

california educator

MARCH 2016 VOLUME 20 ISSUE 7

*Girl
Power*
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What Do **MILLENNIALS** **Really Want?**

Young educators speak out about work, life — and CTA
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**Dual Enrollment:
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A misfire with no
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Parent Trigger

After five years, a legacy of divided communities and traumatized students.

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What Do Millennials Really Want?

They're creative, smart and committed to social justice. Young educators speak out about their career, life — and their union.

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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.

SCENTED IS DEMENTED

Numerous teachers and administrators are forced to breathe in fragrances simply because students insist on contaminating common-air space.

Fragrance is a \$6 billion per year business in the United States, with marketing that specifically targets teenagers. Students' sense of entitlement is based on advertising, which guarantees a more good-looking, attractive personal presence, general adulthood, and undeniable sensuality. This is seriously heady stuff, hard to argue against.

But studies document that the sharp, sweet scent of benzene, a secret ingredient in synthetic fragrance, swiftly pierces the blood-brain barrier, causing immediate discomfort in the form of nagging headaches, bloodshot eyes, dizziness, loss of concentration and dry sinuses, and may have other effects, such as triggering an asthma attack. Long-term exposure to fragrance ingredients can cause respiratory disease, cancer, hormonal disruption and genetic damage.

If environmental justice were easy, every school would enthusiastically enforce a clean air policy. I know a teacher who starts each class with a breath meditation, makes sure her room is well-ventilated, and enlists help from parents to incorporate a lot of green plants to grace her space.

I know another teacher who doesn't see herself in the role of fragrance police. The minute you step inside her classroom, the air is noticeably chemical-laden. It does not feel like a welcoming learning environment.

Which classroom environment would you prefer?

ROBERTA LAWRIISKY

United Educators of San Francisco

FRIEDRICHS V. CTA: LOWER WAGES

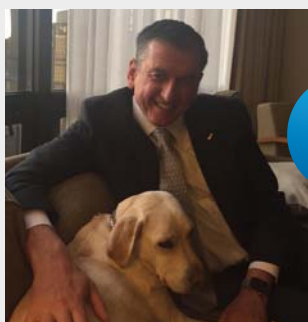
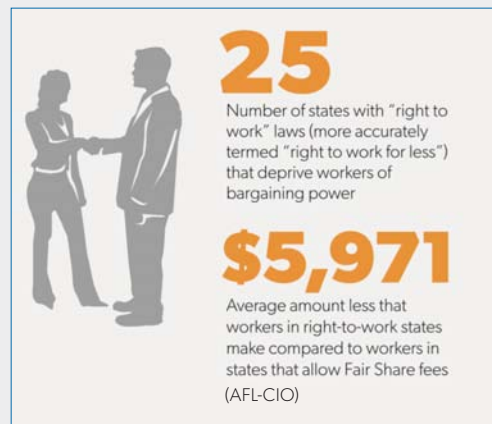
The disgruntled Rebecca Friedrichs erroneously believes the world will be improved when all workplaces are union-free, and therefore subject to so-called right-to-work rules.

However, a report by the University of Notre Dame Higgins Labor Study Program found that such rules result in lower wages and benefits for union and non-union workers alike.

Be careful what you wish for, Ms. Friedrichs. A Supreme Court ruling in your favor could very well lower the living standards for millions of hardworking public servants, yourself included.

DAVID G. ODDO

Retired



CTA President Eric Heins with Ophelia.



READER CONTEST: THE PETS OF CTA

Enter Fluffy or Fido in the Pets of CTA contest! We're looking for **special photos of members and their best friends**, be they furry, finny, scaly — you get the idea.

Show us their good side in two or three portraits or action pics, and you may win a \$50 gift card for school supplies.

Photos should show both member and pet, though we will consider pets alone. Send to editor@cta.org with "Pets of CTA" in the subject line; include your name, chapter and pet's name.

Alternatively, tweet or Instagram your entry: [#petsofcta](https://twitter.com/cateachersassoc).

Enter by March 25. We'll pick three winners based on creativity, photography and animal magnetism. And we'll run a gallery of entrants in our May issue.

Extra Credit answers (see page 52)

Monday: 1. cheapest = chest + ape; 2. cologne = cone + log; 3. mosquitoes = Moses + Quito; 4. travesty = tray + vest. Tuesday: 1. changeless = chess + angel; 2. narrowest = nest + arrow; 3. patients = pants + tie; 4. rudiment = runt + dime. Wednesday: 1. clambake = cake + lamb; 2. fawningly = fly + awning; 3. freelance = France + eel; 4. opinion = onion + pi.



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Dana Goldstein signs copies of her book *The Teacher Wars* at CTA's Issues Conference.

Committed to Equal Rights

AT THE CTA Issues Conference earlier this year, I had the pleasure of meeting and listening to journalist Dana Goldstein, author of *The Teacher Wars* and keynote speaker for the event. Her book and her remarks at the conference paint a portrait of the teaching profession — how we got to where we are today and how, in many ways, things in education have not changed.

Listening to Goldstein, I was reminded that our profession's history is a reflection of America's own social history. There have been numerous opposing forces at work in this country from the very beginning. Our political history has never been without struggle. It's a lesson for all of us, especially in this rather interesting election season.

I've been thinking a lot about her talk since the conference, and how the growth of our profession and our union coincided with the growth of the women's rights and equal rights movement during the first half of the 20th century.

Goldstein uses Chicago in 1900 as an example. At the turn of that century, 97 percent of the teachers in Chicago were women. So-called school reformers at that time attempted to lower female teachers' pay in order to pay male teachers more. That's right, instead of raising salaries for everyone, they wanted to punish women by lowering their salaries. Women were teaching as many as 60 students to a classroom, many of them speaking Czech, Italian and Polish. These were women who could be fired from their jobs for getting married, or for opposing IQ tests of students and the use of those tests to track their students into vocational or academic programs. Does that sound familiar?

Women had already begun to make factory-level wages and were told by the school reformers they should be happy with that. But women weren't happy with that. They were angry, and they organized. They demanded higher pay as well as the right to vote. Teachers' organizing efforts and the suffrage movement had a lot in common.

Gains have been made in the years since. Teachers' salaries have increased, working conditions have improved, and our retirement is more secure, all because of those remarkable women who organized more than 100 years ago.

Yet the need for a unionized teaching profession has not gone away. The median salary for a teacher in the United States today is \$52,000 a year, much lower than the \$77,000 median salary for a dental hygienist. We remain under attack by education reformers who want to privatize and profit from schools.

I doubt you are surprised that the teaching force in America remains 75 percent female.

I wonder if there is still inherent sexism in our country that attempts to devalue our profession because it is still largely composed of women.

As we march into Women's History Month, I'd like for all of us to remember teachers' contribution to the women's rights movement and our continuing commitment to it. The mission of the California Teachers Association, our union, remains a commitment to advance quality public education, protect human dignity, and secure a more just and equitable society.

We must continue that cause. We must stand up for our students and stand up to education "reformers" who would see our voice weakened. We must continue to strengthen our profession by reaching out to colleagues, parents, families and our communities to make our union stronger, more inclusive, more diverse.

Right now, we are seeing an influx of new teachers into the profession, most of them millennials — hence the focus of this month's magazine. Many of our new teachers are not familiar with our history and the continuing need for a unionized teaching profession. But they do want the same things we all want — a quality education for all students, a well-supported public education system, adequate salaries and benefits, professional development and support, and a say in our profession.

We have an opportunity to reach out to our new colleagues and bring them and their voice into the union. I'm asking you to remember what it was like at the beginning of your teaching career, and to think about how you can help a new generation. Think about that new teacher, bus driver, or paraprofessional in your school. That person is now part of the CTA family — and a new union member. Extend a hand, share some best practices, invite them for a coffee, organize a social gathering. Just let them know you are there for them, and so is this union — as we have been for more than 150 years.

Eric C. Heins

CTA PRESIDENT
@ericheins

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CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2015, to Aug. 31, 2016) are \$829, including a \$20 refundable contribution (see cta.org/contribution for details). Up to \$18.40 of CTA annual dues is designated for CTA/ABC political activities to support state and local candidates and/or initiatives and is not deductible for income tax purposes.

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

CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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MISSION STATEMENT

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

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Editor's
Note

Student Confidential



DO YOU THINK the name, Social Security number, home address, disciplinary and mental health records, and progress reports for every student who has attended a K-12 public school in California since Jan. 1, 2008, should be made available to an outside party?

The California Department of Education (CDE) doesn't think so, and is reminding parents, guardians and former students over age 18 that they have until **April 1** to submit a written objection to the release of data to the plaintiffs of a lawsuit. California Concerned Parents, a group with members in 80 school districts throughout the state, alleges that CDE has failed to provide an appropriate public education to students with disabilities, and is asking for records to prove it.

The federal judge issued a court order to protect the data from being made public. CDE and privacy advocates argue that such a massive release of personal information — involving 10 million current and former students — is unnecessary. Parents, guardians and former students can object to the disclosure of data by mailing a form to the judge's office. For a link to the form, see cde.ca.gov/morganhillcase.

It may be hard to believe, but some who were students after 2008 — and who should fill out a form — are now part of the millennial generation of educators. Our story "**What Do Millennials Really Want?**" (page 18) asks young educators their thoughts on their cohort, careers and relationships with veteran educators and CTA. Their insights are keen and inspiring, and sound not at all "entitled" — a label often applied to this generation.

"Veteran teachers are so experienced and wonderful at what they do," says millennial Katy Rees, an elementary schoolteacher with the Fairfield-Suisun Unified Teachers Association. "They need to pass that on to us. We need their help. We have so much to learn. Be patient with us."

Don't miss our look at **California's parent trigger law**, so called because it allows parents to "pull the trigger" on public schools in an effort to charter them and weaken educator unions (page 24). Parent trigger has largely been driven by Parent Revolution, the advocacy group backed by foundations that support the growth of charter schools.

In five years, parent trigger proponents have seen no clear successes. The law has only divided communities, traumatized students and hurt public education. The upside, as our story notes, is that in many schools threatened by parent trigger, educators' relationships with parents and communities have been strengthened.

The expansion of **dual enrollment programs** is a hot topic among high school and community college educators. Our article (page 40) examines the



YOUR VOICE

Have something to say about your students, and the art and science of teaching? Tell us a story that illustrates your experience or opinion, and it could be published in "Your Voice." It can be funny, serious or both. It can be purely descriptive of your day and those you interact with, or it can be your thoughts and reflections as an educator in the trenches. Send no more than 650 words to editor@cta.org, with "Your Voice" in the subject line. Submissions are subject to editing for clarity and space.

challenges and opportunities these increasingly popular programs face as they shape the ways more high school students can transition to college.

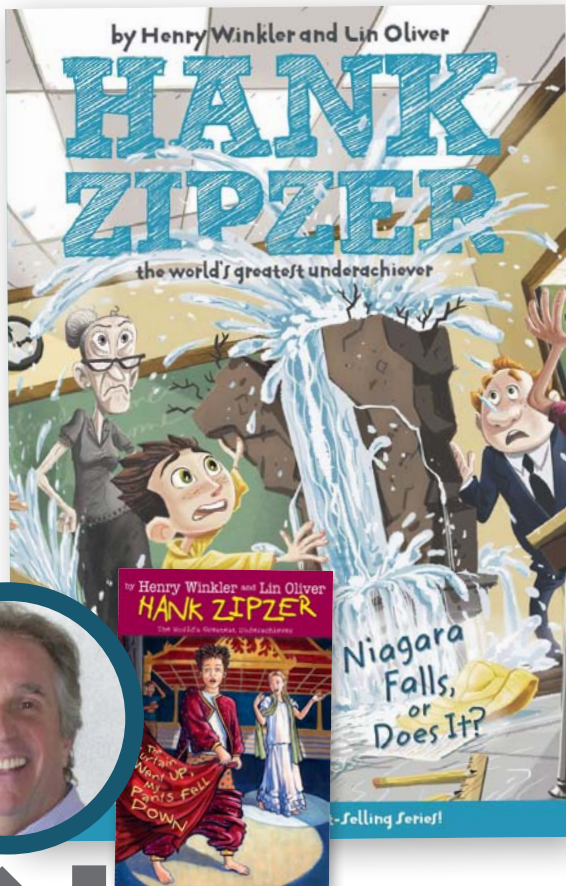
Finally, with Autism Awareness Month coming in April, you'll want to read an excerpt from the new book by Anne K. Ross, ***Beyond Rain Man*** (page 44). Ross, a Northern California school psychologist for 30 years, chronicles her personal journey after she learns her son is on the autism spectrum, and how it informs her work with parents and educators.

Happy spring!

Katharine Fong

EDITOR IN CHIEF
editor@cta.org

CALENDAR



Different Ways of Learning

Hank Zipzer: The World's Greatest Underachiever is a California Reads-recommended series of books by Henry Winkler and Lin Oliver. The first installment of the series (*Niagara Falls, or Does It?*) finds fourth-grader Hank Zipzer, who has always had problems with reading, writing and spelling, assigned to write a five-paragraph essay. He chooses to go the visual/tactile route instead, with chaotic results. Inspired by the true-life experiences of actor Winkler, whose undiagnosed dyslexia made him a classic childhood underachiever, the series chronicles the high-spirited and funny adventures of a boy with learning differences. For additional recommendations, see cta.org/californiareads. #californiareads



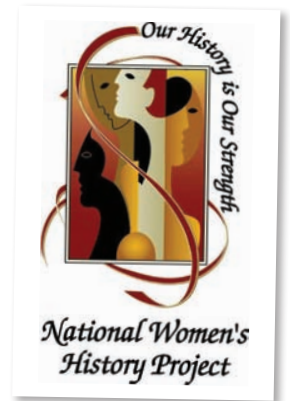
Women's History Month

In 1980, a group of women noticed that women were largely absent from textbooks, girls had few role models, and as a result, many assumed women did nothing important. They founded the **National Women's History Project** (NWHP) in Santa Rosa, and convinced Congress and the White House of the need for our nation to celebrate and recognize women's role in history every March.

This year's theme is: "Working to Form a More Perfect Union: Honoring Women in Public Service and Government." NWHP has identified 16 women who "dramatically influenced our public policy and the building of viable institutions and organizations. ... They have led the way in establishing a stronger and more democratic country."

Honorees include civil rights organizer **Daisy Bates**, NOW co-founder **Sonia Pressman Fuentes**, Native American public policy advocate **Suzan Shown Harjo**, civil and human rights leader **Karen Narasaki**, former NASA Chief of Astronomy **Nancy Grace Roman**, women's rights activist **Bernice Sandler**, and LGBTQ+ civil rights activist **Nadine Smith**. For the full list, see nwHP.org. #womenshistorymonth

Both CTA and NEA have lesson plans and resources for classroom use. Go to cta.org/women and nea.org (search for "women's history").



High Note

March is also Music in Our Schools Month, when music educators, students and communities promote the benefits of high-quality music education programs in schools. Educators can celebrate with special performances, lessons, sing-alongs and other activities. Go to nea.org (search for "music").



MARCH 25 APPLICATION DEADLINE **SCTA Scholarships**

Scholarships are offered to Student CTA members: four \$250 scholarships to community college students; three \$500 scholarships to undergraduates at a four-year university; three \$500 scholarships to graduate students at a four-year university; two \$250 scholarships to ethnic minority members; and two \$250 scholarships to undocumented students.

► cta.org/sctascholarships

APRIL 1 NOMINATION DEADLINE **2015 John Swett Awards**

The 57th annual John Swett Awards for Media Excellence honor journalists for outstanding coverage of public education issues in publications and electronic media during 2015. Nominations must be submitted by CTA local chapters or Service Center Councils. Entries are judged by panels of independent media professionals.

► cta.org/awards

APRIL 15-17 CONFERENCE **CCA Spring Conference**

Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa

The Community College Association's spring conference highlights lobbying and contract enforcement issues, and features the presentation of CCA's WHO (We Honor Ours) Awards. ► cca4me.org

APRIL 15-17 CONFERENCE **Good Teaching Conference North**

Fairmont, San Jose

The Good Teaching Conferences support excellent teaching and learning practices for K-12 teachers. They offer a variety of workshops in curriculum content areas, provide opportunities for professional development, and allow time to network with colleagues and experts. Registration deadline is March 31. #ctagtc

Preconference event on Friday, April 15: **IFT Teacher Innovation Expo**, sponsored by CTA's Institute for Teaching. Engage with teacher-driven, strength-based innovation. See project presentations by IFT grant recipients. Gain insights into the IFT grant selection process. Registration is free.

► ctago.org

APRIL 30 APPLICATION DEADLINE **IFT Grants**

CTA Institute for Teaching's grant program demonstrates what teachers can do when they have the freedom to create and invent. CTA members can apply for strength-based Educator Grants up to \$5,000 and Impact Grants up to \$20,000.

► teacherdrivencchange.org
#teacherdrivencchange

MAY 6 APPLICATION DEADLINE **EMEID Leadership Program**

The Ethnic Minority Early Identification and Development Program identifies ethnic minority members who want to expand their roles in the organization. Participants are paired with a coach who assists them in defining and achieving goals. Participants must commit to attending the Emerging Leaders track at Summer Institute. Applicants will be notified by May 27.

► cta.org/emeid

MAY 11 EVENT **School Nurse Day**

National School Nurse Day honors school nurses on the Wednesday of National Nurses Week (May 6-12). ► schoolnurseday.org

MAY 11 EVENT **California Day of the Teacher**

"Leaders of Learning." 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.

► cta.org/dayoftheteacher

MAY 17 EVENT **CTA ESP Day**

Recognize the vital contributions of education support professionals during ESP Week (May 15-21). ► cta.org/esp



MARCH 31 EVENT **César Chávez Day**

Honor the legacy of the civil rights activist and labor leader who so effectively organized farmworkers and communities in the 1960s, '70s and beyond. For ideas for classroom activities and curriculum, see cta.org/chavezday.

APRIL 1 DEADLINE TO SUBMIT OBJECTIONS **Disclosure of Students' Personal Data**

Plaintiffs in a court case, *Morgan Hill Concerned Parents Association v. California Department of Education*, are seeking disclosure of CDE records including protected personal information of children with disabilities, children who have been assessed for special education, and children who attend or have attended a California school at any time since Jan. 1, 2008. The U.S. District Court issued a protective order that prevents any party from disclosing confidential information acquired in the lawsuit to the public. Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, reiterating his strong commitment to protecting student privacy, reminds all parents, guardians, and former students over age 18 that they have the opportunity to object to the release of their records to the plaintiffs. Failure to submit an objection in writing by April 1 will be deemed a waiver of the right to object.

► cde.ca.gov/morganhillcase

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-  YOUTUBE [YouTube.com/CaliforniaTeachers](https://www.youtube.com/CaliforniaTeachers)

For the latest news and stories, see cta.org/blog

Video



Engaging Parents of English Learners: Kindergarten teacher Douglas Wheeler at Bayview Elementary in Richmond builds an inclusive community in his classroom by encouraging parents to participate. ► edutopia.org/blog/engaging-parents-english-language-learners

Social Buzz

WHAT'S NEW AT CTA.ORG

cta.org/retirement THE BENEFITS OF DEFINED BENEFITS

Check out the CTA website's revamped Retirement section and read new reports and studies describing how defined benefits programs are best for educators.

cta.org/swettawards CTA 2015 JOHN SWETT AWARDS

The John Swett Awards, named for CTA's founder, honor newspaper, broadcast and online journalists for coverage of California public education in 2015.

cta.org/neadirectors MEET NEA DIRECTORS FROM CALIFORNIA

Several CTA members — 18 including three alternates — serve on NEA's Board of Directors. These educators represent California for the nation's policymaking body.

What would happen if teachers just worked an eight-hour day? Readers took to Instagram and Facebook to respond. Add to the list at [#ThankAnEducator](https://www.instagram.com/ThankAnEducator).

KATIE BURNETTE

No game night. No science night. No reading, scoring, and inputting (to a spreadsheet) pre- and post-writing genre assessments. No grading essays. No grading tests. No researching information for rigorous projects.

CLARA DIVELBISS

No sports. No competitions. No music programs. No teacher collaboration to improve teaching techniques.

MELINA MASSETTI

No open house, no back to school night, no conferences, no work displayed on classroom walls.

JENNIFER NEWTON ENGEL

No thoughtful, differentiated prep of their lessons.

JAY DAVIS

No cheerleaders, no science club, no debate team.

DEBBIE MOORE WAGNER

Don't forget those of us who work out of the classroom in support positions. Our days are very long and many times unappreciated.

SVETLANA LAZAROVA

No field trips. No award ceremonies. No clubs.

KELLI HAGUE-SHAW

No school gardens.

JAYNE LECKY

Amazing new NGSS engaging activities/lesson plans! I am doing a project in my class, and the kids love it. Took me over 20 hours of planning time. I am also doing a plastic waste prevention project in conjunction with the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Drove there and back 3 times on the weekend — my own time, my own dime.



JO WELLS

No student art exhibits!

MICHELLE MENSER-DEBLOIS

No robotics club!

NICOLE ROSCHAK

No report cards.

SHARON BOMIO

No school yearbooks.

BILL PIERCE

Let's also not forget the days if not weeks before school starts to get our rooms ready for the first day of school. Our district provides us one "paid day" to work in our rooms before school starts. Newer teachers typically report 3 weeks early, and the average teacher starts at least 1 week early.

Know&Tell

INSIDE:

- 12 Tech Tips:**
Best drones
for teaching
- 13 Quotes & Numbers**
- 14 Your Whole Life:**
High-tech ways
to shop, CTA's
Well-Baby Program

Is your jewelry as smart as you are? In addition to helping you make purchases, rings from Ringly notify you about important calls, messages, apps and people with subtle vibrations and light patterns. Plus, you look good. See story on page 14.



The Sky's the Limit

Best drones for the outdoor classroom

By TERRY NG

EVER TAKEN A “dronie”? That’s the term for taking a selfie from the sky. If you and your students are ready for the world of aerial photography and video, there’s a drone for every budget. (See suggested ways to teach with drones on page 46.) A couple of things to know before buying:

Some are easier to fly than others

Drones are stabilized by a computer inside called a flight controller. It determines if a drone is set up for more agile flying, or for greater stability. Generally, the more expensive a drone is, the more stable it is.

Not all come assembled

A drone labeled RTF is Ready-To-Fly, which means there’s no major assembly and you can be airborne within minutes of opening the box, versus spending hours or days putting together a kit. The models below are all RTF.



BEGINNER DRONES

Price range \$25 to \$250. Most entry-level drones are small and light, and often safe enough to fly indoors. The included camera captures lower-quality images and videos compared to more expensive models, but are good enough to learn the basics of drone photography and flying.

Recommended:

Syma X5C Explorers \$48

Equipped with HD (high-definition) camera and 2-gigabyte microSD memory card. Perform flips at the press of a button with 360-degree eversion. Wind resistant; can be flown indoors or outdoors; 6-axis gyro stabilization system ensures maximum stability; 7-minute flight time; 100-minute charge time.



INTERMEDIATE DRONES

Price range \$300 to \$1,000. These are bigger, heavier, and designed for more stable flight outdoors. The cameras have larger sensors for better image and video quality. Some models even allow you to attach an external action camera.

Recommended:

DJI Phantom 3 Standard \$500

Stunning 2.7K-pixel videos and 12-megapixel photos; 3-axis stabilization gimbal; built-in Wi-Fi; live HD view. Fly up to 25 minutes on a single charge.



ADVANCED DRONES

Price range \$1,000 and up. Instead of the standard four rotors, professional-level drones often have six or even eight rotors for added stability. Included cameras can take 4K-pixel images and videos, and come equipped with stabilizing gimbal units for ultrasmooth video quality. Advanced flight controllers allow total control, including programming flight paths for completely autonomous flights.

Recommended:

DJI Inspire 1 \$2,459

Capture 4K-pixel video and 12-megapixel stills; 360-degree camera rotation; up to 1.2-mile radio range; GPS-based flight control system.

Quotes & Numbers

Compiled by MIKE MYSLINSKI

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.

“Measure what we value,
instead of valuing what we measure.”

— San Juan Teachers Association President **SHANNAN BROWN**, speaking at the January CTA State Council meeting in a forum about looking at test scores and definitions and principles of quality student assessments.

“There is no evidence — zero — that these statutes are the cause of any constitutional violation, and we are confident that the Court of Appeal will fully agree with our position.”

— Attorney **MICHAEL RUBIN**, representing California’s educators at the Feb. 25 hearing in Los Angeles for the appeal in the deceptive *Vergara v. California* lawsuit. Upheld but stayed by a Superior Court judge in 2014, the lawsuit seeks to destroy California teachers’ job protections and due process rights.

“There are so many really awesome teachers
that deserve it more than I do.”

— Modest special education teacher **KIM ADAMS**, upon learning she is the Laguna Beach Unified School District Teacher of the Year. The dedicated El Morro Elementary educator is one of five siblings who are all teachers, the *Laguna Beach Coastline Pilot* reported Feb. 18.

“As billionaires are trying to cripple unions, our vote sends a national signal that educators are willing to invest more in our unions and in the fight for educational justice.”

— United Teachers Los Angeles President **ALEX CAPUTO-PEARL**, quoted in the Feb. 10 *Los Angeles Times*, after UTLA members voted overwhelmingly to raise their union dues by about 30 percent to fight the forces trying to take over LAUSD schools.

“I have two degrees, [including] a master’s in education. I’m having a hard time believing I can find a second room for him. I feel like in some way I’ve failed. I’m trying really hard and it’s not enough.”

— Sonoma County art teacher **MELISSA JONES**, who lives in a cramped one-bedroom basement flat with her 12-year-old son because soaring rents make a larger home unaffordable, as quoted by the Capital & Main investigative blog in a Feb. 24 news story on Bay Area gentrification.

135,000

Number of teachers California would have to hire to get the state to the national average student-teacher ratio of 16:1, according to a January report by the Learning Policy Institute in Palo Alto titled “Addressing California’s Emerging Teacher Shortage.”

70%

Decline in number of people enrolling in teacher preparation programs in California over the past decade, from the same Learning Policy Institute report.

\$17 BILLION

Estimated annual savings nationwide that would occur from raising the federal minimum wage to \$12 by 2020, from low-income workers not being forced by employers to rely on government assistance programs, according to a 2016 Economic Policy Institute study.

12

Number of California cities that have rent control, out of 482, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported Feb. 23 in a story about an elderly Burlingame woman, 97, being evicted from a home she has rented for 66 years.

5TH

National ranking of California in the percentage of 2015 high school graduates who earned a score of 3 or higher in an Advanced Placement (AP) exam, which can allow them to earn college credit, the California Department of Education reported Feb. 24.



YOUR WHOLE LIFE

Tips and trends for a smarter, healthier you

3 New High-Tech Ways to Shop

Gadgets that make shopping easier or more secure were on display at this year's CES, the giant consumer electronics trade show. Here are three to watch for:

- **Wearable tech:** Why fish for a wallet or dig through a purse when you can tap and pay with your fashion accessories? Later this year, MasterCard's payment technology will be embedded in smart jewelry from Ringly (see photo above). Rings with gemstones that hide the hardware start at \$195. Visit ringly.com.
- **Secure payments:** Load all of your payment info on Qkey, which plugs into the USB port of your computer or tablet and contains the same type of microchip that comes with chip-enabled credit cards. When it's time to shop online, plug in Qkey, and remove it when you're done. Your info is off the grid, safer from hackers, with only an encrypted backup file on your computer (preorder for \$89 at qkey.com).
- **Streamlined loyalty:** Consolidate all of your loyalty and discount cards into a single magneticstripe card with Cardberry (\$100; join the waiting list at cardberry.com).

— Lisa Gerstner

NEA Member Benefits; content provided by The Kiplinger Washington Editors © 2016



Bringing Up Baby

CTA's Well-Baby Program is available to active members and their spouses, domestic partners and surrogates. Its excellent resources include:

- **Mayo Clinic Health Coaching for Pregnancy** — registered nurses provide education and support by phone throughout your pregnancy and three months postpartum.
- **Ask Mayo Clinic** — a 24-hour resource staffed by registered nurses to answer questions about your health or the health of your baby during pregnancy and up to three months postpartum.
- **Books** — *Mayo Clinic Guide to a Healthy Pregnancy* (Spanish version available), and *Mayo Clinic Guide to Your Baby's First Year*.

To maximize benefits, you or your spouse/domestic partner should enroll within the first trimester, though enrollments will be accepted through the 30th week of pregnancy. Contact CTA Member Benefits at 650-552-5200.

Don't Forget: Tax Break for Teachers

Doing your taxes? Remember to take advantage of the **Educator Expense Deduction**, which allows K-12 teachers to take an "above the line" (non-itemized) deduction for unreimbursed classroom expenses up to \$250, indexed to inflation. Deductible items include professional development expenses.

Perspectives

INSIDE:

- 16 Member Spotlight:** Girls Night In boosts students' self-esteem
- 17 Teacher Shortage:** What should school districts do? A few points of view



Pinacate Middle School teacher Vickey Mueller works with girls on camaraderie, team building, and conversations that focus on making informed choices and self-respect. See story on page 16.



Self-respect and confidence — it's a girl thing

Member spotlight



Scott Buschman

The most important lesson eighth-grader Nora Washington learned at Pinacate Middle School didn't happen in the classroom. It occurred during Girls Night In, an event designed to boost girls' self-esteem. It was organized by teacher Vickey Mueller, a member and past president of Perris Secondary Educators.

"I learned that if I don't like something about myself, I can change it," says Washington. "I learned that I can be who I want to be. And it's important to be me — without worrying that others will judge me."

Mueller has long urged girls to be confident and true to themselves in the STEM courses she teaches in the school's Project Lead the Way, which incorporates 3-D printers and robotics. But she felt to truly make a difference in their lives, she would have to do more. So she organized Girls Night In, a sleepover event at the school that encourages "girl power" through camaraderie, team building, and conversations that focus on making informed choices and self-respect.

It began as an offshoot of the national Friday Night Live program called Club Live, which fosters positive and healthy development for middle schoolers of both sexes. There have been three Girls Night In events at Pinacate, which has a highly diverse and economically challenged population. Mueller's program is based on the "40 developmental assets" that the Search Institute has identified as helping adolescents grow into caring and coping adults.

Mueller's goal is for girls to look in the mirror, like what they see, and realize that they are beautiful and smart just the way they are. She discusses the importance of dressing and behaving in ways that helps girls be taken seriously by others. "If you have to keep pulling and rearranging your clothes, they don't fit," she tells them.

She encourages females to be allies, not enemies, to reduce bullying. At Girls Night In, the 30 participants play games to learn more about each other — and all the things they have in common — which fosters empathy, understanding and compassion. Sometimes there is crying when someone opens up emotionally.

Mueller believes she is having an impact. Recently she ran into some students she worked with two years ago; they both still have self-affirmation

In Vickey's words:

I AM MOTIVATED TO DO THIS BECAUSE...

I was an abused child. I became pregnant at 13, had a baby at 14, and put the baby up for adoption. I did not feel safe. I want these girls to feel safe and know that there is someone here they can trust, and help them find their way. I want to be the person for them who wasn't there for me.

WHEN I HEAR OTHER SCHOOL EMPLOYEES SAY...

it's not our job to teach girls to value themselves, I reply it absolutely is our job to teach them responsibility and how to make good choices and respect their bodies and themselves. In our society, girls are getting other messages from music, media and celebrity culture. Today's kids, especially if they are raised in poverty, don't always have the tools to develop these life skills without our help. And girls are meaner today. With social media, everyone jumps on the bandwagon to criticize others.

I INVITE GIRLS TO PARTICIPATE IN GIRLS NIGHT IN WHO...

need a helping hand. The other day I saw a girl wearing a shirt that said "No One Cares." I asked her to tell me about her shirt and why she was wearing it. She told me she was having a bad day, her mom and dad were fighting, and she wasn't feeling good about herself. I invited her to join us for the next Girls Night In.

stickers she handed out pasted on their school binders. The stickers read "Love Yourself" with little hearts.

"I'm hoping to change their direction," says Mueller. "I don't want them to go into high school with this perception that they aren't good enough. I'm not trying to fix them; I just want them to believe in themselves."

—Sherry Posnick-Goodwin

What to Do About the Teacher Shortage?

The statewide teacher shortage, brought on by budget cuts during the Great Recession when many lost their jobs and the pipeline dwindled, is a sore subject for educators. The shortage has been exacerbated in regions such as the Bay Area, where the cost of living far exceeds educator salaries. What should districts and administrators do? CTA's Facebook page buzzed with comments.

EARL ROIDER JR.: Maybe pay a fair wage. In our current labor negotiations, the district wants to provide a one-half percent increase. Really? And stop demonizing teachers.

KAREN STOUT: What about the ones who already work for you — especially in areas with difficult, poverty-stricken students and dangerous neighborhoods? Fund teachers to become special education teachers in addition to their general ed credential with no-interest loans or better.

HAYLEY BOWMAN: I'm a new teacher and have applied to over 10 districts. Why are we all talking about a teacher shortage when new teachers like me can't get a full-time job? As far as I and my fellow new teacher friends are concerned, there is no shortage.

JENNIFER MOLESS: How this could have possibly come to pass, given how teachers make big bucks to teach in luxury classrooms? Between the respect afforded them (Chris Christie meant to say he'd give the teachers unions flowers, not punches! John Kasich didn't mean to say he'd outlaw faculty lounges — he wanted to outlaw staff rooms without day spa facilities!) and summers off, who *wouldn't* want to teach?

JOHNNA LEE-GARCIA: I can afford to teach in the Bay Area only because of my husband's job. If not for that, I'd be in suburban Houston, where a teacher's pay can buy a nice brick home in a relatively short time. (No labor protections, which sucks, but if you can't afford your own place, what's the point?) I can't understand why teachers stick around CA. Subsidized housing? Give me a freaking break!

KEN JOHNSON: We are hiring noncredentialed people in the Central Valley. My district starts at \$50K and tops out at \$98K. Housing is much cheaper than the Bay Area; SF is an hour away.

ALECIA HORN: Pay them more, respect substitutes, enforce behavior expectations for students, help them decrease class size, don't expect them to teach three years' worth of material in less than one year. Boom.

HOLLY RENEE CUMBIE: Help with child care would be fabulous. More \$\$\$ of course. Heck, I'd love some debt forgiveness.

JENNIFER TACHELLA RAYMOND: Many places in the Bay Area and San Joaquin Valley are begging anyone to set foot in the classroom. Retention rates are so low that some districts in my area are giving a signing bonus. You can't walk into the best districts and expect to find a job. You have to get experience and *then* move into top districts.

OPAL LYNN JOHNSON:

When I was deciding what to get a credential in, an instructor told me to go with special education and I would always have a job. This has proven to be the case. My district alone has five special ed openings. Districts are competing with each other for special ed teachers. I am currently looking at high-paying districts that will take all 20 years of my experience as credit.

JACKIE CULLUM: In LAUSD they are forcing older teachers to retire, so they can hire new teachers who receive less pay. If you want teachers, treat them with respect and let them teach. Stop telling them how to do their job and stop focusing on stupid test scores. The only thing that those tests really test is how well you take a test.

TONY PESQUEIRA: Teacher shortage reports are false, especially gen ed elementary.

TINA ANDRES: My district has no shortage. They are trying to get as many teachers as possible to retire with an incentive so they don't have to lay off. All of the new charters opening up in the fall will take away the possibility of doing any hiring. This is happening all over Orange County.

Taking Action

CTA has formed a Teacher Pipeline Workgroup to address this serious issue. There is also fresh research from Learning Policy Institute's recent report "**Addressing California's Emerging Teacher Shortage.**" The report notes what can help attract and retain good educators: targeted recruitment efforts; funding and improved pathways to earn teaching credentials; mentoring, especially for newer educators; higher salaries, improved working conditions, stable retirement and job security; loan forgiveness; and training for principals to become great instructional leaders.

BONNIE CEDIEL: New teachers are told they will not be earning Social Security retirement benefits. They will be earning a pension which they will be paying into. What they don't understand is that they will be losing chunks of their own SS retirement benefits that they have already earned because of the Windfall Elimination Provision. We are talking losing \$1,000 to \$2,400 *every month!*

NOELLE CLARK-HILL: How about paying us what we deserve and letting us have a say on the curriculum we are choosing?

ELLIE BURTON: In the 37 years I taught in California, educational quality declined, parents and students were much more disrespectful, and students were lazier by far. Retired teachers cannot collect the social security that many are entitled to. People (led by Carl DeMaio and Chuck Reed) want to eliminate teacher pensions. Were I entering the workforce today, it would likely *not* be in the teaching field.

JILL BOHN: If you have a math, science or special ed credential, you are gold.

KEN JOHNSON: Actually, if you're standing upright and breathing, you are gold.



What Do MILLENNIALS Really Want?

Young educators speak out about work, life, and their union

By SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN
Photos by SCOTT BUSCHMAN

IN CASE YOU haven't noticed, the teaching profession is undergoing a profound generational shift. Thanks in large part to Proposition 30, schools are hiring — and many of the newbies in the classroom resemble students more than educators.

But it's more than looking young. Millennials entering the profession in recent years have a different mindset. They have different needs and expectations than their baby boomer, Gen Y or Gen X counterparts.

As the first generation raised with social media, millennials (now in their 20s and early 30s) are eager to share, collaborate, and utilize technology in new and exciting ways. They embrace change in the classroom — and within their union.

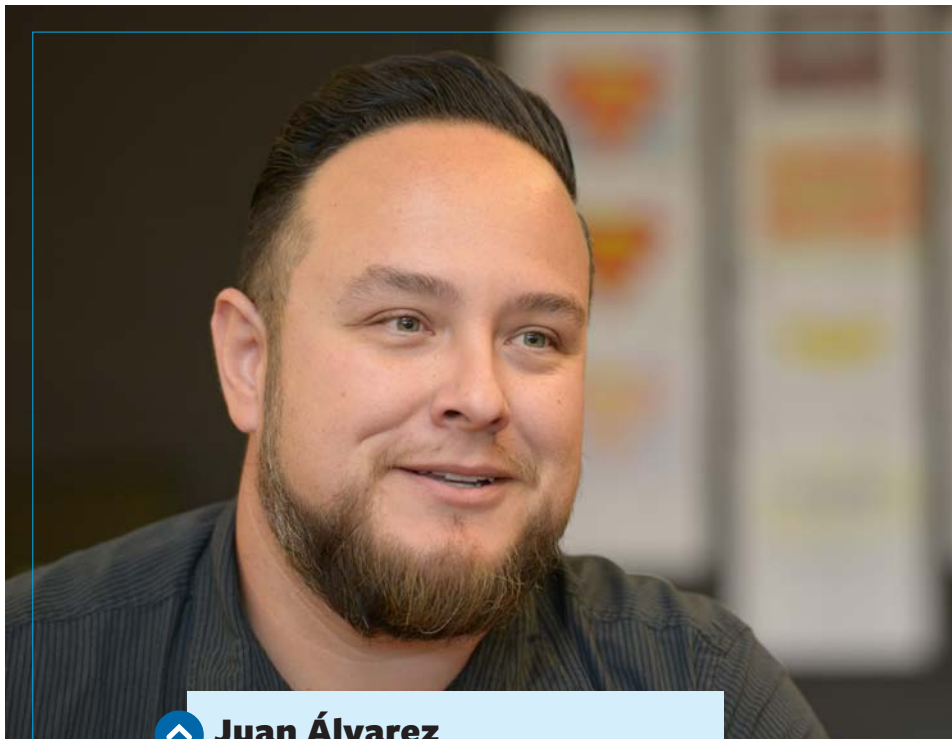
Millennials' relationship with CTA, in fact, is generally very positive, in large part due to CTA's recent outreach efforts. A 2015 survey of almost 1,300 new teachers (defined as having less than 10 years' experience) in California found

that 86 percent had been contacted by CTA in the past year.

"Over a year ago, we asked chapters to set up member engagement teams," notes CTA President Eric Heins.

There is much more to be done to engage younger members, but their generational traits, according to research, indicate that they're ready to roll. Millennials are widely praised for being creative, smart, flexible, idealistic, and committed to social justice. (The media have also given them a bit of a bad rap, describing them as selfie-absorbed, entitled slackers.)

So back to our question: What do millennials want? First and foremost, they want to be *heard*. So let's listen to what some of them have to say.



Juan Álvarez

34, math teacher, Gilbert High School,
Anaheim Secondary Teachers Association

It may sound funny, but older millennials are seeing the tail end of their generation joining the teaching ranks and stepping into new roles, muses Juan Álvarez, a site rep and executive board member of his association.

“Now it’s the older millennials who are becoming the bridge between the veteran teachers and the newest teachers,” says Álvarez, who graduated from CTA’s Ethnic Minority Early Identification and Development (EMEID) program to learn the ropes of leadership. “We’re the ones helping older teachers understand the brand-new teachers — and telling the younger teachers not to judge the older teachers.”

As more newbies are hired, Álvarez envisions seasoned millennials assuming more of a statesman role and serving as mentors to millennial babies.

Millennials on both ends of the age spectrum instinctively know how to implement technology seamlessly and creatively with curriculum, says Álvarez. As a result, millennials sometimes see professional development as a “step backwards” from what they’ve been doing all along, without their elders being aware of it.

“Millennials are always looking ahead to the next thing, while veteran teachers might be worried about trying something new. An administrator might ask me if I’ve tried a new online strategy yet that we talked about during professional development. But for me, that strategy is often so last year.”

CTA SHOULD BE USING MILLENNIALS...

to educate students in credential programs about the importance of unions. If I had known in college how awesome union involvement can be, I would have gotten involved sooner.

SCHOOLS COULD ENGAGE MILLENNIALS...

by having different levels of professional development. In technology workshops, millennials wade through information faster. Sometimes it feels like we are being held back.

MILLENNIALS ARE CONSTANTLY THINKING ABOUT... how they can improve their community and how they can make a difference.

The Facts

Millennials:

- Were born between 1981 and 1997 and are the largest and the most college-educated generation in American history.
- Will make up 75 percent of the workforce within the next decade.
- Were the first generation raised by “helicopter parents” who hovered incessantly and worried about their children’s self-esteem.
- Were described by their teachers as being in constant need of positive reinforcement and attention. They were the first generation to receive trophies for participation.
- Are the most rapidly growing class of millionaires and billionaires. However, many live at home with parents and expect they will never achieve the same standard of living they were raised in.
- Tend to be politically independent and may not affiliate with either Democratic or Republican parties. They are strong supporters of Bernie Sanders for president.
- Thrive on collaboration. It comes naturally: They spent their pre-school to college years working in small groups.
- Were the first generation to grow up with social media networks and enjoy sharing their lives within larger communities. Many prefer texting to talking.
- Find integrating Common Core with technology-infused instruction to be a relatively easy shift.
- Don’t necessarily see teaching — or the field of education — as a long-term commitment. They see careers in education as being among many options open to them.





Maya Walker

31, library tech, Hayward High School,
Association of Educational Office and
Technical Employees



Millennials may constantly post their thoughts, feelings and funny videos on social media, but don't be fooled, says Maya Walker. Along with the online frivolity and personal reflection is a groundswell of political activism.

"Millennials are a lot smarter than most people think and may be the smartest generation ever. We have lots of energy. We are used to multitasking and mobilizing people for social justice issues. With our expertise in technology, we can bring tons of people into the streets."

Walker used social media to urge others to join her in Washington, D.C. — physically and in spirit — when she and fellow CTA members rallied in front of the U.S. Supreme Court on Jan. 11 to show support for unionism and working families (see photo above). The rally occurred as justices heard oral arguments in *Friedrichs v. CTA*, which threatens to undermine the collective voice and bargaining rights of public employees across the nation.

Walker thinks more millennials should be ushered into the CTA fold to strengthen the association. She sees millennials as "untapped resources" who are overlooked for a variety of reasons.

"Millennials may still be in school or working on their degrees. They may have second jobs to work off student loans. They may have young children. When they go to a union gathering, they are not the loudest people in the room. They feel outnumbered, so they take a back seat."

Ageism also plays a role, she believes.

"There is a perception that since we're younger, we are not ready to be leaders," says Walker, a graduate of CTA's EMEID program, which prepares educators of color for union leadership. "But it's not true. We can play a strong role in our local unions. We bring a lot to the table."

WE DIFFER FROM OTHER GENERATIONS... because we don't always plan to stay in one job until we retire. Money is not always our driving force. We came of age in an economic time when lots of folks were out of jobs and many jobs were moved overseas. We are not always about being individuals; we are about the broader world.

WHEN IT COMES TO TECHNOLOGY... we don't always have the boundaries that the previous generations had between their personal life and work. It's harder for us to separate those things. We may not have the time or inclination to go to meetings, but we may be involved in other ways. We have a strong online presence.

I WOULD LIKE FOR CTA... to reach out to millennials about our wants and needs and recognize the contributions we can make to society and public education. I think it's imperative that CTA engages millennials. The future of public education depends on it.



3 Questions for Heidi Swenson Chipman

Heidi Swenson Chipman spent four years researching CTA's fit with tomorrow's educators to earn her doctorate in educational leadership from CSU Fullerton. Her dissertation, published in 2014, focuses on CTA millennials' perspectives on unionism — and also includes viewpoints of Gen X, Gen Y and baby boomers. Chipman, a member of the Association of Placentia-Linda Educators, served on CTA's State Council for 15 years and has held several leadership positions in CTA.

WHAT DO MILLENNIALS LIKE ABOUT UNIONS?

They love the fact that their union bargains for them. It's important to them that their unions are fighting for fair salaries and benefits on their behalf.

WHAT CHANGES WOULD THEY LIKE WITH THEIR LOCAL UNIONS?

They want to work more as a collective team when it comes to curriculum and reform; sometimes they feel that everything is dictated to them. They want to see unions find new ways to incorporate social media into communication. They want things more immediately. For example, they want minutes of union meetings within minutes.

Millennials are also interested in things like flexible time schedules and being able to move from district to district without being penalized. It's hard for them to understand that some of these issues cannot be contractually refined by unions until districts move into the 21st century.

WHAT SHOULD THE OLDER GENERATIONS DO?

The next generation believes in the strength of the union and the promise of the future. The challenge for current union leadership is to recognize and understand that the next generation wants exciting work, is enthusiastic about instructional and social networking technology, and dislikes isolation.



Jonalyn Smith

34, Student CTA President, UC Irvine

Jonalyn Smith has heard people say that her generation is less political than others, but she believes millennials are more independent than previous generations. It's true that a large percentage of millennials don't affiliate with either Democrats or Republicans.

"We are very open to change," she explains. "We welcome the values of other cultures. We value equality for all and believe in social justice."

She doesn't think millennials feel entitled. "Just because we are open to change doesn't make us the 'me' generation. We are willing to share. Our passion is social justice. Many of us are very passionate about careers in education. We are hardworking. I'm working all the time — going to school, being involved in Student CTA, and working to pay my bills."

In her leadership role, she is working to change veteran and younger CTA members' perception of one another. "Millennials are seen as students, or as just 'being there.' There's definitely a generation gap."

WE CAN WORK TOGETHER TO CLOSE THE GAP... with veterans hearing our stories, learning about how active we are when it comes to fighting for social justice, and asking us for our opinions and points of view.

I THINK THAT CTA COULD HELP MILLENNIALS BY... continuing to campaign for affordable higher education so we can get out of debt and buy homes someday.

WHAT CTA SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MILLENNIALS IS... we are here for them and want to help fight for social justice. We have energy and passion. They should always remember to include us.





Katy Rees

29, grades 2-3 teacher,
Rolling Hills Elementary School
Fairfield-Suisun Unified Teachers Association

“Many districts were not hiring for years because of the economy,” Katy Rees says. “Now there are jobs and millennials are getting hired, but there is a huge disconnect between veterans and new teachers. At my school there are only two teachers in their 30s and 40s. There are mostly teachers in their 20s and 50s. There’s no one to bridge the gap.”

Rees describes fellow millennials as “blank slates” eager to learn and utilize technology, while older teachers may have a hard time letting go of the old curriculum. Sometimes, she says, millennials’ eagerness and “go-go spirit” gets on the nerves of staff.

She says younger teachers could benefit from some mentoring, but she thinks veteran teachers are so overwhelmed with figuring out the Common Core that they don’t have time to mentor new teachers properly. It’s not their fault, says Rees, but at times she feels unsupported.

WHAT MILLENNIALS NEED FROM VETERAN TEACHERS... is support and sharing knowledge with us. Veteran teachers are so experienced and wonderful at what they do. They need to pass that on to us. I know everyone is overwhelmed, but we need their help. Younger teachers might understand new technology, but we need help in other areas. Sometimes we’re scared — we have so much to learn. Be patient with us.

WHAT MILLENNIALS WOULD LIKE... is to share what we know with veteran teachers. It’s to everyone’s benefit to learn from each other. We should all be working together. We should all be observing each other in the classroom and collaborating.

WHAT CTA CAN DO TO HELP MILLENNIALS... is reach out to us so we can take more pride in the profession and be more aware of important issues that surround public education.



Chapter Takes On New Teacher Orientation

At CTA's Summer Institute in 2014, Angela Der Ramos, an educator and Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment mentor in the Salinas area, approached CTA with an idea to support new teachers in Alisal Union School District.

"The professional development that was occurring at the district was not really meeting the needs of new teachers coming in," says George Lopez, president of the **Alisal Teachers Association (ATA)**. "It was very much 'Sit down and someone lectures.' We wanted to make it interactive, with real practices that teachers could use on topics such as class management, technology, curriculum — all the different elements of what a new teacher might need."

With CTA's backing, Der Ramos, Lopez, and ATA members Ben Cogswell and Edi Porter asked the district if ATA could take over one day of the mandatory three-day new teacher institute, offered at the beginning of the school year. Lopez says their proposal was so well received that the district "let us have all three days."

It took a year of planning and organizing. They formed T3, which stands for Teachers Teaching Teachers (see logo above). They recruited veteran teachers and relatively new teachers from the district who knew the needs of beginning teachers (and teachers new to the district).

"It was a real collaborative effort between the union and the district," Lopez says. The district provided the facility, food, equipment and materials, and paid for presenters and planning time.

"The program was very successful and beneficial," says Lopez, who notes that a good number of the participants were millennials. "It went beyond those days. New teachers were partnered with vets at each site, who met them and showed them around school, like a mentor. They were taken out to lunch by teachers at each site. We got great feedback. All the 50-plus teachers who were newly hired became members."

ATA, now 385 members strong, has since created a Facebook page that focuses on new teacher issues, called "The other side of the chalkboard." It plans to expand professional development for all teachers in 2016-17.



Michelle Pereira

29, algebra teacher, Tracy High School, Tracy Education Association

"I'm Kind of a Big Deal," proclaims Michelle Pereira's T-shirt.

As a matter of fact, Pereira is a big deal. The shirt is one way of letting her elders know that she may be young but she matters — even though she admits she's still "wet behind the ears" and often mistaken for a teenager.

In true millennial fashion, she is saddled with college debt, living with her parents, and trying to save money. Teaching isn't the fastest way to financial security, but she loves her job and she's not in it for the money. Things were easier for previous generations when it came to fulfilling the American Dream, she observes.

She considers herself "personable" but admits she would rather text than talk on the telephone. She saves most of her talking for students and texts when communicating with parents. Her father doesn't understand that it saves time in the long run, she says.

Older teachers find Pereira a valuable resource when it comes to integrating technology with the Common Core. Some are a bit flummoxed with the transition. She, on the other hand, was taught to teach that way, isn't scared one bit, and is happy to help when asked.

"Just because we're young doesn't mean we don't know anything. We have a lot to learn, but we also have a lot to contribute."

SOME PEOPLE THINK MILLENNIALS ARE... entitled, but we're not. They don't understand that we worked our butts off to go to college and get a degree. I think the "entitled" label comes more from expecting a job right out of college in the field that we studied. It is something that we were promised before the recession, but it isn't that easy anymore. At this point we just want a job so that we can survive and pay off our debt.

WHAT MILLENNIALS HAVE TO OFFER IS... a fresh perspective. We are closely linked with the generation we are teaching. We can relate to our students and we know where they are coming from.

WHAT MILLENNIALS REALLY WANT... is respect and appreciation. We are the future. The older generation is going to have to turn things over to us at some point. They should start including us now so we know what to do.

Palm Lane School in Anaheim is fighting parent trigger efforts to restructure it, possibly turning it into a charter.

PARENT TRIGGER

FIVE YEARS LATER

A misfire with no clear successes

By SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN and FRANK WELLS
Photos by SCOTT BUSCHMAN



Kristen Fisher

Palm Lane Elementary School in Anaheim doesn't look like a battleground, with its neatly trimmed lawns, gently swaying palm trees and orderly students. But it's one of a handful of schools in California under attack by Parent Revolution — an organization dedicated to using the Parent Empowerment Act to “pull the trigger” on public schools in an effort to privatize them, charterize them, and drive out unions.

If an impending legal battle results in a successful pull of the trigger at Palm Lane, the school could be restructured as a charter run by a private company with non-district employees. The principal or teachers could be replaced. Or the school could be shut down and its students sent elsewhere.

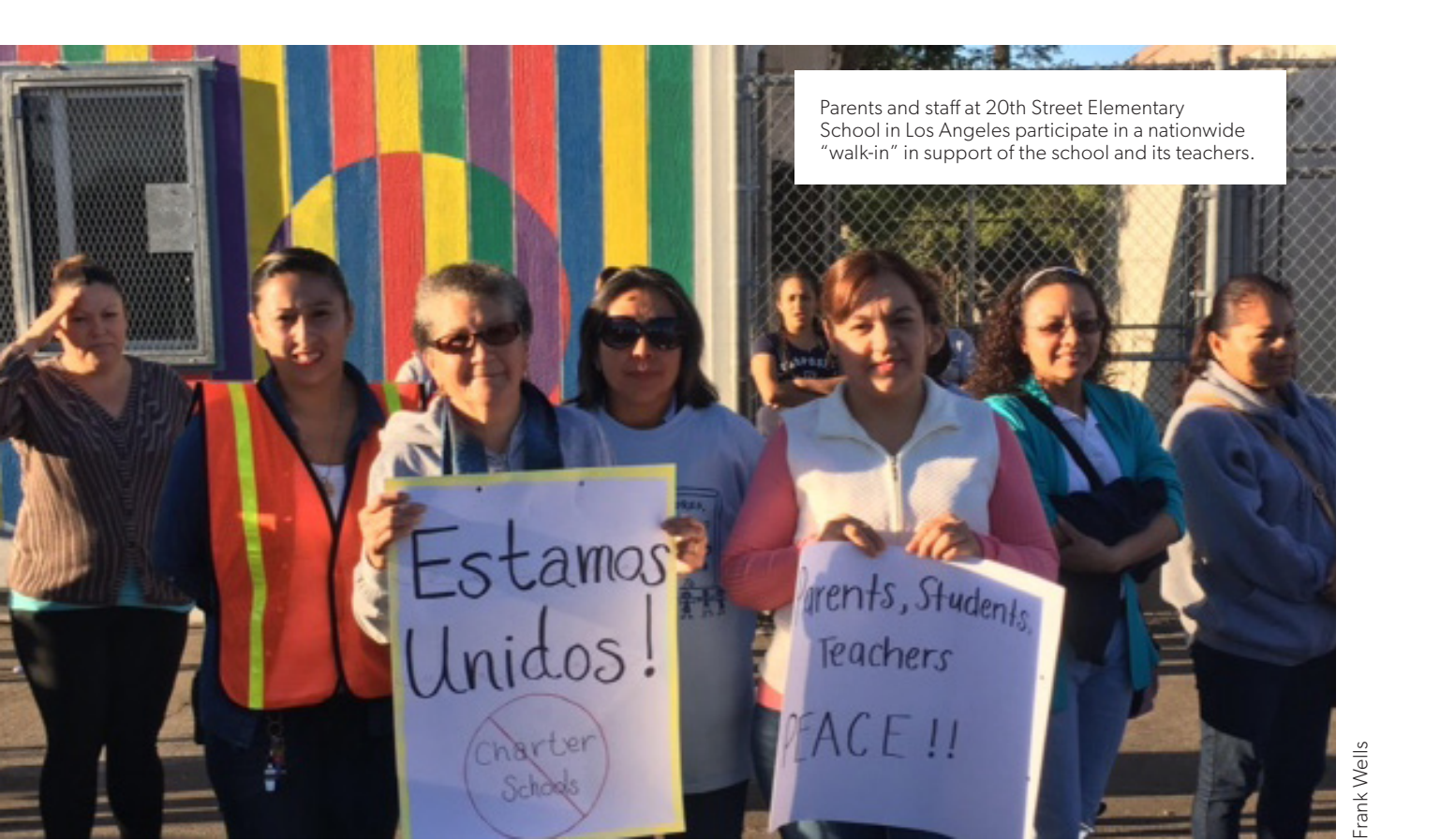
Anaheim Elementary Education Association President Kristen Fisher says the staff is staying calm, but educators

worry about the future of their school and students. “Teachers are focused on doing their job and on what’s best for students.”

The looming legal decision will not only affect Palm Lane; the outcome could determine the legal validity of the parent trigger law, which in five years has done nothing but divide communities, traumatize

students, and hurt public education.

Because of this, there is waning support for the law. Recently the *Los Angeles Times*, an initial supporter of the legislation, urged in an editorial that it be reconsidered, noting that the law has backfired by allowing “fairly good and improving schools to be targeted” and remains an “unproven idea.” In five years, the editorial says, there have only been



Parents and staff at 20th Street Elementary School in Los Angeles participate in a nationwide “walk-in” in support of the school and its teachers.

Frank Wells

a handful of “triggered” schools, and proponents have had no clear successes.

Indeed, parent trigger has proved to be a disruptive and divisive approach to school reform.

WORKING WITH PARENTS

The parent trigger law, enacted in California in 2010, allows parents at schools with low test scores to collect and submit signatures (representing 50 percent of the school’s students) to force a school district to make changes.

The law is flawed and unfair, says Fisher, because the only votes that count are the votes to pull the trigger. Parents opposed to the petitions “have no voice and no vote.”

The trigger has been pulled, meaning petitions have been filed, at six schools thus far. In Los Angeles Unified School District, Parent Revolution targeted a principal at Weigand Avenue Elementary School, and many staff transferred to other sites in protest. LAUSD’s 24th Street Elementary School was split in half when the trigger was pulled, and now has a district-run K-4 program and a charter program operating grades 5-8. At Desert Trails Elementary in Adelanto, the only school where the entire staff was forced out and the school was converted to a charter, new teacher turnover has been rampant, and the school is on the verge of losing its charter.

Parent Revolution has twice collected parent signatures at 20th Street Elementary School in LAUSD. Last year, the group backed off from filing when the district promised to improve

the school. In February, however, the trigger was pulled. The district is reviewing the signatures for validity.

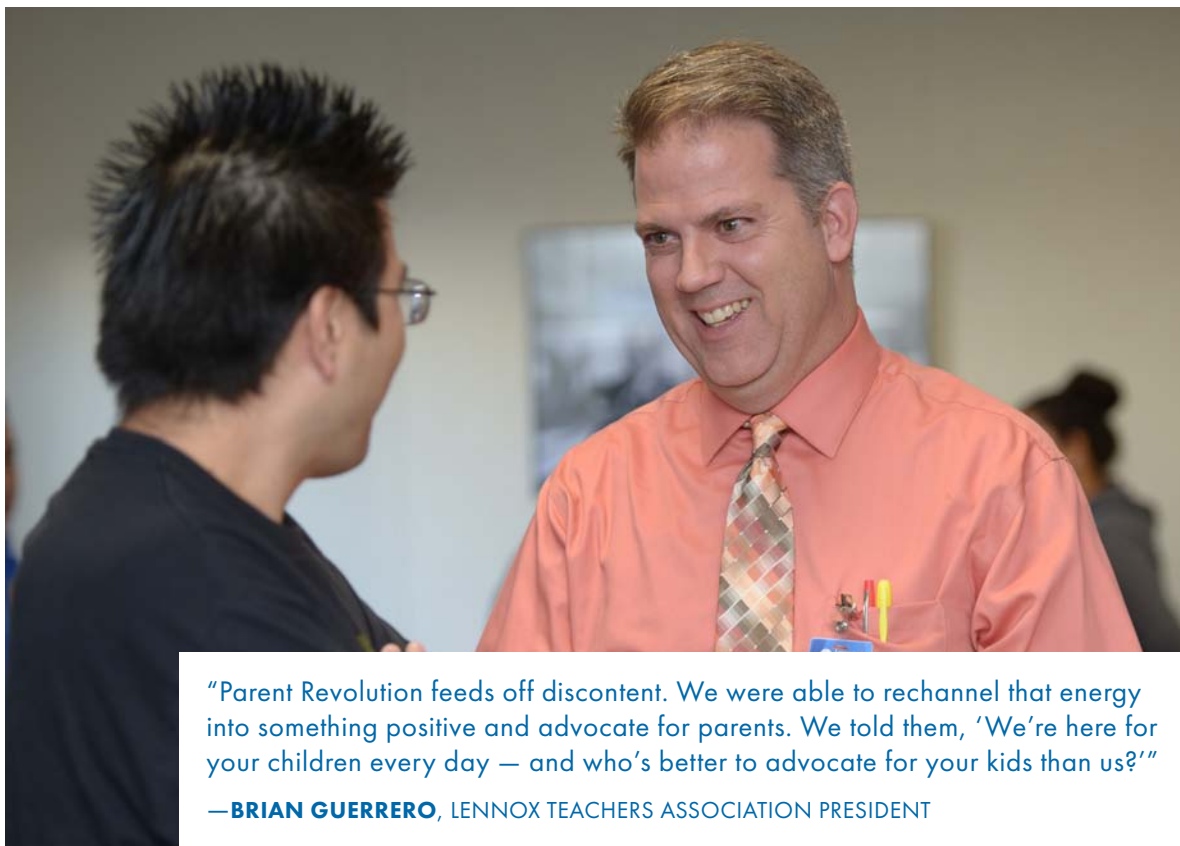
On Feb. 17, a “walk-in” at the school, organized by United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) and the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools, made national headlines. Parents, students and other school supporters spoke and carried signs focusing on what they like about the school — including teachers. The event was one of many walk-ins around the country that day to support public schools.

CTA continues to educate its chapters to be aware of the potential threat at schools that could be targeted. One of the most critical issues in CTA training is understanding the importance of the parent-teacher relationship. United Teachers of Pasadena, the Lennox Teachers Association, and the Inglewood Teachers Association were able to stop parent trigger efforts by strengthening relationships with parents and the community. Inglewood, for example, expanded a “Parent University” that teaches parents how to help their children succeed in school. In Lennox, the association sponsors workshops for parents to explain how they can help their children do well with the Common Core standards.

“Three years ago when Parent Revolution came here, we didn’t confront them directly, but we decided that if we could better represent parent concerns, we could save our school community from them,” says Brian Guerrero, Lennox Teachers Association president. “Parent Revolution feeds off discontent, and we were able to rechannel that energy into



Brian Guerrero, right, talks to a parent during a Common Core workshop.



“Parent Revolution feeds off discontent. We were able to rechannel that energy into something positive and advocate for parents. We told them, ‘We’re here for your children every day — and who’s better to advocate for your kids than us?’”

—BRIAN GUERRERO, LENNOX TEACHERS ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

something positive and advocate for parents. We told them, ‘We’re here for your children every day — and who’s better to advocate for your kids than us?’”

A LEGACY OF LIES

McKinley Elementary School in Compton was the target of the first trigger attempt in 2010. Parent Revolution demanded that the school be turned over to a private charter operator preselected by the outside organizers during a splashy news conference as the petitions were delivered to the district.

The effort began to unravel almost immediately. It became clear that Parent Revolution was unaware that students were already making significant and rapid gains through participation in CTA’s Quality Education Investment Act school reform program.

In addition, although some parents supported the petition drive, many said they had been misled about what they were signing and, in many cases, had clearly been lied to. Parents complained of petitioners knocking on the door late at night, and of being followed and harassed into signing trigger petitions. Others said they were told that signing the petition was a vote to improve the school’s computer technology or to “beautify” the school. Some parents said they themselves were promised laptop computers. Most said they did not understand that the school staff would be replaced, and many among the school’s large immigrant population did not really understand what a charter

school was. Eventually it was determined that there were not enough valid signatures submitted.

“I know parents have been tricked. I’ve seen it,” says Ingrid Villeda, a fifth-grade educator at 93rd Street Elementary School and UTLA member. “Organizers come in who are not from our neighborhood and claim they are people from the community wanting change, but it’s a lie. They are professional organizers who are hired to collect signatures and create a parent union. Parents are told that if they sign the petition, school lunches will be better in the cafeteria and every student will have a computer and test scores will go up. These lies cause disruption and destabilize communities.”

Villeda, who is outspoken on the topic at school board meetings, says pulling the trigger “throws away” valuable people and resources without analyzing what is working well and what isn’t working.

“Those interested in uplifting the community and schools should come to community schools and engage all stakeholders in a very transparent way to make things better. A hostile takeover will never result in gains.”

Sometimes pulling the trigger even makes things worse, as in the case of Desert Trails Elementary School in Adelanto, a small town near Victorville. In that 2012 case, many parents regretted signing the petitions, said they did not understand what they had signed, and asked permission to rescind their signatures, which would have reduced parent support far below the 50 percent mark. But a San Bernardino County



Teachers Rebecca Bykoski and Angela Kutch by their former school's sign. Bykoski says, "I wouldn't wish parent trigger on my worst enemy."

Adelanto: Teachers Relive Trigger Tragedy

In 2011, there were rumblings at Desert Trails Elementary School that the principal, on the verge of termination, wanted to "take down" the school on his way out, and was working with Parent Revolution to influence parents to sign petitions to turn the school into a privately run charter.

He held private meetings with staff to ask if they were "on the bus" or not. Adelanto District Teachers Association members Angela Kutch and Rebecca Bykoski felt threatened. No, they said, as union members they were definitely **not** on the bus.

The principal was eventually ousted. Staff united, worried about their school.

Parents demanded the school provide up-to-date technology, after-school clubs and new programs for students. Teachers, operating in a leadership vacuum and without financial resources, were about to start after-school programs on their own and had

implemented a new reading program when they heard the trigger had been pulled.

Parent Revolution outsiders began attending PTA meetings. Teachers tried to explain to local parents that Parent Revolution intended to close the school and reopen it as a charter. Parents countered that it wasn't true; their petition signatures only meant they were getting a free computer, as Parent Revolution promised.

Parent Revolution convinced some parents to turn against the school. Some of their children arrived at school wearing Parent Revolution T-shirts.

"A first-grader told me, 'I don't have to listen to you. My mom is taking over the school,'" recalls Bykoski.

Parent turned against parent. Those who supported the trigger taunted parents who didn't in the parking lot. TV cameras were constantly trained on the school. Students fought in the playground over the issue.

A new, supportive principal was hired in 2012. He gave pep talks. Sometimes staff

cried and prayed together over student desks after work.

Especially frustrating was hearing outright lies and being unable to speak the truth. Kutch recalls parents standing in front of the school telling the media that their children were "failing." In reality, she says, their children were proficient or advanced based on test scores, but teachers were bound by confidentiality not to discuss children's achievement levels.

On the last day of school in 2013, kids sobbed and hugged their teachers goodbye. Parent Revolution staff went around classrooms taking pictures to make sure educators didn't "steal" things. The school was converted into a charter.

Looking back, Bykoski wishes teachers had stood up to the paid organizers of Parent Revolution more strongly. There was a feeling, she says, that the situation would blow over and that at the last minute, the school would be saved.

Parent Revolution knew exactly what it was doing, says Kutch.

"They picked a location that was remote with a school district that was caught off guard and not savvy enough to really understand what Parent Revolution was about. There were many uneducated, misguided parents living in a tough economy where lots of foreclosures were happening. It was a perfect storm for the trigger to be pulled."

Both Kutch and Bykoski now teach at other Adelanto schools and have tried to put the nightmare behind them. But it's easier said than done.

"It still hurts my heart talking about it," says Bykoski. "It divided our parents, our students and our community. I wouldn't wish this on my worst enemy."

judge ruled that parents could not revoke their signatures.

So Adelanto became the nation's first successful (at least from a legal standpoint) parent trigger effort. The school reopened in Fall 2013 as a charter run by a private operator. It was not feasible for teachers to stay for the transition, as they would have had to resign from the district — losing their salary and benefits — and be hired as new teachers with the charter. (See sidebar above.)

By the end of the new charter's first year, the majority of its new teachers left amid complaints of bullying by the site administrator, inadequate resources, failure to follow through on promises made in the charter proposal, and the complete

abandonment of noncore subjects in an effort to artificially raise test scores in reading and math. In November 2015, the Adelanto School District announced it would not be renewing the charter over numerous administrative and compliance issues. The school has appealed.

THE FUTURE OF PARENT TRIGGER

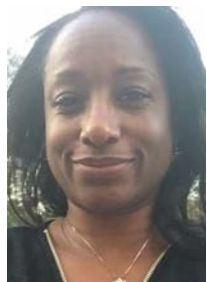
In February 2015, the Anaheim City School District rejected trigger petitions for Palm Lane Elementary School. It appears the law has outlived its own regulations and rules. A school becomes eligible for parent trigger when it falls below 800 on the state's Academic Performance Index (API) and fails





Fifth-grade educator Ingrid Villeda says pulling the trigger throws away valuable people and resources.

to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under No Child Left Behind. Since California has suspended the API and AYP is disappearing with the reauthorization of NCLB, the school district argued that there are no measures available to meet the law's requirement. A superior court judge ruled that the petitions are still valid even if they can't meet the letter of the law. The district is appealing that ruling.



La Nita Dominique

If the district wins its appeal, parent trigger law would become invalid unless it is rewritten using replacements for API and AYP. If the appeal is rejected, the law will almost certainly continue to be a source of division and case-by-case litigation.

What started in California has spread virally to other states. Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio and Texas have adopted some form of trigger law. CTA's experience and assistance were instrumental in helping defeat Florida parent trigger law proposals in 2012 and 2013.

What Triggered the So-called Revolution

In January 2010, the California Legislature enacted the nation's first parent trigger law, allowing parents at schools with low test scores to collect and submit signatures (representing 50 percent of the school's students) to force a school district to pull the trigger.

The concept for the law originated in Los Angeles with Parent Revolution, which had been formed in 2009 in part to help promote LA's Public School Choice Initiative to parents, and to expand charter schools once that initiative was approved by the LAUSD board. There was a split in the organization as Parent Revolution focused more on promoting a parent trigger law and as millions of dollars in support began pouring in from groups such as the Walton, Gates and Broad foundations. Parent Revolution's mission changed: It was now intent on creating and lobbying for parent trigger laws that could widen the charter school share of the public education "market." Ben Austin, a former Clinton White House staffer, was appointed executive director.

Austin found two state lawmakers willing to co-author a trigger law, Sen. Gloria Romero (D-Los Angeles) and Sen. Bob Huff (R-Diamond Bar). The trigger bill became part of a slew of special session education legislation rushed through in an attempt to qualify California for President Obama's Race to the Top (RTTT) school funding competition. It was passed quickly under pressure from Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. California did not end up qualifying for any RTTT funding, and the so-called reforms hurriedly enacted to make that happen left schools saddled with consequences.

Parent Revolution's tactics with parent trigger have come under fire, with numerous complaints that the organization has used the law to coerce parents into taking over schools. Significant numbers of parents have said Parent Revolution organizers used deception in obtaining petition signatures. In 2015, Ben Austin left Parent Revolution to work for Students Matter, the millionaire-backed group that brought the *Vergara v. California* lawsuit attempting to strike down basic due process for teachers.

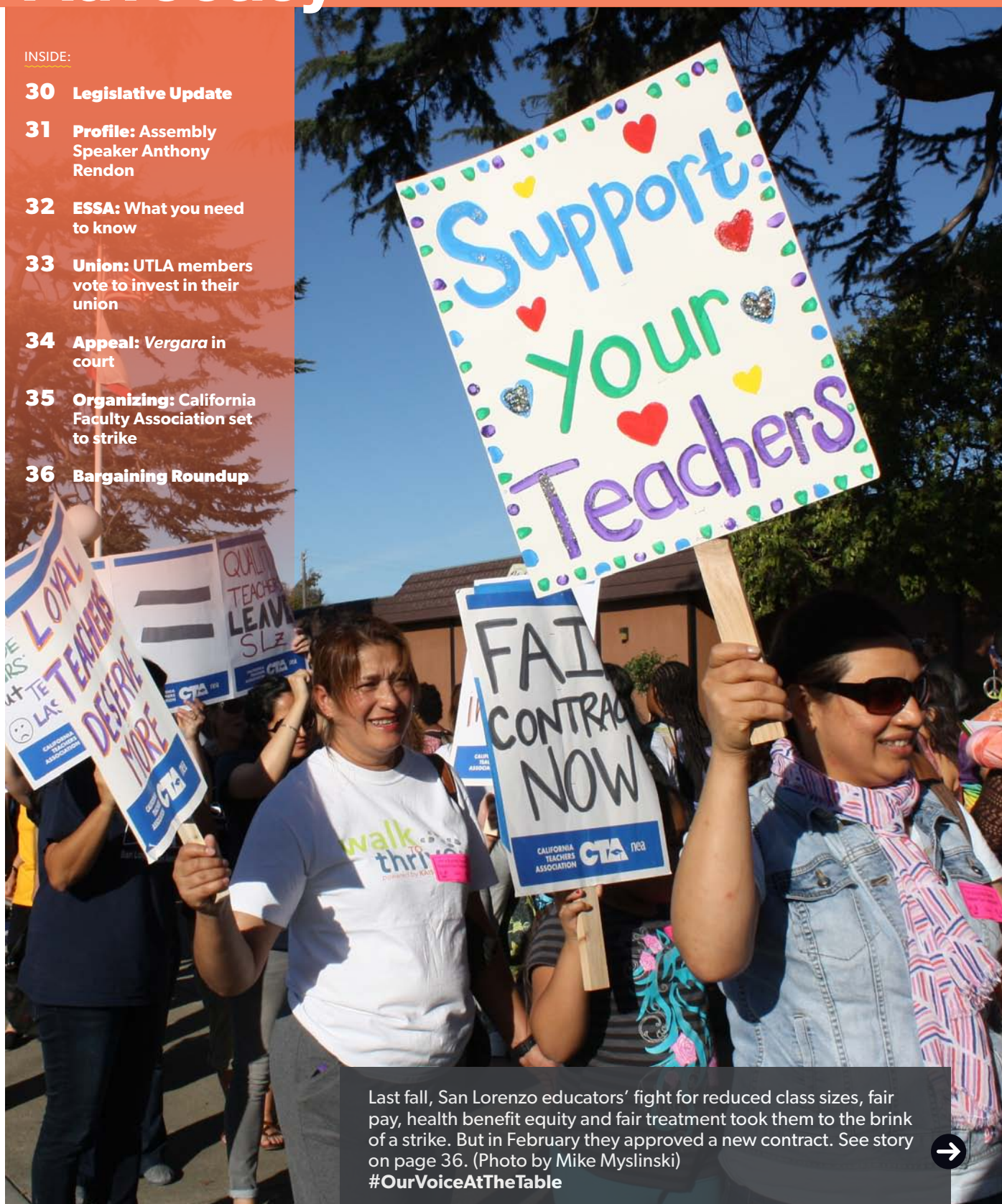
There is a lesson to be learned from the experience, says La Nita Dominique, former president of the Adelanto Teachers Association, now a CTA staffer for the Stockton Teachers Association.

"Studies show that teachers are trusted, so it's important that we continue our efforts to build relationships and do community outreach," she says. "We need to be able to talk to each other. That is how problems are solved. That is when good things happen. We are all partners in education — students, teachers, parents and administrators. It's important that we always keep the lines of communication open." ■

Advocacy

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Last fall, San Lorenzo educators' fight for reduced class sizes, fair pay, health benefit equity and fair treatment took them to the brink of a strike. But in February they approved a new contract. See story on page 36. (Photo by Mike Myslinski)

#OurVoiceAtTheTable



Legislative Update

By LEN FELDMAN

CHARTER SCHOOL MEASURES FOCUS ON TRANSPARENCY

CTA members are urging state lawmakers to approve two co-sponsored measures that together would increase accountability, transparency and accessibility at the state's public charter schools.

Both measures, which were introduced during the 2015 legislative year, were pending action in the Legislature as the *Educator* went to press.

AB 709, by Assembly Member Mike Gipson (D-Carson), would require charter school governing boards to comply with accountability and transparency requirements that apply to other public schools. These include compliance with the Brown Act, the Public Records Act, the Political Reform Act, and Government Code section 1090. The bill is awaiting action in the state Senate.

AB 709 would also require the companies that manage charter schools to inform parents how they spend taxpayer money and reveal information about their annual budgets and contracts. The measure would bar charter school board members and their immediate families from benefiting financially from their schools.

The second measure, SB 322 by Sen. Mark Leno (D-San Francisco), is targeted at maintaining student access to the state's public charter schools. It would bar charter schools from establishing admission requirements and preferences that are not permitted at traditional public schools. This is particularly important to make sure all students have access to these schools, regardless of their economic status, country and language of origin, disability status, or race. The bill is pending in the Assembly.

Among other things, the bill would prohibit schools from requiring parental volunteer hours as an admission or continued enrollment mandate.

Specifically, the measure is intended to ensure that charter schools have nondiscriminatory admission, suspension, and expulsion policies that guarantee students their due process rights — and to eliminate any practices that have the effect, either intentionally or unintentionally, of barring admission or facilitating elimination of certain children and families.

CHAPTER PRESIDENTS CAN HAVE MAJOR IMPACT ON STATE BUDGET

Hundreds of CTA local chapter leaders will be converging on the Capitol on Tuesday, May 24, for the Presidents' Lobby Day.

On that date, chapter leaders will gain valuable information about the state budget and have a chance to meet with their legislators to discuss the needs of students, teachers and public schools.

The event comes at a crucial time in legislative deliberations aimed at finalizing the state's 2016-17 spending plan.

It follows by about a week the deadline for the governor to release his updated estimates of state revenues and his proposals for using the funds. The release of the "May Revision" marks the beginning of the most intense efforts in the state Capitol to finish up a budget bill in time to send it to the governor by the June 15 constitutional deadline.

Under state law, the governor has until June 30 to sign the spending measure sent to him by lawmakers.



On Presidents' Lobby Day several years ago, CTA leaders (including then-Vice President Eric Heins) meet with Assembly Member Susan Bonilla (D-Concord), at right.



Meet Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon

By LEN FELDMAN

ASSEMBLY MEMBER Anthony Rendon (D-Paramount) officially becomes the new speaker of the Assembly on March 7. He represents the 63rd Assembly District, which includes Bell, Cudahy, Hawaiian Gardens, Lakewood, Lynwood, Maywood, Paramount, South Gate, and a northern portion of Long Beach.

Now in his second term, Rendon has focused on issues including clean water, open government and early childhood education. He led the powerful Utilities and Commerce Committee, dealing with utility companies seeking to shape SB 350's mandate that half of California's electricity come from renewable sources by 2030. He played a key role in crafting a \$7.5 billion water bond in 2014 that ultimately won voter approval, and carried a bill that will ban lead bullets in California as of 2019.

Prior to serving in the Assembly, he was executive director of Plaza de la Raza Child Development Services, an agency providing comprehensive child development and social and medical services to over 2,300 children and families. He was an adjunct professor in the Political Science and Criminal Justice Department at CSU Fullerton from 2001 to 2008.

Rendon earned his bachelor's and master of arts degrees from CSU Fullerton. He received a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship and earned his Ph.D. in political science from UC Riverside, with postdoctoral work at Boston University.

Rendon is the fifth Latino to serve as speaker. He and his wife, Annie, live in Paramount.

What did you do before becoming a lawmaker in 2012?

I worked in the nonprofit sector for over two decades operating early childhood education, gang reduction, and other community-based programs.

What led you to run for office?

As a nonprofit executive, I regularly interacted with elected officials to advocate for funding of the programs I managed. Though a valuable experience, it was often a frustrating one, particularly in the depths of the Great Recession, when over a billion dollars was slashed from early childhood education programs. I felt that the Legislature needed a voice that understood those issues and would fight for them.

Who was the teacher who had the greatest impact on you? What key learning did you take with you from your contact with that teacher?

My 12th-grade government teacher, Ms. McCauley, at California High School in Whittier exposed me to a world I previously hadn't thought much about. Little did I know one day I would be practicing all that she taught!

What steps should the Legislature take to help schools succeed?

When we help teachers succeed, students succeed. That means supporting teachers with the training and tools they need, including school facilities that accommodate learning and technology in the classroom that keeps up with the modern world.

What are your goals for public education?

California's public schools have long been a bridge toward upward mobility for our youth. Moving forward, we must commit to connecting our education system to the jobs of today and teaching the skills that prepare students for success in the workforce and in life.

What advice would you give educators about working with legislators?

Many of the things we work on in Sacramento can feel abstract. Your message is most effective when it relates back to the communities we represent. Rather than referencing acronyms and overly technical policy language, talk about how the policies we craft in Sacramento touch our constituents on a human level. Describe how it impacts our neighbors' kids and the schools in our communities.



ESSA: What You Need to Know

THE NEW Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) allows for more authority at the state and local level, as opposed to the top-down, one-size-fits-all approach of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Specifically, assessment, accountability, and measuring student performance are now state and school district responsibilities — and cannot be based solely on standardized tests.

ESSA is an opportunity for educators to drive teaching and learning decisions, and to strengthen partnerships with parents and communities to advocate for what students really need. Here are some highlights.

NEW ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

are not based solely on standardized tests, and must include:

- Math, reading assessments.
- Graduation rates.
- Multiple measures of student success.
- English language proficiency.
- At least one indicator of school quality (from a “dash-board” of measures such as access to advanced coursework, school climate, safety from bullying, fine arts, regular physical education, and counselors or nurses).
- 95 percent participation rate.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

is based on a state-created system to identify two groups of schools:

Subgroup schools have consistently underperforming subgroups.

- Differentiation based on all indicators.
- Districts create the school improvement plan — must make progress in a certain number of years (defined by the district).

Lowest-performing schools include the bottom 5 percent of Title I schools, high schools with lower than 67 percent graduation rates, and the lowest subgroup schools.

- Must do a resource equity plan; the district develops an improvement plan.
- Must improve within four years, or the state needs to do more.

EMPOWERS EDUCATORS

with a greater voice in educational and instructional decisions.

- Calls for local committees of practitioners, including educators, parents and community members, to work together for school improvement.
- Includes engagement and specific mention of teachers, paraeducators and specialized instructional support personnel in decision-making.
- Focuses on the teaching continuum, including career ladders, mentoring, and professional development.
- Maintains NCLB’s paraprofessional qualifications.

AND THERE’S MORE!

Other notable features of ESSA:

- Protection of **collective bargaining** agreements.
- New, positive language about **restorative justice**; ending the school-to-prison pipeline.
- Continuance of, and greater clarity around, options for students to **opt out** of testing (see page 50).
- Improvements to **charter school** transparency and accountability.

Source: NEA. For more information about ESSA, see bit.ly/1P3EYJP.



At top, UTLA members celebrate the vote to approve the Build the Future, Fund the Fight financial restructuring to invest in the union. Above, a montage of LAUSD schools showing their support.

Ringing Endorsement

UTLA's membership votes to support fight for public education

In a resounding victory for students and public education, 82 percent of United Teachers Los Angeles members voted to reinvest in their union and agreed to a dues increase in early February.

With the Build the Future, Fund the Fight campaign, UTLA leadership has for months engaged its membership on the need to fight against those who attack the concept of a strong public education with access and equity for all, and who seek to privatize public education. They include the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, which has proposed a plan to enroll half of Los Angeles Unified School District students in unregulated charter schools over eight years.

"We are fighting back unaccountable billions from the privatization movement one educator at a time, by increasing our dues by \$19 a month," says UTLA President Alex Caputo-Pearl. "Our members believe in funding the fight for our vision of the Schools LA Students Deserve — one that is built by educators, parents, students, and our communities, neighborhood by neighborhood, not funded by corporate special interests whose view of education reduces students to market shares, and educators to human capital."

Currently, LAUSD has the most charter schools of any district in the nation. Because they are independently operated and exempt from some rules that govern traditional schools, charters serve fewer students who may be more difficult or more expensive to educate because of serious disabilities, behavior problems, lack of fluency in English, or other issues.

Caputo-Pearl and UTLA's vision for sustainable neighborhood community schools includes smaller class size, reducing high-stakes testing, reassessing performance evaluations, increasing the number of nurses and counselors per student at school sites, and winning legal battles such as *Vergara v. California* that threaten to eliminate teacher job protections.

UTLA is the nation's second-largest local teachers union and represents more than 35,000 educators along with health and human services professionals who work in LAUSD and independent charters.

More than 50 percent of its membership voted — one of the highest voter turnouts in UTLA's history. Under the initiative that was approved, monthly dues for a full-time member will increase from \$63.33 to \$82.33 as of Sept. 1, 2016. ■

The Numbers

Total number of votes by UTLA members to reinvest in their union: 16,045

Yes: 13,116 = 82%
No: 2,929 = 18%

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Advocacy

Reverse *Vergara* Ruling and Protect All Students

ON FEB. 25, CTA and the California Federation of Teachers presented arguments to California's 2nd District Court of Appeal in *Vergara v. California*, urging the court to overturn the flawed decision for the sake of all students.

At a CTA-CFT press conference outside the court, key advocates spoke about how *Vergara* hurts students and pushes an anti-student, anti-public education agenda.

Civil rights icon Dolores Huerta said, "I strongly believe in providing all children with equal access to a quality public education, and that starts with having educators who have the professional rights to stand up and speak out for the students in their classroom."

In June 2014, a Los Angeles County Superior Court judge issued a decision in the case that threw out teacher job protections such as tenure rights, due process, and rules regarding hiring and layoffs.

The lawsuit is funded by Students Matter, a nonprofit backed by Silicon Valley millionaire David Welch and financed partly by Eli Broad, whose foundation is helping push a plan to put half of Los Angeles' public school students in charter schools, and the Walton Family Foundation. The suit argues that the state deprives plaintiffs of a quality education due to laws guiding core teacher employment rights, which plaintiffs say keep ineffective teachers in classrooms.

Some of the nation's top legal scholars, education policy experts, civil rights advocates, award-winning teachers, school board members and administrators have filed amicus (friend of the court) briefs highlighting the numerous and major flaws that would harm students in the decision, and urging that it be reversed.

Earlier this year, Students Matter deceived Huerta and persuaded her to publicly support its cause. She quickly learned of the organization's mission and wrote, "I am extremely disheartened and disappointed in the way you misrepresented the facts in order to get me to align with your organization and in particular the *Vergara v. State of California* lawsuit. I am now very much aware of your agenda and it is in direct conflict with my beliefs."

A ruling on the appeal is expected within 90 days.



Dolores Huerta speaks at the CTA-CFT press conference. CTA President Eric Heins and Vice President Theresa Montaño are at left; CFT President Josh Pechthalt, attorney Michael Rubin and UTLA President Alex Caputo-Pearl are behind Huerta.



California Faculty Association prepared to strike

The California Faculty Association's **Fight for Five** campaign demands a 5 percent general salary increase for all California State University faculty and an additional 2.65 percent service salary increase for eligible faculty. CFA says that if negotiations with CSU do not yield results, it will strike for five days on all 23 campuses, April 13-15, 18 and 19.

"CTA stands in strong support together with CFA and all college faculty in the Fight for Five," says CTA President Eric Heins. Among the reasons CFA says it will strike:

- **Unprofessional salaries:** On average, CSU faculty earn \$46,016 per year before taxes and other deductions.
- **Not just a time base problem:** Even if all faculty were working on full-time contracts, half of faculty would still earn \$56,000 or less each year.
- **Loss in purchasing power:** CSU faculty are poorer today than they were 10 years ago. The average full-time equivalent faculty member lost \$7,000 in purchasing power between 2005 and 2015.
- **Poorest in higher education:** Permanent tenure-track faculty salaries in the CSU lag behind those in the University of California and community colleges. For the 2014-15 academic year, the average tenured/tenure-track faculty salary at UC was \$135,633; at community colleges, \$89,251; and at CSU, \$85,039.
- **Undermining the profession:** There are fewer tenure-line faculty today compared with 10 years ago, while the number of temporary faculty has grown by 24 percent. Yet, in the last budget cycle, the CSU fought against CFA's successful effort to earmark \$11 million in funding for tenure-track hiring.
- **Uneven faculty sacrifices:** Between 2008 and 2010, CSU faculty gave up two service salary increases and 11 percent of negotiated raises because the CSU administration said it had no money. In 2010, CSU faculty took a 10 percent pay cut, providing \$147 million to help close the CSU budget deficit.
- **Salary increases:** Between 2005 and 2015, the average salary for managers and supervisors in the CSU increased by 21 percent, while the average salary for full-time equivalent faculty increased by 12 percent. The average president's salary grew by 29 percent.
- **Increasing workloads:** In 2014, there were 75,366 more full-time equivalent students (24 percent) than in 2004, but only 2,319 more FTE faculty (14 percent).
- **Bureaucratic bloat:** Even as the number of tenure-line faculty declined over the last decade, the number of administrators increased by 22 percent. Half of these administrators earn six-figure salaries.
- **Student fee increases:** In 2000, a CSU student had to work 319 hours at minimum wage to pay tuition and fees. In 2015, a CSU student must work more than twice as much, 758 hours.



- **Good and bad budget times:** From 2005 to 2015, expenditures on managers and supervisors increased by 48 percent, outpacing the CSU's net operating budget, while expenditures on faculty grew by 25 percent, at a slower rate than the CSU's net operating budget.
- **Campus equity gone awry:** Most campus equity programs exclude lecturers, even though they make up 60 percent of the teaching faculty. Only one in five faculty receives equity pay.
- **Housing a distant dream:** In a large CFA survey, 60 percent of faculty reported an inability to afford housing in the community where their campus is located.
- **A financial strain:** Eighty percent of faculty respondents to the survey said their salary has had a meaningful negative effect on their lives. More than 60 percent are unable to have the recommended three months' savings in the bank.
- **Increasing reserves, decreasing instruction expenditures:** A 10-year analysis of the CSU's financials show a significant decline in the proportion of CSU operating expenses for direct instruction and a stark increase in reserves.
- **No movement:** In 2015-16, CFA members helped to secure \$97 million more in the state budget for the CSU, yet CSU management returned to the bargaining table with the same 2 percent offer faculty had rejected.

Help Wanted

CTA members who can help during CFA's Fight for Five strike are invited to volunteer their services at calfac.org/form/strike-support-pledge. CFA is looking for ESP, pre-K-12, and community college members who have special skills in fields such as — but not limited to — agriculture, athletics, laboratory sciences, child development, visual and performing arts, and nursing/public health.

See calfac.org for more information.

Bargaining Roundup

Details of these stories at cta.org/bargainingupdates



Members of the NAU bargaining team and organizing committee in Alameda celebrate ratifying their first contract. From left to right: Jon Blumenfeld, Leah Wachtel, Kira Foster, Daniel Pasker and Heather Dutton.

▲ ALAMEDA CHARTER SCHOOL EDUCATORS OK FIRST CONTRACT

Teachers, counselors and education support professionals from two Alameda charter schools operated by Community Learning Center Schools (CLCS) turned out in large numbers in February and voted unanimously to ratify their first-ever collective bargaining agreement.

“We organized our union so that educators and staff could better advocate for our learners and our school,” says Carrie Blanche, education specialist and elections chair of **Nea ACLC United** (NAU). “Our new contract accomplishes our most important goals, including lowering class sizes, increasing educator retention, and ensuring that staff have the freedom to advocate for our learners without fear of reprisal.”

Their contract includes just cause, due process, binding arbitration, as well as improvements in class size, staffing and salaries. This victory follows a two-year struggle by the more than 70 members, who unionized with CTA to ensure a stronger voice for frontline educators in decisions that impact their students and schools.

SAN LORENZO EDUCATORS APPROVE NEW CONTRACT, AVOID STRIKE

Avoiding a possible strike, San Lorenzo Unified School District educators on Feb. 19 voted to approve a contract agreement that will help the 10,000-student district recruit and retain its teachers, who had been leaving for better-paying districts in the East Bay.

The agreement, reached on Feb. 3 after one year of

community mobilizing and difficult negotiations, will provide raises of 7 percent over two years. The school board was expected to approve it on March 1.

San Lorenzo educators have been among the lowest-paid in Alameda County.

“This settlement is a good step in the right direction toward investing in educators and the future of our community,” says Donna Pinkney, president of the 580-member **San Lorenzo Education Association**.

NATOMAS TEACHERS FIGHT FOR STUDENT SAFETY, SMALLER CLASS SIZES

Fed up with Natomas Unified School District’s bullying behavior and refusal to invest in students and educators, the **Natomas Teachers Association** (NTA) filed for impasse with the district.

Class size, student safety and services, respectful salaries and treatment to keep and attract quality teachers, and having a voice in education programs are sticking points in the bargaining.

NTA demanded that NUSD cease and desist from publicly demonizing the teachers union through tactics intended to distract from negotiations and divide the bargaining unit. For example, when NTA proposed a new complaint procedure, the district claimed it meant that teachers committing inappropriate behavior could not be fired. After initial public anger, parents and the community rallied to NTA’s side.

NTA also filed an unfair labor practice charge alleging bad faith bargaining, in an attempt to “keep the district bargaining team honest,” says NTA President Phil Cox.



▲ ANAHEIM EDUCATORS PROVE PARTICIPATION IS POWER

During Thanksgiving week 2015, the **Anaheim Elementary Education Association (AEEA)** carried out a “Black Friday” bargaining support action, asking each member to dress in black and gather for a site photo in a public place on campus. Over 90 percent of members at 24 sites participated, sending a powerful message of unity that would lead to the February settlement.

AEEA used the photos to create posters presented to the Anaheim City School District at a subsequent school board meeting. After 13 rounds of negotiations, AEEA has settled for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years. Highlights: crediting years of service outside the district, extending a retirement incentive to veteran members, and a 4 percent salary increase retroactive to July 2015.

▲ SAN RAMON EDUCATORS REACH SETTLEMENT

San Ramon Valley Education Association (SRVEA) members voted overwhelmingly in February to approve raises in an agreement that will help San Ramon Valley Unified School District recruit and retain teachers in this East Bay district’s high-cost living area.

The agreement was reached Feb. 4 after mobilizing by 500 SRVEA members in numerous organizing activities that culminated Jan. 26 with a rally in front of the district office and attendance at a packed school board meeting.

The deal includes a 5 percent raise on the salary schedule and a one-time bonus of 4 percent, retroactive to the start of the school year. Only salaries were negotiated; bargaining resumes on other issues in April.

SRVEA President Ann Katzburg praises the solidarity of educators during negotiations and says the salary restoration is key to easing impacts of the Bay Area’s teacher shortage. “Investing in our educators is investing in the future of our community. Now our district is better equipped to deal with the teacher shortage by offering salaries that can lead to more recruiting and retention of teachers.”

Anaheim Elementary Education Association’s bargaining team, from left to right: Jennifer Hiromoto, Faith Daverin (co-chair), Dennis Haessly (co-chair), Lisa Eck (Anaheim Educators UniServ), and Monica Montoya-Robles.



Huntington Beach Elementary Teachers Association bargaining team, from left to right: Janelle Axton, Joy Forgiarini, Nicole Monaghan, Mala Campbell (negotiations chair), Sara Adams, and Don Gray.

▲ COMMUNITY ORGANIZING PAYS OFF IN HUNTINGTON BEACH

A committed internal organizing campaign by the **Huntington Beach Elementary Teachers Association (HBETA)** led to one of the strongest settlements in Southern California.

The 250-member chapter built significant organizational capacity through continuous communications with its members, including educating members on the importance of supporting their bargaining team’s efforts through the rigorous negotiations.

HBETA negotiators were firm in their demands at the table, as other chapters began to win settlements in surrounding Orange County school districts. Their diligence paid off. Well-informed members supported their team’s effort.

HBETA used that support to reach a three-year settlement with Huntington Beach City School District. Salaries will increase by 8.6 percent, retroactive to July 1, 2015. The district will also maintain member health and welfare benefits for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years, and extend retiree benefits. Reopeners on the contract are provided to both sides in 2017.



► MODESTO AGREEMENT: STUDENT RECESS, TEACHER PREP

Thanks to hundreds of **Modesto Teachers Association** (MTA) members rallying outside of marathon bargaining sessions, attending school board meetings, picketing on street corners and marching at school sites, an agreement was finally reached between MTA and Modesto City Schools.

The deal includes 15-minute recesses at all elementary schools and extends teacher prep periods to 45 minutes in grades 1-6. High schools will all have a college counselor plus a regular counselor for every 650 students, which will reduce the caseload. The deal also offers a 4 percent raise retroactive to July 1, a 1.7 percent hike effective Jan. 1, and a 0.3 percent increase in health benefits, higher daily pay for substitute teachers, and higher stipends for extra work like leading student extracurricular activities and teacher collaborations.

If OK'd by the teachers and the school board at the end of February, the agreement averts a strike that has been building for over a year.



Members of Modesto Teachers Association at a rally in February.

Teachers called the district's offers disrespectful, and accused school administrators and board members of bullying. They were joined by members of Advocates for Justice, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and ministerial and community groups at the February board meeting to protest bullying behavior by the school board president. ■

By Cynthia Menzel, Mike Myslinski, Ed Sibby and Frank Wells.
#OurVoiceAtTheTable

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Learning

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Drones in the classroom



Drones offer a unique learning experience, and allow students to explore multiple subject areas such as multimedia, math, science, art and PE, to name a few. See story on page 46.





A Clear Pathway to College?

Dual enrollment programs present challenges as well as opportunities

By DINA MARTIN

FOR YEARS, high school students throughout California have been allowed to take the occasional class at their local community college. Done right, these concurrent enrollment programs increase transfer rates, student retention and career opportunities.

Done wrong, they can result in funding problems, contract violations, safety concerns and academic freedom infringements.

The nomenclature for the programs is profuse — dual and concurrent enrollment, special admit, and middle college are all

terms for programs that allow high school students to enroll in college courses. Whatever the name, concurrent enrollment programs have become so popular that California is encouraging the development of more formal partnership agreements between community colleges and local school districts.

AB 288, the College and Career Access Pathways Act, authored by Assembly Member Chris Holden (D-Pasadena), expands offerings for high school students, allowing them to take more college courses and be introduced to college-level

coursework both on a high school campus and at a community college.

When signing the bill into law in October, Gov. Jerry Brown wrote, “This bill is an example of how K-12 and higher education institutions can work together on a local level to solve persistent problems, in this case, how to create better pathways to college and career for students who are struggling or are underrepresented in higher education.”

The move to create pathways to allow more concurrent enrollment programs was bolstered in January 2015 by President Obama’s



Long Beach's Model Partnership

The Hechinger Report recently published a story, "How One California City Saved Its Schools" by Lillian Mongeau, on Long Beach Unified School District's successful partnership with Long Beach City College and CSU Long Beach. Among the partnership's initiatives: early college tours by elementary schoolchildren, professional development for teachers, and college admissions standards that favor local students.

As a result, student test scores, AP class enrollment, high school graduation rates and college attendance rates have all risen over the partnership's 20-plus years of existence — even as Long Beach's mostly working-class demographics have remained unchanged. (According to 2014-15 California Department of Education data, 68 percent of Long Beach students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.)

LBUSD's "graduation rate has hovered around 80 percent since 2010," the story reports. "Seventy-five percent of high school graduates attend college within one year, and 42 percent, on par with the state average, graduated in 2014 having met course requirements for admission to the University of California or California State University. Preliminary numbers show that 49 percent of the Long Beach Unified class of 2015 nailed those requirements."

LBUSD graduates who attend Long Beach City College graduate from that school at higher rates than their college classmates. When they transfer to CSU Long Beach, they graduate at higher rates than other transfer students.

A legislative package proposed in January, called the California College Promise, is modeled on the Long Beach partnership and aims to get more California children to and through college.

Arie'ann Velasquez, 10, center, tours Long Beach City College with other elementary schoolchildren, thanks to LBCC's successful partnership with Long Beach Unified and CSU Long Beach. Credit: Lillian Mongeau/The Hechinger Report.

City College has seen a 500 percent increase in students from LBUSD.

TOOL KIT TO HELP IMPLEMENTATION

Community college and K-12 leaders are hopeful that the new legislation can smooth over some of the problems as new programs are implemented. Still, AB 288 is more of a carrot than a stick.

"First and foremost, AB 288 is a voluntary initiative," says Vince Stewart, vice chancellor for external relations with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. "No one is mandating that community colleges and K-12 districts have dual enrollment, and it doesn't affect pre-existing programs. But this will offer one way of doing dual enrollment."

The ongoing challenges that dual enrollment presents prompted the Community College Association (CCA), the higher education affiliate of CTA, to offer two general sessions on the topic during its fall conference and to exact a promise from the Chancellor's Office to produce a "tool kit" to help districts implement programs.

Everyone agrees there are positive aspects about high school and community college districts working together. Still, there have also been some cases in which poorly thought out programs violated collective bargaining agreements.

One such case occurred when an Orange County high school implemented a middle college program offering Cypress College courses taught by high school teachers. Cypress College English professor



Vince Stewart

America's College Promise proposal to provide free community college for all eligible students — much the same as a free public education is guaranteed to K-12 students.

One nationally recognized program is the partnership between Long Beach Unified School District and Long Beach Community College District, which was formalized in 2011 and has been in existence for about two decades. By removing barriers for underserved students and allowing high school students to enroll concurrently in college coursework, Long Beach



Christie Diep was shocked that very few people in her college district could provide any details about the program, including information on how her own department's curriculum was approved for use at the high school.

"This seemed like a violation of our contract. High school teachers were teaching all the classes, they were using our curriculum, and the students were supposedly earning credits from our college. How is it that we were just giving away our curriculum?" she asks.

Diep was able to get her local chapter (United Faculty North Orange County Community College District) and the Academic Senate to look into it and eventually stop the program. That was back in 2012, but the damage was done.



Christie Diep

As a result, Diep says, "The term 'middle college' has a very special connotation

on our campus, as it represents sneaky deals, lack of shared governance, contract violations, board policy violations, and Ed Code violations."

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACCESS, READINESS

Other dual enrollment programs have had unintended consequences for faculty and students alike.

A few years ago at Merced College, for example, high school students were able to forgo college fees because they were taking their courses through contract education, in which the college contracts with public or private entities to provide courses. This occurred at the same time tuition was going up for regular students and courses were being canceled or dropped, according to CCA Board member Keith Law, a Merced College philosophy professor.

"High school students received

privileged access to our courses, while our students were getting these same courses cut on our campus," Law says.

Whether classes take place on high school campuses or at the community college itself, college instructors have also had concerns about what happens to the curriculum when high school students are in the class. They say that many high school students are coming to their campuses unprepared for college courses.

"We have to be clear that the content is the content and that there is no dumbing down of the curriculum," says Dianna Chiabotti, president of the Napa Valley College Faculty Association.

Other issues that have emerged over the years are student safety, dealing with parents, and concerns over having students as young as 14 in class with 27-year-olds.

"I had a parent who dropped her kid off for my class. The student skipped out, the parent came back and yelled at me, and I couldn't do anything about it because of FERPA [the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act]," says Judith Kreft, a part-time physical education teacher at Sierra College. "I'm worried that we risk losing our jobs."

Things to know about the College and Career Access Pathways Act

AB 288 by Assembly Member Chris Holden (D-Pasadena) authorizes community college districts to form partnership agreements with local school districts to expand access to concurrent enrollment opportunities for high school students. The bill was signed into law in October.

A primary goal of AB 288 is to provide high school students who are not ready for college exposure to college work and the college environment. The program is intended to promote more career pathways to fill local labor market needs.

The act also calls for school and college districts to reach these agreements at regularly scheduled public meetings, monitor student progress, and gather data to allow for better analyses of the programs.

The partnerships must comply with local collective bargaining agreements and guarantee that no community college instructor or qualified high school teacher has been displaced or terminated as a result of the partnership.

It's not only community college faculty who have concerns about the programs.

Advanced Placement programs at Truckee High School were decimated by an exodus of students who opted to take English 1A at nearby Sierra College for the same number of credits as the more rigorous AP English course at their high school, according to Patrick Mooney, an English instructor and member of the Tahoe Truckee Education Association. Mooney notes that in part because so many high school students opted for community college classes, there were teacher layoffs at his school.



Keith Law

"We've had times when our enrollment went from 28 students to five in AP English, and social studies classes had the same problem. It came up as a union issue several years ago. Attendance was dropping, and we lost several English teachers in one year," he says.

Mooney supports students being able

to take college classes, but not at the expense of the high school.

“It’s a great alternative and allows students to take classes for free or low cost, but it should be for classes we don’t offer,” he says.

COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP

Other districts have been able to put programs in place that pass muster with both community college and high school instructors.

High school students in the Las Virgenes Unified School District are able to take classes at three different community colleges in the area.

“It’s become much more popular in the last eight years,” says Pat Brooks, head counselor at Agoura High School and a member of the Las Virgenes Education Association. “We only allow students to take classes we don’t offer, and they can take them for college credit only, so that there is no double dipping.”

The three local colleges offer a separate enrollment period for the high school students, who must sign up in person and are not allowed to take up spaces reserved for community college students. Brooks says about 250 high school students are currently enrolled and are only allowed to take one course at a time.

To further manage expectations, the high school’s counseling office requires both students and their parents sign a form.

“We want them to be aware these are college courses, and the discussions that take place are college discussions. They need to fully understand that. Some of our students aren’t mature enough and think it’s OK to skip class,” Brooks says. “Success depends on the kid. Some think it’s an easier way to go, but they learn quickly it doesn’t work that way.”

There have been additional, unexpected benefits to the program, Brooks says. In some cases, parents have been motivated to enroll in classes as well, making it easier for students to get to campus, and easier for both to do homework together.

While acknowledging the legitimate issues that have been raised, Vice Chancellor Stewart is optimistic they can be addressed and resolved.

“As a system, we are struggling with students who are not prepared. We want to improve student outcomes. This is about how we work together in a more collaborative way,” he says.

Stewart says he hopes the tool kit will be available in the coming months. ■



CCTC Approved Reading and Literacy Added Authorization

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

The Reading and Literacy Added Authorization program is geared towards teachers with the potential to become leaders and mentors in the area of reading. It will provide educators with the right tools to improve student achievement.

Program Highlights:

- The program provides participants with the skills to develop a research-based program of reading instruction for implementation in their own classrooms or as a resource for other classroom teachers
- This certificate is aligned with the requirements and standards established by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC).
- **100% online**

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

UC San Diego Extension also offers accessible and affordable online programs for K-12 and Postsecondary Educators.

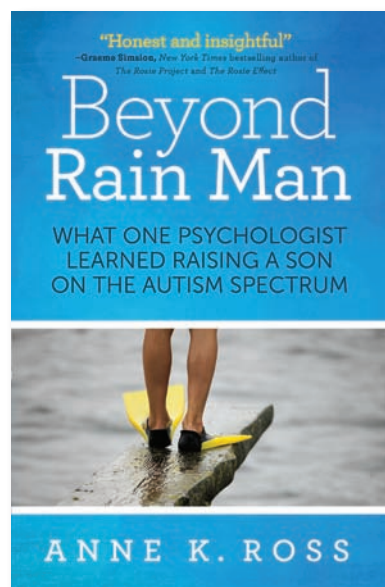
- New courses begin every month
- Most programs can be completed online within 1 year
- Interactive, Research-Based Programs with Practical Classroom Application

Programs include:

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

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

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On the Spectrum

Educator's life work with autism spectrum disorder becomes personal after her son is diagnosed

Although one child in 68 is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, school psychologist Anne K. Ross was stunned when she learned her son has Asperger's syndrome. The diagnosis propelled her more deeply into her life's work with children on the spectrum. Following is an excerpt from *Beyond Rain Man*, her new book on raising her son and what she learned along the way.

A FEW YEARS AGO, at one of my elementary schools, I met with the parents of a first-grader to go over their son's test results.

Their son, at 6, was a math whiz with perfectly average intelligence and above-average attention to details — he loved Legos and knew a lot of facts about dinosaurs. He had a couple of friends from preschool with whom he loved to play chase on the playground.

I started with these strengths as I went over my test results, showing them charts so they could see how their boy was just like his classmates in many ways. "He worked very hard on the tests," I said. "And when we took a break, he told me jokes that made me laugh out loud."

Across the table from me, they both smiled, and the boy's father uncrossed his arms.

After 30 years as a school psychologist in the San Francisco Bay Area, I have now sat across a table from over a thousand schoolchildren. I have tested kids — and continue to

test kids — to identify learning disabilities and emotional disturbances, and particularly in the last decade, to recognize autism spectrum disorders, the fastest-growing special education category of school-aged kids. I've worked at preschools, elementary schools, middle schools and high schools. I've worked in the inner city and in affluent neighborhoods.

"Ben processes some information slower than his peers," I said to his parents, showing them the numbers on the bell curve chart. "He also has trouble reading the other kids' facial expressions. You know about the meltdowns here when things don't go his way or when he makes a mistake." They nodded in unison. "He's sensitive when his classmates use loud voices, and he doesn't tolerate kids brushing up against him in line.

"His teachers told me about his frustration with writing and with moving on to each new activity. He shouts or cries or pouts when asked to make changes. And when you describe his getting stuck on

how things have to be at home, his desperate need for routines that he can count on, how when he was little he didn't look right at you and didn't follow what you were looking at, well, all these things lead me to believe he is on the autism spectrum."

I paused for a few seconds. No matter how many times I say this, it still makes my heart race each time. I'm not sure if a father will scowl and insist "Not my son," or if a mother will cry and say that Doctor So-and-So said it wasn't autism, or if they will thank me for my thorough work and tell me they knew something was not right and that this now makes perfect sense.

"Has anyone ever mentioned this possibility to you?" I asked now.

They shook their heads. "No," his father said, crossing his arms again. "This was not on our radar."

"It's sometimes tough to figure it out with kids who are at the high end of the spectrum," I explained, and then launched into my talk



about how broad the spectrum is and how many highly successful people — both in history and currently — are now thought to be on the autism spectrum. Maybe Einstein and Mozart. NASA folks. A good chunk of Silicon Valley. “People on the spectrum often do extremely well in life,” I said.

“We waited, we didn’t ask for the assessment until now,” the boy’s mother said, wiping away a tear that had threatened to spill over. “We thought it was a stage. Maybe we should have done something sooner.”

At some point in each of these parent interviews, there comes a time when I decide whether or not I will share my story. Sometimes I don’t share it at all. But sometimes I feel I need to, for the authority it will bring me with skeptical parents. And sometimes I do it in order to maintain rapport so we can work together on how to help their child learn. But this mother needed something else.

“I have a son — a teenager — who’s on the autism spectrum.” They stared at me as if this was impossible, the professional across from them having a son like theirs. “We got the diagnosis of Asperger’s when he was 11,” I said, immediately remembering the cold cement floor of the huge bookstore on which I sat for two hours after we got the news, pulling books off the shelf and skimming them fiercely, desperate to know if it was true, if my kid had this thing I didn’t even know how to spell.

Back then we didn’t know what we now

In the Classroom

April is Autism Awareness Month. Students with autism can thrive in general-education classrooms. Here are ways to ensure they do:

- **Use tons of visuals.** Templates, models of expected work, schedules, outlines and visual mapping help students get organized and learn.
- **Don’t insist on eye contact** from students who can’t process what you’re saying when they have to look at you. Some kids need to look away in order to focus on the auditory modality.
- **Understand that students may have sensory defensiveness** and aren’t able to tolerate certain forms of touch. A tap on the shoulder or a pat on the hand can make them physically uncomfortable. Loud noises can make some want to run for cover. Allow for sensory breaks.
- **Give kids plenty of time to process requests** and to respond. Even though they’re smart, most kids on the spectrum have measurably slow processing speed. Give plenty of warnings about upcoming transitions and changes in the routine to alleviate anxiety.
- **Use specific, concrete language.** Kids on the spectrum have trouble with abstract language. Instead of saying, “Get ready for lunch,” say, “Put your papers in the desk and wash your hands.” Realize that figurative language like idioms and metaphor, humor and sarcasm, may be misunderstood.
- **Keep homework to a minimum.** Many kids on the spectrum are exhausted from the school day, and some have therapy appointments (like social skills and occupational therapy) after school.
- **Make a point to discover students’ particular interests and skills.** Use them to capture attention, motivate and facilitate work with peers.

Source: Anne K. Ross

For NEA’s “Teaching Students With Autism” guide for educators, see nea.org (search for “autism”).

causing autism. The mother was always getting blamed back then, for homosexuality, for schizophrenia, for autism.

“It gets better,” I told the couple. “It definitely gets better. He’s in college now, having some trouble managing the workload, but things are so much better.” My son Matt had just texted me the week before: *I continue to live, learn, and change.* And realizing this made me break into a genuine smile, one that comes from feeling happy, not one that comes from trying to make others happy. It was true. After the years of fists through walls, a broken mirror and a broken toe, and calls to the police, it had gotten better. But I didn’t want to tell them about those scary times or the ambulance. Their son would be different in most ways; no two people on the autism spectrum are exactly the same.

It was enough for the parents of the first-grader that day. Before they left my room, the boy’s mother came around the table and opened her arms for an embrace. She squeezed and then let go. “It makes me feel so much better that you know what we’re going through.” ■

Anne K. Ross is the pen name of a CTA member with three decades of experience working in public schools in Northern California. *Beyond Rain Man: What One Psychologist Learned Raising a Son on the Autism Spectrum*, Leatherback Press, April 2016, beyonrainman.com.

know. When I trained in the early ’80s, autism meant kids twiddling their fingers in front of their faces, making odd vocal sounds but no words. In my master’s program in the early ’80s, we read about the cold, withholding “refrigerator mother”

How to Drone On

Class projects with drones let students explore multiple subject areas

DRONES ARE EVERYWHERE these days — including in the classroom. It makes sense that the unmanned aircraft systems (their official technical name) be used in learning environments, as drone projects enable students to explore the intersection of technology, science, math and art.

EduTopia suggests a number of ways educators can incorporate drones into the curriculum. These include:

- **Language arts:** Illustrate different points of view. Photograph the school close up and from far away to see the school from a different perspective. Take photos of little-seen areas of the school, and have students write predictions about where the photo might have been taken.
- **PE:** Send the drone up during PE class to watch students demonstrate a particular play. Then land it and hook your device to an LCD projector so the kids can see what they did. Have them discuss where they should have been and what they can do better. Run the drill again, and see if their performance improves.
- **Science:** Look at the micro world and the macro world. Have a few kids be “cells” of an unknown creature. Pin signs to them with different labels giving hints as to what the broader organism might be. Slowly zoom out and at each 10 feet of distance or so learn a little more about the macro environment in which the cells live. Zoom out entirely to see the plant or creatures in which the cells function.
- **Community building:** Produce a video that promotes the school or a particular class or subject. Drones give you interesting camera angles, and seeing the school from above, for example, can be very celebratory.
- **Current events:** Debate. Form a student congress. What about privacy issues? What is the future of our workforce if companies like Amazon use drones for deliveries? Are drones a good technology, or are we one step closer to automaton domination?

Before you attach a camera and start flying one around your school, however, you need to be aware of some of the dangers and consequences. California Casualty notes that due to multiple incidents, including close calls with airliners, drones over sensitive or



national security sites, and the grounding of firefighting aircraft during explosive fires because of drones, the Federal Aviation Administration is now requiring all noncommercial users to register them.

While noncommercial drone pilots don't need to get permission to fly from the FAA, you do need to know these rules and guidelines for their use:

- Fly no higher than 400 feet.
- Keep the aircraft in eyesight at all times.
- Remain well clear of manned aircraft operations — you must avoid other aircraft and obstacles at all times.
- Do not intentionally fly over unprotected persons or moving vehicles and remain at least 25 feet from individuals and vulnerable property.
- Contact the airport or control tower before flying within five miles of an airport.
- Don't fly in adverse weather such as high winds or reduced visibility.
- Don't fly near or over sensitive infrastructure or property such as power stations, water treatment facilities, correctional facilities, heavily traveled roadways, military installations or government facilities.

Be aware of privacy issues. Don't take pictures of people or property without permission, or use those pictures on the Internet, in social media, or in a publication without permission.

You should check with your school or district about rules and policies they have in place regarding drones. ■

Mark Goldberg, communications specialist at California Casualty, contributed to this report. Celebrating 100 years, California Casualty partners with CTA to provide members auto and home insurance tailored to their professional needs since 1951. To learn more, visit ctamemberbenefits.org/calcas or calcas.com/cta, or call 800-800-9410.

CTA & You

INSIDE:

48 State Council: January meeting focuses on assessment literacy

50 Testing: Parents' right to opt out of CAASPP tests for their children



At January State Council, breakout groups hammer out ideas and suggestions for meaningful formative assessments. See story on page 48.





A special forum on assessment includes, from left, panelists Patricia Rucker, Deb Sigman, Lindsay Burningham and Shannan Brown.

State Council attendees discuss what constitutes quality assessment and evaluation with their seatmates.



Measuring What We Value

State Council Focuses on Assessment Literacy

JANUARY'S STATE COUNCIL focused on leading the profession and assessment literacy, linked to the goal of establishing an organizing culture within CTA. The program included speakers, forums and breakout discussions around what kind of assessment systems and practices educators should establish for our students and schools.

Keynote speaker James Popham, UCLA Professor Emeritus, spoke about the need for meaningful, teacher-led formative assessment practices.

"We have tons of evidence suggesting the significance of the formative process," Popham said. Creating tests for the right purpose is key. "You want to reach an accurate inference of what's going on inside a kid, and make

sure that is consonant with the purpose of the test. Then it's good."

Formative assessment focuses on student development at a particular time. By contrast, summative assessment focuses on the final outcome compared to standards or benchmarks; this can lead to labeling students and schools as failing, when in fact that is far from the truth.

After Popham's speech, a forum looked at definitions and principles of quality assessment, as well as the impact of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and educators' role in its implementation. Panelists included CTA legislative advocate Patricia Rucker, WestEd Deputy Director Deb Sigman, San Diego Education Association President Lindsay Burningham, and San Juan Teachers Association President Shannan Brown, who reminded the audience to "measure what we value, instead of valuing what we measure."

All agreed that assessment and testing must be purposeful, one of multiple measures, and tied to improved learning. They also stressed that educators



Keynote speaker James Popham talks about the need for purposeful, teacher-led formative assessment practices.

California Faculty
Association member Erma
Jean Sims speaks with
author Lorlene Honda.



are instrumental in promoting assessment literacy at the local chapter level.

Breakout groups convened the next day to discuss key components of assessment systems that CTA will use to build our public narrative around learning over testing, and to address changes this year and in the future.

PRESIDENT TAKES PRIDE IN CTA'S SUCCESSES

CTA President Eric Heins recounted how he was privileged to represent members at the U.S. Supreme Court during oral arguments for *Friedrichs v. CTA* earlier in January. No matter what the outcome, CTA will continue its mission.

"We're going to continue to work for the students and educators of California," Heins said. "One court case is not going to change that. There will be more attacks after this one. We're going to keep speaking out, because America's labor movement is the strongest voice we have to speak up for the middle class and against corporate special interests seeking to diminish our rights."

Heins urged members to celebrate our successes, such as the passage of ESSA. The new law gives all students a real opportunity to succeed, Heins said, allowing states to limit testing time, decoupling test scores from high-stakes decision-making, and making it unlawful to tie teacher evaluation to test scores. In California we have already moved decision-making to the state and local level with the Local Control and Accountability Plan, for example.

Heins said we should also celebrate how our work passing Proposition 30 in 2012 increased state education spending by 50 percent in just five years. But this is money needed after years of devastating cuts. "Revenues from Prop. 30 are set to expire soon. If we want to keep up the progress, we must pass a funding extension initiative in the November election," Heins said. "We have the responsibility to step up and to lead once again."

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—CTA President Eric Heins

Executive Director Joe Nuñez spoke about the importance of one-on-one organizing and member engagement at the local level.

"If you believe, as I do, that our power comes from our membership, we must tap into that power and create distributed volunteer leadership," Nuñez said. ■

Council Votes to Support Funding and Multilingual Initiatives

In other actions, State Council:

- Elected NEA Directors Krista Patterson (District 4), Colleen Briner-Schmidt (District 5), Mel House (District 6), and Tracy Lee Taylor (District 13).
- Voted to support the **Children's Education and Health Care Protection Act of 2016**, which would temporarily extend the income tax rates created under Prop. 30 for 12 more years (after Prop. 30 sunsets) to fund public schools, colleges and health care for low-income students.
- Voted to support the **California Education for a Global Economy (Ed.G.E.) Initiative**, which would expand multilingual education programs to better prepare students for college and careers in a global economy. It would also overturn Prop. 227 (1998), which mandated English-only education.
- Affirmed and strengthened policy regarding teachers' and parents' rights around opting out of standardized tests (see story on page 50).
- Recommended candidates for the June 2016 primary election, including Kamala Harris for U.S. senator.
- Voted to write a letter to Gov. Jerry Brown in response to immigration raids happening in California. More info at cta.org/iceraids.
- Voted to actively support Student CTA's "Resist Teach for America" campaign, by denouncing and organizing against the methods of Teach for America, similar programs and other privatization efforts.
- Approved immediate action for a letter of support to be written by the CTA President to the Detroit Federation of Teachers, regarding the dire water situation in Flint and other Michigan cities, as well as unacceptable school conditions.
- Held a reception honoring Martin Luther King Jr. on Saturday night, sponsored by the African American Caucus, including a repeat performance by the Inner City Youth Orchestra Los Angeles.
- Heard from Lorlene Honda, author of *The Cat Who Chose to Dream*, a California Reads recommended book for spring 2016.

Parents' Right to Exempt a Child From Testing

MANY EDUCATORS in California are unaware that parents and guardians have the right to opt out of state-mandated testing of their child. As a result, they don't inform parents of their rights and may unintentionally mislead students. For details, see cta.org/optout.

What tests are we talking about?

California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), a system of state-mandated assessments. CAASPP includes the computer-based Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments in English-language arts and mathematics for grades 3-8 and 11, among others.

Can parents opt out for their child?

Yes. California Education Code allows a parent or guardian to submit a written request to school officials to exclude his or her child from any or all parts of

state-mandated assessments (Ed Code Section 60615). A parent or guardian may annually submit a written request to the school to excuse their child from any or all parts of the CAASPP system for the school year (California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 852(c)).

What if a parent opts out after CAASPP testing has already started?

If the parent's request is submitted after testing has begun, any completed tests will be scored and the results will be reported to the parent or guardian and included in the pupil's records.

As a teacher, may I inform parents about their right to opt out?

Yes. The California Code of Regulations states that a district and its employees may inform parents of the right to exempt their child from state-mandated assessments; however, the district and its employees may not solicit or encourage any written exemption (CCR, Title 5, Section 852(c)).

What is CTA's policy on standardized testing?

CTA believes standardized tests can validly assess only a limited range of student learning.

Therefore, they should be only an adjunct or supplement to information obtained through school- and classroom-based assessment by teachers. They are most useful when designed by educational professionals closest to the classroom and integrated with assessment information specific to local programs. A standardized testing program must include a variety of developmentally appropriate assessment techniques that allow necessary accommodations, modifications and exemptions and are bias-free, reliable and valid. ■

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Word Deli

By CRAIG HAMILTON



AT THE WORD DELI, a sandwich is created when one word (the “bread”) is wrapped around another word (the “filling”). For example, if **pose** is the bread and **tag** is the filling, the resulting sandwich would be **postage**.

In each menu below, you are given clues for four bread and four filling selections (listed in no particular order). You must match them up to produce the sandwiches, which are in alphabetical order of the answers; the number in parentheses is the number of letters in the answer. For example, the answer to the first clue, **cheapest**, is found by wrapping **chest** around **ape**. Answers on page 3.

Monday’s Menu

Sandwich	Bread	Filling
1. Least expensive (8) = cheapest 2. Perfumed liquid (7) 3. Summer pests (10) 4. Grotesque imitation (8)	Edible ice cream holder Biblical lawgiver What a waiter carries food on What a pirate keeps treasure in = chest	Capital of Ecuador Sleeveless garment worn over a shirt Chimp or gorilla = ape Piece of firewood

Tuesday’s Menu

Sandwich	Bread	Filling
1. Constant (10) 2. Most slender (9) 3. Those getting medical treatment (8) 4. One of the basics (8)	Trousers Game with knights and bishops The smallest of the litter Bird’s home	Ten-cent coin Make a knot Cupid’s pointy missile Heavenly being

Wednesday’s Menu

Sandwich	Bread	Filling
1. Seashore party (8) 2. With a submissive, flattering manner (9) 3. Independent, professionally (9) 4. Viewpoint (7)	Edible bulb that might make you cry Birthday dessert Take wing Neighbor of Spain	Canvas rooflike structure in front of a door or window Long, snaky fish 3.14159 Young sheep

With acknowledgments to the late Rosalie Moscovitch.

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