most at-risk students.”



Keynote speaker Dana Goldstein signs a copy of her book *The Teacher Wars* at the Issues Conference.

Heins also spoke about *Friedrichs v. CTA* and the corporate special interests behind the suit who seek to further erode the rights of workers and their families. He was optimistic about the future. “Regardless of the outcome, we are going to continue to do what we always do — and that is to work for the students and educators in California.”

SESSIONS AND STRATEGIES

Members attended sessions on current education issues, collaborated with colleagues on local and state-wide projects, and learned various strategies to better advocate for public education. Topics included health care and legal challenges, technology for education and organizing, assessment literacy, and adult bullying.

Strategies involved chapter actions such as using the Local Control Accountability Plan as a bargaining tool to help fund school improvement; engaging with the broader community through educator, district and community meetings; and tapping into CTA resources, such as the Instructional Leadership Corps, to improve teaching and curriculum.

A preconference session, “The Educator’s Guide to 403(b) and 457 Plans,” showcased CTA’s many resources at ctainvest.org and introduced its new Retirement Savings Plan, a CTA-designed and endorsed 403(b) that offers high-quality, low-fee investment options.

Many found the conference relevant and useful. “I want to help our reps be more comfortable speaking about current challenges facing our profession,” said **Laura Grover**, Fullerton Elementary Teachers Association. She attended sessions on school board elections and following the money. “I took a double session on Robert Reich’s work with the link between poverty and passing standardized tests. I especially liked the facts and numbers I will be able to report back to my local.”

Scenes from the conference (#CTAIC16):



STEPHANIE LIGGINS,
*San Bernardino Teachers
Association*, and **TYRONE
WEEMS**, *United Teachers
of Richmond*, got a lot out
of the conference sessions.

JANECE BOYD,
*Rialto Education
Association*, took
a technology tips
and tools workshop
and was able to
immediately apply
what she learned.



ALICIA GARCIA and **MERCEDES VILORIA**, *Calipatria
Unified Teachers Association*, speak with **DICK GALE**,
program director of the Institute for Teaching (IFT), about IFT's
grants supporting teacher-driven projects. The projects focus
on reducing high school dropouts, enhancing early childhood
education, and promoting the development of higher-level
math skills and STEM education.

Expanded training for local presidents

Local presidents wanted more — more time for network-
ing, building skills and learning. And now they're getting
it: CTA is developing several **Presidents Academy**
modules, and the first, "Reframing Your Work," was held
during the 2016 Issues Conference.

The session focused on the president's role as
a leader and organizer, with a goal of strengthening
organizational culture. It included campaign structures to
accomplish given goals as well as community and mem-
ber engagement strategies.

San Pasqual Teachers Association President **Gina
Hanna-Wilson** says the sessions are good for new and
"more seasoned leaders. Learning about the 'distributed
leadership' will allow for more opportunities to coach
and build new leaders in my chapter."

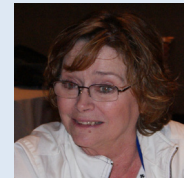
Other presidents said hearing colleagues' experi-
ences will help them with their day-to-day work as
a local leader.

The Long-Term Strategic Plan Implementation Work-
group saw the need for this type of support in surveying
and working with

members, said
Kendall Vaught,
a member of
the Training and
Development
Committee of
the CTA Board.

"The Presidents
Academy series
will provide
ongoing support
for presidents as
they develop as
leaders and meet
new challenges,"
Vaught said. "It
will build upon

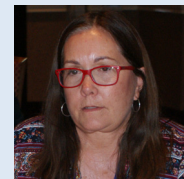
skills and content begun at the Presidents Conference
and address how those skills can be used to meet the
immediate needs of participants attending the training."



Kendall Vaught
Los Alamitos



Carol Courneya
Beverly Hills



Gina Hanna-Wilson
San Pasqual Valley



Deisy Bates
Hayward



Head of the Class

Program promotes and develops CTA's ethnic minority leadership

ANGELA NORMAND TEACHES students with special needs at Adams Middle School in Brentwood. By her own admission, for years she was a “very quiet site rep” who wanted to get more involved in the union but didn’t quite know how, and didn’t think she knew enough to contribute.

Then in 2014, Normand, a Brentwood Teachers Association member, applied for and was accepted into CTA’s Ethnic Minority Early Identification and Development Program (EMEID).

“EMEID changed all of that,” Normand says. “It taught me what I needed to know and provided me with the mentorship as well.”

Normand says the yearlong EMEID program gave her the skills, background knowledge and confidence to step into leadership roles. Since then, she was elected vice president of her local, ran for and won a seat on State Council, and was

elected as a delegate to the 2015 NEA Representative Assembly.

“I honestly give all of the credit to EMEID and the Emerging Leaders track [required of EMEID participants] at Summer Institute,” Normand says. “The program not only teaches history, customs and courtesies, but also organizational leadership — and then puts participants in mock situations so that we learn the right way the first time. Once we are back home, we have a CTA staff mentor who is there to lead and guide us.”

CTA created the pilot program in 2006 to identify, promote and develop ethnic minority members who are interested in expanding their roles in the union, with a goal of sustaining and increasing ethnic minority leadership in CTA and its affiliates. EMEID builds on existing CTA/NEA programs,

“The program not only teaches history, customs and courtesies, but also organizational leadership — and then puts participants in mock situations so that we learn the right way the first time.”

Angela Normand

Applications will open soon! EMEID is accepting applications for the class of 2016-17 beginning March 4; see cta.org/emeid. Deadline to apply is May 6; applicants will be notified by May 27. Those selected must commit to attending the Emerging Leaders track at CTA’s Summer Institute at UCLA, July 31-Aug. 4.

At left, EMEID's class of 2015-16. Interested applicants are encouraged to apply for next year's class by May 6 (see details below left).

trainings, conferences and events. Once accepted, participants are teamed with a staff coach and a CTA Board member, who guide them in setting and achieving their goals.

"What participants do depends on their goals," says Nicole Love, CTA co-consultant to the program. "They could be interested in leadership, or bargaining, or getting on the membership engagement committee, for example."

A total of 20 participants from all four CTA regions are selected each year. The selection process, Love says, is competitive.

Like Normand, Maya Walker is an EMEID alum from 2014. The library technician at Hayward High School and Burbank

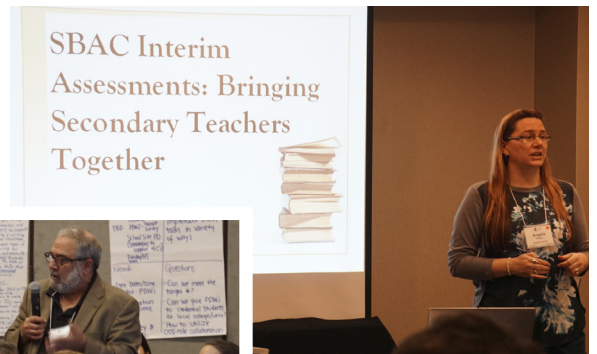
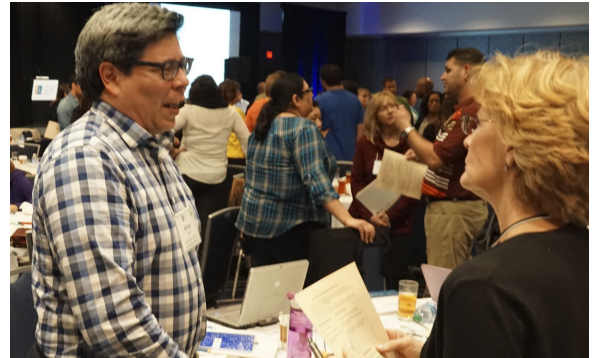
Elementary in Hayward is passionate about making sure library books, resources and materials are accessible to all students. Her EMEID experience was eye-opening.

"Prior to my participation in EMEID, I did not fully understand how CTA functions as an organization," Walker wrote in a year-end assessment of the program. "Now, I constantly find myself explaining how it works and trying

to get more members, especially ethnic minority members, to become more involved."

In January, Walker took a leading role in support of CTA and its fight to be an effective voice for students, speaking to the assembled crowd from the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court during the oral arguments in the *Friedrichs v. CTA* case.

"It was really amazing to be there the day of oral arguments that would determine the future for working Americans," Walker says. "Everyone at the rally had great energy, and to be the final speaker, to give everybody the energy to go forward, was an incredible high." ■



Participants network and learn from one another; Angela Stegall, Marysville Unified Teachers Association, presents; Jon Snyder, executive director of SCOPE, speaks.

Learning From the Field

CTA's **Instructional Leadership Corps (ILC)** held its "Learning From the Field" conference Jan. 22-23 in Irvine. Educators discussed their experience in various situations, such as implementing Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in elementary schools, and reaching adult learners.

ILC is a three-year project to build a statewide network of accomplished teachers who support implementation of the Common Core State Standards and NGSS, and who serve as a resource for other CTA members. ILC is a partnership among CTA, the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE), and the National Board Resource Center at Stanford University. For more information about ILC, see cta.org/ilc. ■

TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

Five remarkable educators step into the spotlight

THE 2016 California Teachers of the Year are a diverse bunch. One's a decorated Army vet, with three tours of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq under her belt. Another will only teach at Title I schools because she wants to show that all kids, regardless of background, can achieve. What these educators have in common, however, is a commitment to teaching excellence.

"Every day in the classroom [these five teachers] inspire students to learn, excel and realize their full potential," says state Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, who chose the awardees from a field of candidates. "Their work provides a great example for other teachers."

The Teachers of the Year program, presented by California Casualty, began in 1972 to honor outstanding educators and encourage new teachers to enter the field. Teachers are evaluated on rapport with students, classroom environment, presentation skills and teaching methods.

Finalists and semifinalists will be honored by Torlakson at a gala in Sacramento on Feb. 15. For information about the program, see cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/ct. ■



DANIEL JOCZ, *United Teachers Los Angeles/AFT*, teaches social studies (AP U.S. history) at Downtown Magnets High School, Los Angeles Unified School District. Look at Jocz's YouTube channel, and you'll see a variety of videos with titles such as "The Best Damn Vietnam War Lecture Ever" and "1790-1860: The Market Revolution Reviewed!" They feature contemporary music and pop culture references, but are crammed with factual information and mesmerizing detail. All of them have excited comments from students, such as: "You've pretty much saved my life" and "Dude, you're the best... Honestly, these explanations are so on point."

The videos are only one of the innovative ways that Jocz uses to reach and teach his students. He is particularly proud of the curriculum he created that incorporates the perspectives of all groups of people. "The experience of African Americans, women, immigrants, workers, the poor, and LGBT individuals *is* American history," he wrote in his application. Jocz is one of four finalists across the country for 2016 National Teacher of the Year, to be announced in April.

"Each day I strive to capture the magic, complexity and wonder of history for my students. All too often my students from neighborhoods as diverse as South Central, East Los Angeles and Chinatown rarely see themselves as being part of American history."



MITCH BAHR, *Shasta Secondary Employees Association*, teaches instrumental music in grades 9-12 at Foothill High School in Palo Cedro, Shasta Union High School District, in Shasta County. The program has a reputation for excellence and includes a string orchestra, two award-winning concert bands, two elite jazz ensembles, a jazz combo, a marching band and a drumline, as well as other brass, woodwind and percussion ensembles. For the many students who have no formal music training when they enter his program, Bahr says, "I try to do as much as I can to relate musical concepts into their world. I have to teach outside of the realm of music." Foothill High Principal Jim Bartow, who nominated Bahr, says he is "just amazing in how he approaches each class."

"One thing I say often to my musicians is: 'I don't care what kind of musician you are in 20 years, I care about what kind of person you are.' For now, music is simply the vehicle that can promote the values of discipline, hard work, empathy, respect."



MICHELLE CHERLAND, *Desert Sands Teachers Association*, teaches second grade at Carrillo Ranch Elementary School in Indio, Desert Sands Unified School District, in Riverside County. Cherland is also a decorated Army veteran: She was awarded the Bronze Star in 2010 and served three tours of active military duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, teaching in between. Her commitment to children and education is unparalleled. On a road march in Iraq, she brought two heavy duffle bags full of books for Iraqi children. Of teaching, Cherland wrote in her application, "It is an honest blessing and my greatest accomplishment to be able to plant the seeds of the future and watch them blossom into upstanding citizens in the country that I have the honor to fight for."

"'Be Awesome Today!' is a sign that hangs over my desk. It ensures that today is the day that something new will be learned, a song will be sung, a laugh will be shared, a friend will be made, and a moment may occur that will be remembered long after this day has passed."



DOUG GREEN, *Carlsbad Unified Teachers Association*, teaches broadcast journalism to students in grades 7-12 at Valley Middle School and Carlsbad High School, Carlsbad Unified School District, in San Diego County. Over the past decade, Carlsbad High won 19 National Student Television Association Awards and the prestigious Student Television Network Award of Excellence six times. The district boasts the number one middle and high school scholastic broadcasts in the country. "I love that my subject area has so much to offer to so many different types of learners," Green says. "I love that the program is rigorous and that it reinforces life skills. Students learn to manage deadlines, deal with technical challenges, and learn to become critical viewers. It is hands-on and academic." Valley Middle School Principal Tom Bloomquist says Green's work "has transformed his students."

"I am thankful each and every day that I am a teacher. I love watching my students develop as they become motivated learners, talented journalists and remarkable human beings."



CALIFORNIA TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

ANN PARK, Oakland Education Association, teaches writing and science to fifth-graders at Greenleaf Elementary School in Oakland Unified School District. "I wouldn't teach anywhere else but at a Title I school because I want to show people that these kids can do well,"



Park says in a profile in the *Contra Costa Times*. "They can achieve. They can have high-level discussions. ... Kids can definitely handle whatever you give them. You just have to have high expectations for them, so the kids will rise to them." Park takes the extra steps to help children succeed, including home visits and helping parents, particularly immigrants, integrate into the school community. "She has unwavering belief in the potential of all of her students," says OUSD's lead new teacher coach, Nyere da Silva, who nominated Park. "I've just watched her work these miracles."

"Teaching is an act of social justice. To be a teacher is to be an agent for change. It is a dynamic profession that promotes lifelong learning, as well as ongoing challenges to analyze student data to drive our instruction and rethink our approaches to pedagogy so that all learners' needs are met."

Teacher of the Year Responsibilities

"A California Teacher of the Year serves as an ambassador of the profession. ... He or she conveys, both orally and in writing, in person and through various media, ideas on current issues and challenges that confront the profession. ... The teacher may be asked to explain a specific program, instructional strategy, or activity that he or she has developed; how those efforts benefited students; and how the experiences might help other schools and teachers."

—California Dept. of Education

Take Advantage of Professional Development Opportunities

HIGH-CALIBER professional development is essential to improving public education and the teaching profession. CTA offers numerous conferences, trainings and workshops designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to enhance your livelihood — everything from navigating Common Core State Standards to CBEST preparation.

In particular, trainings presented by CTA's **Instructional Leadership Corps** (in partnership with the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education and the National Board Resource Center at Stanford University) let you learn from the true experts in the field — classroom teachers.

CTA's many conferences, such as the **Good Teaching Conferences (North and South)** and the **Equity and Human Rights Conference**, provide a place for learning, collaboration and networking. You'll get vital information and perspective from some of the best content and pedagogy experts in the country, which you can immediately apply to your work. For more information, see cta.org/en/Professional-Development.

Other professional development opportunities for educators are available at various universities and colleges and are often tailored for busy lives. **Dominican University of California**, for example, has courses in a variety of subjects that can be taken in several ways: online and self-paced, online and instructor-coached, or in the classroom. Participants receive graduate-level semester units.

Other institutions offering self-paced courses are **UC San Diego Extension**, **University of La Verne** and **Advancement Courses**. Many institutions have classroom courses, including various **California State University** campuses.





Artistic License

ARTIST WYN ERICSON has always been drawn to outdoor settings and subjects.

"I have found drawing and painting in nature is one of the most relaxing ways to live," says Ericson, who teaches art at River Middle School in Napa.

In November, his painting of California's majestic redwoods won a statewide contest to design a new license plate for state parks.

Proceeds from the sales of the ParksPlate, as the state calls it, go toward preservation and restoration throughout California's 280 state parks.

The Napa Valley Educators Association member seems genuinely surprised by the attention he's received, including a special school assembly attended by state parks officials to honor his achievement.

Ericson's calling as an artist and educator runs in the family. His father is also an artist and taught middle school for 20 years. His aunts and a grandmother were teachers or artists.

He has taught a wide array of students with diverse backgrounds and needs, including special education. "Everyone is unique, and everyone has a special way they can learn," he says. "My goal is to have every student succeed in the classroom."

You can support state parks — and the work of a fellow educator — by ordering a ParksPlate at parksplate.parks.ca.gov. A total of 7,500 prepaid applications must be collected before the Department of Motor Vehicles can start production. Cost of the plate is \$50, or \$98 for a personalized plate.



Wyn Ericson

Extra Credit answers (see page 56)

1. **c** Aunt Elke loves words that begin with the name of an animal (ape, bat, bear, boar, cat, cow, dog, hare, mole, pig, rat, shrew, ox).
2. **d** Aunt Meg loves words that become different words when they are written backward (tuba, faced, stressed, reward, tang, mug, recap, tinker, deliver, peels, warts, gnus, know).



Matters of the Heart

IN 2014, Loretta Beaumont was facing the end of her life.

"When my cardiologist told me my diagnosis of end stage heart failure, everything went through my head — especially thoughts of protecting and insulating my family," says the Kennedy Elementary School teacher. "I thought about how to say goodbye. The time clock started immediately. Could I survive the wait until a heart became available?"

Fortunately for Beaumont, her union had her back.

"I'm alive today because I am a member of the Santa Ana Educators Association," she says proudly. "I had three advantages facing heart transplant surgery that many others do not because I have a union."

One was a robust health care policy SAEA maintained, which ensured that she received excellent care by highly trained professionals. Another was the disability benefit.

"When I was invited to sign up for our chapter's disability policy for members only, I never dreamed I'd have to use it, despite stories that were shared about the value of the program," Beaumont says.

SAEA had also negotiated a third tier of member support years earlier: its voluntary catastrophic leave bank. "I had peace of mind knowing my salary would not be impacted," Beaumont explains. "As I waited for a new heart, I cannot tell you how important it was to be able to just focus on my family and me."

Her wait ended in January 2015, when she underwent a five-hour transplant procedure. "Everyone knows an elementary school is an extension of your family," Beaumont says. "I had a built-in support system that included my family, my friends and colleagues, and SAEA."

Back in school now full time, Beaumont is eager to share her story. "When people ask what the union has done for me, I tell them that it saved my life — and it can do the same for you." —*Ed Sibby*



Loretta Beaumont



Peculiar Relatives



I COME FROM a family of word lovers, but some of them are a bit... odd. Each of them loves only words that follow a particular rule. Take my Aunt Fanny, for instance. She loves the words **aardvark**, **bookkeeper**, **hitchhike**, **jazz**, **pepper**, and **vacuum**. Why? Because Aunt Fanny loves only words that contain a double letter.

You'll meet some more of my dotty relatives below. Each follows a different rule to determine which words she loves. Can you figure them out? Answers on page 55.

1. My Aunt Elke loves the words...

apex	boardwalk	dogma	pigment
bathtub	catastrophe	harem	ratio
beardless	coward	molecule	shrewd

Which one of the following words does she love?

a. **cameo** b. **genome** c. **oxygen** d. **quill**

2. My Aunt Meg loves the words...

abut	drawer	pacer	sleep
decaf	gnat	reknit	straw
desserts	gum	reviled	sung

Which one of the following words does she love?

a. **beach** b. **fancier** c. **tingled** d. **wonk**

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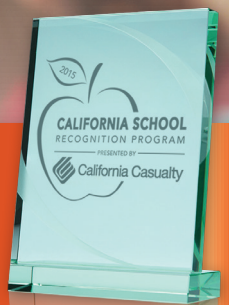
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