

# California EDUCATOR

California Teachers Association June 2010 Volume 14 Issue 9

*"That which does  
not kill us makes us  
stronger."*

Friedrich Nietzsche

**Resiliency**  
page 8

LAST OF THE **One-room  
schoolhouses**  
page 16

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# ¡Sí Se Puede! ¿Por Qué No?

BY CTA PRESIDENT DAVID A. SANCHEZ

**W**e have some good news to celebrate: CTA-supported candidates and school measures scored big wins in the June primary election. Thanks to our hard work, California voters soundly rejected the top-down reform agenda of state Senator Gloria Romero as they voted for CTA-supported Tom Torlakson and former superintendent Larry Aceves to advance to the November runoff for state superintendent of public instruction. It was a vote against the state budget cuts, the one-size-fits-all mandates of Sacramento and Washington, and the blame game against teachers. It shows what we can accomplish when we work together.

But we still have much to do. As we bring this school year to an end, dealing with yet another year of drastic cuts to public education, it's clear that we have our work cut out for us in the coming months. We're facing and fighting the largest budget cuts in California since the Great Depression. Tens of thousands of our members have lost their jobs — forcing class sizes to increase and many educational programs to be eliminated. More than \$17 billion has been cut from California public schools and colleges in the last two years, equaling a cut of nearly \$3,000 per student. We're seeing scathing attacks on our most experienced teachers, swelling class sizes, and an administration that believes federal education funding and support should be based on a competition that labels a few students and schools winners and the rest losers. We know that it's not that simple.

So many of our lawmakers today are looking for easy answers — a quick fix for the problems facing our state and our schools — and have neglected to listen to teachers, the professionals working every day on education's front line. We know that there are no easy answers or quick cure-alls. We know that what's needed now from lawmakers are solutions that are proven to

work. But proven solutions, like smaller class sizes and quality professional development, take money to implement, and if the governor sells the Legislature on another cuts-only budget, things are only going to get worse. Fortunately, Assembly Speaker John Perez has proposed a budget solution that does not suspend or manipulate the Proposition 98 constitutional funding guarantee for public education and does not impose more cuts on schools. We will be working with the Assembly and the Senate, encouraging them to approve this version of the state budget.

The June primary race was about more than who will become the next state superintendent. It was a California referendum on the Obama-Duncan reform agenda. California voters spoke loud and clear, showing their support for education reform that focuses on proven reforms and on parents, teachers and administrators working together to best meet the needs of students in their neighborhood schools.

As we approach this November's general election, we'll need your involvement with the governor's race between Jerry Brown, who has made a firm commitment to support teachers and public schools, and billionaire businesswoman Meg Whitman, who has spent \$71 million of her own money on the primary, essentially trying to buy the office.

We'll need to work hard over the coming months to keep our members informed and engaged through the election. It's not too soon to begin talking with your friends and families about why supporting public education at the polls is so important to the future of our state, or why California's tax structure needs fundamental changes if our public schools are going to have the chance to thrive again.

While most people will agree that change in Sacramento is necessary, getting them to

*Continued on page 38*

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¡Sí Se Puede! [Yes we can! Why not?], words inspired by César Chávez, encourage us to remember that, together, we can achieve great things.



# what's new at CTA.ORG



## On to November

With the June 8 primary election behind us, we now turn to the general election. Check out CTA's recommended candidates for the November 2 ballot.  
[www.cta.org/Election2010](http://www.cta.org/Election2010)



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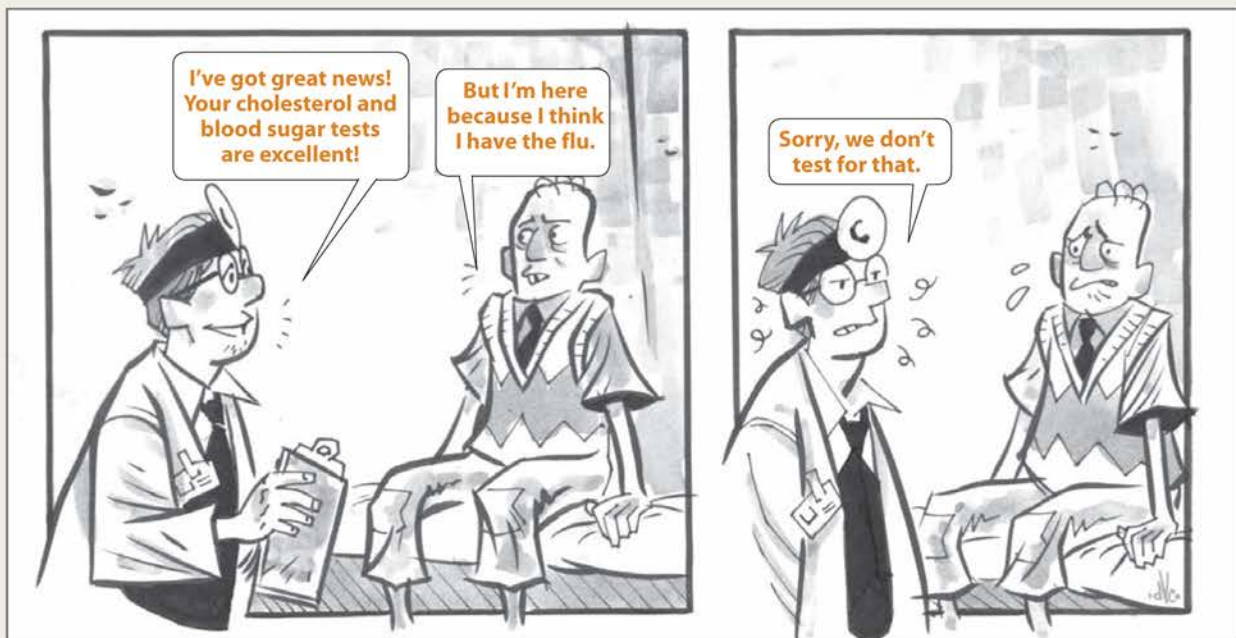
For additional Educator content, look for our web exclusives at [cta.org](http://cta.org)

## Create a cartoon concept

We invite members to send in cartoon concepts for future issues of the *Educator*. All we ask is that your ideas deal with current events in education and captions are no longer than one sentence long. Please send your cartoon ideas through mail, fax or e-mail.

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If doctors were paid according to test scores...



Photos by Scott Buschman

## Seven of 11 teachers pink-slipped San Bruno layoffs devastate a school

“There’s not a dry eye in the house,” a parent warned other parents who had come to collect their children.

The last day of school is usually a time of celebration, but at El Crystal Elementary School in San Bruno there was an outpouring of grief and sadness this June. Students clung to teachers, parents came in to express thanks, and staff said their goodbyes.

Out of 11 teachers at the school, this year seven were given pink slips. Skip Johnson, the school principal, calls the group of San Bruno Education Association members “The Magnificent

Seven.” They are Shawna Briggs, Catherine Fish, Nicole Foster, Sarah Hypes, Lauren Johansen, Melissa Trudell and Megan Youngblood.

The principal is sad, but he’s also angry about cuts imposed on education. “The economic downturn seems to have so desensitized our nation that it no longer seems to care,” said Johnson. “I hope someday we can find the resources to support a sound, basic education for all of our students.”

“What’s happening is just awful,” says Hypes, a first-grade teacher who is not returning. “This is my third year here and



**LEFT:** Front row: Melissa Trudell, Sarah Hypes, Nicole Foster. Back row: Catherine Fish, Lauren Johansen, Megan Youngblood, Shawna Briggs.

**BELOW:** Sarah Hypes says goodbye to students.

the school is like a family. We’re really close. Everybody knows each other, and we’re all on the same page educationally.”

Sadly, they are among 26,000 teachers in California receiving pink slips this year along with thousands of classified employees.

“More than \$17 billion has been cut from California public schools and colleges in the last two years, equaling a cut of nearly \$3,000 per student,” says CTA President David A. Sanchez. “That this is happening in California — in a state that boasts the eighth-largest economy in the world — is truly unconscionable.”

In the end just two of the El Crystal Elementary School teachers — Youngblood and Fish — were asked to return to the school. Some of the seven were offered jobs elsewhere in the district, but for most of them, it was too little too late. They say they are bound for jobs in other districts or pursuing other careers.

SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

Read more about what **CTA** and **NEA** are doing to bring educators back to work

- > Advocating for the Federal Jobs Bill ([www.cta.org](http://www.cta.org))
- > Supporting the state Assembly Jobs Budget (page 32)
- > Repealing corporate tax breaks ([www.paytheirfairshare.com](http://www.paytheirfairshare.com))

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“I look into the eyes of the ‘magnificent seven’ we are losing and my heart breaks. All of us at El Crystal grieve for the loss of our school culture. In 2008, the state of California recognized us as a distinguished school for raising our Academic Performance Index from the low 700’s to more than 850 over a five-year span while maintaining Adequate Yearly Progress for all our subgroups. Next year, in kindergarten through grade 3 we will go from 20 students to 31 students per class. I grieve for the loss of great, young, enthusiastic teachers and for the loss of our ability to reduce class size.”

*Skip Johnson*  
Principal, El Crystal Elementary School in San Bruno



# calendar

<p>jul 2010</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> July 1-6 <input type="checkbox"/> July 19-23</p>	<p>NEA Representative Assembly, <b>New Orleans</b> Presidents Conference, <b>Asilomar</b></p>
<p>aug 2010</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Aug. 1-6</p>	<p>Summer Institute, <b>UCLA</b></p>
<p>sep 2010</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sept. 21</p>	<p>International Day of Peace in Education</p>
<p>oct 2010</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 1-3 <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 8-10 <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 15-17 <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 22-24 <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 29-31</p>	<p>Region II Leadership Conference, <b>Reno</b> CCA Fall Bargaining/Leadership Conference Region I Leadership Conference, <b>Asilomar</b> CTA State Council of Education, <b>Los Angeles</b> GLBT Conference, <b>Rancho Mirage</b></p>
<p>nov 2010</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Nov. 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Nov. 14-20</p>	<p>General election American Education Week</p>
<p>jan 2011</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 14-16 <input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 21-23 <input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 28-30</p>	<p>Issues Conference, <b>Las Vegas</b> Good Teaching Conference, <b>San Jose</b> Region III Leadership Conference, <b>Torrance</b></p>
<p>feb 2011</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Feb. 4-6</p>	<p>CTA State Council of Education, <b>Los Angeles</b></p>
<p>mar 2011</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> March 2 <input type="checkbox"/> March 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> March 18-20</p>	<p>Read Across America Equity and Human Rights Conference, <b>San Jose</b> Good Teaching Conference, <b>Orange County</b></p>

## Corrections

In the May *California Educator*, the headline on page 28 incorrectly stated that Oakland teachers' one-day strike on April 29 "yields contract." The word "talks" was mistakenly omitted from the end of the headline; the Oakland Education Association went back to the table after the strike, but has reached no contract agreement.

Also in the May *Educator*, there were a few errors in the story "Months after quake, Calexico schools still closed" on page 33. The first was in the headline itself: As the story makes clear, all 12 schools in Calexico had reopened and were operating six weeks after the April 4 earthquake. In the caption of the accompanying photo, the woman second from the right should have been identified as Associated Calexico Teachers Treasurer Sandra Gustafson.

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Keira Flionis, a member of the Alvord Educators Association, hands her students balls to remind them of the importance of bouncing back after facing difficult times in their lives.

**Content Objective**

**Content Objective:**  
*Before* we solved proportions. *Now* we will use proportions to find side lengths of similar figures.

**Language Objective**

**Language Objective:**  
*I will tell my learning partner that in similar polygons the ratios of corresponding sides are equal.*

**Essential Question:**  
How do unknown polygons help us take a step in determining the area of polygons? Would similar polygons help solve similar problems?







Of all the lessons you learned growing up, it just may be the most important: Life isn't always fair. Sometimes it can be downright cruel and leave you with more questions than answers — questions like “Why did this happen to me?” and “What do I do now?” The answers to questions like these are seldom simple and often don't offer the comfort and resolution you are seeking at the time. But the process of asking them, of learning how to examine your life and cope with challenges, can make a world of difference — especially if you learn these skills at an early age.

Originally thought to be an inborn trait, resiliency is now considered a process that can be cultivated in the classroom, and many educators are doing just that. From Palo Alto to Riverside, teachers across California are discovering what new research is also showing us: Resilient students are better focused on learning and perform well on standardized tests. They aren't incapacitated by a breakup or not making the varsity team. Instead, they understand the way they approach disappointments can help them gain a positive — or just a different — perspective. What's more, this important life lesson extends far beyond the classroom, as resilient students go on to become resilient adults capable of handling life's ups and downs. >>>

# Resiliency

Stories by Sherry Posnick-Goodwin • Photos by Scott Buschman

# Teaching students to bounce back

Keira Flionis greets every student at the door with a handshake and a personal greeting when they enter her classroom at Wells Intermediate School in Riverside. When something goes wrong, she talks about the importance of “bouncing back” and hands out rubber balls to make her point. She focuses on her students’ strengths and what they are doing right, rather than their weaknesses.

Flionis, a member of the Alford Educators Association, attempts to foster resiliency in her students, because she believes it will help them do better in school and better in life. She doesn’t teach it as a separate subject; rather, she incorporates her philosophy of being resilient in her regular curriculum.

She decided it was necessary after realizing that resiliency was the “missing piece” to help her low-income students be more successful. She attended training on how to foster resiliency in students, and started applying what she learned in day-to-day teaching. As a result, she says, her classroom became a better place.

“I firmly believe that looking at resiliency had a huge part in that,” says Flionis. “The trick, I believe, was in focusing on what the individual students already had going for

them. Before the training, I was focusing on what was wrong with the class.”

For example, if a student misbehaves, she may take that student aside and comment on that student’s ability for natural leadership, and ask them to use that strength in a positive way. “Instead of saying ‘stop that,’ I’ll remind them that they know what’s right.”

## Necessary coping skills

Flionis says students these days are under more stress, but lack basic coping skills — and the ability to recover from adversity — in a way that previous generations did not. She counts herself among the growing number of educators who believe it is necessary for schools to foster resiliency among students, since these skills may not be taught at home.

Nan Henderson, who taught the resiliency workshop that Flionis attended, believes that it is important for educators to communicate a resilient attitude that says to students: You have what it takes to get through this.

“I interviewed a young man a few years ago who had lived a painful life of loss and abuse,” says Henderson, who has worked with school staff in Santa Monica, Los Angeles, and other districts throughout the state. “Most of his adolescence was spent in one foster home after another. He told me that what helped him the most in attaining his own resilient outcome was people along the way that told him: What is right with you is more powerful than anything that is wrong.

“In my trainings, people tell me that this is difficult to do,” continues Henderson. “For example, a child who is skipping class and responding with anger and belligerence to any offer of help presents a typical paradox: At the very same time a person is weighed down with problems in one area of life, he or she

also has strengths somewhere else. The challenge is both to be aware of the problems and to draw upon the strengths of the person to help solve them — as well as to sincerely communicate the belief that the current problems can be successfully overcome.”

Another example might be a student struggling with family problems who is failing two classes. Instead of confronting the student with the problem, another approach might be, “I know about all the problems in your family. Please tell me how you have managed to do as well as you have done? Perhaps we can use these things to bring up your grades in math and science.”

Henderson has created the Resiliency Wheel (see sidebar, below), which displays six key elements to help build resiliency into the school environment and mitigate risk factors.



Nan Henderson

## The Resiliency Wheel

Nan Henderson created the Resiliency Wheel to encapsulate the six key factors in developing resiliency in students.



It includes three strategies for building resiliency in the environment:

- 1 Provide caring and support** through positive relationships with adults and peers.
- 2 Set and communicate high expectations** of success and reward small steps in the right direction.
- 3 Provide opportunities for meaningful participation** and contributing to others.

It also includes three strategies for mitigating risk factors in the environment:

- 4 Increase pro-social bonding** through positive activities such as sports, drama, and community service.
- 5 Set clear, consistent boundaries** with fair expectations and appropriate consequences.
- 6 Teach life skills** such as communication, problem solving, stress management, and conflict resolution.

For more information on Nan Henderson’s training, visit [www.resiliency.com](http://www.resiliency.com).



LEFT: California Faculty Association member Frank Lilly at CSU Sacramento.

## Bolstering resiliency skills

Davidson Middle School in San Rafael has launched a pilot program to bolster students' innate resiliency skills. Davidson staff members are working with a local nonprofit, CorStone, meeting weekly for 28 weeks in groups of 10 with trained facilitators who are either therapists or therapist interns. So far, the program has paid off in dividends, says Steve Leventhal, CorStone director. Suspensions have been reduced by half, and a formal evaluation by University of San Francisco shows increased levels of student optimism and decreased pessimism.

Students are asked to consider their strengths, and to build on those strengths by improving their social and emotional skill sets. They learn healthy ways of dealing with their emotions and how to work out conflicts without involving teachers, administrators or counselors.

"These days you can definitely see a need for it with behavior such as cutting," says Alison Jacobs, a counselor and San Rafael Teachers Association member, referring to students who mutilate themselves. "We have students who are saying, 'Help, I need coping skills, I don't know how to do this.'"

Jacobs finds it ironic that schools are putting more pressure on students, but decreasing services for counseling and mental health. "Kids are going through so many



**Joanne Cohen**  
United Educators of  
San Francisco

changes in a world that is continuously changing. In the classroom, standards are getting tougher, and students need to know curriculum earlier. In the news they see violence, people doing drugs and people committing crimes. A lot of them have parents who are always working, so there's not that time at home for them to learn these skills and values. So it's up to schools to give kids the necessary coping skills."

"We are teaching them life skills and ways of resolving conflict that are self-empowering, peaceful and accountable," says Leventhal. "They are settling things in a way that is respectful of others, as opposed to a punitive and isolation model."

## Safe haven for students

At the School of the Arts in San Francisco, the Wellness Center offers a safe haven for students to chill and discuss problems such as stress, violence and abuse, depression and suicide, sexual orientation, chronic illness, eating disorders, family issues, peer relationships and risky behaviors.

Teens today are under enormous pressure, comments Joanne Cohen, Wellness Center coordinator. "They start testing here in second grade. To get into our school, they have to audition, like in the movie *Fame*. For kids who are motivated, even a 4.0 GPA is



**ABOVE:** Tenth-grader Cassie Grilley at the San Francisco School of the Arts.

not enough. To get into a UC, they need AP and honors classes."

Their problems are exacerbated by technology, with some students cyberbullying and spreading gossip via texting and Facebook, says Cohen, an education support professional and member of United Educators of San Francisco.

"I try to foster awareness that they may be using negative coping skills when it comes to

*Continued on page 38*

**W**hen it comes to understanding why some people are resilient and others aren't, there are no easy answers. According to *Psychology Today*, everyone has the potential to be resilient, and resiliency can emerge in both childhood and adulthood. A 1998 study found there are some common characteristics of resilient people: They keep in mind that bad times are temporary; they believe in themselves; they accept help from others and seek help from family members, teachers, mentors and friends; they set goals for the future; they believe their struggles have made them stronger. While some individuals seem to have resiliency and others haven't yet tapped theirs, there is definitely much more stress in the lives of young people today than in years past and more challenges for them to face with resiliency.

- > The poorest children are bearing the brunt of the recession's impact, according to UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education and Access, and California topped the list in foreclosures and unemployment.
- > California's homeless student population from preschool to 12th grade grew from 178,000 in 2006-07 to 288,000 in 2008-09, an increase of more than 25 percent annually, according to the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.
- > A survey of 6,008 South Los Angeles high school students in 2008, conducted by South Central Youth Empowered Through Action with technical help from Loyola Marymount University, showed a high percentage of students exhibiting symptoms of clinical depression.
- > A new UC Berkeley study shows that poverty affects children's brains, impairing language development and "executive function" or the ability to play, remember details and pay attention in school.

# Counselors increase coping assistance after tragedies

Four students at Gunn High School in Palo Alto committed suicide on the train tracks in the community within the past year. Eight to 10 possible suicide attempts were prevented by police and others in the same location during this period. The “suicide cluster” has devastated students, staff and parents in the Gunn High School community.

Staff have been working hard to provide new services — as well as increasing awareness of existing services — to prevent such tragedies in the future. Staff also brought in resiliency expert Kenneth Ginsburg as a guest speaker. (See Q&A, facing page.)

The counseling department, whose members belong to the Palo Alto Education Association, has been instrumental in responding to the needs of grieving students, parents, staff and community members during these difficult times, and recently shared their perspective during a roundtable discussion. It was the first time they have spoken publicly about what has happened and the prevention measures they have undertaken, despite nationwide media attention focused on the school and requests from Dr. Phil and other talk show hosts for interviews.

Much of the problem, counselors say, revolves around students’ inability to cope with disappointment and setbacks. This appears to be more prevalent with the younger generation

than with previous generations, and can be attributed to several factors, they say.

“When problems arise, parents insist on speaking with teachers and counselors themselves, rather than letting their teens work out the problem,” relates guidance counselor Jovi Dewett.

“The mantra is that kids need to learn how to handle things,” says guidance counselor Linda Kirsch.

It has not been uncommon for parents at the school to fly into crisis mode if their child receives a B instead of an A, and to beg the teacher to change it to an A so it won’t hurt the student’s chances of being accepted into a top university. Some students have even been told that their parents won’t pay for their college education unless they are accepted at Harvard or Yale.

“Many times, students shy away from a more difficult class,” says Dewett. “When that happens, students become very fearful of taking on challenges because they don’t know what the outcome will be.”

When students are afraid to take risks, they begin to lack confidence. And when they lack confidence, they lose their ability to cope with life’s setbacks. Many students, they say, can’t talk to their parents about this and ultimately become depressed.

“Unfortunately, our students are not learning the natural process for problem-solving in life,” says guidance counselor Pat Conway.

Counselors have been communicating with parents about these issues and have also held Parent Education Nights. Counselors communicate that the best college match for their child may not be the most prestigious one. And they are asking parents in no uncertain terms to stop “rescuing” their children at every opportunity so that students can learn how to take responsibility for their actions and make decisions.

The school’s website has posted listings of resources for emotional support that are available 24 hours a day in the community, including counseling services, a suicide hotline, and a hotline for gay and lesbian youth. For students requiring immediate counseling, the school has increased its ties to outside mental health as well.

Guidance counselor Bill Christensen says



**Bill Christensen**  
Palo Alto Education Association



**ABOVE:** Guidance counselor Pat Conway at Gunn High School in Palo Alto.

counselors are accessible to students, and that the “intensity of their needs” has increased. With an open-door policy before school, at lunch and after school, students are encouraged to talk with adults if they have any concerns about their peers. Students are also encouraged to talk to peer counselors, and as part of a grassroots campaign are wearing shirts that say “Talk to Me.” Training has been offered so that students will know how to recognize — and deal with — suicidal thoughts and feelings in themselves and others.

“We want to shatter the idea that it’s okay to keep silent if someone has questions or concerns about someone else,” says guidance counselor Lisa Kaye. “We are beginning to break the silence and help people communicate and come forward. The walls are coming down. Kids are coming in and expressing lots of concerns.”

The presentation by Kenneth Ginsburg was very beneficial, says Christensen, for putting things into perspective — especially when it comes to defining what is or is not a crisis. The pediatrician told the crowd that part of being resilient is determining what’s really worth stressing over.

“It was an amazing event,” says Kirsch. “We had parents, students and people from churches in the area attend. We have wonderful students that attend this school, and we must do everything we can to help them thrive.” ❖

**BELOW:** Palo Alto Education Association members Jovi Johnston-Dewett and Lisa Kaye, guidance counselors at Gunn High School.



# Q&A Resiliency expert weighs in

Pediatrician and author Kenneth Ginsburg, an expert on child and teen resiliency, visited Gunn High School in Palo Alto earlier this year after a student “suicide cluster” devastated the school community. We talked with him recently about the importance of teaching coping skills to students.

**CALIFORNIA EDUCATOR:** Why is there a need for schools and teachers to foster resiliency in children and teens today?

**KENNETH GINSBURG:** Children and teenagers need many layers of support in order to be resilient. While parents are probably the primary layer of support, teachers provide a critical support to young people within the school setting. They watch over peer relationships and teach kids how to thrive despite academic bumps. The bottom line is that teachers spend more time with kids than many parents do and are vital to children’s resilience.

Teachers contribute both to helping kids thrive and to catching problems in the early stages, hopefully preventing most crises.

**Is there a tendency to protect young people instead of teaching them to bounce back?**

There’s no question that parents want to wrap kids in protective quilts to somehow protect them. But kids have to learn their own life’s lessons. You don’t do them a service by protecting them from every little thing, although you need to protect them from big and dangerous things. You also have to let them fall down sometimes so they learn how to get up.

**How do teachers convey to students what’s important — and what’s not — when it comes to stress?**

The bottom line is that if it can’t physically hurt you, it’s not a true emergency. Our body reacts to stress as if we are in a jungle running from a tiger, and that is what makes us so uncomfortable. We have to be able to distin-



**ABOVE:** Kenneth Ginsburg, pediatrician and author, is an expert on child and teen resiliency.

guish between a real tiger that can hurt you and paper tiger that just feels like it might be dangerous. A real tiger is something that can chew your face off. A paper tiger is something that feels stressful, but can never really

*Continued on page 29*

## Cultivating **resiliency** in students

Once thought to be an inborn trait that some have and some do not, resilience is now recognized as a process that everyone is capable of, and this capacity can be tapped and even cultivated by educators. Researchers Bonnie Benard and Sara Truebridge assert that resiliency allows for development of social competence, problem-solving skills, critical consciousness, autonomy and a sense of purpose.

Truebridge, a former teacher, says, “Resilience is more about *how* one teaches than *what* one teaches.” She currently works with students, educators, and administrators to help them understand the power of resilience and supports them in developing strategies and a plan of action that foster resilience for everyone in the school community — students, teachers, administrators and parents — to promote school success for all.

The Penn Resiliency Program, a behavioral therapy program at the University of Pennsylvania, received coverage on National Public Radio, which noted that resiliency curriculum “can be as powerful as taking antidepressant medicines.” An evaluation of the program showed that it prevented symptoms of depression and anxiety among students and negative behavior.

Resiliency training may be a trend, but it’s not exactly new: There has been more than 40 years of developmental research in the area of resiliency and student outcomes, observes Truebridge.

“What people have found is that when high-stakes testing was put into effect, it didn’t totally work, and it didn’t change the way children were performing. I think we’re finally getting to resilience by default — because nothing else works. Resilience is about looking at the whole child. And, ironically, it works and it doesn’t cost any money.”

She believes that the three most important factors in developing resilience in students are “external assets” which she defines as: caring relationships with school staff; high expectations and conveying to students they are “worth something”; and giving youths opportunities for participation or meaningful involvement in school and community.

These external assets, in turn, engage students’ innate capacity for positive characteristics or “internal assets,” which include cooperation, communication, empathy, problem solving, self-awareness, and setting goals and aspirations.

In school communities that focus on building both external and internal assets, students engage in lower rates of “risky” behavior, such as binge drinking, smoking cigarettes and marijuana, and bringing weapons to school. A study by Truebridge and Benard found this especially true in California and noted, “In this way, school communities throughout California can weave the fabric of resilience for all of our children and youth.”



**LEFT:** Santa Monica-Malibu Classroom Teachers Association member Aileen Salmaggi works with students. **BELOW:** Student Kwame Williams exuberantly participates at Edison Language Academy in Santa Monica.

students communicate ideas they may be too young to verbalize. The program empowers students to become problem-solvers and offers them the opportunity to learn from bad experiences in stead of becoming overwhelmed, angry or embittered.

When insulted, a youngster might reach into a toolbox for a tube of toothpaste, for example. This sends a powerful message: Think before talking, because hurtful words are easy to say, but difficult to take back — just as it's difficult to put toothpaste back in the tube after it's been squeezed out. If someone needs personal space, he may reach into the toolbox for a bubble, signaling other students to back off; a large inflatable microphone in the toolbox serves as a reminder that *tone* or volume can help solve problems or make things worse; a maze shows the need to keep trying.

Students, especially those in the upper grades, don't need the actual tool to resolve problems. Sometimes just blurting out "toothpaste" or "bubble" or "microphone" on the playground is enough.

The "Cool Tools" program was developed at UCLA's Corinne A. Seeds University Elementary School, and was designed by safe school specialist Ava de la Sota. The goal is to help youngsters feel empowered, so they won't fall apart when under stress. They can learn how to "fix" problems one step at a time — without feeling overwhelmed — and understand that if they make a mistake, it's their responsibility to fix it. Eventually, say teachers, students will build upon these skills and develop into resilient, coping, competent teens and adults.

Even if students don't resolve their prob-

lems peacefully, they learn there are better ways to deal with their anger or resentment. A teacher might ask a student who has hit someone, "What should you have done differently?" And that student can pull out an ice cube tray to show that he should have "chilled" or a shoe to demonstrate that he should have walked away. The student can then roll the "nice dice" and do a corresponding number of nice things for the person they've wronged.

Fourth- and fifth-graders in the Cool Tools Leadership Team at Edison perform skits for other students to demonstrate how the program works. The message from student leaders has been well received by their peers. Better yet, the program seems to be working.

"I once used the maze when I was nervous



and scared about homework and a test," confides fifth-grader Daniel Aguilar. "It made me feel better. I knew I had to keep trying."

"It a great way to solve problems instead of having a big discussion," says teacher Aileen Salmaggi, a member of the Santa Monica-Malibu Classroom Teachers Association (SMMCTA). "You can just say 'bubble' and that person understands that they should get out of your space."

Salmaggi incorporates resiliency training into her fourth-grade curriculum when the opportunity arises. During a project where students are asked to partner up, for example, Salmaggi passes out kaleidoscopes.

## Cool tools for resiliency

*"It's not fair!"*

*"Everyone is picking on me!"*

*"I'll never pass this test."*

*"It's too much work. I give up!"*

It's common for some youngsters to view minor setbacks and disappointments as catastrophes. They may feel overwhelmed, unable to cope, depressed or anxious. And for those with poor coping skills, it can feel like the end of the world when a real crisis strikes home.

Some educators in Santa Monica believe schools should help foster resiliency, because when children bounce back from adversity, they become stronger human beings both emotionally and academically.

Edison Language Academy adopted a unique curriculum to boost coping skills. Classrooms have special "toolboxes" filled with items to help



“Walk toward the light, look through, and talk about what you see with your partner,” she urges. Naturally one student sees the kaleidoscope patterns one way, and the partner sees another.

“That’s called perspective,” explains Salmaggi. “We all see, view and think about things in different ways. Maybe the best thing to do is for each partner to present his or her own perspective, and then you can compromise.”

The kaleidoscope lesson, explains Salmaggi, is a way to help students “agree to disagree” and understand that *everyone* can be right in a way.

Everyone in the Edison Language Academy ranging from administrator to classified employee is on board with the program, and many believe that Cool Tools helps grownups

other. I think they learn much more from each other than they ever could from me.”

Like Edison, the entire staff at McKinley has embraced the program. “As for staff, we have no cliques or groups,” says Sanchagrin. “Everyone here gets along wonderfully. There’s a lot of collaboration, and it wears off on the kids.”

The program, he thinks, makes students more resilient for the challenges that lie ahead. “We are planting the seeds,” he says. “Sometimes you will never see the plant that results, but you know it’s there, and that you have helped to make it stronger.”



**ABOVE:** Fifth-grade teacher Marc Sanchagrin at McKinley Elementary School; student Lilia Mendoza looks through a kaleidoscope. **BELOW:** Fourth- and fifth-graders in the Cool Tools Leadership Team at Edison Language Academy perform skits for other students to demonstrate how the program works.



get along better, too.

“These issues don’t just affect children,” says Salmaggi. “It’s almost like we are learning along with them about the different solutions for solving problems.”

Marc Sanchagrin, an SMMCTA member and fifth-grade teach teacher at nearby McKinley Elementary School, is also a fan of the Cool Tools program and has a tool chest in his classroom.

“It’s all about social responsibility,” he relates. “They are learning that they are a group and that they are part of a team — not just succeeding in their own right. And the program works because they learn from each

## Ways to foster **resiliency** in students

- Enhance students’ self-worth by complimenting them on their character and contributions — not just academic achievements.
- Help identify problems and break them down into smaller parts so they seem more manageable.
- Emphasize that bad times are temporary and the future can be better.
- Help create a positive personal vision for the future to focus on.
- Suggest healthy habits such as eating properly, getting enough sleep, and exercising.
- Recommend avoiding triggers that cause stress, including negative people or situations.
- Use relaxation techniques like deep breathing, yoga and meditation to manage stress.
- Employ positive diversions such as reading, taking a nature walk or listening to music.
- Create outlets for feelings and emotions such as art or writing down feelings in a journal.



# LAST OF THE

The Comptche one-room schoolhouse in Northern California, still in operation.

INSETS: The former Comptche School building, built in 1925; the current Wooden Valley Elementary School.







Story by Sherry Posnick-Goodwin • Photos by Scott Buschman

# ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSES

The teacher steps outside in the chilly morning. She rings the heavy cast-iron bell announcing that school is in session. Students of varying ages scamper in from the playground, line up at the door and solemnly enter the classroom like a scene from *Little House on the Prairie*. You can still find scenes like this at a few one-room schoolhouses in California. But to reach them, you must sometimes travel down winding roads and visit towns where there are no traffic lights, no supermarkets and no cell phone reception. In this feature we take a look at a few of these structures where American education got its start. >>>

A century ago there were more than 200,000 one-room schoolhouses in the United States, a number that dwindled to 335 in 2006, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Only about a dozen now operate in California. Some communities treasure them; others want them closed. In Napa, the state's oldest single-room schoolhouse, established before the Civil War, is set to close its doors for good at the end of this school year. It's a casualty of bad economic times.

Some leaders in Sacramento may consider them archaic and worth preserving only as historical landmarks. But those who teach in them believe they should be preserved as a part of our cultural heritage. After all, one-room schoolhouses are the foundation of American education.

Much has changed in one-roomers. For example, they now have computers — mostly dial-up — and students no longer get their knuckles rapped for bad behavior. Female teachers — once required to be single — have families. As for students, some have dreadlocks instead of braids. Things may have changed, but the pioneer spirit and sense of independence and pride that were once a hallmark of these schools can still be found today — in those who teach and those who learn inside these unique environments.

### Wooden Valley Elementary School

Napa is known for its wineries and its bed-and-breakfasts. But it is also the home of Wooden Valley Elementary School, the state's oldest one-room schoolhouse still in operation. Surrounded by vineyards and ranches, it is far from the main roads and the hustle and bustle of city life. The original building from 1851 stands in ruins behind the current building, constructed in the 1950s.

Inside the colorful classroom students are learning a bout quail. Their teacher, LeeAnn Ohlandt, plays birdcalls for the students.

"See how it sounds just like they are saying Chicago?" asks Ohlandt, a member of the Napa Valley

Education Association. The children twitter because it sounds indeed like *Chicago*.

"Now you know what a quail call sounds like," says Ohlandt. "I'm going to add *birds.com* to your approved website list."

There are 23 children in the school. The K-5 population is diverse in age and ethnicity. With the help of Ohlandt and a classroom assistant, they all learn together in one big room and, for the most part, thrive.

"We have special-needs kids with physical, emotional and learning disabilities, but if you walk into my classroom, you'd never know," says Ohlandt. "They are all treated the



same, and I adapt my teaching to their needs."

While some teachers would be terrified of teaching six grades at once, Ohlandt makes it seem easy after eight years of practice.

For English, students have common assignments, with younger students copying words and sentences and older students writing essays and paragraphs. During math, everyone works at their own pace.

"As long as you have the right materials, it doesn't matter," she explains. "We don't refer to grade level. We just say, 'This is your math level.' When I pass out math practice, everyone has a different page because they are all working at different levels."

The children work quietly and independently; if they are talking, they are usually helping one another. Many are working above grade level and score quite high on standardized tests, because there is no ceiling on what can be taught.

"It's special and it's different," observes Ohlandt. "We have rules. If someone asks you for help, you say yes. If someone wants to join your group, you say yes. Someone once talked to them about bullying, but some of the kids didn't know what bullying was. I have very few discipline problems."

The school makes time for singing and dancing every day. She calls it

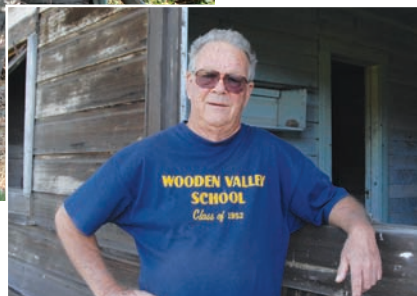


**ABOVE:** A view from the old Wooden Valley School, looking out at vineyards. **LEFT:** Wooden Valley School, a one-room schoolhouse in Napa.



**LEFT:** The former Wooden Valley School, a one-room schoolhouse in Napa, no longer in use.

**INSET:** Foster "Scooter" Clark stands beside the old schoolhouse he attended 60 years ago.



"bonding time."

"It's a happy place," says Ohlandt.

"The kids have more

freedom here than in a big school. They can go play in the garden; they can pick any flower they want; they can catch bugs; they can fly kites on windy days; they can jump on pogo sticks. Because we're small and there's lots of supervision, they have the freedom to do that kind of stuff."

But that kind of freedom will come to an end this year when the school closes for good. Ohlandt gets teary when she talks about moving on. Students say they, too, will be sad to leave.

"You know everybody and can be friends with everybody, because here you are around them every second of the day," explains Brandon Quade, 11. "I am sad that it is closing.

But my sister likes middle school, and I'm sure I'll like it, too."

Former students have been coming to say goodbye and help Ohlandt pack. Among them is Foster "Scooter" Clark, who drops by wearing a shirt emblazoned with "Class of

1952" — and actually was in that class. He attended from first grade to eighth grade. When asked what it was like, he ponders the question for a spell.

"It's like asking Geronimo what buffalo tastes like," he finally answers. "It was all I knew. I think kids got — and still get — a better education in a one-room schoolhouse."

Things were very different back then, he recalls. He and the other boys were allowed to bring guns to school, so they could hunt on the way home. They kept their guns — loaded — in the teacher's car, which was unlocked. Nobody worried about it at all.

When asked how he feels about the school closing, he takes his time before answering.

"I'm out of words," he says finally. "It's just a shame. That's all I can say."

### Comptche Elementary School

When hippies moved to Comptche in the 1970s, established residents weren't sure they could co-exist together in the rural community consisting of a post office, a tiny general store, a school, a church and little else. The tensions eventually worked themselves out as the newcomers with long hair became strong supporters of the Mendocino County community. Today, children and grandchildren of those growing up in the Age of Aquarius are among the 17 students in the one-room K-3 schoolhouse. They wear colorful clothing and hats, and some sport dreadlocks. Everyone goes without shoes to preserve the new carpet.

Judy Stavely has been at the school for 33 years. The teacher, beloved by the community, will retire this month. She will carry with her a treasure trove of memories.

In the early days, teaching was a family affair for Stavely, a member of the Mendocino Unified Teachers Association

**BELOW:** Napa Valley Education Association member LeeAnn Ohlandt; third-grader Michael Norlund.





**LEFT:** Andrew McClean and Judah Pittman work in class at Comptche School. **BELOW:** Mendocino Unified Teachers Association member Judy Stavely in front of the former Comptche School building.

every day at 11:30 a.m., hatching baby chicks in class, creating publications about fictional characters or “Charlie Books,” and making a dinosaur museum out of boxes.



The school has had four incarnations. The school formerly operated in a little white schoolhouse built in 1925, after the previous building burned down. It was sold and turned into a resi-

(MUTA). When she was hired at the site, then a K-5 school, Stavely shared the job with her former husband. Each taught three days a week while the other stayed home with the babies. Wednesday was an “overlap” day when they both taught and brought the babies to school. Eventually he went to teach at another one-room schoolhouse before retiring.

“It was kind of like a family business,” says Stavely. “We lived, breathed, ate and slept Comptche School. We had an old-fashioned letterpress, and children wrote poems and set the type to make printed poetry books. We went backpacking with students. That was back when we didn’t have No Child Left Behind, state standards and all of that.”

NCLB caused the school to make changes. Stavely began using state-approved textbooks and materials for teaching the state standards. This meant careful planning so there was time for field trips, art and music.

“I had been at this long enough to look at the state standards and know whether children were learning them from the projects we did,” says Stavely. “I hit a compromise: I would use the grade-level textbooks three days a week, and two days a week I would do the kinds of things I used to do.”

That includes singing, which happens

after failing to meet seismic standards. The current building was first a barn belonging to a neighboring farm. It was bought and turned into a bar called the Blue Rose, which became the school building when the bar was sold to the school district.

“People always ask me, ‘Don’t you feel lonely and isolated?’” says Stavely. “But the answer is no. To me, teaching school is like painting a picture or making a piece of music. You need quiet to think about it and shouldn’t be distracted to do it. I cannot imagine teaching a single grade; I think it would be really dull. There’s never a dull moment here; I’m juggling all the time.”

Stavely now teaches the children of former students; she fondly refers to them as her “grandstudents.” She will miss the community, but still has some plans to hang around Comptche occasionally, since she’s working with a local circus troupe, learning how to do aerial feats.

“Comptche is my spiritual home,” she says. “I love the community, but it’s time now to let someone else have fun in this job.”

## Other California one-room schoolhouses still in operation



Kathleen Murray, Westport Village School

- > Death Valley Elementary School
- > Forks of Salmon Elementary School
- > Greenwood Elementary School, Elk
- > Kashia Elementary School, Stewarts Point
- > Rand Elementary School, Johannesburg
- > Santa Clara Elementary School, Santa Paula
- > Spencer Valley Elementary School, San Diego
- > Two Harbors, Santa Catalina Island
- > Washington School, North San Juan
- > Westport Village School, Westport

## Albion School

On the playground of Albion School, two students have a conversation about what it's like to attend a one-room schoolhouse.

"I like it because it's little," says third-grader Amelia Aum. "I don't like big schools. I've visited them, and I don't like them much."

"I went to a big school once, and it was kind of chaotic," agrees her friend, Skye Starkweather, a second-grader. "There were kids running around screaming. And you didn't know everyone. There were like 80,000 kids!"

Their teacher, Suzanne Jennings, points out that the school they visited in Mendocino had only 200 students.

"Well," says Amelia, "it was a big school to us."

It was also a big school for Jennings. During her career she has taught in three one-room schoolhouses including this K-3 campus in Albion, a small town in Mendocino County. She spent 17 years teaching in another called Forks of Salmon Elementary School, which had no public utilities.

**BELOW:** Suzanne Jennings, a member of the Mendocino Unified Teachers Association.



**ABOVE:** Seth Costa plays during recess at Albion School.

"I love the creative freedom it offers," says Jennings, a member of MUTA. "I love integrating the curriculum, because that's the only way to make it work. Every day I feel like I'm putting pieces of a puzzle together. I like having latitude; I have the whole day if I need to shift things around, which lots of teachers can't do."

It is also "grueling" and can mean 12-hour days. But for Jennings, the freedom is worth it. She begins every morning by having her 22 students sit in a circle and talk. Communication is the key, she says, to classroom management and creating a sense of community.

"I can't send a child to the principal, so it's got to be dealt with here. If there's a problem out on the playground, we talk about it. We are a school family, and we have to work it out. To day, a boy made fun of a new little girl from El Salvador. We immediately talked about that issue, and tomorrow we'll continue that discussion in circle. I turn everything into a lesson, because it relates to what's going on in their lives. They need to find solutions and creative ways to express themselves."

Jennings, a teacher for 35 years, hails from Southern California and began her career in Santa Ana. But she says she always felt like a "fish out of water" until

she taught in her first one-room schoolhouses in Forks of Salmon.

"Teaching in a one-room schoolhouse is not for everybody," she says. "There is nothing easy about teaching multi-grades. But overall, it's a beautiful way to teach and a beautiful way to learn." ✦

See our expanded story online featuring other one-room schoolhouses in California and the CTA members who teach in them at [www.cta.org/schoolhouse](http://www.cta.org/schoolhouse).

Visit us online 



The original Westport Village schoolhouse.



The Greenwood one-room schoolhouse.



One-room schoolhouse teacher Terry McGuire at Rand Elementary.



## U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee visits Oakland school to observe benefits of CTA's QEIA reforms



**LEFT:** U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee (inset) listens to students, teachers and school officials at Claremont Middle School in Oakland, a QEIA-assisted school.

CTA photos by Mike Myslinski

The students and staff at a successful Oakland middle school helped by the CTA-sponsored law bringing more resources to our state's schools of greatest need got a special visitor recently.

Seeing firsthand how reforms like smaller class sizes and better training for educators increase student learning, U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Oakland) visited Claremont Middle School in early June. It's one of nearly 500 California public schools receiving extra resources from the Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) of 2006.

Lee visited Claremont to see how the landmark in-

tervention law, SB 1133 by Assembly Member Tom Torlakson (D-Antioch), is working. It provides nearly \$3 billion over eight years for teacher-supported reforms such as smaller class sizes in all grades, more school counselors, and better teacher and principal training. The law stresses

the collaboration of administrators, teachers and parents working together to increase student learning.

The QEIA schools serve nearly 500,000 students who are mostly low-income

and minority students and English learners. The law mandates a class size maximum of 20 students in K-3 classrooms; class sizes are reduced to an average of 25 in grades 4-12. A credentialed counselor for every 300 students in high schools is provided, and quality professional development for all staff is established. Teachers get collaboration time to develop lesson plans that work, analyze student data, and mentor new educators. All QEIA schools benefit from

having experienced teachers.

"Our young people are our future," said Lee. "It is imperative that we equip them with the best education possible, providing

targeted resources to address their specific needs. I am pleased to have had this opportunity to tour Claremont Middle School. Additionally, I want to thank the California Teachers Association for taking the time to show me the QEIA program."

Preliminary research data show many QEIA schools are making academic progress. On average, the 499 QEIA schools scored five points higher than similar schools in the state's Academic Performance Index (API) for the school year 2008-09, the first full year of extra QEIA resources. In the same period, the API score at Claremont Middle School rose 90 points to 703.

Speaking with Claremont teachers gathered in the school library, including teacher Lacy Lefkowitz, the CTA site leader for QEIA,

Lee praised the school's progress in these times of widespread cuts. "I love it," she said. "It's really amazing to see the kinds of 21st century

technology that you have, as well as the garden, and to see how you're fighting to preserve art and music and the sciences. I am very impressed. I'm glad you're in my district, and I'm

*"Our young people are our future. It is imperative that we equip them with the best education possible, providing targeted resources to address their specific needs."*

U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee



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

FA09-203Z



**ABOVE:** Teachers Aileen Chang and Lacy Lefkowitz participate in a discussion with Rep. Barbara Lee. Lefkowitz is the QEIA site liaison at Claremont.

vest in students and schools, good things happen.”

For the hundreds of CTA members who teach at QEIA schools, there is still time to enroll in two summer training events in Monterey County and Los Angeles offering big dividends (*see sidebar*).

MIKE MYSLINSKI

*Complete QEIA background is available at [www.cta.org/Issues-and-Action/QEIA/QEIA](http://www.cta.org/Issues-and-Action/QEIA/QEIA).*

going to spread the word.”

CTA President David A. Sanchez said he hoped that QEIA would get more attention from Congress as a model for reform.

“QEIA is a win-win for all education stakeholders at our schools of greatest need,” said Sanchez. “When you in-

### Two CTA QEIA summer events

- CTA chapter presidents with QEIA school sites are invited to a special update at the annual Presidents Conference on the grounds of the Asilomar Conference Center in Pacific Grove, Monterey County. Presented by the QEIA workgroup, the breakfast event will be held 7:30-8:45 a.m., July 21, in the Seascape Room in the Crocker Dining Hall.
- A week of intensive QEIA training, featuring education experts on school collaboration and leadership techniques, is part of the Aug. 1-6 annual CTA Summer Institute held at UCLA. The training stresses shared leadership skills for improving student learning at QEIA schools. For program information, contact Martha Buenrostro at (650) 577-5181, or go to [www.cta.org](http://www.cta.org).

# Del Mar teachers find value in setting up PAC



**LEFT:** Del Mar CTA members Genevieve Chapluk and Andrea Sleet. **BELOW:** Del Mar teachers Debbie Hanna and Jacqueline Boysen.

meant that if we wanted to interview school board election candidates for a possible association endorsement, we could just have an all-member forum, inviting the candidates to address our entire membership,” says Sharpe. “But association membership growth resulting from increased student enrollment in the district has made such informal arrangements unwieldy and impractical. The PAC provides us the organization and structure for efficiently interviewing candidates

“Even though it was formed only a few months ago, our recently created political action committee is already giving our association a more positive and productive image — both among our members and in the Del Mar community,” says Del Mar California Teachers Association (DMCTA) President David Skinner.

The political action committee (PAC) was initiated in January by a core group of DMCTA members at the urging of Skinner and DMCTA Vice President Danielle Roche after they participated in a CTA conference outlining the valuable contributions a PAC could add to a local chapter’s programs.

“The workshop clearly showed me how a PAC might help us with some of the challenges I faced serving as the local association’s president,” says Skinner.

“The workshop helped me understand that forming a PAC could help ensure a more formal process for political engagement,” says Roche. “Our hope was that a PAC might help us develop as a local chapter, taking us to a higher level of engagement that would encourage greater member participation and foster a passion for more involvement in political issues. And we’re already seeing that happen.”

DMCTA members note that developing a

PAC has multiple benefits for associations. It can expand internal organizing capacity in a way that supports other organizing activities, as well as bargaining; help recruit and elect board members who your association can work with toward joint goals and who support your association’s mission; and increase your reach into and involvement with the community and create opportunities for coalition relationships.

“Del Mar has always been a community where parental support of the schools is evident,” says DMCTA and PAC member Deborah Hanna, “but when times are good, it’s easy to get complacent. As we all know, times are not so good now for California’s state budget, and it’s inevitable that the resulting issues are affecting Del Mar. We decided that it would be better to do something proactive — like forming a PAC — to help us be in a better position for positive action, rather than just passively waiting to see what happens.”

Former DMCTA president and PAC member Carol Sharpe explained another impetus for initiating a PAC.

“Until fairly recently, the relatively small number of members in our association



and learning about important local and state political and legislative issues. Then we can provide our members and the public with valuable information to consider when they make their voting choices.”

With guidance and assistance from CTA Governmental Relations staff, the 11 members of the Del Mar PAC have set both short-term and long-range goals with timelines and due dates for completion.

“We have a solid core of members currently involved in the PAC,” says Hanna, “and now we believe it’s time to reach out to other Del Mar members, encouraging them to get involved.”

BILL GUY

*For information or assistance on setting up a local PAC for your association, contact your primary contact staff person and/or your regional political organizer.*



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# Member benefits add value to membership, including new summer savings

**S**avings on auto and life insurance, travel, fitness programs and appliance purchases are just a few of the many benefits CTA members have at their disposal with association membership. With a wide selection of quality products and discounts available on everyday purchases, members can accumulate savings greater than the cost of their association dues. While many members enjoy the savings and value provided by products endorsed by CTA and administered through the Member Benefits Department, some members are not aware of the programs that are available and the many savings they could enjoy.

CTA programs include voluntary life and disability plans, the automatic death and dismemberment plan, automobile and home insurance, credit card services, credit union membership, and travel and entertainment discounts. CTA members also have access to a wide array of attractive benefits and discounts through NEA Member Benefits which leverages the purchasing power of over 3 million members.

## Money in your pocket

A recent key upgrade available to CTA members is the enhancement of CTA's automobile insurance program — the result of CTA leaders and Member Benefits working with the CTA-endorsed vendor California Casualty. The improvement resulted in both a decrease in rates of almost 12 percent for CTA members and the upgrading of unique

benefit provisions especially designed for educators who use the program, including a provision for no deductible for vandalism or collision damage to vehicles parked on school property or while attending a school-sponsored event.

“After learning that many of my fellow educators had good things to say about California Casualty, including the fact that they had just lowered their auto insurance rates, I switched coverage for my three vehicles from my carrier of over 20 years to California Casualty,” said Robin Williams, a member of the Hart

District Teachers Association. “I saved about \$1,800 a year, and I’m thrilled!”

## Thorough endorsement practice

CTA's rigorous endorsement process ensures that the highest-quality products and services are available for members. CTA vendor requirements are stringent and include thorough due diligence in the selection process, careful oversight and management, and special provisions benefiting members. The endorsement process is overseen by the Vendor Evaluation and Screening Commit-

tee, made up of CTA members, and the Member Benefits and Risk Management/Business Initiatives and Development departments.

CTA endorsement also provides channels of recourse for members. The endorsed vendors are expected to provide quality products and exceptional service at reasonable rates. They work with CTA members to resolve issues — a process monitored by Member Benefits. Additionally, the CTA Member Benefits staff will advocate on the member's behalf and attempt to resolve any concerns with a CTA-en-



Photo by Scott Buschman

*“I’ve been using California Casualty A+ auto and home insurance for over 10 years. The service has been great; I’ve shopped around, and couldn’t find a better deal.”*

Philip Oiler,  
Lakeport Classified Employees Association

# Top 5

## Summer Member Benefits Savings

- New lower auto insurance rates from California Casualty
- Travel and entertainment discounts, including Disneyland tickets
- Rental car discounts
- New investment and financial education resources, including [CTAinvest.org](http://CTAinvest.org)
- Savings at [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com) for books, music, videos and more

For more opportunities to find value and savings with member benefits, visit [www.cta.org/Member-Services/Member-Benefits](http://www.cta.org/Member-Services/Member-Benefits) and [www.neamb.com](http://www.neamb.com) today!



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dorsed provider. The Advisory Panel on Endorsed Services provides recourse for members with complaints that cannot be otherwise resolved. The panel, which has CTA Board-appointed members and a CTA Board liaison, has the power to adjudicate most disputes, and to ensure that endorsed vendors and service providers are accurately and consistently administering the provision of their services under the terms of the endorsement agreement.

### Managing your money

CTA continues to develop quality programs, including investment education resources for members. Risk Management/Business Initiatives and Development has launched a new website, [www.CTAinvest.org](http://www.CTAinvest.org), which includes articles on 403(b) and 457 plans, financial calculators, and retirement planning tools. Members are encouraged to visit the website for valuable information on retirement planning and 403(b)/457 plans. Additionally, a new consumer guide on 403(b) and 457 plans has been distributed through CTA chapters and to new CTA members. The consumer guide is available at both [www.cta.org/](http://www.cta.org/)

*Member-Services/Member-Benefits/Financial-Services* and [www.CTAinvest.org](http://www.CTAinvest.org).

There are many opportunities to learn more about programs offered by attending a Member Benefits training at statewide conferences. Sessions will be held this summer at both the Presidents Conference and Summer Institute.

"The information was more than I expected," said one leader attending the Member Benefits mini-track at Summer Institute last year. "I have shared what I learned with many members already and everyone is surprised at all the benefits offered."

In today's economy, it's more important than ever for members to be aware of all the deals and bargains available to them. CTA leaders and staff are working every day to ensure that these programs remain valuable and relevant to enhance members' lives and well-being.

DIANE MORTE, CEBS

*Members and leaders are encouraged to visit the CTA Member Benefits websites at [www.cta.org](http://www.cta.org) and [www.CTAinvest.org](http://www.CTAinvest.org) to learn more. Also visit the NEA Member Benefits website at [www.neamb.com](http://www.neamb.com) to learn more about NEA's programs and services.*



## Taking a Stand

# Teachers take to Sacramento for Lobby Day



CTA photos by Len Feldman

**LEFT:** Unified Association of Conejo Teachers member Josh Carolan, CTA President David A. Sanchez, Assembly Member Tom Torlakson, and Ventura Classified Employees Association member Michael Mussler at the state Capitol for Presidents Lobby Day.

**B**ringing grim stories from their decimated schools, more than 200 local chapter leaders representing thousands of educators from across the state took to the halls of the Capi-

tol in late May to convince legislators to stop public education cuts and to urge them to sign cards committing them to protect education during the state budget battle ahead.

The commitment cards are part of a California Education Coalition campaign outlined at [www.promisetostudents.com](http://www.promisetostudents.com). By signing the card, legislators promise to protect public schools from further cuts, stand by the agreement signed into law last summer to repay \$11.2 billion owed to public schools, and oppose any attempt to undermine Proposition 98, the voter-approved minimum school funding guarantee.

“Teachers know that our state’s \$19 billion budget deficit is a crisis, but education has already been cut by \$17 billion over the last two years,” said CTA President David A. Sanchez.

“California voters believe protecting schools from more cuts should be a top priority during the budget fight. Now the governor’s proposing to cut billions more. Teachers today asked lawmakers to stop the cuts, and to sign commitment cards to show they stand with parents and educators to protect our classrooms and students.”

Going office to office in the Capitol, determined teachers met with their local representatives for urgent conversations about the scope of the growing school cuts crisis. They reminded lawmakers that 26,000 educators received preliminary pink slips this spring — meaning thousands will not be returning to teach in September — and that art, music, physical education and career technical education classes are being gutted across the state. Many community college students cannot find required courses due to cuts, and CSU students have lost roughly 10 percent of their faculty.

Teachers like Jeanette Wylie — a chapter president from Solano County, where students face soaring class sizes and widespread cuts — stood with lawmakers who have signed the



**LEFT:** Travis Unified Teachers Association President Jeanette Wylie speaks at Lobby Day.

cards, including Assembly Members Tom Torlakson and Tony Mendoza and state Sen. Leland Yee.

“This past year our class sizes have soared, with up to 55 students in our PE classes and 39 in academic classes,” said Wylie, president of the Travis Unified Teachers Association. “We have one librarian for our 5,200 students — and only one school nurse for all of our students.”

Lawmakers showed unity with teachers by signing the commitment cards. “I stand with the students, teachers, and parents who are saying enough is enough,” said Sen. Yee (D-San Francisco). “The state budget should not be balanced on the backs of students, schools, and the most vulnerable. I will continue to oppose all budgets that put the interests of corpo-

rations and the rich before the interests of public education and California families.”

“The people of California are telling us it’s time to stop starving our schools and get on with the business of educating our children,” said Assembly Member Torlakson (D-Antioch). “They know that well-trained teachers and strong neighborhood schools are going to be the backbone of this effort. It’s time to reject the proposals by the governor and others who make teachers the scapegoats of their budget cuts. I’ve already signed this pledge. It’s a first step toward restoring California’s public schools.”

Sonia Martin-Solis, a second-grade teacher at Hillcrest Drive Elementary School in Los Angeles, told lawmakers that educators and students

**RIGHT:** Sonia Martin-Solis, an NEA director and member of United Teachers Los Angeles, speaks at Lobby Day.



cannot be expected to do more with less. “Essential support services such as nurse time and counseling have been severely impacted,” said Martin-Solis. “Our state lawmakers must stop the cuts, and I’m in Sacramento today to ask my own legislators to sign the commitment card and stand by their promise to make schools a priority. Our students deserve a chance at a better future than they are getting through these unprecedented budget cuts.”

“Even before the governor proposed more cuts in his re-

vised budget, California’s schools already ranked at the very bottom of all 50 states in staff-to-student ratios,” said President Sanchez. “Our classrooms are alarmingly overcrowded, and we rank 46th in per-pupil funding. If lawmakers don’t find a way to protect public education from further devastation, generations of students will pay the price.”

MIKE MYSLINSKI

## Q&A

Continued from page 13

hurt you. If you don’t differentiate between real and paper tigers, you’re always “running” and therefore unable to focus.

**Is it harder for today’s kids to cope these days than in previous times?**

No one can answer that question. Who really knows? I can tell you kids are under an enormous amount of stress today. The desire to succeed stresses them out, and there is a deep fear of failure. They are much more afraid now that they won’t be able to succeed unless they get a certain spot in certain colleges. They sometimes feel as if they are letting down a whole village when they don’t receive a fat envelope from that certain college.

**How can teachers foster resiliency in youngsters?**

The specific thing is to be part of the solution by helping to praise effort rather than results. When kids are only noticed for results, it increases their anxiety and fear of failure. If teachers learn to notice and praise effort, it takes away a lot of stress. Teachers

can notice when kids are in trouble, and be that extra loving adult that holds them to high expectations. The bottom line of resilience is that kids live up to or down to your expectations of them. By expectations I mean who they are as people inside — their essential goodness — not just their performance. Teachers can also embrace the “Seven C’s” of resilience: confidence, competence, connection, character, contribution, coping and control.

**How will being resilient help students navigate through school — and through life?**

Kids who are resilient can bounce back, handle stresses and ultimately succeed. Kids who have fear of failure in school won’t be able to think outside the box for fear of being judged. And young people who can’t think outside of the box lack the creative energy, innovation and other ingredients needed to lead us into the future. ❖

*Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg specializes in adolescent medicine at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and is the co-author of several books, including A Parent’s Guide to Building Resilience in Children and Teens.*

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# ACTION

## Success in primary election, tough fight ahead



CTA photo by Bonnie Shattun; inset photo by Mike Myslinski

**LEFT:** Gubernatorial candidate Jerry Brown (second from left) joins CTA Vice President Dean Vogel, President David A. Sanchez, Secretary-Treasurer Gail Mendes, and Executive Director Carolyn Doggett at the June State Council meeting. **BELOW:** Liane Cismowski talks about projects funded by Insitute for Teaching mini-grants given out this year.

CTA President David A. Sanchez told CTA's State Council of Education that it was "hard work and solidarity on key issues by teachers across the state that made a huge difference in the June 8 primary election and will help win the state budget battle and protect our schools."

Introducing Democratic gubernatorial candidate Jerry Brown, Sanchez reminded Council delegates that the current state attorney general "knows that California's future depends on a world-class, quality public school system. He believes that the best education reform happens when there is collaboration among teachers, administrators and parents."

Calling for more proven,

teacher-supported reforms for our public schools, Brown told an enthusiastic Council audience he would "mobilize the people of this state" behind public education to achieve a better future for all.

"Look, we're facing big changes, and people who haven't been around always want to reinvent the wheel with yesterday's tried and failed programs," said Brown of state and federal obsessions with standardized testing and other so-called reforms. "We don't make progress by dividing. We make progress by uniting."

Drawing loud cheers and



applause, he said teachers should be trusted to know

what works in their classrooms — and should get proven reforms, like more time for colleagues to share ideas, more prep time and professional development. He called for one united California to protect the middle class and to end political gridlock.

Public schools and public servants deserve more respect, said Brown. "I think we have to restore the trust of the people — we have to show trust in the teachers and the [public]

servants who serve us all."

November's showdown election for governor is about the positive values of educators who care about their students and public schools versus the negative, anti-union values of billionaire Meg Whitman, said CTA Executive Director Carolyn Doggett. Whitman is clearly focused on scapegoating public employees for the state's fiscal woes, and is part of the "public employee and teaching bashing agenda that's being

played out across this country," said Doggett.

"Meg seems to forget that public employees are teachers, nurses, firefighters, police officers, child care workers and custodians," continued Doggett.

"They are you and me. They're our friends and neighbors. They make us smart and keep us safe and healthy. They are the working class that helped build this



CTA photo by Dave Earl Carpenter



CTA photo by Dave Earl Carpenter

**ABOVE:** King City Elementary Teachers Association President Helen Barge accepts the Joyce Fadem Rookie Chapter Award on behalf of her chapter.

country and who are the heart of our communities.”

**Key election victory**

President Sanchez praised CTA members for leading the June 8 primary election fight victory for CTA-backed Assembly Member Tom Torlakson (D-Antioch) in the critical race for state superintendent of public instruction. Torlakson emerged from a crowded field to face former San Jose Unified superintendent Larry Aceves in a November runoff. Teachers led the fight against state Sen. Gloria Romero of Los Angeles, who narrowly failed to

make the runoff.

With Romero championing the flawed policies of the federal Race to the Top program and of U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan, Sanchez said this race was a “California referendum on the Obama-Duncan reform agenda.” Romero’s defeat shows this divisive agenda was clearly rejected by voters.

“It was a vote in support of the people who know what is going on in our classrooms and know how to work to support and improve them,” he said.

CTA-supported candidates also won primary races for other state offices: Gavin Newsom, lieutenant governor; Dave Jones, insurance commissioner; Debra Bowen, secretary of state; John Chiang, state controller; and Bill Lockyer, state treasurer.

**Budget battle continues**

Sanchez discussed the budget battle, acknowledging that devastating state cuts are frustrating so many CTA chapter bargaining teams — and causing so much turmoil from the potential loss of 16,000 teaching jobs this year.

Closing the state’s \$19 billion budget deficit without further gutting education funding —



CTA photo by Mike Myslinski

### In other action, State Council:

- Passed the CTA budget for the 2010-11 fiscal year, including an \$18 dues increase.
- Elected CTA Director Theresa Montañó (District J-HE); re-elected CTA Director Jim Groth (District P); elected NEA Alternate Director Doreen H. McGuire-Grigg; and elected CTA/ABC Committee members Cheryl Fowlkes (District F), Chris Prokop (District P), and Juan Caballero (At-Large).
- Recommended the following candidates: Kamala Harris, attorney general; Richard Pan, Assembly District 5; Ricardo Lara, AD 50; Betsy Butler, AD 53; Ben Hueso, AD 79; Paul Clay, Senate District 36; Mary Salas, SD 40 (pending election results certification); and Pat Meagher, Congressional District 41.
- Recognized winners of the State WHO Awards.
- Recognized winners of the Theodore Bass Memorial Teacher-in-Politics Awards: Christopher Bushée, Overall Award; Jill Low, Getting Others Involved; Debbie Imerson, State Priorities; David R. Bean and Jill Burnes, Local Priorities; and Antonia Brookshire, Coalition Building.
- Recognized winners of the Joyce Fadem Memorial Chapter-in-Politics Awards: Travis Unified Teachers Association, Small Chapter; San Joaquin Delta College Teachers Association, Medium Chapter; San Ramon Valley Education Association, Large Chapter; and King City Elementary Teachers Association, Rookie Chapter.
- Took “Support” positions on the following initiatives that are on track to appear on the November ballot: Legislative Term Limits Reform Act of 2010 (09-0048); Passing the Budget On Time Act of 2010 (09-0057); State Parks and Wildlife Conservation Fund Trust Fund Act (09-0072); and Financial Accountability in Redistricting Act.
- Took “Oppose” positions on the following initiatives: Safe, Clean and Reliable Drinking Water Supply Act of 2010 (SBx7 2); Voters FIRST Act for Congress (09-0027); Local Tax Payer, Public Safety, and Transportation Protection Act of 2010 (09-0063); Sinclair Paint Initiative (09-0093); and California Jobs Initiative (09-0104).
- Authorized up to \$13 million from the initiative fund to support CTA’s positions on initiatives on the November 2010 general election ballot.

which has seen \$17 billion in cuts over the last two years — will best be done with the “California Jobs Budget” plan offered by Assembly Speaker John Perez, he stressed.

Sanchez warned that the governor’s revised spending plan unveiled in May would cut \$4 billion more from our schools, and eliminate health care and child care programs for poor kids. The Assembly budget plan — backed by CTA and the entire

Education Coalition — would raise revenues, protect Proposition 98, increase funding for K-12 and colleges, and protect our social safety net.

“With these kinds of cuts, this isn’t just a fight about money, this is a fight about our values and about what’s right,” said Sanchez. “And CTA is not about to change our values just to make life easier for a failed governor.”

MIKE MYSLINSKI

*For complete CTA candidate recommendations, go to [www.cta.org/Issues-and-Action/Election-2010](http://www.cta.org/Issues-and-Action/Election-2010).*

**LEFT:** State Council delegates give a standing ovation to gubernatorial candidate Jerry Brown.

# CTA mobilizes in support of Assembly's Jobs Budget

**C**TA and its Education Coalition partners are mobilizing their more than 1 million members to urge legislators to support the Assembly's proposed state spending plan — the "Jobs Budget" — which provides schools with \$5.1 billion more than would come through Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposed budget.

"California's public schools and our students have been devastated by more than \$17 billion in cuts already," says CTA President David A. Sanchez. "The approval of the Assembly Jobs Budget would mark a crucial turnaround and a move toward restoring desperately needed funding."

Pink-slipped Bay Area teacher Niko Villars knows firsthand about the human toll from so many cuts to education. He is one of about 16,000 educators with no job to come back to in the fall, according to CTA layoff estimates at press time in mid-June.

For the third year in a row, the Concord High School teacher in the hard-hit Mt. Diablo Unified School District got a pink slip — never thinking it would be permanent. He made life-changing plans. He recently bought a house in Oakland, and is due to get married on July 10. Then he got word he was one of nearly 200 Mt. Diablo educators to lose their jobs.

"This is a huge blow," Villars said. "I thought losing my job was not a likely possibility this year."

Like so many teachers, he is fed up with the roller-coaster layoff ride disrupting his personal life and his commitment to teaching. "I love teaching. But last year I found out about three weeks before the first day of school that I was going to have a job."

The Jobs Budget was unveiled by Assembly Speaker John Perez May 25 at CTA Presidents Lobby Day. Under the Assembly proposal, education and other critical children's services would not suffer any additional cuts. In fact, public schools would receive \$5.1 billion more in vital education funding than the governor's May Revision proposes.

The Assembly budget proposal increases revenues, honors the commitment made less than a year ago by the governor and the Legislature to California's students, and does not suspend or manipulate the Proposition 98 constitutional funding guarantee.

By contrast, the governor's proposal would cut another \$4.1 billion from schools, on top of \$17 billion cut in previous years. The Assembly plan would also increase funding for the CSU by \$365 million without enacting draconian cuts to basic state services and K-12 education.

While the Senate's budget version also contains more school funding than the governor's, it falls far short of the amounts in the Assembly version.

As the *Educator* went to press, members of a joint conference committee on the

## Use CTA's new **text-to-call system**

CTA members can get in touch with their state senator and the members of the joint conference committee on the budget and mobilize their colleagues, friends, family members, and school supporters to do the same. Urge your senator to support the Assembly's Jobs Budget, which protects schools and colleges from additional budget cuts, boosts education funding by \$5.1 billion over the governor's May Revision, and protects the state's minimum school funding law.

## **Tell lawmakers how the cuts are affecting your students!**

Call your lawmaker by using CTA's new text-to-call system.

**Text 69866**  
and enter  
**Prop98**

You will be prompted to enter your name and voting address, and then you will be connected to your senator.

(Your phone carrier may impose a slight text message charge.)

budget were deliberating over each provision of the separate Assembly and Senate spending plan versions. The conferees' job is to forge a compromise budget that will go back to each house of the Legislature for approval.

CTA advocates emphasize that educators getting in touch with their state senator can help ensure that the Assembly's proposal for

funding public schools is incorporated into the final spending plan.

CTA members are also being urged to sign up for budget news bulletins and calls to action that may come when most schools are closed for the summer. To sign up, send an e-mail from a non-school account to [summeradvocate@cta.org](mailto:summeradvocate@cta.org).

LEN FELDMAN, MIKE MYSLINSKI



# CTA opposes Steinberg “favoritism” measure

CTA is working to defeat a new, unnecessary measure by Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) that would change how teachers are assigned, laid off and rehired.

The CTA-opposed SB 1285 is similar to an earlier CTA-opposed bill, SB 955 by Sen. Bob Huff (R-Diamond Bar). Like the Huff bill, SB 1285 would both undermine teachers’ protection against discrimination and unfair treatment and would let districts move experienced teachers out of lower-performing schools, which would be detrimental to improving student learning.

Because Sen. Steinberg “gutted and amended” a bill on an unrelated subject that had already made it to the Assembly, SB 1285 has avoided vetting and scrutiny by the Senate Education Committee. Steinberg’s parliamentary maneuver to circumvent Senate review leaves it up to the Assembly to review and debate.

The measure ignores the real source of the problems in schools throughout the state — budget cuts that have reduced school funding by as much as 18 percent and more than \$17 billion over the past two years. These cuts come at a time when even research commissioned by the governor’s office shows that California schools need 40 percent more funding to ensure all students reach the state’s rigorous academic standards.

The current educator layoffs reflect the state’s funding cutbacks and decisions to increase class sizes dramatically to cope with these funding shortfalls.

Contradicting his own stated goals of the bill and contrary to all research about the importance of teacher experience, Sen. Steinberg is proposing to allow districts to skip over more experienced teachers at schools in the lowest three deciles in order to retain teachers with less than five years of experience.

Research shows that teacher effectiveness increases dramatically as a teacher gains experience, but the Steinberg measure would require districts to keep less experienced educators at the lower-decile

schools, where students desperately need the benefit of the skills that come with experience.

Experts also point out that SB 1285 is unnecessary, as current law gives school districts flexibility in skipping over less senior teachers during layoffs to maintain or achieve compliance with constitutional equal protection requirements. The Steinberg measure would allow districts to rehire laid-off teachers out of seniority order, undermining teacher rights without adding any civil protections for students.

The bill’s efforts to “level” experience at all school sites will in reality cause instability and unnecessary teacher transfers. Administrators will be forced to follow essentially a mathematical formula, instead of making decisions based on the best fit for the needs of the students.

CTA members have been urging Sen. Steinberg and other lawmakers to focus their attention first on passing a budget that protects education funding, rather than looking for ways to blame teachers.

LEN FELDMAN

## Notice of CalSTRS changes July 1, 2010

To comply with new IRS rules, beginning July 1, 2010, a CalSTRS member who retires under the age of 60 must have a six-month break prior to returning to work in CalSTRS-eligible service. Those who return to work

for any employer performing CalSTRS-creditable service during that six-month period will be penalized with a dollar-for-dollar offset to their benefit. *For questions, call CalSTRS at (800) 228-5453.*

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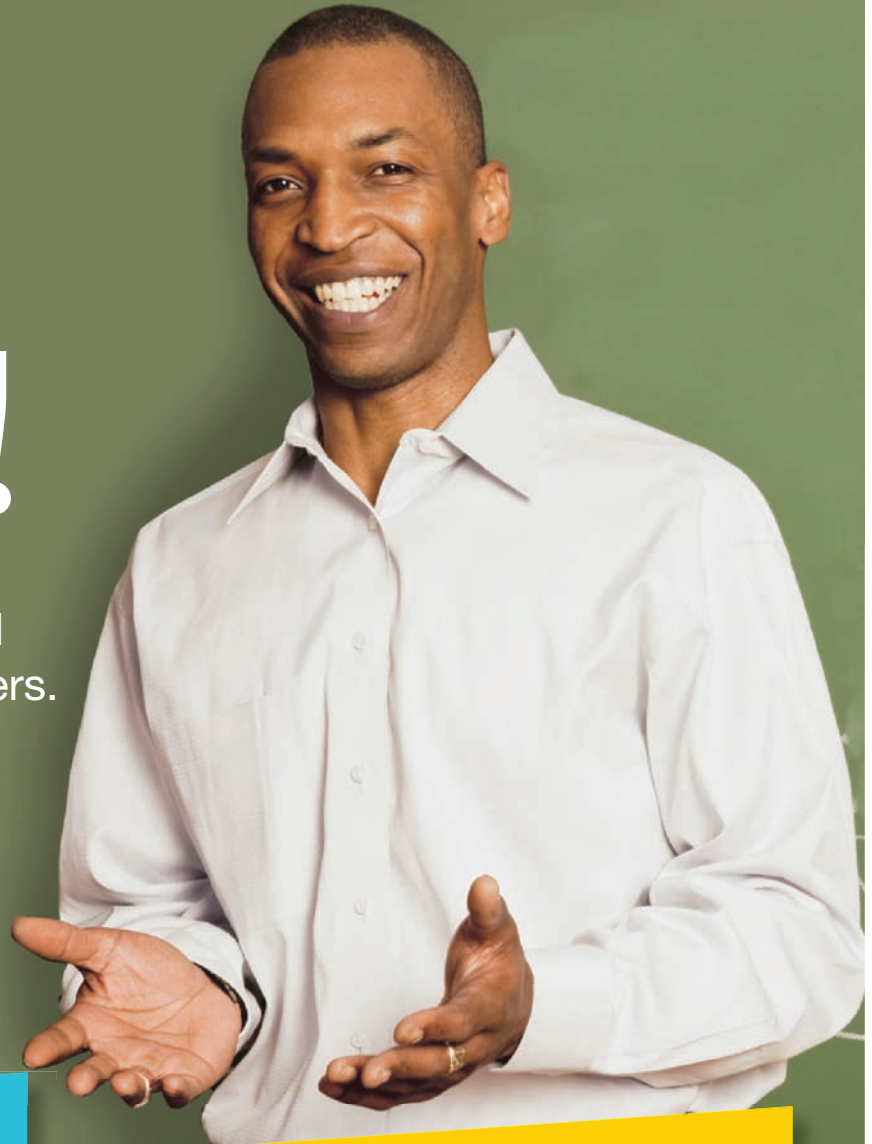
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\*Rate reduction of 11.7% effective May 1, 2010. Rates for current CTA policyholders will be adjusted at renewal.

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# Sixteen winners of John Swett Awards

Stories ranging from a profile of a college-bound high school student fighting cancer who ended up in a speech by President Obama in Virginia about perseverance, to television coverage of CTA's "Pink Friday" protests last year, are among the 16 winners honored this year in CTA's education journalism contest.

The winners of the 51st annual CTA John Swett Awards for Media Excellence were honored at a State Council reception June 11 in Los Angeles, where CTA President David A. Sanchez praised their work.

"We know the news business is changing in many ways, but good education reporting will always matter to our students, communities, lawmakers and our society," said Sanchez in his speech at the awards ceremony. "Our John Swett honor is our equivalent of a Pulitzer, which is why we named the award after the founder of CTA."

The ceremony is a reminder for CTA members to be on the lookout for more outstanding examples of California education reporting dur-



**ABOVE:** Howard Blume (with plaque) with Communications Committee chair Katie Young, CTA President David A. Sanchez, UTLA/NEA Vice President Ana Valencia, and UTLA President A.J. Duffy. **RIGHT:** UESF President Dennis Kelly with winner Nanette Asimov. **BELOW:** Winners Tiffany Carney and Mayra Flores De Marcotte.



CTA photos by Dave Earl Carpenter

for the *Orange County Register*.

**Community newspapers:** Neil Gonzales, *San Mateo County Times*, for an overcrowding story; Kamala Kelkar, *San Francisco Examiner*, looked at snafu regarding the federal subsidized meal program; Roger Phillips, *Stockton Record*, for continuous coverage; Katy Murphy, *Oakland Tribune*, for continuous coverage; Melissa Pamer, *Torrance Daily Breeze*, for a news story about an embattled principal; and Dennis Wyatt, *Manteca Bulletin*, for a column criticizing the local district about teacher layoffs.

**Weekly newspapers:** Tiffany Carney, *Sunnyvale Sun*, won two Swett Awards for stories that included a local profile of a student battling cancer that caught the eye of an Obama speechwriter; Mayra Flores De Marcotte, *Willow Glen Resident* in San Jose, for a news story about closing achievement gaps; Dawn Henley, *Oakdale Leader*, for continuous coverage; and *Los Gatos Weekly-Times*, as a publication, for continuous coverage.

**Television:** Lyanne Melendez, the education reporter for the ABC affiliate in San Francisco, KGO-TV, won for her comprehensive report on Bay Area teacher protests in March 2009 that were part of CTA's statewide "Pink Friday" event. The statewide demonstrations were against the thousands of pink slips issued to teachers across California.

ing 2010. Swett Award entries must be nominated by CTA chapter presidents or service center council chairs. Winners are selected every year by a panel of working journalists and editors. This year there were more than 60 entries.

The Swett winners honored for work appearing during 2009 are:

**Metropolitan newspapers:** Howard Blume, *Los Angeles Times*, won two Swett Awards for a story on foundation-funded Los Angeles Unified consultants, and continuous coverage of LAUSD; Nanette Asimov and Jill Tucker, *San Francisco Chronicle*, for a package of inspirational stories about what happened to a San Francisco kindergarten class of 1995; and Carol Veravanich, a teacher who writes a column about school issues



CTA photo by Mike Myslinski

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## CTA-sponsored and co-sponsored legislation for 2009-10

	BILL #		STATUS
<b>UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE</b> Leno	<b>SB 810</b>	Would establish a single-payer health insurance system in California. <i>(Co-sponsored bill)</i>	Assembly Desk
<b>PART-TIME FACULTY RE-EMPLOYMENT</b> Fong	<b>AB 1807</b>	Would require a community college district to place part-time faculty members on a re-employment preference list with specified rights of first refusal. <i>(Co-sponsored bill)</i>	Assembly Appropriations suspense file
<b>RETIREE HEALTH BENEFITS</b> Buchanan	<b>AB 1814</b>	Would provide that the Fair Employment and Housing Act does not prohibit an employer from reducing health benefits when a retiree becomes eligible for Medicare. <i>(Co-sponsored bill)</i>	Senate Judiciary
<b>CHARTER SCHOOLS</b> Swanson	<b>AB 2320</b>	Would increase the role of teachers in the design, operation and governance of charter schools, and allow only school boards to authorize non-statewide charters.	Passed Assembly; to Senate

Photo by Glen Korengold

## Council to consider bylaw change

Several years ago the CTA Board of Directors discussed the need for term limits for service on the Board of Directors. At the April 2010 Board of Directors meeting, the Board moved to send this proposed CTA Bylaws amendment to State Council for action at the October 2010 meeting. It represents the Board's perspective that getting elected to the CTA Board in any capacity

should be limited to the *election* for three three-year terms over a lifetime. This applies to past, current and future service; filling the unexpired portion of an unexpired term shall not count as one of these three terms.

Article XVI, Section 3 requires a two-thirds affirmative vote by voting members of State Council by written ballot.

## Bylaw amendment

### 2010-2011 CTA BYLAW AMENDMENT

#### Provisos/Transition:

1. For State Council review, debate and possible modification at the June 2010 State Council meeting; and final consideration by written ballot at the October 2010 meeting.
2. Amendment to be effective upon adoption.

#### Legend:

Additions are underlined.

Deletions are ~~struck through~~.

Unaffected and unchanged intervening material is denoted by asterisks (\*\*\*)

#### Approved by CTA Board 5/2010

### ARTICLE VI — BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Section 1. Composition and Number. \*\*\*

#### Section 2. Qualifications. \*\*\*

#### Section 3. Nomination and Election. \*\*\*

#### Section 4. Term of Office.

##### a. Directors from Directorial Districts.

- (1) Each Director shall be elected for a three-year term, beginning on June 26th following the election. Those elected to fill unexpired terms shall take office upon election and serve the unexpired portion of the term. If an election is deferred, the expiration date of term shall be the same. *(Amended October 1987, January 1998)*

- (2) Directors shall be eligible for reelection, but no person shall serve more than three full three-year terms. ~~consecutively as such Director without a break in service of at least one year.~~ *(Amended October 1978, May 1979, January 1998)*

- Racial and Ethnic Minority Directors-at-Large.** These Directors shall be elected for a three-year term beginning on June 26 following the election. At-large Directors shall be eligible for reelection or for election as a Director from a directorial district. Those elected to fill unexpired terms shall take office upon election and serve the unexpired portion of term. *(Adopted May 1974, Amended May 1975, November 1977, October 1978, May 1979, January 1998, March 2000)*

- All Directors.** Directors who have been elected to three consecutive three-year terms ~~without a break in service of at least one year~~ shall not be eligible for reelection to the Board. *(Adopted March 2000)*

#### Section 5. Vacancies. \*\*\*

#### Section 6. Meetings of the Board. \*\*\*

#### Section 7. Waiver of Notice. \*\*\*

#### Section 8. Quorum and Prohibition of Use of Proxies. \*\*\*

#### Section 9. Powers and Duties. \*\*\*



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# Resiliency

Continued from page 11

drinking, smoking pot, promiscuity or cutting themselves,” says Cohen. “It may feel good for them to yell and scream, but that’s not a coping skill that will be helpful in the long run.”

To help bolster resilience, Cohen tries a different approach. “I’ll encourage them to remember what kinds of things make them feel good, such as listening to music, jogging, playing basketball and dance class. Things like dancing can cause a higher level of endorphins and a sense of well-being. Sometimes they forget how good it feels to move their bodies. They get too busy, stressed or depressed to do the things they like to do.”

Some students, notes Cohen, find it therapeutic to write down their thoughts and feelings. But she advises them to do this the old-fashioned way, on paper, rather than online in a way that makes them more vulnerable.

“Sometimes teens just need some perspective and a little bit of a reality check,” she adds. “Is it a real crisis — or just a temporary situation?”

Cohen received a pink slip, and doubts she will be rehired by the district next year. Students say they will miss her sage advice for coping with life’s problems.

“We’re all panicky about getting into good colleges and stuff, and there’s a lot more pressure,” says 10th-grader Cassie Grilley, 15. “Someone like Ms. Cohen is unbiased and helps you to get through whatever is going on.”

## Transition to college life

Once students get into college, they may find themselves adrift for the first time in their lives, says Frank Lilly, a professor in the Teacher Education Department at CSU Sacramento. They have difficulty juggling time management and priorities. For the first time in their lives they are making their own decisions — and based on those decisions, they will either sink or swim.

“They may be used to doing things at the last minute and it being okay, and suddenly it isn’t okay,” says Lilly, whose specialty is educational psychology. “They find themselves in a conundrum because they’ve always been able to do well, and they are not doing well.”

Lilly, a member of the California Faculty Association, is involved in programs to help freshmen survive the college transition. One program, the Guardian Scholars, is designed to help students exiting the foster care system. Another, First Year Experience, is a semester-long course to help students acclimate to the university. Students in that program have higher graduation rates than students not in the program.

Lilly believes that today’s college students are less resilient than their predecessors because years of testing and test preparation have robbed them of critical thinking skills and the ability to self-reflect.

“One of the best ways to be resilient is for someone to self-access their own me-

ta-cognition,” he explains. “They need to be able to ask themselves, ‘How should I study?’ ‘What is the best way to do this?’ One of the strongest ways students can learn resiliency is through problem-solving strategies, questioning and reflecting.”

College instructors can help by being on the lookout for students who are having

difficulties adjusting and seem unduly stressed out.

“The best thing a teacher can do is notice,” he says. “Be aware of signs that a student is having incredible difficulty. It’s hard, but I try to get to know students by name. I notice when they are doing well and speak with them about what they can do differently. I want to help them succeed. That’s why I’m here.” ✦

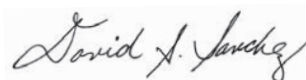
BY CTA PRESIDENT DAVID A. SANCHEZ

Continued from page 4

agree on what that change should be and how to achieve it will take more than a quick, easy conversation. But it’s a conversation we must lead for the sake of our students and schools. That’s why, in addition to recommending a full slate of pro-public education candidates for the November election, CTA has collected signatures to qualify an initiative to repeal unfair corporate tax breaks. This initiative is just a start to changing state tax structures to ensure that everyone is paying their fair share. Big corporations are getting tax breaks at the same time state budget cuts are breaking our schools, and that’s just not right. So CTA will lead the charge to rescind these tax breaks, which were handed out to the state’s largest corporations.

In addition to working on the state budget and preparing for the

November election, we will be monitoring a lot of other issues, like ESEA reauthorization, throughout the summer. We want to make sure your voice is heard on the important issues that affect your classroom and schools. To make it easier for you to advocate for public education and to send a clear message to lawmakers in Washington and Sacramento, we are introducing a new real-time lobbying effort for members who sign up. You can sign up by texting CTASUMMER to 69866 or e-mailing [SummerAdvocate@cta.org](mailto:SummerAdvocate@cta.org); we’ll keep you informed throughout the summer. Working together, we can elect officials who are pro-education and pro-student, and help our schools get the funding they so desperately need.



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