

california
educator

JUNE / JULY 2020 VOLUME 24 ISSUE 6

Black Lives Matter

CTA calls for
racial justice now!

PAGE 6

The Standard is Here for You



As the global health crisis continues to disrupt lives and communities, The Standard's commitment to CTA members remains unchanged. We are open and ready to help you with questions, claims, enrolling in coverage or updating your beneficiaries.

In these uncertain times, taking care of your loved ones is more important than ever. If you would like to learn more about how CTA-endorsed Disability and Life insurance can help protect your paycheck and loved ones, visit **CTAMemberBenefits.org/TheStandard**.



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VOLUME 24 ISSUE 6



"We must continue the call for justice and hold powerful people (and each other) accountable. We must come together to stop the chorus of hate and fear."

—CTA President **E. Toby Boyd**
(see page 6)

#WeAreCTA

OUR VOICE, OUR UNION, OUR PROFESSION

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

MAGAZINE

COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

Educators keep students from communities hit harder by the virus engaged and learning. **PAGE 32**

RENEWAL, REJUVENATION

Use the summer break for deeper practices to restore your body and soul.

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LEADERS OF STUDENT CTA

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cta.org/studentcta

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ctago.org




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educationvotes.nea.org

THE EDUCATOR'S NEW LOOK

Get ready for your new digital *Educator* magazine! **PAGE 12**   
cta.org/educator

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NEVER STOP LEARNING

Array 101 offers dynamic social impact learning guides to expand knowledge of social justice and advocacy, focused on work by filmmaker Ava DuVernay.

   array101.org



MEMBER BENEFITS

COVID-19 IMPACTS

Get updates on your insurance and available financial services.
CTAMemberBenefits.org/notice

SUMMER FUN

Firm up your plans with Access to Savings discounts on travel and entertainment.
CTAMemberBenefits.org/access

HELP WITH PAYMENTS

California Casualty and Provident Credit Union can help with home and auto payments during this difficult time.
CTAMemberBenefits.org

Illustration: Deposit Photos



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PLUS:

Renewal!

Use summer to get reenergized and rejuvenated
PAGE 54

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BE TRUE.
BE BRAVE.
BE PROUD.



EDUCATORS FOR BLACK LIVES

Black Lives Matter

Our work toward anti-racism

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Photo at top left: Educators at Dublin High School help hand out Class of 2020 senior awards in a drive-by celebration.



My Pride in Your Work

AS THIS VERY challenging school year comes to an end, I want to take a moment to express my deep pride and appreciation for the absolutely incredible work that CTA members across the state have done to give California students a quality education, a sense of structure and normalcy, and perhaps most importantly, your unceasing care and concern for their well-being. You took the nightmare of the COVID-19 pandemic and reassured your students that they still mattered, their education still mattered, and even a massive quarantine would not put a wall between them and the educators they depend on. You have been an inspiration.

I've also been so proud to see the videos of online graduations and commencements, students claiming their moment in spite of everything, educators showing up in person for safe social distancing parades celebrating their students. We've also enjoyed some much-needed humor out there in the form of memes, posts from harried parents and even ad campaigns, along with more serious messages of thanks and support. It's pretty clear most people "get it."

We'll need all of that support and then some if we are going to reopen schools safely. CTA is continuing its efforts to prevent devastating state budget cuts that will make reopening safely almost impossible. We are also continuing to be deeply involved in discussions with lawmakers and other policymakers to ensure they understand what, in addition to adequate funding, will be required to open schools so that students and staff can return safely and so that parents will feel confident about sending their children back into our classrooms. Every CTA member can be a part of the funding solution



"You reassured students that they still mattered, their education still mattered, and even a massive quarantine would not put a wall between them and the educators they depend on."

by taking action and contacting lawmakers on our new website at cta.org/covid19budgetcrisis.

As the school year ends, we and the entire world have been faced with the ugly and racist murder of George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement. I know many CTA members are among the millions who have risen up in protest not only against this awful crime, but against similar crimes and both individual and systemic racism in all institutions, including public education and our own union. Together, we must continue the call for justice and hold powerful people (and each other) accountable. Saying **#BlackLivesMatter** isn't enough.

2020 has been quite a ride, and it's not over yet, but still, I urge every CTA member to take some time for yourself this summer. It's too easy to let our work become all-consuming and to spend too much time staring at a screen. Get outside, exercise, engage in hobbies, read, and within safety guidelines, spend time connecting with friends and family. CTA will continue to be fully engaged throughout the summer, but that doesn't mean our members haven't earned a break. If we need you for some sort of action (and we will), we'll let you know. Otherwise, enjoy the summer, and let's all look forward to a safe and better 2020-21 school year.

E. Toby Boyd

CTA PRESIDENT

@etobyboyd

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extension.ucsd.edu/induction

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CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2019, to Aug. 31, 2020) are \$916, including a \$20 refundable contribution (see cta.org/contribution for details). \$20.78 of CTA annual dues is designated for CTA/ABC political activities to support state and local candidates and/or initiatives, and \$15.00 of CTA annual dues is designated for independent expenditures, totaling \$35.78 not deductible for income tax purposes.

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CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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MISSION STATEMENT

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

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Cheers and Gratitude

LIKE HER PEERS, my high school senior has had a tough spring and is sad about ending the year remotely. But her teachers, counselors and other staff have tried hard to send off the Class of 2020 on a bright note: lip-syncing in a funny music video, holding a virtual assembly to say goodbye, and urging the whole city to throw open windows and stand on front steps at the same time to cheer graduates.

Many more of you have lifted spirits by delivering gifts, setting up yard signs, and honking in celebratory caravans to mark the milestone. I know I speak for all parents — all people, really — in expressing profound gratitude for the love you show our kids and the immense amount of work you put in to nurture and educate them, during this crisis and every day.

Just a fraction of that work is reflected in our issue. In **“Tales From the Trenches”** (page 20), several educators describe what it’s really like teaching during a pandemic. A counselor, school psychologist, school nurse and speech-language pathologist — essential to *every* school — tell how COVID-19 has changed what they do in **“A New World for Student Support Services”** (page 25). Work previously handled in one-on-one, face-to-face settings is now done online. “Not being able to offer a student a tissue when they are in tears is heartbreaking,” says counselor Glenda Ortez-Galán.

Equally heartbreaking is the stark reality that some communities of color are disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus. **“Reaching, Teaching All Students”** (page 32) looks at how several members are helping students of color and low-income students remain connected to learning, in addition to pitching in to provide families necessities such as food and clothing.



Middle school educator Rawan Fakhoury, San Bernardino Teachers Association, delivers gifts to one of the nine graduating high school seniors she “adopted.”

Educators are also demanding that state and federal lawmakers give them and students adequate resources and protections during the pandemic. CTA chapters have headed to the bargaining table to ensure health and safety for all, and to get the time, training and tools members need for both distance and COVID-era classroom learning; read more about this in **“Bargaining During COVID-19”** (page 36).

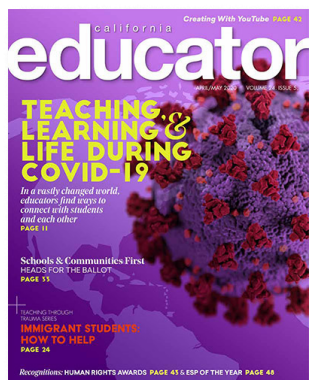
But back to you. From social media, news stories, your writings and direct comments, we know how exhausted and anxious you are. Our story **“Renewal”** (page 54) offers ways you can use the summer break to dive deeper into restorative practices and get reenergized, rejuvenated and ready for the new year.

We hope it’s helpful. Your renewal is indispensable to the larger revival of our public life, and your work affirms our values as an equitable, democratic society. We are eternally grateful for what you do.

Katharine Fong

EDITOR IN CHIEF

editor@cta.org



MISSED THE LAST ISSUE?

WE WENT DIGITAL for our April/May issue because the pandemic made timely delivery of a print magazine problematic. Stories described how educators quickly pivoted to distance learning and stayed connected to their students. We also reported on immigrant students' trauma from escalating government crackdowns that negatively affect their emotions, academic performance and behavior — a situation exacerbated by COVID-19. The issue can be viewed as a PDF at cta.org/educator (scroll down toward the bottom to the link “View Past Issues”); stories have also been individually posted.



EDUCATORS FOR BLACK LIVES

#WeAre
CTA

Our Work Toward Anti-racism



OUR UNION, our community are grieving. We are outraged by the hateful racism and white supremacy that continues to terrorize our communities of color. The murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor (and so many others before them) demand that we, as educators and Americans, recognize and confront the institutional racism that exists in our systems and structures.

CTA President E. Toby Boyd addresses our collective work toward anti-racism when he says, “We cannot allow this moment to define us as a society and as a nation. It is our responsibility to work to abolish racism on a personal, structural and institutional level beginning in our schools and colleges. It is our responsibility to have these conversations at the dinner table and in our places of worship. This is not a

time for us to look away, but to confront for the sake of a fair, just and equitable future for all students.”

The pandemic and resulting lockdown shined an even brighter light on the divide: We have seen firsthand that our black students and educators experience schools and COVID-19 differently than many, if not most, of our white students and educators. Saying **#BlackLivesMatter** isn’t enough.

“Together, we must continue the call for justice and hold powerful people (and each other) accountable,” Boyd says. “We must come together to stop the chorus of hate and fear, and utilize our people power, both personally and at the ballot box.”

We asked our members to help us reflect and move forward with the question: “*What are you doing to work toward anti-racism every day?*”

WHAT MEMBERS ARE SAYING

CINDY VILLALOBOS

As educators it’s so important for us to take a stance. As a history teacher, I’ll keep addressing and discussing the history and presence of racism and inequity through my lessons.

NICOLE WORTHY

Thank you for caring and speaking out. It’s easy to feel invisible when senseless tragedies such as this occur. It’s comforting to know African Americans are not in this fight alone. **#WeAreNotOkay**

JENNIFER TODD-ANDREW

I stand with the voices that have been unheard for far too long. I am white, but I teach all children and love them all. Even when adults, those are MY kids being brutalized and MURDERED. They are mine, because they have been in my class and I love them. We should all be outraged by the continued injustice and lack of consequences for those in power.

DEIRDRE SELBY-GIUS

As a white teacher choosing to

teach in a community of black and brown students... these are my kids being killed! I love them! They are my babies!

ミラー・アキーム

As a black teacher, thank you. This was needed to be said and should be echoed throughout all walks of life but especially in education.

TINA SHERREE’ CHONIS

Embrace Hope for Change. ❤️❤️



MARILYN MARTINEZ

I am a teacher protesting at Pan Pacific Park in Los Angeles [above].

MARISA PIERUCCI

I'm having open discussions with my friends of all cultures and colors. I have a bunch of books on order to educate myself and help teach my own children.

TAUNYA JACO

As a Black teacher, THANK YOU 🙏💙📚. It means the world to be seen and supported.

“THIS IS NOT A TIME FOR US TO LOOK AWAY, BUT TO CONFRONT FOR THE SAKE OF A FAIR, JUST AND EQUITABLE FUTURE FOR ALL STUDENTS.”

—CTA President **E. Toby Boyd**

ARPI CAL

Using cultural relevant material to celebrate the contributions of all cultures represented in my class and helping students become self-aware of their role in ending racism... I remember the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: “Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

KATIE ELIZABETH

As teachers we all know what it's like to have a few abhorrent people make an entire group of public servants look bad. Violence is not the answer and serves to continue the divide and racial inequality by tearing down the

community. Our message should be one of peace and justice.

SUSAN CHEN

I purposefully choose books that have Black and Hispanic characters. I point out the lack of diversity in magazines I read to my students and family and have emailed publishers about this. I have made mistakes in the past and have many more to come, but I'm trying to learn from them and continue fighting for human rights.

SUSAN STRATTON

We as educators can do much to shift perceptions in our society but it will take a committed and well thought

Continued on page 8

WHAT EDUCATION LEADERS AND PARTNERS ARE SAYING

NEA President Lily Eskelsen García

NEA understands the deep racial history and trauma caused by the culture of white supremacy, and we believe that to achieve racial and social justice, we must acknowledge it as the primary root cause of institutional racism, structural racism and white privilege. It is a privilege that manifests as white people weaponizing the police against black men and women going about their daily lives. During this pandemic, we have also seen police treating black and brown people differently than white people. The overarching sentiment about these cases for so many people... is that the lives and the dignity of black people in the United States do not carry the same value or importance as others.

As a union of 3 million educators, we have an obligation to act. Together we will continue the call for justice and to hold powerful people to account.

We must also examine how white supremacy culture impacts our biases, our practices and the policies in our own schools and communities.

Black Lives Matter... because All Lives have not Mattered. We must do better.

(Full text at cta.org/blacklivesmatter.)

Student CTA

Student CTA stands in solidarity with the **#BlackLivesMatter** movement in schools and our communities. Across multiple platforms, we have seen the response for “All Lives Matter” and “Blue Lives Matter,” which we do not condone or accept. These statements/countermovements are a form of gaslighting that minimizes the oppression that Black individuals face in the United States every day. It

Continued on page 8

For guidance, tools and resources, go to cta.org/blacklivesmatter.





out plan of action. Not just words.

BOBBIE CHAVEZ

It's so much more than teaching. It's about truly believing and living what we preach. To understand that this is deeply integrated into our society, into our structures, into who we are as a society. Empathy requires walking in someone else's shoes, sympathy requires pity. Do not pity the person of color who has survived! The word that needs to be shouted is remorse. Remorse for ignoring, remorse for inaction, remorse for allowing. We as teachers are required to look deep into our own souls and model deep remorse.

CAROLA PERISHO

Teaching history like it should be taught. Staying away from white-washed curriculum. Making sure that all my students are represented in our literature not only during all the different holidays or designated months but every day.

JENNIFER DILLY

I am using my title as Educator to speak out on my perspective so that I can be a part of a movement

towards a greater place for us all. I am also using my voice as a Caucasian woman to make it known that I do not agree to such atrocities and to show my resolve towards union and equality for all.

CELIA HARRIS

Diverse leadership is critically important in our institutions in order to combat injustice and inequality. Stay strong and continue to speak up — it's what we tell our kids to do, so we need to live that and model it to build trust.

IRENE DILLON

NCTE, weneeddiversebooks.org and Project Lit have helped me grow and work through some of my feelings. Doing a book study this summer with colleagues on Push Out.

MEAGAN TOWNLEY

Ordering some books for me and my kids. Change begins in our own hearts and homes. Then bring that love to the classroom and our reach is boundless. I no longer tell people I'm "not racist" — I am anti-racist. I've learned the difference. Know better, do better.

NIKOLE KEMPI SCARLETT

It is our responsibility to reflect on how well we are doing our job and to be willing to learn and improve our trade and relations with the public we serve. When there are reoccurring issues like discipline or low academic achievement, it is our job with administrative leadership to address these to get better results, taking into consideration the needs of the community we serve. Teachers must be prepared to acknowledge, respect and understand students with substantially different cultural histories and diverse backgrounds so to deliver curriculum that reflects this and is accessible by all students.

ELIZABETH RUBENSTEIN

EVERY public school that employs "resource" and police officers should follow suit and end those contracts.

To read more responses, go to CTA's Facebook page.

**"AS LONG AS BLACK MEN
AND WOMEN CAN'T BREATHE,
WE WILL NOT REST."**

—United Teachers Los Angeles

invalidates and erases hundreds of years of oppression and systematic racism that continues to happen today.

We will call out behaviors that continue to support White Supremacy Culture. Black lives matter.

(Full text at cta.org/blacklivesmatter.)

Community College Assn. President Eric Kaljumägi

The institutional racism inherent in our society is tenacious, and as educators we have a responsibility to work to abolish it. We call upon members to enhance discussions of equity and diversity in light of these continuing shocking events. ... Now is the time to press our campuses to be bastions of hope rather than simple reflections of society.

Together, teachers can effect change in a way that most other professions cannot. Through your actions and influence, we can be the model that shows others how to reduce racism and inequity in our communities.

(Full text at cca4us.org.)

United Teachers Los Angeles

In Los Angeles and in cities across the country, Black students are more likely to attend underresourced schools and face higher rates of expulsion and discipline, ... to lack access to health care, live in foster care, be housing insecure, or have a parent who is incarcerated because of racial inequality in the justice system. These realities reflect the dehumanizing institutional racism that must be dismantled.

Educators, every one of us, need to look at ourselves ... every time we plan a lesson, pick a textbook, engage with a student, colleague, or parent of color. To be an educator in 2020 must mean being committed to the fight for racial and social justice. This will take bold conversations and actions as union members and colleagues.

As long as Black men and women can't breathe, we will not rest.

(Full text at utla.net.)

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VARIOUS FORMATS

Independent Study:

These courses offer flexibility and the ability to complete a course faster or slower than a traditional live course. Our courses deliver the same high-quality content and expert instruction as traditional, "face-to-face" courses.

Online Self-Paced:

Offering you the perfect blend of accessibility, convenience and flexibility for you to control your learning pace. You will use course textbooks, manuals, assignments, digital tools, and exams to learn and earn credit.

Online Fixed-Date:

This format offers a convenient, yet rigorous style of learning that allows you to structure your education to suit your schedule. Online courses have fixed start and finish dates, but as an online student, you will have access to your digital classroom at any time.

Classroom:

These courses are offered in a traditional classroom where you can connect with your instructor and classmates in a live setting. This learning environment facilitates communication on a given subject in real time, enables immediate feedback, and fosters interaction with the instructor and like-minded classmates.

June / July 2020

CALENDAR



Steve Johnson / Unsplash

NOW IS AN excellent time to talk with students about LGBTQ+ people and their struggles for equal rights. To help build empathy and understanding, educators can introduce important LGBTQ+ people in history, read relevant literature, discuss homophobia/heterosexism, and explore its causes and solutions. The Anti-Defamation League (adl.org) offers lesson plans for grades 4-12 as well as book recommendations. GLSEN (glsen.org) has lesson plans and extensive resource guides for educators.



ADL, GLSEN and StoryCorps collaborated on this project, consisting of audio interviews and background of individuals who witnessed or helped shape LGBTQ+ history.



↑ Watch "Understanding," a video from CTA's Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues Advisory Committee, at tinyurl.com/SOGIIAC.



NEA Representative Assembly

NEA'S RA, July 2–3, is going virtual this year. The world's largest democratic deliberative body, with about 8,000 delegates, is where CTA members help set policy and chart the direction of NEA business. The program features the presentation of NEA's 2020 Human and Civil Rights Awards, including the President's Award to activist and political trailblazer Stacey Abrams, former Georgia representative and gubernatorial candidate. More info at nea.org/ra.

SUMMER CONFERENCES: *Home Edition!*

Presidents Conference and Summer Institute are virtually free

CTA'S PREMIER summer conferences will not meet in person this year, but the upside is you can just roll out of bed to your computer and partake of some of the best training and professional development available. Bonus: They're *free* to all members!

- New and experienced chapter presidents should attend **CTA's Presidents Conference**, July 13–17, with sessions designed to enhance

your skills as a local leader and help build systems of success for your chapter. The conference will also provide opportunities to build lasting relationships with other presidents. **#CTAPC**

- This year **CTA's Summer Institute**, July 27–30, focuses on nuts-and-bolts union leadership and prepares you and your local for the challenges that lie ahead, with a special emphasis on the

unique issues we will face as we return to school sites in the era of COVID-19. Sessions are still being planned but will likely include communicating with members, working with community groups, a deep dive into member benefits and multiple opportunities for professional development. **#CTASI**
Register at cta.org.

PBL World 2020

JUNE 16–18 CONFERENCE

Virtual meeting. PBL World, sponsored by the nonprofit Buck Institute for Education, is the premier conference for Project Based Learning. Pre-conference June 15.

► pblworld.org

California Labor Management Initiative Summer Institute

JUNE 23–24 CONFERENCE

Virtual meeting. CA LMI, a project of Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation, convenes labor-management teams from school districts across the state to promote labor-management collaboration.

► cdefoundation.org/clmi

NSTA STEM 20

JULY 27–30 CONFERENCE

Virtual meeting. Hosted by the National Science Teachers Association, this event provides tools and resources for successful STEM education.

► nsta.org/conferences

* CANCELED

ASCD Conference on Teaching Excellence

This conference, scheduled for June 26–28 in Denver, has been canceled. ► ascd.org/ctesc

California MTSS Professional Learning Institute conference

This conference, scheduled for July 28–30 in Anaheim, has been canceled. ► camtsspli.ocde.us

NEA Conference on Racial and Social Justice

This conference, scheduled for late June in Atlanta, has been canceled. ► nea.org/racialsocialjustice

QTEL Summer Institutes

This conference, scheduled for Aug. 3–7 in Washington, D.C., has been canceled.

► qtel.wested.org/2020-summer-institutes

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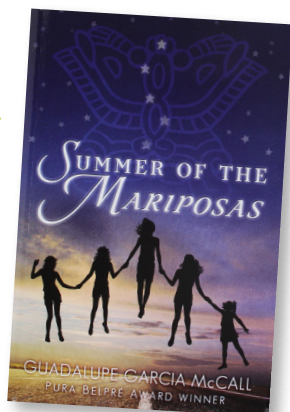
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For our full social media directory, see cta.org/social. **#OurVoiceOurUnion** **#WeAreCTA**

SUMMER READS

Summertime is not only to catch up on sleep, watch videos and take in the sunshine, but to read! Get kids excited with the teacher-recommended books listed at cta.org/californiareads. Among them:



Summer of the Mariposas (Guadalupe Garcia McCall, grades 9-12) is a magical

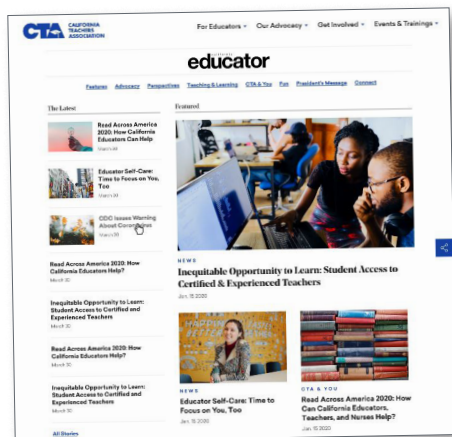
Mexican American retelling of Homer's *Odyssey*, and a celebration of sisterhood and maternal love. Odilia and her four sisters return a dead man from their town in Texas to his family in Mexico. Coming home, they must outsmart a witch, a warlock, half-human barn owls and bloodthirsty monsters. Can this prepare them for when they get back to the real world, where goddesses and ghosts can no longer help them?



In **Front Desk** (Kelly Yang, grades 3-5), 10-year-old Mia Tang lives in a motel. Every day while her immigrant parents clean the rooms, she manages the front desk. Her parents let immigrants stay in the empty rooms for free, and if the motel owner finds out, the family is doomed. Another problem: Mia wants to be a writer, but because English is not her first language, her mom thinks she should stick to math. It will take all of Mia's courage, kindness and hard work to get through the year and follow her dream.



When Angels Sing: The Story of Rock Legend Carlos Santana (Michael Mahin and Jose Ramirez, grades 1-2) is a story of persistence in pursuing goals, with vibrant illustrations. Young Santana loved to listen to his father play *el violín* — a sound that to him made angels real. He tried *el clarinete* and *el violín*, but there were no angels. Then he picked up *la guitarra*. He took the soul of the blues, the brains of jazz, the energy of rock 'n' roll, the heat of Afro Cuban drums, and the sway of the music he'd grown up with in Mexico. Had he finally found the music that would make his angels real?



A mockup of the new *Educator* homepage.

The Educator's (Digital) New Look!

Beginning June 18, *California Educator* content will be on CTA's main website, at cta.org/educator. The new format makes featured stories, latest news and other relevant articles easy to find, read, comment on and share. And the clean, responsive design aligns with CTA's compelling new look, on any device. Check it out and tell us what you think at editor@cta.org. (See page 50 for five cool new features on the main CTA site you need to know about.)



Call **855-977-1770** now
to be connected with
your legislators:

1

***Tell your state legislators
to support a budget with no cuts.***

The California Legislature is debating the 2020-21 state budget to meet the June 30 deadline. The proposed budget has more than \$10 billion in cuts to schools and community colleges, including cuts of \$6.5 billion to the Local Control Funding Formula, which equates to:

- Cutting \$1,230 per student.
- Increasing class sizes by 19 percent.
- Laying off more than 57,600 teachers.
- Laying off more than 125,000 education support professionals.

2

***Tell your U.S. senators
to support the HEROES Act***

State and local governments are facing huge shortfalls and need federal funding to maintain essential services, including education. The House has acted decisively, passing the \$3 trillion HEROES Act. Ask your senators to support the HEROES Act as soon as possible.

Read more on page 42.

Pepi Stojanovski / Unsplash



Corporations Cash In on Kids

IN THE LATEST example of corporations cashing in on students, charter school companies across the country have been taking pandemic-crisis aid meant for small businesses. In Los Angeles, Gabriella Charter Schools, with only two schools, applied for and is set to receive a \$1.3 million loan from the federal CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).

“Charters claim to be ‘public schools’ when that’s where the money is,” says education scholar and author Diane Ravitch. “But when the money is available for small businesses, they claim to be small businesses. Public schools aren’t eligible for the federal money. But charter schools are.”

In the Public Interest (inthepublicinterest.org) reports that privately operated charters are applying for PPP funds *in addition to* the \$200 million set aside in April for large corporate charter school chains by U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

Others caution that COVID-19 has given corporations and corporate-backed groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) another opportunity to undermine public education. Economist and local school board member Gordon Lafer notes in an interview in the Institute for New Economic Thinking (ineteconomics.org) that tech company offers to provide free digital solutions to distance learning during the pandemic, for instance, are comparable to “coke dealers handing out free samples.”

Stronger Together.
#InThisTogether



"We Are a Tribe Like No Other"

The CTA Teaching, Learning and Life During COVID-19 Facebook group By @samdemuro

IT'S HARD TO believe it's been over three months since we first created our closed Facebook group, "CTA Teaching, Learning and Life During COVID-19." The group quickly grew to CTA's largest online space for members to engage with each other. It has evolved into an important tool for educators to get lesson ideas, ask questions of other educators, share messages of hope and gratitude, and stay informed on important education advocacy issues. We asked members what the group has meant for them.

Provident Credit Union's Mortgage Program

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- ✓ Exclusive .125% mortgage rate discount for CTA members
- ✓ \$100 discount on a standard mortgage loan for CTA members
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- ✓ Exclusive Movable[®] feature²
- ✓ Experienced and knowledgeable Provident Mortgage Consultants to guide you
- ✓ Power Funding 10-Day Guarantee³

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Approved by



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1) Relationship pricing credit of the additional \$250 off closing costs is based on you having one of the following Provident products: home equity loan/line of credit, auto/boat/RV/motorcycle loan, checking with direct deposit, or certificate/IRA.

2) Single family/owner-occupied condos, homes and second homes in California only. Other restrictions may apply. Membership required. Subject to final approval.

3) The guarantee to close within 10 business days does not apply if delays occur by third parties, including but not limited to realtors, borrowers, and/or sellers. Down payment must be from borrower's own source of funds and does not include non-lender paid fees, impounds, or reserves. Provident Credit Union guarantees to close your loan by the date specified in the purchase contract, provided this date is 10 business days from contract date and we have received a complete loan application and all requested documents. If the loan fails to close on time due to a delay by Provident Credit Union, we will credit \$995.00 of the buyer's closing costs at time of funding (POWER Funding must be requested at time of application). This offer may not be combined with other satisfaction guarantee offers. Borrowers must meet Provident Credit Union's lending guidelines. Any alteration to the loan amount or loan terms by, or per request of, borrower will invalidate the guarantee. Property must appraise at or above the sale price. POWER Funding is only available for properties in the Bay Area, which include San Mateo County, Santa Clara County, San Francisco County, Alameda County, and Contra Costa County. Other restrictions apply.

4) Figure is accurate as of 5/5/2020.

NMLS #412725 ©PCU 6/2020



“I’M NOT ALONE”

EMILY SMITH LINTS

We are so isolated at home, and here I can see lots of other people going through the same frustrations. It’s a great place to get resources, laughs and collegiality. Plus, it’s a safe space to ask and answer questions.

ERI CARRILLO JR.

I love to see that I’M NOT ALONE. [I’ve] also been able to pick up pointers on how to make this “trip” bearable.

MELODY CARDENAS

I’ve learned that educators are not only resilient, but also extremely funny and creative. Most of what I have read has been positive and supportive. It reminds me that I am not in this alone.

STAYING INFORMED

REBECCA ANNE RECCO

This is a way to connect with teachers and share ideas. Since we are in a “building the plane as we’re flying it” situation, we’re all really left to figure things out for ourselves. It’s been cool to see what others are doing that works (or doesn’t) when I’m stuck.

LUCI NUNES

This group helped me stay informed of what’s happening with other schools and educators, how they’re coping, etc. I have gained insights to share with my chapter’s FB group as their Communications/Member Engagement Chairperson.

COLLABORATION, MORAL SUPPORT

PATTY LEMING

I love the spirit of collaboration; teachers brainstorming ideas on how to conduct distance teaching and how to safely open schools for students and staff. The funny posts about teaching in these crazy times are a great distraction. It really does help to feel connected to other educators.

LIANE ROBERTS

I needed to be with people who understand and share my professional and emotional struggles! The support is amazing! The resources and knowledge I’ve gained is beyond words! We are a tribe like no other!

NELIDA NENA RUBIO

There is nothing more valuable than peer collaboration, and this platform has been the perfect venue for teachers teaching teachers. The group not only supports each other with academics, but also provides social-emotional support and union issues advice.

RESOURCES, TIPS, TOOLS

SARAH COLOMER

I’ve learned that teachers are *resilient*! This group has helped me to focus on what’s important — students — and how best to serve them with the hand we’ve been dealt. Specifically, I’ve accessed many mini-professional development sessions on how to use Google Meet and Classroom.

KIMBERLY NGUYEN

This group [lets] me see how teachers are handling all aspects of distance learning, from digital platforms to parent communication, to district mandates, to wish lists for what we’d like to see before opening again. It has given me inspiration and confidence in my evolving craft.

TELL US WHAT YOU WANT

WE’RE COMMITTED to making this group useful for educators now and in the future. What would you like to see? Email social@cta.org or tell us in the group!

Coming soon:

- Better organization of posts and threads, new topics and categories.
- FB chats and more “live” opportunities.
- Opportunities for new educators to connect with veteran educators.

For more member comments and responses, see californiaeducator.org/covid-facebook-group.

Join our Facebook group! Go to facebook.com/groups/ctacovid19, answer a few questions, then request to join.

Quotes & Numbers

Compiled by **Julian Peeples**

7 hours, 57 minutes

Total length of the virtual CTA State Council meeting held June 6.

6 FEET

Distance from other people at all times in schools, recommended by California Department of Education in guidance issued June 8.

129,000

COVID-19 cases in California, as of June 8, 2020.

\$14 billion

Amount of federal COVID-19 aid earmarked for California in the HEROES Act.

\$4.4 billion

Amount of aid proposed by Gov. Gavin Newsom to address the “learning loss” that low-income students have experienced disproportionately during school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

114

Number of traditional California community colleges that suspended in-person classes and transitioned as many as possible online.

8 minutes, 46 seconds

Amount of time George Floyd was prevented from breathing during his murder by police. Join CTA in standing against police brutality, white supremacy and systemic racism; visit cta.org/BlackLivesMatter.



“WE NAME IT. WE MOURN. WE RISE IN SOLIDARITY. WE STAND AND DEMAND JUSTICE. WE ORGANIZE TO DISMANTLE ALL ACTS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM IN ALL PLACES AND IN ALL FORMS.”

—NEA Vice President **BECKY PRINGLE**

“WE CANNOT OPEN THE SCHOOLS UNTIL WE KNOW THEY ARE SAFE FOR OUR STUDENTS AND OUR MEMBERS. THERE IS NO COMPROMISING THAT.”

—CTA President **E. TOBY BOYD**, during his address to CTA State Council in June.

“WE KNOW THAT BIAS EXISTS IN EVERY SECTOR OF OUR SOCIETY.”

—Superintendent of Public Instruction **TONY THURMOND**, announcing a campaign to fight racial bias.

“This is no time for us to look away. ... The threat and real violence toward black people daring to exist in public spaces and even in their own homes is the direct result of how white supremacy culture is the air we breathe in America.”

—NEA President **LILY ESKELSEN GARCÍA**



“The best support we can get right now is education from our peers who have gone through this process. No need for us to reinvent the wheel, just make it fit our school, our philosophy and our community needs.”

—**SAL WILLIAMS**, member of CTA’s newest local, South Bay Educators United, on the help they need as they prepare to bargain their first contract (see page 39).

Understanding and Gratitude

By **Rosalinda Alcalá**

A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY has risen out of the ashes of fear and uncertainty caused by COVID-19. Many educators have seen an outpouring of parents' appreciation. Parents have left notes on social media and made grateful calls. The increase in parent communication will no doubt strengthen the bonds between school and family.

On March 13, most schools in California closed their doors for an uncertain amount of time. In an instant, learning changed from a social environment to distance learning.

Even on an elementary campus, children understood COVID-19 could lead to severe illness or death. Many children understood school closure was to keep everyone safe. I watched my teary-eyed students embrace one another good-bye.

As the nation began to adjust to the stay-home order, new problems emerged. An equilibrium was needed between work, family and learning. Teaching and learning were disrupted. As students learned in different formats and parents were pulled in different directions, educators were surprised by what followed: Instead of complaints and negativity, there was an outpouring of gratitude.

One Facebook post on the Fryberger Elementary School page read: "Thank you (principal) and your awesome teachers for doing such a phenomenal job in assisting us and our kids with distance learning. There is so much to take away from this experience, however, gratitude is definitely at the top of my list — because today working with all three of my kids hasn't been easy. Yet your teachers work with 30-plus kids at one time, managing all kinds of personalities, moods and problem solving. That's talent and dedication for sure! Thank you so much for your patience as we get through this."

UTLA member Linda Rodriguez Bourgeois, who teaches at Harry Bridges Span Elementary School in Wilmington, found many notes from parents on one of her teacher platforms, among them: "How do you do it? I have no idea how you get him to focus. You must have magic."

Another: "What you do is a gift. ... Where do you find the patience for the kids? I just have one and I'm going crazy."

Yet another: "Thank you for all you do for my boy — he misses you so much."



"When we finally emerge from our homes and return together once more, the bonds between parents and teachers may be forever changed — as may all relationships."

People looked at relationships and felt the gap that has grown during this pandemic. Children are no different. They have strong bonds with their friends and teachers. Sita Jones Perry, a special education teacher at Newport Coast Elementary, says parents have told her, "The children like to see you. They get off Zoom and are happy."

In addition to strong relationship bonds, work specialization has been tested. Crossover of previously specialized skills have spilled into our everyday life. Many parents have learned that teaching their children is a difficult task.

Educators have also understood the value of specialization. A Fullerton Community College instructor (and Community College Association member) concedes that elementary teaching is its own craft. She says, "When it comes to education, the elementary teacher knows the art of discipline, rewards and expectations. She knows when to push and when to pull. I tend to push because I don't know the art of being realistic."

The instructor, who did not want to be named, praises her daughter's elementary teacher: "She has learned and refined the art and science of what works and what doesn't work in the classroom — I want her teacher back." She adds, "Teachers need to be paid the same as doctors."

When we finally emerge from our homes and return together once more, the bonds between parents and teachers may be forever changed — as may all relationships. Perhaps we will understand one another a bit more. Perhaps we will linger and speak to our neighbors, merchants and teachers. Perhaps the isolation of this pandemic will serve to instill understanding and gratitude. ■

Rosalinda Alcalá is a member of Westminster Teachers Association.

What Makes a Good School?

By Susan Philips

WHAT MAKES A good school? I posed this question to seven former high school students in their mid-20s from urban, rural and suburban schools in California. This was prior to the current pandemic, and while distance learning has multiple challenges, I believe students' answers would stay much the same.

What I discovered is that despite their economic and social differences, students had a remarkable consensus on the question.

A good school, students said, is a safe place where they can develop supportive relationships with adults, especially their teachers. They also brought up the importance of inspiring and passionate teachers, electives, and extracurricular activities, but they believed that establishing meaningful connections with adults is the key to a good school.

They spoke about wanting to be "seen," acknowledged and cared for.

"I believe a good school is having teachers who see the potential in every child," said Jackelyn Valladares, a graduate of John Marshall High (JMHS) in Los Angeles and the first in her family to go to college. "Mr. Price at Dayton Heights Elementary School realized that I was struggling in English, but he knew that I was a hard worker and that I listened to all his instructions. He took extra time with me after school to review so he was sure that I understood what was going on. He told me, 'You are a very bright person. You can do a lot.'"

Added Carly Liang, a graduate of Diamond High School in Walnut Valley, "My physics teacher never presented herself as the almighty teacher. She would share her experiences. She inspired us. She gave us confidence."

Daniel Gonzalez, a graduate of JMHS and first in his family to go to college, said, "I like to be acknowledged as smart. When I am slacking off and a teacher tells me, 'I expected more from you,' that's always a wake-up call,

and I will turn things around. This shows me that they recognize my abilities. Some students need a push."

While all students need to be acknowledged, the need for a "push" is especially important for students who come from urban communities. "I grew up in a community where there was a lot of trouble on the streets. There was a lot of peer pressure," said Jorge Rodriquez, who now teaches at JMHS, his alma mater. "Kids get stuck there, and that changes them. When kids get to school in the morning, they need to feel safe and secure and know they are about to enter a school that cares about them and their education."

"Reducing class size has the potential to fundamentally transform our schools from places where students feel anonymous to ones where they feel recognized for who they are and what they offer."

What can we do to make sure that we reach the students who need pushing? What kinds of reforms should we pursue? One thing is sure: High-stakes testing, teacher accountability and standards are not the answer.

What is the answer? Class size reduction is the only way to ensure that every child gets the attention they need. Despite the efforts of teachers, there is no way they can reach 40 or 50 students in a classroom. The students were clear on this point. As

Gonzalez said, "When teachers have smaller classes, they can get to know students at a different level. The smaller the class, the more you feel valued. My opinion, my answers, my participation is important to the class. In a large class, the same five kids always answer. Whether I answer or not doesn't matter because I'm just one of many. Knowing that you matter is important."

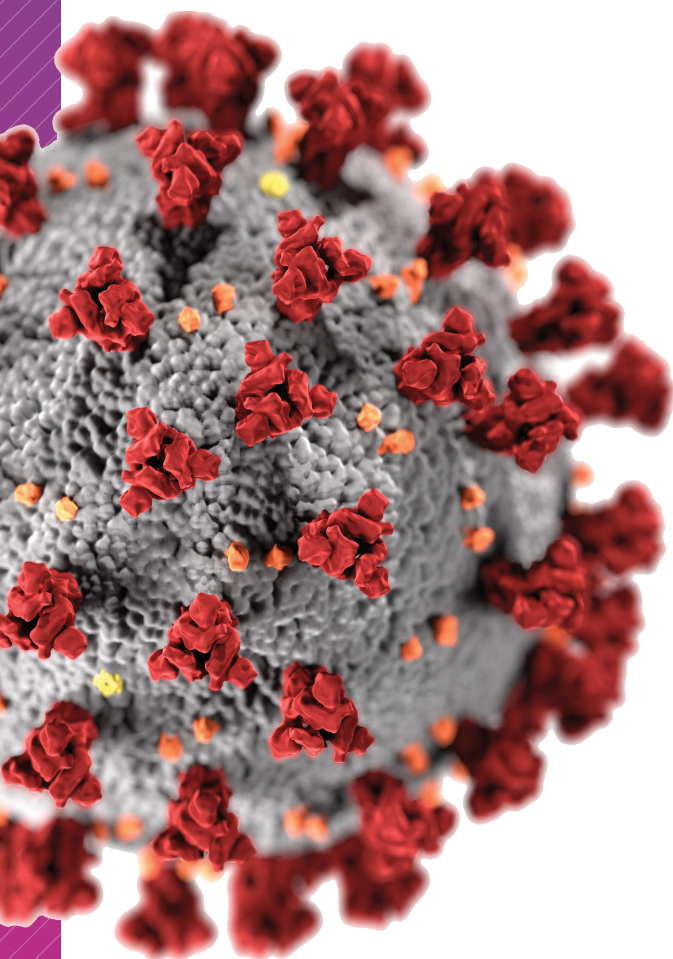
The good news is that teachers across the country are striking and bargaining for smaller classes. Reducing class size is expensive, but this reform has the potential to fundamentally transform our schools from places where students feel anonymous to ones where they feel recognized for who they are and what they offer. That's what students tell us, and isn't that the goal of public education? ■

Susan Philips, former middle school teacher and UTLA member, directs CollegePath LA at John Marshall High School.



Embracing Our Community

Educators work through the pandemic to connect with students and each other



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COVID-19 Tales From the Trenches

Educators tell what it's really like teaching in a pandemic

As told to **Sherry Posnick-Goodwin**

Teaching during normal times is challenging. It requires dedication, patience and knowledge — plus the ability to foster connections with students. It's about being a role model and knowing when students need extra help, even if they don't ask. It's about fostering relationships with parents, building community, and more.

This year was anything but normal. When COVID-19 closed schools, teachers rose to the challenge of taking their classrooms online and teaching from home. Some already knew how to teach online; others had a learning curve.

Educators are indeed making history. The following snapshots highlight different experiences. Woven together, these stories create a tapestry, which may show future historians what it was like to teach during this extraordinary time.

An opportunity for growth

KRISTIN ZEBE

SCIENCE TEACHER at *Pioneer Middle School*, *Tustin Educators Association*

I COMPARE TEACHING in a pandemic to teaching in a tornado. Everything is whirling around you. You have to find a way to get all of the kids into a bunker and feeling safe, while not freaking out yourself. I must be a source of stability, because students can't learn if they are stressed. I am stressed, but can't show it.

I've been teaching 17 years, and it's the most interesting year of my career. It sounds funny, but teaching under these circumstances forces me into flexibility and going outside my comfort zone. It helps that I have a strong classroom management style. The expectations I set earlier in the year have carried over into online teaching.

My district is very tech-savvy. In my school, students were issued iPads to take home. We were ahead of the curve, but I had to learn some things from scratch, like how to hold Zoom meetings and online office hours. It helps that I work with an incredible group of teachers and feel supported. We work through problems together daily.

As a single mom, it has been challenging. Sometimes my second grade daughter and I have Zoom meetings at the same time. I make sure she's able to do her schoolwork while I'm teaching. Sometimes, she needs me when I'm teaching or communicating with students and parents. The upside is that both of us are becoming more flexible and enjoying quality time. I think she has found newfound respect for me as a teacher, seeing how hard I'm working.

I miss school. But I think this pandemic has offered opportunities for social and emotional growth for myself, my family and my entire school community.



"It helps that I work with an incredible group of teachers and feel supported."





**“ Teaching in
a pandemic makes you
feel humble
and courageous.”**

Teaching in quarantine

CECILIA DE LA TORRE

FIFTH GRADE TEACHER at **Paramount Elementary School**, *Azusa Educators Association*

I DIDN'T TELL my students my husband had COVID-19. I would have broken down. I didn't want things to be centered on me. I wanted to be there for *them*. I let my 28 students know that I'm proud of them for joining me on Google Hangouts. Luckily, all my students have devices and connectivity.

My husband Jason works in a prison in Chino and is an assistant baseball coach at Azusa High School. When he tested positive, they told him to go home and quarantine away from me and our sons, who are in sixth grade and high school. He drove home, and I had 15 minutes to go into the master bedroom (with its own bathroom) and remove everything I would need for weeks. He went into the bedroom and stayed there. I opened the door 6 inches only to bring food. He used paper plates and plastic utensils. We texted or Facetimed to communicate. He had fever and chills, but wasn't coughing much.

My boys and I were also in quarantine. Our friends and family shopped for us. The Azusa Educators Association and my principal, Antonio Flores, were extremely supportive.

After a few weeks, my husband was doing better. He came out of the bedroom. But then he developed shortness of breath. He went to the hospital and then into the intensive care unit,

because he developed pneumonia and blood clots related to COVID-19. We couldn't visit. He finally recovered and came home. Honestly, we have so much to be grateful for. My sons and I have no symptoms, and doctors say there is no reason for us to be tested.

During all of this, I worked. I received training from my district on how to teach online when my husband was in the bedroom, and began teaching while he was hospitalized. Teaching became my outlet and a distraction from COVID-19. Then there was my "mom life" to make sure my kids were doing OK. I got my kids set up with Chromebooks for their classes. I teach at the dining room table, and they do schoolwork in their bedrooms.

I'm very organized, so I am able to handle all of this. I am also pretty good with technology. Just show me what to do and I can do it. I was already using Google Classroom, and now use it to push out assignments and offer feedback.

Teaching in a pandemic makes you feel humble and courageous. I tell my students, "You are part of history. Your children and maybe your grandchildren will ask you about this. You say you are bored, but take it all in. You are awesome. *All of us are awesome.*"



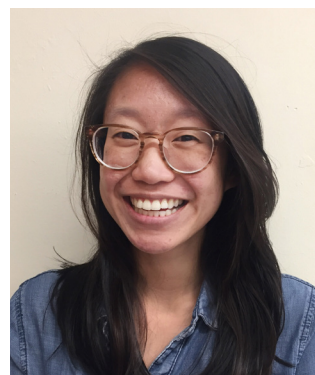
Inequities are more apparent

BIANCA SHIU SCIENCE TEACHER at *Elmhurst United Middle School*, Oakland Education Association

I KNEW THERE is a lot of inequity among student populations, but the virus has made these inequities even more pronounced. Some students have a stable home life, like having their own room and internet so they can continue learning. Many of my students are struggling. A quarter of them don't have an internet connection. One of my students

is looking for a stable place to live. Another is babysitting her 11-month-old brother because her parents work. During a pandemic, poor families are working hard just to have their basic needs met, so they may have to prioritize other things over education.

I've been trying my best to support my students, but their needs are so high it's something I can't do alone. It's overwhelming. A positive aspect is seeing staff in my school community — teachers, principals and others — pushing themselves continually to support students. Some OEA members have pledged portions of their stimulus checks to support undocumented families in the district. Seeing other people step up has motivated me to do the same.



"This has made me realize how important it is to help students become independent learners."

I have four classes — approximately 120 students — and the participation rate in online learning is between 15 percent and 35 percent, depending on the day. My district has given out Chromebooks to students who have internet, and has tried to mitigate some of the factors around the 25 percent of students who don't. They have compiled paper packets. They are working to provide hot spots. I just got an email that our district has served its millionth meal to students.

I have Google Classroom, and had a great time on a Zoom meeting. It was the first time I've seen students face to face. One girl gave us a tour of the backyard garden she's planting as a science project, which was cool.

This experience has made me realize how important it is to help students become independent learners, especially if we have to continue some distance learning in the fall.

Connecting through a screen

NATASHA JACOBS FIRST GRADE TEACHER at *King Elementary School*, United Teachers of Richmond

I TALK TO my students on Zoom. I film myself teaching lessons on Seesaw. The other day I filmed a Number Talk where I spilled M&M's on the table and said, "Wow! How many do you see? What color did you start with? Do you notice any groups of five you can start counting by first?" Students were asked to film themselves explaining these things.

I try to be silly and fun so they do not feel alone or scared. One student thought coronavirus was like a villain who could open his window or door, come in, and infect him.

I teach in a low-income district. Out of 24 students, I have only connected to 15 of their parents. I don't know how the other students are doing. I keep trying to reach out to them, but I don't hear back. I worry about them a lot. I love my students so much.

I have great challenges trying to communicate with my Latino parents. My mother was from



"At times, it can be overwhelming, but I am very hopeful for the future."



Hugo Sierra helped plant yard signs for graduating seniors at his school. "It was a way of letting them know we care."

A weird kind of feeling

HUGO SIERRA

MATH TEACHER at *Jurupa High School*, *Fontana Teachers Association*

I THOUGHT IT would be easier. My district gave out computers to students at the beginning of the semester. I thought technology would be implemented gradually. Then we were told on a Friday we were going online next Monday. I'm grateful because my students and I already knew what to do.

I miss the kids every day. On Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:15 until 11:30 a.m. there are actual meetings through Microsoft Teams Online Classroom. I hear students, but I cannot see their faces, even though they can see mine. Our district blocks their faces due to privacy concerns,

so I just see myself when I'm teaching. I feel like I'm teaching to myself.

It's lonely and a weird kind of feeling. I like to interact with them. Yesterday during class, I took my device into my backyard and showed them my chickens to offer my emotional support.

I always record my lessons just in case students have questions. If I'm going too fast, students can watch it again. Also, kids do math now at their own pace. I guess those are a few perks.

I worry about my seniors. Many of them have gotten jobs to help out at home. In a matter of days, they ceased to be high school students and entered adulthood. They are missing prom and other senior events. Because their grade can't be lowered, a lot of them stopped coming to the online meetings — especially those who are not going to a four-year college. They are done. To them, it's "Why bother?"

Our administration team purchased 450 signs that said "Spartan Strong, Class of 2020" and we planted them in seniors' front yards. We waved at them from afar. It was a way of letting them know we care about them. It was a way to say goodbye.



"I worry about my seniors. In a matter of days, they ceased to be high school students and entered adulthood."

Panama, so I understand Spanish and speak a little to get by, but I am not fluent yet. I use a translation program to converse with my Latino parents to help them get online. Many parents have informed me that they do not have internet access at home. The school is trying to provide hot spots, and there is a long waiting list for hot spots.

I am collaborating with my other two first grade teachers, and we divvied up the workload to make it easier on ourselves. My job is doing the math and art portion; another is doing phonics and language arts; and another is doing science and writing. We are posting lessons to

our own classrooms and to each other's, all while differentiating to meet students' needs.

I am always working. I have headaches from so much computer screen time. I live alone, and it is somewhat isolating. I feel like I am in a time capsule looking at the outside world through the window of my apartment or my computer.

I wish I had known more about teaching with technology before this. There was so much to learn! At times, it can be overwhelming, but I am very hopeful for the future.



Richard and Lisa Razo teach remotely, together.



"When school reopens, I'm going to spend more time building relationships with students. Teaching in a pandemic teaches you what really matters."

Teaching side by side

LISA RAZO SECOND GRADE TEACHER at *Kelley Elementary School* in Thermal, and her husband

RICHARD RAZO ENGLISH TEACHER at *Coachella Valley High School*; *Coachella Valley Teachers Association*

RICHARD: It's interesting having two teachers teaching in the same house. I see her singing to students, but I teach high school, so I'm not going to sing. Yesterday I sat on one side of the couch and she sat on the other. We were both working with students. I was answering questions and she was in a meeting on Webex. Fortunately, we get along well.

The pandemic has given me an insight into what my students know and do not know. Sometimes my students tell me they weren't taught something when they were younger. Next year I will be able to say, "Don't tell me that; you were taught that in second grade. I know this because I watched my wife teach it."

There are so many growing pains. Our district has given one iPad to each family, so sharing can be extremely difficult for families with more than one child, which is most of our families. Reception in the desert can be spotty. Even some of our teachers are not able to be online. The district is offering a "hub" that students can set up at home, but many parents have not responded to the robocall that these are available.

I have learned that even though kids are constantly using technology, they only understand apps and social media. They are having a difficult time downloading essays, even though it's a simple two-step process. When this is over, I will teach students how to use a computer correctly.



LISA: Teaching in a pandemic is like nothing you ever anticipated. We're learning. We're trying hard and making it work. Some days it's great. The next day feels like a failure. It's very challenging. I don't think anybody realizes how much effort we are putting into this. Teachers are using Webex, Google Classroom, Zoom and Class Dojo. However, at this point, I am only able to connect with about 30 percent of my students online. We keep trying.

The majority of my students are the children of farmworkers. Many are undocumented. They are working in the fields. Many of my students are babysat by older siblings.

I know this is a very difficult time for families, so I'm more concerned about my students' survival and whether they are getting enough to eat than whether they are turning in lessons for me. The pandemic has changed my thinking.

When school reopens, I'm going to spend more time building relationships with students and getting to know them better as people, as opposed to just teaching them. I will still push and motivate them to succeed. But I'm going to be more loving, kinder, funnier and sillier. Teaching in a pandemic teaches you what really matters.



COVID-19

A New World for Student Support Services

Counselors, school psychologists, nurses and speech-language pathologists' work in the distance learning era

By **Julian Peebles**



THE EFFORTS UNDERTAKEN by teachers to support their students through the COVID-19 pandemic are nothing less than heroic.

But what about the dedicated people in our schools who provide specialized support and services to students? How is the distance learning environment impacting the essential, complex and often federally mandated work of speech-language pathologists, school psychologists, counselors and school nurses?

We asked some of these professionals to share their experiences and add their important voices to the discussion about school in the era of COVID-19.





"Children are adaptable, but when developing communication skills virtually, nuances such as nonverbal gestures are lost on the screen."

DINA GRIFFIN

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST, *Evergreen Teachers Association*

Describe your job in the age of COVID-19 in one word:

Eye-opening.

What's a "typical" day for you in the new learning environment?

My typical distance learning day is a mix of video meetings with parents, co-workers and students, and paperwork. I write IEPs (individualized education programs) and reports, review files, respond to independent student work, provide feedback to parents, check emails, and create lesson plans. It just happens to take place in my house all online, so it's been challenging!

What kind of challenges does this pose for you and fellow SLPs?

My speech therapy sessions with students were always dynamic — on the floor playing with toys, doing movement activities, working at tables with fun materials. Now, I spend work hours in front of the laptop, which can be very draining. The biggest challenge has been using technology as the vehicle of service delivery. I've been successful at getting team members and parents connected, but scheduling virtual meetings is difficult.

Although my district has provided devices for those in need, distance learning is still not equitable. Lack of technology skills, different home languages, child care challenges and shared devices within a household present many challenges. Technology glitches, lag time, and unstable connections disrupt the natural flow of communication that we would have in person. Children are flexible and adaptable, but when developing communication skills virtually, the nuances of communication, such as nonverbal gestures, are lost on the screen.

What should colleagues to know about life right now for SLPs?

Navigating the legality of implementing a student's IEP in this new distance learning model has been tricky. As we learned about the ever-changing state and county directives for our district, our specialists continued to have weekly virtual meetings to discuss how to meet the needs of our students.

Many of us went into the field with the idea of hands-on therapy and being in person with our students. My colleagues and I

Continued on page 28



SARAH NIELSEN BOYD

SCHOOL NURSE, *Oakland Education Association*

Describe your job in the age of COVID-19 in one word: Lonely.

What's a "typical" day for you in the new learning environment?

I check my email first thing. There are so many emails each day. I answer emails, attend virtual meetings, and contact families to check in on kids who have complicated health conditions or need virtual health assessments for an IEP. I have been working on the *huge* list of kids who are missing immunizations and trying to find missing shots in the California Immunization Registry. I meet/chat/email with colleagues to discuss the challenges and successes of various tactics in this new work world. We share resources that we can offer families and share webinars/articles related to COVID.

What kind of challenges does this pose for you and fellow school nurses?

A lot of the work that I do during a regular school day is computer work. But I also see many kids and talk with staff, so the biggest difference and also challenge is not interacting with human beings on a daily basis. Hands-on nursing involves actually being with a person: feeling the temperature of their skin, looking at their facial expressions, talking privately, and examining whatever body part needs to be examined. All of these

"Because we are such a small group, there is almost no attention being paid to what we do and how to support us."

things are more difficult (or impossible) via telehealth.

What do you want your colleagues to know about life right now for school nurses?

I think, like other professions, school nurses are struggling with some aspects of distance work, juggling family life and finding a silver lining in life during shelter in place. I think most of us worry about our most vulnerable students. We worry about the students in the moderate and severely handicapped classes whose parents get no respite and who are difficult to reach with Zoom and phone calls. We worry about the families of students who don't speak English, who are recent arrivals/immigrants, and who don't qualify for any federal assistance. We worry about kids going hungry and living in dangerous environments.

How does this crisis affect school nurses differently, since you are both educators and health care professionals?

Because we are such a small group, there is almost no attention being paid to what we do and how to support us. Most of us are doing the work that we know needs to get done with little guidance.

"With online counseling it is a completely different world. Not being able to offer a student a tissue when they are in tears is heartbreaking."



GLEND A ORTEZ-GALÁN

COUNSELOR, Sequoia District Teachers Association

Describe your job in the age of COVID-19 in one word:

Octopus. It feels like I have eight arms trying to navigate so many things at once.

What's a "typical" day for you in the new environment?

Our roles require us to interact with students, parents, caregivers, teachers, school staff, admin and community partners — imagine having to navigate communication with all of these individuals through a screen! Spring is a very busy time for school counselors as we are programming student schedules for the following school year, helping seniors make decisions for college. On some days, I have back-to-back video meetings with students, department members, teachers, administrators and district personnel.

What kind of challenges does this pose for you and fellow school counselors?

There are more ethical considerations that we need to keep in mind when counseling students remotely or online. School counselors work with students on their academic and personal/social challenges. There are times when I am holding a videoconference with a student who is in crisis and remind myself to provide the crisis line phone number in case we get disconnected. It is also a challenge to offer students support when they are unable to share what is currently going on in their lives if their family members are within close proximity. In a traditional counseling office, you can ensure confidentiality as it is just the counselor and the student(s). With online counseling, it is a completely different world. Not being able to offer a student a tissue when they are in tears is heartbreaking.

How is your work going to be different next year and moving forward, and what are you doing to prepare for it?

It's really tough to plan for next year because things are still up in the air. My colleagues and I are planning on Plan A: Return to the school building, Plan B: Continue distance learning or a hybrid version of both. Either way, returning in the fall will require several intervention meetings to help students



Continued on page 28

GRIFFIN: *continued from page 26*

have discussed a focus on relationships and our rapport with students and families as a way to emotionally support them during this time. Speech therapy does not always have to be drills and flashcards, and we want to give parents ways to include speech and language into their homes. Flexibility has been key in working with students' families and juggling the responsibilities of our own families.

ORTEZ-GALÁN: *continued from page 27*

get back on track since several students on my caseload fell behind this semester. If we are still working at home, I fear that we will not be able to get to all of our students in a timely manner.

Ultimately, our jobs require face-to-face contact, usually within close proximity. We rely on body language and facial cues to assess how the student is feeling and performing inside the classroom. Sadly, counselors do not foresee being able to experience that close proximity for quite some time, as we will be required to wear masks and need to maintain a healthy distance. Counseling is going to look very different for the foreseeable future.

What should colleagues know about life right now for school counselors?

We are doing the best that we can to keep up with our caseloads, and please know that many aspects of our jobs are taking twice as long as they would at school.

HERENIA SHEPHERD

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST, West Kings County Teachers Association

Describe your job in the age of COVID-19 in one word: Fluid.

What's a "typical" day for you in the new learning environment?

It starts with checking for urgent emails, making breakfast for my kids and getting them started on their distance learning, and then I work on reports for IEP meetings. There are always calls or texts from teachers, colleagues and administrators, Zoom meetings, and of course, times when I have to walk away from work to help my kids with their assignments or to prepare lunch. I'm also always on the lookout for articles or webinars to help me prepare for the opening of schools.

What challenges does this pose for you and fellow school psychologists?

This is different in that the reports I'm writing are based solely on teacher/parent reports and on previous evaluation results, rather than completing a full psycho-educational reevaluation for triennial IEPs. Additionally, we are not able to complete any initial psycho-educational evaluations. We will feel the effects of this when schools open again, as we will have to play catch-up to complete all of the evaluations that needed to be done during the school closures as well as all of the triennial reevaluations that will be due at that time.

Another aspect of how things are different is that, rather than supporting teachers with behavioral challenges that students may have, I now host Zoom meetings with parents to support them with their child at home. I listen to their concerns and provide them with strategies to try at home, or I model sensory regulation activities. I've been happy to be able to support parents, and am hopeful that they will continue to support their children at home once they are back in school.

How will your work be different next year? How are you preparing for it?

This is the most intimidating part because we don't yet know what will be different, and so we don't know how to prepare for it. We are anticipating that many students may have anxiety, difficulty adapting to being at school again, and although we wish it were different, an increase in reports of abuse. Our students are going to need our emotional support, and teachers will too. It will be difficult for teachers to manage not only their own anxious feelings, but those of their students as well. But we will be there to support them in any way that we can.

What should colleagues know about life right now for school psychologists?

I feel that even on a "typical" workday we're like ninjas, addressing a multitude of issues daily in the background, seemingly unnoticed, ready to jump in to help at a moment's notice. We're still here, doing just that — please reach out to us if you need us — and educating ourselves in an effort to prepare for all the challenges to come.



"We're like ninjas, addressing a multitude of issues daily in the background, seemingly unnoticed, ready to jump in to help at a moment's notice."



COVID-19 The Pandemic's Teachable Moments

Educators develop lessons and learning
around COVID-19 crisis

By **Sherry Posnick-Goodwin**



While teaching during the crisis presents huge challenges, it also offers opportunities to engage students in profoundly teachable moments. A few teachers share their experiences.

What color is the virus?



Nina Schield

NINA SCHIELD, a third grade teacher at Rooftop K-8 School in San Francisco, incorporates COVID-19 into several optional assignments. Parents appreciate that she explains in age-appropriate terms why their children can't go to school, play in parks and hang out with friends.

For one assignment, the United Educators of San Francisco member had students read articles about COVID-19 in *Time for Kids* magazine and then submit questions to her brother-in-law, Philip Sossenheimer, who answered them from Chicago on Zoom.

"Some students wanted to know what color COVID-19 is. They learned

from Dr. Sossenheimer that although it is depicted as bright red, it's actually so small that it can't be seen with regular light microscopes. [Scientists] color it red after they use electron microscopes to see the tiny viruses."

For art projects students created posters thanking essential workers and hung them in windows. "We discussed what an essential worker is. It's not just doctors and nurses and others in high-status jobs. People collecting trash, delivering mail and working in grocery stores are just as essential to keep us safe and healthy."



Imparting accurate information

STUDENTS ARE PAYING attention to the coronavirus, so Andrew Martinez makes the most of that in his biology lessons about the DNA and RNA of viruses. Large numbers of the Armijo High School science teacher's students tune in when he shares online videos about the coronavirus.

"Students have so many questions about why this pandemic is happening," says Martinez, a member of the Fairfield-Suisun Unified Teachers Association, who uses Twitch as a livestreaming platform for lessons on virology and the spread of pathogens. "By helping them understand how the coronavirus works, it helps them understand the necessity for social distancing and why it's relevant."

Martinez knows that some of his students are traumatized by what is happening in the world, but doesn't want to shield them.

"Access to accurate information helps put my students more at ease. In my classes, we acknowledge that the pandemic is terrible, but will not last forever."



Andrew Martinez

Science and the facts about COVID-19



EDDIE CHANG, biology and microbiology professor at Imperial Valley College, incorporates the coronavirus into virology lessons. He trained as a virologist at the University of Missouri and has worked in the defense and biotech industries.

"In the past, HIV and flu viruses were my go-to viruses as classroom models," he says. "[Teaching the coronavirus] might make students feel stressed out, but it's relevant. They need accurate information because there's a lot of misinformation out there."

Many of his students are planning on becoming nurses or entering other health care professions, so they are keenly interested in current events, says Chang, a member of the Imperial Valley College chapter of the Community College Association.

"We are learning that viruses differ from other microorganisms, [which] are a lot like our cells, reproducing and getting energy from food when they're outside human bodies. Viruses are inert, laying on surfaces and doing nothing. But once they enter the body, they do what other organisms do."



Eddie Chang

Student-created primary source documents



Maddie Thompson

MADDIE THOMPSON, a student teacher who attends Humboldt State University, asks fourth graders to create journals with their thoughts, drawings and photos to document their experiences sheltering in place.

"These are crazy times, but this is history," says Thompson, a former member of Student CTA's executive board, who is co-teaching with a veteran teacher in Humboldt County. "It's a way of letting kids know their writings will be considered primary sources years from now, when people read about what life was like during a pandemic. Reading about things like the shortage of toilet paper and social distancing will be an awesome keepsake for them to have as adults and share with their children someday."



Jessica Benson



Becky Vega

Math: Six feet of separation

COVID-19 IS AN excellent teaching tool for math, relates Jessica Benson, an algebra teacher at Ánimo Inglewood Charter High School in Los Angeles and member of Asociación de Maestros Unidos. The spread of the virus fit in well with her lesson on the exponential function.

"[Students] saw it was authentic math that people are using to predict the spread of the virus exponentially and when it will peak. Epidemiologists are expecting cases to double every six days, so we talked about what that equation looks like, based on Los Angeles County data and statistics. Kids could see how mayors and governors arrived at their conclusion to close down and for how long."

Becky Vega, math teacher at Morse High School in San Diego, adapted a math lesson out of an XKCD comic she saw on Facebook.

In her optional exercise, "The 6-Foot Zone," students are asked to visualize how much space that represents.

"They calculate the amount of total space surrounding themselves in the 6-foot social distancing space. Then they choose an object at home and calculate how many of those objects fit in the space. This helps them see how much space they need to themselves if they go out."

Vega, a member of San Diego Education Association, uses the Go Formative platform to watch students work in real time and gives her a chat box for timely feedback.

She says it won't be easy to link upcoming units, such as right triangle trigonometry, with the coronavirus. So, it will be back to teaching the standard curriculum — until the circumstances of this teachable moment inspire another innovation.

Messages to essential workers

JUST BEFORE HER school closed, Jessica Guccione asked her seventh grade science students at Venado Middle School in Irvine to create public service announcements to educate their peers on how to reduce transmission of COVID-19. She had them go to "trustworthy websites" such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Students created upbeat TikTok videos with song lyrics on such topics as handwashing and how to replace hugs, handshakes and high-fives with alternative greetings.

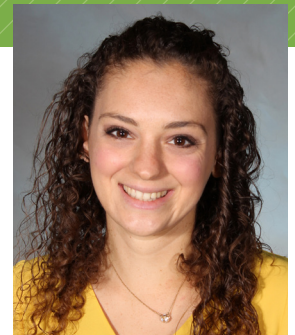
"It made me proud how they created such wonderful projects," says the Irvine Teachers Association (ITA) member. "They now know where to go for factual information."

ITA member Amina Ahmed, who teaches at University Park Elementary School in Irvine, incorporates the pandemic in writing

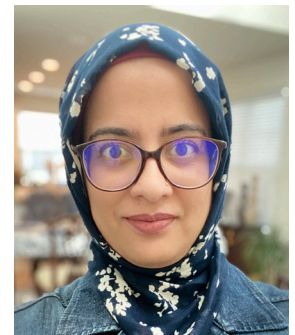
and research lessons with students in her fifth and sixth grade combination class. They create research reports on Flipgrid, including uploading videos for class review. They also create multimedia informational slides and made a timetable of events.

For an assignment on persuasive writing, students were encouraged to write letters to medical workers, firefighters, police officers and grocery store workers. They were asked to explain the importance of what essential workers are doing, point out the challenges and risks they face, and describe what would happen in their absence.

"We talk a lot about primary source documents in history class, and I want students to understand that this is a historical moment and we are creating primary source documents in real time. They totally had buy-in that yes, they are now historians."



Jessica Guccione



Amina Ahmed



COVID-19 Reaching, Teaching All Students

How educators are helping communities of color hit harder by the virus



← Rori Abernethy at Denman Middle School graduation with several students, who are from Georgia (Eastern Europe), Samoa and East Oakland.



WHEN THE COVID-19 pandemic closed classrooms in California in mid-March, Rori Abernethy, like many educators, was concerned that schools wouldn't be able to remain connected with all students. She was disturbed to hear that administrators at various school sites did not have current phone numbers for their students, particularly those whose family or living situations are challenging or who have issues around attendance. Many of these are students of color.

"It shocked me that schools didn't know kids' contact info," says Abernethy, a member of both the San Francisco Alliance of Black Educators and United Educators of San Francisco, and math teacher at Denman Middle School. "If you know these kids have a problem, you make sure you get their number. Every single kid, even

if their parent changes phones all the time or is living somewhere else, has a number. You have to ask them."

She notes that Denman administrators, counselors and paraprofessionals did wellness checks on students long before San Francisco Unified asked. But she knows the African American and Latinx communities have been hit hard by COVID-19, both medically and economically, and many of her students are coping with even more difficulties than usual. Like her fellow educators around the country, she's doing her best to keep students learning.

Preexisting condition: structural racism

Racial and socioeconomic disparities have been thrown into stark relief as a result of COVID-19. People of color and those with low income are coping with economic

hardship, limited access to health care, and slow internet or lack of internet access at home, among other things.

These disparities have existed for years, harming our students, and continue to harm them today.

“Here’s the reality,” said NEA Vice President Becky Pringle at a virtual town hall in April. “Structural racism [is] the preexisting condition that [has] destined us to be where we are — where our communities of color are disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus. We shouldn’t be shocked.”

Nationally and statewide, growing data reflects the unequal impact COVID-19 is having on communities of color, especially among African Americans. According to data compiled in May by APM Research Lab, African Americans collectively represent 13 percent of the population in all areas of America releasing mortality data that includes race and ethnicity, but have suffered 27 percent of deaths. While Latino Americans fare better overall, in certain states their COVID-19 deaths are also disproportionate to their share of the population.

The toll is not only sickness and death. The devastation exacted by lost or reduced jobs and salaries and the resulting housing and food instability, as well as students’ difficulties accessing needed resources to learn, greatly expands the number of people affected.

“We are going to be in distance learning in the fall. You have to have something where a kid can walk in with issues, but they can put in significant time and work and still pass.”

—Rori Abernethy,
United Educators of San Francisco



Pringle emphasized that while educators and their unions have focused on the “right now” to keep students safe and keep them learning, the education community must use this experience to help build a future that is equitable and fair, “where all of our students, every one of them, have access and opportunity.”

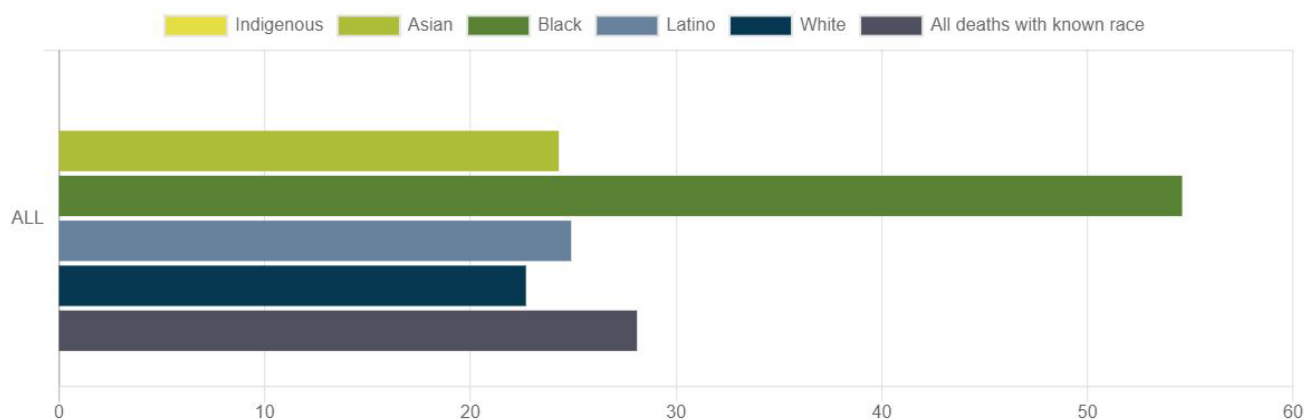
Educators reach students where they are

Rori Abernethy’s experience teaching 13 years in Oakland unexpectedly prepared her to teach during the pandemic.

“I had lots of kids who missed a lot of school,” she says. “They had family problems — their parents lost their jobs, or somebody died, or they’re the family provider and have to work. Or they got involved in criminal activities and went to jail. In Oakland especially, teachers deal with a lot more trauma. You see the impact of someone who did not get



COVID-19 DEATHS PER 100,000 PEOPLE OF EACH GROUP, THROUGH MAY 26, 2020



APM Research Lab

** Includes data from Washington, D.C., and the 40 states of Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin. States employ varying collection methods regarding ethnicity data. Denominator is built from data aggregated from each state, aligned with their method. Comparable rates could not be calculated for Indigenous people, due to so few states reporting data.*

→ Food distribution at Hudnall Elementary.



Courtesy Inglewood Unified School District

their high school diploma — they have no job, they get involved in things outside of the law. I had to think: Am I really going to fail students because they did not fit into my program?”

Instead, Abernethy developed ways to make sure students dealing with such trauma were still getting an education and still passing all-important standardized tests.

“I gave them projects they could do on their own, that were comprehensive and rigorous,” she says. “I even kept the stuff done by kids who went to jail. When they got out I told them, ‘If you want to graduate, you need to do projects for the unit you missed to get a passing grade.’ They did the work because it was doable.”

She refused to pass students without evidence that they could move on successfully, but she never failed a single graduating senior in 10 years teaching high school.

This approach also worked for her high-performing students, who needed challenging assignments to push them and keep them engaged. She is working to develop many of these strategies for her students now dealing with the impact of COVID-19 and distance learning.

“If you weren’t having these conversations before COVID, it’s super hard to do now,” Abernethy says. “We are going to be in



“We have to think as we, not me. We are the community.”

—Ramona Rocha,
Inglewood Teachers
Association

distance learning in the fall. You have to have something where a kid can walk in with issues, but they can put in significant time and work and still pass. It’s unfair, with all they have to do to make it to school, not to give them the option to get their diploma.”

Making sure digital needs are met is essential. At Denman, UESF members Mark Aquino and Bryan Yarrington helped ensure students’ online access several years ago. (Aquino is now at a high school in San Francisco.) Denman is a Verizon Innovative Learning School, so each student is issued an iPad.

Communication remains key. Abernethy says one tactic that helped keep her Oakland students on track, especially the “outliers” who were veering off track, was the “daily update,” where she texted parents their child’s highs and lows, both positives and negatives, every day, to

encourage them to straighten up.

She was ecstatic when one of her former students recently sent a note to tell her he had been admitted to Stanford University this fall, thanking her “for the strong educational foundation you gave me in middle school.”

In the end, she says, parents and guardians’ desire for a good education for their children transcends all other boundaries. “All the families I talk to want the same thing for their kids.”



Hudnall teacher Aba Ngissah spends her days packing lunches for students as well as teaching class.

'We are the community'

Since the school closures, Ramona Rocha, a preschool teacher and member of Inglewood Teachers Association (ITA), has been at Hudnall Elementary School every Wednesday to help hand out fresh produce, canned goods and other food-stuffs to the 400 to 500 families in line. Inglewood School District is 56 percent Latinx and 40 percent African American.

"The majority of parents at this low-income school are Spanish speakers and don't have a job, don't know how to pay bills," says "Ms. Mona," as Rocha is known.

Other educators have been pitching in as well. A recent news story followed a day in the life of Aba Ngissah, sixth grade teacher at Hudnall and ITA president. In the morning, she packed bag lunches for students, then handed out laptops. In the afternoon, she went home to teach class, and between instruction and answering individual questions via text she didn't finish till late in the evening.

Ngissah spent nearly a month tracking down her 35 students, helping them log on, reset passwords, and access the internet. Almost all of them are now doing schoolwork; she knows the others have too much going on in their lives.

"It's not like they don't want to," she says. "People are dealing with stuff."

Ngissah and other teachers and staff

members help with this, too. They use their own money to buy food and other needed supplies for families.

Ms. Mona's preschool class has 24 children, and while she is not teaching them right now, she is in frequent contact with students and families.

"I give parents strategies for teaching ABCs and numbers," Rocha says. "I tell them how to make 'Play-Doh,' and how to use shaving cream to develop kids' fine motor skills — it doesn't cost much, and they can use it to write, make shapes, talk about language and science. I make cop-

ies of worksheets and drive to meet them. Many parents don't drive or have technology. I ask if they need food and tell them where to go for Cal-

Fresh or to get help to pay their bills."

For those who need clothing, Rocha is a primary source. "If parents need clothes, I have stuff I'm not using. I have grand-kids, so if children need clothing or shoes, I take it directly to families."

Rocha's desire to help extends well beyond her immediate family of eight children and eight grandchildren. On weekends, she's a home care worker for seniors.

"We have to think as *we*, not *me*," she explains. "We are the community." ■

Brenda Alvarez contributed to this story.

"Structural racism is the preexisting condition that has destined us to be where we are — where our communities of color are disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus."

—NEA Vice President **Becky Pringle**

TAKE ACTION

THE FACTS:

A looming fiscal emergency.

Due to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, state and local budgets are under siege across the country. Unlike the federal government, states are required to have balanced budgets, meaning that cuts are coming without federal help.

California faces steep cuts to education funding.

The state anticipates a \$54 billion deficit over a two-year period. This will lead to cuts to vital student programs, educator layoffs, furlough days and salary reductions. We cannot afford a generation of students subject to underfunded classrooms due to this pandemic.

Congress needs to hear from us!

Tell your members of Congress to support the \$1 trillion HEROES Act and at least \$175 billion for the Education Stabilization Fund to distribute to states. Ask them to support \$2 billion for the E-Rate program to promote internet equity. **Call 855-977-1770 to be connected directly to your representatives.**



Chris Montgomery / Unsplash

Bargaining During COVID-19

CTA locals focus on safety, students and equity

By Julian Peebles

The Marysville Unified Teachers Association (MUTA) bargaining team entered negotiations in March absolutely unified in the demand that their students be held harmless from any impacts of COVID-19, receiving grades no lower than what they had earned before schools abruptly shuttered.

“I’ve been heavily involved in my local union for years, but the passion we felt to protect our students was unlike anything I’ve ever experienced at the table,” says Angela Stegall, president of MUTA. “We let the district know this ‘hold harmless’ aspect of our proposed agreement was nonnegotiable, and it’s now in our memorandum of understanding (MOU).”

CTA locals across the state initiated negotiations with their school districts to protect educators and students when the COVID-19 pandemic changed teaching and learning conditions overnight.

Bargaining teams met virtually with district administrators to work toward MOUs that set parameters and expectations for the remainder of the school year — all while educators worked to meet the new and changing demands of teaching, dealt with their own COVID-related issues and trauma, helped their children enter the world of distance learning, and cared for family members vulnerable to the virus.



Alex Vogel

“On top of those issues, we also had the added stress of having to deal with the district dragging their feet when we were trying to mutually agree on an MOU for distance learning,” says Alex Vogel, bargaining chair of Whittier Elementary Teachers Association (WETA). “We were able to negotiate teacher flexibility and freedom on instruction delivery, and instructional time flexibility based on teacher knowledge and students’ capabilities. We were also able to negotiate language for all members, including special educators, TOSAs, school

"We were able to negotiate teacher flexibility and freedom on instruction delivery, and instructional time flexibility based on teacher knowledge and students' capabilities."

—Alex Vogel, Whittier Elementary Teachers Association

psychologists, speech-language pathologists, counselors and regular classroom teachers."

Protections for all

Lodi Education Association (LEA) President Michelle Orgon requested guidance just as the decision was made to close schools in mid-March. During a meeting with the district's executive cabinet, Orgon says, the Lodi Unified superintendent was certain school would resume within a few weeks, and she assured educators that the district had ordered a sufficient amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect staff and students.

But when Orgon learned the order had already been canceled, it was a sign of the tumultuous negotiations to come. LEA and the district eventually negotiated two separate agreements — one that addressed initial issues of holding students harmless and outlining distance learning parameters, and a second MOU to address hours and working conditions, as well as other issues arising from district administration's unilateral directives to staff.

"We thought we had things relatively well covered in the first MOU," she says. "But then the district created several COVID task forces, some which lacked proper representation for educators and other bargaining unit staff."

In rural Modoc County, located in the northeast corner of the state, Modoc Teachers Association (MTA) President Katie Copp says impacts from the pandemic have been less significant than in more populous areas, but serious nonetheless. MTA began negotiations immediately with Modoc Joint Unified School District to protect their members, securing agreements to protect educators' health, safety and financial security.

"We made sure that those who were on leave were returned to paid status and that members were not required to go into school except for necessary school duties," Copp says. "We asked for rooms to be deep-cleaned and sanitized after each member had gone into their classrooms."



Katie Copp



Some difficult negotiations

When locals went into these negotiations with agreement language from CTA that protects educators and students, they expected school district administrators to share their priorities. In many cases, this was not true. Copp says the district delayed and dragged on the negotiations for three weeks, showing no urgency in ensuring educators and students had the protections they needed.

"In the end, we did agree to the basics of the MOU in regard to cleaning of classrooms, provisions for hand sanitizer, a 48-hour return notice, and a return to full pay for those on leave," says Copp, noting that the district refused to agree to conditions to return to school, asserting that administrators would make the decision based on recommendations from state and county health officials. "We always worked really well together in supporting each other on the sides of administrators, teachers and students, so it came as a huge surprise when the district pushed back on the idea of needing an MOU to extend protections to our staff."

In Whittier, Vogel says his team faced the same delaying tactics from district administrators, who seemed more interested in getting opinions from their legal counsel than acting quickly to protect educators and students. WETA responded to district proposals



within 48 hours, while administration would often take as long as five days, he says. And then the district released a distance learning plan without any input from WETA educators, prompting a cease-and-desist letter from Vogel. Even then, he says, district administration didn't seem to understand they needed to work with educators.

"We thought we were going to have to organize by initiating talks with the school board," Vogel says. "Just when we thought it was time, the district indicated an interest in coming to a much-needed agreement."



Michelle Orgon

One happy ending

But not all negotiations went south. Orcutt Educators Association (OEA) was organizing for a big contract fight after 10 negotiation sessions led to the declaration of impasse earlier this year. More than 100 members attended a school board meeting on March 10 to show that educators were united in their struggle.

"And then March 13 came and everything stopped," says OEA President Monique Segura.

"We had a 2.5 percent on-schedule raise on the table from the district. We literally settled our contract the next week and were able to get class size cap language for kindergarten classes."

Segura marvels at the quick change in direction by district administration. Only eight weeks after declaring impasse, the two sides worked together amicably to address distance learning and other COVID-related issues. Segura credits the district's flexibility and willingness to partner with educators.

"I am hopeful that this continues with our new superintendent," Segura says. "There's going to be lots of bargaining. Health and safety issues, working hours and conditions — some of us are working 18-hour days, and we need some balance. There are a lot of moving parts!"



Monique Segura

Advice for bargaining COVID-related issues

"There will be trying times ahead. Be persistent and don't give up, because your members are depending on you. Decide your priorities, what is worth fighting for and what you can do without. Once you come to those decisions, be firm, but at the same time be willing to allow for some flexibility to have the necessary language that your members require during these difficult times."

—**ALEX VOGEL**, Whittier Elementary Teachers Association

"Don't give up, no matter what! It is our job to provide added protections for our teachers and make sure that their rights are taken seriously. We also need to be a voice to those members who are afraid to voice their opinions to their districts with regard to their safety and protection. Also, keep advocating for your teachers to have a vote or be part of any decision about what programs your district is planning for the future. Make your voices heard!"

—**KATIE COPP**, Modoc Teachers Association

"You really have to look at the greater good, which is our future and our children. Reach out an olive branch and work together with your district. Try to think outside the box when it comes to your students. It will benefit you as well."

—**MONIQUE SEGURA**, Orcutt Educators Association

"Take a step back and breathe. This is all new to everyone. Hold your ground as best as possible in negotiations. It's going to be a lot of work, but lock arms and march together as a group toward what's best for our members, students and community."

—**MICHELLE ORGON**, Lodi Education Association

SBEU educators' historic campaign occurred without any in-person organizing.

Virtual Organizing, Real Solidarity

South Bay Educators United is CTA's newest local

By **Julian Peeples**



THE POWER OF solidarity is unstoppable, even in the middle of a pandemic. This was brilliantly illustrated by a group of about 100 San Jose educators when they organized a union amid shelter-in-place orders.

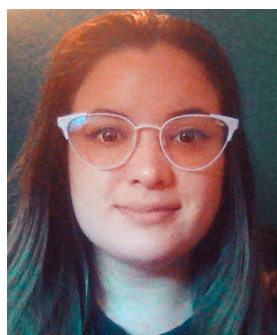
When these teachers and counselors from four Downtown College Prep charter schools filed for recognition on May 11, South Bay Educators United (SBEU) became the newest local in CTA and likely the first educators union in the country organized during the COVID-19 pandemic. The effort is a testament to what educators will do to support one another, protect their students and defend the school community they love.

"A union is a great step to fixing all the things we don't like at Downtown College Prep (DCP) without changing its mission and what it means to our families," says Beatriz Velez, history teacher at El Primero High School. "We want to keep doing all the great things we've been doing at DCP. We just want a real seat at the table."

Guided by the values that built DCP, which serves mostly Latino students who often become the first in their families to attend college, a small group of educators began organizing in late February to advocate for their students and create positive change. Unsustainable expectations by



Beatriz Velez



Carolina Rodriguez

management, a lack of support for educators, and a disconnect with realities facing students and staff fueled the group's desire to organize a union.

Organizing for positive change

"My vision for SBEU is to create a sustainable environment for educators so students not only have consistency with who they see year-to-year but also top-tier, experienced educators who receive ongoing training and support," says Sal Williams, an English teacher at El Primero. "Our students already have so much instability in their lives. They deserve stability at school. Our union can help create systems to aid with teacher retention that will support our students."

The educators contacted CTA in March for support and guidance with the process to join our union. An organizing committee began videoconferencing weekly to strategize. Due to COVID-19, the historic campaign occurred without any in-person organizing. But SBEU showed that the face-to-face communication that powers unionizing efforts doesn't have to be done in person.

Alum Rock Middle School educator and SBEU member Carolina Rodriguez says the "distance organizing" was surprisingly streamlined and had many unexpected benefits.

"We were able to have one-to-one conversations



without the tension of being on campus,” says Rodriguez, a 2009 graduate of DCP. “There was flexibility in response times for teachers to think about our petition and ask questions, and meetings could be held at any time because commuting and location were not an issue.”

What’s best for students

Williams says the virtual organizing allowed the team to take a more personable approach with their colleagues. The committee strategized conversations with co-workers to secure their support and leverage their relationships to build the union effort. Velez says the virtual medium was a major benefit, providing safe spaces for educators to ask questions and encourage the free discussion needed to build a movement.

“I don’t think we would have been able to get a super-majority [of educators signing union cards] without the time and space to talk through things with people,” Velez says of the virtual effort, which even drew the attention of the *Wall Street Journal*. “At the end of the day, we all want to do what’s best for our students.”

When SBEU organizers knew they had the support to file for union recognition, a new COVID-era challenge arose: collecting physical signatures on cards to submit to the state Public Employment Relations Board. Velez says the team took the same strategic approach, mapping out routes to educators’ homes and coordinating collection of the union cards — complete with precautions to protect everyone’s health and safety.

“We’d call and say, ‘We’ll be there in 15 minutes,’ and they’d come out and leave the signed card at a safe social distance,” Velez says. “It was like DoorDash for unions.”

In addition to being strong advocates for their students and families, SBEU members are eager to bring their perspectives as charter school educators to discussions in CTA about how best to support and nurture

all students. They are excited to have a seat at the table as part of the CTA family.



Educators need a voice

“Charter school educators also need a voice in campaigns and processes that impact our schools,” says Rodriguez.

“The fact that so many charter schools have already chosen CTA is indicative of the support that is available for charter school teachers.”

With the process for recognition of their union underway, SBEU now shifts attention to bargaining their first contract and exercising their unified voice to advocate for students, address difficult working conditions, and fight for the schools they believe in, all while wading into the unknown of COVID-19.

“How can we set up next school year to be sustainable for teachers, students and parents?” Velez asks. “Our priority right now is having teacher impact on what next year

is going to look like.”

Help amplify the story of SBEU’s fight by following on social media, liking their posts and sharing their website (sbeu.info), which posts their union declaration letter to DCP management as well as a video the educators created on why they decided to say “Union Yes.”

“Knowing that there are people in your school, your district and schools around the state who have your back feels good,” Velez says.



Sal Williams

South Bay Educators United social media

facebook.com/SBEUteachers

twitter.com/SBEUteachers

instagram.com/sbeuteachers

Reopening Schools Safely Requires Funding

Cuts, deferrals proposed as legislators negotiate state budget



View and share the TV ad created by CTA and the Education Coalition, at youtube.com/CaliforniaTeachers.

IN EARLY JUNE, the California Assembly and Senate came to an agreement on a 2020-21 state budget, one that rescinds cuts to education funding proposed by Gov. Gavin Newsom in his May budget revision.

According to the chairs of the budget committees, the legislators' budget assumes the "strong likelihood" that the \$3 trillion HEROES

(Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions) Act will be passed by the U.S. Senate. The act, which the U.S. House passed in May, is in response to the COVID-19 pandemic's shattering economic impact. Federal aid from the bill would deliver \$14 billion to California.

Newsom's May Revision does not count on passage of the HEROES Act, and instead proposes tentative cuts to education funding as part of his effort to address a \$54 billion revenue gap. The more than \$10 billion cut to public education would lead to layoffs and even larger class sizes.

In addition, Newsom's proposal does *not* allow schools to open safely, which is CTA's top priority when reopening schools and colleges.

State lawmakers rescinded Newsom's cuts to K-12 and higher education, mostly through deferrals, where school

"We recognize Senate and Assembly efforts in agreeing to a budget proposal that prevents immediate educator layoffs, as well as their commitment to prioritizing schools and colleges and preserving programs for the most vulnerable."

—CTA President **E. Toby Boyd**

districts would borrow to cover their expenses and the state would repay later. While deferrals alleviate immediate fiscal distress, they would have an impact on future budgeting, especially as California recovers from the pandemic.

CTA President E. Toby Boyd acknowledged the lawmakers' efforts to avoid education cutbacks that would irreparably hurt stu-

dents and educators. In a statement by the Education Coalition, of which CTA is a member, Boyd said, "We recognize the efforts of the Senate and Assembly in agreeing to a budget proposal that prevents immediate educator layoffs, as well as their commitment to prioritizing our schools and colleges and preserving programs for the most vulnerable."

The State Legislature is expected to approve its revised budget and send it to Newsom by June 15. The 2020-21 budget must be passed by June 30, with lawmakers returning in late summer to address revised state revenue projections — and to determine what to do if federal funding does not come through.

Turn the page to find out how you can help protect education funding. For the latest news on the state budget, go to cta.org/our-advocacy/state-budget.



We Need Your Help!

PROTECT EDUCATION FUNDING AND AVOID CATASTROPHIC CUTBACKS

- Call 855-977-1770 to tell your state lawmaker to support a budget with no education cuts and no educator layoffs! Ask colleagues and parents to do the same.
- Email your U.S. senators (educationvotes.nea.org/covid-19). Tell them to pass the HEROES Act. Then ask colleagues and parents to email as well.
- Sign up to stay informed and ready to promote the Schools and Communities First initiative (schoolsandcommunitiesfirst.org) on the November ballot. Reclaiming \$7 billion to \$12 billion each year for schools and community services will be essential in weathering this COVID-19 storm.
- Learn more by viewing and sharing the TV ad created by CTA and the Education Coalition, at youtube.com/CaliforniaTeachers.

TELL LEGISLATORS:

ESPs and other frontline educators need PPE

Go to NEA Education Votes (educationvotes.nea.org/covid-19). The next COVID-19 legislative package should include at least \$56 million for personal protective equipment (PPE) for ESPs and educators in direct contact with students. They should be considered frontline workers whose jobs are essential, and that means having PPE to protect themselves, as well as their families and communities.

Stop DeVos' use of COVID-19 to push privatization

U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and the Trump administration are pushing privatization when the focus should be on massive state budget shortfalls caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and what they mean for the public schools that educate 9 out of 10 students. Congress must provide at least \$175 billion more for the Education Stabilization Fund created by the CARES Act; the \$30.7 billion authorized so far is not nearly enough.

Call to Action

Pass a Budget with NO Education Cuts!

Take Action!

Deep cuts to public education will stand in the way of preparing our schools for the safe return of students.

- Call 855-977-1770 to speak to your Legislator

What to Say

Be sure to tell your representative:

- Your name and where you live.
- Ask them to support a budget with no cuts, no educator or school employee layoffs and prioritizes equity by repealing corporate tax credits.

cta.org/covid19budgetcrisis

#WeAreCTA

Close the homework gap and narrow the digital divide

The coronavirus crisis has shone a spotlight on a long-standing inequity: the inability of 12 million students, including many of the most vulnerable, to do schoolwork at home due to lack of internet access. The Emergency Educational Connections Act (H.R. 6563) provides a \$2 billion down payment for a special fund, administered by the Federal Communications Commission's E-Rate program, to equip students with internet access. The Senate version provides \$4 billion to support students for the duration of the 2020-21 school year.

Include student debt cancellation in COVID-19 relief efforts

The pandemic has had devastating effects on the health and economic security of families and individuals. As Congress considers additional legislation to help the millions who are suffering, measures to ease the burden of our nation's 45 million student loan recipients should be included. The average educator begins a career with about \$35,000 in student loan debt. The Student Debt Emergency Relief Act (H.R. 6363) would cancel at least \$30,000 in outstanding student loan debt, boosting consumer spending and reducing the financial strain on educators and other borrowers.

Schools and Communities First

The Schools and Communities First (SCF)

initiative qualified for the November ballot with more signatures than any proposition in California history. The 1.7 million signatures collected (well above the nearly 1 million required) represents the support and effort of more than 300 social justice, faith-based, education, labor and philanthropic organizations powering SCF. It also proves that Californians are ready to close corporate tax loopholes to generate \$12 billion every year for critical local services, essential workers and schools.

As school districts, local governments and the state face a historic budget shortfall, Schools and Communities First will be key to California's recovery and reinvestment. SCF maintains the Prop. 13 tax limits for small business, agricultural land and residential property, including apartment buildings. But it requires that commercial and industrial property be taxed at full market value, closing

corporate tax loopholes that have affected funding for schools and public services for more than 40 years.

With SCF, we can invest in local governments, schools, and essential workers like first responders and public health nurses, which will be so critical to recovering from this crisis.

Help ensure SCF passes in November and schools and public services get funding they desperately need. Go to schoolsandcommunitiesfirst.org to learn more and get involved.



Natalie Bui

Shop for an
electric car
from the comfort
of your home.

CVRP has 3 steps
for finding the
right model for you.

Learn about rebates and
other cost-saving benefits at
CleanVehicleRebate.org/CalEd



CALIFORNIA
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REBATE PROJECT SM



READY PLAYER ONE:

Esports in Schools

Teamwork, self-confidence and competition
for high school video gamers By Julian Peebles

“Students who normally wouldn’t fit in now have a group and an environment to call their own. It’s instilled pride and confidence in a segment of the student population that was shy and introverted.”

—Brent Willis, Association of Placentia-Linda Educators

THE TEAM TRAINED for this moment all year. They developed strategy with their coach, reviewed video of their opponents to determine strengths and weaknesses, and scrimmaged against other teams. As the Yorba Linda High School team prepares for a match with a squad from Vancouver, British Columbia, the players put on headsets, settle into chairs and focus their eyes on computer screens for the impending arena battle — in this week’s esports league match.

Esports, short for electronic sports (and with a variety of spellings), is a form of sport competition using video games. Long organized by gamers and enthusiasts, esports

became an international phenomenon in the late 2000s, growing and evolving into a billion-dollar industry with an estimated audience of nearly 500 million worldwide. The popularity spurred the creation of esports clubs in colleges and high schools as early as 2008, with more than 130 colleges and more than 300 high schools now in on the competitive gaming action.

With 100 million people watching last year’s League of Legends World Championship, the visibility of competitive gaming is at an all-time high. Couple that with recent studies that show educational benefits of playing video games and the increased job



→ Teams from the four Placentia-Yorba Linda high schools compete for the championship at UC Irvine's Esports Arena.

opportunities in the booming industry, and esports is likely coming to a high school near you. And it's not just a boys' club, with estimates that 35 to 45 percent of gamers are girls.

Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District (PYLUSD) is what you could call an early adopter, with vibrant esports clubs at all four of its high schools. Yorba Linda High School computer science teacher Dan Eliot got involved in 2017 when he was approached by two of his female students who wanted to start an esports club on campus and convinced him to serve as adviser. During the club's second year, Orange County Department of Education started the Orange County High School E-Sports League to provide students with an opportunity for fun competition and learning about science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM).

"It started unofficially with assorted on-campus clubs across the district," says Eliot, general manager of the esports team and member of Association of Placentia-Linda Educators (APLE). "It became more official when our district administrators took notice and realized that esports are a very nice tie-in with career technical education, STEAM and computer science."

Brent Willis, a 17-year AP economics and U.S. history teacher at Esperanza High School, got involved in 2017 when student Ben Tecker asked for his help in creating an esports club and a competitive team on campus. Tecker was already an accomplished gamer and wanted to connect with fellow students to compete in the Orange County E-Sports League he helped to create, now called the North American Scholastic Esports Federation (NASEF).

Willis became the club's adviser and the team's general manager (kind of like the equipment manager for an athletic team) — with responsibilities including holding regular team and club meetings, forming active rosters, handling all administrative items needed for students to be eligible for competition, holding practices outside of school hours, recruiting new members, promoting the club on campus and in the community, and providing a safe and inclusive environment where students can share experiences and enjoy competing with each other online.

"Esports have opened many doors on our campus and in our district. Students who normally wouldn't fit in or who didn't feel like they had a place to go on campus to share their interests now have a group and an environment to call their

own," says Willis, also an APLE member. "It's instilled pride and confidence in a segment of the student population that was shy and introverted. Districtwide, it's connected students from all of our high schools and allowed us to communicate and develop new avenues for future collaboration."

With its popularity, competitive gaming has become a lucrative endeavor, with top players earning six figures a year and sponsorships from video game giants like Blizzard Entertainment and Riot Games. And for Tecker, working to create a home for gamers in PYLUSD earned him more than an extra life: The Esperanza graduate won a \$15,000 Dreamers & Doers Luminary Scholarship from Disneyland in recognition of his work to create the esports league, which now includes more than 280 schools worldwide.

"Ben decided to donate \$4,000 of his scholarship money to the Esperanza esports program so we could buy new computers, monitors, gaming chairs, mice and keyboards, and other equipment for our esports lab," Willis says. "Because of Ben's generosity, our esports team has doubled in size in one year, and we now play in perhaps the most advance esports labs in NASEF."

MORE THAN TROPHIES AND HIGH SCORES

The esports teams from the four PYLUSD high schools compete every year in a massive NASEF-sponsored tournament held at UC Irvine's Esports Arena — the first facility of its kind on





➔ Economics and AP History teacher Brent Willis says the games may be on computers, but the competition and community are definitely real.



“Gaming teaches really important skills, such as being part of a team, being able to communicate effectively and decisively, knowing your role in a group, and being able to perform your role well.”

—Dan Eliot, Association of Placentia-Linda Educators

a college campus. NASEF partners with UC Irvine, which is conducting gaming research, including on the students and coaches involved in NASEF. Over the past two years, the young gamers have competed in the mega-popular multiplayer battle arena game League of Legends for an etched crystal trophy, but they gain so much more.

“Last year, our team was crowned co-champions in the tournament,” says Willis. “It’s an exciting trip because we receive a campus tour provided by UC Irvine esports players, and our students are exposed to college life and how big collegiate esports has become. It really opened our students’ eyes to the possibilities after high school in the world of gaming, entertainment and video game design.”

Jason Parker’s Valencia High School esports team has hoisted the trophy two years running. Parker, a 21-year math and computer science teacher, is the general manager of the team, which

boasts a club of 130 members who compete in several different games, even holding a Super Smash Bros. tournament on campus to raise funds for the team. Parker says it’s an amazing experience to see his students in a different light and watch them communicate and collaborate to achieve goals.

“Esports programs bring together kids from all walks of life,” says Parker, a member of APLE. “They promote learning communication skills, team play and game theory.”

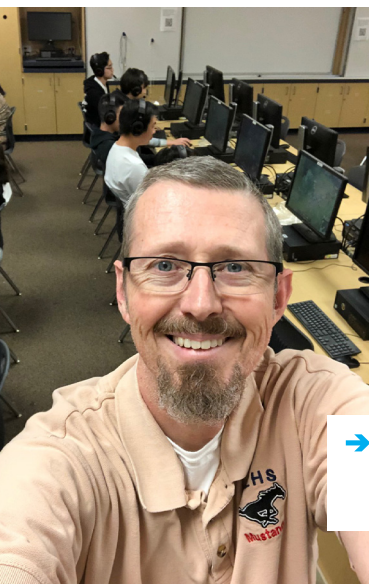
The positive talk about video games and benefits of gaming might come as a shock to those who grew up in an era where video games were considered a waste of time by many. But not only is it a common and popular pastime for people all over the world, research now shows that moderate gaming is good for young people — with studies showing cognitive, creative, social, emotional and motivational benefits associated with video games.

“Many studies have examined psychological correlates of and consequences of video gaming, and the results overwhelmingly support the idea that video gaming produces many of the same kinds of benefits as other forms of play,” wrote psychology professor Peter Gray in *Psychology Today*. “Play has always provided the major context through which children make and interact with friends, and there is reason to think that video gaming serves that function for many children today.”

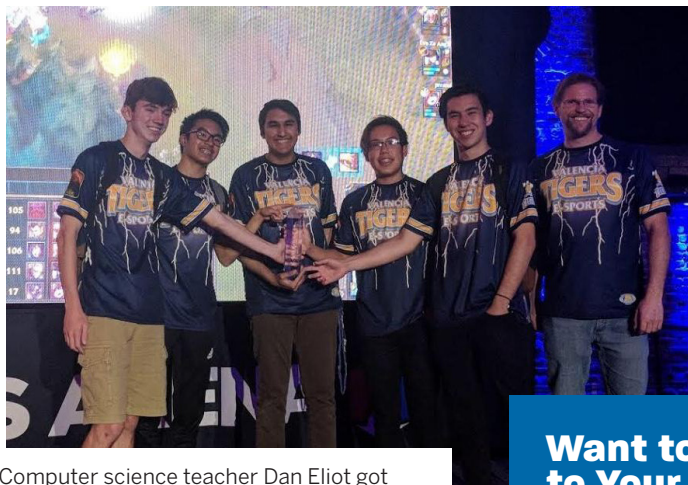
Eliot can see the benefits in his students.

“It excites them about competition and learning in ways that perhaps other areas of school life do not,” Eliot says. “It also legitimizes for the students (and their families!) that gaming is not all just fluff and wasting time. Gaming teaches really important skills, such as being part of a team, being able to communicate effectively and decisively, knowing your role in a group, and being able to perform your role well.”

And these young gamers aren’t just plopping on the couch and vegging out every afternoon. They practice several times a week, plan multiple strategies, watch video of opponents, communicate and work together to solve problems, and



→ Computer science teacher Dan Eliot got involved when two of his female students asked him to be their esports club adviser.



Want to Bring Esports to Your School?

Advice for educators interested in learning more about esports:

“Don’t reinvent the wheel. There are great support systems available in CIF (California Interscholastic Federation), NASEF (North American Scholastic Esports Federation), and other leagues. NASEF even provides remote coaching (currently free) for many of their teams! Ready or not, esports is coming to every public school over the next few years. Embrace it, since it’s good overall for kids!”

—**DAN ELIOT**, Yorba Linda High School esports general manager

“It’s a great opportunity for our kids. You don’t even have to know how to play the games — I wish I did, so that I could help them improve faster. But they usually figure that out on their own with experience, friends, and online. It takes time and decent computers, so if you have those, you’ll have plenty of student interest.”

—**JASON PARKER**, Valencia High School esports general manager

“Your students know what they’re doing and are your greatest assets. Their excitement at forming a club will take control of the situation, and you’ll see them flourish in the roles you give them. Ask [your administration] for what you need, and generally you can receive help. School districts want to provide more spaces like esports to their students.”

—**BRENT WILLIS**, Esperanza High School esports general manager

prepare for the rigors of organized competition. When they enter the arena and collaborate to defeat the opposing team, they’re competing just the same as any basketball or soccer team in the country.

MAINTAINING A SPECIAL SPACE FOR STUDENTS

Growing up in the “Atari Generation,” Parker has been playing video games since he was a child. Being able to create a special place for students to learn and grow through gaming has been especially rewarding.

“I enjoy seeing my students in a different light, watching them communicate and work together for a common goal,” he says.

For Willis, the thrill of competition isn’t limited to his students. Part of helping provide this space means getting a front-row seat to the energy, emotion and exciting competition of the game.

“Being there with my players during matches and experiencing the palpable excitement of competing with and beating other teams is the best part of the job,” he says. “Our esports program is one of the best in the area, so on match days the environment is thrilling. Our players cheer each other on during matches and boost each other up after defeats. Seeing how much they appreciate each other is the best part of it all.”

Eliot agrees, saying that in his classroom he only gets to see his students through an academic lens, while his work with them through esports allows him a glimpse of them experiencing the joys and sorrows of competition. He says there’s so much more going on than some video games.

“I hope that in their lives, esports encourages them to stay connected with school and education. I hope that it makes the kids feel validated for their love of gaming. I take pride in these students when I see them improving socially and academically, communicating well, happy and engaged. It’s great to see kids come out of their shells and shine due to esports!” ■

BLACK LIVES MATTER

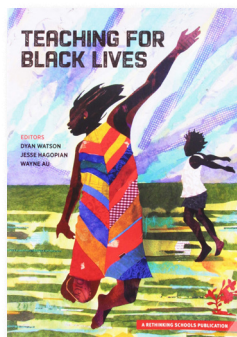
A Summer Reading List

RECENT EVENTS in the United States have spurred protests and calls for change around the world. Many of us are conscious of the absolute and urgent need, individually and collectively, to work toward anti-racism.

But what does that mean, exactly?

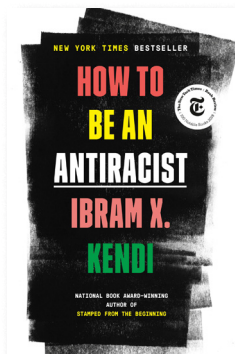
According to the Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre, anti-racism is the active process of identifying and working toward racial justice by changing systems, organizational structures, policies, practices, norms and attitudes. That suggests that being anti-racist is not just purging our own racist attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. It also means that we challenge and fight racism in all spheres of our lives.

To be better allies in the movement, it's helpful to be informed, to study cogent perspectives, histories, discussions and debates, and to challenge our own positionality. To that end, CTA recommends several insightful books for your summer reading. You can find a more complete — and growing — list of reading, watching and listening resources at cta.org/blacklivesmatter. We welcome your comments and suggestions on works that add to our knowledge base and public conversation. Let us know at wearecta@cta.org. ■



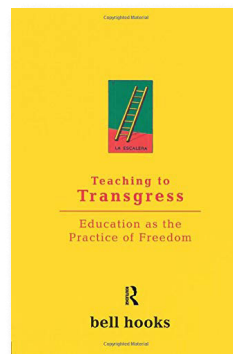
Teaching for Black Lives
(Edited by Dyan Watson, Jesse Hagopian, Wayne Au; Rethinking Schools, 2018)

This teaching guide is a compilation of essays, teaching activities, role-playing, poems and artwork designed to illuminate the movement for black student lives, the school-to-prison pipeline, black history, gentrification, intersectional black identities, and more.



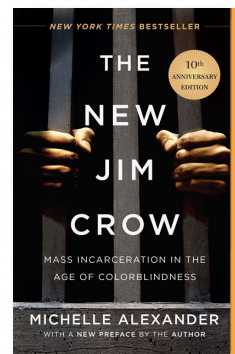
How to Be an Antiracist
(Ibram X. Kendi, One World, 2019)

Kendi takes readers through a widening circle of anti-racist ideas, from the most basic concepts to visionary possibilities, that will help readers see all forms of racism clearly, understand their poisonous consequences, and work to oppose them in our systems and in ourselves.



Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom
(bell hooks, Routledge, 1994)

Teaching students to “transgress” against racial, sexual and class boundaries to achieve the gift of freedom is, for hooks, a teacher’s most important goal. She explores how to rethink teaching practices in our multi-cultural age, and how to deal with racism and sexism in the classroom.

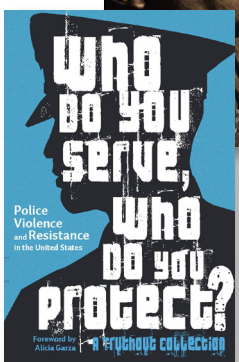
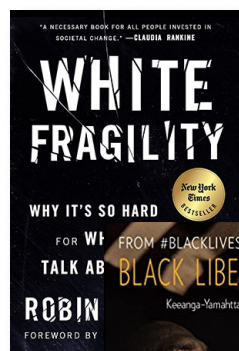


The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness
(Michelle Alexander, The New Press, anniversary edition 2020)

Since first published in 2010, the book has spawned a generation of criminal justice reform activists and organizations motivated by Alexander’s argument that “we have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it.”

“One either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an antiracist. There is no in-between safe space of ‘not racist.’ The claim of ‘not racist’ neutrality is a mask for racism.”

—Ibram X. Kendi, *How to Be an Antiracist*



White Fragility: Why It's So Hard For White People To Talk About Racism

(Robin DiAngelo, Beacon Press, 2018)

White fragility is characterized by emotions such as anger, fear and guilt, and by behaviors including argumentation and silence. DiAngelo examines how this serves to maintain racial inequality and prevent meaningful cross-racial dialogue, and looks at what we can do to engage constructively.

From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation

(Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, Haymarket Books, 2016)

The author surveys the historical and contemporary ravages of racism and the persistence of structural inequality such as mass incarceration and black unemployment, arguing that this new struggle against police violence holds the potential to reignite a broader push for black liberation.

Who Do You Serve? Who Do You Protect?

(Edited by Maya Schenwar, Joe Macaré, Alana Yu-lan Price; Haymarket Books, 2016)

This collection of reports and essays explores police violence against black, brown, indigenous and other marginalized communities, miscarriages of justice, and failures of token accountability and reform measures. It also explores alternatives for keeping communities safe.

So You Want to Talk About Race

(Ijeoma Oluo, Seal Press, 2019)

How do you tell your roommate her jokes are racist? Why did your sister-in-law take umbrage when you asked to touch her hair? How do you explain white privilege to your white, privileged friend? Oluo guides readers through subjects such as intersectionality, affirmative action and “model minorities” to help lead to honest conversations about race and racism.

I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness

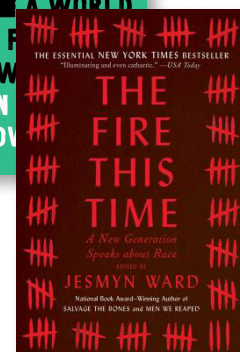
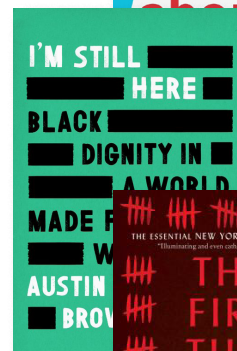
(Austin Channing Brown, Convergent Books, 2018)

In a time when nearly all institutions, including schools, claim to value “diversity,” *I'm Still Here* is a powerful account of how and why our actions so often fall short of our words. Brown's stories bear witness to the complexity of America's social fabric.

The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks About Race

(Jesmyn Ward, Scribner, 2016)

Ward gathers original thinkers and writers to speak on contemporary racism and race, including Carol Anderson, Jericho Brown and Edwidge Danticat. The book shines a light on the darkest corners of our history, wrestles with our current predicament, and imagines a better future.



5

Don't-Miss Features

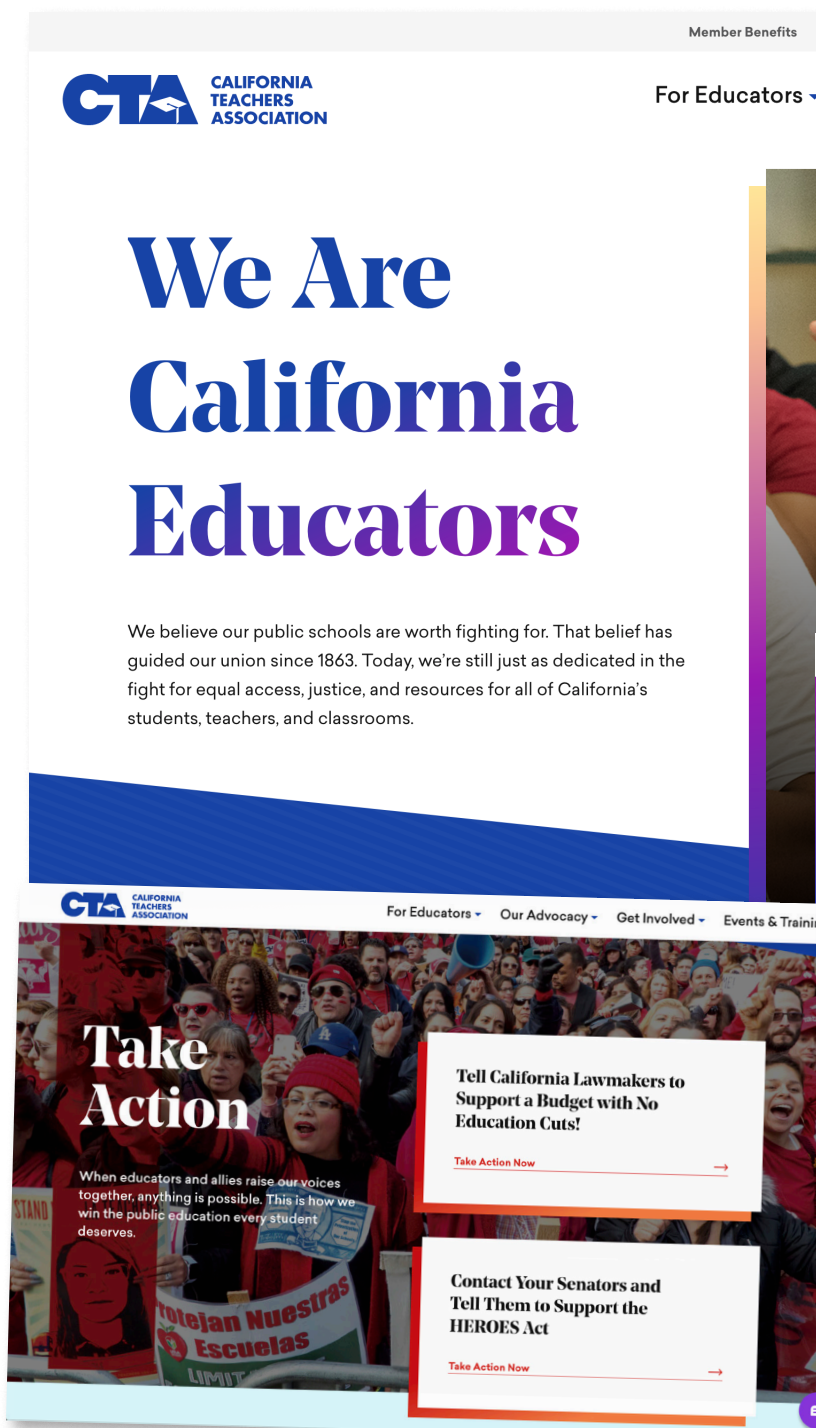
Check out our new and improved website

By Terry Ng

AFTER MONTHS OF hard work and member input, CTA is proud to launch a new and improved [CTA.org](https://cta.org). The modern, accessible design focuses on a great user experience, as well as on *your* needs. Take a spin on your desktop or smartphone and find what you're looking for quickly and easily. Our new interactive space truly reflects the power and beauty of our union.

Here are a few features you won't want to miss! ■

MORE FEATURES are on their way, so be sure to bookmark cta.org! Want to see something on the site? Love a new feature? Let us know what you think at cta.org/website-feedback-survey.



↑ TAKE ACTION

Take action on the education issues you care about. The section is available on every page, and you can easily share on social media to spread the word.



Upcoming Events & Trainings

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Jun. 1-30, 2020</p> <p>LGBTQ+ Pride Month</p> <p>Learn More</p> | <p>Jun. 1-6, 2020</p> <p>Virtual Meeting</p> <p>CTA State Council</p> <p>Learn More</p> | <p>Jul. 1-6, 2020</p> <p>Virtual Meeting</p> <p>NEA Representative Assembly</p> <p>Learn More</p> |
| <p>Jul. 13-17, 2020</p> <p>Home Edition</p> <p>Presidents Conference</p> <p>Learn More</p> | <p>Jul. 27-30, 2020</p> <p>Home Edition</p> <p>Summer Institute</p> <p>Learn More</p> | <p>Aug. 1-31, 2020</p> <p>Family Fun Month</p> <p>Learn More</p> |

↑ UPCOMING EVENTS & TRAININGS

Find our professional development events and trainings, including upcoming conferences like 2020 Summer Institute: Home Edition and New Educator Weekend.

CHAPTER SEARCH →

Searching for a CTA local chapter, Regional Resource Center or Service Center Council is easier than ever. Simply type in the name of the school district and get results.

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Find Your Chapter

Enter your school district/employer to find contact info for your local CTA Chapter, RRC or SOC.

School District or Employer

Not able to find your local chapter? Feel free to send us a message and we'll assist you.

Member of CTA/NEA Retired? Be sure to visit our page for retired educators to get resources and learn about ways to remain involved in and supportive of public education.

Stay Informed

Stay up-to-date with all the latest California teachers news, events, and member benefits.



↑ STAY INFORMED

This new area lets allies and supporters connect with CTA and get the latest news and updates from the public education world.

Hi! I'm Buzz. Your CTA help bot.

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Have a question?
 Hi! Send us a message and ...

FAQs

- General
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↑ MEET BUZZ

Strike up a conversation with Buzz, our new answer bot, and get instant and precise answers to your questions 24/7. If Buzz can't answer, he'll forward your question to our support team to ensure your message is heard.

State Council Goes Virtual

CTA taking active role in change

By **Julian Peeples**

CTA MUST TAKE an active role in fighting racism in our schools and communities, and we must be agents of change in a society rife with inequity, CTA President E. Toby Boyd said during the June State Council of Education meeting.

For the first time in CTA's 157-year history, the meeting was held by videoconference, with more than 800 participants in total. It came at an emotional time for all Americans, following the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police and subsequent protests against police brutality and systemic racism across the country. In his speech to Council, Boyd shared some of his experiences as a black man in America and his thoughts about our duty as educators to fight racism, police brutality and white supremacy in our classrooms and our communities.

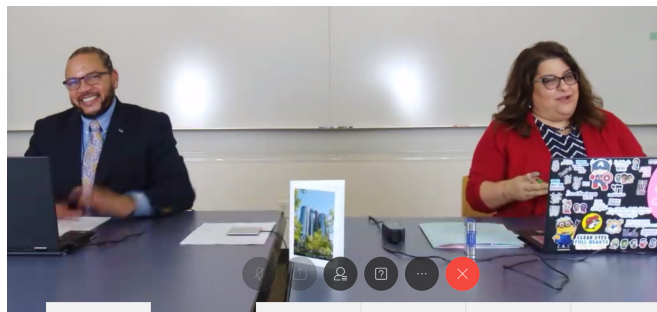
"It's all right to cry. It's all right to show your anger. But words are not all we can do. We need results, and we can't wait any longer," Boyd said. "Change is going to happen, and CTA is going to be a part of it. We have to be."

With the COVID-19 pandemic still facing communities up and down the state, Boyd said, educators' voices are in the room during discussions about how and when to reopen public schools safely. He said safety for students and educators needs to be the top priority, along with flexibility for teaching and learning, educator input on all decisions, and the funding schools need to address the new challenges.

"We cannot open the schools until we know they are safe for our students and our members," Boyd said. "There is *no* compromising that."

The fight for the funding our schools need for the services our students deserve includes passing the Schools and Communities First (SCF) initiative in the November election. The initiative will close tax loopholes that benefit a small number of corporations and wealthy investors to reclaim \$12 billion a year in funding for public education and local services that benefit our communities. Council voted to authorize up to \$6 million to support CTA's positions on the ballot by the Political Involvement Committee to oppose the Early Release Rollback initiative, support the Bail

CTA President E. Toby Boyd and Secretary-Treasurer Leslie Littman conduct State Council business while socially distancing.



"Change is going to happen, and CTA is going to be a part of it. We have to be."

—CTA President **E. Toby Boyd**

Reform Referendum and oppose the Gig-Workers Classification initiative. A vote of no recommendation was taken on a number of other initiatives.

Council also recognized outstanding members and leaders. Boyd recognized CTA's 2020 Paula J. Monroe Education Support Professional of the Year Deisy Bates, an interpreter/translator with Hayward Unified School District's special education department, and outgoing CTA/NEA-Retired President

Marc Sternberger. State Council members also bid farewell to outgoing CTA Board at-large member Bill Freeman and outgoing District N member Barbara Dawson.

State Council elected the following members to the CTA Board of Directors:

- Jerry Eaton, District A
- Shelly Gupton, District E

- Jesse Aguilar, District H
- Sergio Martinez, District K
- Denise Bradford, District N
- Telly Tse, At-Large

These members were elected to the CTA/ABC Committee:

- Luciano Ortiz, District G
- Nora Allstedt, District H
- Hilary Hall, District I
- Alan Underwood, District M
- James Benanti, District O

These members were elected to the NEA Board of Directors:

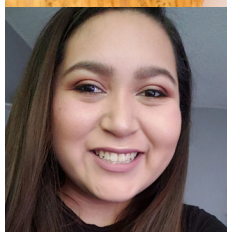
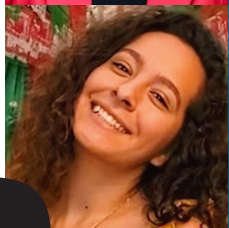
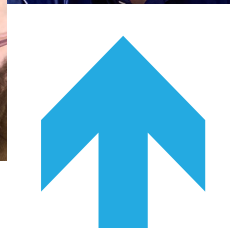
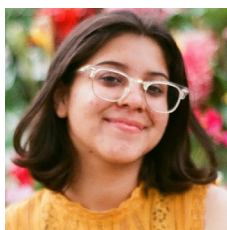
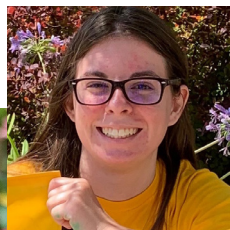
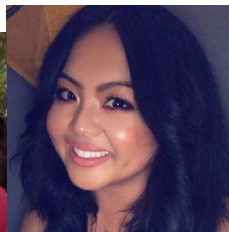
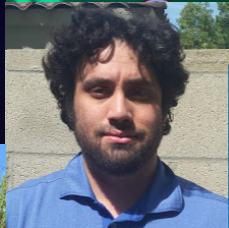
- Shane Parmely, District 10
- Nora Allstedt, Alternate Seat 1

In closing the meeting, a visibly emotional Boyd urged all to join CTA in the work needed to eradicate racism and show that Black Lives Matter.

"All of you are change agents in your communities," he said. "We know that we have to change the system. I am up for the fight, and I hope you are, too." ■

The next State Council of Education meeting is Oct. 23-25, scheduled to be held at the Westin Bonaventure in Los Angeles.

From top to bottom, left to right: Haley Castello, Monserrat Bonilla Flores, Jessica Chamness, Paul Bansen, Brenda Quispe, Lizette Mendoza, Rigoberto Delgado Jr., Viridiana Castro Silva, Tristan Wieser, Sarah Ashley Jones, Ariana Avila, Selaima Tamotuu, Amy Lo.



STEPPING UP

Student CTA's new leadership ready to take on the world

THE NEWLY ELECTED Student CTA Executive Board took office on June 7. The group is already actively working toward distributed leadership; they have established themselves as an anti-racist organization by changing their mission statement to:

"The purpose of this association shall be to offer the tools necessary to foster interest in the education profession by providing pre-professionals information about their rights, responsibilities and vital support systems necessary to become a committed part of the education profession. Student CTA believes that in order to do these things listed, we must actively fight for racial and social justice by naming and working to dismantle White Supremacy Culture where it exists in and outside of our organization."

Look for our interview with the board in an upcoming issue. Congratulations to all! ■

2020-21 Student CTA Executive Board

President –

VIRIDIANA CASTRO SILVA,
CSU Sacramento

Executive Vice President –

RIGOBERTO DELGADO JR.,
UC Irvine

Secretary-Treasurer – JESSICA CHAMNESS, CSU Fullerton

Southern Regional VP – SELAIMA TAMOTUU,
Santiago Canyon College

Central Regional VP – TRISTAN WIESER,
CSU Bakersfield

Northern Regional VP – vacant

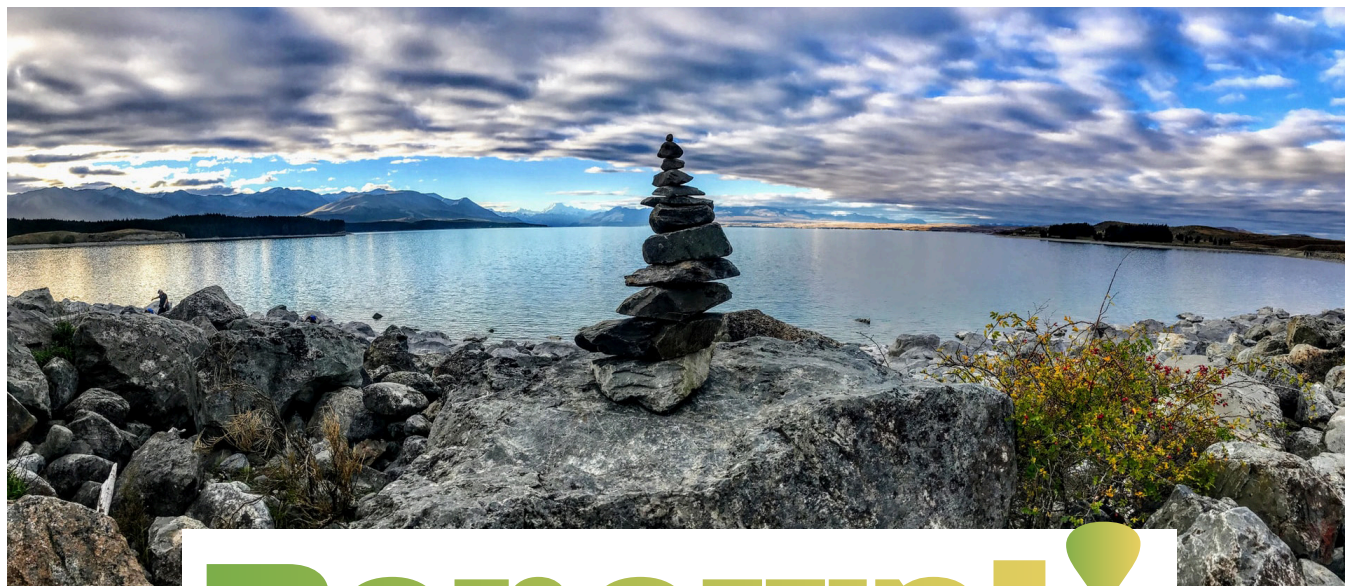
Ethnic Minority Rep – LIZETTE MENDOZA,
Santiago Canyon College

Social Justice Advocate – PAUL BANSEN, CSU Stanislaus

State Council Reps – MONSERRAT BONILLA FLORES, Santiago Canyon College; **AMY LO**, UC Berkeley; **BRENDA QUISPE**, Fresno Pacific College

Communications Editors – ARIANA AVILA, California Lutheran College; **HALEY CASTELLO**, Pasadena City College; **vacant**

Past Officer (Elections Chair) – SARAH ASHLEY JONES, San Diego State University
CTC Liaison – vacant



Renewal!

After a difficult spring, use the summer break to get reenergized, rejuvenated and ready for the new year



WE KNOW: You're bone-tired. You're totally exhausted and emotionally drained after the whiplash events of the past few months. And it shows.

"This teaching during crisis is not a vacation. It is not a welcome break. It is brutal. It is stressful. It is not what's best for kids," posted Miska Pearson in the "CTA Teaching, Learning and Life During COVID-19" Facebook group in mid-May.

"Does anybody else feel exhausted after an hour of live teaching?" posted Kevin England.

On social media, in news stories, in essays, in person, educators up and down the state and across the country are sharing the real fatigue and anxiety that stem from coping with work and life during a pandemic.

How can you get reenergized and rejuvenated during these uncertain times? Daily efforts to meditate, do yoga, eat right and exercise help. But the



Amy L. Eva

"It's crucial to keep coming back to what matters most to you. Seek opportunities to enact your values in small ways each day."

—Amy L. Eva,
Greater Good Science Center

summer break offers opportunities to dive deeper into restorative practices that can reboot mind and body and let you regain your sense of well-being and calm. They can also help you tap into your joy and passion for teaching. On these pages are a few ideas you can try before the new school year.

Pro-you and prosocial

Amy L. Eva, associate education director for Greater Good Science Center (GGSC) at UC Berkeley, assists educators and others who are feeling overwhelmed and helpless, whether due to external factors, such as workload, or internal commotion. She agrees that the standard stress relievers are good places to start, but adds that a long-term commitment is essential.

"These things take daily ongoing practice, just like exercise," Eva says.

She and GGSC point to several ways to address anxiety and stress in depth.

- **Self-compassion.** Understand you are not alone in your feelings, and be kind to yourself. “[Acknowledge] the emotions you are experiencing right now and genuinely offer yourself some understanding,” Eva says in a GGSC article on teachers managing their emotions during school closures.
- **Affirm your values and strengths.** “It’s crucial to keep coming back to what matters most to you, again and again,” says Eva. “Seek opportunities to enact your values in small ways each day.” For example, if perseverance is a personal strength and value, model it with students, colleagues and family by sharing quotes and notes of encouragement that highlight this value. Or host a daily ritual like an online read-aloud, or feature stories of perseverance in your online history course.
- **Have compassion for others and communicate it to them.** Build your empathy and compassion for others by mentally — or tangibly — sending them wishes for good health, happiness and more. Eva uses “May I/you be safe; may I/you be happy; may I/you be healthy; may I/you live with ease,” and infuses this way of thinking into her daily interactions.
- **Mindfulness as a way of being.** Take time to simply be with your thoughts and feelings, with no judgment. You can incorporate breathing exercises and mental and physical soothing techniques, such as “The CALM Reminder”

by Randye Semple and Chris Willard: Check in with your chest (C), arms (A), legs (L), and mouth (M), first noticing sensations in those areas, then tensing and relaxing each set of muscles, in sequence.

GGSC also advocates developing prosocial behavior to overcome feeling helpless and demoralized. Prosocial behavior is defined as behavior that benefits other people or society, such as sharing, volunteering and helping.

“When we are kind or helpful in service of a value that we hold, we also affirm our belief and feel a sense of agency and efficacy,” Eva explains. “[This might mean acting on] your belief that all students should have resources, or your desire to be an active citizen in your neighborhood.”

The result is the satisfaction of engagement and positive contribution, and the feeling that while “I can’t control what’s going on in the world, I can control what happens in my classroom.”

These methods have been scientifically shown to help you manage difficult emotions and stay centered and calm during stressful times. Greater Good in Education (ggie.berkeley.edu) has extensive collections of strategies and practices for educator and student well-being (see “Resources,” page 56).

Beyond the research, Eva likes to point people feeling emotionally and physically overwhelmed to a quote by author and Buddhist scholar Joanna Macy: “You don’t need to do everything. Do what calls your heart; effective action comes from love. It is unstoppable, and it is enough.”

Align your money with your values

Kelly Knoche, founder of The Teaching Well and a former public school teacher, says that while resilience to stress, managing vicarious trauma exposure, and healthy communication are important parts of educators’ professional development, financial wellness is also a big factor in well-being.

“Teachers ask for financial wellness help,” says Knoche, noting that educator salaries are often less than optimal and can contribute to stress. The Teaching Well (theteachingwell.org), based in Oakland, works with school communities to assist educators at “the edges of burnout,” bringing them back to wellness so that they can work sustainably at their school sites for years to come.

That includes handling personal finances. “The goal of financial wellness is to help people develop a healthy relationship with the money they have, and to gain tools to balance their budget and use their money in a way they feel powerful.”



Kelly Knoche

“The goal of financial wellness is to learn how to align your values with how you spend your money.”

— Kelly Knoche, The Teaching Well

In other words: “You learn how to align your values with how you spend your money.”

As an example, one of your values might be eating healthy and taking care of your body. “You make sure your budget allows access to healthy foods and ingredients for you and your family,” Knoche says. “Or you may value a hobby such as playing guitar or gardening.” Your budget should place a priority on the lessons or tools you need.

Budgeting allows educators to see if they are spending money in a disproportionate way — such as ordering delivery, going to restaurants or bars, and online shopping — and make changes.

Knoche recommends the following resources to help educators gain control of their finances.

BUDGETING APPS:

- YNAB (younеedabudget.com; pricing varies; offers a 34-day free trial).
- Mint (mint.com; free).



AUTO-INVESTMENT APP:

- Acorns (acorns.com; \$1 to \$3 monthly fee) rounds up your purchases and lets you invest your spare change in stocks and bonds.

HOMEBUYING HELP:

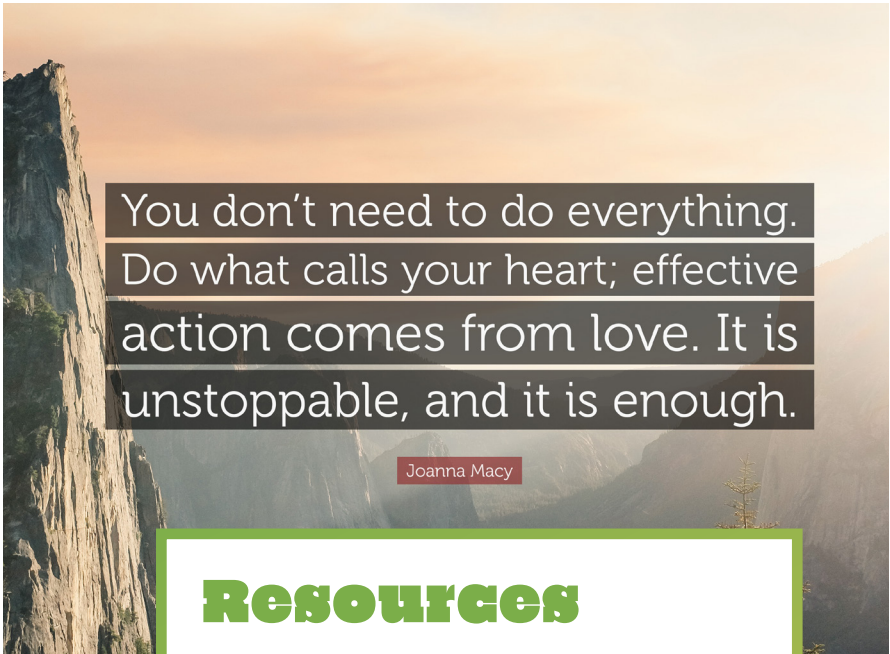
- Landed (landed.com) helps educators purchase homes in pricey metro areas by paying half the down payment. If you stay in the home, you don't need to pay it back, but if you sell or buy out the investment, Landed takes 25 percent.

CAPITALIZE ON YOUR CREATIVITY:

- Be empowered by options that allow you to supplement your income through creative work you are already doing. Teachers Pay Teachers (teacherspayteachers.com) is an example.

Knoche says developing a “money mindset,” along with mastering other self-care practices and tools, is essential so educators can start the new school year with renewed energy instead of depletion.

It's particularly critical in recovering from the current pandemic, she adds, noting several steps involved: “We spent the spring *responding* to our communities and meeting the basic needs of students. This summer is an opportunity to *reflect* and take time to nurture ourselves and our families. Once we have rested, we can sift through ingenious ideas that surfaced during the crisis, to find what we want to continue. Which leads to *renewal* — we take what we've learned and walk with vitality into the 2020-21 school year.”



You don't need to do everything.
Do what calls your heart; effective
action comes from love. It is
unstoppable, and it is enough.

Joanna Macy

Resources

SEARCH THESE practice collections at Greater Good in Education (ggie.berkeley.edu):

- Stress Management for Educators
- Affirming Important Values
- Use Your Strengths
- Connecting With Students
- Connecting With Colleagues
- Helping Students Feel Connected to Each Other

RESTORATIVE CIRCLES:

- “Building Community With Restorative Circles”: edutopia.org/article/building-community-restorative-circles

EXPLICIT SEL LESSONS:

- Collaborative Learning Solutions: clsteam.net/category/daily-sel-lesson
- CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning): casel.org

Get ready to help students as they return to school; see “Students’ Well-Being,” next page. “Acknowledge the loss and grieving we’ve all gone through as a result of COVID-19 — the collective trauma of losing routine, losing milestones,” says school social worker Giuliana Valdovinos.

Students' Well-Being

IN THE NEW school year, educators should be prepared to face students who are still coping with the pandemic's impact. Erica Moran and Giuliana Valdovinos, both social workers with Ocean View School District in Huntington Beach, know what to expect after working with young people this spring.

"Students were feeling grief from loss of routine and structure," Valdovinos says. "There was a lack of engagement and motivation [for school]."

As an example, she notes how a disruption in sleep patterns — staying up late and waking up late — would result in missed Zoom calls with teachers and other important academic deadlines. Moran adds that students' lack of physical movement and missing the company of peers may lead to mild or severe depression.



Erica Moran

How can educators address these issues and set a productive classroom tone? Children and teens pick up on teachers' moods and emotions (studies have found that students' cortisol levels — a marker of stress — mimic their teachers' levels). So while educators need to be able to manage their own stress and anxieties, it's also critical for students to learn how to regulate their emotions.

Moran and Valdovinos offer suggestions based in social-emotional learning (SEL), the process through which we understand and manage emotions, develop empathy, and establish and maintain positive relationships.

1 START BY MAKING SURE YOUR CONNECTION WITH STUDENTS IS THERE.

This involves welcoming rituals such as greeting

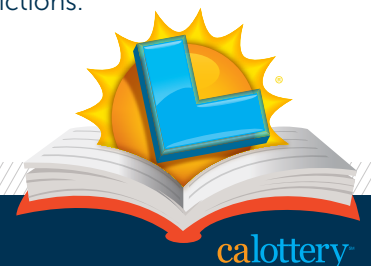


ENHANCING EDUCATION



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Last fiscal year, Lottery players contributed **\$1.8 billion** in supplemental funding to public schools. That distribution includes K-12 schools, community colleges, the California State University, the University of California, and other school jurisdictions.



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www.calottery.com

students by name, making eye contact, and smiling — all of which can be done with distance learning as well as in person.

“Let them know they can show feelings and behaviors, and they are safe,” Moran says. “Provide routine.”

She stresses that teachers should not feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities to ensure SEL, saying they can “fold in SEL, a little here and there, starting out class with a couple deep breaths, which helps students focus and be present, either daily or when students are not focused.”

2 UNDERSTAND WHAT TRAUMA IS, WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN STUDENTS, AND USE A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH.

“Acknowledge the loss and grieving we’ve all gone through as a result of COVID-19 — the collective trauma of losing routine, losing milestones,” Valdovinos says. “Validate these feelings.” She adds that you shouldn’t be afraid of talking about your own experience and



Giuliana Valdovinos

showing your own vulnerabilities.

3 USE SEL EXERCISES TO HELP STUDENTS LEARN COPING SKILLS.

In addition to deep breathing, this can include drawing pictures, writing poems, using music, and talking to a friend or helpful adult (with teacher follow-up). Moran and Valdovinos are big proponents of restorative circles, which can help restore the sense of classroom community and collective relationships.

Once a week, consider doing a deeper SEL activity (see “Resources,” page 56).

4 LET OTHERS KNOW IF A STUDENT NEEDS MORE HELP.

Contact your counseling team or administrators, who can reach out to parents and help develop a plan for the student. You should not be solely responsible for managing longer-term student needs. ■

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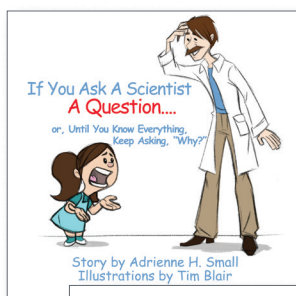
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Continued from page 60

Speaking of California history, best teachers

Social studies and technology teacher **Jordan Mattox**, member of the Chowchilla Elementary Teachers Association, hosts several podcasts, including *California's Best Teachers* and *History of California*, both on Apple Podcasts. Mattox describes the interviews on the former as his "journey to learn from the best teachers our Golden State has to offer." The history podcasts start with how the first people arrived here, and are currently looking at California's missions.



Everyday science, girls' brains and talent

Why is our sky BLUE? **Adrienne Small's** book for K-4 students, *If You Ask a Scientist a Question* (2019), uses observation, curiosity, the search for knowledge and the use of science vocabulary to discuss everyday phenomena. The playful picture book expresses a sense of wonder about the natural world, encourages a curious attitude, and appeals to scientists of all ages.

Small, a CTA/NEA-Retired member, has a second book for K-4 students just out. *The Princess and the Ph.D.* (2020) was inspired when a contestant's chemistry experiment in the talent category helped her win the 2019 Miss America crown. Sure to encourage, engage and support girls interested in science.

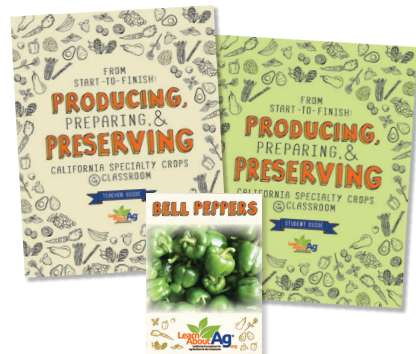
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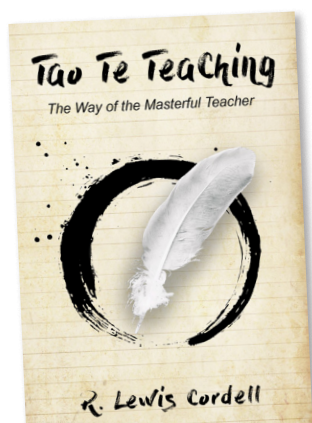
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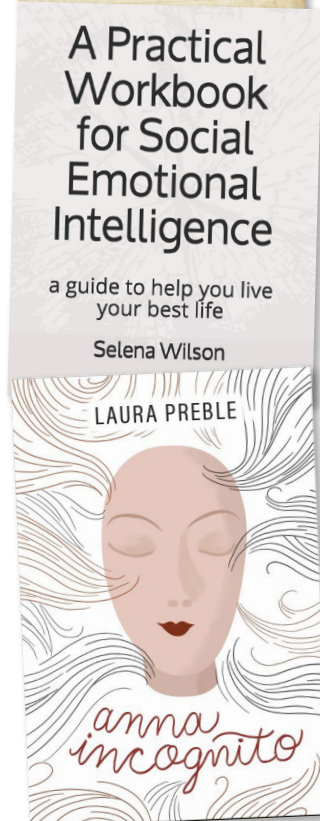
Often educators' creativity spills over into a book, blog, app or other work. We're happy to showcase members' talents.



The Tao of teaching

The *Tao Te Ching* is one of the world's longest-surviving wisdom texts. Veteran educator **R. Lewis Cordell** came out with his translation, *Tao Te Teaching* (2019), for the teacher who seeks to walk the path of learning and to travel the way of the masterful teacher.

According to Cordell, a social science teacher and member of Carlsbad Unified Teachers Association, this book has only three things to teach: Simplicity, Patience, Compassion. The masterful teacher will first deeply know the educational system in which they work, complete with its nuances and facets. They will know how, why and which rules to navigate around to be a masterful teacher. Available at Amazon.



Building teens' social emotional intelligence

Finally, a book for teens to cut out needless drama and create their best life! **Selena Wilson**, a 14-year art teacher and member of Nuview District Teachers Association, is author of *A Practical Workbook for Social Emotional Intelligence* (2019). The simple guide is interactive, grounded in science, and inspired by *The Four Agreements* by Don Miguel Ruiz. Readers will gain an understanding of the physiology of stress, core beliefs, and social constructs that bring awareness of four habits of mind that can create or avoid needless suffering. They'll learn practices to rewire their neural networks. In 45 pages designed for a short attention span or a busy life. Available at Amazon.

Woman on the move

High school librarian and Grossmont Education Association member **Laura Preble** has won awards for her young adult series, *Queen Geek Social Club*. Her newest novel is the darkly witty *Anna Incognito* (2020), and while it deals with adult themes, it features a teen character pivotal to the story.

Protagonist Anna Colin Beck suffers from OCD and lives a regimented life at home, doing everything she can to avoid subjecting herself to the torments of a germ-infested world. A chance meeting in a laundromat changes her life, and she finds herself on a solo cross-country trip determined to stop a wedding. Though she's planned extensively for all contingencies, there are some twists and turns — on a trip, in life — you just can't prepare for. Available at Mascot Books (mascotbooks.com).

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Marlene Bicondova, Ed.D. '19, Director of Positive Youth Development, San Bernardino City Unified School District

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