



# california educator

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2018 VOLUME 22 ISSUE 4




## BEYOND

### *Black History Month*

Teaching an inclusive view of American history —  
all year long **Page 20**





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# california educator

VOLUME 22 ISSUE 4



## #WeAreCTA

OUR VOICE, OUR UNION, OUR PROFESSION

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

### MAGAZINE

#### CHANGING THE SYSTEM

Student CTA offers a different new member experience, with lasting impact. **PAGE 48**

[f](#) [t](#) [i](#) [cta.org/scta](#)

#### MEET TONY THURMOND

CTA's choice for state superintendent is ready to lead.

**PAGE 32** [f](#) [t](#) [tinyurl.com/TonyThurmondCTA](#)

#### ARE YOU ENGAGED?

Examples of locals' successful efforts to get their members active and involved.

**PAGE 52**

#### IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

National Board Certification benefits students and teachers. **PAGE 42** [f](#) [t](#) [nbpts.org](#)

#### BARGAINING HEROES

Members who work hard to make sure you get what you deserve. **PAGE 59**

### DIGITAL

#### PROTECT WORKERS' VOICES

Supreme Court case threatens our freedom to come together in union.

**PAGE 38** [f](#) [t](#) [cta.org/janus](#)

#### INSIDE CALIFORNIA EDUCATION

Public television series with stories from across the state starts its second season on March 7. [yt](#) [insidecaled.org](#)

#### BITMOJIS IN CLASS

Your avatar is a fun way to connect with students.

**PAGE 45** [bitmoji.com](#)

#### CTA ONLINE TRAININGS

Brush up on social media, photography and other skills. [cta.org/online Trainings](#)

#### CALIFORNIA EDUCATOR WEBSITE

Educator content, news, resources and much more. [californiaeducator.org](#)

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### GOOD TEACHING CONFERENCE

A kickass program takes your instructional skills to the next level. March 16-18 in Garden Grove. **PAGE 9** [f](#) [t](#) [ctago.org](#)

#### SCHOOL ME!

NEA's new site for early career educators features podcasts, blog posts and video with tips and insights. **PAGE 13** [f](#) [t](#)

[neatoday.org/school-me](#)

#### CCA'S SPRING CONFERENCE

Focuses on effective advocacy in Sacramento and a well-informed membership. April 20-22 in Los Angeles. [f](#) [t](#) [cca4me.org](#)

### MEMBER BENEFITS

#### SUMMER TRAVEL

Before you plan, read up on hotel and auto discounts, as well as theme park savings. [ctamemberbenefits.org](#)

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Everything you need to know about personal finance, from consolidating debt to creating a spending plan. [ctainvest.org](#)

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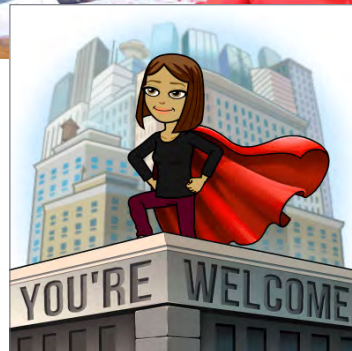
**ABOVE:**

During State Council in Los Angeles in January, CTA officers, Board members and delegates participate in the Women's March. Read the State Council recap on page 46.





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45

## FEATURES

► **Beyond Black History Month**

Increasingly, instead of segmentation, educators are teaching a comprehensive, inclusive view of American and world history — all year long. **PAGE 20**

► **Vital Roles**

School nurses are essential in meeting the myriad needs of today's students, yet their numbers are dwindling. A look at how some are doing the job while coping with fewer resources. **PAGE 26**

**PHOTOS:** Top left, nurse Nancy Semerjian shows students how to use fitness equipment at Limerick Elementary in Winnetka. Top right, Alameda Education Association members are asking local businesses to place anchor-themed signs in their windows to remind the public that educators "anchor" the city. Credit: Dennis Evanovsky, *Alameda Sun*.

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

## Sensitive Topic

Thank you for your article "Teaching About Religion" (December/January). As a middle school educator, I have had to speak to both my community of parents and my students on the place of Islam and other religions within the California content standards and their importance in the social science curriculum. Your article addresses quite well the role of a social science teacher to be objective and teach how these belief systems of various religions are important to helping our students understand the world from a global perspective. By keeping our teaching academic and not devotional, by helping our students understand the historical significance of systems of faiths, we truly can impact, as David Fulton mentions, how we behave as a society, being more courageous and empathetic to the needs of those around us.

**RUSS KLINGER** *San Mateo Elementary Teachers Association*



## Not Internment Camps

I am a retired science educator of 39 years. I am now volunteering at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles. In your item about Fred Korematsu Day (December/January, page 8), you used the word "internment" in mentioning that Korematsu refused to go to the internment camps. A careful distinction should be drawn between the internment of enemy aliens and evacuation of military zones.

Enemy aliens deemed unsafe are placed in internment camps, under guard, and the conditions under which they are held are in accordance with the provisions of international law. Internees are people who have individually been suspected of being dangerous to the internal security of the United States, have been given a hearing on charges to that effect, and have been ordered confined in an internment camp administered by the Army.

The evacuation of a military area is an entirely different matter. The evacuees are not "internees," they have not been "interned." (President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 authorized the military to divide the West Coast into military areas and exclude any persons deemed dangerous.)

**JAMES TANAKA** *Former WRA Minidoka Relocation Center evacuee, family number 16,152*

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#OurVoiceOurUnion  
#WeAreCTA

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



## CAPTION THIS!

The winning caption for our [CaliforniaEducator.org](http://CaliforniaEducator.org) GIF caption contest:

**"Go into teaching," they said. "It'll be a breeze," they said. "You only have to work ten months of the year," they said.**

Congratulations to **PAULA BRANNON**, *Val Verde Teachers Association*, who wins a stylish, zippered CTA tote.

## HONORABLE MENTIONS:

*That moment when all 30 of your students brought back their field trip forms but you only made reservations for 25.*

—**FERNANDO J. FIGUEROA**,  
*San Mateo Elementary Teachers Association*

*"Doh! 5 years, 4 TPAs, 3 CSETs, RICA, a thesis, \$65,000, and I'm still not prepared for all of this!"*

—**ALICIA ROMERO**,  
*Hesperia Teachers Association*

See [CaliforniaEducator.org](http://CaliforniaEducator.org) for our next GIF contest. While you're there, take in all the great *Educator* content as well as relevant news and information.



## CCTC Approved Reading and Literacy Added Authorization

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

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To view credential requirements, the program FAQs and to download an application please visit our Reading Instruction at [extension.ucsd.edu/teachreading](http://extension.ucsd.edu/teachreading)

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- CCTC Approved CLAD Through CTEL Program
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- Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Specialized Certificate
- Teaching Adult Learners Professional Certificate
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- Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Professional Certificate
- Professional Development/Salary Point Coursework

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

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

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*California Educator* is published for the information and edification of CTA members. The editorial philosophy is governed by the policies of CTA. Articles and advertising reflect that philosophy. Letters to the editor may be sent to [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org).

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

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

### CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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### MISSION STATEMENT

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

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# From the Streets to the Ballot Box



**AFTER AN OFTEN** difficult 2017, 2018 couldn't get here fast enough. Wildfires devastated much of the state; some of us lost friends, colleagues or loved ones in the terrible Las Vegas shooting; the #MeToo movement revealed how widespread sexual harassment and outright assault are in workplaces and elsewhere; Washington became more chaotic and dysfunctional than usual; and Dreamers, many of whom are our students, spent the year in a state of deep anxiety.

But we also saw communities come together to care for their own, offering up funds and household goods to those displaced by wildfires, and protesting the intolerable situation Dreamers and their families have found themselves in.

Educators were at the forefront of these actions. In communities such as Rancho Tehama, where yet another gunman wreaked havoc, educators put themselves between the shooter and their students. I know this doesn't surprise you — it doesn't surprise me either. But I am filled with pride when I hear of these teachers and others who risk so much so that their students can have a better future.

That's exactly why many educators are taking to the streets on behalf of public education and social justice issues.

2018 began with the inspiring action of thousands of CTA members and educators across the country as they donned pink caps and raised signs in the second annual Women's Marches. CTA's January State Council meeting coincided with the Los Angeles march, and I was thrilled to take time out from our work to join CTA delegates and

about 600,000 others on LA streets as we pushed for social and political changes. With women making up about 75 percent of California's teaching force, it was powerful to see so many strong women coalescing into a political force.

The action in the streets must translate to action at the ballot box. We need to elect leaders who will get this country back on track. This year Californians will vote for a new governor, a new superintendent of public instruction, new state legislators, and new school boards. CTA members have interviewed the candidates, evaluated their records, and identified shared values before making recommendations in statewide races. Now, more than ever, we need pro-public education candidates who will join us as we stand up to the school privatizers and anyone who puts profits before kids. I know that Tony Thurmond will do just that as our next superintendent of public instruction, as will Gavin Newsom as our next governor. (For CTA candidate recommendations and campaign information, go to [campaign2018cta.org](http://campaign2018cta.org).)

We will need help from leaders who believe in a strong middle class. Public employee union members across the country are facing a political challenge of a different kind, as the Supreme Court hears arguments this month in *Janus v. AFSCME*, a well-funded attempt to further rig the system in favor of the wealthiest in America, not the rest of us.

But even if they succeed in winning that case designed to decimate unions, CTA isn't going anywhere. We are firmly planted in the foundation of this state. For 155 years our members have been at the forefront of every

Eric Heins leads the CTA delegation at the Women's March in LA.



***"Now, more than ever, we need pro-public education candidates who will join us as we stand up to the school privatizers and anyone who puts profits before kids."***

major improvement to public education in California.

CTA chapters are stronger than ever, and CTA members are getting involved in record numbers, spurred to action by the current political climate and other challenges. We're seeing the fulfillment of CTA's long-term strategic plan, adopted over four years ago, which made statewide and local member engagement a top priority. It's exciting to see that come to fruition in so many local CTA chapters in so many ways.

With our collective action, our commitment to students, and our passion for the work we do, the future of public education in 2018 is in good hands.

**Eric C. Heins**

CTA PRESIDENT

@ericheins



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# The Impact of One on Many

**IN THE OLD DAYS**, school nurses would dispense bandages and ice packs, and handle the occasional emergency. “Now,” says F. Ndidi Griffin-Myers, director of the School of Nursing at Fresno State University, “we are talking about feeding tubes, diabetes, epilepsy, students with heart problems, severe food allergies, and acute and chronic illnesses.”

Unfortunately, as the demands of the job have grown more complex, the number of school nurses has dwindled in California. Often nurses are responsible for multiple schools and significantly more students with serious health issues. According to [Kidsdata.org](#), in 2015 the ratio of students to the state’s school nurses was a shameful 2,784:1. (In one county, the ratio was a shocking 8,920:1.)

But as you’ll read in **“Vital Roles”** (page 26), school nurses are a resourceful, resilient bunch who care greatly for their young charges. We highlight a few who have found ways to continue to help students stay healthier — through prevention, education and community partnerships.

Educators, of course, are always seeking ways to improve the lives — and minds — of students, and our cover story **“Beyond Black History Month”** (page 20) shows how several are integrating studies of various groups into ongoing, big-picture lessons of history and present-day society. Ethnic studies teacher

Dominique Williams is one of them, making history more inclusive. “Whether students are from different cultures, countries, income levels, or are LGBT, they deserve to be validated and feel they belong in the learning environment,” she says.

Educators are embracing opportunities to improve their own skills as well, whether through trainings and workshops or longer-term commitment to National Board Certification. **“In Pursuit of Excellence”** (page 42) describes the rigorous path to becoming a National Board Certified Teacher, and the huge impact NBCTs have on student learning. CTA’s free Jump Start program offers members essential information and guidance about the process.

This issue also looks at learning experiences for those still in the process of becoming an educator. **“You Say You Want a Revolution?”** (page 48) showcases Student CTA’s Welcome Summit last fall, where organizers eschewed traditional conference structure in favor of an intensive role-playing scenario that demonstrated exactly why unions are necessary. In addition, participants discussed disparities in student outcomes and how to address them, and built lasting relationships with one another.

Relationships are at the heart of



School nurse Linda Boyer-Chu screens a student’s vision at George Washington High School in San Francisco.

Student CTA and CTA. Members’ connections with colleagues and their locals drive the amazing work and spirit that CTA is known for. Our member engagement section **“Winning Hearts and Minds”** (page 52) illustrates just a few successful efforts by locals to foster strong links with each other so that powerful collective action with students, community members and working people everywhere is possible.

These links also make possible the selfless work of members who serve on chapter bargaining committees. **“Unsung Heroes”** (page 59) sings the praises of those who work hard to make a profound impact on the lives of colleagues and their families.

It’s work that is never-ending, but done together as one.

**Katharine Fong**

*EDITOR IN CHIEF*

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## Get the *Educator* Online!

**CHECK OUT** [CaliforniaEducator.org](#) for the news and information you need — especially during the magazine’s “in-between” times — available 24/7 and optimized for all your devices. You’ll find the *Educator*’s stories, articles and past issues there as well.

CTA President Eric Heins at Highlands Elementary in Pittsburg.

Mike Myslinski



# Read Across America

**GET READY FOR** Read Across America Day on March 2. Plan now for activities, such as bringing in special guests — parents, firefighters, the mayor — to read their favorite books to your students.

While the day, sponsored by NEA, CTA, and many of the country's leading literacy and youth groups, is a fun way to celebrate reading, encourage your students to read all year long. For CTA's **California Reads** teacher-approved book recommendations for all ages, see page 10 and [cta.org/californiareads](http://cta.org/californiareads). Find classroom resources at [nea.org/readacross](http://nea.org/readacross), and connect at [#readacrossamerica](https://twitter.com/readacrossamerica).



## ◀ CESAR CHAVEZ DAY

March 31 is an official state holiday marking the birthday of labor leader Cesar Chavez. Help students learn about Chavez's life and central philosophies on social justice, public action and non-violence, and find a link to the State Board of Education's Model Curriculum, at [cta.org/chavezday](http://cta.org/chavezday).

## Arts and Music

A well-rounded education includes the creative thinking that the arts help develop. California Arts Education Month and Music in Our Schools Month, both in March, underscore the importance of dance, music, theater, literature, design and visual arts. Find lesson plans at [ReadWriteThink.org](http://ReadWriteThink.org) and the National Association for Music Education ([nafme.org](http://nafme.org)).

Speaking of arts education, kudos to members **Victor de los Santos** and **Curtis Gaesser**, two of 10 finalists for the 2018 Grammy Music Educator Award. De los Santos, Santa Ana Educators Association, and Gaesser, Folsom Cordova Education Association, were selected out of 2,300 applicants nationwide. They and their schools receive \$1,000 each.



Gaesser



De los Santos

## Women's History Month

**"Nevertheless She Persisted: Honoring Women Who Fight All Forms of Discrimination Against Women"** is the timely theme of the

National Women's History Project 2018 observance of Women's History Month in March. Honorees include Margaret Dunkle, who played a key role in implementing Title IX, the federal law prohibiting gender discrimination in educational institutions; Cristina Jiménez, a leader in the youth-led immigrant rights movement and instrumental in creating the DACA program; and labor activist Saru Jayaraman, who helps restaurant workers mobilize for better wages and working conditions. See the full list at [nwhp.org](http://nwhp.org), and [womenshistorymonth.gov](http://womenshistorymonth.gov) for lesson plans and more. Connect at [#womenshistorymonth](https://twitter.com/womenshistorymonth).





## Essential Conferences

CTA's **Equity and Human Rights Conference**, March 2–4 in Torrance, covers topics promoting diversity and social justice, and training on withstanding attacks on public education. CTA Human Rights Awards will be presented to individuals who have advanced and protected the human and civil rights of members and students. CTA's **Good Teaching Conference South**, March 16–18 in Garden Grove, features workshops focused on curriculum content areas for K-12 teachers, positive classroom management strategies, and much more.

See [cta.org](http://cta.org) for information and to register, and connect at #CTAEHR #CTAGTC.



### NEW EDUCATOR WEEKEND

**FEB. 23-25 CONFERENCE**

SFO Marriott Waterfront, Burlingame. For educators in their first three years. Hotel cut-off is Feb. 7. ► [cta.org](http://cta.org) #CTANEW

### MEMBER-IN-POLITICS AWARD IN HONOR OF TED BASS

**MARCH 1 NOMINATION DEADLINE**

This award honors CTA members for outstanding contributions to their colleagues through effective political action during 2017. Awards are given to one overall winner and up to five single-issue winners. Each chapter may select one nominee.

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

### CHAPTER-IN-POLITICS AWARD IN HONOR OF JOYCE FADEM

**MARCH 1 APPLICATION DEADLINE**

This award honors CTA chapters for outstanding contributions through effective political action during 2017. Awards are given to one large, one medium, one small, and one "rookie" chapter. Any chapter may apply.

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

### CTA/NEA-RETIRED ISSUES CONFERENCE

**MARCH 1-2 CONFERENCE**

Torrance Marriott South Bay. Learn how CTA/NEA-Retired is working to protect your future and maintaining a

constant watch on federal legislation that affects retirement benefits. Stay connected, be protected, and enjoy great benefits. Hotel cut-off is Feb. 14.

► [cta.org](http://cta.org)

### EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

**MARCH 2-4 CONFERENCE**

Torrance Marriott South Bay. Affirms CTA's mission to protect the civil rights of children and secure a more equitable, democratic society. Hotel cut-off is Feb. 14. ► [cta.org](http://cta.org)

### GOOD TEACHING CONFERENCE SOUTH

**MARCH 16-18 CONFERENCE**

Hyatt Regency Orange County, Garden Grove. Supports excellent teaching and learning practices for K-12 teachers, offers a variety of workshops in curriculum content areas, provides opportunities for professional development, and allows time to network with colleagues and experts. Hotel cut-off is March 1. ► [cta.org](http://cta.org)

### JOHN SWETT AWARDS

**APRIL 2 NOMINATION DEADLINE**

The 59th annual John Swett Awards for Media Excellence honor journalists for outstanding coverage of public education issues in publications and electronic media during 2017. Any local chapter or Service Center Council may nominate. Entries are judged

by panels of independent media professionals.

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

### REGION IV LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

**APRIL 13-15 CONFERENCE**

Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina. "It's All About Relationships — Every Site, Every Member in 2018." Learn the ropes of being an association leader, or increase your skill set. ► [cta.org](http://cta.org)

### CCA SPRING CONFERENCE

**APRIL 20-22 CONFERENCE**

Hyatt Regency LAX, Los Angeles. The Community College Association's spring conference highlights advocacy and features the presentation of CCA's WHO (We Honor Ours) Awards.

► [cca4me.org](http://cca4me.org)

### EMEID LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

**APRIL 27 APPLICATION DEADLINE**

The Ethnic Minority Early Identification and Development Program is for ethnic minority members who want to expand their roles at CTA. See page 13 for details. Applicants may apply online starting March 1, and will be notified by May 18. ► [cta.org/emeid](http://cta.org/emeid)

### POLITICAL ACADEMY

**APRIL 27-29 CONFERENCE**

Sacramento. Hands-on learning of the skills needed to be successful in political campaigns. ► [cta.org](http://cta.org)



◀ **Make your voice heard** on Feb. 24, two days before the U.S. Supreme Court hears oral arguments in *Janus v. AFSCME*. See [itsaboutfreedom.org](http://itsaboutfreedom.org) to join thousands rallying in support of workers' rights, including our freedom to come together in strong unions. More on *Janus* on page 38.



# FREE TO READ



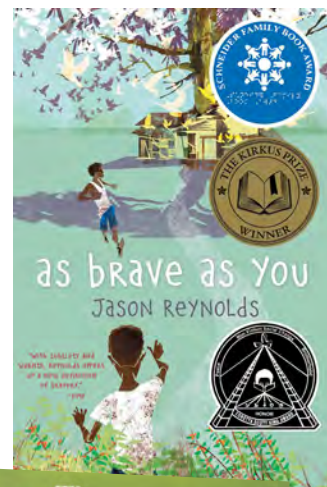
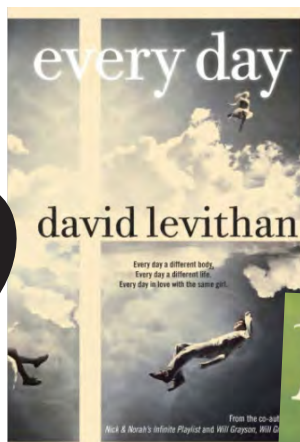
**TO PARAPHRASE** Frederick Douglass, learning to read makes you free. Students can explore that freedom with California Reads, a list of teacher-recommended books for all levels. Among them:

*The Name Jar*, by Yangsook Choi (pre-K, kindergarten), introduces Unhei, who is newly arrived from Korea and worried that her American classmates will not be able to pronounce her name. When she tells them she will choose a name next week, they helpfully fill a jar with names for her to pick from. Unhei practices being a Suzy, Laura and Amanda, before her new friends discover her real name and its special meaning.

*Every Day*, by David Levithan (grades 9-12), explores the complexities of identity and connection. Teen protagonist "A" wakes up "every day a different body, every day a different life" — accessing the host person's memories and becoming that person for 24 hours. A has no gender, going by the pronoun "they." One day, in the body of Justin, A meets Justin's girlfriend Rhiannon and finds they want to be with Rhiannon forever.

*As Brave as You*, by Jason Reynolds (grades 6-8), has city kids Genie and his big brother Ernie spending the summer with their grandparents in rural Virginia. Grandpop — blind and the bravest person Genie knows — says to become a man, you have to learn how to shoot a gun. But Ernie has no interest in learning how to shoot. Genie is left to wonder just what bravery means.

See more at [cta.org/californiareads](http://cta.org/californiareads), and connect at [#californiareads](https://twitter.com/californiareads).



## NEA Foundation Grant Winners

### THREE PRESTIGIOUS

Learning & Leadership

and Student Achievement grants have been awarded to CTA members by the NEA Foundation.

**Sarah Garrity**, California Faculty Association, San Diego State University, \$5,000. Project: Facilitate a study group at Chollas Meade Elementary School to help preschool/kindergarten teachers examine language and literacy practices and align planning,

instruction and assessment across grade levels.

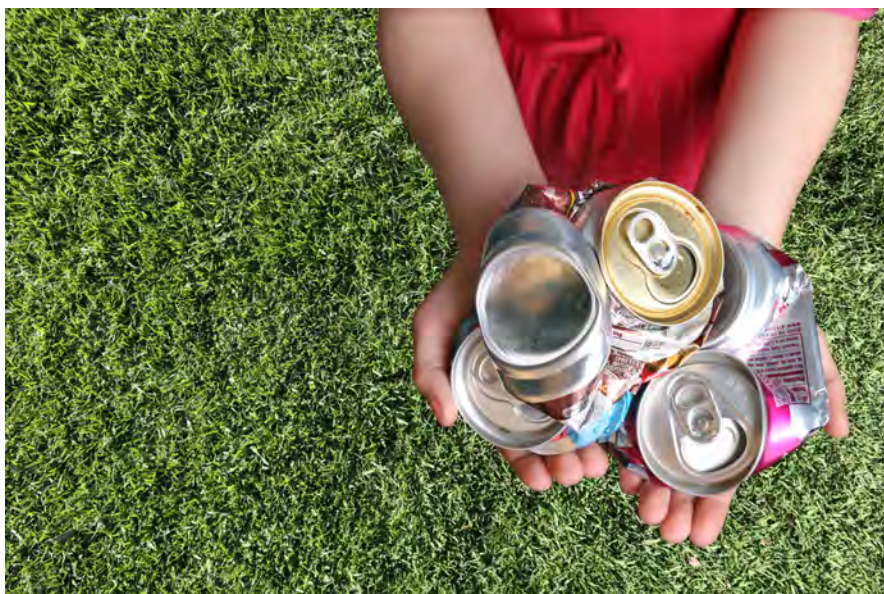
**Robert Medrano** and **Scott Smith**, Torrance Teachers Association, Richardson Middle School, \$5,000. Project: Enrich social studies curriculum and explore important cultural sites using virtual reality field trips.

**Sarah Purl**, South Tahoe Education Association, Bijou Community School, \$5,000. Project: Better understand social-emotional needs

of English learners and other students with high needs by embedding AVID elementary strategies into daily instruction schoolwide.

The NEA Foundation awards grants to NEA member educators three times a year. Application forms and a video with step-by-step instructions on how to apply can be found in the Grants to Educators section of [NEAFoundation.org](http://NEAFoundation.org).





## Worthy Recycling Contest

**THE CALIFORNIA RECYCLING CHALLENGE**, a friendly competition and benchmarking tool for K-12 school recycling programs, offers cash rewards to winning schools. Over a one-month period, schools report their recycling and trash data, which are then ranked according to which school has the largest amount of recyclables per capita, the largest amount of total recyclables, or the highest recycling rate.

Participants can select one of three participation levels — categories designed to encourage participation for those who may not be ready to submit full documentation of their diversion numbers.

Get details and enter your school at [greencaschools.org](http://greencaschools.org).



## ESSENTIAL ELEMENT

**EDUCATORS FROM** Livermore and Granada high schools hold updated, extra-large posters of the periodic table of elements, a gift from Sandia National Laboratories in Livermore. The classroom chart measures 6 feet by 4 feet and includes the city's namesake element, Livermorium, discovered by Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in 2000.

**#MeTooK12**

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

## #METOO FOR STUDENTS

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT** and assault know no age limit. That's the message behind **#MeTooK12**, a new social media hashtag created by national nonprofit Stop Sexual Assault in Schools to encourage young people who were sexually harassed or assaulted while attending K-12 schools to speak out.

An extension of the **#MeToo** social media movement, **#MeTooK12** is an effort to highlight a problem that has received far less public attention than on college campuses and in the workplace. An Associated Press investigation last year found there were 17,000 reports of sexual assaults committed by students against classmates between the fall of 2011 and spring of 2015. Investigators say that figure is likely only a fraction of the actual number of assaults, since incidents are underreported and government data is inconsistent.

## CLASSY GRANTS

**NEED A LITTLE HELP** to fund classroom supplies or equipment? Apply for a Help Your Classroom donation of \$200. Every month, California Casualty selects eight instructors from K-12 public schools across the country for these grants. In the last two years alone, 27 CTA members have been winners. See [calcas.com/help-your-classroom](http://calcas.com/help-your-classroom).

# HUNGER AND TEST PERFORMANCE

**ANY TEACHER** can tell you there is a relationship between poor nutrition and poor student performance. Children just can't think when they don't have food in their stomachs.

Now new evidence shows a connection between a lack of nutrition at home and poor performance on mathematics tests.

In a study released in 2017, researchers found a link between poor test performance and the time of month in which a family's food stamps from the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) run low.

The study was based on student performance in South Carolina. But University of Wisconsin economics professor Chad Cotti says results may be generalized to other locations because "regardless of the state, households receive all of their SNAP assistance on one given day."



Cotti notes that there is a time near the end of an existing SNAP cycle (such as the week before receipt of the next month's SNAP dollars) when children in a SNAP household are in a relatively lower caloric state.

"Our results indicate that during this period academic performance is reduced."

What is not clear is whether poor performance is from lack of food or reaction to stress in the household because food is running out. Now that research has been established, however, solutions are being considered. One possibility: Distribute food

stamps twice a month — as long as there are not unintended consequences of students being hungry twice a month rather than once.

Read the study at [tinyurl.com/SNAPstudy](https://tinyurl.com/SNAPstudy). —Dina Martin

## Find The Right Fit For Your District Health Benefits With CSEBA



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## School Me!

NEA has expanded its support for early career educators with a new site called *NEA Today's School Me* ([neatoday.org/school-me](http://neatoday.org/school-me)).

School Me features blog posts and podcasts from a diverse group of NEA and CTA members, who provide



Robert Rodriguez

guidance, tips and tricks of the trade based on actual experience. For example, CTA Board member Robert V. Rodriguez participates in a March podcast discussing how to handle tough parent meetings.

School Me's videos, meanwhile, offer step-by-step visuals of how to create fun and quick classroom activities for students.



## Inside California Education

**PUBLIC TELEVISION** series "Inside California Education" begins its second season on March 7 (check local PBS listings, or [insidecal.org](http://insidecal.org), for show dates and times). From small rural districts to big city schools, each of the 13 episodes features four segments to tell the education stories of interest to students, parents, educators and community leaders throughout the state.



The EMEID class of 2017-18

## EMEID: A Path to CTA Leadership

**ARE YOU AN** ethnic minority member of CTA? Are you interested in broadening your knowledge of the association and exploring a possible role in leadership?

CTA's Ethnic Minority Early Identification and Development Program (EMEID) can help you. EMEID promotes and develops ethnic minority leadership in the organization, locally and statewide. It builds on existing CTA/NEA programs, trainings, conferences and events, and incorporates coaching and interaction with leadership from local chapters, CTA/NEA, as well as CTA Board members and staff.

Members selected to participate in EMEID 2018-19 begin the program in June and finish 15 months later. They must commit to attending the Emerging Leaders strand at CTA's Summer Institute, at UCLA July 29-Aug. 2, 2018.

To apply, see [cta.org/emeid](http://cta.org/emeid). Key dates: Apply online starting March 1; application deadline is April 27. Applicants will be notified by May 18, 2018.



## CHECK YOUR REPORT

Your CalSTRS Annual Progress Report, that is. The California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) updates members' progress report each September to reflect the prior year's service credit. Reports are available electronically at [mycalstrs.com](http://mycalstrs.com). (You can create your [mycalstrs.com](http://mycalstrs.com) account.) Those wishing to continue receiving a hard copy of the report should contact CalSTRS at 800-228-5453 to request a form, or download the form at [mycalstrs.com](http://mycalstrs.com). Forms must be received by July 1.

Compiled by **Mike Myslinski**

# 43<sup>RD</sup>

**Ranking of California nationwide** in adjusted per-pupil expenditures, based on 2015 data (the most recent data available), according to *Education Week's* annual "Quality Counts" report.

# \$3,109

Amount that California's per-pupil expenditure of \$9,417 is below the national average of \$12,526, from the same "Quality Counts" report.

# \$436,000

Amount that CTA's Disaster Relief Fund provided in 245 grants to members impacted by wildfires and other disasters since September, as reported at State Council Jan. 21, with more grants still in the pipeline.

# 16,656

Number of signatures turned in at San Francisco City Hall Jan. 31 from a petition drive by United Educators of San Francisco members to place a parcel tax on the June ballot to increase educators' wages in the high-cost city. The city has 30 days to verify that the required 11,000 signatures are valid, the *San Francisco Examiner* reported.

# 2 WEEKS

Duration of a successful strike by bus drivers represented by Teamsters Local 572, over student safety issues and working conditions, against the company that Alhambra, Glendale and Pasadena unified school districts contract with to transport students. The strike ended Feb. 1, the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune* reported.

***"Learning takes place in the classroom, and that's why our first job is to support teachers and give them the training and the freedom to teach as they know best."***

—Gov. **JERRY BROWN**, in his Jan. 25 State of the State speech, his final address.

**"THE LACK OF SCHOOL NURSES IN CALIFORNIA PUTS CHILDREN AT RISK."**

—Dr. **F. NDIDI U. GRIFFIN-MYERS**, director, School of Nursing, Fresno State University. The ratio of students to school nurses in the state was 2,784:1 in 2015. (See story, page 26.)

**"We won't stand for vouchers, and we will not allow for any privatization of public education in the great state of California. Not in this state. Not on my watch."**

—Assembly Member **TONY THURMOND**, CTA-supported candidate for state superintendent of public instruction, in his Jan. 21 speech about pushing back on White House threats, to cheering delegates at the CTA State Council meeting in Los Angeles.

**"We're losing really good teachers."**

—National City Elementary Teachers Association Vice President **TAMLYN McKEAN**, in Jan. 10 KNSD-TV (NBC) news coverage of the San Diego County chapter's second protest rally in a month over salaries and other issues. Teachers are leaving the district for better pay elsewhere.

**"We simply want to remind the public of the critical importance that public schools and teachers play in the future of our community."**

—Alameda Education Association President **JUDITH KLINGER**, quoted in the Jan. 25 *Alameda Sun* about the AEA campaign asking local businesses to support educators by placing anchor-themed signs in their windows to remind the public that teachers "anchor" the community.



By @samdemuro

## Which platform to use?

This depends on your social media goals.

**f FACEBOOK:** the most popular, with the most features (posts, photos, videos, Facebook Live, etc.). Public-facing Brand pages can be “liked” by users; can help with branding and connecting with a larger, external community. (Paying to boost posts ensures your audience can actually see your content in their news feeds.) Facebook Groups lets you control privacy options, allow for document sharing; a great way to engage users around a specific topic/interest.

**🐦 TWITTER:** arguably the most activist; users can connect over hashtags and issue-based content. News media’s Twitter is useful to connect to journalists and news outlets. Many educators use Twitter to build personal brands and connect with other educators. Also helpful for conferences and professional development opportunities, like Twitter chats.

**📷 INSTAGRAM:** provides an easy way to share photos and memes to illustrate resources and messages. Hashtags are an excellent way to find relevant content or archive classroom content. Instagram Stories let you create in-the-moment, 24-hour-expiring content without the stress of posting the “perfect” photo or video.

Have a great social media presence we should know? Tell us at [social@cta.org](mailto:social@cta.org) and we’ll give you a follow!

# Getting Social

**THINKING OF STARTING** or upgrading your social media platforms? An active social media presence for your local chapter or classroom can provide quality connections and great audience engagement. A few considerations:

### WHY BE ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

Don’t do it just because “everyone’s doing it.” Get motivated because you want to share information, connect to a larger audience, strengthen your voice or your members’ voices, and enhance your brand identity.

### WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

Whether members, parents, students or other educators, keep them in mind as you craft messaging and curate content.

### WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

To spread awareness on issues? Connect to members? Reach out to other educators? Thinking about your goals will help shape content and messaging.

### WHAT PLATFORMS DO YOUR MEMBERS OR TARGETED AUDIENCES CURRENTLY USE?

Send out a survey, or ask in person. Pick one or two platforms and do them well.

### WHY SHOULD THEY FOLLOW YOU?

You follow social media accounts because the content is engaging, funny and relevant. When creating and curating your content, always think about why your audience should come back for more.

### DO YOU HAVE THE CAPACITY TO MAINTAIN A PRESENCE?

For a local chapter or a group of people, it may be easier with multiple administrators/editors working together. If it’s just you, check out tools such as Hootsuite, Tweetdeck or Facebook’s own scheduling tool to plan out your posts.

**Add to Your Skills** Brush up on your social media, photography and other skills with CTA webinars only available to members. Coming up: Best Practices on Twitter & Instagram, March 15, 4-5 p.m., and Visuals, Memes & Photography, May 17, 4-5 p.m. Resources and video of past webinars are also available. See [cta.org/online Trainings](http://cta.org/online Trainings).



# Secret Admirers

Classroom friction disappeared when my students focused on others' strengths and kindnesses

By Elena Aguilar

**A**lthough my first year of teaching was more than two decades ago, I clearly remember how my second-graders returned from Thanksgiving more settled and focused. I was teaching at a public school in Oakland, and as December began, I was hopeful, energetic and increasingly confident about the learning routines I'd established in my class.

Yet cliques had formed among some of the girls, and too often kids were not nice to each other. Another teacher had given me a book called *Tribes: A New Way of Learning Together*, a guide to building a safe and caring learning community in the classroom. I wholeheartedly adopted it.

Committed to addressing student dynamics, I found an activity in *Tribes* to try out. One day in our morning circle, each student drew the name of a classmate and became that person's secret admirer for the day. The

rules included that you couldn't tell anyone which name you had chosen, and you had to observe that classmate all day and find behaviors to appreciate.

At the end of the day, we squeezed back into our tight circle on the rug, and students revealed the person they'd been watching and shared appreciations: "Oscar gave Manuel his soccer ball during recess," and "Lizette walked quietly to lunch," and "Billy helped Tomas with math."

## A powerful activity

As students offered and received appreciations, their expressions shifted and revealed pride, joy and connection. I was surprised at how astutely these 7-year-old children had observed each other, identifying specific, admirable behaviors in a classmate who may or may not have been their friend.

When we debriefed and wrapped up the activity, Tomas asked if we could repeat the activity the next day, and the whole class echoed their approval. "Sure," I said. "Why not?"

At the end of the second day of secret admirers, I got the same request. "Why can't we do this every day?" asked Elizabeth. And so we did. Day after day, the kids pulled names from the hat. Sometimes we had "challenge days" where everyone drew two or three names. Other days were "Me too!" days — students also had to identify their own behaviors for which they wanted recognition. We created and posted lists of the student behaviors that kids were most proud of, or most liked observing — those reflecting kindness, cooperation, personal responsibility, courage and so on.

The day before winter break started, we reflected on the school year. I told them that during the break, I'd be planning for the rest of the year. I asked what they would like more of, or less of, and what suggestions they had for our class overall.

The secret admirers activity was unanimously endorsed. "All year!" they chanted. Oscar, who had to exert a great deal of energy to regulate his behavior, said, "I love coming to school now, and every day I think, 'I can't wait to get caught doing good things!'" "OK," I said, "we'll keep doing it." Their cheers attracted the attention of my colleague next door.

As I observed their excitement, I noticed that my behavior chart on the wall hadn't been used in weeks — not since before we'd started this routine. I'd always had mixed feelings about this classroom management device — every time I asked a student to turn his or her card to orange or red, it only seemed to exacerbate his



*“Researchers in psychology, organizational change management and neuroscience agree that focusing on the positive not only feels good, but works when you’re trying to change or want others to change.”*

or her behavior, and the element of public shaming made me uncomfortable. When I walked into my classroom on the first day after winter break, I took it down.

In January, my students settled back into school routines, and I held my breath in the hopes that all would continue to go smoothly. And it did. Secret admirers continued throughout the year. The kids didn’t seem to tire of it, and the behavior chart never went back up. It was like a switch had been flicked in my classroom and the unpleasant interpersonal behavior between students declined considerably.

Our community felt good. At the time, I didn’t know why this activity worked so well, but I was thrilled to be avoiding many of the classroom management challenges that my new-teacher colleagues were dealing with.

### **A shift toward the positive**

Some years later, I learned why the secret admirers activity worked: We focused on strengths, assets or bright spots. This is an extensively researched approach in psychology, organizational change management and neuroscience. And

researchers in all those fields agree that focusing on the positive not only feels good, but works when you’re trying to change or want others to change.

Whether you try this with toddlers or teens, or even adult learners, know that some may resist at first, but as with any activity or teaching strategy we give a go, keep at it, reflect after, and modify if necessary.

As you reflect on how this year has been going and how you might want to start next year, consider opportunities to focus on bright spots — in yourself, in your students and in your community. ■

*Elena Aguilar is an author and former Oakland teacher. Excerpted from Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators (Jossey-Bass), available in May. Copyright Edutopia.org; George Lucas Educational Foundation.*

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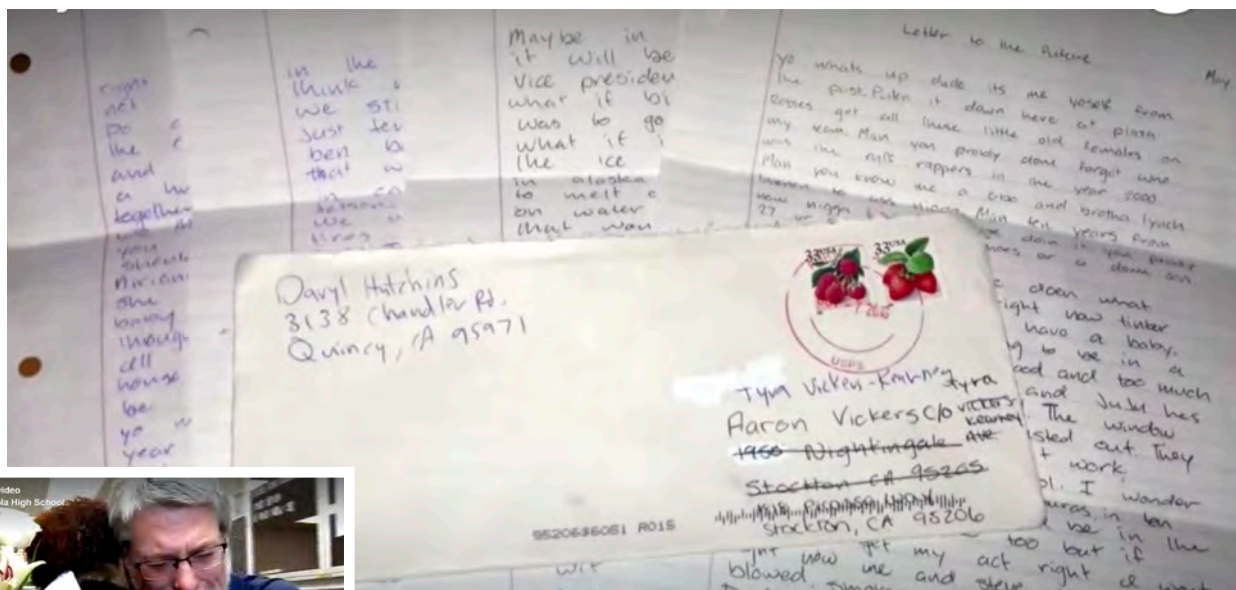
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Make life easy.



Educator Daryl Hutchins hugs Aaron Vickers' mother. Hutchins delivered a letter written by Vickers, who died two years after graduating from high school, to Vickers' family.

# Letters From Their Younger Selves

Teacher delivers students' thoughts, hopes about the future By Dina Martin

When Daryl Hutchins first assigned his students to write a “letter to my future self,” he thought it would be a high-motivation, low-input activity to fill the last hectic few weeks of the school year. Little did he realize it would not only become a crowning achievement of his teaching career, but also have a deep impact on those students and their families for years to come.

That much was brought home to Hutchins over a year ago when he delivered an unopened letter to the family of one of his former students, Aaron Vickers, who had tragically been killed at age 19 in a drive-by shooting in Stockton in 2002. The letter ended up generating local media coverage that culminated with a national segment on the CBS news show *Inside Edition*.

Hutchins returns the sealed letters to his students after 15 years. He didn't learn of Vickers' death until the young man's former classmates at Plaza Robles High School in Stockton had received their letters. Now teaching continuation high school in the Plumas County Office of Education, Hutchins was stunned by the news that Vickers had died just two years after high school. Hutchins was able to track down Vickers' mother and sister to tell them he had a letter from Vickers that he wanted to deliver to them.



Daryl Hutchins

“They were blown away, in tears and in shock,” says Hutchins, now a Plumas County Teachers Association member. In fact, it was Vickers' family who contacted local media about the letter.

Less than two weeks later, a TV crew from *Inside Edition* drove Vickers' mom and sister some four hours from





***“It’s given me extreme joy in keeping track of these students. Of everything I’ve produced in the classroom, I consider this to be the best.”***

Stockton to Portola, where they read the four-page letter to Hutchins’ current students.

“It made us smile, it made us cry, it made us laugh again,” Vickers’ mother, Tyra Vickers-Kearney, tells Hutchins in the TV segment. “I loved the whole letter. I loved the fact that it is a letter from him. I’m still in awe over that.”

Vickers touched on several topics in his high school letter to himself, from Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson being “the man” in wrestling to a political prediction that maybe in the year 2010, there would be a black vice president. For Vickers’ family, the letter will be a precious remembrance of their son for years to come.

Hutchins has made the assignment to his middle school, high school and continuation students for most of his 29 years of teaching. Each day during the last weeks of school, he asks them to write a page on school issues, friendship issues, current events, goals for the future, their view of life, a shout-out to classmates, and personal things they want to include. Despite his assurances to students that they will want to have this letter in the future, in truth, not everyone completes the assignment.

Those who do, turn in their letters to Hutchins with a self-addressed envelope. He himself never reads the letters, but bundles them in several layers of plastic and duct tape to preserve them, and then labels them. Over the years, with the help of classroom aides, he has developed a master file of 650 letters, of which 350 have been successfully returned to the student writers. The dawn of

Facebook several years ago has made the distribution task much easier, he says.

Besides Vickers’ letter, several other poignant letters have surfaced. One was from another deceased student, whose daughter learned from the letter that she had already picked out her future daughter’s name. While Hutchins has learned of the deaths of several students, he has also heard from many others who went on to have happy and successful lives.

“They grow up,” he says. “They may not be CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, but they go on to get good jobs and raise families.”

At least one former student from Hutchins’ all-time “class from hell” sent a note of apology for his past behavior and what the class put Hutchins through. That realization came to the former student only after having children of his own.

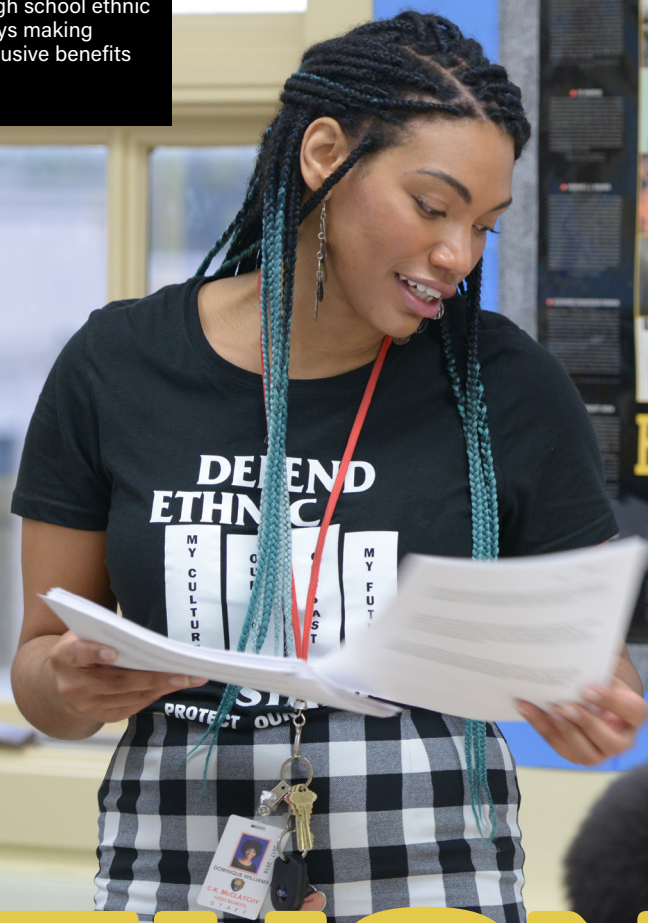
Since letters are stashed away for 15 years, the rewards from the project are delayed. But then, Hutchins points out, he is able to learn about his former students’ later lives — something not every teacher is able to do.

Although he has received many complimentary Facebook messages from these students, Hutchins says he is most touched by the fact that they are so surprised he kept his promise to hold and deliver the letters.

“I’m a big proponent of this assignment,” Hutchins says. “It’s given me extreme joy in keeping track of these students. Of everything I’ve produced in the classroom, I consider this to be the best.” ■

Watch the *Inside Edition* segment at [bit.ly/2zxwojK](http://bit.ly/2zxwojK).

Dominique Williams, who teaches high school ethnic studies, says making history inclusive benefits everyone.



# BEYOND

## *Black History Month*

Educators teach a comprehensive view of American history — all year long

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin Photos by Scott Buschman



When Ashlea Laury was growing up, Black History Month in February meant studying about slavery, Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks. But now, in a unique class called Project WORD, the senior at Mt. Pleasant High School in San Jose is learning more about her African American roots.



Ashlea Laury, left, and Rozalina Ingram in Debra Robinson's class.



Debra Robinson with student Christian Drake.

“WE WERE ROYALTY IN AFRICA before we were slaves,” she says proudly. “There is much more to our history than what the history books tell us.”

Debra Robinson is among the many educators to change the tradition of teaching black history just one month per year. Her class instills African American students with a sense of pride that comes from understanding their comprehensive history, including ancient Egyptian civilization, where major advancements in mathematics, astronomy, science and architecture took place. Students look forward to the monthly visits from Egyptologist Anthony T. Browder, an author and cultural historian who has lectured worldwide on issues related to African and African American History.

Project WORD (which stands for Working on Redefining Our Destiny) is a cultural enrichment class for African American students created by Debra Watkins, a longtime San Jose educator and current executive director of A Black Education Network ([aben4ace.org](http://aben4ace.org)), formerly called the California Alliance of African American Educators.

“Black history should not be just a one-month event,” says Robinson, a member of the East Side Teachers Association. “It’s part of American history. You can’t separate these things. In most schools, our history begins in America with slavery. But we were people before we were slaves.”

While Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks are the most recognized leaders in the struggle for civil rights, Robinson makes a point to teach students about lesser

**“WE DISCUSS THE NEED TO REMAIN CONSCIOUS AND VIGILANT OF WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE ARE DOING, AS EVENTS CONTINUE TO EVOLVE.”**

—DEBRA ROBINSON, EAST SIDE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

known leaders and events in black history, including Huey Newton and the Black Panther Movement, human rights activist Malcolm X, the Harlem Renaissance of art and music that led to the Roaring ’20s, historian and civil rights activist W.E.B. Du Bois, botanist and scientist George Washington Carver, and renowned mathematician and astronomer Benjamin Banneker, whose mathematical genius was key in the design and development of the nation’s capital. History, she explains, is broader than a few individuals.

Students also discuss what Robinson describes as “black history in the making,” such as the Black Lives Matter movement and athletes taking a knee during the national anthem, both forms of protest to raise awareness of African Americans who have been gunned down in the streets of America in record numbers.

“We discuss our responsibility as African Americans in terms of patriotism, when in many ways we are being dishonored as citizens,” says Robinson. “We discuss the need to remain conscious and vigilant of who we are and what we are doing as events continue to evolve, so we understand what is going on in our world. The theme for this year is ‘Stay Woke.’”

Best of all, the class communicates to black students that they



Debra Robinson

Williams says teaching a more inclusive history helps raise awareness and empathy among students, “so they know other people’s stories.”



are valued yearlong, and Project WORD builds a strong sense of community that has contributed to students’ academic success.

“This class helps me to better understand what it means to be black,” explains senior Melissa Perry. “I’m black and Mexican, and I had no black friends. But through this class I’ve learned more about my other half, and I’m proud of who I am.”

### ***Ethnic studies classes offer depth and perspective***

Dominique Williams asks her students if they can name the “4 I’s” of oppression. Hands rise, and students list them: ideological, institutional, interpersonal and internalized.

Institutional racism — the idea that one group is better than another and has the right to control the other group — has been embedded in society throughout history, says Williams, who teaches ethnic studies at McClatchy High School in Sacramento. She believes it is time for that to change, and the first step is making history inclusive, so that students see themselves as part of the past and the present.

“Ethnic studies allows schools to teach U.S. history the way it should be taught, by including all groups and highlighting their contributions to our country,” says Williams. “U.S. history is very white centric, and

## **DO’S AND DON’TS OF TEACHING BLACK HISTORY**

### ***Do...***

- **Incorporate black history year-round**, not just in February.
- **Continue Learning.** Explore how 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.
- **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** 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.** Be sure to 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 historic figures and social movements.
- **Shy away from controversial, ambiguous, or unresolved issues.** Share the real-life experiences about racial realities in developmentally appropriate ways.

For the full list, see [tolerance.org](https://tolerance.org).



This spring, Karen Ramroth will travel with students to Sojourn to the Past, a weeklong journey along the path of the civil rights movement in the American South.

**“STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT THE WORK AND SACRIFICES OF THE PAST TO EMPOWER THEM TO ADDRESS ISSUES IN THE PRESENT.”**

—KAREN RAMROTH, SEQUOIA DISTRICT TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

ethnic studies essentially decentralizes the narrative of white Americans and is inclusive of everyone. It’s a way to go beyond Black History Month, Latino History Month, Asian History Month and Women’s History Month. In ethnic studies, we do it all year round.”

Making history more inclusive doesn’t just benefit students of color — it also benefits white students, says the Sacramento City Teachers Association member.

“It helps to raise awareness and empathy, so they know other peoples’ stories. Whether students are from different cultures, countries, income levels, or are LGBT, they deserve to be validated and feel they belong in the learning environment.”

She encourages her students to make a map of their lives and highlight major moments, which often have to do with race, culture and trauma.

“I want my students to see they have agency and they are a part of history. History is still happening, and they belong in it.”

## ***Seeing black history firsthand***

Students at Carlmont High School in Belmont will travel this spring with ethnic studies teacher Karen Ramroth, during a weeklong journey along the path of the civil

rights movement through the American South for a program called Sojourn to the Past ([sojournproject.com](http://sojournproject.com)). Founded by Jeff Steinberg, a San Bruno teacher (now retired), the program is aligned with state and national curriculum standards, provides participants with an opportunity to earn college credit, and is made available to underserved students. It has been honored by the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities, the National Education Association, and the U.S. Congress as a social justice education outreach program for youth.

“The connection between Sojourn and ethnic studies means learning about history and turning it into some sort of action,” says Ramroth, a member of the Sequoia District Teachers Association who went on the Sojourn in high school. “We ask students in both programs to learn about the work and sacrifices of the past to motivate, encourage and empower them to address issues in the present and future. I know Sojourn had that impact on me, and I have seen the same impact on my students.”

This year, students will go to Jackson, Mississippi, to learn the story of Medgar Evers, who worked to overturn segregation and voting rights before being murdered by a white supremacist; Birmingham, Alabama, to learn the story of the Children’s Campaign and the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church; Little Rock, Arkansas, to learn about the Little Rock Nine; and Memphis, Tennessee, to learn about the last days of King and the Poor People’s Campaign.

Elysia Wright, a senior going on the trip, isn’t sure what to expect.

“I don’t know a lot about civil rights, but I want to become involved. I’m an introvert, and I’m hoping that seeing these things will give me courage to participate more in the movement.”



Karen Ramroth







Fourth-grade teacher Kristie Puls explains to students that what they do matters, and may someday become a part of history. Inset: Some of the “Amazing Americans” Puls’ class are learning about.

## Learning at a young age

“Let’s talk about Sylvia Mendez. She moved to Westminster and wanted to go to the white school, but she was told she had to go to a school for Mexican children. Her family fought back.”

It’s early October during Latino Heritage Month, and Kristie Puls explains to her fourth-grade GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) students at Westmont Elementary School in Anaheim about the court case that helped desegregate schools in California. She makes a point of teaching history about minorities all year long, so students feel included.

“The election scared a lot of kids. There has been some bullying. So it’s important to talk about how people are different and how boring it would be if we were all the same.”

Puls has been teaching her students about Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks and Ruby Bridges, and how these heroes were a catalyst in the battle for equal fights.

“We have written letters to Ruby Bridges asking about her experiences with racism as a young child and what advice she has for about overcoming bullying and differences. We talked about how difficult it can be to go to a new school, and how terrible it would be if people didn’t want you there.”

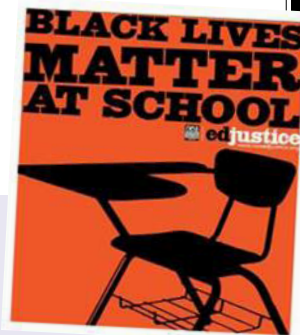
Talk returns to the *Mendez* decision in 1947, and the children are shocked to learn that it really happened not so long ago. Many of their grandparents were alive then.

“If this case never happened, we still might have segregation,” says



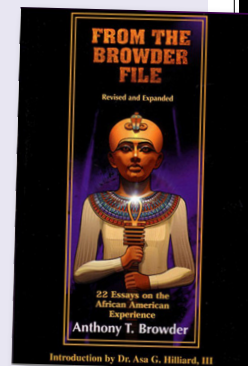
## BLACK LIVES MATTER AT SCHOOL

Check out NEA’s resource site centered on Black Lives Matter at School (see [NEAedjustice.org](https://www.nea.org/edjustice.org)). You’ll find stories detailing how educators and students are organizing for racial justice; curated lesson plans by grade level; resources from locals, school districts and partners; and art and videos to use to educate, engage and take action for racial justice in education.



## FREE YOUR MIND

Project WORD curriculum used in Debra Robinson’s Mt. Pleasant High School class is drawn from *From the Browder File* by cultural historian Anthony T. Browder.



Puls, a member of Anaheim Elementary Teachers Association. “That would be terrible.”

She asks students to come up with a noun to describe the Mendez family, who won the landmark Orange County case, *Mendez v. Westminster School District*, which laid the groundwork for school desegregation throughout California and eventually the nation decades before the civil rights movement captured the country’s attention. She explains that the family didn’t win at first, and had to appeal.

“She had perseverance,” says a student. “Her family never gave up.”

“It’s important to never give up,” replies Puls. “What the Mendez family did matters. What you will do also matters. Someday your actions may also become a part of history.” ■

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**"The workshop inspired me and gave me tools to  
take back to the classroom!"**

– Fifth Grade Teacher, Sacramento, CA

**"I have been moved and empowered!"**

– Administrator, Kern County, CA



Lynda Boyer-Chu, a nurse at George Washington High School in San Francisco, gives a flu shot to Taylor Miller.



## VITAL ROLES

### School nurses are essential in meeting students' health needs

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



**YEARS AGO**, nearly every school had a nurse, recalls Dr. F. Ndidi U. Griffin-Myers, director of the School of Nursing at Fresno State University, which has a school nurse credential program.

But times have changed, observes the California Faculty Association member. Due to budget cuts, the number of school nurses has dwindled in California. Nurses are now often responsible for multiple schools and large populations of students, coinciding with more students with serious health issues attending schools.

"In the old days, you bandaged a kid with a scrape or handled an occasional emergency, but now we are talking about feeding tubes, diabetes, epilepsy, students with heart problems, severe food allergies, and acute and chronic illnesses," says Griffin-Myers. "The lack of school nurses in California puts children at risk."





At a Corona Norco Unified School District office, nurse Norah Arrington works a shift on the help line.

**"WE NEED MORE SCHOOL NURSES. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT NURSES SPEAK UP, BECAUSE STUDENTS ARE UNABLE TO ADVOCATE FOR THEMSELVES."**

—F. NDIDI GRIFFIN-MYERS,  
SCHOOL OF NURSING,  
FRESNO STATE UNIVERSITY

**IN 2010,** California had 2,187 students per school nurse, according to the National Association of School Nurses. By 2015, that ratio rose to 2,784:1, with ratios varying wildly among counties, according to [Kidsdata.org](http://Kidsdata.org). During 2015 in Santa Cruz County, for example, the ratio was a shocking 8,920:1; in Tuolumne it was 6,122:1; and in Monterey, 6,574:1.

In 2016, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended that *every* school have a nurse. Twenty-two states require school nurses, and 15 states require staffing ratios. California is not among them, despite state and federal laws that require districts to meet the medical needs of students with disabilities and health conditions.

A 2015 study by SRI International, involving researchers from Sacramento State University, UC Berkeley and University of Wisconsin-Madison, examines how California schools are meeting health service needs during the school day. The study concludes that a large population of children lacks access to minimal health services during the school day; that only 43 percent of school districts employ a school nurse; and that 1.2 million California students attend schools in the 57 percent of school districts without one.

"It is not a stretch to speculate that all children [in districts without school nurses] — and especially children with special health care needs — are experiencing poorer health and academic outcomes because they don't have access to school nurses," states a summary of the report.

Griffin-Myers believes the situation may worsen.

"As more people lose health insurance, we are going

to see more students who will rely on schools for health care. So we are going to need more school nurses. It is important that nurses speak up, because students are unable to advocate for themselves."

While working harder, school nurses have found ways to help students stay healthier through prevention, education, community partnerships, and a strong dose of can-do spirit.

### ADVICE JUST A PHONE CALL AWAY

How do 12 school nurses help meet the needs of 54,000 students in the Corona-Norco Unified School District? School nurses started a help line that allows for telephone triage, so serious problems get instant attention.

Nurses rotate the position, and when a nurse is on call, they are responsible for answering questions from office staff, health clerks who are trained to provide first aid, registration clerks with questions about immunizations, and administrators and parents. They confirm activities and procedures for nurses out in the field.

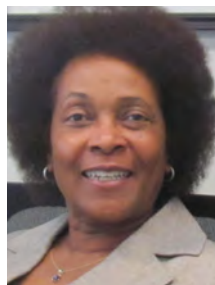
It was nurses who dreamed up the call center over a decade ago, when school nurses began to feel overwhelmed.

"This help line allows the school nurses to do the work they need to do instead of fielding phone calls all day," says Norah Arrington, named 2017 School Nurse of the Year by the San Bernardino Riverside County School Nurses Organization. "It allows for some of our diabetics who can inject

their own insulin to be supervised by well-trained health clerks, who call in to verify insulin dose based on carb count and blood sugar. We take lots of calls about diabetics to determine a course of action during the day by looking at their health plan and physician orders."

On-call nurses typically receive between 30 and 50 calls during a school day.

"Advice nurses can access health plans for all district students. We ensure schools meet the requirements of public health laws



F. Ndidi Griffin-Myers





**"SCHOOL NURSES ARE AT THE FRONT LINES OF PUBLIC HEALTH. WE PLAY A ROLE IN CREATING A HEALTHIER SOCIETY."**

—LINDA BOYER-CHU,  
UNITED EDUCATORS OF SAN FRANCISCO

and immunization laws. And we can tell office staff when it's time to call 911."

The Corona-Norco Teachers Association member remembers a time when nurses ran all over the district from emergency to emergency and couldn't get there fast enough.

"It could take us 30 minutes to get across town. This is much easier, and it's the next best thing to being there," Arrington says.

## IMPROVING VISION, WIPING OUT FLU

Lynda Boyer-Chu had a vision: to make sure students without good eyesight could see. She organized a vision-screening program for all freshmen at George Washington High School in San Francisco.

When she began working at this school of 2,000 students, she noticed some of the students were squinting to see. San Francisco Unified School District only screens first- and fourth-graders on a routine basis, but many high school students were arriving too late for that, or their vision had worsened and their parents were unaware of the problem due to lack of screening.



At Limerick Elementary in Winnetka, nurse Nancy Semerjian shows students how to use equipment.

"Seven years ago, I realized I had the capacity to screen all ninth-graders due to my accepting nursing students from City College or University of San Francisco as interns," Boyer-Chu says. "Because I'm not fluent in other languages but a substantial number of our parents speak Chinese or Spanish, I always ask for and usually get bilingual nursing students."

Approximately 25 percent of students do not pass the vision screening, and when that happens she calls their parents. If they are unable to afford glasses, she offers referrals and resources from partnerships with LensCrafters and the nonprofit Children's Vision First to provide free eyeglasses.

Boyer-Chu also wanted to reduce absenteeism due to flu, so she implemented a vaccination program targeting ninth-graders. Washington High is the only San Francisco school that offers the flu vaccine on campus, thanks to the help of nursing students. In addition, Boyer-Chu created a partnership with UC San Francisco dental students to provide dental screenings for English learners and students with special needs, who often lack access to dental care.





**“THE JOB IS TO KEEP STUDENTS  
IN SCHOOL — DESPITE HEALTH  
CHALLENGES THEY FACE.  
IT’S A DEMANDING JOB,  
BUT I LOVE WHAT I DO.”**

—NANCY SEMERJIAN,  
UNITED TEACHERS LOS ANGELES

Students use the room an hour per week and sometimes more, going from station to station.

“Oh my gosh, the kids love it,” says the United Teachers Los Angeles member.

Semerjian had the campus designated as a “tasting school,” to sample healthy foods the district is considering serving. Students feel important being “taste testers” and have given thumbs up to turkey dogs, whole-grain bread and other healthy choices.

She created a five-minute workout for the student body first thing in the morning. Fifth-graders provide instructions over the intercom and play music as students march in place, do jumping jacks, squats and deep breathing. The routine has a calming effect on students and transitions them into work mode.

Semerjian started lunchtime walking clubs and provided pedometers to students through another grant from Fire Up

Your Feet, an organization dedicated to movement. Last year, students walked a total of 5,000 miles at school, and their goal is to beat that record this year.

She partnered with Vision to Learn, a program that provides free eye exams and glasses for students, and is involved with the school’s social-emotional learning team, which helps students cope with bullying and other problems.

“Everyone thinks I put Band-Aids on and let children lie down in my office, but that is just a small part of my job description,” says Semerjian. “In addition to overseeing programs helping students stay healthier, I manage health plans of students with colostomies, catheters, feeding tubes and food allergies. The job of a school nurse is keeping students in school — despite health challenges they face. It’s a demanding job, but I love what I do.”

## HELPING TEEN MOMS AND THEIR BABIES

Thanks in part to the support of school nurse Yolanda Cuevas, Ana Perez had a healthy baby girl, finished high school and became a caring mother to Adamary, who is now 13 months old.

“Yolanda encouraged me to never give up, and I didn’t,” says Perez, now 20, who still regularly visits the school nurse who made such a difference in her life.

“School nurses are at the front lines for public health,” says Boyer-Chu, United Educators of San Francisco. “We play a role in creating a healthier society.”

## PREVENTING OBESITY

A record number of students are overweight and at risk of developing diabetes and heart problems. In fact, some experts say today’s youth will live shorter lives than their parents.

Nancy Semerjian, a school nurse at Limerick Elementary School in Winnetka in the San Fernando Valley, hopes to change that grim prognosis by helping students stay fit and eat healthier, while having fun at the same time.

She joined the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, a national program dedicated to keeping students physically active and nutritionally aware. With nearly \$5,000 in grant money from Healthier Generation and from Kaiser Permanente, she converted a classroom into a circuit gym for students. There are punching bags, treadmills, balance pillows, power ropes, bike pedals, hula hoops, yoga mats and yoga classes.





Yolanda Cuevas with Ana Perez and daughter Adamary. Cuevas helped Perez have a healthy pregnancy and stay in school.

Cuevas manages the Nurse-Family Partnership Program in Los Angeles Unified School District, and her territory includes South Los Angeles, where Perez lives. The program was created by Dr. David Olds, whose research found that helping women early in pregnancy prevented their babies from being born prematurely due to factors such as smoking, drugs, malnutrition or abnormalities caused by fetal alcohol syndrome.

“My goal is to help teens deliver healthy babies, see them graduate from high school and become self-sufficient,” says Cuevas, a member of United Teachers Los Angeles. “We try to prevent high-risk behavior through education for pregnant students who range in age from 11 to 19, enrolled in LAUSD. That includes students who dropped out. We assist in bringing them back to school.”

LAUSD is the only school district in the nation with this program. It is an expansion of the Los Angeles County Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) Program and is funded by the California Home Visiting Program. There are 4.5 positions devoted to the program, says Cuevas, and referrals are made by school nurses, counselors, teachers and administrators.

“We don’t tell students what to do. We provide them with information and explain that school nurses are mandated reporters, but everything is kept confidential. Sometimes we meet before they have told their parents. We encourage participation in the sessions by parents or the father of the child — if they are comfortable doing so, and willing.

“The NFP model is a home visitation program, but we accommodate students and meet with them at school on occasion or sometimes in a park. Our nurses are flexible and nonjudgmental. We don’t know what these students have gone through.”

For the first month, nurses meet with the pregnant teen weekly, to assure she has a doctor, is keeping prenatal appointments, taking prenatal vitamins, making healthy choices, and staying in school. Later,

## NEED A NURSE?

### 1.4 MILLION

Approximately 1.4 million school-age children in California are considered to have a special health care need, which includes chronic conditions such as allergies, heart problems, seizure disorders or diabetes.

Many of these children do not have access to minimal health services during the school day.

### 43%

43 percent of California school districts employ school nurses.

### 1.2 MILLION

There are 1.2 million students in the 57 percent of state school districts without a nurse.

*Source: SRI International 2015 study*

visits drop to twice monthly. After delivery there are weekly visits for six weeks, which continue until the baby is 2. Nurses help the young moms with birth control and sexual health.

“It is rewarding to see these young girls mature,” says Cuevas. “We have had 65 girls since this program started in 2012, and about 96 percent of them graduate high school and go on to college and vocational school. They want to do well, for their children.”

Perez plans to go to college and would like to become a nurse, like her mentor.

“It’s hard being a young mom,” she says. “But it’s been much easier having someone like nurse Yolanda to support me.” ■

# *A Crucial Election*

**THE 2018 ELECTION** will be critical. All statewide offices are up for election, including governor and superintendent of public instruction (SPI), along with state Senate, Assembly and local school board seats.

Who wins these races and their views on public education will have a direct impact on students and educators.

A lot is at stake. We're seeing threats of vouchers and public school privatization, threats to immigrant students, and our state's teacher shortage, among other California education issues.

To fight the attacks on public education that are coming from multiple fronts, we need leaders, champions and allies. And we need to make our voices heard. Our collective political voice matters greatly to our students, our profession, and our communities that depend so much on strong schools and a well-educated workforce to thrive.

CTA recommends Gavin Newsom for governor, and Tony Thurmond for SPI. You can find a complete list of other recommended candidates for state office at [campaign2018cta.org](http://campaign2018cta.org). For your personalized recommendations in state and local races, go to CTA's Voter Guide at [cta.yourvoter.guide](http://cta.yourvoter.guide) and enter your address.

CTA makes it easy for you to stay informed and get involved. Check out [campaign2018cta.org](http://campaign2018cta.org) for ways to take action, volunteer, and get links to voter information, resources and election data. **#VotePublicEd**



Newsom



Thurmond

## **CTA'S RECOMMENDATION PROCESS**

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

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

After the interviews, teams make their recommendations. Those that are approved by the CTA Board of Directors are sent on to CTA State Council's 800 delegates, who debate them and make final recommendations.

## **Correction**

In our December/January issue, we erroneously listed Scott Svonkin as a CTA-recommended candidate. CTA has made no recommendation for Board of Equalization District 3.



Scott Buschman

# Meet Tony Thurmond

With a stellar track record of support for students and youth, CTA's choice for state superintendent is ready to lead

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin



**THIS JUNE**, voters may elect a new state superintendent of public instruction (SPI) to oversee California's public schools, which educate 6.2 million K-12 students. The challenges facing our schools are many: California has nearly 60 percent of its students living in poverty (eligible for free and reduced-cost meals), has 1.3 million English learners, and is 46th in the nation in per-pupil spending. President Trump's plan to defund public schools by putting federal dollars into vouchers and for-profit charter schools sets the stakes even higher in this election.

CTA recommends Assembly Member Tony Thurmond, former Richmond City Council member and former West Contra Costa Unified school board member. His opponents include Marshall Tuck, former president of Green Dot Public Schools, who received \$12 million from charter school groups in the 2014 SPI race he lost narrowly to current Superintendent Tom Torlakson.

We caught up with Thurmond recently, and asked him to share his views on a wide variety of topics for our members. Here's what he had to say.



## How did public education influence your life?

It's been everything for me. My mother, an immigrant, raised four kids alone until she lost her battle with cancer. At age 6, I and one of my brothers left California to live with cousins I'd never met in Philadelphia. We struggled and moved around a lot.

What saved me was having teachers believe in me, support me, and set the bar high for me. I could have easily ended up in California state prison instead of the California State Assembly. I see myself every day in students who face challenges. And like teachers who believed in me, I believe in them. So, I fight to give every student the same opportunity to receive a quality education.

## Was there a teacher who made a difference?

I will always remember Mrs. Harrell, my high school math teacher in Philadelphia. I struggled in math. She put in extra time and never gave up on me, helping me be successful. I looked for her on social media but couldn't find her. But I would love for her to know her investment in me paid off.

## How will you fight the federal government's attack against public education?

President Trump has sent a message: He'd like to take California's federal dollars for education and repurpose them into voucher programs. That goes against everything we hold dear. I believe pushing back against the Trump agenda starts here in California. California schools are 46th in the nation in per-pupil spending. I can think of no more important job than changing that.

## How do we fix the teacher shortage?

We can't solve the shortage if teachers can't afford to live in the communities where they work. To provide what's best for students, educators need stability. I've met teachers who are homeless and couch-surfing. I'm introducing Assembly Bill 45 to give school districts money to build affordable teacher housing. Residency

and pipeline programs can also attract teachers, including ethnic minorities, to teach hard-to-fill subject areas such as special education, science and math.

We should support teachers instead of blaming them — and give them the compensation, resources and tools necessary for them to succeed. If we make these investments, young people will dream about becoming teachers in communities that are historically underserved, and perhaps even return to their own communities one day to teach and become role models.

## You mentioned special education.

Special education in this state and country has been underfunded for a long time. Instead of asking "What's in the best interest of a student's IEP or 504 Plan?" the first thing administrators say is that the services requested are too expensive, forcing families to sue the district, which creates higher costs when a district must pay legal fees. We need to do a better job of funding special education. I spent many years as a social worker helping students and adults with developmental disabilities, and I currently serve on the state's special education advisory committee, which is seeking creative ways to find more funding.

## Closing the gap?

Every student can achieve. But we must provide more support to students from disadvantaged backgrounds — enrichment programs, universal preschool, counselors, after-school programs, health care, mental health programs — to address barriers that impede student success. It's hard to learn when you are homeless and hungry. It's hard to do well on a standardized test if you have a toothache.

I'm proud to have introduced AB 1014, enacted in 2016, which provides funding to address chronic absenteeism and support community schools offering health, dental and other support services. It allocated \$35 million to more than 30 districts just this year. Another bill I introduced resulted in a



## A Career of Action and Results

### Among Tony Thurmond's accomplishments:

- As a social worker, worked with disadvantaged and developmentally disabled youths and adults for two decades, and founded nonprofits such as Beyond Emancipation, which provides services to youths leaving the child welfare and juvenile justice systems in Alameda County.
- Passed legislation providing millions of dollars to school districts to keep students in school and out of the criminal justice system.
- Crafted legislation that ensures all youth who have been in foster care have the opportunity to attend college.
- Increased funding for early childhood education programs.
- Current priorities: Expand school-based mental health and social service programs; reduce teacher shortage through affordable teacher housing; provide more money for preschool and after-school programs.
- Current Assembly committee memberships include: Education Committee, overseeing school finance; Human Services Committee, whose jurisdiction includes child welfare services, foster care and child care; three Select Committees: STEM, Career Technical Education, and the Status of Boys and Men of Color.



guarantee that every student who has ever been in foster care has the money to go to college — the Chafee Grant.

I'm convening with stakeholders now about closing the gap. How do we interpret the data? What are the best practices other districts use to help kids? To close the gap, educators, administrators, classified staff, parents and community members must work together, instead of blaming each other.

### **Can technology help?**

Yes! STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) is a great equalizer. There should be maker spaces in every single school. What better way to help to develop critical thinkers than giving our kids the ability to see themselves as inventors and entrepreneurs? Some kids don't have access to the Internet at school; their only access to Wi-Fi is if a truck pulls up and provides a hot spot. California is the cradle of modern technology, and we can do better. We should offer every K-12 student access to computer science courses. Career technical education helps prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow — and these kids might just come up with the next innovation to save our lives.

### **The school-to-prison pipeline?**

We have a great opportunity to change the pipeline. Unfortunately, we spend so much money on prisons and incarceration and very little on programs like universal preschool to prevent it. I founded a nonprofit for students who have been incarcerated, and I teach a civics course to high school students detained in juvenile camp in Alameda County. My students are honest about the lack of support services upon re-entering the community, which is

why we have a high rate of recidivism. AB 1488, a two-year bill I introduced in 2017 based on my students' observations, would expand wraparound re-entry support services such as housing, substance abuse counseling and career training to help them succeed. I used this as a civics lesson about how a bill becomes law and invited students to the Capitol, so they could understand civic responsibility.

### **Thoughts on school privatization?**

I don't think education should ever be based on competition. We've got for-profit schools traded on the New York Stock Exchange. I think that is a twisted approach. Public education is just that. For that reason, I'm proud to be co-author of legislation that would ban for-profit charter schools in our state. Schools aren't businesses. They are environments for learning and innovation.

### **What about bilingual education?**

I support bilingual education. We should also be creating more dual-immersion programs to develop the global leaders of tomorrow. In other countries, students are provided the opportunity to learn multiple languages. We need to do more of that here.

### **Why do parents and community matter so much?**

We must make parents and community members our partners when it comes to educating kids. Schools should be at the center of the community and a place where parents feel comfortable and supported, especially if English isn't their first language. With schools facing so many challenges, the more partners the better. Frankly, it's an all-hands-on-deck situation. We should all be working together.

### **You have been recommended by CTA and others.**

I am honored to be supported by groups like CTA, the California Federation of Teachers, the California Faculty Association, Equality California (which addresses bullying in schools), and Planned Parenthood (which provides students with accurate sex education and how they can be safe from STDs). I'm supported by a very broad coalition of educators, public officials and legislators, such as current SPI Tom Torlakson, U.S. Senator Kamala Harris, Congresswoman Karen Bass in Los Angeles, and Congresswoman Barbara Lee in the Bay Area. I'm very proud of the coalition we have. If we don't have any movie stars, that's OK. I want hard-working people who care and believe in public education.

### **How do you differ from your opponents?**

I have a track record as a legislator and public official of bringing dollars to systems that need change, tackling challenges some said were impossible, and working with stakeholders to get the job done. I have relationships with 120 legislators, our governor and communities to promote wide-scale change. I have served on a school board, city council and state Legislature, making things better for students. I have served as a social worker and taught at the university level.

This is not a political decision for me. People ask me, "Why are you running?" I am giving up a so-called safe seat in the Legislature because so much is at stake. For me, it's all about the kids in California. I'm all in because of them! ■

*See video clips of CTA's interview with Tony Thurmond, as well as clips from Thurmond's speech to State Council in January, at [tinyurl.com/TonyThurmondCTA](http://tinyurl.com/TonyThurmondCTA).*

# Tony Thurmond

**Age:** 49

**Born:** Fort Ord, Monterey, California

**Parents:** His father, an Army veteran from Detroit, left when he was a child. His mother emigrated from Panama to become a teacher, and died when he was 6.

**Education:** Graduated from Temple University, where he was student body president. Dual master's degrees in law and social policy and social work from Bryn Mawr College.

**Children:** Thurmond has two daughters in public schools.

**Website:** [tonythurmond.com](http://tonythurmond.com)

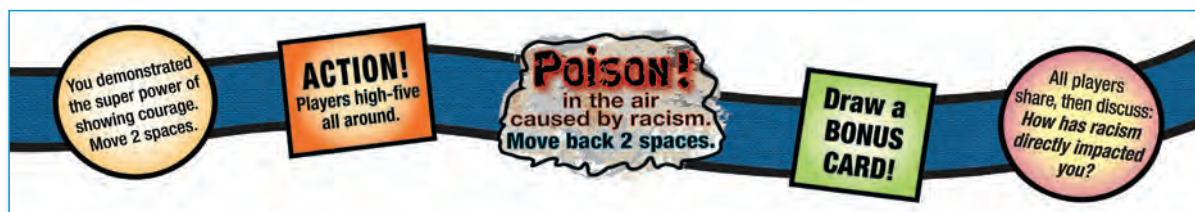


***“I see myself every day in students who face challenges. And like teachers who believed in me, I believe in them.”***

## Road to Racial Justice

### A Free, Educational “Board” Game

Addresses racism and white privilege through critical thinking, social analysis, and team-based discussion.



Ages 13+ • CCSS-Aligned • Curriculum Included (Worksheets, Glossary, PowerPoint)

#### Players will:

- Become more aware that racism exists in many everyday situations (interpersonal and institutional)
- Learn why the situations are racist (stereotyping, tokenism, cultural appropriation, etc.)
- Acquire tools to interrupt these situations in order to help create a more loving and just world

*“...your game was a remarkable tool. What better way to suggest critical thinking and generate deeper awareness of U.S. culture’s white racial frame?”* — Kevin Cummins, High School Teacher, Albuquerque, New Mexico

*“I learned that my whole life I have been treated a certain way by the people around me because I am white, which I had never really thought about before.”* — White student player

*“...I appreciate the realistic/practical action-based solutions presented in the game.”* — African American student player

**FREE DOWNLOAD at [www.roadtoracialjustice.org](http://www.roadtoracialjustice.org)** Created by Kesa Kivel



# Education Rising

Proposed state budget includes more funding for K-12 and higher education

**GOV. JERRY BROWN'S** first draft of the state's 2018-19 budget, released in January, includes a \$190.3 billion spending plan. As a result of increased state revenues and local property taxes, education funding for California's public schools and community colleges is at an all-time high of \$78.3 billion (see chart).

Proposition 98, passed in 1988, guarantees a minimum level of funding be spent on K-14 education. If the proposed budget is passed, it would mean per-pupil expenditures in 2018-19 of \$16,085, an increase from \$15,654 in 2017-18.

Brown's budget fully funds the Local Control Funding Formula, which augments resources for the state's students of greatest need, and raises the voter-mandated Rainy Day Fund by more than \$5 billion to protect against inevitable economic recession.

"We commend Gov. Jerry Brown for his leadership and resolve to deliver a surplus budget that fills the Rainy Day Fund and



Jerry Brown

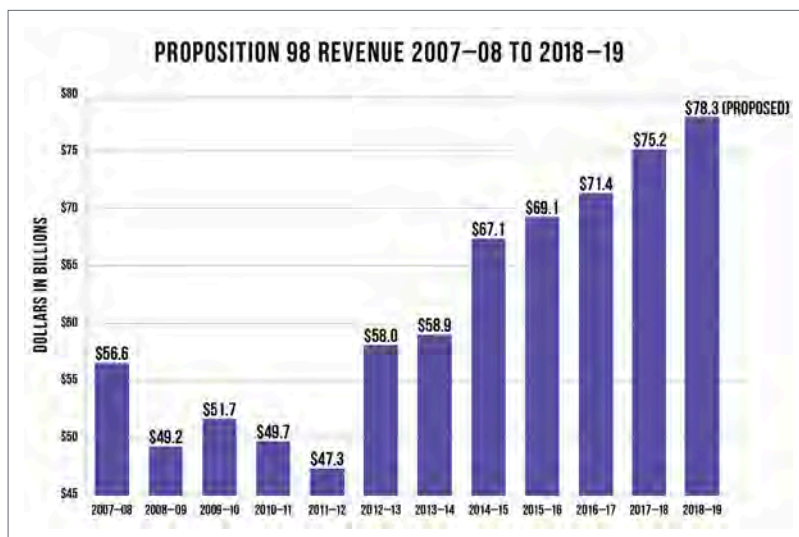
fully funds the Local Control Funding Formula two years ahead of schedule," says CTA President Eric Heins. "We're seeing this increase in revenue, thanks in large part to the overwhelming support of voters who passed Proposition 30 in 2012 and Prop. 55 in 2016 to prevent another round of devastating cuts that were so detrimental to our students."

In addition, Brown's budget proposes a \$570 million increase, or 4 percent, for community colleges. The University of California and California State University systems would each see a 3 percent increase.

Other highlights of education spending in Brown's plan:

- \$100 million in one-time funding to recruit and train special education teachers to help reverse a critical shortage. Half of the money would establish teacher residencies — a one-year mentoring program for teachers in training. The other half would award competitive grants to districts proposing solutions to the special ed teacher shortage.

Continued on page 37 →



Prop. 98 guarantees a minimum level of funding to be spent on K-14 education, which in Gov. Brown's proposed 2018-19 budget plan is \$78.3 billion. This would mean total per-pupil expenditures of \$16,085, of which \$11,614 is Prop. 98 revenue (up 66 percent from the \$7,008 per pupil provided in 2011-12), and \$4,471 is from federal and local revenue, including district parcel taxes and debt service from school construction bonds.

CFA members protesting the lack of student access to CSU. Top row: Kim Geron, CSU East Bay professor; Kevin Wehr, CFA secretary, communications chair; Jorge Quintana, CFA intern, CSU Sacramento student; Steven Filling, CFA CSU Stanislaus president. Bottom row: Martha Ancajas, CFA intern, CSU Sacramento student; Margarita Berta-Avila, CFA CSU Sacramento president; Jennifer Eagan, CFA president.

Erika Sizemore

Erika Sizemore



Pop-up art installation at the State Capitol with 1,507 empty chairs, each representing 20 qualified students turned away from CSU for lack of space.

## CFA Protests Lack of Student Access to CSU System

**LAST YEAR**, California State University turned away a record numbers of qualified applicants — 1 in 10, or 31,000 — for lack of space. California Faculty Association leaders and others say the 3 percent increase for the 23-campus CSU system proposed in Gov. Jerry Brown's 2018-19 state budget is not enough to help fix the problem.

On Jan. 11, the same day Brown unveiled his budget, CFA members staged a pop-up art installation called "Every Student Deserves a Seat — Fund the CSU" on the north lawn of the State Capitol.

The installation — 1,507 empty white chairs, with each seat representing 20 qualified students — was meant to symbolize the increasing lack of access to CSU and quality public higher education.

Brown's plan proposes \$92.1 million in additional state funding for the CSU. CFA is calling for an additional \$422.6 million in state funding, which would allow for healthy enrollment growth of an additional 18,205 students.

"By not allowing qualified students access, we're failing them before they even have a chance to walk in the classroom," says CFA President Jennifer Eagan. "It's time for our state to stand up for the CSU — for our students, for our university, and for the future of California."

See [calfac.org](http://calfac.org) for more information.

- \$212 million in ongoing funding to extend career technical education programs under the community colleges' Strong Workforce Programs to K-12 districts, and \$12 million to hire local industry experts for technical expertise in setting up the programs.

Heins praises the funding for induction programs for beginning teachers and professional development. "At a time when we face a critical teacher shortage, we must do everything possible to attract and retain the most qualified to our profession," he says. "The proposed increases

in funding for special education, the state preschool program, child care, and health care for low-income families are also critically important."

Brown's budget also sets aside \$120 million to create a new online community college program geared toward working adults. Higher education advocates and others responded with some reservations, as they have traditionally urged funds go to bolstering existing in-person programs and institutions.

Heins says that further discussion on the topic is warranted. "We are taking

a closer look and have some concerns about a few items, such as the online community college and the proposed funding for the vital UC and CSU systems. We look forward to having meaningful conversations and working with the governor and the Legislature to ensure they enact a budget that provides all students with the quality public education they need and deserve."

Brown will present a revised 2018-19 proposal in May. The state Legislature is expected to pass a budget by June 15. ■



# THE ATTACK ON WORK

## *Janus v. AFSCME*

### What is the issue?

More than 30 cases across the country have been filed over the past three years designed to weaken unions in a variety of ways, such as attacks on payroll deductions, collective bargaining, and the collection of fair share fees.

*Janus v. AFSCME*, now before the U.S. Supreme Court, is crafted to overturn 41 years of constitutional law established in *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*. (The law means public sector unions can charge all employees fair share fees for activities related to “collective bargaining, contract administration, and grievance adjustment purposes.”) A decision in *Janus* is expected between March and June. The current makeup of the Supreme Court makes it likely that *Abood* will be overturned and fair share fees will be ruled unconstitutional.

### Why is it happening?

Since its founding in 1863, CTA has been steering the direction of public education in California. We are the original education reformers — speaking out for children, educators and our communities to build a better California for all. CTA has had many successes over the past 154 years, much to the dismay of those looking to expand their own agenda and profit from public education.

Our proven record of advocacy, our willingness to stand up to anyone, and our reputation of political power make CTA a target for anti-union forces who want a piece of the \$76 billion spent on California's 9 million students in public schools and community colleges. But CTA is about kids, not profits. Always has been, always will be!

## Supreme Court case threatens to silence workers' collective voice



**T**he U.S. Supreme Court is poised to hear oral arguments in *Janus v. AFSCME* on Feb. 26, 2018. A decision in favor of *Janus* would make the entire public sector “right-to-work” in one fell swoop.

*Janus v. AFSCME* (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) is the culmination of decades of attacks on working people by corporate CEOs, the wealthiest 1 percent, and the politicians who do their bidding to rig the economy in their favor. These are the same forces that have pushed for limiting voting rights, attacked immigrants, and undermined civil rights protections. Their goal with *Janus* (as it was in *Friedrichs v. CTA*) is no secret: They want to use the Supreme Court to take away the freedom of working people to join together in strong unions.

It is essential, says CTA President Eric Heins, to keep educators' collective voice strong. “Unions give us the power to speak up for our students, families and communities. Unions such as CTA use their collective voice to advocate for policies that benefit all working people — like livable wages, affordable health care and great public schools.”

Unions have played a critical role in building and protecting the middle class in America. They provide hardworking people economic stability for their families and give them the tools to build a good life, home and education for themselves and their children.

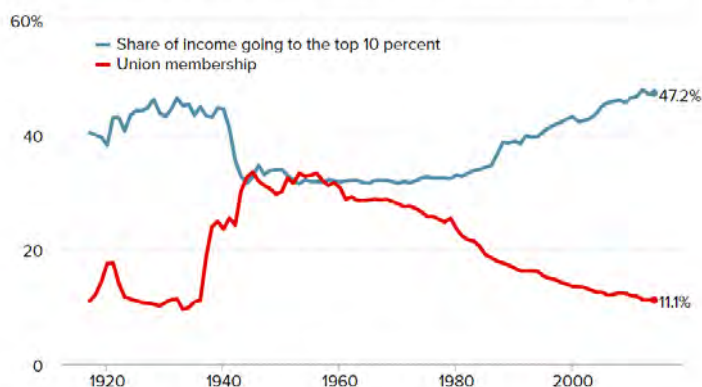
In an era when the courts have determined that corporations are people, *Janus*



# ING FAMILIES

## As union membership has fallen, the top 10 percent have been getting a larger share of income

Union membership and share of income going to the top 10%, 1917–2014



Source: Piketty and Saez (2014), Gordon (2013), and Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey public data series

Economic Policy Institute

***“We must stand together to ensure that America has an economy that works for everyone.”***

—CTA PRESIDENT ERIC HEINS

*v. AFSCME* could further weaken the voice of real working people. But, as Heins says, it is not in CTA’s nature to let that happen. “We can’t allow this, and we will not allow this. We will continue to organize and to engage our members so that we will maintain and strengthen our voice.”

“We must stand together to ensure that America has an economy that works for everyone,” he adds. “For 154 years, CTA has been standing up for working people, our students and the communities we serve. No court case will stop our determination and advocacy for our students and our profession.”

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



### Kids Not Profits

([kidsnotprofits.com](http://kidsnotprofits.com)) is a public awareness campaign about privately run charter schools, how they operate, and the billionaires behind them in California, who are spending millions of dollars to influence local school board elections statewide.

Privately managed charter schools are taxpayer-funded schools exempt from some rules applicable to other public schools. They are not held accountable and can operate without transparency. Evidence shows this lack of accountability and transparency:

- Has led to financial gains for private for-profit charter operators.
- Has cost taxpayers millions in waste, fraud and abuse.
- Has led to harmful consequences for students.

Kids Not Profits developed out of a growing concern of educators, parents, and civil rights and community groups that greater accountability and transparency are needed for California’s charter schools. On [kidsnotprofits.com](http://kidsnotprofits.com) you will find facts, figures, reports and updated news stories to help you become more aware of the impact current laws have on our students and communities, and take action.

# Bargaining Roundup

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

By Cynthia Menzel, Mike Myslinski, Ed Sibby and Frank Wells. [#OurVoiceAtTheTable](https://twitter.com/OurVoiceAtTheTable)



FTA members at their ratification meeting.

## Fresno: Member Involvement Is Key

**A TENTATIVE AGREEMENT** between the **Fresno Teachers Association** and Fresno Unified School District prevented a strike in the fourth-largest school district in the state. FTA President Tish Rice credits an unprecedented level of teacher involvement as key in reaching an agreement. More than 2,700 members showed up to take a strike authorization vote in October.

"Without their collective action and willingness to strike to improve student learning conditions and working conditions, we wouldn't be where we are," says Rice. The union made gains in class size, salary and health care. The agreement also includes a joint committee on discipline and special education issues, plus plans to explore revenue options.

The agreement came after an all-night bargaining session Jan. 17 and includes an 8.5 percent salary increase over three years; changes to health care, with the district paying \$18,000 per employee each year; and districtwide reductions to classroom sizes, meaning teachers will have no more than 29 students at a time — and even fewer for younger grades.

The agreement was ratified by both parties in early February.

## Solana Beach: Unions Keep On Fighting

The **Solana Beach Teachers Association** (SBTA) and the **Solana Beach Association of Support Professionals** (SBASP) have worked together for months to reach a settlement with Solana Beach School District (SBSD), San Diego County. SBSD has been an unwilling partner throughout, while continuing a policy of hoarding reserves that are 16 times the state's requirement for economic uncertainties, and deprioritizing teachers, students and classrooms.

"We will continue to fight, because every dollar over the state requirement is a decision not to spend that dollar on a Solana Beach student," says SBTA President Cyndy McBride.

## Oceanside: Agreement Reached

On Jan. 30, after nearly 600 days without a contract, the **Oceanside Teachers Association** (OTA) reached a tentative agreement with Oceanside Unified School District, San Diego County.

The California teacher shortage and how it affects students was an important focus of organizing. In times of shortage, OTA argued, the district should keep salaries competitive to recruit and retain the best.

Parental and community support was also critical. OTA President Jennifer Skellett praises the efforts of members and parents who came to events and rallies in ever-increasing numbers through the fall and into winter. "We knew standing with parents would be the key to a settlement. When those parents began to passionately defend us, it gave our teachers added strength to keep the fight going."

Major elements of the settlement include a 3 percent salary increase and setting up a health care retiree account for veteran teachers who may opt for early retirement.

At press time, OTA expected a solid ratification vote within a few days.



HVTA members at Happy Valley Elementary School in Anderson.

## Happy Valley: Not So Happy

Attracting and recruiting qualified teachers for the students in this small Shasta County community is a priority for teachers. The offer from Happy Valley School District to freeze teachers' pay and add extra duties has made educators unhappy. **Happy Valley Teachers Association** members did their homework and learned that administrators have nearly 25 percent in reserves, around \$1.5 million, and can afford to devote funding to student learning. One way to do that is to give the modest increase teachers are asking for.



## National City: Impasse

After months of negotiating with little progress, the **National City Elementary Teachers Association** is at impasse with National School District. Teachers are frustrated; the district has declined proposed language addressing workload concerns and classroom conditions, and a salary increase that would make National City in San Diego County a destination for new educators in this time of teacher shortages.



Hundreds of teachers have participated in organizing actions, including signing petitions and rallying at school board meetings. Many have spoken publicly about the lack of quality materials from NSD and the hours they spend outside of school searching for meaningful curriculum — with no compensation.

NCETA President Christina Benson says, "The NSD claims they are broke. However, for the past five years, they have failed to spend

new money received under the Local Control Funding Formula on students or on teachers. NCETA knows that you can't put students first when you put teachers last, and our members stand united in our resolve to achieve a fair contract."

At press time, the next mediation date was scheduled for mid-February.

## Alameda: Educators "Anchor" Community

Frustrated with teacher turnover that hurts students, **Alameda Education Association** members launched a community organizing campaign in late January to remind the public that educators "anchor" the city. But because they make the lowest salaries in Alameda County, many are leaving for better pay elsewhere.



The campaign asks businesses and their customers to show support for teachers by placing an anchor-themed AEA sign in their windows. "Our community is built on strong family relationships with our teachers," says AEA President Judith Klinger. "This campaign is reminding the public that when teachers leave for higher pay in neighboring districts, it undermines our community."

How low is pay? Klinger says a fifth-year teacher in Alameda Unified School District can take home \$10,000 to \$20,000 more in neighboring Bay Area districts. A first-year teacher who is paying premiums for family medical coverage takes home only about \$31,000.

## CAVA: Educators Closer to Strike

In January, contract talks between **California Virtual Educators United** (CVEU) and California Virtual Academies (CAVA) were certified for fact-finding, bringing the 444-member union one step closer to a possible strike. If that happens, it would be the nation's first "virtual strike" of unionized educators working in an online school.

CVEU has been negotiating with CAVA for over a year. This will be their first collective bargaining agreement since teachers unionized, a move bitterly fought by their employer. Although progress has been made in areas of workload and achieving permanent job status, salary remains a sticking point. CAVA teachers earn thousands less than their brick-and-mortar counterparts.

One reason is that much of the taxpayer money that supports CAVA is sent out of state. CAVA is run by K12 Inc.; nearly half its revenue goes to that for-profit, Virginia-based provider of technology and curriculum, which passes on much of that money to its investors (including U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos). CVEU has made ensuring that more resources stay in CAVA schools to support CAVA students part of their **#FixCavaNow** campaign.

"Quality virtual schools can provide a needed and unique learning opportunity for students," says CVEU President Brianna Carroll. "CVEU members believe in this platform and want to fix CAVA so students, not profits, are the priority."



# In Pursuit of Excellence

## National Board Certification benefits students and teachers

By Dina Martin

**A**fter more than 20 years in the classroom and a few credentials and a master's degree along the way, Lodi third-grade teacher Lori Celiz was looking for a new challenge when she learned about National Board Certification (NBC).

The rigorous multiyear process proved to be just the thing to reawaken Celiz's lifelong love of the teaching profession.

"It's a passion for me. This is totally different than anything I've ever done," Celiz says.

It's also a heck of a lot of work, requiring an intensive process of standards-based performance assessment by NBC evaluators and peer review.

Created by teachers *for* teachers, National Board Certification is the most respected professional certification available in K-12 education. It was designed to develop, retain and recognize accomplished teachers, as well as generate ongoing improvement in schools nationwide. The rigor of certification has been compared to that of certification for the medical and legal professions.

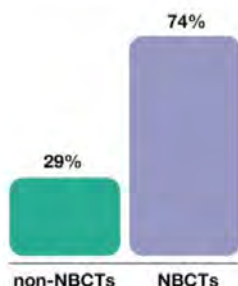
Celiz spent three years and some \$2,400 to complete the certification process in literacy in 2016. She explains that "a lot of life" happened along the way, including participation in the Instructional Leadership Corps (CTA's partnership with Stanford University's Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education and the National Board Resource Center), earning her administration credential, and caring for an ill child.

For certification, she was required to submit four



# Jump Start

Students of NBCTs demonstrate evidence of deeper learning nearly three times more frequently than their peers



Students of NBCTs gain one to two months of additional learning compared to their peers in other classrooms



Courtesy National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

Jump Start is CTA's program for teachers interested in becoming a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT). The 2½-day seminar is free to members and provides important information about the certification process in a supportive environment, facilitated by experienced NBCTs. You will leave with a clear understanding of the process and a plan of action for completion. 2018 dates: June 18-20 in the Sacramento area and June 25-27 in San Diego. Email [jrobb@cta.org](mailto:jrobb@cta.org) for details.

portfolio entries and a video of her classroom teaching, and to complete six essay questions at a testing center.

"Each component focused on a particular aspect of literacy," she says. "Writing, reading, listening and speaking, and the fourth focused on professional development."

"It's very personal," she adds, "because you are looking at your own practice. Motivation has to come from within. Most of my work was done between 9 p.m. and midnight, when it was quiet and I could think deeply."

## Certification benefits students

Celiz has seen how National Board Certification benefits students.

"It greatly impacts student learning, because looking at teaching through a reflective lens helps us become better teachers. If we don't have a positive impact, why do it?"

She cites more than a decade of research that students taught by board-certified teachers learn more than students taught by other teachers, on the order of an additional one to two months of instruction. Studies point to an even more positive impact on minority and low-income students. (See research at the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, [nbpts.org](http://nbpts.org).)

Her Lodi Education Association (LEA) colleague Kristi Arredondo, who is going through the NBC process, agrees.

"The more I reflect on my teaching, the better teacher I will be," she says. "I was teaching for 20 years, and instead of burning

out, I said, 'What can I do?' Everyone should always be interested in growing in their profession."

Certification also benefits educators. Under LEA President Michelle Orgon's leadership, LEA recently bargained a \$2,000-a-year stipend for members who obtain certification. Lodi educators are not unique in bargaining such stipends.

Several chapters around the state have contract language awarding board-certified members.

"Through attrition and changes, we had only two NBC teachers left in our district," Orgon says. "We want to facilitate as much as we can toward getting more teachers board-certified."

Nevertheless, bargaining stipends for certification "was a hard-fought battle," Orgon says. At a time when districts might be considering buying an online or off-the-shelf professional development program, Orgon maintains it's important to recognize that teachers learn in different ways. Not only

did the school board and LEA members have to be educated about the value of certification, the district had to give LEA more control over professional development.

"I don't think they knew what [certification] was and what it takes," Celiz says. "Most of our teachers didn't even know what it meant."

## Jump Start to certification

National Board Certification has become such a passion for Celiz that she is now a trainer in Jump Start, which CTA



Lori Celiz



## Reflections on Becoming Board-Certified

**BY 2025**, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards expects 1 million teachers to earn National Board Certification status, further improving student achievement across the country and elevating the teaching profession along the way.

It's a lofty goal, but with recent changes that include lowering fees and allowing more time to complete the process, the board is hopeful more teachers will participate. Specifically, the board decreased the fees from \$2,500 to \$1,950 and now allows up to three years to submit all four components, and an additional two years if retakes are necessary.

"It's a game changer in that it matches up more to personal lives of teachers," says Linda Bauld, director of the National Board Resource Center, which provides support for teachers pursuing certification. "We are already seeing greater enrollment throughout the nation."

More than 112,000 teachers across

the United States are board-certified, and almost 20,000 are currently going through the process.

In December, thousands more teachers received certification nationwide. Among them was Tedra Matthews, a literacy coach at Monroe Elementary School in San Francisco and United Educators of San Francisco member.

"It was the best professional learning experience of my career," she says.

With the support of her school district, Matthews was part of a National Board Support Network in which National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) serve as professional learning facilitators. Within the district, NBCTs led site-based professional development that included hosting lab classrooms to help newer teachers see evidence of accomplished teaching in practice.



Tedra Matthews

Reflecting on teaching is a key aspect of the process, Matthews says.

"Teaching is not magic. It's making purposeful decisions and reflecting on them to improve your practice."

Matthews decided to go through the process when she was teaching at a charter school that didn't offer much in the way of professional development.

"I was feeling at a dead end and wanted to submit my practice to a higher level of professional learning," she says. "There is

a lot of research that teachers who continue to grow professionally are less likely to burn out."

With certification, Matthews can expect to see an increase of \$5,000 above her regular salary.

Bauld says the state's Professional Teaching Standards are patterned after the NBC process, so it complements and enhances what teachers should be doing in the classroom. "It's not that NBCTs are better than other teachers. It's about teachers doing their best for their students," Bauld says.

**"It's not that NBCTs are better than other teachers. It's about teachers doing their best for their students."**

—LINDA BAULD, NATIONAL BOARD RESOURCE CENTER

offers in partnership with NEA. The three-day workshop prepares CTA members to embark on the NBC process. Celiz and Arredondo participated in Jump Start in San Diego last summer, and Celiz introduced it to 20 LEA members at a training in the fall.

"Jump Start goes through each of the components of the certification process and breaks it down," says Arredondo. "If you go on the NBC website, it can be daunting. Jump Start gives you a solid idea of 'This is where I need to go.' If you don't understand the process, it would be easy to give up."

"Jump Start was designed to be a three-day training," Celiz says. "We did a 4-8 p.m. after-school training and then two Saturdays. On the first day, [we covered] foundations and

what board certification is; and then the two other days, we looked at each component."

Celiz has since been selected as part of an NEA Jump Start Advisory Team, about 15 to 20 teacher leaders from different NEA affiliates around the country. The team redesigned Jump Start to match the new National Board process, which was revised in 2013 to condense the assessment process into four modules. (The first teachers to complete the revised process are expected to be certified this year.) It is now focusing on Jump Start as a professional issues engagement strategy.

For more information about National Board Certification, see [nbpts.org](http://nbpts.org). ■

# LEVEL UP!



## New Year, New Avatar



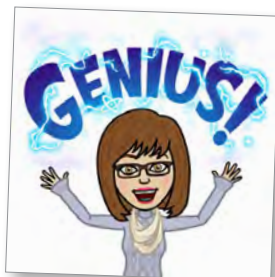
### Connect to Your Students with Bitmoji

By Terry Ng

**E**ducators are raving about Bitmoji ([bitmoji.com](http://bitmoji.com)) as a fun way to connect and communicate with their students and colleagues. Use of the personalized emojis can add humor and positivity, as well stress relief, to many of your interactions.

If you've never used the free mobile app that lets you turn yourself into a cartoon emoji, or if you need to update your avatar, now is the time.

After you select a customizable skin tone, hair length, hair color, face shape, eyebrows, eye color, body size and clothing that best match you, Bitmoji creates different scenes and messages for your avatar. These



## You Can Do It!



### Our favorite ways to use Bitmoji in the classroom:

- **Have students create their own bitmoji** to use as a profile photo on various websites. This helps address any privacy issues of using their real photo.
- Studying a particular book, film or time in history? **Create an assignment where students work together** to create bitmojis of fictional or historical characters.
- **Use bitmojis to communicate feelings and key words** with students who have difficulty expressing and articulating their emotions.
- **Ask students to summarize an excerpt of a text, poem or story** with bitmojis, or write their own story or comic.
- **Congratulate students on their achievements or give feedback on assignments** with your own bitmoji. Some educators even make stickers to use on their students' papers.
- **Create classroom signs** or handouts.

images can be sent through text message or social media, or saved to be added to documents. By adding a Bitmoji Chrome extension, you can easily add your bitmoji to your Gmail or Slack.

Note: Use of Bitmoji may be best for high school students, as some content is not appropriate for all audiences. Or you can just use your chosen bitmojis for classroom assignments. Experiment with the app first, then think creatively of how to use it with students. Have a great bitmoji? Email it to us at [social@cta.org](mailto:social@cta.org) or tag it [#WeAreCTA](https://twitter.com/WeAreCTA) on Twitter or Instagram. ■



# CTA STATE COUNCIL

## Top takeaways from the January 2018 gathering

**CTA STATE COUNCIL** started the new year with a rousing speech by CTA-recommended candidate Tony Thurmond, and had a very visible presence at the Women's March in Los Angeles. There was plenty of time to attend to other business.

CTA President Eric Heins introduces Tony Thurmond to delegates.



Mike Myslinski

## 1 Thurmond Speech Helps Launch Campaign 2018

Educators' candidate for state superintendent of public instruction brought down the house. Bay Area Assembly Member Tony Thurmond spoke with power and passion on key education issues, such as the White House push for vouchers and the teacher shortage, and how public education is the great equalizer that helped save his life. "We won't stand for vouchers, and we will not allow for any privatization of public education in the great state of California," he vowed. See our interview with Thurmond on page 32; watch video of his remarks at [tinyurl.com/TonyThurmondCTA](https://tinyurl.com/TonyThurmondCTA). And check out CTA's Campaign 2018 website at [campaign2018cta.org](https://campaign2018cta.org).

## 4 Crucial Candidate Recommendations Nearly Done

Delegates supported re-electing Secretary of State Alex Padilla and state Controller Betty Yee, both of whom are strong advocates of public education. Also recommended were 44 state Assembly and Senate candidates, with more recommendations to come at the April Council meeting. President Heins, explaining why educators strongly support Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom for governor, said Newsom "knows that educational excellence isn't conceived in Sacramento but in the daily toil of hundreds of thousands of educators, parents and students."



## 2 Women Shall Overcome (March)

Loud and proud: CTA had a vocal and unified presence at #WomensMarchLA, marching as educators and union members to Grand Park by City Hall. We joined millions of others — in LA and across the country and the world — advocating for women's and human rights at a time when they are imperiled. CTA resolutely stands behind the goal of this year's march: to launch a nationwide voter registration tour targeting swing states, engage communities, and collaborate with partners to elect more women and progressive candidates to office.

## 3 Women Are the Heart of the Labor Movement

Referencing the #MeToo movement, President Eric Heins in his speech to Council made abundantly clear that CTA supports women and others who are breaking a culture of silence in the face of harassment and assault. He paid tribute to "the dynamic women who largely make up this profession and this union," and said, "This union is better and stronger because of you."

Heins noted that CTA has been at the forefront of the women's rights movement, seeking pay equity, decent benefits, safe health care and job protections, and that to continue to move forward, we need women's strong voices and activism.



## 5 Membership Engagement

CTA Executive Director Joe Nuñez spoke to Council about CTA's initiatives to recruit and engage our membership now and after the Supreme Court's *Janus v. AFSCME* decision. Along with conducting focused trainings and creating new toolkits, CTA has held membership engagement workshops at regional and local conferences and worked with chapters to develop membership engagement plans. Nuñez also acknowledged the tremendous efforts locals have made, including chapters' campaigns to convert agency fee payers to members and ask members to recommit. See our member engagement stories starting on page 52.

## 6 Sunday Morning Joe

Executive Director Nuñez warned about the rejection of objective truth by U.S. conservatives who attack mainstream journalism and science. "How will our union continue to grow or continue to be the voice of students and educators in California in this world of separate realities? We do it by sticking to our core values, and by letting them hear our voice." We do it, he said, through making information-based State Council decisions, organizing our chapters, engaging our communities on educational issues that matter, and building on political successes like Propositions 30 and 55, which increased taxes on the wealthiest Californians to generate billions for our schools. Last but not least: "We do it by using the power of our voice and our vote!"

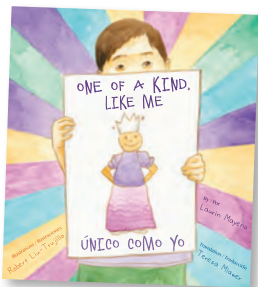
## 7 MLK Reception Gets Lit!

No, not that way. CTA's African American Caucus held its annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration on Saturday evening with a program featuring stirring monologues by LAUSD youth of Get Lit, an LA-based organization working to increase literacy and empowerment. The young women of Victory Praise Dancers also entertained the crowd with their spirited, evocative dance moves.



## 8 Delegates Thank CTA for Fire Disaster Relief

One by one, delegates from the burn zones stepped up to Council microphones to thank CTA for fire relief grants. Rosa Granado, president of Hueneme Education Association in Ventura County, said the quick CTA Disaster Relief Fund grants helped four of her members who lost their homes and others who were temporarily displaced in the massive December Thomas Fire, the largest in the state's recent history. Since September, the CTA Disaster Relief Fund has provided 245 grants to CTA members for a total of \$436,000, with more grants in the pipeline, CTA Secretary-Treasurer David Goldberg announced at Council.



## 9 California Reads

CTA's #CaliforniaReads kicked off its annual list of teacher-recommended books for all grade levels at Council, with author Laurin Mayeno on hand to sign her book *One of a Kind, Like Me*. In addition to the books themselves for sale, bookmarks, posters and informational flyers were also available. See [cta.org/californiareads](http://cta.org/californiareads) for more.

## 10 Numbers and Nostalgia — the Annual Report Has It All

It was a fiscal year to remember, and to revisit your union accomplishments, see the highlights in CTA's 2016-17 Year in Review. The Annual Report is CTA by the numbers for 2016-17 (including \$393,100 in scholarships and grants awarded to CTA members and their dependents, and \$608,326 in project grants awarded to members through CTA Institute for Teaching). Both reports are posted at [cta.org/annualreport](http://cta.org/annualreport).







Student CTA Executive Board; front row: Shireen Klein, Erin Githens, Rosa Maria Martinez, Miyuki Manzanedo, Mackenzie Ramsay, Irene Amezcua, Autumn Crisantes; back row: Samantha Smith, Qohle Martinez, Stephanie Rios, Douglas Anderson, Abel Solano, Aaron Barlin.

# YOU SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION?

**Student CTA ditches tradition to offer a new member experience with lasting impact**

**L**eave it to the young — in this case, Student CTA — to come up with fresh ways of thinking and doing.

SCTA Board members, in fact, developed an original event for their fall Welcome Summit, held in Irvine in early November, that deeply engaged new members and helped ensure that everyone has the opportunity to lead and contribute.

Among its goals this past year, the board wanted to strongly connect new members to SCTA's social justice work and the multifaceted benefits of unionism, and to grow leaders and activists within its ranks. The board

decided the best way to do this was to create an “experience” or “journey” with meaning and power, at a fall event that would draw members from across the state.

The first thing they did was open the event to new blood. “Chapters always had elections to see who goes to the Fall Leadership Conference,” says Miyuki Manzanedo, SCTA president, noting that the same set of leaders would attend everything. “So our parameters for the event were that it was for members who were not part of chapters, and chapter members who had never been engaged before.”

Next, they ditched the conventional conference setup,



Students participate in various exercises designed to break the ice and forge tight bonds.



## STUDENT CTA

**Members:** About 1,300

**Benefits:** Members receive \$1 million liability insurance, which covers them when they work with students as a requirement for a class or program; discounts to attend CTA conferences; networking with other aspiring educators; sponsorship and volunteer opportunities to SCTA events and some CTA conferences

**Board:** Members are elected for one-year terms

**Social Media:**  
[Facebook.com/StudentCTA](https://www.facebook.com/StudentCTA)

because they felt it does not foster enough connection between and among people. “When we came up with ideas, it was ‘No workshops!’” says Manzanedo. “Members felt they were being lectured at. We wanted to move away from general sessions with a guest speaker.”

The weekend summit included some necessary activities:

**Relationship-building.** Participants were separated from people they knew, so they could forge new connections. SCTA Board members, with the exception of Manzanedo, were not introduced as such till the end of the event, so they could be considered regular members and new leaders could emerge. Through various exercises, individuals learned about each other and forged tight bonds.

“It made me realize that in school we sometimes forget to learn about our students, and that could change everything,” said Krystal Perez, a student at Sacramento State University. “When we allow students to feel safe, they are more open to learn.”

**Exploration of biases in education.** Participants discussed disparities in student outcomes, and how, since the American public education system was originally meant to serve certain groups, inequities have been addressed over time with add-ons instead of rethinking or revamping the entire system.

## THE JOURNEY

Then, the summit program turned to unionism and the potential impact of the *Janus v. AFSCME* case currently before the U.S. Supreme Court (see page 38).

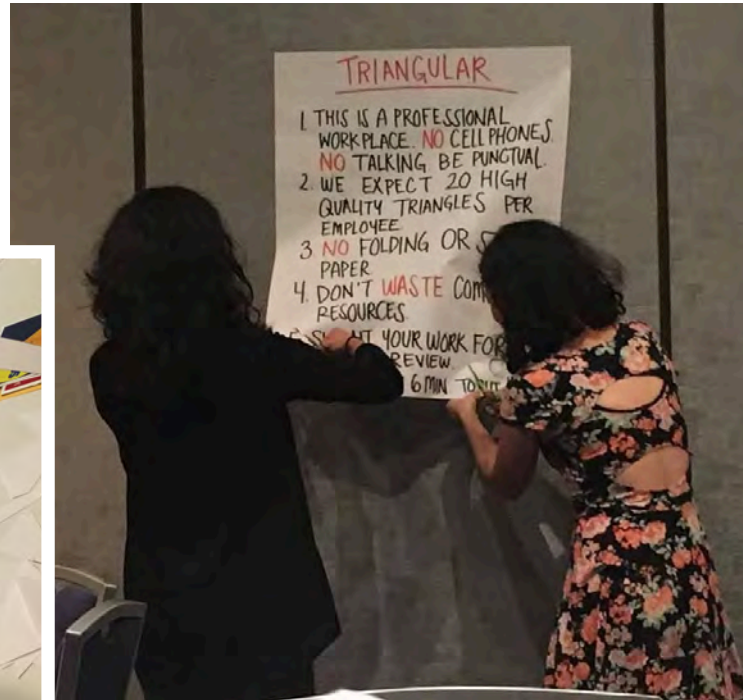
Participants were all given the same scenario: *You’re a poor college student who can’t take out any more loans. It’s critical that you have a job to pay for school and support your family. And good news — you just got a job, cutting triangles for a corporation. Now, go to your new employee orientation.*

Participants headed off to one of four different “corporate headquarters,” where their “boss” laid out job expectations, such as no talking and no cellphones, and tardiness would result in not being paid. Then, for purposes of the journey, 10-minute periods became a workday (with six minutes of work and four minutes off), and conditions became increasingly challenging. Some bosses were mean and belittled workers; others set high quotas for number of triangles cut; others supplied faulty scissors, inadequate templates, etc. Bosses could make workers work overtime without pay. A “big boss” came in to put pressure on the local bosses. Cards that would affect individuals were randomly distributed; for example, one card indicated that you cut your hand, but since you can’t quit or leave, you had to cut with your other hand.

SCTA organizers had no way of knowing how the journey would progress, and indeed some participants grew angry. But all “employees” eventually found their working conditions unacceptable and talked of unionizing. All four groups ended up forming unions the first day of the program.



In a role-playing scenario, students hold jobs at triangle-cutting companies, and have to cope with restrictive policies and difficult conditions in the workplace.



***"WE WERE CONCERNED THAT PEOPLE WOULDN'T GRASP THE CONCEPT OF FAIR SHARE. BUT WHEN THEY WENT INTO A ROOM TO DISCUSS FORMING A GIANT UNION, IT MADE MY HEART FEEL FULL."***

—STUDENT CTA PRESIDENT **MIYUKI MANZANEDO**

Gail Watts, Regional UniServ Staff for CTA Human Rights, played the role of outside union organizer advising the nascent activists as they negotiated their first contracts. "Some wanted a lawyer to negotiate for them," Watts says. "I told them, 'No, union members negotiate their own contract. Lawyers charge \$150 an hour — do you have the funds for that?'"

As leaders thought through what they wanted in the contract, she reminded them to keep the broader membership in mind. "Are you being inclusive on holidays you want off? What happens when bosses come back with counter offers?"

### ***'I CALLED MY PARENTS'***

The next day of the journey, the four groups held official union meetings to elect leadership, establish core values, and decide what to focus on. Each 10 minutes was still a workday, but four minutes of the day was devoted to "society," where workers left their rooms for a common area marked with anti-union posters and messages. At one point during society time, the Supreme Court decided in favor of Janus, meaning that no one needed to pay fair share fees to unions anymore.

SCTA organizers had "plants" out in society who tried to convince the now-unionized workers to leave the union — and then have them organize to convince others

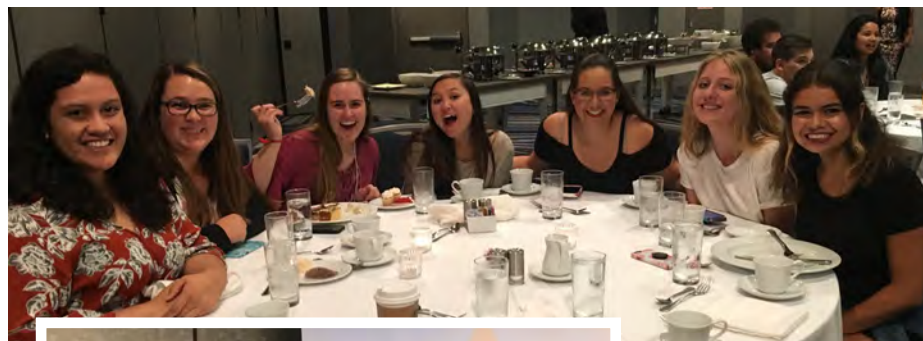
to leave. Back at their jobs, union members would have to try to get those who had left the union back into the fold, to maintain solidarity and their bargaining power with bosses.

At one of the final society moments, Manzanedo played the role of an anti-unionist, jumping on a chair to give an impassioned speech to the crowd. "I told them they didn't need unions. I tried to open their eyes: 'What are unions using your money for? For things you don't like! Your money is going for candidates you don't support.'"

But it backfired. The entire group of workers decided to join in one giant union.

"It was so exciting for me. We were concerned that people wouldn't grasp the concept of fair share. But when they went into a room to discuss forming a giant union, it made my heart feel full. I called my parents," says Manzanedo, whose parents are longtime educators and CTA members.





## BRINGING POLICY TO LIFE

At SCTA Representative Assembly last April, the board created an education experience for attendees in two rooms set up like a museum, with quotes from U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and others, along with images and documents. Attendees would pick one of 20 “identities” that would inform their journey through the exhibit — for example, you might be a third-grade student with special needs, or a first-year teacher.

Events that occurred along the journey — such as the cutting of federal funds for a school lunch program — would affect your experience. The journey brought policy to life, and was so well received that it became the basis for the Welcome Summit in the fall.



SCTA Welcome Summit participants make lifelong connections as they learn about the teaching profession and their role in it.

## SPREADING THE WORD

The journey had a powerful impact on participants.

“It was pretty intense. Some people took things very seriously,” says Amy Lo, currently studying at Santa Ana College. “It was a good experience for real life. And I now have an understanding of education and the school system.”

“It taught me about equality, equity and workers rights,” said Perez. “I had never thought about all the rights that were earned through unions for workers before. The way that the roles were played was very realistic and it was impactful because people were passionate and stated facts. People stood on chairs, shouted, and lobbied.”

“We had a couple members share out responses,” says Manzanedo. “They said things like ‘This was the most amazing experience of my life’ and ‘I will never forget this.’”

Watts says she met up with two participants at a later CTA conference, who were still talking of how meaningful the experience was.

Watts is proud of the SCTA Board and the event they pulled off. “I’m extraordinarily happy that the SCTA Board was willing and able to try new things,” she says.

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—SCTA WELCOME SUMMIT  
PARTICIPANT AMY LO

“They developed an event that matched their goals, and had a comfort level with creating scenarios and not knowing how they would turn out.”

She thinks there are lessons to be learned from SCTA’s successful event, particularly given what may happen following

the Supreme Court’s *Janus* decision. “CTA members have to be inoculated [with unionism] because they’ll be inundated with anti-union messaging.”

The SCTA Board met at CTA’s January State Council in Los Angeles to debrief and consider whether the event accomplished its goals and what to do next. Many thought the experience was powerful enough to continue. The board next meets at SCTA Representative Assembly in April.

Manzanedo, meanwhile, is busy spreading the word about SCTA, asking local presidents for a few minutes at their meetings to talk about SCTA. “My parents didn’t know SCTA existed till I joined,” she says. “How can they not have heard about it?” ■



Kern County Education Association officers, from left to right: Yolanda Baxter-Cole, Greg Ardoin, Miriam Matos-Brown, Tracy Sneed, Cotati Thomas-Crompton.

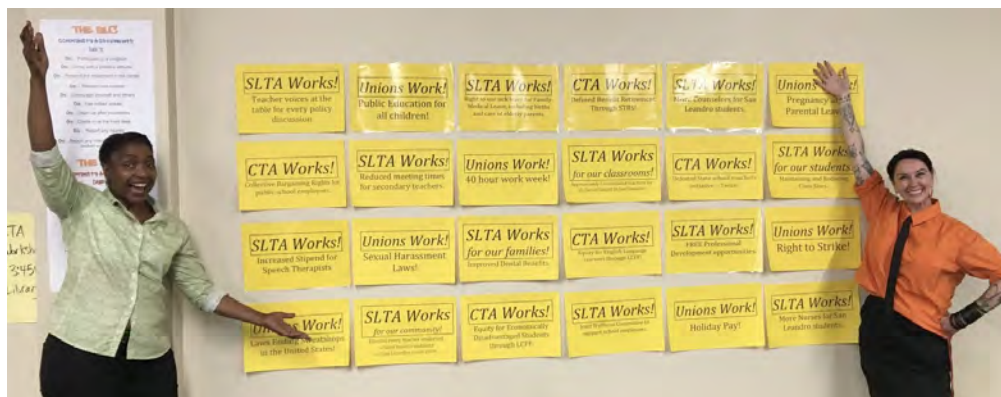


# Winning Hearts & Minds

Individual CTA chapters work to foster strong connections among their membership, knowing that these ongoing efforts make calls for collective action — whether for a community food drive or negotiating with the district — that much easier.

How are chapters forging team bonds and cultivating mutual interests? The following pages showcase a few examples.

San Leandro Teachers Association executive board members Nancy James, left, and Valarie Sowers remind attendees at SLTA's "Issues to Action" forum in October of how SLTA and CTA actions help all educators. Credit: Tom Morse





From left to right, KCEA's Susan Barle, Kathy Smith, Miriam Matos-Brown, Amy Moore, Karen Pease.

Efforts start in August during a member benefits fair. This year, KCEA used CTA 360, a mobile app that retrieves and updates membership data and makes it easy to sign up new members. With the app on iPads, KCEA “enrolled many teachers who honestly did not know they were not members,” says Matos-Brown. The chapter keeps on top of members’ wants and needs through short surveys each time members interact with CTA 360 — whether to sign in for meetings or use CTA services.

## Everyone expected to help

KCEA leaders are invited to all Kern County Office of Education school kickoffs, “regardless if they’re in Mojave or Maricopa.” Leaders meet with faculty to share how members can help, because everyone is asked to do something. Like what? “Phone-bank, decorate the holiday tree, make blankets, provide goodies at the lab days,” says Matos-Brown. “We have a lot of involvement.”

Twice a month, KCEA provides food to educators participating in lab days, which are times set aside at the county office in Bakersfield for teachers to make materials for their classrooms. “We come together, make materials, chat — it’s family-friendly. And there’s a table with goodies with a sign that says: ‘Brought to you by KCEA.’”

Each month, members come from across the county and make blankets. “Everybody can make a blanket, regardless of politics,” says Matos-Brown. KCEA members have made and distributed over 150 blankets in the last three years. Currently, the blankets go to a local teen pregnancy center.

“Originally, the blankets went to a program for kids whose families are incarcerated. We thought, ‘If kids are feeling loved, they’ll will do better in school. What better way to do that than with a blanket?’”

# Different – and Making a Difference

Kern County deals with far-flung members in novel ways By Cynthia Menzel

**WHEN YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER** is geographically the size of New Jersey, how do you engage members? The Kern County Education Association does it by providing blankets to students, building relationships and being “brazen,” in the words of KCEA President Miriam Matos-Brown.

The chapter covers 8,200 square miles, including 42 school districts, and the 327 members, most of whom are itinerants, include professionals in four program areas (early childhood, special education, alternative education and charter schools) as well as nurses, psychologists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists and teachers. They provide for all of Kern County.

“We know we are different,” says Matos-Brown, smiling. “We are gypsies, traveling and teaching all over the county. Most members work in rented space or in classrooms on a district campus. Some of our members don’t have break rooms or mailboxes, so we communicate strategically by asking them, ‘How do you want to hear from us? Quick and easy on the phone, snail mail — what works best for you?’”



## By phone and in person

Phone banks are ongoing, and everyone gets a list. Members get phone calls at least once a month, just to talk. “They have different issues, and they don’t know they can complain, or understand how concerns are dealt with. Our goal is to build bridges. We do it by phone.”

And in person.

KCEA leaders get the first or last 10 minutes on the agenda at monthly district program area meetings. “The 10-minute meeting started back with Proposition 55. Everyone leaves with a handout,” Matos-Brown says. More than 10 percent of members attend the monthly chapter rep council, where “we formulate a common message, with

supports, so that site reps feel more comfortable about sharing information. Our goal: meet one more person each week. We’re constantly practicing phone banks, joining others to walk precincts, etc. We’re ready for the 2018 elections.”

The same applies to a quarterly joint labor-management committee of district

**“We thought, ‘If kids are feeling loved, they’ll will do better in school. What better way to do that than with a blanket?’”**

—KCEA PRESIDENT MIRIAM MATOS-BROWN

administrators, the KCEA president and a teacher from each of the four program areas. They meet more often, if necessary, and issues are dealt with in a timely fashion, or may be assigned to a work group.

Matos-Brown says it all works because she is brazen about asking for — well, anything and everything, something she learned from her union’s founders. “We are standing on the shoulders of those who came before us. Teachers who built this union in 2000 created and negotiated this practice and of working relationships — between union members and with the administration. All sides are professional, compassionate and respectful. We’ve come a long way in a short time.”

**CTA 360** CTA 360 is an app that allows CTA leaders to quickly access their local’s data (member contact information, work location, etc.) from their mobile device. The app also lets them sign up new members and update member information.

Matt Corcoran works hard to create a positive bond with students.



2

## A Path to Activism

New educator discovers union’s essential role of caring and support

By Matt Corcoran

**THIS IS MY SECOND YEAR** as a full-time teacher at John F. Kennedy High School in Anaheim, where I teach AP Language & Composition, English 3, and Journalism. I learn from my students every day: the latest slang or fashion or pop culture trends, who’s dating who, or who’s beefing with who. But more than that, I learn what they care about, what matters to them, what they know and don’t know. I learn what they’re passionate about, and I share my passions with them.

I believe that a classroom functions best when there is a healthy, positive bond between teacher and students. My students know they can come to me with their problems. They know I care about them and respect them, and because of this, I feel that they respect me. This relationship helps me to be not only a better teacher but a better person.

I’m a member of Anaheim Secondary Teachers Association (ASTA). I came to know about ASTA’s work during the reduction in force (RIF) hearing last spring. Hundreds of educators who had received pink slips (including 80 in my district) went before district officials to make their case as to why they should not be laid off.

As a first-year teacher, I had never dealt with anything like the RIF process before. I was concerned and confused. ASTA held a helpful informational meeting about



**"If we do this thing right, maybe members will see ASTA as I see it: a source of support, a group of hardworking men and women who will do everything in their power to fight for members."**

the complicated situation, but I don't think I would have made it through if it wasn't for Christie Bettendorf and CTA field staff Lisa Eck. Christie went above and beyond her role as site rep to ensure that I knew exactly what to expect. That she was so knowledgeable and confident made the experience a little easier to handle. At the hearing, where I chose to represent myself, Lisa was an invaluable source of information regarding legal issues.

Before the RIF, I knew the union worked to ensure members had the best possible pay, benefits, and so on, but I was unfamiliar with the inner workings of the local. It felt to me like ASTA just showed up to save your job when you did something stupid or encourage you to vote for a specific candidate or policy. The RIF experience changed that. It made me feel like there were actual people in my local who supported me and cared about what happened to me.

A few months after the RIF process ended, I was invited to an ASTA event and was blown away by what I saw. These educators were using their personal time to fight for the rights of their fellow members. It was eye-opening. I couldn't help but think, "If I didn't know about all this, how many other newer educators don't know about this?" And even more, "How many veteran educators don't know about this?"

I figured I needed to do something about how our own members see our local and the role it plays in their success, both in the classroom and in their personal lives. Now I'm involved with ASTA's new online and social media committee, where I can use my skill set and writing experience. What better way to spread ASTA's message than by developing an online presence that connects with our members and our community?

If we do this thing right, maybe members won't just see ASTA as the custodian showing up to fix mistakes, or even the lobbyist trying to grab your vote. Maybe they'll see ASTA as I see it: a source of support, a group of hardworking men and women who will do everything in their power to fight for members.

Work by ASTA ultimately helps our students. With good working conditions and wages and benefits, I can focus on the kids and my goal: to make them better writers, better communicators. Critical thinkers who can be civically engaged and do so in a civil manner. Those are the kinds of citizens we need right now, and those are the kinds of citizens we are going to need even more in the future.

*Matt Corcoran attended Anaheim public schools and received his M.A. in English from CSU Fullerton.*

## 3

# Consistent Connection

**Palmdale chapter keeps member involvement ongoing, not just when needed**

By Frank Wells

**MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT** has become a top priority for the Palmdale Elementary Teachers Association this year, as the union works to become even stronger through greater participation levels and better communication. A combination of PETA-sponsored workshops, social activities, organizing efforts, community outreach and regular member input is making that goal happen.

PETA President Kathy Vanderzee assumed office in July after serving as bargaining chair and in other association roles. Although PETA was in good shape when she took over, she says, she wants to make it stronger by moving away from a "service model" construct where some members pay their dues in exchange for representation and other benefits, but don't realize that their participation and involvement are key to true union effectiveness.

Over the years, membership engagement has ebbed and flowed depending on the latest bargaining crisis, election or other organizing effort. Participation reached an all-time high in 2013, when a strong PETA election effort flipped the school board to a more teacher-supportive majority, and resulted in a shakeup in district administration. But after that victory, participation declined and fewer members came to association rep councils and other committee meetings.

"I want to get away from the 'ramp up, reach your goal, ramp down' cycle that gets us starting nearly from scratch when we try and bring members in to support bargaining and other efforts," Vanderzee says.





**“The truth is you can have the best bargaining team in the world, but they’re not going to get the results they should without good organizing and strong membership engagement.”**

—PETA PRESIDENT **KATHY VANDERZEE**

PETA joined community partners in a local Stuff-A-Bus toy drive. From left to right: Andrew Ramirez, Marcia Saldana, Kathy Vanderzee with son Benjamin Vanderzee, Chris Vanderzee and David Cuestas.

This year, a new Membership Engagement/Organizing Committee surveyed PETA members to see how they felt about their union, what their values are, what their expectations of PETA are, and what could be improved. The committee found that members value family above all else, then work, and that they want advocacy and support from their union. Surprisingly, union leadership concern about member involvement turned out to be a two-way street: Members said they want to feel more involved and more connected to their union.

Vanderzee credits her predecessors for laying the groundwork for many of her efforts to build those connections. This year, PETA recruited new members at a three-day orientation, and Vanderzee worked with the school district’s new teacher coordinator to make sure she is a part of any orientation for potential members hired throughout the year. “We want people to hit the ground running with a connection to PETA,” she says.

PETA also decided to provide more opportunities for members to see the value of their union and to get together, by offering association-sponsored workshops. With assistance from NEA, they held what proved to be a very popular workshop on student loan forgiveness, which PETA expanded to invite other CTA locals in the surrounding High Desert area. Vanderzee says she’s planning to bring in CalSTRS representatives to hold a retirement workshop in the spring.

She says she always makes it clear when something is an

association-sponsored event, in most cases not open to the public, and that participants’ membership and dues support is helping make it all happen. She and other PETA leaders use iPads at workshops, school visits and other events, where members or potential members can check their PETA/CTA/NEA information and update it if needed.

While many CTA locals have organizing committees, which often focus around bargaining crises, and membership committees, which largely focus on member recruitment, PETA took the innovative step of combining the two into the Membership Engagement/Organizing Committee. Vanderzee wants members to view member engagement as every bit as important as the bargaining team.

“Bargaining is hugely important,” she says, “but the truth is you can have the best bargaining team, the strongest spokespeople, the best budget numbers crunchers in the world, but they’re not going to get the results they should without good organizing and strong membership engagement.”

PETA’s Membership Engagement Organizers were “on fire” with ideas after attending sessions on member

# 4

PETA members rise to the challenge when needed to support bargaining or other efforts.



benefits and more at the fall CTA High Desert Service Center conference, and have scheduled at least one member engagement project per month.

In November and December, PETA participated in a local Stuff-A-Bus toy drive, resulting in nearly 300 member-given toys going to needy community children. The effort boosted PETA's visibility in the community (PETA was recognized as a charitable partner in the effort, and its logo appeared on the side of the bus) and gave members a different and positive way to participate in an association effort. In the same spirit, PETA supplied their site representatives with holiday cards that they could personalize and deliver to their colleagues. The union is also planning a classic movie night, beer and wine tastings, casino nights, baseball outings, and other fun social events.

"We're looking to strengthen connections," says Vanderzee. "Many of our members are already active in the community. We're looking to use those connections to help build or own."

PETA has always had strong membership numbers (over 95 percent of the bargaining unit belong to the union), and its members have nearly always risen to the challenge when needed to support bargaining or other efforts. But it's everyone's hope that these new efforts to truly engage members will make it an even stronger, more effective and more vibrant union.

"I'm really excited for our future," says Vanderzee. "It's a great time to be a PETA member and to get involved."

## San Leandro Gets Organized

Chapter's attention to members' needs builds unity and collaboration

By Mike Myslinski

**BY MAKING MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT** and management collaboration some of its top priorities, the San Leandro Teachers Association (SLTA) has earned the respect and participation of many of its 462 members in the San Leandro Unified School District. The union is a force not just at the bargaining table, but in the classroom as well, because it acts on issues that educators want handled, says veteran SLTA President Jon Sherr.

Teachers respond to issues they feel are relevant. "It gets more people involved," he says. "And now our district does respect the leadership of the union. The district is willing to work with us."

In one key project, SLTA reviews the performance of principals at all 14 school sites. Every February, educators fill out confidential questionnaires, which union leaders then discuss with Superintendent Mike McLaughlin and other district managers. It's meant to be a constructive process. "Our members felt that

since principals are evaluating them, they should also get to do evaluations," Sherr says.

Then there's the thriving SLTA "Issues to Action" program, says SLTA Vice President Tom Morse, who helps coordinate it. Started in 2014, it promises that the union will listen to members' priorities and then act on those priorities.

The program is a way to remind teachers that their union work extends into the classroom and far from the bargaining table. "On the one hand, we're a union. On the other hand, we're the heart of the community," says Morse.

So far, the program's successes include teachers having a stronger role in changing the district's student assessment and discipline policies, and having their voices heard about special education caseloads and tech integration into curriculum. SLTA committees on co-teaching, campus safety, new program

**"Our district does respect the leadership of the union. The district is willing to work with us."**

—SLTA PRESIDENT JON SHERR



SLTA's Ron Thompson, Amy Reick and Phil Smothermon, teachers at Bancroft Middle School.



CTA Board member Terri Jackson participates in a forum with SLTA members.



integration, English learner issues and tech integration are holding ongoing meetings involving scores of members.

Morse will give a presentation on vital union issues and SLTA victories at all school sites in February and March. It mostly underlines the attacks on public schools by federal anti-union efforts, and the dangers from the pending U.S. Supreme Court case *Janus v. AFSCME*, which would weaken unions by ending the requirement that non-union members must pay fair share fees to cover the costs of representing them. (See Morse's presentation at [bit.ly/2DiyFSj](https://bit.ly/2DiyFSj).)

By improving labor-management relations and engaging members over the last six years, SLTA:

- Secured 23.5 percent salary increases.
- Lowered class sizes in elementary schools.
- Created a wellness committee that holds employee health fairs, with one planned March 30.
- Secured more nursing and counselor positions.
- Elected pro-student and pro-teacher majorities to the progressive school board.

In fact, with its active political action committee and the union's affiliation with the Alameda County Labor Council, AFL-CIO, the SLTA endorsement in school board races has taken on a huge significance for candidates, Sherr says. "San Leandro is still a union town." He adds that Alameda County's labor movement is a good place to seek common

goals, for the sake of students and the community.

Morse believes in face-to-face meetings and forums on union issues to build unity. He says working with CTA is key in these uncertain political times, which is why he asked CTA Board member Terri Jackson, an East Bay teacher, to address San Leandro teachers early last year about the dangers posed to education by the Trump administration.

Last fall, he attended a CTA conference in San Jose. "President Eric Heins was there, and he said the one thing we need to do as union activists is build relationships. He was right."

He says the ongoing SLTA efforts will help San Leandro teachers face whatever threat to students and the teaching profession lies ahead.

"People do know that we are under attack, and they are ready to step up," Morse says. "People are woke more than they've ever been." ■

# UNSUNG HEROES

**CTA members drive  
a hard bargain —  
for students, and for you**

By **Sherry Posnick-Goodwin**

Photos by **Scott Buschman**

*Has your district put a cap on class size?*

*Has it changed to a fairer evaluation system or improved safety conditions?*

*Have you received a raise in the last few years?*

*Has your chapter fought district efforts to cut health care or essential positions such as librarians and nurses?*

**IF SO**, thank your chapter's bargaining team members, who work behind the scenes in ways that profoundly impact students and CTA members. They spend long hours at the bargaining table with district leaders, sometimes pulling all-nighters and negotiating until they're blue in the face. And they do it for free, to help ensure that students receive a quality education, and to improve the benefits and working conditions of colleagues.

When educators are paid adequately, it helps retain high-quality teachers. When districts provide educators with good health care, they are better able to serve the needs of students. And those on the bargaining team make that happen.

CTA has more than 1,000 chapters statewide. Educators in each chapter negotiate a contract that covers all members of the bargaining unit, including teachers, librarians, nurses, speech pathologists, counselors and other certificated staff. While a few chapters include both certified and classified staff, there are ESP chapters that support paraeducators, bus drivers, janitors, cafeteria workers, administrative assistants, health aides, library technicians and more.

Collective bargaining levels the playing field — educators sit down as equals with administrators, and both sides start the process with initial proposals. Even in tough times, the bargaining process allows



educators the means to protect their profession and their compensation.

Once an agreement is reached, it must be ratified by a majority of the chapter's members, and then by the school board. When the contract expires, the process begins again. (Teachers can strike only if a state mediator is unable to break a bargaining impasse and a nonbinding report from a neutral fact-finder fails to resolve the crisis.)

Meet some of the unsung heroes who serve on CTA chapter bargaining teams.





## NGOZIKA ANYANWU

**Hudnall Elementary School**

*Inglewood Teachers Association*

The fifth-grade teacher joined the bargaining team two years ago after being encouraged by colleagues to become more active. In February 2016, her chapter ratified a contract, and it was an epic moment, Anyanwu recalls, as before then employees had been working without a contract for seven years. That's because the Inglewood Unified School District has been in state receivership since 2012 to avoid fiscal insolvency. Last year, team members met several times to discuss challenges the district faces, including high teacher turnover and a revolving door of leadership.

### ***A union contract is important because...***

it spells everything out, and if something happens that goes against the contract, you can hold people's feet to the fire and say no, it stops right here. It is an incredibly powerful tool that we need to value, because there are people trying to take collective bargaining rights away in this country.

### ***Good traits for someone on a bargaining team...***

are patience and keeping an eye on the prize. You must communicate well, be open and flexible. You have to be able to connect with your members so you know what they want. We are constantly doing surveys, site visits, and asking members about their priorities.

### ***I would encourage someone to be part of their bargaining team...***

because it allows you to be part of the positive change that impacts every person in your chapter. It wasn't an immediate yes for me, because I have two small children. But I'm happy I joined. I have gained so much from being part of the process.



## DERIAL MCCAW

**Riverbend K-8 School**

*Yuba City Teachers Association*

Yuba City Teachers Association members went on strike last September, as the school district struggled with high teacher turnover because of large class size and lower comparable pay. After a week on the picket line, YCTA's negotiating team hammered out an agreement with the district granting educators pay raises over three years. McCaw, on the bargaining team that helped resolve the crisis, says it was natural for him as a science teacher to play the role of "realist" during tense meetings that sometimes lasted until morning.

### ***I joined my chapter's bargaining team six years ago...***

because I saw stuff that needed attention, and felt that I should be active instead of complaining. Making positive changes for teachers directly impacts students in a positive way, by allowing us to attract and retain good teachers.

### ***Being on a bargaining team...***

requires the ability to come up with creative solutions, work as a team, and discover through research whether the other side is being transparent. It puts a demand on your time, which can be challenging when you have a family. But it's worth it.

### ***Members of our team...***

are proud and honored that we were able to make changes that improve working conditions for our members — as well as future members.





## CHRIS PETERSON

**Modesto High School**

*Modesto Teachers Association*

This history teacher has been on MTA's bargaining team since 2009 and has been chair since 2011. Like the historical figures he teaches about, he believes it's important to play a role in shaping policy through public service. MTA's contract expired in June, and bargaining has gone to impasse. Issues include salary and lowering class size. MTA agreed to cuts during lean times, and Peterson says it's important for the district to act in good faith and restore cuts when finances are better, which is why class size is now being addressed.

### **One of the most challenging things...**

is building consensus. First you have to unify your negotiating team, or you'll never be able to convince the other side. Our unit represents teachers, counselors, librarians, speech pathologists, psychologists and more, and it can be a challenge to get everyone on the same page. Then you have to be able to reach across to the other side of the table and convince the district that your goals are in their best interest, too.

### **Communication is very important...**

and listening is more important than being a great orator, because if you don't know what your membership is asking for, or you don't understand your district's point of view, you will never reach a compromise to form a tentative agreement. You must be open and listen to multiple perspectives. That includes helping community members understand that it's not just about us getting the best contract, but doing what is best for our community.

### **Members have been supportive...**

by wearing green buttons that say they support the bargaining team, and even doing a conga line with drums outside the window during negotiations. It's been a fantastic source of strength!



## CINDI LUNSFORD

**Mariposa School of Global Education**

*Las Virgenes Classified Association*

This special ed paraeducator wanted to be in the loop about things happening in her district, so she joined her chapter's bargaining team five years ago. While salary is always an issue, this year the team will also focus on safety issues and the pay scale. (There are only five steps, so people working 20 years make as much as those hired five years ago.) Lunsford loves the back and forth of the bargaining process, which she calls a dance to balance the best interests of everyone. She is pleased her district finally purchased "comfortable chairs," because there will be lots of sitting during negotiations this year.

### **The first year I sat at the table...**

I don't think I said three words. I just listened, learned and tried to absorb as much as I could. It's kind of daunting at first, and sometimes I had absolutely no idea what they were talking about. But I acted like I did, and now, of course, I'm no longer intimidated. I love having a voice — and sometimes I have a big one.

### **When you sit at the bargaining table, you must...**

think before you talk. Don't offer up anything you haven't talked to your colleagues about. You have to be patient. Everybody has to be heard.

### **I find it rewarding...**

when somebody walks up to me and says, "Thank you for taking the time to represent us." That's a great feeling.





## TOM LEFEVERS

North Tahoe High School

Tahoe Truckee Education Association

In February, when district schools closed for a snow day, members of the bargaining team drove through a storm to sit down with the district and negotiate a contract. Fortunately, a deal was hammered out before those in the building got snowed in, says LeFevers, an ELD and English teacher who's been lead negotiator since 2015. "We wanted to get it done, and I'm very proud of my team for being willing to do that," he says. The deal offered members a 9 percent increase in wages and health benefits. LeFevers received letters from members thanking him for his service. It almost felt like being in the military, he muses.

### ***I decided to join the bargaining team...***

because I felt it was my turn. Over the years I've been raising a family and been a coach while others on the bargaining team did great things. I reached a point in my career when most of the kids were out of the house, and I figured it was finally my turn and said OK, I'll do it.

### ***During negotiations...***

you have to stay focused with your game face on. It takes lots of strategizing. You need to be skilled at nuances and watching people on the other team. We look at body language like crossed arms and rolling of eyes, and talk about what it means afterward. We don't miss much.

### ***As a lead negotiator...***

you need to work out an agreement that is best for the majority of your members, and sometimes what you decide may not be popular with everyone. You need to make sure members of the bargaining team put their personal interests aside and do what is best for the common good. Your decisions affect people's lives much more than I had ever realized. ■

## California Teachers and Collective Bargaining

**ON SEPT. 22, 1975**, Gov. Jerry Brown signed CTA-sponsored Senate Bill 160 by state Sen. Al Rodda, known as the Educational Employment Relations Act or the Rodda Act, to give California public school teachers collective bargaining rights and allow them to join in union to strengthen and protect their profession and students' education. A primary function of CTA and its locals is to represent teachers in negotiating the terms of employment contracts.

Critical job issues within the legal scope of bargaining include compensation, hours of work, safety matters, class size, evaluation and disciplinary procedures, health care, access to personnel files, preparation time, seniority, transfer rights, a grievance procedure with binding arbitration to settle major disputes, discrimination, job assignments, and early retirement.

The school board and the union must review the terms of the existing agreement at least once every three years. As noted by Ed-Data, negotiations can also "discuss problems and address new issues that have arisen during the period of the contract. ... [such as] when the Legislature and governor have passed new laws — for example, about school finance or teacher training and evaluation. A district can implement these laws only after the impact has been bargained."

Each party's initial bargaining proposal must be presented for public comment at a publicized school board meeting. Any new subjects raised later must be made public within 24 hours. The board must explain the financial impact of any proposed settlement before adopting the final contract.

A signed contract is binding on both the board and the union. It applies to all teachers in the bargaining unit whether or not they are union members. Educators who have joined the union pay union dues. Those who have not joined pay a "fair share" service fee, covering the costs of negotiating pay, benefits and working conditions.

# Member Benefit

Take advantage of **CTA's Retirement Savings Plan** — and educational resources to help you invest wisely

**CTA IS COMMITTED** to members' financial well-being. That is why we created the CTA 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan.

The plan features include:

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- High fiduciary standards.

CTA knows you need a trustworthy source of tools and resources to help you get informed and comfortable with your investment options. At [CTAinvest.org](http://CTAinvest.org) you can find objective help on your retirement savings strategy, including videos, calculators and model portfolios. You can also download helpful consumer guides at [CTAMemberBenefits.org/download](http://CTAMemberBenefits.org/download). For an on-site presentation by one of

CTA's Member Benefits team, call 650-552-5200.

Also, for Northern California teachers, the San Francisco office of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission can help you learn about retirement plans and investment options so you can invest wisely (see sidebar). And there are other organizations that promote investor education, including the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA).

To learn more about the CTA Retirement Savings Plan, visit [CTAMemberBenefits.org/rsp](http://CTAMemberBenefits.org/rsp) or call CTA Member Benefits at 650-552-5200. You can also enroll online at [CTAretirementplan.org](http://CTAretirementplan.org). ■

## SEC's Teacher Investment Outreach Project

The San Francisco office of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission has developed the Teachers Investment Outreach initiative to provide teachers in Northern California with investment education on 403(b) and 457(b) retirement plans and investment options.

The pilot project helps teachers make informed decisions on investment portfolio options, fees and risk, and also teaches how to evaluate financial professionals who offer 403(b) and 457(b) plan services.

To learn more, visit [investor.gov](http://investor.gov) and [sec.gov/teachers](http://sec.gov/teachers).



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# Share Your Journey to Win a Journey

California Casualty offers contests as well as great deals

**W**hether you're a new teacher or retiring after a distinguished career, California Casualty invites CTA members to visit [winajourney.com](http://winajourney.com) and enter for a chance to win a Dodge Journey, or the cash equivalent of \$25,000.

While you're there, see how California Casualty's auto, home, renters and other insurance products can meet any personal and professional life stage needs.

Since 1951, CTA and California Casualty have partnered to support educators and the important causes that impact schools and students. For example, in 2007 they helped found Impact Teen Drivers, the nonprofit dedicated to battling inattentive driving, the No. 1 killer of teens. California Casualty continues to fund the Create Real Impact contest, which rewards students for artistic messaging promoting safe driving to their peers.

California Casualty employees also volunteer to bring the Impact Teen Drivers



## WIN A DODGE JOURNEY

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curriculum into public high schools across the country and present awards to winning Create Real Impact entrants. While California instituted a tough new law last year banning the use of handheld mobile devices behind the wheel, it's believed that efforts like Impact Teen Drivers are needed to keep public attention on the problem to turn the tide of crashes from inattentive driving.

As part of the Impact effort, California Casualty enlisted NEA and CTA members last year to make a pledge to drive focused for a chance to win a Ford Focus. More than 76,000 educators, including almost 16,000 CTA members, met the challenge to be a good example for their families and their students and avoid distracted driving.

(Christy Clark-Weese, a PE and health teacher in Firestone, Colorado, was the grand prize winner.)

California Casualty gives back in other meaningful ways. It has partnered with CTA to sponsor the California School Recognition Program, which celebrates the Teachers of the Year and highlights California's Distinguished Schools. Its programs have also benefited educators through \$7,500 School Lounge Makeovers, \$2,500 Academic Awards, and multiple monthly \$200 Help Your Classroom grants.

The Win a Journey contest will run through Oct. 5, 2018, with a winner announced in November. ■

*To learn more about California Casualty, or to request an auto insurance quote, please visit [calcas.com/CTA](http://calcas.com/CTA), or call 800-800-9410. Chrysler Dodge is not a participating partner in or sponsor of the Win a Journey contest.*



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# WIN

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