

california  
**educator**

MAY 2015 VOLUME 19 ISSUE 9

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Talking  
About Race**

How you can turn recent events into powerful teachable moments

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**\* 'Model  
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**Do you look  
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A narrow perception of Asian students ignores their unique challenges

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**\* Renowned  
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CTA's 8-year QEIA program yields valuable lessons for schools everywhere

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# 9

## *Beyond the myth of “Model Minority”*

Viewing all Asian American students through one lens, without regard for ethnic or cultural differences, ignores students who are struggling and perpetuates stereotypes.

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## *Rooted in Success*

QEIA, CTA’s visionary school turnaround program, is coming to an end, but the lessons learned couldn’t come at a better time, as local districts are looking for proven ways to educate their most at-risk students.

**FEATURES**



Student Sionefuka Pole talks about stereotypes of Asians and Pacific Islanders.

**PLUS**

ESP Awareness Poster  
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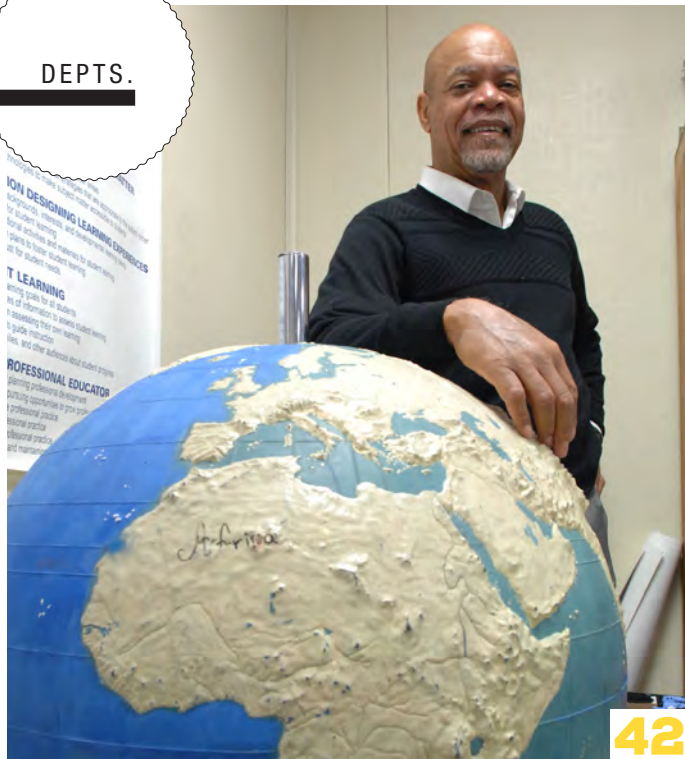
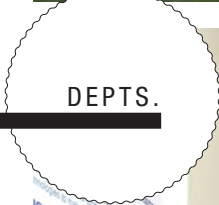
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# Thank you!

As I contemplate the last few weeks of my term as president of CTA, I find myself drawn to the memory of what brought me to this position in the first place. I'm not referring to the union work in all its various manifestations. I'm remembering the calling I felt, from somewhere deep within me, to be a teacher, an educator, and how hard I worked to be the best educator I could be. It's been a long time since I was an elementary school counselor in Vacaville, and even longer since I was a classroom teacher. But I still miss teaching, and I miss it every single day. Nothing has ever made me "tick" like being in a classroom with kids, and I'll always consider myself a teacher first and foremost.

So, I'd like to pay homage to the folks who shaped me and still inspire me on a daily basis, the educators and education support professionals who sit at the core of this remarkable enterprise we call public education. You're the teachers and the counselors, the nurses and the librarians, the speech-language pathologists and the social workers. You're the instructional assistants and the school secretaries, the bus drivers and the custodians. The list goes on and on. You're the folks who hold the school together, who work tirelessly to build and sustain positive learning environments for kids, and who often do so under some of the worst circumstances imaginable. You're continually asked to do more and more with less and less, and you do it, consistently, selflessly, and always with the highest regard for the students you serve.

As your president for the last four years, I've had the opportunity to visit schools in Finland and Shanghai, and I've met with educators from Toronto and Singapore as well. We've talked about the dynamics of teaching and learning and argued over differences of opinion about "best practices." All of these places are high-performing countries and cities that we're continually being asked to emulate. But I'll tell you right now, the best teaching I've ever seen, the most innovative practice anywhere, is right here in California classrooms.

In fact, California students, when you factor in the challenges like poverty and learning a new language, are among the highest-scoring students in the world. Considering the years with insufficient resources, the lack of relevant professional learning opportunities, mandated, scripted curriculum, and the incessant, toxic standardized testing, many would call this a miracle.

Well, it's not a miracle at all. The success of California's students is the direct result of your hard work and determined effort. Educators are some of the most courageous, determined, resilient people on the planet. And as we push back against the corporate reformers and the privatizers, as we fight to



## CTA/NEA-RETIRED

If you, like me, find yourself nearing retirement, or if you are making plans to retire, please sign up for CTA/NEA-Retired. Whether you plan to retire 20 years from now or have just recently retired, membership will deliver rewards throughout your lifetime. Plus, membership in CTA/NEA-Retired offers a seamless way to stay connected, be protected, and enjoy the benefits of membership. Learn more at [www.cta.org/retired](http://www.cta.org/retired).

take our profession back and become the rightful directors of what happens in our schools and classrooms, it is our expertise, hard work and determined effort that will pave the way. It always has.

As I prepare to move gracefully into retirement, I do so with a humble heart for your faith in me as your president and with pride for all we've been able to accomplish for the past four years. I'm also excited for what lies ahead for our union. I know the new leadership team will continue to keep the students at the center of every decision they make and will lead CTA wisely through the years ahead.

Thank you for the work you do, for giving voice to the voiceless, for standing up and standing strong. You inspire me.

**Dean E. Vogel**

CTA PRESIDENT



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



**Read Around the World** On my recent Ghana trip, the children were elated with their stuffed spiders and the books donated by the California Reads Committee. The children received gift bags with pencils, stickers, toothbrushes, and other items which were needed. California Reads and Read Across America have truly gone global. Thank you so much for supporting my charity partner and me in bringing hope to the hopeless. **Vanessa Lewis, East Whittier Education Association**

**Immunizing students**

As a school nurse, I get lots of parents with concerns about what vaccinations have done to their children. It cannot be controverted that there is possibility of some medical damage with the thimerosal in the immunizations, and there is a fund to compensate those families who have medical problems resulting from the immunizations. Some parents are just not willing to take that risk.

When I find out there is a child with an outbreak of chicken pox, measles, etc., I usually check to see whether the child has had the immunization in the past. I've noticed that usually they are ones who *have* had the immunization.

As a child, I had these childhood diseases — that is why they are called such. It is just sad that we are slowly losing our liberties, one at a time, in the United States. The comment “Liability should be a factor for those who refuse immunizations and whose choice causes economic or personal loss to others” [in

the March Point/Counterpoint column] is very sad. Should that also apply to those whose child has had an immunization and gets the disease anyway? That frequently happens and causes others to be exposed to the disease.

I hope as I say the Pledge of Allegiance there will continue to be “liberty and justice for all” (not just for some).

**Marsha K. Nagel**  
*Association of Colton Educators*

**Race and ethnicity**

As a professor of sociology specializing in race and ethnicity, I was happy to read the April *California Educator*. Three particular stories caught my attention.

“Hazardous harvests” noted the disproportionate impact of exposure to pesticide use that Hispanic children face (46 percent more likely than whites).

Regarding “CTA presses for ethnic studies bill,” CSU Fresno is one of the few CSU campuses to have an upper-division General Education requirement of a “Multicultural/International” course. Unfortunately, a 2011 GE Committee ruling exempted the entire Craig School of Business from taking an M/I course. Nonetheless, nearly every student who has taken my Sociology of Race and Ethnicity course has stated how every student should be required to take such a course, how it helped them understand themselves





and people from other backgrounds better, how it prepared them to advocate for justice and fair treatment across racial and ethnic lines, and how they wished they had had some exposure to these ideas before college.

A key resource I rely on that was not mentioned in “Talking about race” is [TeachingTolerance.org](http://TeachingTolerance.org), a project of Southern Poverty Law Center, dedicated to reducing prejudice, improving intergroup relations, and supporting equitable school experiences for our nation’s children. This invaluable resource provides free educational materials to teachers.

**Matthew Ari Jendian,**  
*California Faculty Association,*  
*CSU Fresno*

### Get 4Paws Certified

Thank you for highlighting the lasting effects a reading dog can have on a classroom, especially for struggling students, in the April *Educator*.

4Paws Learning and Wellness Center is a San Francisco and North Bay social therapy organization that has a strong reading program called Readers of the Pack. We provide reading teams to public libraries and schools, and many of our members are classroom teachers. Last year our teams reached over 7,400 K-12 students and learners at Sonoma State University at special “Stress-Less” events. It is a privilege to become part of a child’s learning experience and to watch them grow in confidence and skills. If any of your readers in Sonoma, Marin and San Francisco counties would like to become a certified team member, please visit our website, [4Pawscenter.org](http://4Pawscenter.org).

**Joanne Yates**  
*President, 4Paws*

### Kitties help read, too

Please note that cats, kitty cats, can also be loving and attentive compan-

ions for readers. Their empathy and intelligence radiate and encourage shy readers, including autistic children. And they are super soft for petting and reassurance. Cats deserve to be featured, too!

I am part of a real no-kill cat shelter in Redwood City, Nine Lives Foundation. I would love to share wonderful information about cats and their therapeutic and educational qualities.

**Carol Scola,** retired  
*San Bruno*

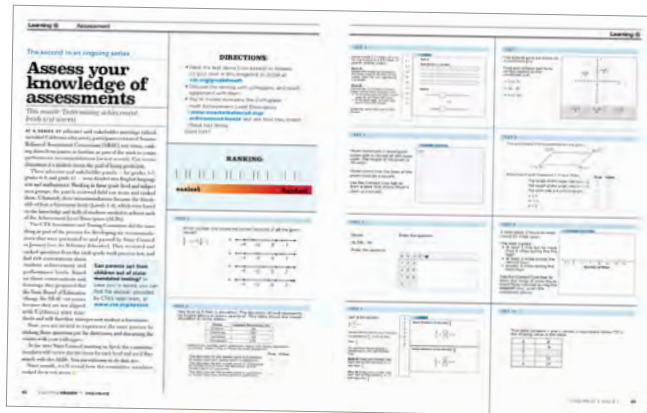
### Social Security

I have been a special education teacher in San Mateo County for 33 years. My husband died 12 years ago. He collected Social Security. I learned shortly after his death that California is one of 13 states that do not allow teachers who are widows to collect their deceased spouse’s benefits. I contacted Sen. Dianne Feinstein and canvassed my neighborhood with petitions to change the law here in the Golden State. Nothing happened.

Clearly I am not the only teacher in this situation. It needs to be addressed by our union, because 37 other states allow it to happen. Please address this issue on behalf of others like me.

**Catherine Stoddard**  
*San Mateo County Office of Education*  
*Teachers Association*

*Editor’s Note: Please accept our sincere condolences. Unfortunately, we are very well aware of the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset and the hardship these provisions impose on our members. CTA is currently supporting SJR 1, which requests that the president and U.S. Congress pass legislation repealing WEP/GPO from the Social Security Act. Congress members have been engaged*



### Assessment: Ranking test items

In the March *Educator*, we discussed how achievement levels (cut scores) are set for the Smarter Balanced assessments. The process involves having panels of educators and stakeholders review test items and rank them from easiest to hardest. Members of CTA’s Assessment and Testing Committee did the same thing in order to evaluate the cut scores, as part of their effort to make recommendations to the State Board of Education.

We presented 10 items from the Smarter Balanced sixth-grade math practice test, and invited you to share the experience of ranking them and discussing the ranking with your colleagues. We also promised to reveal how the committee ranked these test items in the next issue. Unfortunately, we neglected to publish that information in the April *Educator*.

Here is how the committee members ranked the test items from easiest to hardest: 10, 1, 7, 2, 5, 3, 6, 4, 9, 8.

*in this critical conversation, and this resolution urges them to ensure California’s educators are not forgotten. We will not give up. For more information, visit [www.cta.org/wepgpo](http://www.cta.org/wepgpo).*



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[extension.ucsd.edu/education](http://extension.ucsd.edu/education)

## WHAT IS ON YOUR SUMMER READING LIST?

*How to Jump-Start Your Union: Lessons From the Chicago Teachers*, by Labor Notes

*The Wright Brothers*, by David McCullough

*We Are Water*, by Wally Lamb

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### MISSION STATEMENT

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



## #CTATopTweet

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



## Viral video 🎥



**Inspiration and Innovation** CTA's new TV ads remind Californians that innovation is happening in our public schools and educators are leading efforts to make our schools even stronger. [www.cta.org/mediacenter](http://www.cta.org/mediacenter)

## Most popular post 📱



**Tell the *LA Times* the partisan poll they wrote about on their front page is flat-out wrong!**

APR 11 👍 149 likes 📧 56 shares

## More top tweets 🐦

**@JoshKob1**

Having a great time with [@christal\\_watts](#) in our e-organizing training at CTA's Political Academy.

**@MrPABruno**

A good rule of thumb: when somebody talks about the 'factory model' of schooling, you can stop taking them seriously.

**@reeveskd**

"I am more than a test." From the pens of children.

## Favorite comments 💬

**Belinda Stevens Hyde** | APRIL 25  
I just LOVE my job.

**Joanne Sheehan Lindevald** | APRIL 23  
My daughter and son both teach in the same building that I do! I am so lucky to have them as children, now also friends and colleagues! It is great fun when we get our three classes together for special events!

**Linda Ortega** | APRIL 21  
Been there... Keep up the good fight and ORGANIZE, by getting your community involved.

**Ophelia Vasquez** | APRIL 21  
Get your parents and the community involved in your struggle, i.e., a Facebook page, parents picketing in front of the district office every morning, are helpful in reaching a fair contract. Stand united and you can do great things.

**Rebecca McAlary** | APRIL 11  
Let teachers teach, not simply prep students for flawed tests.

**Suzi Tornberg** | APRIL 6  
My 6th graders are creating public information pieces, posters and brochures, as part of a potable water science research PBL. It is great how much they are discovering and how they are changing their water habits and educating their families too.

## What's new at cta.org

1 [www.cta.org/mayawareness](http://www.cta.org/mayawareness)

**May is Asian Pacific Heritage Month** Join us as we acknowledge the contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders during Asian Pacific Heritage Month — and year-round.

2 [www.cta.org/wellbabyprogram](http://www.cta.org/wellbabyprogram)

**Parents-to-be, look here!**  
The CTA Well-Baby Program offers a myriad of resources to help guide you through your pregnancy. Be sure to check out the recent enhancements.

3 [www.cta.org/qeia](http://www.cta.org/qeia)

**Read fourth report on QEIA**  
CTA has released the fourth in a series of five comprehensive reports on the Quality Education Investment Act.

4 [www.cta.org/sponsoredleg](http://www.cta.org/sponsoredleg)

**Where we stand on the bills**  
Check out the cool automated resource that lists the status of CTA's sponsored and co-sponsored legislation for 2015-16.

5 [www.cta.org/workshops](http://www.cta.org/workshops)

**Workshops enhance skills and knowledge** CTA offers workshops on Ethnic Minority Leadership Development, Human Rights sessions on a variety of topics, and much more.



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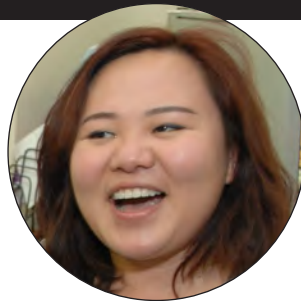


# ASIAN AMERICANS: Beyond the myth of the 'model minority'

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin



An Vu says most people assume she is a whiz at math, just because she is Asian. But for her it's a challenge; she recently received a B in her class at CSU East Bay. "But I'm happy with that," smiles Vu, a student of Korean and Vietnamese heritage.



People take it for granted that Minh Ly is majoring in science or accounting at CSU East Bay, and are surprised to learn she's enrolled in the hospitality program. But crunching numbers or looking down test tubes has no appeal to Ly, who's a "people person" at heart — along with being Chinese and Vietnamese.



Kevin Khau, a student at James Logan High School in Union City, says the expectation for him to excel at everything he does sometimes feels like a chain around his neck. "Just because you are Chinese, people expect you to do really well, but the chain keeps getting tighter and tighter."



As an educator, you know you can't judge a book by its cover, but do you make assumptions about your students based on their ethnicity?

# Being in the “model minority”

can be challenging for Asian American/Pacific Islander students in California, an extremely diverse group who often are overlooked when there are conversations around “students of color.” They are generally assumed to be smart in math and science, respectful of others, and superachievers.

While some might argue these are positive traits and flattering, the myth of the model minority needs to be examined, asserts Charmaine Banther, chair of CTA’s Pacific Asian American Caucus, because it ignores students who are struggling, lumps all students together without regard for ethnic or cultural differences, and perpetuates stereotypes.

“We must make sure we don’t prejudge anybody,” says Banther, New Haven Teachers Association. “Otherwise, we are shortchanging our children.”

## A wide range of cultures and peoples

Quynh Nguyen came to the U.S. when she was 12. Everyone assumed that she was Chinese. When she explained she was really Vietnamese, people told her it was the same thing.

It’s actually *not*, says Nguyen, Garden Grove Education Association.

“That’s the stereotype,” says Nguyen, who teaches Vietnamese language classes at Bolsa Grande High School. “They think because we’re Asian we must be Chinese.”



Laurence Tan

She can relate to her Vietnamese students, who sometimes feel as though they are living in two cultures. “It’s hard growing up with the old values of Vietnam and the values of American society. There can be struggle between the two generations, and students don’t always understand the Vietnamese culture.”

Laurence Tan, a teacher at 122nd Street School in Los Angeles, is Filipino and Chinese. The United Teachers Los Angeles member teaches in the Watts community, which is primarily Latino and African American, and says he is the representative of “all things Asian” to his students.



“Students may become stressed out and become superachievers to please their parents,” says Charmaine Banther.

“Many nationalities fall into the umbrella of being Asian, and whether you are Japanese, Filipino, Chinese or Pacific Islander, you are all lumped together,” says Tan, who was a Teacher of the Year in Los Angeles Unified School District.

“But we all have different histories and cultures and struggles.”

Asia is an entity that contains nearly 4 billion people and more than 50 countries, and referring to everyone as “just being Asian” downplays diversity and differences among people. Pacific Islanders have traditionally been grouped with Asians. However, the two groups are very different culturally and ethnically. Since 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau has split the two groups, listing Asian and Pacific Islanders as two separate races on the Census form.





## HOW CAN EDUCATORS HELP ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS?

SOMETIMES ASIAN STUDENTS SIT QUIETLY and border on invisibility. But teachers should open their hearts and minds to be inclusive of students who sit quietly in class and may feel ignored, says Phe Bach, a chemistry teacher at Mira Loma High School in Sacramento who moved from Vietnam to the U.S. at age 15, without knowing English.

“Teachers can reach out to students and do research about their students to understand them,” says Bach, San Juan Teachers Association, who is the author of *Best Teaching Practices: A Supporting Guide for New Teachers* (Lambert Academic Publishing, 2013). “The best way to let students know you care about them is to understand them. It’s so important to have a relationship with *all* students — so they can open up and share what they are thinking and feeling. As teachers, we need to be patient, open-minded and willing to embrace differences of all students.”

Tips for educating Asian American students from Benji Chang and Wayne Au, authors of the article “You’re Asian. How Could You Fail Math?: Unmasking the Myth of the Model Minority” in *Rethinking Schools*, include:

- Don’t automatically assume that Asian American students are good students.
- Rethink the “silence” of Asian American students in your classroom. They may be quiet because they have a firm understanding of the material, or perhaps they are embarrassed for not grasping what is being said. Check in with students individually. Don’t make assumptions.
- Teach about unsung Asian American heroes.
- Highlight ways in which Asian Americans challenge racism and stereotypes.
- Weave historical struggles, culture and art of diverse Asian communities into your curriculum.

Pacific Islanders may be categorized as Asian, but they have different stereotypes. In the publication *Culture*, an article titled “Four Myths About Pacific Islanders” states, “One myth is that Pacific Islanders used to be violent savages, making them nowadays naturally adept at football.”



Sionefuka Pole, a senior at James Logan High School in Union City, is constantly asked if he’s a football player. Many assume the tall, muscular Tongan doesn’t care much about school, either. But he’s a straight-A student who loves singing in the school choir — and he’s never played football.

“When I say I’m in choir, they don’t believe me,” says Pole. “But I don’t care what people think. Choir has helped me to be myself.”

Benji Chang and Wayne Au, authors of the article “You’re Asian. How Could You Fail Math?: Unmasking the Myth of the Model Minority” in *Rethinking Schools*, believe numerous cultures were “squished” together as Asian to make things easier for European and U.S. imperialists who conquered them. They believe the myth of the model minority is used to drive a wedge against other minorities. Since Asian Americans were able to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, the reasoning goes, why can’t Latinos or blacks? Such reasoning is simplistic, is used to “mask” racism, and completely ignores class exploitation in the U.S., they say.

### The truth behind the myth

Asian Americans have done very well when it comes to achieving the American Dream of getting a good education and earning a good living. This has resulted in “model minority” as a common term, even used in *Newsweek* and “60 Minutes.” Among the five major racial/ethnic groups in the U.S., Asian Americans have the highest college degree attainment rate, rates of having an advanced degree, median family income, and rate of working in a highly skilled occupation, even outperforming whites in these categories.

But these statistics don’t tell the whole story. The reality is that some Asian students don’t do well in school, drop out, join gangs, or behave in other ways that are not associated with being a model minority.

“The high school dropout rate among Southeast Asian Americans is staggering,” comments Phe Bach, a chemistry teacher at





Mira Loma High School in Sacramento. “Forty percent of Hmong, 38 percent of Laotians, and 35 percent of Cambodian populations do not complete high school.”

While there is a high overall college degree attainment rate for Asian students, studies show Vietnamese Americans only have a college attainment rate of 20 percent. The rates for Laotians, Cambodians and Hmong are less than 10 percent. Fifteen percent of Pacific Islanders have an undergraduate degree.

Income, more than race, factors into achievement, says Bach, noting large percentages of Hmong, Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese Americans live in poverty. Children of educated and affluent parents are likely to do better in school than those with poor parents having little or no education, adds Bach, San Juan Teachers Association.

Kim Geron, a political science professor at CSU East Bay, sees that firsthand.

“Many Asian students do well academically, but others are just as challenged as other minority students,” he relates. “There are a significant number of Pacific Islanders from Tonga, the Solomon Islands and Fiji that tend to struggle more than other Asian students. Here, 60 percent of Asian students are the first in their families to attend college.”

Geron, whose mother is Japanese, co-directs the Student Service Operation for Success on campus, which provides counseling and cultural activities to help Asian American and Pacific Islander students succeed.

“Our math tutors can tell you that some of the most challenged students in math are Asian American students,” relates Geron, California Faculty Association, CSU East Bay. “But the real challenge is that the myth puts a lot of pressure on students, because people assume they are going to be overachievers.”

## Parental pressure not a myth

On the TV show “Glee,” a tearful student sobs about earning a B, calling it the equivalent of an “Asian F.”

It may be a joke, but there is a lot of parental pressure on Asian American students to succeed, says Banther, whose mother is Chinese. And while the Tiger Mom may be an extreme version of the Asian parent who

demands academic excellence — based on the book by Amy Chua describing a strict style of parenting — students say parental pressure is commonplace.

Banther asks a room full of students who hang out in her classroom at lunchtime if their parents expect academic perfection. Nearly all of the students are Asian; most raise their hands.

Meeting expectations of excellence in all capacities can be challenging for students, says Banther, who recalls that if she got 98 percent on a quiz, her mother would ask what happened to the other 2 percent.

“Students may become stressed out and become superachievers to please their parents — or throw their hands up in the air because they’ll never be good enough.”

Student Kevin Khau believes parents have good intentions — wanting their child to do better than they did, especially if they came from challenging circumstances. But it can be overwhelming.

“Teachers may not know it because kids like to hide their problems,” he says. “But it’s a lot of pressure and sometimes we can’t take it.”

Banther advises fellow educators to be sensitive to Asian students who are superachievers.

“We need to show these children that we care about them and love them for who they are — and not just what they can achieve.” ■

**Quynh Nguyen,** who is Vietnamese, often meets people who assume she is Chinese.



Kim Geron



# Know & Tell

Grants, awards, contests, resources and tips to share

## **Get ready for summer reading**

In addition to recommending books for students, CTA's California Reads Committee has put together a list of great reads for adults for the summer.

*The Speech*, by Gary Younge

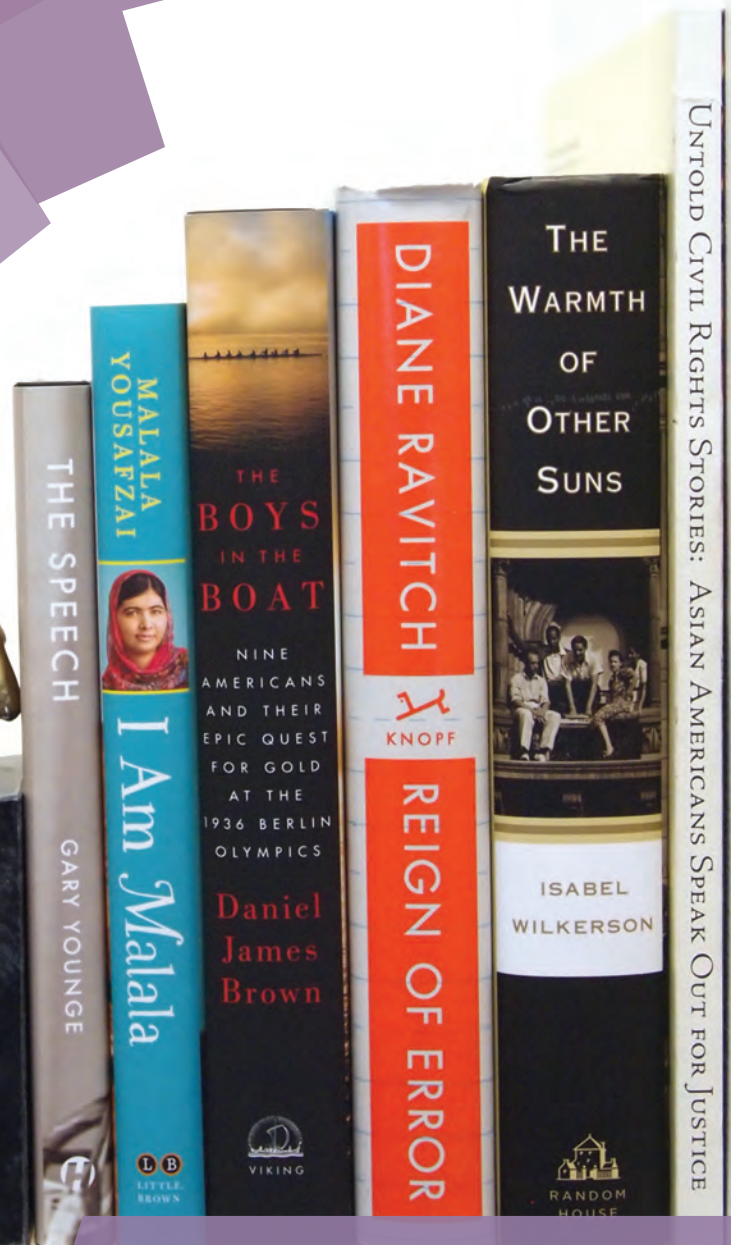
*I Am Malala*, by Malala Yousafzai

*The Boys in the Boat*, by Daniel James Brown

*Reign of Error*, by Diane Ravitch

*The Warmth of Other Suns*, by Isabel Wilkerson

*Untold Civil Rights Stories: Asian Americans Speak Out for Justice*, by Stewart Kwoh and Russell C. Leong



TURN TO PAGE 16 TO CATCH UP ON CALIFORNIA READS SPRING AND SUMMER BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS.

### Canon PIXMA PRO-100

**PRICE:** \$368

Ready for a printer that can create professional-looking prints of your life's special moments and milestones? Look no further than Canon's PIXMA PRO-100. The PRO-100 uses eight dye-based inks to create amazing gradients and color, three of which are dedicated grayscale inks for beautiful black-and-white prints. Canon claims the PRO-100 can resist noticeable fading for up to 100 years in proper storage conditions.

*The Photo Printer*



*The All-in-One Printer*



### Epson WorkForce WF-3620

**PRICE:** \$119

Printers have graduated from just being printers. They now give you the convenience of also being a scanner, copier and fax machine. The Epson WorkForce WF-3620 color inkjet printer is easy to use on both Mac and PC, and features wireless and mobile printing. It can print about 18 pages per minute, and includes a 35-sheet document feeder that can scan and copy both sides of a page.

### Brother HL-L2340DW

**PRICE:** \$90

The Brother HL-L2340DW laser printer is the best bang for your buck, costing about 2 cents of toner per printed page. That's the lowest of any current consumer printer model on the market. It's compatible with both Mac and PC, prints 27 pages per minute, and features wireless or Google Cloud print.

*The Budget-Friendly Workhorse*



# PRINTERS

By Terry Ng

## A paper-free life.

That's what the Internet, mobile phones, Wi-Fi and the "cloud" promised us this past decade. It's now 2015, and despite all the technological advancements we've achieved, paper is still a part of our daily lives. Maybe 10 or 20 years from now, we'll be able to finally free ourselves from printers and live in a paperless world. For now, here are three printers we recommend for your printing needs.



## CTA member honored as School Counselor of the Year finalist

By Ed Sibby



“I remember many times sitting in Mrs. Pringle’s office because I needed someone to listen to me,” says Cherno Hindra, a former Hoover High School student now enrolled at CSU East Bay. Originally from Morocco, Hindra is the first in her family to attend a four-year university, and an affirmation of why Tawnya Pringle, San Diego Education Association, was named one of five national finalists for the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) School Counselor of the Year.

“Mrs. Pringle was there when my family wasn’t or couldn’t be. On the days that I wasn’t feeling so confident about my future, she would counsel me in the right direction so I wouldn’t get off track, so I wouldn’t give up. It wasn’t just me she was encouraging; it was all her students. She always took the time to help support her students whether it was with academics, personal issues or helping you plan your life after high school,” Hindra says.

Hoover High School Principal Joe Austin credits her with assisting families, most for the first time, through the myriad of responsibilities associated with the admissions process — no small feat in a school where 100 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. “It’s difficult to fathom all of the lives that have been positively impacted by her passion, caring and expertise,” he says.

The School Counselor of the Year finalists and winner (Cory Notestine, Colorado) were judged on several criteria, including creative school counseling innovations, effective school counseling programs, leadership skills, and contributions to student advancement.

“School counselors make significant contributions to the overall well being of students and their success,” says Kwok-Sze Wong, ASCA executive director. “They have unique qualifications and skills that allow them to address students’ academic achievement, career, and social-emotional development needs.”

Pringle, along with the other finalists and semifinalists, flew to Washington, D.C., in January for three days of celebratory events. The honorees were received at a White House ceremony with the First Lady, and attended meetings with their members of Congress, including a congressional briefing and formal recognition at a black tie gala.

Back home at Hoover High School where the term is winding down, Pringle has just moved through college application deadline season, dealing with parent outreach for financial aid, checklists, explanations regarding the difference between two- and four-year colleges, and student loan eligibility. Multiple parent meetings have taken place since fall, and Pringle is still engaged after nearly a quarter century of the work. “It’s a rewarding field that gives me an opportunity to make a difference in students’ lives. Counselors today face significant challenges. They are tasked with maintaining and reinforcing empathy while balancing relationships, leadership, and site-level power and data use in order to make effective school improvements. It’s not you and a student working in isolation.”

In the White House Blue Room in January, where Pringle and the other finalists were gathered, First Lady Michelle Obama remarked that it was the first time in history that school counselors were so honored. “I was so thankful, I wanted to have every teacher and professor who ever encouraged me to be able to share this with me,” Pringle says.

CTA proudly acknowledges the outstanding achievement of Tawnya Pringle as a 2015 School Counselor of the Year finalist. ■

# Recommended Reading

More book recommendations from California Reads

SPRING 2015		SUMMER 2015
<p><b>Nest</b> BY JOREY HURLEY</p> <p>From birth to first flight to new friend, the first year of a bird's life is full of activity and wonder. Artist Jorey Hurley pairs vivid, crisp artwork with simple, minimal text — often just one word per spread — to create a breathtaking, peaceful chronicle of nature and life's milestones.</p>	Pre-K	<p><b>Press Here</b> BY HERVÉ TULLET</p> <p>Press the yellow dot on the cover of this book, follow the instructions within, and embark upon a magical journey! Each page of this surprising book instructs the reader to press the dots, shake the pages, tilt the book, and who knows what will happen next!</p>
<p><b>The Year of Billy Miller</b> BY KEVIN HENKES</p> <p>Award-winning, nationally bestselling author Kevin Henkes introduces second-grader Billy Miller in this fast-paced and funny story about friendship, sibling rivalry, and elementary school.</p>	K-2	<p><b>Miss Smith's Incredible Storybook</b> BY MICHAEL GARLAND</p> <p>When Zack meets his second-grade teacher, Miss Smith, he can tell right away that her class will be different. But he has no idea just how different it will be! Miss Smith has a knack for telling tales. When she reads from her incredible book, the stories literally spring to life!</p>
<p><b>Sonia Sotomayor: A Judge Grows in the Bronx</b> BY JONAH WINTER</p> <p>The inspiring and timely story of Sonia Sotomayor, who rose up from a childhood of poverty and prejudice to become the first Latino to be nominated to the U.S. Supreme Court.</p>	3-5	<p><b>This Is the Rope</b> BY JACQUELINE WOODSON</p> <p>The story of one family's journey north during the Great Migration starts with a little girl in South Carolina who finds a rope under a tree one summer. She has no idea the rope will become part of her family's history.</p>
<p><b>Diego Rivera: Artist for the People</b> BY SUSAN GOLDMAN RUBIN</p> <p><i>Diego Rivera</i> offers young readers unique insight into the life and artwork of the famous Mexican painter and muralist. The book follows Rivera's career, looking at his influences and tracing the evolution of his style. His work often called attention to the culture and struggles of the Mexican working class.</p>	6-8	<p><b>Bluefish</b> BY PAT SCHMATZ</p> <p>Travis is missing his old home in the country, and he's missing his old hound, Rosco. Now there's just the cramped place he shares with his well-meaning but alcoholic grandpa, a new school, and the dreaded routine of passing when he's called on to read out loud. But that's before Travis meets Mr. McQueen, a teacher who doesn't take "pass" for an answer.</p>
<p><b>Changers Book One: Drew</b> BY T COOPER AND ALLISON GLOCK-COOPER</p> <p><i>Changers Book One</i>: Drew opens on the eve of Ethan Miller's freshman year of high school in a brand-new town. Ethan is a Changer, a little-known, ancient race of humans who live out each of their four years of high school as a different person. After graduation, Changers choose which version of themselves they will be forever.</p>	9-12	<p><b>Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood</b> BY MARJANE SATRAPI</p> <p>Wise, funny, and heartbreaking, <i>Persepolis</i> is Marjane Satrapi's memoir of growing up in Iran during the Islamic Revolution. In powerful black-and-white comic strip images, Satrapi tells the story of her life in Tehran from age 6 to 14, years that saw the overthrow of the Shah's regime, the triumph of the Islamic Revolution, and the devastating effects of war with Iraq.</p>





**Doreen McGuire-Grigg** interrupts CTA President **Dean Vogel's** presentation for a selfie.

## Doreen McGuire-Grigg is CTA's Education Support Professional of the Year

By Cynthia Menzel

“Sometimes I’m not nice — I’m pretty direct,” admits veteran Lakeport Unified School District para-professional Doreen McGuire-Grigg. She flashes a megawatt smile that has melted many hearts and adds, “I have been a loud and determined voice for education support professional members in my local, state and national organizations. It’s important for me that our ESP members have advocates who work beside them, who know that what they do is important to educating all the students in our schools.”

It’s that passion and advocacy that brought McGuire-Grigg to the dais at the April State Council meeting to receive CTA’s Paula J. Monroe ESP of the Year Award for 2015. “I admire Doreen’s unabashed ability to do what she knows is right, no matter what,” said CTA President Dean E. Vogel in honoring her for role in ensuring student and school success. “CTA is a more unified and inclusive organization because of her union work and her inspiring solidarity.”

Known as a formidable activist for all educators, McGuire-Grigg is president of the Lakeport Unified Classified Employees Association and the first ESP elected to a state position on the NEA Board of Directors. Until recently she served as a delegate to State Council, CTA’s top governing body.

When it comes to union solidarity and so-called education reformers, she is just as direct. “I’m an educator and proud member of my local union, CTA and NEA. And while the education ‘deformers’ want to attack educators and their unions, we are all standing together and fighting for our public schools.”

“As a special education paraeducator, one of the most

important phrases for me is ‘We are one!’” she adds. “Our ESP members work to make sure all students have all the opportunities they deserve for a quality education. Before students arrive at school, ESP members are involved in their day. Schools wouldn’t be able to open without us!”

Known as the go-to person at her school and within CTA, McGuire-Grigg began her ESP career 27 years ago. She’s been in a special education classroom with the same teacher for many years and is respected for her ability to approach and teach students. Her skills and dedication have made a difference for students and colleagues at the site, district and state education levels.

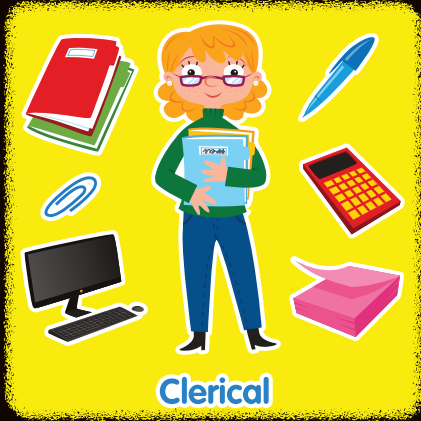
As much as she’s grateful to her union, especially for this honor, she’s even more grateful to her family. “If it weren’t for the support at home and at my school, I wouldn’t be able to advocate as hard as I do. I have a passion for doing the right thing.”

The state award is named after retired activist Paula J. Monroe, Redlands ESP Association, a former CTA and NEA ESP of the Year, who campaigned successfully in 2006 to have 5,000 California ESP employees admitted to CTA as full members. ■

You can help educate your students about ESPs and the important work they do by displaying this poster in your classroom and visiting [www.nea.org/esp](http://www.nea.org/esp) for more resources.

# Education Support Professionals

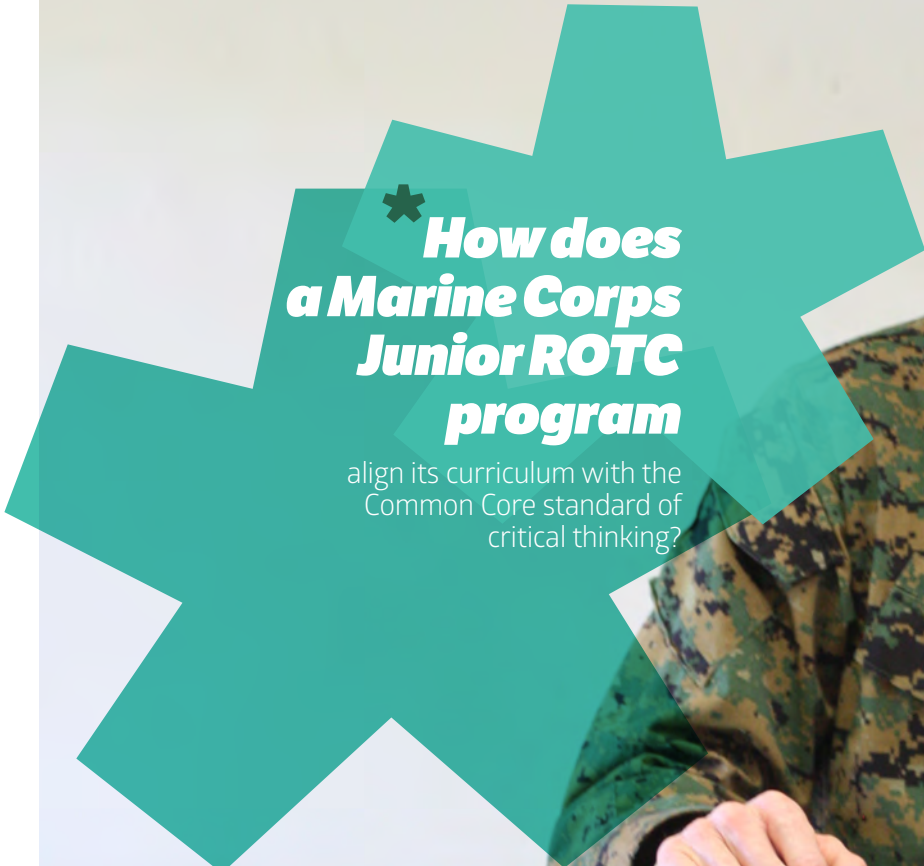
ENSURING STUDENT & SCHOOL SUCCESS






# Perspectives

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



**\* How does  
a Marine Corps  
Junior ROTC  
program**

align its curriculum with the  
Common Core standard of  
critical thinking?



**COL. BRIAN KERL**, MEMBER OF THE  
OCEANSIDE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION AND  
SENIOR MILITARY INSTRUCTOR, ANSWERS  
THAT QUESTION ON PAGE 21.





# Should schools have a no-lice policy?

## Yes.

**I believe kids should stay home when they have lice.**

In my experience, it can easily spread among kids or even teachers if they get close to you. I work with preschoolers with special needs, and if they put their head against you or give you a hug, it's very contagious. Sometimes I see kids scratching their heads. I have seen one child give it to another.

Sometimes I actually save the head lice I find on a child and have it stuck to some tape so parents can see it, because they might say, "My child is clean." I am extra cautious, because I don't want it to spread. Sometimes parents will say they noticed it at home and the student's siblings have it, but they still sent them to school because they don't want to keep their children at home or miss work.

I can understand parents feeling frustrated, because it's a long process to remove them, especially with younger children who may have behavior problems. But hopefully, parents can realize that with all the frustration they are going through, they don't want to put another parent through the same thing. I have a 4-year-old daughter, and I don't want her to get lice, so I'm super careful.

Our school policy is that if there are live lice, they must stay home, but if there are nits, they can send them to school. Personally, I don't agree with that policy, because the nits can hatch. So I don't think they should come to school with nits.

I think there should be a state law that says students can't come to school with live lice or nits, to protect other kids and the school staff. There should be a law that protects everyone.

They may be little tiny bugs, but they can cause huge problems!

**Sonia Pina, Oxnard Educators Association,** teaches students with special needs at San Miguel Preschool.



**Currently, there is no state policy or law regarding head lice, although the California Department of Public Health has issued guidelines. We wanted to know what members thought, so we bugged a few and asked them to share their thoughts on what schools should do.**



## No.

**According to the national guidelines issued by the American Academy of Pediatrics, "No healthy child should be excluded from or miss school because of head lice."**

In my district we have an evidence-based, no-exclusion policy where students are allowed to attend school. That's because in my district, we want children to attend school, and there is no reason for parents to miss work or pay for child care for what's merely a nuisance.

People may be fearful of head lice, but there is no reason for this. Oakland changed to a no-exclusion policy nine years ago, and there have been no reports of head lice overwhelming the student population. Nor has that happened in Piedmont. School is not a common place for transmission. Overnights and camps are a greater risk because of head-to-head contact.

Initially in my district there were parents who were upset; some may still be. However, parents have recognized that this is not a school issue. They have asked if they can continue lice checks outside the school day on school grounds in a program run by parents, and the district has said yes.

An important point is that head lice should be confirmed by identifying them under a microscope — as they are about the size of a sesame seed. Identifying a viable nit under a microscope would also be acceptable. This is something that can't be done with the naked eye. Head lice are frequently misdiagnosed. For example, if 10 students are identified as having head lice, the diagnosis will be accurate about 60 percent of the time, or in six students. Among those six, half will have an active infestation. So if 10 are identified and treated, seven will have been treated unnecessarily.

There's no reason to enact legislation about something that has no health risks. Our energy would be better spent making sure students are immunized and know how to wash their hands so they can prevent disease.

**Joan Edelstein, Association of Piedmont Teachers,** is a school nurse and faculty member in the School Nurse Credential Program at CSU Sacramento.

# ROTC and the Common Core

How one Oceanside teacher incorporates critical thinking into curriculum

By Col. Brian Kerl,  
Oceanside Teachers Association

AT OCEANSIDE HIGH SCHOOL, we view critical thinking, as defined in Paul and Elder's *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking, Concepts and Tools*, as "the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view to improving it." What critical thinking looks like is a person who raises key questions and issues, finds and assesses pertinent information, and develops sound conclusions and solutions to problems.

To do this, the student must effectively communicate, problem-solve, and be committed to open-minded thinking. How does a Marine Corps Junior ROTC program align its curriculum with the Common Core standard of critical thinking?

Oceanside MCJROTC has developed a strategy enabling critical thinking to supplement significant portions of MCJROTC instruction, which is focused on leadership education and instruction on citizenship, personal growth and responsibility, and general military subjects. The strategy includes task design centered on analyzing and evaluating information stressing the student's ability to communicate both verbally and in writing.

**Task design and critical thinking** Three primary methods used to promote critical thinking are case studies, questioning techniques, and problem-solving activities. Critical in the task design is to ensure all students can participate both orally and in writing. Another aspect of task design is to enable student progress using Norman Webb's Depth-of-Knowledge (DOK) levels.

Level 1 focuses on basic recall of information — who, what, where, when and why. Level 2 requires more skill through identification and summarization of major events and patterns of behavior. Level 3 is oriented on strategic thinking requiring students to support ideas with details and examples. Finally, DOK level 4 requires more extended thinking through analyzing data and reporting the results along with solutions to specific problems.

This year I used Meyer and Brown's *Practicing Public Management: A Casebook* for questions that facilitate



Cadets answer questions in Oceanside High School's Marine Corps Junior ROTC classroom.

critical thinking. Students are assigned to read the case and answer questions in writing. The writing assignment is turned in at the beginning of class, and the remainder of the class is used to discuss the case.

The Socratic method using DOK question stems works well, e.g., how is \_\_\_\_ related to \_\_\_\_? As students respond, the instructor can prompt the class for information covering the various DOK levels. The goal is to get the students to progress to higher DOK levels offering input supported by evidence that supports their conclusion.

Also, as students answer questions, their peers can be asked if they agree or disagree and why. Each question promotes DOK level information, and if the instructor is strategic in task design, various DOK levels can be targeted from the readings, film, etc. The goal is to have students justify their thinking and reasoning based on evidence.

Recently Oceanside Principal Ron Pirayoff asked staff to look at how we close the "knowing-doing" gap with critical thinking. Through our professional learning community (PLC) sessions, we believe the task of critical thinking is understood, but how do we ensure more students and classes are critically thinking than before?

**Narrowing the "knowing-doing" gap** One way we are closing the gap is through our questioning techniques. We maintain a high expectation for our students to justify their answers by providing evidence to support their position. Questions are linked to the various DOK levels requiring students to pause and reflect for a moment before providing the first thought that comes into mind. As students answer, other students are expected to be ready to respond with their position on the issue. Case studies, persuasive speeches, team-building activities like the Basic Leadership Camp, and group projects like our recent participation in CyberPatriot (a national cybersecurity education program), have been used to exercise critical thinking in addition to the daily prompts and questions discussed earlier.

Oceanside High School has conducted instructional rounds that have produced encouraging results. It has been my experience from last year and during this first semester that the majority of the students have worked at DOK levels 1 and 2. I have tried this semester to improve my task design to incorporate more level 3 and 4 tasks. The students' work this semester should provide a gauge on their progress from level 1 and 2 DOK tasks to level 3 and 4 tasks.

Critical thinking has become a part of our MCJROTC curriculum and fits nicely into the other areas of academic instruction. ■

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**27**

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tip no. **1**

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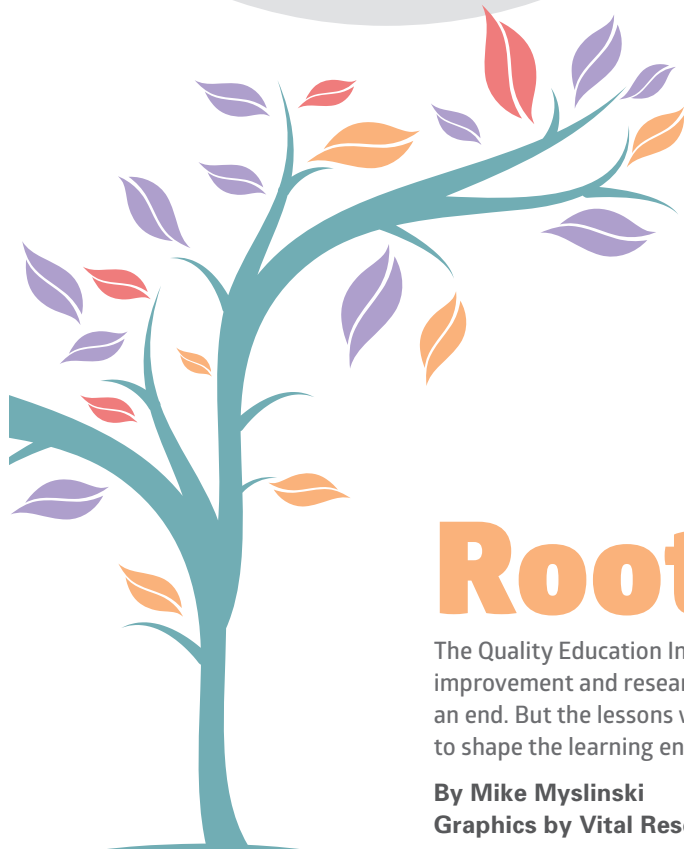


# QEIA

QUALITY EDUCATION INVESTMENT ACT OF 2006

“Now is the accepted time, not tomorrow, not some more convenient season. It is today that our best work can be done and not some future day or future year. It is today that we fit ourselves for the greater usefulness of tomorrow. Today is the seed time, now are the hours of work, and tomorrow comes the harvest.”

W. E. B. Du Bois



## Roots of Success

The Quality Education Investment Act of 2006 was the largest teacher-led school improvement and research effort of its kind, and on June 30 it is officially coming to an end. But the lessons we’ve gleaned from this unprecedented effort can help to shape the learning environment for students across the country.

**By Mike Myslinski**  
**Graphics by Vital Research, LLC**

*More than eight years ago,* CTA planted seeds of change in targeted schools throughout California where students were struggling academically. These schools were in communities serving our most at-risk youth—where the students were predominantly English learners and overwhelmingly poor. Unfortunately, in a time when politicians seemed to care more about test scores than the test takers, these students were the children being left behind. So CTA educators partnered with then state Senator Tom Torlakson to provide real growth opportunities for these students.



QEIA AUTHOR TOM TORLAKSON WEIGHS IN	SCHOOL EXAMPLES: QEIA IN ACTION	QEIA IS PRAISED BY EDUCATION EXPERTS	PERCEIVED IMPACT OF QEIA	INTERVIEW WITH QEIA RESEARCHER	LESSONS LEARNED FROM QEIA
PAGE 27	PAGE 28	PAGE 29	PAGE 29	PAGE 30	PAGE 30

**Heralded by education experts** as the visionary school turnaround program led by California’s educators, a revolutionary CTA-led experiment based on bringing more resources directly to our students of greatest need is ending as planned on June 30 after eight years of documented and inspiring success.

But the revealing lessons learned from the Quality Education Investment Act of 2006 (QEIA) will live on as best-practice tools for educators statewide. Proven reforms like small class sizes, more teacher collaboration time, and better professional development crafted by educators all work wonders, the sustained project showed.

And QEIA showed how CTA had changed from doing short-term campaigns and fixes to an eight-year commitment of staff and resources to help nearly 400,000 mostly low-income, minority students. The union committed nearly \$3 billion it had won in a school funding lawsuit settlement for lifting up 500 schools with extra resources. The reform law clearly proves that CTA is putting professional issues among its top priorities, along with improving teaching and learning, says CTA President Dean Vogel.

“There is a real sense of pride about how educators made this dream

of teacher-driven reform a reality that worked on this scale,” Vogel says. “With QEIA, with this unprecedented turnaround program that’s the largest of its kind in the nation, we learned that certain proven reforms can work for all schools. Smaller class sizes, more teacher collaboration time, fostering a sense of collective community accountability — the QEIA-supported schools excelled with all of these targeted resources, and more.”

Not even massive education cuts from the brutal Great Recession of 2008-12 — during which about 30,000 California teaching jobs were lost — could derail the reform law. Because some districts failed to meet the law’s class size reduction mandates or other requirements, the total

# WHO & WHAT?

## 400,000 STUDENTS



**500**  
SCHOOLS  
STRUGGLING IN  
THE **BOTTOM 20%\***



\*According to the state’s accountability system.



## Listen to Barbara Kerr speak about the birth of QEIA

Barbara Kerr was president of CTA from 2003 to 2007 during many political wars and victories. She says her proudest moment was when CTA decided to launch the Quality Education Investment Act of 2006. As part of an ongoing oral history project, CTA interviewed Kerr in 2013 about how the landmark reform idea was born. Listen to her candid remarks at [soundcloud.com/cateachers/barbara-kerr](https://soundcloud.com/cateachers/barbara-kerr). She first recounts how CTA had just defeated Propositions 74, 75 and 76 in 2005 — the triple ballot threat to teachers championed by then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. The second half of the interview is about winning a lawsuit against him for withholding nearly \$3 billion in school funding, and the birth of the idea to use the money for at-risk students via QEIA.

“Off we went — helping real students in real schools,” Kerr says. “I think about QEIA as my most important legacy.”

number of QEIA-funded schools was whittled to about 350 today. The law says QEIA schools must reduce class sizes to a maximum of 20 students in grades K-3 and an average of 25 in grades 4-12.

Teachers in four QEIA-supported schools in the high-poverty Lennox Elementary School District in Los Angeles County saw the power of the smaller classes for improving student learning and even took pay cuts to help their district keep classes small with QEIA help, says Brian Guerrero, middle school teacher, QEIA site contact, and president of the Lennox Teachers Association. He is proud of CTA for launching the daring reform.

“As a union leader and as a teacher in the state of

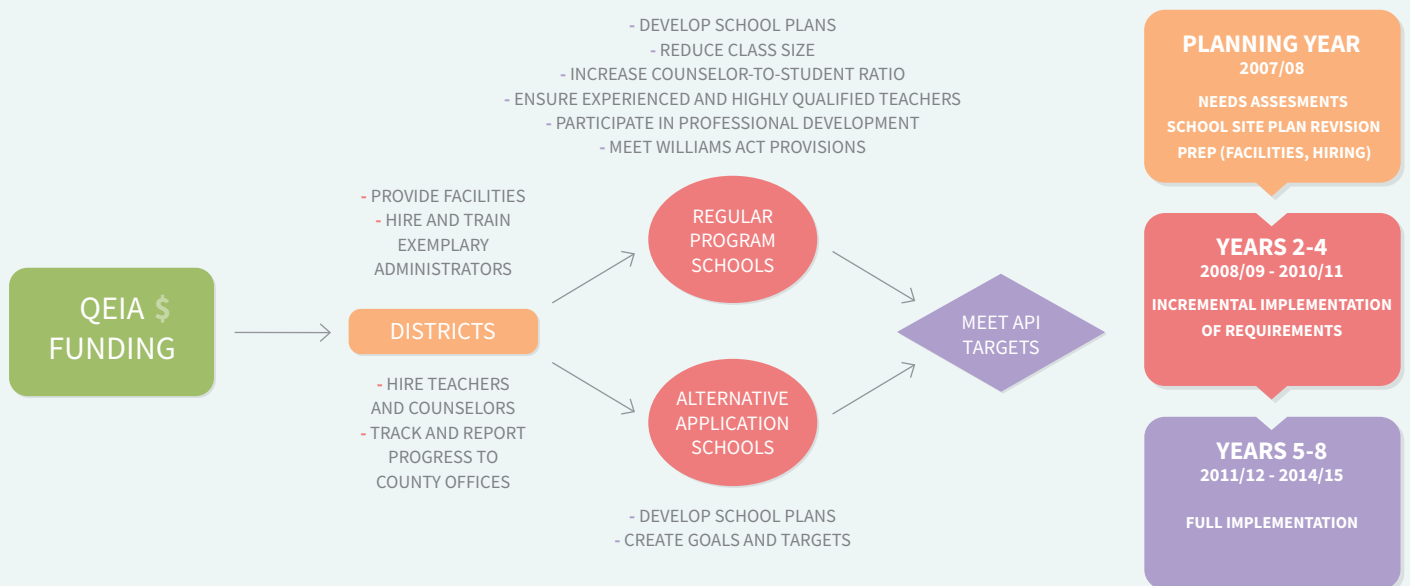
California, I’m proud for our statewide association to have really championed this. I’m proud of the way the teachers in my district have stepped up,” he says. (See short profiles of other successful QEIA schools, page 28.)

CTA Vice President Eric Heins chaired the union’s QEIA Work Group of staff and QEIA school members for many years. This reform was a new way to shake up the system, Heins told researchers who quoted him in the 2012 book *The Global Fourth Way*. The book hails QEIA as one of six top education reform models in the world at the time.

“We had to be able to reach into schools in a different way,” Heins says in the book. “I saw QEIA as a program for getting back to good pedagogy.”

The excited authors also say about QEIA: “Recovering, renewing, and reinventing teaching and teachers builds the basic resources of professional capital that yields repeated returns in continuous improvement and student

# HOW? 3 BILLION DOLLARS







achievement.” (Read more about how QEIA is viewed in books by education researchers on page 29.)

**H**ow did QEIA get its chance to cultivate these roots of change? It all began when CTA and the California Department of Education sued Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger over his withholding education funds mandated by the voter-approved Proposition 98, which guarantees minimum K-14 school and community college funding levels.

With the green light of Barbara Kerr, then CTA president, the reform plan was fast-tracked. (Listen to an audio recording of Kerr proudly calling QEIA “my most important legacy” at [www.cta.org/oralhistory](http://www.cta.org/oralhistory).)

State Sen. Tom Torlakson — now California’s state superintendent of public instruction — quickly authored legislation (SB 1133) sponsored by CTA, which gave birth to QEIA. Over eight years, the program allocated \$2.7 billion from the settlement of the CTA lawsuit in one-time Proposition 98 funding.

Enacted in the fall of 2006, the law mandated that 500 of the state’s lowest-performing schools serving about 400,000 students would get funding for reforms like reducing class sizes, improving teacher and principal training, hiring more high school counselors, and providing additional resources to support local programs that best fit the needs of students. The law also increased funding to expand career and vocational education programs offered by community colleges.

The impact on achievement was almost immediate. On average, the QEIA-supported schools scored five points higher than similar schools in the state’s Academic

### In QEIA-supported schools over the years, the program required:

Additional annual state funding of \$500 per pupil in grades K-3, \$900 per pupil in grades 4-8, and \$1,000 per pupil in grades 9-12, for these targeted schools.

A credentialed counselor for every 300 students in high schools. The statewide ratio is now more like 1:1,000, the worst in the nation.

Highly qualified teachers in all core academic subjects at the end of the third year of the program.

Establishing California’s first teacher quality index to ensure the average teacher’s experience at these schools is equal to or exceeds the district average.

Flexibility for school districts to encourage school-level innovations to advance learning excellence.

Shared responsibility for monitoring and support by the superintendent of public instruction, the California Department of Education, county offices of education, local school districts, and local schools.

Performance Index (API) for the 2008-09 school year, which was the first full year of extra QEIA resources. Also, 351 of the 499 QEIA schools met state schoolwide targets for API academic growth. The trend continued, especially in elementary schools.

The state’s old API accountability system used standardized test scores to gauge progress and set an API target of 800 for every public school. Currently, the state has suspended the API program as it looks at devising a new system that uses multiple measures for student assessment — with the final API scores coming out in the spring of 2013.

**C**TA created a valuable network of site contacts at about 400 QEIA schools, which was also unprecedented, notes a February 2015 research report by Vital Research of Los Angeles. This is the fourth of five planned reports by the independent firm.

“CTA’s ability to reach directly into schools to make a difference through the site contact resulted in major gains for both schools and CTA,” the report notes. “Rather than feeling restricted by internal networks, CTA staff were empowered to interface directly with school sites to build capacity and create change.”

In the Bay Area, teacher Sharon Abri hopes that QEIA momentum will continue at her school, Marilyn Avenue Elementary in the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District. The school of mostly low-income students and English learners had an API score of 833 in 2013, and staff last year greatly benefited from two writing coaches that QEIA paid for, Abri says. “We did labs. We did classroom



Lennox Middle School teacher **Brian Guerrero** visits colleague **Patti Martin** as she leads a seventh-grade language arts class that is a manageable size, thanks to QEIA funding. Photo by Frank Wells.

observations. It was an amazing form of professional development.”

She has 17 students in her third-grade class this year. Her colleague, Noah King, has 18 and praises the teaching opportunities that the extra resources provided.

“We definitely saw a lot of positive impact during all the years we have been under QEIA,” King says. “The research shows that this kind of school deserves more resources. In the past, this kind of school never got more resources.”

While the QEIA program is ending June 30, something is beginning as well. It’s a new understanding in California that schools struggling with poverty issues really need targeted help that works, and they respond to the investment, says Heins.

He notes that QEIA goals to help at-risk students and involve the community are mirrored in the state’s Local Control Funding Formula, which provides extra funding for schools with more English learners and low-income and foster youths. As part of this funding promise, school districts must develop Local Control and Accountability Plans that involve parents and community leaders. Looking forward, these ideas will expand the safety net that QEIA first cast eight years ago.

“CTA now has a strategic plan, and QEIA lessons all fit into that plan, especially our goal to fight for meaningful education change,” says Heins, who is CTA’s president-elect and takes office June 26. “I look forward to using the lessons we learned from QEIA to help all educators in the years ahead. We built a successful student-centered, teacher-driven structure that mandated parental engagement. We showed the power of smaller class sizes. The students and our profession all benefited from the risks we took as a union, and from the rewards we all harvested together.” ■

# END OF THE QEIA ERA

By Tom Torlakson

**THE YEARS 2007-12** were dark ones for public education in California, as the Great Recession took hold and budget cuts rippled throughout school districts across the state.

But even during that era of serious belt tightening, some positive programs did emerge. One was the Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA), which directed \$2.7 billion to low-performing schools so they could reduce class sizes, improve teacher training, hire more counselors and increase parent participation. After eight successful years, this program comes to a close on June 30. It is a good time to reflect on what it accomplished.

When I authored the 2006 legislation (SB 1133) that created this act, my hope was that we could target funds in schools that needed resources the most. I worked closely with the California Teachers Association to fashion the program as part of a legal settlement between the organization and then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. I felt strongly at the time that this was a smart way to direct Proposition 98 money that the governor owed schools — by giving schools in the lowest 20 percent of test scores added resources to improve classroom learning, with a lot of flexibility on how to do it.

The timing turned out advantageous. As districts had to cut deeply, QEIA schools were able to keep class sizes small and retain and develop their teachers. As a result, most QEIA schools significantly increased their test scores, attendance and overall success.

We started with 500 QEIA schools, and we’ll be ending with 352 that continued to meet performance goals and financial commitments. That 70 percent of these low-performing schools met their guidelines and excelled is a remarkably positive outcome.

Harder to calculate, but equally important, is the overall value to teachers and students. Teachers at these schools received more relevant training and staff development, and they gained experience with smaller classes, allowing them to focus more on each student and see the positive impact that they have.

While not fully recovered yet from the tough times and budget losses of the recession, public schools today, thankfully, are better funded due to an improved economy and the passage of Proposition 30 in 2012. And we are making great strides to better prepare students for college and careers in the 21st century.

California has set new rigorous academic standards, given local schools and communities more control over spending decisions, and provided more resources to students with the greatest needs. We are on the right track, and QEIA helped get us there.

Teamwork. Teachers, parents and administrators working together. Investing together in student success.

*Tom Torlakson is California’s state superintendent of public instruction.*



**Tom Torlakson**

## QEIA IN ACTION

### San Diego County: Award-winning Chula Vista school shines

**QEIA School: Lauderbach Elementary**

- **DISTRICT:** Chula Vista Elementary School District.
- **SUCCESS FACTOR:** Teacher collaboration.
- **API SCORE IN 2013:** 845.
- **STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS:** 809 students; 91 percent Hispanic; about 85 percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunches; 75 percent are English learners.

**Quote:** “I think a big part of what we did was our collaboration. We were able to allow time once a week for teachers to collaborate and plan lessons and observe one another, providing each other with feedback,” says teacher and literacy coach Evette Ramirez, whose position is funded by QEIA.

**What worked:** Teachers spend hours every week in brainstorming sessions assessing student data, planning lessons together. In her literacy coach job, Ramirez helps model lessons for colleagues and promotes quality professional development. Having Principal Alex Cortes be a strong advocate for QEIA goals and her position mattered because “you can have the extra funds, but it’s how you use them that matters.” She says the principal “wants teachers supported so that they can be successful, and the students in turn can benefit from having the best teachers possible.”

**What changed:** Lauderbach Elementary was named a California Distinguished School in 2012 and was one of 56 California public schools to earn a Title I Academic Achievement Award in 2013 from



Evette Ramirez

the California Department of Education. Title I is the largest federal program for K-12 public schools and assists students living at or below the poverty line. The school also won a National Center for Urban School Transformation award.

Visit [www.cta.org/QEIA](http://www.cta.org/QEIA) to read more about these QEIA successes.



**SMALLER CLASSES INSPIRE at Francisco Sepulveda Middle School in LA**



**TRUE COMMUNITY SCHOOL INSPIRES PARENTS at Harmon Johnson Elementary in Sacramento**



**West High School TRANSFORMS LEARNING CULTURE in Bakersfield**



Read the full story about QEIA praise in these two books at [www.cta.org/QEIA](http://www.cta.org/QEIA)

# QEIA PROGRAM PRAISED BY EDUCATION EXPERTS

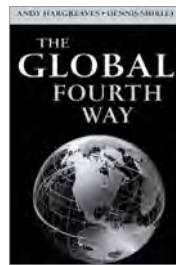
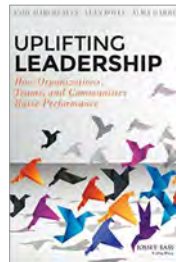
By Mike Myslinski

**TWO RECENT BOOKS** by top education experts singled out the acclaimed, CTA-sponsored Quality Education Investment Act of 2006 as cutting-edge reform that inspired and empowered California's educators.

Taking nearly \$3 billion won in a CTA lawsuit and investing it in hundreds of at-risk schools backed by the QEIA program over eight years instead of spreading the funds statewide for bargaining purposes showed inspiring vision, tenacity and leadership, say the authors of the 2014 book *Uplifting Leadership: How Organizations, Teams, and Communities Raise Performance*.

The QEIA-mandated collective approach of teachers, parents and administrators working together paid off in student growth, the authors note. They found that young California teachers also saw CTA in a new light.

The three authors are Alma Harris, a professor at the Institute of Educational Leadership at the Univer-



sity of Malaya who is internationally known for her school improvement work; Alan Boyle, who designs and creates professional learning for education leaders in the United Kingdom; and Andy Hargreaves of Boston College, one of the nation's most influential scholars on U.S. public education policy. They enlisted Dennis Shirley, a Boston College professor of education, for their QEIA chapter.

Hargreaves and Shirley teamed up for an earlier book praising QEIA, the 2012 *The Global Fourth Way: The Quest for Educational Excellence*. QEIA is one of six case studies examined in the book about innovative education reforms around the world.

The authors consider QEIA to be "inside-out innovation that builds a platform of professional capital where classroom teachers become the dynamos of change themselves, not in this school or that school, but across hundreds of schools in one of the world's largest systems."

## PERCEIVED IMPACTS

### 1 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE



### 2 REPUTATION

"We increased our test scores, and I think that behavior as a site is getting better, and the community recognizes that our school's improving. It used to be like nobody wanted to come to our school. Parents would try to keep their kids at a different school, but now people want to come [here.]"

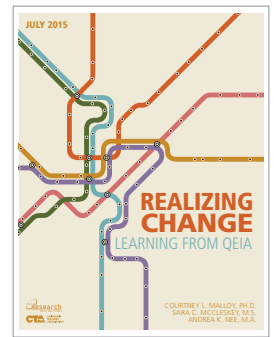
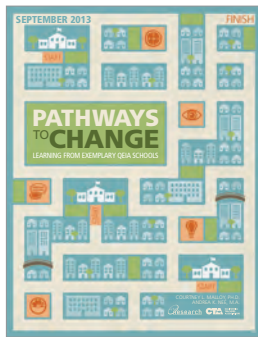
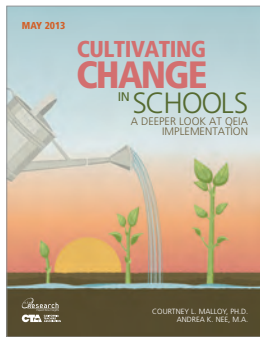
### 3 SCHOOL CLIMATE

"Our staff cares about our students to the highest. They really do go above and beyond. If they need things outside of school, we're willing to get it for them. We're willing to spend our own time in order to help them or bring in their parents. We do whatever it takes for our students, and I think that's the biggest key, too, because if you're not willing to go above and beyond, they're only going to make success to a certain degree."

### 4 PARENT INVOLVEMENT

"We've had a lot better parent involvement, especially since they see a lot of the programs and things that we've tried to do to bring the families into the school and make them more involved, and then they become more involved in certain fundraisers and even social things like talent shows and stuff like that, that has brought the community together."





Coming in July

To read the complete research reports, visit [www.cta.org/qeia](http://www.cta.org/qeia).

While there, you can also read more about the history of the program, watch videos, and discover how this unprecedented program can help shape how schools are reaching their most at-risk students.

**The QEIA program was funded over eight years with about \$3 billion that came from CTA winning a school funding lawsuit against former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. Wasn't a program that took that money and invested it in hundreds of at-risk schools highly unusual?** The typical approach might have been to distribute the funding to all schools equally in California. Instead, leaders said, "No, we're going to do something different. We're going to do something that will really change schools." QEIA was a grand experiment. It was really unprecedented.

**Your team's QEIA research says certain things really work — fostering collective accountability, supporting exemplary leaders, strengthening professional development, cultivating teacher collaboration, responsive student interventions, and class size reduction. Is one more vital than the others?** I don't think one is more vital necessarily. I do think this idea of local and collective accountability is foundational. At the core, in order for schools to change or become something great, there needs to be a sense that everybody's on the same page, that they understand the goals, they have collective responsibility, and that they have high expectations for their teachers, students, staff and parents. If that's not in place, I think it's hard to move anything.

**What other key QEIA elements for success did you notice?** You must have exemplary leadership in place, whether it's the principal or whoever. In our final report, we'll also be talking about how important it is to empower teachers and give them a voice in the reform process, and to give them the tools to engage in teaching and learning more effectively.

**What are the similarities between QEIA and the state's Local Control Funding Formula and the Local Control and Accountability Plan system?** It's fair to say there are a lot of similarities. The new policies, much like QEIA, are about helping our schools of greatest need. And both are focused on whether schools are adequately funded. Like QEIA, the local control policies appreciate the local context and support locally driven approaches to change. Our research on QEIA offers many lessons learned that can support schools in California as they transition to these new policies.

**What impressions stayed in your mind over the many years of research?** I met an amazing principal at one particular QEIA school who really defined what we mean by an exemplary leader. He empowered his teachers; he trusted them to make decisions. He moved heaven and earth so that everyone could collaborate. He also set goals that laid the foundation for a strong sense of collective accountability. Data was used to drive responsive academic interventions. If we don't staff our schools with the right kinds of principals, we aren't going to see the change we want.

**Any final lessons you want to share?** We learned some really important things about class size reduction. Research tends to focus on test scores and whether or not they improve with class size reduction. We learned more about how class size reduction affects the work of teachers and the classroom. When you reduce class size, classroom management improves. The environment is less stressful for teachers and students. Teachers can develop better student relationships, and as they get to know their students better, they can really differentiate instruction through small groups and one-on-one instruction. Those changes to practice have the potential to improve student learning.



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# Advocacy

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

## **Community tells Dump “Put a lid on it”**

In Huntington Beach, Oak View Elementary School’s educational and parent communities are working together to ensure clean air for their children.



ABOUT 400 PARENTS, TEACHERS, BOARD MEMBERS AND STUDENTS HELD AN EVENT TO EDUCATE THE COMMUNITY ABOUT THE ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS FROM BOTH THE SMELL AND SEAGULL GUANO STUDENTS ARE SUBJECTED TO ON A DAILY BASIS. THEY ARE DEMANDING THAT THE REPUBLIC WASTE COMPANY ENCLOSE THE DUMP OPERATING DIRECTLY ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE SCHOOL SITE AND JUST YARDS FROM WHERE CHILDREN PLAY. TURN TO PAGE 39 TO READ ABOUT ANOTHER LOCAL ASSOCIATION PARTNERING WITH ITS COMMUNITY TO IMPROVE THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR ITS STUDENTS.



# BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING

by Sherry Posnick-Goodwin



**Freda Russell** teaches with a camera looking over her shoulder at all times.



Freda Russell backs against the wall near the door of her classroom, arms outstretched, palms touching the surface.

She looks like someone perched on a ledge of a tall building contemplating a jump. She explains it's the only area of the room where the camera can't see her. She calls it the "dead space" and stands there often.



**A**T JOHNSTONVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Big Brother is always watching. Cameras are rolling all day, recording inside every classroom. Cameras are on the playground and in the lunchroom, the maintenance man's workroom and even in the staff lounge, recording staff on breaks. Cameras are everywhere but restrooms.

The K-8, one-school district of 228 students is on the outskirts of Susanville in rural Lassen County, and looks like something out of "Little House on the Prairie." The biggest employer in town is the prison system. School board members, most of whom are associated with the correctional system, voted to have the cameras installed as a "safety precaution." But unhappy employees say a locked gate at the entrance is enough of a deterrent.

The district maintains that the recordings are not used to spy on staff or evaluate them. Members of the Johnstonville School Teachers Association tried to bargain the matter to no avail, and instead negotiated a provision in their contract that no footage from the cameras can be used to discipline or dismiss teachers.

However, several employees say they have a sneaking suspicion they are watched on a regular basis. Some have heard comments about things that have happened inside classrooms that could only be known from watching the recordings. They suspect the firing of a classified employee was due to something viewed on video.

Cameras were installed in 2013, without teacher input. Not all teachers are against them. Staff who want the cameras removed say they have nothing to hide, but don't want to star in a reality show for an audience of administrators looking for wrongdoing.

Last year, one-third of the teaching staff (three out of nine) left the school voluntarily, says Russell. Four of the teachers on staff are currently probationary, and naturally declined to express any views about the cameras.

The law is on the side of those who oppose the cameras. Education Code 51512 states: "The Legislature finds that the use by any person, including a pupil, of any electronic listening or recording device →

the prior consent of the teacher and the principal of the school given to promote an educational purpose disrupts and impairs the teaching process and discipline in the elementary and secondary schools, and such use is prohibited. Any person, other than a pupil, who willfully violates this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.”

A magazine for administrators, *District Administration*, actually cautions school leaders against placing cameras in classrooms. It suggests they only be placed in common areas like stairwells or school yards, and not in areas where staff and students expect privacy, including classrooms, work rooms or break rooms.

## Teachers aren't smiling for the cameras

Russell, a seventh-grade teacher, says the cameras are “creepy.” Knowing she is being recorded makes her nervous and affects everything she does.

“There is always a possibility that someone is watching me, and in the back of my mind, before interacting with students, I would always wonder how it will look for the camera. It results in a lack of spontaneity, because I wonder if something might be misconstrued.”

Colleen Ballew, a teacher there for 19 years, says the cameras make her feel self-conscious. She does a lot of hand-gesturing and has tried to cut back on that in case someone is viewing her.



Colleen Ballew

“I wonder about certain things looking inappropriate,” she says. “Last year a child lost a grandparent and went to pieces, so I hugged her. And all I could think was, ‘What are they going to think about that?’ Thoughts like that shouldn’t cross my mind when comforting a grieving child.”

Theresa Moore, a former teacher at the school who now teaches in Susanville, says it was particularly stressful as a brand-new teacher to know she was being recorded.

“I was extremely hard on myself by demanding perfection,” she recalls. “The knowledge of an extra set of eyes through that piece of technology only added to my own criticism of myself as an educator.”

“It’s unconscionable and an abomination,” says Bill Martens, State Council representative for Lassen County and husband of Freda Russell. “It says to staff, ‘You’re not a professional and we need to watch you.’ It makes my skin crawl.”

The cameras also had a negative impact on students, says Janean Embree, a teacher who left the school to work elsewhere. Her students would try to hide at times if they didn’t want to be watched.

“My students asked, ‘What’s going on? Why are they watching us?’ And I said to them, ‘Well, technically, they’re watching me.’”

Two teachers who have retired from the school say they would like to return as substitutes, but don’t want to work in such a hostile environment.

“It would make me crazy,” says Diana Keller, a retiree for three years. “I personally feel the cameras are highly insulting and show a lack of respect for teachers.”

**Janean Embree**  
was one of several  
Johnstonville  
teachers who left to  
teach elsewhere.



## Superintendent not camera-shy

Viewed through the lens of Superintendent/Principal Roy Casey, it’s a different story. He denies that teachers left due to being recorded, and claims that it was never mentioned during an exit interview. Two former teachers say they were never given exit interviews; one says Casey typed up her letter of resignation before she could do it.

“Cameras are here to protect teachers,” asserts Casey, who says footage is erased automatically every 30 days and there’s no audio capability. “Cameras aren’t here to evaluate teachers, they are here to support them.”

How would he feel about having a camera in his own office?

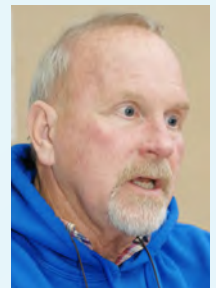
He does have one, and says he’s fine with it. But that’s probably because nobody is watching the watcher.

Casey says he isn’t worried about high teacher turnover or whether it is violating the rights of teachers, classified employees or students.

Russell worries that students suffer the most when experienced employees become unhappy and leave.

Just after being visited by the *California Educator*, Russell accepted another job offer, to teach a GED class at the local men’s prison. She finds it ironic that she isn’t being recorded while teaching this high-risk population.

“I am very proud of my 31 years spent teaching at Johnstonville, and I have no regrets,” she says. “This policy is idiotic, and we all know it.” ■



Roy Casey

## MOST DON'T MIND CAMERAS OUTSIDE THEIR CLASSROOM

**CAMERAS ARE POSTED** throughout Oak Park High School, but only in common areas. Russ Peters, president of the Oak Park Teachers Association, says it's not a big deal.

"I haven't heard any objections from teachers. When you see what's happening on school campuses and the violence that has befallen some, you see cameras as a way to keep some people away who don't belong here, and a way to keep an eye on the campus when nobody is here. Kids do sometimes come on campus and commit vandalism. The cameras have cut down on that."

If a camera was installed in his classroom, it would be an entirely different story, says Peters.

"I would object completely, because I would feel it was an invasion of privacy for myself and students. Teachers are highly qualified, and their eyes

are the only ones needed in a classroom. I know that most teachers in our district would object to having a camera in their classroom. There's a line between having a camera outside, when you're in public, so to speak, and being inside a classroom, where you expect to have privacy."



**Russ Peters**

In Oakland, teachers were upset to learn that cameras

in gymnasiums were recording gym classes. They were supposed to be used for recording activities outside of class such as games, and turned off when class was in session. But that wasn't happening, since the cameras are up high, and not easily accessible to be switched on and off. As a compromise with the Oakland Education Association, the district agreed to post signs in non-classroom areas informing teachers they are in the proximity of a recording device and possibly being recorded. Such notice does not constitute a waiver of their rights under the Education Code.

"Cameras are not allowed in the classroom, but they are allowed in the hallways and common areas," says OEA President Trish Gorham. "Ten years ago members wouldn't have accepted having a camera anywhere. I guess you could say that people are feeling less secure than they were 10 years ago. Times have changed."

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## Hundreds turn out at Sacramento middle school to fight for tax fairness

Story and photos by Len Feldman

**MORE THAN 200 EDUCATORS**, clergy, parents, retirees, labor union representatives and others convened in front of Sutter Middle School in early May to announce the creation of a coalition dedicated to making California’s property tax structure fairer.

“California is losing billions of dollars every year, thanks to problems in the law that allow some big corporations and wealthy commercial property owners to avoid paying their fair share,” said Anthony Thigpen, spokesman for Make It Fair and president of California Calls. “We’re building a statewide movement to reform the law, close the loopholes, and bring that revenue back to our communities to strengthen our schools, provide tax relief to small businesses, and support affordable housing, public safety and other important services.”



Don Stauffer

The Make It Fair coalition is proposing a critical change to the state’s tax law: closing loopholes that allow commercial (not residential) properties to be taxed at nearly the same level as they were in 1975. If the loopholes are closed, California could gain an additional \$9 billion a year — revenue that could be used for schools, social services, affordable housing, and a range of other needs that have been starved for funds since Proposition 13 went into effect.

Don Stauffer, Washington Teachers Association, a science teacher at River City High School in West Sacramento, spoke of more than \$20 billion in cuts that have slashed services for students and swelled class sizes. He said that corporations paying a fair share of property taxes would help schools gain the additional dollars they need to help all students succeed.

Over the coming months, the Make It Fair coalition will embark on an aggressive grassroots and legislative outreach effort to improve public awareness of this issue and advocate for reform. Hundreds of organizations and

**Make It Fair is committed to the following principles:**

- Assessing commercial and industrial property at fair market value in order to close commercial property tax loopholes.

---

- Investing the resulting funds (up to \$9 billion a year) in education and neighborhood services we all rely on.

---

- Protecting homeowners, renters and agricultural land from any changes.

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- Providing tax relief for small businesses.

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- Including strict accountability provisions to ensure new funds are spent appropriately.

individuals have already signed up to be part of the effort. A full list can be found online.

“This is a crucial movement to improve our state. We’re going to be reaching out to every part of this state, because this is an issue that impacts every community in the state,” said Thigpen. “Make It Fair reforms commercial property taxes, protects homeowners, renters and agricultural lands, improves accountability, and lets us invest in schools and communities once again.”

More about Make It Fair can be found at [www.MakeItFairCA.com](http://www.MakeItFairCA.com). ■



## Lake Elsinore teachers engage community to create supportive environment for students

By Ed Sibby

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) collaborative with school site teams consisting of parents, teachers and administrators at Canyon Lake Middle School in Lake Elsinore.

What began in 2011 as a chapter response to burgeoning special education issues has grown into a robust teacher-driven series of programs that now has teachers, parents, students and administrators working together to improve all student outcomes throughout the 22,000-student Lake Elsinore Unified School District (LEUSD) in Riverside County.

“We knew we had tapped into something when we hosted our first CTA-sponsored special education meeting for interested members, and 75 teachers showed up,” says Lake Elsinore Teachers Association President Bill Cavanaugh.

What LETA heard over the course of these meetings was an outpouring of valid concerns about students being underserved because of programmatic flaws that had led to uneven distribution of services within the district. “We were frustrated to the point that we knew we could no longer continue with the status quo,” says Elisabeth Brehm, a general education teacher.

Through their union, dedicated LETA members organized around this professional issue by conducting site visits, surveying membership, and setting strategic goals to improve services for all students. LETA and LEUSD have since agreed to contract language establishing a joint Special Education Steering Committee to ensure ongoing communication and collaborative problem-solving.

Further educational change followed with the establishment of the union-supported Parent Network and a partnership with the local Parent Training Information Center called Team of Advocates for Special Kids (TASK). This outreach has led to the engagement of community members whose voices were previously not heard in the district. Parent forums are now held regularly, and a CTA Community Engagement Grant provides the child care, food, and interpretation services for non-English-speaking parents.

“Access has strengthened our ability to provide services as

early as possible for younger students,” says TASK staff member Brenda Smith. Available trainings include Assistive Technology, Collaboration, Boys Town, and IEP for Parents. “It’s been very helpful, because these parents now have an avenue to ask questions and get the right services for their child,” says Cavanaugh.

Union-led outreach to the California Department of Education, TASK, WestEd and CTA for access to technical support and resources has led to the district implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to strengthen the general education environment for all students. Now there is a focus on supporting school site teams with training and communication tools.

School psychologist Susan Bottino explains: “Our goal was to create a program that would help both teachers and students feel more supported.” As a result, Student Study Team (SST) discussions now include social-emotional well-being in their assessment and intervention plans. “This allows all of the players a part in supporting each other for the benefit of the student,” says Bottino. “Let’s face it, students are more successful and resilient when they are engaged in a positive, supportive environment.”

For Brehm, who is chair of the special education committee, it’s still all about collaboration and community. “When students feel supported and have self-esteem, they are willing to take more risks and even be willing to risk failure. And when parents feel important, heard and valued, it fosters the type of teamwork necessary for all our students to be successful.”

LETA is clearly putting the CTA strategic plan into action by building an organizing culture to advocate for students, teachers and parents. ■

***Let’s face it, students are more successful and resilient when they are engaged in a positive, supportive environment.***

## Bargaining Updates

### ***Time for collaboration and raises in Palm Springs***

By adopting a straightforward approach in requesting Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) dollars be spent in the classroom and on students, **Palm Springs Teachers Association** (PSTA) settled its 11-month contract dispute and met bargaining goals including instructional planning time for teachers and improved compensation.

Because Palm Springs Unified School District (PSUSD) has significant numbers of English learners and students on free and reduced-price meals, it received one of the largest boosts in LCFF funding in Riverside County. This year alone, PSUSD received an additional \$23 million in LCFF funding.

On May 8, PSTA members ratified the settlement with 96 percent support. Work schedules will be altered to create weekly collaboration and instructional planning time for educators and paraeducators. Provisions include a retroactive 5 percent raise for this school year, an additional 5 percent in the 2015-16 school year, and a final half-percent increase to be added in 2016.

### ***Lucia Mar teachers reach agreement***

On April 16, members of the **Lucia Mar Unified Teachers Association** ratified a tentative agreement, narrowly averting a strike. The agreement came after months of internal and external organizing and a strong show of community support. The three-year deal calls for midyear 3 percent salary schedule increases this year and next, and reopens on salary and benefits for 2016-17. Shortly after ratification, the LMUSD superintendent, who was widely viewed as the major obstacle to settlement, took a position with another district. LMUTA plans to build on their organizational capacity and community support to impact the next round of school board elections.

### ***UTLA settlement helps create 'schools LA students deserve'***

On April 17, **United Teachers Los Angeles** and Los Angeles Unified School District reached a tentative contract agreement that was the culmination of months of effective union organizing. The three-year deal includes a 10 percent salary increase over two years (UTLA members have gone without a raise for the past seven years), unprecedented class size caps, targeted class size reduction in grades 8-9, new secondary counselor ratios, new language regarding the reassignment of employees under investigation, and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on teacher evaluation. Salary and class size will be among reopened articles for 2016-17.

The settlement addresses many of the issues spotlighted by UTLA's "Schools LA Students Deserve" campaign, a grassroots effort petitioned by UTLA members and approved by vote of the general membership. The campaign involved partnering with parents and community groups and making issues benefiting students key components of the union's bargaining proposals.

Throughout negotiations, UTLA leaders engaged members through organizing actions that included districtwide school site visits, site picketing, parent leafleting, faculty meeting boycotts, strike buildup preparation, and a massive "Stand at Grand" rally in downtown Los Angeles. With the agreement in place, UTLA shifted focus to school board election runoffs held on May 19.

### ***Stockton district makes teachers and students a priority***

With a 97 percent vote, members of the **Stockton Teachers Association** (STA) capped off 32 months of organizing and hard bargaining by approving a new contract. The contract provides a multiyear 12.5 percent compensation increase, more time for collaboration with one another and with parents, and individualized student instruction.

"Our bargaining team, backed by the actions and unity of our members, won a fair contract that moves the classroom, our students and teachers much closer to the top of the district's priority list," says John Steiner, a high school teacher and STA president. "Ratification of this agreement by our members and the school board will be a first major step in the right direction for Stockton schools."



Stockton TA bargaining team member **Ellen Old** (right) discusses provisions of the agreement before the ratification vote. Photo by Len Feldman.

### ***Pittsburg educators secure lower class sizes and competitive pay***

It was a long and demanding bargaining cycle, but **Pittsburg Education Association** (PEA) members finally reached a fair agreement. Negotiations began in April 2014 and finally ended with a mediated settlement one year later — on April Fools' Day!

The major issues were the term of contract, K-3 class sizes, effective date of benefit increases, work year, and hours. PEA was able to secure a competitive successor agreement while maintaining the ability to negotiate salary and benefits in each of the next two years after the facts of the budget are known. Benefit increases will be retroactive as well.

Regarding K-3 class sizes, PEA agreed on a school average of 24 with a maximum of 26. If the funding is eliminated or decreased, the district may return to current class sizes (30), but PEA would be able to negotiate an alternative at that time.

The highlight of the successor agreement is the 9 percent salary increase retroactive to July 1, 2014. Pittsburg teachers were among the lowest-paid in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, and this increase was needed to make salaries more competitive with surrounding districts.



# Learning




Members' best practices, teaching ideas and education trends



## \* **Real talk about Race**

Teachers are helping students grapple with and learn from recent tragic events

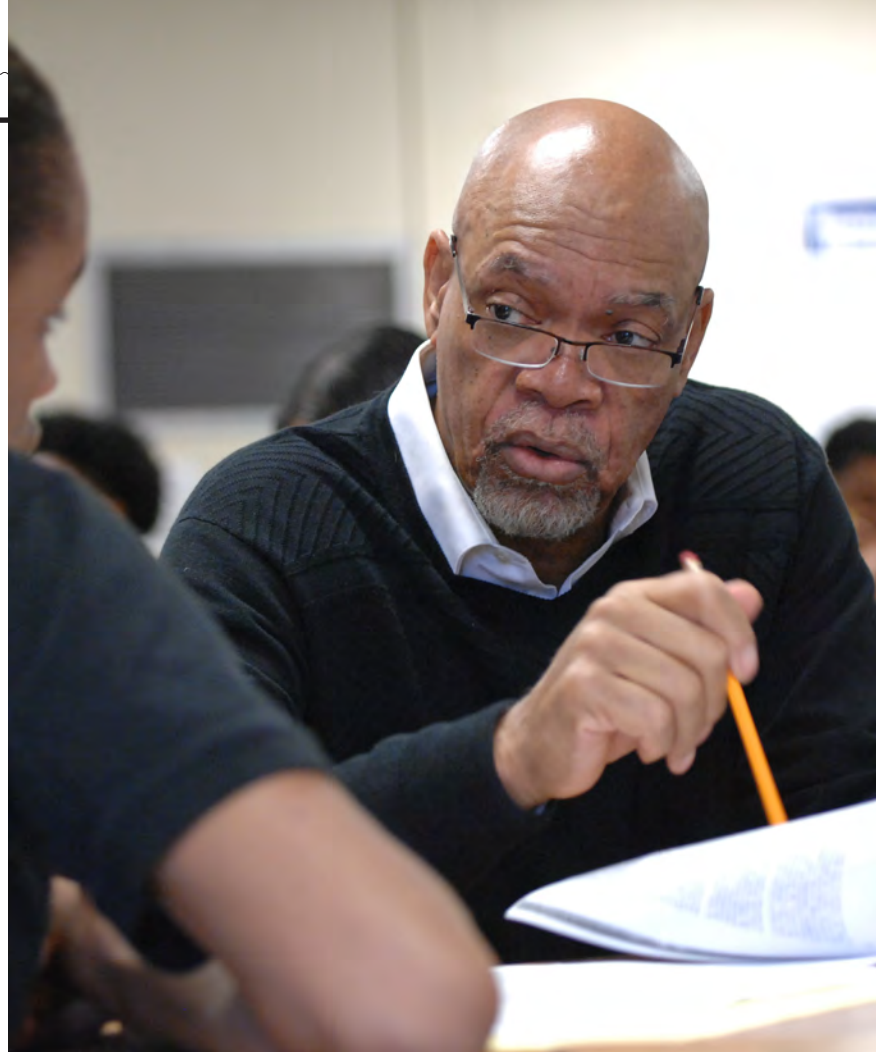


STUDENTS IN **DAVID BROWN'S** CLASS HAVE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT RACE, GIVING THEM A CHANCE TO EXPRESS THINGS THEY HAVE FELT AND EXPERIENCED. TURN THE PAGE TO READ MORE ABOUT HOW TEACHERS ARE WEAVING TRAGIC EVENTS INTO HISTORY LESSONS AND CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS TO HELP STUDENTS DEAL WITH CONFUSION AND ANGER.

When young people talk about race and inequity, says **David Brown**, “they don’t feel as powerless and they can advocate for their needs.”

# In the wake of Ferguson, classrooms take up the matter of race

by Sherry Posnick-Goodwin



Students in David Brown’s history class don’t always keep up with the headlines. But they were well aware that Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, was killed by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, and that a grand jury voted not to indict the white officer who shot him.

“Their reaction was anger,” says Brown, Inglewood Teachers Association.

Students at Inglewood Continuation High School can relate to Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin and Tamir Rice — three unarmed African American males whose lives were tragically cut short. Most are students of color, and according to Brown, many have been stopped by police for wearing hoodies and baggy pants — or being black or brown.

“These events are tragedies, but they are also teachable moments,” says Brown. “I weave them into my lessons. One of the great ways we discuss race in this country is by looking through the prism of the Declaration of Independence, which says all men are created equal and entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. And my students are asking why white students have



**Michael Rodriguez** with a mural created by his students.

better resources and better schools, and are not arrested or traumatized to the extent that children of color are.”

Brown is not alone. Other teachers are weaving tragic events into history lessons and classroom discussions to help students grapple with confusion and anger. They are discussing race, inequity, police tactics, poverty, social justice and racial profiling.



It can be uncomfortable — but it’s necessary, says Brown.

“When we discuss how race affects the dynamics in American life, it shifts the paradigm, and they can understand racism means unequal access, unequal treatment by law, poor health, and internalized stress that comes from being voiceless. When young people understand that, they don’t feel as powerless and they can advocate for their needs.”

Having discussions offers students a chance to express things they have felt and experienced, but could not put into words, says Brown. Mostly, it has given some students a voice.

“They know they have been treated different than white people in adjacent communities, and that law enforcement officers look at them as though they are guilty of something or might be a danger. My students are able to connect that they may be seen as a threat.”

For their safety, he urges them to ditch the saggy pants, baseball caps and hoodies and lose the attitude (especially if stopped by a police officer), and always be aware of their constitutional rights.

## Learning about their rights

“What should you do if you are ever stopped by the police?” asks Michael Rodriguez.

They are only seventh-graders, but many of them already have had encounters with police in their neighborhoods. Their lives could depend on knowing how to interact with law enforcement. Several students tell Rodriguez their parents have been stopped by police due to racial profiling.

His students at Spurgeon Intermediate School in Santa Ana are watching a video from an organization called Flex Your Rights, pausing every few minutes for discussion. Interwoven in Rodriguez’s lesson are the Bill of Rights, the Fourth Amendment prohibiting unreasonable searches and seizures, the Fifth Amendment protecting persons from being compelled to testify against themselves, and the Miranda right to demand legal representation.

# TIPS

## FOR LEADING DISCUSSIONS ABOUT RACIAL ISSUES AND CURRENT EVENTS

### #1

**Tie in past events with current events**, such as Jim Crow laws, Selma, the Watts riots and Rodney King.

### #2

**Stay focused on having a discussion**, not winning an argument.

### #3

**Tell students your classroom is a safe place** for honest discussions.

### #4

**Ask questions to encourage critical thinking**, such as: What is the role of law in society? What is profiling? How does media coverage contribute to racial stereotypes? What is the definition of social justice?

### #5

**Keep it age-appropriate.** The NEA offers guidelines in its Racial Profiling Curriculum Guide.

In the video, students learn during a police encounter it is unwise to talk back, and they should stay cool and calm, be respectful, and de-escalate the situation. Two years ago in nearby Anaheim, two Latino young men were shot in separate incidents within a week. One was shot in the back while running from police. Riots ensued in the Orange County community. Due to these events, a campaign was founded to create districts in the Ana-



**Alexandra Campbell Jones** with Andrea Zavala, Paige Anderson, Fabrizio Elevancini, Micah Alleyne and Nathan Hosley.

heim City Council to address the disenfranchisement of Latinos in city politics.

If driving, students should keep their hands on the wheel, advises the video’s narrator.

In the video, a young black man demonstrates wrong and right ways to respond to police. In the first example, he says flippantly, “Yo, what’s up sucker, I don’t need to tell you nothing.” In the second example, he says politely, “Officer, I know you are just doing your job, but I do not consent to a search.”

The point is not to make students afraid. It’s supposed to empower them and make them aware of how to respectfully demand their constitutional rights.

“These types of discussion are important and necessary, although they can be uncomfortable for teachers,” says Rodriguez, Santa Ana Educators Association. “It’s important to try and teach my students not to stereotype others. It’s also important for them to understand how stereotypes





work so that they don't feed into them or internalize them — or act out the stereotypes that society has assigned to them. Little things like this can put a dent into the school-to-prison pipeline.”

### Artwork expresses feelings

Rodriguez is the adviser for the Social Justice Club, whose students created a mural stating “Black and Brown Lives Matter.” It was displayed prominently. Some staff members objected because they thought it should state “All Lives Matter.” Eventually it was moved to the Social Justice Room.

Gabriel Marin, a Social Justice Club member, says the mural was never meant to be controversial.

“In my view, it is about the love of every single race, culture and people. It's about people's right to be treated fairly. It means a lot to me.”

Rodriguez describes it as an “affirmation of youth in our community” and thinks it is important to address institutional inequities in society, not brush them aside.

“When students put effort into art like this, we need to recognize their lives *do* matter,” he says.

A “Black Lives Matter” mural created by the students of Alexandra Campbell Jones also generated discussion at Washington Elementary School in Richmond. The third-graders had many questions after the Ferguson verdict. Many had seen protests on the news.



Jessica Lopez,  
Destiny Clark and  
Maritza Zeledon  
listen to  
Scotty Stewart.

“We discussed vocabulary such as verdict, unjust, trial and jury,” says Campbell Jones, United Teachers of Richmond. “We discussed the legal system in our country and how some trials are done by a jury of peers and some verdicts are decided without a trial.”

Students described conversations with family members and peers about Ferguson, then created posters where each letter represented a conversation on the topic.

“It was challenging because some students never watch the news and others have seen *Selma* and watched the protests,” she relates. “After, we continued our study of Dr. Martin Luther King and discussions of segregation in the context of the Negro Leagues. I have 15 boys this year who all experienced the World Series and were shocked to discover that baseball used to be segregated. It is important to meet students where they are and find a way to connect with their life experiences to help them understand the world around them.”

### Thinking for themselves

Students at Woodland Hills Academy had lots of questions for Scotty Stewart during Our Global World, a class on current events.

Why were police acquitted of beating Rodney King when it was videotaped? Why weren't the laws changed after the Los Angeles riots? Why was Michael Brown shot if he was unarmed? How were lawyers for the police able to create “reasonable doubt” during a grand jury hearing?

“These are great questions,” says Stewart, United Teachers Los Angeles. “You would be great on a jury,

“Part of having these conversations [about race] is to help them realize they have choices,” says  
Cat Burton-Tillson.



because you are not rushing to judgment. You look at all sides of the story.”

Stewart wants them to be critical thinkers, and asks them to obtain news from a variety of sources, including radio, Internet and TV — and listen to liberals and conservatives discuss events to understand different perspectives. Some students noticed Fox News was more focused on the property damage in Ferguson during riots than on the death of Michael Brown.

“I’m hoping to foster discussion, not arguments. But I don’t mind if people argue as long as it’s done respectfully and everybody listens without name-calling. It’s never too heated, because these kids like each other.”

Student Alyna Calzadillas is frustrated. “Why are we having all these conversations about race and profiling if things are never going to change?” she asks. “When we walk out the door, people will still say ‘Why are you acting black?’ or ‘Why are you acting white?’”

An African American student questions why some students act in ways that perpetuate stereotypes.

“We’re never going to wipe racism off the face of the Earth, but we can try and diminish it as much as possible,” says Stewart, who reminds students most people thought it was impossible to elect a black president.

At Menlo-Atherton High School in Atherton, Cat Burton-Tillson urges remedial students to reflect on the reasons that Latino students make up the majority of remedial classes and why white students are the majority in advanced classes. Is it prejudice? Motivation? Peer pressure? A combination?

Students decide that sometimes they are prejudged by teachers and put into remedial classes — and other times they hold themselves back by making poor choices.

“I don’t want to provide them with the answers or lead them in the discussion. I want them to express how they feel,” says Burton-Tillson, Sequoia District Teachers Association. “Sometimes



it’s uncomfortable.” The Latino students discuss the word “ghetto” and say they don’t like other students using it as an adjective about them. Boys say they’re stereotyped as future dropouts and druggies. A girl named Jackie says she constantly fights the stereotype that Latinas get into fights, become pregnant and drop out. She shares that her mother gave birth to her in high school and dropped out, and regrets not earning a diploma.

“I want a different story. I want to be the first in my family to graduate from high school.”

Eventually these discussions will lead to broader discussions about race, class and social justice, but for now this teacher is starting small and asking students to consider their own environment.

“Part of having these conversations is to help them realize they have choices,” Burton-Tillson says. “I want them to realize that with effort and dedication, they can be successful. They don’t have to feel stuck. They are smart. They are overcoming obstacles. They deserve to be heard.” ■

Kaya Jones (left) talks about stereotypes in **Scotty Stewart’s** class.



**Scotty Stewart**

## RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

To raise awareness and create dialogue about the problem of racial and ethnic profiling, NEA has teamed up with the NAACP, Not in Our Town/Not in Our School, Teaching Tolerance/Southern Poverty Law Center, The Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the American Federation of Teachers, Human Rights Educators of the USA Network, and Facing History and Ourselves. To view curriculum guides, visit [www.nea.org/home/52285.htm](http://www.nea.org/home/52285.htm). More resources can be found at [www.teachablemoment.org](http://www.teachablemoment.org) and [www.facinghistory.org](http://www.facinghistory.org).





# TO SIT OR TO STAND

?

That is the question!

by Sherry Posnick-Goodwin

Sarina Zomorrodian is on the ball in **Julie Shattles'** classroom in Tustin.



**S**INCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME — or at least school — kids were told to stay in their seat and not fidget. It's presumed those who can't sit still are not paying attention. Or as they used to say, they have ants in their pants.

Some schools are questioning that philosophy, because studies show that too much sitting isn't good for you. Being sedentary can cause health problems including heart disease — or even a shorter lifespan.

In some schools students are using “standing desks,” rather than traditional workstations. In others, students may sit on a yoga ball, which stabilizes the core and promotes better posture. Both of these

trends are growing in popularity at the workplace with adults, especially in the tech industry.

Advocates say standing desks help students burn more calories and stay focused. And sitting on a yoga ball forces spine alignment, decreases back pain, improves balance, and allows “mini-workouts” without getting up.

While most students sit at traditional desks, standing desks are being used in hundreds of schools nationwide, according to [districtadministration.com](http://districtadministration.com). One of them is Montera Middle School in Oakland, where Krishna Feeney teaches eighth-grade math.

**Krishna Feeney** shows a standing desk in her classroom in Oakland.



## On their feet in Oakland

Ben Muchin is a standup guy. He explains that he usually has a “big energy rush” after arriving fresh from gym class, and needs to transition slowly into academia, which is best done by standing.

Itai Bojdak-Yates likes having the “freedom” to move around in class, so he also prefers standing. He sits in all his other classes and enjoys having a “break” from being in a chair all day long.

Most of the students in Feeney’s class prefer to stand. However, the standing desks can be lowered, so students have the option of sitting. Feeney describes herself as a “stander” because teachers are always standers.

Because standers block the view of the sitters, they are usually in the back of the room. Some students like sitting on the countertops and do a combination of both.

Standing desks with casters allow fluidity of motion, so students can easily move into groups or regroup, and turn their entire bodies around to collaborate with peers or see the teacher. Because students are different heights, sometimes they must agree on a “compromise height” for desks when they are working as a group, to see what their classmates are doing.

“It helps students focus and pay attention,” says Feeney, Oakland Education Association. “It’s really

Students have their desks at varied heights during class.

interesting seeing students being flexible with their workspace. As long as they’re fulfilling their part of the bargain and doing their work, I don’t micromanage how they do it. And that’s really appreciated, because students don’t get a lot of choice in their universe. Usually they just hear someone tell them to sit all the time.”

At the beginning of the year Feeney had no furniture in her classroom. Most students were sitting on the floor. Then Assistant Principal Ashanti Branch mentioned on a radio show that students have a hard time sitting still, which causes some of them to become disruptive. Someone was listening from Ergotron, a company that sells standing desks, and the company donated 28 to the school. Since Feeney was without furniture and excited to get some, they found a home in her classroom.


“It was a fluke we got these,” says Feeney. “And I love them because it’s completely unreasonable to expect students to stay in their in seats all day from kindergarten to 12th grade. It’s always bothered me as an educator that we’re asking them to do that.”

The desks aren’t cheap. They cost about \$500 apiece, which is one of the reasons schools aren’t buying them in bunches.

“Schools don’t get money for much more basic things we need, so I don’t see this becoming widespread,” says Feeney. “It’s a little bit of a bummer. At best, it would be nice if students who need this kind of support can get a standing desk. I know some of our special education teachers would like them for students.”

Not everyone prefers them. The class has several dedicated sitters. One of them is Olivia Petty, who tried standing in class, but didn’t like it, saying it was tough to be on her feet for an entire hour.

At first the desks were a bit of an adjustment for students, who played with



### Students at standing desks burn more calories,

reports Mark Benden, an associate professor of Texas A&M who researches classroom ergonomics and childhood obesity.

**11+ CALORIES PER HOUR**  
300+ CALORIES PER WEEK

He found that if students choose to stand for most of the class time, they will burn 11 more calories per hour and about 300 more calories per week than other students.

---

**23+ CALORIES PER HOUR**  
575+ CALORIES PER WEEK

Overweight students burned 23 more calories per hour and 575 more per week than their seated peers.



them, making them go up and down. Some put them at maximum height and used them for a chin rest.

“Now they’ve gotten used to them,” says Feeney. “It’s not novel anymore. It’s just their desk.”

## Having a ball in Tustin

Sarina Zomorrodian likes sitting on a yoga ball more than a chair. It’s soft and comfortable, and bounces without making noise if she has a case of the wiggles.

“It’s much better for our core,” she explains solemnly, sounding more like an ergonomic specialist than a third-grader. “It

keeps our bodies straight.”

Julie Shattles, her teacher at Peters Canyon Elementary School in Tustin, purchased the yoga balls for her class of 31 students in November, thanks to a \$2,000 grant from **Donor-Choose.org** (funded by Chevron) and a parent who chipped in. The balls are about \$20 apiece, and the base is about \$40. While some workplaces use them without a base, she worried that her students might roll away or fall off without a foundation. (Yes, as the song goes, it really is all about the base.)

Shattles got the idea when she visited the Tustin Education Association office and saw a yoga ball on wheels used by a staff person. She wondered if it might be the answer to restless student syndrome, because some students were becoming “squirrely” as the year progressed. She thinks chairs can be painful for students experiencing “growing pains” and impact the tailbone.

It was an adjustment.

“As we were establishing rules for their use, most of the students were seeing how high they could bounce,” recalls Shattles. “Watching that from the front of the room during a whole class lesson created a bit of seasickness for me, which they all thought was funny because of the nautical theme in my classroom. It took about a week for them to get the bounce height competition out of their system, and then the balls started to serve their purpose, which is to decrease unwanted movement.”

Students’ attention spans have increased, while visits to the restroom have decreased, reports Shattles.

“Some students ask to go to the restroom just so they can move around. As teachers, we have to make a judgment call if they really have to go or not, because we don’t want them to have an accident.”

Students were given a choice of yoga balls or traditional chairs, and all of them opted for balls. Not one has asked

Students sit on yoga balls instead of chairs.



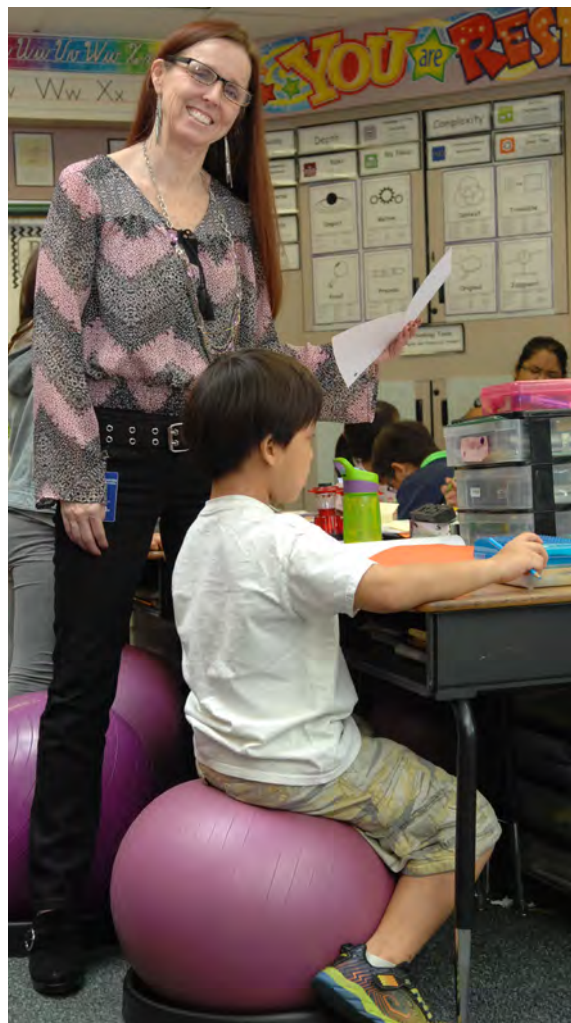
to return their ball for an old-fashioned chair.

“I like it because you don’t have to sit still,” says John Kim. “You can fidget and roll and bounce.”

Mira Kincaid loves that students can use the yoga balls for PE if it’s raining outside. She offers an impromptu demonstration of how students can swing the ball to improve arm strength and roll around on them to perform floor exercises.

Shattles says her students are so attached to their ball seats that they worry about being without them next year in fourth grade. Meanwhile, she has borrowed one from her granddaughter that she plans on using at school for herself.

“Mine will have wheels and a larger base,” she says. “That way I can roll around, help kids, keep my spine aligned and be comfortable, all at the same time.” ■



Julie Shattles watches as John Kim works on an assignment.





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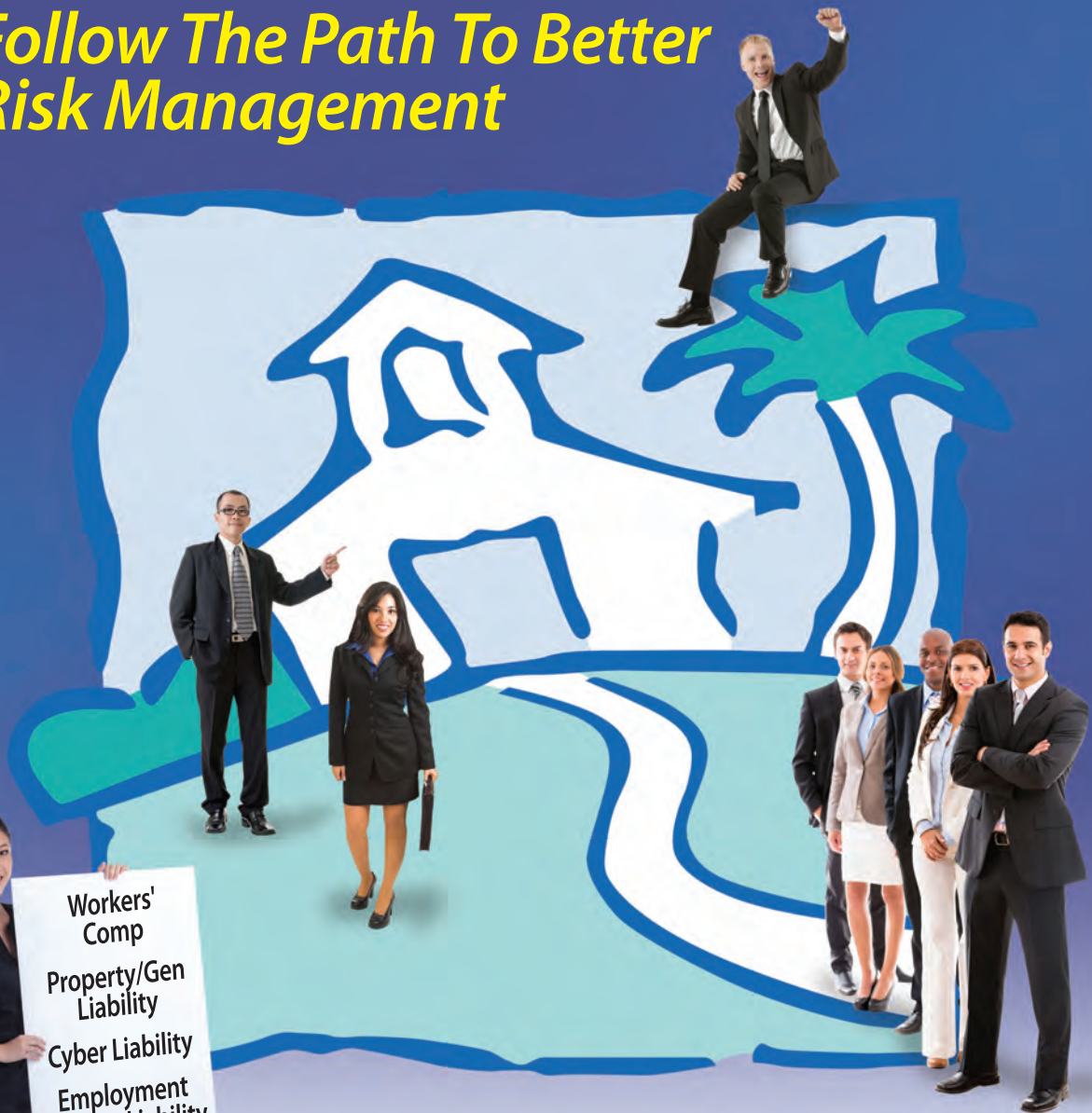
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## *Behind the Scenes*

Members star in CTA's latest TV and radio ads



AMY LAUGHLIN (ABOVE CENTER), A 2015 CALIFORNIA TEACHER OF THE YEAR, IS JOINED BY (FROM LEFT) ANN SHIOJI, MARISSA BROWN, DEISY BATES AND MAYA WALKER ON SET FOR CTA'S LATEST AD CAMPAIGN PRAISING EDUCATOR INNOVATION. GO TO [WWW.CTA.ORG/MEDIACENTER](http://WWW.CTA.ORG/MEDIACENTER) TO SEE THE FINAL RESULTS.



Top row: Uma Sen (grade 12), Renee Chan (11), Mona Chahine (10), Sun Ah Lee (10), Jillian Kido (12).

Bottom row: **Ellyn Siskind** (adviser), Melanie Nguyen (12), Alex Williams (12), Chandy Alayra (11), **Julie Braun** (adviser).

Not pictured: Brenda Nguyen.



## Irvine High School wins *Educator's* journalism contest

By Cynthia Menzel

A two-page spread about visual art programs that “unleash the power of creativity” won first place in the first-ever *California Educator* journalism contest.

“The Art of Teaching” was featured in Irvine High School’s newspaper, *El Vaquero*. Staff members who worked on the spread are student editors Jillian Kido and Alex Williams, photographers Renee Chan, Brenda Nguyen and Uma Sen, and writers Chandy Alayra, Mona Chahine, Sun Ah Lee and Melanie Nguyen. The advisers are Ellyn Siskind and Julie Braun, Irvine Teachers Association. Their winning entry is featured on the next page, and they have been invited to attend the presentation of the John Swett Awards for Media Excellence at the June State Council meeting, where they will have an opportunity to meet working journalists.

The entries were judged by educators, editors, graphic artists and publication specialists, who also provided critiques of the entries.

“I appreciated the judges’ comments in that they address some of the same elements we discuss on a regular basis as a staff — concise writing, use of good quotes, solid understanding of layout elements,” says Braun. “Critique comments remind us what we are doing well, in addition to what we need to work on. That is how a publication improves and grows. Plus, as an adviser, it is always wonderful to hear affirmation that the things you are teaching your publication staffers are, in fact, what others trained in the business are looking for, as well.”

*El Vaquero* is published by the Advanced Journalism class. Students must first take Beginning Journalism, submit an application and essay, and be interviewed to



Visual Arts | Programs that unleash the power of creativity

# THE ART OF TEACHING

BY CHANDY ALAYRA, MONA CHAHINE, SUN AH LEE AND MELANIE NGUYEN

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## ERIKA PERALES



I make my students say two positive things every time they say something negative."



PHOTO BY JANA SEV AND RENEZ CHAN

Erika Perales gives freshman Lina Kang tips on her outline technique during Painting and Drawing class on Jan. 23 in UA 11.

Erika Perales always knew she wanted to spend her life creating art. Perales teaches photography, Beginning Painting and Drawing, Intro to Art and Yearbook. She has been teaching for eight years and has a wide variety of experience with visual arts. Students practice skills such as observational sketching, followed by step-by-step demonstrations. She conducts one-on-one time with students, pushing them to think critically and learn from their mistakes. Perales says the greatest challenge she faces is increasing class sizes that make individual attention difficult.

## MIRIAM KHURGEL



I try to encourage students to think of things they like to inspire their art—I want them to be personal."



PHOTO BY RENEZ CHAN

Miriam Khurgel helps senior Kylie Tuyorada with his multicultural project in her class on Jan. 23 in UA 11.

Miriam Khurgel teaches Introductory Art and Multicultural Art. She enjoyed being an art student herself, and wants to relay that passion to others. Khurgel enjoys the freedom students have to explore in their projects and seeing the students' perspective and inspiration. "I really enjoy the sense of community [that an art class provides]," Khurgel said. "My favorite thing is when I see [students] surprise themselves in their art...and then they create something and surprise themselves with how much they enjoyed making it."

Here's a look at Irvine's visual arts instructors and the methods they use to inspire their students.

## TEACHERS ARE...

selfless kind passionate collaborative empathetic understanding loving educators' helpers inspirational dedicated patient innovative supportive amazing helpful innovative thoughtful caring compassionate interesting enduring motivating fun guides encouraging

## ROBIN LUX

This is a special time in the students' lives, and their artwork reflects this special time."

Whether she's drawing or building something, visual arts teacher Robin Lux has always loved creating. She teaches Ceramics, Advanced Ceramics, Computer Graphics, Advanced Drawing and Painting and AP Studio Art. She believes that teachers adapt to find better ways to instruct their students.

She takes sculpting classes in order to complement improve upon her own craft and her teaching. She believes her job is not to make students pursue art in the future, but to facilitate their learning and nurture their growth. It's rewarding to see her students overcome challenges, make improvements and produce incredible art for the world to enjoy.

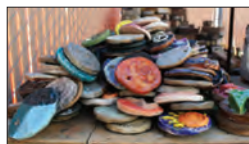


PHOTO BY BRENDA NGUYEN

Clay medallions made by Robin Lux's Beginning Ceramics students are stacked by the kiln on Jan. 23 outside H10.



PHOTO BY RENEZ CHAN

Mandy Tucker explains the importance of a historic artwork during her AP Art History class on Jan. 23 in SU6.

Photography teacher Mandy Tucker smiles as she watches her students react to the gradual development of an image on photo paper. She has been doing this demonstration for 20 years and it never fails to impress. To further grab her students' interest, Tucker explains depth and complexity using some of her own photos as models. She trains her students to develop film the old-school way as well as to use Adobe Photoshop to enhance digital photos. Tucker chairs the visual arts department and also teaches AP Art History, a course on art styles throughout the ages.

## MANDY TUCKER



You're only on this planet a certain [number] of years, and this is one way you can make your mark."



## REBECCA PHILLIPS



You don't truly learn until you get your hands on the equipment and learn for yourself."



PHOTO BY RENEZ CHAN

Rebecca Phillips discusses plans for the upcoming ITV broadcast with senior Hannah Tran on Wednesday in SE 11.

Beginning Video Production teacher Rebecca Phillips meets with her 22 student filmmakers every other day, after school and on weekends to create bi-weekly ITV broadcasts. Her dedication earned her recognition at the Orange County Film Festival in January when she was named Mentor of the Year. She commits herself to teaching self-expression through cinematography. Students learn how to use Final Cut Pro professional editing software, cameras and other film equipment. Phillips encourages her students to pursue the art of film.



Irvine High School's winning spread and the other entries are posted at [cta.org/journalismcontest](http://cta.org/journalismcontest).

be considered for acceptance to staff. Both Advanced and Beginning Journalism classes are UC-approved elective courses. Widely respected throughout the district, the program has won numerous awards from organizations such as the National Scholastic Press Association and Quill and Scroll International Honor Society.

Braun started advising *El Vaquero* in 1991 and has witnessed its growth over the years. "If I remember correctly, I began with two or three Apple computers and around 10 students," she says, noting the staff now runs between 30 and 38 students. "We had to do pasteup boards and layout by hand and were often at school during deadline until 9 or 10 p.m. Now, we have access to a room full of computers, a tabloid printer, a scanner and multiple cameras, and do all our work electronically, which makes

things much easier and gets us home a bit earlier." Siskind has been advising for 10 years.

Braun describes being a journalism adviser as a labor of love. "You get to work with some of the most dedicated kids on campus, and through your role, you become knowledgeable about your campus. Journalism also teaches real-life, valuable skills to students."

What advice does this adviser offer to advisers? "Go for it! Journalism is hard work. I won't pretend that it's not. Dive in and make the most of your journalism assignment, whether it be newspaper, yearbook, broadcast or online. Take advantage of and attend local journalism events like write-off contests, sign up for workshops and seminars, attend the national journalism conventions, and get yourself a mentor. There are many journalism folks just waiting to help with the transition to becoming a publications adviser."

The winning entry and the entries receiving honorable mention are posted at [cta.org/journalismcontest](http://cta.org/journalismcontest). ■



CTA's officers honor three California Teachers of the Year. From left: Vice President **Eric Heins**, **Christopher O'Connor**, **Erin Rosselli**, President **Dean Vogel**, **Amy Laughlin**, Secretary-Treasurer **Mikki Cichocki**.

## State Council honors members and students, stands for learning over testing and holds elections

By Cynthia Menzel

In a jam-packed weekend, the 800 members of CTA's State Council of Education elected new leaders, discussed issues that impact student success, and took positions on more than 200 bills.

CTA President Dean Vogel kicked off Council by noting the 50th anniversary of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was intended to deliver new resources to schools that served low-income students and to help close achievement gaps for students of color. Between 1965 and today, things went terribly wrong as changes like No Child Left Behind led to the overreliance on test scores. "It was a complete disaster," said Vogel. "These laws have turned test scores into the goal — rather than learning and becoming a good citizen." He thanked delegates and all who joined with fed-up parents in NEA's Wave of Action to tell Congress to "Get ESEA Right This Time!"

The theme of meeting student needs carried throughout the weekend. Executive Director Joe Nuñez discussed work in transforming the profession with projects such as CTA's Instructional Leadership Corps. The ILC, he said, "exemplifies the power of teachers leading professional development. Educators are forming groups to help other teachers with curriculum and instruction strategies

around the implementation of the California Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards. This group of 180 accomplished educators has held more than 250 trainings in local chapters and districts across the state, providing instructional support to more than 6,700 teachers."

### New leadership team elected

State Council delegates elected Pittsburg elementary teacher Eric C. Heins as CTA's 55th president during the April meeting. A 24-year teaching veteran and K-5 teacher, Heins is currently serving as CTA's vice president. "It's time to stop substituting testing for thinking and let students discover and experience the wonder of learning," he said. "I look forward to working with my fellow officers and all educators to ensure all California students get the public education they deserve."

State Council delegates also elected Theresa Montañó, a Chicano studies and education professor at CSU Northridge, as vice president, and Los Angeles elementary school teacher David Goldberg as secretary-treasurer.

The new leadership team will take office June 26 and will serve a two-year term. Read more about them at [cta.org/leadership](http://cta.org/leadership).



### YOUTH ACTIVISM AWARDS

CTA's Peace and Justice Caucus presented Youth Activism Awards to Karen Oliva, Los Angeles; Rony Moon, Fullerton; and Dakota Brown, Antelope Acres. Through CollegePath LA and the First Generation Club, Oliva helps first-generation students be admitted to and be successful in college. Moon started a nonprofit organization, Cooperation Act, which provides financial and emotional support to peer students around the world ([cooperationact.weebly.com](http://cooperationact.weebly.com)). Brown founded NERDS (Native Education Raising Dedicated Students) and is advocating statewide and nationally for the elimination of Native American images and stereotypes in schools.

## Mandatory kindergarten, EpiPen follow-up, and 200 other bills

The bulk of the work done at State Council happens in the 21 committees that review, discuss and make recommendations on issues and legislation that impact student learning conditions. For example, the Early Childhood Education Committee recommended a "Co-sponsor" position on AB 713, a measure by Assembly Member Shirley Weber (D-San Diego) that would make kindergarten mandatory for all students. Under this year's version of the bill, parents would be able to opt out after the first 30 days of class.

In all, Council took positions on some 200 legislative bills. Among them were positions to support AB 101 (Alejo) to develop an ethnic studies curriculum framework, and SB 172 (Liu) to suspend the high school exit examination (CAHSEE) as a condition for high school graduation, and to co-sponsor AB 709 (Gipson) to require that charter schools comply with the Brown and Public Records acts for transparency and accountability.

The Student Support Personnel Committee recommended a "Watch" position on two bills by Sen. Bob Huff (R-Diamond Bar) that expand on his SB 669 of 2014, which requires school districts to provide emergency epinephrine auto-injectors to trained personnel to provide emergency medical aid to persons suffering from an anaphylactic reaction. SB 738 and SB 277 protect medical personnel against civil or criminal legal actions resulting from their prescribing the auto-injectors and revise current law authorizing nonmedical school employees to volunteer to use the medical devices to provide emergency aid. ■

## IN OTHER ACTION, CTA STATE COUNCIL:

- Honored Doreen McGuire-Grigg**, Lakeport Unified Classified Employees Association president, as the winner of the 2015 Paula Monroe ESP of the Year Award. A special education para, she is the first education support professional (ESP) to be elected to a state position on the NEA Board of Directors. Her interaction with CTA President Dean Vogel during the award presentation was both entertaining and inspiring. *See the full story on page 17.*
- Honored three California Teachers of the Year:** Amy Laughlin, a K-6 intervention teacher, Savanna Teachers Association; Erin Rosselli, a kindergarten teacher, Orange Unified Education Association; and Christopher O'Connor, a high school science teacher, St. Helena Teachers Association. Unable to attend was Maggie Mabery, a middle school science teacher, Manhattan Beach Unified Teachers Association, who is California's nominee to the National Teacher of the Year competition.
- Re-elected to the CTA Board of Directors** Gayle Bilek, District G; Leslie Littman, District I; and Curtis L. Washington, At-Large.
- Re-elected CTA/ABC Committee members** Roberto Rodriguez, At-Large; Mike Patterson, District D; Carlos Rico, District E; Loren Scott, District J; and Barbara Dawson, District N; and elected John Haschak, District A.
- Elected NEA Directors** Karen Schuett, District 8; Barbara Schulman, District 9; Linda Crow, District 14; and Julius B. Thomas, District 15; and elected NEA Alternate Director Ken Tang, Seat 2.



# CALENDAR 2015



## LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

### SEPTEMBER 18–20 Region I Leadership Conference

*Fairmont Hotel, San Jose*

### OCTOBER 9–11 Region II Leadership Conference

*Grand Sierra Resort, Reno, Nevada*

Do you have what it takes to be an association leader? Learn the ropes or increase your skill set. Find out more: [www.cta.org/conferences](http://www.cta.org/conferences)

### JUNE 1 *Application Deadline* NEA Foundation Grants

The NEA Foundation awards grants to educators: 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](http://neafoundation.org)

### JULY 1–6 *Convention* NEA Representative Assembly *Orlando, Florida*

With 8,000 delegates (including about 900 from California), the RA is the world's largest democratic deliberative body. CTA members will help set policy and chart the direction of NEA business. Find out more: [www.nea.org/ra](http://www.nea.org/ra)

### JULY 16–19 *Conference* Presidents Conference

*Fairmont Hotel, San Jose*

This training is geared for local chapter leaders. New and second-year presidents and new community college chapter presidents begin on Thursday with specially tailored training; others join them Friday for electives and workshops to enhance leadership skills. Find out more: [www.cta.org/conferences](http://www.cta.org/conferences)

### AUGUST 2–6 *Conference* Summer Institute

*UCLA Conference Center, Los Angeles*

CTA's premiere training workshop offers sessions in Instruction and Professional Development (focusing on Common Core), Community Engagement and Coalition Building, Communications, Legal, Member Benefits, Emerging Leaders, Bargaining, School Finance, and Health and Welfare. Find out more: [www.cta.org/conferences](http://www.cta.org/conferences)

### Extra Credit solutions

*U.S. states*

1. EVERY MAN ON IT = VERMONT
  2. FIND A HOUSE = IDAHO
  3. FLIP FOR IDEAS = FLORIDA
  4. PARK BANS PUMAS = ARKANSAS
  5. ARM ITCHING MAN = MICHIGAN
- Challenge: COMING NEWS  
QUOTAS = MINNESOTA

*Last names of famous composers*

1. EACH COP WINS = CHOPIN
  2. BEEN WITH MOVE IN = BEETHOVEN
  3. BAR LEAN HAMS = BRAHMS
  4. SHAKY DINER = HAYDN
  5. SUCH A FUN BERET = SCHUBERT
- Challenge: TECH MAN INK MOVES  
KEY = TCHAIKOVSKY

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From left to right: **Christine Timmons**, Sweetwater EA, in Italy and Croatia. **Gloria Matoba**, Torrance TA, in Paris, France. **Brent Duka**, Moreland TA, in Washington, D.C.



### Announcing the second “Educators are everywhere!” PHOTO CONTEST

Are you traveling or volunteering this summer?  
Bring us along this summer, send a selfie, and win school supplies!

CTA members are traveling everywhere, and because educators are everywhere, we thought it might be fun again to take your *Educator* along. Yes, we mean your CTA magazine.

Take a photo of yourself with your magazine between now and July 21 and send it in. You may win school supplies! Three \$50 gift cards for school supplies will be awarded.

Here's what to do:

- While on your interesting or fun travels, take a photo with you and your favorite *Educator* magazine.
- **BONUS:** If you're traveling over the summer for the classroom, include a paragraph about how your travels and experience will improve teaching/learning. It may become a story for this magazine!
- Email your selfie and a brief description of what we're seeing, with your name, local chapter and current email address, to [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org).

**That's it! Entries will be accepted through July 21, 2015.** All entries submitted will be reviewed. Judging considerations include creativity, location, distance, and applications to the classroom (and celebrity sightings, of course!). Have fun on your summer travels.

Go Online



For details and to see last year's submissions, go to [www.cta.org/educatorsareeverywhere](http://www.cta.org/educatorsareeverywhere).



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By Alan Stillson

# Letter Zaps

---

**IN THE PUZZLES BELOW**, you are given a short phrase. Your task is to zap (cross out) five of the letters (or seven letters in the challenge questions) so that the remaining letters in order spell a word in the category. Answers on page 56.

---

## *U.S. states*

Example: SCHOOL FOR A DOG = **S C H O O L F O R A D O G = COLORADO**

1. EVERY MAN ON IT \_\_\_\_\_
  2. FIND A HOUSE \_\_\_\_\_
  3. FLIP FOR IDEAS \_\_\_\_\_
  4. PARK BANS PUMAS \_\_\_\_\_
  5. ARM ITCHING MAN \_\_\_\_\_
- Challenge: COMING NEWS QUOTAS \_\_\_\_\_
- 

## *Last names of famous composers*

Example: MORE ZOO ARTS = **M O R E Z O O A R T S = MOZART**

1. EACH COP WINS \_\_\_\_\_
  2. BEEN WITH MOVE IN \_\_\_\_\_
  3. BAR LEAN HAMS \_\_\_\_\_
  4. SHAKY DINER \_\_\_\_\_
  5. SUCH A FUN BERET \_\_\_\_\_
- Challenge: TECH MAN INK MOVES KEY \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Alan Stillson is a CTA member and the author of *Middle School Word Puzzles* and numerous other puzzle books. Find out more at [stillsonworks.com](http://stillsonworks.com).

---





*"I feel like I have so much more to offer my students."*

Erin Kurtz, English 6  
Robert Louis Stevenson Middle School, CA

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