

# California EDUCATOR

California Teachers Association May 2010 Volume 14 Issue 8

*"Teaching is the  
profession that teaches  
all the other professions."*

Author Unknown

## Making the grade

Is the traditional letter system changing for good? **8**

### Lesson Plans for Sale

Educators turn good ideas into profits **16**







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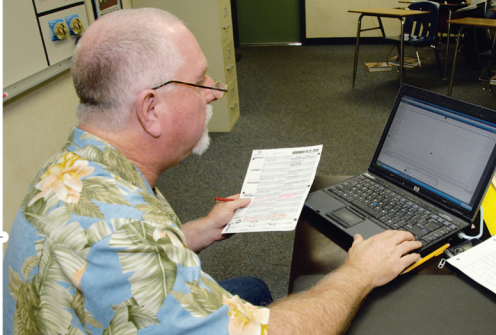
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MAY 2010

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# ¡Sí Se Puede! ¿Por Qué No?

BY CTA PRESIDENT DAVID A. SANCHEZ

**W**ith the June 8 primary election right around the corner, it is of the utmost importance that we choose the best candidates who support public education and understand the need for effectively funding our state's schools. California educators have paid dearly over recent years, with more than 16,000 educators laid off last year and another 26,000 receiving pink slips this spring. Countless dedicated professionals have been left in a state of limbo, along with all of California's students — the ones who end up paying the price for the bad decisions being made by our elected leaders.

It's more important than ever that all CTA members exercise their right to vote in June. Tom Torlakson — CTA's recommendation for state superintendent of public instruction — is an excellent example of the type of leader we need guiding California's public school system out of the deep crisis we find ourselves in today. With experience as a science teacher and coach, Torlakson has worked in California's schools and sees the very real challenges our classrooms face day in and day out with issues like swelling class sizes and the proliferation of corporate charter schools that have no accountability to the community.

The situation with funding our schools is truly dismal — and stands to get even worse if we don't choose the right candidates this election year. We desperately need leaders who can get the job done. Torlakson has a proven track record of delivering on education issues and bringing about real results and positive effects for students and teachers. He sponsored CTA's Quality Education Investment Act, which provides \$3 billion to help lower-performing schools. He opposed the flawed Race to the Top (RTTT) program, which requires states to adopt specific standards and expand accountability measures such

as paying and evaluating teachers based on student test scores, and also seeks to impose more stringent sanctions against lower-performing schools. Spearheaded by Gloria Romero — who is running against Torlakson for superintendent of public instruction — the state's effort to conform to RTTT is one of many ill-conceived issues she has backed that have adversely affected public education. Romero has also supported efforts to weaken the state's Class Size Reduction Program and voted to take away funding from public schools and give it to corporate charter schools that have a track record of excluding some students, especially those with special needs and English learners.

California needs a state superintendent who is going to be pro-public schools and pro-student. Torlakson understands that it is best to have a collaborative environment where teachers and educators are given buy-in and are part of the dialogue about reform. Being an educator himself, Torlakson realizes that educators should have a say in the advancement of the public education system. He knows that reforms work best when they are done at the local level to best meet the needs of students in each neighborhood.

The June primaries represent an extraordinary opportunity for educators to positively influence the critical issues that will affect the future of our classrooms for years to come. If we neglect to vote for pro-education candidates, the future funding and supportive resources for our state's public schools are bound to be even worse off than they are today. Tell your friends, neighbors and family members to get out and vote. The future of education and of California's students is at stake in June.

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**¡Sí Se Puede!** [Yes we can! Why not?], words inspired by César Chávez,  
**¿Por Qué No?** encourage us to remember that, together, we can achieve great things.



# what's new at CTA.ORG



## TV Spot Honors Educators

Educators may be the best mentor, friend or coach a child ever has. Check CTA's new video honoring teachers and Education Support Professionals — and use our "Share" feature to share with a friend.

[www.cta.org/About-CTA/News-Room/Media-Center/Video/2010/Celebrate-Educators.aspx](http://www.cta.org/About-CTA/News-Room/Media-Center/Video/2010/Celebrate-Educators.aspx)



## Staying Aware

CTA has a long tradition of acknowledging and promoting events and holidays that support various groups or efforts that have had a positive effect on public education. Our Awareness Holidays section shines a spotlight on some of these important items.

[www.cta.org/Parents-and-Community/Awareness-Holidays/Index.aspx](http://www.cta.org/Parents-and-Community/Awareness-Holidays/Index.aspx)



## Acknowledging ESPs

Education Support Professionals Week began May 16 — and CTA ESP Day was May 18 — but it's not too late to download special wallpaper for your computer monitor or send an e-card to a colleague!

[www.cta.org/Parents-and-Community/Awareness-Holidays/ESP-Day-2010.aspx](http://www.cta.org/Parents-and-Community/Awareness-Holidays/ESP-Day-2010.aspx)

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

## Create a cartoon concept

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

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Dave Crosland, hiredmeat@gmail.com

"...and a 5 — the highest score with our new number grading system — will indicate that the student is able to decode phonetic patterns, plurals and diphthongs. Any questions?"



## BAN ON EIGHTH-GRADE ALGEBRA TESTING UPHELD

In 2007, the U.S. Department of Education found that the General Mathematics Test used in California to assess the skills of eighth-grade students did not comply with the assessment requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The State Board of Education (SBE) in June 2008 was about to approve a new assessment plan to address the federal concerns. At the last minute and with no notice to the public, under pressure from Gov. Schwarzenegger, SBE adopted a different plan that required California to test all eighth-grade students in algebra.

In the September 2008 *Educator*, we reported that only about half of eighth-grade students currently take algebra, and the state standards merely state that algebra should be taken before high school graduation. Testing all eighth-graders in algebra, but providing no resources to school districts to prepare teachers and students for such testing, sets our students and schools up for failure. For those reasons, CTA and Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell joined with the California School Boards Association and the Association of

California School Administrators in a lawsuit to stop SBE from imposing its radical plan to change the state standards through this backdoor algebra test requirement.

In October and December 2008, a Superior Court judge found that the June adoption of the algebra testing plan by the SBE had violated the open meetings law for state agencies and the Education Code sections that require the alignment of testing with state standards. The judge ordered SBE to stop implementing the plan. The SBE appealed to the 3rd Appellate District Court in Sacramento. On April 28, 2010, the Court of Appeals upheld CTA's position. Unless SBE chooses to continue to litigate the matter in court, it must devise a new plan to comply with NCLB that does not violate California law.

## CAPISTRANO UNIFIED EDUCATION ASSOCIATION WINS CONTRACT

In the April *Educator*, we reported on the developing situation with the Capistrano Unified Education Association (CUEA) strike for a new contract. In a vote taken the week of May 10-14, members approved their hard-won tentative



CTA photo by Bill Guy

agreement by 94 percent.

Wrested from the Capistrano Unified School District Board of Trustees on the heels of CUEA's courageous strike April 22-23 and 26, the new three-year agreement restores salary cuts and furlough days as new revenue comes to the district and holds off potential health benefit caps an additional year. It also includes greatly improved working conditions contract language.

"CUEA members cannot find words adequate to express our appreciation for CTA members' solidarity and support during the strike and for their numerous and generous contributions to CUEA's strike fund — now at almost \$77,000 — to assist CUEA members experiencing financial difficulty from lost wages," says CUEA President Vicki Soderberg.

For contribution details go to [www.cuea.org](http://www.cuea.org).

## calendar

<b>jun 2010</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> June 8 <input type="checkbox"/> June 11-13	Statewide primary election CTA State Council of Education, <b>Los Angeles</b>
<b>jul 2010</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> July 1-6 <input type="checkbox"/> July 19-23	NEA Representative Assembly, <b>New Orleans</b> Presidents Conference, <b>Asilomar</b>
<b>aug 2010</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Aug. 1-6	Summer Institute, <b>UCLA</b>
<b>sep 2010</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Sept. 21	International Day of Peace in Education
<b>oct 2010</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 1-3 <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 8-10 <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 15-17 <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 22-24 <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 29-31	Region II Leadership Conference, <b>Reno</b> CCA Fall Bargaining/Leadership Conference Region I Leadership Conference, <b>Asilomar</b> CTA State Council of Education, <b>Los Angeles</b> GLBT Conference, <b>Rancho Mirage</b>
<b>nov 2010</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Nov. 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Nov. 14-20	General election American Education Week
<b>jan 2011</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 14-16 <input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 21-23 <input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 28-30	Issues Conference, <b>Las Vegas</b> Good Teaching Conference, <b>San Jose</b> Region III Leadership Conference, <b>Torrance</b>
<b>feb 2011</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Feb. 4-6	CTA State Council of Education, <b>Los Angeles</b>
<b>mar 2011</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> March 2 <input type="checkbox"/> March 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> March 18-20	Read Across America Equity and Human Rights Conference, <b>San Jose</b> Good Teaching Conference, <b>Orange County</b>

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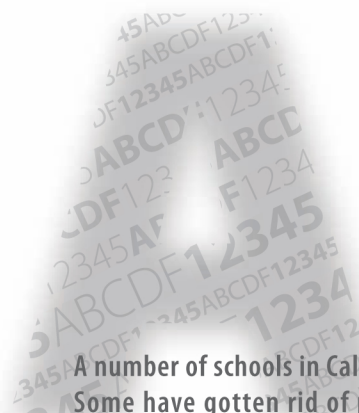
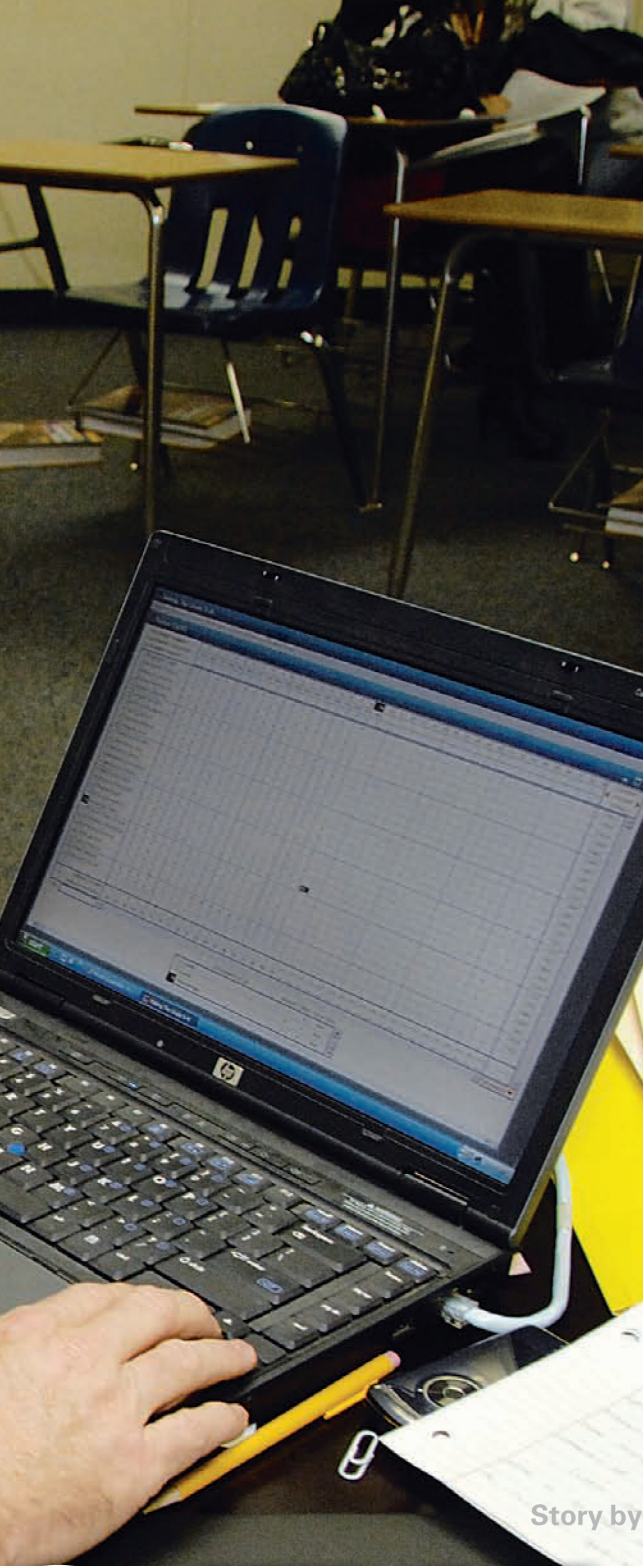




# MAKING

Temecula Valley Educators Association  
member Larry Thompson grades papers  
for his English class.





A number of schools in California have bid farewell to D's and F's. Some have gotten rid of pluses and minuses. And others have eliminated traditional report cards with letter grades altogether, replacing them with "standards-based" report cards that have numbers instead of letters.

The changes have taken many by surprise. Letter grades, after all, have been the status quo for over a century, accompanied by teacher comments such as "Johnny shows excellent progress" or "Jenny talks too much in class." These days, however, school districts and colleges throughout the state are ditching tradition and revamping their grading systems. And as a result, grades are all over the map in California's schools.

The trend toward experimental grading methods has led to confusion for students and parents, and is taxing for teachers already dealing with increasing class sizes and workloads.

On the following pages you'll read about the challenges teachers face with new grading methods and the profound effect the changes are having in the classroom. >>>

Story by Sherry Posnick-Goodwin • Photos by Scott Buschman

# GRADING THE GRADE

IS THE TRADITIONAL LETTER SYSTEM CHANGING FOR GOOD?





When the West Contra Costa Unified School District adopted standards-based grades for elementary schools, report cards became more confusing for teachers, students and parents, says Gig Jenkins, a second-grade teacher at Grant Elementary School in Richmond.

Numbers replaced letter grades, with 1 showing that a student needs improvement; 2 showing the student approaching the standards; 3 showing the student meeting benchmarks; and 4 showing that the student is advanced. Instead of being graded overall on subjects, students are graded on many standards within core subjects.

Jenkins was part of a committee that helped create the report cards measuring student progress toward meeting state standards. With so many standards, not all were included.

"We used our district 'power standards,'" recalls Jenkins, a member of

the United Teachers of Richmond. "Our committee looked at report cards from other districts with standards-based report cards and created our own."

The report cards are confusing and are not particularly parent-friendly, says Jenkins. "Many people, including myself, believe the standards-based language of the report cards is geared more toward guiding teachers than informing parents."

Parents are baffled by such things as a math standard that evaluates students on their ability "to use the commutative and associative rules to simplify mental calculations," or a language-arts standard that determines whether students "decode phonetic patterns — plurals and diphthongs."

"When they first came out, I basi-



**ABOVE:** Second-grade teacher Gig Jenkins at Grant Elementary School in Richmond — a school that has replaced letter grades with numbers. **LEFT:** Second-grade students at Grant Elementary School.

cally would spend all my time in parent-teacher conferences explaining what this stuff means," says Jenkins. "Now many parents and students are just looking for numbers and not looking at standards individually. If students get mostly 2's and 3's, they know they are doing okay." Report cards, she adds, need to be modified so that they are easier to understand and less time-consuming for teachers to fill out. It takes hours to complete the legal-sized report cards.

Teresa Basin, a second-grade teacher at Rail Ranch Elementary School in Murrieta, also finds standards-based report cards to be extremely time-con-



suming. A recent redesign of her district's report cards has helped. But report cards are still time-intensive for teachers to fill out, with 18 standards for math and 22 standards for English.

"The new report cards are hopefully more user-friendly for parents," says Basin, a member of the Murrieta Teachers Association. "We'll find out how user-friendly they are in a few weeks when we have parent-teacher conferences."

The school's grading rubric was changed from 1-4 to 1-5, with a new category to indicate that students are advanced. The numbers now correlate with standardized test scores, with 1 standing for "far below basic"; 2 for "below basic"; 3 for "basic"; 4 for "proficient"; and 5 for "advanced."

Students are graded separately on "effort" in every subject, so they can be acknowledged for trying to master the material. "You might have a child who is a 2 — or below basic — in reading, but his effort is excellent," explains Basin. "He tries his best every day, does his homework and does his reading logs. That's different than a child who needs improvement but is not putting any effort out. I think that kids try harder when they are graded on effort and held accountable for their learning."

To make standards-based report cards easier for parents to understand, members of the La Cañada Teachers Association give the very first report card "face to face" during conferences, so they can explain exactly how children are evaluated and what the standards mean.



**RIGHT:** Teresa Basin, a Murrieta Teachers Association member and second-grade teacher, works with Juan Arreguin and Jamie Johnston. **INSET:** Kyle Larson and Alyssa Gomez at Rail Ranch Elementary School.







**LEFT:** Student Nancy Penaloza at Temecula Valley High.

Susan Bornhurst, a first-grade teacher at La Cañada Elementary, believes that flaws with the state standards also are reflected in standards-based report cards, which she describes as “a mile wide and an inch deep.”

“Some of the standards on report cards we cover too broadly; some are too vague; some are broken down too much; and others are left out completely,” she says. “I don’t really like it and think we need to look at standards-based report cards more carefully.”

When schools go to standards-based report cards that mirror testing results, it can be more difficult for students to raise their grades through traditional avenues such as extra credit, homework and class participation. Parents may be mystified as to how their child compares with his or her classmates. While standards-based grades are increasing in elementary schools, high schools don’t use them, since college acceptance is usually based on a student’s grade point average.

## Should **Schools** be more consistent in **grading students?**



Beaumont Teachers Association member and 10th-grade English teacher Jessica Breed at Beaumont High School.

Some universities, including Stanford Law School, Yale University and UC Berkeley’s Boalt Hall School of Law, have dropped letter grades and shifted to other forms of evaluation, such as “honors,” “pass,” “restricted credit” or “no credit.” The goal is to eliminate students from “class shopping” or choosing teachers known for being easier on grading. Some schools, like UC Santa Cruz, have abandoned the “pass/fail” system and brought back traditional grades.

The *Los Angeles Times* recently reported that Douglas Reeves, an expert on grading systems, conducted an experiment that demonstrated how subjective grading can be. He asked more than 10,000 educators in the United States, Australia, Canada and South America to determine a final semester grade for

### A grading system without D's

High schools in Temecula got rid of D's about a decade ago, and have A, B, C and F grades only. The decision was made by the school board without any teacher input, says Larry Thompson, a member of the Temecula Valley Educators Association. And the reasoning behind the decision, says the English teacher, was extremely flawed.

"The school board said, 'By God, we're going to raise the bar and the students will work harder and scores will go up,'" he recalls. "They thought everybody would beat a path to our door because we set a new standard. But nothing like that happened."

What did happen was an exodus of some students before graduation. "We've had an explosion in our alternative education programs," says Thompson. "I think much of it can be laid directly at the doorstep of the no-D policy."

The district is now considering bringing back the D and is asking for teacher input this time. Thompson serves as a member of the "D Committee." Students, for the most part, would welcome back the D with open arms.

"I'm in favor of bringing back the D,"

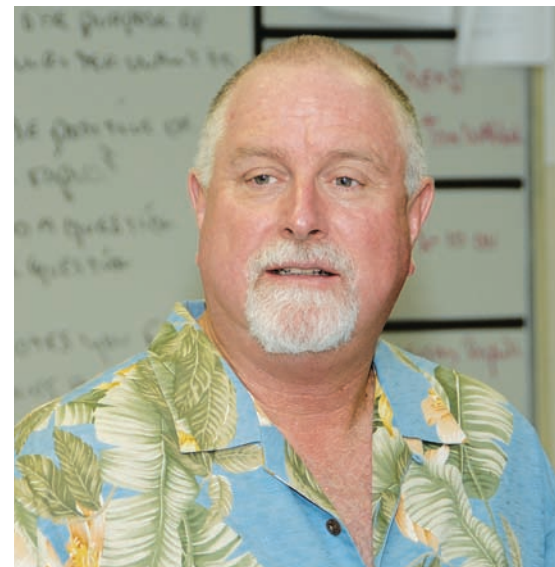
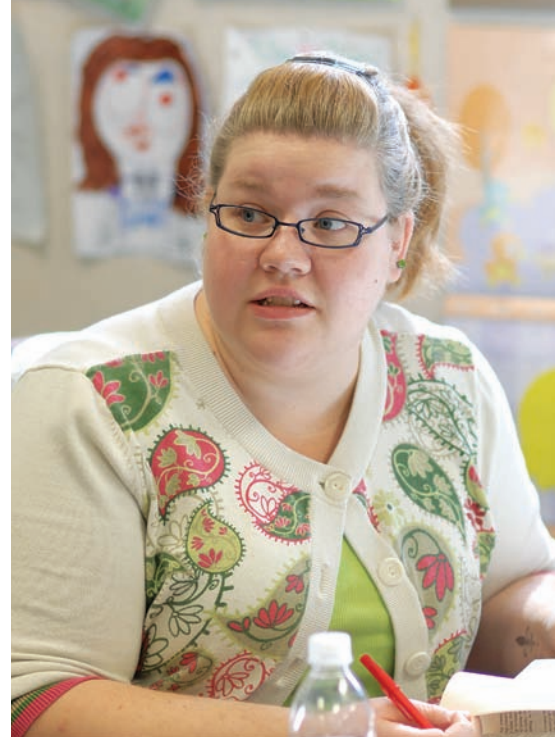
says 12th-grader Karissa Simmons. "We have to face the fact that not all students are going to college. Some are struggling with high school, and some will go to a vocational school or into the workforce. Some students I know have quit school over this."

Thompson says that some students have tried harder to avoid failing, but the policy mostly caused grade inflation, with a C becoming the new D. "There was no data that I can see indicating that D students magically became C students."

Grade inflation also occurred when a middle school in Beaumont eliminated D's, says Jenn Latzke, now an English teacher at Beaumont High School.

"It became almost like pass/fail," says Latzke, a BTA member. "I often felt conflicted when grading. I felt that students were not doing well enough to be given a C and not doing poor enough to be given an F, so I had difficulty deciding which grade to give them based on their

**RIGHT:** English teacher Jean Latzke at Beaumont High School; Temecula Valley Educators Association member Larry Thompson.



a student who received the following grades for assignments in this order: C, C, MA (missing assignment), D, C, B, MA, MA, B and A. The educators surveyed gave the hypothetical student final grades ranging from A to F because they used different criteria for grading.

Getting educators on the "same page" with grades is challenging but possible, says Jessica Breed, a 10th-grade English teacher at Beaumont High School, where department members jointly decided that teachers should all grade on the same criteria.

"There were big differences among teachers on how many points timed essays were worth, how much homework was worth and whether late work should be accepted," says Breed, a member of the Beaumont Teachers Association (BTA). "Some teachers were accepting late work until the final day of the quarter and some wouldn't accept work that was even an hour overdue."

After lots of meetings, a uniform grading policy was

implemented for English and math teachers. In the English Department, for example, teachers decided major assignments were worth 90 percent of earned credit the first day late and 50 percent of earned credit the next four days.

"I think it's fair when teachers grade the same," says 10th-grader Kaitlyn Nelson. "Nobody has easier or harder teachers this way and everybody knows what to expect."

"Before, if one teacher accepted late work and another didn't, it would turn into a big thing," relates classmate Krystal Johnson. "It's a pretty good system now."

Breed says teachers are more empowered when they are unified. But she doesn't foresee a universal grading system happening in California anytime soon.

"It was such an effort just getting 15 people to compromise in our department," she says. "I can't imagine getting agreement on a consistent grading policy statewide." ❖



# pluses and minuses of grading

When it comes to having marks alongside letter grades, there are, of course, pluses and minuses. Sierra College has gone back and forth on this policy and currently doesn't allow them. So a student who gets a 70 percent receives a C, just like a student who receives 79 percent.

"I think not having pluses or minuses does students more a disservice than a service," says Jay Hester, a professor at Sierra College.

"Pluses and minuses are a little more expressive of how students actually do."

Lynn Medeiros, also a Sierra College professor, is on the fence. "I stand by 'an A is an A' whether it has a plus or a minus next to it," she says.

"But when I

was at Sacramento State College it mattered tremendously. An A minus could really hurt your GPA because it wasn't a 4.0."

An instructor she met at the University of Chicago put the issue into perspective:

"A student asked the professor to give him a D plus instead of a D so he could show his parents he was improving, and then his parents would pay for school," says Medeiros. The professor replied, 'If that's what you really want, I can do that. But putting a plus next to a D is really just like putting whip cream on dog poop.'"



Lynn Medeiros  
Sierra College Faculty  
Association

work. I wound up adjusting the grading scale, so that the lowest C compensated for having no D's. Many of the kids didn't try as hard because they were doing D work and still getting a C in the class."

Nearby Murrieta is presently considering a "no-D" policy, and science teacher John Grissom has mixed feelings about whether it should be implemented. "Lately businesses have been saying that some high school graduates are not a workable product for them. Businesses say, 'Yes, they got their diploma, but it's deceptive, because they skated through with a 1.9 GPA.' But on the other hand, if you have 25 percent of students not getting diplomas, you will flood adult education programs and won't have enough people to serve them."

## Intervention: help or hindrance?

The Rocklin Unified School District eliminated both D's and F's years ago and went to a system of A, B, C and "No Credit." "Interventions" were put into place to help students pass, including more time in study hall and the opportunity to retake tests and rewrite papers.

"Some kids try harder and some give up easier," says Whitney High School science teacher Rachel Kanowsky. "Overall, more students try harder. It's difficult for teachers in many ways because it's more work and sometimes we stick around after school. But I feel strongly that it's helpful to kids."

When students do poorly on a test and can't change what happened, they may feel defeated, says Kanowsky, a Rocklin Teachers Professional Association member. "But when they make it up and pass, they get a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. They have built up their confidence in their problem-



ABOVE: Zach Fisch works on an assignment at Temecula Valley High.

solving skills. Teachers love it when students finally 'get it' and feel that sense of gratification."

"It's helped me a lot," says Ryan Harper, a sophomore at Whitney High School. "I have problems sometimes with math and science. Every time I need an intervention, I can go and get one during the first 15 minutes of lunch or get a pass for an intervention. When students know they can get their grades up, they become a little more motivated."

Students are motivated to do their best the first time taking a test, adds Harper, because the best they can get on a retake is 70 percent, which is barely passing. "I try to get a good grade the first time. If I don't, I don't become totally distraught since I can get the help I need before taking it again."

An ABC News report raised the question of whether eliminating failing grades — a trend nationwide — might be "coddling" students. Some education experts say it reflects a trend to "protect" children from the harsh reality that they have failed, such as when children receive trophies for "participation" in competitions they lost. Another question is whether eliminating failing grades adequately prepares students for





college or life.

Several professors at Sierra College, a community college in Rocklin, were unaware of the “no-D” policy at the local high schools and said they now understand why some of their students expect extra chances.

“Learning this produced an ‘aha!’ moment for me,” says history professor Lynn Medeiros, a member of the Sierra College Faculty Association (SCFA). “Last semester I had a student say, ‘I missed these questions; when can I retake the midterm?’ I said there was no

retaking mid terms. She asked if she could just retake the questions she missed and I said no.”

Medeiros says students who have asked to retake tests and rewrite papers have told her they should be entitled to do so as part of the “learning process.” But college, she says, has stricter standards.

“It’s always a double-edged sword when it comes to helping students who are struggling with something and facilitating a process to test whether they



**ABOVE:** Rocklin Teachers Professional Association member and Whitney High School science teacher Rachel Kanowsky. **LEFT:** Student Ryan Harper.

know it or not,” says Jay Hester, also a history professor at the college and SCFA member. “If you reach a point where you have a system that allows them another method of getting a good grade other than being tested on the information and knowing the information, you have a problem.” ❖



# LESSON PLAN

## EDUCATORS TURN GOOD IDEAS INTO TIDY PROFITS FOR

Story by Sherry Posnick-Goodwin • Photos by Scott Buschman

When she began teaching six years ago, Kristen Bowers found it extremely challenging to cover the state standards, teach literature required by her district, and also prepare her students for the state's exit

exam and standardized tests.

"I was under a lot of pressure," recalls Bowers, a teacher at South Hills High School and a member of the Covina Unified Education Association, "and there was a disconnect between

the materials that I used to prepare my students for tests and the materials I needed to teach literature."

Unable to find resources integrating content standards with literature, she created her own literary guides and essay writing guides. She shared them with colleagues, who loved the materials. She created her own company, Secondary Solutions, in 2005, and one year later began selling materials online via [www.teacherspayteachers.com](http://www.teacherspayteachers.com) (TPT), boosting her sales and recognition. Last year she earned \$40,000 from TPT, making her the top-selling teacher in the nation.

Bowers is a new breed of educator that some call a "teacherpreneur." Thanks to the Internet, teachers can now sell materials that previously could only be shared with a few colleagues. While the practice has raised some eyebrows, teacherpreneurs say the advantages go beyond monetary value.

"It has definitely made me a better teacher," says Justin Lim, a reading intervention teacher at Rosemead High School, who sells materials on the TPT site. That's because, as a seller, he has received a lot of feedback from teachers who have purchased or previewed his materials.



**LEFT:** Reading intervention teacher Justin Lim at Rosemead High School.

# S SALE

“Others critiqued my materials on the website and said my questions didn’t encourage critical thinking skills. So I took a look at how I asked questions of my students, and then went back and tweaked my materials. For me, it was a learning experience as well as a sharing experience.”

He decided to become a seller after purchasing materials on TPT from others. “What I found was much better than some of the materials I had seen from professional curriculum writers,” Lim comments. “Often those materials were tough to implement or unrealistic. What teachers wrote and sold was much more practical.”

He now sells products on TPT including worksheets and PowerPoint presentations pertaining to short stories commonly assigned in English classes. He earns about \$300 a month and uses the extra cash to buy classroom supplies he previously paid for with his salary.

“It’s not easy money,” he says. “It takes a lot of time to do this. You have to look at materials from a teacher’s point of view in addition to the point of view of the students in your class. But I would definitely encourage others to try it. There are a lot of rewards.”

TPT was created in 2006 by Paul Edelman, a former middle school teacher in New York City. The idea took hold because he was always surfing the Web looking for new ideas to try in his classroom.

“It was mind-numbing because there



was so much online, and also so little,” says Edelman. “But I knew there were millions of teachers creating lesson plans every day and that very few of these were on the Web. Most were just sharing with local colleagues. They didn’t have much incentive to post them, and that’s where the idea of TPT came from.”

TPT handles all transactions, for a fee, and pay sellers on a quarterly basis. Presently 10,000 teachers from the U.S., Canada, Australia and Britain have seller accounts, with 6,000 of them considered active contributors. Most mate-

**ABOVE:** Kristen Bowers, a South Hills High School teacher and member of the Covina Unified Education Association, who sells her lesson plans online.

rials are cheap (under \$5), while a few sell for as high as \$50.

In addition to offering potential buyers a preview of materials and the opportunity to post reviews and ratings, buyers can also ask the seller questions via e-mail.

“It’s truly an open market place with quality controlled by user ratings and comments,” says Edelman. “But we do



give enough tools for buyers to make good purchasing decisions, so in that way the best materials and best teacher authors rise to the top.”

“It’s added a whole new dimension to teaching careers,” continues Edelman. “Teachers have always been focused on creating the best curriculum they can. But now they are spending more time on lesson planning because they are offering it to the world and putting a price tag on it.”

### The ethics of selling

Because the teaching profession has always been known for sharing and collaboration, there are bound to be some who feel that selling materials “cheap-

ens” the profession. However, it was difficult to find any CTA members who agreed with that sentiment.

Susan Mercer, Santa Ana Educators Association president, has been selling on TPT since 2006. Her products, identified by a frog logo, introduce pre-algebra concepts, provide an alternative to rote memorization in textbooks, and address the needs of all students, including English learners and those in special education.

“I believe it is entirely ethical to sell teacher-generated materials on the Internet,” says Mercer, a curriculum math specialist. “I have spent countless hours developing and writing the units. I did this on my own time and used my own computer. Teachers don’t have the time to reinvent the wheel. If they can buy a product that has been successfully used by others, why not? This is no different from attending a professional confer-



**ABOVE:** Susan Mercer, president of the Santa Ana Educators Association and a curriculum math specialist.

ence or workshop to get ideas and materials.”

Her district adopted her curriculum as supplemental materials, and teachers have been using them for more than five years in nine middle schools. Mercer allows her district to share them with teachers for free, but requires

**BELOW:** Student Zain Circourel at Marin Elementary School; Kerry Dunigan, Albany Teachers Association member and a teacher at Marin Elementary School.



## Sharing free lesson plans at CTA.ORG

those outside her district to purchase them.

“Teachers are not highly paid,” says Bowers. “This is a great opportunity for them to be valued for their extra work. In other professions, if someone works overtime, they get paid for it. But teachers don’t. We’re just asking for a little compensation.”

Kerry Dunigan, a teacher at Marin Elementary School, was so incensed by the thought of districts claiming ownership rights — or forbidding teachers from selling curriculum — that she wrote a scathing letter to the *New York Times* on the subject.

“Try as I might, I cannot recall taking a vow of poverty when I became a teacher,” writes Dunigan, a member of the Albany Teachers Association, who does not sell lessons herself. “Nor can I remember ever being compensated for the hundreds — perhaps thousands — of hours I’ve put in on weekends, evenings and vacations. Teachers continually develop and tweak lessons, often on their own time and without the use of district resources, to reach an increasingly diverse and sophisticated population of learners. The fact that we are willing to pay for lessons superior to the curriculum bought by our school districts doesn’t cheapen what we do; it raises it to a new level of commitment.”

### A question of ownership

Beth Decker, an English teacher at Liberty High School in Brentwood, was asked to teach a class designed to help freshmen transfer into high school. She agreed, despite a lack of curriculum. Outside of the school day she developed lesson plans that incorporate real-world concepts — including career and college planning, self-awareness and finances — to help foster success in high school and adulthood, titled *Get Real! A Reality Project for Teenagers*. Her work has been recognized by George Washington University’s Freshman

CTA’s Lesson Plan Share Center on the new [www.cta.org](http://www.cta.org) is a great place for teachers to share exclusive curriculum with one another, rate and write reviews on the curriculum, and join in discussions on the most talked-about and effective lesson plans being used by CTA members. The plans in the center, created by educators for educators, were designed to assist members in sharing and developing new, interesting curriculum.



South Tahoe Educators Association member Krissi Russell uses the Lesson Plan Share Center and finds it an excellent way for members to connect easily and share knowledge.

“The share center is fabulous,” says Russell. “I think it’s a great way to provide lessons and access to teachers for making their job easier.”

Russell, a Spanish teacher at South Lake Tahoe Middle School, was inspired to create lesson plans and share them at [www.cta.org](http://www.cta.org) after she wrote a book about animal safety called *In the Meadow (Don’t Feed Our Bears)*.


It all started about five years ago when her son Caleb was selling lemonade in front of their house one summer day. “I walked out onto the porch, and there was something *big* walking toward my son,” recalls Russell. “It was a bear walking down the street within 10 feet of my son.”

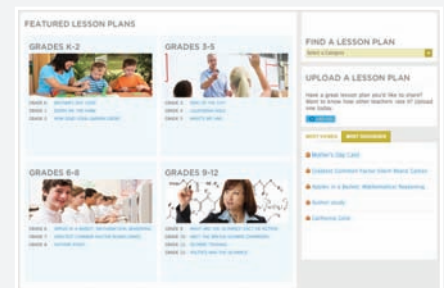
The bear ignored the lemonade stand and ambled into a neighbor’s yard, where it pulled down a bird feeder and helped itself to some birdseed. After that, Russell wrote a song about

the incident, which later became her book, a lesson on the importance of not feeding wild animals. Russell saw the potential for using the song as a tool to educate the public about the importance of keeping wildlife wild. She sang her song at campgrounds and in schools and around the community.

“I guess the teacher in me decided I had to educate people about this,” says Russell. “When wild animals find easy food in the form of garbage, pet food, birdseed or food left out for them, they become lazy about looking for their own.”

She then created interactive K-3 lesson plans with grade level specific extension activities, aligned with content standards, to teach environmental lessons. She has uploaded some of her lessons to the Lesson Plan Share Center for other members to use.

CTA seeks to improve student learning by making this center available exclusively to members for sharing and integrating Web-based lessons into instructional practice. 



To view the great selection of lesson plans available, visit [www.cta.org/Professional-Development/Lesson-Plan-Share-Center](http://www.cta.org/Professional-Development/Lesson-Plan-Share-Center). Choose from different grade level blocks, K-12, or browse all the lesson plans for subjects or curriculum materials of interest.

Transition Initiative as a curriculum that correlates with their standards designed to assess freshmen transition programs. Decker shared her curriculum with district colleagues teaching the class for free.

“Everything had to be photocopied, which presented problems,” says Decker, a member of the Liberty Education Association. “Students don’t see it as a legitimate class when they don’t have a book. They take it more lightly, often losing assignments, and part of the value of the class is having the materi-

als to reflect on later.”

After comparing the cost of self-publishing with the cost of photocopying, she decided to self-publish because it was cheaper and more convenient. Instead of appreciation, her district refused to buy the materials, implying that it would be a conflict of interest. To date the district has still not purchased sufficient materials for the course. At one point, her administrators questioned Decker’s ownership of *Get Real!*, but now acknowledge that Decker does, in fact, own the materials.



Historically, teachers have always owned the rights to their own curriculum, says Elizabeth Townsend-Gard, associate professor and co-director of the Center for Intellectual Property Law and Culture at Tulane Law School in New Orleans and legal adviser for TPT and Edelman.

The law states that anything created within the “scope of employment” at one’s job is owned by the employer. For example, if an accountant writes a novel after hours, it is not within the scope of employment, but if that accountant creates an accounting software program for use at work, it could be considered the property of the firm where that accountant is employed. However, says Townsend-Gard, there has traditionally “been an exception for teachers.”

“Nobody cared before because teachers weren’t making money. But now, because of the Internet, they can. The law is blurrier now, and the court hasn’t established whether the teacher exception still exists. But it’s important that the teacher exception survive. If schools own teacher-created curriculum, it will mean less autonomy for teachers.” Townsend-Gard adds that any materials created outside of the scope of employment by teachers — or others — are automatically the creator’s copyright.

NEA’s Office of General Counsel warns that the Copyright Act of 1976 stipulates that materials created by teachers in the scope of their employment are “works for hire” and owned by the school — and that this could also include materials created by teachers on their own time and equipment, since it falls under the category of “job du-



ties.” For this reason, NEA supports amending the Copyright Act of 1976 to officially recognize the teacher exemption.

Edelman believes the teacher exception will eventually be tested in court, and that the ruling will be in teachers’ favor. “When teachers change jobs or go from one district to another, they take their lesson plans

**ABOVE:** Students at Liberty High School in Brentwood using Beth Decker’s workbook.

**INSETS:** Jaqueline Campbell (top), fifth-grade teacher at York Elementary School; Beth Decker, English teacher at Liberty High School.



# Ways to evaluate online curriculum

Whether purchased or for free, it's not always easy to differentiate good online materials from mediocre. Glowing reviews may be accurate — or could be biased.

"It's important to have criteria for evaluating these materials," says Jacqueline Campbell, a fifth-grade teacher at York Elementary School and adjunct faculty member for National University's Graduate School of Education. "There are so many materials out there on the Web that it can be overwhelming to try and select the best resources."

To prepare her student interns for choosing the best lesson plans on the Web, Campbell assigns them the task of analyzing various online lesson plans. "It's a real eye-opener," says the Hawthorne Elementary Teachers Association member. "But it's good because they pick up lots of ideas."

Here are some of the criteria Campbell has her students look for:

- Does the lesson plan offer various activities that differentiate instruction so that it can meet the needs of all students with diverse learning styles, whether they are visual, kinesthetic or auditory learners?
- Does the lesson "scaffold" vocabulary to help English learners or struggling students by including simplified language, visuals and graphics, and hands-on learning opportunities?
- Does the lesson tap into students' prior knowledge and experience, enabling them to make connections between what they already know and the new material?
- Does the lesson offer whole-group as well as small-group instruction?
- Are there provisions for teacher-directed instruction, guided practice and independent practice?

"As teachers, we are always looking for creative strategies and tweaking lesson plans that will best meet the diverse needs of our students," says Campbell, who presented a workshop titled "Fabulous Tips and Fun Tricks for Teaching Math" at this year's CTA Good Teaching Conference. "Our profession is rewarding, demanding and challenging, so it's important to provide the best learning materials for all students." ❧



with them," he reasons. "That's a pretty good measure of who owns the materials."

However, this is not always the case. When a teacher recently transferred to a different school within the San Jose Unified School District, administrators demanded that the teacher leave behind all lesson plans and materials. The teacher refused and sought advice from CTA's legal staff. As a result, new contract language was negotiated. Bargaining such language is always advisable, notes NEA.

"We came to an informal understanding with our district about how situations like this should be handled," says Patrick Bernhardt, a member of the San Jose Teachers Association's bargaining team. "The district wanted certain specific things to remain behind, and we decided that if there was a legitimate need for these things to remain, they would."

But SJTA members saw the possibility for future disputes and decided to bargain

**ABOVE:** San Jose Teachers Association member Patrick Bernhardt at Pioneer High School.

for "intellectual property" rights. SJTA members studied a similar provision in the contract for United Teachers Los Angeles members and came up with their own version for their contract. (To view SJTA's contract language, visit us online at [www.cta.org/Professional-Development/Publications/Educator-May-10/SJTA-Web-Exclusive](http://www.cta.org/Professional-Development/Publications/Educator-May-10/SJTA-Web-Exclusive).)

"Having that contract language clarifies things," says Bernhardt, a math and history teacher at Pioneer High School. "It helps, because there is some ambiguity in existing law about teacher rights and matters of intellectual property. Many teachers generate work products that may not be explicitly required by their job, but they create them because they are invested in their students." ❧





# School librarian positions severely slashed



Photo by Scott Buschman

**LEFT:** Library media teacher Cathy Collins at Montgomery High School in Santa Rosa helps student Meg Healy find books on college scholarships.

*How can I access a database for a research paper?*

*Where can I find animals on the endangered species list?*

*What's a good science fiction novel for English class?*

These are the kinds of questions students ask library media teachers — or school librarians — every day. But with cutbacks, school librarians themselves are becoming an endangered species, much to the detriment of students throughout the U.S. and California.

California ranks 51st in the nation — behind Puerto Rico — with one librarian to 5,124 students, far below the national average of one library media teacher to 870 students, according to the California Department of Education. Only about 24 percent of schools in the state have a credentialed library media teacher on campus part time or more, with most of them working in high schools. But that figure will drop, as school districts increasingly shelve school librarian positions to balance the budget.

Research has shown that in the absence of poverty, the quality of the school library is the best pre-

dictor of reading scores. Douglas Achterman of the University of North Texas confirmed that school libraries positively impact student achievement in a 2008 dissertation titled *Haves, Halves and Have-Nots: School Libraries and Student Achievement in California*.

## Working behind the scenes

Librarians may be known for shushing patrons, but they are getting increasingly vocal about the importance of quality school libraries staffed by qualified professionals. (A credentialed teacher librarian has both a California teaching credential and a California teacher librarian services credential.)

Cathy Collins, a library media teacher at Montgomery High School in Santa Rosa, believes school libraries are “the great equalizer” for students who lack books and computers at home. Because librarians work “behind the scenes,” the public may not understand the important role they play in education, says Collins. This includes helping develop an appreciation for literature,

helping students locate and evaluate print and online information sources, collaborating with teachers on lesson plans and research projects, and much more.

“School librarians are responsible for teaching information literacy and technology skills that assist our students in becoming globally competitive in the job market,” says Collins, a member of the Santa Rosa Teachers Association. “By devaluing information and technology skills librarians teach, we directly impact our students’ future marketability in the workplace. For this reason, it is heartbreaking to see positions being cut left and right.”

Her district is considering eliminating seven school librarian positions, but so far has only eliminated one full-time and one part-time. Collins decided to teach overseas next year because she feared being jobless.

Many school districts throughout the state expect classified employees or “clerks” to take on responsibilities once held by library media teachers, which is a mistake, says Collins.

“The roles of clerks and librarians are *both* important — and sometimes overlap — but we need to have both in order to have a strong library program in any school operating to full potential,” she says. “There are some schools where classified staff only work part time or a few hours a week in

libraries. It seems an incredible waste of resources to me to spend millions of dollars on our school library facilities and materials, but neglect the most important components of school libraries — certified librarians and classified staff.”

Students appreciate having someone like Collins helping them in the library.

“Without her, it would be a lot more difficult to know what to look for,” says Julia Gass, a senior. “A librarian can make recommendations to help you find what you need; otherwise the information might be here, but you wouldn’t know how to find it.” Seven and a half teacher librarian positions in Riverside Unified School District were eliminated to balance the budget this year. Among those receiving a pink slip was Della Skannal of Sierra Middle School.

Skannal, a member of the Riverside City Teachers Association, fears the loss of school librarians will leave members of the “Google Generation” without the skills they need for information literacy and academic success. A March 21 editorial in the *Los Angeles Times* describes the phenomenon: “Today’s students sift through an infinite number of options: books, Internet sources, academic databases. Much of the time they opt for Google, which is like being tossed into the ocean without a paddle.”

“Most students feel the first place they should look for something is Google,” says Skannal. “But Google is simply a search engine, and we need to make sure the websites they are explor-

ing are authoritative, authentic and reliable places for information. When students go to Google they may find 10,000 hits on a topic and encounter information overload and things that are of no value whatsoever for their project and paper. Librarians help students understand how to find information, evaluate information and utilize that information.”

While students may prefer technology to books, Skannal encourages reading for pleasure. “Sometimes they will come to me and say, ‘I want a book,’ and I help them pinpoint the genre they might be interested in, such as adventure or science fiction. I will go through lists of books the students might like and recommend some books they might enjoy. Lots of students just go by the cover of a book, and I encourage them to read the summary and see if they might like the content.”

Ellen Shimamoto, a teacher librarian at Gabrielino High School, finds it ironic that her district reduced its middle school librarian from full time to half time — after building a brand-new library on the site. Fortunately, she

says, the San Gabriel School District has not eliminated any librarian positions completely.

### Information literacy curriculum

The San Gabriel Teachers Association member received an Innovation Award from the California School Library Association for integrating information literacy skills with classroom curriculum for freshmen taking a career course. As part of the class, students spend 12 days in the library learning strategies in research, Web evaluation, taking notes, avoiding plagiarism and using databases. Then they pick a career they are interested in and research the pathway to that career. They are asked to look 10 years into the future and write a letter and résumé for a job in a field they have supposedly prepared for. At the end of the course they are “interviewed” for the job to see if they’ve done their research.

Shimamoto, who enjoys collaborating with classroom teachers for the course, says students learn invaluable skills they can use throughout high school and college. “Kids will come back and say, ‘Now I know why you taught us

*Continued on page 37*

### Elsewhere in California:

- In the Tracy Unified School District, students are using Facebook in hopes of saving school libraries and librarian positions.
- Members of the Parent Faculty Association at Foothill Middle School in the Mount Diablo Unified School District organized a massive fundraising effort to keep the library staffed an additional day with a full-time certified librarian.
- School libraries are set to disappear in California’s Belmont-Redwood Shores School District as it plans to close all media centers; as a result, students will reportedly no longer be allowed to check out school library books.
- In Modesto, the school board voted to cut 8.5 library media teachers and eight library assistants.



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# 2010 César E. Chávez Award recipients

CTA's César E. Chávez Memorial Education Awards Program provides recognition for students and their teachers who demonstrate an understanding of the vision and guiding principles by which César E. Chávez lived his life.

This year, 63 winners — 38 visual arts projects and 25 written essays — have been selected to receive recognition plus \$1,000 for both students and CTA members. Group entries will share the award.



César Chávez artwork recipient for grades 9-12: Ricardo Torres, student of Lora Royster, Anaheim Secondary Teachers Association.

**In the visual arts category**, the winners are: Grades Pre-K-K: **SUSANA VERA**, student of Linda Fresquez, Tracy Educators Association, Region 2; **JORGE CARDENAS**, student of Socorro Scow, Fresno Teachers Association, Region 2; **CÉSAR TRONOSCO**, student of Nancy Glenn, San Bernardino Teachers Association, Region 4; **SHALEY CRUZ**, student of Nancy Glenn, San Bernardino Teachers Association, Region 4.

**Grades 1-2:** **DANIEL NUNEZ**, student of Latasha Pipkin, United Teachers of Richmond, Region 1; **MARCIELA MACIA**, **LEOPOLDO RAMIREZ**, **XYRELL PEREZ** and **RYAN BEESON**, students of Kathy Olsson, Empire Teachers Association, Region 2; **KRISTIAN DOMINGO**, **DALLANARA CALVARIO** and **SANTOS ROMERO**, students of Robert Ellis, United Teachers of Richmond, Region 1.

**Grades 3-4:** **JOSUE CASTILLO**, student of Tanya Manabat, Lawndale Teachers Association, Region 3; **VICTOR AGUILAR**, student of Manny Lopez, Oakland Education Association, Region 1; **KIMBERLY VIL-LASEÑOR**, student of Diane Doris Kissas, Montebello Teachers Association, Region 3; **MAGGIE FIELDS**, student of Rosemary Crespo-Storelee, Livermore Education Association, Region 1.

**Grades 5-6:** **VANESSA ARGUMEDO**, student of Shannon Hess, Sylvan Educators Association, Region 2; **KENNY GOMEZ**, student of Kathleen White, San Jose Teachers Association, Region 1; **ISAIAH ANDREWS**, student of Kathleen White, San Jose Teachers Association, Region 1; **KIMBERLY TERCERO**, student of Robert Hudson, Hemet Teachers Association, Region 4; **HEIDI LOEBEL**, student of Robert Hudson, Hemet Teachers Association, Region 4; **RILEY HUMPHREY**, student of David Humphrey, Sylvan Educators Association, Region 2; **BAILEY CLAYTON**, student of David Humphrey, Sylvan Educators Association, Region 2.

**Grades 7-8:** **ELLIOTT CHUNG**, student of Karen Bomar, Glendale Teachers Association, Region 3; **EMILY LEWIS** and **DALTON MILLS**, students of Lisa Dittman, Guerneville School Teachers Association, Region 1; **DAVID CRENSHAW**, **JACOB STOLTING** and **URIEL VALENTIN**, students of John Silva, Guerneville School Teachers Association, Region 1; **CONNOR SMITH** and **MITCHEL REESINK**, students of Kari Johnson, Guerneville School Teachers Association, Region 1; **CASSIDY ROSALES**, **PRINCEVEER BUTTAR** and **LOUIS RAM-PONE**, students of Mary Bracken, Guerneville School Teachers Association, Region 1; **LUIS MONJE**, student of Roxi Romo, Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association, Region 2; **SHAHID OSUNA**, student of Kelly Larned, Associated Chino Teachers, Region 3; **JEREMY GALLARDO**, student of Jodene Paris, Wil-

sona Teachers Association, Region 3.

**Grades 9-12:** **RICARDO TORRES**, student of Lora Royster, Anaheim Secondary Teachers Association, Region 4; **FRANCISCO JUAREZ**, student of Sonia Melendez, Baldwin Park Education Association, Region 3; **CARLOS LOPEZ**, student of Staci Reinalda, Moreno Valley Educators Association, Region 4; **JONATHAN JACINTO**, student of Jeanne Brostrom, Baldwin Park Education Association, Region 3; **BRITTNEY DE LA TORRE**, student of Jane Altenau, Baldwin Park Education Association, Region 3; **CHARAE MCCONNELL**, student of Joy Cornish-Bowden, Tracy Educators Association, Region 2; **LIBBY BERTELSON**, student of Joy Cornish-Bowden, Tracy Educators Association, Region 2; **VALERIE GAPASIN**, student of Joy Cornish-



César Chávez artwork recipient for grades 3-4: Victor Aguilar, student of Manny Lopez, Oakland Educators Association.

Bowden, Tracy Educators Association, Region 2; **DANIELLE CUDDY**, student of Blanca Wellington, Napa Valley Educators Association, Region 1; **CRISTINA GONZALEZ-ELIAS**, student of John Robrock, San Benito Joint Union High School Teachers Association, Region 1; **ARLYNE ARIAS**, student of Maria E. Vega, Napa Valley Educators Association, Region 1; **MARIA SALCIDO**, student of Sandra Barnard, McFarland

*Continued on page 38*

# 2010 Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship recipients

Six dependent children of CTA members, two Student CTA members, and four CTA members have been selected for awards of \$3,000 to \$6,000 under CTA's Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Scholarship program for ethnic minority members, funded by voluntary contributions from the CTA membership and the CTA Foundation for Teaching and Learning.

Dependent children receiving scholarships are: **TIMOTHY ROGERS**, son of Vonda Rogers,

Menifee Teachers Association; **ANNALISA WILLIS**, daughter of Tyra Willis, Association of Cypress Teachers; **JESSICA REEDE**, daughter of James W. Reede Jr., California Faculty Association; **HAYWARD COX**, son of Altina Cox, Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association; **FERNANDA MIRANDA-CELESTINO**, daughter of Lucia H. Miranda-Celestino, Associated Chino Teachers; and **STACEY OCHOA**, daughter of Susan L. Ochoa, Association of Cypress Teachers.

Student CTA members receiving scholarships are: **ARELI DOHNER-CHAVEZ**, California State University, Stanislaus; and **DANIELLE HAMEL**, California State University, Sacramento.

CTA members receiving scholarships are: **ANA-MARIA FRENES**, Stockton Teachers Association; **RIKA HIRATA**, East Side Teachers Association; **SUE KEY**, Torrance Teachers Association; and **AARON KLAFTER**, Torrance Teachers Association.

# 2010 CTA Scholarship recipients

CTA's Board of Directors has awarded scholarships to 50 dependent children of CTA members, four Student CTA members, and seven CTA members under the CTA Scholarship Program.

**ARIELLE DENNIS**, daughter of Riverside City Teachers Association member Maria Crombie, won the Ralph J. Flynn Memorial Scholarship for the highest-scoring applicant (\$5,000). **KELLY RODRIGUEZ**, daughter of Alvord Educators Association member Karen Rodriguez, won the D.A. Weber Memorial Scholarship for a student attending continuation high school (\$5,000).

Recipients of the 2010 CTA Scholarship for Dependent Children (\$5,000) are: **NICOLE BRISTOL**, daughter of Sandra Bristol, La Mesa Spring Valley Teachers Association; **LINDSEY LEWIS**, daughter of Debra Lewis, Muroc Education Association; **PARKER LEWIS**, son of Michelle Lewis, Tracy Educators Association; **MICHAEL DIAZ**, son of Tony P. Diaz, Teachers Association of Long Beach; **MEGAN CALZIA**, daughter of Elaine Calzia, Fall River Teachers Association; **JELENA CYR**, daughter of Lejla P. Cyr, Livermore Education Association; **LEAH AVILA**, daughter of Irma Avila, Fresno Teachers Association; **CALEB BARNES**, son of Daniel H. Barnes, Westside Union Teachers Association; **CHRISTINA CUNHA**, daughter of Allyn C. Cunha, Stockton Teachers Association; **BETHANY MCHENRY**, daughter of Janet McHenry, Sierra-Plumas Teachers Association; **RACHAEL DODD**, daughter of Margaret Page, United Teachers Los Angeles; and **MANUEL CROSBY**, son of Carol A. Beck-Crosby, Calaveras Unified Educators Association.

Also, **FREEMAN BUTLER**, son of Cynthia W. Butler, Palmdale Elementary Teachers Association; **DERRICK CONTRERAS**, son of Susan Contreras, Fresno Teachers Association; **VICTORIA CHAU**, daughter of Cindy Chau, Modesto Teachers Association; **CLARA CHRISCO**, daughter of Susan W. Chrisco, Chico Unified Teachers Association; **ASHLEE EVONC**, daughter of Josephine Evonc, San Ramon Valley Education Association; **AMANDA CHASE**, daughter of Bruce R. Chase, La Mesa Spring Valley Teachers Association; **HANNAH COOPER**, daughter of Jill Rae Ziegler Cooper, Windsor District Educators Association; **DOMINIQUE CURRAN**, daughter of Nancy R. Curran, Panama-Buena Vista Teachers Association; **COURTNEY KEWLEY**, daughter of Marianna Kewley, Cajon Valley Education Association; **KAITLYN SPORE**, daughter of Jeri P. Spore, Saddleback

Valley Educators Association; **KEVIN BRICE**, son of Sherril J. Brice, San Dieguito Faculty Association; and **ELENA LOSADA**, daughter of Antonio Losada, San Juan Teachers Association.

Also, **AMBER MCINTIRE**, daughter of Cindy L. McIntire, Gridley Teachers Association; **FELIPE CARDENAS**, son of Carla M. Cardenas, Sweetwater Education Association; **KELLEY BRADY**, son of Kaureen A. Brady, Panama Buena Vista Teachers Association; **TRISHA MORRISSEY**, daughter of David Morrissey, Panama Buena Vista Teachers Association; **EMILY MCQUAID**, daughter of Laurie Larson-McQuaid, Arcadia Pupil Support Services Association; **GENEVIEVE BOYKINS**, daughter of Rita M. Boykins, Associated Chaffey Teachers; **LOGAN BRODNANSKY**, daughter of Rebecca J. Brodnansky, Lakeport Teachers Association; **THOMAS BUTTERWECK**, son of James & Cynthia Butterweck, Fontana Teachers Association; **CATHERINE CHIANG**, daughter of Emily Chiang, Teachers Association of South Pasadena; **SEAN CIVALE**, daughter of Anne Carlin, Manhattan Beach Unified Teachers Association; **KHRISTA**

**DELUCCHI**, daughter of Dorothy Platz, Escalon Unified Teachers Association; and **RACHEL BONIFACIUS**, daughter of Annette Bonifacius, Gridley Teachers Association.

Also, **KERRY COLLINS**, daughter of Kathleen Collins, Capistrano Unified Education Association; **ALESSANDRO FOLCHI**, son of Erin Folchi, Sierra-Plumas Teachers Association; **DEVON ENGLAND**, daughter of Dina Kubba, Capistrano Unified Education Association; **MARGARET MARATOS**, daughter of G. Putnam Cook III, Fallbrook Elementary Teachers Association; **TYLER MCGEE**, son of Debra McGee, Apple Valley Unified Teachers Association; **STEVEN PHAM**, son of Minh Pham, Twin Rivers United Educators; **TYLER STEIMEL**, son of Julie Steimel, Brawley Elementary Teachers Association; **DEBBIE JONG**, daughter of Chih-Yun T. Jong, Arcadia Teachers Association; **ERIN PHILLIPS**, daughter of Susan Becker Phillips, Monterey Bay Teachers Association; **AARON BORGESON**, son of Dale Borgeson, Temecula Valley Educators Association; **CHRISTINE**

*Continued on page 38*

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# Be a lifelong learner: Attend CTA's Summer Institute

**C**TA's Summer Institute 2010 will be held Aug. 1-6 at UCLA's Conference Center. This event offers a variety of sessions designed to assist chapters in day-to-day representation, help teachers build leadership skills, and improve teaching and learning. This year's offerings include:

**LEGAL TRACK** — The Legal Department is expanding its offerings at Summer Institute this year to two separate partial-week tracks.

**Track 1 (Sunday–Tuesday)** — This track will focus on “group” labor and employment issues, including basic union and employee rights under the Educational Employment Relations Act, the legal framework around bargaining, unfair practice issues, duty of fair representation issues, and Brown Act open meeting issues. Topics will include: the rights of members to union representation; duty of fair representation — what are the best practices to follow to protect your chapter from DFR liability; which union activities are protected by labor laws and other statutes, and which are not; what is the legal framework for bargaining; what actions by the district can be successfully challenged by filing an unfair practice charge; and how can you use the open meetings law effectively.

**Track 2 (Wednesday–Friday)** — The second track will focus on “individual” labor and employment issues, including the rights of individual union members under the antidiscrimination statutes, the rights of educational employees to a safe and healthy workplace, the discipline and dismissal procedure under the Education Code, and cyber-

law, texting and Facebook issues. Topics will include: employment discrimination and sexual harassment; disability discrimination and reasonable accommodation; discipline and dismissal; leave of absence issues; school health and safety issues; cyberlaw, texting, MySpace and Facebook — what are best practices in a hyperconnected world.

**NEGOTIATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRAND** — The NOD Strand includes the following tracks.

**Emerging Leaders** — Designed to arm members with the information, resources and skills needed to become effective organizers and future leaders in their local chapter, this track includes the basic concepts of unionism and advocacy, association history and structure, and effective organizing techniques. The session is intended for all association members who are beginning their activism in their local union.

**Essential Bargaining Skills** — In this highly interactive session, designed to guide participants in the use of a 10-step process to ensure a successful bargaining experience, participants will form bargaining teams, bargain an agreement, and work through extensive coaching and debriefing sessions to determine which strategies were successful.

**Advanced Bargaining Skills** — This track is designed for those who have completed the Essential Bargaining Skills track or who have at least three years of experience on a local bargaining team, or who have previously completed the Essential Bargaining Skills track and at least one year of experience on a local bargaining team. Those who don't



CTA photo by Dave Earl Carpenter

**ABOVE:** CTA President David A. Sanchez at last year's Summer Institute at UCLA.

meet the prerequisites of this track will not be admitted. This track provides skills and knowledge that will improve the association's final contract settlement. Participants will learn about developing effective bargaining strategies and tactics, writing effective contract language, identifying key elements of the district budget, defining and negotiating issues, composing effective bargaining communications, balancing the bargaining goals of complex constituencies, and utilizing CTA's research database in an effective manner.

**School Finance** — Designed for leaders and bargaining team members who want to become more knowledgeable about school finance and school district budgets, this session includes tracking the trends of budget priorities, calculating the cost of a bargaining proposal, determining a district's ability to pay, and develop-

ing comparability data to support bargaining objectives.

**Healthcare Benefits and Issues** — This full-week session focuses on bargaining health benefits in order to increase the quality of care and reduce costs. This workshop will also inform members about current local, state and national medical health care reform measures, current activities of CTA coalitions, and Medicare benefits for retirees. Participants should be prepared to discuss their Summary Plan Descriptions, contract language and other information pertaining to their locally bargained medical benefits program.

**MEMBER BENEFITS STRAND** — This partial-week strand (Sunday–Tuesday), presented by CTA Member Benefits and NEA Member Benefits, will offer participants survival tips on how to manage stress, save money, utilize their ben-

efits, and better connect to the local, state, and national associations. The strand is designed for chapter presidents, local site reps, membership chairpersons and membership recruiters.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH STRAND** — Recognizing that organizing is the basis of community outreach, this strand (Wednesday–Friday) will explore a variety of strategies and tools for tapping into the “power of community,” geared for all educators, ESP, higher ed and Student CTA chapter members. Topics will include: sharing community connections; meeting external organizations; open forum/relational meetings; community outreach electives; chapter outreach planning; and World Café — a group approach to problem-solving.

**INSTRUCTION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** — The weeklong IPD Strand will focus on shared school leadership and whole system change. Priority will be given to those who register as school teams. Fea-

tured speakers include Michael Fullan and Anthony Muhammad.

**COMMUNICATIONS STRAND** — This strand includes separate two-day tracks. Participants can choose two:

**Chapter Newsletters from A to Z** — Participants learn to create and produce local association newsletters, from writing articles and selecting stories to laying out pages with digital photos. The session includes a tutorial in desktop publishing. Participants will get practical experience producing the official Summer Institute newsletter. Please bring your own digital cameras.

**Online Activism: Engaging Your Members Through Your Website and Social Media** — Today’s chapter leaders must have a working knowledge of everything from websites to Twitter to reaching members so they can communicate and access information. During this two-day session participants will learn how to create and use their chapter website to their best advantage, in addition

to exploring the latest tools in social media, from flip-video to Facebook. Participants should be comfortable using technology and taking and downloading digital photos.

**Effective Communications: Using News and Public Speaking** — The focus is on crisis communications in this pivotal election year — learning how to use the media to mobilize and push back successfully. This session covers the essential elements of effective communications with members, the media and the general public. This includes the basics of speech writing and how to be an effective and confident spokesperson for your organization, holding a news conference and creating an effective chapter media relations program.

SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

Register now for your track of choice at [www.cta.org/conferences](http://www.cta.org/conferences). Enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis, and many strands fill up quickly. For more information, contact the CTA Conference Coordination Center at (650) 552-5355.

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## Taking a Stand

# Oakland teachers' one-day strike yields contract



CTA photos by Mike Myslinski

**LEFT:** Oakland Education Association members hold a one-day strike April 29. **INSET:** CTA Board member Eric Heins speaks to the crowd at a noon rally.



**F**ed up with being the lowest-paid educators in Alameda County, Oakland educators mobilized their community with a successful one-day strike April 29 that motivated the school district to return to the bargaining table after it had just imposed its final contract offer of no raises for teachers through 2012.

"We would rather be teaching than striking, but we needed to show the district how serious our concerns are," said Betty Olson-Jones, president of the 2,800-member Oakland Education Association (OEA). "A quality public education is a civil right. The future of this district is in doubt and teachers had to take a stand for our students and our community."

If it holds up, the district's unfair imposed contract would sharply increase class sizes and

possibly eliminate the adult education program. Oakland teachers would receive a mere 1.75 percent raise over an eight-year period from 2004 to 2012. Starting pay for educators in Oakland is about \$39,000, compared to \$50,000 in San Francisco.

The 38,000-student district is supervised by a state-appointed trustee and one of the highest-paid superintendents in Alameda County. Oakland teachers are exasperated because of the recession and state cuts taking their toll, and because the district receives much more than the average district in per-pupil funding, yet spends far less on teachers. This creates a teacher turnover rate of about 20 percent.

Oakland teachers also want the district to stop spending on outside contractors at a rate twice that of the average school district, and to cease spending voter-approved parcel tax funds

on consultants and bureaucracy, instead of on reducing class sizes and retaining educators.

Contract talks resumed May 13, and five more dates were scheduled, jump-starting negotiations that broke off in December after almost two years of frustrating meetings. As painful as the strike was for OEA members, 91 percent of them walked picket lines and stayed out of their classrooms. The week after the strike, a strong majority of Oakland educators affirmed their solidarity by voting to authorize their leaders to call another strike, if necessary.

"I think the strike was the right thing to do, because Oakland needs to become more competitive to retain its quality teachers," said Peter Mates, an Alameda County Teacher of the Year who was also picket line captain at his Bret Harte Middle School. "Our parents were very supportive."

To show solidarity with teachers, parent Kristin Miller-Nicholas kept her two daughters out of class at Joaquin Miller Elementary and spent the morning on the picket line with her school's educators. "Our teachers are under-respected and underpaid," she said, calling the strike "a statement that needs to be made." Her parents were teachers in Michigan, so she un-

derstands the sacrifices teachers make. "Oakland has the money. It's just a matter of them prioritizing where the money goes."

As three television news trucks covered predawn picketing at Oakland High School, Amy Wilder, a special education teacher, tried to keep warm. She was there to "demonstrate to my students that their education matters to me," and to tell the district that it "needs to shift its priorities to fund our students' education appropriately."

Eleanor Alderman, a teacher at ACORN Woodland Elementary, walked her picket line and said the stress of having to hold three jobs to pay her mortgage is hard on her. Born and raised in Oakland, she works weekends as a waitress in Berkeley and as a nanny for a couple in Oakland — in addition to full-time teaching.

"I absolutely believe in living in the city that you teach in," said Alderman. "There's no way I could survive on just my teacher salary and pay my mortgage."

CTA Board member Eric Heins, a teacher in nearby Pittsburg Unified, pledged the resources of CTA to OEA at a noon rally and march held during the one-day strike in downtown Oakland — with 2,000 teachers, parents and students. "An injury to one is an injury to all," Heins said to applause. "Keep up the fight."

MIKE MYSLINSKI



**LEFT:** Betty Olson-Jones, president of the 2,800-member Oakland Education Association, rallies members at the successful one-day strike.

For updates on the Oakland showdown, see [www.oaklandea.org](http://www.oaklandea.org). Video of the strike can be seen at [www.cta.org/About-CTA/News-Room/Media-Center/Media-Center](http://www.cta.org/About-CTA/News-Room/Media-Center/Media-Center).

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# ACTION

## CTA, Ed Coalition battle proposed cuts of \$3.8 billion



CTA photo by Len Feldman

**LEFT:** CTA Board Member Elana Davidson at a Capitol news conference in May expressing the Association's support for AB 2492.

**C**TA and the Education Coalition are mobilizing more than a million teachers, education support professionals, parents, school employees, school board members, administrators, and other school supporters to defeat Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's newest budget proposal of over \$3.8 billion in additional cuts to public education.

A key element of the coalition effort is securing signatures from lawmakers on "commitment cards" that commit lawmakers to vote against any new cuts to school funding and to honor the agreement they reached and the governor signed into law last year. The Education Coalition has been posting the names of lawmakers who have already signed the commitment cards on a new website, [www.promisetostudents.com](http://www.promisetostudents.com), and CTA chapter presidents and legislative contact teams are hard at work seeking additional signatures.

The coalition is engaged in intensive efforts urging lawmakers to honor their 2009 commitment. Schools have already suffered more than \$17 billion in cuts — roughly 60 percent of all the reductions — leaving public education in a state of severe crisis. Lawmakers are charged with reviewing the governor's plan and putting together their own spending plan, which goes back to him for his signature.

"Schools around the state have been devastated by the cuts that have already hit them," says CTA President David A. Sanchez. "The newest cuts will force more layoffs, larger class sizes, fewer nurses and counselors, and other reductions that are harming a generation of our students."

The governor's newest round of cuts, announced on May 14 as part of the May Revision, an update of the governor's January spending

plan proposal, includes the education cuts he proposed in January. It also reduces school funding by another \$1.4 billion by eliminating the state's child care programs, which are funded through the state's constitutional school funding mechanism, Proposition 98. By eliminating these programs, the governor is effectively reducing the amount of the Proposition 98 guarantee to schools for years to come. The bigger point is that it harms kids.

### Timeline for action

Lawmakers are working against a June 15 constitutional deadline for sending the governor their own final budget proposal. The state constitution requires the governor to make his line-item vetoes and then sign the final plan into law prior to the July 1 start of the new fiscal year.

In recent years, those budget deadlines have been missed much more often than met. Often, the budget agree-

ments haven't been reached until late in the summer or early in the fall.

At press time, CTA presidents from around the state were getting ready to converge on the state Capitol as part of the May 25 Presidents Lobby Day. During that event, they will be making lawmakers aware of the effects that the already adopted cuts are having on their local schools. They will be urging lawmakers to reject any further reductions for schools and colleges.

### Solutions for budget shortfall

CTA firmly believes that the governor and lawmakers have the responsibility to find new state revenues to support vital services, including schools. At the same time, the association has been supporting efforts to close loopholes for both state corporate income and property taxes, which have allowed U.S. and multinational companies to escape paying billions of dollars in their fair share of the costs of state programs. CTA has collected enough signatures to qualify the Repeal Corporate Tax Loopholes initiative for the November ballot. However, legislators can and should take care of this injustice before November as part of the budget solution.

LEN FELDMAN

# Keep Our Educators Working Act before Congress

CTA and NEA representatives are pressing Congress for the approval of a \$23 billion measure aimed at protecting students from the devastating effects of massive budget cuts. With California schools having already suffered more than \$17 billion in slashes and facing more than \$4 billion in additional cuts proposed in Gov. Schwarzenegger's May Revision, the federal Keep Our Educators Working Act would provide schools in California and across the nation with funds to stave off some of

the most draconian cuts.

The bill, a targeted state fiscal stabilization plan authored by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), would help prevent massive class size increases and a significant reduction in individual attention for students. In California, more than 26,000 teachers have received lay-off notices, with the state facing a \$19.1 billion revenue shortfall, according to the governor's Department of Finance.

"CTA/NEA Board members lobbied hard in Washington, D.C., in April in support of this legisla-

tion by Senator Harkin and in support of efforts by Senator Harkin and U.S. Representatives George Miller [D-Calif.] and David R. Obey [D-Wis.] to have these provisions placed in an emergency appropriations bill," says CTA President David A. Sanchez. "The Obama administration is fully in support of this vital legislation. Administration representatives understand how badly these cuts will harm our students and our schools. They also know these cuts will ripple through the rest of the economy, making economic recovery

harder to achieve for everyone."

According to NEA statistics, as many as 300,000 educators throughout the United States could lose their jobs without inclusion of the Harkin amendment in pending emergency funding measures.

NEA President Dennis Van Roekel asks, "How can we give our children a world-class education when teachers and other education personnel are in unemployment lines instead of in classrooms and schools?"

LEN FELDMAN

## SB 955 seeks to eliminate due process rights

CTA is battling to defeat an opposed bill that could gain a second life because of a legislative maneuver but remains stalled in the Senate. SB 955, by Sen. Bob Huff (R-Diamond Bar), which seeks to create an unfair system that takes away due process rights from teachers, should have gone to the Senate Labor Commit-

tee — but instead, Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) has routed the bill to the Senate Rules Committee to keep it alive. In the ordinary course of business, SB 955 would have headed to the Senate Labor Committee where it would have received a fair hearing. More than 1,600 CTA members have already contacted

their legislators urging them to kill this harmful bill.

SB 955 represents an ongoing effort by anti-teacher forces to simply blame teachers for the ills of public schools, without acknowledging years of chronic underfunding resulting in larger class sizes, fewer teachers, nurses, counselors and education support pro-

fessionals, and the elimination of vital programs that keep students engaged in school.

In his State of the State speech in January, under the guise of responding to the state's fiscal crisis, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger resuscitated his attack on teacher rights as a diversion from the pressing issue of funding our public schools. In April, the governor recruited Sen. Huff to carry his anti-teacher agenda, and Sen. Huff quickly enticed Sen. Gloria Romero (D-Los Angeles) — a candidate for superintendent of public instruction — to back his bill.

With the help of the governor, SB 955 narrowly cleared the Senate Education Committee with votes from Sens. Huff, Romero, Abel Maldonado, Mark Wyland and Elaine Alquist.

LEN FELDMAN

### Reasons to stop SB 955

- SB 955 is an outright attack on teachers and ignores real problems facing our schools. It's outrageous that some lawmakers are scapegoating teachers during these tough economic times and robbing them of due process rights, while at the same time — because of \$17 billion in budget cuts the last two years — neighborhood schools are eliminating entire programs and teaching positions, and in some cases closing doors for good.
- SB 955 won't save the state one dime or do anything to improve student learning. Instead of blaming teachers, the governor and lawmakers should be working with educators to support public schools and provide all students with a quality education.
- We need to attract and retain the best candidates in teaching. SB 955 will discourage college graduates from going into the teaching profession because it creates an unfair system with no due process rights. The bill also opens the door to arbitrary and discriminatory treatment of teachers.
- SB 955 is unnecessary. There is already a process to remove ineffective teachers. During their first two years of employment, teachers can be fired for any reason. In their third year, teachers have a right to a hearing before being laid off. This process allows districts to consider student needs when making layoff decisions.
- California's parents and teachers want the governor and the Legislature to focus on solving real problems — like soaring class sizes, inadequate resources, and the elimination of music, art, and vocational education programs — to ensure our children have a real chance at a brighter future.

*Call Sen. Steinberg at (916) 651-4006 and tell him to stop blaming teachers and start finding real solutions to fund our schools and students. For updated information about SB 955, visit [www.cta.org](http://www.cta.org).*



# Attacks on defined-benefit retirement plans increasing

A hot topic of discussion of late, public pension systems have been under intense scrutiny and unwarranted attack by legislators and candidates alike. Much of the talk has been centered around the sustainability of defined-benefit retirement pensions, such as CalPERS and CalSTRS.

Steve Poizner and Meg Whitman — both running for governor of California — are becoming increasingly vocal in their opposition to defined-benefit plans, arguing a need to switch public employees from their current defined-benefit retirement plans to 401(k)-type defined-contribution plans. The candidates claim that the switch to 401(k) systems would be more cost-effective for the state. But in actuality, the reverse is true. To deliver the same level of retirement benefits to an individual — a decent, livable wage — a defined-benefit

plan saves almost half the cost of a defined-contribution plan (*see sidebar*).

Historically, defined-benefit plans are much more efficient, secure and predictable vehicles of retirement than 401(k) contribution plans. Defined-benefit systems are able to pool resources to maximize investment returns, while defined-contribution plans leave individuals burdened with administrative fees and many hidden costs. Research shows that many individuals struggle with the task of managing money through a 401(k), either drawing down funds too quickly and running out of money, or holding on to funds too tightly and enjoying a lower standard of living as a result.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger recently took sides in the debate through the actions of his economic adviser, David Crane, who commissioned a study conducted by students

at Stanford University that calls for a switch of public employee pensions from a defined-benefit plan to a 401(k) plan. The study throws away decades of investment and accounting practices, and concludes that the rate of return assumptions for California's pension systems should be close to 4 percent — almost half of their current levels, which have been achieved over time, despite the economic downturn.

The real purpose of the study is to create an alarmist perspective that running a defined-benefit plan is simply too costly and must be eliminated in favor of a defined-contribution plan. The governor should be seeking ways to ensure that all Californians have a secure retirement.

Instead of commissioning students to study eliminating retirement benefits, they should instead study what the cost will be to provide for the hundreds of thousands of seniors with a 401(k) who may soon be facing the unfortunate predicament of lacking the resources to retire.

On the legislative front, a Senate committee met in May to discuss SB 919 (Hollingsworth), which was recently introduced as a measure sponsored by the governor. The bill seeks to create a two-tier retirement system for public employees who utilize CalPERS by significantly reducing the current benefit structure for new employees. It would require school employees to work an additional 10 years to age 65 in order to receive the standard 2 percent formula.

These tactics create a divisive atmosphere and penalize individuals for deciding to enter into a public service career.

Public employees have been working diligently with their local government counterparts to find ways of cutting costs, which have resulted in salary cuts, furlough days and a multitude of other creative cost savings. SB 919 would bypass

## Example of CalSTRS retiree payout:

Retiree age:  
**60**

Final average salary:  
**\$50,000**

Years of service:  
**24**

Monthly retirement benefit:  
**\$2,000**  
(\$24,000 per year,  
replacing 48 percent  
of final average salary)

## Defined-benefit plans are more cost-effective

The cost of a defined-benefit plan is 46 percent lower than a defined-contribution plan that provides the same level of retirement benefits.

Longevity risk pooling  
**saves 15%**

Maintenance of balanced  
portfolio diversification  
**saves 5%**

Superior investment returns  
**saves 26%**

Source: "A Better Bang for the Buck: The Economic Efficiency of Defined-benefit Pension Plans" by Beth Almeida and William B. Fornia, FSA — 2008.

the local government process in favor of perceived short-term gain that is not actuarially proven.

The issue of securing an adequate retirement for educators will be an ongoing discussion as politicians seek new ways to cut state costs at the expense of its workers. CTA is diligently working on behalf of educators — along with a broad coalition of labor organizations including teachers, nurses, firefighters, police, correctional officers and state workers — to protect the secure and fair retirement of public employees.

JENNIFER BAKER, DAVE EARL CARPENTER

# Months after quake, Calexico schools still closed

Most CTA members probably know about the magnitude 7.2 earthquake centered across the U.S.-Mexico border not far from the Imperial County town of Calexico on Sunday afternoon, April 4. In fact, if you live anywhere in Southern California, you probably felt it to some degree. But what you may not know is that the damage prevented the district's nearly 10,000 students and about 450 members of Associated Calexico Teachers (ACT) from returning to class for almost six weeks — and left many unable to retrieve schoolbooks, supplies and personal items contaminated by asbestos fibers.

"The earthquake and its aftermath certainly made all our lives more difficult these last few weeks," says ACT President Carmen Durazo, "but damage to buildings and materials is inconsequential compared to the countless injuries and potential loss of life that could very well have occurred had the earthquake happened on a school day. We are thankful not only for that, but also for the opportunities the disaster has given our community to display unity and collaboration in recovering from the damage and disruption."

Initial earthquake damage included concrete soffits falling from the underside of veranda covers at numerous building sites; damage to electrical wiring and ceilings; leaking gas lines at some sites, and mildew and asbestos contamination from broken water fixtures; and shaken ceiling tiles. Continuing aftershocks and subsequent high winds in the days and weeks following the April 4 quake created safety hazards too severe for classes to continue until repairs could be made.

"ACT members couldn't get to their classrooms or teach their lessons as usual," says Durazo, "but that didn't keep us from working in a variety of ways to help our students and our community cope with the effects of the earthquake, including doing our best to help the students keep from getting too far behind due to the missed instruction."

Because the earthquake damaged the school district's communications system, ACT Secretary Manuela Fuentes activated the chapter's e-mail and phone tree system to keep members informed. Members assisted in set-

ting up temporary shelter for food stations for displaced families, and ACT-member school counselors and psychologists provided invaluable service to fearful students and their families.

ACT members quickly began using their Snap Book grade book software to communicate with students about opportunities for volunteer tutoring sessions and homework assignments to keep students active. After it became evident that the break was going to extend into weeks, ACT members and district personnel put together homework lessons packets picked up by 6,314 of the district's 9,332 students — none of whom had taken their California Standards Tests prior to the quake.

## Filling the void

When the earthquake kept ACT member Juan Orduña and his AP calculus students away from their Calexico High School classroom with potential time on their hands, the 32-year teaching veteran quickly filled the void.

Communicating with his students via phone and the Web, he made sure they had their assignments and homework requirements. After realizing that the disruption could last several weeks, he offered tutoring lessons in the community's library at a variety of times to better accommodate the students' schedules.

"Because many of the students had to stay home to babysit with their younger siblings who normally would have been in school themselves, it wasn't always possible for them to participate in the tutoring sessions in person," said Orduña, "but those who could not were able to drop off their work and pick up new assignments."

"I also took advantage of the opportunity to take my many years' worth of hand written assignments and notes and enter them digitally as computer files, updating and incorporating them into current software," said Orduña. "My students and I all worked together



CTA photos by Bill Guy

**ABOVE:** Members of Associated Calexico Teachers beneath earthquake damaged overhang: (from left) Secretary Manuela Fuentes, ACT Negotiations Chair Enrique Cervantez, ACT member Tino Castro, ACT member Norma Ortiz, ACT Secretary Sandra Gustafson, and ACT President Carmen Durazo.



to bring as much good out of the bad situation as we could."

## Need for disaster preparedness

"One thing the earthquake taught us that we'd like to share with our fellow CTA members throughout California — since most if not all live in an earthquake zone — is that they need to make sure that their district's emergency plan doesn't have fissures itself," says ACT negotiations chair Enrique Cervantez.

ACT members participating in a May 11 meeting conceded that prior to the earthquake they had not been diligent enough about making sure that the district had an up-to-date emergency plan and that it was following through with preparations and provisions.

"In this instance, it resulted only in some initial irrational responses to the quake that probably caused unnecessary delay and disruption," says Cervantez, "but had this been a true emergency involving injury or death, the consequences could have been horrendous."

Ten of the 12 Calexico schools affected by

*Continued on page 37*



# Q&A: Tom Torlakson

**CALIFORNIA EDUCATOR:** Why are you the best candidate for state superintendent of public instruction?

**TOM TORLAKSON:** I am running for state superintendent of public instruction to fight for our kids. I'm a second-generation teacher who wants to continue to apply my experience as a science teacher and high school coach to restore our public schools, and the funding they receive, to the top ranks in the nation.

**What do you think is the greatest challenge facing California schools?**

Our failure to properly fund and invest in our schools. It is a disgrace that California ranks 47th in the nation in per-pupil spending. I have opposed the recent rounds of education funding cuts because I know they will impact today's students for a lifetime. There must be no more cuts to public education.

**What should we be doing in California to bring our schools up to the national average in funding?**

Getting to the national average in the next four or five years is a good start, but it should not be our final goal. I will fight to bring California back into the ranks of the top five states. Proposition 98 is supposed to be the floor, not the ceiling, for education funding. We must expand and strengthen the Proposition 98 guarantees, including earlier payback of the billions taken from schools during bad budget years. I also want to close corporate tax loopholes and work to develop ways to bring new revenue into state and local education budgets. We need majority-vote state budgets, majority-vote approval of school parcel taxes, and we must increase revenues to invest in our public schools.

**What do you think the role of charter schools should be in California? Do you think they should be held to the same standards as public schools?**

Charter schools can serve an important role in our educational system, and responsible ones can encourage innovative instruction. Unfortunately, the charter schools movement has fought efforts to hold them accountable in the same way public schools are held accountable. That's unacceptable. I have supported and authored legislation to improve charter school accountability and transparency. I will continue to do so.

**What is the role of community colleges in California?**

I know from experience — having attended and now teaching at a community college — how important community college access is to many students. We need to oppose fee increases and make sure our community colleges have the funding required to serve every

eligible California student.

**So many focus on what California schools are doing wrong. What are we doing right?**

As I have traveled around the state visiting schools, I have been heartened by the successes I have seen continue despite the horrible education funding cuts. I see teachers and the classified school services team doing valiant work against all odds. While class sizes are rising, while we rank at or near the bottom of the nation in terms of the number of counselors, librarians, and teachers available per student, while budgets are getting slashed — test scores are rising. Teachers are guiding students to success despite all of the great hurdles put in front of them. I see caring and excellent professional work in progress at every school I visit.

DINA MARTIN

*To read our extended interview with Tom Torlakson, please visit us online at [www.cta.org/Torlakson](http://www.cta.org/Torlakson).*

VOTER GUIDE

## CTA'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE JUNE 8 PRIMARY



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SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION  
**Tom Torlakson**

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BOARD OF EQUALIZATION #2  
**Chris Parker**

BOARD OF EQUALIZATION #4  
**Jerome Horton**

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- Reduces voter choice and is backed by Gov. Schwarzenegger and his corporate supporters that want to elect candidates who won't stand up to them or fight for education funding and positive changes in our schools.

# Education Support Professionals Conference

Nearly four years after several thousand education support professionals in the state merged with the California Teachers Association to become CTA ESP, these members are finding they have an even stronger voice in the state's largest professional organization — so much so that “We are One: One Voice, One Union” was the theme of CTA's ESP Conference, which drew paraprofessionals, school secretaries, custodians, maintenance workers, bus drivers and other classified staff from throughout the state.

More than 100 ESP turned out for the conference at the Westin Hotel in Millbrae on May 15 to take part in trainings in topics such as building a strong leadership team, reaching out to the community, navigating through the grievance process, and strategically using social media.

“It's wonderful to be part of such a strong organization and have the same

voice,” said Doreen McGuire-Grigg, conference chair and president of the Lakeport Unified Classified Employees Association.

The conference was held the weekend that kicked off Education Support Professionals Week, leading to CTA ESP Day on May 18. This year, education support professionals were part of CTA's TV ad honoring educators throughout the state. CTA's ESP members

were also the focus of a poster created to recognize their work.

“I look forward to more of these conferences, learning more and taking it back to our members,” said Jacqueline Lee of the Association of Classified Employees of Culver City. “It's important to take back this information to those who can't attend.”

Vickie Stegemann, a member of the Redlands ESP Association (RESPA) and manager of the school cafeteria, said that after 14 years of being on the job, she is ready to step up and become more active in the union.

“It's not about one person, it's for all of the children,” she said.

## ESP of the Year awarded

Conference-goers recognized Duval “Sam” Phillips, who was presented with the CTA ESP of the Year award by CTA President David A. Sanchez and Michael Downey, the award committee chair.

A utility maintenance employee in Potter Valley Community Unified School District, Phillips is also president of the Potter Valley Classified Employees Association.

“During these tough economic times, Sam stands firm in his belief that all members are important in the education of all



CTA photo by Dina Martin

## CTA ESP of the Year

Duval “Sam” Phillips (left) was presented with the CTA ESP of the Year award by CTA President David A. Sanchez and Michael Downey, the award committee chair.

students in Potter Valley, and has successfully recruited new members to the association by explaining to them the benefits of membership,” said Sanchez in his remarks.

Phillips is trained as a special education adviser/liaison for the students and parents in Mendocino County and has served in this advocacy role for over a decade. Phillips also served on the NEA Anti-Bullying Work Group, and has worked extensively with the Native American tribal community in Potter Valley. He also works with other tribal leaders and Northern California educators to encourage Native American students to enroll in college, and has been taking students to College Motivation Days at Mendocino Community College and Humboldt State University.

## Many ESP layoffs

Although the atmosphere of the conference was upbeat and positive, ESP members also had stories to share about how the state's budget cuts are affecting students in their schools and affecting them personally as well.

“I've lost one-fifth of my take-home pay due to budget cuts, while I'm watching my own kids struggle more and more because there is no one there to help,” said

*Continued on page 36*

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

	BILL #		STATUS
<b>SECOND-GRADE TESTING</b> Hancock	<b>SB 800</b>	Would eliminate second-grade tests in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program effective July 1, 2010.	Dead
<b>UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE</b> Leno	<b>SB 810</b>	Would establish a single-payer health insurance system in California. <i>(Co-sponsored bill)</i>	Assembly Desk
<b>IMMIGRATION INVESTIGATIONS</b> Mendoza	<b>AB 132</b>	Would limit the extent to which immigration raids disrupt students' education.	Vetoed by governor
<b>CONSEQUENCES OF DROPPING OUT</b> Block	<b>AB 374</b>	Would encourage schools to provide at-risk students with a "consequences of dropping out" notice developed by the CDE. <i>(Co-sponsored bill)</i>	Vetoed by governor
<b>50% LAW COMPLIANCE</b> Torlakson	<b>AB 581</b>	Would require annual random audits to ensure district compliance with existing law that requires 50 percent of community college funding to be spent on instructors' salaries.	Dead
<b>75/25 FACULTY RATIO COMPLIANCE</b> Hill	<b>AB 1095</b>	Would ensure full compliance with law that mandates 75 percent of instruction be performed by full-time faculty in California Community Colleges within three years of passage.	Dead
<b>PART-TIME FACULTY RE-EMPLOYMENT</b> Fong	<b>AB 1807</b>	Would require a community college district to place part-time faculty members on a re-employment preference list with specified rights of first refusal. <i>(Co-sponsored bill)</i>	Assembly Appropriations
<b>RETIREE HEALTH BENEFITS</b> Buchanan	<b>AB 1814</b>	Would provide that the Fair Employment and Housing Act does not prohibit an employer from reducing health benefits when a retiree becomes eligible for Medicare. <i>(Co-sponsored bill)</i>	Senate Rules
<b>PART-TIME FACULTY HEALTH INSURANCE</b> Mendoza	<b>AB 1892</b>	Would provide full state funding for the Part-Time Community College Faculty Health Insurance Program.	Dead (failed to clear policy committee by April 23)
<b>CHARTER SCHOOLS</b> Swanson	<b>AB 2320</b>	Would increase the role of teachers in the design, operation and governance of charter schools, and allow only school boards to authorize non-statewide charters.	Assembly Appropriations

Photo by Glen Korengold

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The University of Values

## ESP

Continued from page 35

Sherry Furtado, a member of RESPA.

President Sanchez noted the toll that layoffs have taken, with thousands of support staff having lost their jobs already.

"When you cut the jobs of ESP, you cut the quality of our schools and communities," he said, pointing out that 77 percent of support professionals live in the school districts where they work. "By living, working and volunteering in our local communities, you enrich our communities and our neighborhood schools. You are paying taxes in our communities, supporting businesses in our communities, and voting in our communities. Your contributions go far beyond the school

boundaries."

Ultimately, the solution to California's budget woes is political, said Sanchez.

"Every phone call, every letter, every e-mail we send to our legislators makes a difference. Every protest and rally we stage or attend makes a difference. Every conversation we have with our neighbors makes a difference. And every vote we cast on behalf of public education makes a difference. We're one big union, but we are only strong if we act."

DINA MARTIN

Visit [www.cta.org/About-CTA/News-Room/Media-Center/Media-Center](http://www.cta.org/About-CTA/News-Room/Media-Center/Media-Center) to see a video of CTA President David A. Sanchez talking about CTA's appreciation for education support professionals.

# Librarians

Continued from page 23

how to do this.”

People might assume that once students go to college they no longer need a school librarian, but nothing could be further from the truth, says Jeff Rosen, a librarian at San Francisco State University who is vice president of the school's California Faculty Association chapter.



**ABOVE:** Library media teacher Cathy Collins helps Jeremie Sanem and Julia Gass find resources online.

“The information world students encounter today is infinitely more complex than when you and I were in college,” he explains. “It’s a different world. Administrators like to think that because everything is online, students don’t need librarians anymore. But it is exactly the opposite; with everything online it can be a very complex process to find it. Students need a

shoulder to lean on working through the maze, and our job is more important than ever.”

Colleges have been cutting back on librarians nonetheless. At Rosen’s campus five librarians retired and were not replaced, resulting in 20 to 25 percent fewer librarians in campus libraries.

Academic libraries are caught in a paradigm shift, says Rosen. The information world is shifting from print to electronic, and users want information at their fingertips electronically — as well as in the print format they are accustomed to.

As community colleges and CSU campuses have cut back on remedial classes, the need for librarians has increased, he adds. Students arrive with lower reading and research skills than students in years

past, and sometimes need assistance and one-on-one help from librarians to pass their classes.

“The role of the school librarian is changing, but it is more important than ever,” says Rosen. “They are very much needed in the K-12 world and the world of higher education, and will remain so in the foreseeable future.”

SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

# Calexico

Continued from page 33

the earthquake reopened for class on Wednesday, May 5, and the remaining two more severely damaged schools were back in session by May 13. The school year was originally supposed to conclude on June 8, but the district has initiated the process of requesting attendance allowance from the Cal-

ifornia Department of Education for the missed instruction days.

BILL GUY

*View our expanded web-exclusive story online at [www.cta.org/Professional-Development/Publications/Educator-May-10/Calexico-Web-Exclusive.aspx](http://www.cta.org/Professional-Development/Publications/Educator-May-10/Calexico-Web-Exclusive.aspx) to read more about ACT members discussing the need for better disaster preparedness measures.*



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# Chávez

Continued from page 24

Teachers Association, Region 2.

In the written essay category, the winners are: Grades 3-4: **ELLA GUNADY**, student of Johnna Laird, Fremont Unified District Teachers Association, Region 1; **JEFFREY HERNANDEZ**, student of Eloisa Arellano, Fresno Teachers Association, Region 2; **DANIELA HERNANDEZ**, student of Eloisa Arellano, Fresno Teachers Association, Region 2; **JOSÉ LARA**, student of Leticia Yñiguez-Gómez, United Teachers of Los Angeles, Region 3; **ALIANA PARNELL**, student of Laurel Cornelson, Moreno Valley Educators Association, Region 4; **YESSICA MOX**, student of Joseph Amador, Alvord Educators Association, Region 4.

Grades 5-6: **PEDRO VELAZQUEZ**, student of Kathleen White, San Jose Teachers Association, Region 1; **JASMINE LOPEZ**, student of Kathleen White, San Jose Teachers Association, Region 1; **JESSIKA GUIZAR**, student of Karen Klein, Ceres Unified Teachers Association, Region 2; **DENISE WARD**, student of Karen Klein, Ceres Unified Teachers Association, Region 2; **RACHEL KIM**, student of Rob Matlock, Solana Beach Teachers Association, Region 4; **DOMINIQUE ARANDA**, student of Linda Lopez Corley, Santa Maria Elementary Education Association, Region 3.

Grades 7-8: **REBEKAH BILEK**, student of Suzanne Dutra, Templeton Teachers Association, Region 3; **ASHLEY ORTEGA**, student of Suzanne Dutra, Templeton Teachers Association, Region 3; **RACHEL MUNZAR**, student of Susan Ze, Livermore Education Association, Region 1; **GABRIELA CHAN**, student of Susan Ze, Livermore Education Association, Region 1.

Grades 9-12: **JOANNE BELLE IBAÑEZ CHUA**, student of Arthur Eddy, Baldwin Park Education Association, Region 3; **ALLISON ROSILES**, student of Robert Davila Jr., Associated Calxico Teachers, Region 4; **PARAMPREET SINGH**, student of Vanessa Jara, Lodi Education Association, Region 2; **ALISON LENCI**, **SARAH PLATT** and **LAUREN VARGAS**, students of Joyce Wong, Fremont Unified District Teachers Association, Region 1; **JOSHUE LEYVA**, student of John Mesicek, Palm Springs Teachers' Association, Region 4; **ERIC GOMEZ**, student of Jeanne Brostrom, Baldwin Park Education Association, Region 3; **YAHAIRA MONDRAGON**, student of Janet Creech, Sequoia District Teachers Association, Region 1; **LINDSAY GLASS**, student of Gary Blenner, San Juan Teachers Association, Region 2.

Higher Education: **DANIEL BAÑUELOS**, student of Mary Ann Pacheco, Rio Hondo College Faculty Association, Region 3.

# CTA Scholarships

Continued from page 25

**FORBES**, daughter of Carol Forbes, Simi Educators Association; and **ELLEN NULPH**, daughter of Denise Nulph, Turlock Teachers Association.

The recipients of the 2010 L. Gordon Bittle Memorial Scholarship for Student CTA (\$3,000) are: **MICHELLE SEWELL**, Sonoma State University; **KRISTY WALLACH**, California State University, Fullerton; **COURTNEY WOODS-ZIANI**, San Diego State University; and **KELSEY LEACHMAN**, California State University, Sacramento.

The recipients of the 2010 CTA Scholarship for Members (\$3,000) are: **LARA SHAFFER**, Hart District Teachers Association; **JULIE WILLIS**, United Teachers of Richmond; **BRIAN OLKOWSKI**, San Ramon Valley Education Association; **ALICIA WEYENETH**, Compton Education Association; **SABRINA WOODS**, San Diego Education Association; **BONNIE STOGNER**, Manteca Educators Association; and **NELDA CHRISTIE**, Teachers Association of Norwalk-La Mirada.

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