

California EDUCATOR

California Teachers Association March 2010 Volume 14 Issue 6

MARCH 4
WE RALLIED
NOW WHAT
> Page 6

"Through first-class education, a generation marches down the long uncertain road of the future with confidence."

Wynton Marsalis

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FEATURES

6 March 4 rallies — now what

- 8 Greater Bay Area
- 10 Greater Los Angeles Area
- 11 Q&A with CTA President David A. Sanchez
- 13 Southern California
- 14 Central Valley

16 Higher education on life support

- 18 Feeling the pain at Cal Poly Pomona
- 22 Tough times at Lake Tahoe Community College
- 24 What CTA members say about cuts to higher education



On the cover: **Teachers Association of Long Beach member Allison Cassidy with her son Carl Cassidy, a student at Goldenwest College, cheer at the March 4 "Day of Action" event at Wilson High School in Long Beach.**
Story on page 6.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

- 26 Project Angel Food delivers meals to the ill
- 27 Heads up: Deadlines and conference dates
- 28 Read Across America serves up books and fun
- 30 Education scholar Diane Ravitch speaks at Urban Issues



ACTION

- 32 CTA, Education Coalition press governor to keep budget promise, pay back schools
- 32 CTA-sponsored measure would expand role of teachers in charter design
- 33 CalSTRS update with CTA legislative advocate
- 34 Public school kids now a captive advertising audience?
- 36 CTA-sponsored and co-sponsored legislation for 2009-10





¡Sí Se Puede! ¿Por Qué No?

BY CTA PRESIDENT DAVID A. SANCHEZ

The difficult situation we now find ourselves in is truly a perfect storm of bad events for public education. In my 28 years of teaching, I have never experienced a crisis quite so dire in the classroom. For years California has dealt with indecisive lawmakers and a broken tax system that time and again have kept our schools in a state of disorder and uncertainty. As of March 15, more than 23,000 layoff notices have gone out to educators across the state. Add to that the dual threats of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act — which could potentially be even worse than its last reauthorization as No Child Left Behind — and the ill-conceived Race to the Top competition, and you have a combination that threatens to deal a hard blow to our students and teachers this year. With all of that hardship, however, we cannot fall prey to cynicism. We must instead come together and focus on solutions.

The recent March 4 rallies were a step in the right direction. All the incredible rallies across the state — together with educators, administrators, parents, students and community members — served to show that the public really does care about our students, teachers and all education employees. They demonstrated that our communities are behind our schools and colleges, and are willing to fight for a quality public education system for all students. Thanks to the efforts of our members, our coalition partners, and thousands of education supporters standing together, our voices were heard in every community across California. Whether it was kicking off the day with early morning activities including leafletting, picketing, mock funerals, disaster drills, and bake sales; staging afternoon rallies, demonstrations and marches; or holding candlelight vigils that evening, we made a great impact. The message was loud and clear: The cuts to public education and critical community services must stop. It's time to rescind the tax breaks to big corporations and oil companies and have everyone pay their fair share.

With the Obama administration's release of the blueprint for reauthorizing the new version

of ESEA, there isn't very good news — it isn't the change anyone hoped for. In fact, it's not really a change at all, just more of the same one-size-fits-all approach, overemphasis on test scores and labeling, and punishing our most struggling students and schools. We've been dealing with this backward law for the past eight years, and we've had enough. The administration needs to understand that it is teachers who should be leading change, that teachers are the experts who are in the classrooms day after day and know what can best benefit their schools and students. We are going to have to work hard to change the situation for the better. Parents and the community at large trust us as educators to make good choices for their children. You are in a position to talk to your neighbors — at the grocery store, coffeehouse, church — and explain to them why education funding is in such a sore state and what we all need to do to help repair it. It's important that the public get behind the campaigns to close corporate tax loopholes so that all Californians pay their fair share, and elect public officials who understand that an investment in education is an investment in our communities.

March 4 was an extraordinary success, but we can't stop there. We must continue to build on that momentum and take every opportunity to organize and mobilize in our local chapters and communities. Continue communicating with other members using www.standupforschools.org, sharing what you're doing to stand up for public education and sharing your stories about how state budget cuts are dismantling your schools and colleges.

Let's keep moving forward together and standing up for our children and their future. Together, we can demand that public education be a priority. Together, we can make our publicly elected officials understand that the only way to build a strong California is to give California's students a fair shot at a great education and a rewarding future.

California EDUCATOR

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



WHAT'S NEW AT CTA.ORG

- > **Legal Resources for RIF'd educators**
Use CTA's legal resources to become aware of the rights of educators who have been RIF'd. Also, read the very helpful Layoff Survival Guide.
www.cta.org/Member-Services/Legal-Services/Resources.aspx
- > **Ethnic Minority Early Identification & Development Program**
Find applications for the Ethnic Minority Early Identification & Development Program.
www.cta.org/About-CTA/Leadership/EMEID.aspx
- > **Chapter Newsletters sample articles**
Make use of sample articles to create Chapter Newsletters.
www.cta.org/About-CTA/Leadership/Chapter-Leader-Corner/Chapter-Newsletters.aspx
- > **Lesson Plan Share Center**
Use this center for sharing and integrating Web-based lessons into your instructional practice.
www.cta.org/Professional-Development/Lesson-Plan-Share-Center/Index.aspx



Dave Crosland, hiredmeat@gmail.com

"My statistics class was canceled, the library's closed again, and it's impossible to meet with professors — but I did learn one thing: the probability that I'll finish college in less than seven years is... zero."

calendar	mar 2010	<input type="checkbox"/> March 26-28	CTA State Council of Education, Los Angeles
	apr 2010	<input type="checkbox"/> April 16-18 <input type="checkbox"/> April 23-25 <input type="checkbox"/> April 30 <input type="checkbox"/> April 30	Region 4 Leadership Conference, Rancho Mirage CCA Conference/Spring Council and WHO Awards Incentive grants deadline for summer conferences El Día de los Niños
	may 2010	<input type="checkbox"/> May 12 <input type="checkbox"/> May 12 <input type="checkbox"/> May 14-16 <input type="checkbox"/> May 18	School Nurses Day Day of the Teacher CTA ESP Conference, Millbrae CTA ESP Day
	jun 2010	<input type="checkbox"/> June 8 <input type="checkbox"/> June 11-13	Statewide primary election CTA State Council of Education, Los Angeles
	jul 2010	<input type="checkbox"/> July 1-6 <input type="checkbox"/> July 19-23	NEA Representative Assembly, New Orleans Presidents Conference, Asilomar
	aug 2010	<input type="checkbox"/> Aug. 1-6	Summer Institute, UCLA

Correction

In the February issue of the *California Educator* in our story "Meet Generation Z," our caption on page 9 wrongly gave the impression that students at Crocker Middle School in Hillsborough are allowed to have cell phones on campus. The Crocker handbook states: "Personal stereos, pagers, cellular phones, or other communication devices may not be carried or worn at school or at school functions. Any violation is at the student's own risk." The *Educator* regrets the misrepresentation of Crocker's policy regarding cell phones on campus.

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The conversation was passionate, with the words “education” and “respect” rising repeatedly. It was Saturday morning, March 6, two days after the rallies that brought public education back into the national spotlight. The coffeehouse was bustling, and a group of eight ladies, all roughly retirement age, were talking in serious tones about how unfair the state has been to its teachers and students.

“It’s just not right,” said one woman. “We’re talking about people we’ve put in charge of cultivating the young minds of the next generation — and we don’t seem to care about giving them the most basic things they need to do their jobs.”

That statement hung in the air — an easy target for objections from a dissenter, but there was none. Instead, a chorus of agreement came from the others. One woman said that sitting back and accepting subpar education in the U.S. was unconscionable, and more people needed to speak up. Another said she couldn’t believe the conditions that teachers were asked to work under — buying supplies with their own money and having to accept furlough days, pink slips and dwindling pay.

Their interest in the topic might be surprising to a listener. These ladies — all of them at an age where they might be expected to discuss topics like Medicare, Social Security and family — were speaking out for public education with remark-

MARCH 4 RALLIES NOW

Introduction by Dave Earl Carpenter

able passion. But after listening to them a bit more, you could see exactly why they were so engaged in this discussion. They knew that the future of the children — their grandchildren — is inextricably tied to the future of everyone. The students in the classroom today are the police, paramedics, software engineers and teachers of tomorrow.

As educators, we are heartened that people throughout the state are talking about the crisis facing us and the necessity of properly funding public education. And it’s important we keep them talking. March 4 was a massively successful day of action, but now what? What are the next steps? It all starts with having conversations, with our students’ parents, our neighbors, our family, and yes, even our friends over a Saturday morning coffee. Our fellow Californians need to understand what is happening in their neighborhood schools if we expect them to fight for public education as wholeheartedly as we do.

In the following pages, we’ll see what CTA members did to rally the public all across the state on March 4, and we’ll also look at where CTA members can take this momentum in the coming months to make a change that matters for our students and their future. >>>



In this feature

- **Page 8** Bay Area rallies
- **Page 9** Citizen journalists
- **Page 10** Los Angeles area rallies

AT

- Page 11 Q&A with CTA President Sanchez
- Page 13 Southern California rallies
- Page 14 Central Valley rallies

Students and community members stand up for education at a rally on March 4 at Wilson High School in Long Beach.

Contributing editors: Mike Myslinski in the Greater Bay Area; Sherry Posnick-Goodwin and Frank Wells in the Greater Los Angeles Area; Bill Guy in Southern California; and Dina Martin in the Central Valley

GREAT PUBLIC RALLIES, LIKE THE MARCH 4 events across California and the nation, can often set the stage for even greater victories that shed light on social inequities. CTA's statewide "Cuts Hurt" bus tour in 2008 and Pink Friday in 2009 were perfect examples of events that scored huge gains for education and were instrumental in winning back \$11 billion in the form of repayments owed to education. But these well-received events are just one piece of the puzzle. Rallies inspire the public and can create energy around a position, but they often require continuing effort afterward to keep the flame alive.

"This ongoing action is really about taking our communities back," says Dean Vogel, CTA vice president and chair of the Education Funding Workgroup, a team of CTA leaders tasked with helping to develop a plan to move education funding forward. "If our conversation with the public is to be just about schools, we lose a tremendous opportunity. We need to engage the public and demonstrate how important the bond is between successful schools and successful communities and a brighter future."

Taking our communities back — that's the larger vision of how we connect to one another and pursue common interests for the future of California. The March 4 events demonstrated that a great number of supporters are standing up for public schools. People care. A broad spectrum of labor, nonprofits, local elected leaders, school officials, parents, students and many others gathered together on March 4 to recognize that our communities are being damaged by the willful abandonment of our schools.

If we're to address the issues of education in our state, the place to start is demonstrating to

the community and to the Legislature that the stability of the California budget relies upon making some large changes. Restructuring the tax code is one step, closing corporate loopholes and asking lucrative businesses to pay their fair share. We also need to support elected officials and candidates who support education, including our next governor. We've seen what an unsupportive governor can do, and now we need to elect one who will truly make education a priority and assist in rebuilding a stronger California.

CTA members have already started acting at the local level, engaging the community to talk about how to best maintain our March 4 momentum. Many Southern California chapters, for example, are bringing together local school leaders to host education forums, discussing strategies about mobilizing for change. They've identified that it is important to be there in our local neighborhoods, talking with the community every chance we get.

Groups like the CTA Strategy Workgroup are also focusing on CTA's comprehensive goals and objectives. "We are working with chapter presidents and members to help them talk to the community about the issues facing our schools today," says Mikki Cichocki, chair of the Strategy Workgroup. As part of this strategy committee, CTA leaders are "coordinating information from various workgroups, such as Public Education Funding, ESEA, Race to the Top, and Campaign 2010, to present members with a comprehensive strategy for the future."

You'll read in these pages how CTA members and the community came together for March 4 to defend public education — 12,000 concerned citizens on the steps of City Hall in San Francisco; people protesting in Riverside in massive numbers, capturing the attention of national news; supporters braving the morning cold and fog in Willits, in Northern California; parents marching side by side with educators at intersections and school parking lots. The community was engaged on March 4 — *is* engaged now. Each of us can focus on the goal of bringing our communities back together to show how much we all care about our students and the future of our state.



GREATER BAY AREA

From school district "disaster" drills calling attention to the disastrous state cuts to bake sales with \$1 million cupcakes to

town hall meetings and rallies with parents and students, the San Francisco Bay Area reverberated on March 4 with the defiant voices of thousands of teachers all warning that the cuts must stop now.

CTA Vice President Dean Vogel spoke at news conferences in Concord and Alameda, where cuts are severe, and was interviewed live in the Oakland studios of a morning TV news program.

"I'm worried about the future of the students that are standing here," Vogel said in Concord, as students, parents and educators flanked him for a 7:15 a.m. news conference in front of Monte Gardens Elementary School. "The massive state cuts to education are threatening their future."

Another speaker, Mike Noce, president of the Mt. Diablo Education Association, warned of state cuts ruining local school districts. Mt. Diablo Unified issued 200 educator pink slips and will make nearly \$49 million in cuts over the next three years.

"We have waited too long for Sacramento to solve the problems facing our students," Noce said as four television news cameras took in the scene. "We need your help in the urgent effort today to speak out about the painful effects that cuts are having on our students, schools



CTA photo by Dave Earl Carpenter



CTA photo by Dave Earl Carpenter

and communities.”

Near the podium, teachers held a mock bake sale with cupcakes going for \$1 million each. Monte Gardens kindergarten teachers Lauren Jamieson and Denise Dobson held protest signs declaring “Education Cuts Never Heal” and “Schools Are Not Broken — They’re Broke!” Noce and other teachers wore “disaster attire” including hard hats and orange vests for a disaster drill held later that morning in the district to call attention to disastrous cuts — one of at least seven Bay Area districts to hold disaster drills on March 4.

Mt. Diablo Superintendent Steve Lawrence, PTA representatives, state Sen. Mark DeSaulni-



CTA photo by Mike Myslinski

BELOW: At Monte Gardens Elementary School in Concord, members hold a bake sale with \$1 million cupcakes. **OPPOSITE:** At a San Francisco rally, performers support education with songs about saving education.



CTA photo by Mike Myslinski

LEFT: Students at a March 4 rally outside San Francisco City Hall, where more than 12,000 students, educators, elected officials and community members joined in to protest the unprecedented cuts to public education. **BELOW:** Mike Noce, president of the Mt. Diablo Education Association, wears an emergency drill vest to a March 4 rally signifying the disaster the state cuts have unleashed on California.

er, Assembly Member Joan Buchanan and others decried the cuts.

In a noon rally in Alameda on the steps of the school district office, Vogel joined Alameda Education Association President Patricia Sanders, Alameda Unified Superintendent Kirsten Vital and school board President Ron Mooney in warning that the state must protect education from more blows. Nearly 150 Alameda educators could be laid off, and state cuts are increasing class sizes and raising the threat of furloughs for educators next year if a June parcel tax is not approved by voters.

Scores of Alameda High School students used their lunch hour to add to the protest with chants, cheers and handmade signs with messages like “Education Is The Future” and “My Education Matters!”

Public schools are “the cornerstone of a true democracy!” Sanders shouted as the crowd of reporters, participants and passersby listened in. She said afterward of the rally, “It showed real unity. It showed the community how important education really is.”

In Oakland Unified, where more than 120 teachers face pink slips and students face program cuts, Oakland Education Association President Betty Olson-Jones spoke at a news conference at the Elishu Harris State

Average Joes and Janes become citizen journalists for a day

On March 4, unprecedented numbers of concerned Californians let the world know we are not going to stand for any more funding cuts to California’s public schools. Starting early in the morning, Twitter was buzzing with news of protests happening up and down the state, making it a “Trending Topic” in Los Angeles and San Francisco, all because of the people actually participating in events. Live pictures and videos were broadcast by individuals posting to their Facebook pages, YouTube and Twitter. Quickly, the traditional media ran with the story of activist students and teachers, and by the afternoon, major homepages such as CNN.com and Huffingtonpost.com were featuring these live videos and stories from the trenches. Our voices certainly were heard!



Office Building. Oakland teachers then boarded public mass transit for a ride to the huge 5 p.m. San Francisco Civic Center rally co-sponsored by United Educators of San Francisco and many concerned community groups.

More than 12,000 teachers, parents, students and other education supporters packed the peaceful San Francisco rally as television cameras swarmed the huge event, including cameras looking down from TV news helicopters. UESF President Dennis Kelly spoke with many others from a flatbed truck, and was enthusiastic a day later about the rally’s outcome.

“What we did collectively on Thursday should be an inspiration and an example for ourselves and others,” said Kelly. “We all came together as a body to demand the end to the injuries we have suffered. That message and that energy must continue. The sight of the sea of people from the deck



CTA photo by Mike Myslinski

ABOVE: CTA Vice President Dean Vogel rallies members on the steps of Kofman Auditorium in Alameda.

of that flatbed truck was tremendous.”

In San Jose, Janice Allen — who has taught since 1972 and is president of the San Jose Teachers Association — marched against cuts downtown with her son Daniel Allen, 28, who is working on his master’s in U.S. History at San Jose State University. Cuts there have threatened many of the classes at the college.

Allen spoke out against state cuts in a noontime rally at SJSU with members of the California Faculty Association. Her San Jose Unified members are sacrificing five furlough days next school year to help the district cope with cuts, she

Sonoma County, educators spent part of the day calling local legislators to demand a stop to education cuts — and worked on getting the community to sign the CTA-sponsored Repeal Corporate Tax Loopholes ballot measure to reverse \$2 billion in tax breaks given last year to large corporations. Fremont Unified District Teachers Association President Brannin Dorsey joined scores of colleagues for a spirited afternoon rally against the laying off of up to 200 temporary teachers.

In Monterey, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell joined local educators in a rally against school cuts at Colton Hall on Pacific Street in Monterey, where Monterey Bay Teachers Association President Jill Low also spoke.

The day of action ended with an ex-

said, so the march was meaningful for her on several levels.

Elsewhere, CTA Board member Eric Heins and Pittsburg Education Association President Chris Coan did informational picketing before school in Pittsburg Unified and rallied after school. In

traordinary education coalition town hall meeting at 6 p.m. attended by 300 parents and educators in the high-achieving Cupertino Union School District. It clearly showed that state cuts spare no district.

Of the 10,000 public schools in California, based on Academic Performance Index scores, 15 of Cupertino’s 25 schools are ranked in the top 150 in the state. And the district’s overall API ranks ninth highest of the state’s 1,000 school districts. Now, due to cuts, that success is threatened by pink slips being issued to more than 110 teachers and the district raising K-3 class sizes from 20 to 30 students, Cupertino Education Association President Dave Villafana told the hushed crowd in the gym of Lawson Middle School.

“We are in an unprecedented financial crisis that has been forced upon us by the state of California,” he said. “In spite of being one of the lowest-funded districts in the state, Cupertino is one of the highest-performing.”

As questions came from the audience on school funding, the sacrifices of Cupertino educators in recent years — no raises this year and their covering of the entire burden of increased health care premiums

Continued on page 31



Photo by Scott Buchman



GREATER LOS ANGELES AREA

“Stop Killing Public Education” said a sign waved by student Susan Gonzalez. She was one of thousands who came to

the Wilson High School gym to protest the death of public education as we know it, unless legislators switch course.

“It’s unfair what is being done to our education system,” said Gonzalez, a CSU Long Beach student. “The future is being

LEFT: Educators and community members participate in a rally at Wilson High School in Long Beach.

messed up — not just for me, but for the children who need education if they are going to succeed in the future. And we are the future.”

The guest speaker, CTA President David A. Sanchez, took the stage and announced that it is time to hold those who are cutting education responsible for what’s happening. “They are cutting classes and they are cutting teachers.”

More than 2,000 attended the afternoon rally at Wilson High, including teachers, college professors, students, parents and community members. Many had attended a protest earlier that day across the street at CSU Long Beach. Latecomers to the Wilson High rally were turned away in accordance with Fire Code regulations, and ended up protesting outside the building. Those inside the gym joined Sanchez in shouting, “No cuts! No compromises!”

Sanchez asked the crowd to join CTA in supporting an initiative to repeal tax breaks for large corporations. Signatures must be gathered before it can be put on the ballot.

“We can’t cut funds to schools and give tax breaks to large corporations, because that is wrong,” said Sanchez. “The government is making secret deals with these large

corporations and giving them tax breaks. Join us to repeal them. We must talk to the public every chance we get — in grocery stores, movie theaters, everywhere. We must tell them what’s happening to our schools and what’s happening to our students. We must tell them *enough is enough.*”

In Long Beach Unified, more than 700 teachers were issued pink slips, including Mandi Reger, a teacher at Stevenson Elementary School for 11 years, who attended the rally.

“It’s going to hurt the students more than anything,” she said. “Everything we’ve worked for in the last decade to improve student achievement will be taken away by cuts and large class sizes. There will be a big education gap between these kids and the next generation.”

“Lawmakers hold schools accountable for student results, but accountability is a two-way street,” said Michael Day, president of the Teachers Association of Long Beach (TALB). “It’s time to protect education funding, and it’s time to protect our kids. If we don’t stop now, we’ll fail an entire generation.”

Teri Yamada, president of the CSU Long Beach California Faculty Association chapter, told the crowd the campus was forced to reduce student enrollment because employees are taking unpaid furlough days and classes have been cut. José F. Moreno, assis-

BELOW: CTA Long Beach City College President DeWayne Sheaffer gets the crowd going in Long Beach.



Photos by Scott Buschman

Q&A with CTA President David A. Sanchez



The *California Educator* sits down with CTA President David A. Sanchez to talk about why March 4 was so important and what’s next.

EDUCATOR: Why was March 4 important for public education?

DAVID A. SANCHEZ: On March 4, entire communities stood together and said no to any more budget cuts to public schools, community colleges, universities and the essential public services we all need. It wasn’t the first step, but it definitely was a resounding recommitment to take our communities back, to fight for our neighborhood schools and the future of our students and our state. I was re-energized by standing alongside such a vast coalition of supporters.

So, where do we go from here?

We build on the momentum. Each of us must be an ambassador for our public schools and colleges. We must use every outlet we have to let the public know what cuts are doing to schools, communities and our future. Talk to parents, friends, family and community members — to anyone who will listen. Post to your Facebook page or Twitter account. Talk to your local media. We must keep the conversation alive and be proactive in changing the way California funds public education. We must also continue to work with each other and with broader coalitions.

How is CTA leadership maintaining the momentum?

The CTA Board of Directors and State Council of Education have already begun implementing

Continued on page 12

Q&A with David A. Sanchez

Continued from page 11

a plan for next steps. We are declaring April Community Outreach Month to build upon the coalitions that came together to make March 4 such a powerful day. We are standing united with the state Education Coalition in demanding no cuts to education and demanding that lawmakers keep their promise to repay public schools the more than \$11 billion they are owed under state law. But our current dilemma can't just be solved at the Capitol alone. Change must happen at the ballot box and in our communities, too. CTA workgroups are creating plans, and State Council is setting the agenda of how we move forward this election year to pass initiatives that make sure large corporations pay their fair share and to elect candidates who will invest in public education and be held accountable.

What are CTA's goals for school funding this year?

First, we have to ensure that the governor and state lawmakers keep the promises they made last year when they signed the state budget agreement that included restoring more than \$11.2 billion to public education over time. Once again, the governor wants to break his promise to students. We are not going to let that happen. We also have to be realistic. California is in the middle of the largest economic recession of our time. All of our goals for funding our schools and colleges will not be achieved this year. But we can definitely start by repealing the corporate tax breaks the Legislature handed out to large corporations and oil companies last year while slashing \$17 billion from our schools. And we can definitely start by electing lawmakers who will stand up for public schools when the going gets tough. There's a long way to go to make sure our schools and colleges get the funding they deserve, and CTA will not rest until we get there. That's why it's so important for you to help us build on the momentum by reaching out in your communities and telling your story.

tant professor in the Department of Chicano and Latino Studies at the college campus, also addressed the crowd. "You do not get a return on your investment unless you put money into it. And we should not look at education as a cost, but rather as an investment."

"Public education is under attack, and we need to do something about it," said Long Beach Community College Association President DeWayne Sheaffer. "It's time to start taking it to the streets. We have to talk to our families, our friends and even our enemies. March 4 ends at midnight, but we must continue this fight. We mean business. Let's make it count at the polls."

Emily Peterson, a student at Hughes Middle School in Long Beach, asked teachers at her school who had received pink slips to join her onstage. "To me, it's sad that Long Beach is laying off such wonderful teachers," she said. "What can you do to save my future — or should I say *our* future?"

Tom Morello, formerly of the band Rage Against the Machine, entertained audience members on the guitar, singing "This Land Is Your Land" by Woody Guthrie.

"The wheels of history are in your hands, brothers and sisters," said Morello. "What we do or fail to do will determine the future of our children."

In Los Angeles, CTA President David A. Sanchez kicked off CTA's "Start the Day for Students" by joining leaders of United Teachers Los Angeles,

the California Federation of Teachers, and the American Federation of Teachers for a news conference in Los Angeles. Sanchez urged the public to support CTA's signature-gathering efforts for the Repeal Corporate Tax Loopholes Act, and he decried the backroom deals that had robbed schools of funding at a critical time.

"Those tax breaks cost the state annually just about the same amount the governor is now proposing cutting schools this year," said Sanchez. "It's not fair and

it's not right. In this environment *everyone* must pay their fair share."

Gathering signatures was a focus of many activities throughout the day, and Southern California hosted several major afternoon events. Huge rallies

were held at UCLA and CSU Northridge. Thousands packed Pershing Square, where protesters marched to the governor's Los Angeles office to rail against his broken promises to schools.

Further up the coast, afternoon protests continued with a massive march down State Street in downtown Santa Barbara. The Santa Barbara Teachers Association led the coalition of education groups, including UCSB students who bicycled in from the campus north of town to protest skyrocketing fees. They joined SBTA members, who have been struggling with \$17 million in cuts over the past two years and large numbers of layoffs.

"Our community has been fortunate in that we've had outstanding schools and educators, and we've been able to see our students really achieve," Santa Barbara Teachers Association President Layne Wheeler told the crowd. "But we just won't be able to continue giving them the education they deserve when faced with cuts like this. Santa Barbara schools have already been hit too hard. It has to stop."

Marchers chanted their support: "They say cut back, we say fight back!"

SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN AND FRANK WELLS



LEFT: A huge crowd gathers for the March 4 rally at Wilson High School in Long Beach. **ABOVE:** Students join in the protest for equal access to affordable education.



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

“Call your legislators and the governor now and tell them to stand up for students by stopping the cuts and restoring funds to California’s future,” said CTA Executive Director Carolyn Doggett in a rallying cry echoed at March 4 events throughout Southern California. “Hundreds of thousands of students are suffering from the unprecedented cuts that are decimating California’s once nationally envied kindergarten-through-university public education system.”

Joining Doggett at a Huntington Beach rally and march featuring teachers and education supporters from the Ocean View, Fountain Valley, Huntington Beach City, and Huntington Beach Union High School districts, CTA Board member Michael Stone told the crowd of several hundred, “Public education in California isn’t broken. It’s broke!”

Stone later commented, “On March 4, I saw local chapters that have seldom participated in CTA events get organized and stand alongside their communities to fight for public education.”

Activities took place all across Southern California. In Laguna Hills, Saddleback Valley Educators Association members demonstrated on all four corners of a busy intersection, accompanied by a rhythm band composed of four pink-slipped music teachers. “What’s happening to my colleagues is such a shame,” said SVEA Secretary Chrissy Smedberg, an English teacher at Trabuco Hills High School. “But even more important, what’s happening to the students we teach. California can do better than this.”

Members of Associated Calexico Teachers in Imperial County invited members of the community to join them at a Stand Up for Education rally in Calexico that featured

music and guest speakers. ACT members also handed out fliers with information about the detrimental effects of education budget cuts to parents at each school site prior to the beginning of school.

“From Mexico to the Oregon border, and everything in between, supporters of public education throughout California are standing up to say that enough is enough! California cannot enact any more cuts to schools and yet claim to be providing a quality education for its students,” said CTA Board member Jim Groth in a live interview with San Diego’s FOX 5 news at a before-school rally at Helix Charter High School in La Mesa.

“It’s my hope that by raising the awareness of how harmful the cuts to education are,” said Helix Teachers Association President Ben Stone, “it will motivate the public to take action by calling their legislators to demand decent funding for public schools.”

Facing about 360 pink slips, Riverside City Teachers Association members rallied at several before-school demonstrations throughout the city, wearing black arm bands and carrying black and pink balloons and posters. CTA Board member Mikki Cichocki, former CTA President Barbara E. Kerr, and RCTA President Mark Lawrence participated at Pachappa Elementary, where four of the six teachers who have taught Cichocki’s daughter have received layoff notices. “There is nothing more important than a child, and standing up for



CTA photos by Bill Guy

ABOVE: Helix Teachers Association member Rebecca Meyer marches at the Helix Charter High rally in La Mesa. **BELOW:** CTA Executive Director Carolyn Doggett and CTA Board member Michael Stone at the Huntington Beach March 4 rally. **LEFT:** National City Elementary Teachers Association members rally in South San Diego County.

our students on March 4 was just one way I could show my support for my daughter, her teachers and all the members I represent who are being harmed by the draconian ed-





CTA photo by Bill Guy

LEFT: CTA members at a March 4 rally in Laguna Hills pounded the drum for education. **RIGHT:** CTA Board member Jim Groth speaks to San Diego's FOX 5 reporter Matt Johnson at a rally in La Mesa.

ucation budget cuts enacted in this state," said Cichocki.

Fontana Teachers Association members stood up for students at before-school rallies throughout the district, and prior to a meeting of the Fontana Unified school board meeting, FTA members hosted their second annual "Poor Man's Dinner" of hot dogs and chips, wearing black to lament state education budget cuts.

In Palm Springs, educators, classified school employees, parents and community members



CTA photo by Bill Guy

participated in before-school protest rallies and passed out fliers to draw attention to education budget cuts. "Our students are paying the price," said Palm Springs Teachers Association President Bev Bricker. "Quality public schools build strong communities. We have joined together to say our children deserve better. Investing in public education is the best investment we can make in their future." ❖

BILL GUY



CENTRAL VALLEY

Whether they were rallying at the state Capitol in Sacramento, marching in San Joaquin County, or holding hands around schools in Georgetown, thousands of teachers, higher education faculty, parents, school employees, administrators and students turned out on March 4 throughout the Central Valley to stand up for schools.

Local chapters, large and small, heeded the call to "Start the Day for Schools" by holding activities before school, while

other chapters joined together to stage marches and rallies after the school day.

"We think it's important to join with educators, administrators, parents and people throughout the state who are standing up for schools in California," said Linda Tuttle, president of the Sacramento City Teachers Association, which held activities at 14 different school sites. "We cannot continue to starve our schools and expect our students to thrive. Class sizes are soaring while important programs like adult education, counselors and other important programs are being cut. Our students

deserve better than this." The association is backing a parcel tax for the November election

that will support small schools and smaller class sizes.

CTA Secretary-Treasurer Gail Mendes hopped from a student-led mock funeral for education at Monterey Trail High School in Elk Grove to a massive rally at the Capitol sponsored by the California Faculty Association, and from there to a candlelight vigil at San Joaquin Delta College. The vigil followed a march by 500 people through Stockton that was sponsored by a host of organizations that included local CTA chapters and the California School Employees Association.

"We say 'No!' to more cuts," Mendes told the crowd. "We have to restore the resources that have already been taken away, and we have to make sure California students and our state have the future they deserve."

She continued, "We have to make Sacramento keep its promises to our schools. And we also have to stop letting politicians give corporations sweetheart tax breaks while our schools suffer! It's not fair and it's not right. In this economic climate everyone must pay their fair share."



CTA photo by Dina Martin

LEFT: CTA Secretary-Treasurer Gail Mendes stands up for public education at an event in Sacramento.



CTA photo by Dina Martin

ABOVE: College students join in a protest at the Capitol in Sacramento.

Manteca Educators Association President Ken Johnson said that class sizes in Manteca had increased from 20 to 32, and all of the high school librarians and 60 percent of the school counselors had been laid off.

“We need to change the direction of our state and build a better California for all of us,” said Johnson. “We must demand that politicians fund our schools with stable, consistent revenue,



CTA photo by Dina Martin

and we need to protect education.” In Willits, where teachers participated in a 7 a.m. rally, Willows Teacher Association President Shelley Amaro told the local newspaper, “It’s important to act on a local level and get people involved. We want people to begin thinking about protecting education.”

At least 24 smaller chapters in Kern County participated in activities by putting signs in their car windows and parking them along the busy streets where parents dropped off students. Among them were teachers associations in the Fruitvale, Panama-Buena Vista, Edison, Delano Elementary, Lost Hills, El Tejon, Standard and Rosedale school districts.

Much of the major action in the Central Valley took place on college campuses. Students at CSU campuses in Bakersfield, Fresno and Stanislaus, San Joaquin Delta College and Merced College were among those who participated in rallies to protest the elimination of course offerings and the escalating costs of higher

LEFT: A student-led mock funeral for education at Monterey Trail High School in Elk Grove. **RIGHT:** In Northern California, CTA members brave the early morning cold on March 4 bringing their message to commuters in Willits.

not gimmicks.”

“Even a 12-year-old is aware and can feel the trickle-down effects that cuts are making in his school,” said Bruce Grininger, a teacher at Lyman Gilmore Middle School, in an interview with the newspaper *The Union*. Grininger was out distributing pamphlets to parents with his colleagues in the Grass Valley Teachers Association. “The situation is beyond urgent. We need everyone aware and prepared to stand together and stand up for our schools.”

In Willows, where teachers participated in a 7 a.m. rally, Willows Teacher Association Presi-

NO MORE CUTS!

- > Write a letter to the editor of your local paper about the devastation the cuts at your school.
- > Make a presentation at a local community group.
- > Continue dialogue at standupforschools.org, take your own video and post it to YouTube.
- > Create a flier and put a real face on program cuts and layoffs in your local community.
- > Post your local RIF information on your association website or Facebook page.
- > Continue to contact your legislators using the toll-free hotline at

1-888-268-4334

telling them

NO MORE CUTS!

education. One of the largest gatherings of students was at the state Capitol, where students from CSU Sacramento, CSU Chico, UC Santa Cruz and local community colleges joined faculty leaders for an “Educate the State” rally.



Photo courtesy of Willits Teachers Association

There, college student Reid Milburn, president of the Student Senate of California Community Colleges, told the crowd, “Our courses have been slashed, our programs reduced, our faculty are being laid off. ... How are we going to save the future if we can’t even get into our classes?” ❖

DINA MARTIN



Chemistry professor Martin Wallace at Lake Tahoe Community College.



Stories by Sherry Posnick-Goodwin • Photos by Scott Buschman

Higher education on life support

For the past 50 years, California's students have been told that if they work hard and do well in school, they will have access to an affordable, quality college education. But for many of California's college students, the reality of the situation is distinctly different.

"If we want a thriving economy, we must have an educated working class," says Dián Dolores Hasson, a member of the CTA Board of Directors representing higher education. "We are wiping out the future of an entire generation of students with excessive cuts and tuition increases."

This year, 40,000 eligible students were denied admission to California State University campuses. And students from community colleges, previously assured of being able to transfer to four-year institutions, were refused admission at nearly every CSU campus.

"What are community college transfer students supposed to do — go out of state?" asks Ron Norton Reel, president of the Community College Association.

At community colleges and CSU campuses, teaching positions and class offerings have been drastically cut, so students are finding it difficult — or impossible — to enroll in classes they need to graduate.

At the CSU level, students are paying more for less. Tuition has gone up 32 percent this year and has nearly tripled since 2002. State lawmakers cut both CSU and UC budgets by 20 percent in 2009. The cost of tuition is now nearly \$5,000 a year at CSU and \$11,000 a year at UC campuses.

"We will continue fighting to guarantee that our colleges get the resources they need, deserve and are owed under law," says CTA President David A. Sanchez. "The future of California depends on higher education. It's tragic when qualified students are turned away."

In his State of the Union address, President Obama emphasized the importance of affordable, quality ed-

ucation. "Right now, three-quarters of the fastest-growing occupations require more than a high school diploma," said the president. "We know the countries that out-teach us today will out-compete us tomorrow. That is why it will be the goal of this administration to ensure that every child has access to a complete and competitive education — from the day they are born to the day they begin a career."

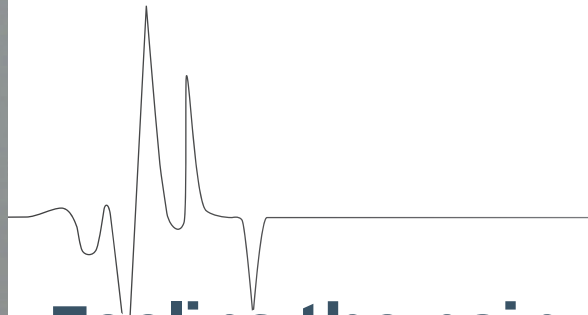
Access to a complete education was a top priority for California under the state's Master Plan for Higher Education — which, ironically, celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. The plan, intended to guarantee Californians an affordable, accessible, high-quality college education, served as a national model. Until recently, California's college system was one of the best in the nation.

But that is no longer true: California dropped to 40th place in the nation for students entering college after high school. California has cut spending on public universities and community colleges more than any of the nation's other most populous states except Florida, according to a study by the University of Washington.

"What's happening is that a devastating level of cuts has been piled on top of many years' worth of devastating cuts," says Lillian Taiz, president of the California Faculty Association. "We are putting higher education at risk in a way that has never happened in this state before. If we continue down this path, public higher education will be completely dismantled. There will be no return from the direction we are going — which is straight off a cliff if we don't start prioritizing and making an investment in students."

The following stories — which show the impact of budget cuts at a CSU campus and a California community college — illustrate the strain that higher education is under and reflect student hardships and teacher challenges everywhere across the state. >>>

Wendy Slatkin, from Cal Poly Pomona, teaches classes for both the art history and fine arts programs. **INSET:** Gwen Urey, president of the California Faculty Association chapter at Pomona .



Feeling the pain at Cal Poly Pomona

Andrea Edwards has postponed graduation from Cal Poly Pomona — for the second time — because she can't get the classes she needs. The 25-year-old student lives at home and takes care of her grandmother. She is unemployed and worries her financial aid will be cut before she can graduate.

The English major tried to enroll in a grammar course, but it was full. "Now I'll have to wait until next year, because it's only offered once or twice a year," she sighs. "I'm very upset. I want to begin my career, but it seems impossible at the moment."

For the fall semester, California State University campuses cut class sections by 7 percent statewide and cut lecturers and part-time faculty by 17 percent over the previous year. Classes are so crowded, say professors, they can't give students the attention they deserve.

Ruben Vazquez, a third-year aerospace engineering major, is so frustrated that he organized a protest. About 700 students participated, along with some faculty members who held a "teach-in" to educate others about the dire

budget situation in California.

"As a freshman, I was able to get the classes I needed," says Vazquez, 20. "But



“We have some first-year students and transfer students whose classes were canceled after the preregistration period, so now they can’t get into anything.”

Gwen Urey, president, CFA at Cal Poly Pomona

now the math and physics classes I need are not available and I’m always on a waiting list. I’ve wasted an entire year without being able to move forward.”

Students are distressed throughout the campus, says Gwen Urey, president of the California Faculty Association chapter at Pomona. “Many classes were canceled because of cutbacks, so students have to wait. We have some first-year students and transfer students whose classes were canceled after the



Dián Hasson
CTA Board member

preregistration period, so now they can’t get into anything. They can’t get 12 units; they can’t get financial aid; and they can’t get health care benefits if they aren’t enrolled in 12 units. Some of them are feeling

desperate and looking for *any* units to take — even if it won’t help them proceed toward graduation. And some can’t even get that.”

With 50 or more students on a waiting list, some CFA members fill their classrooms with as many students as the fire code permits. More students mean more work, but instructors have been told to take furlough days, so there’s less time. Most of the teaching positions that were cut were part-timers or “lecturers” without permanent status, so the administration claims



Cal Poly Pomona student Shelley Bruce, a double major in fine arts and gender ethnic multicultural studies, discusses how both programs may be eliminated.

“I used to have students write essays, but I now have so many students I can’t do that.”

*Bruce Brown
California Faculty Association*

that layoffs have not occurred.

“It does change the way one teaches,” says associate professor Bruce Brown, whose economics class has 76 students. “I used to have them write essays, but I now have so many students, I can’t do that. There are too many students to do presentations. Education becomes much more impersonal. Stronger students can handle the lack of personal attention,

but I worry that the weaker students are being hurt by what’s happening.”

Meanwhile, entire departments are on the chopping block, says Urey, an urban planning professor. Faculty have been presented with a list



Photo by Steve Yeater

Lillian Taiz
California Faculty
Association president

of nearly 40 programs that might be eliminated and were told that 10 or 12 will be selected from the list.

Wendy Slatkin of the Art Department teaches classes for both the art history and fine arts programs, and recently discovered that both might be cut. “It’s a shame; we train our students at a very high level,” she laments. “Our art history students have gotten into very good grad-



uate programs because we set very high standards for them. They are talking about cutting some very good programs.”

The college has cut so much in the way of ancillary support, says Professor Debora Whitson, that it’s difficult to do her job.

“You go to the library, and it’s closed for a furlough day. You call the IT de-

partment because your equipment isn’t working, and you get a recording. You try to order equipment, and you get no answer. And, of course, there’s no money to travel for research,” says Whitson, who teaches international business and marketing classes. Everyone on the staff has different furlough days, she explains, so instructors never know whether services are available or not.



ABOVE: Associate professor Bruce Brown at Cal Poly Pomona, whose economics class has 76 students.

RIGHT: Professor Debbora Whitson teaches international business and marketing at Cal Poly Pomona.



Morale is low and students are more irritable, observes Whitson. “You can see it reflected in their e-mail. Students want to vent. Some of the students are very angry.”

Shelley Bruce, 21, is more sad than angry. The fourth-year honors

student is a double major in fine arts and gender ethnic multicultural studies. Both programs may be eliminated.

“I love my university and I love these programs,” says Bruce. “Students here are really united because they are passionate about education. They really care about what’s happening here. And what is happening here is absolutely devastating.” ❖



Tough times at Lake Tahoe Community College

Alex Mellon can't believe it, but he actually misses doing homework for chemistry class. Homework assignments helped him learn the material, says the 36-year-old student who once made his living as a photographer and even taught photo classes at the college.

His chemistry professor, Martin Wallace, has seen chemistry enrollment increase by 94 percent over the past five years, although there is still only one full-time chemistry instructor. So homework went by the wayside. His classes now pack 70 or more students into a

room.

"My grading is up 75 percent; off-hour e-mail questions are up 75 percent; and students dropping by during my off-hours are up by 75 percent over the past few years," says Wallace, a member of the Lake Tahoe Community College Faculty Association (LTCCFA). "Everything requires a lot more time these days."

Layoffs and cuts have left faculty and students at the small community college reeling, says LTCCFA President Scott Lukas. Last spring, 25 part-time ed-

ucators lost their jobs, resulting in about 100 class sections being cut. Many students can't enroll in the classes they need to graduate. Mellon, for example, would like to fulfill his pre-nursing requirements and transfer to another college to receive his RN degree, but finds himself at a standstill.

"I need to take chemistry, anatomy and physiology," he says. "There used to be a lot of night classes, but they are gone."

Class sections are reduced, but enrollment is at an all-time high due to the poor economy and job layoffs, says Lukas, an anthropology professor. Many who have lost their jobs in the tourist



“Students who can’t get into the CSU system want to go to community colleges, but we’ve eliminated 10 percent of classes this year.”

Ron Norton Reel, Community College Association president

industry have sought retraining at the college in hopes of starting new careers.

But even students who complete their prerequisites can’t transfer. Sarah Smith, 30, was not accepted as a transfer student at several colleges she applied to, even with a 3.74 GPA. For now, the single parent continues to take classes at the community college so she won’t stay stagnant, and hopes that doing so will increase her chances of transfer acceptance.

“Students who can’t get into the CSU



Ron Norton Reel
CCA president

system want to go to community colleges, but we’ve eliminated 10 percent of classes this year,” says Ron Norton Reel, president of the Community College Association. “And because of the economy and layoffs, we have more students seeking retraining at community colleges.”

The cutbacks at Lake Tahoe have disproportionately hurt minority students, says Sal Lopez, who teaches English as a Second Language at the college. English learners can no longer find tutors. Ethnic studies classes he



ABOVE: Library director Lisa Foley at Lake Tahoe Community College. **BELOW:** Chemistry professor Martin Wallace (INSET) has seen chemistry enrollment increase by 94 percent over the past five years, although there is still only one full-time chemistry instructor at Lake Tahoe Community College.





LEFT: Lake Tahoe Community College English as a Second Language instructor Sal Lopez.

taught were eliminated, although they are still listed in the catalog. Because the area lacks an adult education program, many students without high school diplomas have relied on the college's non-college-credit courses to fill the void. But those, too, have been cut.

"I think we've made a giant step backwards," says Lopez. "Things were already bad for certain segments of the student population before the cutbacks happened."

A disproportionate number of physical education classes have been eliminated. Tahoe is a community known for its recreation services, and many students chose to attend the college to take PE, says Mike Spina, a faculty member whose PE classes were eliminated.

The Disability Resource Center lost 48

What CTA members say about cuts to higher education

"We're inundated with students. They are coming from all over because of the unemployment situation and because they need retraining. CSU Long Beach isn't accepting students, so those who are turned away there come to us. There are more students and fewer teachers, since many adjunct faculty members were let go and others were offered early retirement. **THE COUNSELING DEPARTMENT LOOKS LIKE AN EMERGENCY ROOM.** It's like triage, with students lined up down the halls waiting anywhere from two to three hours. It's really crazy. We are trying to educate students and give them a lesson in civics about what's going on, because they think it's something that's just happening to them personally. But it's a statewide situation, and it's going to get worse."

DeWayne Sheaffer, President, CTA Long Beach City College

"When fees went up again, it was a hardship for our students. **IT FORCED SOME OF THEM OUT OF SCHOOL ALTOGETHER, LIKE THE STRAW THAT BROKE THE CAMEL'S BACK.** There have also been a huge number of lecturers who didn't come back, more than 200 of them. In the fall term of 2008 there were 3,700 sections [classes] compared to the fall term of 2009, with 3,100 sections. That's a huge drop. When I started teaching here eight years ago, I used to have 25 to 30 undergraduate students in a class. Now it's 50 or 60. I used to know the names of all my students after a few weeks. Now it takes a whole semester to figure out who sits in the back of the classroom."

Ramon Castellblanch, CFA at San Francisco State University

"We're in double-digit unemployment here in Stockton. The housing market is terribly depreciated. People can't get jobs because there are no jobs to get, so they come here to college. But we have cut more than 4,000 sections or classes over the past three semesters. **ALMOST ALL THE ADJUNCTS OR PART-TIME TEACHING POSITIONS ARE GONE.** We have a significant summer program here, but administrators are now being elusive about committing to summer school. Students are very stressed out and scared about their education plans and goals. I really think the legislators and the governor need to take a look at what's happening to the educational process in California."

Jeff Hislop, President, San Joaquin Delta College Teachers Association

"**THINGS HAVE BEEN DETERIORATING FOR YEARS.** The word 'draconian' is what I mostly use, but I'm running out of adjectives. We have 80 fewer faculty members and 2,000 more students than last year. Much of what we have been doing here is fighting program closures. We have held rallies and teach-in events, marched to the president's office, and sent in thousands of letters. We are very much in a holding pattern right now."

Dave Bradfield, CFA at CSU Dominguez Hills



Sarah Smith in chemistry class at Lake Tahoe Community College.

percent of its funding from Sacramento. Last quarter, all of the center's tutors were let go, although a few were hired back part time. The center also lost the part-time learning disabilities specialist who had been testing students for more than 20 years, the classified person at the front desk, and the "alternate media specialist" who helped match special-needs students with resources, such as Braille for blind students.

Beth Marinelli-Laster, the learning disabilities specialist, now runs constantly back and forth between the front desk and her office because there's no longer a receptionist. "We care a lot about the students and are trying very hard to meet their needs, but everyone is starting to get burned out as they try to do more with less," she says.

The library is open fewer hours and closed Saturdays, which hurts students who check out textbooks or use

computers there because they can't afford to buy their own. "The staff is starting to feel strained," says library director Lisa Foley. The library now receives 50 percent less to purchase new books and has lost funding for all database subscriptions, which students need for online research.

The campus cafeteria is no longer open. A local Thai restaurant is scheduled to take it over, but students and staff say it will be difficult to exist on only Thai food.

"Losing the cafeteria is a big deal for me," says Joe Stanton, a third-year student who hopes to transfer to UC Davis. "I'm here all day long."

Esta Lewin says that the counseling staff has been cut and that Early Alert, an intervention program for students at risk of failing classes, was eliminated. Despite high un-

employment in the rural area, there's no money for the annual career and job fair, so that's been canceled, too.

"I think we're all being affected by the dire news," says the counselor. "We have a constant stream of dire news, so how could we not be worried? And how could this worry not trickle down to students?"

Mellon, the student who misses homework, is plenty worried.

"I worry quality teachers will be driven out of the profession by what's happening here," he says. "And I also worry that future generations will be deprived of a quality education." ❖



Beth Marinelli-Laster
Lake Tahoe
Community College



Scott Lukas
Lake Tahoe CCFA
president

RIGHT: Alex Mellon, a student at Lake Tahoe Community College.





Project Angel Food delivers meals to the ill

On Feb. 19 CTA President David A. Sanchez and CTA Board members Marty Meeden and Mary Rose Ortega spent a day volunteering at Project Angel Food, a charity that provides nutritious meal preparation and delivery service to people with HIV/AIDS, cancer and other life-threatening illnesses throughout Los Angeles County. The visit was arranged through CTA's Community Outreach Department, which has helped CTA establish an ongoing connection to the charity.

After an early morning arrival, the CTA visitors were joined by United Teachers Los Angeles member Harold Galvez and his eager class of fifth-graders. Galvez and his students made the early morning walk across the street from Vine Street Elementary School, which, like several other area schools, has developed a partnership with Project Angel Food that allows regular visits from student volunteers. The enthusiastic children split into two groups — some contributing art to holiday and birthday gift bags, and others bagging up fruits and placing them into boxes for delivery — while Sanchez and the CTA Board members lent a hand.

Project Angel Food was started in 1989 by best-selling author Marianne Williamson. After a modest beginning serving 15 meals a day, the sharp increase in AIDS patients in the early 1990s quickly pushed the facility's output to 250 meals daily. Project Angel Food has grown even more in the years since, relocating in 2007 to the new and larger Vine

Street building, where 13,000 meals a week are prepared for about 1,600 clients.

"For many of our clients this is the only fresh food they have access to," says Margaret Steele, who serves as the program's CEO. "Our



ABOVE: CTA President David A. Sanchez preparing meals at Project Angel Food in Los Angeles. **INSET:** CTA Board member Mary Rose Ortega volunteers making nutritious meals.

CTA photos by Frank Wells

small staff includes some skilled culinary school trained chefs, who are really able to create deliciousness on a budget. And the volunteers make the rest possible." Steele said that some patients who might not otherwise feel well enough or have the energy to eat often will eat knowing someone has cared enough to prepare and deliver a hot meal.

While his students worked getting food ready for delivery, Galvez noted that many of them come from lower-income families that need and receive assistance of some kind. "These kids are here helping others and at the same time others are helping them," he said. "That's what community is all about."

After an hour or so the students returned to their school, where Sanchez was the featured speaker for an assembly on vol-

unteerism. "What is volunteering and why should we do it?" he asked the students. They enthusiastically gave the CTA leader examples of other types of volunteer work, and shared their ideas about the importance of helping others. Sanchez encouraged them to continue volunteering whenever possible throughout their lives. "Helping each other makes the world better for everybody," he told the youngsters.

The CTA group then walked back to Project Angel Food, where they spent the rest of the morning slicing squash and placing it into tubs for meals to be prepared later. Like all facility volunteers, they received instructions about and worked under the extremely rigorous sanitation requirements for a facility serving meals to immunocompromised patients, self-imposed requirements far stricter

than normal restaurant regulations or health codes.

"This was an outstanding experience for us and for these students," said Sanchez. "More districts should give their students opportunities like this. The earlier kids learn the value of helping others in need, the more likely they are to continue with important volunteer work in the future."

FRANK WELLS

More information about Project Angel Food, including how to contribute or volunteer, is available at www.angelfood.org.



See video footage of CTA leaders volunteering at www.cta.org/project-angel.

Heads up

Deadlines

IFT MINI-GRANTS Spring 2010

The CTA Institute for Teaching Board of Directors has established a competitive grant program for CTA members and chapters to support strength-based, teacher-driven reform. Applications must specify how the proposal would improve teaching and learning conditions, how student outcomes will be improved, and what the overall benefit of the proposal is for teachers and the teaching profession. The application process for the initial round of mini-grants will begin in spring 2010 and will be open to individual CTA members, small teams of educators and affiliated local chapters.

For more information, visit www.teacherdrivenchange.org.

INCENTIVE GRANTS FOR SUMMER CONFERENCES April 30, 2010

Small chapter and minority incentive grants are available for the Presidents Conference (July 19-23) and Summer Institute (Aug. 1-6). Apply by April 30. Minority incentive grants are offered to members of racial-ethnic minority groups to encourage minority leadership within the association. Small chapter incentive grants are awarded to chapters that represent a unit of 100 or fewer members for collective bargaining. Each grant pays for transportation expenses and the conference fee, which includes materials, meals and housing based on double occupancy. In addition, Summer Institute offers grants for participants in the Emerging Leaders Track and the Member Benefits Strand. The Presidents Conference offers additional grants for first-time chapter participation (available to chapter presidents whose chapter has not previously participated) and first-time presidents participation (available to new presidents from chapters of 1,000 or fewer members); the first-time presidents participation grant pays 50 percent of the shared room cost.

You can register and apply for incentive grants online at www.cta.org/conferences.

Conferences/Events

FINANCIAL LITERACY AND EDUCATION SUMMIT April 19, 2010

Live webcast, 7–9 a.m. Pacific time

The fourth annual Financial Literacy and Education Summit will be webcast and is a joint project of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago and Visa. This year's summit will cover key topics such as how we can improve our collective economic health, and how to bolster our shared commitment to global financial education. The program will be valuable to educators, students and education advocates interested in financial literacy and the global economy. The summit will feature an introduction by Federal Reserve Board Chairman Ben Bernanke, and a guest appearance by Michelle Greene, who heads President Obama's financial literacy effort at the Treasury Department.

To view the live, free webcast, register in advance at www.practicalmoneyskills.com.

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The 23rd annual CTA ESP Conference offers sessions on diverse topics that meet the specific needs of education support professionals. The conference kicks off with a reception on Friday night. Sessions are offered on Saturday and Sunday, and the conference concludes on Sunday with a lunch general session.

For more information, visit www.cta.org/professional-development/events/conferences/index.aspx.



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Read Across America serves up books and fun

This year's Read Across America theme, "Serve Up a Good Book" — inspired by the children's book *Armadilly Chili*, written by Helen Ketteman and illustrated by Will Terry — had members and students across California lining up to savor the joy of reading. The nationwide celebration of books on March 2, an annual event that coincides with the birthday of children's author Dr. Seuss, included celebrities, parents, city officials and others at events

throughout the state.

In San Francisco, Buena Vista Elementary School students listened attentively while CTA President David A. Sanchez read from *Armadilly Chili*: "Miss Billie Armadilly skit-skat-skittered down the lane. 'A blue norther's a-blowin' and my old, cold bones are rattling for a pot of hot armadilly chili,' she said."

"It's a great way to promote reading at all grade levels," said Sanchez, who spoke to the dual immersion students in Spanish about the importance of literacy. "It's a way to encourage family and friends to pick up a book and share and read with one another."

Reading to the kids along with Sanchez was one of this year's honorary co-chairs, Will Terry, who is also illustrator of



Photos by Scott Buschman

ABOVE: Students at Buena Vista Elementary School engrossed in a reading of *Armadilly Chili*. **LEFT:** Angel McKinley adjusts his chef's hat as he is "served" a fun reading at Gratts Elementary.



BELOW: Dodger great Jimmy Campanis reads with fifth-grader Marisol Reyes at Carl E. Gilbert Elementary's annual RAA "Read In" in Buena Park.



CTA photo by Bill Guy

the colorful book. The artist also demonstrated to students how he digitally draws his characters, wowing them as he brought the book's pages to life before their eyes.

"I am honored to share my books with children," said Terry, who traveled from Utah to San Francisco for the event. "My audience is children, and celebrating Dr. Seuss's birthday with

LEFT TO RIGHT: *Twilight*'s Rachelle Lefevre and *The Blind Side*'s Quinton Aaron celebrate RAA in Compton; illustrator Will Terry shows the kids how he creates art; RAA honorary co-chair Paul McCullough with CTA Vice President Dean Vogel join chef-inspired students at Gratts Elementary in Los Angeles after reading *Armadilly Chili*; actress Amy Poehler with Miss California USA Nicole Johnson; ABC Committee member Roslyn Jones, RCTA President Mark Lawrence, and past RCTA President Dennis Hodges.



Photos (left to right) by Frank Wells, Scott Buschman, Sheri Miyamoto, Frank Wells, Bill Guy



All Across California schools served up the stories

- Los Angeles Region:** The Los Angeles Dodgers provided players to read at Monlux Elementary, North Hollywood; John Dollard Elementary, Norwalk; Hermosa View Elementary, Hermosa Beach; and New River School, Norwalk.
- Vallejo:** Students from Hogan High School read favorite books to students at Beverly Hills Elementary. Many of the teachers dressed the part to add to the fun.
- Oakdale:** Second-graders at Sierra View Elementary read *The Cat in the Hat* and did a guided drawing lesson, drawing the Cat. Many Dr. Seuss books were read, and a breakfast of green eggs and ham was served.
- Sacramento:** The Sacramento Start program at Elder Creek Elementary celebrated literacy in an after-school program. Students recited the "readers' oath," read a book of their choice, and constructed their own mini storybooks. Student council members also went to the children's learning center and read Dr. Seuss stories to the preschoolers.

RIGHT: CTA President David A. Sanchez reads *Armadilly Chili* to students at Buena Vista Elementary School in San Francisco. **BELOW:** *Armadilly Chili* illustrator Will Terry displays his artwork to the class.



Photos by Scott Buschman

them is wonderful."

Students had fun and got the message of the importance of reading. "I liked this a lot," said student Diego Velcich, 6. "Reading is important because it makes you smarter and helps you learn more stuff."

CTA Vice President Dean Vogel joined RAA honorary co-chair Paul McCullough, an acclaimed Los Angeles chef, at Gratts Elementary School in Los Angeles. Students there were given their own chef hats to celebrate the theme of serving up a good book.

"Watching kids thrilled about reading, shar-

ing stories, laughing... is a real treat!" said Vogel.

"I read cookbooks, I read recipes. Without reading I would not be able to cook," said Chef McCullough. "It's a pleasure to share *Armadilly Chili* with the great students at Gratts Elementary!"

In Buena Park, just south of Los Angeles, Buena Park Teachers Association

members at Carl E. Gilbert Elementary celebrated their annual "Read In" and invited Dodger great Jimmy Campanis

Continued on page 38



Education scholar Diane Ravitch speaks at Urban Issues

What teachers and their unions have been saying for years about the pitfalls of high-stakes testing and the dangers of privatizing public schools, education scholar Diane Ravitch confirms. “Congress does not know how to reform schools,” Ravitch told the appreciative audience of educators at the

CTA Urban Issues Conference in San Jose in a keynote speech in February. “Neither does the U.S. Department of Education.”

CTA members might also add the California Legislature and the governor.

Ravitch, a research professor of education at New York University and author or edi-

tor of 20 books, said testing, choice, and privatizing of public education are threats to the nation. “There is something awful going on today in America. It has to do with scapegoating teachers, demonizing unions and undermining education.”

She should know. She was once a strong advocate of charter schools, testing and teacher accountability and served as assistant secretary of education and counselor to Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander in the administration of President George H.W. Bush. President Clinton appointed her to the National Assessment Governing Board, which oversees federal NAEP testing, which she trusts. She hailed the signing into law in 2002 of President George W. Bush’s flawed No Child Left Behind Act.

In recent years, she has had a change of heart.

In her insightful speech, she touched on many of the points in her new book, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*. Ravitch now believes that public schools cannot be run like a business, and one chapter in her book shows why. She documents the failure of Alan Bersin to impose top-down reforms when he was superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District — reforms that alienated teachers and the

San Diego Education Association.

Bersin had the backing of the business community and entrepreneurs, which do not understand education or why the public school system should not be viewed as a marketplace where schools are closed like a bad franchise in a retail chain, Ravitch said.

“Managing schools is not like managing a stock portfolio, where the object is to pick winners and get rid of your losers,” said Ravitch. “Rather, it’s like managing a family. When a family member is struggling with poor health, financial woes or bad decisions, the family leader does whatever is possible to help him or her recover, get on his feet and return to a sound footing. The family leader does not kill off the weak siblings. Educational euthanasia is not a good idea.”

Transforming struggling schools into charters does little, she said. “There is no evidence that charter schools or privately managed schools are a cure for low-performing schools.”

Ravitch considers charters and test-based teacher accountability reforms ominous. She opposes test score-based merit pay for educators and believes teachers must be fairly paid and more involved in local education decisions.

She questioned how the federal government, which she noted only provides about 8



What members had to say



Robert Rodriguez
San Bernardino Teachers Association
Resource specialist

“I attended the workshop on professional compensation and teacher incentive funding. I learned different ways we can attract and retain employees at high-priority schools. Incentive grants are not to be confused with merit pay. High-priority schools have hard-to-staff positions. What this workshop talked about was how to retain veteran teachers in our schools of greatest need. This is something locals can bargain for with their local school district.”



Cindy Crawford
San Lorenzo Education Association
Fifth-grade teacher

“I took the workshop here on issues and organizing. We learned how to determine the issue, and then from there go forward to develop your goals, objectives and tactics. The letters G.O.S.T. are the key to organizing. They stand for goals, objectives, strategy and tactics. A lot of people go immediately to their tactics. You need to work back and determine what the issue is and then develop your goals and objectives.”



Catherine Proctor
United Teachers Los Angeles
Third-grade teacher

“I went to the conversation with author Diane Ravitch. Unfortunately, L.A. Unified is going through the process of opening itself up to privatization. Everything that she’s talking about and concerned about is part of our current reality. Frankly, it’s frightening. Being with her was empowering. She gave us some ideas of how to protect our schools. It gave me tools to bring back to my local.”

CTA photos by Mike Myslinski



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FA09-2032

percent of all public school funding, has come to drive states' education policies.

By forcing teachers to teach to the test, NCLB caused many states to “dumb down” their standards to get better test results. Ravitch recalled how U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan — the former superintendent of Chicago schools — has said such tactics amount to lying to children. “He’s right. He should know. They did it in Illinois.”

If people thought punitive NCLB concepts would be discarded by President Obama when he took office, think again, Ravitch warned. She described the testing and accountability reforms sought by Obama and Duncan as “NCLB on steroids.”

She cited as proof Obama’s Race to the Top (“dash to the cash”) guidelines for states to qualify for \$4.3 billion in federal grants. California failed to qualify for the first round of grants. CTA raised red flags about all of the grant program

reforms states must make to win the race for grants — reforms that Ravitch also criticized: lifting caps on charters; linking test scores to teacher salaries; the demand that struggling schools be turned around or closed; creating a statewide data tracking system linking test results to teachers.

This administration fails to see that there is no one-size-fits-all strategy for every school, she asserts, and that testing should not be used for punitive purposes.

She is saddened that Obama has said he wants to close as many as 5,000 low-performing schools in America, instead of finding them the resources they need to succeed. Communities need their neighborhood schools open and thriving, she said.

“Schools are often the heart of their community, representing traditions, values and history that help bind the community together.”

MIKE MYSLINSKI

March 4 rallies

Continued from page 10

for the last three years — became clear.

Parents at the town hall reiterated their campaign to raise \$3 million to save teachers’ jobs and keep class sizes low, and helped staff tables to gather donations.

Parents listened as the town hall moderator, CTA Board member Don Dawson, a San Jose high school teacher, explained about the impacts of the governor’s latest broken promise — reneging on an agreement made last summer in the Legislature to restore \$11.2 billion

owed to schools under Proposition 98.

“The governor signed it,” Dawson said. “He wants to renege on that. That’s not right. In California, we have suffered enough from these things.”

Villafana ended with a call to action. “Please contact your legislators and let them know that we cannot continue to cut and cut and cut public education. We need to put pressure on them to come up with other solutions, or we need to find new legislators that will work with us.”

MIKE MYSLINSKI

ACTION

CTA, Education Coalition press governor to keep budget promise, pay back schools

CTA and its statewide Education Coalition partners have been pressing Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and legislators to honor the promises they made to public education during the protracted 2009-10 budget battle. At a recent news conference in Sacramento, CTA President David A. Sanchez and coalition leaders rebuked the governor for proposing more cuts to schools in his January spending proposal. That plan would renege on the July 2009 budget he signed into law, as well as the commitment to restore more than \$11.2 billion to students and schools as required by Proposition 98, the voter-approved minimum school funding guarantee.

“The governor claims he’s protecting education, but he is in fact hurting students by cutting billions more from our schools and colleges and breaking education promises he and the Legislature made last year,” said Sanchez. “Our schools and our students are reeling from massive cuts — more than \$17.2 billion — made in recent years, yet the governor is renegeing on the agreement he signed to restore funds to public schools.”

Together, CTA and the coalition represent more than 1 million Californians engaged in helping all students achieve educational excellence. These include parents, school administrators, education support pro-

fessionals, teachers and other school supporters.

During the news event, coalition leaders cited a recent report from UCLA — “Education Opportunities in Hard Times” — that found more than 74 percent of elementary principals report that class sizes are swelling. Coalition representa-

tives also cited a poll by the nonpartisan Public Policy Institute of California that found 82 percent of Californians oppose reductions in school funding as a method of closing the state budget deficit.

The coalition news conference is just one element of the *Continued on page 35*

Bottom line for generating new revenues

The state has two main routes to raising revenues. The first is closing tax loopholes that allow wealthy special interests, including corporations, to escape paying their fair share. CTA is currently circulating an initiative for signatures that would close some of the most egregious of these loopholes and raise hundreds of millions in new revenue every year. The second avenue involves reducing the two-thirds supermajority required to pass a budget bill or raise taxes, thereby preventing a small number of lawmakers — about one-third — from blocking the passage of a budget that would protect schools and legislation that would close loopholes and raise new funds. Senate Budget Chair Denise Ducheny (D-San Diego) has introduced a constitutional amendment, SCA 9, that would accomplish this. The CTA-supported measure was under consideration in two legislative committees as the *Educator* went to press.

CTA-sponsored measure would expand role of teachers in charter design

Assembly Member Sandré Swanson (D-Oakland) has introduced a measure on behalf of CTA that will expand the role of teachers in the design, operation and governance of charter schools. CTA-sponsored AB 2320 will also make the governance and operation of charters more transparent, more representative of the students in their neighborhoods, and more accountable to the communities they serve.

The bill would expand the authority of local school boards, and limit the role of the state, in granting charters for schools. It would also encourage charter schools to achieve a racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic balance of students reflective of the general population of the school district.

CTA has long sought to ensure that charter schools are held to the same fiscal and academic accountability stan-

dards that govern non-charter public schools. State education officials have found that, in absence of tight regulations, the operators of a number of charter schools have engaged in conflicts of interest and other counterproductive actions.

In other cases, poorly managed charter schools have failed midyear, forcing students to return to regular schools within their school district. Unfortunately, in those situations, the

districts may not receive any per-student funding because the appropriations were already given to the now-failed charter school.

AB 2320 would tighten the fiscal oversight of these schools and give teachers more power to ensure the academic effectiveness of the institution. The measure is expected to see its first hearing in the Assembly Education Committee.

LEN FELDMAN

CalSTRS update with CTA legislative advocate

With recent reports of the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) being underfunded, we took some time to speak with CTA legislative advocate Jennifer Baker to discuss the situation.

EDUCATOR: Do mass teacher layoffs adversely affect the CalSTRS pension?

JENNIFER BAKER: No. Teachers' CalSTRS Defined Benefit Plan is guaranteed by the California Constitution.

Can you explain what a "defined benefit pension" is?

It is a guaranteed, secure retirement plan that is based upon a formula for determining benefits. The benefits are not directly dependent on the member and/or employer contributions as well as the interest that is earned on those contributions.

Example: CalSTRS offers a defined benefit plan which is guaranteed by the California Constitution. Contributions

are made by members, school districts and the state. The benefits are based upon a formula which varies depending on an individual's final compensation, age and years of service. There are other factors that also influence the formula, such as longevity, career factor, and survivor benefit options. (See helpful benefits calculator at www.calstrs.com/calculators.)

There have been recent reports in the news about CalSTRS "unfunded actuarial obligation." Can you explain what that means?

The amount of money needed at a projected future date to meet the anticipated liabilities for all of CalSTRS' members.

Example: CalSTRS has a potential \$43.5 billion unfunded actuarial obligation, which means that in order to pay all of the earned retirement benefits to current members and their beneficiaries for the next 30 years it will cost \$43.5 billion more than the current assets and current contribution rates will be able to provide in that 30-year period.

What is CalSTRS doing to correct the situation?

CalSTRS has been steadily informing the Teachers' Retirement Board, which oversees the CalSTRS fund, as well as constituent groups and the Legislature. This issue is quite complex, particularly given the current fiscal climate in the state, which

will likely make this issue something that is discussed in context with long-term state budget issues. CTA is committed to working with CalSTRS to ensure no member loses any retirement benefits.

Does CalSTRS have a plan to deal with the projected funding shortfall?

CalSTRS is working with constituent groups including CTA and the Legislature to craft a long-term solution. CalSTRS has discussed possible increases in state, employer and employee contribution rates over a period of time.

To be considered successful, does a pension fund have to be funded at 100 percent?

No. CalSTRS itself has had great fluctuations in its funding status and has only reached 100 percent and over once. CalSTRS' fiduciary goal is to reach 100 percent funding, but if they reach 90 percent they will be better funded than most retirement systems in the country.

What percentage is STRS funded at?

The projected shortfall of \$43.5 billion would leave the system funded at a 77 percent level.

What is the current age a member can retire and begin to receive a CalSTRS pension?

A teacher may retire as early as 50 years old if she has a minimum of 30 years of service credit. For all others who have a minimum of five years accumulated service, the min-

Members retiring in fiscal year 2007-08

NUMBER RETIRING
12,568

MEDIAN AGE AT RETIREMENT
61.3 YEARS

MEDIAN SERVICE CREDIT
29.0 YEARS

AVERAGE MONTHLY CALSTRS BENEFIT
\$4,329

imum retirement age is 55. The median age of retirement is 61.3 years.

For those who leave the teaching profession and go to another profession, can they still receive their CalSTRS pension?

Yes, provided they have a minimum of five years vested into CalSTRS. They cannot receive this until they reach 55.

Where can members go for up-to-date CalSTRS info?

The website www.calstrs.com is a great resource.

DAVE EARL CARPENTER

Contribution amounts

STATE
2.017%

SCHOOL DISTRICTS
8.25%

EDUCATORS
8%

(CalSTRS contributions as percentage of teacher's pay.)

Public school kids now a captive advertising audience?

SpongeBob Elementary School? Hostess Twinkies Middle School? Wal-Mart Senior High?

None of these schools are real. But as districts throughout the state face mounting budget problems, officials are turning to corporate sponsors in hopes that advertisements will bring in extra dollars. For example, Chino Unified School District may place advertising on everything from lunch tray liners to floor mats to educational materials to assembly programs, as well as banners in hallways; and South Pasadena schools are encouraging Hollywood producers to film TV shows on district property.

Reaction to the commercialization trend among CTA mem-

bers varies. Some worry that students will, in effect, become a captive advertising audience for corporate America to manipulate. Others welcome such help from private companies willing to assist public schools.



Justine Cunningham
Associated Chino
Teachers

“They are considering this after cutting \$32 million for the next three years in Chino, and they still have more to go,” says Justine Cunningham, president of Associated Chino Teachers (ACT). “I realize that the district needs to find ways to balance the budget. My concern is that children seem to be targeted everywhere; and school has always been a safe haven. When we use children to help balance the budget, it doesn’t seem right. They are affected enough with class sizes

being raised, school site budget cuts, and the elimination of programs.”

“Right now it may seem like a good thing, but at a certain point, it’s going to be too much,” says Todd Hancock, an ACT member at Ayala High School. “I don’t mind advertisements on stadium scoreboards or even lunch trays. But I would not like to see them on classroom doors, hallways or fences because it’s too much pollution. And putting them on textbooks is not a good thing. There needs to be a definite distinction between schools and commercialism, because you don’t want companies and corporations controlling school districts. The next thing you know, they’ll be saying, ‘We gave your school \$1 million and we expect you to do this and this for us.’”

In Santa Rosa, which cut \$8 million and is expecting to cut another \$5.6 million, school board members asserted their authority to reject inappropriate school naming rights and other advertisements. This includes selling space to alcohol and cigarette companies as well as religious and political organizations.

“We have not taken a position as an association,” says Santa Rosa Teachers Association President Dan Evans. “I have heard many concerns about the propriety of advertising private business at schools. It actually is now done at some of the high school fields. Given the safeguards and restrictions that have been made contingent with the district policy, I personally have no problem with the policy in these tight budget times.”

In Las Virgenes Unified School District, there has been talk of put-

ting corporate names on panels covering ceiling lights inside the district office and in hallways, and putting advertisers’ names on electric signs outside the school. Officials are also talking about selling naming rights to school libraries, multipurpose rooms, gymnasiums and football fields. Parents will get the first opportunity for purchase, perhaps to memorialize family members, and such rights may expand to corporate sponsors and will be renewable.

“Every year they have been cutting our budget,” says Sandi Pope, president of the Las Virgenes Educators Association. “It’s sad to see commercialization of our schools, but if the state can’t fund schools, districts are forced to find their own funding sources. As long as it doesn’t interfere with instruction, more power to them. I’d rather see this happen than hear more talk about increasing class sizes, cutting jobs and cutting salaries.”

Unhappy parents in at least one school district were heard murmuring in the audience that school trustees were “pimping off” community schools in exchange for cash.

The Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, based in Boston, strongly objects to advertising in schools. “Today, as never before, the lives of children are saturated with commercial marketing,” states the website. “Schools turn to marketers to alleviate financial woes, but many marketing activities generate little, if any, revenue. Students are harmed when schools promote corporate profits at the expense of children’s health and well-being. Schools should be a haven from commercialism.”

SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

Corporate Takeover

- Chino Unified School District may place advertising on everything from lunch tray liners to floor mats to educational materials to assembly programs, as well as banners in hallways.
- The Santa Rosa school board voted in September to allow advertisers to purchase sponsorships and naming rights for Santa Rosa schools.
- Beverly Hills Unified School District has mulled over ordering logo T-shirts, hats and other items to cash in on the popularity of the TV show “Beverly Hills, 90210.” Such items, geared toward teens, would be sold in department stores.
- San Diego County approved selling naming rights to sixth-grade science camps.
- South Pasadena schools are encouraging Hollywood producers to film TV shows on district property.
- Mission Viejo High School explored the possibility of allowing a firm in Texas to construct an open-air IMAX-type theater on the athletic field to show movies at night and on weekends, but the deal fell through.

Budget

Continued from page 32

ongoing campaign to protect public education and secure the restoration of the billions in appropriations already slashed.

On May 25, hundreds of CTA chapter presidents are slated to converge on the state Capitol as part of the Presidents' Lobby Day. They will meet with their lawmakers to provide them with details of how budget cuts are impacting their students' educations at local schools. CTA and coalition members are lobbying lawmakers on a daily basis to reject the governor's newest round of budget cuts and to take steps to restore funding to schools. The battle over the budget is expected to heat up in mid-May, after the governor releases his updated budget proposal, the May Revision.

The Legislature, which has been hold-

ing hearings on the governor's January proposal since it was released, will vet the budget revision. They are under constitutional pressure to send the governor a final spending plan by June 15. Under state law, the governor has until June 30 to sign a spending plan into law prior to the July 1 start of the new fiscal year.

LEN FELDMAN

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

	BILL #		STATUS
SECOND-GRADE TESTING Hancock	SB 800	Would eliminate second-grade tests in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program effective July 1, 2010.	Dead (failed to pass Senate by Jan. 31)
UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE Leno	SB 810	Would establish a single-payer health insurance system in California. <i>(Co-sponsored bill)</i>	Assembly Desk
IMMIGRATION INVESTIGATIONS Mendoza	AB 132	Would limit the extent to which immigration raids disrupt students' education.	Vetoed by governor
CONSEQUENCES OF DROPPING OUT Block	AB 374	Would encourage schools to provide at-risk students with a "consequences of dropping out" notice developed by the CDE. <i>(Co-sponsored bill)</i>	Vetoed by governor
COMMUNITY COLLEGE FUNDING Furutani	AB 551	Would provide for a permanent backfill of shortfalls in property taxes to California Community Colleges.	Senate Rules
50% LAW COMPLIANCE Torlakson	AB 581	Would require annual random audits to ensure district compliance with existing law that requires 50 percent of community college funding to be spent on instructors' salaries.	Dead (failed to pass Assembly by Jan. 31)
75/25 FACULTY RATIO COMPLIANCE Hill	AB 1095	Would ensure full compliance with law that mandates 75 percent of instruction be performed by full-time faculty in California Community Colleges within three years of passage.	Dead (failed to pass Assembly by Jan. 31)
PART-TIME FACULTY RE-EMPLOYMENT Fong	AB 1807	Would require a community college district to place part-time faculty members on a re-employment preference list with specified rights of first refusal. <i>(Co-sponsored bill)</i>	Assembly Higher Ed
RETIREE HEALTH BENEFITS Buchanan	AB 1892	Would provide that the Fair Employment and Housing Act does not prohibit an employer from reducing health benefits when a retiree is eligible for Medicare. <i>(Co-sponsored bill)</i>	Assembly Judiciary
PART-TIME FACULTY HEALTH INSURANCE Mendoza	AB 1814	Would provide full state funding for the Part-Time Community College Faculty Health Insurance Program.	Assembly Higher Ed
CHARTER SCHOOLS Swanson	AB 2320	Would increase the role of teachers in the design, operation and governance of charter schools, and make the governance and operation of charters transparent and free of conflicts of interest.	Introduced in Assembly

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RAA

Continued from page 29
to read with students.

CTA Secretary-Treasurer Gail Mendes joined the Compton Education Association's festivities, along with visiting television and movie celebrities, including Rachelle Lefevre of *Twilight*, Quinton Aaron



Photo courtesy of Fullerton Elementary Teachers Association

RAA partners helped to celebrate

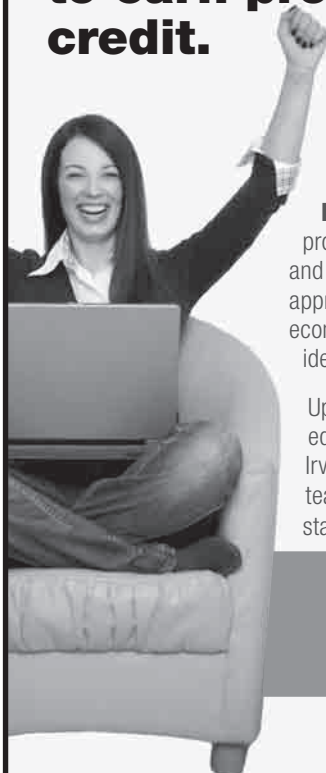
- American Federation of Television and Radio Artists members visited local area schools in and around Los Angeles.
- The Los Angeles County Fire Department sent engines and firefighters to schools across Los Angeles to read and donate books provided by RAA partner Barnes & Noble.
- The Los Angeles Kings sent their mascot Bailey and the Ice Crew to Mitchell Elementary in Lawndale for fun and reading.

of *The Blind Side*, and Raven of "That's So Raven." Mendes also visited and read for students in the Inglewood Unified School District at Crozier Middle School and Payne Elementary School.

To celebrate the book's theme, members

ABOVE: Fullerton Elementary Teachers Association President Andy Montoya celebrates Read Across America reading to a kindergarten class at Commonwealth Elementary.

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of the Riverside City Teachers Association (RCTA) sponsored its second annual chili contest during their RAA event, with different chili recipes prepared by RCTA staff and leaders.

At Sunset Lane Elementary in Fullerton, acclaimed children's author John Archambault of *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* and young adult fiction writer Mark Williams of the *Danger Boy* series read to the students.

President Sanchez had the pleasure of presenting Buena Vista Principal Larry Alegre with boxes of books for the school library. "Despite massive state education funding cuts to our classrooms," said Sanchez, "California teachers every day inspire our students to see the importance of reading."

"Read Across America is important because it emphasizes the importance of reading and serves kids who are being seriously betrayed by state government and funding," said United Educators of San Francisco President Dennis Kelly, who attended the event with UESF Vice President Linda Plack. "Today is nice because we are *giving* them something."

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