

california educator

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IS AT THE DOOR
**RUN
HIDE
OR FIGHT?**

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Adult Education

After years of cutbacks, adult education programs may be poised for a comeback — if high schools and community colleges can work together to provide services.



John Czajkowski, a high school English and music theory teacher in Chula Vista, urges educators to be prepared, not paranoid.

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Safe schools

Some educators are learning how to be proactive to increase the odds that students and staff will survive a shooting. They are learning skills they hope they will never have to use, such as building barricades, evacuating students, and even distracting or disarming a shooter as a last resort.



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Peer Court

At Davidson Middle School in San Rafael, students undergo a trial by their peers as an alternative to suspension and expulsion. See how this approach works.



DEPTS.

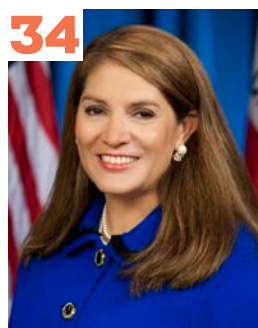
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YOUR OPINIONS AND LETTERS ARE WELCOME! There is a 250-word limit, and all letters will be edited. If you send photos or other materials, identifications and permissions are required. Letters must include your name along with your address, daytime telephone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



Like at school

The article "Love at school" (February) brought back memories.

Jerry and I met in 2003 teaching in Fremont at Brier Elementary. We, like many of the other couples, kept it quiet. When we were about to get engaged, Jerry told our principal. We were married in 2004 and are best friends. We've been working at the same school for the last seven years.

A lot of people ask us how we manage to work together. The answer is simple: We like each other!

KIM DARLING LOISEL

Fremont Unified District Teachers Association

Teaching tip: Collect magazines

I enjoyed the Works4Me teaching tips in the last magazine. Here's a tip I'd like to share.

April is National Poetry Month, and I have two activities I like to do with my speech and language students.

I have a collection of nature photographs from magazines and calendars. I use these as inspiration for my students to write haiku poems about the images.

I also like to use magazines as a means to create a "found" poetry collage. Students cut

out words or phrases that they find in magazines. Most often they will be from advertisements or titles of articles because they are of a large enough size. They organize them to form a poem and then paste or tape them on a piece of paper. My rule is

that students must cluster words in a single line, rather than cut out individual words to form new phrases.

The collage activity can be extended to include images cut from the source magazine. So start collecting magazines now. Your doctor's office might be a good source.

HELEN OGDEN

Alisal Teachers Association, Salinas

Editor's Note: Another source may be your CTA magazine!

A voice in Common Core implementation

I've seen several stories about Common Core in the *Educator*. I went to the Presidents Conference, and four of my members attended Summer Institute with me, and two of them attended the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) strand. CTA informed members about the Educational Employment Relations Act requirements for consultation regarding curriculum decisions.

As a result, the vice president and I contacted the Magnolia School District and requested a consultation committee in which the union would work with the district regarding CCSS implementation. The district agreed, and the administrator of student learning (curriculum) created a CCSS implementation committee.

Our chapter appointed four people to the committee: a kindergarten teacher, who attended the CCSS training at the Good Teaching Conference; the vice president, who attended the CCSS strand; a resource specialist, who attended the CCSS strand; and a teacher on special assignment, who is a technology support instructor.

The committee helps the student learning administrator decide on CCSS training, purchase of CCSS curriculum materials, and technology implementation. The district has purchased Chromebooks and has implemented training for the teachers in use of them. The biggest success of the union has been influencing the district to use some of the district's CCSS training days as grade-level lesson-planning days, with no other agenda set by the district (the idea of the vice president).

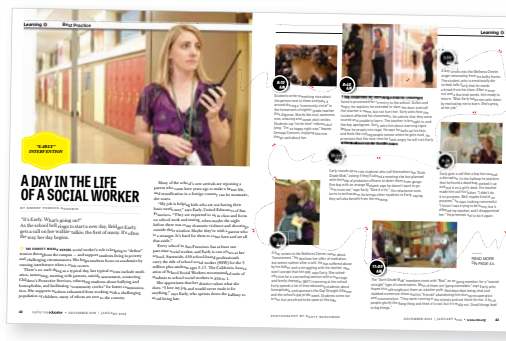
We are still in the early stages of this, but members feel strongly that they have a voice in the implementation of CCSS, and we owe it all to CTA!

PAMELA GREENHALGH, President
Magnolia Educators Association

Social worker resources

Thank you for the article "A day in the life of a school social worker" (December/January). As a former president of a CTA/NEA local and lifetime member of CTA, I am gratified that CTA recognizes the other professionals who are certificated and employed by our public schools.

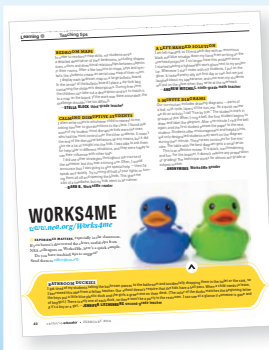
There was a question on where California stands in relation to other states. The answer is elusive because California does not have a specific office within the CDE that is respon-



sible for certificated support personnel, or as the new term that is being used calls them, specialized instructional support personnel (SISP). For information on the various student support professions and organizations, look at the websites of the National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (www.nasisp.org) and the School Social Work Association of America (www.sswaa.org).

DANIEL MCCARTHY

California Association of School Social Workers



What do you think of Common Core?

As an educator for more than 40 years, I've seen many things come and go when it comes to school reforms.

Many sets of standards have been a part of my professional life, and more than a few flew out the window when the state introduced “brand-new” standards. Like other professionals, I learned to adopt them and adapt them, all the while trying to be the best teacher I could be. That part doesn't change. As teachers, we are always finding new and better ways to reach our students, standards or no standards.

This year California, along with 44 other states, is moving on to the Common Core State Standards. I know the standards have provoked critics and champions, but the truth is, through it all we will continue to be the best teachers we can be. Some teachers, like myself, worked with similar approaches to teaching years ago and welcome the new standards as a return to flexibility, if implemented appropriately with educators in charge.

Others among us have a very different feeling about the CCSS, primarily because the implementation in their districts right now is a real mess. No doubt about it, the Common Core State Standards represent a major shift for us. Yet, ultimately, they can put teachers back in control of crafting and tailoring the education of their students. Critical thinking skills can now be part of our students' educational foundation. That's a good thing, and we can once again be the pedagogical decision makers in our own classrooms.

As we enter spring, we approach our first testing season having less than a year with

these new standards. Now the good news is, unlike most other states, California has done it right, and in no small part that is due to you. We listened to you, heard you, and worked with Governor Brown, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, and Assembly Member Susan Bonilla to craft and pass AB 484, which suspends the use of California's antiquated and out-of-sync student testing — including the California Standards Test (CST) and the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program. There will still be a field test this year of the new computer-based Smarter Balanced tests, but they will not be used for official assessment. In fact, it will be three years before any of the new tests are used for school accountability purposes. This will give us a chance to implement the standards before we implement the assessments. *Imagine that!* Let's just call it Common Sense for the Common Core.

However, we all know it has not been done this way in many other states. As a result, Common Core has been met with confusion, skepticism and hostility. The uproar has prompted NEA President Dennis Van Roekel to agree with us and call for “a course correction” in the implementation process. (See page 5.)

In addition to slowing down the implementation and working with chapters to ensure educators are on local implementation teams, CTA has been busy offering trainings on teaching to the standards and collaborating with local districts on professional learning opportunities. We want to make sure you are getting the resources in your classroom and the time you need to do it right. And we want to make sure we, as educators, are part of the ongoing dialogue about what's working and what's not.

I believe these new standards can be good for our students and our profession. They



DEAN ON THE ISSUES

The millionaires and corporate interests behind [the Vergara lawsuit] want to wipe out basic due process for dismissing teachers. They are seeking to let go of experienced teachers for no reason. That isn't fair, and it isn't good for our students or our profession.”

“Right now we have an opportunity with the Local Control Funding Formula and, honestly, with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, to lead the education discussion and the profession.”

give us the opportunity to lead our profession, but we must continue to be smart and patient as we shape the implementation as well as the development of the right assessments. And we absolutely must stand up to district management teams that are doing it wrong and push back at every turn.

That's why it's so important we continue to hear from you — especially on how the field tests are going this year and how your district is doing with implementation. We know there are some bad actors out there.

We will soon launch a survey on the CTA website so you can tell us how it's going. We will share your responses with Superintendent Torlakson and the State Board of Education. Our voice has never been more important, and we must make sure we are heard.

Dean E. Vogel
CTA PRESIDENT



Do you have an issue or topic you'd like Dean to address? Let us know.
Email editor@cta.org.

Common Core needs a course correction

BY NEA PRESIDENT DENNIS VAN ROEKEL

WHEN 45 STATES adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), educators saw the wonderful potential of these standards to correct many of the inequities in our education system.

NEA members overwhelmingly supported the goals of the standards because we knew they could provide a better path forward for every student. The promise of these high standards for all students is extraordinary.

We also had high hopes that our policymakers would make an equal commitment to implement the standards correctly by providing the time, supports and resources that are crucial to making changes of this magnitude.

So over the last few months, I have been listening closely. I have joined our state leaders in member listening sessions, observed member focus groups, and invited NEA members to share their views about how CCSS implementation is going.

In far too many states, implementation has been completely botched. Seven of 10 teachers believe implementation of the standards is going poorly in their schools. Worse yet, teachers report that there has been little attempt to allow educators to share what's needed to get CCSS implementation right.

Imagine that: The very people expected to deliver universal access to high-quality standards have not had the opportunity to share their expertise about how to make implementation work.

NEA has been called upon to oppose the standards. But scuttling these standards will simply return us to the failed days of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), where rote memorization and bubble tests drove teaching and learning. Instead, we want states to make a strong course correction and move forward.

As a math teacher, I have some strong views about the proper sequence of things. Start with high standards, create a curriculum that supports them, then focus on assessments that are aligned to what is taught and that really measure learning, then evaluate progress, and finally make continuous adjustments to improve teaching and learning.

So the first step is for policymakers to treat teachers as professionals and listen to what we know is needed. Give us resources and time — time to learn the standards, collaborate, develop aligned curriculum, and field-test the standards in classrooms. We also need the financial resources for updated textbooks and fully aligned materials.

Second, work with educators to determine how to properly use assessments. Don't ask teachers to administer tests that have no relation whatsoever to what they have been asked to teach. Why would we waste valuable learning time? To make matters worse, many states are using these invalid test results as the basis for accountability decisions.

This is not "accountability" — it's malpractice.

NEA members are committed to seeing the promise of the standards fulfilled. But we can't do it alone. Elected officials, school administrators and other stakeholders are part of the accountability system, too. There's too much at stake for our children and our country to risk getting this wrong.

To read the full article, go to www.cta.org/vanroekel.

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What is your favorite spring break location?

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cuddling up with a good book

Vegas or wherever my family is

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staying home with my family

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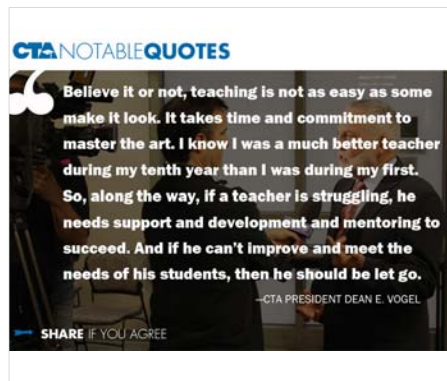
Use this hashtag in your tweets and we'll select our favorites for each issue of the *California Educator*.

Viral video 📺



CTA member wins top honor: English teacher **Kimberley Gilles** (second from right), San Ramon Valley Education Association, receives the NEA Member Benefits Award for Teaching Excellence and \$25,000. Read more on page 52. www.cta.org/gilles

Most popular post 📱



NOV 22 📱 105 likes 📧 79 shares

More top tweets 🐦

LA School Report @LASchoolReport | FEB 20

Parent says: I'm sick and tired of private companies using parents to advance own agenda. [#Vergara](#)

Dana Dillon @danad818 | FEB 20

Proponents of [#Vergara](#) ignore research that shows teaching experience counts. I was a much better teacher after 10+ yrs than I was at 5!

Lorena Gonzalez @LorenaSGonzalez | FEB 20

They aren't in my district, but I fully support the Alpine teachers!



@danad818

CA educators don't earn Social Security, and #CalSTRS benefits only replace 62% of final salary. Hardly generous!

CTA Online

What's new at cta.org

1

www.cta.org/women

March is Women's History Month

Bring this year's theme to life: "Celebrate Women of Character, Courage and Commitment!" See our resources page for more.

2

www.cta.org/capitolnews

At the Capitol

What happens at the state Capitol can affect every teacher, education support professional, and student in the state. Find out what's going on.

3

www.cta.org/esp

ESP of the Year Community relations specialist Janet Eberhardt, UESF, was named 2014 Education Support Professional of the Year. Her motto: "We are only as strong as those who walk the walk."

4

www.cta.org/swettawards

John Swett Awards The John Swett Awards program, named for CTA's founder, honors the excellent work of newspaper, radio, television and online journalists in covering education issues.

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How do we make our schools safe?

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, my friend Dexter Meyer was in a negotiations session in Jefferson County, Colorado. The topic: the district's safe school policy. During talks a call came in. Shots had been fired at Columbine. In the wake of the school shootings since then, such as at Sandy Hook Elementary one year ago, we've heard a lot of discussion about how to make schools safer. Well, here in California, we heard about a new approach. John Czajkowski, a Chula Vista teacher and former Navy Seal leader (featured on the cover), thinks school employees should be prepared — and keep everything in perspective. In "Run? Hide? Fight?" on page 24, you'll visit a Modoc County school training session where teachers practice survivor strategies in the unlikely event of a shooter on campus, including building barricades and turning a fire extinguisher on an attacker.

BEHIND THE SCENES



Who is this woman?

This masked person is *Educator* staff writer Sherry Posnick-Goodwin on the ground in Modoc County for our "Run? Hide? Fight?" feature. See how far Sherry will go for a story by checking out her blog at cta.org/blog.

All I can say is, "Ouch!" View additional photos from all of our stories at cta.org/educator.

As we bring you this story, it's important to note that schools are still the safest place for our kids to be. In fact, research shows the chances of a shooting in any particular K-12 school in a given year are about 1 in 54,000. And recent research at CSU Sacramento shows that rates of school violence are going steadily down. Prevention efforts are working. I'm not talking about metal detectors, armed guards and armed teachers. That's not prevention.

What you do in school every day — caring, teaching, providing a safe place — makes the difference. In many places, students get involved in making school a good learning place. That's what's happening in San Rafael. Read about a middle school "Peer Court" (page 44) that deals with behavior problems using a restorative justice approach. The result: increased learning and fewer kids kicked out of school. That's just one program making a difference. Check out the research (page 15) showing that suspension and expulsion rates in our state are dropping.

I simply love what CTA members do to keep kids in school and to enhance teaching and learning. Like in San Diego, where one teacher is blending zombie attacks with science and math (page 42). Sounds scary, but it works. Or in Moreno Valley, where members are working with

minority parents to close achievement gaps and open doors to lifelong learning (page 16). And then there's this member-requested topic: Adult education and its required merger, of sorts, between high schools and community colleges (page 9). Hear from teachers and students about this roller coaster ride.

I often get letters from CTA members. Some truly touch my heart, like Colleen Nishikawa-Alanis' account of her journey to self-acceptance (page 55). Others make me burst with pride. Case in point: Kimberley Gilles being honored nationally for teaching excellence (page 52).

So keep those letters and suggestions coming. Your stories are our stories, and we like sharing them. You're welcome to share, too! We've made it pretty easy for you to share these stories with your family and friends. Just visit us at cta.org/educator and look for the social media tools accompanying each article.

Cynthia Menzel
EDITOR IN CHIEF
editor@cta.org

Number of Favorable Outcomes

Total number of Possible Outcomes



ADULT EDUCATION *at a crossroads*

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

ADULT EDUCATION IS SUFFERING from an identity crisis. It's been the neglected stepchild of public education for years, and it's now on the verge of a comeback. *Kind of.*

Run by K-12 districts, adult ed classes are designed for those over 18, but teens who dropped out may enroll. It's not college, but there are programs on community college campuses. And colleges will soon be playing a much larger overall role. As if that's not confusing enough, adult education programs throughout the state have received both proclamations of death and announcements of rebirth within a single year because of on-again, off-again funding.

Depending on who you talk to, adult education is either about to be revamped in a way that ensures its survival — or entering a new state of uncertainty and chaos.

"I do worry about K-12 adult schools combining with community colleges," says **Sam Bark**, Teachers Association of Paramount. "These changes may pit one against the other."



Matthew Kogan, shown teaching ESL at Evans Adult School in Los Angeles, is concerned that parenting classes and classes for older adults were omitted from a recent bill funding adult education.



A ROLLER COASTER RIDE

Adult schools offer free or low-cost classes for adults 18 and older. In its heyday, all students could enroll in adult education courses to graduate from high school, pass the GED (General Educational Development) test, learn about jobs, learn to speak English, or learn how to become U.S. citizens. There was a plethora of parenting classes, enrichment classes such as conversational Spanish and computer skills, and classes geared for older adults.

Adult schools operate at much lower levels today in K-12 districts, and community colleges offer some adult education programs, referred to as “non-credit” or “community” courses.

HOW DID ADULT EDUCATION REACH A NEAR-DEATH STATE?

After years of gradual cutbacks, adult education entered “flexibility” or “Tier III” status in 2009, landing at the bottom of categorical programs. The cellar-dweller designation maimed adult education. Districts were given the right to raid funds from Tier III programs or shut them down completely. Many districts decimated once-thriving adult education programs or dismantled them to fund K-12 education. CTA called the move to Tier III status “short-sighted” for depriving adults of important skills necessary to securing employment.

Public outcry was huge in 2012 when Gov. Jerry Brown proposed shifting all adult education programs to community colleges within two years. Protest from faculty prompted the governor to relent. In a compromise move, he endorsed AB 86. Under this plan, K-12 districts must fund adult education programs at the same levels as 2012-13 for the next two years, while working with local community colleges to “streamline” services and develop regional consortia to oversee programs.

“It’s been a roller coaster ride without brakes. There were horrible cuts, and most of our colleagues have lost their jobs. At the moment, I think we’re at the bottom looking up.”

—**Matthew Kogan**, chair of CTA’s Subcommittee on Adult Education, describing adult education in California

ADULT ED TEACHERS SHARE CONCERNS FOR THE FUTURE



SAM BARK

GENERAL EDUCATION MATH TEACHER,
Teachers Association of Paramount

My students are ages 18 to 62. They come because they want to learn. Adult education is a second chance. I teach people who are immigrants, or who dropped out years ago or got into trouble with the law. Seeing them graduate from high school is very rewarding. America is the land of opportunity, and society will benefit from educating its adults. I do worry about K-12 adult schools combining with community colleges. They are two different entities. My classes are smaller, and students say they feel comfortable here because it is family-oriented. Community colleges are larger and more competitive with bigger classes. I worry these changes might pit one against the other.



CORI VILLALOBOS-MORROW

PARENTING EDUCATION TEACHER,
United Teachers Los Angeles

I teach various parenting classes to adults. Topics focus on child abuse prevention, discipline, developmental stages, stress management, nutrition and cognitive development. The most important lesson is the importance of parents' involvement in the home, school and community to increase their child's chances of academic success. Parents are taught that both teacher and parent must work together as a team. Eliminating parent education from the adult division will undermine this essential role parents must play for the success of their children. We will likely see an eventual increase in juvenile delinquency, child abuse and the dropout rate of high school students. This program was designed to prevent these things from happening in the first place. Most parent education teachers have already been let go. It is so disheartening that this is happening in California.



VALYNCIA JOHNSON

CAREER/COMPUTER LITERACY TEACHER,
Fairfield-Suisun Unified Teachers Association

Adult school is a place where students can gain confidence. It's a second chance for adults and maybe a first chance for so many of them. It's a place where they can feel empowered. I have students who looked for work for long periods of time, and then they came back and said "Thank you" when they found a job. One of my former students emailed me and said, "I wouldn't have gotten my diploma without you." I help them with interview skills and help them go online and look up labor market information. I help them understand they may have job skills that are transferable from one job to another. I help them build profiles on employment websites. The need is so great, but we have downsized so much. When I first came here, I worked four hours a day every day, but now it's three hours a day two days a week. I'm hanging on, like some of my students.

The 2013-14 budget allocates \$25 million for "planning and implementation" grants that community colleges can apply for to begin collaborating with their local K-12 districts on adult ed. The governor announced plans to spend \$500 million on adult education in 2015-16, with existing programs first in line to receive funding.

SB 173, which enacts the governor's compromise plan, funds adult education elementary and secondary basic academic skills, English as a Second Language (ESL), citizenship classes, short-term vocational programs with high employment potential, and programs for disabled adults.

Through omission, parenting education programs and programs for older adults won't be funded.

"I'm very concerned about these omissions," says Matthew Kogan, chair of CTA's Subcommittee on Adult Education. "I don't know any role in society that is more important than parenting. Courts refer parents to these classes. And programs for older adults cost such a small amount of money. They provide physical and mental stimulation and an opportunity to socialize for seniors who have paid taxes their entire lifetime. It seems mean-spirited to ignore them."

CAN K-12 SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES WORK TOGETHER?

"I think some of the direction of AB 86 is very good, and I like the idea of secure funding in the future," says Kogan, United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), who teaches ESL at Evans Adult School. "Some of our colleagues

are afraid of working with community colleges, but I think competing with community colleges is scarier than working together. And working collaboratively with them will secure us more support from state lawmakers.”

Ernest Kettenring, UTLA director for adult education and a member of CTA’s Adult Education Subcommittee, hopes collaboration will ensure continued survival, noting that Los Angeles has one-third of the adult education programs it once did, and is still considered to be a “survivor” compared to other districts.

“There have been structural deficiencies in adult education programs for a number of years, and those need to be addressed. One of the deficiencies is a lack of coordination with the community college system and duplication of services. Collaboration could provide a pathway that will transition adult education students into the community college system. That was missing before.”

Lynette Nyaggah, Community College Association president, is pleased with AB 86, because community colleges did not want to “poach” adult education programs from K-12 districts in the first place, even if the governor tried to give community colleges control.

While people are afraid their “territory” may be taken away from them, “it’s not a territorial issue,” Nyaggah says. “The issue is how to make the very best adult education we can in the state so our students get the education they need. There’s no one-size-fits-all. We need to put teachers in the room and have them talk about what size fits their population.”

She encourages those involved to apply for the grant money to collaborate between community college and K-12 communities. Not applying will hurt local programs in the long run because they won’t be funded, she says.

CTA HAS A ROLE IN THE TRANSITION

As part of the implementation process, a series of town hall meetings with the adult ed consortia were scheduled around the state, with stakeholders providing testimony and comment. Nyaggah attended a few with other CCA members. She is concerned there are no faculty, either K-12 or community college, on any of the decision-making bodies listed on the AB 86 website, just administrators.

“The Department of Education and the Chancellor’s Office need to hear CTA members say that faculty must be involved, since we are the ones who will live with these decisions in our classrooms.”

Hank Mollet, chair of CTA’s Adult, Alternative, Career and Technical Education Committee (which oversees the Adult Education Subcommittee), is concerned that AB 86 lacks “teeth” to make the community colleges work with school districts, so CTA members must do it themselves.

“If we don’t work together, change will be done to us, not with us. Our best opportunity is having CTA members take the lead in

ADULT ED STUDENTS SHARE SUCCESSES



ASIAH MARTINEZ
STUDENT IN SAM BARK’S ADULT
EDUCATION CLASS, *Paramount*

I started ditching school and dropped out of high school. I think adult school has been a really good learning experience. My teacher, Mr. Bark, is a phenomenal teacher who has helped me a lot, and I am grateful for that. Without him, I wouldn’t have the confidence to take the GED class.



ADILENE AVILES
STUDENT IN CORI VILLALOBOS-
MORROW’S PARENTING CLASSES,
Los Angeles

I have learned how to interact with kids, communicate with them and play with them in an age-appropriate way. Most importantly, I have learned how to communicate and talk to them in an appropriate manner instead of screaming and being mad. I look for ingredients on food I buy to make sure it’s healthy. It was a wake-up call to learn about these changes.



WADE HENDERSON
STUDENT IN VALYNIA JOHNSON’S
CAREER/COMPUTER LITERACY CLASS,
Fairfield

I’m 28 years old and about to enroll in an algebra course so I can be an electrician. Adult education will enable me to further my career and my life. I’m raising a 6-year-old boy, and it’s very necessary for people to have a place where they can go to further their education.

developing a plan through their association. We need to keep the conversations going, tapping into service centers and setting up meetings. A lot of resources can be brought together to make adult education and career education in our state more powerful. Now is the time to make it happen.”

Know&Tell

Grants, awards, contests, resources and tips to share



Together, parents and teachers are closing African American achievement gaps and opening doors to lifelong learning, thanks to the Junior Black Achievers Club.

THE CLUB HELPS STUDENTS LIKE **MALIKAH SAAFIR** ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL, SAYS MORENO VALLEY EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION MEMBER KYMBERLY TAYLOR. "IF WE BUILD RELATIONSHIPS, WE LOSE FEWER KIDS." FIND OUT HOW ON PAGE 16.

CHROMEBOOK ADVICE



THE GOOGLE CHROMEBOOK is fast becoming a mainstream computing device thanks to its low price and multitude of cloud applications. Here are five tips and tricks to make your Chromebook use more productive.



BY TERRY NG

1

TAKE AND EDIT SCREEN SHOTS.

Chrome's built-in photo editor makes this an easy task. Just press **CTRL**, then press the **Window Switch key (F5)**. When you see the screen flicker, your screen shot has been taken. Your screen shot will be saved in your Downloads folder.

2

KEEP YOUR FILES IN THE CLOUD.

Chromebook's limited internal hard drive tends to fill up fast, but did you know that every Chromebook comes bundled with 100 GB of cloud storage space? Just head over to drive.google.com/redeem to activate your free cloud storage.

3

PRINT FROM ANYWHERE.

Use Google's Cloud Print service to print to either a Cloud Ready printer that can connect directly to the Internet or a classic printer that is plugged into a Windows or Mac computer with Internet access. No wires necessary.

4

TOO MANY WINDOWS OPEN?

Hit **CTRL-M** once to minimize your current window, or keep hitting **CTRL-M** to minimize all windows, till you see the desktop.

5

USE YOUR CHROMEBOOK OFFLINE.

Head to drive.google.com and click **More** on the left-hand side of the screen. Select **Offline Docs** and install the app. Once installed, return to **Drive** and click the **Google Drive** icon. On the right hand side of the **Offline Docs** page will be a blue button that says **Enable offline**.

6

HAVING TROUBLE SEEING?

Chrome makes it easy to zoom in or out with a simple key combination. For pages that display too small, zoom in by hitting the **Ctrl-+ (plus key)** combination. You can scale pages back down the same way by using **Ctrl-- (minus key)**. Pages will always display at the last zoom setting when revisited.

Have a tech tip to share? Email editor@cta.org.

3

ways to get students excited about learning:

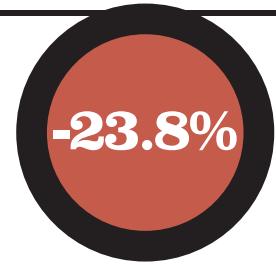
MAKE IT RELEVANT. Show students what they are learning is relevant to their lives now and show how they can use it in everyday living, such as using statistics to figure out how a sports team is doing, or algebra to determine room dimensions.

OFFER THEM A REWARD. As an incentive for a job well done, offer a snack, a video game, a pizza party, or something they enjoy in exchange for doing their best.

SET GOALS. long-term and short-term, and explain how a particular test or assignment is helping them meet their goals for success in the future.

The number of suspended or expelled students declined sharply during the last school year,

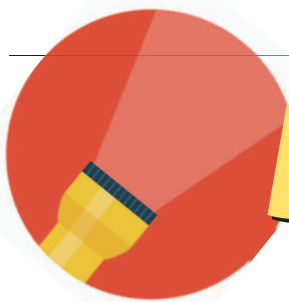
according to the California Department of Education (CDE), which credits increased measures designed to keep young people in the classroom and learning. The total number of expulsions decreased by 12.3 percent. The total number of suspensions, both in school and out of school, dropped 14.1 percent. "Student defiance" is an often-reported reason for suspensions, and this area saw the largest declines statewide. There were a total of 259,875 suspensions statewide for defiance in 2012-13, down 81,237 or 23.8 percent, compared to the year before. There were 495 expulsions for defiance in 2012-13, down 113 or 18.6 percent from the year before. (See details on page 46.)



Total Defiance Suspensions

Latinos mostly go to community colleges, even from the state's best high schools. According to a USC study, 46 percent of Latinos who graduated from California's top public schools enrolled in a community college after graduation. Students of other ethnic groups from the same schools enrolled in community colleges at a much lower rate: 19 percent of Asians, 23 percent of African Americans, and 27 percent of white students who graduated from high-performing schools went to their local community college; most went to four-year colleges. George Washington University researcher Lindsey Malcolm-Piqueux, who authored the study, concluded that efforts to close the Latino achievement gap, focusing on impoverished neighborhoods, may not be enough. She expressed concern that the completion rate for Latino students at community colleges is relatively low, as is their transfer rate to four-year colleges.

"Amping up" anxious students is better than trying to calm them down when it comes to performance. In a series of experiments highlighted in Journal of Experimental Psychology, Harvard Business School psychologist Allison Wood Brooks found that getting anxious people "amped up" or excited about an upcoming test or task improved their performance more than trying to soothe their fears. The rationale is this: **When people feel anxious and try to calm down, they are thinking about all the things that could go badly. When they are excited, they are thinking about how things could go well.** Because fear and excitement are similar types of brain arousal, Brooks believes talking about being excited can fool the brain into translating fear as anticipation. The researcher found it was easier to get children and adults to switch mentally from fear to excitement than to switch from fear to serenity.



Did you know?

IF YOU DISCOVER research you think we should shine a light on, send it along with your name and local chapter to editor@cta.org.



Kymberly Taylor says, "As we build strong relations with parents, the test scores of African American students have gone up."

Left: Reagan Clark, Taariq Elmahadi and Delante Moxley at Valley View High School.

Closing gaps, opening doors

Closing African American achievement gaps in Moreno Valley

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

“WHAT ARE THE TOP ‘soft’ skills employers are looking for?” Leah Belote asks students at Sunnymead Middle School in Moreno Valley.

Belote looks expectantly at the teens, who show up for a Junior Black Achievers meeting every Wednesday before school begins. Today is Dress for Success Day, so the boys are wearing shirts and ties, and the girls wear slacks and skirts.

Students raise their hands to discuss skills that are valued in the workplace, including teamwork, communication, time management and leadership skills.

“And you know not to come into a job interview with sagging pants, Jordans and bling-bling,” says the Moreno Valley Educators Association member with a smile.

Junior Black Achievers clubs meet weekly at each of the district’s six middle schools to discuss everything from job skills to college to technology. Activities include tutoring, field trips to colleges, community service, and presentations of guest speakers who are successful African American role models. There are also social events that teach etiquette, with adult guest speakers giving advice and encouragement.

“I was a C student, and now I’m getting B’s,” says eighth-grader Tario Scott, who is vice president. “This club helped me feel better about myself and encouraged me to get better grades so I can be on a college path.”

Before joining the club, seventh-grader Ariyon Dawson was shy. She seldom participated in class discussions and was a C student.

“Now I’m on the high honor roll. I focus better in class. I have learned how to communicate with people.”

Eighth-grader and club president Jay Martinez joined last year because he wanted his grades to go up.

“Once I started going to tutoring and asking the teachers



Leah Belote



Students look over skill sheets and résumé notes at Sunnymead Middle School.

for help, I was able to ask questions in class. We went on a field trip to UC Santa Barbara. It was very exciting to see students of different races in the same classroom wanting to be successful and go somewhere in life. I'm planning on going to the University of Connecticut or to Arizona State."

The club is geared toward African American students, but does not discriminate. White and Latino students have also joined and are doing better in school.

A districtwide effort

The middle school clubs are just part of a districtwide effort to help African American students achieve their potential.

At the high school level, Young Black Achievers (YBA) and Black Student Union (BSU) programs focus on community service projects, college preparation, scholarships and workplace success.

Members must maintain a 3.0 GPA to be in YBA, and a 2.0 for BSU. YBA members tutor struggling peers who belong to the Black Student Union on their campus, and both BSU and YBA serve as mentors and tutors to Junior Black Achievers at local middle schools.

"My senior project is mentoring middle school girls and helping them to improve their self-esteem," explains Sunterrah Palmer, a senior at Valley View High School. "Working together, we can be strong and help each other."

Taariq Elmahadi, a member of the Young Black Achievers, says the clubs have fostered unity among black students that has improved overall school culture.

"Before, we were disconnected as a whole. We were fighting amongst each other. My eyes have opened. I realize how important it is to bring the black community together and help each other."

The parent equation

Parents working with Moreno Valley Educators Association members are a huge part of the shift. They formed an African American Advisory Council for the district, which meets monthly, and nearly every school site has an African American Parent Advisory Council.

The partnership of MVEA members, African American parents, students, administrators and other community stakeholders occurred after a historic Underground Railroad Tour in the Deep South a few years ago. Teachers and parents say they came back from that journey deeply committed to increasing parent involvement, boosting student achievement and fostering a spirit of togetherness.

"We started reaching out to parents, because they have the power to change things here," says MVEA member Kymberly Taylor, a school counselor and adviser of United Black Student Unions of Southern California, who is credited with starting the collaboration. "As we build strong relations with parents and connect with them, the test scores of African American students have gone up. They are still not at the level where they ought to be, but they have gone up."

API scores of black Moreno Valley School District students have gone from 651 to 698 over five years.

Parents and MVEA members created a curriculum called Footsteps to Success based on the seven principals of Kwanzaa to help black students feel more connected to school. Most high school classes focus more on white accomplishments in textbooks, and the Footsteps to Success curriculum offers a black perspective with activities such as bringing in storytellers from UC Riverside's Black Voice Foundation.

"The curriculum fosters a feeling of kids feeling connected to the community, and that in turn helps them focus on being prepared for college and the career world," says Taylor. "If we build those relationships, we will lose fewer kids."

Restoration Jubilee Center, a faith-based organization in Riverside County, is also a partner, sponsoring free workshops on SAT preparation, how to pay for college, and academic success strategies.

Micki Clowney, a parent who serves on the district's African American Advisory Council, says she is pleased parents are playing a stronger role and more involved in the schools. Parents, she says, serve as a "clearinghouse" when district and school strategies are discussed to improve student achievement.

"Traditionally, it has been us against them," she explains of the relationship between African American parents and school staff. "But now we are working to create a village. We are finally on the same page."



Micki Clowney

80

PERCENT

The new U.S. high school graduation rate unveiled Feb. 14, the highest nationwide rate in American history, as reported by the U.S. Department of Education.

519,000

STUDENTS

Number of charter school students in California, which leads the nation in the opening of new charter schools, according to an industry report.

110 trillion

DOLLARS

Amount of wealth owned by the 85 richest people in the world — the same as owned by the entire bottom half of the world's population, according to the British humanitarian group Oxfam.

6th

PLACE

Improved national ranking of California in the number of high school graduates who scored at least a passing 3 out of 5 on an Advanced Placement exam last year (up from eighth place).

29

DISTRICTS

The number of California districts honored for improving student AP exam access. As a result, the number of students from low-income backgrounds taking at least one AP exam tripled.

The Numbers

Quotes & Numbers

WE COMB THE MEDIA DAILY for the best quotes and statistics about public education. If you discover a quote or stat you think we should highlight, send it along with your name to editor@cta.org.

“VERGARA DISREGARDS THE BENEFICIAL PURPOSES OF THE STATUTES UNDER ATTACK AND IGNORES THE FULL CONTEXT OF PROBLEMS CONFRONTING OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND SOCIETY. THE CASE RELIES ON VARIOUS MYTHS, INCLUDING THE MYTH THAT CALIFORNIA TEACHERS HAVE A ‘JOB FOR LIFE’ AFTER A TWO-YEAR PROBATIONARY PERIOD.”

—CTA Chief Counsel **EMMA LEHENY**, analyzing the deceptions in the *Vergara v. State of California* lawsuit attacking teachers’ due process rights, in a column published Feb. 12 in the *Daily Journal* legal trade newspaper.

“It is my honor to accept this award in the name of the American public school teacher. It is my honor to say to you: Well done! You labor in the vineyards, and you bring home a good harvest.”

—Bay Area teacher **KIMBERLEY GILLES**, accepting the NEA Member Benefits Award for Teaching Excellence last month at the annual NEA Foundation gala in Washington, D.C. (Read more on page 52.)

“UNFORTUNATELY, THE DISTRICT IS INTENT ON BUILDING THEIR RESERVE FUND AND BREAKING TEACHERS’ BACKS FINANCIALLY, BASED ON FAULTY FINANCIAL ASSUMPTIONS. ULTIMATELY, IT IS THE STUDENTS AND THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY WHO WILL SUFFER.”

—Alpine Teachers Association President **GAYLE MALONE**, explaining why ATA members went on strike Feb. 20.

“Do you know the difference between education and experience? Education is when you read the fine print; experience is what you get when you don’t.”

—**PETE SEEGER**, American folk music icon and champion of social justice, who died on Jan. 27 in New York of natural causes. He was 94.

Perspectives

Members' opinions and practical advice, plus guest columns and reviews



During a school health aide's day, she deals with kids who have wiggly teeth, twisted ankles, allergic reactions or tummy aches, or are simply having a bad day.

HERMOSA BEACH EDUCATION ASSOCIATION ESP MEMBER **TONI BELKNAP** TALKS WITH TRITON QUILLING. BESIDES TENDING TO BOO-BOOS, SHE ADMINISTERS MEDICATIONS AND SUPPORTS SCHOOL NURSES. READ ABOUT HER ON PAGE 21.

Should schools provide condoms to students?

NO

As a teacher, my motivation is to teach my subject matter and to impart two necessary skills students will need to be successful in their lives: ethics and critical thinking. Passing out condoms at school sends a mixed message to our students, and leads our public education system down a slippery slope of determining what is right and moral — and what is not.

I understand the noble intentions of passing out condoms at school: It prevents the spread of venereal disease and lessens the chance of unwanted pregnancies. But it conveys the message that the public school system promotes underage, premarital intercourse. That is not the role of the public school. The public school's mission should be to provide the tools necessary to make those moral decisions: ethics (the ability to know right and wrong, good from bad), critical thinking (the reasoning and judgment based on the information presented), and finally action/reaction (doing something, but then knowing that those actions can lead to consequences).

By giving condoms out to our underage children, we are preventing them from using the decision-making skills needed in real life situations; we are making those decisions for them. Moral decisions like this issue should be made in the home. We live and work in a society that is not only multicultural, but has multi-values. Respect the fact that families will provide a moral structure for the children.

Besides, if we begin that move into moral teaching, whose morals do we teach? For example, do we teach the Judeo-Christian view? Morals based on Islamic or Eastern philosophies? Is it based on a culture's or nation's set of values? Where does it end, and whose values and morals will be perceived as irrelevant and wrong?

The best and most effective way to deal with this situation is to do what we do best — educate. Let's teach about the effects of STDs and human reproduction in school. That is not morality-based, but facts. Let's give our students the information and critical thinking skills to make the wise decisions.

Ironically, what we need to do is to have faith that our students will make the right decisions. Passing out condoms at school prevents that, and sends a message that our public institutions support certain dangerous and possibly inappropriate behaviors.

TIMOTHY BUCKLEY, *King City Union Elementary Teachers Association, teaches seventh-grade language arts.*



Schools are dispensing condoms in Daly City, Santa Rosa, Los Angeles, and other areas around the state to protect students from sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. Two CTA members share opposing viewpoints on this issue.



YES

Tulare County, where I live, has had one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the country. In fact, the Central Valley leads the nation in the number of teen pregnancies nearly every year. Providing access to contraception is the key to changing this.

Students do not use condoms due to embarrassment, confidentiality, cost, access, transportation, and the perception that the risks of pregnancy and infection are low. Many students do not know where to find or get to a local clinic where they can get them for free.

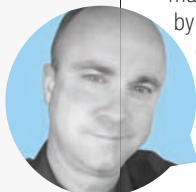
Who better to trust to give them something that could be useful in preventing sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy than the student's school? Of course, we must invest in proper health education instruction from a qualified teacher, who can show students how to use them before handing them out. Studies consistently show that talking to kids about sex or handing out condoms does not make them more sexually active. In fact, it has the opposite effect. Abstinence is great, but let's be realistic. Students don't always listen.

Nearly 3 million teenagers will get an STD this year. Most parents will tell me their kid is not having sex, but they know other kids are having sex. There are a lot of naive parents out there. The cost of teen pregnancy is staggering. Two out of three teen moms never finish high school. They typically end up depending on public assistance for most of their child's life and beyond.

Condoms, if used correctly, are very effective at preventing pregnancy and many STDs. As a society, we need to step up and realize we live in a different world than we did 20 or 30 years ago. Condom commercials are now on television. With the Internet and other electronic media, children are exposed to sex at earlier and earlier ages. Making contraception more accessible to students just might be a step in the right direction.

My district does not allow condoms to be handed out. They will not allow us to show how to use them, but we can tell them. That's insane. We may very easily save a life, in more ways than one, by making this type of contraception available in our schools.

DAVE RODGERS, *Visalia Unified Teachers Association, teaches health science.*





In Toni's words:

I think I relate well to children...

because I give off a comfortable vibe. I am cheerful. My office is comfortable and not sterile. If a child is bleeding or crying, I try to distract them with a cute picture I have hanging up. I'm a mother of three children. In addition to being trained in first aid and CPR, that's probably the best training any health aide can have.

One of the children I helped...

had a severe nut allergy and was afraid to even sit at the peanut-free table. He ate in my office for months. Every day I tried to get him to join his friends at the nut-free table, but he was afraid. After convincing him it was safe, I was finally able to get him to go out at snack one day and eat with his friends. He never came back. I was so happy to help him overcome his fear.

Children are so funny...

especially the "frequent fliers." These are the children who will think of any reason to come down to my office, whether it's a blister or an invisible bug bite. Sometimes they work in pairs. They will limp in and say "We both twisted ankles" or "We both have a tummy ache." I will say, "Wow,

isn't that amazing you both have the same ailment!" My job never ceases to amaze me.

One of the funniest things that happened...

was when a girl came into my office crying hysterically. She told me she was going to die because her friend had made her put hand sanitizer in her mouth. Her friends told her people who eat hand sanitizer are going to die because it is poison. I told her she was not going to die; it was like putting soap in her mouth. I explained she might get a tummy ache if she drank the whole bottle, but that she wasn't going to die. She was so relieved.

One of the kids who really tugged at my heartstrings...

was a little boy who was always very sad and angry when he came in. He just needed TLC. I always talked to him and gave him hugs. Now he is a grade older and so much happier. Whenever I see him he yells "Miss Toni!" and runs up and hugs me. You can't imagine how it feels to see such a positive change in a child and wonder whether that little bit of extra time I gave him really helped.

MAKING KIDS WITH BOO-BOOS FEEL BETTER IS HER SPECIALTY

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

A YOUNG GIRL says she "crashed" off a big blue swing and bumped the back of her neck. "Can I lie down for a while?" she asks tearfully.

A boy who bumped his head on the playground walks in and asks for a SpongeBob ice pack to make him feel better. He is more angry than hurt, complaining that the person who bumped him didn't even say he was sorry. After a few minutes of holding the ice pack, he trudges back to class.

A youngster with a wiggly tooth strolls in and asks if he can stay for a few minutes until his mouth feels a little bit better.

Toni Belknap gives a warm welcome and hug to the youngsters who visit her office at View Elementary School in Hermosa Beach. "Where does it hurt? How can I make it feel better? Should we call your mommy?"

The Hermosa Beach Education Association ESP member at the K-2 school has been administering first aid — and hugs — to little ones in need at the site for five years. In addition to tending to boo-boos, the health aide maintains the school's immunization files, handwrites medical cards for students and inputs their information into the computer, administers medication to students, and supports school nurses when they are conducting hearing screenings. She has been trained to administer EpiPens if a child has an allergic reaction or Diastat if a child has a seizure. She also answers the school telephone when needed.

"There's never a dull moment," says Belknap. "The kids are so cute, and I love to help take care of them."

Why I chose National Board Certification

BY BEV BRICKER, PALM SPRINGS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

WHEN I FIRST HEARD of National Board Certification, I had been teaching 10 years and was a Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) support provider. I incorrectly assumed that I needed my own classroom filled with students in order to attempt this certification.

I knew this process would be difficult, and I wanted a challenge. Very rarely do we get the chance to stop and deeply reflect on our teaching. That is what this process required I do, stop and reflect.

In the early days of National Board Certification, teachers across the country reached out to other candidates to form online support groups. Yahoo Groups was a favorite back then in 1993, when the first National Board teachers were certified.

Now those groups have become sessions led by a trained Candidate Support Provider, many of them trained through CTA-sanctioned events. Joining a community of educators seeking a higher certification, working together to analyze

our practice and supporting each other through the process was one of the many positive unintended consequences for me. The level of trust developed by critiquing each other's videos was powerful. This was not a mandated professional development I was required to attend, but rather a process I chose for myself.

I was drawn to National Board Certification because it is teachers setting the bar high for teachers. It is one of the steps educators are making in the process of taking back our profession from the politicians. National Board's five core propositions speak to what I believe and want for my chosen profession:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

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3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

Now, for the first time in 14 years, the National Board is revising the credentialing process. As in the past, candidates must have three years of teaching experience to apply and can take up to three years to complete the process. The revised process is based on the latest research, is more flexible, and has a reduced cost (\$1,900).

This revision will roll out over a three-year period with the first two components available for new candidates in the 2014-15 cycle. These first two components offer the opportunity to demonstrate content knowledge through a computer assessment and

how instruction is differentiated through an analysis of student work.

In recent years, public school educators have endured the mandates from our policymakers in Washington and Sacramento and from our districts and site administrators. Somewhere along the way, far too many of us chose to close our doors and do what we knew our students needed in isolation. In our separated classrooms, we secluded ourselves and relinquished our voices. What an opportunity was lost as a result of those actions.

Working with peers to improve our practice is where our strength lies. Being a part of a professional peer group that offers meaningful feedback, asks the probing questions and is an encouragement when things get overwhelming can make all the difference for our fellow teachers and all our students.

The beauty of this program is that even if you do not certify, the process provides the opportunity to grow and refine your teaching skills. I encourage others to attempt it. If nothing else, there are times when having an additional certification helps those outside the educational community take notice and understand that teachers are the experts.



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RUN? HIDE? FIGHT?

**New safety strategies
for worst-case scenarios**

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

What would you do if a shooter was on campus?
Would you lock your door, huddle in a corner with
students, try to keep them calm, and wait to be rescued?
Would you try to evacuate students?
Would you fight back?





Educators are learning to be proactive to increase the odds of survival. Here, teachers barricade a classroom door to deter a shooter during an ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate) training.

IN A WORST-CASE SCENARIO, teachers usually lock their classrooms, hide with students and wait for police. It doesn't always work. It didn't work in Columbine 15 years ago or in Sandy Hook Elementary one year ago. Some educators are learning how to be proactive to increase the odds that students and staff will survive a shooting. They are learning skills they hope they will never have to use, such as how to build barricades, evacuate students during a rampage, and even distract or disarm a shooter with the help of students as a last resort.

Such training is taking place in rural Modoc County, where a year ago a teen threatened to shoot "a classroom of kids" along with faculty members at the local high school. He was apprehended by police, who caught him holding a knife on his parents and attempting to load

a rifle. Now, in an empty schoolhouse in the town of Likely, CTA members, administrators and law enforcement agents practice survival skills.

"You may have adrenaline rushing and get caught up in the moment. If you get scared, yell 'safety, safety, safety.' If someone screams those three words, you must stop what you are doing immediately."

After hearing these instructions, groups of teachers and other training participants don safety masks and walk into empty classrooms. One member of each group has a two-way radio; soon a voice resonates over the airwaves that the scenario is about to begin.

The participants in Group 3 become quiet and dim the lights. They huddle in a corner quietly. Outside, a male screams, "Open up. I know you're in there." The door bursts open and he begins shooting. After firing numerous shots, he departs and visits the next classroom.

"Hello, hello, I know you're in there," he yells tauntingly, and begins shooting all over again.

Fortunately, this eerily realistic scenario with plastic pellets is only a drill. But it's still terrifying.

"How many of you were shot?" asks instructor Al Bahn of the ALICE Training Institute when participants regroup. Several hands go up from individuals, many of whom are still smarting from the pellets.

"Now let's practice some skills that could bring the death toll down," says Bahn. "In a real incident, I can't guarantee that everyone would survive. But I'm giving you a tool box of tactics and information about how to select the best tactic at the right moment."

CTA members and administrators attending the training say they plan on teaching their colleagues these tactics and strategies upon their return.

"You need to be prepared for these situations to keep kids safe," says Tulelake Basin Teachers Association (TBTA) member Tricia Brown. "Things have happened that have changed the way we think. We need to be prepared for these situations and practice what to do."



1 in 21,000

The chances of a school shooting taking place in a U.S. high school in any given year

Heather Wright, Paula Silva and Michael Kehoe wait for a shooter behind a bookcase during a training.



Robert Shaljean, shown with Paul Olano, says he thought the ALICE training was beneficial. "If anything ever really happened, I'd have something to fall back on."

↓ **TIPS** TO SURVIVE A SCHOOL SHOOTING



Prepare and plan what you would do if an armed attacker is on your campus.



Try and exit, if possible. If you know the shooter is in another area of the building, try to evacuate your students to a safe area.



If you can't exit, hide. Barricade your door with chairs, desks, sofas, etc. The bigger the barricade, the more likely a shooter is to move on to an easier target.



Use a landline to call 911, if possible. If something happens, the address will appear to the dispatcher.



Silence your cellphone. It can give your location away.

A nationwide shift in thinking

ALICE stands for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate. The organization has offered trainings in California school districts in Los Angeles, Vallejo, Pittsburg, Antioch, Sacramento, Merced, Woodside and elsewhere throughout the nation.

The training reflects the new recommendations from the U.S. Department of Education for keeping students safe, known as "Run, Hide, Fight." The new guidelines ask educators to take a more assertive role in trying to survive the unlikely event of a shooter on campus, such as throwing chairs and staplers at an intruder or turning a fire extinguisher on an attacker.

Not everyone agrees with the shift in protocol, and some teachers have anonymously complained in the media that they should not be expected to play Rambo. The new strategies have never been tested, but some who have taken the ALICE training say they feel better having been taught about things they could do.

"I personally thought it was a good thing, because if



Linda Chan

anything ever really happened, I'd have something to fall back upon," says Robert Shaljean, a math teacher at Buhach Colony High School in Atwater who took the training a year ago and recently underwent a refresher course.

"Most teachers thought it was beneficial," says the Merced Union High School District Teachers Association member. "Our school has an extremely detailed safety plan required by law, but classroom teachers don't have a clue what to do."

"I'm in favor of this type of training," says Linda Chan, a math teacher at Mt. San Antonio College and the chair of CTA's Safety Committee. "We need as much training as possible so we can make quick, intelligent decisions instead of panicking. Even with all that training, you just don't know what will happen. You can't always predict what is going to happen, but you should certainly be prepared for any situation.

My personal thoughts are train, train, train."

The Mt. San Antonio College Faculty Association member had plenty of training as a former firefighter. She is especially concerned about college safety, since it's a completely open environment.

Keith Brown, vice-chair of CTA's Safety Committee, also sees the shift in a positive light.

"I agree that we need to look at different approaches and be proactive in dealing with any active violence on our school campuses including gun violence," says the Bret Harte Middle School English teacher and Oakland Education Association member. "I feel that one of our responsibilities as teachers is to ensure the safety of all students. Most of our members don't believe in arming teachers and don't want that responsibility. But most of the teachers I know — and members of CTA's Safety Committee — are open to looking at different approaches in dealing with a violent situation on campus."

While there may be a perception that school violence has gone up, in reality it has gone down, and schools are among the safest places for children to be, adds Brown, whose students live in a high-crime neighborhood. And while he approves of training teachers to be proactive to counter an armed intruder, he believes the real solution to school violence lies in addressing the social and emotional needs of students and offering counseling services, anti-bullying programs and a restorative justice approach to create a safe, nurturing environment on campus.

However, he acknowledges, these things may not always prevent violence.

John Czajkowski shows how to barricade a classroom door. "Fighting back should always be a last-ditch effort," he says.



EX-NAVY SEAL TEACHER LEADS SCHOOL SAFETY EFFORTS IN CHULA VISTA

DESPITE THE FEAR that school shootings inspire in the public, John Czajkowski urges educators to keep things in perspective.

"According to the FBI, there is a one in a million chance of someone being killed at school. According to the National Safety Council, there is a one in 80,000 chance of being killed by lightning and a one in 84 chance of being killed during a car accident over the course of a lifetime. There is a one in seven chance of dying of cancer and a one in four chance of dying of heart disease. We can't allow paranoia to rule our lives."



Keith Brown, shown with Alejandro Villa, says, "We need to look at different approaches and be proactive in dealing with any violence."



Ways of being proactive

“We are mostly telling people they have options,” says Marianne Alvarez of the ALICE Training Institute. “We tell children to fight and run for their lives if there is ‘stranger danger,’ so why tell them to sit in the corner if there’s danger in their school? Statistically, when everybody gets in a corner, it makes one big easy target for a shooter to hit.”

ALICE training calls for educators to use whatever tactical advantage they have available — especially outnumbering the assailants. Teachers and students can make barricades out of desks, chairs and heavy objects, making it difficult for a shooter to enter. Older students can be taught to throw chairs, desks, books and heavy objects to distract a shooter, and move constantly, interfering with the intruder’s ability to shoot accurately. Fire extinguishers can be sprayed, thrown or used to hit someone. Younger children can be taught to run around and provide a distraction so others can escape. In the Columbine library, where 10 were killed and

READ MORE ON PAGE 30. ➤

Despite the odds against it happening, Czajkowski thinks school employees should be prepared. Since the attack at Sandy Hook Elementary School, he has been using his skills and expertise as security manager and Security Work Group chairman for Sweetwater Union High School District.

He’s well qualified: Before becoming an English and music theory teacher at Bonita Vista High School in Chula Vista, John Czajkowski graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy and served as a Navy Seal leader from 1989 to 1997.

Under his guidance, teams from each school in the district have been trained in the Cornell threat assessment model, to determine how dangerous a threat may. (For example, did a student say “I’ll kill you” in jest, or was there something behind it? Has a student’s behavior changed in a way that should alarm teachers?) His district recently implemented Positive Behavior Intervention Support programs, anti-bullying programs and a method for students to anonymously report tips if they anticipate violence.

“It’s not just about security. It’s about teachers and staff developing relationships with students and developing an effective system of communication,” says the Sweetwater Education Association member, who teaches Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate classes. “In most mass killings on school campuses, someone knew the kid was going to do something and the information was not acted upon. So many incidents could have been prevented.”

Building safety has also been improved under his guidance. Mylar, a film that makes most windows resistant to bullets, has been used to cover windows in some school sites where staff were vulnerable. He comments that glass makes schools appear to be open and accessible environments, but can

make schools open and accessible to shooters, too.

Czajkowski has shown fellow educators how they can use cheap magnets to keep doors from opening.

“Internally locking doors are ideal, but they are expensive to retrofit. My schools keep older externally-locking doors routinely locked but held slightly ajar with a short stack of inexpensive refrigerator style magnets. To secure the door during daily or emergency situations, you remove the magnets. This avoids fumbling with keys or exposure to an outside threat.”

In addition to training staff in standard lockdown procedures that include locking the door from the inside, closing the blinds and having cellphones powered off, he shows educators how to build strong barricades to protect classrooms.

“Never give up during an attack,” says Czajkowski. “During the Virginia Tech shooting, some people successfully barricaded classrooms to deny the killer access. Others leapt out second-story windows to save their lives. Quick thinking, communication and leadership also saved lives at Columbine and other places.”

Fighting back should always be viewed as a “last-resort offensive option” for teachers when evasion or evacuation is not possible, says Czajkowski, who has demonstrated to a few employees on each campus, including teachers, how to use a fire extinguisher or other tools to fend off an armed intruder. Real training in fighting back can take weeks or months to acquire competency, he emphasizes.

“I don’t want people to have a false sense of confidence about this,” he says. “A lot of things can go wrong. That’s why fighting back should always be a last-ditch effort.”



Above: **Heather Wright** and **Tricia Brown** watch a video of the shooter scenarios. Left: School nurse **Jody Johnson** says, “The scenarios really brought this to life.”

12 were injured, it was 56 against two — and the two won. That shouldn’t happen, says Alvarez.

Under the “alert” part of ALICE, schools are urged not just to announce a lockdown, but to announce over the PA system that a shooter is on campus, what he looks like and where he’s located, so that teachers know they can evacuate students in areas where the attack isn’t happening. Students can be taught to leave the building, scatter and rendezvous at a safe location previously agreed upon.

As for fighting back — that is a personal decision, says Alvarez.

“If you have 25 students in class throwing textbooks or chairs and someone with a fire extinguisher on the side of the door ready to spray, you can save lives,” says Alvarez. “In the beginning, it wasn’t easy to convince people about this. They would say, ‘I’m not trained to do anything but teach.’ Unfortunately, we need to make this type of training as mainstream as fire drills. When’s the last time a child died in a fire? It was 1958. When is the last time a child died due to violence in school? It was probably last week.”

Testing out the new strategies

CTA members and other workshop participants are told to return to their classrooms and try again. This time, in multiple scenarios, they practice skills learned from the ALICE training. In Group 3, they build a barricade with a participant’s belt, but it snaps easily. (Many get shot.) They hear an armed intruder in another part of the school and decide to evacuate by climbing out a window and also fleeing out the door. (One person is shot.)

Next, it’s the “last resort” scenario when nothing else works and it’s time to fight back. Participants are given rubber balls to throw (in lieu of books, staplers, chairs and other heavy objects during a real-life situation) to distract the shooter while he is rushed by individuals stationed on either side of the door.

Participants actually disarm ALICE trainer Al Bahn when he pushes open the door. It happens so quickly, Bahn doesn’t have time to fire one shot.

Michael Kehoe, a school counselor and TBTA member who ends up with the pellet gun during the melee, says he feels empowered.

“But I think about what this would have been like if we’d had a classroom full of children,” he muses. “How would we respond? I’m not sure, but this has really raised my consciousness.”

“The scenarios really brought this to life,” says school nurse Jody Johnson, Plumas County Teachers Association. “It got my adrenaline going. Nothing helps people learn something better than practicing. As educators, we know this.”



Paula Silva

Paula Silva, a member of the Big Valley Teachers Association, says she worries about school violence, but feels she now has options in the unlikely event that a shooter enters her campus.

“We live in a remote area, and we don’t always get a timely response from law enforcement,” says Silva. “But this gave us a good sense of the things we can do. I think it’s worth it to fight, as opposed to just sitting in a corner waiting for something to happen.”

“We’re in the business of educating children,” says Heather Wright, TBTA. “I guess you could say after this training that the business of education just got a little broader.”

For more information on the ALICE Training Institute, visit www.alicetraining.com.

Advocacy

News from the legal, legislative, bargaining and education policy fronts



Wonder why they're smiling? South Lake Tahoe Educators Association negotiated a two-year agreement that includes a 3 percent increase the first year, a 6.5 percent increase the second, plus additional elementary preparation time, an increase in the after-school hourly rate, and a work year reduction of two calendar days with no reduction to the salary schedule.

AFTER YEARS OF STAGNANT SALARIES, RISING CLASS SIZES AND CONSTANT THREATS OF TAKEAWAYS, SLTEA BARGAINING TEAM MEMBERS (LEFT TO RIGHT) **ALICIA FULLER**, **JODI DAYBERRY**, **CARLA ZEZULA**, **KELLY DANT**, AND **GENE MATTEUCCI** CELEBRATE AN AGREEMENT THAT MEMBERS SAY IS "THE BEST DEAL WE'VE SEEN IN THE LAST 15 YEARS!"

READ ABOUT MORE SETTLEMENTS ON PAGE 36.

PHOTO BY JOELLA ARAGON

CalSTRS Unfunded Liability

Despite critics' claims, it's not bankrupt, and it won't bankrupt the state

BY CLAUDIA BRIGGS

♥ **THE LAST FEW YEARS** of the economic downturn took a toll on our ability to create the kind of learning environments we know our students need if they are to be prepared for life and success in the 21st century. We stepped up to the challenge and continued to provide an outstanding education, even when school districts reduced both teaching and support staff positions and salaries stagnated. The saving grace was, and continues to be, the promise of a secure retirement — modest, yet secure. The average retirement benefit for a teacher who worked more than 25 years is \$3,300 per month.

“We know that secure retirement is critical to attracting and keeping quality educators. As educators, we live by two basic rules: work hard and play by the rules,” says CTA President Dean E. Vogel. “California public school educators have kept their word, never missing a contribution to their retirements. We believe the state must ensure that the retirement commitments made to teachers and other education professionals are fulfilled.”

The California State Teachers' Retirement System, like pension funds and investment-based savings worldwide, took a financial hit due to the global recession. It is not bankrupt, and it will not bankrupt the state. The CalSTRS shortfall did not happen overnight, and it cannot be addressed overnight. It is going to take time, commitment and collaboration from all stakeholders — that includes us.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- CalSTRS members contribute 8 percent of their monthly pay to help finance their retirement. Employers or local school districts kick in 8.25 percent of monthly pay. The state contributes a little more than 3 percent, which formerly was 4.6 percent but was reduced in 1998 when the fund was flush. The returns garnered by CalSTRS investments do the rest.
- CalSTRS faces a current shortfall of \$71 billion that lawmakers need to address to ensure the plan remains solvent beyond 2043 and to keep the promises made to educators.
- The shortfall was created by the dot-com bust in 2003 and was initially \$20 billion, but was exacerbated to its current level as a result of the economic recession.
- The shortfall is like a mortgage and is based on a 30-year projection.
- Increased contributions, whether through state, employer or employee contributions, may be needed to close the gap and reduce the impact of different party contributions.
- Any changes in contributions should be gradual over a period of time.
- CalSTRS achieved a 19.1 percent rate of return for 2012-13.

Fair share solution?

CTA believes all stakeholders must work together to craft an ongoing, comprehensive solution that will continue to attract and retain quality educators and that will not harm education. CTA supports a fair share solution with increases in contributions from the state, school districts and educators.

According to CalSTRS, acting now to fully fund the program over the next 30 years would translate to an additional contribution of 15.6 percent of payroll. (See chart.)

In crafting a shared solution, CTA believes the state needs to increase its CalSTRS contribution at least to previous levels (4.6 percent). The state has saved more than \$3.3 billion from reduced contributions over the past decade. As in the past, the state's contribution should not take any funding away from students and should not come from Proposition 98 funds.

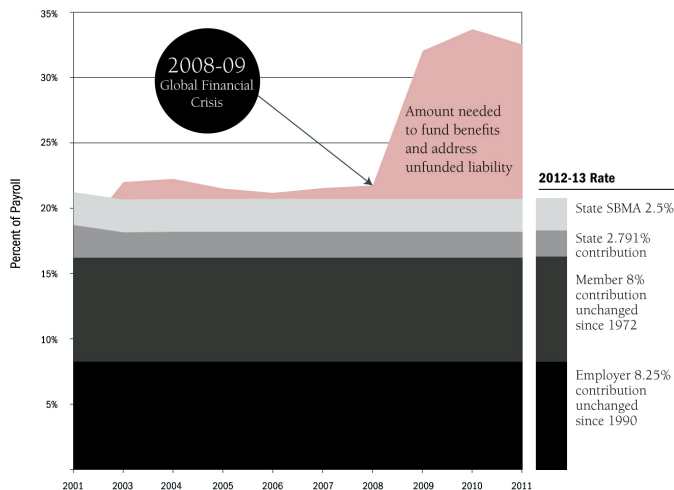
Fortunately, the governor is taking this matter very seriously and is urging lawmakers to work together this session to find a solution to the unfunded liability. Already, Assembly Speaker John Pérez (D-Los Angeles) and Assembly Member Rob Banta (D-Oakland) have outlined their plan to begin to address the shortfall. The legislators said all options are on the table except the “ostrich” option of pretending a problem doesn't exist. The first step is a commitment to hold committee hearings that will allow for input and an in-depth look at the facts, which should help lawmakers come up with proposals.

Now some critics claim that CalSTRS is heading toward insolvency, and therefore should be eliminated. While there is a \$71 billion shortfall, this does not have to be paid overnight. Like a mortgage, this is an amount that will need to be closed over a 30-year period.

“The shortfall has to be addressed, and CTA is committed to partnering with CalSTRS in finding a long-term funding solution, as we have since the system's inception in 1913,” says Vogel. “We are also very much looking forward to ongoing conversations with legislators to address this serious problem beginning this session. Instead of attacking teachers over their modest retirement benefits, we should all be having discussions about how to create better retirement options for everyone. Eliminating the retirement options for teachers and public employees will not add to anyone's retirement security.”

All Californians should have a safe and secure retirement system, just like teachers and other public servants. The real problem is not that teachers, firefighters and other public servants have defined-benefit plans, but that many private-sector workers do not.

Benefit Funding Sources



The state contribution reflects 2.017% beginning in 2003-04 and is 2.791% for the 2012-13 fiscal year.

Source: CalSTRS

That's because the private sector systemically eliminated defined-benefit pension plans in favor of risky 401(k) plans to reduce costs to corporate America at the expense of the American worker.

Keeping and retaining teachers

Despite the shortfall, CalSTRS has been and continues to be a sound system. Until the market collapse, CalSTRS consistently met or exceeded its assumed rate of return. Even now, CalSTRS is 71 percent funded and has sufficient assets and projected contributions to pay benefits until 2043.

CTA believes the solution needs to be fair and equitable for all educators, and that increases in educator contributions should minimize inequities between current and future educators, and should not create new, additional or unequal contribution tiers.

Elk Grove Education Association President Maggie Ellis testified to the Assembly Public Employees, Retirement and Social Security Committee: "We are so focused on our students. ... This retirement system is about us, but it's also good for our students because it keeps good teachers in the classroom."

"I have recommended many a colleague to University of San Diego, Continuing Education."

CarolAnn Barr-Gutkowski,
Teacher, Dearborn Public Schools

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Meet an advocate:

ASSEMBLY MEMBER SHARON QUIRK-SILVA

♥ **CTA MEMBER** Sharon Quirk-Silva represents California's 65th Assembly District, which includes her hometown of Fullerton, Anaheim, and neighboring communities. A 27-year classroom teacher, she graduated from Fullerton College and UCLA and earned her teaching credential at CSU Fullerton. She currently serves on the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC), an advisory body to the State Board of Education (SBE) on matters related to curriculum, instructional materials and content.

What did you do before becoming a lawmaker?

I have been a Title I specialist, a Healthy Start coordinator and a classroom teacher for 27 years in my hometown of Fullerton. The next step in my career was to serve on the Fullerton City Council in 2004. I served two terms as Fullerton City mayor, in 2007 and 2011.

What led you to run for office?

My evolving role as a teacher, parent, and community leader led me to run for office. It started when I was appointed to the Parks and Recreation Commission. Experiencing these new ways to serve the community and seeing the direct impact of my work inspired me to run for office. Working as an educator and within our local government gave me a unique perspective on how to navigate Sacramento.

Who was the teacher who had the greatest impact on you?

My fourth-grade teacher, Mrs. Davis, made education come alive. She captivated us by incorporating active participation. I remember her teaching us how to square-dance and play the harmonica. She went beyond her responsibilities and curriculum as a teacher and drew out the artist in me. Mrs. Davis has been a constant role model and reminder that as teachers, we pass on not only the school curriculum but also the love of education.

What are your hopes or goals for public education?

I hope public education engages students — that it helps us see and believe in our students' potential and push them to accomplish more than they think they

are capable of. We need to invest in our schools so that our students receive the quality education they deserve. My goal for this state is the same: to move up from one of the lowest-ranked states in education funding. Education helps us meet our state's potential.

What steps should the Legislature take to help schools succeed?

Our primary role should be to invest in our youth in early education, K-12, and higher education. When our public schools succeed, our communities benefit. As a member of the Higher Education Committee, I have sought legislation to expand access to Cal Grants, and supported the Middle Class Scholarship, which will reduce student fees at the California State University and University of California by up to 40 percent.

What advice would you give educators about working with the legislators?

Teachers need to know that they are part of the equation and that we want their voices heard. I understand educators are primarily focused on their classrooms and students. They are juggling curriculum, behavior, parents, testing, and most of all, showing results. State legislators may seem far off and disconnected. Legislators need to visit classrooms, talk to teachers, and get familiar with their local legislative district. Invite them to your school and build relationships with your elected legislators. Help them hear your voice in any way you can.



Update: On Feb. 20, the day plaintiffs rested their case, CTA and CFT held a news conference showing the lawsuit to be groundless and outlining the defense that state and CTA/CFT attorneys intend to present. Martha Sanchez, a Los Angeles parent, told reporters she is "sick and tired" of poor parents being exploited by wealthy corporate interests like those backing Students Matter and the Vergara lawsuit. The trial is expected to continue through much of March.

Vergara trial is under way

On Jan. 27 a landmark court case attacking the professional and due process rights of teachers got under way in Los Angeles Superior Court. *Vergara v. California* is the latest in a series of simplistic "blame teachers first" solutions to complex challenges facing public education, and if successful would make it more difficult to recruit and retain good teachers in California schools. Although the state of California is the primary named defendant, CTA and the California Federation of Teachers have intervened and joined the defense in the case.

BY FRANK WELLS

Who is behind this lawsuit? Although there are nine named student plaintiffs, the suit is really the brainchild of Students Matter, a group created by wealthy Silicon Valley businessman David Welch. Students Matter and the lawsuit have received support from corporate education "reformers" and school privatization advocates like Michelle Rhee's StudentsFirst and Parent Revolution. They have hired a top law firm to handle the case and a high-powered public relations outfit to promote their version of the trial.

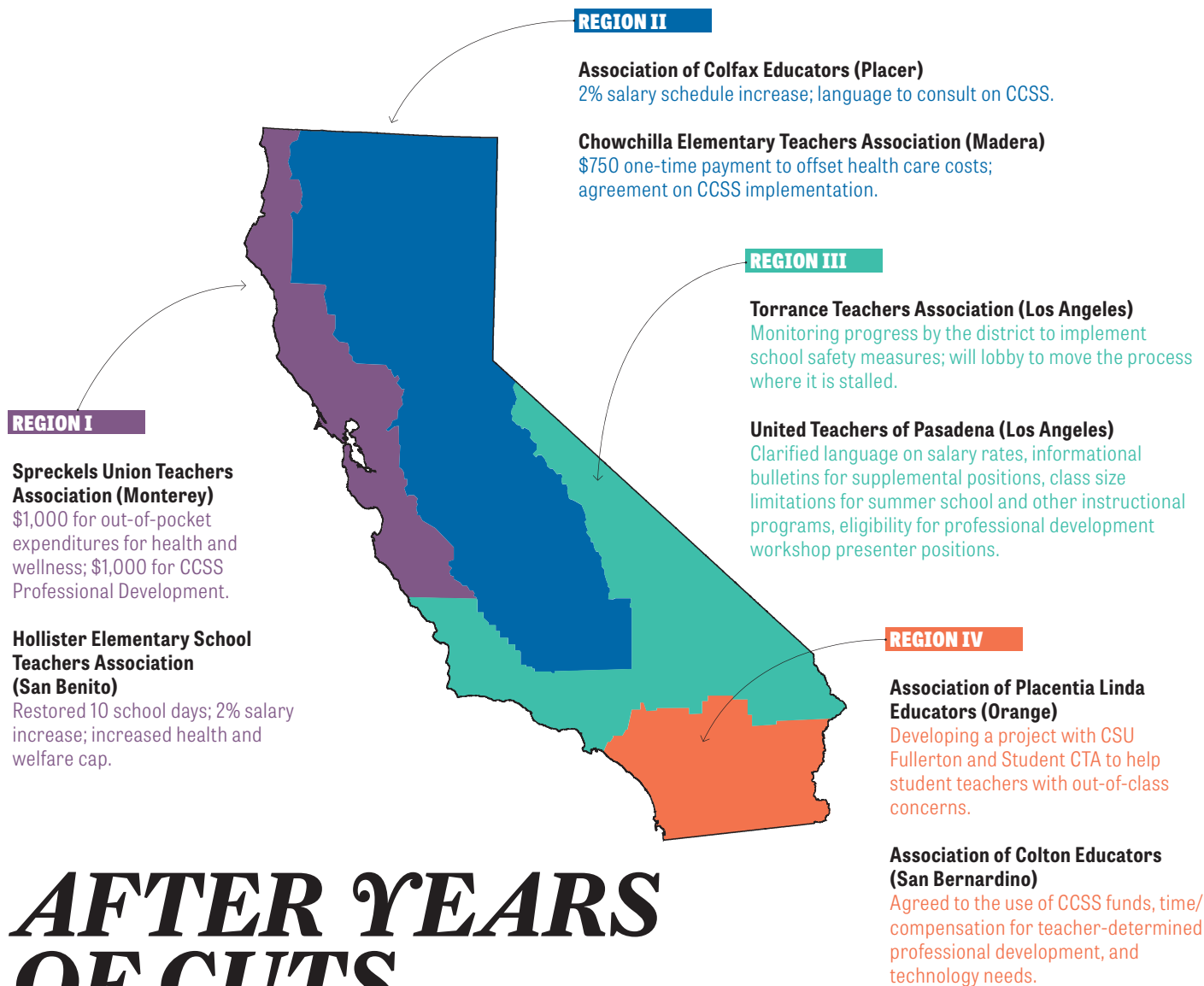
What are the plaintiffs trying to accomplish? By circumventing the legislative process and bypassing input from parents and other stakeholders, the plaintiffs are attempting to prove that the state's two-year probation period, seniority/experience factored layoff procedures, and the process for dismissing ineffective teachers all violate the constitutional right to an education and disproportionately harm low-income and ethnic minority students by making more likely they will be assigned "grossly ineffective" teachers. They would like these laws struck down. They have also made it clear they would like to strike down similar protections in other states.

Do they have a case? While that is ultimately up to the court, based on evidence presented so far and on common sense, they do not. While plaintiffs have been able to demonstrate that some students like some teachers better than others, that layoffs are unfortunate, and that some administrators would like there to be fewer if any safeguards for teachers they

would like to dismiss, any alleged harms they have tried to put forward cannot be tied directly to any of the challenged laws and in most cases are the result of poor (or to use their own language, "grossly ineffective") administration. CTA's attorneys are presenting strong witness- es and evidence showing these laws work well in well-run school districts and in fact serve legitimate interests that benefit students, and that current laws when applied by competent administrators and school districts help maintain a quality teaching force.

If plaintiffs prevail, how will this affect CTA members? That would depend on which, if any, of the statutes the judge were to strike down. It could mean that no teachers would receive permanent status until legislators redefine the probationary period. It could turn layoffs into a chaotic system based on favoritism and discrimination, and make the system even more cumbersome when individual layoffs are challenged. New legislation severely curtailing a teacher's right to due process and fair treatment in dismissal might be enacted. Regardless of the trial outcome, appeals are likely.

Learn more about the case at www.cta.org/vergara.



AFTER YEARS OF CUTS

Improved contracts include restored days, salary hikes, Common Core agreements

♥ **"AFTER CLASS SIZE INCREASES,** pay freezes, program cuts and furlough days experienced by students and educators, it's good to see some money is coming back to the classroom to turn the tide," says CTA President Dean E. Vogel. Across California, local chapters and school districts are working to approve contracts to improve learning and teaching conditions and help implement the Common Core State Standards.

These improvements are happening because of increased funding, thanks to CTA members' work in passing Prop. 30, which is bringing \$47 billion to schools, colleges and local public services over seven years. The new fund-

ing is repaying \$20 billion in cuts schools endured. This year, there will be \$10 billion more for schools and colleges in the state budget, which includes the repayment of all the budget deferrals to local schools.

Gov. Jerry Brown's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is an epic shift in the way our school funds are spent. Ushering in a new era of local control, the LCFF gives educators in every community in California more of a say in how to reach and teach all their students than ever before.

We want what's right, not what's left



SOME LOCAL CHAPTERS struggled to reach agreements. As always, good relationships and resources within the district and community are factors in a good bargain.

◀ **Alpine Teachers Association**

ATA members express their relief to be going back to teach their classes Feb. 25 after accepting a contract settlement following a three-day strike over significant cuts in salary and health benefits. Parents and colleagues from local chapters showed their support. ATA President Gayle Malone says, "Though still painful, this settlement can serve as a basis toward a more harmonious relationship with the district, especially as new funding comes in to hopefully alleviate Alpine's fiscal difficulties." Photo by Bill Guy

McKinleyville Teachers Association ▶

In rural Humboldt County, teachers are at impasse with the McKinleyville Union School District and have demonstrated and mobilized for months. After going six long years with no raise, the district is offering only 2 percent while out-of-pocket costs for health care premiums are soaring and some educators are taking second jobs to make ends meet. The next session with a state mediator is March 28.

Courtesy photo



◀ **San Ysidro Education Association**

At press time, SYEA's last mediation session was taking place. The district is seeking 8 percent salary cuts in each of the next three years, despite receiving millions of dollars of new money under the LCFF. They also insist on maintaining high class sizes, while budgeting the receipt of Grade Span Adjustment funds intended to facilitate reduction in class sizes.

Rather than dollars coming from the state that can only be used for specific categorical purposes, LCFF supports local decision making that targets local priorities created by teachers, parents and the education community. This shift recognizes that some students need extra resources to succeed and allows local stake-

holders to decide the best way to help their students.

The new budget includes a funding increase of \$244 million for the UC and CSU systems, which holds tuition at existing levels. State funding for community colleges includes an 11 percent increase in 2014-15. And while greater funding is still needed to restore our higher education system, this is moving in the right direction.

Alum Rock Educators Association ▶

Teacher Maria Ortega and her daughter, Elisa, joined more than 250 Alum Rock Union Elementary School District educators on a San Jose picket line Feb. 13 to protest the district's paltry 1.5 percent raise. Frustrated AREA members agreed to the small raise in the fall, with the understanding that both sides would meet and negotiate for an additional salary increase again in January. But the district refused to provide additional salary hikes in January, instead offering only a one-time bonus of \$500. The district received \$21.5 million more than expected due to the state's Local Control Funding Formula. Photo by Mike Myslinski



Resources for better bargaining

CTA provided your bargaining teams with training and resources to prepare for the paradigm shift to bargaining proactively, and to push back on district bargaining delays. And thanks to the lessons we've learned from CTA's Quality Education Investment Act, local chapters are considering best practices to consider when thinking about where to focus those dollars in ways that improve instruction and support educators.

There have been impressive settlements in all corners of the state, and some teachers are seeing their first raise in years. United Teachers of Santa Clara, Montebello Teachers Association, Pierce Joint Unified Educators Association (Colusa County), and Hartnell College Faculty Association all negotiated 5 percent salary increases. El Dorado Union High School Faculty

Association and Roseville Secondary Education Association earned a 5.25 percent increase retroactive to 2013, along with health care increases. Associated Teachers of Placer, Rosemead Teachers Association (Los Angeles County), and Sierra-Plumas Teachers Association negotiated raises of 6, 6.3 and 6.5 percent, respectively.

There have been some bad actor districts (see page 37), but on average, contract settlements are coming in with about 3.5 percent salary increases to help retain teachers. For more settlements, go to cta.org/bargainingupdates.

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*National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Digest of Education Statistics, 2011.

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Learning

Members' best practices, teaching ideas and education trends




What would happen if a disease turned normal human beings into roaming, hungry, flesh-eating zombies?

SAN DIEGUITO FACULTY ASSOCIATION'S **KATIE MARTINEZ** USES A POSSIBLE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE TO BRING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH (STEM) TO LIFE. READ MORE ON PAGE 42.

Common Core math curriculum on display

Advice: Choose math textbooks based on student needs

 **CTA'S CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE** arranged to have the recently approved Common Core math curriculum materials on display for State Council members.

"The committee felt it was important for our members to view these textbooks before they went public," says committee chair Wendi Smith. "We wanted educators to get an idea of what kinds of resources were coming."

These textbooks will be on display in select county offices of education as well as at the Good Teaching Conference South.

Smith, a third-grade teacher and Sunnyvale Education Association member, notes: "The publishers who submitted textbooks for review and possible adoption had to align their materials to the California Common Core Standards. And these textbooks had to meet all the criteria for approval before they can be recommended."

"Panels of teachers and other educators reviewed and recommended these books. In fact, our own vice-chair of Curriculum and Instruction on State Council, Yolanda Muñoz, served on one of these panels."

Does the committee have any advice for local leaders who will be involved in choosing math curriculum materials? Committee members encourage teachers to get involved in the process of selecting textbooks for their district.

"I think the most important criterion that any teacher or school should consider is whether the math textbook is the right fit for their students' needs," says Smith. "Schools should not choose a textbook for its looks or popularity in other school districts. The textbooks should enable the students to maximize learning opportunities and outcomes to become career and college ready."



Wendi Smith shows math textbooks that can be seen at upcoming CTA conferences.

APPROVED MATHEMATICS MATERIALS

Here is the mathematics curriculum adopted by the State Board of Education.

Basic Grade-Level Programs

PROGRAM TITLE

- McGraw-Hill My Math
- enVision Math
- Go Math!
- Math Expressions
- Math in Focus
- Common Core System of Courses
- Creative Core Curriculum for Mathematics with STEM, Literacy and Arts
- Reasoning Mind Algebra Readiness Program
- Common Core Middle School Mathematics
- Big Ideas Math
- Core Connections, Courses 1-3
- Edgenuity California Common Core Mathematics
- Go Math!
- California Math, Courses 1-3
- CA Digits
- SpringBoard Mathematics
- Common Core Math Curriculum
- Glencoe Math Accelerated
- Math Links
- Kinetic Pre-Algebra

Algebra 1 Programs

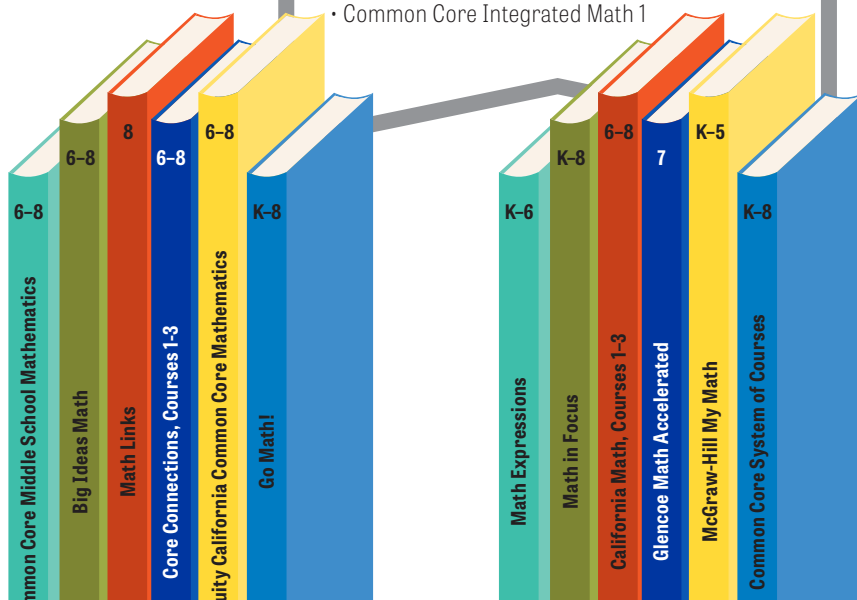
PROGRAM TITLE

- Common Core Algebra 1 Mathematics
- CA Algebra 1
- Big Ideas Algebra 1
- Core Connections Algebra 1
- Algebra 1: Analyze, Connect, Explore California
- I CAN Learn Algebra 1
- Glencoe Algebra 1
- CA Common Core Algebra 1
- Kinetic Algebra 1
- SpringBoard Mathematics Algebra 1

Mathematics 1 Programs

PROGRAM TITLE

- Common Core Integrated Math 1



It's Field Testing Season!

✿ **CALIFORNIA STUDENTS AND TEACHERS** are getting their first taste of the new computer-based Smarter Balanced Assessment, which is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The field test is being administered for all students in grades 3-8 and 11, and some students in grades 9-10.

Each school is assigned a six-week testing window between March 18 and June 6. You can find your school's testing window at www.californiatac.org.

In preparation, students may take a grade-level practice test that is similar in structure and format to the field test. The practice test has approximately 30 items, plus a performance task, in each area (English language arts/literacy and mathematics).

Also available are training tests, designed to help students quickly familiarize themselves with the software and navigational tools they will use on the field test. The training test is organized in grade bands (grades 3-5, 6-8, and high school) and has fewer items than the practice test and no performance tasks. The training test features new item types not previously included in the practice test, and provides the full suite of accessibility and accommodations features, including American Sign Language (ASL) videos for all listening items.

To get the latest information from the California Department of Education, sign up for Field Test Flash. To join, send a blank email to CAASPP@mlist.cde.ca.gov. Meanwhile, here are helpful resources:

- School test window assignments — www.californiatac.org
- Practice and training tests — www.smarterbalanced.org/practice-test
- Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines — www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/access.asp
- CTA resources on Common Core, Smarter Balanced Assessments and more — www.cta.org/ipd



ASSESS THE ASSESSMENT

Let us know how Common Core implementation is going in your district. We are planning to conduct a survey about your experiences with the Smarter Balanced Field Test.

Stay tuned — you'll hear from us soon.

Plan now for Spring 2016.

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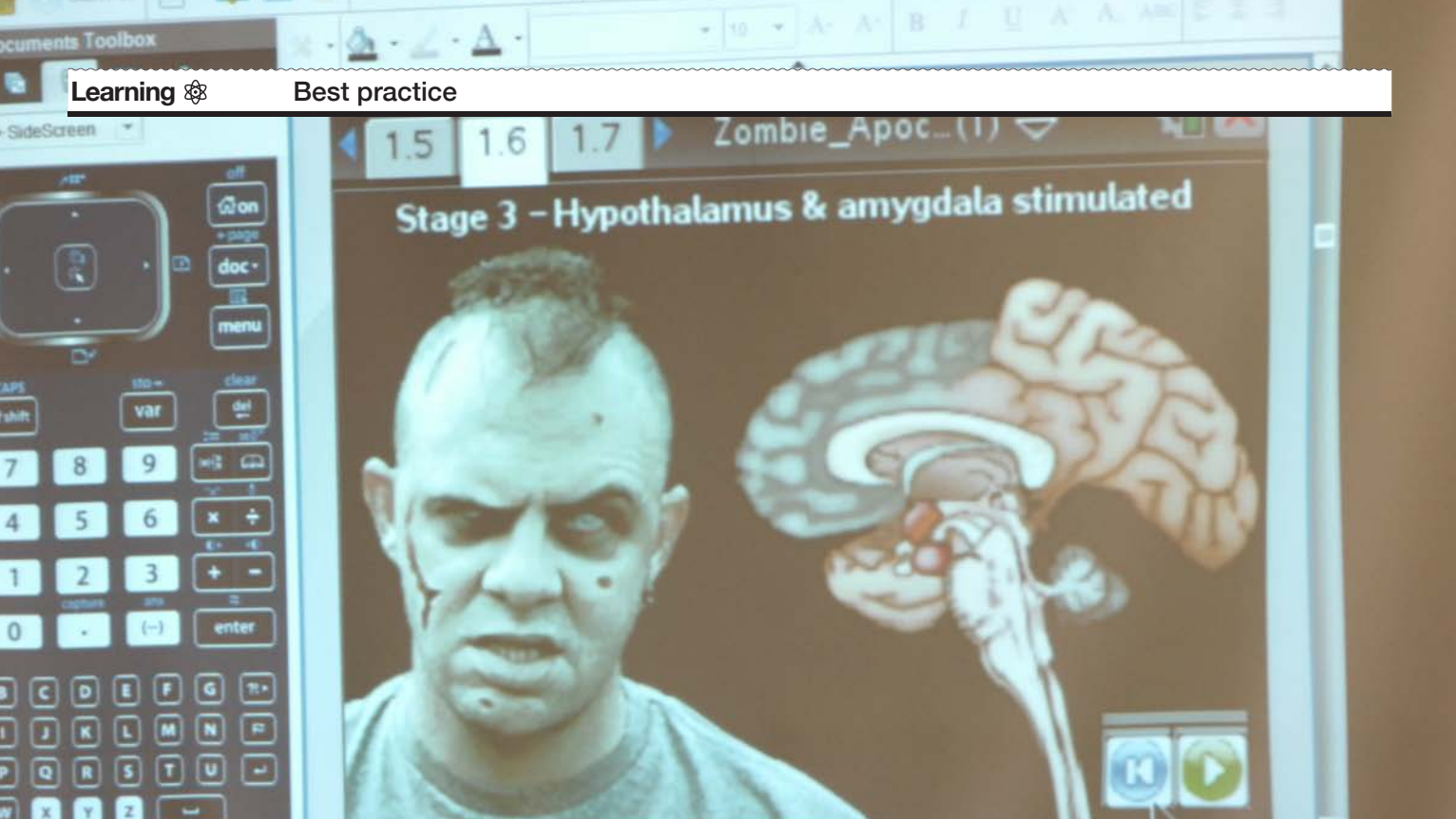


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Students determine how quickly people become zombies, and calculate the impact of developing vaccines or eliminating vectors.

Zombies bring STEM education to life

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN if a disease turned normal human beings into roaming, hungry, flesh-eating zombies?

This scenario has been the subject of movies (*Night of the Living Dead* and sequels) and the monster TV hit “The Walking Dead.” Now, a possible zombie apocalypse is being used to bring science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) to life in schools across the country, including the classroom of Katie Martinez at Canyon Crest Academy in San Diego.

The zombie scenario begins with a video explaining that a virus has infected humans. They stagger around, no longer speak, and eat noninfected humans. Although zombies aren’t real, it’s a fun way to learn how disease can spread and how populations suffer the effects of real viruses like influenza, says Martinez, San Dieguito Faculty Association.

Students discuss which parts of the brain might cause a person to become a zombie. The cerebellum, for example, controls walking. The classes discuss how real viruses (flu) and diseases affect certain parts of the brain. Then, for the math portion, students track how the disease spreads and write an equation showing the curve of the infection rate.

Students are asked to use their graphing calculators to estimate at which

point the number of zombies and the number of humans would become equal, and what variable would affect this point.

“The rate of any disease will eventually decrease because of many factors,” Martinez explains. “The main factors are lack of food (healthy humans) and lack of additional targets to infect. For other epidemics, factors may include the development of a vaccine or the elimination of a vector, which is the source that carries or distributes the pathogen, such as mosquitoes, rats or other organisms.”

The National Academy of Science and Texas Instruments (which creates the large graphing calculators) teamed up to create STEM Behind Hollywood, a program that creates STEM lessons based on zombies, superheroes, space and forensics. For the zombie lessons, Texas Instruments consulted with Dr. Steve Schlozman, an assistant professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and author of *The Zombie Autopsies: Secret Notebooks from the Apocalypse*. The result is a blend of science, Hollywood and math in a format that’s fun and engaging for middle school and high school students.



Katie Martinez, shown with Ryan Michaels and Mitchell Edwards, says, "It was incredible to see the conversations they had and the excitement they shared."

Because she has a side job as a consultant for Texas Instruments, Martinez was able to use the program early and test out the zombie apocalypse unit on her class. It was big hit with students, who used their graphing calculators to test out equations. The program's popularity has been featured in national publications.

"It was a lot of fun to do with the kids. I have Algebra I students who are on the lower end for high school, and 30 to 40 percent of them have special needs. It was incredible to see the conversations they had and the excitement they shared. It was something I had not seen before. Even students who had no previous experience with zombies were interested and applying these concepts to real-life situations."

Students say the exercise helped to make learning fun.

"It was easy to see on a graph how fast zombies would replace normal people," says ninth-grader Mitchell Edwards.

"It's nice to have a break from regular

math with something interesting," comments ninth-grader Nate Barnes. "Putting something interesting into math makes it fun."

Martinez recently used a STEM Behind Hollywood Spider-Man lesson to introduce her students to quadratic functions. They watched a video and predicted what the graph of Spider-Man's swinging path would look like. STEM Behind Hollywood also offers "STEM-ageddon!" units about what scientists would do to avoid an asteroid in the path of Earth, and a "Who-dunnit?" forensics unit where students use science and math to identify victim John Doe and the cause of death.

But most popular, for the time being, is the zombie unit.

"I am not a zombie person and don't watch the shows," admits Martinez. "But if it gets kids interested in math in a nonthreatening manner by introducing a concept that they're familiar with, it's wonderful to see their excitement."

GO ONLINE

STEM Behind Hollywood is available to teachers and students for a free 30-day trial.

Those who have TI-Nspire software technology from Texas Instruments have permanent access, and students who purchase the graphing calculator get the software included for free. There is also an app available for iPads.

For details, visit education.ti.com/en/us/stem-hollywood.

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Consequences happen

Peer Court gives students a second chance

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

ONE DAY PEDRO decided to smoke pot on campus. The act was witnessed by other students and parents after school. Pedro even posted about smoking pot on Facebook, removing any doubt the act had occurred.

Freshly back from suspension, the 13-year-old now faces a “courtroom” of his peers to make things right. He agrees to accept whatever “sentence” the Peer Court decides upon to “expunge” his suspension.

Peer Court, developed by sixth-grade math teacher and school climate/culture specialist Karen Junker at Davidson Middle School in San Rafael, uses a “restorative justice” approach to lower suspension rates and improve behavior. The rationale is that students can’t learn if they miss school.

Over the past five years the Peer Court has brought a turnaround at the campus, where more than half of students are economically disadvantaged. Before Peer Court, the school of fewer than 900 students had 375 suspensions per year — with a highly disproportionate number of Latino students suspended. The school lost an estimated \$35,000 in state revenue annually from suspensions. Last year, in comparison, there were just 40 suspensions and only three cases of recidivism, says Junker, San Rafael Teachers Association, who says the 85 percent decrease in suspensions

Pedro faces a “courtroom” of his peers. He hopes to “expunge” his suspension for smoking pot on campus.

coincided with an 85-point rise in the school’s API scores.

Suspension for minor infractions, such as willful defiance, theft and bullying, are reduced through a “diversion” program where youths agree to make positive changes as an alternative to suspension. While serious offenses — weapons or drugs — require suspension under the Education Code, the Peer Court gives students like Pedro a chance to remove suspensions from their school record in exchange for making positive changes. It’s a way of putting rehabilitation above punishment, rewarding good behavior and wiping the slate clean.

Court’s in session

Accompanied by his father, Pedro walks into the classroom-turned-courtroom. He sits up front, next to an administrator. At first he is smirking, but the semi-circle of student panelists surrounding Pedro make it clear that it’s no laughing matter.

Pedro says he has smoked pot before “many times,” and even though he knew it was “stupid,” he brought it



Karen Junker writes down possible ways to resolve Pedro's case. She developed the Peer Court program using a "restorative justice" approach. Above right: Pedro's father, Victoriano, looks on.



to school. He admits that it made him feel "cool," and says he is flunking most of his classes, including PE.

When asked how his behavior affected others, Pedro looks puzzled.

"Do you think that parents who saw you doing this might not want to send their kids here?" asks one of the panelists.

"Have you considered that people might not trust you anymore?" asks another.

Pedro's father says through an interpreter that he had a drinking problem, but quit drinking so that he could be a better father to his son. Now he is disappointed to see his son engaged in substance abuse.

Pedro tells the courtroom he feels sad because he has let so many people down.

"My father is disappointed in me. He can't trust me being alone with my friends. I feel stupid."

Pedro tells the panelists that he would like to regain the trust of his family, stop smoking pot and do better in school. Then he goes into the hallway with his father and the assistant principal while the court ponders his fate.

The 3 R's

"We emphasize Repair, Restore and Reintegrate," says Junker, who gave a presentation about the program at a panel discussion during the October CTA State Council meeting. "Students must repair the damage they have

done, restore our confidence and reintegrate into the school. It's beyond simply meting out punishment. It's about helping students learn from their mistakes. It's important that this happen. Studies show that students suspended twice in middle school — and failing math — are five times more likely to wind up in jail."

Junker emphasizes that running a Peer Court can't be done by just anyone; it requires training in restorative justice practices. She created the curriculum for training the panelists, which is based on asking offending students key questions that lead to reflection and then giving a "sentence" that involves making positive changes such as tutoring, counseling

or participating in school activities.

Panelists aren't always "goody-two-shoes." Wilbert Hernandez, now a panelist, was an offending student in Peer Court last year after being disruptive in class. Wiping away tears, the eighth-grader explains that the court helped him turn his life around and made him aware that he was acting out in school because he was angry at being separated from his father. He was sentenced to tutoring and counseling sessions.

"I was throwing all my ability away," says Hernandez. "Going through the court's suspension diversion program made me realize I was making horrible choices. I have turned my life around. Instead of getting D's and F's, I'm now getting A's and B's."

For many students, Peer Court is a way of giving back.

"I like helping people get through their problems," says eighth-grader Victoria Robbins, who has been on the court since seventh grade. "I like helping people repair the damage that has been done."

Eighth-grader Bailey Bowler believes the program works because students listen to each other.

"I'm one of them. Sometimes it helps to hear something from a classmate rather than from an adult."

During the proceedings, adults let students run the show.

"I don't make decisions — the students do," says Junker. "I only jump in if it's unjust."

She comments that earlier that morning a white student also faced the Peer Court for a drug offense.

“I want to make sure the same thing happens to the brown kid that happens to the white kid,” says Junker. (It does.)

The decision

During deliberations, panelists express concern for Pedro and discuss how they can help him get on a better path, showing wisdom far beyond their years. Pedro returns with his father to hear their decision. Panelists tell him he must write apology letters to his family, the school and the community. Pedro must go to drug counseling at Huckleberry House and volunteer there a few times a week. He must also go to tutoring, find an after-school activity that he enjoys, and do chores at home to stay out of trouble.

“He will be very busy,” whispers Junker. “But hopefully it will keep him from repeating a grade.”

Pedro agrees to all of the conditions.

“Thanks for having me in court,” he says. “I will get it all done.”

Later, he confides that he is pleased with the court’s decision.

“It’s better than having a suspension on my record.”

His father is also pleased.

“I think the court came up with excellent ideas in how to help my son,” he says. “He learned a lot. Hopefully he learned that he doesn’t want to ever go to a real court, so he needs to stop using drugs, change his friends and stay out of trouble.”



RESOURCES

Do you want to start a peer court in your school?

Contact Karen Junker at kjunker@srcs.org.

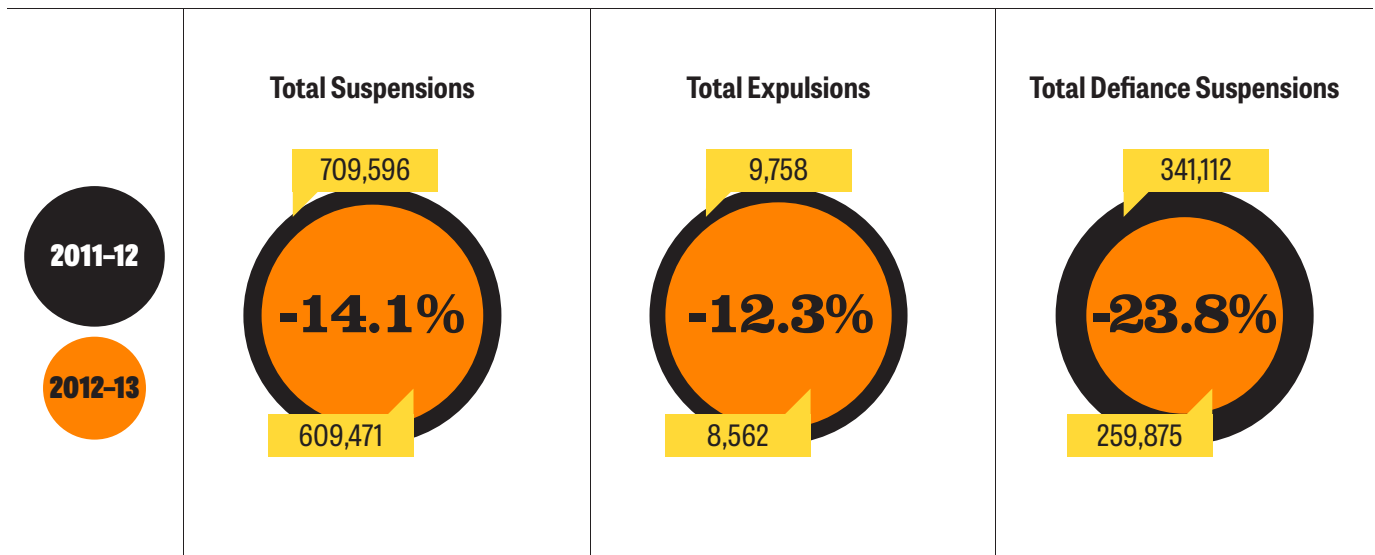
Here are more resources:

www.restorativejustice.org/university-classroom/01introduction

The International Institute for Restorative Practices, www.iirp.edu

Story update: Three months later, Pedro completed his drug counseling sessions, did most of the tutoring, completed all his chores and hasn’t missed a day of school. At the time of the court he was earning F’s in three classes. But at the end of the quarter he passed all his classes and is no longer in danger of being retained in eighth grade.

Statewide Comparison of 2011-12 and 2012-13 Discipline Data



CTA & You

Member-driven actions, conferences, benefits and all things CTA

"It is my honor to accept this award in the name of the American public school teacher," Gilles said in her acceptance speech. "And I am blessed because my kids, thousands of them over 27 years, show me every day what can happen when a great idea meets a great kid... and the room lights up."

DANVILLE TEACHER **KIMBERLEY GILLES** ACCEPTS THE NEA MEMBER BENEFITS AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE AT THE NEA SALUTE TO EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION GALA IN WASHINGTON, D.C. READ MORE ON PAGE 52.



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State Council unanimously approves Strategic Plan

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DINA MARTIN

BASED ON THEIR WORK accomplished during the January weekend meeting, the nearly 700 delegates to CTA's State Council of Education agreed with CTA President Dean E. Vogel when he said, "This is our time!"

With the passage of Proposition 30 and new revenues coming into the state's coffers, the promise of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), and the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, CTA has a real opportunity to "lead the profession and the discussion on education issues," Vogel told Council members, "to lead those discussions with parents and the community to move our schools forward and fund the priorities we know work best for our students."

On the heels of Gov. Jerry Brown's state budget announcement, Vogel noted the budget proposal provides \$10 billion more for schools and colleges and repays all of the budget deferrals to local schools this year. A funding increase of \$244 million for the UC and CSU systems, which will hold tuition at existing levels, is included in the proposal. State funding for community colleges includes an 11 percent increase in 2014-15.

"The governor also committed to working with us to ensure the stability of the California State Teachers' Retirement System. This too was an important recognition that the state must ensure the retirement commitments made to our hardworking teachers and educators," Vogel said.

Strategic Plan approved unanimously

After two years of meetings, input from more than 30,000 members, and discussions by the Strategic Planning Group, State Council unanimously approved CTA's Long-Term Strategic Plan. The plan, "Our Union, Our Future," will be CTA's road map for the next four years and is intended to result in a more vibrant, inclusive, strong and engaged union.

There was good discussion about the plan. And on Sunday morning, Council unanimously voted in support of the Strategic Plan, with many members agreeing with Ingrid Villeda, a member of United Teachers Los Angeles.

"We need to change the way we are a union. I'm very glad CTA is engaging in strategic planning," said Villeda. "Site grievances are not enough. Bargaining the way we used to do it doesn't work as well. It takes a whole community standing behind educators to be able to transform and change."

"The plan's genesis was in 2011, amid increasing attacks on public schools and educators coming from billionaires and politicians, and schools struggling against devastating budget cuts," Vogel said. "If you've read the



Above: "This is our time!" President **Dean E. Vogel** tells State Council delegates.

Ingrid Villeda, UTLA, shares her views while **Lynette Henley**, Vallejo Education Association, waits her turn.



Strategic Plan, you've got a pretty good idea about our direction: how we as an organization will help our members promote the profession and provide for public education."

The next step: An Implementation Workgroup consisting of members and staff will be appointed to make recommendations to the CTA Board of Directors about how to implement these goals and how to align governance structures. (Read more about the plan on page 50.)

**DUNG HO**

Communications Committee
Sulphur Springs District
Teachers Association

Committees allow members to fully participate in issues that they are most passionate about. In essence, you become an expert in that particular area. The committees look at all legislation that affects education and make recommendations that are then voted on by the rest of State Council. I think that members sometimes think that CTA just takes a position on issues without going through a process. That's just not the case at all.

**CARIDAD RIVERA**

Language Acquisition Committee
Teachers Association of Long Beach

We work together. Committees communicate with each other to make sure any new business items, policy changes, legislative issues, etc. are within our legal rights. Through the committees, everyone's voice is heard, from very rural areas where very small districts are located to the largest districts like LAUSD. Every voice carries equal weight. State Council is open to all members. Every member should try to visit at least once. Come see how we all work together to better serve our members and students. It's not just about teachers.

What exactly do State Council Committees do?

STATE COUNCIL COMMITTEES

The work of State Council takes place in 22 committees.

- Adult, Alternative, and Career Technical Education
- Assessment and Testing
- Budget
- Civil Rights in Education
- Communications
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Early Childhood Education
- Elections and Credentials
- Financing Public Education
- Language Acquisition
- Negotiations
- Political Involvement
- Professional Rights and Responsibilities
- Retirement
- School Safety/School Management
- Special Education Committee
- State Legislation
- Student Support Services
- Teacher Evaluation and Academic Freedom
- Service Center Councils
- Education Support Professionals (ESP) Issues
- Community College Association

**BRIAN ELDRIDGE**

Financing Public Education Committee
Buena Park Teachers Association

Council committees are one of the starting points for establishing the belief statements of CTA. The committees don't make policy on their own! Nothing they recommend can become the policy of CTA until it is voted on and approved by the 700 representatives who make up State Council.

lition of community and civil rights groups, staff from the State Board of Education, the Department of Finance, and the California Department of Education.

"It was kind of a Wild West hearing at the State Board of Education. More than 500 people were there to testify," Nuñez told delegates. He noted that Gov. Brown showed up unexpectedly to testify, and started by thanking CTA for helping to pass Proposition 30.

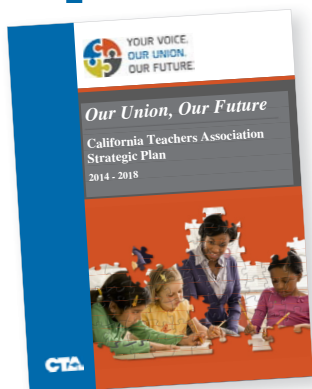
"The regulations for the LCFF and the Local Control Accountability Plan are inextricably linked and give local educators and our local chapters an opportunity to further participate and guide district budgets," Nuñez said. "This is how we begin to transform our profession as outlined in CTA's Strategic Plan."

In other actions, CTA State Council:

- Re-elected NEA Directors Doreen McGuire-Grigg (District 1) and Greg Bonaccorsi (District 3).
- Unanimously denounced the *Vergara v. California* lawsuit attacking educators' professional and due process rights, which is being bankrolled by millionaires and corporate special interests. (Read more on page 35.)
- Recommended Gov. Jerry Brown, Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, Attorney General Kamala Harris, and Insurance Commissioner Dave Jones for re-election in November, and recommended John Chiang for state treasurer and John Perez for state controller.
- Raised \$20,000 for the Alpine Teachers Association strike fund in contributions from Council members. (Read about ATA's fight on page 36.)
- Approved spending up to \$3 million in the upcoming elections in support of CTA's positions.

New Local Control Funding Formula regulations adopted

In his report to Council, CTA Executive Director Joe Nuñez discussed the State Board of Education's adoption of the Local Control Funding Formula regulations and the basic template for the Local Control Accountability Plan. The adopted regulations and template are largely the outcome of months of work and collaboration among CTA, the ACLU, and Public Advocates, which is a coa-



What does this mean for me, as a member?

FOR STARTERS, the plan directs CTA's time and resources. That means CTA is concentrating on building a strong union on the foundation of educators who are active and engaged in their local schools, local unions and local communities.

CTA members first and foremost are educators. As you do your work helping children, guiding their learning, and being part of a profession that creates a better society and future for all of us, the plan will give voice to your values.

Learn about CTA's Strategic Plan.

You can download the plan, read answers to frequently asked questions, and more. www.cta.org/ourfuture

"I hope every CTA member will read the plan and see that CTA isn't content to rest on its laurels. CTA truly cares about representing all members as we move on in the 21st century. There are so many obstacles in our path by outside forces, but as long as the rank and file know that leadership is listening and cares, we can overcome!"

MONA DAVIDSON, *Desert Sands Teachers Association president*

The YOU in Union

CTA's Strategic Plan helps members find their professional voice

Leading the way

"The strategic plan — 'Our Union, Our Future' — is about listening to and engaging all members, advocating for our students, leading our profession, reaching out into our communities, and standing up for a just society for all."

That comment, and many more, prompted the unanimous approval by State Council of Education of CTA's long-term strategic plan.

It is designed to help educators, local chapters and CTA lead the education agenda in California, says CTA President Dean E. Vogel.

"I find myself thinking about that new second-grade teacher in Turlock, who is just trying to be the best teacher she can be, yet

TIMELINE

APRIL 2011

April 2011 State Council calls for a long-term strategy for CTA.

APRIL 2012

CTA Board hires the University of Oregon Labor Education Research Center (LERC).

MAY-JUNE 2012

15-member steering committee is formed; 100-member planning group convenes.

JULY 2012-MARCH 2013

Online and in-person surveys, focus groups and local meetings are held with internal and external audiences.

APRIL 2013

Strategic planning groups share and analyze data.

OCTOBER 2013

CTA Board approves the Strategic Plan. It is presented to State Council.

“We need to change the way we are a union. I’m very glad CTA is engaging in strategic planning. It’s an opportunity for locals to transform education. It’s an opportunity to work with students and parents, to stand with the community.”

INGRID VILLEDA, *United Teachers Los Angeles*

“[During planning meetings] we had folks come in from the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), from the Chicago Teachers Union, and we asked ourselves: What are we fighting for? We realized it was about doing the right thing for kids. It’s about our profession and taking charge of what’s in our hearts.”

STEVE DILLON, *Corning Elementary Teachers Association president*

she is dying under the weight of the work. How do we help her? How do we make sure her voice is heard?

“And how about the bus driver in Redlands, the community college counselor in Stockton, the school nurse in Santa Rosa, the paraprofessional in San Francisco, the professor of education at Sacramento State? I believe in our organization and the power we have in bringing members together under a united voice.”

True to its goals from the outset, the development of the strategic plan involved listening to and talking with members

CONTINUED ON PAGE 53. ➤➤

JANUARY 2014 FEBRUARY 2014

State Council of Education unanimously passes the Strategic Plan.

Implementation Workgroup appointed.



CTA member honored nationally for teaching excellence

YOU MAY REMEMBER KIMBERLEY GILLES. She was featured in the cover story “5 reasons to bring back the arts” in our inaugural redesign issue last September. We weren’t the only ones impressed with her skills. Gilles, an English teacher at Monte Vista High School in Danville in the Bay Area, received one of public education’s top honors in February: the NEA Member Benefits Award for Teaching Excellence, which comes with \$25,000.

She was recognized at what’s become known as the Academy Awards of public education, the NEA Foundation’s Salute to Excellence in Education Gala. This is an annual celebration of the men and women who do exceptional work in America’s public schools. This year, the NEA Foundation presented nearly 40 awards to educators and dedicated supporters of public education across the country.

Gilles, a veteran teacher and member of the San Ramon Valley Education Association (SRVEA), was one of five national finalists for the top award. Each of the five finalists received special recognition at the gala, the Horace Mann Award for Teaching Excellence, and \$10,000.

CTA President Dean E. Vogel was in Washington, D.C., to be with Gilles at the awards ceremony, along with CTA Vice President Eric Heins, Secretary-Treasurer Mikki Cichocki-Semo, and SRVEA President Ann Katzburg.

Vogel praised her emphasis on social justice issues and diversity. “Part of Kimberley’s great ability in teaching is her attention to diversity. Diversity is integrated into the textbooks she chooses, the music she selects, the model essays she presents, and even the decor of her classroom.” Gilles received a 2012 CTA Human Rights Award for her classroom curriculum focusing on bigotry and social justice issues.

“It is my honor to accept this award in the name of the American public school teacher,” Gilles said in her acceptance speech. “It is my honor to say to you: Well done! You labor in the vineyards, and you bring home a good harvest.”

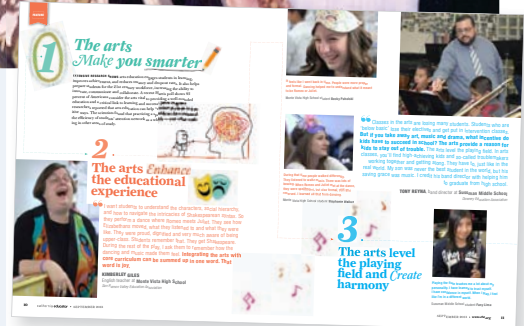
Katzburg, who nominated Gilles for the honor, said, “Walking into Kimberley’s classroom is an entryway into the world of a masterful educator. Her strategies include front-loading the curriculum with a carousel of new ideas for the students to ponder, and waiting for answers, allowing students to go deeper into their thinking.”

The gala featured performances by nearly 80 students from Maryland public schools, who took the audience on a journey around the globe with cultural performances including salsa dancing, madrigal singing and African drumming. In their finale performance, the students were joined by Phylicia Rashad, a Tony



CTA officers **Eric Heins, Mikki Cichocki-Semo and Dean Vogel** congratulate **Kimberley Gilles**.

Right: Gilles was featured in the *September Educator*.



Award-winning actress, singer, stage director and educator, who also hosted the gala.

For more on this honor, including links to a video of Gilles receiving the award and a tribute video produced by her students, go to cta.org/gilles.

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 51.

and staff about what they want for their students, for their profession and for CTA. Representatives of education-related organizations, community and business groups, and the media were also interviewed.

Now that State Council has approved the plan, an Implementation Workgroup consisting of members and staff will be appointed to advise and make recommendations to the CTA Board of Directors about how to implement these goals and how to align governance structures.

The workgroup will not be successful, though, without members getting involved, Vogel notes. It will be up to local chapters to determine how they engage in the plan and engage with educators in local schools.

What's in the plan?

This plan is divided into three categories:

- Quality Public Education and Our Profession
- Building a Strong Union
- Structure and Governance

Within those three categories are eight focus areas: advocacy, transforming the education profession, organizing and engaging members in the work of the union, community engagement, equity and social justice, growing new leaders, and aligning CTA structures to best meet member needs.



"At one time I wasn't engaged in, and was critical of, CTA. Now I see this [strategic plan] is the vehicle. I came back to CTA, and I am proud to be a part of this."

SHANNAN BROWN, San Juan Teachers Association president



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Calendar

See our upcoming events at cta.org/calendar

Seminars: Common Core and Beyond

Get extensive practice on standards in the areas of curriculum, literacy strategies across the content areas, technology, assessments, and performance tasks. Learn the latest about implementation of the standards and the new timelines for assessments in these seminars. Cost: \$25 for members; \$75 for non-members. If you can't attend, register for the Virtual Pass and participate online.

SATURDAY, APRIL 5

Stockton

SATURDAY, MAY 3

San Luis Obispo

Register Now at
www.cta.org/conferences

MARCH 24 *Application Deadline*

CTA Teacher Leadership Cohort

Are you an innovative, effective educator who wants to take a leadership role in improving teaching and learning? Join other CTA members who are strong advocates for the teaching profession! Cohort members attend the statewide Leadership Academy in Burlingame July 9-11, and continue to meet in regional groups throughout the year. Find out more: www.cta.org/ipd

MARCH 26 *Nomination Deadline*

2013 John Swett Awards | The 55th annual John Swett Awards for Media Excellence honor journalists for outstanding coverage of public education issues in publications and electronic media during 2013. Nominations must be submitted by CTA local chapters or Service Center Councils. Entries are judged by panels of independent media professionals. Find out more: www.cta.org/swettawards

APRIL 11-13 *Conference*

CCA Spring Conference and WHO Awards

| Marriott, Manhattan Beach
The Community College Association's spring conference will focus on members' accomplishments and membership engagement. Find out more: www.cca4me.org

APRIL 25-27 *Conference*

Region IV Leadership Conference | Irvine Marriott | "Organizing — The Path to Strength and Unity." This conference offers multiple training sessions designed to build leadership skills and competencies for

association leaders. Implementation of CTA's Strategic Plan will be discussed. Find out more: www.cta.org/conferences

APRIL 30 *Application Deadline*

IFT Grants | CTA's Institute for Teaching grants support projects that demonstrate strength-based, teacher-driven reform. Grants of up to \$5,000 are awarded to individual members and small teams of teachers. Chapter grant awards are up to \$20,000. Find out more: www.teacherdrivenchange.org



APRIL 30 *Event*

El Día de los Niños | El Día de los Niños (Children's Day) is a traditional festival in Latino culture. Many public libraries have events to promote literacy on this day. Find out more: dia.ala.org

MAY 6 *Event*

National Teacher Day | National Teacher Day is on Tuesday of Teacher Appreciation Week (May 5-9). Find out more: www.nea.org/teacherday

MAY 7 *Event*

School Nurse Day | Since 1972, School Nurse Day has honored school nurses on the Wednesday of National Nurse Week (May 6-12). Find out more: www.schoolnurseday.org

MAY 14 *Event*

California Day of the Teacher | California's celebration, arising from legislation co-sponsored by CTA and the Association of Mexican American Educators, is patterned after the traditional Día del Maestro festival. Find out more: www.cta.org/dayoftheteacher

MAY 2 *Application Deadline*

Ethnic Minority Early Identification and Development Program

EMEID identifies ethnic minority members who are interested in expanding their roles in the organization. Once accepted in the program, participants are paired with a coach who assists them in defining goals and identifying appropriate steps to achieve those goals. Applicants will be notified by May 30. Find out more: www.cta.org/emeid

Learning to be a leader

BY COLLEEN NISHIKAWA-ALANIS, MONTEBELLO TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

I AM A JAPANESE AMERICAN, third-generation ethnic minority. My parents were sent to an internment camp before I was born. When I was a child, they never spoke about their experience or how they felt. They did not want me to hate America, but to be a part of it. They stressed education, and instructed me to work hard and keep my opinions to myself.

My parents always said, “You are Japanese American. You must always remember where you came from.” I have always thought of myself as American and debated the issue with my parents, never having experienced what they went through. However, as I grew into adulthood, I myself experienced more and more roadblocks for a person of color. During this time, I thought perhaps my parents were correct, so I kept my opinions to myself. At best, I discussed them with close friends. This is how I lived my life, although subconsciously, I knew I was not fully connected to myself.



Colleen Nishikawa-Alanis

One day, a CTA leader of color shared her positive perception of me. It was something that I did not see, or rather did not want to acknowledge in myself. I disagreed with her. I fought her. This went on for weeks.

Then, she connected me with other CTA leaders, and over time I reflectively revisited my own identity and accepted her perception. I accepted myself. My parents were correct to teach me to remember my roots, but I did not fully grasp that simple statement. To be able to relate, share visions, ideas, opinions and plans with other ethnic minorities — wow, now that is powerful! I see how CTA’s EMEID program helps others while helping me grow (I am free to be me). This is a philosophy, a psychology and a way of life. It is in sync with unity, diversity and collaboration. It is both connected and interconnected.

The Ethnic Minority Early Identification Development program promotes ethnic minority members by giving participants tools to expand their roles in leadership and themselves. It is an opportunity to broaden one’s knowledge of CTA and explore many possibilities and opportunities of leadership while sharpening your skills. It is like opening a door to a new expansive world. For me, it has enhanced my life both professionally and personally.

I’ve also discovered:

- The program builds on “Awareness” — I came into this program knowing very little about CTA’s purpose and how it functions. Knowing where to get answers, support and guidance is invaluable in advocating for the well-being and progress of our students, teachers and community. Knowing the big picture always puts things in perspective.
- Hands-on learning with “Interconnections” — The EMEID program encourages participants to talk to leaders and staff. Interfacing one-to-one with an individual, from the president of CTA to all its leaders and staff, makes this program unique. It draws you in — you are a part of it, interconnected. In addition, experiencing CTA at work, by physically being present at meetings, conventions, events and State Council, is productive and exhilarating.

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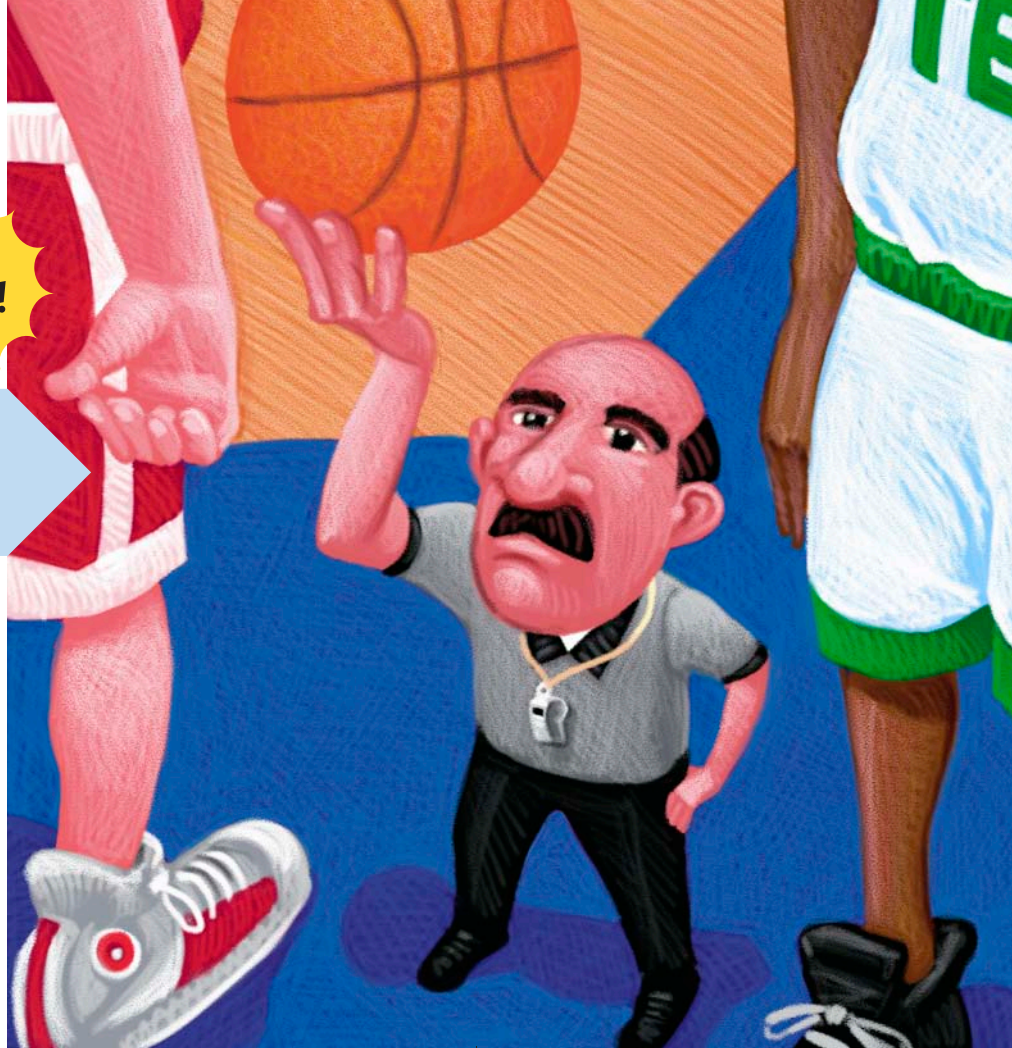
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Quiz

Good
Luck!



1 March Madness! Duke won the Final Four in 1991 and 1992. What team won consecutive Final Four titles prior to the Devils, setting the record for most consecutive championships?

2 Bonus: What team did UCLA defeat for their 1995 NCAA title?

3 What educators know as due process was known as a "continuing contract law" when it was first passed by the California Legislature in what year?

- [A] 1900
- [B] 1906
- [C] 1912
- [D] 1921

4 Which is bigger, a bit or a byte?

5 March was originally the first month of the Roman calendar and was named after Mars, the god of war. What is the birthstone for March?

- [A] Sapphire
- [B] Emerald
- [C] Aquamarine
- [D] Topaz

6 Ads for the first iPod boasted how many "songs in your pocket"?

- [A] 500
- [B] 1,000
- [C] 10,000
- [D] 50,000

7 The March of Dimes Foundation promotes general health for pregnant women and babies. Who founded it and when?

8 March has some fun awareness holidays. Which is not a real March holiday?

- [A] Extraterrestrial Abductions Day
- [B] National Chocolate-Covered Raisin Day
- [C] National "Jane" Day
- [D] Something on a Stick Day
- [E] I Am In Control Day

9 What important device did Jack Kilby invent?

10 March 9 is the beginning of daylight saving time, which has been observed in the U.S. since the 1970s. Who first proposed daylight saving time?

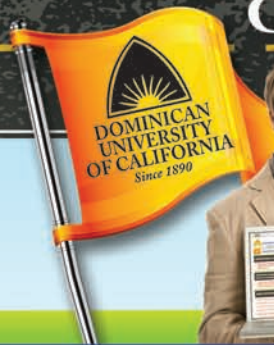
11 March 15, 44 B.C., Julius Caesar ignored a warning by soothsayers. His murder gave rise to what phrase?

12 March is National Women's History Month, and this year's theme is "Celebrating Women of Character, Courage, and Commitment." When did this recognition begin?

13 When did Saint Patrick's Day become an official holiday in Ireland?

- [A] 1903
- [B] 1917
- [C] 1931
- [D] 1970

ANSWERS: 1. UCLA won seven consecutive titles from 1967 to 1973 (10 titles altogether between 1964 and 1975). 2. Arkansas. 3. C. 4. A byte is bigger. A bit is a binary digit (0 or 1) of data or information. A byte is eight bits. 5. C. 6. B. The 5GB device went on sale in the fall of 2001. 7. Then-President Franklin D. Roosevelt founded it in 1938 to combat polio. 8. C. Actually, it's National "Joe" Day. 9. After inventing the integrated circuit, Jack Kilby invented the handheld calculator and the thermal printer. 10. Proposed in 1895 by George Vernon Hudson, daylight saving time was first implemented by Germany and Austria-Hungary in April 1916 during World War I. 11. Beware the Ides of March. 12. The Education Task Force of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women initiated a "Women's History Week" celebration in 1978. Congress recognized the week in 1981, and National Women's History Month became a reality in 1987. 13. A



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