

California EDUCATOR

Pop
Quiz!

150 years
in the making!

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Travel tips and deals

Take a vacation
without going broke!

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SUSPENSION PREVENTION

Grant helps CTA members keep
kids like Daben in school

Page 18

Listen in on experts!

Teachers talk Common Core,
mentoring, technology and
student triumphs



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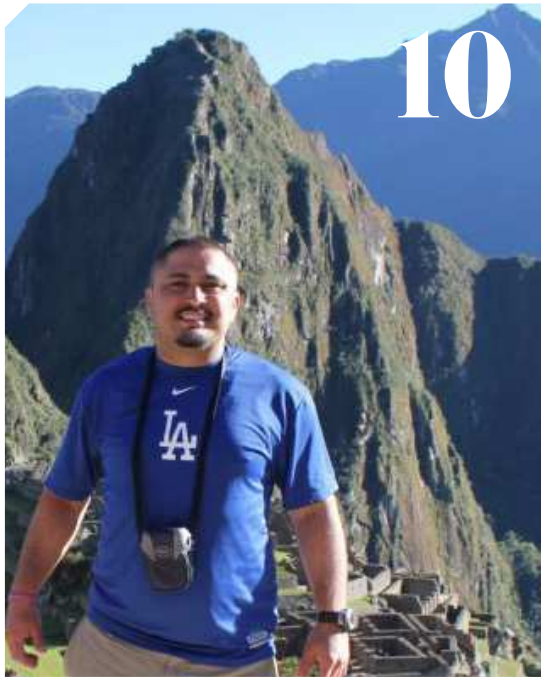


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Daben Linares plays kendama during lunchtime at Jackman Middle School in Sacramento.

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Wow. You are awesome.

The California Educational Society, now CTA, was formed 150 years ago. Extraordinary professionals then... and now. Read about CTA member Rebecca Mielwocki's incredible year as the 2012 National Teacher of the Year (page 36), and the wisdom of Mama G, who's retiring at age 95 (page 32).

Best of all (from one whose guilty pleasure is eavesdropping), listen to colleagues talk teacher issues. San Jose area teachers Michelle Makinson and Sarah Payne discuss subject matter and test scores (page 16), while in Grass Valley, Irene Frazier mentors Guy Greever (page 24). Alicia Garcia, from Calipatria, and George Cheung, from Covina, chat about technology and teaching (page 28), and Cynthia López Elwell, from Ontario, and James Norwood, from Moreno Valley, share about transitioning to the Common Core State Standards (page 43).

See this "listen in" icon?



That's how you'll identify this eavesdropping series, which, by the way, was suggested by readers like you as part of our redesign process. A series within the magazine rather than in several issues. Cool idea.

Speaking of cool ideas, your colleagues are keeping kids in school learning. See how they're preventing suspensions in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Sacramento (page 18).

And it's that time of year to plan your summer. One option: attend Summer Institute — it's a great time to network, learn, and get professional growth and college credits (page 27). And why not plan something exciting or adventurous that's guaranteed to inspire envy and enhance your teaching? Fremont, Visalia and El Monte members share advice and escapades, plus you'll find travel savings and tips from the *Educator's* resident travel expert, Sherry Posnick-Goodwin (page 10).

CTA members have accomplished so much in 150 years. For example, did you know CTA was part of a successful lawsuit to desegregate schools for Mexican Americans (*Mendez v. Westminster*)? It was in 1946, eight years before *Brown v. Board of Education* (page 45). We, who are CTA, have so much to be proud of.

CTA is kicking off its sesquicentennial celebration this month with an innovative media campaign. Have you seen the TV and radio spots, the newspaper and Web ads (page 40)? They're based on your professionalism and good work. And like you, they're awesome.

Happy birthday, CTA!

Cynthia Menzel
Editor in Chief

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TOP TWEET

@educationweek Many schools don't have the high-speed Internet connections needed to make full use of #edtech tools.

CTA ONLINE

WHAT'S NEW AT CTA.ORG



MAY IS ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH

The immigration of the first Japanese to the U.S. in May 1843 was one of the milestones that led to May being dedicated as Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month. www.cta.org/asianpacificawareness



CELEBRATE LABOR HISTORY IN MAY

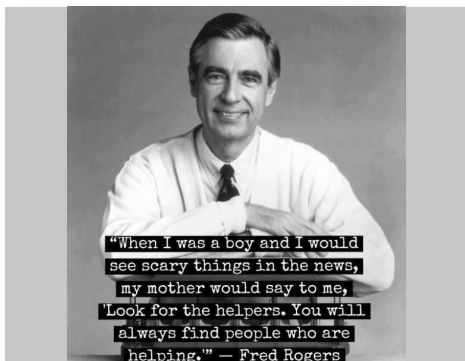
Thanks to legislation signed by Gov. Brown last year, May is Labor History Month. Celebrate our history, help reinvigorate the labor movement, and keep it strong. www.cta.org/labor



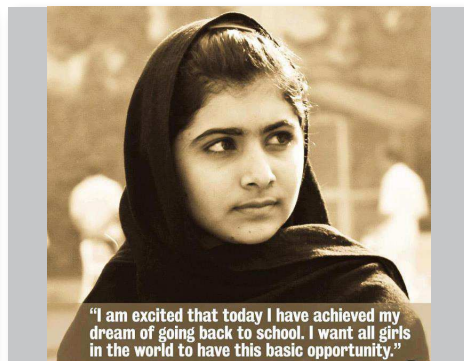
FORMS AND DOCS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Have you ever needed a form or document on the CTA website? Just log in using the orange box on the webpage and navigate to our Leadership page. www.cta.org/formsdocs

MOST POPULAR FACEBOOK POSTS



April 15 1075 likes 542 shares



March 21 396 likes 125 shares

FAVORITE COMMENTS

Julie Burgess | March 25

I am so fortunate to have had so many inspirational teachers in my life. I knew as far back as second grade that I wanted to teach.

Jason Bronstein | March 26

I am proud to be a public school teacher in California and a CTA member! My husband is also a teacher and CTA member. Thank you, CTA, for supporting all members.

Julie Shipman | March 26

Proud to belong to CTA, which has been at the forefront of supporting equal rights for 150 years!

Carol Villeda | March 28

So proud of CTA for being the voice of TODAY. We are all equal and as such deserve equal rights.

MORE TOP TWEETS

@MrsMieliwocki | April 18

If your shoulders are soft enough to be cried on and strong enough to hold the weight of your students' futures, you're ready to be a teacher!

@losangelista | April 18

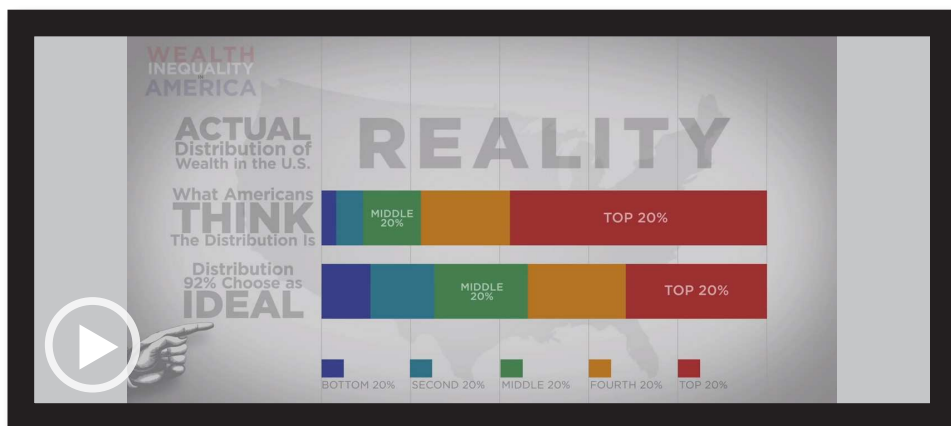
This is on my mind quite a bit lately. Are we educating for capitalism or democracy?

@John_Merrow | April 16

What did the billionaires know about cheating in DC schools, and when did they know it?

@EricHeins | April 14

It's time for real #schooltransformation led by the professionals actually doing the job!



VIRAL VIDEO

Wealth Inequality in America: This easy-to-understand video on wealth inequality has been watched more than 5 million times. www.youtube.com. Search for "Wealth Inequality by politizane"



ask dean

As we celebrate CTA's sesquicentennial, what are we learning about ourselves?

→ “But you’re a girl!”
 “You’re a boy. Now that we’ve clarified that, let’s talk about what’s important for educators and our public schools.”

That’s a conversation Carolyn Doggett had with Assembly Speaker Curt Pringle shortly after she became CTA’s first female executive director in 1995.

Carolyn Doggett is the real deal. As executive director, Carolyn helped achieve CTA’s historic election victory in 2005 over several harmful initiatives, the enactment of the Quality Education Investment Act in 2006 to help schools of greatest need, and the passage of Proposition 30 in November.

She is retiring this summer after an amazing career of teaching, advocacy and learning. A fourth-generation Californian and a fourth-generation teacher, Carolyn began her 45-year career teaching first grade in Willits, California, before moving to Anchorage, Alaska, to teach high school English.

Can you imagine? When Carolyn was elected president of the Anchorage Education Association, the headline in the Anchorage newspaper read: “Teachers Elect Woman.” She was president of NEA-Alaska before coming back to CTA. She’s been a caring teacher, an outspoken education activist, a feminist and a union organizer since day one. She will be missed.

Honoring our past, guiding the future

This month, CTA turns 150 years old. You’ve probably seen and heard the creative TV and radio spots or seen the newspaper ads. We’ll be celebrating our heritage for the next several months. We are honoring the past and guiding the future because people like Carolyn and me and you, who worked to improve teaching and learning conditions, to enhance teaching

and the profession, fought for professional salaries and benefits so we could be full-time educators.

And members like you are guiding CTA into the future. You’ve heard about the strategic planning process we’re engaged in now. It seems appropriate to do this during our sesquicentennial, to review and renew our work to support California public education. Even after our legislative victories, there are so many things coming at us at once — Common Core and its implementation, the worry around getting the support we need for teachers, the governor’s budget proposal, all the policy attacks, and the corporate attacks on collective bargaining and our evaluation process.

If we approach these issues in the short term, if we simply “circle the wagons” and fight, we will never get out this cycle. It behooves us to take a critical look at ourselves, a thorough examination of our organization, to determine how we might be better prepared and, at same time, how we might engage our members more thoughtfully.

As part of this process, members like you were surveyed online, in face-to-face focus groups and at meetings and conferences throughout the state. You talked and were heard. You, our members, want your union to reclaim and transform the profession, to change the narrative about the craft and the art of teaching. We’ve lost a share of the narrative as corporate reformers attempt to change the teacher into a technician, into a one-job-fits-all type of profession. Where’s the “profession” in that kind of thinking?

Members want CTA to tell a different story. And we’re doing that here, in this magazine, and in all the TV, radio and newspaper advertisements you’re seeing this month.

People are rooted in their communities, and educators are rooted in their communities, as well. Our local chapters are well suited to helping build connections between our members and the community, as well as helping them connect to their state association. It’s a powerful connection, and CTA, at the state level, is



learning from local leaders.

People feel a desperate need for CTA to take charge of things related to our profession and public schools. As educators, we want to feel successful, be better at what we do, and have a reliable measure of our practice. If we wait this out and let someone else come up with those measures, we’re going to get run over.

But if we take charge and lead, if we use our voices and tell our truths, we really do have a chance to change the landscape, to reshape and reframe the narrative.

I learned our organization is more resilient than I anticipated. We’re more open to thinking outside the box, to changing things that aren’t necessarily in everyone’s best interest. I expected more of a tug of war with folks who want to hold on to the old way of doing things. But I saw, and I see, a willingness to seriously engage, be better than we are, and make the necessary changes.

Renewing our mission, our spirit, our dedication to public education and our craft — I can’t think of a better way to celebrate CTA’s 150 years, to honor the amazing work of educators like Carolyn, and to give our members renewed opportunities to continue improving our profession through our teachers union. Please join us.

Dean E. Vogel

Dean E. Vogel
 CTA PRESIDENT



LETTERS & COMMENTS



Lysa Sassman's second-graders read about Read Across America in the *Educator* at Rock Creek Elementary in Auburn.

Your opinions and letters are welcome.

So, too, are your photos of teaching, learning and association activities. There is a 250-word limit on letters and all letters will be edited. Photo identifications and permissions are required. All materials submitted must include your name, address, daytime telephone number and email address. E-mail to editor@cta.org.

THANK YOU, TEACHERS

I believed it when I started my career as an educator, and I'm even more certain of it now: Teaching is the most important job there is.

Ask anyone about the most memorable people in their life, and there's usually a teacher at the top of the list — with good reason.

As we celebrate the Day of the Teacher, it's important for people to remember that teachers like you are often the greatest champions our children have. Your care and skill inspires our students, motivates them to do their best, and prepares them for the world beyond the classroom.

Inside those classrooms, teachers are not only the brains — they're also the heart. We should celebrate educators like you not only for what you teach, but also for giving us all the great gift of learning to believe in ourselves.

Let me wish all of our outstanding educators a wonderful Day of the Teacher. You deserve our thanks, today and every day.

—Tom Torlakson

State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DO TEST SCORES REALLY MATTER?

Why do CST scores not count for a student's graduation, or in some meaningful way toward a student's grade? If the test actually mattered to a student, then we can use it in our evaluations. But that's not the case, is it?

As it is, neither the pro nor the con arguments (April) addressed this crucial issue. What is CTA doing to make the Common Core more meaningful to individual students? Will the new test count toward student grades at all? If it does not affect the student in any way, then it ought not affect the teacher.

Why is this issue not addressed at all, like it's the elephant in the room? We are putting increasing responsibility on teachers, and increasingly less responsibility on students, not to mention parents.

—Ion Puschila

Associated Pomona Teachers

Editor's note: CTA held dozens of Common Core related trainings over the past two years that have been attended by thousands of members; it is a featured issue at Summer Institute (page 27), and local teams of teachers and administrators are encouraged to attend. Also, CTA believes student test scores should not be used in the summative evaluations of educators. See more on this at www.cta.org.

EVALUATE THIS

As a longtime teacher of a subject that is not regularly tested on the standardized tests (music), but knowing that the subject I teach has great value to the development of children, my question is: How would teachers in this category be evaluated?

In all the discussion of tying teacher evaluations to test scores, I have not yet seen any discussion of how or to what standards teachers who do not teach the four subjects tested would be evaluated. Any thoughts?

—Carol Kouklis

Gold Oak Teachers Association

PEOPLE BEFORE DISABILITIES

When reading "Joy, enthusiasm and a pooch" (March), I was upset by the first words: "Ren the therapy dog visits April Giles' class of ED students..." This upset me because you referenced the students' disability first, and them as people, second.

People First Language is important to special educators. I implore you, when writing or speaking about a person with a disability, to state the person first and the disability or difference second. The sentence would then read: "Ren the therapy dog visits April Giles' class of students with emotional disturbance."

I hope that you, as a highly regarded magazine for educators, will set the standard for how people with differences are written about in the future.

—Kara Lowney

Salinas Elementary Teachers Council



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

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- Reading and Literacy Portfolio

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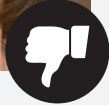
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No!



Public schools should not be the recruiting grounds for young people to be subjected to sophisticated, persuasive marketing techniques designed to sell them on joining the military.

I believe military recruitment is about the indoctrination of our young in a culture that glamorizes war and violence. Recruiters use deception and false promises to entice students who feel like they have few or no options. We call this the “poverty draft.” The lure of the military particularly impacts youth of color, and more middle-class families as college becomes less affordable.

I witnessed Marine recruiters promising students from working-poor families a way to be “successful,” go to college, buy a home for their parents and make their families proud. They promise male students a way to manhood, strength and independence. The promise females the best of all worlds: supervision and independence that will help them build strength and character. Recruiters know how to market the military in a way that speaks to the dreams and hopes of these young people.

It is particularly painful to see how the military recruiters gain the trust of families and become a “big brother” to potential recruits. Then, after the student enlists, they disappear.

The invasion of Iraq changed my life. I was outraged knowing that it was the young people I saw every day in the high schools of Los Angeles — as well as those across the country — who would perhaps die, lose limbs or have traumatic brain injury. I worried that when they returned home, many of them might live with post-traumatic stress disorder, homelessness or unemployment. Even worse, they could join the growing ranks of veterans who commit suicide.

I asked others to join in providing factual information to youth about the realities of war and enlistment connected to a broader national counter-recruitment movement. This was the beginning of CAMS (Coalition for Alternatives to Militarism in our Schools), which I brought to United Teachers Los Angeles. In the “Adopt a School” project, we identified a contact in each of 50 high schools to organize counter-recruitment efforts in the schools, including schoolwide restrictions on military recruitment, distributing “opt out” information so students could withhold contact information from recruiters, encouraging student-led Peace Clubs, sponsoring alternative career fairs, and inviting speakers such as veterans and filmmakers to share about their experiences with combat.

If we are a society that values our young, it is imperative we stop allowing the military to give them false and misleading information. It is wrong for the military to be afforded legitimacy and authority in our schools without also providing the truth about what it means to experience war. Each of us can make a difference. Over the years I’ve seen hundreds of students change their mind about enlisting. Learn about this movement and get connected through the National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth (www.nnomy.org).

Arlene Inouye, *United Teachers Los Angeles*, is a speech therapist and CAMS coordinator.



Yes!

Full disclosure: I am a military wife. My husband was on active duty for 30 years in the U.S. Navy. Our eldest son earned an ROTC scholarship and is a graduate of UC Berkeley. He and his wife are physicians on active duty in the U.S. Air Force. Our second serves in the Naval Reserves. So yes, I believe military recruiters should be allowed on high school campuses. Here’s why.

OPPORTUNITY: Our military services offer training and advanced education in a variety of fields, including auto mechanics, engine repair and maintenance, flight mechanics, air traffic control, construction, medical fields, linguistics, chaplain services and food service. Military members may drive, steer or guide planes, helicopters, drones, sailboats, small boats, large ships, cars, trucks or monster trucks. Those who sign up for a four-year commitment may stay on for a full career of 20 or 30 years.

PHYSICAL FITNESS: Through training and education, military members develop self-discipline and physical fitness. They may be trained as Olympians, or participate in inter-service sport rivalries.

ADVANCEMENT: The military is a meritocracy. Women and minorities are well represented, including at the highest levels.

Advancement is based upon merit. Those who display a positive work ethic move up.

INCOME: A fair wage is offered, with support for food and housing. Military members leave the service, prepared to compete for a competitive wage in the civilian job market.

SACRIFICE: The military is a voluntary service. It is a sacrifice to join. Yet it offers the opportunity to work, learn, succeed and excel while participating in a cause that is larger than self.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING: Those who display academic achievement and leadership accomplishments in high school may earn an ROTC scholarship to a civilian college or an appointment to a service academy. Professional schools are also available in medicine, dentistry, nursing, psychology and more. The debt is not in money, but in years to serve. That “free” education is an investment our country makes in the youth of America.

TRAVEL: Realistically, yes, service members may be sent into harm’s way, but they may also be sent to Germany, Italy or Japan, steam around the world, or travel to and through most of our 50 states.

DUTY, HONOR, COUNTRY: Let’s be honest. It hurts to send a young adult into harm’s way. Breathing stops. But when the decision is made, when that young adult seeks to live the life of military service, it is with pride that families — and schools — support their decision to serve our country.

IT’S THE RIGHT THING TO DO: Public schools gratefully accept public funding to support our students, even though that funding comes with strings attached. It would be disingenuous of us to reject access to military recruiters on our campuses because we may disapprove of the military mission. Who are we to allow our disapproval to deny access to others?

Christine Steigelman, *Unified Association of Conejo Teachers*, is a fifth-grade teacher at EARTH’S Magnet School in Newbury Park.

POINT / COUNTERPOINT

Should military recruiters be allowed on school campuses?

 *Summer Time*
AND THE
TRAVELING
IS EASY... *and Affordable!*

Good news: 

DREAMING OF A SUMMER BREAK AFTER WORKING HARD ALL YEAR? Whether you're planning a sabbatical or a family vacation, globe-trotting is possible on an educator's salary. There are bargains to be had and even freebies in some cases.

So whether you dream of zip-lining through the jungle, trekking through Europe, or lazing on a tropical island with good friends and a grownup beverage, here are ideas to get you started.

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN



Traveling gives teachers insight to their content areas, says Joe Massaro, standing here in front of the Louvre Museum in Paris.

Teachers share travel tales/tips

“When teachers travel, it helps with their content areas. Being a music teacher, I like to visit places where composers lived. It gives me better insight into their creative processes that may have influenced their work,” says Joe Massaro, El Monte Union Education Association. “It’s always enriching to visit other cultures and get a world perspective when you are away from your day-to-day routine.”

The Arroyo High School band teacher says travel helps his own creative process, too. He prefers to make his own travel plans; he redeems his credit card points for flights, cashes in on “rewards” programs for hotel stays, and asks friends in the hospitality industry for the “friend and family” rates to cut costs.

☀ TRY A TEACHER TOUR

Ed Campos wants to experience everything a country has to offer — the food, the language and culture.

“I’ve always wanted to travel and see as much of the world as possible,” says Campos, Visalia Unified Teachers Association. “I don’t need to be catered to. All I need is a backpack, something to snack on, a camera, and things I’ve never seen before to stretch my vision of what the world is.”

The independent studies teacher has seen a lot of the world thanks to Global Exploration for Educators Organization (GEEO), a nonprofit that runs travel programs for educators at a discount rate (www.geeo.org).

GEEO tours for teachers — and their guests — combine sightseeing, history, culture and even a school visit with fellow educators. A tour guide fluent in English accompanies the group. Open to teachers of all nationalities (K-12, college and retired), participants may earn graduate school credit (three units through Indiana University) and professional development credit while seeing the world.

“It’s cheap, it’s subsidized and fun, and it’s also not a lecture tour,” says Jesse Weisz of GEEO. “Beforehand, each teacher submits an action plan on what they want to learn and bring back into the classroom so we can help them meet their goals.”

Campos has been on two trips — one to Costa Rica and another to Peru — and will travel to Thailand, Laos and Vietnam this summer.

“It saves me about \$100 to \$150 per day (flight is separate) and includes accommodations, transportation between cities, fees for visiting museums, national parks and some meals,” says Campos. “You meet amazing people who have good hearts, compassion, and care about kids. It’s easier to jell with 10 to 15 teachers. On every trip, we donate school supplies to impoverished areas, play games with the kids and teach them some English.”

His Costa Rica trip livened up volcano lessons, and a visit to Machu Picchu reshaped history curriculum and Peruvian cooking projects for students.

“I would definitely recommend one of these trips to recharge your teaching battery, get some new motivation and find inspiration,” says Campos. “It’s wonderful to bring back that enthusiasm to the classroom and refocus your students.”



Ed Campos canyoneering in La Fortuna, Costa Rica.

Travel agents sometimes charge fees,

but a good one can save time and find bargains. The Internet also makes it easy to make arrangements yourself. In any case, you'll have to do some homework.

PLACE:

Read about it online and in guidebooks.



- Is it the right time of year? The Caribbean, for example, is cheaper in the summer, but it's also hurricane season, so buy trip insurance.
- Is it safe? The U.S. State Department issues travel warnings on its website (travel.state.gov/travel). Many countries have areas that are safe and areas that should be avoided.
- Will there be enough to do? Google "top 10 things to do" in the location you plan on visiting and see if the attractions are worth it. Researching ahead of time lets you know if a destination is friendly, affordable, educational and fun. If possible, talk to someone who's been where you are thinking of going. Ask if they'd recommend it and for how long. Read travel blogs and browse the Net.

Christine Remedios and her husband, Dennis McCarty, often swap homes with teachers abroad.

AIRFARE:

Track fares over time. If the cost drops significantly, book immediately.



- The time when you buy a ticket may affect its cost, so check at different times of day. Research shows that booking in the morning tends to be more expensive, and that people who book mid-week get better deals. The best airline comparison websites are travelocity.com, hotwire.com and kayak.com, although discount airlines aren't included. Airfarewatchdog.com can direct you to websites that offer discount tickets, including discount airlines such as Southwest or JetBlue.
- If there's a booking fee on the comparison website, go directly to the airline website. Speaking of comparison websites, check out the "last-minute specials." You may find a cheap flight to Ireland, or an all-inclusive vacation — including airfare — to Jamaica.

HOTEL:

Guidebooks (Lonely Planet, Fodor's) list hotels by price range and offer descriptions of various places.



- Purchase the books cheap secondhand on amazon.com. Internet tourism websites are less objective but also have hotel information. If a place looks good, check it out on tripadvisor.com.
- Remember, even the best places will have some negative tourist reviews, so consider what the majority say to get an accurate picture. Check out the location on Google Maps Street View to see if the area is near places you want to visit. And don't be afraid to bargain with hotels via e-mail; some overseas hotel operators are willing to drop the price upon request or will refer you to cheaper properties they also manage.
- If you are renting more than one room, ask for a group rate. If there's a language problem, translate English into the native tongue via a free online service such as babelfish.com for e-mail communications. Also, if you are brave and in the mood for "hotel roulette," try setting your own price at priceline.com or hotels.com.
- You can pick out the neighborhood, price and the overall rating of the hotel without knowing the actual name of the establishment until your bid has been accepted. Although a bit risky, waiting until the last minute can net tremendous discounts.

CONDO, APARTMENT OR HOUSE RENTAL:

Check out vrbo.com or airbnb.com or flipkey.com to stay in a home or condo anywhere in the world.



- Prices are usually reasonable because property owners are not paying a middleman. And if you want money to help subsi-

dize your travels, rent your own home out to tourists on Airbnb while you're gone.

PACKAGE DEALS:

Most of the websites listed offer package deals including airfare, hotel and car all for one price, but your hotel selections are restricted and sometimes higher end, which can result in a higher overall cost.



- Our favorite: skyauction.com auctions everything from hotel stays to Broadway shows to vacation packages. There is a minimum bid, and you can go from there.

CRUISES:

If you feel like being pampered, it's time to set sail.



- Cruise lines may be eager to fill empty cabins at the last minute at bargain rates. Check out cruisedeals.com or lastminutecruises.com.
- About port excursions: Taxis will often take you to the same place at a much cheaper rate than booking an outing through the cruise ship, if you don't mind being adventurous.

ALL INCLUSIVE:

Resorts around the world offer great bargains that include lodging and all you want to eat and drink. First, make sure there are no hidden fees!



OTHER TRANSPORTATION:

It's best to figure out in advance if you need to rent a car, or whether to rely on buses or taxis.



- If car rental seems expensive and public transportation (trains and buses) is spotty, shuttle vans may provide a reasonable alternative for tourists traveling from one part of a country to another. Shuttles can be booked



Alamere Falls, CA

in advance and are cheaper than taxis, and the bigger the group, the more affordable (which is definitely the case in Costa Rica). Or check out cheap interconnecting flights.

ATTRACTIONS/TOURS:

Booking an excursion online in advance may net you a cheaper price, because hotels often up the ante for their share of the profit.



- Check your guidebook for reputable tour guides, prices for different tour operators, whether lunch is included, etc. If there are more than two people, request a group rate.

TRIP INSURANCE:

When planning a trip that includes airfare, hotels and other nonrefundable expenses, a little insurance goes a long way.



- American Express Card holders are eligible for cheap travel insurance, in case something goes wrong. Airlines also provide insurance.

VACCINATIONS, MEDICATIONS:

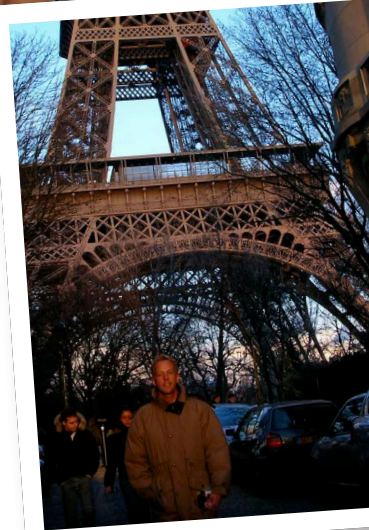
Going to the tropics? Those pesky mosquitoes can be carriers of diseases ranging from malaria to yellow fever to dengue fever.



- Check with your guidebook, doctor or local travel clinic to make sure you are vaccinated against diseases that may be present in the area you are visiting.
- Ask your doctor or travel clinic nurse for antibiotics in case of emergency. Most will say yes. Better to have and not need than to need and not have.



"Trips help you recharge your teaching battery, get some new motivation and find inspiration," says Ed Campos, shown trekking to Machu Picchu (above) and sampling the food in Costa Rica (right). "It's wonderful to bring back that enthusiasm to the classroom and refocus your students."

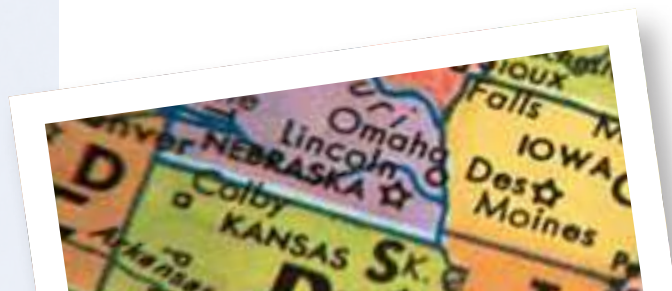


Joe Massaro in front of the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

Save on car rentals!

Renting a car, SUV, or minivan in the United States? Take advantage of the savings on car rentals from Enterprise, Hertz or Alamo, thanks to CTA Member Benefits.

The CTA Rental Car Program provides you vehicle rentals at reduced or low flat rates, regardless of location. While it doesn't include other potential rental-related charges, like optional insurance, the flat rate is competitive in many locations. It's fast and easy to make arrangements. Go to CTAMemberBenefits.org for details.



☀️ SWAP HOMES WITH A TEACHER ABROAD

Christine Remedios traveled abroad seven times in the last 10 years and never paid for lodging. That's because the Thornton Junior High School French teacher swaps homes with other teachers. The switcheroo is *fantastique*, says the Fremont Unified District Teachers Association member, whose favorite destinations include France and Quebec.

For nominal membership fees, she can log on to websites that provide access to individuals in foreign countries willing to exchange homes. Her favorite, www.echangedemaison.com, is not just for educators but for anyone interested in a home exchange.

"You can peruse listings and see pictures of homes," says Remedios, who lives near San Francisco. "Then you establish contact with people who want to come to the Bay Area. It works great; no money is exchanged."

Is she worried about strangers staying in her house?

"We've never had a problem. Teachers tend to be responsible people. We're also in their home. We respect each other's property. It's like the Golden Rule. We've even exchanged cars."

Exchanges are usually for a period of three weeks. Typically, she meets the family before the exchange takes place, at her home or theirs. The departing family is often driven to the airport by the arriving family.

"That way, you know who you are dealing with," she explains, adding that on occasion, she and her husband brought their dog to France (no quarantine required) and also did "pet sitting" at guest homes. "Teachers don't make a lot of money, and it's a creative way to have a good vacation. It's a great way to travel, and you don't feel as much a tourist when you are living in someone's house, shopping in the local grocery store and going to the local park."

Also worth checking is Global Home Exchange for teachers, www.4homex.com/teacher.htm, where educators can find homes to stay for free rather than staying in a single room of an expensive hotel. 🏠

MORE WAYS

to save money or travel free...

NEA discounts:

NEA members have access to many travel discounts. Visit NEA Member Benefits at neamb.com and find travel and restaurant deals in the Click & Save section. Learn how to receive a 20 percent discount on stays at Red Roof Inn nationwide. Find promotion codes that provide discounts on Hertz, Alamo and Enterprise car rentals.

Lead an education tour:

Teachers who lead an education tour can travel free and even earn continuing education units. Some tour companies hand out free trips and cash bonuses to teachers willing to share their expertise. For example, EF Educational Tours allows a teacher to gather six individuals — including family and friends — who want to take a tour, and the teacher travels for free. Visit eftours.com.

The ISE Card:

The International Student Exchange cards offer great discounts to teachers, too. Benefits include up to \$2,000 travel and medical insurance, 24-hour travel and medical assistance, airline bankruptcy protection, a global phone card, and discounts including the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Eurostar Train between London and Paris, and much more. Visit isecard.com.

The International Teacher Identity Card:

Just \$25 gives teachers access to discounts around the world including airfares, sightseeing, food and museums. Visit statravel.com/teacher-discount-card.htm.

Travel grants:

Visit edutopia.org/teacher-travel-grants to learn about grants available via the Earthwatch Institute, Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad Program, and numerous other agencies that offer opportunities for teachers seeking educational travel experiences.

Home hosting:

Visit sites such as Teachers Travel Web, teacherstravelweb.com, which, for a nominal yearly fee, connects teachers willing to host educators in their home for free. Another website, Educators Travel Network, educatorstravel.com, allows subscribers to stay in the home of a teacher for an extremely low rate of \$40 per night as a guest, or occupy the entire home when the owner is absent for \$50.

FRANCE



Switching houses is *fantastique*, says Christine Remedios, shown here (left) with her husband chez friends in Migné-Auxances, France.

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LISTEN IN!

Ever want to eavesdrop on colleagues? Here's your chance. This "listen in" icon designates a series of conversations CTA experts, who are members like you, are having on today's issues.



Joys, challenges and rewards of teaching

Fourth-grade teacher colleagues **Michelle Makinson** and **Sarah Payne** teach at Bagby Elementary in San Jose. Both are Cambrian District Teachers Association members. Sarah has Michelle's son in her class.

PHOTO AND COMPILATION BY MIKE MYSLINSKI

Michelle: Teaching is a calling. Nobody in their right mind would do this job for money. I know we get paid, but it's not enough.

Sarah: It's not a lot. I got my teaching credential at San Jose State and I'm here now — which is the best decision I could ever make. I feel so happy about being able to make a difference. It's not just about the high test scores. At the beginning of the year, we see those students who don't want to raise their hands, who don't want to ask questions, who don't have a lot of self-confidence.

Michelle: It's about their evolution as a person.

Sarah: We're teaching people how to be good people. How to be good citizens.

Michelle: It's even more important we do this with class sizes increasing, as we're getting combo classes that force behaviors into smaller quarters. It's even more imperative.

Sarah: Now we are at 30 students to one teacher.

Michelle: PE used to be twice as much time as it is now. Music is now every other week instead of every week. You see more behavior problems because there aren't these outlets

for people to shine. Everything is academics, academics, academics. Because of budget cuts, we are neglecting the whole child.

Sarah: What keeps me going is knowing that I can think of things to say that will really have an impact on students.

Michelle: It's also about looking back at somebody I had nine years ago who sat in my room like an angry depressed lump and did not do any work. Seriously. Now he's playing football and he's going to go to college. Now he comes back to me and he's helping me with another student. He's volunteering to tell his story to this other child. I knew he was depressed and sad. It had to do with the human element. How does that come out on the standardized test scores?

Sarah: We strive to build this community in our classroom. We are a classroom family. They have to feel like it's a safe place, that they're not going to be made fun of.

Michelle: I am proud of our test scores here, but that's not what I'm most proud of. I am most proud of our climate. That when you come to this school, people know the "Bagby B's." Be safe, be responsible, and be respectful.

Sarah: We have a song, too, about that.

Michelle: We have a framework in which we're organizing all of our behavioral expectations by these "Bagby B's." Kids can go, "I know why I'm not supposed to climb up that slide — because it's not safe."

Sarah: We're teaching them that here at school, but we want them to apply these things outside of school as well. Not only in the playground, but in the classroom and outside of school. For me, it's about teaching them to persevere. I see a lot of potential in our students. I also see that teachers have to spend a lot of time teaching them how to persevere.

Michelle: I don't believe there are any bad kids. There is always hope. I never run out of hope. You don't always see the plant growing until way later.

Sarah: This is my second year as a classroom teacher. I am staying.

Michelle: (Smiles) I'll tackle her. I'm not letting her leave.



Sarah Payne (left) and Michelle Makinson in conversation.

Listen to Sarah Payne sing her song about the “Bagby B’s” for her fourth-graders.

www.cta.org/bagbyB



Bagby B’s On My Mind
Written By: Sarah Payne

When I’m outside by the yellow line
gonna eat my snack right behind.
I’ll learn to wait my turn in line,
got the Bagby B’s on my mind.
On the playground the other day,
asked the new girl if she wanted to play.
Made a good friend along the way,
and there’s one more thing I want to say.
I’m gonna be safe and I’m gonna be kind
with the Bagby B’s on my mind.
I’m gonna be safe and I’m gonna be kind
with the Bagby B’s on my mind.
In the classroom after recess
The Bagby B’s are the real true test.
We work together to be our best,
Lend a hand to clean, though it’s not our mess.
I’m gonna be safe and I’m gonna be kind,
with the Bagby B’s on my mind.
I’m gonna be safe and I’m gonna be kind,
with the Bagby B’s on my mind.
I’m gonna be safe and respectful,
Responsibility is cool.
These are the Bagby B’s I’ll learn at school.
I’m gonna be safe and respectful,
Responsibility is cool.
These are the Bagby B’s I’ll learn at school.

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RETHINKING SUSPENSION

What makes sense?

What the
RESEARCH
shows

40%

of 778,084 suspensions
in 2009-10 were for “defiance”
and minor infractions

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN
PHOTOS BY SCOTT BUSCHMAN



Are student suspensions hurting academic achievement?

Some CTA members are helping kids stay in school by finding alternatives to suspension while keeping safety as the first priority.

“Zero tolerance” policies emphasizing suspending or expelling unruly students became widespread in the 1990s as schools responded to fears of violence, weapons and drug use.

California schools issued 778,084 suspensions and expulsions in 2009-10, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Of these suspensions, 40 percent were for “defiance” and minor infractions. About 400,000 students were suspended in California; this number is smaller because some students were suspended more than once.

Students can’t learn if they are not in school. They fall further behind in their studies. They may be unsupervised. Students feel a lack of connection to school, which fosters worse behavior.

“It’s time to return to common sense,” says CTA Secretary-Treasurer Mikki Cichocki-Semo, a member of the hearing panel on suspensions and expulsions in San Bernardino Unified. “Kids, as well as teachers, are entitled to due process. And we need to look at what’s best for students. There should be alternatives to suspension and expulsion whenever possible.”

Educators question the value of suspending students for minor infractions, especially in light of last September’s passage of AB 1729, mandating that suspension be imposed only when other means fail to bring about proper conduct. Fighting, drugs and weapons are still cause for suspension.

With the support of, and in coalition with, The California Endowment (see page 22), CTA and its members are helping to lower suspension rates and keep kids in school.

Here are CTA members who are



◊ Daron Andrade, William Berry and Brenda Gordon say teachers have taken back Gardena High.

“What can we do to fix this?”
Aaron Harkey asks as he discusses
classroom behavior with Marsy.



helping to lower suspension rates, improve student behavior and improve the overall school climate.

Taking back Gardena High School

Years ago, students ignored the warning bell calling them to class at Gardena High School. They roamed the hallways. There were no consequences for being tardy or ditching class. Fights broke out constantly. Kids were running the school.

Today, when the bell rings, a loud-speaker reminds students they have 90 seconds to get to class. They sprint across campus as the countdown continues. Students know that if they're late, they'll receive a tardy and detention.

“Move it, let's go, come on, my loves,” calls out Daron Andrade, dean of student discipline, to runners.

Andrade gestures to fellow United Teachers Los Angeles members standing outside their classroom doors, waiting for students to arrive.

“When that started happening, it was a new beginning,” she says proudly. “The presence of teachers in the hallway shows we have taken back our school.”

Improvement at the inner-city high school began in 2009 with a leadership change, says English teacher Brenda Gordon. The principal implemented a “tardy sweep.” Security staff started rounding up students who were not in class, escorting them to the office, and issuing tardy slips and lunch detentions before sending them back to class. Staff also began enforcing the dress code, to students' surprise.

“It was a big cultural change not only for us, but for the kids,” says Gordon. “Once teachers got on board, kids knew what was expected of them.”

Students quietly file into the auditorium for lunch detention. Those who come voluntarily sit on one side of the room, writing one-page essays on how to be a better student. Those who come involuntarily write two-page essays. There is no chatter.

“Kids know that detention's no joke,” says math teacher William Berry, who graduated from the school in 1970. “It's nice to have an administration that backs us.”

Before, students were suspended for minor infractions, such as “defiance.” Now most things are handled by detention. Gardena reduced suspensions by 83 percent between 2008 and 2011.

Positive behavior and good attendance is rewarded with barbecues and assemblies honoring teens who bring up their grades. Gordon hands out awards to those caught “being good” and lets ticketholders pick a prize at the end of the month.

With online access to attendance records and grades, teachers in “advisory period” have a better handle on what's going on with their students.

“We're on top of it,” says Gordon. “I make phone calls and get parents and counselors involved. These kids are like, OMG, what are we going to do now?”

But things aren't perfect. Two years ago,

a gun went off inside a backpack, injuring two students. That was a wakeup call, says Andrade. The school now randomly “wands” students with metal detectors each morning. Gang activity is seldom seen on campus these days. API scores and CAHSEE pass rates have gone up.

“It's a much different vibe now,” says Berry. “I used to walk around campus and feel the tension, but it's not there anymore. The kids behave a lot better. Teacher morale is better.”

“It takes a village to raise these kids, and we have evolved into a village,” says Andrade. “Working together, we've made a difference.”

A restorative justice approach in Santa Barbara

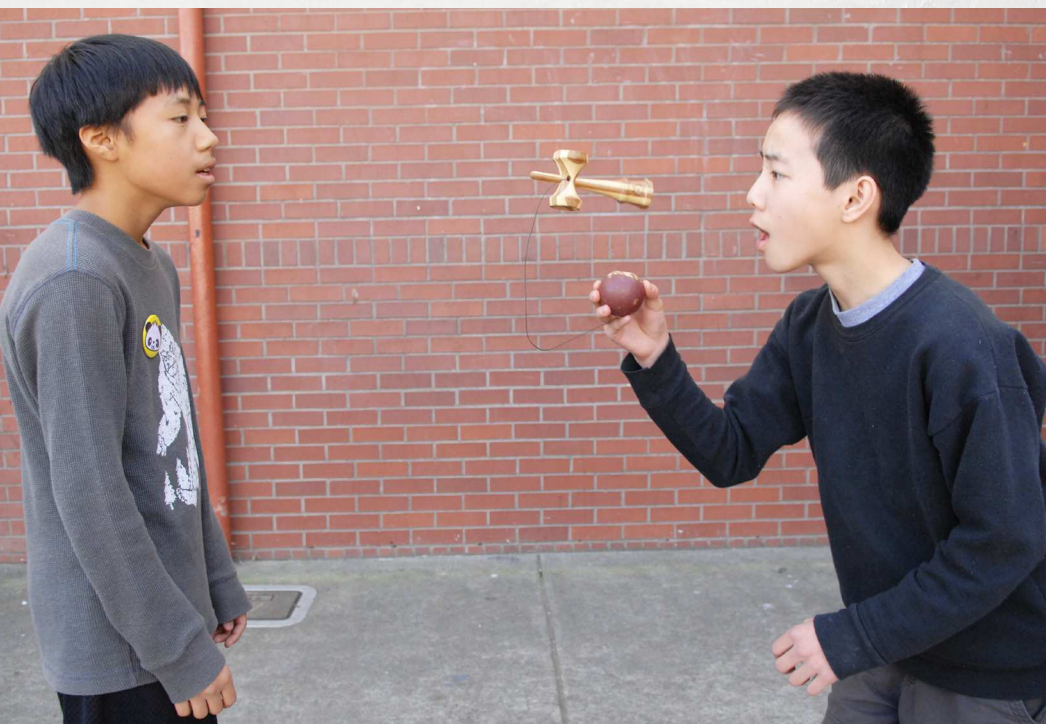
Marsy has problems in science class. The seventh-grader talks instead of paying attention and skips homework. On the verge of failing the class, she's sought help from a third party.

“Why is this happening, and who do you think is being harmed by this?” asks Aaron Harkey, the AVID teacher she's sought out. “What can we do to fix it?”

Marsy says she talks because she sits near friends. She admits she's harming herself, the science teacher and classmates by disrupting the learning environment. She suggests changing her seat so she's not sitting near friends, then



John Houchin



Kevin Thao and Chris Her play kendama during lunch at Jackman Middle School.

worries she'll make new friends and talk to them. She offers to attend study hall to catch up.

Harkey offers an "intervention" with himself, the student and science teacher to work out a plan. Meanwhile, he'll ask the teacher to put a Post-It on Marssy's desk to signal when a seat change is necessary, so the lesson can continue uninterrupted.

Welcome to Santa Barbara Junior High School's restorative justice approach, which improved student behavior and cut the suspension rate this year. It's a novel approach to find out why things happen, letting students take responsibility for their actions and communicating about ways to prevent bad behavior in the future.

"I like talking with somebody I'm comfortable with," says Marssy, who prefers that her last name not be disclosed. "It helps me."



Don't know what kendama is? Check it out!

www.cta.org/kendama

Concerned about high suspension rates, the school board asked the junior high to pilot the program before it went districtwide. Santa Barbara Teachers Association members jumped on board.

"We're proud to lead the way," says math teacher Kathleen Glenn, one of five school employees who went to Denver Public Schools for training.

Posters in every classroom depict the Five R's: Respect, Responsibility, Relationships, Repair and Reintegration.

"There's no one-size-fits-all approach," says Glenn. "It has to be customized for each student and the offense. We still need traditional discipline and referrals. But it's working for a lot of kids. We take care of issues at the classroom level with a few minutes in the hallway and a quick discussion. Kids feel empowered to talk about why they did what they did and their feelings. They don't need to take it any further or act out, because they've been heard."

Science teacher Marilyn Garza found it helpful to have her entire class sit in a circle with three teachers and a counselor when her students behaved badly for a substitute. They talked about what good

behavior should look like when a substitute teacher is present.

"It was not defensive and better than detention," says Garza. "When everyone sits in a circle and feels like they have buy-in, we can describe what a positive culture looks like. It didn't happen again."

Science teacher Julie Kluss refers fewer students to the principal with the new approach. "When you listen to students without judgment and ask how you can help them, you develop a better relationship with them."

"Initially some teachers had dread and suspicion," art teacher John Houchin recalls. "But teachers embraced the restorative justice approach. It changed the climate of our school.

It's not just a program; it's a gift."

To learn more, visit www.restorativejusticecolorado.org/restorative-justice-in-schools.html.



Marilyn Garza



Jackman Middle School students in "dance-off" during lunchtime.



Marty Clark oversees lunchtime detention at Jackman Middle School.

P

Pushing the positive in Elk Grove

During lunchtime at Jackman Middle School, students suddenly migrate into a large circle in the quad. No, it's not a sign of an impending fight. It means a "Dance Off" competition is about to take place. Students congregate to watch contestants; the loudest applause determines the winner.

Creating a fun, positive environment where students want to be at school is the goal of teachers and Principal Paul Burke. It's part of the school's Positive Intervention and Support Program, put into place to improve the school's discipline problem. It's working quite well.

Five years ago, it was a different story.

"The tardy bell would ring, and 100 kids would stay out wandering the quad," recalls history teacher Mike Phillips. "You'd write a tardy or a detention slip and send them to the office, and nothing would happen. It was frustrating. Morale was lagging."



Mike Phillips

**STUDENTS CANNOT
LEARN IF THEY ARE
NOT IN SCHOOL.**

Suspensions spiked in 2008-09 after a former principal instituted a “zero tolerance” policy. The school had the highest number of suspensions in Northern California, with 52 percent of the school’s black students suspended at least one time, compared with 25 percent of its white students.

Elk Grove Education Association members and Burke decided to turn things around. Clear behavior expectations are now accompanied by consequences to avert suspensions. This includes lunchtime and Wednesday night detention. A “tools” program was formed — consisting of teachers, counselors, security and other staff members — to help students who do not respond to minor discipline. Team members determine the source of misbehavior and make sure students’ needs are being met. Outreach efforts increased parental involvement; parents are invited to sit with their unruly kids in class.

Counselors formed a conflict management program, training students to mediate disputes.

“When students can work it out, they’re not fighting, getting suspended and missing class,” says head counselor Tyrone Weaver.

When teachers formed professional learning communities, creating lessons to increase student engagement, academic achievement went up, says Lisa Adams, History Department chair. Teachers made more of an effort to form relationships with students, says Adams, who started attending students’ basketball games and sponsoring clubs.



Tyrone Weaver

“There’s a consistent effort to get everyone on board with common goals, and have students connect to the campus,” says math teacher Taira Redding.

Connection is fostered through events such as lunchtime dances, kendama contests and barbecues for students who increase their GPA. Teachers reward good behavior in their classrooms. Redding, for example, has a “banking” system where students rack up points for good behavior and can “buy” a pizza party.

Rewarding the positive helped suspensions plummet and achievement soar: The 2011-12 school year had 729 suspensions, compared with 1,242 in 2008. Last year the school’s API score went up by 42 points.

“It’s not perfect,” says Redding. “We’ve gone through tremendous strife to get everyone on the same page with a schoolwide focus, common expectations for students and common staff goals. While there are a lot of good things happening, we still have a long ways to go. We are a work in progress.”



Grant helps CTA define alternative discipline, close achievement gaps

CTA members like you noted the disparity of suspension rates between students of color and white students, so CTA wrote policy and advocated for AB 1729 and a host of other bills signed into law last year. AB 1729 requires school districts to document alternatives taken prior to suspending a student.

In addition, CTA received a grant from The California Endowment to address closing achievement gaps through positive disciplinary strategies and offering alternatives to traditional suspension and expulsion policies. The grant:

- Helps CTA work with school districts to align discipline policies, implement restorative justice, and develop best practices for use in the classroom.
- Promotes trainings both externally and internally using existing CTA workshops plus physical and social/emotional health-related trainings developed by UC San Francisco.
- Supports comprehensive school discipline legislation.



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LISTEN IN!

Mentoring and new teachers

Irene Frazier is retiring this year after 32 years teaching English in Grass Valley. **Guy Greever** is a first-year science teacher at the same school, which he also attended while growing up in the community. Both are Nevada Union High School Teachers Association members.

PHOTOS AND COMPILATION BY DINA MARTIN



Irene: How are you doing?

Guy: I'm a little beat these days, with a newborn.

Irene: Are you getting any sleep at all?

Guy: She sleeps for about five hours a night now.

Irene: This is your first full year of teaching.

Guy: Yep, I student-taught here last year. I split time between PE and science because I was getting my credential. I coached varsity basketball last year. This year I coached freshman boys as head coach.



Irene: So you've had a new baby, you taught for the first time, and you coached a sport.

Guy: Yeah.

Irene: If that were me, I'd say you shouldn't have been allowed to do a sport.

Guy: It definitely was a heavy load. Luckily, the sport ended right before the baby came.

Irene: I'm sure you were excited to do a sport, but as a person who's been a BTSA* support provider, and seeing how much time that entails, and how difficult it is to maintain a normal life and teach the first year anyway... Most of us don't remember much from the first year except staying up really late and getting up early to do lessons. It's a job that if you've got a few years under your belt, you can take on all that, but most principals are looking to hire someone who could do sports, who can take on a club. Sometimes new teachers are afraid to say no because they are afraid they will lose the job. We're not always kind to our new teachers.

Guy: I'm going to make it through, though.

Irene: You are. The sad thing I heard is you got a pink slip.

Guy: It's the way things are with the seniority list. I can't say it's totally unexpected, but it's still disappointing, especially with a new baby. I don't know where the road leads from here.

Irene: The fact that you got your layoff notice has nothing to do with your teaching ability. You know that, don't you?

Guy: That's what everyone tells me.

Irene: I mean, we have declining enrollment. Last year we laid off someone who had been here 20 years. Declining enrollment is really hard.

Guy: I heard that the projection is by 2016 we'll have lost 1,700 students. That's faster than they thought.

Irene: Our young people are our greatest export. But you have roots here. If something does open up, you live in the community. You don't have to buy into the housing market. It's becoming tough for teachers who move up here. I wonder if we will get more commuting.

Guy: That's what I'm looking at now. There's not a whole lot out there. I might be looking at a bit of a commute. I may have to head down to the valley. At least to Rocklin.

*Note: *BTSA is Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment.*



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MAY 21 EVENT

CTA ESP Day

Get on board and recognize the vital contributions of education support professionals during ESP Week (May 19-25). Find out more:

www.cta.org/esp



JUNE 1 APPLICATION DEADLINE

NEA Foundation grants

The NEA Foundation has awarded more than \$8.5 million in grants to educators and ESP, including many CTA members. Student Achievement Grants support improving academic achievement. Learning and Leadership Grants support high-quality professional development activities. Applications are reviewed three times a year.

Find out more: neafoundation.org

JULY 1-6 CONVENTION

NEA Representative Assembly

Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta

With more than 8,000 delegates (including more than 1,000 from California), the RA is the world's largest democratic deliberative body. CTA members help set policy and chart the direction of the NEA.

Find out more: www.nea.org/ra

JULY 22-25 CONFERENCE

Presidents Conference

Fairmont Hotel, San Jose

This four-day training program is geared toward local chapter leaders. New presidents and presidents of locals in the Community College Association begin on Monday with specially tailored training; other participants join them Tuesday for electives and workshops to enhance leadership skills and understanding of issues. New this year is Camp CTA, a program of activities for children of participants.

Find out more: www.cta.org/conferences

AUGUST 4-8 CONFERENCE

Summer Institute

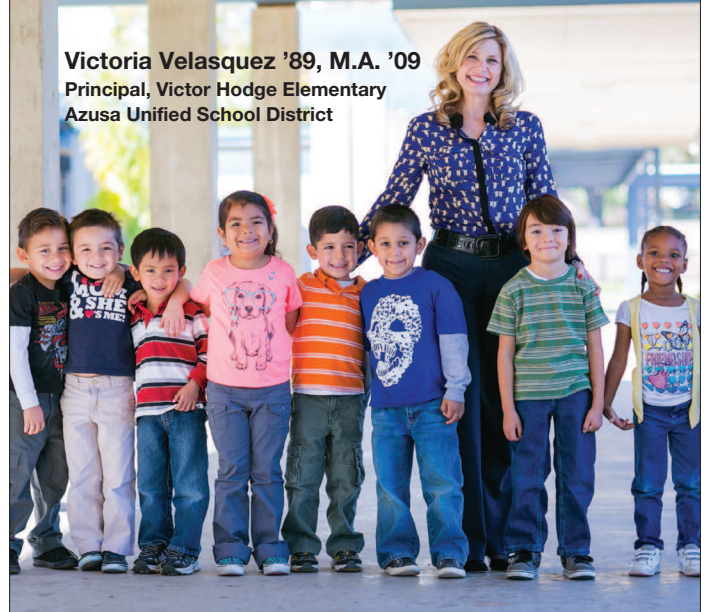
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The premiere workshop of its kind, Summer Institute offers trainings that assist chapter leaders in the day-to-day representation and support of members. Sessions include Communications, Instruction and Professional Development, Emerging Leaders, Bargaining, School Finance, Health and Welfare Issues, Legal, and Member Benefits.

Find out more: www.cta.org/conferences

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Negotiations and Organizational Development Strand

Emerging Leaders — Novice activists learn the skills needed to become effective organizers and future leaders in their chapter as the basic concepts of unionism and advocacy, union history and structure, and effective organizing techniques are covered.

Essential Bargaining Skills — In hands-on trainings, bargaining teams negotiate an agreement using a 10-step bargaining path. Extensive coaching and debriefing sessions help determine which strategies were successful.

Advanced Bargaining Skills — Learn advanced strategies, analyze contract language, dissect a district budget, balance complex goals, and use CTA's research database. Prepared for those who have three years of experience on a local bargaining team or who completed the Essential Bargaining Skills track and have one year of experience on a local bargaining team.

School Finance — Learn about school finance and district budgets. Track the trends of budget priorities, calculate the cost of a bargaining proposal, determine a district's ability to pay, and develop comparability data to support bargaining objectives.

Health and Welfare Issues for Active Members and Retirees — Bargain health benefits. Topics include current health care measures, CTA coalition activities, and Medicare benefits for retirees. Be prepared to discuss local Summary Plan Descriptions, contract language, and other features of local health benefits programs.

Legal Strand

Track I (Sunday–Tuesday) — Focusing on “group” labor and employment issues, topics include basic union and employee rights under the Educational Employment Relations Act; the legal framework for bargaining; Brown Act open meeting issues; members’ rights to union representation; duty of fair representation; which union activities are protected by labor laws; and when an unfair practice charge can be filed successfully.

Track II (Tuesday–Thursday) — Focusing on “individual” labor and employment issues, topics include the rights of union members under antidiscrimination and sexual harassment laws; the rights of educational employees to a safe and healthy workplace; discipline and dismissal procedure under the Education Code; disability discrimination and reasonable accommodation; leave of absence issues; and cyberlaw issues.

Instruction and Professional Development Strand — Teams of administrators, curriculum coordinators and other educators are encouraged to attend! Learn in-depth knowledge on implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the accompanying Smarter Balanced assessments. Learn about ELD and CCSS, discover implementation strategies from colleagues throughout the state, examine instruction and assessment practices for student learning, find out about numerous resources and curriculum units aligned to the CCSS, and address the association's role in implementing curriculum and standards-driven instruction. Keynote speaker Marcia L. Tate, author and educational consultant, will speak on instructional strategies for teaching the CCSS.

Member Benefits Strand — Come party with Member Benefits and celebrate CTA's 150 years! In this partial-week strand (Sunday–Tuesday), chapter leaders see how CTA/NEA Member Benefit programs add value to association membership. Have fun and gather tips and ideas on how local chapters provide tools to meet members' needs, gather members for

organizing efforts, grow and retain membership, convert agency-fee payers to members, and build chapter appreciation and loyalty. Hands-on activities teach how to survey membership and plan member benefits events.

Communications Strand

Internal Communications — Communicate effectively online. Use Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to inform and engage members. Create an e-newsletter, polish your e-writing skills and learn the dos and don'ts of e-mailing.

External Communications — Get news coverage of your chapter's issues. Participate in a simulated news conference. Practice public speaking and learn easy, fun tips to help you deliver strong, effective speeches with confidence. Learn message discipline and strategies for crisis communications.

★ Summer Institute
Registration Deadline
is July 19, 2013

LISTEN IN!

Teaching and technology

Alicia Garcia, Calipatria Unified Teachers Association, and George Cheung, Covina Unified Education Association, met at a technology workshop during CTA's Good Teaching Conference South.

PHOTOS AND COMPILATION BY BILL GUY

Alicia: I am hindered in using new technologies in my teaching because of a lack of both hardware and readily available professional development. Our district is trying to get us the equipment and a few years ago we finally got teacher laptops for some classrooms on a lottery basis. But progress has been slow because of all the recent budget cuts.

George: I've seen a huge difference in how I was previously supported and in what I am able to do now. But my first ancient projector had one of those pop-up mirrors. It was so dim that if the classroom door was open, you couldn't see anything on the screen. I had to purchase my own laptop for classroom use because we had little to no technology.

Alicia: When I started, I had an Apple IIe, the computers that were supposed to "revolutionize" education. They required floppies and then the 3x5 hard disks. But because we lacked the necessary professional development to know how to use them, they became monuments that just sat in the classrooms.

I now have four computers, and I was so excited two years ago when I got a flat screen for my classroom.

George: I had a radio background before becoming a teacher, so I knew that I needed to merge technology into my students' education. Plus, I was often bored in high school, so with all the advances in technology, I just knew that reliance solely on traditional methods would not work with today. Many of my students have their own cellphones, but even if they don't have access to much technology at home, as soon as you make it available to them, they embrace it.

Alicia: Some teachers in my school are getting iPads, but many still do not know how to use them. They may search the Internet or take a photo or two. Just because someone has the hardware doesn't mean that they are automatically going to know how to use it. If I find out that someone's is in a drawer somewhere, I say, "Whoa! Give it to me and I'll use it!" We need more professional development, but a good deal of our training comes from the Imperial County Office of Education, and that's 30 miles away.

George: I've gone from purchasing my own laptop to the district launching an initiative for every student to have an iPad for classroom use. My class is a pilot project to help iron out the issues, and I am now the director of PD for my site. There are ongoing discussions about me training teachers throughout the district in how to incorporate and use new technologies. With an average class size of between eight and 14 students who rotate every period, I have 12 iPads that students use on a rotational basis. They don't take the iPads home yet, but we are moving toward that. The district recognized that they can actually save money by purchasing each student an iPad over the cost of purchasing textbooks. Not having to make paper copies of lessons also saves money, as does using technology to communicate with students and parents — both in human effort in preparing the letters or fliers and in postage.

Alicia: We do have computer labs at every school site, and I have a pullout program where I teach first-graders one-finger keyboarding, and our district has classes at the high school level to teach students how to use technology for individual learning.

George: I think we can both agree that most CTA members could benefit from more professional development in how to bring technology into their teaching. I really appreciate having technology workshops at the Good Teaching Conference, but there's only one strand — four sessions on Saturday and one on Sunday. I'd really like to see greater emphasis on this important issue.



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State Council delegates rally in support of commonsense immigration reform, anticipating the May Day Immigrants' Rights March in Washington, D.C., attended by Council members Raul Gonzalez of Visalia Unified TA, Sonia Martin-Solis of UTLA, George Sheridan of Black Oak Mine TA, and Sergio Martinez of Hacienda-La Puente TA.



CTA President Dean E. Vogel discusses the plummeting number of pink slips, from 20,000 last year to 3,000 in March, with Cecily Myart-Cruz, UTLA, who chairs the Civil Rights in Education Committee. The fall can be directly attributed to the historic passage of the CTA-supported Proposition 30. Says Vogel: "We changed the number of pink slips that were sent out this year, and we changed the public conversation." Read Vogel's remarks to State Council at cta.org/april2013statecouncil.

State Council advocates for students and the profession

BY DINA MARTIN

As CTA embarks on its 150th anniversary celebration this year, State Council continued the tradition of standing up for the cause of public education. Your elected State Council delegates:

- Took positions on some 150 legislative bills that went through the State Legislation Committee. Among them were Support positions on AB 375 and AB 1338 by Assembly Member Joan Buchanan, which would streamline procedures for teacher dismissal while preserving due process rights. Council also took positions on 22 Community College Association bills, including AB 283, which would provide community colleges with a property tax backfill.
- Elected Dean E. Vogel to a second two-year term as president. Vice President Eric C. Heins was also elected to a second term of office.
- Approved a New Business Item putting CTA on record for endorsing and encouraging members to attend the "May Day Immigrants' Rights March" and using social media, CTA Facebook, Twitter, email blasts and newsletters to advertise this historic event. Delegates staged a brief "rally" in support of immigration reform.
- Heard NEA Secretary-Treasurer Becky Pringle deliver a passionate address about NEA's support of commonsense immigration reforms that value keeping families together, and about the proposed \$3 dues increase to support teacher-led professional development programs, which will be decided at the NEA Representative Assembly in July.



Secretary-Treasurer Mikki Cichocki-Semo discusses numbers with Annette Bonifacius, Gridley TA, during a Service Center meeting.

Get details from your locally elected delegate. Read more at www.cta.org/april2013statecouncil.



Dale Kennedy, Kings Canyon EA, salutes the flag as State Council delegates say the Pledge of Allegiance.



Rebecca Harper, San Geronio SCC staff, and Darla Bramlette, Panama-Buena Vista TA, check out CTA's new conference cellphone app before a Service Center meeting.



State Council delegates honored three California Teachers of the Year: Veronica Marquez, fifth-grade teacher, United Teachers Los Angeles; Sebastien Paul De Clerck, high school French and Italian teacher, Ventura Unified Education Association; and l'Asha Warfield, seventh-grade teacher, Oakland Education Association and California's nominee for National Teacher of the Year.

Elected delegates hard at work

State Council Committees drive CTA actions, beliefs

AS CTA'S TOP GOVERNING BODY, State Council has 22 committees ranging from assessment and testing to school safety, and from curriculum and instruction to professional rights and responsibilities. Council delegates do not consider an issue until it has been thoroughly reviewed and recommended by the committees. Most committees have subgroups that deal with specifics of an issue, for example: Policy, Practice, School Safety, School Management, or Legislation.

Some of April's committees covered the omnibus bill and its effect on school safety issues, or the attempts to eviscerate teacher rights to remove children from the classroom for the day for violating rules outlined in EC 48910. Others delved into the impacts of the Governor's Local Control Funding Formula and took positions on issues such as the proposed Common Core Mathematics Frameworks and the Next Generation Science Standards. Delegates heard presentations by the CDE on Smarter Balanced Assessments and the ELD standards. They took their work home with them to prepare for their review of the math frameworks.

What do State Council committees do?

Through State Council, teachers have a voice in the development of Common Core State Standards.

Pia Vanmeter

*Riverside City Teachers Association,
Curriculum and Instruction Committee*



Committees provide direction to State Council in developing policies to help teachers do what they do.

Jose Chavez

*California Faculty Association, CSU Sacramento,
Curriculum and Instruction Committee*



We discussed the teacher dismissal bill, which keeps students safe, safeguards the integrity of the profession, and protects the rights of educators.

Linda Venturino

*San Ramon Valley Education Association,
Teacher Evaluation and Academic Freedom Committee*



Through committee work, I hope State Council has better input in developing a fair way to evaluate all teachers.

Debbie Resnick

*Anaheim Elementary Education Association,
Teacher Evaluation and Academic Freedom Committee*





**UTLA member
“Mama G”
retires at 95**

Rose Gilbert in front of her “wall of fame.”

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN
PHOTO BY SCOTT BUSCHMAN

➔ **ROSE GILBERT OUTLASTED 14 PRINCIPALS.** She’s given away millions to public education. She inspired generations of students and taught for 63 years. And now, she will enjoy her retirement, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Gilbert, or “Mama G” as she is known to students at Palisades Charter High School, retired in February. Her students were devastated.

“They said, ‘No, no, no! Don’t you love us anymore?’” chuckles Gilbert. “I told them I had to do something new, otherwise I’d be too old. I want to retire when I’m alert and on two feet.”

The beginning of a legend

Gilbert put herself through UCLA working as a secretary. After graduation, she signed up with the UCLA employment agency and was hired as a temp at MGM because she spoke Spanish and knew shorthand.

She assisted the agent in charge of contracts with studio stars. When that person quit, Gilbert took over, working with Liz Taylor, Judy Garland, Spencer Tracy, Greta Garbo, Mickey Rooney and Lana Turner. Taylor and Garland were sensitive and some-

times came to her in tears when they had problems. Garbo was difficult.

“They were people, like anyone else.”

When Gilbert became pregnant with the first of her three children, she quit MGM and became an English teacher in 1949. On her first day as a student teacher at University High School in Los Angeles, the teacher next door had a heart attack and died.

“The principal came to me and said I had to take over,” she recalls. “I’ve been teaching ever since.”

When Mama G began her teaching career, schools were still segregated, the Berlin wall wasn’t built, President Truman was just creating NATO, and color television had not yet entered the homes of Americans, notes a Huffington Post story.

Then and now

In the 1950s, girls’ skirts were below the knees and boys had short hair.

“Now kids wear shorts to school, and there’s no hair policy,” she muses. “Girls practically wear bikinis to school and pajamas. Things have changed.”

In the 1960s there was turmoil on campus, and students protested.

“There was a student walkout over the Vietnam War, and another over whether students could have long hair. The teachers supported the kids. Now kids are apathetic. They don’t care much about anything besides themselves. They are the Entitled Generation.”

Education became driven by standardized tests, but Gilbert didn’t change her teaching style much. She donned colorful costumes and used props in class to make learning fun, once wearing a “Freudian slip” when students wrote a paper on Freud. She continued to be creative and teach her class like a college course, so her students would learn how to be critical thinkers.

“I’m going to miss all that,” she says.



She refused to use a Scantron (test-scoring machine) because she loves grading papers.

“It’s not for me,” she says with disdain.

Students called “bubalas”

“I loved how caring and dramatic she was. You never knew what she would say,” says Cathy Salser, who was Gilbert’s student in 1982. “Mama G was an advocate for students who were different or ostracized. She called us ‘bubalas.’ She made sure we knew how to formulate our thinking and our sentences so we could articulate our point. She made sure we got the basics; she was like a hammer on certain things. She had incredible energy.”

Salser recalls that Gilbert didn’t have the entire class read one book at the same time; she picked out three books for each individual student to read and write an essay about.

“It was kind of like having your fortune told,” she recalls. “You knew she was choosing those books just for you. I was very shy, and she picked books for me that had to do with artists.”

Salser went on to found an art group that helps heal victims of domestic violence.

A generous spirit

Gilbert donated millions to Palisades Charter High School to establish a pool in the name of her daughter Maggie, who died at a young age. She rebuilt the UCLA library and a learning center for student athletes on the campus where she earned her master’s degree.

In short, she made good use of the millions she inherited from her late husband, who owned a construction business. Gilbert has an entire wall in her home covered with articles about her accomplishments as a teacher and philanthropist.

She still wears large-framed, rose-colored glasses and calls herself “optimistic” about life.

On her first day of retirement, Gilbert volunteered at A Window Between Worlds, the nonprofit founded by Salser. She volunteers on a regular basis.

Sage advice?

“I’ve been teaching for 63 years, and it’s been a joy for me,” says Gilbert. “It’s never been a chore for me. The kids know it. They can sense it.”

Remember that all kids are different, and that is what makes them special when they are in your class, says Gilbert, who made a point of getting to know and appreciate her students as individuals.

“Be earnest and honest,” adds Gilbert. “If you say you’re going to give an exam, then give it. You have to be earnest so they believe you.”

She pauses.

“If you’re going to teach, be enthusiastic. If you’re not enthusiastic, you’re going to fail. Don’t expect things to be perfect. Teaching is a lot of hard work.”

“You have to be earnest so they believe you.”



Rose Gilbert looks through old yearbooks.

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Unintentional 'spiking' can hurt retirement benefits

When it comes time to determine your career earnings for retirement, the saying "caveat emptor" (buyer beware) has never been more important.

BY DINA MARTIN

ALTHOUGH THE CALIFORNIA STATE TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM (CalSTRS) is doing everything it can to encourage school districts to report earnings accurately, it is ultimately the employee's responsibility to make sure that earnings reports are correct when retirement nears.

This bit of advice may come in handy for those planning ahead, especially since a number of retirees have had to return much-needed pension funds to CalSTRS due to errors made in reporting earnings.

The issue isn't widespread, but it can be a shock when it happens. In one recent case, a retired teacher was forced to return \$44,000 to CalSTRS because of errors that had been made in her earnings report.

Generally, the problems came up in the reporting of "extra compensation" such as coaching stipends or extra duty assignments. Districts do not always understand the idea of "creditable compensation" and have put that money into a retiree's total compensation, causing a "spike" in earnings that erroneously increases retirement benefits.

"Our active members have to know this is happening," warns Alen Ritchie, CTA/NEA Retired president. "Be aware: If you do extra duty or work an extra period, it must go into a Defined Benefits Supplement account. Otherwise, it's spiking."

While the error may have been unintentional, it falls into the category of spiking, which is the practice of artificially and inappropriately increasing compensation to enhance retirement benefits. CalSTRS has been aggressive in taking steps to prevent pension spiking by creating a toll-free Pensions Abuse Reporting Hotline as well as a Compensation Review Unit to investigate suspected pension spiking incidents.

The toll-free Pensions Abuse Reporting Hotline is (855) 844-2468.

There have also been instances where it appeared districts intentionally spiked the earnings of employees to incentivize them to retire. CTA's Legal Department has gone after these districts to force them to change their practices.

"We have retirees who have been caught in the crossfire," says CTA Chief Legal Counsel Emma Leheny. "It is devastating for someone on a fixed income to be told they have to return money they counted on for retirement."

CalSTRS has been doing everything it can to prevent misreporting by conducting more reviews and fining and penalizing districts that engage in the practice. However, many problems are caused by increased turnover in district staff as well as downsizing at the district level. Still, employer reporting has improved, so it is likely there will be fewer problems as current CTA members head into retirement.

"Remember, your retirement benefits are based entirely on what employers report," says Ed Derman, deputy chief executive officer of CalSTRS. "Don't assume if it's on the report, it's accurate."

Dillon and Keiley re-elected as CalSTRS board leaders

The trustees of the CalSTRS Teachers' Retirement Board re-elected CTA members Dana Dillon as chair and Harry Keiley as vice chair of the board for the 2013-14 term.

Dillon, who also serves on the CTA Board of Directors, is an intermediate grade school teacher and librarian from Weed. She has served on the CalSTRS board since her election in 2003, including service as chair and vice chair.

Keiley, a high school teacher and Santa Monica-Malibu Classroom Teachers Association leader, chairs CTA's Political

Involvement Committee. He was elected to the Teachers' Retirement Board in 2007.

The 12-member Teachers' Retirement Board nominates and elects its chair and vice chair annually. The chair and vice chair provide board leadership, direction and policy development for the largest educator-only pension fund in the world.

CalSTRS divests certain firearms holdings

The CalSTRS Investment Committee approved the fund's divestment of holdings of firearms companies that manufacture weapons that are illegal in California.

After the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Connecticut, state Treasurer Bill Lockyer, a CalSTRS board member, issued a call for the fund to divest itself of companies that manufacture firearms and high-capacity magazines that are illegal for sale to, or possession by, the general public in California.

CalSTRS has since begun the divestment process with the two publicly traded U.S. companies within the CalSTRS portfolio that manufacture these products, Sturm Ruger and Smith & Wesson.

"The tragic events that took place at the Sandy Hook Elementary School that December morning were truly eye-opening. I think our actions today are an appropriate response, because this tragedy illustrates all too well the hazards such firearms pose to human health and well-being," said Harry Keiley, CalSTRS Investment Committee Chairman and Santa Monica-Malibu Classroom Teachers Association president.

CalSTRS followed a similar process leading up to its 2009 decision to divest itself of holdings in the tobacco industry.

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ESTABLISHED FREE PUBLIC SCHOOL AND SECURED FUNDING TO TEACH NONWHITE STUDENTS (1866)

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ESTABLISHED COMMUNITY COLLEGES (1911)



1863 - 2013
Advocating for equal education for all students

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Reflections on an incredible year

BY REBECCA MIELIWOCKI, *National Teacher of the Year 2012*

I've envied people who had whirlwind lives, traveled, and were big decision makers in their fields. I had that kind of year since I was named the National Teacher of the Year by President Obama in the White House, and it's been nothing short of an incredible experience. I've traveled to nearly every state in the union, participated in conversations at the highest levels of power, listened to great thinkers in education, and spoken to nearly every kind of group there is. It's been the journey of a lifetime, and I appreciate sharing my big takeaways.

Rankings mean very little if the race isn't one we care to win anyway.

Part of my year involves international travel to see the classrooms in the countries that routinely best us on international assessments. I toured the top schools in Russia, Beijing and Shanghai, China, Japan, and Singapore. I went to see their greener grass; what I saw shocked me.

I was always told these nations simply teach to the test, but I thought that answer to be simplistic. Sure enough, I witnessed drill-and-kill instruction, teacher-centered rote learning and memorization activities. I didn't see art, music, sports, field trips, robust technologies, or anything, really, that is the hallmark of a full and enriching education.

In meetings with students, teachers, professors and parents, it was clear that while they were proud to be No. 1, they were not happy, and they knew that simply acing tests does not set their children up to succeed in this world.

I was treated like royalty and asked how we do what we do. How do we teach so creatively, and how do we teach kids to be creative? How do we use team structures and collaboration in our classrooms so well? How do we make such nimble thinkers of our students, capable of handling abstract thought, divergent thinking, and multiple solutions to problems? These are all 21st century competencies, and they know their students don't have them.

Ours do. And yet, we stand at 15th on international rankings. Do we really want to be No. 1 if it means we abandon all that we offer our kids? That's not a race I care to win.

Can we shore up our schools, raise learning standards, and push our academic programs to be even better? Absolutely.

I went looking for greener grass and came home prouder than ever that our own grass, the way we educate children here at home, is a spectacular, unique, and highly coveted shade all its own.

American teachers are amazing.

I met incredible teachers from Seattle to Sanibel Island and I'll tell you this: We are in such good shape! If you thought things were as dire as folks tell you, they are not. Teams of educators are teaching dynamically, using technology in ways that amaze me and frankly, boggle my mind. Teachers are asking more of their kids, having them reach out across the planet and do good work.

I am blown away by the passion, the purpose, the professionalism and the urgency I see in the work done by American teachers. Before this year, I was sure there were lots of good teachers in this country. Now I know it for a fact. We might not have a perfect system and perfect teachers everywhere, but the great teaching out there cannot be denied. This makes me so proud.

The wounds of a decade of teacher bashing are painfully visible.

There's a moment in my speeches where I get a tad sappy about my love for my job and for teachers in general. I admit to the pain and the struggle of it all, the worry I'm not doing it right, the exhilaration of a lesson gone right, the joy of a child who succeeds.

I share how heartbreaking it is to be the focus of anger and blame and frustration from the media and some of my fellow Americans. I end my speeches positively, always, and afterward there is always a long line of teachers, young and old, who wait for me and just fall into my arms crying. The pain of going through what we have, on top of the tremendously challenging work itself, has pushed so many to despair that it's visible on the outside.

Whether a teacher stops speaking up and instead isolates, or whether they cry out and rally with colleagues, or whether they just keep on keeping on, every teacher, even the most optimistic among us, has the scars to show for a decade of blame and teacher bashing.

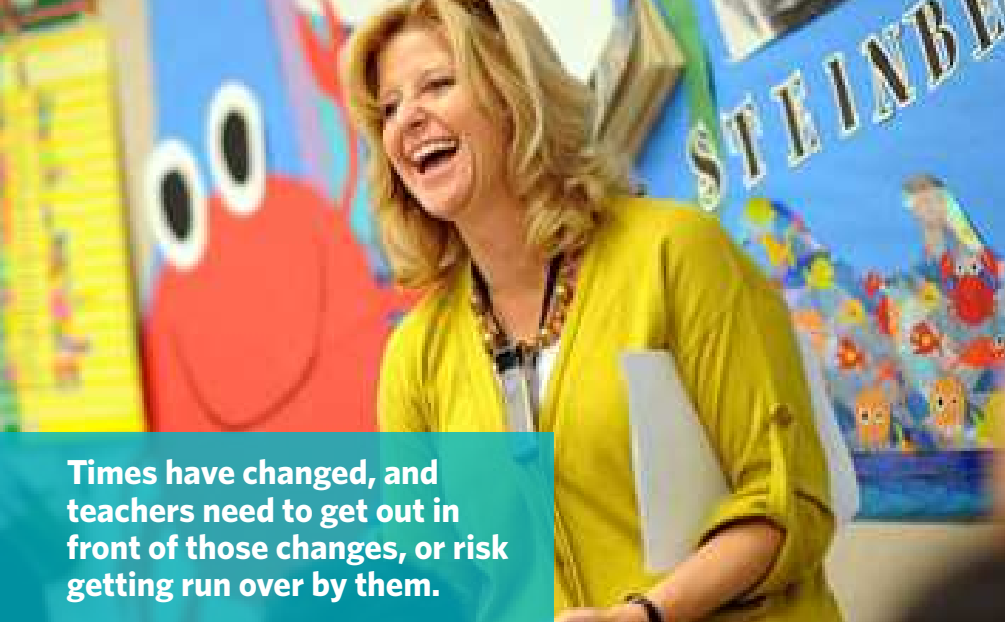
I'm thunderstruck by our resilience, our stalwartness, and our refusal to be who they expect us to be. It may take a while to turn the conversation around, but we are getting there.

I saw action on teacher evaluation, some of it encouraging, some of it downright frightening.

A recent MetLife study indicates the single greatest impact on learning is the presence of a highly effective teacher. It made a huge ripple in education circles, and everyone is creating evaluation frameworks or rubrics to use that will identify and hopefully grow better teachers in the profession.

Most of these efforts are smart and are honestly selecting key criteria that teachers need to meet to be considered effective. Most if not all of these rubrics include statistical data on our students' performance on standardized tests, and that's not necessarily a bad thing in and of itself. But we all know that using test scores to tell if teachers are exceptional, or awful, is stretching the scientific truth and needs more investigation before it can be trusted as an accurate measure.

I saw state superintendents working with legislatures to grade and rate schools, just



Times have changed, and teachers need to get out in front of those changes, or risk getting run over by them.

like we do students, in the hopes that the pressure of being given a poor grade will miraculously improve the school. For the most part, however, I saw the idea of using multiple measures to evaluate teachers gain a strong foothold.

The president and the secretary of education care.

From personal experience I can tell you: President Obama and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan are genuine, committed people. A strong American education got these men where they are, and they are not shy about telling you that.

We can debate the merits of how they are going about education reform, but in a time when Congress is content to do little but watch generation after generation of teachers be children left alone, here are two men and countless others who work with them, determined to do better for all of us. I see that as a win.

Sometimes, we are our own worst enemy.

A stereotype has emerged of the American teacher that is unflattering, and while this saddens me, it's something we must fight. For any number of reasons, we teachers are seen as accountability-fleeing, incompetent job-keepers with cushy pensions that threaten the very safety of the American economy.

This is not me, nor is it anyone I know who teaches young people. Fight that stereotype every chance you get, with every word you utter.

We cannot, and should not, position ourselves as victims. It's hard to gather

momentum and empowerment when you see yourself as someone always at the mercy of thoughtless, faceless others.

We can absolutely continue to engage in open, honest discussions about the challenges we face, but we should do that from the driver's seat as an empowered teacher corps poised to make the great changes in education we all want and need.

The time for action is now.

Teaching has always been a rewarding profession. For too long, we've toiled in isolation waiting for others to train us, prepare us, protect us, develop us, evaluate us, lead us, and fight for us. For a time, I was content to let that happen.

But decisions were made that I did not agree with and that directly affected my students. I'm no longer willing to sit in the backseat with others at the wheel of my destiny. I'm ready to lead and to act, to be a voice and a force for teachers.

I'm struck by the differences between the life I live and play in and the one we educate kids in. The classroom, the schools, the teaching methods in many places look like they've looked for a hundred years. The world kids live and will work in is completely, utterly different. We must change if education is to remain relevant.

Let's build new ways of educating kids that honor where they're at now and prepare them for the lives they'll lead tomorrow. It's scary, certainly, but we should never cease to act due to fear. We should make creative leaps because we have vision, passion and courage.

That's how I'd like to be remembered.



We need to make sure our voices are heard and our wishes are respected. And we can do that through CTA. Let's write those amazing lessons, allow creativity and collaboration in our classes, demand time to meet with colleagues, and create the professional learning communities that will grow us to greatness. Let's fight back against every misguided decision, vote in every election, call every congressman, and brag about every success to anyone who will listen and especially to those who won't.

It's an exciting time of opportunity in education. Will we be bold enough to seize it? I hope so.

Bargaining Updates

Across the state CTA members are fighting for improved teaching conditions and professional compensation. Find out more at www.cta.org/bargainingupdates.

Madera teachers want what's right, not what's left

► CTA Vice President Eric Heins brought the full support of CTA to hundreds of Madera Unified Teachers Association members in the Central Valley who have been trying to reach a fair contract settlement.

Over the past few years, more than 100 teachers were laid off, while MUTA members accepted unpaid furlough days and increased class sizes. Teachers have not had a salary increase in five years and have seen hikes in their health care costs. Meanwhile, the school district has stockpiled \$37 million in reserves.

During a board meeting in April, some 450 educators turned out in red shirts and picketed along Howard Road before their sheer numbers forced the trustees to move the meeting to the larger cafeteria at Madera South High School.

"They're standing up for their jobs. They're standing up for what's right," says MUTA President Kathy Horn.

MUTA maintains the district has not bargained in good faith, and has filed an unfair labor practice charge. At press time, the teachers were urging the district to return to the bargaining table while awaiting a report from a fact-finding panel. Teachers have also set up a strike organizing team, should talks break down completely.

Heins joined CTA Board member Elana Davidson and NEA Director Ron Edwards during an afternoon demonstration April 23 before a meeting of the school board. The demonstration was just the latest action by MUTA members in their fight to obtain a bargaining agreement.

Desert Sands superintendent gets pay raise, teachers offered takebacks

► Members of the Desert Sands Teachers Association (DSTA) in Riverside County are wearing black on contract negotiation days in mourning for the death of respect to educators in their school district.

They are alarmed by the takebacks in the Desert Sands Unified School District's opening contract proposals for the 2013-14 school year: The district is asking for either furlough days or salary schedule roll-backs (a real slap in the faces of teachers who haven't seen a COLA since 2007, and who worked hard to pass the governor's Proposition 30 to stop drastic school cuts); reduced prep times for teachers; and reduction of extra-duty stipends.

Adding insult to injury, the district refuses to support the kinds of compensation agreements made by neighboring Coachella Valley districts that help teachers make ends meet. This is despite the hiring of a new superintendent with a total compensation package worth \$257,000. Giving stipends to DSTA members would be irresponsible, the district claims.

"It completely mystifies me that any intelligent person could claim they must be fiscally responsible and deny teachers any kind of increase, when they feel it is hunky-dory to pay a superintendent of a school district more than the vice president of the United States," says DSTA President Mona Davidson.

Alisal educators in Salinas frustrated with bargaining delays

► Fed up with working without a contract that expired in June 2011, members of the Alisal Teachers Association (ATA) in Monterey County picketed the Alisal Union School District's school board meeting April 24 in an escalation of their contract fight.

Teacher anger has been steadily increasing as they work longer without a contract, and the Salinas district keeps coming to the table unprepared. "We should have finished negotiations months ago," says Joshua Ezekiel, the ATA political action chair. "This board had no difficulty offering Superintendent John Ramirez a new contract with a raise. However, when it comes to teachers, the board can't even make a proposal."

The board in December approved raising the superintendent's salary from \$168,000 to \$180,000. Alisal teachers and classified staff have worked hard to increase test scores at schools in the district — some of whose scores were among the lowest in the state. Now the district wants to lay off 25 classified employees.

"We are proud of what we have accomplished," says ATA President John Aaron. "We are still waiting for serious negotiations to take place."

Bellevue teachers in Santa Rosa fight takebacks

► Fed up with a district that has rising financial reserves but refuses to invest in its teachers, Bellevue Union School District educators packed the school board meeting April 16 and demanded respect and fair treatment at the bargaining table.

Since the 2007-08 school year, the district's unrestricted ending balance has tripled from \$1.9 million to \$6 million. Yet the district is seeking takebacks from educators. While administrators pay no out-of-pocket money for family health coverage, teachers and classified staff pay \$1,000 to \$1,500 per month of their own money for family coverage. Teachers want a fair raise offer, especially since they have had no raises in about three years. And they oppose the district's proposal to give higher increases to less senior teachers and smaller raises to more experienced educators.

"The district's reserves are not being invested in our educators or our students as they should be," says teacher Heidi Kreklau, president of the 100-member Bellevue Education Association. "It's time for the school board to understand that an investment in recruiting and retaining educators is an investment in our community."

The chapter has declared an impasse in negotiations, the first step toward having a state mediator step in.

Oakland "Hour of Power" mobilizes community

► Stepping up their fight for a fair contract, Oakland Education Association members took to the streets April 17 and demonstrated on five street corners for an "Hour of Power" event to mobilize the community about their struggle.

Many Oakland teachers are leaving the district due to low pay. The district, despite its \$25 million in excess reserve funds, is refusing the OEA's proposal of a 3.5 percent raise for this school year. The protests will continue and are educating the public about the district's lack of priorities: For this school year, the district budgeted for 234 fewer certificated employees (teachers, counselors, etc.) and 36 fewer classified employees, but 37 more administrators, says OEA President Trish Gorham.

See more about the Oakland bargaining campaign at www.oaklandea.org.

Ramona teachers are considering a strike vote.



Courtesy photos by CTA members



Oakland educators getting the message out include Kelly Banks, Kimm E. Ward, Julie Palacios, Channon Jackson and Tracy Dordell.



Leilani Banks is one of the many who support Oakland teachers.

Ramona: Can a strike be avoided?

▶ A strike authorization vote is imminent for Ramona teachers. Despite impassioned pleas from teachers, parents, students and community leaders to resume negotiations, the Ramona Unified School District School Board unilaterally imposed three years of drastic cuts — 7.8 percent for 2012-13 and 9.4 percent for both 2013 -14 and 2014-15 — at a special board meeting April 22.

Six furlough days between now and the end of the current school year and retroactive health and welfare benefits cuts backdated to February 2013 mean that the 255 members in the rural San Diego County district will lose an average of 50 percent in gross pay from their May and June paychecks. In the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years, each will lose hundreds of dollars from every warrant.

Teachers received great support from the community. Above, Ramona Teachers Association bargaining chair Grant McNiff and chapter president Donna Braye-Romero encourage RTA members and supporters at a rally demanding a fair contract settlement.

“The board imposed these egregious cuts knowing full well that it will leave many teachers unable to pay their mortgages or rent, their car payments, or food and utilities for them and their families,” says Braye-Romero.

It's time to celebrate... OURSELVES!

CTA's 150th birthday celebration was officially kicked off with a news conference unveiling a major television, radio, print and Web ad campaign about CTA's historic achievements that reach back to the Civil War era.

THE CTA ADS ALL STRESS that, for 150 years, California's educators have stood up for what happens in our classrooms, and CTA has been their voice. The three-week ad campaign includes print ads in eight languages in more than 47 ethnic newspapers, website ads, and radio and TV spots on scores of stations in all major media markets.

"Today, our values of fairness, public service and commitment to all of our children remain exactly the same," CTA President Dean E. Vogel says in one radio ad. "And that's why the California Teachers Association paid for this message — celebrating 150 years advocating for all students, educators, and our public schools."

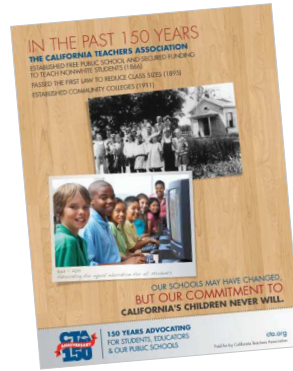
CTA's theme for the state's Day of the Teacher is "California Teachers: Honoring our past. Guiding the future." Events are planned to celebrate the work of all school staff, education support professionals and community college faculty.

The "educational society" that became CTA was founded by crusading state schools chief John Swett. Generations of CTA members won the state's first class size legislation in 1895; a 1927 court victory preventing the firing of a female teacher simply for getting married; the state's landmark 1988 law establishing minimum funding levels for public schools; and the passage of the CTA-sponsored Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) of 2006 to ensure that at-risk students can thrive.

There will be many opportunities to "toot our own horn," says Vogel, "and I hope all members will participate or attend celebrations at the local and state levels."

CTA's media fund promotes the great work of educators in California public schools. The campaign is paid for by the media fund and a grant from the NEA.

View and listen to TV and radio spots and see the print ads at www.cta.org/150media.



CTA's print ads appear in eight languages. Rotating website ads (right) tell of CTA's achievements.



Photos by Becky Zoglman

Thanks to the members who gave their time to appear in CTA's media campaign:

Adriana Saavedra, New Haven TA; Doreen McGuire-Grigg, Lakeport Classified EA; Jose Rivera-Chavez, Hollister Elementary School TA; Junelle Mallari, New Haven TA; Keith Lark, New Haven TA; Marianna Aguirre, Tracy Educators Association; Sebastien Paul De Clerck, Ventura Unified EA; Susan Green, CFA, CSU Chico; and Tracy Jimenez-Bedolla, Hollister Elementary School TA.



CTA members say...!

Focus on transforming the profession,
remain student-centered

CTA IS MOVING INTO THE NEXT PHASE of its strategic planning process, and you're invited to participate.

Begun last August, the process helps CTA build a long-term plan for CTA that engages all members and staff, embraces new ideas, sets priorities, focuses organizational resources, and builds the CTA we want for our future.

After months of talking with and listening to CTA members and staff, eight key areas are emerging as the focus for a strategic plan to lead CTA through the next three to five years (see sidebar).

To identify these eight key areas, CTA reached out to members in different ways: two member surveys, including an online survey that was open to all members, retired members and student members; discussions at CTA conferences, State Council meetings, Service Center Council meetings and local chapter meetings; and one-on-one interviews.

The 55-member Strategic Planning Group also reviewed CTA's current practices and structures and talked to parents, education partners, community groups, state labor unions and business groups.

Committee members learned much during the research process.

"As an organization, we are doing many things right, but there is more that we can and should do to make CTA even better," says Christal Watts, Vallejo Education Association.

"I learned that CTA takes the democratic process seriously," says Kei Swensen, Oakland Education Association. "A motion made at State Council officially began this process, and no matter how difficult it may be to analyze, criticize, or make changes to our current structures or practices, our leadership is committed to providing the space and time in seeing it through."

"The goal, in my mind, is to have active, engaged, members," says Jesse Aguilar, Kern High School Teachers Association. What does active engagement mean? "CTA provides a lot of services, like an insurance company. Members pay dues, CTA comes in and fixes a problem, then goes away. CTA is its members. We want members engaged in setting goals and reaching common goals."

"I learned how little we know about our Native American/Alaska Native population," says Mary Levi, Upland Teachers Association, noting that both internal and external scans showed few native educators while the last census showed California has a significant number of native students in public schools. "If reports are correct and we have so few educators in our schools, we have a lot of work to do. If our native educators are just not speaking up, then we need to help them find their voices."

Bill Wertz, who represents California Associate Staff (a CTA employees union), says the general public polling results "surprised me in the overwhelming support that is out there for teachers, and for students to achieve."

"The process is moving forward, but we are all actively seeking to check our assumptions and make sure that our interpretation of the data is on track," says Chuck King, California Staff Organization (a CTA employees union). "Personally, I'm reminded that there are very smart people at every level who are committed to the CTA mission."

The results of member input will be shared at upcoming meetings, online and in future print and electronic publications. You are invited and encouraged to hear and participate in discussions.

See cta.org/strategicplan for more.



YOUR VOICE. OUR UNION. OUR FUTURE.

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

Based on member input, CTA's mission will be carried out by focusing on these areas:

- Building an organizing culture that engages CTA members at every level of our union.
An organizing culture is one where members have a relationship with their union that is active and involved, rather than seeing the union simply as a place from which to receive services. Leaders and staff seek to engage members in strategy and problem solving.
- Leadership and leadership development that supports the recruitment, retention and development of effective, responsible and accountable leaders at every level of our union.
- Community engagement and coalition building that creates effective and authentic partnerships with parents, other unions and community organizations.
- Transforming our profession for teachers and other educators by supporting the highest standards of quality in student-centered education.
- Standing up for social justice, equity and diversity inside our organization and in the greater community.
- Structure and governance.
Aligning CTA staffing and governance structures with these strategic objectives and assuring effective representational democracy in CTA.
- Advocacy on education reform.
Changing the education reform discourse to being proactive and student-centered on education policy issues.
- Organizing unrepresented education workers.
Engaging in new member organizing, including charter school workers, Education Support Professionals and college faculty, to advance our goal of quality education for all.

Restore funding before imposing new allocation formula

WITH CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS and students still reeling under the effects of \$20 billion in cuts, CTA and its Education Coalition partners urge lawmakers to provide funding to restore programs before implementing the governor's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF).

CTA supports Gov. Jerry Brown's proposal based on the belief that every student is entitled to educational equality. CTA has been having conversations with the governor and legislators to ensure all concerns are addressed including accountability, use of accurate data in determining funding levels, timing of implementation, and funding for the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

Implementing the Common Core Standards is expected to cost hundreds of millions of dollars for new textbooks, teacher training and technology upgrades.

Assembly Member Susan Bonilla (D-Concord), chair of a budget subcommittee looking at the governor's spending proposal, says the state can't keep asking education to spin gold from straw. "It takes an infusion of funding to make things happen."

Allocating funding to the LCFF, which provides more money for English learners, students living in poverty and foster youth, would have implications for other important programs, including class size reduction, Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment, and Common Core implementation.

Under the new proposal, many categorical programs would be consolidated, and funds to implement programs like the Common Core State Standards would be decided at the local level. This necessitates that local chapters be involved in those decisions.

Assembly Member Al Muratsuchi (D-Torrance) questions whether the governor's LCFF really increases funding for schools. "The first priority is to increase base

funding for all districts so that we don't have winners and losers, things the Department of Finance figures [of funding under LCFF] show. All the school districts in my area are losers, according to these figures."

At press time, the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) released figures revealing public schools are likely to see an additional \$4.3 billion over two years, and attributed the increase to passage of Prop. 30. This will likely help restore funds.

During their presentation to the education subcommittee of the Assembly Budget Committee, Education Coalition members emphasized the importance of acknowledging that drastic cuts have slashed more than \$20 billion from schools. These cuts reduced the number of employees, shortened school years, and forced furlough days. Restoring these cuts is the Education Coalition's top priority.

CTA reminded lawmakers California ranks 49th nationally in per-pupil spending. While the top 10 states spend more than \$15,000 per student and the average state spends \$11,000, California allocates only \$9,000 per student. The Education Coalition wants California to boost its spending to be among the top 10 states.

Even without new programs, the funding restoration would put California only 42nd nationally.

It is likely the final formula will see many changes before it is implemented, and CTA will continue to work with the governor and the Legislature.

The budget subcommittee's review of the governor's plan is part of the Legislature's effort to craft a final budget prior to the June 15 constitutional deadline. The governor has until June 30 to sign the proposal sent to him by the Legislature, with July 1 marking the start of the next fiscal year.

Court to decide on legality of state's ban on 'gay conversion therapy'

BY LEN FELDMAN

THE LAW THAT PROHIBITS PSYCHOLOGISTS from treating a youngster's sexual orientation as a "disease" and from forcing a youth to "change" is being reviewed by a federal appeals court. CTA-backed SB 1172 was approved by the Legislature and signed by the governor last year.

While the measure was signed into law last year with an effective date of Jan. 1, legal wrangling put the measure on hold. Groups representing parents and psychotherapists objected to it, claiming the measure impinges on their free speech rights. Gay rights organizations point to the fact that the "conversion" practice stigmatizes youngsters, often leading to their depression and suicide.

If found constitutional by the courts, the measure will help protect school faculty who work with gay student groups from being pressured into advocating the virtues of "conversion" to their gay or bisexual students.



Teachers speak with the staff of state Sen. Ted Gaines (R-Rocklin) on key issues. Dana Dillon, an elementary teacher and member of the Weed Classroom Teachers Association, urges support for AB 375, a teacher dismissal bill, and a no vote on SB 441, which would harm educators' due process rights. Other team members are Alek Ustaszewski of the Rocklin Teachers Professional Association, and Jon Halvorsen of the Tahoe Truckee Education Association.

LISTEN IN!

Common Core

Cynthia López Elwell, Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association, and James Norwood, Moreno Valley Educators Association, met at a CTA Common Core State Standards conference. Both are middle school language arts teachers.

PHOTOS AND COMPILATION BY FRANK WELLS

Cynthia: The move to the Common Core is a double-edged sword. It is delivered through teachers, and before it gets to us it has to come through districts. Some districts are being prescriptive, while others are pretty loosey-goosey about the whole thing. There's a lot of interpretation going on about what the standards say, and that can be a little scary.

James: If done right there will be real benefit to students who will have the opportunity to work with higher-level text to develop college and career-ready literacy. The problem is not having much of a transition. It might make sense to start fully with elementary students and transition them, rather than have middle and high school students have such a jarring shift from one year to the next.

Cynthia: There's also a huge issue with access: Students already performing at level in schools with adequate resources will have an easier time with the transition. It's harder for students who are already behind to catch up.

James: One of the focuses of the new standards is cross-curricular literacy. Although I meet with teachers in other disciplines once a month to talk about IEPs and things like that, we don't get into course content or coordinate lessons. The transition may be

more difficult for subjects other than English where they may have the reading content already, but they're not used to doing the kind of writing and analysis the new standards demand.



Cynthia: Collaboration in its current form might not be all that helpful. In my district, collaboration is centered on raising test scores. I'd love the opportunity to work with colleagues and discuss curriculum and approaches geared to specific students.

James: That would be great. We'll be dealing with computer-adapted testing. We don't have computers for every student, so I assume the testing window is going to be wide enough that we can get to every student. And many of our students don't have the computer skills necessary to perform well. If they have to keyboard an essay answer and don't know how to keyboard, they're at a disadvantage.

Cynthia: I'm not as concerned about that as I used to be. My students know the QWERTY keyboard layout from texting each other. Of course, that's with their thumbs, so they may not know how to type, but it takes the hunt out of hunt-and-peck.

I have infrastructure concerns though, not only about hardware, but about bandwidth. Many districts may not meet the requirements or have the resources to meet them without cutting somewhere else. There needs to be enough funding so that all students are on a level playing field when it comes to testing as well as learning content.

James: One challenge is getting students used to the depth of the new assessment questions. Instead of choosing A, B, C, or D, they'll be asked how or why they came up with an answer.

Cynthia: If it's a translation from paper to computers, I think our kids will struggle with the same issues they have now. But if the assessments are as interactive as they are supposed to be, I'm looking forward to it. I saw students working with computer-adapted problem solving as part of a science and technology pilot, and it's the first time I've ever seen students smiling ear to ear during a test as they worked their way through a problem. They were so engaged.

James: Districts know it's coming, and some are on top of it. I know there are teachers who don't know what the Common Core is, and it's only a year away. And that's not their fault.



Cynthia: There's kind of a hierarchical structure. Superintendents and district office administrators may know about it, others are getting information from CTA and coming to conferences like this, but the overwhelming majority are probably just getting a glimmer at this point, and without more information it will be a little scary.

James: Knowledge is power. That's why I'm here, and I wish more teachers could come to a conference like this.



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Note: In every 2013 issue of the *Educator* we will be highlighting a portion of CTA's proud history in a timeline. Collect all 9 and put them together for a big look at all we've accomplished over the past 150 years. To get started just cut out the timeline from this page. Your next installment will be coming to you in June/July.



1946-60

After the end of World War II, men returned to the home front, women returned to the household, and the baby boom was on.

1946: CTA was part of a successful lawsuit to desegregate schools for Mexican Americans: *Mendez v. Westminster*. Judge Paul McCormick ruled that school districts had no business and no right in separating school children on the basis of race or nationality. The decision helped establish a precedent for other important cases that led up to the landmark 1954 Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* decision stating that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

In CTA's publications, *Sierra Educational News* and later *CTA Journal*, teachers wrote columns on such topics as how to prepare for the return of Japanese American children to their classrooms, how to start Teacher Clubs to encourage young people to become educators, what should the teacher look for in a written contract, and the effectiveness of detention.

In 1956, following a yearlong debate, CTA adopted its first education platform, "We Hold These Truths,"

defining the responsibilities of the schools. Among the principles is: "The public school is committed irrevocably to strive for equal educational opportunity for all." The policy coincided with the White House Conference on Education, which brought public attention to problems in the nation's schools.

California continued to experience a massive teacher and classroom shortage while the population increased and shifted. CTA continued to call for increased professionalism to draw people to the profession, and campaigned for better salaries and working conditions as it had since its founding in 1863.

Said classroom teacher Verna M. Moran: "We, the present-day teachers, must be willing and ready to fight the battle of the future. The battle for such things as good salaries, security, tenure for the small school and health insurance for all."



1947

Gov. Earl Warren signs AB 1625, which improves teacher retirement benefits. Ninety-two percent of the education bills passed by the Legislature are signed into law during that watershed session.



1953

CTA wins a historic case when it represents San Lorenzo teacher Fern Bruner in suing a local radio commentator who wrongfully accused her of being a Communist. The court rules the commentator slandered the teacher and awards her \$55,125.



1954

Throughout the 1950s and into the early '60s, thousands of California students receive polio vaccinations at their local schools.



1956

CTA helps address the ongoing teacher shortage by encouraging student clubs like the California Education Club at Sanger High School. Today, CTA still supports these efforts through its Student CTA affiliate.



See how much you know!

CTA's historic achievements reach back to the Civil War era. Guess, speculate, deduce or remember the answers *without* turning the page upside-down. OK, if you must, you must. Learn more about your CTA — and enjoy.



Begin!

1. The school in this photo is significant because:

- [A] It was CTA's first office in Burlingame.
- [B] It is the Old Columbia School House that CTA helped restore.
- [C] It was California's first teacher training college.
- [D] It is the oldest school in California school still in operation.

2. Who was CTA's founding father?

- [A] Dean Vogel
- [B] John Muir
- [C] John Swett
- [D] Horace Mann

3. In 1927, CTA won a legal victory when the state Supreme Court ruled that a school board can't:

- [A] Fire a teacher because she got married.
- [B] Fire a teacher because she's pregnant.
- [C] Fire a teacher because he's a Communist.
- [D] Evaluate teachers.

4. The original name of the California Teachers Association was:

- [A] California Teachers and Administrators
- [B] The John Swett Society
- [C] California Professional Teachers Association
- [D] California Educational Society

5. California's Day of the Teacher:

- [A] Began with legislation sponsored by CTA and the Association of Mexican American Educators in 1982.
- [B] Results from a Proclamation signed by President Harry Truman to address the teacher shortage after World War II.
- [C] Is part of an international celebration of the good work of teachers.
- [D] Is the one day teachers are allowed to call in sick.

6. The Quality Education Investment Act is:

- [A] Successful CTA-sponsored legislation to address the achievement gap in California schools through meaningful teacher-driven reform.
- [B] An effort by corporations to privatize low-performing schools.
- [C] An innovative school nutrition program that gives students a head start on the day.
- [D] A program that offers scholarships to undocumented immigrants to attend California colleges.

7. Due process rights mean:

- [A] Teachers are entitled to a fair hearing in a dismissal action.
- [B] Teachers have a job for life.
- [C] Incompetent teachers are protected.
- [D] Academic freedom for teachers.

8. CTA's fight for due process rights dates back to:

- [A] 1863, when John Swett decried arbitrary and capricious firings of teachers.
- [B] 1975, with the passage of the Rodda Act.
- [C] Gov. Jerry Brown's election in 2012.
- [D] Gov. Pat Brown's election in 1958.

9. CTA's membership no longer includes:

- [A] Bus drivers
- [B] Principals
- [C] Teachers
- [D] Counselors

10. Coinciding with CTA's sesquicentennial, the organization:

- [A] Is conducting a yearlong strategic planning process that will impact its future.
- [B] Is dissolving.
- [C] Is no longer going to bargain local contracts.
- [D] Is merging with the California Federation of Teachers.

11. CTA's political involvement includes:

- [A] Active advocacy on education policy in Sacramento.
- [B] Support of education-friendly local and state public officials.
- [C] Legislative action alerts to members.
- [D] All of the above.

12. Lois Tinson was:

- [A] CTA's founding mother.
- [B] The first African American woman elected president of CTA.
- [C] The first female teacher allowed to be married.
- [D] The first female president of CTA.

13. The 1975 CTA-sponsored Rodda Act allowed:

- [A] Teachers to collectively bargain their salaries and working conditions.
- [B] Prayer in the schools.
- [C] Teachers to receive health benefits.
- [D] Opportunity for teachers to meet and confer about their salaries and working conditions.

14. California's landmark Proposition 98, drafted and sponsored by CTA:

- [A] Guarantees that at least 40 percent of the state budget is spent on K-14 education.
- [B] Gives CTA a member on the State Board of Education.
- [C] Sets minimum class size at 22.
- [D] Mandates compulsory education for children between 6 and 18 years old.

15. CTA engages in human rights and social justice because:

- [A] It's politically correct.
- [B] It enhances the quality of education for all students as outlined in CTA's mission.
- [C] It's good public relations.
- [D] We like to rabble-rouse.

1. B 2. C 3. A 4. D 5. A 6. A 7. A 8. A 9. B 10. A 11. D 12. B 13. A 14. A 15. B

Answers

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