

California EDUCATOR

California Teachers Association May 2011 Volume 15 Issue 8

State of Emergency

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How to reach gifted students **Page 18**

Tips for retirement planning **Page 29**



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MAY 2011

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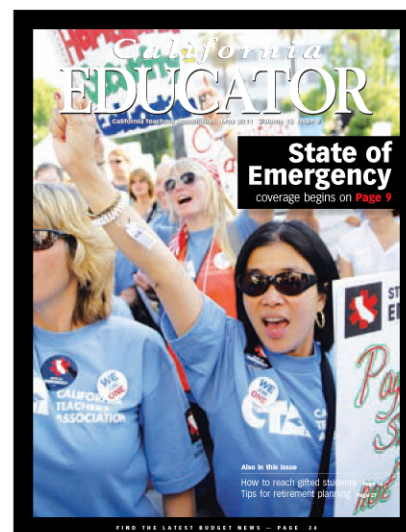
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¡Sí Se Puede! ¿Por Qué No?

BY CTA PRESIDENT DAVID A. SANCHEZ

Sometimes when you take a stand it means standing your ground. I revisited this lesson during CTA's State of Emergency week of action. First, let me say "Thank you" to those of you who planned events and took to the streets in your communities to let your friends and neighbors know how state budget cuts have been negatively impacting your students. At the end of a busy school year, you rallied together with parents and other education, community and labor partners to raise awareness about the need for lawmakers to approve temporary tax extensions and prevent further cuts to schools, colleges and essential public services.

And your efforts didn't go unnoticed. More than 1,200 articles ran in newspapers throughout California. Reports of our collective action played in millions of homes every day as part of TV news coverage — including a package on the CBS nightly news with Katie Couric. The State of Emergency website informed more than 10,000 visitors of what was happening. And thousands of Facebook and Twitter followers were active throughout the week. We changed the conversation that week, making sure that the impact of state budget cuts to schools, colleges and our communities was front and center in people's minds.

As many of you were engaging in local activities, a group of nearly 500 CTA member volunteers made their way to Sacramento to participate in a week of action at the state Capitol designed to keep our concerns on the minds of our lawmakers. The "Capitol Insiders," as they came to be known, took over the statehouse. I was honored to be part of this group. We held press conferences, teach-ins and grade-ins; we met with legislators and testified before the Senate Education Committee, killing three destructive bills; we took our message to the streets with leafleting; we rallied in the rotunda and held daily sit-ins in the Capitol; and we placed 400 empty chairs at the base of the Capitol steps, each one representing 100 educators who have been laid off in the past three years.

In an act of civil disobedience, some educators and students refused to abandon their demands for temporary tax extensions and stayed beyond the Capitol's official closing time on Monday and on Thursday. I was part of the group that refused to leave on Thursday.

Earlier that day, Republican leaders had released a budget proposal, claiming it protected funding for public education. It was an insulting proposal because it was crafted using the same budget gimmicks that got our state into the financial mess it is in. In addition, it gutted the funding for the Quality Education Investment Act — the very program that is proven to help at-risk schools improve student achievement. This wasn't protecting public education.

So I went to see Senate Republican leader Bob Dutton and Assembly Republican leader Connie Conway that evening to let them know this proposal wasn't good enough for the students of California. And when the time came for the Capitol to close for the evening and I was asked to leave, I decided to stand my ground. It was a very personal and emotional moment for me. I wasn't quite sure what would happen, but I felt strongly that the time had come to take bolder action. I was not alone when I refused to leave Dutton's office — 13 educators stood with me, and 14 others stood their ground outside of Conway's office. Each of us was arrested and led out in a peaceful protest. We spent that night in a Sacramento jail. I found myself thinking about my students and what would happen to them if we didn't do all we could to make a change in their future. I hoped that my action, as well as all of our local advocacy efforts, would be enough to awaken lawmakers and compel them to put California students and our state's future before selfish partisan politics.

In the weeks following our week of action, we've seen increased support for passing the tax extensions throughout the state, but we've yet to see legislators take a vote on them. That means our work isn't over. We need two additional Republican votes in the Senate and two votes in the Assembly to pass the extensions and keep deeper cuts away from schools and colleges. Please join me in keeping the pressure on California legislators to do the right thing, finish their jobs, and pass the tax extensions our state so desperately needs.

They owe it to our students and the future of our state.

David A. Sanchez

California EDUCATOR

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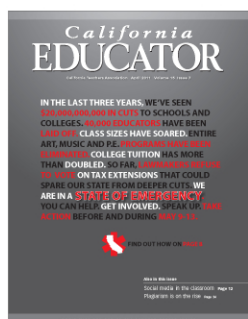
LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

While I read through [the April *Educator's*] articles highlighting all the terrible cuts to education and the harm that these cuts will have on students, I know that the solution will not be found in furloughs, pink slips or increasing class size. We need to look to our leaders. Some superintendents across the nation are doing the right thing and giving raises back to our struggling schools. I only wish every leader had such strength of character.

I am appalled that teachers and unions are made out to be the problem in documentary-like films. The public seems unaware that school boards are in charge of raises for district leaders, and some are taking those raises while teachers are having their pay cut due to furloughs. We need to spend smarter and start our cuts from the top, not the bottom.



Gina Berry
San Juan Teachers Association

Dear Editor,

In the April issue of *California Educator*, the cover declared a "State of Emergency" and described the cuts in budget, teachers, and programs to our schools across the state. One area not being mentioned is the business and computer teachers. A few years ago, teaching jobs in this area were plentiful, and high schools were building up their career technical education programs. Now these are often the first teachers on the cut list. In the U.S., business administration is a popular college major, yet we are sending students to college ill-prepared for these courses as we continue to cut

accounting, marketing, finance and computer applications from our course schedules. A lot of what we teach used to be considered "secretarial" classes, but these are still relevant classes today and lead our students directly to jobs. Next time you pass the school's office, ask the secretary how she feels about the business/computer classes getting cut from the schedule. You know as well as I that the school can't run without her.

Karen Parks
Twin Rivers United Educators

Editor's note: You may enjoy the story on page 11 about how computer lab teacher Alice Mercer uses social media to advocate for education funding.

Dear Editor,

This year I am among many teacher librarians who have had their positions eliminated, with or without tax extensions. Yet the "State of Emergency" promotional campaign highlighted in [the April] *California Educator* magazine makes no reference to library programs being cut, nor teacher librarians being eliminated. I find this disregard of teacher librarians and school library programs reprehensible.

Judith Ehret-Straesser
Santa Rosa Teachers Association

Editor's note: Our May 2010 issue had a story about the negative impact on learning when school librarian positions are cut. The March

2011 issue discusses how budget cuts can cause school libraries to shut their doors. We didn't intentionally exclude anyone in the last issue. Unfortunately, there were just too many painful cuts to mention everything.

Dear Editor,

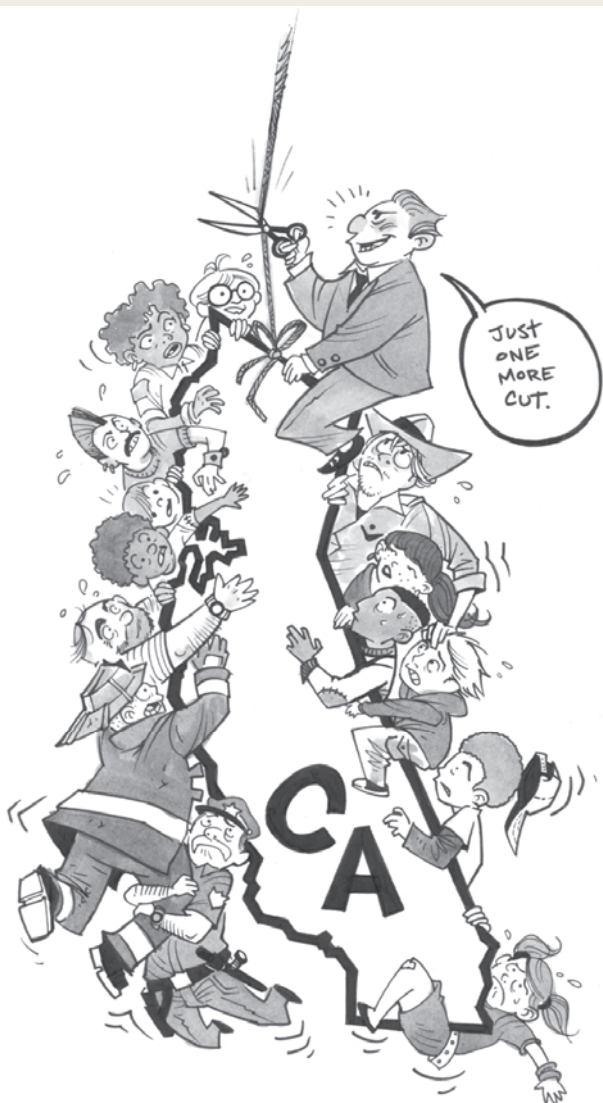
I was more appalled at [Justin] Knight's letter [April *California Educator*] than he must have been by the [March] cover story. With all the cuts that school districts are experiencing because of loss of student enrollment, among other unfortunate realities that we are having to contend with, I am frankly puzzled that some of our members still do not appreciate the very simple (almost simplistic) fact that there is no us/union without our students, the people about whom we dare to write occasional cover stories. We are fighting as a union, from our local chapters all the way to the national (NEA) level, to keep our students in our public schools for a more equitable and

well-rounded educational and human experience. We are there for them as they are there for us. It is up to us to acknowledge them, their parents/guardians and their caregivers as our partners, not our enemies. They are not the enemy. It is time for us to wake up and see the ever-shrinking enrollment numbers in our still mostly unionized public schools. It is

not the end of the world to have pictures of our collective special interest on the cover of our CTA union magazine once in a while. Again, there will be no CTA or NEA without them.

Faith O. Mowoe
Rialto Education Association





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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calendar

jun 2011 <input type="checkbox"/> June 3-5 <input type="checkbox"/> June 30-July 5	CTA State Council of Education, Los Angeles NEA Representative Assembly, Chicago
jul 2011 <input type="checkbox"/> July 18-22 <input type="checkbox"/> July 31-Aug. 5	Presidents Conference, Asilomar Summer Institute, UCLA (see page 26)
sep 2011 <input type="checkbox"/> Sept. 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Sept. 29-Oct. 2	International Day of Peace in Education Region II Leadership Conference, Reno
oct 2011 <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 7-9 <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 14-16 <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 21-23 <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 28-30	CCA Fall Bargaining/Leadership Conference Region I Leadership Conference, Asilomar CTA State Council of Education, Los Angeles GLBT Conference, Palm Springs
nov 2011 <input type="checkbox"/> Nov. 13-19	American Education Week

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STATE OF EMERGENCY



“Enough is enough!”

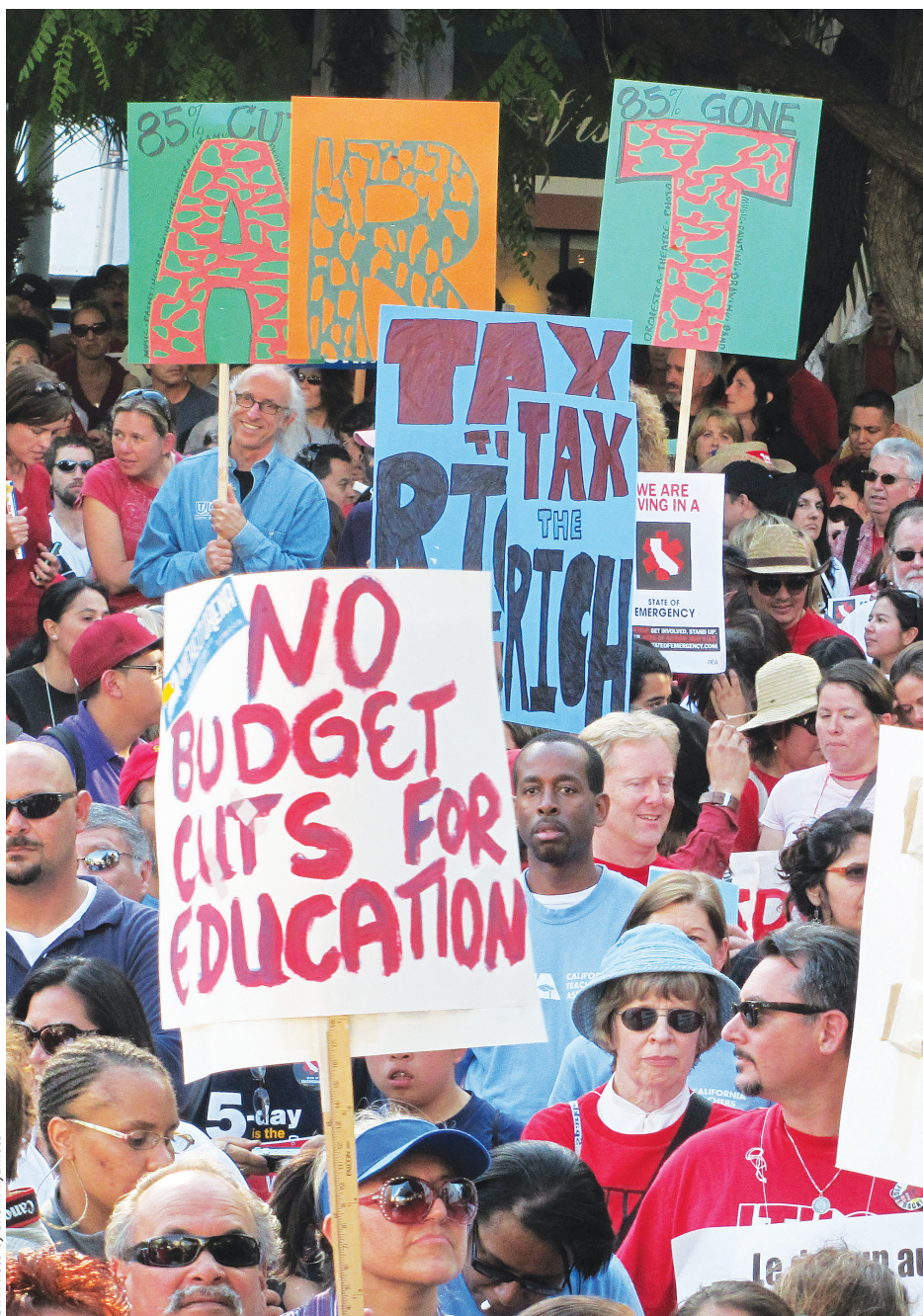
This message about cuts decimating public education from preschool to college was delivered loudly to legislators during CTA's State of Emergency week of action May 9-13. Thousands of educators, parents, students and community members throughout California staged a myriad of activities ranging from a teach-in for tax fairness in Escondido to a grade-in at a local mall in Newark to setting up empty chairs representing pink-slipped teachers outside of schools in the San Mateo-Foster City School District. There were local rallies, press conferences and funeral marches mourning the “death” of public education, whose funding has been slashed by more than \$20 billion over the past three years. And there were acts of civil disobedience at the state Capitol.

This week was about coming to life. Taking action to remind the state that education deserves support. That funding schools is essential to building the future. Let's keep up the good fight. >>



Loud and clear

Californians raise their voices for school funding



CTA Photo by Sheri Miyamoto

Californians have been waiting since February for lawmakers to pass Gov. Brown's balanced and responsible budget proposal. Since then, lawmakers have made \$12.5 billion in cuts, but refused to counter that with \$12.5 in revenue extensions, forcing schools and colleges to plan for the worst. More than 20,000 layoff notices were issued to teachers by March 15 while legislators still couldn't reach an agreement. Educators said "Enough is enough" and declared a State of Emergency. A week of action was planned for May 9-13.

Nearly 500 CTA member volunteers converged on Sacramento. The week kicked off with a march to the Capitol with community and faith groups. Later, activities escalated, spurred on by the release of the Republican leaders' budget proposal.

In response to the Republican plan, which was full of budgeting tricks and would eliminate funding for the successful Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) program, CTA members protested outside the offices of Senate Republican leader Bob Dutton and Assembly Republican leader Connie Conway. When the Capitol closed and educators were asked to leave, 28 made the personal decision to stay behind. Among them was CTA President David A. Sanchez, who explained: "I am not willing to sit idle while a handful of Republican lawmakers in the state Senate and Assembly refuse to face the realities happening in the classrooms and communities across California. Today, I took a stand for the

LEFT: In Los Angeles, more than 6,000 people packed in Pershing Square to rally for education.

Continue to urge lawmakers to pass the temporary tax extensions in order to prevent further cuts to schools and colleges.



Photo by Scott Buschman

millions of California students who are being robbed of their future. I refused to step aside while California's public schools and colleges go without the vital resources they need." Those who stayed were removed peacefully and spent the night in a Sacramento jail.

The following day, Friday, May 13, rallies were held throughout the state. Educators traveled far and wide to gather together and collectively insist that education be a state priority. A broad coalition formed to send this message, including parents and other education, community and labor groups. The tune was slightly different — mariachi bands in Los Angeles, a teachers' rock band in San Francisco, steel drums in San Diego — but when the music stopped, the message was the same: Fund public education.

Here's a look at some of the statewide rallies on Friday the 13th.

Sacramento

CTA President David A. Sanchez received a hero's welcome from the crowd of more than 5,000 people on the South Steps of the state Capitol.

"It's not only been a teachable moment, but we've started a new movement for a better

ABOVE: After Republicans released their plan, 28 educators including CTA President David A. Sanchez made a personal decision to refuse to leave the Capitol at closing time unless Republicans kept tax extensions in place. They spent the night in jail.

California," said Sanchez. "It's going to take us a while to prevail — but we will prevail."

In the Sacramento crowd were family members representing three generations impacted by cuts: Madalyn Gonzales, a business teacher from Edison High School in Stockton who received a pink slip, her daughter Amber Bosch, and her grandchildren Trinity, 5, and Kayden, 1.

"It's not just about me getting laid off," said Gonzales. "I'm worried for Trinity, who will have 40 kids in her first-grade class next year. Kids need their teachers in the classroom. Without teachers, what will happen to kids?"

San Francisco

Looking out from the rally stage at the crowd of about 3,000 Bay Area educators, students and parents, CTA Secretary-Treasurer Gail Mendes spoke from the stage in front of San Francisco City Hall about how the headlines this week were about "waves and waves" of teacher protests across the state. Mendes led the crowd on three solidarity waves, watching the

Action continues online

Alice Mercer, a computer lab teacher at Oak Ridge Elementary in Sacramento, certainly earns the "Social Media Rock Star" award for her dedication to keeping the Twitter hashtag #StateofEmergency presence alive during the week of action. "MizMercer" kept us all updated with her active Twitter feed, regular blog posts, a Flickr photoset, live streaming video and a dedicated YouTube playlist.

One memorable post from Alice was about George Sheridan, a first-grade teacher in the Black Oak Mine School District and one of the "Capitol Insiders" who were arrested during the nonviolent protest outside a Republican senator's office in Sacramento. Alice had done a video interview with Sheridan earlier in the week, asking him why he had decided to join the Capitol protests. Sheridan explained that budget cuts have caused safety issues at his school in the foothills, where he sometimes finds mice and even snakes in his first-grade classroom because the custodian is only able to clean each room every three days. Later in the week, Alice joined the vigil outside the County Jail and talked to Sheridan during a livestream upon his release.

You can watch the videos of Sheridan and read Alice's take on the protests at the State Capitol at mizmercer.edublogs.org.

The growing "netroots" of education activists did an amazing job getting the word out about the State of Emergency our schools are facing. And just think, for many it was as easy as a status update on Facebook! Who knows which of your friends you might influence with yours?

Here's a sample of Twitter posts that chronicled the week of action:



@Mads2007 May 12, 10:32am
WE ARE ONE, fighting for our schools, our kids, our rights, OUR FUTURE!!!!!!
#StateofEmergency



@martinejoelle May 13, 5:24pm
Just drove by #stateofemergency CA teachers protest at San Francisco City Hall. Go teachers!

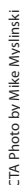
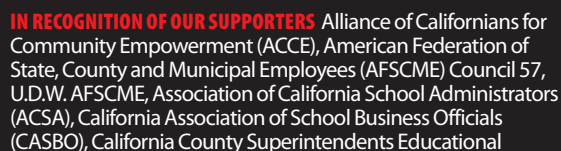


@alicemercer May 16, 1:30pm
Reminder to those thinking new revenue means we don't need extensions, it's \$6B and the current shortfall is \$15B
#stateofemergency

by **Tiffany Hasker**

WWW

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California State PTA President-elect Carol Kocivar urged lawmakers to pass a budget that protects children. "Parents will not be silent as children lose counselors, classroom aides and reading specialists. They will not be silent while arts and music are stripped from our schools!"

In addition, other State of Emergency sponsor speakers from the California State PTA, the Association of School Administrators, the California Federation of Teachers and other Los Angeles area labor organizations made their voices heard. Pat McOsker, president of United Firefighters of Los Angeles City, talked about cuts to public safety, then told the crowd, "People always say firefighters are heroes, but to us, teachers are the real heroes."

BOTTOM: Californians came to the Capitol to support funding for schools.

Services Association (CCSESA), California Faculty Association (CFA), California Federation of Teachers (CFT), California Labor Federation AFL/CIO, California Nurses Association (CNA), California Professional Firefighters (CPF), California School Boards Association (CSBA), California School Employees Association (CSEA), California State PTA, California Teachers Association (CTA), Clergy & Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE), Community College Association (CCA), CTA/NEA Retired, Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, Equal Justice Society, Just Communities, Central Coast, National Education Association (NEA), Operating Engineers Local 3, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) California State Council, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1000, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1021, Student CTA, UC Berkeley Labor Center, University of California Student Association (UCSA)



It was their home turf, and United Teachers Los Angeles had a large showing at the rally. Sixth-grade teacher and UTLA member Jessica van der Valk came because she and her colleagues have felt the impact of budget cuts and layoffs, with class sizes at her school ranging from 28 to 42.

"We do a better job when we really know the child," she said. "But when they lay off a colleague, we can't because of the extra students. We need to extend taxes we're already used to paying anyway; it would make a tremendous difference!"

San Diego

More than 2,500 people from throughout San Diego, Imperial, Orange and Riverside

counties traveled to participate in the huge "Not Business As Usual" State of Emergency rally for public education at San Diego's Embarcadero Marina Park North.

San Diego Education Association President Bill Freeman welcomed participants to San Diego, and CTA Executive Director Carolyn Doggett gave welcoming remarks from the statewide Education Coalition. Rally speakers included California Teacher of the Year Darin Curtis from the Lakeside Teachers Association and Superintendent of the Year Lou Obermeyer of the Valley Center-Pauma Unified School District, both in San Diego County, and representatives from the District 9 Parent Teacher Association, the California School Employees

Continued on page 38

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Kasha Maslowski from Elk Grove rallies outside the state Capitol. Recently pink-slipped teacher Madalyn Gonzales (right) came to Sacramento with her daughter and grandchildren. High school students from Elk Grove joined the rally after school. Parents, teachers, public employees and other citizens gathered in San Bernardino in support of education. In Los Angeles, Pershing Square was full of people who believe in public education.

The people behind the protest

Six educators who rallied

by Sherry Posnick-Goodwin

CTA members made history by taking over the state Capitol during the State of Emergency week. They lobbied, marched, prayed, sang “We Shall Not Be Moved” and “graded” legislators on their ideas for solving the state budget crisis. They became known in the halls for their blue shirts, and legislators got the message that educators will fight for adequate school funding. This was a collective action that saw results, but it was also a collection of individual stories.



Becoming an advocate

KENNETH TANG ventured to Sacramento because his school in San Gabriel is closing.

Students in his class at John Marshall Elementary School are devastated. It will be the third school closed in five years in the Garvey School District. Last year a beloved teacher died just before retiring, and students planted a tree in his memory. Students asked Tang tearfully: *What will happen to that tree when our school closes?*

“When they asked me that, I decided to become an advocate for public education,” said the Garvey Education Association member. “And that meant going to Sacra-

mento for a week.”

Tang marched, lobbied and chanted “We Are One.” He discovered it was more than a slogan when fellow protesters were arrested. Feeling deeply anguished, he prayed for them during a candlelight vigil outside the jail. It ended at midnight, but he stayed awake all night and vowed not to eat until they were released. He rushed back to the jail when he heard they were being let go.

“When [CTA Board Member] Larry Allen walked out of the jail the next morning, I grabbed him and hugged him,” said Tang. “He had tears in his eyes, and I just lost it. To me, the candlelight vigil was as meaningful as if I had been arrested myself.”



Just the beginning

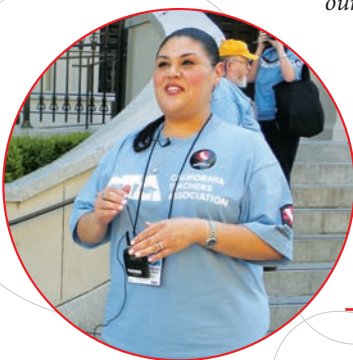
DEWAYNE SHEAFFER simply got tired of waiting.

“We can’t sit around waiting for someone to save us,” said Sheaffer, president of Community College Association’s Long Beach City College chapter. “We need to get active and explain to legislators what’s happening not only to K-12 schools but higher education, which is moving more toward privatization. Pretty soon it will be more like a privilege than a right to go to school.”

Colleges are turning students away, and have pink-slipped so many professors that students can’t get the classes they need to graduate. As head of the counseling department, he has seen counselors dwindle and individual counseling being replaced with “group” sessions, much to the dismay of students with individual needs.

Enough, he said, is enough.

“I wanted to model the behavior I want from my members instead of just telling them about the behavior they should have,” said Sheaffer. “I think that what happened in Sacramento will be the shot heard round the world. But it’s just the beginning.”



Tough decisions

JULIA CERVANTES ESPINOSA wrestled with the decision of whether to come. She had just received her third pink slip and hoped to be rehired once again at Stanford Elementary School. She was worried about leaving students during testing week.

“It was a difficult decision,” admitted the United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) member. “My students are English learners and need me. But I decided my students — and the next generation of students — would be better off if I came to Sacramento.”

She spoke with her parents and then told the youngsters she was leaving to try to get more money for schools. She reminded them to eat

breakfast every morning and begged them to do their best on the test. She sent letters to parents explaining her decision, and most of them supported her for taking a stand.

In Sacramento, Espinosa spoke with her students daily on the phone. “I miss you,” she said. “I’m thinking of you. Study hard!”

All doubts vanished once she arrived. She led marches, including a “Republicans pass the buck” exercise. She was interviewed on TV. She visited legislators in their offices and told them that students weren’t getting the education they deserved. She became empowered.

“I’m ecstatic to be here,” she said. “I can feel so much positive energy. It’s almost like going to church. I know that I’m here for a good reason for the kids.”



STATE OF EMERGENCY

—Across party lines—

JOHN KENNETT proudly calls himself a “conservative evangelical Republican.” But that didn’t stop him from joining his fellow CTA members in Sacramento.

Kennett teaches low-income special education students at Paradise Hills Elementary School just seven miles from the Mexican border. His school’s budget for supplies has been cut 25 percent every year, and is now almost nothing. He pays for his own paper. He enthusiastically joined fellow protesters in lobbying, marching and waving signs at passing cars, wearing his black fedora at all times.

“I don’t agree with all the policies that

CTA stands for, but I love kids, and want to make a difference in their lives,” said Kennett, a member of the San Diego Education Association. “I am disappointed with the political leadership of both parties and want to tell them so. I want to be part of this historic event and tell my grandkids about it.”

He went to the offices of Republican legislators and “talked Republican” with them. He hopes they were listening. “I tried to build some bridges,” he said. “Politicians have to stop trying to stare each other down, waiting for someone to blink first. The rest of the state is going blind.”



—Finding unity—

TERI ROOTS came to Sacramento to represent classified employees hit hard by budget cuts. She is the president of the Ventura Classified Employees Association and a secretary at Buena High School, which has lost classified staff and gained furlough days.

“I’m angry and scared,” said Roots. “I have a granddaughter I’m helping to raise, and I’m scared about

what kind of education she’ll have if we don’t fix things now.”

The phrase “We Are One” has new meaning to her.

“It was such an amazing feeling to be part of an event where all forms of educators unite and see the importance of standing as one in this fight to preserve the right of every student to an excellent public school education,” she said.

“I will never forget the feeling of standing in the state Capitol rotunda and everyone singing together. All you could feel in that room was unity. We are indeed One.”

A retiree’s perspective

PAUL MARKOWITZ came out of retirement to participate in the historic event.

“I’ve gone to Sacramento and participated in various activities before, but nothing like this,” said Markowitz, who taught in the Las Virgenes School District for 34 years and belongs to CTA-Retired.

He is especially angry that legislators are cutting school funding and blaming the problem on teacher pensions. Teachers, he said, are not the problem, they are the solution. For years they contributed to their pensions, and they do not receive Social Security.

“The general understanding is that if you go

into teaching, you won’t make the kind of money you’ll make in other careers, but there’s a livable pension at the end if you stay in the system long enough,” he said. “Without that, who’s going to go into teaching? I’m frightened for the next generation of teachers — if there is a next group of educators coming into the system with the cuts that are happening.”

Markowitz stayed for the week with wife Renee Lancon, a retired UTLA member. They marched around the Capitol at a brisker pace than many younger protesters huffing and puffing to keep up.





The actions throughout California fell into distinct categories: legislative, every parent, appreciation and allies, revenue, and not business as usual (**LEARN**). There were gains in every category throughout the state. Below are some highlights.



'L' is for Legislative

* Fontana and Chaffey teachers association members protested budget cuts at state Sen. Bob Dutton's office in Rancho Cucamonga. They met with Sen. Dutton's regional director to discuss budget cuts.

* On May 11, hundreds of CTA members packed a hearing of the Senate Education Committee and testified one after another against legislation that would have harmed teachers. Ironically, this took place on Day of the Teacher before a resolution was read in that committee to honor educators. The two anti-teacher bills that were introduced were SB 266 by Bob Dutton (R-Rancho Cucamonga), which would have allowed districts to hire laid-off teachers as substitutes at a lower per diem rate; and SB 355 by Bob Huff (R-Diamond Bar), which would allow districts to use teacher evaluations to replace seniority and transfer rights. While the bills are dead for this legislative year, they could be resurrected for 2012. Another bill, SB 871 by Sharon Runner (R-Antelope Valley), that would have mandated "no teacher raises if the school year is shortened" was pulled from the calendar beforehand.



ABOVE: CTA members pack a hearing of the Senate Education Committee in the Capitol and help defeat three bad bills. Members of the Fontana Teachers Association hold lawn chats with signs that say, "Ask me! I'm a teacher!" to engage parents in a discussion about schools.

'E' is for Every Parent

* At Audubon Elementary School in Foster City, there were nine empty chairs lined up in front of the principal's office all during the State of Emergency week as part of an awareness campaign to reach parents. These chairs were a poignant reminder of the nine Audubon school employees who could be gone next year — victims of state budget cuts that are reducing the staffs of thousands of California public schools suffering layoffs. Empty chairs for teachers, administrators and education support professionals who could lose their jobs were also in front of every school in the San Mateo-Foster City School District.

* In Walnut Creek there was a news conference on Main Street in front of City Hall on May 10, with a community coalition of parents, teachers, firefighters and East Bay education leaders. Speakers sounded the alarm about dire state cuts being a Main Street issue.

* Members from the Fullerton Secondary Teachers Organization, Fullerton Elementary Teachers Association, Buena Park Teachers Association, Brea Olinda Teachers Association and La Habra Education Association took part in a "grade-in" Tuesday, May 10, at the Brea Mall to help members of the public better understand the scope of their out-of-class responsibilities and to give them a focal point to discuss the state budget education shortfall with area citizens.



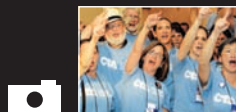
ABOVE: Members of the San Mateo Elementary Teachers Association put empty chairs outside of every school in the district representing staff who will lose their jobs due to budget cuts. Teachers hold a grade-in at the Brea Mall. Attendees at a news conference on Main Street, Walnut Creek.



See our favorite signs
cta.org/soe-signs



View rallies around the state
cta.org/soe-rallies



Meet the 'Capitol Insiders'
cta.org/soe-insiders

A R N

Keys to change

'A' is for Appreciation and Allies

* Carol Kocivar, president-elect of the California State PTA, spoke at a Friday rally in San Francisco May 13. She had the following comments to elected officials in Sacramento: "You don't close the achievement gap by giving our children less and less education. You don't create a skilled work force by eliminating the classes our children need just to get into college."



ABOVE: Carol Kocivar, president-elect of California State PTA, at the huge rally in San Francisco. Tahoe-Truckee Educators Association organizing chair Stephanie Bacon gives a thank-you card to Kevin McKechnie, a local firefighter and union member, for his support of teachers. Corona-Norco Teachers Association members at the Teacher Appreciation Day Members' Fair.

* Members of the **Tahoe-Truckee Educators Association** made and delivered thank-you notes to public employee association allies on May 11, including nurses, police and firefighters. In addition to expressing gratitude, the notes asked allies to contact their local legislators.

* The **Corona-Norco Teachers Association** held a Teacher Appreciation Day Members' Fair on May 11 on Mountain View Avenue in Norco. The event featured booths by approximately 40 area businesses and vendors with information, gifts, prizes and food for local educators. There was also a State of

Emergency booth with information and resources for helping members and the public get involved with efforts to maintain funding for public schools, including a phone bank opportunity.

'R' is for Revenue

* On May 12 in Fremont, a town hall/community forum meeting was held regarding the dire need for more school revenues. The meeting was sponsored by the **Fremont Unified District Teachers Association** (FUDTA) and school district, and held at the district office. Nearly 50 community members turned out for the event held during the State of Emergency week of action.



ABOVE: Dr. Jan Frydendahl of the Fremont Unified District Teachers Association at a town hall meeting in Fremont about the need for more school revenue.

'N' is for NOT Business as Usual

* Chapters from **Kern County** attended a massive Sierra Service Center Day of the Teacher on May 11 at Yokuts Park in Bakersfield with an "Advocacy Row" which included a place for teachers to send letters and make phone calls to legislators on behalf of public education — and also had a mock graveyard to symbolize the death of public education. On May 12 there was a rally mourning the "death" of public education in Bakersfield attended by 100 teachers, sponsored by the **Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association**, staged at the busiest intersection of town.

* More than 100 **Manteca** educators wore red on May 9, and there were 262 red balloons flying high, one for each Manteca educator who had received a pink slip in this crisis. They stood on the street, and horns of cars passing by honked in support.



ABOVE: From left: Manteca Unified school board trustee Don Scholl with Ken Johnson, Manteca Educators Association president, and MEA membership chair Becky Scholl, who is married to Scholl. The Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association held a rally mourning the death of public education.

Defining gifted

It's up to each school district to define what it means to be gifted. Some districts rely on standardized test scores, while others use grade point average, IQ tests, a comprehensive abilities test or a combination of factors.

According to the National Association for Gifted Children, about 6 percent of all schoolchildren are classified as gifted. The *Los Angeles Times* reported in 2008 that there are about 512,000 students in California enrolled in GATE programs. **However, 80 percent of gifted students nationwide do not receive any specialized instruction.**

The *Los Angeles Times* also reported that Latinos, who make up nearly half of student enrollment in California, represent just 28 percent of students enrolled in gifted programs; African Americans represent 7.6 percent of the state's total enrollment and 4 percent of students enrolled in gifted programs. On the other hand, Asians make up 8 percent of total enrollment and 17 percent of gifted enrollment; white students make up 29 percent of total enrollment and 43 percent of gifted enrollment.

"The reasons for the imbalance are varied," noted the *Los Angeles Times*. "Schools attended by lower-income and minority students tend to have fewer gifted programs. ... In addition, better educated and more affluent parents are more likely to demand an advanced curriculum or hire outside psychologists to test their children."

Not all gifted students are motivated to be high achievers. **The *Los Angeles Times* reports that 5 to 20 percent of students who drop out are gifted.** David Palmer, a psychologist with UC Irvine, maintains that some gifted students struggling with social or emotional problems can be misdiagnosed as having attention deficit disorder, autism or other issues.

80% of
gifted
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receive
special
instruction

* 5-20%
of dropouts are gifted

Gifted students can shine

Three ways to reach the brightest

Stories by **Sherry Posnick-Goodwin**

Photos by **Scott Buschman**

"High school has been a great experience," says Paris Doby, a senior on the verge of graduation. "I have a kind of legendary feeling; I feel almost *obligated* to do great things. I am very excited about attending UCLA next year."

Doby lives in South Central — one of the roughest areas in Los Angeles. He attends the Crenshaw Gifted Magnet High School (CGMHS), a "school within a school" at Crenshaw High School. Enrolling in a school for gifted students has made a huge difference in his life.

Attending CGMHS offers a "lifeline" for 157 bright inner-city students who might not be challenged academically in regular classrooms, says Rochelle Hall, a member of United Teachers Los Angeles who serves as the school's coordinator and speech teacher. Gifted students take separate core classes but share elective and physical education classes with other students on campus.

This is one approach to reaching gifted students. Other methods include clustering gifted students within a regular class and pulling students out of class for enrichment activities.

Separate gifted classes

"One of the advantages of having classes just for gifted students is the grouping of like minds, so students can be in an environment where they are challenged and can engage in friendly competition with each other," Hall re-

lates. "Classes for gifted students allow teachers to offer rigorous curriculum that goes above and beyond what is required by the state."

When students are challenged, they stay focused, says Noren Osman, a senior. "The classes are very, very hard, and because of that, we work harder. Also, we are not in classes with students who might hinder our achievement with, well, *distractions*."

Osman will attend CSU Northridge this fall. "I come from an underprivileged family with no father," she says. "Nobody in my family has gone to college. I'm the first, so it's a big deal. The gifted magnet program has given me the resources to do that and has made me more aware that there's a big world out there."

Several students admit that without a challenging program like CGMHS to meet their needs, they might have become dropouts. Instead, they are allowed to shine.

"Our students have a wonderful college acceptance rate," says Hall, who was identified as being gifted as a child. "Our students attend every Ivy League college you can name. I firmly believe gifted education can be a ticket out of poverty."



Paris Doby



“Our students attend every Ivy League college you can name. I firmly believe gifted education can be a ticket out of poverty.”

*Rochelle Hall
United Teachers Los Angeles*

ABOVE: These students belong to a cluster of gifted students at the Independence Elementary School fourth-grade classroom of Erika Tindell (center) in Bakersfield.

A cluster of gifted students

In an elementary school in Bakersfield, two groups of students in Erika Tindell’s classroom are discussing *By the Great Horn Spoon!*, a novel by Sid Fleischman in which characters face difficult choices during the Gold Rush. One group discusses the transformation of the main character. The other group looks at life-and-death decisions that take place in the novel from the viewpoint of multiple characters — and debates the implications and morality of events that transpire.

The students are all fourth-graders at Independence Elementary School in Bakersfield, but the more intellectual discussion takes place within a “cluster” of students who have been identified as gifted. The cluster model is used in the Rosedale Union School District until students attend junior high school, where they enroll in classes for gifted students.

In some ways, the “cluster model” is

similar to teaching a split-grade combination class, says Tindell, a member of the Rosedale Teachers Association. She uses differentiated instruction to meet the needs of Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) students as well as general education students, including those with learning disabilities and English learners. It’s a constant juggling act that might be impossible without professional development offered by her district, which enables teachers to push students on the “high end” while also helping those who are in the middle or struggling. But the best thing about having a cluster of gifted students, she says, is the “trickle-down effect” from their presence that motivates other students to try harder.

“Lots of times gifted kids get left out,” says Tindell, who received the 2011 Distinguished Service Award from the California Association for the Gifted, an organization of parents and educators striving to improve education for gifted individuals. “Then students get in trou-

ble because they are bored. Some teachers think the answer is giving them more work, but that’s a disservice. I believe that instead of giving them more work, it’s important to give them different work, so that they can learn and grow and be challenged with greater depth and complexity.”

For student Maggie Mosher, the approach works just fine. “I like being in a cluster because it’s more challenging. For me, it’s actually easier to do harder things. I like being a GATE kid, but I also like being in a regular class with regular kids.”

Tindell says she tries not to make a “big deal” of the GATE kids in her class and treats them like regular kids.

“Everyone has talent in my classroom, and people may be different, but nobody is better than anybody else,” she says. “Some parents may want their children to only be in GATE classes throughout their education. I feel that when GATE children are in mainstream classes, they can learn how to deal with people and diverse situations on all levels. To me, it seems like a great preparation for life.”



Rochelle Hall
United Teachers Los Angeles

Pullout programs

Jordan Turner's favorite day of the week is the day he spends with teacher Kathy Scrivner at Stockdale Elementary School. He and other gifted fifth-graders throughout the district are bused to her GATE classroom for enrichment activities that expand upon the core curriculum in their regular classrooms. With Scrivner, they enjoy creativity, critical thinking and philosophical discussions that might leave their other classmates in the dust. Students also explore new and different topics of study and are offered opportunities for independent study projects.

The Panama Buena Vista Union School District in Bakersfield offers a



ABOVE: Fifth-grader Julie Rogers works on an art project inspired by artist Joan Miró in Kathy Scrivner's pullout enrichment class at Stockdale Elementary in Bakersfield.

"pullout" program for gifted students in grades 4-6. If they score at the advanced level on the STAR test, they are eligible for further testing with the Otis-Lennon

School Ability Test. Of the district's 15,000 students, nearly 400 have been identified as gifted, including Jordan Turner.

When
~~GATE~~ →
is on the
chopping
block

The hidden costs of
cutting programs for
the gifted

At the
federal
level, the
entire
\$7 million
budget for
GATE was
eliminated.



Ten years ago, gifted students received specialized instruction in Evergreen School District on a weekly basis. That was cut to a few hours every other week. Last year the district in San Jose decided to completely eliminate its program serving nearly 800 gifted students.

"Teachers are working hard to try and meet the needs of all of their students," says Bryan Feci, a fourth-grade teacher at Holly Oak Elementary School. "But it can be very challenging when you have 30 students and so much emphasis about having kids from the bottom move upward. In the process, you don't want to lose kids who are proficient and above."

Some fear that may happen as districts struggle to keep their Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) programs afloat.

This year nearly \$40 million in GATE funding was made available to districts (with \$4.2 million deferred until next year), compared with \$46.8 million allocated in 2008-09. But the Legislature put categorical programs into "Tier 3," which allows districts to apply for GATE funding and then use the money for other

purposes. The state Legislative Analyst's Office reported that 68 percent of 231 school districts surveyed had shifted resources away from GATE education. At the federal level, the entire \$7 million budget for GATE — used for the purpose of identifying gifted students — was eliminated.

Not all states have reduced GATE programs, comments Joseph Renzulli, director of the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented. But those states, including California, where GATE programs have been cut or eliminated are under extreme pressure to bring up test scores.

"Under this type of thinking, the achievement gap separating students will be closed by pulling from the top rather than jacking it up from the bottom," Renzulli says.

Other districts in California that have sus-



Bryan Feci



ABOVE: Teacher Kathy Scrivner talks with gifted students about art before beginning a project at Stockdale Elementary School.

“We can learn about things much faster here, and it’s fun,” he says. “We don’t have to wait for the slow kids like we do in other classes.” On this particu-

lar day, students are studying modern art and creating abstract sculptures in the style of Spanish surrealist Joan Miró fashioned from wood blocks, coat hang-

ers and plaster gauze. On other days, topics might include architecture, paleontology, Greek mythology, Italian or higher-level math.

“These kids love learning and are hungry for the kinds of challenges we offer in GATE,” says Scrivner, a member of the Panama Buena Vista Teachers Association and one of three district GATE teachers.

“Our district really values this program, and they want to keep it,” adds Scrivner. “It’s expensive, but it’s important. In some ways, it evens the playing field for some of our low-income kids who don’t get extras at their schools. I think gifted kids deserve equity, and we give them a place where their needs can be met.”

pendent or reduced GATE programs — or are considering putting GATE on the chopping block — include Los Banos Unified, Fairfax and Fruitvale school districts in Bakersfield, Merced City School District, Delano Unified, San Francisco Unified, and Los Angeles Unified (LAUSD).

Mentally dropping out

The impact of cutting GATE is potentially catastrophic, says Martha Flourney, a former special education teacher who serves on the legislation committee of the California Association for the Gifted (CAG). “You can have kids drop out of school mentally in third grade if they are not being challenged. They may attend school, but they may become depressed and have behavior problems. Don’t gifted children also deserve to learn something new at school every day?”

Beth Littrell, a resource specialist for the San Mateo-Foster City School District’s GATE program, believes there is a common misconception that gifted students will be fine regardless of what happens. “There are



Beth Littrell

a lot of social and emotional issues that come with being gifted,” says Littrell, a member of the San Mateo Elementary Teachers Association. “Gifted students are a highly intense group of people who experience the world with stronger emotions and with heightened senses. When their cognitive and emotional needs aren’t being met, they tend to go underground. It’s a shame, because they might be the ones to find the cure for cancer and be our future leaders.”

Without proper training, it can be a big challenge for general education teachers to have gifted students in their class, adds Littrell. “Most districts don’t think about the fact that gifted students have incredibly different needs, and most districts don’t offer training to meet those needs,” she says.

Littrell knows that firsthand, since teachers from other districts often visit her school district — which has a strong commitment to GATE education — seeking ways to meet the needs of gifted students at their own sites. (For tips, see page 20.)

Brain development at risk

Research on gifted students shows that ignoring their needs goes beyond boredom or a risk of having them drop out; it can also jeopardize brain development. Dr. Barbara Clark, author of the leading textbook on the subject, *Growing Up Gifted*, which has been translated into numerous languages, bases her beliefs on a new field called “neuroplasticity.”

“New brain cells are born every day and must be challenged and exercised by learning something new, or they disappear,” says Clark. “This finding is hugely important for learners, especially gifted learners. They are too often not challenged in regular classrooms, where they may already know the ideas and content being presented at their grade level. Just repeating old activities and information will not support these new brain cells.”

“For these reasons, it is critical that we advocate for appropriate education for gifted learners,” concludes Clark. “Without such educational provisions, we take the chance that much of their neural development will be slowed or even lost. The idiom ‘Use it or lose it’ can become all too real.”

Tips

for teaching gifted students

Lessons from the classroom

The following tips on teaching gifted students in your classroom come from Beth Littrell, Bryan Feci and other CTA members, as well as members of the California Association for the Gifted (CAG) and Joan Lindsay Kerr, CAG's educator representative chair and GATE curriculum specialist for the Rosedale Union School District.

Resources and ideas

- * Read books on differentiated instruction by Carol Tomlinson and Susan Winebrenner, who have authored numerous books on this complex topic. Studying differentiated instruction will also be helpful for teaching English learners and special-needs students.
- * Visit the CAG website cagifted.org for a variety of resources. CAG offers a certificate of completion and professional development credit hours at its annual three-day conference held in Anaheim in February. CAG also offers teacher institutes with training for teachers.
- * Visit hoagiesgifted.org/hoagies_kids.htm for great resources and tips on gifted children.
- * Use curriculum "compacting" to allow students who already know the information to do alternative activities designed to provide enrichment, a more challenging curriculum or independent study opportunities. Under this

model, teachers give a "pre-test" at the beginning of the unit so that students who demonstrate mastery of the curriculum don't have to sit through the lessons on skills they already know. The teacher can provide them with more challenging alternative activities or have them work independently on a personal interest related to the subject so they may study it in greater depth.

- * Use flexible grouping. When appropriate, allow GATE students to work together or individually on an advanced project. At other times, GATE students can join the whole class in learning new concepts and work in mixed-ability groups.
- * Communicate with parents of gifted students, who may feel frustrated if they feel their child's needs are not being met in school. They appreciate knowing how you are meeting the needs of their advanced learner in your classroom.

More ideas

- * Use tiered instruction. Design activities based on the same concept being taught to the whole class, but geared to different ability levels. Bloom's Taxonomy is a great tool for designing activities for different ability levels. (Bloom's Taxonomy is a system of classifying learning objectives in education. Teachers can design activities around the six levels of cognitive learning skills from simple to complex: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating.) An example of this is having students read the same book, and then having general education students discuss the perspective of one character and having gifted students discuss multiple perspectives of characters and their motives.
- * Make your class a safe place where it is OK to be smart. In our culture, it has become uncool to be smart, and some gifted kids will hide their ability rather than risk the teasing of their peers. In a mixed-ability classroom, honor all of the children for their special gifts, whether they are academi-

cally advanced or talented in the area of athletics, music or art.

- * Brainstorm every day. Connect the brainstorming to curriculum.
- * Ask gifted students to identify patterns and trends — not just in math, but in all disciplines.
- * Encourage students to consider issues from many points of view, including the perspective of different disciplines. How would a literary critic, a mathematician, an artist, a musician, a sociologist, a psychologist or an athlete view the curriculum being studied?
- * Offer a variety of resources. Gifted students can comprehend complex information. Encourage students with prior knowledge or interest in a particular subject to stretch with more sophisticated reading.



QEIA empowers communities

Through my Coro Center for Civic Leadership fellowship, I have had opportunities to be integrated into the culture of various organizations. My first days included sitting on the floor of a future city council member's home and conducting interviews with youth nonprofits for San Francisco. My four-week internship with CTA was meant to help me understand the role that labor organizations play in shaping political dialogue.

Upon visiting three distinct East Oakland schools on my first day, however, I realized that my time with CTA would do more than expose me to labor and organizing. It would also allow me to witness the power of educators in shaping communities when given sufficient financial and societal support.

The purpose of the three school visits was to highlight the success and impact of the Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA), which is a state-wide program that increases funding for struggling schools to help them in their mission to educate and inspire youth. QEIA funds assist schools in closing the achievement gap by reducing class size, improving teacher and principal training through individually selected seminars, providing paid time for teachers to reach out to students and plan curriculum, and adding counselors to high schools.

At each school we visited that day, teachers spoke of the tremendous impact QEIA has made in their lives. Teachers at New Highland Academy described how the arts program was supporting efforts to have the more quiet children take an active role in the classroom. They also told us their school now felt more like a community or even a family. Educators at ACORN Woodland Elementary were especially happy with the fact that QEIA gave them an opportunity to collaborate on schoolwide curriculum that supported each student's learning. Students at Madison Middle School passionately spoke about how they felt supported at their school and were now thinking of which universities they wanted to attend. As I listened to these moving accounts, I could relate each story back to the QEIA research I had read. QEIA is supposed to make schools better, but I also learned that QEIA can make communities better.

The stories that I did not expect to hear were those of three parents whom I had the privilege to eat lunch with at ACORN Woodland Elementary. The three parents, two male and one female, were from an underprivileged neighborhood. Prior to

QEIA, they had never taken an active role in their community or in the schools of their children. Additionally, they all spoke very little English, and at the beginning of the luncheon communicated through a translator.

The parents related stories about how their students were receiving the special help they needed in the classroom and how teachers were genuinely reaching out to parents to include them in the learning process. The two fathers, who stated that most men in their neighborhoods were not active in their children's education, now attend ELAC (English Learner Advisory Committee) meetings and bring their friends. The mother, shyly at first, told a story about how one of her

daughters does wonderfully in school thanks to the instruction of her teachers. She said that her other daughter was struggling in class but is now showing marked improvement because of the school's focused programs. All three believed that the school's progress was helping their communities overcome enormous obstacles.

With each story told at lunch, each parent became more engaged and emotional, more willing to take risks in support of their school and the educators housed within it. By the end of lunch, they were all speaking in English, without a translator, to Jo Anderson Jr., senior adviser to the U.S. secretary of education. It was an amazing transformation to behold. These parents were emboldened. It seemed that QEIA had transformed their lives as much as it had transformed their children's school.

EDIT RUANO



Edit Ruano

CTA has taken part in the Coro Fellows in Public Affairs program for more than 10 years. Coro fellows are emerging leaders who are placed in several organizations during their fellowship. The fellows spend their time at CTA shadowing leaders and staff, conducting policy research and engaging in current political issues. CTA and other labor unions are an important part of the Coro program because they allow the fellows to see how working people join together to have a voice in their workplace, in their community and in their government.

2011 César E. Chávez Award recipients



ABOVE: Picture by Kelly Morello, student of Sandra Isbell, San Ramon Valley, winner for grades 9-12, Region I.

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, 26 winners — 13 visual arts projects and 13 written essays — have been selected to receive recognition plus \$1,000 for both students and CTA members. Submitters of a group entry will share the award.

In the visual arts category, the winners are:

Grades Pre-K-K: **GENAVEE HIDALGO**, student of Theresa Sawyer, Di Giorgio Elementary School Teachers Association, Region II; **SEBASTIAN FLORES**, student of Socorro Scow, Fresno Teachers Association, Region II.

Grades 1-2: **ABIGAIL BECKSTEAD**, student of Lindsay Waterman-Tate, San Ramon Valley Education Association, Region I; **RICI PRUETT, ANA VAL-**

DOVINOS, JOHNATHAN GONZALEZ, AILEEN CASAS, and **AYANNA PATEL**, students of Kathy Olsson, Empire Teachers Association, Region II.

Grades 3-4: **VIVIANA CASTILLO**, student of Patricia Sifuentes-Vasquez, Montebello Teachers Association, Region III; **MONSERRAT LEYVA-ARIAS**, student of Diane Doris Kissas, Montebello Teachers Association, Region III.

Grades 5-6: **TASNEEM YASIN**, student of Christopher Aguilar, Sylvan Educators Association, Region II; **EDUARDO RUIZ**, student of Linda Lopez Corley, Santa Maria Elementary Education Association, Region III.

Grades 7-8: **BIANEY ESQUIBEL**, student of Mary Bracken, Guerneville School Teachers Association, Region I; **STEPHANY TORREJON**, student of Silvia Ligins, Montebello Teachers Association, Region III.

Grades 9-12: **KELLY MORELLO**, student of Sandra Isbell, San Ramon Valley Education Association, Region I; **MAI XIONG**, student of Julie Rivard, Merced UHSD Teachers Association, Region II.

Higher Education: **FRANCISCO JUAREZ JR.**, student of David Reyes, CSU Los Angeles, Region III.

In the written essay category, the winners are:

Grades Pre-K-K: No winners.

Grades 1-2: **MAXFIELD ENGLISH**, student of Linda Jasper, Teachers Association of South Pasadena, Region III.

Grades 3-4: No winners.

Grades 5-6: **CELESTE TOMASCHKE**, student of Georganne Nuger, Livermore Education Association, Region I; **ELLA GUNADY**, student of Johnna Laird, Fremont Unified District Teachers Association, Region I; **BROOKLYNN NICOLE FUNEZ**, student of Linda Scheller, Ceres Unified Teachers Association, Region II; **CESAR NOE BARAJAS**, student of Linda Scheller, Ceres Unified Teachers Association, Region II.

Grades 7-8: **TAMARA MENDELSON**, student of Jodene Paris, Wilsona Teachers Association, Region III.

Grades 9-12: **APRIL OCHOA**, student of Janet Creech, Sequoia District Teachers Association, Region I; **ERICA GUTMANN**, student of Alicia Murray, San Juan Teachers Association, Region II; **ARIANNA SUE**, student of Alicia Murray, San Juan Teachers Association, Region II; **DYLAN DICKSTEIN**, student of Antonio Losada, San Juan Teachers Association, Region II; **HUNTER AKINS**, student of Antonio Losada, San Juan Teachers Association, Region II; **LILIAN COIE**, student of Diane Shires, Teachers Association of South Pasadena, Region III; **CHRIS HUDSON**, student of Rafael Mosqueda, Hemet Teachers Association, Region IV.

Higher Education: No winners.



ABOVE: Picture by Mai Xiong, student of Julie Rivard, Merced, winner for grades 9-12, Region II.

2011 Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship recipients

Nine dependent children of CTA members, seven Student CTA members, and three CTA members have been selected for awards of \$3,000 to \$5,000 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: **LEAH AVILA**, dependent of Irma Avila, Fresno Teachers Association; **HAYWARD COX**, dependent of Altina Cox, Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Asso-

ciation; **MARIAH HOUSTON**, dependent of Margaret Hynson-Houston, Elk Grove Education Association; **MICAH KAVROS-ALFARO**, dependent of Eric Alfaro, Dos Palos/Oro Loma Teachers Association; **STACEY OCHOA**, dependent of Susan Ochoa, Association of Cypress Teachers; **KATHY RAMIREZ** and **KATIE RAMIREZ**, dependents of Carol Ulibarri, Etiwanda Teachers Association; **THALIA RINCON**, dependent of Martha Rincon, Lamont Teachers Association; and **CHRISTINE PINTO**, dependent of Lawrence Pinto, Walnut Valley Educators Association.

Student CTA members receiving scholarships are: **DAISY ANGELES**, CSU San Marcos; **RAQUEL GONZALEZ**, San Diego State University; **MICHELLE GRUE**, Pepperdine University; **ASHLEY MAYS**, CSU Long Beach; **REBECCA O'HAVER**, CSU Sacramento; **JAIME ONTIVEROS**, CSU Stanislaus; and **JESSICA REEDE**, Howard University.

CTA members receiving scholarships are: **JAIME COLLY**, Oakland Education Association; **CATHY CREASIA**, United Teachers Los Angeles/NEA; and **AARON GRANT III**, Hayward Education Association.

2011 CTA Scholarship recipients

CTA's Board of Directors has awarded scholarships to 35 dependent children of CTA members, three Student CTA members, and five CTA members under the CTA Scholarship Program.

ERIKA KREEGER, dependent of Pacific Grove Teachers Association member Kathleen Carol Kreeger, won the **Ralph J. Flynn Memorial Scholarship for the highest-scoring applicant (\$5,000)**.

Recipients of the 2011 CTA Scholarship for Dependent Children (\$5,000) are: **NICOLE ISBELL**, dependent of Sandra Jean Isbell, San Ramon Valley Education Association; **KORBIN JOHNSTONE**, dependent of Kelly Johnstone, Tulare City Teachers Association; **TIANA MCFARLAND**, dependent of Stephanie McFarland, Teachers Association of Paradise; **MOLLY McDONELL**, dependent of Jerilyn Keyak, United Educators of San Francisco; **MAURA CHEN**, dependent of Shawn Chen, Manhattan Beach Unified Teachers Association; **JOHANNAH FERNANDES**, dependent of Albano and Maureen Fernandes, Hemet Teachers Association; **TIERRA SCHROEDER**, dependent of Thomas Schroeder, Associated Teachers of Placer; **IAN STUBBS**, dependent of Richard Stubbs, Temecula Valley Educators Association; **KATHERINE CONGLETON**, dependent of Anne Congleton, Monterey Bay Teachers Association; **ELIZABETH COOPER**, dependent of Christopher Cooper, Vacaville Teachers Association; and **ANDREW BRINKER**, dependent of Tobin Brinker, Rialto Education Association.

Also, **MARGARET MARATSOS**, dependent of G. Putnam Cook III, Fallbrook Elementary Teachers Association; **MELISSA KELLER**, dependent of Cheryl Keller, San Ramon Valley Education Association; **ASHLEY WYBENGA**, dependent of Katherine Wybenga, Hemet Teachers Association; **CAMILLE BORGES**, dependent of Esther Borges, Capistrano Unified Education Association; **STEVEN HUFF**, dependent of Rodney Huff, Stockton Teachers Association; **NATASSIJA JORDAN**, dependent of Tarsha Jordan, Emery Teachers Association; **DEIDRE KENNEDY**, dependent of Kathryn Kennedy, Teachers Association of Paradise; **RADOST IVANOVA**, dependent of Jasmina Ivanova, Coachella Valley Teachers Association; **MICHAEL LANCE**, dependent of Colleen Lance, United Teachers Los Angeles/NEA; **CLAIRE RAMALEY**, dependent of

Lee Ramaley, Elk Grove Education Association; and **MICHAEL DIAZ**, dependent of Tony Diaz, Teachers Association of Long Beach.

Also, **AUSTIN HAGWOOD**, dependent of Susan Frediani, Plumas County Teachers Association; **MELISSA IMMEL**, dependent of Nicole Dubois and Scott Immel, Dixon Teachers Association; **JILLIAN RISIGARI-GAI**, dependent of Marie Ibsen, Alhambra Teachers Association; **HANNAH MARYANSKI**, dependent of Peggy Maryanski, Ventura Unified Education Association; **AMY WOLFORD**, dependent of Richard Wolford, Shasta Secondary Education Association; **MEGAN BUCK**, dependent of Susan Duquesnel, Garden Grove Education Association; **NOAH CONNALLY**, dependent of Janis Connally, Santa Barbara Teachers Association; **ALLAN ISBELL**, dependent of Sandra Jean Isbell, San Ramon Valley Education Association; **TRISHA MORRISSEY**, dependent of David Morrissey, Panama Buena Vista Teachers Association;

tion; **ALEXANDER NEWTON**, dependent of Susan Newton, Monterey County Office of Education Teachers Association; **STEVEN PHAM**, dependent of Minh Pham, Twin Rivers United Educators; and **THEODORA TURNER**, dependent of Ronald Turner II, Association of Colton Educators.

The recipients of the 2011 L. Gordon Bittle Memorial Scholarship for Student CTA (\$3,000) are: **ARELI DOHNER-CHAVEZ**, CSU Stanislaus; **HANNAH SENER**, Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo; and **COURTNEY WOODS-ZIANI**, San Diego State University.

The recipients of the 2011 CTA Scholarship for Members (\$3,000) are: **MARYEL AMBAT**, Franklin McKinley Education Association; **DIANE PENDRICK**, Torrance Teachers Association; **RICHARD SNYDER**, Associated Pomona Teachers; **JACQUELINE VALADEZ**, El Centro Secondary Teachers Association; and **JUYOUNG YANG**, Glendale Teachers Association.

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Build your skills at CTA's Summer Institute

Photo by Bridget Lockhart, Garden Grove Education Association



LEFT: At the first general session of Summer Institute 2010, Bridget Holderman and Champ Clark of Garden Grove Education Association use texting to urge Congress to pass the education jobs bill.

CTA's Summer Institute 2011 will be held July 31 to Aug. 5 at UCLA's Conference Center. This event offers a variety of trainings designed to assist chapters in day-to-day representation, help teachers build leadership skills, and improve teaching and learning.

NEGOTIATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRAND — The NOD Strand offers five full-week tracks.

Emerging Leaders — Designed to arm members who are beginning their activism 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, union history and structure, and effective organizing techniques. This track does not cover bargaining or grievance representation skills.

Essential Bargaining Skills — In this highly interactive session, designed to guide participants in the use of a 10-step process to en-

sure 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. Participants must attend every session from Sunday afternoon to Friday morning.

Advanced Bargaining Skills — This track will teach the skills needed to fully prepare for and implement successful bargaining programs. Topics include organizing for power, developing infrastructures for support, information-gathering to engage members and their communities, leveraging data and power to your advantage, impasse mediation and fact-finding. Participants must have three years of experience on a local bargaining team, or have previously completed the Essential Bargaining Skills track and one year of experience on a local bargaining team.

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 developing comparability data to support bargaining objectives.

Healthcare Benefits and Issues for Active Members and Retirees

— This track will focus on bargaining health benefits in order to increase the quality of care and reduce costs, and 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.

LEGAL STRAND — The Legal Department offers two introductory half-week tracks. Participants may register for either or both.

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 for 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; du-

ty of fair representation — best practices to protect your chapter from DFR liability; union activities that are protected by labor laws; what actions by the district can be successfully challenged by filing an unfair practice charge; and how to use the Brown Act effectively.

Track 2 (Wednesday–Friday) — This track will focus on “individual” labor and employment issues, including the rights of union members under antidiscrimination laws, the rights of educational employees to a safe and healthy workplace, discipline and dismissal procedure under the Education Code, and cyberlaw 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; and cyberlaw, texting, MySpace and Facebook — best practices in a hyperconnected world.

INSTRUCTION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

STRAND — The full-week IPD Strand will focus on “Transitioning to the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics.” Teams of teachers, administrators, curriculum coordinators and other educators will be offered up-to-date information and training on the transition from current state standards to the CCSS. Topics include academic content standards, performance assessment, framework adoption, textbook adoption, professional development, alignment with current standards, planning for the transition, and developing a clear, purposeful vision for your school

site. Keynote speakers are W. James Popham and Bobb Darnell. You can use QEIA, School Site Council, PI and SIG funds to register for this important professional development.

MEMBER BENEFITS STRAND

— This half-week strand (Sunday–Tuesday) will show participants how to make the most of the numerous deals and savings opportunities provided exclusively to CTA and NEA members. The strand is designed for chapter presidents, local site reps, membership chairpersons and membership recruiters, and offers tips to help your chapter grow and retain membership, convert agency-fee payers to members, gather members for organizing activities, build chapter appreciation and unity,

and provide solutions to many member needs.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH STRAND

— This half-week strand (Wednesday–Friday) will focus on “Collective power: Creating positive changes in our communities.” It will explore a variety of strategies and tools for tapping into community power. Activities will include: community-building; sharing community connections; outreach activities; electives; attending a local community meeting off-site; chapter outreach planning; and World Café — a group approach to problem-solving.

COMMUNICATIONS STRAND

— This strand will offer four separate one-day tracks, which pro-

vide the most comprehensive communications training from CTA. Every participant will attend each of the four tracks. Participants should be comfortable using the Internet.

From “Gee Whiz” to “Gee WOW!” — Communicate your message effectively online. Create an e-newsletter, polish your e-writing skills, and learn the dos and don’ts of e-mailing.

Sure Cure for the Tongue-Tied Blues — This session on public speaking offers easy, fun tips to help you deliver strong, effective speeches with greater poise and confidence, and includes information about message discipline and development of strategies for crisis communications.

Headlines and Deadlines and Cameras, Oh My! — Plan media

events and get compelling news coverage of your chapter’s issues. Reach out to news media, and be prepared when they reach out to you. The session includes crisis communications and participating in a simulated news conference.

Organizing Online: Engaging Your Members Through Social Media

— Use social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to reach, inform and engage your members, and become a cyberactivist through online organizing.

Register now for your training of choice at 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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*The Wall Street Journal, 9 June, 2009

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Sandals for the Soul connects students with Haiti



LEFT: Escondido High School French class students of Escondido Secondary Teachers Association member Janice Mulder pose with the 400 pairs of shoes they collected for distribution to earthquake survivors in Haiti.

A group of Escondido High School French class students figuratively walked a mile in the shoes of Haitians last semester, inspired by Student CTA member and student teacher Courtney Woods-Ziani and Escondido Secondary Teachers Association member and master teacher Janice Mulder.

Hundreds of Haitians are now literally walking in new shoes collected and donated by the California students in response to the devastating earthquake that struck the Caribbean island last year.

“One of my goals as an aspiring French teacher was to develop a global outreach project,” says Woods-Ziani, CTA’s student liaison to the

California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and now a candidate for a master’s in French at SDSU. “It was my hope to engage students in a social justice project while also teaching the language and culture of a Francophone country.”

While reading a magazine article about the positive impact just a pair of shoes can have on a person living in a developing country, Woods-Ziani was inspired to create “Sandals for the Soul,” a project in which she and her high school students collected footwear for persons living in displacement camps in Haiti.

“This became the perfect vehicle for helping the students make a positive impact in the lives

of hundreds of Haitian people by providing them the footwear necessary to prevent disease, improve their quality of life, enhance hygiene, advance opportunities for migration and enable children to go to school,” says Woods-Ziani. “All while providing them opportunities to better understand Haiti’s language and culture.”

After doubling their original goal of collecting 200 pairs of shoes, Woods-Ziani and her students were making plans to ship the 400 pairs of footwear to Haiti. Then a volunteer church group that was already planning to take supplies to the island offered to transport the shoes for them. “We were delighted to have surpassed our goal by collecting such a large number of shoes,” says Woods-Ziani, “but even more excited by being able to deliver them free of charge, enabling us to purchase additional shoes for a future delivery.”

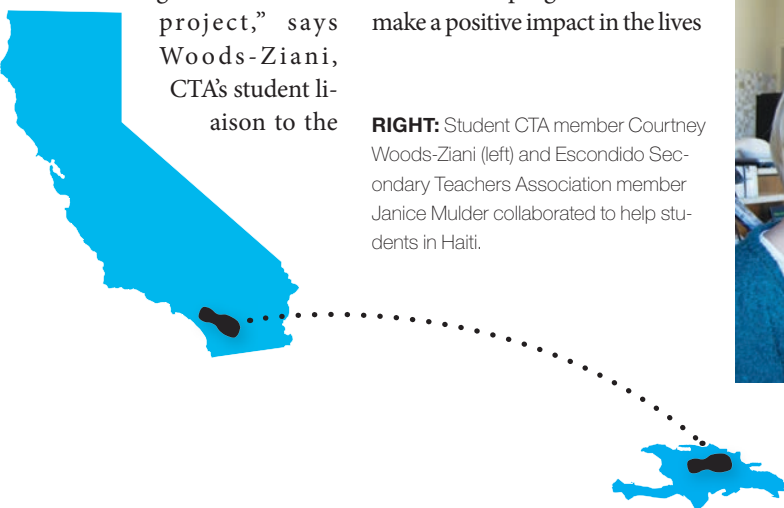
Upon their arrival in Haiti, the American volunteers delivered the shoes to residents of a refugee camp, Camp Abraham. They had enough to give every man, woman and child in the facility at least one new pair.

“When we saw photos of our shoes being distributed, we were so gratified to see the fruits of our efforts,” says Woods-Ziani. “The students were amazed at how such a seemingly small gesture could make such a huge impact in the lives of these Haitian people. For me personally, it certainly reinforced the ‘Power of One,’ the idea that even a single person can achieve something worthwhile.”

Although Woods-Ziani has finished her student teaching in Escondido, master teacher Janice Mulder and the EHS French students were so inspired by the project that it is continuing and has expanded to include donations from school clubs, sports teams and extracurricular groups. In addition, Woods-Ziani has set up a Facebook page, “Sandals for the Soul — Helping Haiti,” where people interested in participating can learn how.

BILL GUY

RIGHT: Student CTA member Courtney Woods-Ziani (left) and Escondido Secondary Teachers Association member Janice Mulder collaborated to help students in Haiti.



Eight tips for your 403(b) and 457 plans

It's a good idea to keep an eye on your retirement financial goals including defined contribution plans — 403(b) and 457 plans, where you contribute a specific amount of pretax dollars that will eventually supplement your pension in retirement. Financial consultants say that a retiree will need 80 to 100 percent of their preretirement income to retire comfortably. The average California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) retiree receives only 63 percent of preretirement earnings through their pension. To bridge that gap, 403(b) and 457 plans become valuable for CTA members.

Now is the time to take control of planning for your retirement, no matter what age you are. Here are some tips to consider as you begin making contributions or refining your current 403(b) and/or 457 plan strategies:

1. Invest early and wisely.

With pretax contributions, you save on taxes now. Money you contribute to 403(b) and 457 plans is subtracted from your paycheck before federal and state income taxes are calculated. Tax-deferred savings and the magic of long-term interest compounding work to grow your account balance over time.

2. Review your pay stubs and read your statements.

Watch your pay stubs and retirement plan statements to ensure your contributions are being made accurately and in a timely manner. Your money should be invested in your selected products within two weeks following the deduction from your paycheck — the sooner the better.

3. Become educated so that you are comfortable making good investment decisions.

Visit our special website dedicated to financial and investment information, CTAinvest.org. Download or order your free copies of the CTA guides

“Closing the Gap: Supplement Your Pension Benefits with a 403(b) or 457 Plan” and “Selecting a 403(b)/457 Advisor & Understanding Plan Fees” at CTAinvest.org or cta.org. 403(b) product information is also available at the CalSTRS website 403bcompare.com. Consider attending 403(b)/457 plan presentations scheduled at many CTA conferences. You can also review your plan prospectuses — if you can't locate them, contact your vendor and request copies.

4. Ask for help if you need it.

Be careful about whom you trust, however. Do your homework and ask questions. Unless the adviser is working in the capacity of a fiduciary, he or she is not ethically or legally obligated to act in your best interest. Be aware that commissioned agents are motivated by income concerns — probably more theirs than yours. For information on evaluating advisers, you can order copies of the guides listed above at CTAinvest.org.

5. Be wary of insurance sales representatives.

Insurance sales representatives target educators and work hard to reach out to you. Educators may assume that investment professionals who give presentations at their districts or contact them through the districts have been vetted and are endorsed by the district. This is probably not the case. It is up to you to evaluate their credibility and the products that they recommend to you.

6. Think twice before investing in annuities. Consider investing in mutual fund products.

Insurance companies may try to convince you to invest in annuities, which are an alternative investment offered in 403(b) and 457 plans. You need to ask questions such as: Will annuity products provide the results you need? Are their fees disclosed and

reasonable? Is the financial strength of the insurance company strong,

and will it remain so? Will the agent receive commissions for the sale or convincing you to change investments? Does the annuity product include expensive and unnecessary insurance features? Note: Before transferring funds from an annuity product or requesting a distribution, determine if surrender charges will apply — this is money you can lose if you withdraw your investments too early. There is more information about annuities and mutual fund products including guides and calculators at CTAinvest.org.

7. Manage your defined contribution accounts.

Avoid taking loans or withdrawals from your accounts unless absolutely necessary. Contribute as much as you can. Consider allocating more toward your contributions when you receive pay increases; and take advantage of catch-up provisions if available. Review your investment products and account balances regularly to determine if your diversification strategy and asset allocation is appropriate for your needs.

8. Speak up with concerns.

If you have concerns about your 403(b) and 457 investment choices, sales presentations being given at your district, or your district's 403(b) plan third-party administrator, bring these concerns to your chapter leaders.

You deserve a comfortable retirement without financial worries. We hope these suggestions will help you to make the most of your opportunity to supplement your pension benefits with 403(b) and 457 plans.

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Student protest results in declaration

Students organized a three-and-a-half-day sit-in April 18-21 at CSU Fullerton that succeeded in persuading CSUF President Milton Gordon to sign their “Declaration to Defend Public Education.” This action promises to be the first salvo in an ongoing effort by California higher education students and faculty statewide to carry out activities emphasizing social justice and the defense of public education.

Impetus for the sit-in began about a year and a half ago, when a loosely knit group of CSUF students, faculty and campus organizations involved in social justice issues coalesced into a group named “We! Alternative Voices for an Alternative Future” or “We!” for short. John Belleci, a CSUF undergraduate student in history who was recently elected Student CTA state executive secretary-treasurer, is a member of the CSUF We! organization, along with fellow SCTA members Gabriella Longbotham and Kristina Hohmann. Hohmann was recently elected SCTA state executive vice president.

“We have been increasingly frustrated and anxious about having to pay more and more for tuition, while losing class time due to furlough days — paying more and getting less,” says Belleci. “And we’re not just concerned about current students. What’s going to happen to future generations of California college students?”

CSUF We! member concern was heightened last spring when university officials proposed cuts to modern language



© Ken Steinhardt/Orange County Register/ZUMA

and humanities classes.

“If classes in the social sciences were going to be cut, we felt that they were devaluing our degrees, so we realized that it was time to fight,” says Belleci.

After We! members tried unsuccessfully to meet with President Gordon on several occasions in spring 2010, they were able to meet directly with senior administrators, and held two open-mike forums on the meaning and value of public education. On March 2 of this year, We! planned a day of action in collaboration with Students for Quality Education, distributing fliers that invited students and faculty to participate in a rally and open-mike opportunity to express their feelings about education at CSU Fullerton.

Then, at one of the We! organization’s regular Wednesday night workshop sessions on social justice and current issues, the

group’s organizing committee in conjunction with representatives from CSU Long Beach, CSU Los Angeles, Compton College, Fullerton College and Mt. San Antonio College hammered out the “Declaration to Defend Public Education,” a statement affirming the right of all Californians to a quality public education, preschool through graduate school.

At the April 13 CSUF “Take Class Action” rally, part of a day of action coordinated by the California Faculty Association and held on California’s college and university campuses statewide, We! members circulated their declaration. By the end of the day, with over 1,200 signatures of endorsement, the students and faculty marched as a group to the office of CSUF President Gordon, asking him to sign the document in solidarity. Gordon initially refused to sign the document, say-

ABOVE: Students settle in for the first night of a sit-in at the CSU Fullerton administration building to protest cuts to the university system’s budget.

ing he needed more time to read it. He agreed to meet with a delegation of students and faculty on Monday, April 18.

At the meeting, Gordon said that he could not endorse the document because of “problematic language” related to faculty contracts and negotiations. According to We! representatives, when they said that they would be willing to delete the problematic clauses and work with Gordon to come up with a mutually agreeable document, his response was, “I don’t have the time.” The students said that they did have the time, and would wait until he could meet with them. They also began mobilizing to organize students who

would be able to participate in a sit-in at the administration, through the night if necessary.

At that point, in an effort to prevent the sit-in, university officials presented We! with a compromise statement that did not address the core issues on the declaration. So the sit-in was on, with about 40 students and a few faculty participating. “We made a deal with the campus police that we would not occupy the eighth floor of the administration building — the area including President Gordon’s office and requiring a secure elevator key for access — but would be willing to conduct our sit-in on the second floor,” says Belleci. “They told us that if we were peaceful and did not destroy any university property, there would be no disciplinary action because we would be acting in a peaceful demonstration of our civil rights. Our response was that this is our university. We’re not going to destroy anything. That’s not what we’re about.”

At about 3:30 a.m. on Tuesday, the first reporters and media photographers arrived, and the sit-in hit the newspaper, television, radio and online media markets in short order. When university officials met with the students that day, they said that President Gordon still could not sign the declaration because of his concern about the contract language. Again, the students reiterated their willingness to sit with Gordon to craft a document that would be mutually acceptable. The response was negative, so the sit-in continued into its second night, with students coming from more than a dozen area colleges and universities in San Marcos, San Bernardino, Northridge, Long Beach, Irvine, Los Angeles and Sacramento — more than 110 participating in solidarity

with CSUF students.

During the day on Wednesday, attorneys for the university examined the students’ declaration, with administration officials finally agreeing to meet with the students at 4 p.m. After intense negotiations, administration officials came back with their own “Statement of Public Education,” but the students could not agree to the document without bringing it to their entire organizing committee — some of whom were still in class at the time. “They really pressured us to sign,” says Belleci. “But we told them that we would not give up our principles.”

On Thursday, Pasadena Assembly Member Anthony Portantino spoke with the students, promising to urge Gordon to support their concerns. At noon that day, the CSUF Academic Senate voted unanimously to endorse the students’ cause. With pressure mounting, the university’s administration finally agreed to work with the students on a compromise document, which President Gordon ultimately signed.

“We’re pleased that we were able to achieve our goal,” says Belleci. “But it’s a shame that our university’s administration and President Gordon were so reluctant to sign a document that contained nothing that is not already in the CSU charter and the California higher education system’s stated purposes. Other California college and university student and faculty activist groups are reaching out to We! for information and support to coordinate lobbying efforts for both higher and K-12 public education in California, and we’re all gearing up for a state-wide simultaneous action next fall. I also believe that we’re going to see a greater advocacy emphasis by members of SCTA statewide.”

BILL GUY

Declaration to Defend Public Education

- > We, the students, staff, and educators of California’s public schools, colleges, and universities, call upon the people of the state to recommit to and reinvest in public education as the principal foundation of a democratic society.
- > Public education is a sacred trust and needs to be protected from those who would see the state divest even further from its constitutional obligations.
- > Public education is a public good and needs to be protected from the for-profit interests of the private sector.
- > We call upon the people of California to recognize that, though an educated workforce is essential to our prosperity, education itself has a social value that cannot be reduced to monetary considerations alone.
- > Public education brings together diverse communities of educators, staff and students in ways that prepare learners for a productive yet socially responsible life.
- > Public education creates spaces that promote the intellectual and emotional development of tolerant, critically-engaged citizens.
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ACTION

Gov.'s revised budget holds line on education funding



LEFT: Sen. Bill Emmerson (R-Hemet) hears from a group of his teacher constituents, who urge him to support the tax extensions and the governor's budget proposal, which would boost school funding by more than \$3 billion.

Following a week of CTA State of Emergency activities at the state Capitol and in cities around California, Gov. Jerry Brown on May 16 proposed an updated budget reversing a multibillion-dollar deferral that would have delayed funding for schools. "We are heartened by the governor's support for public education in his May Revision," said CTA President David A. Sanchez. "He is clearly keeping his promises and working to secure for public schools and colleges the funds that are desperately needed to restore programs and avoid more layoffs. We will continue to work to secure the four Republican votes needed to approve the temporary tax extensions upon which his May Revision depends."

State of Emergency activities

by CTA, parents, labor and students helped drive home forcefully to elected officials and the public the plight of public schools and colleges, and the devastating impact of three years of cuts — more than \$20 billion — on the state's nearly 9 million K-14 students.

The governor told reporters at a Capitol news conference that his proposal would bring school funding to \$52.4 billion, \$3 billion more than he proposed in January. The governor conceded that schools would still be receiving less than they did in 2007-08. He stated that it would take several years to restore funding to that level.

In order for schools and other programs to avoid further cuts, the Legislature must pass the May Revision, which includes the temporary tax exten-

sions. An all-cuts budget would require a suspension of Proposition 98 with deep reductions to schools.

The governor emphasized that his revised spending plan relies on the extension of the state's temporary taxes. He said that Republican lawmakers' refusal to approve his revenue proposal would lead him to his own Plans B and C — but he refused to spell out what those plans would be.

The governor said he has been working hard to secure the total of four Republican votes needed for his spending plan, which ratchets back some of the tax extensions he had previously proposed, including one that would have boosted personal income taxes for the coming year.

The governor said that even though some tax increases

would precede a popular vote, the proposal meets with his campaign pledge: "There are no taxes without a vote of the people — this is a program with a vote of the people."

The governor's release of the May Revision typically marks the start of an intense period of fiscal negotiations with the Legislature. Generally, the state Senate and the Assembly separately make revisions to the governor's proposal. Often a joint Assembly-Senate conference committee is empowered to meld the two legislative spending plans into one final document. That budget is due to the governor by June 15, and he is required by the state constitution to sign a final version by June 30.

This year's process is likely to be more complicated, because — unlike the budget itself — the tax extensions the governor has proposed require a two-thirds supermajority in both houses. Getting that supermajority requires four Republican votes, and Republican leaders have been unwilling to provide any so far.

Hundreds of chapter leaders lobby for school funding

On May 18, several hundred leaders of local CTA chapters were hard at work in the state Capitol. They came to Sacramento to persuade lawmakers to provide the two-thirds vote required to pass the governor's tax extension proposal, which would raise billions of additional dollars for public education.

The CTA representatives visited the offices of both Democratic and Republican lawmakers seeking to firm up support for the tax extensions, which would preserve more than \$10 billion for education and other vital services.

The CTA members told stories of how budget cuts of more than \$20 billion have decimated their local schools, ballooned class sizes, and eliminated counselors, nurses, and vital services to their students.

Often, the educators shared with lawmakers physical representations of the harm being done to their students.

Chapter leaders from Monterey brought to the office of one of their lawmakers, Sen. Sam Blakeslee (R-San Luis Obispo), a poster created by parents that featured photos of their children. The poster's headline drove home the message: "Cuts Hurt Monterey Peninsula Students." The parents had asked the chapter members to use the poster to help convince lawmakers of the dire need for more funding for public schools.

While lawmakers can pass a budget on a simple majority vote, state law requires a two-thirds supermajority to enact or extend revenues.

During the Presidents Lobby Day and the State of Emergency mobilization in the Capitol, CTA members put a high priority on helping to round up the four Republican votes — two in the Assembly and two in the state Senate — that would provide the two-thirds supermajority.

They also sought to counter an element of the GOP's own budget proposal that would illegally suspend the state's Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) and pare another \$500 million from public education.

The CTA chapter presidents committed to working with their members, parents, and community members to visit their lawmakers in their home area offices and press them to provide the financial support that public schools desperately need.

LAO: Proposal is sound, but election poses uncertainty

The nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) concluded that Gov. Brown's May Revision represents a "serious proposal" that would address the state's ongoing fiscal problems. The appraisal of the spending plan came in "The 2011-12 Budget: Overview of the May Revision," which was released on the LAO website (lao.ca.gov).

Legislative Analyst Mac Taylor told reporters during a Capitol news conference that his greatest concern about Gov. Brown's budget revision is the uncertainty that would come with the Legislature and the governor sending the tax extension proposals to the voters for their approval.

Taylor said the uncertainty



would have a significant impact on the state's ability to issue Revenue Anticipation Notes or RANs, instruments sold to investors to raise cash temporarily until state revenues are collected. Taylor said the state could have to sell about \$10 billion in RANs this coming year.

Taylor pointed out that schools and other entities would face problems as they try to budget for the coming year without knowing whether some of the proposed funding will disappear before the year is out.

Taylor said the most certainty would come if the governor and lawmakers approved the taxes themselves, but if an election is in the offing, he would recommend that it be held late in the 2011-12 fiscal year. He would also propose that the Legislature and governor adopt new revenues, some or all of the ones proposed or others, to take effect for the entire year prior to the public vote.

Citing the impact of economic uncertainty on schools and other public services, CTA representatives have been urging the governor and the Legislature to approve the tax

ABOVE: Backed by a team of local leaders including CTA Board member Don Dawson, Jill Low (at right) presents a poster to Gabrielle Jackson, a staffer for state Sen. Sam Blakeslee (R-San Luis Obispo). Low told Jackson that parents had brought Monterey teachers the poster, which shows photos of their children who are being harmed by cutbacks in their schools. The parents urged the teachers to use the poster to help secure more fiscal support for public education.

extensions themselves, without putting a referendum on the ballot.

Taylor commended the governor for tackling the state's debt. He said the governor is using the bulk of the additional funding for schools — about \$2 billion of the \$3 billion increase to schools — to cover deferrals.

Taylor said he was glad that the state had some good news in the form of \$6.1 billion in unanticipated revenues. However, he cautioned that forecasters were disagreeing about the reasons for the increase and how much new revenue the state would receive in the months and years ahead.

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Members connect at issues conference



Photo by Bill Guy

Participants at the first-ever CTA Joint Ethnic Caucus Issues Conference held April 29 to May 1 in Manhattan Beach included Hattie McFrazier of UTLA and CTA Board member Toby Boyd. United under the conference theme "Stand Up! Advance Our Power Together," members of CTA's African American Caucus, American Indian/Alaska Native Caucus, Hispanic Caucus and Pacific Asian American Caucus came together to learn more about what is happening in California's ethnic communities and to reflect the strength of diversity in promoting quality of life for all California citizens. Conference attendees participated in a

variety of workshops covering a wide range of topics related to diversity and issues focused on specific ethnic constituencies, but then came together to share ideas and strategies during a common dialogue session toward the close of the three-day event.



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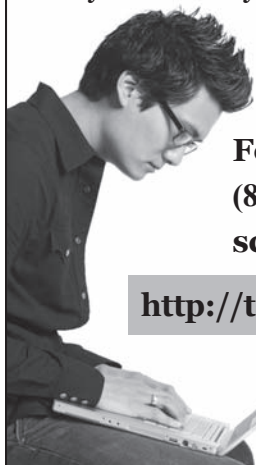
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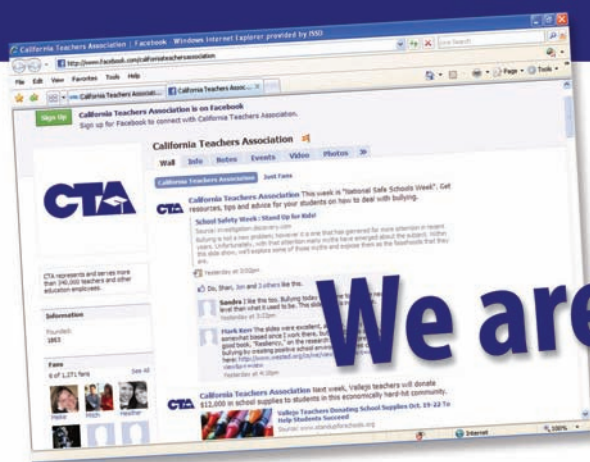
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Emergency

Continued from page 13

Association, the California Faculty Association, and Student CTA, plus students from San Diego's High School for International Studies.

A widely touted "counter rally" initiated by the right-wing Koch Brothers fizzled, with only about 10 participants. Some media interviewed them on the extreme periphery of the Education Coalition rally, but most State of Emergency rally participants were completely unaware of their presence. Ironically, the opposition participants arrived in a white limo sporting a sign, "Government Workers Make Too Much!"

San Bernardino

Close to 1,000 Education Coalition leaders from the Inland Empire gathered with teachers, parents, education support professionals, administrators, public employees and students from elementary school to college at the National Orange Show in San Bernardino to oppose further cuts to education and other state and local programs.

CTA Secretary-Treasurer-elect Mikki Cichocki emphasized the crowd's interdependence: "Each of us leans on one another to meet our societal needs, and because 'we are one' we must support extending current taxes." Speakers included James Ramos, San Bernardino Community College Board of Trustees, and California State Board of Education member, who said, "Public education is vital to the health of our democracy. Tax extensions will enable us to avoid further damage to our schools and our students."

Student CTA Southern Regional Vice President Wesley Porter told attendees, "We need to fight for the future we want."

What's next

After the rallies, Gov. Jerry Brown issued his "May Revise" for the state budget, which, if approved by the Legislature, would provide additional funding to K-12 schools and allow local districts to maintain current funding levels and rescind some planned program cuts and layoffs. No additional cuts have been proposed for California's colleges. CTA continues to call for an extension of the temporary taxes approved in 2009 in order to keep our economy on track, to restore much-needed jobs and to prevent further drastic cuts to public education. ✎



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